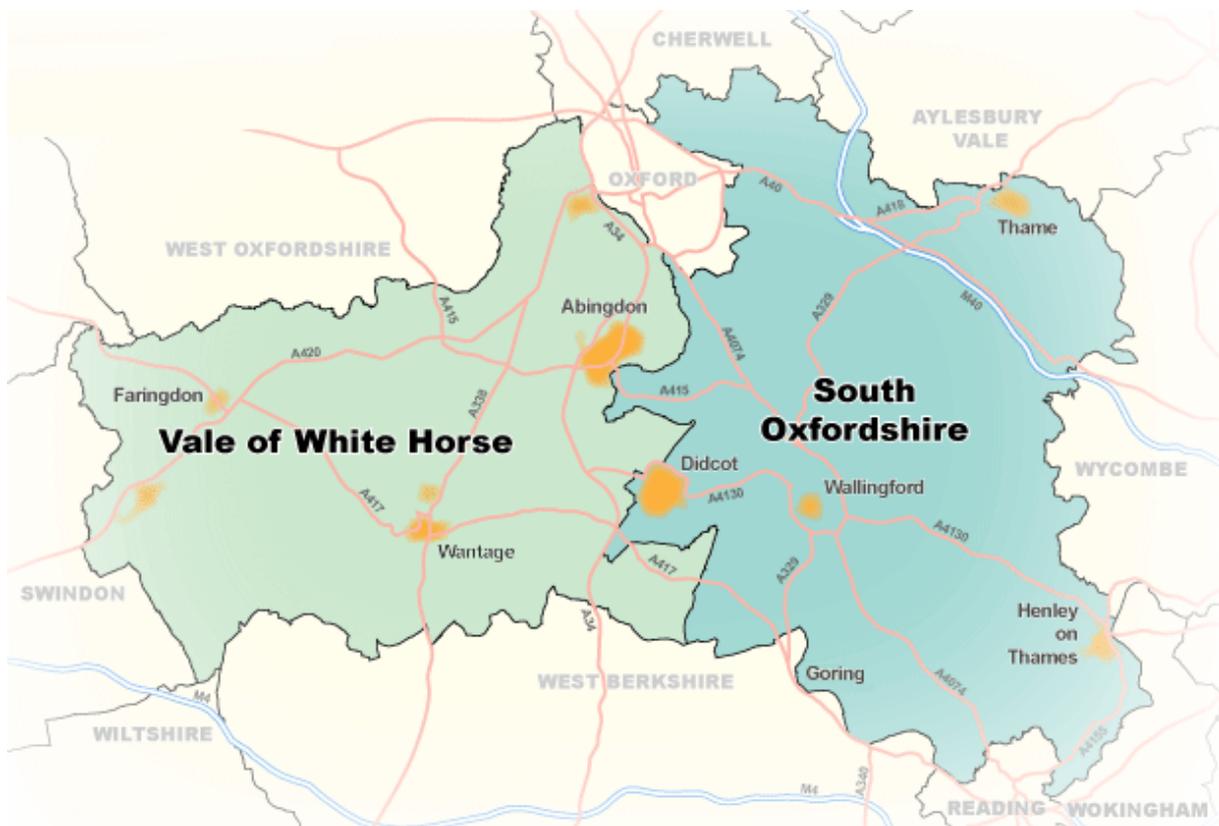


South and Vale Community Safety Partnership

Rolling annual plan 2021 - 22



**Confident and
safer communities**
SOUTH AND VALE COMMUNITY
SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

BACKGROUND

South and Vale Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

Each year, the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership (CSP) produces an annual plan which sets out how partners will work proactively to address crime and protect vulnerable people in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse over the coming year.

The plan is informed by the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Strategic Intelligent Assessment¹ which looks at current data and trends over the previous year to identify priorities for Oxfordshire in preventing, reducing and tackling crime and disorder.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse is one of the safest places to live and work in Thames Valley and we are focused on keeping it that way, working with local organisations to reduce harm and support local services.

The mid-2018 population for South Oxfordshire estimated by the Office for National Statistics is 140,500 and for Vale of White Horse 133,700.²

The district of South Oxfordshire covers nearly 260 square miles. Its boundary reaches from the edge of the City of Oxford in the north-west along the borders of Buckinghamshire and Berkshire to the outskirts of Reading in the south. It has four main towns: Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford, with Didcot becoming increasingly dominant as the main urban centre.



¹ <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents>

² <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/population-0>

The district of the Vale of White Horse whose name comes from the oldest chalk figure in Britain dating back to around 1000 BC stretches from the edge of Oxford to the edge of the Cotswolds. The district has three historic market towns, Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage. The area also covers Botley, located on the edge of Oxford, as well as the large village of Grove near Wantage.



