



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Darlington Community Safety Plan 2026 - 2029

The Darlington Community Safety Partnership are committed to making Darlington a safe place to live, work, and visit and aim to achieve this through early intervention and prevention.

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Darlington Community Safety Partnership Plan 2026 -2029

The Darlington Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is pleased to introduce the Community Safety Plan for the next three years from 2026-2029. The document provides information on our background, structure and priorities.

The Partnership Plan brings together our aims, ambitions and priorities for the next three years. We will work in Partnership to tackle the issue which impact on, and matter to local people through early intervention and prevention.

CSP's were created to tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour through collective, place-based action, recognising that enforcement alone cannot address the root causes of harm. Evidence consistently shows that early intervention and prevention.

- Reduces long-term crime and antisocial behaviour
- Improves life outcomes for children, young people and families
- Lowers future demand on policing, health, social care and criminal justice systems

The duty to collaborate for CSP's is rooted in section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which places a legal obligation on key local agencies to work together to reduce crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour, substance misuse and reoffending in their area.

Darlington Community Safety Partnership remains committed to providing an environment where people can go about their everyday lives, day and night, confident in the knowledge that Darlington is a place where people treat each other fairly and with respect, and they are safe from harm or the effects of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

The plan has been developed following a period of consultation and community surveys and reflects the vision and priorities for the borough and the direction of local agencies who work together as part of our Community Safety Partnership.

Tackling crime and disorder with competing demands, limited resources and delivering a detailed plan is a challenge. Darlington continues to be a safe place to live, work and visit with falling rates of crime. As a partnership we are aware that we still have work to build upon our success and focus on a range of new challenges and activities.

Comments from Steve Long Chief Superintendent and Chair of the Darlington Community Safety Partnership.

As Chair, I'm pleased to introduce our Community Safety Partnership priorities for 2026-2029. These priorities reflect the issues that matter most to our residents and businesses, and we'll work together with partners to make Darlington safer for everyone. Community safety means people feeling safe and supported in their community. It's about reducing crime and the fear of crime, feeling secure in your home and public spaces, addressing issues like ASB, violence and substance misuse and building trust and cohesion among residents.

Our focus is on:

1. Tackling ASB and off-road bikes
2. Reducing harm from drugs and substance misuse
3. Supporting victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence
4. Strengthening community cohesion

By working together, we'll keep residents safe, reduce crime, and make Darlington a great place to live, work, and visit. Darlington Community Safety Partnership will ensure that responsible authorities and services collaborate with voluntary groups and communities to keep Darlington safe. As a partnership we will endeavour to create an environment where people can thrive, feel protected and enjoy their community.

The plan sets out our aims and objectives for the next three years and what we intend to do to ensure that Darlington becomes an even safer place to visit, work and live.

To achieve our vision for Darlington we have identified **4 Key priorities**.

- 1) Anti-Social Behaviour and Off-Road Motorcycles**
- 2) Drugs and Substance Misuse**
- 3) Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence**
- 4) Community Cohesion**

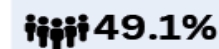
Darlington on a Page

Darlington is a large market town in North East England, surrounded by a rural area consisting of 26 civil parishes. The town lies on the River Skerne, a tributary of the River Tees and owes its development to the influence of the local Quaker families in the Georgian and Victorian era, who provided much of the finance and vision in creating the stockton and Darlington Railway: the world's first modern passenger railway.

Crime over time



Population



55,214
recorded as
male



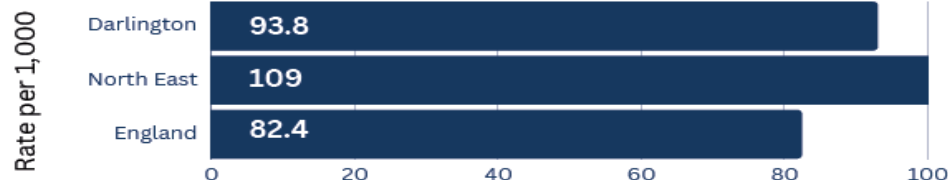
57,275
recorded as
female

Change in offences (2020-23)



Crime rates (2023) are **lower** in Darlington than the North East but are **higher** than England.

This has been the case over time



Role of Darlington Community Safety Partnership

Local authorities have a statutory duty to form a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, behaviour which effects the local environment and to reduce reoffending.

