



# Safer Hartlepool Partnership

## Agenda

Friday 16 January 2026

**Time:** 1:00pm

**Location:** Council Chamber

### Members:

#### Responsible Authority Members:

Councillor Riddle, Elected Member, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Councillor Oliver, Elected Member, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Denise McGuckin, Chief Executive, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Kieran Bostock, Director Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Helen Wilson, District Commander, Cleveland Police (VC)  
Jo Heaney, Chair of Youth Offending Board  
Gordon Bentley, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB)  
Ann Powell, Head of Stockton and Hartlepool Probation Delivery Unit  
Sean Smith, Cleveland Fire Authority

#### Other Members:

Jonathan Brash, MP for Hartlepool (C)  
Chris Woodcock, Acting Director of Public Health, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Matt Storey, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland  
Michelle Hill, Hartlepool Voluntary and Community Sector Representative, Safer Communities  
Angela Corner, Head of Community Resilience, Thirteen Group  
Alison Sutherland, Executive Director of Children's Services, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Jill Harrison, Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Non-Voting Observer, Councillor Jorgeson, Representative of Audit and Governance Committee, Hartlepool Borough Council

#### CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone. The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.



**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. To Receive Any Declarations Of Interest By Members**

**3. Minutes**

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2025

**4. Items For Consideration**

4.1 Development of a Domestic Abuse Strategy – *Interim Director of Public Health*

4.2 Retail Crime Investigation – Final Report - *Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee*

4.3 Safer Hartlepool Partnership Action Plan 2025/26 - *Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)*

**5. Any Other Business Which The Chair Considers Urgent**

**FOR INFORMATION**

Date of next meeting – Friday 13 March at 1pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

# **SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

3 October 2025

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

**Present:**

**Responsible Authority Members:**

Councillor Karen Oliver, Elected Member, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Helen Wilson, District Commander, Cleveland Police (Vice Chair)  
Ann Powell, Head of Stockton and Hartlepool Probation Delivery Unit

**Other Members:**

Jonathan Brash, MP for Hartlepool (Chair)  
Matt Storey, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland  
Angela Corner, Head of Community Resilience, Thirteen Group

Non-Voting Observer, Councillor Jorgeson, Representative of Audit and Governance Committee, Hartlepool Borough Council

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 John Lovatt, Assistant Director (Adult Social Care) was in attendance for Jill Harrison, Director of Adult and Community Based Services

Also present: Samantha Hayes, Drive Partnership  
Andrew Liddell, Neighbourhood Chief Inspector, Cleveland Police  
Rachel Parker, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner  
Anna Waddington, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner/CURV

**Officers:**

Phil Hepburn, Enforcement and Car Parking Services Manager  
Phil Gleaves, Operation Lead Pre-Court  
Olivia Highly, Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator  
Joan Stevens, Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager  
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

## 9. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brenda Harrison and Pamela Hargreaves, Gordon Bentley (North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board), Craig Blundred (Director of Public Health, Hartlepool Borough Council), Jill Harrison, (Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services, Hartlepool Borough Council).

## 10. Declarations of Interest

None.

## 11. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2025

Confirmed.

## 12. Community Payback Teesside – Probation Service (Operations Manager)

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Partnership on 16 January 2026.

## 13. Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) (*The Drive Partnership*)

### Purpose of report

To provide an overview of the new Domestic Abuse Orders including the Positive Requirements element and the use of triage in this aspect of the orders. In addition the presentation illustrated how professionals might become involved or become linked to cases, service- users or individuals connected to a DAPO.

### Issue(s) for consideration

A representative from the Drive Partnership had been invited to provide the Partnership with an update on the pilot scheme that had been launched in Cleveland in March 2025 and was due to complete in March 2026. The new Domestic Abuse Orders (DAPO and DAPN) were designed to address some limitations of previous Domestic Abuse Orders and details of the powers of the Orders were provided in the presentation.

The presentation included comprehensive detail on the Positive Requirements under the DAPO mandate and the DAPO and triage processes through to final assessment and recommendations. Statistics were provided on the number of DAPO triage referrals processed and a Member requested a further breakdown of figures across the town, on a Ward by Ward basis. The Chair indicated that this information will be collated and circulated to the Partnership.

A discussion ensued during which the representative from the Drive Partnership provided detailed responses. It was confirmed that a number of Domestic Abuse charities and organisations were heavily involved through the pilot programme as they were integral to the development of the pilot. It was noted that there would be an evaluation undertaken of the pilot programme and this would be reported to a future meeting of the Partnership.

The representative from the Drive Partnership was thanked for attending and for the very informative presentation provided.

### **Decision**

- (i) The presentation was noted.
- (ii) That a breakdown of the DAPO referral statistics on a ward by ward basis across the town be collated and circulated to the Partnership.
- (iii) That the evaluation of the DAPO pilot be reported back to a future meeting of the Partnership.

## **14. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

### **Minute 15 – Flying of flags across the town**

## **15. Flag Flying**

At the request of Councillor Sue Little who was unable to attend today's meeting, Councillor Karen Oliver raised concerns around the flying of the flags in the Seaton area as some residents had raised concerns with Councillor Little of feeling intimidated by this. The Chair confirmed that Home Office Guidance was extremely clear and indicated that there should be no proactive taking down of flags unless they posed a danger to the public or included offensive words. Councillor Oliver indicated she would pass on that feedback to Councillor Little.

## **16. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006**

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

**Minute 17 – Domestic Abuse Related Death Review** (*Assistant Director, Regulatory Services*) – This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (para 2).

- 17. Domestic Abuse Related Death Review** (*Assistant Director, Regulatory Services*) This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (para 2)

#### **Purpose of Report**

To consider the report into a death as part of the Safer Hartlepool Partnerships Statutory Duty to commission Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

#### **Issues for Consideration**

Further details can be found in the exempt section of the minutes.

#### **Decision**

Further details can be found in the exempt section of the minutes.

### **18. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The Chair noted that the next meeting of the Partnership would be held on Friday 16 January 2026.

The meeting concluded at 2:30 pm

CHAIR



Hartlepool  
Borough Council

## SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

16 January 2026

**Report of:** Interim Director of Public Health

**Subject:** DEVELOPMENT OF A DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY

**Decision Type:** Key Decision (ii) – ACBS 110/26

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### 1. Council Plan Priority

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b>
- Where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

### 2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To provide members an opportunity to comment on the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 There are 2.3 million people aged 16 years and over who have experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024. This is estimated at 1.6 million women and 712,000 men.
- 3.2 Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires each local authority to –

- assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based support in its area;
  - prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in its area; and
  - monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.
- 3.3 The current strategy for Hartlepool ‘Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System on Lived Experience 2022 – 2025’ Comes to an end this year and a needs assessment for 2024 – 2025 has been carried out to inform the development of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026 – 2029.
- 3.4 The needs assessment for 2024/25 is attached as **Appendix 1** and the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026-2029 is attached as **Appendix 2**.

## 4. Proposals

- 4.1 The Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2024/25 reviewed the level of need for domestic abuse services, including:
- safe accommodation;
  - the extent of unmet need and gaps in provision; and
  - the effectiveness of current service provision.
- 4.2 Three key strategic themes have been identified through the needs assessment process:
1. There is an insufficient availability of support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.
  2. Children affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).
  3. There is a lack of consistent accountability for perpetrators of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behavior or reducing repeat offending.
- 4.3 The needs assessment sets out what needs to be done to address these strategic themes, and this information has been used to inform the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy priorities.

- 4.4 The draft Domestic Abuse Strategy provides an update on what has been achieved to date, what has been learned and areas that continue to be challenging, as well as setting out priorities and what success would look like.
- 4.5 Consultation on the draft strategy will include: –
- Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board
  - All stakeholders including Members
  - Public consultation via an online survey which will include victims of domestic abuse via commissioned support services
  - Safer Hartlepool Partnership

The consultation will run from 5 December 2025 to 30 January 2026. The final strategy incorporating feedback from the consultation will be presented to Adult Services and Public Health Committee in March 2026 for approval.

## 5. Other Considerations/Implications

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>The Council is required to update the needs assessment and strategy for domestic abuse to fulfill its statutory duties.</p> <p>It is important for partners to work together to reduce the risk of domestic abuse. The development of the strategy based on the local needs assessment will support a reduction in risk.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The local authority receives grant funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to carry out its statutory duties in relation to the Domestic Abuse Act.
<b>SUBSIDY CONTROL</b>	There are no subsidy control implications.
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The Domestic Abuse Act places a statutory duty on local authorities to have a strategy.
<b>SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	A Single Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as <b>Appendix 3</b> . This identifies a positive impact for people with protected characteristics as domestic abuse affects everyone and the Domestic Abuse Strategy will ensure services are accessible for all.

<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no staffing considerations.
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no asset management considerations.
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no environment, sustainability and climate change considerations.
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	<p>Consultation on the draft strategy will include: –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board</li> <li>• All stakeholders including Members</li> <li>• Public consultation via an online survey which will include victims of domestic abuse via commissioned support services</li> <li>• Safer Hartlepool Partnership</li> </ul> <p>The consultation will run from 5 December 2025 to 30 January 2026. The final strategy incorporating feedback from the consultation will be presented to Adult Services and Public Health Committee in March 2026 for approval.</p>

## 6. Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that members consider the draft strategy and provide feedback as part of the consultation.

## 7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 The council has a statutory duty under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to have a strategy and provide domestic abuse support services.

## 8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System Based on Lived Experience 2022 – 2025.

## 9. Contact Officers

Chris Woodcock  
Interim Director of Public health  
[Chris.woodcock@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.woodcock@hartlepool.gov.uk)

Claire Robinson  
Public Health Principal  
[Claire.robinson@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.robinson@hartlepool.gov.uk)

Sign Off:-

Chief Executive	Date: 6 January 2026
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 6 January 2026
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 6 January 2026



# **Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2024/2025**

1. Summary
2. Introduction
3. Data and Intelligence
4. Which population groups are most at risk?
5. Consultation and engagement
6. Strategic issues
7. Evidence base
8. What is being done and why?
9. What needs are unmet?
10. What needs to be done?
11. What additional needs assessment is required?
12. Key contacts and references
13. Appendices

## 1. Summary

The most recent needs assessment in Hartlepool was published in 2021, followed by Hartlepool's Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System Based on Lived Experience 2022-2025. The purpose of this document is to refresh and review the level of need for domestic abuse services, including –

- safe accommodation
- the extent of unmet need and gaps in provision
- the effectiveness of current service provision

It will also make recommendations of meeting need and using resources effectively and efficiently.

It will build on progress already made since 2021, combining national data and research with the local context of Hartlepool to continue conversations with stakeholders, commissioners and partner agencies about the future of domestic abuse services in Hartlepool and inform the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026 and inform the commissioning of domestic abuse services.

The below strategic issues are a summary of the needs that have been identified throughout this needs assessment.

Issue number	Strategic issue?	What needs to be done?
1	There is an insufficient availability of support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early intervention and prevention. Awareness raising and promotion of services, especially with hidden victims (such as those with disabilities, from ethnic minority groups or different cultural backgrounds and male victims) and those with complex needs</li> <li>• Utilise existing service user forums to ensure that victim and survivor voice informs the commissioning and delivery of services</li> <li>• Ensure services are accessible, trauma-informed and use professional curiosity when individuals decline their service or do not engage</li> <li>• Provide training to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of</li> </ul>

		<p>the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of 'personally connected' covering intimate partners and family members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure pathways and information sharing is robust, including MARAC, MATAC and HRAP</li> <li>• Consider alternative safe accommodation options including specialist, by and for and move-on.</li> <li>• Review the proportion of out of area referrals both in and out of Hartlepool.</li> <li>• Consider a multi-agency dashboard to create consistency in the recording and reporting of data relating to domestic abuse</li> <li>• Understand the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law).</li> <li>• Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response victims receive</li> </ul>
2	<p>Children affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on early intervention and prevention to ensure all children understand healthy relationships</li> <li>• Ensure all services are recognising children as victims in their own right</li> <li>• Ensure therapeutic support services are available for children</li> <li>• Review the prevalence of CAPVA, the demand on services and ensure that the offer in place can meet the need of children and their parents.</li> <li>• Understand the effectiveness of Operation Encompass</li> <li>• Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners</li> </ul>

		to standardise the response children as victims receive
3	There is a lack of consistent accountability for perpetrators of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the OPCC Perpetration Strategy</li> <li>• Review the criminal justice response to perpetrators within Hartlepool</li> <li>• Monitor the effectiveness and engagement of perpetrator provision</li> <li>• Reduce repeat offending and the number of repeat high risk MARAC cases</li> <li>• Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response perpetrators receive</li> </ul>

## 2. Introduction

Domestic Abuse is a global, national and local issue. The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 2.3 million people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024. This is estimated at 1.6 million women and 712,000 men.<sup>i</sup>

Domestic abuse is a hidden crime due to underreporting but also that one domestic abuse incident can have multiple impacts on victims, their families, communities and services. Domestic abuse impacts everyone and can be devastating for all.

The economic and social costs of domestic violence and abuse are immense. The Home Office estimated in 2017 the cost to be £66 billion in England and Wales.

It is widely known that domestic abuse is recognised as a gendered crime and predominantly perpetrated by men towards women, in intimate partner relationships as a form of violence against women and girls. However, it is now widely recognised that anyone of any gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, race, or religion can be a victim of domestic abuse, and the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) introduced a recognised definition to encompass those who are personally connected. See Appendix 1 for the definition.

It is critical to provide life-saving safe accommodation and support for those victims and their children that need it following domestic abuse and as they rebuild their lives after the trauma of domestic abuse.

Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act requires local authorities to undertake a needs assessment and strategy every 3 years. See Appendix 2 for further detail on the statutory guidance of the Domestic Abuse Act, including Part 4 and other relevant legislation.

The following needs assessment has used published statistics including both national and local datasets from a range of organisations and held locally in-house at Hartlepool.

The way data is collected and the level of detail held varies considerably between organisations as does the time periods that data is available for. The timeframe for each dataset is given each time within the report.

The data in this needs assessment covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Where possible, data from the previous needs assessment has been used as a comparison to review trends and progress.

The term victim and survivor will be used interchangeably throughout this document; however, it is important to recognise that not everyone who has been impacted by domestic abuse will identify as either. Those who cause harm will be referred to as perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Other JSNA topics this topic closely linked to:	
Housing	Sexual Health
Violent Crime	Substance Misuse
Mental Health	Youth Offending
Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults	

### 3. Data and Intelligence

#### National Prevalence and Trends

The prevalence of domestic abuse nationally is difficult to estimate as it is very often a hidden crime, which means that under-reporting of offences is an issue when looking at data.

Nationally data is available from ONS and from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

The latest annual results for the Crime Survey for England and Wales were published in July 2024. <sup>ii</sup>

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) self-completion module provides a more reliable measure of long-term trends for domestic abuse than police recorded crime data. Estimates from the CSEW showed that 4.8% of people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in year ending (YE) March 2024, no statistically significant change compared with YE March 2023.

There has been a gradual decrease in domestic abuse over the last 10 years. The CSEW for YE March 2024 estimated that 5.4% of people aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year compared with 6.5% in YE March 2014.<sup>iii</sup>

Within national police data there are differences in the way that different police forces categorise and record domestic abuse offences. The CSEW does include data from victims who have not reported to the police but even so the estimated prevalence should be considered an under-estimation.

The Home Office developed a calculation in 2017 to estimate the economic and social costs of domestic abuse. This had the following findings –

- The economic and social costs of domestic violence are immense: £66 billion in England and Wales in 2017.
- The average cost per victim in England and Wales is £34,015.
- The cost of domestic abuse in Hartlepool in 2019/20 was around £50 million.
- The calculation includes direct costs, indirect costs and hidden costs.

These costs are likely to be an underestimate due to under reporting of abuse and are likely to be significantly higher due to inflation since 2019. The calculation has not been updated by the Home Office since 2019.<sup>iv</sup>

## Hartlepool Characteristics

It is difficult to understand an individual's journey of domestic abuse and their access to services due to the way data is recorded. There is currently no standardisation of what data is collected, how this is recorded and shared on a local level between services. This means that some services are unable to provide quality, meaningful data to truly understand need.

According to 2021 Census data, in Hartlepool, the population size is 92,338, with a gender split of 51.6% female and 48.4% male and made up of 40,930 households. 5.4% of households in Hartlepool have dependent children aged 0-4, while 23.4% of households have dependent children of all ages. The predominant band in Hartlepool is 50-64 years with 20,007 people (21.7%).<sup>v</sup>

The Census data also shows that the largest ethnic group in Hartlepool is White at 96.5%, compared to 86.1% for England and Wales. The second largest ethnic group is Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh at 1.7%, compared to 9.3% for England and Wales.

Census data also shows that most households are owner occupiers (31.2% own outright, and 27.6% own with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership). Compared to the previous needs assessment, social rented has increased to 23.4% from 14% and private rented has increased from 14% to 17.7%.

In terms of education, the 2021 Census shows that 24.8% of residents have achieved level 4 qualifications and above which is an increase from 2011 which was 18%. 23.1% have no qualifications which has decreased from the previous needs assessment which was 31%.

For health, Hartlepool has 5,625 (6.1%) residents that report being in bad health and 1,732 (1.9%) of residents that reporting being in very bad health which has remained consistent.

In relation to employment, 50.5% of residents are employed, with the majority (15.5%) working in professional occupations, 11.9% working in associate professional and technical occupations and 11.6% working in caring, leisure and other service occupations which has shown an increase from the previous Census in 2011.

In summary, Hartlepool has an ageing population, with the majority reporting good health however there is still a high proportion reporting bad or very bad health. There has been an increase in the number of people seeking social rented tenure, with a higher proportion of people owning their own home, lending to cheaper house prices in the Northeast of England. There has been an increase of educational attainment and employment however Hartlepool still has high levels of deprivation and poverty due to the recent cost of living crisis and residents working low skilled jobs with lower rates of pay.

## How Hartlepool Compares to the National Trends

A comparison was carried out between local Hartlepool domestic abuse police data and the national ONS police and CSEW data to see how Hartlepool compares to the national picture.

The table below shows this comparison –

Metric	National data 2019/2020	Hartlepool data 2019/2020	National data 2023/2024 <sup>vi</sup>

## Hartlepool JSNA

				data 2023 / 2024
Proportion of adults aged 16-74 who experienced domestic abuse in the past 12 months	5.5% (2.3m)	2.1% (1,392)	4.8% (2.3 million)	2.6% (1,793)
Proportion of females aged 16-74 who experienced domestic abuse in the past 12 months as a percentage of female population aged 16-74	4.7% (1.6m)	3.1% (1,050)	6.6% (1.6 million)	3.6% (1,262)
Proportion of males aged 16-74 who experienced domestic abuse in the past 12 months as a percentage of male population aged 16-74	2.3% (757,000)	1.0% (342)	3% (712,000)	1.6% (531)
<b>Violence against the person (VAP) offences</b>				
Proportion of VAP offences flagged as domestic abuse-related	35%	32%	33.3%	35%

## Hartlepool JSNA

Proportion of VAP offences with a female victim which were flagged as domestic abuse-related	53%	48%	46.7%	71%
Proportion of VAP offences with a male victim which were flagged as domestic abuse-related	23%	21%	22.9%	28%
<b>Sexual offences</b>				
Proportion of sexual offences flagged as domestic abuse-related	16%	16%	18.9%	20%
<b>Coercive control offences</b>		1st April 2020 to 19th March 2021		
Number of coercive control offences	2019/20 – 28,856 2018/19 – 16,679	2020/2021* - 77 2019/20 – 0 2018/19 – 0	45,310	89
<b>Domestic abuse crimes</b>				
Total number of domestic abuse incidents and crimes	1,288,018	3,370	1,350,428	3,146
Proportion of domestic abuse incidents <b>not</b> subsequently recorded as a crime	41%	38%	37%	33%
Proportion of domestic abuse incidents recorded as a crime	59%	62%	63%	67%
Proportion of domestic abuse incidents recorded as a crime – percentage change from 2019/20 to 2023/2024			+4%	+8%

The table above shows that locally, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of adults aged 16-74 who are experiencing domestic abuse and is around half of the proportion nationally. This can be attributed to the fact that the national data is taken from the CSEW which includes crimes which are not reported to the police, whereas the local data is purely based on police reports.

The proportion of domestic abuse offences recorded as sexual offence has increased by 4% in Hartlepool which mirrors the increase nationally of 3%. The proportion of domestic abuse incidents recorded as a crime has increased both nationally and locally.

Rates of domestic abuse per head of population remains difficult to calculate due to factors such as under-reporting and frequent changes in how this data is recorded and classified over time.

Public Health England have produced a crude rate based on the number of recorded domestic abuse incidents and crimes per 1,000 population.

This gives Hartlepool a rate of 43.2 domestic abuse incidents and crimes per 1,000 population in 2023/24. This is an increase of 3.2 since 2019/2020. However, it is worth noting this is based on the Cleveland Police force area. Nationally, the rate has decreased by 0.9.<sup>vii</sup>

### **Safer Hartlepool Partnership**

Domestic violence and abuse is a strategic priority of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and the strategic assessment for the period October 2022 to September 2023 highlighted an increase by 3% of police recorded incidents of domestic violence and a 12% increase of domestic related violent crimes compared to the previous year October 2021 to September 2022. Domestic violence crimes are 21% of all recorded victim-based crime in Hartlepool, 76% of which are violence offences.

Women and girls in Hartlepool continue to be at the greatest risk of domestic violence and abuse with 70% of all victims being female. 62% of female victims of domestic violence and abuse are aged between 21 and 42 years. Repeat victimisation is evident, with 34% of female victims and 22% of males suffering two or more incidents during the reporting period.

In relation to the perpetrators charged with domestic abuse offences during the assessment period, 84% were males with more than two thirds aged between 27 and 45 years. Repeat offending is evident with 41 males charged with 2 or more offences during the reporting period.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Cleveland Police Data (ONS)**

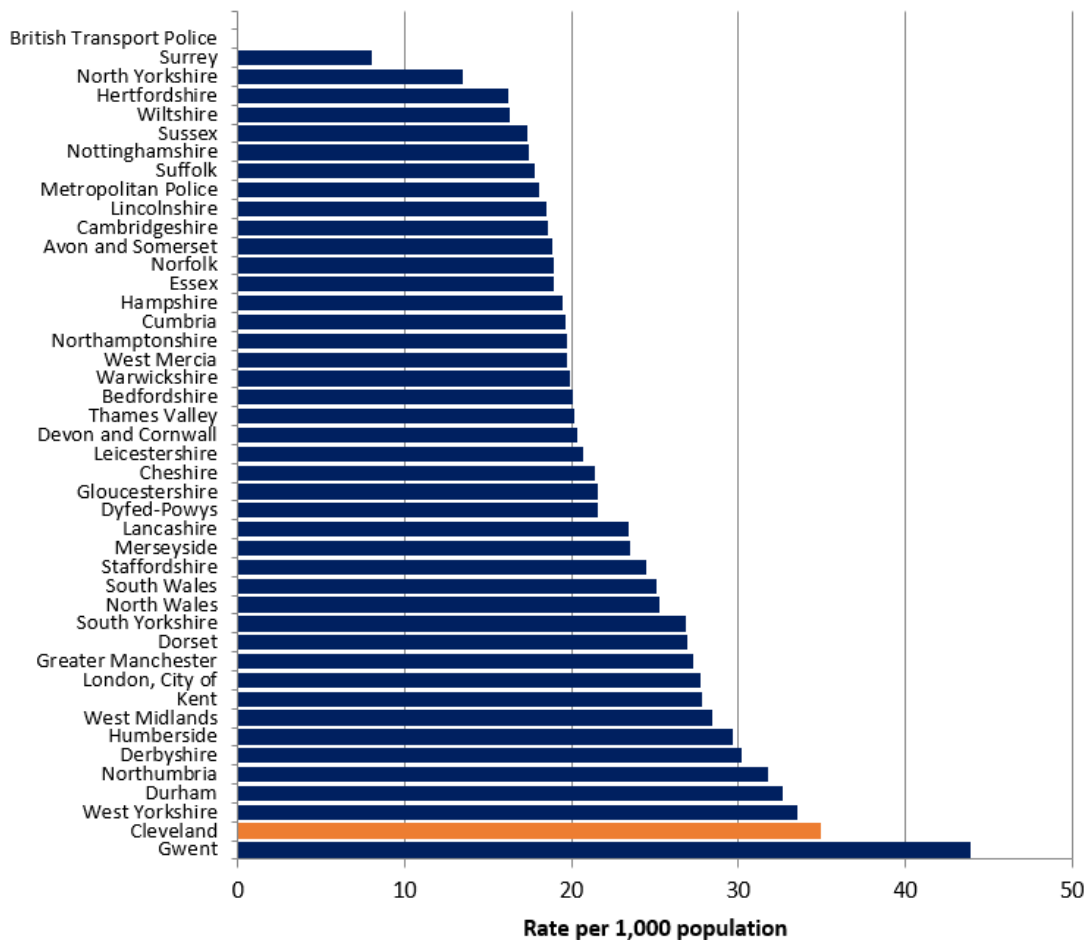
Hartlepool, along with Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland are part of the Cleveland Police force area. Data provided by the ONS for the Cleveland Force for the year ending March 2024:<sup>ix</sup>

#### ***Domestic Abuse-Related Crimes***

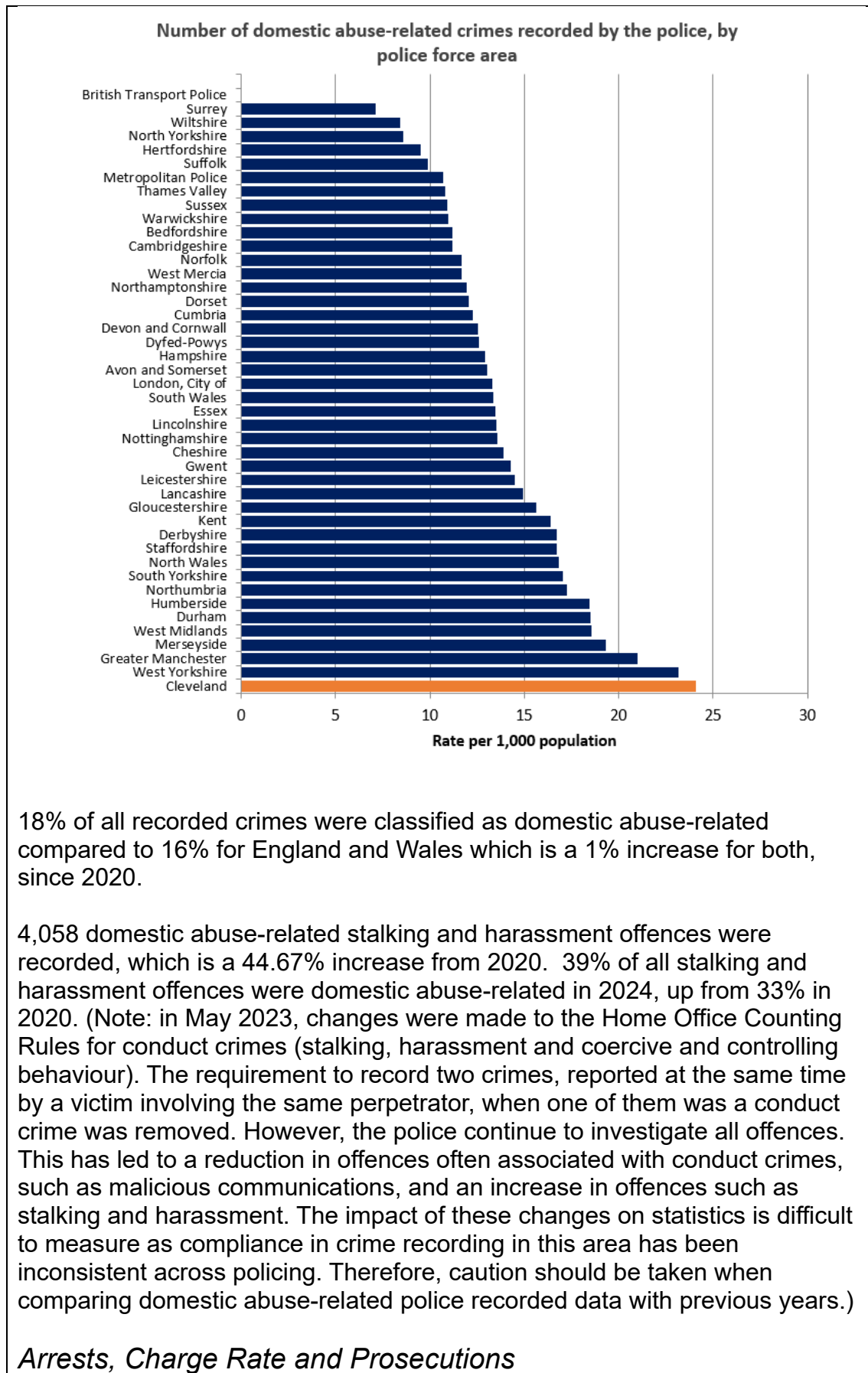
## Hartlepool JSNA

- 20,218 domestic abuse related incidents and crimes were recorded – equivalent to 35 incidents per 1,000 population. This is a 10.64% increase from 2024.
- Cleveland Police have the second highest rate of domestic abuse incidents per 1,000 population of all 43 police forces.

**Rate of domestic abuse-related combined incidents and crimes recorded by the police, by police force area**



- 13,943 domestic abuse related crimes were recorded – equivalent to 24 crimes per 1,000 population.
- Cleveland Police have the highest rate of domestic abuse related crimes per 1,000 population of all 43 police forces.



- In 2024, there were 35 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes in Cleveland; lower than the England and Wales rate of 42 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes.
- The charge rate for domestic abuse-related offences was 73% in Cleveland (equating to 910 domestic abuse-related charges). This is lower than the charge rate for England and Wales which was 79%.  
*Note: CPS amended the method for reporting the charging rate in 2019 to exclude non-legal decisions. Data on the charging rate included in previous publications may not be comparable to data in this publication.*
- 981 domestic abuse-related prosecutions took place – equivalent to 15% of all prosecutions in Cleveland, and up from 13% in 2020. The England and Wales rate fell from 14% in 2020 to 12% in 2024.
- 747 domestic abuse-related convictions were recorded in Cleveland – this means that 76% of domestic abuse-prosecutions resulted in conviction (a fall of 3% since 2020); this is the same as the rate of prosecution in England and Wales.

#### ***Use of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs)***

- No data is available for the number of DVPNs applied for in Cleveland but 223 DVPNs were granted (a 266% increase from 61 granted in 2020).
- 223 DVPOs were applied for in Cleveland and 198 DVPOs were granted (equivalent to 89% - up from 67% in 2020); compared to 90% in England and Wales.

#### ***Clare's Law***

- Right to Know Clare's Law applications made in Cleveland increased from 467 in 2020 to 1,286 in 2024 (175% increase). The number of Right to Know applications given disclosure increased from 296 to 382. However, the proportion of applications given disclosure fell from 63% in 2020 to 30% in 2024. The proportion of applications granted disclosure in England and Wales also fell from 52% in 2020 to 45% in 2024.
- Right to Ask applications made in Cleveland increased from 307 in 2020 to 828 in 2024 (170% increase). The number of Right to Ask applications given disclosure increased from 150 to 279. However, similarly to Right to Know, the proportion of Right to Ask applications granted disclosure fell from 54% in 2020 to 37% in 2024. The proportion of applications under Right to Ask for England and Wales increased from 37% in 2020 to 40% in 2024.
- Note: disclosures cannot be directly compared against applications made as there are many reasons why an application may not meet the threshold for disclosure so a low percentage of disclosures may not necessarily suggest a problem. Also, the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) was put onto a statutory footing in

the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act, which could have contributed towards the increase in applications received.

Additional local data provided by Cleveland Police for Hartlepool shows that there has been an increase in the number of Clare's Law application, both right to ask and right to know. However, there has been a decrease in the percentage resulting in a disclosure.

Applications	2022/2023	2023/2024
Right to Ask applications	133	170
Right to know applications	225	272
Total	358	442

Disclosures	2022/2023	2023/2024
Right to Ask disclosures	61	61
Right to know disclosures	100	77
% resulting in a disclosure	45%	31%

## Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.<sup>x</sup>

Cleveland Police provide Operation Encompass disclosures to schools but are unable to break this down into district area and were unable to provide any data relating to this. This continues to be a gap as highlighted in 2021.

## MARAC

MARAC is the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference meeting where the highest risk cases are heard. Risk is determined via a DASH risk assessment checklist or by using professional judgement that a victim is at serious risk of harm or death and all agencies have a responsibility to refer cases to MARAC where they believe the case is high risk.<sup>xi</sup>

Local data has been sourced from Cleveland MARAC for the periods April 2021 to March 2024. The table below shows the number of MARAC referrals submitted and the total number of referrals declined for Hartlepool as well as the total number of cases heard and the number of cases that were repeat. A

case is listed as a repeat when there is another incident within a 12-month period.

As of March 2025, the screening process for declining referrals has ceased and all cases referred into MARAC will be heard.

	Apr 21 – Mar 22	Apr 22 – Mar 23	Apr 23 – Ma
Referrals	205	188	205
Declined	71	65	41*
Total cases heard	134	123	164
Repeats	40 (30%)	47 (38%)	60 (37%)

\*Police introduced gatekeeper process, so no referrals declined.

## MATAC

Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) is a multi-agency approach to:

- Reduce re-offending of domestic abuse perpetrators
- Safeguarding adults and children at risk of domestic abuse

The RFG(V) is a matrix tool used to identify the most serial and prolific DA offenders based on police data. A formula is used to interrogate police data to gain a “score” out of 100

The matrix looks at:

R – recency of offending  
F – frequency of offending  
G – gravity of offences  
V – number of victims

MATAC looks at a 2 year rolling data set to establish the RFG score. It measures how many times the perpetrator has offended, when the most recent offence was, the number of victims impacted and the gravity of the listed offences.

As the data is monitored, the score can go up or down, the longer the period of no offending the more rapidly the score will reduce, at other times we may see the score increase as there may be increases of offending through the period of time. The rolling data set provides a more dynamic scoring system than the previous static 2-year period.

When an individual is identified as repeat and prolific perpetrator, they will be listed to be heard at the next available MATAC meeting.

When risk is reduced, they will be discharged with police monitoring for 12 months to ensure they are brought back to MATAC if the risk increases.

Local data for Hartlepool is as follows -

	Apr 21 – Mar 22	Apr 22 – Mar 23	Apr 23 – Mar 24
Nominals	9 (1 repeat)	<5	10
Discharged	5	<5	11

Since inception in June 2018, 33 nominals have been heard in MATAC. The average score of a perpetrator on entry into MATAC is 64 with the average score on exit being 43, showing a reduction in offending when using the MATAC approach.

## MARAC

The CHUB provide a single point of contact to the MARAC process to information share and record any actions or outcomes. The following table shows the number of cases heard in Hartlepool and the number of children who have been impacted by domestic abuse.