The South and Vale CSP was created in accordance with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which established the principles of partnership working. The partnership involves the community safety portfolio holders from both district councils and officers representing:

- National Probation Service
- Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Oxfordshire County Council Fire & Rescue Service
- Soha Housing Limited
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Sovereign Housing Association
- Thames Valley Police
- Vale of White Horse District Council

Working with the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) set out his proposals for the next Police and Criminal Justice Plan for the Thames Valley in June 2021. The plan aims to reduce crime, catch those that offend and prevent people from becoming victims of crime. This is laid out in the following five priorities:

1. Strong local policing
2. Fighting serious organised crime
3. Fighting cybercrime and fraud
4. Improving criminal justice
5. Tackling illegal encampments

The CSP receives funding from the PCC to support the delivery of his plan. We therefore ensure that we take the PCC priorities into account when setting our own plan.

The South and Vale CSP annual rolling plan

For 2021-22 the CSP will focus on the following objectives in the Thames Valley Police & Criminal Justice Plan 2021-2024:

- preventing crime & protecting communities
- protecting vulnerable people
- fighting modern crimes
- reducing reoffending

In addition to delivering these objectives through our core areas of work; **anti-social behaviour, hate crime, rural crime, burglary, fraud and cyber-crime, and terrorism**, the CSP will focus on three key priorities:

1. Tackling domestic violence and abuse, including early intervention to reduce harm and improving services for victims
2. Working with vulnerable people and children to reduce the likelihood of being exploited
3. Reducing serious youth violence, knife crime and harm and vulnerability caused by drugs and alcohol

Each of these three priorities has an explanatory introduction and a set of key actions – please refer to page six. An action plan has been developed for each of these priorities to establish clear measures so we can track the delivery and impact of our plan. We will deploy our Community Safety grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner to support these priorities and continue to invest in early interventions to prevent harm developing.

In addition to our established statutory duties, we will continue to measure crime data and will respond to any increases in demand. The CSP will review its performance on a quarterly basis, agree any remedial action necessary and provide an annual report to the district councils' joint scrutiny committee.

Crime Data

Over the past twelve months, recorded crime in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse has increased by 0.2 percent, an increase of 22 crimes (excluding fraud). Total of recorded crime for 2020-21 is 12,920. A total of 12,928 crimes were recorded in 2019-20 and 11,867 crimes in 2018-19. Police recorded crime excludes offences that are not reported to, or not recorded by the police. Trends can be influenced by changes in recording practices making it difficult to make long-term comparisons.

Fear of Crime

The chart below shows the public perception of the fear of crime measured by district councils' resident's surveys every two years from 2012 to 2018.

Base size: 1,100	2012		2014		2016		2018	
	South	Vale	South	Vale	South	Vale	South	Vale
Safe in the day (%)	--	96%	99%	99%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Safe after dark (%)	--	93%	84%	90%	82%	79%	91%	91%

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020-21

2021-21 has been another busy year for the South and Vale CSP, which has been successfully operating as a single Partnership since April 2011. For examples of some of the activities that the CSP supported, please see the CSP's annual report to Joint Scrutiny Committee www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk, www.southoxon.gov.uk

The community safety team is responsible for running **Joint Tasking Meetings (JTM)**. These meetings maximise partnership working to make best use of resources. They problem solve complex cases to support the most vulnerable people in our community. Officers from Thames Valley Police, Community Safety, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Environmental Health, Housing, Soha, Sovereign Vale, Mental Health, Fire & Rescue, Trading Standards and other agencies share resources, knowledge and data on a monthly basis to support:

- repeat victims of ASB
- medium/high risk ASB victims
- families in need of intervention to avoid ASB
- domestic abuse victims
- prolific offenders
- vulnerable individuals (e.g. rough sleepers, individuals at risk of radicalisation, young people at risk of child exploitation, persons dependent on drugs and alcohol and individuals suffering with their mental health)
- individuals with complex needs that do not meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral

PRIORITY 1: Tackling domestic violence and abuse, including early intervention to reduce harm and improving services for victims

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. The abuse can encompass (but is not limited to): psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional: online or digital abuse.

Why is it a priority?

Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) makes up a significant proportion of violent crime, as well as causing long lasting harm in families, and remains a priority for the Partnership. We know that the long-term impact of experiencing domestic or sexual violence and abuse, whether directly or indirectly within a family situation, as an adult or as a child, can have a devastating effect on people's ability to cope throughout their life.

In 2020 (Jan-Dec) Thames Valley Police recorded a total of 7,851 victims of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire. This was ten per cent above the three-year average for the years 2017 to 2019, with the greatest increases in Vale of White Horse (+26%) and Cherwell (11%). Over a quarter of victims of domestic abuse were subject to repeat occurrences. 69 per cent of victims were female and 29 per cent male³.

Police recorded crime data show an increase in offences flagged as domestic abuse-related during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, however, there has been a gradual increase in police recorded domestic abuse-related offences over recent years as police have improved their recording of these offences; therefore it cannot be determined whether this increase can be directly attributed to the coronavirus pandemic. There has generally been an increase in demand for domestic abuse victim services during the coronavirus pandemic, particularly affecting helplines as lockdown measures eased; this does not necessarily indicate an increase in the number of victims, but perhaps an increase in the severity of abuse being experienced, and a lack of available coping mechanisms such as the ability to leave the home to escape the abuse or attend counselling⁴.