More information about Darlington's Community Safety Partnership is available on the webpage. [Darlington BC - Community safety partnership](#).

The changing landscape for Community Safety Partnerships

Community Safety Partnerships provide localised strategies tailored to meet the needs of their communities. They work on the principle that no single agency can address all crime and anti-social behaviour in an area, and that effective partnership working is vital to ensuring safer communities.

The Darlington Community Safety Partnership has a duty to meet our statutory obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In recent years there have been many changes to statutory duties and further changes planned.

Government guidance and legislation places some other groups on a statutory footing, and they function effectively with oversight from the Darlington Community Safety Partnership. For example, the County Durham and Darlington Serious Violence Prevention Partnership. This strategy sets out a new challenge for Community Safety Partnerships and other local partnerships with measures in place to help them respond to serious violence and to make it their mission to tackle this crime and involve communities in doing so.

Responsible authorities

Darlington Community Safety Partnership (CSP) includes 5 responsible authorities:



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust



County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service



**National
Probation
Service**



These agencies all have a statutory duty to work together to tackle crime and disorder, however, we also work with many public and private sector partners as well as voluntary and community groups to effectively implement and deliver initiatives that will assist in Darlington becoming a safe place to live, work and visit.

Additional members include:

County Durham and Darlington Police and Crime Commissioner's Office

Voluntary and Community Sector

Our Priorities 2026-2029

How have we identified our priorities?

The partnership has considered existing and emerging national priorities and legal obligations faced by members of the Community Safety Partnership.

Other factors which have been considered during the development of the new Community Safety Plan 2026-2029 include an analysis of:

- Community Surveys
- Volume of offences
- Level of harm on victims and communities
- Partnership strengths
- Trend analysis

Public opinion

A public opinion survey was conducted across Darlington between October and November 2025, which was made available in the October edition of the One Darlington magazine, on Darlington Borough Council's website and social media platforms. The survey was also promoted by all partners in the Community Safety Partnership.

As a partnership we also looked at the "Being Included in your Community" survey which was conducted by Darlington Borough Council in 2025 where there were 2,395 surveys completed.

- 66.49% of residents felt very safe or safe in Darlington
- 24.86% of residents remained neutral
- 8.65% of residents felt very unsafe or unsafe.

Governance

The Partnership and its members ensure that priorities can be effectively delivered, and that performance and progress are regularly monitored through appropriate checks including.

- Working with, supporting, and listening to feedback from victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Applying prevention and early intervention approaches that reduce the number of people becoming victims in the first place and preventing the escalation of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Increasing public confidence to encourage people to report crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Improving connectivity and partnership working to include working with others in Darlington and beyond and the sharing of information to obtain the right results.
- Being connected to County Durham and Darlington Strategic groups and partnership boards.
- Providing support to the Darlington Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group (MAPS) who meet monthly to prioritise crime and disorder threat and risk in our communities and take collective action to tackle and resolve.

Identified priorities 2026

1. Anti-Social Behaviour and Off-Road Motorcycles

Area of focus: anti-social behaviour and off-road motorcycles

Areas of assurance: reductions in reports of the above and increased community confidence.

2. Drugs and Substance Misuse

Area of focus: Drugs and substance misuse

Areas of assurance: Combatting drugs and alcohol and effective support for those addicted to substances.

3. Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence

Area of focus: Domestic abuse & Sexual Violence

Areas of assurance: Domestic abuse, serious violence, violence against women and girls.

4. Community Cohesion

Area of focus: Community cohesion

Areas of assurance: Hate crime, community engagement and counter terrorism.

Priorities

Darlington Youth
Parliament.

Pride in Place
Programme

**Anti-social
behaviour/ Off
Road
Motorcycles**
**ASB Strategic
Group**

**Drugs &
Substance
Misuse**
**Combating
drugs & alcohol
strategy**

**Domestic Abuse &
Sexual Violence**
**County Durham &
Darlington Violence
Executive Group**
(DASVEG)

**Community
Cohesion**
**Joint Hate
Crime Action
Group**

Assurance Groups

- County Durham & Darlington Road Safety Partnership.
- Contest Group
- Local Criminal Justice Board
- Reducing Reoffending Delivery Group
- Serious Violence Group
- Organised Crime Group
- Prepare and Protect Group

Community Safety Partnership

Intelligence Led

Data Driven

Problem Solving

**Partnership
Approach**

Prevention

Early Intervention

The CSP Plan links to other documents such as the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police Crime and Justice Plan 2025-2029 and is aligned to Darlington Borough Council's Council Plan.