Date	Number of Cases	Number of Children
2023 – 2024	204	443
2022 – 2023	132	268
2021 – 2022	145	345
2020 – 2021	150	321

This shows an increase in the number of cases identified as high-risk year on year as well as an increase of the number of children. On average, there are at least 2 children linked to each MARAC case.

## High Risk Adult Panel (HRAP)

The purpose of the High Risk Adults Panel is to work in collaboration with a core group of multi-agency professionals and extended members to reduce/remove or manage the risk of our most vulnerable individuals who are identified as being complex and at high risk of harm. This includes both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.<sup>xii</sup> Hartlepool are currently piloting a new process where HRAP cases will be cross-referenced with MARAC and MATAC. In 2023/2024, 20% of cases identified domestic abuse as a risk factor.

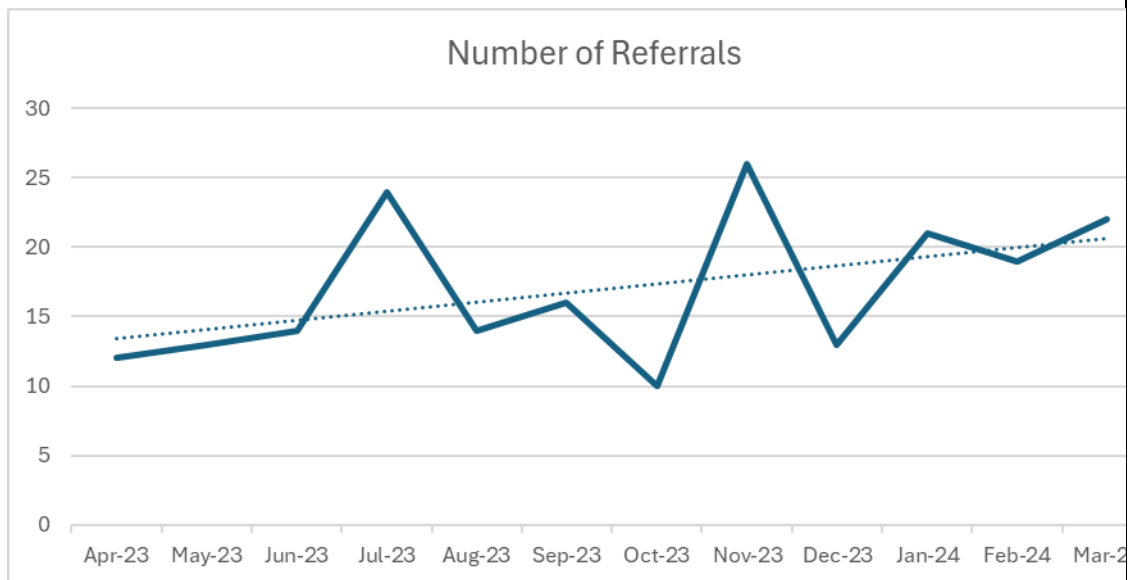
## Sanctuary Scheme and Target Hardening

A victim of domestic abuse can access a target hardening service on offer by the Crime Prevention Service in Cleveland Police, in partnership with the Community Safety Team. A crime prevention officer will receive a referral, either by police, Harbour or the local authorities' social services and will book an assessment to consider any additional safety measures on the property.

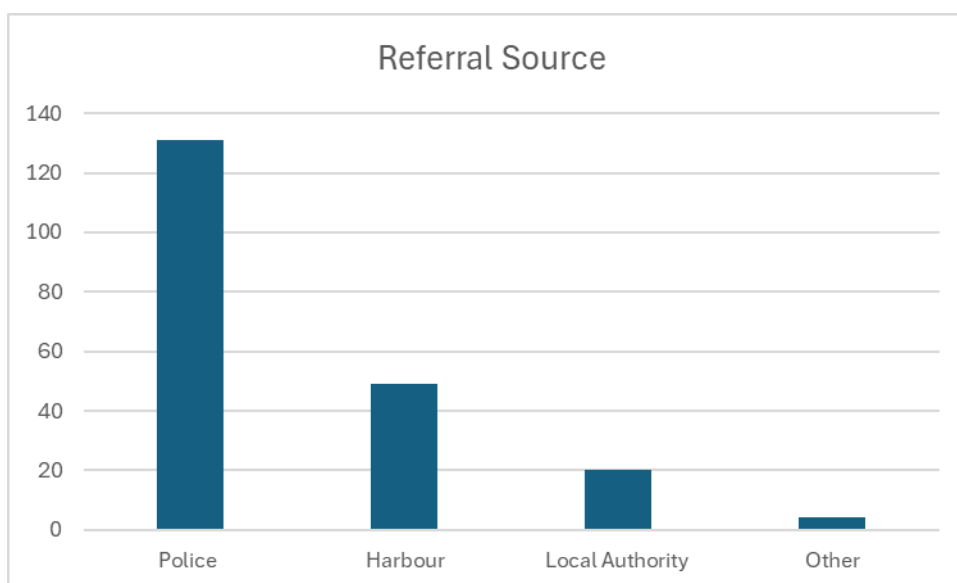
## Hartlepool JSNA

Harbour will also offer support to complete the Sanctuary Scheme, and any additional target hardening measures will be installed. Data was provided by the Crime Prevention Service for the period April 2023 – March 2024. This is the first year that data is available however can be used as a baseline for future needs assessments.

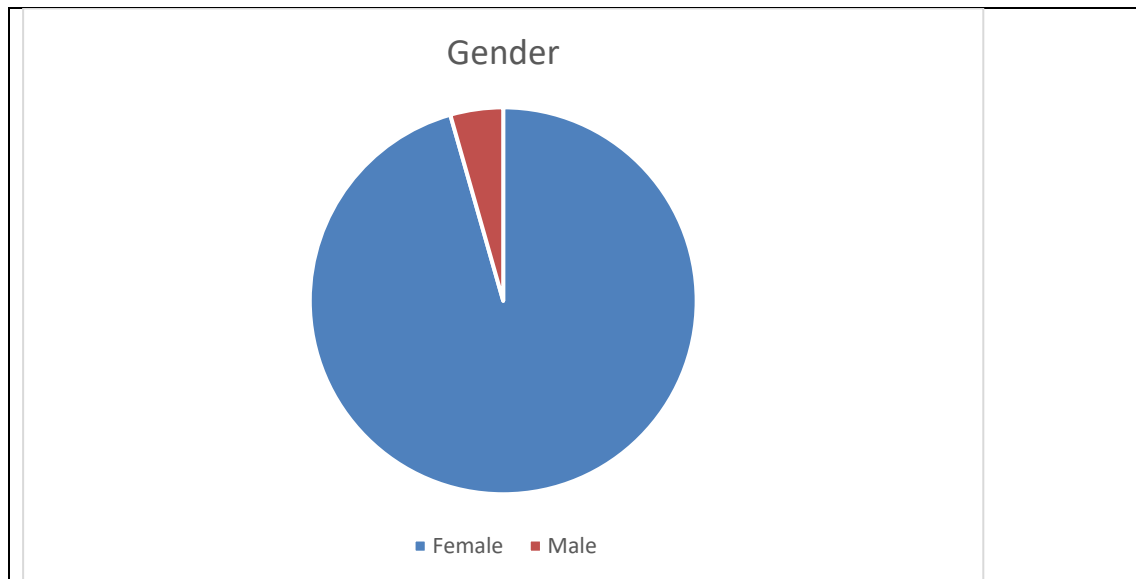
The below table shows the number of referrals between April 2023 – March 2024. This shows an increasing trend over the reporting period.



The below table shows the police are the highest referring agency in 2023/2024.



The majority (96%) of individuals referred to the service were female.



Of those referred into the service (204), there was a 55% (113) positive outcome of which 54% (61) received full target hardening and the remaining 46% (52) received advice and alarms.

## Domestic Homicide Reviews

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a multi-agency review commissioned by Community Safety Partnerships to establish what lessons are to be learnt from deaths that have, or appears to have, resulted from domestic abuse. Following consultation, Domestic Homicide Reviews will be renamed Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews which will reflect all deaths, including suicide.

The Local Government Association and the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) completed a review survey in 2024.<sup>xiii</sup> They received 103 responses, covering 182 authorities (57%) which had the following key findings –

- Respondents reported a total of 370 ongoing DHRs currently in their area, as well as 144 open DHRs and 109 pending DHRs.
- Between 2018/19 and 2022/23 the number of DHRs undertaken by respondents increased by 76 per cent from 94 to 165.
- Respondent authorities spent a total of £1.0 million on DHRs in 2022/23, 45 per cent more than the 2021/22 figure. Around three-quarters of expenditure was on DHR chairs.
- On top of expenditure, staff time spent on undertaking and implementing DHRs was equivalent to 82 full-time staff in respondents.

In addition to this, the DAC reviewed all deaths identified by police as domestic abuse related between April 2022 to March 2023.<sup>xiv</sup> A total of 242 domestic abuse related deaths were recorded including:

- 93 suspected victim suicide following domestic abuse (SVSDA)

- 80 intimate partner homicides (IPH)
- 31 adult family homicides (AFH)
- 23 unexpected deaths
- 11 child deaths
- 4 'other' deaths (individuals living together who are not family members or intimate partners)

The most recent published DHR in Hartlepool is in 2019. Three reviews are currently ongoing.

Themes and lessons learned will be considered in future needs assessments once reviews are concluded, quality assured by the Home Office and published. An action plan accompanies each review from the highlighted learning and recommendations which are monitored via the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the Safer Hartlepool Partnership.

## Harbour Client Data

Harbour is the only commissioned support service within Hartlepool and were re-commissioned in October 2022 to provide an integrated service for both victims and survivors, children and perpetrators of domestic abuse. This includes providing safe accommodation, outreach and targeted support programmes.

Harbour data shows that both overall referrals and individuals referred for support have decreased by 4-5% from 2022/23 to 2023/24 as shown in the table below. Repeat referrals also declined in both number and proportion in 2023/24, down from 13.1% to 10.5%.

Origin of referral	2022/23	2023/24
Referrals	3296	3165
Individuals referred	2372	2266
Repeat	310	239

The table below shows that in 2023/24, less than 50% of referrals to Harbour services came from the police, down from 52.3% in the previous year. Self-referrals, referrals from social services (both child safeguarding and early help) and MARAC all increased their proportion of referrals in 2023/24 and accounted for 35.2% of referrals in 2023/24. In contrast, 4% of referrals were made by health services (GPs, community midwives, hospital, health visitors and mental health services). More than half of the health service referrals came from mental health services, and no referrals came from community midwives or health visitors.

## Hartlepool JSNA

Origin of referral	% 2022/23	% 2023/24
Police	52.3	47.9
Self-referral	16.0	16.4
Social Services - Child Safeguarding	7.4	8.7
MARAC	4.1	6.8
Health Visitors	0.2	0.0
Other	3.5	2.8
Mental Health Service	2.3	2.7
Social Services - Adult Safeguarding	1.9	1.0
Social Services - Early Help	2.2	3.3
Court	2.2	1.6
Housing Provider	1.8	2.0
Hospital	1.3	1.0
Other DV Service	1.2	1.9
School/ college	0.8	0.6
Other LA	0.5	0.3
Probation	0.5	0.5
Community Midwives	0.3	0.0
SARC	0.3	0.0
Drug/ Alcohol Service	0.2	0.5
Family / Friend	0.3	0.3
Homeless Team (other area)	0.5	0.6
GP Practice	0.1	0.3
Homeless Team (local)	0.0	0.4
Victim Support	0.0	0.1
IOM	0.0	0.0
Unknown	0.0	0.0

## Demographic Breakdown of Harbour Referral Data

### Ethnicity

Ethnicity	2022/23		2023/24		% Hartlepool Pop (2021 Census)
	Count	%	Count	%	
White	1233	97.1	1070	95.2	96.5
Black, Caribbean or Black British	<5	suppressed	13	1.2	0.5
Asian or Asian British	24	1.9	21	1.9	1.7
Mixed or Multiple Ethnicities	5	0.4	12	1.1	0.7
Other Ethnic Group - Other	6	0.5	8	0.7	0.6
Undisclosed	129	N/A	135	N/A	N/A
Unrecorded	973	N/A	1007	N/A	N/A

The table above shows the proportion of referrals from each of the main ethnic groups adjusted to remove undisclosed and unrecorded from the calculation. The Harbour categories have been grouped to fit against the ethnic group list used in the 2021 Census question on ethnicity to enable comparison.

The data shows that the proportion of referrals to Harbour support services that were white has reduced by 13% compared to 2022/23. This is due to a proportional increase in all other categories except Asian or Asian British. This probably reflects the changing population of Hartlepool, which is becoming more diverse in recent years.

### Sex

Sex	2022/23		2023/24	
	Count	%	Count	%
Male	436	18.6	451	20.0
Female	1910	81.3	1799	79.8
Transgender	<5	<1	<5	<1
Unrecorded	24	N/A	13	N/A

The table above shows that the proportion of referrals for male victims of domestic abuse increased by 3% compared to 2022/23.

Of these, the data provided to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) shows that in 2023/2024, 88 women accessed safe accommodation in Hartlepool which is the same as 2022/2023. No men accessed safe accommodation during this time. One trans person accessed safe accommodation in 2023/2024. The number of children decreased to 36 in 2023/2024 from 63 in 2022/2023. This could be attributed to changes in the recording of data.

### Sexual Orientation

	2022/23		2023/24		
Sexual Orientation	Count	%	Count	%	% Hartlepool Population (2021 Census)
Heterosexual	710	89.2	649	90.1	91.1
Lesbian / gay	7	0.9	10	1.4	1.5
Bi-sexual	11	1.4	13	1.8	1.1
Other	68	8.5	48	6.7	0.2
Undisclosed	102	N/A	123	N/A	N/A
No data	1456	N/A	1423	N/A	N/A

The table above shows a 9% reduction in the number of clients that disclosed their sexual orientation as heterosexual. However, because there was a smaller cohort in 2023/24 this has resulted in heterosexual making up a slightly larger proportion of the total referrals.

Whilst there were small increases in the proportion of referrals for lesbian/gay and bisexual clients, there was a 29% reduction in those selecting the “other” option. However, due to the low numbers involved, these changes should not be considered significant.

### Age

	2022/23		2023/24		
Age	Count	%	Count	%	% Hartlepool Population (2023 MYE)
Under 16	238	10.4	255	11.6	18.9
16-18	61	2.7	56	2.5	3.7
19-25	363	15.9	329	14.9	7.6
26-35	723	31.6	665	30.2	12.5
36-44	497	21.7	481	21.8	10.8
45-54	232	10.1	232	10.5	11.8

## Hartlepool JSNA

<b>55-64</b>	113	4.9	115	5.2	14.6
<b>65+</b>	59	2.6	69	3.1	19.9
<b>Unrecorded</b>	86	N/A	64	N/A	N/A

The table above shows referral data broken down by age bracket. As the age brackets cover different ranges, caution should be used when comparing different brackets that are not the same size. To find the comparable local population data, single year figures from the 2023 mid-year estimates have been compiled into matching brackets.

The table shows a 7% increase in referrals for under 16s compared to 2022/23. However, there was a reduction in the proportion of referrals for clients aged 19-25 (-9%), 26-35 (-8%) and 36-44 (-3%). However, these three age bands continue to be the largest categories of referrals and are considerably over-represented compared to the local Hartlepool population.

### Disability

	2022/23		2023/24		
<b>Disability</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>% Hartlepool Population (2021 Census)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	138	20.0	131	16.0	22.9*
<b>No</b>	551	80.0	688	84.0	77.1
<b>Unrecorded</b>	1683	N/A	1447	N/A	N/A

\* This figure is a combination of the “limited a little” and “limited a lot” answer options to the question “If you have a long-term illness or condition, does this limit your day-to-day activities?”

The table shows that the proportion of those who said their daily activities were limited by a health condition or disability reduced slightly compared to 2022/23 and remains lower than the general population of Hartlepool. More detailed disability data would be useful to understand the types of disabilities experienced by people being referred. This would enable better understanding of what barriers exist for people with disabilities in accessing support services.

### Tenure

	2022/23		2023/24	
<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Local RSL</b>	211	32.7	200	32.3
<b>Other RSL</b>	26	4.0	14	2.3

## Hartlepool JSNA

<b>Private rented</b>	177	27.4	198	31.9
<b>Owner occupier</b>	49	7.6	35	5.6
<b>Family / friends</b>	104	16.1	99	16.0
<b>Other</b>	79	12.2	74	11.9
<b>Unrecorded</b>	1726	N/A	1646	N/A

The categories recorded for tenure in the 2021 Census are not a direct match for the categories used in the client data so comparison against the local population is not possible for this characteristic.

The table above shows that living in registered social housing or private rented accommodation continues to be the most common tenure of people referred to Harbour support services. The number of clients living in private rented accommodation increased by 12% compared to 2022/23, whilst the number of owner occupiers reduced by 29%. This probably reflects changes in the local housing market over the period.

### *Safe Accommodation*

#### **Referrals**

Harbour data shows that the number of overall referrals for safe accommodation has decreased by 12% from 2022/23 to 2023/24 as shown in the table below. However, for the number of individuals referred, this is only a 0.9% decrease. This shows that whilst the number of referrals is decreasing, roughly the same number of people are being referred to the service. There are very few repeat referrals across both years.

<b>Origin of referral</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Referrals	372	326
Individuals referred	323	320
Repeat	8	3

The data also shows that the average stay in refuge accommodation increased by one third from 76 days to 100 days over the same period. If clients are staying in refuge longer this reduces the overall availability of accommodation at a time when demand is increasing.

<b>% of referrals unable to accommodate</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
No Space	86.7	81.9
Room not big enough	0.6	0.8
Complex Needs	4.2	9.8
No recourse	0.0	0.0
Other	8.5	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

### Complex Needs

The data also shows that the proportion of referrals to refuge which were turned down due to the victims having complex needs that could not be accommodated more than doubled from 4.2% in 2022/23 to 9.8% in 2023/24, almost 1 in 10 of referrals in 2023/24. However, some clients with complex needs were accepted into refuge. A lack of space fell from 86.7% in 2022/23 to 81.9 in 2023/24, which is still 4 in 5 occasions when a referral was unable to be accommodated.

The following table shows that in 2023/24 the proportion of clients accommodated with some degree of mental health or substance issues increased across the board on their 2022/23 levels. The proportion of clients with drug misuse issues increased more than fourfold, from 9% to 40%, and alcohol misuse issues increased sevenfold, from 3% to 21%. Almost half of new clients accommodated in 2023/24 had mental health issues and 2 in 5 had co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues.

New Clients Accommodated	2022/23	2023/24
% clients who have drug misuse issues	9%	40%
% clients who have alcohol misuse issues	3%	21%
% clients who have mental health (MH) issues	33%	47%
% clients who have substance misuse and MH issues	23%	40%

### Abuse from Partner / Ex Partner

The overwhelming majority of clients accepted into refuge were experiencing abuse from an intimate partner or ex-partner rather than from a family member. However, in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 the proportion of clients experiencing abuse from a previous partner was higher than from a current partner, though in 2023/24 the proportion experiencing abuse from a current partner was around 1 in 3, compared with 1 in 4 in 2022/23.

New Clients Accommodated	2022/23	2023/24
% clients who are subject to abuse by an intimate partner	27%	39%
% clients who are subject to abuse by an ex-intimate partner	67%	56%
% clients who are subject to abuse by a family member (minor)	0%	0%
% clients who are subject to abuse by a family member (adult)	4%	6%

### Clients' Children

Harbour's refuge client data also shows that the number of clients accepted into refuge with children has almost halved in 2023/24, from 60% to 33%, largely because of this there has also been a sharp decline in the proportion of children with early help, child protection, or looked after care, though child in need increased fivefold, from 2% to 10%. Pregnant clients increased by 50% in 2023/24 compared with 2022/23, from 8% to 12%.

New Clients Accommodated	2022/23	2023/24
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% clients with children in Refuge	60%	33%
% clients who are pregnant	8%	12%
% clients with children engaged with Early Help	2%	0%
% clients with children subject to Child Protection	47%	14%
% clients with children subject to Child in Need	2%	10%
% clients with children in Looked After Care	16%	19%

In comparison, Harbour's client data for those who accessed dispersed property shows that the percentage of clients with children increased. In 2022/2023, none of the children residing in a dispersed property had intervention from children's social care however in 2023/2024 21% of the children were open on a Child Protection basis.

	2022/23	2023/24
<b>Safe Accommodation Measures - Dispersed Property</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
% clients with children	33%	44%
Number of children linked to the client	<5	15
% clients who are pregnant	0%	25%
% children engaged with Early Help	0%	0%
% children subject to Child Protection	0%	21%
% children subject to Child in Need	0%	0%
% children in Looked After Care	0%	0%

### Clients with a Disability

In terms of those clients accommodated in refuge who have a disability, in 2023/24 there were almost three times as many clients with a physical disability than the previous year (15% and 4% respectively). At the same time, the proportion of clients with a learning disability increased by 50%, from 4% to 6%.

In 2023/24 more than twice as many new clients had a physical disability than a learning disability, while in 2022/23 they were at the same level. In both 2022/23 and 2023/24 there were no clients who were providing care of a friend or relative.

<b>New Clients Accommodated</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
% clients who have a physical disability	4%	15%
% clients who have a learning disability	4%	6%
% clients who have a sensory impairment	0%	1%
% clients who care for a friend or relative	0%	0%

The data provided to the MHCLG shows that the number of individuals from an ethnic minority has doubled to 16 in 2023/2024. The number of individuals from the LGBTQ+ community has remained the same at 2 in 2023/2024.

The data provided to the MHCLG shows that in 2023/2024 the number of individuals supported from out of area was 64 which is 51.2% of all individuals who have accessed safe accommodation. This is an increase from 21.2% in the previous year.

### *Domestic Abuse Prevention Service (DAPS)*

#### **Referrals**

Harbour data shows that in 2023/24 14% of referrals to the Domestic Abuse Prevention Service (DAPS), which works with perpetrators, were repeat referrals, compared to only 9% in 2022/23, an increase of more than 50%.

Origin of referral	2022/23	2023/24
Social Services - Child Safeguarding	33.3	52.3
Self-referral	28.0	25.7
Police	17.2	8.3
Social Services - Early Help	6.5	6.4
Other	5.4	1.8
Probation	4.3	4.6
Drug / alcohol service	1.1	0.0
Mental Health Service	1.1	0.0
SARC	1.1	0.0
Social Services - Adult Safeguarding	1.1	0.0
MARAC	0.0	0.0
Court	0.0	0.0
School/ College	0.0	0.0
Hospital	1.1	0.0
Other DV service	0.0	0.9

The table above also shows that referrals to DAPS in 2023/24 continue to be predominantly made by social services (child safeguarding) (52.3%) and self-referrals (25.7%). If all forms of social services are included, then referrals from self or social services account for 84.4% of referral in 2023/24, compared with only 68.9% in 2022/23. Referrals from the criminal justice system (i.e. police, probation and court) only make up 12.9% of referrals in 2023/24, this is down from 21.5% in 2022/23. In both years the courts did not make any referrals at all. Police referrals fell from 17.2% in 2022/23 to 8.3% in 2023/24, a fall of more than 50%. As most abuse meted out by perpetrators forms a criminal offence of one kind or another it is surprising that so few perpetrator referrals are being made by the criminal justice system.

In both 2022/23 and 2023/24 roughly half of referrals were assessed, but the proportion of those who were assessed and deemed not appropriate for the service fell from 17% in 2022/23 to 9% in 2023/24. In both years the majority of those deemed not appropriate were due to denying the abuse.

### Clients with Children

Of those who were accepted onto the DAPS program in 2023/24 roughly four in five have children, compared with 2 in 3 in 2022/23. In both years roughly a third had child protection needs, but in 2023/24 a third had child in need, compared with only 1 in 10 in 2022/23.

Clients Assessed	2022/23	2023/24
% clients with children	66%	82%
% clients with children engaged with Early Help	0%	5%
% clients with children subject to Child Protection	34%	29%
% clients with children subject to Child in Need	11%	31%
% clients with children in Looked After Care	10%	9%

### Children and Young People's Service

Harbour offers a therapeutic service for children and young people impacted by domestic abuse. The number of referrals has increased by 9% from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024. However, there has been a slight decrease in the number of individuals referred meaning that the average number of referrals per individual has increased.

The below table shows that of those children referred, there has been a decrease in the number of children assessed with 53% of referrals completing an assessment in 2023/2024, compared to 64% in the previous year. Although the safe accommodation data shows a decrease in the levels of involvement from children's social care, there is an increase overall in children receiving support from Early Help or subject to Child in Need and Child Protection at assessment stage.

	2022/23	2023/24
Children and Young People Measures	Total	Total
Number of Referrals into the service	275	301
Number of CYP referred	265	255
Repeat	18	22
New Clients Assessed		
Number of new clients assessed	177	160
% clients engaged with Early Help	2%	8%
% clients subject to Child Protection	12%	21%
% clients subject to Child in Need	15%	23%
% clients in Looked After Care	3%	1%
% clients who have a physical disability	2%	1%

% clients who have a learning disability	7%	3%
% clients who have a sensory impairment	3%	0%
% clients who care for a friend or relative	1%	0%
Number of cases closed in a planned way	96	69
Number of cases closed in an unplanned way	32	32

### Children and Young People's Services Outcomes

For those case closed in 2023/2024, 68% were planned, compared to 75% in 2022/2023. The most common reason is the client disengaging from the service (81%).

In terms of outcomes for those exit surveys completed with planned closures, there has been an increase in the percentage of the number of children and young people feeling safer and happier following their support from Harbour.

	2022/23
Safe Lives Insights Report CYP	Total
Number of CYP feeling safer at exit (planned closures)	77%
Number of CYP feeling happier at exit (planned closures)	77%

### The Halo Project

The Halo Project provides safeguarding and on-going confidential advice, help and support to black and minoritised women, girls and children who are at risk of and/or are survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, including forced marriage, honour-based abuse and female genital mutilation. They are based in Middlesbrough but offer support to individuals who reside in all four local authority areas within Cleveland. Halo were unable to provide local data however have stated the organisation have seen a 13% increase in cases for Hartlepool year on year. Local data for 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 can be viewed in the 2021 needs assessment.

### Children's Social Care

Hartlepool Children's Hub (CHUB) is a multi-agency team based within Hartlepool Borough Council which provides information, advice and guidance on services and support for children, young people and families. The CHUB also acts as a triage service for professionals and members of the public to report child safeguarding concerns. Hartlepool Council also commissions an emergency out of hours response to emergency situations involving child protection, childcare, mental health and other adult care service matters.

Referrals to the CHUB are generally made using a SAFER referral form and the process for how these referrals are processed is shown below:

1. SAFER referral received by CHUB – have 24 hours to decide on a course of action and inform the referrer, unless it is a Child Protection issue where the referral must be processed within 4 hours
2. Referral triaged, RAG rated and allocated to social worker
3. Four possible options:
  - a. No further action (does not meet the threshold for intervention)
  - b. Refer the child to Early Help
  - c. Refer to another agency (in a domestic abuse context this would be Harbour or Halo)
  - d. Make a formal statutory social care referral:
    - i. Child in Need (CIN) – consent-based intervention
    - ii. Child Protection (CP) – child in imminent danger of harm, consent not needed (though still try to obtain consent where appropriate)

In terms of domestic abuse-related child safeguarding referrals to the CHUB, most referrals are made by the police at 73%. This is an increase compared to the previous needs assessment in which 48% of referrals were made by police.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, local data shows there was a total of 1875 contacts to the CHUB. This equates to:

- 1330 individual children
- 492 of the contacts related to only 1 child (some have had more than 1 contact)
- 517 contacts related to sibling groups.
- 1022 children had only 1 contact with 308 children having 2 or more contacts.
- Of the 556 referrals, 539 had an outcome of C & F Assessment, 2 were NFA, 11 had an outcome of Strategy and 4 had no outcome recorded.

### ***Source of Referrals***

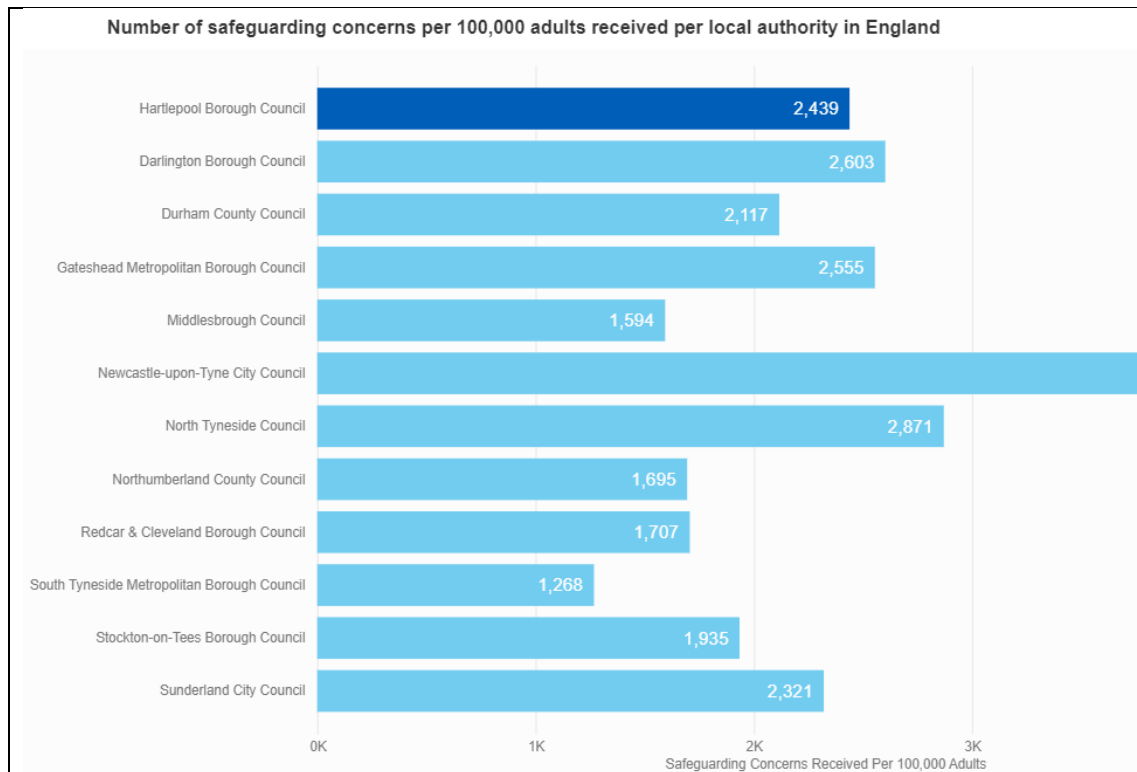
- 73% of referrals come from police
- 3.9% of referrals come from probation
- 3.41% of referrals come from a relative
- 2.13% of referrals come from HBC children's social workers

The remaining referrals are made by healthcare providers, adult social care, education settings or anonymous referrals.

## **Adult Social Care**

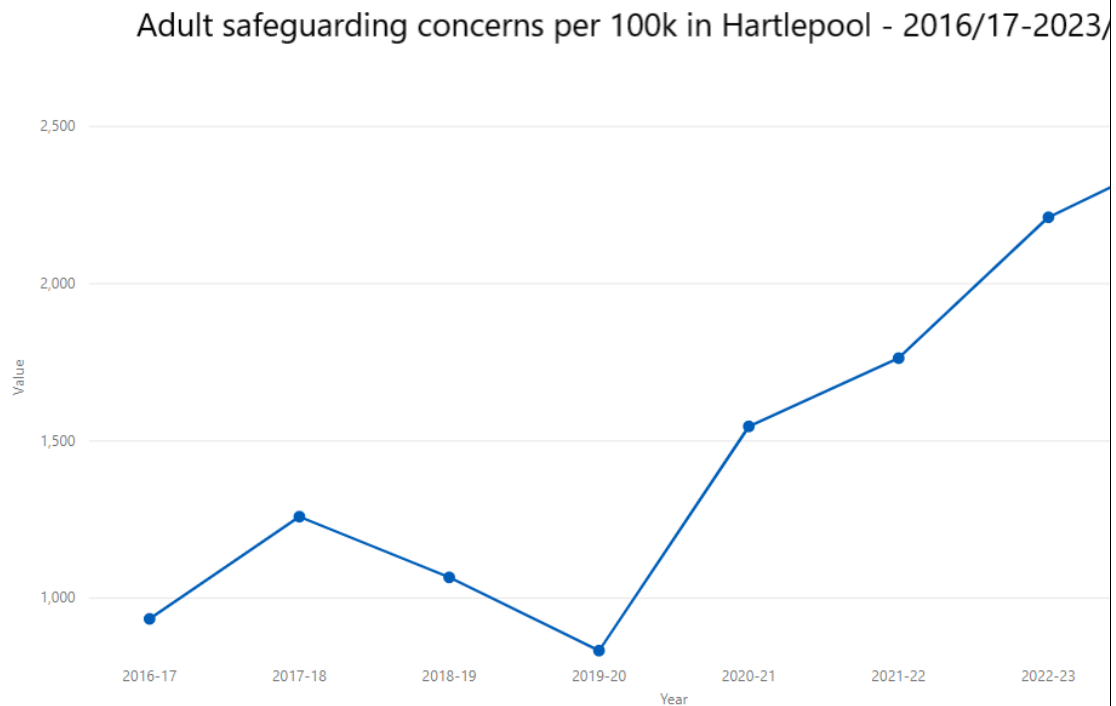
The rate of enquiries in Hartlepool for adult safeguarding in 2023/24 is almost 80% larger than the England rate of 1,361 per 100k.

