



www.dacorum.gov.uk

# Housing Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report for:</b>	Housing Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	Community Safety Team update
<b>Date:</b>	20 November 2024
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Simy Dhyani, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property Services
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. CSP newsletter</li><li>2. Domestic Abuse Champion proposal</li><li>3. DAHA Case Management Standards</li></ol>
<b>Background papers:</b>	<a href="#">What is DAHA accreditation</a> <a href="#">Community Safety Plan</a>
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	Community Safety Partnership – CSP Anti-social Behaviour – ASB Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), Joint Action Group – JAG Community Safety Action Group – CSAG Violence Against Women & Girls – VAWG Domestic Abuse – DA Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Domestic Homicide Review – DHR Incident Management Review – IMR Joint Targeted Audit Inspection – JTAI Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance – DAHA

## Report Author / Responsible Officer

Joshua Smith, Head of Safe Communities

Emma Purkiss, Community Safety Manager



Joshua.smith@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228584 (ext. 2584)

Emma.purkiss@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228244 (ext. 2244)

<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>Community engagement: Engage with residents and partners to have a real say on our services and the borough</p> <p>Service improvement and delivery: Running the Council efficiently and putting residents at the heart of everything we do</p> <p>Vibrant communities: Foster arts, culture and leisure opportunities</p> <p>Clean, safe and green: Provide a clean, safe and green-focussed environment</p> <p>Homes to be proud of: Enable well-maintained and affordable homes, where people want to live</p> <p>Proud and thriving borough: Realise our potential as a great place to live and work with a thriving business community</p>
<b>Wards affected</b>	ALL
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To inform members of activities related to Community Safety.</li> <li>Gain feedback for Community Safety initiatives</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback on report and initiatives outlined.</li> </ol>
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	Annual strategic assessment

## 1 Introduction/Background:

Community safety is about helping communities to be and feel safe. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were introduced by Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and bring together local partners to formulate and implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in their communities.

The Dacorum CSP provides the strategic framework to address crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour (ASB), drug and alcohol related harms in the borough. The partnership is structured over three levels, which are outlined below:

Strategy Group – has a statutory responsibility to ensure that crime and disorder is addressed in collaboration with partner agencies across the borough. Representation is made up from senior Officers from relevant statutory partner agencies, including Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), police, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Probation and Integrated Care Board. The group is chaired by the borough’s CSP lead, the council’s Chief Executive or nominated deputy. The group meet regularly to review the plan, analysis of key day data, escalations and to reach strategic decisions based on intelligence.

Joint Action Group (JAG) – The JAG is the operational management, multi-agency group responsible for delivering the Community Safety Plan. The group meet monthly to update the plan, identify emerging issues and develop resolutions or initiatives to tackle concerns arising.

Community Safety Action Group (CSAG) – This is the frontline multi-agency group made up of partners operating locally. This group is a platform for specific case management and locality-based concerns, formulating actions or escalating matters for decisions within the governance structure.

Co-ordination of the CSP is led by the Community Safety Team's, prioritising activity to ensure people can feel safe where they live, work or spend leisure time in the borough. Since June 2023, the council's approach to Community Safety and delivery of activity has been reviewed and refreshed – with a new Community Safety Plan completed and approved early 2024. The service has also led on the refresh of a new Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy, aligned with the revised ASB powers and approved by Cabinet in April 2024.

There has been a drive to recruit Officers to the reshaped service, ensuring these Officers embody the culture and behaviours of the organisation, in addition to embracing the importance of working in collaboration with our partners to improve the feeling of safety within our communities. Since the completion of recruitment to key roles in August 2024, the service has seen significant early progress in CSP plan activity.

Community safety initiatives are an approach to preventing, reducing and responding to risk taking behaviour and crime, and the impact of related harm in relation to vulnerable individuals and communities. They provide local solutions to local problems, placing prevention and early-stage intervention as their primary aim. This report provides an insight into recent activity, progress against key priorities and successes.

## **2 Community Safety team progress and successes**

### **a) Quarter 1 progress and successes**

- Established a CSP Communications Group and activity planner to ensure agencies are joining up on communications, publicity and campaigns with our partners. This includes the early development of a newsletter, with future publication arrangements to be determined shortly – see example at Appendix 1.
- Website update: reviewed for accessibility and republished with more information about domestic abuse (DA), hate crime, safeguarding, radicalisation and extremism.
- Prevent (radicalisation and extremism) training sessions delivered to employees and lead Members.
- Workplace Support Plan training digitised and now available on DORIS.
- Planning with police colleagues for a police force led initiative in Grovehill locality, implementation plans will be communicated to key Officers and Members in the autumn.
- First Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Scrutiny Panel: a Police Force driven panel, with representation from the Community Safety Team, which supports quarterly reviews of the Police response to DA and VAWG callouts.
- Housing Advocate pilot went live on 1<sup>st</sup> October. This will provide a co-located specialist domestic abuse worker from Refuge who will work directly with and alongside our Housing teams. They will attend Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and work with our housing teams to achieve safer outcomes for victims and survivors in Dacorum.
- Stood up a Humanitarian Response sub-group of JAG, ensuring a robust approach to planning and mitigating issues arising from contingency accommodation and dispersal locations.
- Implementing an ASB Case Review procedure which details the process in which we will follow upon receipt of an ASB Case Review (previously known as a Community Trigger) request.
- Problem solving and crime prevention work is being targeted at known hot spot locations, this has resulted in the delivery of several community engagement and environment activity days.