Performance Measures

The CSP will use a range of performance measures to track progress against the delivery of priorities in the Plan. These will include (but not be limited to):-

- Number of reported crimes
- Number of reported Hate Crimes
- Number of reported violent crimes
- Number of reported sexual offences
- Number of possession of weapons incidents
- Number of reported anti-social behaviour incidents
- Number of repeat victims, locations and perpetrators on anti-social behaviour
- Number of reported begging incidents
- Number of fly tips
- Number of Fixed Penalty Notices for (i) littering and (ii) dog fouling
- Number of other environmental associated Fixed Penalty Notices
- Number of deliberate secondary fires
- Number in treatment for alcohol / substance misuse
- Accident & Emergency attendances for overdose
- Number of community needle finds
- Further NHS measures (to be confirmed)

Priority 1. Anti-Social Behaviour and Off-Road Motorcycles

Why is this a priority?

During the last year 2025-2026 Darlington like many other communities across the country has seen an increase in anti-social behaviour which includes among other issues the use of off-road motorcycles.

Those who live, work and visit Darlington need to feel safe and incidents of anti-social behaviour impacts on both our emotional and physical wellbeing. Such incident also impacts negatively on community cohesion.

Anti-social behaviour and crimes which disrupt our community is the number one priority for residents across Darlington. Residents are clear that these behaviours disrupt our neighbourhoods.

ASB can have a massive impact on those who are subjected to it and can be a precursor to more serious crime and early intervention prevents further escalation into other more serious crimes.

As a partnership we want residents to have pride in the area they live, to feel safe in their own homes and have confidence in reporting incidents to the authorities.

What do we want to achieve?

- A coordinated and efficient multi-agency response to reports of ASB
- Effective support that meets the needs of the victim
- Effective pathways for the perpetrators.
- An increase in community confidence to report incidents

Case Study

Increase in anti-social behaviour in Darlington Town Centre

During the latter part of 2024 and early 2025 Darlington like many town centres across the country saw an increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB).

As a result, a multi-agency meeting was called bringing together partners such as the Police, Darlington Borough Councils Community Safety Team, Civic Enforcement, Young Peoples Engagement & Justice Service, CCTV, Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, Cornmill Centre Staff, Dolphin Centre and other retailers to stamp out ASB.

The meeting focussed on the correct reporting procedures, the sharing of intelligence, building relationships between partners and retailers and reducing the ASB within the town centre.

The joined-up action between all has resulted in a reduction in ASB with extra foot patrols by Police and Civic Enforcement at key times and timely action taken against those acting in an anti-social manner.

Regular meetings are now held between retailers and partners to discuss current patterns and trends to address the issues and monthly "Cuppa with a Copper" sessions within the Cornmill Centre where partners and retailers attend where members of the public can raise concerns and discuss issues over a cup of tea or coffee.

As a result as a partnership, we have been able to act swiftly obtaining two injunctions banning key offenders for ASB out of the town centre and have obtained several Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABA's) to control young people's behaviour.

As a partnership we are committed to supporting safer, stronger communities and as a result have seen significant drops in ASB in Darlington town centre as a result of sharing intelligence, building positive working relationships and taking robust actions against offenders.

Priority 2. Drugs and Substance Misuse

Why is this a priority?

Substance misuse is the abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances that affect perception, consciousness, understanding, mood or emotion and is a worldwide public health issue.

Substance misuse not only harms the individual, but also their family, communities and society. The UK is one of the European countries most affected by drugs and demand for drugs across the population is very high – 2.9 million adults reported using drugs in England and Wales in 2025.

Drug and/or alcohol use increases crime, damages people's health, can put children and families at risk and reduces productivity. It affects everyone, with the most deprived areas facing the greatest burden.

The UK Government estimates that drug use costs society nearly £20 billion a year and new research from the Institute of Alcohol Studies has found that alcohol harm costs society in England alone £27.44 billion each year.

In 2024, there were 5,565 deaths registered related to drug poisoning, which is the highest annual total since records began in 1993 with the North East region experiencing greater numbers than any other region. The latest government figure for deaths related to drug misuse in England, Wales and Darlington indicates a continued rise in mortality rates of 5.8, 8.5 and 10.0 deaths per 100,000 people, respectively.