## Hartlepool JSNA



Source: NHS England, 2024<sup>xv</sup>

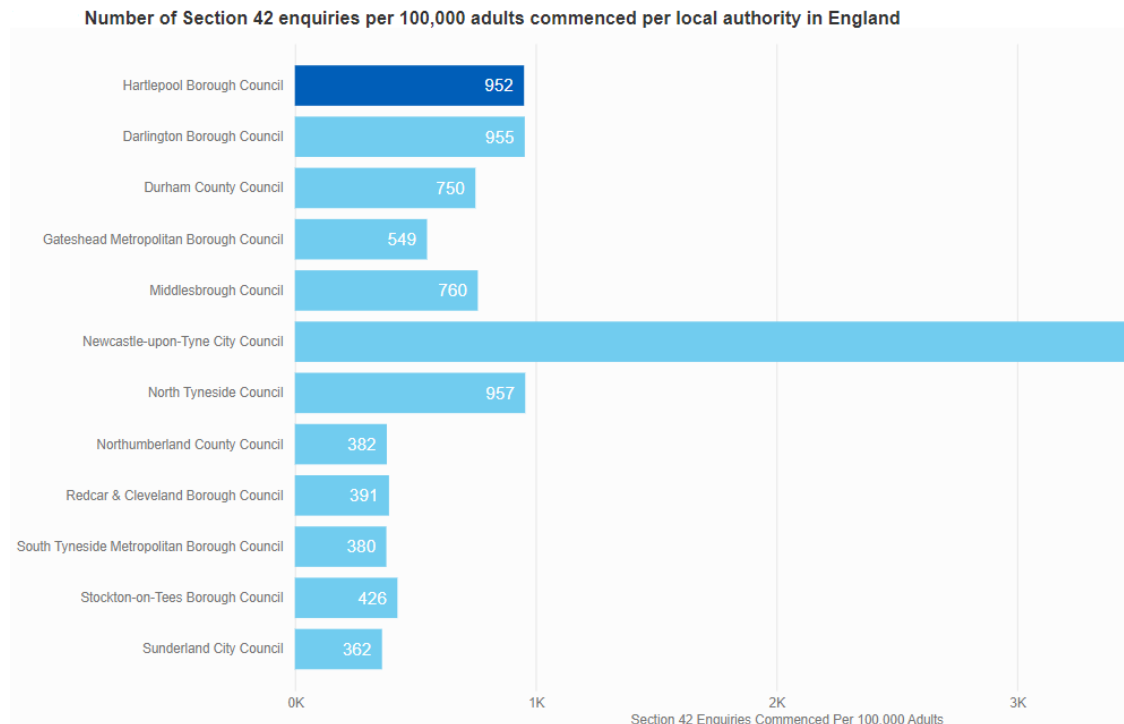
Hartlepool's rate of 2,439 per 100k is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest in the North East, comparable with the rates for Darlington, Gateshead and Sunderland. Hartlepool's 2023/24 rate is the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of increase, from 841 per 100k in 2019/20, almost a threefold increase in four years.



Source: NHS England, 2024

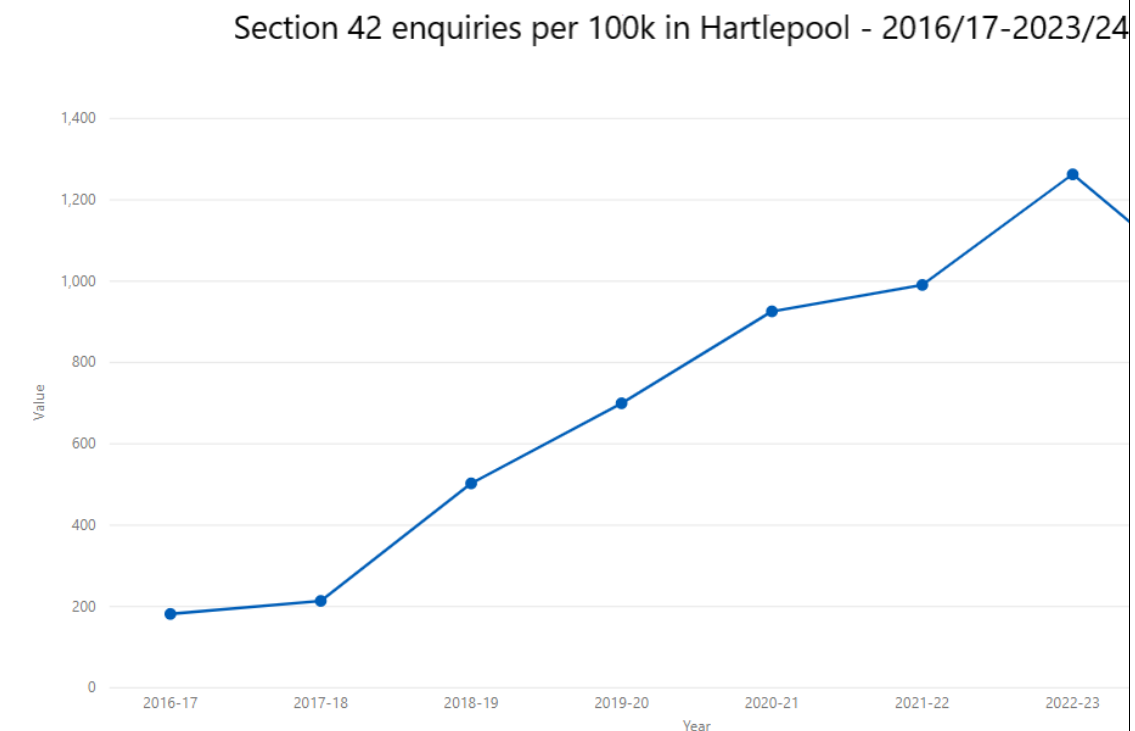
## Hartlepool JSNA

Within those safeguarding enquiries, the rate of Section 42 enquiries in Hartlepool is almost 2.5 times the size of the England rate of 390 per 100k.



Source: NHS England, 2024

Hartlepool's rate of 952 per 100k is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the north east, and is comparable to Darlington and North Tyneside. Hartlepool's 2023/24 rate is lower than the 2022/23 rate, and ends a run of five consecutive years of increase. The 2023/24 rate is almost 25% lower than the previous year.

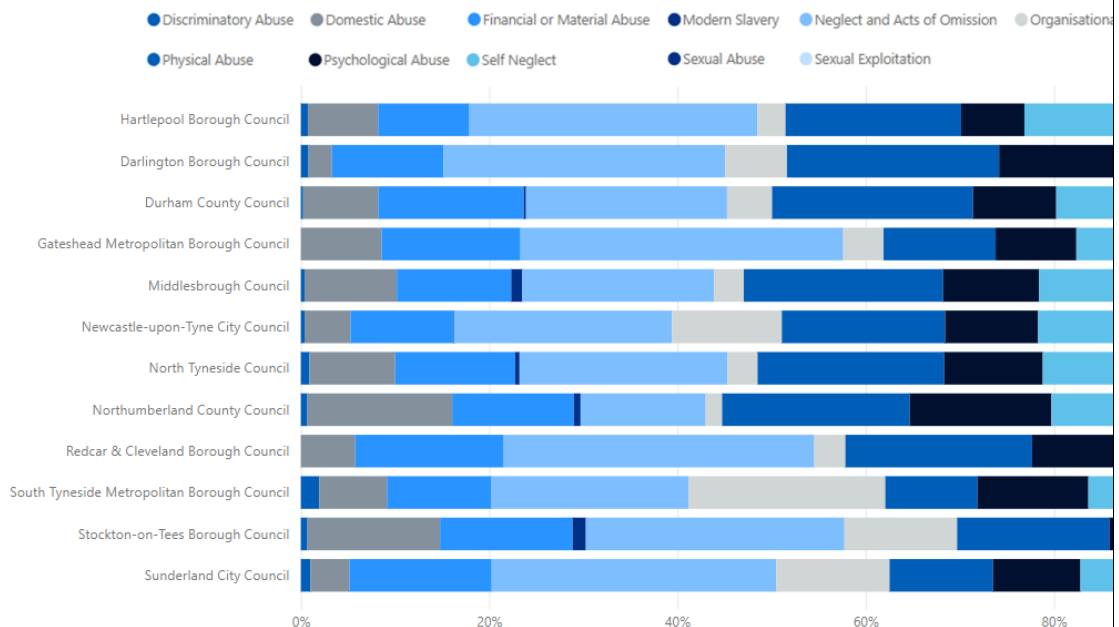


## Hartlepool JSNA

Source: NHS England, 2024

Within Hartlepool's 2023/24 Section 42 enquiries domestic abuse was recorded as a risk 7.5% of the time.

Proportions of type of risk for Section 42 enquiries that concluded in England

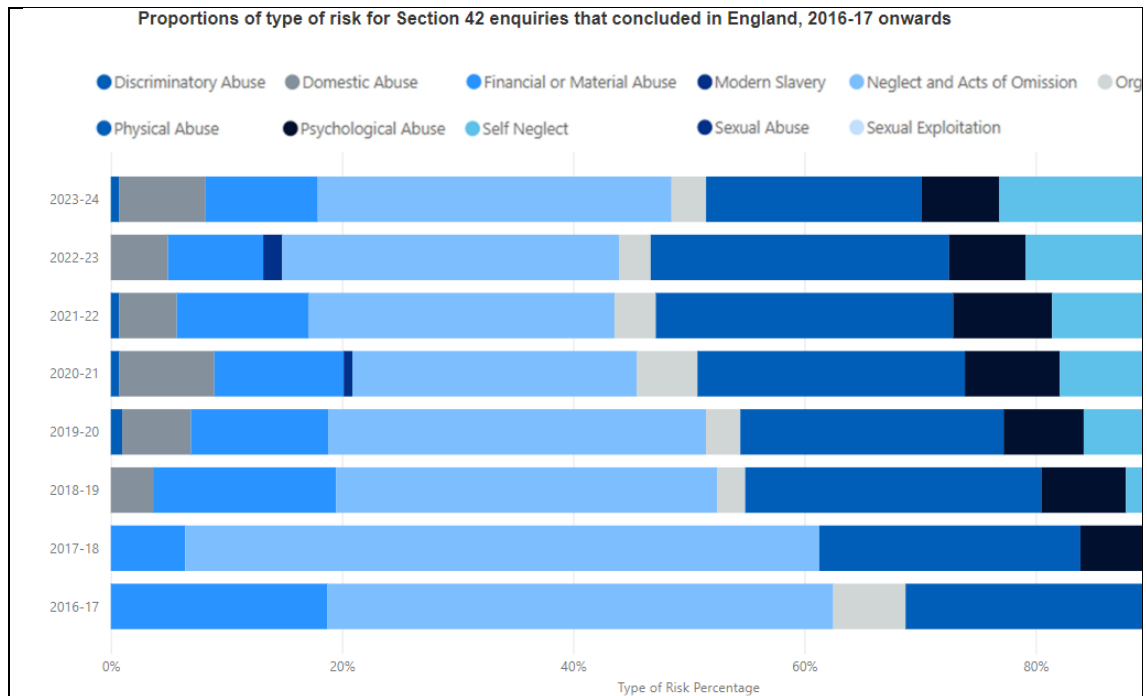


Source: NHS England, 2024

Hartlepool's proportion of 7.5% of section 42 enquiries relating to domestic abuse is the 7<sup>th</sup> highest in the north east, comparable to the rates for Durham and South Tyneside. The proportion of section 42 enquires relating to domestic abuse is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest risk group in Hartlepool.

The proportion of Hartlepool's section 42 enquiries relating to domestic abuse is at its highest level since 2020/21.

## Hartlepool JSNA



Source: NHS England, 2024

The rate in 2020/21 of 8.21% is the only year in the eight-year reporting period where it is higher than the 2023/24 rate. 2023/24 ended a two-year reduction in the proportion relating to domestic abuse.

It is recognised that the type of abuse recorded from an adult safeguarding referral, is that which the referring agency deems the most suitable. This means that domestic abuse is likely to be under-recorded where there is more than one type of abuse being perpetrated towards an individual, or a professional is recording based on the type of abuse eg) physical or financial. As of April 2025, sub-categories have been introduced for domestic abuse.

The below table shows the number of adult safeguarding concerns and section 42 enquiries during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

Quarter & Year (Fiscal)	Concerns	S42 Enquiries
Q1 2023/24	450	196
Q2 2023/24	503	218
Q3 2023/24	451	159
Q4 2023/24	457	166
<b>Total</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>739</b>

Of these, referrals, 105 concerns were identified by the referrer as domestic abuse, 11 of which were a repeat referral within the previous 12 month period.

Quarter & Year (Fiscal)	Concerns	S42 Enquiries
Q1 2023/24	24	13
Q2 2023/24	22	12
Q3 2023/24	30	16
Q4 2023/24	29	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>52</b>

Of the 105 referrals, 81 were female and 24 were male.

The age breakdown of the referrals is shown below -

Age Group	Female No Safeguarding	Male No Safeguarding
18-64	57	16
65+	24	8

In terms of the outcomes following a Section 42 safeguarding referral, over half were recorded as either “Managing own risk” (19.2%) or “Inappropriate concern” (17.5%).

Outcome	Number of Cases
Action by provider	1
Advice and Guidance	3
Further concerns Raised	6
Inappropriate Concern	9
Managing own Risk	10
Moved	1
Non engagement	1
Other	7
Police Action	6
Referral for assessment required	3
Referred to other services including Harbour etc	3
Review required via Care Management	2

## Homelessness Data

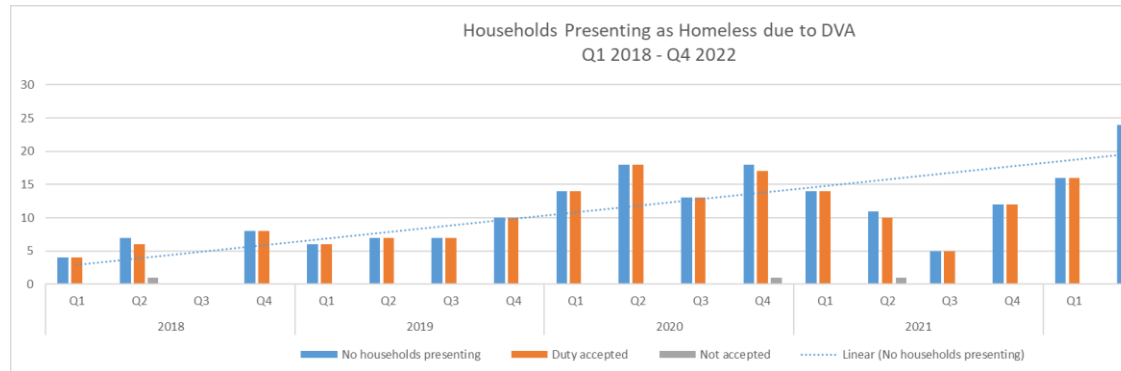
The housing advice team have provided data around homeless relating to domestic violence and abuse in Hartlepool. They have adopted a new system as of June 2023; therefore, data has only been included up to March 2023. Going forward, trends will continue to be monitored on a yearly basis.

### *Presentations*

Data provided by the council’s housing advice team shows that from the period April 2018 to September 2020 that was previously provided, the number of households presenting due to domestic violence and abuse is increasing as shown up to March 2023. The increase shown in the year 2022-2023 could be following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act and the

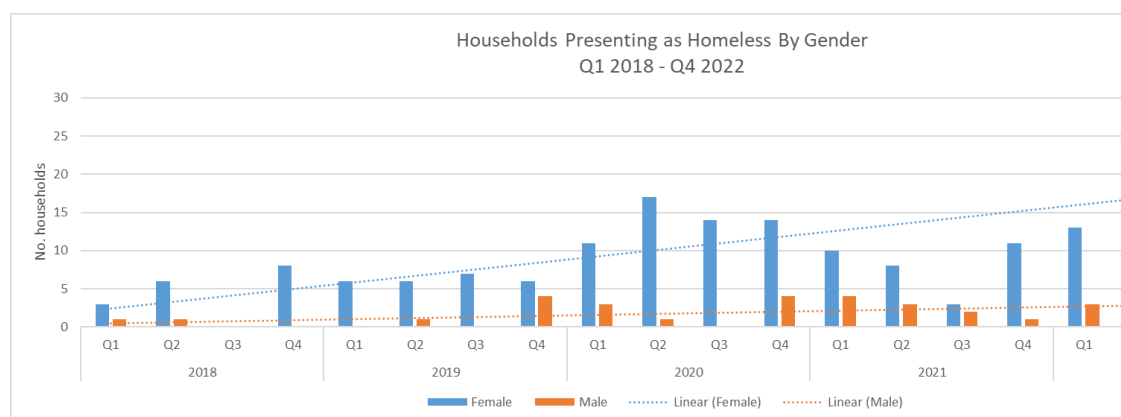
updated guidance on responding to domestic abuse in homelessness. It is also worth considering the impact post-covid may have had on presentations.

A relief or prevention duty was accepted in most cases. In the two cases where a duty was not accepted, one had advice or guidance given and the other household withdrew their application.

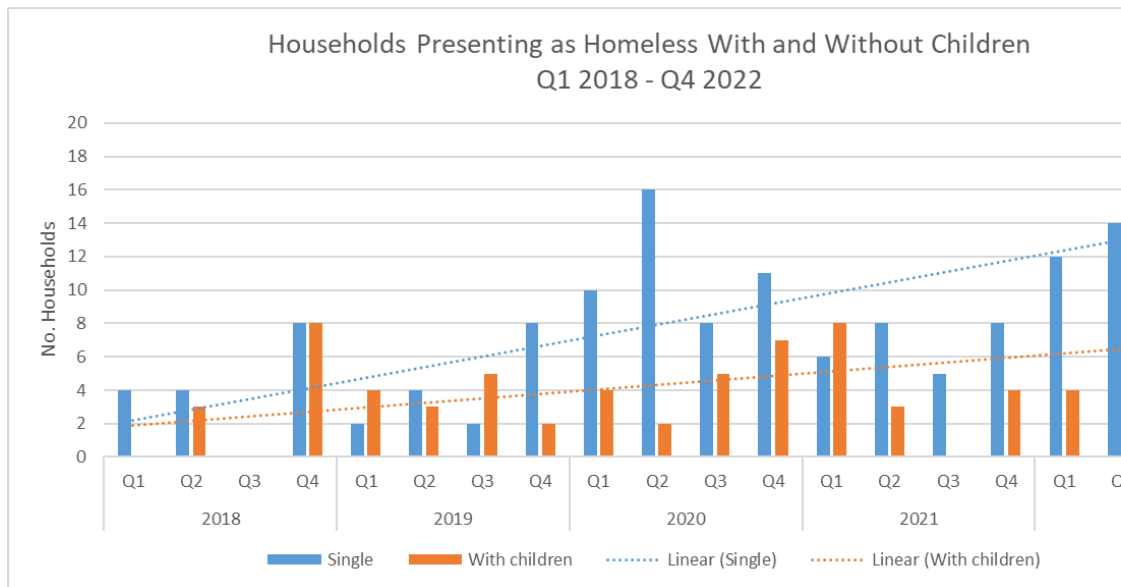


In terms of gender, most individuals presenting as homeless are female (211). In September 2020, 84% of the individuals were female. However as of March 2023 this has increased to 95%. The number of males presenting is the same (11).

The trendlines on the below chart show that the number of female presentations is increasing quite steeply over the reporting period, reflecting the overall increase in presentations. Male presentations are also showing an increasing trend but at a slower rate. However, this is something to be considered as to whether there are fewer safe accommodation options available for men.



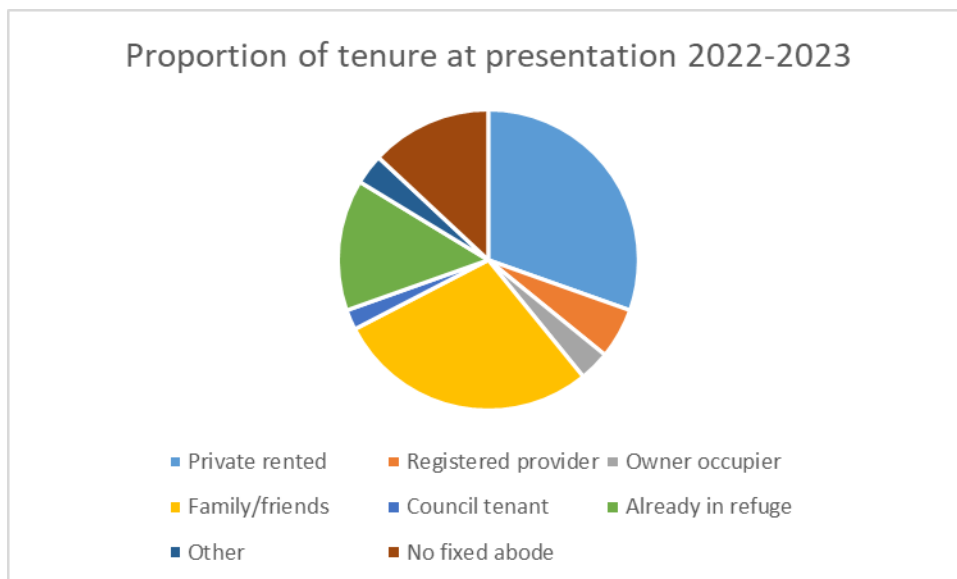
The number of single households continues to show an increasing trend from 2018 to 2023; however, this has slowed slightly since the last reporting period. Whilst both single households and households with children are increasing, single households requiring homeless assistance is increasing at a faster rate.



## Tenure

The data also shows the tenure of people presenting as homeless as well as the tenure of the accommodation they go on to after support. The chart shows that the most common tenure for individuals presenting due to domestic abuse was those living in private rented accommodation (30%).

The proportion of clients who were either staying with family and friends or already in refuge at presentation has increased from 12% in 2020 to 42% in 2023. This suggests that they had already been homeless for some time before presenting to Council homelessness services for assistance. It is likely they could be fleeing to family and friends in the first instance, before approaching services for formal assistance.



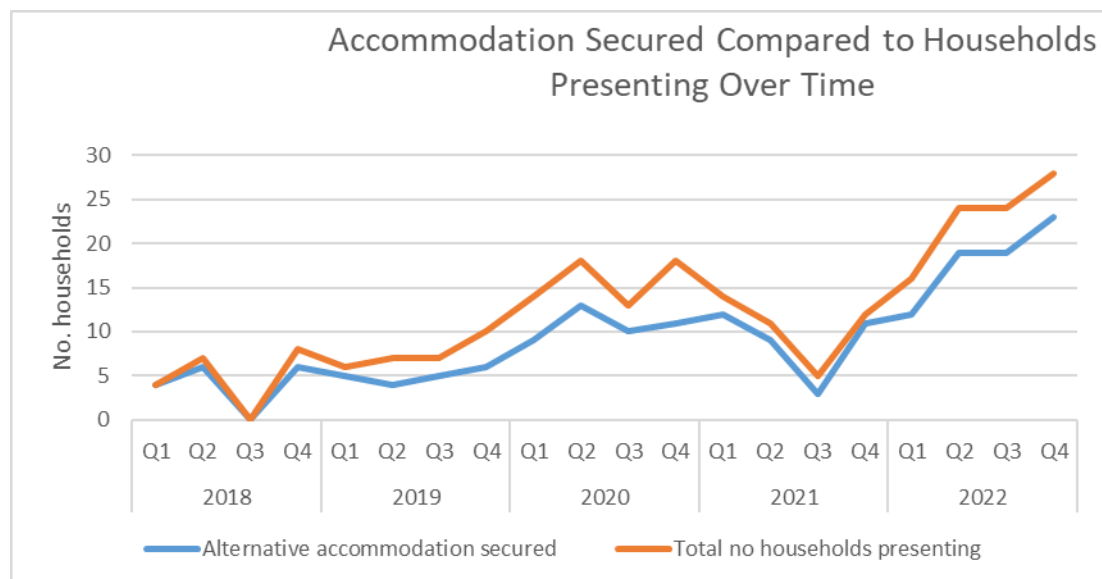
The low proportion of owner occupiers presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse reflects the further difficulty of leaving for survivors who are property owners. Particularly as owner occupiers represent the largest proportion of households in Hartlepool.

### Outcomes

Of the 246 households that presented as homeless during the reporting period, 187 (76%) had accommodation secured. This was either by obtaining a private rented tenancy, registered provider or council tenancy or other social rented supported accommodation. Over half (59%) of individuals who received support from the housing advice team were supported to access registered provider tenancies.

Of those who didn't secure alternative accommodation, 8 stayed with family or friends, 6 were supported to remain safe in their accommodation and the remaining cases were withdrawn or contact lost with the service.

This suggests that the homelessness team have been successful in securing longer-term accommodation for clients presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse in most cases as shown in the chart below.



Hartlepool Borough Council moved to a new choice-based lettings system for social housing on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023, Hartlepool Home Search and subsequently left the Tees Valley Home Finder partnership. From April 2023 – March 2024, 174 housing register applications selected domestic abuse as their main reason for moving. Of these, 32 were awarded a Band 1 priority to move due to domestic abuse.

### Health data

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust<sup>xvi</sup> provides care and treatment for people with mental health and learning disability needs in

Hartlepool. They did not have any available data to provide to the needs assessment due to a system change. This is a gap in assessing the needs of victims and survivors, perpetrators and their children who access mental health services.

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust<sup>xvii</sup> have an IDVA co-located within their trust, funded by the Office for Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland. They will provide advice and support to patients disclosing domestic abuse. This role is trust wide and therefore it is unable to breakdown which patients were of Hartlepool residence. However, the IDVA completed 162 total interventions in year 2023/2024 in comparison to 115 interventions in year 2022/2023 which is a 41% increase. This can partly be accounted by a dip in interventions during the first quarter of 2022/2023 due to staff sickness. In 2023/2024 most interventions were providing safety planning and advice. However, this funding is due to cease in March 2026.

Data provided by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust shows there were 89 safeguarding concerns where domestic abuse was a category in 2023/2024 compared to 73 in 2022/2023. This is a 22% increase. However, due to the way the data is recorded this for all presentations to the trust and is unable to be broken down to Hartlepool residents.

Cardiff Model data previously provided in 2021 is no longer available.

## Conclusion

Whilst the data shows that domestic abuse continues to be primarily a gender-based crime, perpetrated by men against women, this oversimplifies the situation somewhat. Demographic analysis of the services reviewed in this section shows that some groups are overrepresented in the client / referral data compared to other groups within that same demographic characteristic (e.g. age bracket) or compared to the local Hartlepool population. Additionally, whilst the numbers for some groups remain low, they are making up an increasingly significant proportion of service users.

Based on the evidence reviewed in this section, the following groups are overrepresented in the client data:

- Women – make up 79.8% of referrals to Harbour support services, 95% of homeless presentations due to domestic abuse and 71% of adult safeguarding referrals related to domestic abuse yet just 51.6% of the Hartlepool population
- People aged 19-44 – make up 66.9% of Harbour referrals yet just 30.9% of the Hartlepool population
- People living in social housing or private rented accommodation - make up 66.5% of Harbour referrals compared to 41% of the Hartlepool population

- People who are already homeless (particularly women and single households) – make up 42% of referrals to the Council's homelessness team

In terms of groups where total numbers remain low but they are representing an increasing proportion of the demographic makeup of referrals:

- Ethnic minorities make up a small proportion of referrals to Harbour but this proportion is increasing and is slightly higher than the local population for all minority groups
  - Black, Caribbean or Black British - 1.2% of referrals / 0.5% local population
  - Asian or Asian British – 1.9% of referrals / 1.7% of local population
  - Mixed or multiple ethnicities – 1.1% of referrals / 0.7% of local population
  - Other ethnicity – 0.7% of referrals or 0.6% of local population
- Males make up an increasing proportion of Harbour referrals. They currently make up 20% of referrals (increased from 18.6%) compared to 48.4% of the local population

Particular groups also make up an increasing proportion of the Safe Accommodation referrals:

- People with complex needs who cannot be admitted into refuge accommodation (increased from 4.2% to 9.8%)
- Women who are pregnant at the time of referral (increased from 8% to 12%)
- People with a disability (increased from 4% to 15%)
- People with mental health issues (increased from 33% to 47%)

Future analysis will show if these trends continue over the longer term. However, in the meantime, consideration needs to be given to how the differing (and intersecting) needs of these groups can be accommodated by services.

#### 4. Which population groups are at risk and why?

Whilst national and local data shows that women are most at risk of domestic abuse, unfortunately the lack of demographic data and underreporting means that there may be groups of people who are hidden from services or have additional barriers to accessing support. Individuals also aren't always asked

for their demographic data when accessing services and when they are, they are not obliged to provide this.

<p><b>Age</b></p>	<p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of any domestic abuse (8.7%) compared with those in age categories of 55 years and over, for year ending (YE) March 2024. The percentage of people aged 20 to 24 years who were victims of any domestic abuse (7.1%) was higher than those aged 55 to 59 years (3.8%). For those aged 75 years and over, the percentage of victims was significantly lower than all other age groups (2.1%).<sup>xviii</sup></p> <p>Older people are more likely to be abused by family members rather than intimate partners and experience barriers to accessing support due to abuse being normalised and accepted.<sup>xix</sup></p> <p>Harbour local data shows that in 2023/2024, 184 referrals were receive for clients aged 55 or over. This is an increase of 9% from 2020/2021.</p>
<p><b>Children and Young People</b></p>	<p>Domestic abuse impacts children and young people both as victims when living in a household where domestic abuse occurs between parents or family members and in their own interpersonal relationships.</p> <p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales only records domestic abuse victims from age 16 onwards. Figures for year ending March 2024 show that 8.7% of people aged 16-19 were victims of domestic abuse in the last year. This is almost double the average for all age groups of 4.8%. When broken down by sex, 11.2% of women aged 16-19 experienced domestic abuse, compared to 5.8% of men in the same age bracket.</p> <p>Another element of domestic abuse relating to young people that is a hidden harm is child and adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA). Respect.org.uk defines CAPVA as “where a young person (aged 8-18) engages in repeated abusive behaviour towards a parent or adult carer”.<sup>xx</sup> Research suggests that CAPVA, like other forms of abuse, is under-reported with families only contacting the police when the situation has reached crisis point and they are afraid from their safety. CAPVA most commonly involves male children in late adolescence directing physical violence towards their mothers. Due to under-reporting and lack of a standardised definition of CAPVA, data is patchy.</p> <p>Harbour data shows that in 2023/24, 299 referrals were received for clients aged 18 and under. This represents an increase of 12 (4%) compared to 2020/21).</p> <p>Additionally, in terms of child referrals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 255 were for clients aged under 16</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 were accommodated in refuge.</li> <li>• 15 were accommodated in dispersed accommodation.</li> <li>• 22 of the referrals were repeats.</li> <li>• Most referrals were received from Social Services – Child Safeguarding (98), followed by self-referral (56) and Social Services – Early Help (53).</li> </ul> <p>Local data for CAPVA incidents is not available, however, research reported by Respect.org.uk found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a youth offending sample, Respect and Numbers for Good found the prevalence of CAPVA in caseloads were between 21 and 27%, and between 64 and 67% of police Domestic Abuse incidents where the suspect was under 18. There were also significant levels of CAPVA reported in Children's Social Care, including Early Help caseloads.</li> <li>• Between 6 March 2019 and 4 January 2020, Northumbria police responded to an average of two incidents of CAPVA per day (515 total).</li> </ul>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that adults with a disability were more than twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without, for year ending March 2024 (9.2% and 3.9% respectively).</p> <p>According to ReducingTheRisk.org.uk, disabled people face additional barriers to accessing services. Someone who is disabled and experiencing domestic abuse may find it harder to protect themselves, access sources of help, or remove themselves from the abusive situation.<sup>xxi</sup></p> <p>People with disabilities may be reliant on the abuser for personal care or mobility.</p> <p>Learning disabilities can also affect victim-survivors access to support and their understanding of their own abuse.</p> <p>People with disabilities can be subject to all forms of domestic abuse, but due to their added vulnerability they may also experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An abuser withholding care or medication from them</li> <li>• An abuser removing mobility or sensory devices that they need for independence</li> <li>• An abuser claiming state benefits to care for them — enabling them to control the victim-survivor's finances more effectively</li> <li>• An abuser using their disability to taunt or degrade them</li> </ul> <p>Disabled people also face difficulties when it comes to disclosing the abuse. Disabled victims may already be socially isolated because of their disability. They may also find it harder to disclose abuse because they have no opportunity to see health or social care professionals without their abuser being present.</p>

	<p>For a victim-survivor with disabilities, the concerns about moving out of their homes come with additional and vital concerns about accessibility of a new home or refuge.</p> <p>Their house may have been specially adapted for them. Care packages have been organised and they may be worried that they will lose their current level of independence if they are forced to move elsewhere.</p> <p>They may be reluctant to report domestic abuse from a partner whose care they depend on, and which they believe enables them to stay out of institutional care.</p> <p>Harbour data shows that for 2023/24, 131 clients disclosed that they had a disability (up 37 (39%) compared to 2020/21), while 688 (up 111 (19%) said they did not have a disability, however disability status was unrecorded for 1447 clients (down 378 (21%).</p> <p>Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the clients accommodated in refuge in 2023/24, 47% had mental health issues, 15% had a physical disability, 6% have a learning disability and 1% have a sensory impairment.</li> <li>• Of those accommodated in dispersed accommodation, 63% had mental health issues, 13% had a physical disability, and 0% had a learning disability or sensory impairment.</li> <li>• Of those clients referred to outreach services, 30% had mental health issues, 2% had a physical disability, 2% had a learning disability and 1% had a sensory impairment.</li> <li>• Of those clients referred to IDVA services, 32% had mental health issues, 0%- have a physical disability, 7% have a learning disability and 0% have a sensory impairment.</li> <li>• Of those clients referred for counselling measures, 26% of clients had mental health issues, 5% had a physical disability, and 0% had a learning disability or sensory impairment.</li> <li>• Of the clients referred for prevention measures, 45% had mental health issues, 5% had a physical disability or a learning disability and 2% had a sensory impairment.</li> <li>• Of the clients referred for Children and Young People measures, the proportion with mental health issues is not recorded, 1% have a physical disability, 3% had a learning disability and none had a sensory impairment.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender</b>	<p>Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales for year ending March 2024 gives a domestic abuse prevalence of 3% for men, compared to 6.6% for women.</p> <p>Harbour data for shows that:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023/24, 451 referrals were received for male victims of domestic abuse.</li> <li>• This represents 20% of all clients referred.</li> <li>• The number of males referred remains similar to 2020/21 (462)</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, Adult safeguarding report that 24 males with a care need were referred with domestic abuse concerns during year ending March 2024. This is a 50% increase from 2020.</p>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<p>The CSEW ending in March 2024 did not find any significant differences across ethnic groups for victims of domestic abuse. Although the percentage of minority ethnic victims accessing support services in Hartlepool is increasing, they often have additional risks including so-called honour-based abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<p>The Domestic Abuse Victim Characteristics release from ONS does not include reference to LGBTQ+ victims. However, ReducingTheRisk.org.uk identify that while LGBTQ+ victims experience well-established forms of abuse, they are also subject to other forms of abuse specific to their LGBTQ+ status and a general landscape of discrimination.<sup>xxii</sup> This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia or manipulation of someone's internalised Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia</li> <li>• Conversion therapy</li> <li>• Threats to 'out' someone to their family/ colleagues/ friends</li> <li>• Withholding housing or financial support from them</li> <li>• Withholding medication or access to healthcare</li> </ul> <p>LGBTQ+ people also face difficulties in disclosing abuse. The history of violence and legal discrimination as well as the general homo/trans/biphobia in British society can dissuade LGBTQ+ victim-survivors from disclosing for fear of giving a community already being marginalised a 'bad name'.</p> <p>Fear of 'outing' themselves by reporting. This is often compounded when living in smaller towns and rural areas and can make it difficult for the abused partner to seek help.</p> <p>Heteronormative assumptions may lead Police and other agencies to misunderstand the situation as a 'fight' between two men or women rather than a violent intimate relationship.</p> <p>Most information on domestic abuse relates to the experiences of heterosexual women.</p> <p>This lack of understanding means that some people may not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Believe it happens in LGBTQ+ relationships.</li> <li>○ Recognise their experience of domestic abuse as that.</li> <li>○ Know how to respond if they see domestic abuse being experienced by their friends or family.</li> </ul>

	<p>Harbour data shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023/24, 649 referrals were recorded as being heterosexual, compared to 607 in 2020/21 (an increase of 7%)</li> <li>• 10 were recorded as being lesbian / gay - 9 in 2020/21(11% increase)</li> <li>• 13 were recorded as being bisexual – 6 in 2020/21 (117% increase)</li> <li>• 123 referrals were recorded as undisclosed – 112 in 2020/21 (10% increase)</li> <li>• In 1423 referrals no data was recorded – 1772 in 2020/21 (20% decrease)</li> <li>• 48 referrals were recorded as “other” sexuality – 1 in 2020/21 (4700% increase)</li> </ul>
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## 5. Consultation and engagement

Building on previous consultations in 2019 and 2021, an online consultation was completed to review whether there were any changes in findings. Service users were invited to share their experiences of accessing domestic abuse services. Nonservice users were asked about the barriers that had prevented them using services available.