### **b) Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation**

We have made great strides towards achieving DAHA accreditation, but as we move towards the final stages of the accreditation process, our success is dependent upon progress in the following:

- I. Domestic Abuse Champions (part of Staff Development & Support)

To achieve accreditation, we must create and sustain a network of Domestic Abuse Champions within our organisation. This is a voluntary role, and it differs from a Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer role. All Heads of Service across DBC are automatically Designated Safeguarding Leads. They ensure, staff in their service fulfil their statutory responsibilities to safeguard people who are vulnerable to abuse or neglect. The main legislation that provides the framework for safeguarding and child protection is the Care Act 2014 for adults and the Children Act. Between late September and February 2025, DAHA will deliver training to 157 of our employees from across the Housing service. We will be looking to capitalise on the interest generated by these sessions to recruit Domestic Abuse Champions across the Council (minimum 1 employee from each team).

Please see attached Domestic Abuse Champion proposal for further context at Appendix 2.

## II. Safety Led Case Management

The multitude of systems used by our service areas was previously highlighted as a challenge to achieving this standard, however we can still achieve it by utilising and consistently recording information on our current systems. Procedures have been put in place across the Housing service to guide employees through the case recording process. DAHA standards for this are included at Appendix 3.

As part of this, we need to evidence that we regularly review and recorded notes for domestic abuse cases, and that we follow safeguarding and high-risk escalation processes where necessary. Community Safety have begun another case sampling review, and we will be working with the relevant teams (namely Tenancy Management & Homelessness Prevention) to highlight and resolve any issues of non-adherence ahead of the accreditation assessment.

We also need to ensure that our practices are 'victim-centred' and that we respond to instances of domestic abuse as a priority. As part of this, we will review and likely suggest changes to our current practices related to joint tenancies and the Complex Case process.

## III. Perpetrator Accountability

To achieve this standard, we need to uphold the principle that we will not tolerate domestic abuse. In practice, an appropriate response to those who perpetrate domestic abuse should be considered on individual merit, and we need to strike a safe balance between taking enforcement action and ensuring the safety and respecting the wishes of the victim/s.

Community Safety & Tenancy Enforcement teams will be working together to streamline and map processes for this. We will also be engaging with our Legal team to ensure we have a consistent organisational approach.

### **c) 16 Days of Action to end gender-based violence/male violence against women**

Between the 25 November and 10 December 2024, we will once again be marking the 16 days of action. This year's theme is: 'It starts with men'.

We are planning to deliver a broad range of awareness raising activity during this time, which will include:

- Increased engagement with schools and delivery of healthy relationship and consent training (in partnership with Herts Young Homeless).
- Communications activity throughout the period.
- An event to mark the start of the period, on the 25 November. This will include the Forum building orange light switch on, a vigil to honour those who have lost their lives to gender-based violence, and a 'drop in' event supported by local specialist providers for victims who need to access support. HCC support the replication of this activity across the county, and we seek your approval to deliver this in Dacorum.
- Hotspot 'walkabout' with female residents and Police to identify areas in Dacorum where they feel unsafe: feedback will be taken as actions by CSP.

## **Recommendations**

The Community Safety Partnership team would welcome endorsement and feedback for the proposed initiatives below:

- Proposal to introduce DA Champions.
- Introduction of nominated DA Champions from across services and consider volunteering to become a champion.
- Engagement in a public DA campaign during 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse (particularly male members).

### **3 Options and alternatives considered**

No alternatives have been considered, proposed activity is in line with the approved CSP plan and statutory powers.

### **4 Consultation**

Consultation for activity has been undertaken within the CSP governance framework and the lead Member for the CSP. Specific consultation and engagement activity is undertaken with residents as required. Annual consultation (survey) of stakeholders (including residents) is undertaken as part of the Community Safety Strategic Assessment process.

### **5 Financial and value for money implications:**

There are no financial implications from the proposals contained within this report.

### **6 Legal Implications**

No legal implications are foreseen from the proposals in this report.

### **7 Risk implications:**

DAHA accreditation is imperative as it will help DBC respond to domestic abuse more effectively, which can save lives and prevent homelessness. Failure to accurately record any cases related to domestic abuse, can have severe consequences for survivors.

### **8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:**

A Community Impact Assessment is not undertaken for individual initiatives, this is completed for the overarching strategic assessment, relevant policy or project activity.

Human Rights – there are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

### **9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)**

The community safety implications are:

Tackling Crime - resources, funding, stakeholder engagement (internal and external), managing expectations from stakeholders

Health and Wellbeing – Crime and ASB impacts residents' health and wellbeing, the council works collaboratively to ensure that there is a joined-up approach to tackling crime and supporting our communities.

### **10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)**

N/A

### **11 Conclusions:**

Members are asked to note the report content and advise on period for programming of further updates to the committee.