The latest government figures on alcohol-related deaths in England and Wales indicate a concerning trend. In 2023, there were 10,473 deaths from alcohol-specific causes registered in the UK, the highest number on record. The rate of alcohol-specific deaths in England, Wales and Darlington increased to 15.0, 17.7 and 21.5 deaths per 100,000 people, respectively.

In Darlington, statistics show that substance misuse is still an issue which needs to be prioritised, and that to tackle it we need a long-term approach where relevant agencies work in partnership.

What do we want to achieve?

- Prevention and early intervention: Delivering prevention and early intervention programmes that reduce likelihood of substance use initiation and offer timely support in preventing the development of more harmful patterns of use and cessation.
- Effective Harm reduction: Providing interventions and strategies to minimise harm to individuals, families and communities caused by substance use e.g. emergency antidotes like naloxone, initiatives to reduce blood borne viruses and supporting non-fatal overdose pathways to connect individuals to the right services.
- Increased access to treatment and support services: Ensuring that people have access to high-quality treatment and support services, empowering them to obtain and maintain recovery.
- Recovery community empowerment: Provide a sense of belonging, uplifting communities and making recovery visible and inspiring, whilst offering practical and emotional support to individuals and their families, helping them connect to wider communities of people in recovery.
- Enhanced community engagement: Inviting input from residents and partners to address local priority areas where the community can have the greatest impact.

Case Study

In June 2023, I took myself to Accident and Emergency because I thought I was going into withdrawal from drinking alcohol. After being checked out the doctor asked me if I would like to talk to someone about my drinking. I said yes and within half an hour the STRIDE Engagement team came to speak to me in the Hospital. They were warm and welcoming, and we had a good conversation about my situation, how I was feeling, and what services were available to me.

I was very impressed with the communication between the hospital and recovery services and how swiftly they were able to come and see me. It was exactly what I needed at the time. I arranged an appointment for an assessment and entered structured treatment through the STRIDE Clinical team.

I began to attend as many of the groups, activities and outings as I could fit in around work. I was grateful that there was such a full and varied timetable so that I had something to attend when I needed it.

In September I approached the STRIDE Individual Placement Support (IPS) team who helped me put together a CV, discussed what kind of work I was looking for and went over some interview techniques with me which ended in me starting a new Job.

In March I started the Ambassadors Course and with the continued support and encouragement from the STRIDE Recovery team I completed it. In June I applied for a position with Recovery connections, went for the interview in July and started working in September.

When I first entered the service back in June 2023 I had absolutely no confidence. Without the opportunities and multidimensional services and resources that have been made available to me through STRIDE I would never have believed that I could achieve what I have.

Priority 3. Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence

Why is this a priority?

Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence represents one of the highest-harm crimes in the borough. It is a complex issue that crosses all demographics, encompassing physical violence, coercive control, financial abuse, and stalking. A multi-agency approach is essential because domestic abuse is rarely a "one-off" event; it is a pattern of behaviour that requires the combined intervention of the police, health services, and social care to break the cycle of re-offending. The rate of domestic abuse-related offences in the Durham Constabulary area is significantly higher than the national average, with approximately 22 incidents per 1,000 population (compared to 13 per 1,000 nationally). Crucially, the partnership recognizes that abuse extends beyond the traditional adult-partner dynamic. It explicitly includes teenage relationship abuse, acknowledging that 1 in 4 teenage girls and 1 in 6 boys experience physical force in their first relationships. By prioritizing this, the CSP aims to intervene before these behaviours escalate into lifelong patterns of violence.

What we want to achieve?

The Darlington Community Safety Partnership aims to achieve a "Whole System" response to domestic abuse & sexual violence, ensuring that no victim falls through the cracks. Primary objectives for 2026 include improving early identification, putting the "Survivor Voice" at the heart of decision-making, and increasing the effectiveness of perpetrator accountability. A key local goal is the successful operation of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, which focuses on providing safe accommodation and therapeutic support for children who are often the "hidden victims" of household abuse. By targeting education and awareness in schools, the CSP also seeks to reduce the prevalence of teenage relationship abuse, empowering young people to recognize red flags like digital stalking and coercive control early on.