### Background

The online survey, comprising of multiple-choice questions and free text boxes, ran for 8 weeks until the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024. It was promoted widely to the public. The survey was included in the Your Say newsletter which was sent out 3 times during the survey period. The survey was also promoted via the Council’s social media feeds and in the local press. Additionally, the survey was directly promoted to service users via Harbour circulating the link to their clients. On this occasion, only the online version was promoted. Paper copies would have been made available on request; however, no such request was received.

The online survey page was viewed by 111 individual people, of which 23 went on to complete the survey. Twenty-five survey responses were received, so 1 or more participants completed the survey more than once. This could potentially have been a support worker completing the form with one or more clients.

Of the 111 people who viewed the project page:

- 42 came direct via the URL shared by email or QR code
- 55 came via the Your Say newsletter email

- 1 came via the Council website
- 3 via search engine
- 24 via social media (23 via Facebook and 1 via X (formerly Twitter))
- 7 via other websites, including the Hartlepool Mail and MSN websites

## Demographic information

Of the 25 survey responses:

- Three respondents skipped the demographic questions
- Twenty-one were female and one male
- All said their gender identity was the same as that registered at birth
- Two were 18-24
  - 4 were 25-34
  - 6 were 53-44
  - 5 were 45-54
  - 3 were 55-64
  - 2 were 65+
- Twenty described their sexual orientation as “heterosexual / straight” and 2 described it as “bisexual”
- Twenty described their ethnicity as “white”, 1 as “black, African, Caribbean, or Black British” and 1 “preferred not to say”
- Ten described their religion as “Christian”, 5 as “no religion”, 4 as “prefer not to say”, 1 as “atheist” and 1 as “Buddhist”
- In terms of whether their day-to-day activities were limited by a health condition or disability:
  - 7 were “not limited”
  - 5 were “limited a little”
  - 8 were “limited a lot”
  - 2 “preferred not to say”
  - This reflects both the fact that people with disabilities are more likely to experience domestic abuse than the general population and also that Hartlepool has a higher rate of disability and ill health than the England rate
- Two respondents had been in the care of the local authority at some stage, while 19 had not and 1 preferred not to say
- All 22 respondents said they had not been subject to immigration control
- Postcode data has been suppressed due to low response numbers to avoid accidental identification of respondents

## Findings

There were 25 survey responses from 111 people who viewed the page. The low conversion rate from viewer to participant can potentially be explained by the challenging subject matter and the difficulties of retelling traumatic stories to answer the questions, so should not be taken as indicating a lack of interest or need in this service area.

As this is a small sample size, it is difficult to draw robust conclusions. However, there are useful details included in the survey comments which provide a level of insight into the lived experience of domestic abuse survivors in Hartlepool.

Of the 25 survey responses, half had used DVA services and half had not.

Of those who had not used support services (the non-user group), all were the current or former partners/spouses of the perpetrator. Similarly, all but one of the people who had used a support service (service user group) were also current or former partners of the perpetrator. In the service user group one respondent was the child of the perpetrator.

The reasons given by the non-user group for not using a support service were “not being aware of anything available locally” (3 respondents), “managing the situation themselves” (3) and “other (please specify)” (4). The “other” reasons given were:

*My Mother contacted The Police at the time who where[sic] disinterested and not supportive at all to my situation.*

*Incident was out of hours and didn't want to involve police as there was no violence but threat and controlling behaviour. I dealt with it myself but could have done with having somewhere for him to sober up and stay overnights as he lives out of town and had no where to go so i had no choice but to let him stay (debated dropping off at local hotel)*

*I made a phonecall to harbour and the woman on the phone was so rude and snappy with me that it put me off following up.*

The non-user group were also asked if they had tried to access a service but it had not worked out, what the reason for this had been. The responses were: “I was turned away” (1 respondent), “services did not seem to be suitable for men” (1), “I did not receive a call-back” (1) and “other (please specify)” (2). The “other” reasons are not very useful (“I’m not a victim of abuse” and “see above”).

Finally, the non-user group were asked what could have been done differently to improve their experience. Three responses were received, as follows:

*Understand that the victim has limited choices and sometimes does have to return to the home where abuser is. It's not as simple as NOT wanting to press charges, it can be that they are unable to at that time.*

*Ensure the staff hired are suitable or give them more appropriate training for the job.*

*I wish I had known were to go for help it would of [sic] meant I left the relationship earlier.*

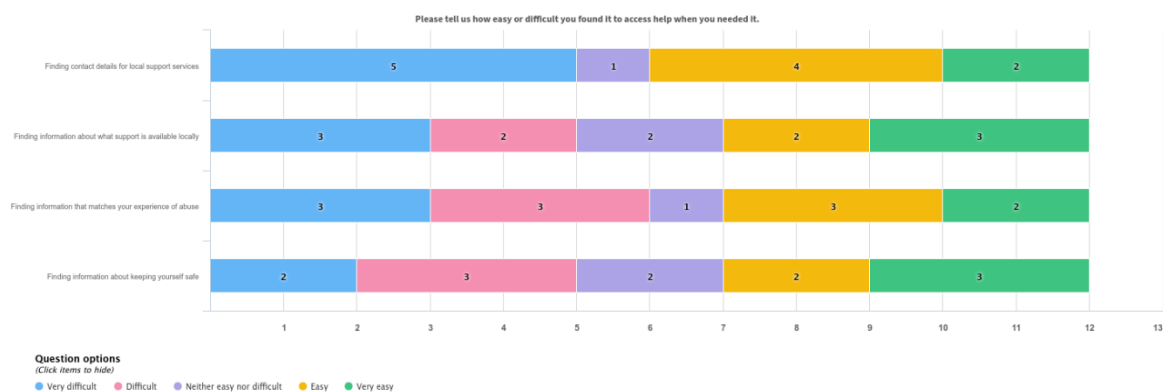
The service user group were asked how recently they had used the service. Ten respondents had used it within the past 12 months, three within the past 1-3 years and one more than 5 years ago. When asked how many times they had used the

service, five had only used it once (not surprising given most had only accessed services recently) the other seven had used it more than 5 times. Unfortunately, the small sample size makes it difficult to draw conclusions from this data, but it is hoped that the respondents who used the service more than 5 times did so because they felt confident in the service they received.

The service user group were asked about how easy or difficult they had found it to find information about local services. The options were “finding contact details for services”, “finding information about support”, “finding information that matches your experience of abuse” and “finding information about keeping yourself safe”.

About half of respondents found each element easy/very easy and half found it difficult/very difficult to access. The breakdown is shown in chart 3 below. Although the sample size is small, it still suggests that more could be done to make information easier to find.

Chart 1: Please tell us how easy or difficult you found it to access help when you needed it.



Comments about finding information and support included:

*Harbour were fantastic, police were too slow to respond in some events social services were terrible to deal with in regards to protecting my child from domestic abuse.*

*I suffered every form of domestic/sexual abuse and found myself alone cut off and unable to even speak or receive what was happening to me.*

*Harbour were useless - long wait lists for counselling and support. Cleveland Police are shameful at handling these cases and got me to drop the case due to insufficient evidence to support my mental health but really it was to save themselves the work. My IDVA and the rape centre in Middlesbrough was amazing.*

*Services are available but waiting list far too long iv waited over 12 months still not got appointment.*

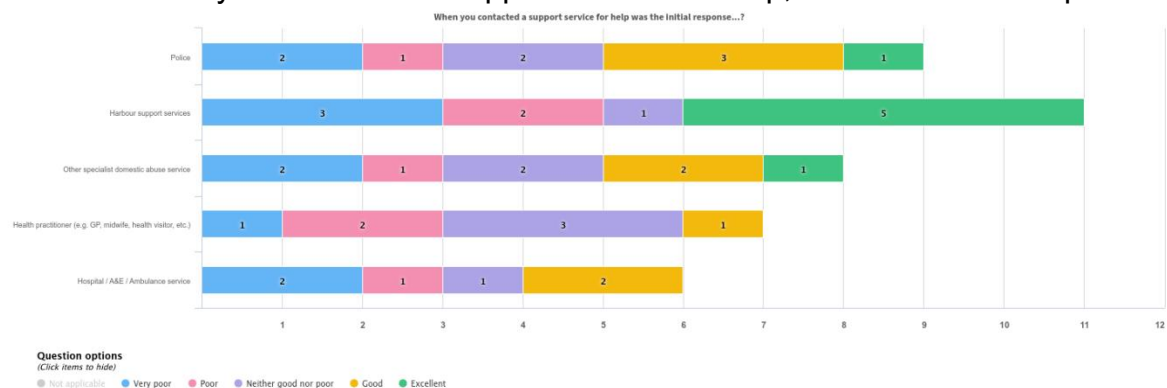
*Iv begged for the last few months for help to be told to move on with my life nobody is really interested you get told to phone 111 or samarathons [sic] which don't really help or other on line groups these people aren't supportive of your needs iv.been here twice my first time was ten years ago with my ex husband and agian now with my ex partner*

*I was referred to social services and given information about the Harbour Domestic abuse services in Hartlepool. Getting in touch with the refuge was very easy and I was able to access help straight away.*

*Very easy to find the information if you look for it and the posters in healthcare places - getting the help from it is another case.*

The service user group were asked who they approached for help. The most common response (almost double the number of responses for any other option) was “Harbour”, the second most popular response was “friends or family” and in third was jointly the “police” and “healthcare practitioner”. They were also asked about the initial response each provider made to their approach. Again, it was roughly a fifty-fifty split between poor/very poor and good/excellent. The breakdown is shown below in Chart 2 (note only those options which received a response are included in the chart):

Chart 2: When you contacted a support service for help, was their initial response...?



Comments received relating to the initial contact included the following:

*Harbour were brilliant very supportive, police did not respond to some incidents as quickly as needed, social services were terrible in communicating, cancelling meetings not turning up for visits etc.*

*The whole experience was terrible I found myself being misunderstood constantly. I would ask for help by the tie I was contacted back more abuse had taken place and it continued in circles until I had nothing left. (Health, home, family, friends, employment and self respect).*

*Police not interested the fact your Ben harassed [sic: you are being harassed] by ex partner and family or the fact he already has criminal record for knife crime harbour tell you to move on with your life or put you in s [support] group which involves colouring books in or asking grafts that's not support.*

*Harbour have been absolutely fantastic in helping me and my young children flee domestic abuse. We would still be with the perpetrator if they hadn't provided us with shelter and clothed and fed us. I will be eternally grateful to the staff at the Hartlepool refuge. They have saved my children's future.*

Comments relating to other services not listed in the previous question:

*Social services were involved but their input was neither supportive or pro active, they would arrange meetings and not turn up or contact myself, did not support myself or my child productively hardly any communication unless Marac meetings were taking place very unprofessional.*

*I spoke to Samaritans and self referred to my sister place in Middlesbrough. Received therapy but it was stopped and I was told it was by the request of Hartlepool Services. No one contacted me after and I found myself back in the same violent situation and needed to give up work. I then rang local services asking for help or a place in refuge and it took 3 months before I was contacted back.*

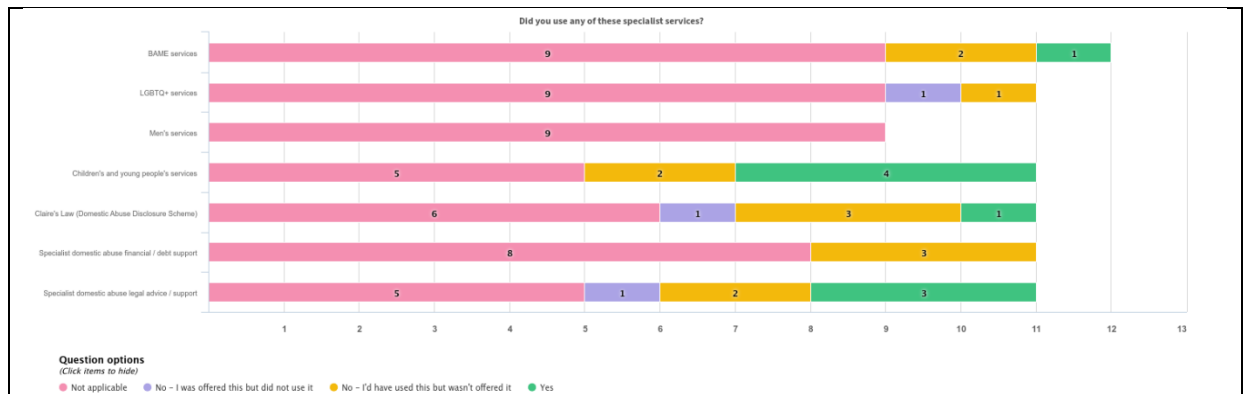
Although (as already stated) the sample size is small, these responses and comments suggest that initial responses from services can be a bit "hit and miss"; and that where the initial response is not positive, it can cause serious problems for the victim/survivor.

When the service user group were asked about specialist services, only a small proportion of the respondents had used the services on the list. However, for all but one of the specialist services listed several respondents said that they would have used the service if they had been offered it. This suggests there may be a level of unmet need for specialist domestic abuse support services. The fact that no respondents requested men's services is reflective of the fact that all but one of the survey respondents were female. There may well be more demand from the wider community for specialist men's services. Chart 3 shows the breakdown of responses. The specialist services listed were:

- BAME services
- LGBTQ+ services
- Men's services
- Children's and young people's services
- Claire's Law (Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme)
- Specialist domestic abuse financial / debt support
- Specialist domestic abuse legal support

Chart 3: Did you use any of these specialist services?

## Hartlepool JSNA



When asked to comment on specialist domestic abuse services, respondents said:

*To have been supported in line with the law. My Children have both been affected by my situation but never offered help.*

*Housing support were great with me and really did help me and support me in finding a place to live*

*Telephone helplines - Childline listened but I felt like they did not understand and kept telling me to go to the police, even though I had already been, and they did not want to do anything. Need a solution for people who are at a dead end.*

*Refuge accommodation - the safest I ever felt. I could not be found by him, and there was a system in place if he did find us. The only unnerving thing was that workers frequently came into our flat without knocking or notice, which was embarrassing for me as a teenage girl. It would be good if that could change.*

*Counselling - I used so many of these and had a consistently poor experience...I was terrified of our social worker who had betrayed my trust every time and made it clear that she did not believe me.*

When asked if they had needed to move out of their local area to find safe accommodation, the majority of the service user group (7) had not. Of those that had moved, 2 had moved out of Hartlepool to another area, while 3 had moved into Hartlepool from elsewhere.

The service user group were also asked if they had been offered follow up support once their contact with services had ended. Half of respondents (6) had not been offered follow up support but indicated that they would have used it had it been offered. This suggests that where follow up support is available, and appropriate, service users would appreciate being made aware of it. Of the remaining respondents, 3 indicated that they had been offered follow up support and had used it, while 1 was offered follow up support but declined.

Respondents who had used follow up support made the following comments about the service they received:

*Emotional support it helped me having someone to speak too who showed understanding and compassion.*

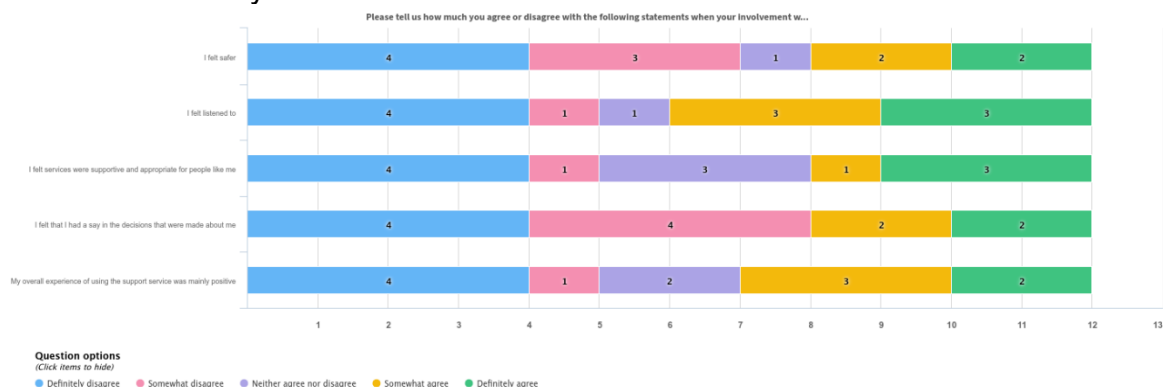
*Harbour outreach service was invaluable in helping me regain my independence.*

*I had a worker come out every week to get me into the community, but it was really hard to click with her and I didn't know what I was supposed to do with her. We usually went to get food and eat in her car, but she didn't like this. I was scared to go anywhere with her because I didn't want anyone at school knowing or my family finding me. It didn't really work, but it did get me a break from home which did help.*

When asked about how they felt when their involvement with services ended, the service user group were again split between positive and negative feelings. The two areas where there were more negative feelings than positive ones were that respondents disagreed that they “felt safer” and also disagreed that they felt they had “a say in decisions made about me”. This is concerning because the purpose of domestic abuse support services is to make the people who use them safe; however, the small sample size could be affecting the result and further investigation into client feedback would be required to find out if this is a significant issue for people leaving services. Chart 4 shows the breakdown of responses. The options were:

- I felt safer
- I felt listened to
- I felt services were supportive and appropriate for people like me
- I felt I had a say in decisions that were made about me
- My overall experience of using the service was positive

Chart 4: Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements when your involvement with services ended.



The service user group were also asked about their children and any support offered for them. Just over half the group had children (7 compared to 5 who did not). Of those with children, 5 were offered support for their children (of which 3 used the support and 2 declined it). One was not offered any support and the other skipped this question.

Three comments were received about the support offered:

*Children's course.*

*Social services provided terrible support arranging and cancelling meetings, being met with poor attitude and made to feel like a bad person. Harbour were fantastic with myself and my child and provided a lot of support.*

*Harbour family support worker.*

All the respondents who answered the question (3) said it was either “easy” or “very easy” to access the support for their children they had been offered. Two of the three also said that the support had been “good” or “excellent” and one said it was “neither good nor poor”.

Finally, the service user group were asked if they had any further comments to make about their experience of using domestic abuse support services in Hartlepool. The following are a selection of the comments received:

*More needed for Men.*

*No I have not needed services but believe there needs to be more provision for people with pets as in my experience victims are already subject to trauma without having to leave their pets, therefore more likely to remain in an abusive relationship.*

*I told a housing officer from the council i needed housing as I'd left my partner, implying abuse and because we owned the house they told me to go back until it sold.*

*Police should respond to all reports of stalking and domestic abuse and not arrange appointments for the following day, social services should be attending planned meetings and not turning up or supporting children included in domestic abuse cases. Harbour were fantastic and provided all the positive support I needed to get a conviction for my abused which saw him sent to prison and given a restraining order.*

*The 6 months wait time for eligibility for local welfare support is crippling families that are subject to DA.*

*I had a girl called Nicola she supported and valued my options,, I will be forever grateful for her time and compassion.. it is so scary when you are living in a abusive relationship and feel you have no one.*

*Harbour refuge at Hartlepool was absolutely amazing. We arrived with nothing and they clothed and fed myself and my two young children and looked after us until we were able to leave and move into a property of our own. They definitely need more resources as they rely heavily on donations. With a little funding they could work miracles. They saved our lives.*

*I didn't know the service was available to everyone. I always thought that the services were only for physical abuse. I have encountered verbal abuse and*

*economic abuse and coercion. I recently had verbal abuse and was made to feel that I was the one with the problem because it was only meant as a joke. Even though it was offensive, derogatory and at the time the situation was frightening. Sadly the effect of husband drinking alcohol. I become the target.*

*Believe what the children say. My life was immeasurably changed and somewhat ruined by the treatment I received by police, social workers, medical professionals. Also you cannot lump together Harbour and the police for instance. I could not have had a worse experience with the police but Harbour was fantastic and I will always support their work. However, I am terrified of the police...*

## Conclusions

Unfortunately, the small sample size means that it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from the survey data. However, some common threads are apparent such as that early intervention and preventative help would have greatly benefited some respondents. Understanding, empathy and listening to victims were also highlighted as being key things people would like to see from services.

Additionally, the response that people receive when they first contact services is crucial as to whether they go on to access and have a good relationship with that service. Also, where people are made aware of follow up support that is available, they often go on to use this support. These are points that services may like to consider going forward.

The fact that over half of the respondents had some kind of limiting health condition or disability is very important. Consideration should be given as to how domestic abuse services can be made more accessible to people with disabilities (tying in with ongoing work across the Council in light of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee investigation into improving disabled access to all our services).

Additionally, Harbour service users are also encouraged to access the recovery service once formal support has ended and contribute to the Service User Panel to inform strategic decisions.

Issue number	Strategic Issues Arising from Consultation
1	<p>The following strategic issues were identified from the consultation. They have been considered in the overall findings and are represented in the final strategic issues outlined in section 6.</p> <p>People with disabilities are more likely to experience domestic abuse than the general population and Hartlepool has a higher rate of disability and ill health than the England rate. 59% of the survey respondents reported a limiting health condition or disability.</p>

2	Services need to be visible and accessible. There needs to be further education and awareness raising to reduce the stigma of domestic abuse and break down barriers. Some respondents in the survey stated they “were not aware of anything locally” or were “managing the situation themselves”.	
3	Services need to be trauma informed and use professional curiosity, including in cases where service users decline to engage. Training should be provided to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of ‘personally connected’ covering intimate partners and family members. One respondent highlighted “staff should have more appropriate training”	

## 6. Strategic issues

Issue number	Strategic Issue
1	There is an insufficient availability of support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.
2	Children affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).
3	There is a lack of consistent accountability for perpetrators of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.

## 7. Evidence base

Issue number	
1	<b>Source</b> <i>Robinson, A. L., &amp; Davies, B.</i>
	<b>Title incl. web link</b> 'Specialist policing units as a pathway towards procedural justice for domestic abuse victims.'
	<b>Summary</b> This study highlights how victims with complex needs often face significant barriers to accessing support. It evaluates specialist policing units in Wales and finds that dedicated, victim-led services with multi-agency collaboration improve outcomes for victims, particularly those who are reluctant to engage due to complex circumstances
	<b>Source</b> <i>Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse</i>
	<b>Title incl. web link</b> 'In Search of Excellence. A refreshed guide to effective domestic abuse partnership work – The Coordinated Community Response (CCR)'  <a href="https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ee0be2588f1e349401c832c/t/5fd78eaf72a0a65a94da967e/1607962290051/In+Search+of+Excellence+2020.pdf">https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ee0be2588f1e349401c832c/t/5fd78eaf72a0a65a94da967e/1607962290051/In+Search+of+Excellence+2020.pdf</a>
	<b>Summary</b> Every agency who has a responsibility for dealing with survivors, their children and/or perpetrators, must work effectively within their own agency and with all other agencies who also have that responsibility, to secure the safety of the survivor and their children and hold perpetrators to account. The process by which this work is integrated and managed is known as the CCR.
2	<b>Source</b> <i>Domestic Abuse Commissioner</i>
	<b>Title incl. web link</b> 'Victims in their own right? Babies, children and young people's experience of domestic abuse' <a href="https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/dac_bcyp_main-report_V6-DIGITAL.pdf">https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/dac_bcyp_main-report_V6-DIGITAL.pdf</a>
	<b>Summary</b> Victims in their own right?' examines the current response to children and young people who experience domestic abuse at home or in their family across both the statutory and non-statutory response.
	<b>Source</b> <i>Mayor of London Violence Reduction Unit</i>
	<b>Title incl. web link</b> 'Comprehensive needs assessment of Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse in London'  <a href="https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/comprehensive_needs_assessment_of_child-adolescent_to_parent_violence_and_abuse_in_london.pdf">https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/comprehensive_needs_assessment_of_child-adolescent_to_parent_violence_and_abuse_in_london.pdf</a>

	<b>Summary</b>	The comprehensive needs assessment was commissioned to explore the scale and nature of CAPVA in London, to ensure services and support for children, young people and families is grounded in evidence. The research findings will inform a public health approach to violence prevention and reduction.
<b>3</b>	<b>Source</b>	<i>Hilder, S., &amp; Freeman, C.</i>
	<b>Title incl. web link</b>	'Working with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Abuse: A UK Perspective. In Domestic Violence and Abuse: Contemporary Issues and Innovations.'
	<b>Summary</b>	This chapter explores the evolution of perpetrator intervention programmes in the UK, identifying challenges in holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring programme effectiveness. It stresses the need for evidence-based, coordinated approaches to reduce reoffending
	<b>Source</b>	<i>Jane Monkton Smith</i>
	<b>Title incl. web link</b>	'The Homicide Timeline' <a href="#">What is the Homicide Timeline   Homicide Timeline</a>
	<b>Summary</b>	The Homicide Timeline™ is a new framework for tracking homicide risk in cases of coercive control and stalking.  This eight stage sequence is based on research which looked at over 400 cases of intimate partner homicide to identify a common behavioural pattern that can be used in a practical way by professionals to assess threat and risk.

## 8. What is being done and why?

### Overview of current Domestic Abuse services

#### *National Domestic Abuse Services*

- Women's Aid
- Refuge
- Man Kind
- Men's Advice Line
- Dog's Trust Freedom Project
- Forced Marriage Unit
- Galop
- Paladin
- Respect

### *Regional Domestic Abuse Services*

There are several agencies who provide specialist services across the Cleveland and Tees area including -

Halo provides safeguarding and on-going confidential advice, help and support to black and minoritised women, girls and children who are at risk of and/or are survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, including forced marriage, honour-based abuse and female genital mutilation. Community support includes refuge accommodation, help to stay safe, practical, emotional and cultural support, including legal, financial and community education.

ARCH Teesside is a specialist sexual violence service offering free and confidential support, help and advocacy to people in the Teesside area who have experienced rape and sexual abuse at any point in their lives.

A Way Out is an outreach and prevention charity which aims to engage, empower and equip vulnerable and excluded women, families and young people to live lives free from harm, abuse and exploitation and to reduce life-limiting choices and behaviour.

Suzy Lamplugh Trust offers expert advice in lone-working and personal safety training, stalking training, as well as consultancy, campaigning, and support services. Across the Cleveland area, Suzy Lamplugh Trust provides support to victims of stalking via an Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC).

### *Local Domestic Abuse Services*

Harbour is the commissioned service provider for an integrated response to victims and survivors, including children, and perpetrators of domestic abuse in Hartlepool. This includes the provision of safe accommodation comprising of –

- a 7-unit refuge for women and children, inclusive of one space for disabled people and one space to be used for emergency use for a maximum of 7 days,
- a 6-unit refuge for single women with complex needs
- 3 dispersed properties for all victims of domestic abuse

Harbour also delivers a Sanctuary scheme to residents of Hartlepool in tandem with Crime Prevention Officers in Cleveland Police.

The number of units of safe accommodation available in Hartlepool has increased year on year since 2021. However, Hartlepool does not currently have any specialist or second stage (move-on) accommodation.

In addition to safe accommodation, Harbour are commissioned to deliver –

- outreach and assertive outreach in the community,
- empowerment programmes,

- counselling
- a dedicated children and young people therapeutic service
- a prevention service and programme for those who cause harm.
- Three specialist roles for the CHUB, safeguarding and assessment teams and early intervention.

Service users are also encouraged to access the recovery service once formal support has ended and contribute to the Service User Panel to inform strategic decisions.

Harbour offers services to the whole community, including –

- Women, men and trans people
- People from all ethnic groups and backgrounds
- People from the LGBTQ+ community
- Disabled people
- Children

In addition to this, the Office for Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland fund an IDVA in each locality, as well as specialist IDVA's for –

- Mental Health
- Hospital
- Children and Young People
- Court

They are subject to grant funding until March 2026.

The Office for Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland has launched a Teeswide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy for 2025 – 2035.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy identifies three key priorities:

- Prevent – by identifying, responding and referring concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Protect – by identifying perpetrators and holding abuse behaviour to account.
- Pursue – by using protective measures to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators.

Hartlepool Borough Council has commissioned the Safe and Together<sup>xxiv</sup> Model as framework to improve the response to domestic abuse to families involved in children's services. An implementation plan is underway to develop this across multi-agency partners.

### 9. What needs are unmet?

Issue number	Unmet need
Hidden victims and victims with multiple and complex needs	Whilst service provisions are available and inclusive for all, the needs assessment has shown a cohort of hidden victims who may face barriers to accessing services. Additionally, local data has shown that victims support needs in relation to mental health, disability and substance use is increasing and becoming more multi-faceted, creating a greater need and demand on services.
Children and young people	The demand for services for children is increasing. There needs to be a focus on children being recognised as victims. Additionally, further work needs to be completed to understand the need of CAPVA. A standalone domestic abuse strategy for children should be considered.
Perpetrator accountability and provision	Data has shown that perpetrators of domestic abuse are committing multiple crimes and repeating this pattern of behaviour. The current perpetrator provision has seen an increase in repeat referrals therefore the effectiveness of the provision needs to be considered.

## 10. What needs to be done and why?

Issue number	What needs to be done?	Why?
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early intervention and prevention. Awareness raising and promotion of services, especially with hidden victims (such as those with disabilities, from ethnic minority groups or different cultural backgrounds and male victims) and</li> </ul>	<p>Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on both the victims and the wider community. Providing early intervention and prevention approaches are both life saving and will be cost effective in improving the health and wellbeing of the community.</p> <p>In view of the fact that disabled people are more likely to be victims</p>

## Hartlepool JSNA

	<p>those with complex needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise existing service user forums to ensure that victim and survivor voice informs the commissioning and delivery of services</li> <li>• Ensure services are accessible, trauma-informed and use professional curiosity when individuals decline their service or do not engage</li> <li>• Provide training to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of 'personally connected' covering intimate partners and family members</li> <li>• Ensure pathways and information sharing is robust, including MARAC, MATAC and HRAP</li> <li>• Consider alternative safe accommodation options including specialist, by and for and move-on.</li> <li>• Review the proportion of out of area referrals both in and out of Hartlepool.</li> <li>• Consider a multi-agency dashboard to create consistency in the recording and reporting of data relating to domestic abuse</li> <li>• Understand the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law).</li> <li>• Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to</li> </ul>	<p>of domestic abuse and individuals in Hartlepool are more likely to have a disability or report poor health, it is vital that we have accessible services and information.</p>
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	standardise the response victims receive	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on early intervention and prevention to ensure all children understand healthy relationships</li> <li>• Ensure all services are recognising children as victims in their own right</li> <li>• Ensure therapeutic support services are available for children</li> <li>• Review the prevalence of CAPVA, the demand on services and ensure that the offer in place can meet the need of children and their parents.</li> <li>• Understand the effectiveness of Operation Encompass</li> <li>• Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response children as victims receive</li> </ul>	Children experience domestic abuse both in their family homes and in their own interpersonal relationships. This can have a lasting adverse impact through childhood and into adulthood.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the OPCC Perpetration Strategy</li> <li>• Review the criminal justice response to perpetrators within Hartlepool</li> <li>• Monitor the effectiveness and engagement of perpetrator provision</li> <li>• Reduce repeat offending and the number of repeat high risk MARAC cases</li> <li>• Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response perpetrators receive</li> </ul>	Without addressing perpetrators behaviour, the cycle of abuse will continue.

### 11. What additional needs assessment is required?

Firstly, there will continue to be an underreporting of domestic abuse.

The data that is currently available from different sources has issues relating to

- Collection periods
- Data quality and quantity
- Interpretation of data
- Recording of demographics

To effectively understand the need of domestic abuse within Hartlepool, an agreed set of data standards across all services would need to be developed.

Review the need, demand and effectiveness of –

- Operation Encompass
- CAPVA
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)
- Perpetrator interventions

Response to consultation is low, therefore further consideration should be given for how to incorporate the victims voice to inform the commissioning and delivery of services.

### 12. Key contacts and references

#### Key contact

**Name:** Olivia Highley

**Job title:** Domestic Abuse Coordinator

**Organisation:** Hartlepool Borough Council

**Email:** [Olivia.Highley@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Olivia.Highley@hartlepool.gov.uk)

**Phone number:** 01429523919

**Contributor/s:**

Hartlepool Borough Council

Cleveland Police

Harbour Support Services

Halo

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust

## References

See end of document for references

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### *Definition*

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 created a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional as well as coercive and controlling behaviour. Section 1 sets out the definition as follows –

*[The] Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if—*

- a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected\* to each other, and*
- b) the behaviour is abusive.*

*Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following—*

- a) physical or sexual abuse;*
- b) violent or threatening behaviour;*
- c) controlling or coercive behaviour;*
- d) economic abuse;*
- e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;*

*And it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.*

*\*Personally connected is defined in Section 2 as being or have been married, in a civil partnership, in an intimate personal relationship or are related.*

Section 1 of the Act also gives a statutory definition to economic abuse for the first time as:

*"Economic abuse" means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to—*

- (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or*
- (b) obtain goods or services.*

The Act also defines child victims of domestic abuse in Section 3:

*1) This section applies where behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is domestic abuse.*

*2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who—*

- a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and*
- b) is related to A or B.*

Coercive and controlling behaviours within an intimate or family relationship are defined in Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015:

A person (A) commits an offence if— a) A repeatedly or continuously engages in behaviour towards another person (B) that is controlling or coercive, b) at the time of the behaviour, A and B are personally connected, c) the behaviour has a serious effect on B, and d) A knows or ought to know that the behaviour will have a serious effect on B. A and B are "personally connected" if— a) A is in an intimate personal relationship with B, or b) A and B live together and— i. they are members of the same family, or

ii. they have previously been in an intimate personal relationship with each other. A's behaviour has a "serious effect" on B if— a) it causes B to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against B, or b) it causes B serious alarm or distress which has a substantial adverse effect on B's usual day-to-day activities.