This local work is directly linked to the UK Government's national Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. By aligning with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the CSP ensures that local services meet the "National Set of Expectations" for victim support. Treating domestic abuse as a public health issue rather than just a policing

matter, the CSP supports the national drive to shift society's culture away from the acceptance of gender-based violence.

Case Study

This case consists of 2 x adult female victims who were subject to abuse from a single adult male, over an extended period of time. Both females provided detailed accounts of multiple sexual and physical assaults, alongside control and coercive behaviour (CCB) throughout the relationship.

The first complainant was in a long-term relationship with suspect during which she suffered serious sexual abuse, mental abuse, violence, financial control and was isolated from friends and family.

The second complainant confirmed that she was subjected to serious sexual and physical assaults during her relationship with the male. The suspect demonstrated CCB threatening to harm himself, contacting the victims' children using them to apply pressure to rekindle the relationship, reducing and controlling her contact with family and friends, preventing her from socialising, and financially exploiting her, taking out credit in her name.

Police, working in partnership with the local authority child services, health bodies, education, and voluntary organisations, including the victims GP's, mental health teams, local hospitals, schools, Harbour (Independent domestic violence advisor) and ISVA (independent sexual violence advisor) compiled a comprehensive evidential case, covering all aspects of the abuse and its long term effects. Importantly partners continue to provide ongoing support for the victims, and their children.

A Civil Sexual Risk Order was obtained with 5 prohibitions/requirements, and the suspect has been charged with multiple offences.

Support for both victims remain in place to help them with the long-term effects of this abuse and guide them through the criminal justice process.

Priority 4. Community Cohesion

Why is this a priority?

Strong and inclusive communities, underpinned by shared values and based on positive relationships and mutual respect, are the building blocks of a fair and stable society. No matter what our background, religion, or political persuasion, we all share some fundamental values: foremost among them being respect for the law; tolerance and freedom of speech. By reinforcing those common values, by supporting chances for people to come together, learn more about each other, and overcome misperceptions, we can reinforce those shared values and strengthen our communities.

High levels of community cohesion can lead to improved social well-being, reducing issues like crime and social isolation within the group.

There is a real strength in our communities in Darlington, brought to the fore during the COVID 19 crisis, recent storms and flooding where there have been some excellent examples of communities working together with a common purpose across Darlington. As a partnership we need to build on this to improve community cohesion so that our communities are safe and free from fear of crime and take pride in their area.

Hate crimes can have a profound effect on both individuals and communities causing emotional distress, fear and a sense of isolation within our communities. Such incidents often lead to a breakdown in community cohesion and create intolerance within communities.

If hate crimes are not tackled and dealt with swiftly in our society, then this can lead to an increase in confidence from extremist groups to get a foothold in our communities and a spread of their ideologies and targeting those who are vulnerable.

Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

What do we want to achieve?

- Cohesive communities which embrace diversity
- Effective support that meets the needs of the victim
- Effective pathways for the perpetrators.
- An understanding within communities that hate crimes will not be tolerated

- Confidence to report incidents of hate crimes

Case Study

The terrorist attack on 2nd October 2025 at Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation in Manchester, had had huge ramifications on the local Jewish diaspora throughout the country. Evidently planned on this date due to it being Yom Kippur, Jewish day of atonement, where there would be a high footfall of Jewish people attending Synagogue for the service and celebrations being one of the most important Jewish high holy days.

Durham Constabulary's community cohesion team picked the incident up while off duty and raised this with wider cohesion team, made direct contact within the local synagogue, who at the time were in their ceremony for Yom Kippur.

The Community Cohesion Team made necessary formal documented actions, highlighting this with the Neighbourhood Policing Team and colleagues within council community safety team.

Within the days proceeding, conversations held around the community concerns and suitable support which included: increased patrols, application for funding for religious premises for CCTV which was granted and then installed.

Connection between cohesion team and wider congregation for future events was made and an invitation to join Hannukah celebrations to meet the congregation, along with the Police Neighbourhood Policing Team who supported the celebration.

The Neighbourhood Policing Teams have direct contact with key contacts at the Synagogue and have been providing patrols and drop in's at well attended events to provide confidence and reassurance

Advice provided around lone working procedures and direct support provided during primary school RE visits at the synagogue which is conducted by the synagogue on their own.

The partnership engagement has cemented the already strong relationship between the Jewish community and partners.