## Appendix 2

### *Domestic Abuse Act and Statutory Guidance*

The Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent in 2021 and as well as setting out a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognising children as victims it also –

- Appointed the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out their functions and powers
- Introduced Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Domestic Abuse Protection Notices
- Placed a duty on local authorities to provide safe accommodation with support to victims and children
- Prohibit perpetrators from cross-examining victims in civil and family courts and provide special measures to victims in criminal, civil and family courts
- Created a new offence of non-fatal strangulation
- Extended coercive and controlling behaviour to cover post separation abuse
- Extending the 'revenge porn' offence to cover threats to disclose material
- Reinforcing that an individual cannot consent to their own death to eliminate the 'rough sex gone wrong' defence.
- Provide eligible homeless victims with 'priority need' <sup>xxv</sup>

Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act sets out the statutory duties on local authorities to –

- Carry out a needs assessment for accommodation based support and use this needs assessment to;
- Publish a strategy and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy in providing safe accommodation
- Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Partnership Board including representation of victims and children of domestic abuse
- Present an annual report to the Secretary of State

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board meets quarterly to monitor the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan and reports into the Safer Hartlepool Partnership.

The statutory guidance was published in July 2022 and includes agency and multi-agency response to domestic abuse. Following this, the Government

published their Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan<sup>xxvi</sup> which focuses on prioritising prevention, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and a stronger system

Each individual agency should have provisions in place in responding and identifying domestic abuse, including the use of the DASH risk assessment when professionals are trained to use the tool, using professional judgment and indicators to identify and manage risk.

The statutory guidance of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) should be used in conjunction with the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) when responding to abuse involving children under the age of 18.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Other relevant legislation -

- Serious Violence Duty
- Victims and Prisoners Act
- The Care Act
- Homelessness Code of Guidance
- National Statement of Expectations

## Appendix 3

### *Glossary*

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical assault including hitting, shoving, kicking, head-butting, slapping, hair pulling and assault with weapons. Also includes threatening to carry out any of these actions.

#### **Sexual abuse**

Any unwanted sexual contact including rape.

#### **Verbal abuse**

Shouting, swearing, calling names.

#### **Economic abuse**

Taking away someone's resources or economic independence. May involve actions like preventing the victim going to work or taking away their wages; taking out debt in the victim's name (with or without their knowledge); ruining the victim's credit score to make it difficult for them to access credit; damage to possessions and property.

#### **Emotional abuse**

Attacking the victim's personality by insulting or demeaning the victim, telling them they are worthless or unlovable, that everything is their fault, that they are a bad spouse/partner/parent, etc.

#### **Gas lighting**

A form of emotional abuse where the perpetrator causes the victim to doubt their own thoughts, memories, the events happening around them and even their own sanity.

**Child contact abuse**

Using child contact arrangements to abuse or harass the victim, for example, telling the victim they will report them as a bad parent to have the children removed or if they have been removed that it was the victim's fault; repeatedly taking the victim back to Family Court (particularly if the victim does not have access to legal aid); making malicious reports to social workers about the victim; encouraging the children to abuse the victim as well.

**Online abuse**

Using social media to stalk or harass the victim; posting or threatening to post indecent images of the victim online (revenge porn); installing "spyware" software on the victim's computer and/or smart phone to monitor their online activity or to track their "real-world" movements.

**Stalking**

Following, watching or spying on the victim - can be "real world", online or both.

**Harassment**

Repeated attempts to force contact or communication with the victim – can also include attempts to contact others connected with the victim e.g. family members, friends and co-workers.

**LGBTQ+**

Abuse based around an individual's sexuality e.g. saying the individual is "too gay" or threatening to "out" the survivor to family, co-workers, etc. who are not aware of their sexuality. LGBTQ survivors can face abuse from their partner and / or their family. They can also face hostility and prejudice from services.

**Child-to parent abuse**

A pattern of abuse that causes the parent(s) to fear the child. In the context of young people and family violence, this can also extend to siblings and other members of the household. In an adult child-to parent-abuse context the abuse may revolve around the elderly parent(s) care needs, for example, the adult child's refusal to allow care for their parent as the cost will reduce their inheritance.

**Disabled people**

Disabled people can face abuse related to their disability and / or care needs, for example withholding medication; removing a disabled person's wheelchair or placing obstacles in the path of a blind person to restrict their mobility; using abusive language when talking to or about the survivor e.g. saying they are a burden. If the abuser is also the carer then the risk to the victim is even greater.

**Older people**

Similarly to disabled people, older people can face abuse related to their care needs, particularly if the abuser is also the person's carer. They can also face abuse from their adult children. Services can confuse signs of abuse for age-related infirmity.

**Young people**

Young people in abusive teen relationships face similar types of abuse as adults. As young people often have a large online presence they may also

experience additional types of abuse related to this e.g. sexting, revenge porn and online stalking and harassment. Young people may also face abuse within a family context from siblings. They may also experience abuse from a parent if they are still living at home beyond age 16 (for purposes re: domestic abuse below age 16 would be classed as child abuse not domestic abuse however it also needs noting that a child aged 16-18 can still be defined as child abuse).

### **Honour-based violence (HBV)**

HBV is motivated by a desire to preserve the “honour” of the perpetrator and / or the wider family. HBV can be perpetrated by the intimate partner and / or other family members. HBV victims are more likely to experience abuse from multiple perpetrators. Factors such as disability, sexuality and being “Westernised” can increase the risk of HBV. Forced marriage and FGM is a significant part of the abuse for many victims of HBV

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM involves any procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genital organs or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is most often carried out on young girls aged between infancy and 15 years old. This is child abuse and must be treated as such. Forced marriage A forced marriage is where one or both people do not or (in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity) cannot consent to the marriage and they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so. Rejecting a forced marriage can be a trigger for HBV.

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<sup>i</sup> Office for National Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2024> (Accessed July 2025)

<sup>ii</sup> Office for National Statistics <https://www.crimesurvey.co.uk/en/SurveyResults.html> (Accessed July 2025)

<sup>iii</sup> Office for National Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2024#domestic-abuse> (Accessed July 2025)

<sup>iv</sup> The Home Office

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f637b8f8fa8f5106d15642a/horr107.pdf> (Accessed July 2025)

<sup>v</sup> Nomis [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census\\_2021/report?compare=E06000001](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2021/report?compare=E06000001) (Accessed July 2025)

<sup>vi</sup> Office for National Statistics

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<sup>vii</sup> Public Health England <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/domestic%20abuse%20rate> (Accessed July 2025)

<sup>viii</sup> Safer Hartlepool Partnership

[https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4471/safer\\_hartlepool\\_partnership](https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4471/safer_hartlepool_partnership) (Accessed July 2025)

<sup>ix</sup> Office for National Statistics

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<sup>x</sup> Operation Encompass <https://www.operationencompass.org/why-was-operation-encompass-created> (Accessed July 2025)

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- <sup>xi</sup> Safe Lives <https://safelives.org.uk/about-domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-response-in-the-uk/what-is-a-marac/> (Accessed July 2025)
- <sup>xii</sup> Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board <https://www.tsab.org.uk/key-information/policies-strategies/high-risk-adults-panel/> (Accessed July 2025)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Local Government Association <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/domestic-homicide-review-survey-2024> (Accessed July 2025)
- <sup>xiv</sup> Domestic Abuse Commissioner <https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/domestic-abuse-commissioner-responds-to-new-report-revealing-the-scale-of-domestic-homicide-and-suicide/> (Accessed July 2025)
- <sup>xv</sup> NHS England <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/safeguarding-adults> (Accessed July 2025)
- <sup>xvi</sup> Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust <https://www.tevv.nhs.uk/> (Accessed July 2025)
- <sup>xvii</sup> North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust <https://www.nth.nhs.uk/news/new-domestic-violence-advocate-supporting-teesside-patients-and-staff/> (Accessed July 2025)
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- <sup>xxi</sup> Reducing The Risk <https://reducingtherisk.org.uk/disabilities-and-domestic-abuse/> (Accessed July 2025)
- <sup>xxii</sup> Reducing The Risk <https://reducingtherisk.org.uk/lgbtq/> (Accessed July 2025)
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**Hartlepool Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership**  
**Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026 – 2029**

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**Contents**

Title	Page Number
Foreword	
Duties and responsibilities	
How this strategy links to other local strategies	
Governance	
Introduction	
What are the key issues in Hartlepool?	
What have we achieved since the previous strategy?	
How have we responded to the Safe Accommodation Duty?	
What have we learned?	
What are the challenges?	
What are our priorities and what needs to be done to achieve them?	
What does success look like?	
Help and support	

## Foreword

To be completed by the Leader of the Council.

## Duties and responsibilities

Under the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**, several key duties have been placed on councils in England to improve support for victims of domestic abuse. These are primarily outlined in **Part 4 of the Act**, and include the following responsibilities:

### Statutory Duties on Councils

#### 1. Provision of Support in Safe Accommodation

Councils must ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children have access to **safe accommodation** and **specialist support services**. This includes:

- Refuges and other forms of safe accommodation including sanctuary
- Support services such as counselling, advocacy, and advice on staying safe

#### 2. Development of Local Strategies

Councils are required to:

- Conduct a **needs assessment** for victims in their area
- Develop and publish a **local domestic abuse strategy**
- Review and update this strategy regularly

#### 3. Multi-Agency Collaboration

Councils must work closely and form a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to ensure appropriate governance with:

- Police
- Health services
- Domestic abuse charities
- Other relevant partners to ensure a coordinated response

#### 4. Monitoring and Reporting

Councils must report annually on:

- How they are meeting their duties
- The effectiveness of their strategies
- The outcomes for victims and children

#### 5. Guidance Compliance

Councils must have **regard to statutory guidance** issued under the Act when exercising their functions. This includes ensuring that support is trauma-informed and accessible to all victims, including those with complex needs

## How this strategy links to other local strategies

The needs assessment which has informed this strategy, also forms part of Hartlepool Council's wider Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The Domestic Abuse Strategy is closely linked to the following JSNA topics:

- Housing
- Violent Crime
- Mental Health
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Sexual Health
- Substance Misuse
- Youth Offending

The Domestic Abuse Strategy is also closely linked to the following local strategies:

- Housing Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Drug and Alcohol Strategy
- Community Safety Plan

Intersecting local initiatives:

- Making Every Contact Count (MECC)
- Whole Systems Approach
- Coordinated Community Response (CCR)
- Safe and Together
- High Risk Adults Panel (HRAP)

The Office for Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland has launched a Teeswide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy for 2025 – 2035 which aligns with the strategic priorities in the Cleveland Police and Crime Plan.

The Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy identifies three key priorities:

- Prevent – by identifying, responding and referring concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Protect – by identifying perpetrators and holding abuse behaviour to account.
- Pursue – by using protective measures to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators.

## Governance

The Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership (DALSP) has oversight and governance of the delivery of the strategy, and is made up of –

- Victims and survivors of domestic abuse
- Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) including community safety, public health, children's and adults social care and housing
- Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust
- Cleveland Police
- Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland (OPCC)
- Probation Service
- Registered Housing Providers
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)
- Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP)

The DALSP reports to the Safer Hartlepool Partnership (SHP).

## Introduction

The most recent needs assessment in Hartlepool was published in 2021, followed by Hartlepool's Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System Based on Lived Experience 2022-2025. In line with the Council's duty to review and refresh its domestic abuse needs assessment and associated strategy, a new strategic needs assessment has been carried out during 2025. The data and intelligence gathered as part of the needs assessment has informed this strategy for 2026 - 2029.

We would like to thank the Council departments and Partner Agencies that contributed data and information to help in the assessment of the level of need for domestic abuse services in Hartlepool and the development of this strategy. We would also like to thank the service users and survivors who contributed their lived experience, and feedback, which allows us to continue in our victim and survivor-led approach.

## What are the key issues in Hartlepool?

The needs assessment identified the following three key strategic issues:

1. There is an insufficient availability of support services for **victims and survivors** of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.
2. **Children** affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).
3. There is a lack of consistent accountability for **perpetrators** of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.

## What have we achieved since the previous strategy?

The key strategic priorities identified in Hartlepool's Domestic Abuse Strategy: Building a System Based on Lived Experience 2022-2025 were -

- Working with victims/ survivors (adults and children) for them to be true partners in our review and development of services;
- Focus on supporting as early as possible – develop a prevention/ early intervention offer;
- Re-commission support services based on lived experiences;
- Equip the workforce to ask the right questions and to support victims of domestic abuse;
- Develop more choice and options for safe accommodation; and
- Consider the needs of victims/survivors with multiple and complex issues using multi agency support in order to begin to address needs.

Key achievements against these strategic priorities include -

The voices of victims, survivors and children are represented by Harbour as the commissioned service provider but also by other specialist support agencies, including Halo, Hart Gables, A Way Out and ARCH. Services have service user panels and survivor groups that are utilised to influence change and development. Members of the partnership also identify as survivors of domestic abuse both as children and adults and contribute their lived experience. Survivor voice continues to be reflected in the refreshed Needs Assessment and Strategy.

The offer of domestic abuse services within Hartlepool has been updated and is reflected on the Hartlepool Borough Council website. The development of a new website is ongoing.

There have been numerous awareness raising campaigns including –

- Violence Against Women and Girls week of action led by Cleveland Police with support from specialist agencies,
- 'Ask for Angela' was launched by Community Safety in licensed premises across Hartlepool
- 'Ask for Ani' campaign has been reinforced with pharmacies.
- Harbour celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and hosted a 'Walk a Mile in their Shoes' event, bringing together survivors and the professionals that support them.

A full commissioning process was completed in 2022 for support and safe accommodation and therapeutic support for children Harbour being awarded both contracts commencing on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 for three years. These are monitored with a robust performance framework with regular outcome monitoring.

Domestic abuse services have been complemented with funding from the Office for Police and Crime Commissioner that is aligned with commissioning arrangements, including hospital, court, mental health and Independent Domestic Violence

Advocate's (IDVA) that operate within Hartlepool and a programme for perpetrators with complex needs. Other organisations have received funding from the OPCC, including ARCH Teesside that provide support to adults and children who are victims of sexual abuse and Halo who received funding from the OPCC to support with black and minority ethnic groups. Unfortunately, this funding is grant funded, time limited and subject to yearly funding allocations.

Reducing parental conflict work is led by Changing Futures North East.

The Safe and Together model continues to be implemented across the workforce which is strengthening our response to domestic abuse by partnering with survivors and intervening with perpetrators and keeping children safe and together with the non-offending parent. Additional training has been provided to Health Advocates within the local authority, including training on responding to disclosures of domestic abuse within the workplace. Training is delivered by Harbour and partners via workforce development and the HSSCP and TSAB.

TSAB updated the Team Around the Individual (TATI) process, now known as High Risk Adult Panel (HRAP) and offers another pathway to strengthen the response to individuals with multiple and complex issues, including victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. Strategic MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) continues to oversee the action plan recommended by Safe Lives.

## How have we responded to the Safe Accommodation Duty?

Harbour is the commissioned service provider for an integrated response to victims and survivors, including children, and perpetrators of domestic abuse in Hartlepool. This includes the provision of safe accommodation comprising of –

- a 7-unit refuge for women and children, inclusive of one space for disabled people and one space to be used for emergency use for a maximum of 7 days,
- a 6-unit refuge for single women with complex needs
- Dispersed properties for all victims of domestic abuse.

At the time of writing, Harbour have secured additional dispersed properties across the North East, with the total number in Hartlepool being 6.

The provision of safe accommodation for women with complex needs is a unique model of delivery and has received regional and national recognition, with options being explored for co-commissioning and reciprocal arrangements with commissioners across the North East.

The number of units of safe accommodation available in Hartlepool has increased year on year since 2021. However, Hartlepool does not currently have any specialist or second stage (move-on) accommodation.

Hartlepool Home Search was launched as the new Choice Based Lettings System in Hartlepool and victims of domestic abuse are awarded a priority banding in line with the allocations policy, in partnership with the Housing Advice Team and Registered Social Landlords.

The Safe Accommodation Duty also includes the requirement to provide other support services such as counselling, support services and advocacy. Harbour also delivers a Sanctuary scheme to residents of Hartlepool in tandem with Crime Prevention Officers in Cleveland Police.

In addition to safe accommodation, Harbour are commissioned to deliver –

- outreach and assertive outreach in the community,
- empowerment programmes,
- counselling
- a dedicated children and young people therapeutic service
- a preventions service and programme for those who cause harm.
- Three specialist roles for the CHUB, safeguarding and assessment teams and early intervention.

Service users are also encouraged to access the recovery service once formal support has ended and contribute to the Service User Panel to inform strategic decisions.

Harbour offers services to the whole community, including –

- Women, men and trans people

- People from all ethnic groups and backgrounds
- People from the LGBTQ+ community
- Disabled people
- Children

Data returns have been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), formerly Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for the financial years 2021 – 2022, 2022 – 2023, 2023 – 2024 and 2024 – 2025.

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## What have we learned?

Whilst the needs assessment shows that domestic abuse continues to be primarily a gender-based crime, perpetrated by men against women, this oversimplifies the situation somewhat. Demographic analysis of the services reviewed in the needs assessment shows that some groups are overrepresented in the client / referral data compared to other groups within that same demographic characteristic (e.g. age bracket) or compared to the local Hartlepool population. Additionally, whilst the numbers for some groups remain low, they are making up an increasingly significant proportion of service users.

Based on the evidence reviewed in this needs assessment, the following groups are overrepresented in the client data:

- Women – make up 79.8% of referrals to Harbour support services, 95% of homeless presentations due to domestic abuse and 71% of adult safeguarding referrals related to domestic abuse yet just 51.6% of the Hartlepool population
- People aged 19-44 – make up 66.9% of Harbour referrals yet just 30.9% of the Hartlepool population
- People living in social housing or private rented accommodation - make up 66.5% of Harbour referrals compared to 41% of the Hartlepool population
- People who are already homeless (particularly women and single households) – make up 42% of referrals to the Council's homelessness team

In terms of groups where total numbers remain low, but they are representing an increasing proportion of the demographic makeup of referrals:

- Ethnic minorities make up a small proportion of referrals to Harbour but this proportion is increasing and is slightly higher than the local population for all minority groups
  - Black, Caribbean or Black British - 1.2% of referrals / 0.5% local population
  - Asian or Asian British – 1.9% of referrals / 1.7% of local population
  - Mixed or multiple ethnicities – 1.1% of referrals / 0.7% of local population
  - Other ethnicity – 0.7% of referrals or 0.6% of local population
- Males make up an increasing proportion of Harbour referrals. They currently make up 20% of referrals (increased from 18.6%) compared to 48.4% of the local population

Particular groups also make up an increasing proportion of the Safe Accommodation referrals:

- People with complex needs who cannot be admitted into refuge accommodation (increased from 4.2% to 9.8%)
- Women who are pregnant at the time of referral (increased from 8% to 12%)
- People with a disability (increased from 4% to 15%)
- People with mental health issues (increased from 33% to 47%)

Future analysis will show if these trends continue over the longer term. However, in the meantime, consideration needs to be given to how the differing (and intersecting) needs of these groups can be accommodated by services.

### **Strategic Issues Arising from Consultation**

People with disabilities are more likely to experience domestic abuse than the general population and Hartlepool has a higher rate of disability and ill health than the England rate. 59% of the survey respondents reported a limiting health condition or disability. Services need to be visible and accessible. There needs to be further education and awareness raising to reduce the stigma of domestic abuse and break down barriers. Some respondents in the survey stated they “were not aware of anything locally” or were “managing the situation themselves”.

Services need to be trauma informed and use professional curiosity, including in cases where service users decline to engage. Training should be provided to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of ‘personally connected’ covering intimate partners and family members. One respondent highlighted “staff should have more appropriate training”.

## What are the challenges?

Gaps in the available data continues to be a significant challenge in understanding the level of need in Hartlepool. The needs assessment identified the following gaps:

- Detailed demographic data is patchy, with some services collecting more detailed data than others. Some key gaps in demographic information include:
  - Where survivors have a disability, more detailed information about the types and levels of disability experienced would enable a better understanding of the barriers that exist for people with disabilities.
  - Health data is patchy and, in some cases, unavailable. This is a significant gap in assessing the needs of victims and survivors, perpetrators and their children who access health services. In some cases, data is only available at NHS Trust level and cannot be broken down to find which patients were of Hartlepool residence. Additionally, the Cardiff Model data which was previously provided in 2021 is no longer available.
  - Cleveland Police provide Operation Encompass disclosures to schools but are unable to break this down into district area and were unable to provide any data relating to this. This continues to be a gap as highlighted in 2021.
  - Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, although approached, weren't able to provide data if they are not a commissioned service due to the level of pressure this places on already limited services.

Funding from central government is often allocated on a yearly basis and therefore it is difficult to make commitments when commissioning services. Due to this, teams can be small and staff turnover can also be high and can create instability in services. An example of this, is the hospital based IDVA's that have received grant funding since 2022 from the OPCC will come to an end in March 2026.

Support for victims of crime is precarious due to staffing pressures and funding cuts which has a significant impact on the delivery of crime prevention and target hardening as part of the sanctuary scheme offer.

The demand for services for children is increasing. There needs to be a focus on children being recognised as victims. Additionally, further work needs to be completed to understand the need of Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA). A standalone domestic abuse strategy for children should be considered.

Data has shown that perpetrators of domestic abuse are committing multiple crimes and repeating this pattern of behaviour. The current perpetrator provision has seen an increase in repeat referrals therefore the effectiveness of the provision needs to be considered. Additionally, the referrals into the Preventions Service from the Criminal Justice System (CJS) continues to be low. It is increasingly challenging to hold perpetrators accountable for their behaviour, without intervention from the CJS.

## What are our priorities and what needs to be done to achieve them?

The strategic priorities have been identified from the needs assessment. Additionally, they align closely with the Government's Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan.

### Priority 1: Supporting Victims

There is an insufficient availability of support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, particularly for those who are hidden from services or have complex needs. This limits early intervention and identification of domestic abuse, recovery, and long-term safety.

#### Why?

Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on both the victims and the wider community. Providing early intervention and prevention approaches are both lifesaving and will be cost effective in improving the health and wellbeing of the community. In view of the fact that disabled people are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse and individuals in Hartlepool are more likely to have a disability or report poor health, it is vital that we have accessible services and information.

#### What needs to be done?

- Early intervention and prevention. Awareness raising and promotion of services, especially with hidden victims (such as those with disabilities, from ethnic minority groups or different cultural backgrounds and male victims) and those with complex needs
- Utilise existing service user forums to ensure that victim and survivor voice informs the commissioning and delivery of services
- Ensure services are accessible, trauma-informed and use professional curiosity when individuals decline their service or do not engage
- Provide training to multi-agency practitioners in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and ensure that practitioners are aware of the many forms of domestic abuse and the definition of 'personally connected' covering intimate partners and family members
- Ensure pathways and information sharing is robust, including MARAC, MATAC and HRAP
- Consider alternative safe accommodation options including specialist, by and for and move-on.
- Review the proportion of out of area referrals both in and out of Hartlepool.
- Consider a multi-agency dashboard to create consistency in the recording and reporting of data relating to domestic abuse
- Understand the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law).
- Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response victims receive

## **Priority 2: Recognising Children as Victims**

Children affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right, and current services are not always responsive to their needs—whether in the home, in their own relationships, or in cases of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA).

### **Why?**

Children experience domestic abuse both in their family homes and in their own interpersonal relationships. This can have a lasting adverse impact through childhood and into adulthood.

### **What needs to be done?**

- Focus on early intervention and prevention to ensure all children understand healthy relationships
- Ensure all services are recognising children as victims in their own right
- Ensure therapeutic support services are available for children
- Review the prevalence of CAPVA, the demand on services and ensure that the offer in place can meet the need of children and their parents.
- Understand the effectiveness of Operation Encompass
- Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response children as victims receive

## **Priority 3: Pursuing Perpetrators**

There is a lack of consistent accountability for perpetrators of domestic abuse, and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.

### **Why?**

Without addressing perpetrators behaviour, the cycle of abuse will continue.

### **What needs to be done?**

- Support the OPCC Perpetration Strategy
- Review the criminal justice response to perpetrators within Hartlepool
- Monitor the effectiveness and engagement of perpetrator provision
- Reduce repeat offending and the number of repeat high risk MARAC cases

Continue to implement the Safe and Together model across multi-agency partners to standardise the response perpetrators receive

## What does success look like?

### For victims...

Victims and survivors will continue to be partners in the delivery of the strategy and action plan and continue to shape and support services

Victims who have accessed services will report –

- Feeling safer
- A reduction in all types of abuse (physical, sexual, harassment and stalking, jealous and controlling behaviour)
- Improved quality of life
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved relationships with their children
- Improved self-esteem and confidence
- Improved support networks

There will be a reduction in repeat victims.

Pathways for victims who do not access services or who have unplanned exits from services will be robust to ensure they receive support that is person-centred and trauma-informed to their individual need.

Services will be flexible and able to accommodate the need of different groups such as:

- Disabled people
- People from an ethnic minority or with cultural needs
- Male victims
- People with complex needs

The community will feel confident in knowing where they can access support and service providers will continue to raise awareness of support to both adults and children.

Practitioners will report that their skills and knowledge regarding domestic abuse have improved. Audits will show that practitioners have a developed understanding of domestic abuse and respond in line with the Safe and Together principles.

There will be an increase in the number of people able to access safe accommodation, including those with complex needs. The number of households who successfully move on from safe accommodation will increase.

There will be consideration of a multi-agency dashboard to create consistency in the recording and reporting of data relating to domestic abuse.

Strategic MARAC will have appropriate oversight and governance of the MARAC process. Information sharing process will be robust, including for MARAC, MATAC and HRAP.

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) will be effective in responding to disclosures.

### **For children...**

Children who have accessed services will report –

- Feeling happier
- Feeling safer

There will be an increase in the number of children able to stay with the non-offending parent because of implementing Safe and Together.

Children will be recognised as victims in their own right and offered the appropriate support packages based on their needs, including therapeutic support.

Practitioners will be confident in recognising the difference between reducing parental conflict and domestic abuse. Parents will be able to access the appropriate support accordingly.

Children will receive the appropriate level of Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) to understand healthy relationships.

There will be a clear link with youth services, including youth offending to strengthen partnership working and ensure as many professionals as possible are trauma informed.

There will be improved professional understanding and a clear offer for families who experience Child to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA).

Operation Encompass will be effective in providing support to children experiencing domestic abuse. There will be a clear understanding of how this operates in Hartlepool, in line with statutory duties.

### **For perpetrators...**

Practitioners will feel confident in intervening with perpetrators and holding them accountable for their behaviour, including within the criminal justice system.

There will be a clear understanding of the role of the criminal justice response to perpetrators of domestic abuse.

There will be a reduction in the number of perpetrators identified as repeating their pattern of behaviour, resulting in a reduction of repeat high risk MARAC cases.

When a perpetrator is identified within the MATAC cohort, there will be a clear reduction in risk that is sustained.

There will be an increase in the number of individuals referred to and accessing prevention interventions. There will be an increase in the number of individuals successfully completing behaviour change programmes.

There will be a robust offer of support for perpetrators, including accommodation in order to safely manage risk to victims and children.

The DALSP will support the priorities outlined in the Tees-wide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy.

DRAFT

## Help and Support

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the police. If you can't speak, you can ring 999 then press 55 when prompted: this is called the Silent Solution System.

For information and support in Hartlepool you can contact –

### Harbour Support Services

Harbour works with families and individuals affected by abuse from a partner, former partner or family member and provides an integrated support service to residents of Hartlepool.

T: 03000 20 25 25 (24 hours)

E: [info@myharbour.org.uk](mailto:info@myharbour.org.uk)

W: [www.myharbour.org.uk](http://www.myharbour.org.uk)

### Adult Safeguarding

If you are worried about an adult being abused or neglected please contact:

The Integrated Single Point of Access (iSPA), *Monday Thursday 8:30am-5pm; Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm*

Tel: 01429 523390

SMS: 078336 72357

Email: [ispa@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:ispa@hartlepool.gov.uk)

If you need urgent help when our offices are closed, you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552

### Children's Safeguarding

The Children's Hub is the first point of contact for anyone who has a concern about the welfare or safety of a child or young person or thinks they may need extra help and support.

Tel - 01429 284284

Email - [childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk)

The service operates Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm.

The Emergency Duty Team provides an out-of-hours response to emergency situations involving child protection, child care, mental health and other adult care service matters.

Tel - 01642 524552

Further information and support can be found at

<https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/domesticabuse>

# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

Guidance for completing this form is available in the “Single Impact Assessment: Toolkit for Officers”, available from the Single Impact Assessment page on the intranet at <https://hbcintranet/Pages/Single-Impact-Assessments.aspx>.

## Section 1 – Details of the proposed action being considered

<b>1.1 Lead Department:</b>	Children’s and Joint Commissioning
<b>1.2 Lead Division:</b>	Quality and Review
<b>1.3 Title of the proposed action:</b>	
Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026 – 2029	
<b>1.4 Brief description of the proposed action:</b>	
Updating the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026 – 2029 in line with statutory duties within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.	
<b>1.5 Who else is involved:</b>	
Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership – <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Victims and survivors of domestic abuse</li><li>• Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) including community safety, public health, children’s and adults social care and housing</li><li>• Integrated Care Board (ICB)</li><li>• North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust</li><li>• Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust</li><li>• Cleveland Police</li><li>• Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland (OPCC)</li></ul>	

# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

- Probation Service
- Registered Housing Providers
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)
- Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP)

## 1.6 Who will make the final decision about the proposed action:

Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee

## 1.7 Which wards will be affected by the proposed action? Tick all that apply

All wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hart	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seaton	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burn Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Headland & Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throston	<input type="checkbox"/>
De Bruce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manor House	<input type="checkbox"/>	Victoria	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fens & Greatham	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rossmere	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A - Internal council activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foggy Furze	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural West	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## 1.8 Completed By:

Name	Job Title	Date Completed
Olivia Highley	Domestic Abuse Coordinator	07/08/2025

1.9 Version	Author	Summary of Changes	Date
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# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

1	Olivia Highley	N/A	07/08/2025

## Section 2 – Explaining the impact of the proposed action

### 2.1 What data and evidence has informed this impact assessment?

A full domestic abuse needs assessment was carried out for 2024/2025. This included using local data requested from partner agencies –

- Cleveland Police
- Safer Hartlepool Partnership
- Children's Hub
- Adult Safeguarding
- Housing Advice and Homeless Service
- Harbour Support Services
- Halo Project
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust

National data was analysed as a comparison accompanied by a literature review. A consultation with the public and service users was carried out.

### 2.2 If there are gaps in evidence or not enough information to assess the impact, how have you addressed this or how will you address it?

Gap(s) Identified	How it / they have or will be addressed
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# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

## Appendix 3

<p><b>Hidden victims and victims with multiple and complex needs</b></p> <p>Whilst service provisions are available and inclusive for all, the needs assessment has shown a cohort of hidden victims who may face barriers to accessing services. Additionally, local data has shown that victims support needs in relation to mental health, disability and substance use is increasing and becoming more multi-faceted, creating a greater need and demand on services.</p>	<p>Within the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026.</p>
<p><b>Children and young people</b></p> <p>Additionally, further work needs to be completed to understand the need of CAPVA.</p>	<p>Within the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026. A standalone domestic abuse strategy for children should be considered.</p>
<p><b>Perpetrator accountability and provision</b></p> <p>Data has shown that perpetrators of domestic abuse are committing multiple crimes and repeating this pattern of behaviour. The current perpetrator provision has seen an increase in repeat referrals therefore the effectiveness of the provision needs to be considered.</p>	<p>Within the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026 and the Teeswide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy.</p>

## 2.3 Risk Score

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
<b>Age</b>		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of any domestic abuse (8.7%) compared with those in age categories of 55 years and over, for year ending (YE) March 2024. The percentage of people aged 20 to 24 years who were victims of any domestic abuse (7.1%) was higher than those aged 55 to 59 years (3.8%). For those aged 75 years and over, the percentage of victims was significantly lower than all other age groups (2.1%).</p> <p>Older people are more likely to be abused by family members rather than intimate partners and experience barriers to accessing support due to abuse being normalised and accepted.</p> <p>Harbour local data shows that in 2023/2024, 184 referrals were receive for clients aged 55 or over. This is an increase of 9% from 2020/2021.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on people within different age groups by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
<b>Disability</b>		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that adults with a disability were more than twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without, for year ending March 2024 (9.2% and 3.9% respectively).</p> <p>According to ReducingTheRisk.org.uk, disabled people face additional barriers to accessing services. Someone who is disabled and experiencing domestic abuse may find it harder to protect themselves, access sources of help, or remove themselves from the abusive situation.<sup>i</sup></p> <p>People with disabilities may be reliant on the abuser for personal care or mobility.</p>

# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

## Appendix 3

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
		<p>Learning disabilities can also affect victim-survivors access to support and their understanding of their own abuse.</p> <p>People with disabilities can be subject to all forms of domestic abuse, but due to their added vulnerability they may also experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An abuser withholding care or medication from them</li> <li>• An abuser removing mobility or sensory devices that they need for independence</li> <li>• An abuser claiming state benefits to care for them — enabling them to control the victim-survivor's finances more effectively</li> <li>• An abuser using their disability to taunt or degrade them</li> </ul> <p>Disabled people also face difficulties when it comes to disclosing the abuse. Disabled victims may already be socially isolated because of their disability. They may also find it harder to disclose abuse because they have no opportunity to see health or social care professionals without their abuser being present.</p> <p>For a victim-survivor with disabilities, the concerns about moving out of their homes come with additional and vital concerns about accessibility of a new home or refuge.</p> <p>Their house may have been specially adapted for them. Care packages have been organised and they may be worried that they will lose their current level of independence if they are forced to move elsewhere.</p> <p>They may be reluctant to report domestic abuse from a partner whose care they depend on, and which they believe enables them to stay out of institutional care.</p> <p>Harbour data shows that for 2023/24, 131 clients disclosed that they had a disability (up 37 (39%) compared to 2020/21), while 688 (up 111 (19%) said they did not have a disability, however disability status was unrecorded for 1447 clients (down 378 (21%).</p>

# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
		The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on disabled people by ensuring services are accessible for all.
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>Harbour client data shows that their service have been and continue to be accessed by a small number of transpeople.</p> <p>LGBTQ+ people also face difficulties in disclosing abuse. The history of violence and legal discrimination as well as the general homo/trans/biphobia in British society can dissuade LGBTQ+ victim-survivors from disclosing for fear of giving a community already being marginalised a 'bad name'.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on transpeople by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provided a definition of 'personally connected' which recognises domestic abuse as being perpetrated towards intimate partners and family members.</p> <p>The overwhelming majority of clients accepted into refuge were experiencing abuse from an intimate partner or ex-partner rather than from a family member. However, in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 the proportion of clients experiencing abuse from a previous partner was higher than from a current partner, though in 2023/24 the proportion experiencing abuse from a current partner was around 1 in 3, compared with 1 in 4 in 2022/23.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals regardless of their marital status by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>

# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>For new clients accommodated, pregnant clients increased by 50% in 2023/24 compared with 2022/23, from 8% to 12%.</p> <p>Pregnancy is a well known risk factor for individuals at risk of domestic abuse as domestic abuse occurs or increases in severity and frequency during pregnancy or within 12 months after birth.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on women who are pregnant ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
<b>Race (Ethnicity)</b>		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>The percentage of minority ethnic victims accessing support services in Hartlepool is increasing, they often have additional risks including so-called honour-based abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. This group may have specific needs relating to their ethnicity.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals of all ethnic backgrounds ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
<b>Religion or Belief</b>		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>It is now widely recognised that anyone of any gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, race, or religion can be a victim of domestic abuse Individuals may experience additional risks and have specific needs relating to their religion and beliefs.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals of all religions and beliefs ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>

# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

<b>Sex</b>		
Positive Impact	N/A	<p>Women and girls in Hartlepool continue to be at the greatest risk of domestic violence and abuse with 70% of all victims known to the police being female.</p> <p>Women make up 79.8% of referrals to Harbour support services, 95% of homeless presentations due to domestic abuse and 71% of adult safeguarding referrals related to domestic abuse yet just 51.6% of the Hartlepool population</p> <p>It is widely known that domestic abuse is recognised as a gendered crime and predominantly perpetrated by men towards women, in intimate partner relationships as a form of violence against women and girls.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals of all sex ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>

# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

Appendix 3

Impact	Negative Impact Score	Explanation – what is the impact?
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
Positive Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	<p>LGBTQ+ victims experience well-established forms of abuse; they are also subject to other forms of abuse specific to their LGBTQ+ status and a general landscape of discrimination. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia or manipulation of someone's internalised Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia</li> <li>• Conversion therapy</li> <li>• Threats to 'out' someone to their family/ colleagues/ friends</li> <li>• Withholding housing or financial support from them</li> <li>• Withholding medication or access to healthcare</li> </ul> <p>LGBTQ+ people also face difficulties in disclosing abuse. The history of violence and legal discrimination as well as the general homo/trans/biphobia in British society can dissuade LGBTQ+ victim-survivors from disclosing for fear of giving a community already being marginalised a 'bad name'. Fear of 'outing' themselves by reporting. This is often compounded when living in smaller towns and rural areas and can make it difficult for the abused partner to seek help.</p> <p>Heteronormative assumptions may lead Police and other agencies to misunderstand the situation as a 'fight' between two men or women rather than a violent intimate relationship.</p> <p>Most information on domestic abuse relates to the experiences of heterosexual women. This lack of understanding means that some people may not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Believe it happens in LGBTQ+ relationships.</li> <li>○ Recognise their experience of domestic abuse as that.</li> <li>○ Know how to respond if they see domestic abuse being experienced by their friends or family.</li> </ul> <p>Harbour data shows that referrals from people who identify as LGBTQ+ is increasing.</p>

# Hartlepool Borough Council – Single Impact Assessment Form

## Appendix 3

		The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ by ensuring services are accessible for all.
<b>Care Leavers (Local)</b>		
Positive Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	<p>The Domestic Abuse strategy has a whole system approach and ensures that children who are in the care of the local authority can continue to receive support into adulthood.</p> <p>Care Leavers are now exempt from the local connection test when applying for social housing along with victims of domestic abuse which will have a positive impact going forward.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on Care Leavers by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
<b>Armed Forces (Local)</b>		
Positive Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	<p>The Domestic Abuse strategy has a whole system approach and ensures that vulnerable adults who are or have been in the armed forces receive support. This forms part of our commitment under the Armed Forces Covenant. There is also a support package available via Cleveland Police for veterans in the justice system (Op Nova).</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on Armed Forces personnel and Veterans by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>
<b>Poverty and Disadvantage (Local)</b>		
Positive Impact	Likelihood score: Impact score: Overall score:	<p>Domestic abuse impacts everyone regardless of their social and economic status. Commissioned services are free at the point of access and non-means tested.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on by ensuring services are accessible for all.</p>

## Section 3 - Mitigation Action Plan or Justification

Group(s) impacted	Proposed mitigation	How this mitigation will make a difference	By when	Responsible Officer

<b>Justification</b> If you need to justify your proposed action explain this here

## Section 4 - Sign Off

<b>Responsible Officer sign off:</b>	
Name	Olivia Highley
Job title	Domestic Abuse Coordinator
<b>Assistant Director / Director sign off:</b>	
Name	Jill Harrison
Job title	Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health

Once the Single Impact Assessment is completed please send to [impactassessments@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:impactassessments@hartlepool.gov.uk).

## Section 5 - Review (To be completed after implementation)

5.1 Review completed by:		
Name	Job Title	Date review completed

5.2 Did the impact turned out as expected?

5.3 Were the proposed mitigations the correct ones and were they successful in reducing any negative impacts?

5.4 Were there any unexpected outcomes?

## 5.5 Following the review please identify next steps here (Select one)

- ☐ Additional mitigation required (give details below - 5.6)
- ☐ Original proposed course of action needs to be revisited
- ☐ No further action required

## 5.6 Additional mitigation(s) or justification

Group(s) impacted	Proposed mitigation	How this mitigation will make a difference	By when	Responsible Officer

## Justification If you need to justify your proposed action explain this here

Submit form with completed review to [impactassessments@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:impactassessments@hartlepool.gov.uk)

<sup>i</sup> Reducing The Risk <https://reducingtherisk.org.uk/disabilities-and-domestic-abuse/> (Accessed July 2025)



## SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

16 January 2026

**Report of:** Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee

**Subject:** RETAIL CRIME INVESTIGATION – FINAL REPORT

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### 1. Council Plan Priority

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b>
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

### 2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present the Audit and Governance Committee's findings following completion of its investigation into Retail Crime in Hartlepool and seek approval of its recommendations.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 In fulfilling the requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Council's Audit and Governance Committee, explored potential issues for consideration under its statutory crime and disorder scrutiny responsibilities.
- 3.2 Following consideration of a wide array of potential topics, the issue of retail crime in Hartlepool was highlighted as an issue of significant importance for residents and the topic identified as the primary focus for Audit and Governance Committee's investigation.

- 3.3 The Audit and Governance Committee completed an extensive piece of work which culminated in the production of a detailed report. As Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, I would like to present the Committee's final report and its recommendations, as attached at **Appendix A**, for consideration by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership (SHP).
- 3.4 To assist the SHP in the formulation of an informed view on each of the recommendations, an Action Plan has been produced. Under normal circumstances a stand-alone action would be developed, however, in light of the piece of work on retail crime also completed by the SHP this year, in this instance a combined action plan has been produced. The combined Action Plan, appended to the report attached as item 4.3 of today's SHP agenda, ensures coordinated response to the recommendations from both pieces of work.
- 3.5 The SHP is asked to receive the Audit and Governance Committee's report and agree to its recommendations. Responses to the combined Action Plan to be developed, implemented and monitored via the SHP. Progress in implementing the Audit and Governance Committee recommendations to be further reported back to the Audit and Governance Committee on an annual basis, as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee.

#### 4. Other Considerations/Implications

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	None
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None
<b>SUBSIDY CONTROL</b>	None
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None
<b>SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	None
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	As outlined in the report attached at Appendix A

## **5. Recommendations**

### **5.1 That SHP Members:**

- i) Receive the Audit and Governance Committee's Retail Crime investigation report and agree its recommendations; and
- ii) Monitor the implementation of the Action Plan and report progress back to the Audit and Governance Committee on an annual basis.

## **6. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 To progress presentation of the report and seek implementation of its recommendations.

## **7. Background Papers**

- i) Audit and Governance Committee – Reports and Minutes
- ii) Detailed in the final report attached at Appendix A

## **8. Contact Officers**

Joan Stevens | Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager  
Legal, Governance and Human Resources Department  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: (01429) 284142  
Email: [joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk)

Gemma Jones  
Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: (01429) 284171  
Email: [Gemma.Jones@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Gemma.Jones@hartlepool.gov.uk)



# **AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

## **RETAIL CRIME INVESTIGATION**

**SEPTEMBER 2025**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

As part of the requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Council's Audit and Governance Committee considers potential topics for investigation under its statutory scrutiny responsibilities.

The Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on the 16 July 2024 explored a range of potential topics for investigation as part of its 2024/25 work programme, all of which had merit. Of particular interest to the Committee was data presented in relation to retail crime, which highlighted that Cleveland had one of the highest rates of retail crime per 1000 population in the country and the highest rate of shoplifting<sup>1</sup>.

Whilst shocked at the regional position, Members were concerned regarding the impact of retail crime in Hartlepool, not only on the stores but also on employees and the wider community. In view of this, Members agreed to select retail crime as the topic of investigation for the 2024/25 municipal year and, over the course of the investigation, received detailed evidence from a variety of sources. Details of the evidence considered by the Committee in the formulation of its conclusions and recommendations, as summarised below, are outlined in Sections 7, 8 and 9 of this report.

### Conclusions

1. Retail crime is a significant issue in Hartlepool for retailers, employees, the Police and the wider community.
2. Offences are committed for various reasons, however, evidence showed that the main driver behind retail crime in Hartlepool is substance misuse and addiction issues. It is unclear whether perpetrators are engaging with treatment services and ways of ascertaining this information needs to be considered. It is paramount that, in order to make every contact count, offenders are linked to treatment services and that any issues are identified for those who might offend whilst in treatment.
3. A joined-up approach is vital to tackling retail crime, with primarily retailers, the Police and Local Authorities working together on the issue.
4. There appears to be a miscommunication that the Police do not respond to all reports of theft. This needs to be addressed with improved communication by all partners.
5. Under reporting appears to be an issue in Hartlepool with issues around the perception of the police response and the complexity of reporting mechanisms acting as a disincentive. The reporting of crime being essential to the gathering of intelligence to inform future development and focus of initiatives to tackle the issue.

<sup>1</sup>Cleveland Police evidence to the A&G meeting – 24 Jul 2024

6. All mechanisms available to respond to the issue are essential, including the use of out of court resolution pathways that can be more effective at tackling the issue in some cases rather than custodial sentences.
7. In Hartlepool many of the suspects arrested are local offenders. There is little evidence to suggest that this is serious and organised crime (SOC), planned and co-ordinated by groups or as part of transnational networks.
8. A range of activity is taking place across Hartlepool in working towards tackling the issue of retail crime. The Committee commended the work of retailers, the Police, Local Authority and the wider community.
9. The identification of new funding and the provision of continued funding for initiatives that can be delivered across Hartlepool is essential. This will help to support not only retailers but also prevent offending / re-offending. Promotion of such initiatives needs to be a priority and engagement encouraged.
10. It is unacceptable for employees in any sector of employment to face the risk of violence and abuse in the conduct of their duties.
11. The creation of supportive retail networks to facilitate the sharing of information and experience, assist in the collection of intelligence and promote engagement with initiatives are essential.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the process of reporting crime to the Police by retailers be examined to ensure that this process is simple and straight forward.
2. That ways of encouraging the reporting of all retail theft be explored. Whilst reinforcing and promoting that the Police will respond to reports of retail theft.
3. Explore ways to build relationships between retailers and the Police and to share best practice.
4. Identify both new, and continued sources of funding, for initiatives to tackle neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour. Including those that would extend the availability of help and support to businesses outside the town centre.
5. Local businesses be encouraged further to engage with schemes and initiatives, including the offer of Airwave Radios to aid communication between retailers to prevent thefts occurring.
6. Examine ways to identify whether retail crime offenders are engaging with substance misuse treatment services. Including ways of making every contact count in order to signpost offenders to services and identifying issues for those who might offend / reoffend whilst in treatment.

7. To explore developing a Retail Forum where retailers can work in conjunction with each other to share ideas and best practice.
8. That the effectiveness of Police target hardening and the prioritisation of certain businesses most affected by retail crime be evaluated.

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Audit and Governance Committee's investigation into retail crime.

## 2. MEMBERSHIP (for part or whole of investigation)

- 2.1 The Membership of the Audit and Governance Committee for this investigation was Councillors Boddy, Buchan, Darby, Hall, Holbrook, Jorgeson, Moore, Morley, Roy and Thompson.

## 3. SETTING THE SCENE

- 3.1 The Committee was concerned to learn that Cleveland had one of the highest rates of retail crime per 1000 population in the country, and the highest rate for shoplifting<sup>2</sup>. In addition to this, retail theft in Hartlepool had increased by 16% from the previous 12 months<sup>2</sup>. A further summary of the data considered by the Committee during the investigation is available in Section 7 of this report.
- 3.2 Members were informed that increases in retail crime were not specific to Hartlepool, with levels also increasing across other Police force areas. However, retail crime was identified as an issue of significant concern that would merit further investigation, as part of the Committee's statutory scrutiny responsibilities under the Police and Justice Act 2006. The investigation providing an opportunity for partnership working with Cleveland Police, including support for ongoing prevention and detection activities, whilst gaining an understanding of the:
  - Impact of retail crime on staff, businesses and residents, in particular the health and well-being of staff working in retail outlets.
  - Drivers behind retail crime and the potential for a combination of factors.
  - Measures that were being taken to address this issue locally and regionally.
- 3.3 The Audit and Governance Committee commenced its investigation on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024, agreeing:
  - The aim of the investigation, terms of reference and methods of investigation (full details of which are available in Sections 4-6 below).
  - Definition of retail crime<sup>3</sup> for the purpose of the investigation.

<sup>2</sup> Data received from Cleveland Police Forces Performance Team

<sup>3</sup> as defined by Cleveland Police.

*'retail crime being any criminal act (intended and unintended) against the retail industry i.e. a store, a company, their properties as well as their employees and customers'*

- 3.4 The Committee met formally on five occasions, during 2024/2025, to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation, details of the issues raised during these meetings are available from the Council's Democratic Services.

#### **4. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 4.1 The **aim** of the investigation was to explore ways of designing out and reducing incidents of retail crime.

#### **5. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 5.1 The **Terms of Reference** for the investigation were:

- (a) To gain an understanding of the issue and its impact on residents, employees and businesses;
- (b) To explore the factors that drive retail crime (national and local data inc. police information in relation to high level offenders);
- (c) To examine existing approaches used to tackle the issue and investigate their effectiveness (preventative and reactive). E.g.
  - i) Are we encouraging retailers to maximise the use of new technologies for the prevention and detection of retail crime, including the facilitation of digital CCTV evidence?
  - ii) Are we encouraging the Community Safety Partnership to direct investment to design out crime to areas they perceive to be a problem, including reducing opportunities to sell stolen goods?
  - iii) Are we actively encouraging the use of appropriate funding to invest in local retailers?
  - iv) Are there sufficient support pathways for those who use retail theft to fund substance misuse?
  - v) Are there sufficient food banks, advertised, accessible and with ongoing funding, for those who use retail theft as a means during the cost-of-living crisis?
  - vi) Are there sufficient out of court resolution pathways available to residents of Hartlepool?
- (d) To seek views on the issue, the impact and what could / should be done from:
  - Residents survey (as part of Police Ward surveys),
  - Stakeholders and businesses (HBC survey and face to face Working Group)

- (e) To gain an understanding of the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which services are provided.
- (f) To identify potential ways of designing out and reducing incidents of retail crime.

## **6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION**

6.1 Members of the Audit and Governance Committee met to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation.

A summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:

- Detailed information gathering sessions with Senior Officers from Cleveland Police including an overview of data and crime statistics both nationally, regionally and in Hartlepool.
- Evidence provided by Cleveland Police regarding the drivers behind retail crime via interviews with offenders.
- Sought the views of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland and received a presentation on this matter at a Committee meeting.
- A consultation survey circulated to business owners/retailers in the town to seek their views on this issue.
- In-depth interview with a Manager of a local retail outlet.
- Evidence from the British Retail Consortium.
- Sought the views of the local MP who is also the Chair of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and the views of the Chair of the Councils Neighbourhood Services Committee.
- Sought the views of local residents via Cleveland Police ward survey.

## **7. RETAIL CRIME IN HARTLEPOOL**





7.1 The Committee received evidence from Cleveland Police regarding an overview of data and statistics<sup>4</sup> for retail crime in Hartlepool together with comparative data, both regionally and nationally. The data in table 1 was received by the Committee in September 2024. For the most current data available please see **appendix 1** (table 4).

7.2 The Committee noted the data in **table 1** over the page: -

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<sup>4</sup> Data received from Cleveland Police Force Performance Team

**Table 1 – Reports of retail theft**

Area	Date range	Reports of retail theft	Trend compared to 12 months prior
Tees Valley	Sept 23 - Sept 24 (12-month period)	8,164	 7% increase
Hartlepool	Sept 23 - Sept 24 (12-month period)	2,117	 16% increase
Hartlepool	Apr 24 - Sept 24 (6-month period)	1,251	 16% increase
Hartlepool	September 2024 (1 month period)	257	 28.7% increase

- 7.3 Members were concerned to find that reports of retail theft in the Tees Valley had increased from the previous year. Members also noted an increase in the reporting of theft across Hartlepool and that this was higher than what was seen in the Tees Valley. It was, however, noted that this position echoed the national picture, with evidence suggesting that retail crime has reached unprecedented levels with a detrimental effect on communities.<sup>5</sup> More detail in relation to comparable rates across the Tees Valley is available in **table 3**.
- 7.4 Whilst the increase in the reporting of thefts was a concern, Members were encouraged to see that the solved crimes by Cleveland Police were higher than the national average as detailed in **table 2**.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 2 - Solved Crimes**

Date Range	Cleveland Police	Hartlepool	Nationally
Solved crimes (month of August 2025)	37%	36%	24.8%
Solved crimes (month of September 2024)	37%	17%	16.4%

- 7.5 Members were interested in comparing the rates of retail crime across the Tees Valley local authority areas and nationally and were provided with data in relation to this.<sup>6</sup> They noted that the rates for Hartlepool were the highest across the 4 local authority areas and higher than the national figure as noted in **table 3**.
- 7.6 The Committee noted data in **table 3** over the page: -

<sup>5</sup> National Crime Business Centre<sup>6</sup> Data received from Cleveland Police Force Performance Team

**Table 3 – Retail crime theft rates**

Area	Number of retail crime thefts per 1000 population*
Hartlepool	22.9
Middlesbrough	13.6
Stockton	11.1
Redcar and Cleveland	12.5
Nationally	8.7

\* This data covers the period January 2024 – December 2024.

- 7.7 The financial impact of retail crime was also considered as part of this investigation. It was noted that nationally, the cost of retail theft is £970 per crime, including a cost of £40 per crime for the police and £200 per crime for the wider criminal justice system. This equates to a total cost of £7,843,420 per annum including £323,440 for the police and £1,617,200 for the wider criminal justice system.<sup>7</sup>
- 7.8 Looking at the perpetrators of retail crime, evidence in Section 10 of the report, demonstrated that many of the suspects arrested were known to the Police and that a small number of prolific offenders were responsible for the majority of offences. Evidence provided did not, however, support the suggestion that serious organised crime (SOC) groups are driving retail crime in Hartlepool. The definition of SOC being ‘crime that is planned and co-ordinated by groups or as part of transnational networks’. The issue of lower-level organisation of retail crime was, however, raised with the Committee and it is addressed in Section 8.6 of the report.
- 7.9 Members welcomed confirmation that retail crime had not only been identified as an issue by the Audit and Governance Committee, it had also been identified as one of three priority areas of crime by Cleveland Police and had been looked at in specific detail by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership (SHP). Actions identified by the SHP included in, and monitored via, the Community Safety Plan are explored in greater detail in Section 9.14 of the report.

## **8. THE IMPACT OF RETAIL CRIME ON RETAILERS, EMPLOYEES AND RESIDENTS**

- 8.1 At its meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024, the Committee agreed to seek the views of commercial business owners, retailers and residents in the town on their experiences of retail crime. This was to gain an understanding of how this issue affects staff, businesses and the wider community. This was undertaken via a number of mechanisms, including an online survey, one to one interview with a retailer and via a police ward survey.

<sup>7</sup> [Economic and Social Costs of Crime 2018 report](#)

Retailer Consultation

- 8.2 A public survey was launched via the Council's 'Your Say' engagement platform that ran from the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and was promoted extensively. Please see **appendix 2** for details of promotion and survey demographics.
- 8.3 The Committee noted that despite extensive promotion only 13 consultation responses had been received. Concern was expressed that the level of response had been influenced by the timing of the survey, during one of the busiest times for retailers. Given the level of response, the Committee appreciated that the statistical significance of the data needed to be taken into consideration in the formulation of views and comments based on the evidence provided.
- 8.4 The Committee noted with interest the responses received via the consultation, as summarised below:-
- i) *How much of a problem is theft for your business?* - 12 participants expressed concern that it was a problem for their business with 10 describing it as a significant issue.
  - ii) *What is the impact of retail crime?* – From the responses received it was clear that loss of earnings, staff mental health and the expense of security measures were felt to be the most significant issues associated with retail crime. Most participants stated that their store had security measures in place including CCTV, security tags and door alarms. However, despite the measures in place most stores still had issues with shop theft. Some stores also employed additional security measures such as the use of radios within the store to alert other businesses to potential thefts.
  - iii) *How are staff impacted by retail crime?* - 7 retailers indicated that their staff had been afraid to come to work for fear of violence, with most having experienced verbal abuse or threatening behaviour. 4 business owners stated their staff had experienced actual violence. One commented that staff had also experienced anxiety around thefts occurring. Whilst the survey received limited responses, wider evidence gathered suggests that this issue is a national concern. Data<sup>8</sup> indicates that the use of aggression, abuse and violence during thefts has escalated. It was reported nationally that 87 % of retailers placed violence in their top 3 threats, with 68% placing it as the number 1 threat.
  - iv) *Reporting of thefts?* - Some retailers indicated they did not report all crime, advising that this was due to concerns that the issue would not be taken seriously by the police.

When questioned further, 1 participant commented that it was time consuming to complete paperwork regarding the reporting of thefts and that this affected how often they reported theft. 5 retailers commented they did not feel any action would be taken against the perpetrator and this dissuaded them from reporting the theft. This was also echoed in evidence from the

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<sup>8</sup> [British Retail Consortium – Crime Survey Report 2025](#)

British Retail Consortium (BRC) survey where it was reported that confidence in Police response to a retail crime had declined.<sup>9</sup>

- v) *What could be done to tackle the issue of retail crime?* - The most common suggestions included wanting to see a higher Police presence within the town and harsher punishments to deter individuals from committing crime. A full list of comments and suggestions can be found at **appendix 2**.

#### Interview with a local Retail Manager

8.5 To further inform the investigation, an in-depth interview was conducted with a local Retail Manager who described their experiences of working in the retail industry for over 25 years. The Committee noted that the response was based on an individual perspective and could not be taken as a view on behalf of the wider retail sector.

8.6 The Committee welcomed the input provided, as summarised below:

- i) Concerns regarding the perceived reduction in Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's), the presence of which it was felt acted as a retail crime deterrent. Whilst also helping to compile local intelligence / knowledge in relation to individual Wards and building relationships with residents and businesses.
- ii) That their company made it a priority to log all incidents of retail theft and in their experience, Police responded to all reports. Police Officers regularly attended for statements and requested CCTV footage of the incident. They commented that this had not always been the case in their experience, but this had significantly improved over the last 6 months.
- iii) They noted that logging crimes with the Police felt time consuming and that the system generated unnecessary letters. This was also reported to be a national problem with 38% of retailers surveyed indicating failure to report crimes due to lack of staff time, with 58% of retailers experiencing difficulties with the reporting system (this being in their top 2 reasons why crimes were not reported).<sup>9</sup>
- iv) In response to questions asked about the drivers behind retail crime the Manager commented that, in their opinion, substance misuse contributed significantly to theft. They did not feel that the cost-of-living crisis was a significant driver behind theft due to the nature of the items that were regularly stolen. In terms of the patterns of theft, it was reported that different goods were targeted at different times of the year, with high value items often the target. In their view offenders, at times, seemed to work in groups and targeted different shops.
- v) When describing the aggression shown by offenders during the thefts they considered it to be escalating. Staff surveys indicated that theft was always reported to be a worry for employees.
- vi) When asked what they thought would help the situation they advised they would like to see a higher police presence in the local area. A network between shop owners would also be useful as there seemed to be little joined up work. Businesses were often working in silos to tackle the problem. The sharing of information and further input from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was also discussed.

<sup>9</sup> [British Retail Consortium – Crime Survey Report 2025](#)

Resident Surveys

- 8.7 In addition to the engagement outlined in Sections 8.2-8.6, the Committee considered how best to obtain an understanding of the impact of retail crime on residents. In addition to publicising meetings of the Audit and Governance Committee with the aim of encouraging engagement, the Committee also welcomed an opportunity to utilise the Cleveland Police Ward Survey to engage with residents.
- 8.8 The Committee, at its meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025 received feedback on the findings of the Police Ward survey, with indications that no specific issues had been raised concerning retail crime by the residents who had taken part. It, however, came as no surprise to the Committee that the focus had instead been on the issue of off-road bikes and the belief that criminals were using E / off-road bikes to commit crime and travel across the Town.

**9. PARTNER EVIDENCE**

- 9.1 As part of its investigation the Committee, at its meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025, welcomed evidence for a range of partners, including the Chair of the Neighborhood Services Committee, the MP for Hartlepool and the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner. A summary of which is outlined below.
- 9.2 Chair of Neighbourhood Services Committee - The Committee welcomed the Chair's support for the investigation of the issue as a significant area of concern for retailers across Hartlepool. The Chair reiterated views expressed through the investigation in relation to the importance of having a clear understanding of the drivers behind retail crime, as the basis for the identification of appropriate interventions. Details of the evidence considered by the Committee in relation to these drivers outlined in Section 10 of the report.
- 9.3 Discussions with the Chair also explored the potential actions / interventions that could be included as a package of measures to reduce the prevalence and impact of retail crime across the town. These included:
- The promotion of a zero-tolerance approach to all types of crime, utilising education campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of crime on communities and businesses. These campaigns to include engagement with schools to help influence behaviour as early as possible.
  - Drives to increase the reporting of all crimes, to allow the effective identification of interventions and focusing of resources.
  - The importance of utilising the expertise and knowledge of the Public Health team to help identify and target interventions for those who are experiencing substance misuse issues and may be participating in retail crime as a means of generating income (whether or not they are engaging with treatment services).
  - Interventions around alcohol sale and licensing, including the lobbying of central government to allow alcohol sales to be scrutinised and increased scrutiny for shops that apply for alcohol licensing.
- 9.4 MP for Hartlepool – The MP expressed complete support for the Audit and Governance Committee's focus on retail crime and, as Chair of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership (SHP), was well versed on the issues and impact of retail

crime. The SHP recently undertaking a light touch piece of work on retail crime, that culminated in a number of actions to be monitored via the Community Safety Plan (Action Plan). These included the formation of a Retail Crime Board to ensure the voices of retailers can be heard, the implementation of Public Space Protection Order's (PSPO's) to manager anti-social behaviour and the increased use of Community Safety Accreditation Scheme powers.

- 9.5 The MP provided a written submission for Members consideration. The letter (attached at **Appendix 3**) outlined the MP's views on the matter with attention drawn to the intent of the Crime and Policing Bill to make assaulting, threatening, or abusing a retail worker a statutory standalone offence. The Bill would also reverse the 2014 legislation whereby 'low level' thefts, worth under £200, were subject to less serious punishment.
- 9.6 Members welcomed the legislative changes contained within the Bill as an increased deterrent to perpetrators and the removal of a perceived deterrent to reporting of retail crime. The inaccurate perception that there was little point in reporting retail crime under £200 prevented the identification of an accurate position in Hartlepool and the development of appropriately focused interventions.
- 9.7 The need to promote the removal of the £200 threshold and dispel the perception was identified as a priority by the Committee. The Committee was also supportive of the SHP proposals in relation to the creation / re-establishment of a body where retailers can share information and best practice with each other, and partner organisations. Also, the increased use, where possible, of PSPO's and Community Safety Accreditation Scheme powers.
- 9.8 Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland (PCC) - The PCC presented evidence to the Committee regarding retail crime. This included information arising from a Retail Crime Summit, organised by the Office of the PCC in October 2023.
- 9.9 From the evidence provided, the Committee concluded that many of the areas of concern identified during the summit had also been raised during the course of the investigation, including:
- Communication – misinformation regarding what police will respond to
  - Sentencing – support for increased use of Out of Court Disposals
  - Difficulties in passing evidence to police – retailer ICT infrastructure issues
  - Wider issues such as ASB / addiction – often shoplifting is not the primary concern
- 9.10 In considering the evidence provided, emphasis was again placed on:
- The importance of prevention in addressing the drivers behind retail crime, with reference to prevention in terms of the effectiveness of drug treatment and support services as a tool in reducing reoffending.
  - The use of a range of methods of tackling retail crime, such as the effective use of dispersal orders and community protection notices.
  - The importance of reporting crime and dispelling the myths around the police response to reporting, with emphasis on the use of the COPA app, 101 and Crime Stoppers (to guarantee anonymity for those in fear of reprisals) as effective methods of reporting.

9.11 British Retail Consortium – In addition to the evidence obtained via the consultation and engagements activities outlined in Sections 8, information and data relating to retail crime from a national perspective was also available via a wide breadth of resources. The Committee received further evidence on the impact of retail crime on businesses and employees from one such source, the British Retail Consortium (BRC), which had been identified as the ‘go-to’ trade association for UK retail businesses.

9.12 A Representative from the consortium provided further information by way of their annual crime survey which tracks crime against retail staff and businesses in the UK, the costs related to it and the police response to it.<sup>10</sup> The findings from this national survey mirrored what was found in Hartlepool. The key findings from the BRC Crime Survey 2025 demonstrating that many of the issues identified in Hartlepool were being experienced nationally:



i) The impact of violence and abuse on the welfare of retail workers:

- 1,300 violent or abusive incidents occur per day, an increase from 870
- 475,000 incidents occurred in the 12 months surveyed including 41,000 violent incidents

ii) The cost of crime and crime prevention to retail business and indirectly the customers they serve:

- Overall cost of retail crime including crime prevention measures was 3.3billion
- Crime prevention measures cost 720million

iii) The response of the justice system and overall police systems:

- Incidents of customer theft rose to 16.7million
- 61% of retailers rate police response as poor or very poor
- 8% of reported incidents of violence and abuse were prosecuted

9.13 The Committee was interested in the BRC's views on the actions that it felt should be implemented to address the issue of retail crime going forward. They recognised many of the following as being potentially relevant to the formulation of a Hartlepool response:

- A separate stand-alone offence of violence and abuse towards retail workers
- A BRC/Home Office National Retail Crime Steering Group
- Reporting to be simplified
- All theft should lead to police action.
- Role of organised crime needs to be fully understood.
- Dealing with the underlying context of crime such as alcohol and drug addiction.
- Clarity in statistics where crime is retail related.

<sup>10</sup> [British Retail Consortium – Crime Survey Report 2025](#)

9.14 Safer Hartlepool Partnership – Looking more specifically at the focus of SHP activities in relation to retail crime, as alluded to in Section 7.9 of the report, it was clear that the partnerships concerns had mirrored those expressed by the committee during its investigation. Specifically in relation to:

- Increases in levels of retail crime and the impact of repeat offending with one offender in Hartlepool committing 46 shop thefts over a 12-month period. Prompting consideration of why repeat offending is such an issue and what is being missed in terms of prevention / interventions.
- Indications that at one point over 50% of overall theft was driven by drug / substance misuse in Hartlepool. Although there were gaps in the understanding of other factors in terms of the remaining 50%, including the cost of living / economic challenges.
- Opportunity being key to retail crime, as businesses drive enticements to increase sales by the location of goods. Prompting questions as to how businesses could be supported and share information / best practice.
- The perception of retail theft as a victimless crime and the reality of its actual economic and staff welfare impact.
- Sentencing and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention activities including probation pathways.
- Under reporting.

9.15 Potential actions identified by the SHP being:-

- i) To increase the reporting of retail crime.
- ii) Support for businesses to:
  - Encourage increased take up of schemes / activities available to businesses for the prevention of retail crime.
  - Explore the identification of new, or continued, funding for schemes to support businesses in the prevention and response to retail crime.
  - Provide advice to businesses on how to improve their own surveillance and design out crime.
- iii) Improve communication / sharing of best practice, including the potential creation of a 'Retail Crime Forum / Partnership' to ensure that the voices of retailers are heard, providing a greater promotion of crime reporting and encourage partnership working between businesses and partner organisations.
- iv) Obtain a clearer understanding of:
  - Offender need and the support required in terms of reoffending prevention.
  - The factors that drive retail crime and improve communication with offenders to identify improved interventions (e.g. reintroduction of exit interviews with offenders).
- v) Explore and develop improved pathways for the support of offenders to prevent reoffending with relevant agencies (e.g. the Probation Service).

9.16 All partners were thanked for their input in to the investigation, the evidence provided welcomed by the Committee in the formulation of its conclusions and recommendations.

## 10. DRIVERS BEHIND RETAIL CRIME

- 10.1 Evidence provided during the investigation emphasised the importance of having a clear understanding of the drivers of retail crime and the Committee received evidence from a variety of sources in relation to each of the below drivers.
- 10.2 Drug and Alcohol addiction – Evidence obtained via Offender Exit Interviews, carried out by Cleveland Police, indicated that shoplifting by most prolific offenders was self-motivated to fund a drug or alcohol addiction<sup>11</sup>. It was also reported nationally that being under the influence of substances was also a factor with 13% of cases (440 crimes) having circumstances involving perpetrators being under the influence.<sup>12</sup>
- 10.3 During the investigation Members of the Committee were advised by Cleveland Police that there was funding available for drug testing. This involved the mandatory drug testing of offenders on arrest. Those that tested positive were ordered to attend a minimum of 2 drug treatment meetings. It was advised that this was a gateway to ensuring the offender can access treatment and other support to tackle their drug-related offending. However, it was confirmed that the funding for this was due to end. Significant disruption activity also takes place in Hartlepool to tackle the issue of drugs.
- 10.4 Substance misuse treatment services are available in Hartlepool that meet demand; however, it was recognised that only a proportion of those with issues access services. In addition to this, although exit interviews identified the funding of substance misuse as a driver, data was not available to confirm if perpetrators were, or were not, accessing drug treatment services at the time of their offence. This made it difficult to ascertain what and where interventions / prevention activities could be focused.
- 10.5 Organised Crime - Members were informed by Cleveland Police that most incidents of retail crime in Hartlepool are carried out by offenders operating individually with most crimes being committed by a small number of persistent offenders. There are some notable examples of shoplifters escalating to more serious crimes, but this is rare. During the Offender Exit Interviews it was noted that most offenders operated alone as opposed to being part of an organised shoplifting gang. Whilst the link to organised crime, that is crime planned and co-ordinated by groups or as part of transnational networks, has been explored by the Committee there was little evidence put forward by the Police or the PCC to confirm this to be a significant driver. However, it was acknowledged that stealing to fund drug addiction identifies an indirect link with serious and organised crime.
- 10.6 During the interview with the Retail Manager there was a suggestion that some shoplifters seemed to be co-ordinated and were targeting different shops together, however, this would not fall under the Police definition of organised crime.

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<sup>11</sup> Cleveland Police evidence to the A&G meeting – 28 January 2025

<sup>12</sup> [British Retail Consortium – Crime Survey Report 2025](#)

- 10.7 Operation Pegasus – Pegasus is a partnership between retailers and police, spearheaded by the PCC to centralise intelligence on serious and organised crime groups involved in retail crime.
- 10.8 Cost of living crisis – It was acknowledged that whilst there was an expectation that cost of living / economic challenges was also driving retail crime, this was not the trend seen by Cleveland Police or the experiences of the retail Manager interviewed. Gaps in the understanding of its impact meant it could not be specifically identified by the Committee as a key driver.
- 10.9 The Committee was, however, aware that this may well be a factor in some cases and the availability of food banks and hardship support was touched upon by Members. Members expressing disappointment at the need for such a provision but noting the level of support provided in the town by partners, the VCS and local authority.

## **11. EXAMINING EXISTING APPROACHES TO TACKLING RETAIL CRIME**

- 11.1 Over the course of the investigation the Committee were informed that significant work takes place via different bodies in relation to the prevention, disruption and detection of retail crime.

### Cleveland Police

- 11.2 In addition to the retail crime rates outlined in Section 7 of the report, the Committee gained an understanding of the mechanisms used by Cleveland Police to tackle retail crime. This included the below -
- 11.3 Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT's) - NPTs are tasked with making 'Top 5' arrests which change on a month-by-month basis, as offenders are sentenced or otherwise go quiet with other prolific offenders replacing them.
- 11.4 Retail Crime Action Plan - Members were made aware that retail crime meetings take place bi-monthly and include 4 districts in the Tees Valley. They are attended by the Single Point of Contacts (SPOC) for each of the four districts and a representative from the National Business Crime Solutions Team. Each district reports into this meeting as well as local retail crime forums. This informs decisions around their approach to retail crime and ensures a joined-up, consistent approach to retail crime across the 4 Local Policing areas.

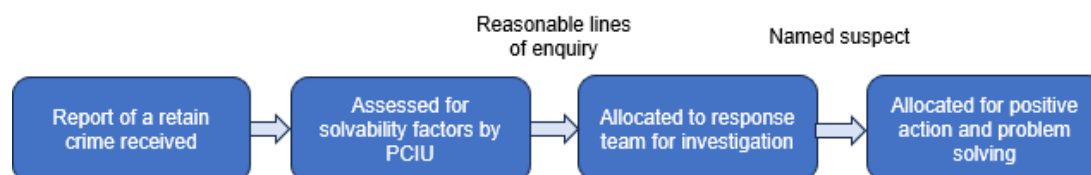
In support of the Retail Crime Action Plan, a local action plan has been developed, and work has taken place to:

- Review/revise the Force's response criteria
- Identify Cleveland's most prolific offenders
- Increase the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO)
- Identify Cleveland's most vulnerable locations
- Develop collaborative problem-solving plans
- Enhance proactivity
- Working collaboratively with partners

- 11.5 Working with Retailers - Cleveland Police encourage retailers to engage with local Retail Crime Forums. This provides an opportunity to receive tactical

updates, crime prevention updates and to share information. Information and intelligence used by Police Retail Crime Leads also informs problem solving activity.

- 11.6 A multi-faceted approach is taken to tackling crime and some stores in certain locations are also prioritised. Crime Prevention Officers visit the most vulnerable stores to provide bespoke advice and help prevent loss. Examples of this work include:
- Target hardening
  - Target removal
  - Property marking/monitoring
  - Access control
  - Surveillance
  - Raising staff awareness
  - Restricting access/ implementing banning orders
- 11.7 Members were keen to evaluate the effectiveness of prioritising high-risk locations and to understand if this impacted on the reduction of crime rates in this location.
- 11.8 The Police explained that case studies demonstrate that the Force's collaborative problem-solving work, with local retailers and other key stakeholders, has resulted in a reduction in offending and a noticeable absence of persistent perpetrators<sup>13</sup>.
- 11.9 Responding to Reports of Theft - The process for crime allocation was outlined using the flow chart below.



- 11.10 The Force stated that they are committed to tackling shoplifting and prioritising attendance where violence is involved, or a shoplifter is detained. At the point of first contact, a robust threat assessment is carried out using THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement). Police attendance for retail crime, as with other crime, is prioritised if an immediate/emergency or priority response is required. The Force has a clear and consistent approach in place and all reasonable lines of enquiry are pursued to help identify suspects.<sup>13</sup>
- 11.11 The results from the consultation showed that the perception of some retailers was that police do not respond to all reports of crime. Members agreed that further work needs to be done to challenge the perception that reports of crime will not be responded to.
- 11.12 Methods of Detection - Cleveland Police explained the methods of detecting and solving incidences of retail crime included the use of PNC facial

<sup>13</sup> Office of the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner – Scrutiny Meeting (retail crime) – 10 Oct 2023

recognition software to identify potential suspects. It was reported to the Committee that the use of this technology had increased by 500%.<sup>14</sup>

11.13 Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) - The Police promote the use of the CSAS across all four districts. This scheme can accredit employed people already working in roles that contribute to maintaining and improving community safety with limited but targeted powers. These roles include neighbourhood wardens, hospital security guards, park wardens and shopping centre guards. It was recognised by the Committee that these powers do not include the power of arrest or prosecution for retail crime offences.

11.14 Measures in the Crime and Policing Bill - The Bill<sup>15</sup> introduces a new standalone offence of assaulting a retail worker which will have a maximum penalty of six months in prison, and/or an unlimited fine – and upon first conviction. The Courts can also impose a criminal behaviour order (CBO) which can bar offenders from visiting affected shops or premises. To tackle low level shop theft, the bill will remove the perceived immunity granted to shop theft of goods to the value of £200 or less. This will ensure that all offences are tried as ‘general theft’ with a maximum custodial sentence of seven years.

#### The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

11.15 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland presented to the Committee their views and provided information relating to recent work carried out in relation to tackling retail crime.

11.16 Activity taking place in the area included:

- Meetings with the management of Middleton Grange Shopping Centre
- The use of dispersal orders to manage Anti-Social Behaviour
- Use of Community Protection Warnings (CPW) and Community Protection Notices (CPN)
- Engagement with local businesses including sharing photos of people that have been issued with CPW and CPN
- Police enforcement around shops selling alcohol
- Additional warden patrols through UKSPF funding

11.17 The PCC also highlighted plans for next steps to be taken this included:

- Distribution of Airwaves radios to businesses.
- Explore introducing Public Space Protection Order's in the Town Centre and Marina
- Letters to be sent from PCC, Tees Valley Mayor and Council Leader to all businesses to encourage reporting of all incidences of theft
- Explore Community Safety Accreditation Scheme and additional powers for Middleton Grange security staff
- Encourage Middleton Grange Security staff to use existing powers

11.18 During the investigation it was brought to the Committees attention by the PCC that there is a miscommunication that police do not respond to reports of theft.

<sup>14</sup> Cleveland Police evidence to the A&G meeting – 15 Oct 2024

<sup>15</sup> Crime and Policing Bill: retail crime factsheet - GOV.UK

It was emphasised by the PCC that this is not the case and that the Police will respond to reports of retail crime.

- 11.19 The effectiveness of custodial sentences was also discussed, and comments were expressed by the PCC that this was not always the most effective way of dealing with offenders. Out of court settlements and help for substance misuse were more efficient in terms of reducing offending rates. This was also expressed by the Police who advised that significant work is carried out in relation to out-of-court disposals. However, it was acknowledged there was also room for improvement.

#### Local Authority Enforcement

- 11.20 Information was provided to Members regarding the introduction of the Shop Watch Scheme which involved giving premises radios that can be used by staff in the event of an incident to communicate with each other. Shops in Hartlepool town centre were urged to take advantage of the initiative aimed at tackling shoplifting. The radios were provided to shops free of charge for a year, with the subscription cost being covered by Hartlepool Borough Council. Funding for the radios was provided via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), money provided by the UK Government and administered locally by the Tees Valley Combined Authority. The UKSPF money was specifically for the town centre area.
- 11.21 The availability of Safer Streets Funding enabled the Local Authority to bid for investment in initiatives which have been proven to prevent neighbourhood and environmental crime. This also included the appointment of a Community Cohesion Officer and an Environmental Projects Officer. Further funding included 3 new mobile CCTV cameras to be deployed in hot spot locations and remotely monitored by HBC council CCTV control room. It was highlighted that enforcement work by the Local Authority relates to anti-social behaviour which may help to move perpetrators out of the area.
- 11.22 Community Protection wardens employed by the Local Authority are responsible for enhancing the safety of the community and acting as a link between the Police, partners and organisations. Whilst not having the power of arrest they are able to provide a visible presence in the community. They carry out a range of duties such as conducting patrols in targeted areas, dispersing groups causing anti-social behavior and tackling unwanted activity such as vandalism or graffiti.

## **12. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 12.1 The Audit and Governance Committee's conclusions and recommendations are outlined in the executive summary at the beginning of the report.

## **13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of the investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Craig Blundred, Director of Public Health  
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)

External Representatives:

Multiple Senior Officer representatives from Cleveland Police  
Office of the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner  
Jonathan Brash, MP for Hartlepool and Chair of Safer Hartlepool Partnership  
Councillor Karen Oliver, Chair of Neighbourhood Services Committee  
Hartlepool Retailers  
British Retail Consortium

**COUNCILLOR SHANE MOORE**  
**CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (2024/25)**

- 14. Contact Officer:** Gemma Jones – Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer  
Legal Services, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel:- 01429 284171  
Email:- [gemma.jones@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.jones@hartlepool.gov.uk)

**15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-





- Audit and Governance Committee – Reports and minutes (11 June 2024, 16 July 2024, 24 September 2024, 15 October 2024, 5 November 2024 and 28 January 2025).

## Appendix 1

**Retail theft report data**

Table 4 shows the most current data available in relation to reports of theft in the Tees Valley and the Hartlepool area.

**Table 4 - Reports of retail theft**

Area	Date range	Reports of retail theft	Trend compared to 12 months prior
Tees Valley	Sept 24 - Aug 25 (12-month period)	8,286	 2.5% increase
Hartlepool	Sept 24 – Aug 25 (12-month period)	2,289	 11% increase
Hartlepool	May 24 – Aug 25 (6-month period)	1,144	 3% decrease
Hartlepool	August 2025 (1 month period)	263	 27.7% increase

## **Appendix 2**

### **Impact of Retail Crime on Business and Employees – Consultation data**

#### **How people were made aware of the consultation?**

- i) Council's social media platforms;
- ii) Your Say newsletter;
- iii) Members of Audit and Governance (including a request to share with any relevant individuals or bodies).
- iv) Community Cohesion Officer who was asked to promote this with individual retailers in their patch.
- v) Middleton Grange Shopping Centre Management were asked to share with all businesses within the centre.
- vi) The Councils Economic Growth Team who circulated the details to the business forum and via their newsletter.
- vii) Surveys were also hand delivered to 22 retailers in the town including large retailers.

#### **What was the Survey Demographics?**

The demographics of each business were determined, questions included the postcode of where the businesses were located, the type of products sold and the size of the workforce. It was noted that just under half of the responses were from stores located in the Victoria Ward, but this area included the Town Centre where there was a large concentration of shops. The size of the businesses varied from those with less than 5 employees to those employing more than 20. Goods sold varied from food and drink, health and beauty and clothes.

#### **What should be done to tackle the issue of retail crime?**

- More CCTV in the town
- Higher police presence in the evenings and certain areas of the town
- Prosecuting the individuals responsible for theft
- Harsher punishments and stronger sentences for offenders
- Police to attend the store every time a shoplifter is apprehended
- Excluding offenders from certain areas in the town
- More interaction between the police and security officers
- A forum with other retailers to share ideas
- Involving the local MP in the issue
- Adoption of an offender to rehab scheme
- Tackling drug issues
- Education in schools as to the consequences of crime



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

**Appendix 3**  
**Letter from MP,**  
**Jonathan Brash**

Cllr Shane Moore  
Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Victoria Road  
Hartlepool  
TS24 8AY

30 October 2024

Dear Shane,

**Retail Crime**

Thank you for the invitation to share my thoughts with you on retail crime in Hartlepool. As you can imagine this is an issue about which many people have contacted me in my former role on the Council and since my election as Member of Parliament for Hartlepool.

Retail crime is often wrongly referred to as a victim-less crime, which any shop worker in Hartlepool will tell you is not the case. I have personally spoken to shopworkers who are required to wear a camera around their neck and who tell me that they arrive at work each day expecting to be the victim of crime. This is unacceptable.

Right now, there are 45,000 incidents of retail crime every single day in this country. A staggering 7 in 10 retail workers have been abused in the last 12 months.

It does not matter whether the shop is owned by the worker or if they work for a regional or national chain, the feeling of powerlessness watching shoplifting occur for many retail workers is leaving them feeling upset, angry, and fearful for their next shift. These crimes also lead to mental health issues for many of the people who experience them on a day-to-day basis, as too many of my constituents do every day.

The Scottish Parliament passed legislation in relation to specific retail offences in the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Act 2021 which was proposed by Scottish Labour MSP Daniel Johnson. The Crime and Policing Bill, announced in the King's Speech will make assaulting, threatening, or abusing a retail worker a statutory standalone offence to ensure that shop workers across Great Britain have the same protections in the workplace. The Bill will also reverse 2014 legislation that meant "low value" thefts worth under £200 were subject to less serious punishment.

Locally, as the Chair of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership we intend to make a range of specific recommendations focused on making our town centre community safer for everyone. This includes:

- The formation of a 'retail crime board' to ensure that the voices of retailers are heard, and that greater reporting of crime is ensured.
- The implementation of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). PSPOs are intended to prevent specific acts which would not otherwise be classed as criminal offences and this would allow the targeting of antisocial behaviour that too often blights our

town centre and causes huge distress to retail workers.

- The use of community safety accreditation scheme powers, which allow the Police Chief Officer to devolve a range of powers to accredited persons, such as Council and shopping centre security personnel.

As MP and Chair of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership, you have my complete support in the work that you are undertaking, and I would be more than happy to contribute further to the valuable work of the Audit and Governance Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Brash'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

**Jonathan Brash**  
**Member of Parliament for Hartlepool**



## **SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP**

**16 January 2026**

**Report of:** Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)

**Subject:** SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN 2025/26

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### **1. Council Plan Priority**

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b>
- where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

### **2. Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To provide an overview of Safer Hartlepool Partnership performance linked to the priorities outlined in the Community Safety Plan 2024/27.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Community Safety Plan for 2024/27 has a strategic objective to “make Hartlepool a safe, prosperous and enjoyable place to live, work and visit”. Members agreed that the priority areas of focus to achieve this objective should be Anti-Social Behaviour, Drugs and Alcohol, Domestic Violence and Serious Violence.
- 3.2 Partners contribute to a Safer Hartlepool Partnership (SHP) Action Plan by providing an outline of the work they are carrying out covering each priority with the Community Safety Plan. The action plan is a living document and allow partners to include new initiatives to fully reflect the work being carried out.

- 3.3 The reporting arrangements are that the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Action Plan is reported to the Partnership for consideration & comments.

## 4. Proposal

- 4.1 The Safer Hartlepool Partnership Action Plan is attached in **Appendix 1** of the report it outlines activities carried out by partners across the priorities of the 2024/2027 plan.
- 4.2 Following workshops during the year additional actions have been added covering the York Road Ramp, Off Road Bike, Retail Crime and Deliberate fires.
- 4.3 Audit & Governance Committee carried out its 'retail crime' investigation in 2024/25 and reported its finding at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025. The recommendations in that report have been included in the SHP action plan in appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.4 Some partners produce action plans to accompany strategies such as Domestic Abuse and Drugs & Alcohol Details, links to these are included in the action plan to ensure that it fully reflects the work being carried out by all partners.

## 5. Other Considerations/Implications

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	No relevant issues
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No relevant issues
<b>SUBSIDY CONTROL</b>	No relevant issues
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No relevant issues
<b>SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	No relevant issues
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No relevant issues
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No relevant issues
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No relevant issues
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	No relevant issues

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 Members are asked to agree the inclusion of the following into the Action Plan:
- The recommendations from the Audit & Governance Committee report on Retail Crime
  - The additional action from Safer Hartlepool Partnership workshops relating to Off Road Bikes, Retail Crime & Deliberate Fires
- 6.2 Members are asked to consider and comment on the SHP Action Plan 2025/2026.

## **7. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Partnership is responsible for monitoring performance against the Community Safety Plan 2024-2027

## **8. Background Papers**

- 8.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-
- Safer Hartlepool Partnership – Community Safety Plan 2024/27

## **9. Contact Officers**

Sylvia Pinkney  
Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Hartlepool  
TS24 8AY  
(01429) 523315  
[Sylvia.pinkney@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Sylvia.pinkney@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

**blue** = June 2024 comments    **red** = February/March 2025 comments    **Green** = November/December 2025

Priority	Objective / Outcome	Who	Actions/Progress/Comments
Anti-Social Behaviour	Ensure victims understand how to report ASB.	SHP members and partner organisations	<p><b>28/02/2025 - Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Cleveland Online Policing App (COPA) provides residents of Cleveland a digital platform to Cleveland Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner. The app allows them to feed in information about policing and community safety issues easily and quickly. It also lets them ask questions and give feedback.</p> <p>A new 'Neighbourhoods Alert' App is due to go live imminently, which will provide a digital platform for communicating between police and residents – more details to follow upon launch.</p> <p>Traditional methods of the 999, 101 and police front desk remain available.</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>Publicity has occurred during 2024-25 regarding the work of Hartlepool Community Safety Team including work in the town centre and enforcement activity that has been undertaken.</p> <p><b>02/12/25 – Cleveland Police update</b> Officers have continued to drive reporting of ASB through a variety of methods including Cleveland Connected. There have been messages sent out to the community to ensure awareness of the COPA in support of this</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b></p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			During the 2024/25 and 2025/26 periods daily patrols have been undertaken in key crime hotspot areas by uniformed Kingdom officers to allow residents and businesses to have a visual point of contact within their areas to report ASB issues to directly, which included outside of HBC normal opening times. Officers also pass information onto the public on how they can report specific issues within their area.
	Ensure victims are aware of the ASB case review process – “Community Trigger” and how to initiate it	SHP members and partner organisations	<p><b>28/06/24 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader</b></p> <p>Publicity to occurring regarding the work of Hartlepool Community Safety Team. Information regarding the team is available on HBC website.</p> <p>Information regarding the Community Trigger is available on HBC website.</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>The Community Safety Team webpages on the Council website have been updated in anticipation of a new Council website in 2025.</p> <p>Information regarding the Community Trigger remains available on HBC website. (Nicholas Stone)</p>
	Provide a more visible police and council officer ‘on street’ presence	Police and Local Authority	<p>ASB hot spot funding uniformed patrols carried out in Headland &amp; Harbour and Victoria wards.</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 - Cleveland Police update</b></p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments   red = February/March 2025 comments   Green = November/December 2025

			<p>A new shift pattern was introduced in January 2025 for Hartlepool Neighbourhood Policing Teams, this has reduced the original three teams to two, meaning more police officers and Community Support Officers are on duty at any one time. All officers have dedicated wards to increase public confidence, engagement and officer accountability.</p> <p>Operation Artemis: In July 2025, Cleveland Police will be leading a large-scale day of action, involving several partner agencies, charities, local organisations – this will be aimed at two key areas, Anti-Social behaviour and Open Water Misadventure.</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>Safer Streets 5 project funding provided Community Cohesion Officer and Environmental Project Officer roles in Victoria Ward from April 2024 to March 2025. Town Centre patrols in place by Kingdom.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>All wards continue to have dedicated officers with individual ward meetings established and dates published online. Neighbourhoods currently have several vacancies meaning that some wards do not have dedicated officers across both shifts. However ,this is in hand and there remains cover from teams whilst an uplift in numbers is ongoing as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments   red = February/March 2025 comments   Green = November/December 2025

			<p>Op Aster launched in July 2025 which involves 2 dedicated officers carrying out high visibility patrols through the town centre to reduce crime and ASB. This has had a significant impact and continues to see results.</p> <p><b>December 2025 - SP</b> ASB hotspot funding is providing uniformed patrols in parts of Victoria, Foggy Furze &amp; Burn Valley Ward</p> <p>UKSPF funding is providing regular uniformed patrols in the Town Centre area.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b> During 2024/25 and 2025/26 uniformed Kingdom officers have been on daily patrols across the borough but mainly focused in a number of crime trigger areas, including Victoria Ward, Burn Valley Ward and Foggy Furze Ward. This has allowed a council lead daily presence on the streets. Although primarily focused on ASB and Enviro crime, they have also been involved in other front-line queries and have given out advice on any council related topics. Council enforcement officers also do uniformed patrols across the borough and use marked council vans to show a visual presence. Signage has been put up in key areas on how to report certain issues and offer a visual deterrent. Any fly tipping investigated is also stickered to show the public that council officers have investigated it and passed it over to be removed as soon as possible, to provide a further reassurance of presence.</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments   red = February/March 2025 comments   Green = November/December 2025

	<p>Make full use of the ASB tools and powers related to the partnership activity to tackle ASB</p>	<p>Local Authority, Police and partner organisations; Thirteen Group</p>	<p>Community Safety Accreditation scheme in ASB hot spot areas giving Civil Enforcement Officers additional powers</p> <p><b>28/11/25- Cleveland Police Update</b> Since April 2025 Hartlepool Police have submitted 139 AS13 forms in relation to Anti Social Behaviour. These are shared with our partners across the Community Safety Partnership to tackle the offending behaviour utilising other tools such as Anti Social Behaviour Contracts, Restorative Justice and Social Care intervention.</p> <p><b>December 2025 – SP</b> HBC Civil Enforcement Officers and ASB officers use the full range of enforcement powers when carrying out their duties.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b> A new back alley PSPO is being looked at to allow enforcement officers to have greater powers to deal with ASB and enviro crime related issues. This will allow for powers to deal with nuisance vehicles, poorly maintained properties and waste presentation/collection issues. New powers have also been introduced during 2025 to help tackle abandoned vehicle issues and commercial waste collection issues. Enforcement officers also have PSPO dog control powers to allow them to tackle a number of key issues like dog fouling or exclusion areas across the borough. All actions are recorded on APP to collate any actions taken by other teams within the council for intel gathering on a property and/or person.</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

**blue** = June 2024 comments    **red** = February/March 2025 comments    **Green** = November/December 2025

	Reduce deliberate fires	Local Authority, Police, Fire Brigade and partner organisations	<p><b>03/03/25 - Sean Smith (Hartlepool District Manager)</b></p> <p>Fire Brigade District manager, Sean Smith has now agreed to chair this group. (Sean Smith). Would recommend that all individuals who are known to be involved in deliberate fire setting are referred to Fire Brigade 'Fire Education Intervention' team for 1 to 1 education.</p> <p>Would recommend this group is attended by Fire Brigade Road and Water safety co-ordinator.</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>Multi agency deliberate fires group – Chaired and hosted by FB with representation from partner agencies</p> <p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police Update</b></p> <p>The group chaired by Sean Smith (Fire Brigade) has Police attendance and an October meeting was held where the agenda, key areas of focus and stakeholders were identified. Work will continue with partners to form a plan to tackle this specific issue.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b></p> <p>Enforcement and Kingdom officers work closely with the deliberate fires group and will actively patrol key problem areas and report any incidents they come across. A number of late patrols have been done in conjunction with Summerhill and the parks teams to help reduce fires during the dry summer months.</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			Any fly tipped waste, which could become a source of a deliberate fire is dealt with at the earliest opportunity and passed onto the councils cleansing team to be removed. Extra patrols are done on this during the build up to bonfire night.
	Reduce the nuisance caused by illegal / off road bikes/vehicles	Local Authority, Police, Fire Brigade and partner organisations	<p><b>28/02/2025 - Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>A reinvigorated Operation Endurance is in train, which will be aimed at a Multi-Agency approach to enforcement, problem solving and preventative activity regarding off-road bikes and ASB.</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>Multi agency off road vehicle group – Chaired and hosted by HBC with representation from partner agencies</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b></p> <p>Council Enforcement officers and Kingdom officers are tasked to report any offroad/ illegal bikes they see while on patrol and will actively report any issues with them to the Police or council CCTV to monitor. Intel is also passed to the council's highways team to try and put in measures to prevent access by these vehicles in problem areas.</p> <p>Enforcement officers have also assisted in erecting signage across the borough to allow these types of vehicles to be seized by the Police.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

**blue** = June 2024 comments    **red** = February/March 2025 comments    **Green** = November/December 2025

	Tackle environmental crime in all its forms	Local Authority, Police, Fire Brigade and partner organisations	<p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>Multi agency fly tipping group. – Chaired and hosted by HBC with representation from partner agencies</p> <p><b>24.11.2025 – Paul Hurwood, Environmental Services Manager</b> Fly-tipping group meets quarterly and continues to bring together those who can influence, and deal with the aftermath of, fly-tipping in Hartlepool. Action plan has been produced and forms basis of the work of the group. Currently working through fly-tipping data to identify trends, hotspots, etc, and formulating further actions to address. this.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 – Cleveland Police update</b> Op Endurance is still in operation and there are currently efforts ongoing to secure funding through partners to trial new tactics to reduce ASB. Cleveland Police are also working with Local Authorities to support in designing an environment within areas of Hartlepool that prevents this form of ASB. As part of ASB meeting specifically for Bishop Cuthbert there is a MA approach to designing this out in the playpark area. The number of incidents reported to police has declined over the last 3 months from 66 in August to 34 for October.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b> Council enforcement and Kingdom officers have authorised legislative powers to enforce environmental crime across the</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			<p>borough. Enforcement action from warnings, direct FPNs to court prosecutions are used to tackle enviro crime. Patrols are also undertaken in hotspot areas to give a visual enforcement presence. Camera operations and signage are also used to give a further visual deterrent and give out information on how it can be reported. HBC will actively promote actions taken, regarding enviro crime results. Currently enforcement officers are able to issue for a number of environmental crimes including:</p> <p>Littering, domestic and commercial waste, fly tipping, duty of care, commercial waste issues, untaxed and abandoned vehicles, dog control issues, CPW/CPN, vehicles being repaired or sold on the highway and smoking in a restricted area.</p>
	<p>TOWN CENTRE RAMP / ASB - ACTION PLAN</p> <p>Explore greater use of Public Space protection Orders (PSPO)</p>	<p>HBC &amp; Police Explore how far / to who the orders can be devolved.</p> <p>HBC &amp; Police Explore the introduction of a PSPO across the wider Town Centre and Marine.</p>	<p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>A review of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 legislation and associated Home Office guidance for the Act shows that it would be possible to implement a PSPO for the town centre area.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police Update</b></p> <p>Police have resourced two officers from each NHP team to be specifically dedicated to town centre patrols (Op Aster). Results provide a good indication as to what any increased presence in the town would entail. Reporting is not currently specific to Aster however from November the officers arrested 14 persons within the bounded area.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p>Positive feedback from the public has also been received through a variety of channels including SOH where individuals have noticed a reduction in ASB in key areas such as 'The Ramp'</p> <p><b>December 2025 - SP</b></p> <p>September 2025 a report was taken to Neighbourhood Services Committee To inform Members about the use of Public Space Protection Orders and to seek the views of the committee in relation to conducting a public consultation to include new order in the Town Centre.</p> <p>A town centre PSPO would likely include prohibitions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) groups of people acting in a manner likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress.</li> <li>(b) being verbally abusive</li> <li>(c) drinking alcohol (unless from licensed premises) and refusing to hand over alcohol on request.</li> <li>(d) injecting, inhaling, ingesting, smoking or otherwise using intoxicating substances</li> <li>(e) urinating, defecating spitting in a public place</li> <li>(f) littering and rummaging bins</li> <li>(g) riding skateboards, scooters, e-bikes etc. in a manner likely to cause damage to property, nuisance or annoyance.</li> <li>(h) begging and busking</li> <li>(I) Approaching members of public for subscriptions or charity donations without holding a licence to do so</li> </ul> <p>The Committee agreed to the public consultation which commenced on November. A further report will be taken to Committee following the consultation.</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			<b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b> Enforcement and Kingdom officers currently patrol the area daily and report any issues seen to either the Police or the council CCTV to monitor the area. Accredited officers will have further powers under the PSPOs to take further action within these areas, should they be approved. PSPOs may allow FPNs to be issued or in some cases a criminal prosecution.
	Create a 'Support Hub / Safe Space'	HBC Explore potential locations for the creation of the support Hub / Safe Space  HBC Identify who could be co-located in the Hub / Safe Space (options including Wharton Trust, START / Drugs Services and Homeless Team)	<b>28/02/25 – Abigail Reay (Public Health)</b>  A meeting was held with Start, Sylvia Pinkney, Neil Harrison and Phil Hepburn. It was agreed that a 'support hub/safe space' may not be the best option to tackle ASB at the ramp after discussions were held with wider partners. It was discussed that a place based approach using assertive outreach should be explored. This will include a team of staff working together to provide support to these individuals. A further meeting has been arranged to put plans into action.
	Maximise the use of available interventions Create a 'Retail Crime Forum' to ensure that the voices of retailers are heard and promote greater reporting of crime	HBC & CFB Explore types of support that could be provided, including Fire Brigade offer.  HBC & Police i) General promotion of use of available interventions: - Community Protection Warnings	<b>28/02/2025 - Cleveland Police update</b>  A bespoke problem-solving plan has been commissioned, aimed at reducing retail crime in key locations/business within Hartlepool. This will include focus on both Theft of goods and violence towards employees and involve many stakeholders within the Community Safety Partnership.  <b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments   red = February/March 2025 comments   Green = November/December 2025

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community protection Notices</li> <li>- Fixed Penalty Notices</li> <li>- Dispersal Orders</li> <li>- AS13s</li> </ul> <p>Police Support Middleton Grange Shopping centre to bettered use the AS13s</p> <p>HBC PCC &amp; MP Letter to Businesses to include York Road businesses to: Explore benefits and business support of the creation of a retail Crime Forum.</p>	<p>Several meetings have occurred between Community Safety, Cleveland Police and MGSC during 2024 to discuss joint working and tackling problems in the town centre. A further meeting has been arranged on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025.</p> <p>Cleveland Police have offered to attend any Retail Crime Forum established by MGSC.</p> <p>The Community Safey Team has issued 21 Community Protection Warnings, and 4 Community Protection Notices under Operation Grantham which has targeted aggressive persons in the town centre.</p> <p>Anti-social Behaviour Officers and ward PCSOs have on a number of occasions undertook walkabouts around the town centre during 2024 to speak to local businesses about any problems, and to provide advice on how to report any problems. Officers have also updated businesses on the actions being taken by Community Safety and provided them with posters with names/photos of perpetrators who have been issued with CPWs/CPNs so that any breaches of these can be reported.</p> <p>Cleveland Police undertook 3 dispersal orders around the town centre in 2024.</p> <p>Should MGSC security pursue Community Safety Accreditation with Cleveland Police then this issue could be discussed.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 – Cleveland Police update</b></p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			<p>Op Aster which launched in July 2025 has 2 officers dedicated to high visibility patrols in the town centre which includes Middleton Grange. Officers have built strong relationships with stores and security to identify problem individuals and deal robustly through arrests and AS13s etc</p> <p>PSP in place for Retail Crime since February 2025 where police engage with key locations/businesses to provide reassurance and drive better practices to reduce thefts. This is updated regularly to adapt to any new trends or change in locations etc. As stores are identified as being 'top' victims there is increased focus and visibility from officers which reduces crime in these areas. As a result though offenders generally move to target other stores and so this approach needs to be reviewed as a whole.</p> <p>Prolific offenders are targeted through 'Top 5' activity where individual officer responsible for securing convictions</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b> Kingdom officers have been tasked with patrols of the MGSC and High Street areas to engage with retailers and promote the shop watch programme to give a physical point of contact and visual deterrence.</p>
	Actively pursue additional funding opportunities	PCC, HBC Explore options for increased / continued access to: - UK Shared prosperity Funding (UKSPF) (including the ongoing	<p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police update</b> GRIP funding of over £30000 has been obtained by police, HBC to allow for upgrade/repair of CCTV cameras in key streets in Foggy Furze over coming months.</p> <p><b>December 2025 - SP</b></p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

		provision of additional Warden Patrols). CURV funding	<p>Additional UKSPF funding obtained from April 2025 to March 2026.</p> <p>Police obtained additional GRIP funding for CCTV improvements in Foggy Furze Ward.</p> <p>Improvements and upgrades have been carried out to Public Space CCTV system with further works planned in the New Year. Funding for this work has been obtained from a number of sources.</p>
	Expand the use of Community Safety Accreditation Scheme powers.	PCC Expand the delegation of Community Safety Accreditation Scheme powers to Middleton Grange Shopping Centre	<p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b> Should MGSC wish to pursue Community Safety Accreditation they should contact Cleveland Polices Licensing Support Unit for advice and guidance on the Accreditation process.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b> Enforcement officers will actively be involved with accredited powers and use them as part of their daily patrols. Further powers are currently being looked into and may allow for more actions to be taken in this area.</p>
	Use of Licensing Powers	<p>Police Review Licensing powers available.</p> <p>Police Licensing teams to better control the sale of alcohol to intoxicated individuals.</p>	<p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police update</b> The Cleveland Police licensing team continue to work with partners in LA and Trading Standards to tackle on and off license sales whilst also supporting pub watch schemes in line with the licensing objectives.</p> <p><b>06/01/2025 Rachael Readman, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager</b></p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			<p>Hartlepool Licensing Team and Cleveland Police Licensing Team maintain a strong working relationship and take a joint approach to addressing issues within licensed premises across the borough.</p> <p>Where premises are suspected of selling or supplying alcohol to an intoxicated individual, officers from both teams will conduct a visit and carry out a thorough investigation.</p> <p>A range of enforcement options may be considered, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strengthening licence conditions</b> through a premises licence variation</li> <li>• <b>Licensing review</b>, which may result in licence revocation, removal of the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS), or amendments to the operating schedule</li> <li>• <b>Targeted test purchase operations</b></li> </ul>
	CCTV in Hartlepool	HBC Improve communication and awareness of CCTV in Hartlepool and how it is monitored	<p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>The Council is currently undertaking a refurbishment of town centre CCTV cameras. Once this has been completed by end March 2025 publicity will occur regarding the CCTV service.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police update</b> As per the funding update above re GRIP.</p>
	Other Comments		<b>28/02/2025 - Cleveland Police update</b>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p><b>Operation Artemis – January 2025:</b> Officers in Hartlepool carried out activity with Hartlepool Council Community Wardens to tackle antisocial behaviour, aggressive begging and alcohol related violence. They also engaged with local shop staff around the threat of violence to shopworkers. Two people were found to have drugs and dealt with, three antisocial behaviour orders were issued and a shop was reported to Trading Standards.</p> <p>Further activity continued into the evening, with checks on and around licensed premises. Sixty people were stop searched by officers, with seven of those dealt with for possession of drugs. Two were arrested on suspicion of possession with intent to supply drugs and one person arrested for an outstanding stalking offence.</p> <p>A drugs dog was taken around licensed premises, which led to a large quantity of drugs discarded which was then recovered by officers.</p> <p><b>December 2025 - SP</b> Improvements and upgrades have been carried out to Public Space CCTV system with further works planned in the New Year. Funding has been obtained from a number of sources.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b> Enforcement and Kingdom officers will continue to be a source of intel and report/deal with any ASB/Enviro crime issues they come across. Officers have direct radios to the council's CCTV</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			room which allows a much quicker reporting method for monitoring any issues. Enforcement officers also use overt CCTV in the prevention and enforcement of enviro crimes across the borough.
<b>Off Road Biles</b>	Improve terminology to include new technology (e.g. e-bikes - potentially 'nuisance vehicles' rather than off road bikes)	<b>Police Local Authority</b>	
	Improve education / awareness of the risks associated with this nuisance behaviour (work schools from primary level onwards)	<b>Police</b>	
	Encourage reporting stressing it's importance	<b>Police Local Authority</b>	<b>December 2025 - SP</b> HBC encourage complaints to report off road vehicle activity and highlighting the importance to elected members & others.
	Raising the profile of work being undertaken	<b>Police Local Authority</b>	<b>December 2025 - SP</b> HBC Social media posts highlight work being carried out.

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

	in response to the issue and successes.		
	Dispel myths about what the police can / will do in terms of interventions.	<b>Police</b>	
	Embrace technology (develop the use of drones and promote the Copper App)	<b>Police</b> <b>Local Authority</b>	<b>December 2025 - SP</b> Police Actively and HBC both promote the use of the COPA App.  Police and HBC use drone to assist with ASB enforcement work which includes off road bikes & other vehicles
	Work with Fuel Retailers to bring them on board to better regulate the sale of fuel.	<b>Police</b> <b>Local Authority</b>	
	Further develop data sharing agreements (including Housing Associations to explore what can be done via tenancy agreements)	<b>Police</b>	
	The MP to progress via parliamentary processes the:	<b>MP</b>	

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The introduction of a policy that allows seized off road bikes / e-bikes to be crushed; and</li> </ul> <p>Requirement for all off road bikes and e-bikes to be licensed</p>		
Domestic Violence and Abuse*	Local delivery of the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership action plan 2022-2025	<p>SHP members and partner organisations</p> <p>Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board / All</p>	<p><b>27/06/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>Needs assessment, strategy and action plan are in place with oversight provided by the statutory Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership. Needs assessment completed 2021 and currently being refreshed. Strategy was published 2022 and will be updated 2025. Action plans completed for years 1 and 2 and year 3 is in progress.</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Domestic Abuse policy and appropriate strategies are in place, with a strategic governance framework.</p> <p>Referral mechanisms pertaining to the sharing of information with key services are well implemented.</p> <p><b>28/11/25- Cleveland Police Update</b></p> <p>As per the above entry. Cleveland Police are an attendee at the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

**blue** = June 2024 comments    **red** = February/March 2025 comments    **Green** = November/December 2025

	<p>Workforce are equipped to ask the right questions and to support victims of Domestic Abuse</p>	<p>Strategic MARAC Group / Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board</p>	<p>Training/ promotion of Domestic Abuse campaigns; Ask for Angela, 16 Days of Action/....</p> <p><b>27/06/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>The council has adopted and are implementing the Safe &amp; Together model and an implementation plan is being rolled out initially targeting children’s safeguarding teams and Multi-Agency partners. Training is available via HSSCP, TSAB and the council’s workforce development team as well as through our commissioned service provider, Harbour. In addition training is being developed via Strategic MARAC.</p> <p><b>02/03/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>The implementation of Safe and Together is going well, with a further two, 4 day Core training sessions delivered to children’s social care, health colleagues and Harbour. MARAC training is available via TSAB website which has been developed by Strategic MARAC. Training is available via HSSCP, TSAB and the council’s workforce development team as well as through our commissioned service provider, Harbour.</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Incident reporting mechanisms are in place to ensure appropriate risk grading for domestic abuse and victim needs assessments – connecting with MARAC and additional support services.</p> <p><b>28/11/25- Cleveland Police Update</b></p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			As per the above entry there is a system in place for risk grading of victims which is audited regularly. Cleveland Police have recently changed their investigative structure to ensure all incidents that are graded as high risk receive investigation from their CID departments. This is in line with national recommendations and has the objective to improve service to victims of domestic abuse.
	Ensure that the needs of victims / survivors with multiple and complex issues are given due consideration	All / HBC Domestic Abuse Coordinator / Corporate Communication Teams	<p><b>27/06/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>TSAB refreshed the Team Around the Individual process which is now High Risk Adult Panel. Harbour have a dedicated assertive outreach worker for victims with complex needs. A second refuge has been opened specifically for complex needs victims and survivors.</p> <p><b>02/03/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>A perpetrator strategy has been developed and is currently out for consultation via OPCC</p>
	Domestic Abuse in all its forms is recognised by the workforce and in the community	HBC Domestic Abuse Coordinator / Harbour	<p><b>27/06/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>A robust communications strategy is in place educating the public as well as professionals on domestic abuse, appropriate response and how to access help and support. The council's website has been updated to reflect our offer of support services.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b></p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			Front line enforcement officers are aware of current initiatives such as 'Ask for Angela' and other signs of domestic abuse and will report any such issue seen to the appropriate teams.
	Victims/survivors (adults and children) are true partners in the review and development of services	SHP members and partner organisations	<p><b>27/06/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>The board has survivor representation, the needs assessment was completed and is being refreshed with support from victims and survivors. Harbour's service user panel contributes to any policies, procedures and plans to ensure we are led by lived experience.</p>
	Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews is disseminated, resulting in improved service delivery across the whole system	SHP members and partner organisations	<p><b>27/06/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>DHR – the SHP is responsible for commissioning DHRs where a death is a result of domestic abuse. The SHP will manage any recommendations and action plans with support from the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board</p> <p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Cleveland Police have a tracking dashboard for all learning reviews for Adult and Child safeguarding. The Head of Adult Safeguarding has responsibility for ensuring all learning from reviews is disseminated throughout the force. This is currently controlled through Strategic Governance Boards and the Organisational Learning Board.</p>
	Other Comments		<p><b>28/02/25 – Abigail Reay (Public Health)</b></p> <p>DAPO pilot to begin with START D&amp;A service this is a one year funded pilot providing dedicated staffing resource to the pilot</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p><b>28/02/2025 - Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>DAPO: Cleveland police are one of three forces to pilot the introduction of Domestic Abuse Prevention Orders. This goes live on 05/03/2025. DAPO is a joint policy shared between the Home Office and Ministry of Justice. The aim of the DAPO is to bring together the strongest elements of the existing protective order regime into a single comprehensive, flexible order to afford longer-term protection for victims of all domestic abuse. The DAPO will be the first order available in all court jurisdictions (criminal, family and civil) providing victims with a choice to identify the most appropriate route for them. This emphasises the importance of victims having greater choice of how to apply and allows third parties the option to apply on behalf of victims.</p> <p><b>28/11/25- Cleveland Police Update</b>  <b><u>VKPP Year 4 Domestic Homicide Project – Self-Assessment</u></b>  Cleveland Police is actively responding to the recommendations outlined in the fourth annual VKPP Domestic Homicide Project report. The force is coordinating a comprehensive submission, due 27th November, to address five strategic questions. These focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing recognition and response to domestic abuse among young people, particularly in the context of teenage relationship abuse, through both independent and multi-agency initiatives.</li> <li>• Strengthening information sharing with mental health and substance misuse services, and mapping local referral pathways to prevent domestic homicides and suicides.</li> </ul>
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Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepening collaboration between suicide prevention and domestic abuse teams to safeguard those at risk.</li> <li>• Raising awareness of the risks associated with non-fatal strangulation, and embedding this understanding in both operational and partnership responses.</li> <li>• Improving early engagement with Complex Case Units to support evidence gathering in suspected suicides linked to domestic abuse.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Draft Domestic Homicide and Suicide Prevention Plan</u></b> A strategic Domestic Homicide and Suicide Prevention Plan is in advanced development, designed to address gaps identified in the self-assessment. This plan will be integrated with the force's DA 4P Plan, ensuring a cohesive approach. Key strategic actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-agency early identification, intervention, and support for those at risk.</li> <li>• Enhanced recording and analysis of domestic abuse-related suicides and "near miss" incidents.</li> <li>• Strengthened partnerships with mental health and suicide prevention services.</li> <li>• Targeted training for frontline staff.</li> <li>• Systematic learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>DAPO Progress Update</u></b> Cleveland Police continues to demonstrate sector-leading performance in the implementation of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs):</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 311 police-led DAPOs granted in criminal courts, second only to Greater Manchester, reflecting strong operational delivery.</li> <li>• Effective use of Positive Requirements (PRs) in DAPOs, aligning with best practice for rehabilitation and behaviour change.</li> <li>• No deployment of electronic monitoring to date, in line with most pilot areas; this presents a strategic opportunity for future enhancement.</li> <li>• Highest number of DAPO breaches among pilot forces, indicating robust enforcement but also highlighting the need for ongoing review of compliance strategies.</li> <li>• Moderate activity in family court DAPOs, with scope for further cross-jurisdictional development.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Implications:</b> Cleveland's leadership in DAPO implementation is clear, but future planning should address the absence of electronic monitoring and the high breach rate to further strengthen compliance and victim safeguarding.</p>
Drug and Alcohol Misuse	Work in partnership with the Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) to reduce drug supply	SHP members and partner organisations	<p><b>27/06/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>Hartlepool public health are represented at the combatting drugs partnership, as well as chairing CDP subgroup 2 regarding treatment and recovery. Community D+A services (Start) are also in attendance.</p> <p><b>28/02/25 – Abigail Reay, Public Health</b></p> <p>The above still stands – no updates</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police update</b> Close working relationships with CDP and DARD (Drug &amp; Alcohol related deaths) is occurring across all districts to develop intelligence, information share to reduce overdose and drugs death along with enforcement. The teams within prevention are tasked from the force Tactical Coordination Group in line with force threat, harm and risk around this area.</p> <p><b>04/12/2025 – Abigail Reay Public Health</b> DAPO Manager is currently looking to extend that DAPO pilot, awaiting outcome regarding this.</p>
	Local delivery of the Drug & Alcohol Strategy action plan	START and Criminal Justice Partners	<p><b>27/06/24 – Olivia Highley, Domestic Abuse Coordinator</b></p> <p>Drug and alcohol strategy plan continues to be delivered with quarterly update meetings with partners we need to present this joint at Safer Hartlepool Partnership</p> <p><b>28/02/25 – Abigail Reay, Public Health</b></p> <p>Update meetings currently on hold whilst reviewed partnership. Meetings to be reinstated in the coming weeks. The D+A strategy plan continues to be worked on.</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Cleveland Police restructuring has seen the creation of a 'Prevention Command', with a dedicated team driving the use of Out of Court Disposals, diversionary schemes and early intervention.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p><b>28/11/25 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Out of court referrals are starting to increase across Hartlepool with 164 alternative outcomes used in the past 6 months. Of these 96 are linked to drugs offences and the alternative outcomes will predominantly be referrals to drug support services.</p> <p><b>04/12/2025 - Abigail Reay, Public Health</b> Meetings reinstated and continue to work well.</p>
	Review the current criminal justice pathways into substance misuse services to ensure efficacy of treatment and support	Police Trading Standards Community Safety	<p><b>28/06/24 – Abigail Reay, Public Health/START</b></p> <p>Hartlepool's continuity of care continues to be significantly higher than the national average, suggesting continuation of robust pathways between the prisons and community drug and alcohol services. Work on going to ensure that those who are taken into custody are also given opportunities to speak to substance use professionals, including onward referrals to community services. Those that are on community orders are also referred into our dedicated CJIT Team.</p> <p><b>28/02/25 – Abigail Reay, Public Health</b></p> <p>There has been a dip in CoC stats across the region. Start have prioritised this work to increase CoC numbers and ensure timely and effective treatment to our prison leavers. Start are currently working closely with regional prisons. We can see from our local data, that our CoC stats have started to increase, showing progress with regard to the work Start have been doing.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			<p>Aswell as being a pilot site for ISC Start are also working with Cleveland Police to look at Out of Court Disposal's this will allow an even wider reach to individuals coming through the CJ pathways to support and divert away of crime and D+A use.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police Update</b> OOCd are being increasingly considered for a host of offences including drug possession and officers will seek to work with partners and encourage referral and self-referral for addicts into such services.</p> <p><b>04/12/2025 – Abigail Reay, Public Health</b> Continuing to improve</p>
	Work in partnership to disrupt the supply of illegal drugs	Police Trading Standards Community Safety	<p>Supply chain disruption work carried out including. Premises visits, raids &amp; premise closures orders</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Cleveland Police, along with key partners, continue to disrupt the manufacture and supply of controlled drugs. This includes effective intelligence gathering and making best use of search warrants and planned operations to target suspicious properties, seize drugs and arrest suspects. Hartlepool Neighbourhood Teams have recovered in excess of 12 million pounds worth of drugs over the last 24 months.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 – Cleveland Police update</b> There has been continued focus and efforts to disrupt the supply of drugs within the area.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			<p>By maintaining relationships with key stakeholders and through effective intelligence gathering there have been numerous drugs warrants executed throughout the LPA in the last 6 months. This has resulted in the convictions of persons bringing harm to the community.</p> <p>DDU taskings are also in line with the force Tactical Coordination Group (force and district).</p> <p>Presentations and targeted interventions delivered in schools and colleges across Hartlepool on key themes including County Lines and anti-social behaviour and drink spiking</p>
	Raise awareness of the harms associated with drug and alcohol misuse amongst school and college students	Neighbourhood Police Team (PC Coggin)	<p>Presentations and targeted interventions delivered in schools and colleges across Hartlepool on key themes including County Lines and anti-social behaviour and drink spiking</p> <p><b>28/06/24 – Abigail Reay, Public Health/START</b></p> <p>Start CYP Team have been approaching secondary schools to expand their treatment offer, as well as offering awareness sessions. CYP team also involved in an enrichment pilot lead by YouthFocusNE within High Tunstall and English Martyrs which will include substance use drop ins. CYP Team attend colleges frequently on their market place days and events such as Freshers.</p> <p><b>28/02/25 – Abigail Reay, Public Health</b></p> <p>The above is complete. Start CYP team are now working into all secondary and youth clubs across the town. A priority for Start CYP team for 2025 is to increase numbers into treatment for</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments   red = February/March 2025 comments   Green = November/December 2025

			<p>under 18s. Start continue to provide prevention and resilience work across the town.</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>School liaison and engagement continuous with presentations and events raising awareness of many high-risk areas; including drugs, use of weapons, violence against women and girls.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>PC Coggin has continued to deliver engagement sessions within educational establishments to highlight multiple areas including alcohol/drugs.</p> <p>Over 90% of education establishments force wide are signed up to Pol-Ed which provides hundreds of lessons across a host of themes including drugs and alcohol that can be consistently delivered to students. In addition, Early Intervention staff deploy to schools on a daily basis engaging with children to seek to divert away from criminal behaviour.</p> <p><b>04/12/2025 – Abigail Reay, Public Health</b></p> <p>START YP numbers in treatment remain a priority and we are working towards this priority.</p>
	Other Comments		<p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Refresh of Naloxone training for Hartlepool police intended during 2025.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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<p><b>Serious Violence*</b></p>	<p>Analysis of existing and emerging hotspots of serious violence is shared and a Multi-Agency response is planned.</p>	<p>Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV)</p>	<p>Partners providing data for need assessment.</p> <p>Partners providing data for deep dive.</p> <p><b>27/06/24 – Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Three Bleed Cabinets have been installed in the NTE area. Installation took place on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June. The fourth cabinet has been purchased and will be installed as soon as the pole mounting kit has arrived.</p> <p><b>03/03/25 – Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p><b>Bleed Control Cabinets</b> Four Bleed Cabinets have been installed in and around the Night Time Economy area.</p> <p><b><u>Bleed Control Kit Cabinet Locations</u></b></p> <p><b>1. <u>Bleed Cabinet 1</u></b></p> <p>Hartlepool Community Central Hub 124 York Road, Hartlepool, TS26 9DE On front wall of building, left of entrance, next to existing Defibrillator cabinet Three What Words /// loser.report.dock</p> <p><b>1. <u>Bleed Cabinet 2</u></b></p> <p>Hartlepool Borough Council</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p>Civic Centre building, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY At front of building, at top of steps on front entrance concourse, next to existing Defibrillator cabinet Three What Words /// handle.boot.twigs</p> <p><b>2. <u>Bleed Cabinet 3</u></b></p> <p>Tranquillity House (Orange Box building) Harbour View, Hartlepool, TS24 0UX Front wall of building, left of entrance, next to existing Defibrillator cabinet Three What Words /// hype.occurs.nobody</p> <p><b>3. <u>Bleed Cabinet 4</u></b></p> <p>Hartlepool Railway Station Station Approach, Hartlepool, TS24 7ED On Council owned public space CCTV camera column, opposite front entrance of Hartlepool Railway Station, and opposite existing Defibrillator cabinet Three What Words /// beats.vines.filer</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>We have a dedicated Licencing Officer for Hartlepool within the Police who is working with the HBC officer(s). Plans are in place to fund further high visibility operations throughout the year tackling NTE violence and taxi licencing. We will continue to work in partnership to tackle problem premises and offenders.</p>
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			<p><b>28/11/25- Cleveland Police Update</b> Cleveland Police have created problem solving plans around the night-time economy in each policing district. Hartlepool also has a problem solving plan around knife crime and robbery that drive proactivity in these areas.</p> <p><b>01/06/2025 – Rachael Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Work with CURV and Cleveland Police around serious violence in the Nighttime Economy is ongoing</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b> Enforcement officers, although not directly responsible for this area, can and do act as council front line workers. So, any violence seen on patrols is reported and, if available, information passed to the CCTV room to monitor the issue on camera for evidence. Officers have rung 999 on a number of occasions when coming across violent issues and will continue to do so as part of their patrols</p>
	<p>Local delivery of the CURV Response Strategy</p>  <p>CURV Response Strategy-Final.pdf</p>	Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV)	<p><b>27/06/24 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Premises have been chosen from the NTE area. Launch event taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> July when the radios will be distributed. Launch event will be attended by Cleveland Police, CURV, HBC Licensing, Licensing Committee representative and SHP Representative.</p> <p><b>03/03/25 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p>

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			<p>With support from the UKSPF funding the 25 pub watch radios are going to be funded for a further year (free to the NTE premises until July 2026). The UKSPF funding has also provided us with the opportunity to hire a further ten radios bringing the NTE Pub watch network up to 35 premises.</p> <p>So far 38 NTE premises have taken advantage of one years free membership to Schemelink, to assist with their Pub watch. SCHEMELINK is more than just a tool - it's the backbone of hundreds of watch schemes across the UK, from Pub watch to Shopwatch and beyond. With features designed to keep members connected, informed, and secure, SCHEMELINK brings cutting-edge technology to the front lines of community safety and crime prevention.</p> <p>Via UKSPF funding free membership has been offered for the LASAI scheme to NTE premises within the eligible area. So far one premises has completed the process and been awarded five stars.</p> <p>Licensing Security &amp; Vulnerability initiative has been launched to keep licensed premises safer for staff and customers. Licensing SAVI brings together all the information a premises need to meet the requirements of police and council licensing teams to promote the four Licensing Objectives.</p> <p><b>04/03/24 – Brian Hughff, Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Team</b></p>
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			<p>Cleveland IOM is a partnership approach to tackling the most prolific offenders committing ‘Neighbourhood Crime’ offences (Robbery, Burglary and other serious acquisitive crime). The key stakeholders are The Probation Service and Cleveland Police, who work with partners to collectively address the criminogenic needs of the cohorts. With substance misuse being a key driver behind the offending of this cohort the team work closely with START, who attend monthly meetings to discuss IOM cases who are causing the most concern, re-offending or harm. IOM prioritise selection of violent offenders who have committed Robbery and Aggravated Burglary offences as part of their index offence.</p> <p>There are currently 17 offenders actively managed by the IOM Team. Over the last year the desistence rate for Hartlepool offenders has been positive (above 81.5% for the ‘fixed’ cohort) and there have been real sustainable outcomes for people at the end IOM management.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to expand IOM to include a cohort of other offenders who wouldn’t usually be ‘in scope’, but who would benefit from the IOM approach which will see the number offenders being managed increase.</p> <p><b>06/01/2026 - Rachael Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Pubwatch scheme ongoing with APEX radios being provided to 25 premises.</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p>Pubwatch membership via Schemelink has continued and has been a real asset to the NTE allowing their Pubwatch scheme to be officially recognised.</p> <p>Officers from the Licensing Security &amp; Vulnerability initiative attended Hartlepool in the run up to the Christmas period and visited premises across the borough and encouraged them to sign up to the initiative.</p>
	Assist in the delivery of the CURV night time economy action plan.	SHP members and partner organisations	<p><b>27/06/24 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Responsible Authorities group has been established. The group has been well received and has met regularly since its incorporation. The group is chaired by HBC Licensing Manager.</p> <p><b>03/03/25 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Responsible Authorities group continues to meet to discuss new Premises Licence Applications. Multi Agency group made up of all responsible authorities as defined by the Licensing Act 2003.</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>A fourth Bleed Control Cabinet has been installed in the town centre. Locations are: (1) Central Community Hub, York Road; (2) Civic Centre, Victoria Road; (3) Hartlepool Railway Station; (4) Orangebox, Navigation Point.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p><b>04/03/25 – Anna Waddington, Police</b></p> <p>All four bleed cabinets have now been installed and CURV are working to add these to NEAS's CAD system so they can be accessed through a 999 call. Licensed premises and other NTE stakeholders have been trained in the use of the cabinet equipment. Has been agreed bleed cabinets will be installed at a number of police and fire stations.</p> <p>25 APEX radios have been distributed to licensed premises to support communication between venues, CCTV and police. Ask for Angela training for licensed premises is planned for this month.</p> <p>Hartlepool Town Pastors given funding for additional resources.</p> <p>Drug dog operation carried out in licensed premises. This was 'piloted' with CURV funding to be taken forward by the force in future.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Responsible Authorities group continues to meet to discuss new Premises Licence Applications. Multi Agency group made up of all responsible authorities as defined by the Licensing Act 2003.</p>
	Raise awareness of the risks and potential consequences of	Neighbourhood Police Team - Supt. Martin Hopps / PC Geoff Coggin	Presentations and targeted interventions delivered in schools and colleges across Hartlepool on key themes including knife crime, personal safety and "Ask for Angela" initiative.

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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	serious violence amongst school and college students		<p><b>28/11/25 – Cleveland Police update</b>          Since October 2025 PC Coggin has delivered 18 engagements in schools and colleges around serious violence and knife crime. This has reached over 2650 individuals.</p>
	Provide a more visible police presence to prevent and deter serious violence in identified hotspot areas and the night-time economy	Police - Supt. Martin Hopps / Ch. Inspector Pete Littlewood	<p>Dedicated patrols in hotspot (GRIP) areas / positive action / reduction in offences and victims</p> <p><b>27/06/24 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Hartlepool Town Pastors meeting are hosted by HBC. The meetings are attended by Licensing, Cleveland Police and CCTV.</p> <p><b>03/03/25 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Close working alongside the Hartlepool Town Pastors continues.</p> <p><b>28/06/24 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader</b></p> <p>Installation of 2 mobile CCTV cameras in the NTE area.</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>During the year there have been multiple operations running which have tackled the reduction in Serious Violence within the LPA. Op Deterrence patrols have targeted areas highlighted</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p>from data for High Visibility Policing at key times which have been identified.</p> <p>Operation Tranquillity is an ongoing force order for Night Time Economy Policing with a commitment to increasing staffing numbers on key identified dates that violence can increase.</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>Pub Watch (Apex) radios have been distributed to Licenced Premises through the Hartlepool Licensee Association members. These radios are monitored by Hartlepool's CCTV Control Room.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Op Advent is currently being finalised to deliver a plan for NTE across the festive period. This will involve high visibility patrols across the main 2 NTE areas in the LPA with support from Neighbourhoods, Response and Specials.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 - Rachael Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Close working alongside the Hartlepool Town Pastors continues.</p> <p>Licensing Team have conducted Licensing visits with Cleveland Police Licensing Officers over the Christmas Period – ensuring an enhanced visibility to the trade.</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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	Other Comments		<p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Officers in Hartlepool carried out activity with Hartlepool Council Community Wardens to tackle antisocial behaviour, aggressive begging and alcohol related violence. They also engaged with local shop staff around the threat of violence to shopworkers. Two people were found to have drugs and dealt with, three antisocial behaviour orders were issued and a shop was reported to Trading Standards.</p> <p>Further activity continued into the evening, with checks on and around licensed premises. Sixty people were stop searched by officers, with seven of those dealt with for possession of drugs. Two were arrested on suspicion of possession with intent to supply drugs and one person arrested for an outstanding stalking offence.</p> <p>Within Op Artemis Pc Coggin attended the College of Further education and delivered sessions on One Punch, Spiking and Violence Against Women and Girls.</p>
Re-offending	The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) 'Proven adult offending rate' for Hartlepool offenders is reduced.	Probation / Integrated Offender Management	<p><b>02/11/2025 – Cleveland Police Update</b></p> <p>At the time of writing there are 16 active IOM cases living in Hartlepool. It should be noted that IOM cases are often transient and some Hartlepool residents on IOM have been dispersed to other LA areas due to the way housing is allocated upon release from prison. Of the overall IOM cohort, 36% are dwelling house burglars and 28% are Robbery offenders. 59% have a flag for Domestic Abuse. (Data from Q2 IOM Performance Pack)</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p>The desistence rate for Hartlepool offenders in July-Sept 25 is 100% for Fixed Cohort cases and 87% for Flex Cohort cases.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police update</b> Cleveland Police has a mature operating model within the IOM arena and co locate with probation staff to ensure accurate and timely information sharing. The staff utilise Intensive Supervision courts to ensure strict management of individuals in the community which has proven to reduce offending rates.</p>
	Implement the Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan	YJS Management Board Chair (Jo Heaney) / HBC YJS Manager (Roni Checksfield)	<p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Cleveland Police continue to utilise Juvenile out of court disposal methods with projects such as the Triage scheme. These are referred to and then managed by the Youth Offending Team who work with partners to educate and divert children from re offending.</p> <p>This has been particularly well received in respect of youths involved in the Murray Street disorder.</p> <p>As described above there is a force wide focus led by the Prevention command to increase the use of Out of Court Disposals and Education to prevent re-offending and build safer communities.</p> <p><b>03/03/25 – Phil Gleaves (Youth Offending Operational Lead)</b></p> <p>The strategic plan has been to full council and been approved.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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Prevent	Susceptible individuals are safeguarded from being radicalised by individuals and/or groups promoting extremist ideologies online or in the community	Community Safety / Police	<p>Training: Key partners briefed on the Counter Terrorism Local Profile</p> <p>Local Prevent Risk Assessment is in place</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>Ongoing assessment to ensure compliance with Prevent duty – including developing venue booking policy, Mandatory staff training and providing Prevent awareness for commissioned services. Developing an ongoing local operational group to ensure delivery of the wider Cleveland Action Plan</p>
	Workforce and Community awareness of Prevent and the risks of radicalisation is increased	Community Safety / Police / Corporate Communication Team	<p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>Cleveland Police have Prevent officers as part of the Counter Terrorism Unit which is managed in the Northern Area by West Yorkshire Police. Referrals are submitted via the intelligence submission process.</p> <p>Within the LPA Tasking and Co-ordinating Group meeting the current trends concerns are discussed as an overview with then further discussion in relation to specific identified individuals.</p> <p><b>28/11/25 Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>SME lead has asked for tweak to prior update.</p> <p>Prevent is managed on behalf of the force by Counter Terrorism Policing North East (CTPNE). A dedicated CTPNE Prevent team is based within Cleveland managing the referrals. These</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p>referrals are submitted using a national referral form direct to CTPNE for assessment and action as appropriate.</p> <p>For clarity all Cleveland officers involved in CT are seconded to West Yorkshire as they are the lead force for CT. In simple terms we work for CTPNE and as a result Cleveland don't have any Prevent officers as such.</p>
	Victims of hate crime have increased confidence in reporting and accessing support services	Community Safety / VCAS / Third Party Reporting Centres	<p>Develop a Prevent Communications Plan</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>Hartlepool Community Safety Team operate a network of 10 Third Party Hate Crime Reporting Centres around Hartlepool. These centres are located in public and voluntary sector buildings. Centres are advertised through signage on buildings and with contact information published on the Council and OPCC websites. The Council will also be participating in the Hate Crime Awareness Week 11-18<sup>th</sup> October 2025.</p>
Acquisitive Crime	Reduction in residential burglary offences	Police / Crime Prevention/Community Safety	<p>Proactive patrols in key areas/ prioritise activity to locate and arrest outstanding suspects / crime prevention and target hardening measures to prevent repeat victimisation.</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>This is an area monitored by the Tasking and Co-Ordinating Group with discussion around Crime trends and locations. This will then direct increased ward patrols by Neighbourhood</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p>Policing and Response Teams with Local CID tackling offenders.</p> <p>The Local Policing Framework has a force mission of Tackling Criminals and to this end we now have a Pro-active team in the Hartlepool Local Policing Area to support the arrest of people who are wanted.</p> <p>Within the LPA present figures show a 9.7% reduction in Residential Burglaries in the last 12 months.</p> <p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>The Safer Streets Project has handed out 287 anti-burglary packs to at risk residents in the Victoria Ward.</p> <p>Hartlepool Community Safety Team also operate a target hardening service for victims of crime.</p>
	Reduction in shoplifting offences	Police / PCSOs / Community Safety	<p>Proactive patrols in key areas / prioritise activity to locate and arrest outstanding suspects / pursue robust enforcement for repeat offenders.</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>A bespoke problem-solving plan has been commissioned, aimed at reducing retail crime in key locations/business within Hartlepool. This will include focus on both Theft of goods and violence towards employees and involve many stakeholders within the Community Safety Partnership.</p>

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p><b>03/03/2025 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Through UKSPF funding over 55 Apex radios have been provided to Hartlepool Town Centre shops. The premises have received a radio with a two year free subscription in place.</p> <p>The radios will be used to help ensure effective communication between shops and the sharing of information/intelligence. The radio will also be connected to several services that operate in the daytime economy that can provide help and support, including the Councils CCTV team and Cleveland Police.</p> <p><b>06/01/2026 Rachael Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>The distribution of Shopwatch radios continues, with 107 daytime economy premises having an APEX radio.</p> <p>The radios are supporting effective communication between shops, enabling the quick sharing of information and intelligence. The radios are linked to key daytime economy services that can offer assistance and support, including the Council's CCTV team and Cleveland Police.</p> <p><b>06/01/26 – David Riley – Enforcement/Parking</b></p> <p>Enforcement officers have reported several suspected burglaries to the Police, leading to arrests either through witnessing it as part of their patrols or through overt camera enforcement. Officers also report any breached properties as</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

			part of their patrols to make the properties secure, to reduce theft, reduce the risk of arson and prevent enviro crimes. Officers will continue to perform this role as part of their duties. A new PSPO is being looked at to make property owners more responsible for their property maintenance to also reduce crime.
Retail Crime	Increase the reporting of retail crime.		
	Support for businesses: - Encourage increased take up of schemes / activities available to businesses for the prevention of retail crime. - Explore the identification of new, funding for , schemes to support businesses in the prevention and response to retail crime -Provide advice to businesses on how to improve own	<b>Police</b>  <b>Local Authority</b>  <b>Police</b>  <b>Local Authority</b>  <b>Police</b>	

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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	surveillance and design out crime.		
	<p>Improve communication / sharing of best practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of a 'Retail Crime Forum / Partnership' to ensure that the voices of retailers are heard, greater promotion of crime reporting, encourage partnership working , sharing good practice and information sharing between businesses and partner organisations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Police</b></p> <p><b>Local Authority</b></p>	
	<p>Offender understanding and support (reoffending prevention):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Obtain a clearer understanding of the factors that drive retail crime and</li> </ul>	<p><b>Police</b></p>	

## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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	<p>improve communication with offenders to identify improved interventions (e.g. reintroduction of exit interviews with offenders).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore and develop improved pathways for the support of offenders to prevent reoffending with relevant agencies (e.g. the Probation Service).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Police</b></p> <p><b>Probation Service</b></p>	
Retail Crime	<p><b>Recommendations from Audit &amp; Governance Committee Report.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the process of reporting crime to the Police by retailers be examined to ensure that this process is simple and straight forward.</li> <li>2. That ways of encouraging the</li> </ol>		

Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

blue = June 2024 comments red = February/March 2025 comments Green = November/December 2025

	<p>reporting of all retail theft be explored. Whilst reinforcing and promoting that the Police will respond to reports of retail theft.</p> <p>3. Explore ways to build relationships between retailers and the Police and to share best practice.</p> <p>4. Identify both new, and continued sources of funding, for initiatives to tackle neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour. Including those that would extend the availability of help and support to businesses outside the town centre.</p> <p>5. Local businesses be encouraged further to engage with schemes and initiatives, including the offer of Airwave Radios to aid communication between retailers to</p>		
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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	<p>prevent thefts occurring.</p> <p>6. Examine ways to identify whether retail crime offenders are engaging with substance misuse treatment services. Including ways of making every contact count in order to signpost offenders to services and identifying issues for those who might offend / reoffend whilst in treatment.</p> <p>7. To explore developing a Retail Forum where retailers can work in conjunction with each other to share ideas and best practice.</p> <p>8. That the effectiveness of Police target hardening and the prioritisation of certain businesses most affected by retail crime be evaluated</p>		
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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Protect	Workforce and Community awareness of Protect duty and the risks of terrorist threats.	SHP members and partner organisations	<p>Requirement for staff to undertake ACT Awareness eLearning and Scan for All training package</p> <p>Recommended that all staff with a work Mobile phone to download the free ProtectUK App</p> <p><b>27/06/24 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Protect training is now incorporated into the mandatory training section of the 2024/25 Workforce Development Programme for all HBC members of staff.</p> <p><b>03/03/2025 - Rachel Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Updates regarding Protect are provided at all meetings with stakeholders; for example Hartlepool Licensee Association and HUFC Safety Advisory Group.</p> <p>A HBC Safety Advisory Group Protect letter is now integrated within our SAG process and is provided to all internal and external event organisers to ensure that Protect measures are incorporated into the event planning.</p> <p><b>28/02/2025 – Cleveland Police update</b></p> <p>ACT package is part of our e-learning Mandatory packages and compliance has been monitored.</p>
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## Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2024 – 2025

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			<p><b>04/03/25 – Nicholas Stone, Community Safety Team Leader and Philip Hepburn, Community Safety Manager</b></p> <p>Prevent training is now incorporated into the mandatory training section of the 2024/25 Workforce Development Programme for all HBC members of staff.</p> <p><b>06/01/2026 - Rachael Readman (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager)</b></p> <p>Updates regarding Protect are continuing to be provided at all meetings with stakeholders; for example Hartlepool Licensee Association (Rebranded to be named Pubwatch) and HUFC Safety Advisory Group.</p> <p>HBC are going to implement the ACT for Local Authorities initiative being ran by Counter Terrorism Policing to support local government partners to embed counter terrorism considerations into their day-to-day work.</p>
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