³ https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/OxonSIA2021_June21.pdf

⁴

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseduringthecoronaviruscovid19pandemicenglandandwales/november202>

What we plan to do

We will:

- fund the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service to deliver outreach and support locally for victims of DVA
- fund and co-ordinate sanctuary scheme work for victims of DVA in South and Vale⁵ - to provide a rapid response to enable people to feel safe in their homes and avert homelessness
- focus on early intervention and prevention, raising awareness of domestic abuse pathways, how to spot the signs and how to respond to abuse as a victim, witness or a concerned person

⁵ Mears – for more information about the small repairs/target hardening service, visit <http://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/social-housing/home-improvements/oxfordshire/>

PRIORITY 2: Working with vulnerable people to reduce the likelihood of being exploited.

Why is it a priority?

Exploitation can have a devastating effect on the physical and mental health of individuals, their families and communities. Traumatic and adverse experiences, especially in childhood, can have lasting effect and make the individual more susceptible to harm in later life.

Crimes involving exploitation often involve the criminal exploitation of vulnerable people, both adults and children on a physical, sexual or financial basis. Gang activity based around 'county lines', where drug dealers from elsewhere set up in local areas, leads to anti-social behaviour, violence and safeguarding concerns.

In 2020 (Jan-Dec), Thames Valley Police recorded a total of 149 victims of Modern Slavery in Oxfordshire. This compares to 168 victims in 2019 and 144 in 2018. Reports of child abuse and exploitation continue to be a significant concern. In 2020 (Jan-Dec) Thames Valley Police recorded a total of 94 victims of Child Sexual Exploitation in Oxfordshire. This was 13 per cent above the three-year average (for the years 2017 to 2019), with the greatest increases in West Oxfordshire (+112%), Cherwell (+57%) and Vale of White Horse (+50%)⁶.

In year ending December 20, Thames Valley Police recorded a total of 1,085 Cyber-related offences in Oxfordshire, a significant increase on the number recorded in 2019 (777, +49%). Between 2019 and 2020, Cherwell, Oxford, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts each saw an increase in cyber-related offences⁷

What we plan to do

We will:

- work with communities to improve general awareness of the signs of possible harm including child and adult exploitation and what action to take; and improve victim confidence to report issues
- protect vulnerable adults who are at risk of being "cuckooed" into hosting drug dealing
- provide support for individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism leading to terrorism through the Channel process; and support collaborative projects and events which build cohesion and offer a positive alternative narrative to extremism (Channel Panel is made up of multi-agency

⁶ https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/OxonSIA2021_June21.pdf

⁷ https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/OxonSIA2021_June21.pdf

partners who collectively assess the risk to an individual and decide whether intervention is necessary)

- improve understanding and raise awareness on the use of techniques to combat cyber-crime, including risks to children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing associated with the misuse of technology and risks associated with child exploitation.
- work with older communities to raise awareness of online fraud and how they can protect themselves from being a victim of both fraud and online scams.

PRIORITY 3: Reducing serious youth violence, knife crime and harm and vulnerability caused by drugs and alcohol

Serious violence has a negative impact on individuals, local communities and the whole of Oxfordshire. It undermines how safe people feel and their wellbeing. Offences of violence with injury are estimated to have the highest cost impact of all crimes when considering all the costs to individuals and services.

Why is it a Priority?

In the year ending December 2020, there were 317 violent, sexual and robbery offences recorded in Oxfordshire where a sharp or bladed implement was linked to the offence as a weapon. Compared with the three-year average for 2017 to 2019, this was a four per cent increase, the same as the change across Thames Valley. The greatest per cent increases were in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts.

In 2020-21 (Apr-Mar) Thames Valley Police recorded a total of 294 victims of knife crime offences in Oxfordshire. This was three per cent below the previous three-year average (for the years 2017-18 to 2019-20), however knife crime remains a significant concern for the partnership⁸.

Drug and alcohol misuse are often a factor in many offences, particularly crime relating to the night-time economy, sexual violence, domestic violence, child abuse and anti-social behaviour. People suffering from poor mental health are more likely to be targets of crime and ASB; and being the victim can cause poor mental health. In 2020 (Jan-Dec) Thames Valley Police recorded 1,817 alcohol-related crimes in Oxfordshire, below the number in 2019 (2,221). Alcohol-related crimes were four per cent of all crimes in the county. Comparing 2020 with the average for 2017-19, shows a three per cent decline in Oxfordshire and a decline or similar level in all districts with the exception of Vale of White Horse where alcohol-related crimes increased by 14 per cent. In 2020 (Jan-Dec) Thames Valley Police recorded 135 young people aged under 18 arrested for drug offences in Oxfordshire. Compared with the average for 2017 to 2019, this was a 22 per cent increase in Oxfordshire, with the greatest increases in Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse⁹.

⁸ https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/OxonSIA2021_June21.pdf

⁹ https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/OxonSIA2021_June21.pdf

What we plan to do

We will:

- work with schools to raise awareness of knife crime to prevent young people from carrying knives
- introduce a Violence Reduction Hub to provide a joined-up approach to delivering positive pathways and alternative activities for young people by:
 - building community resilience and problem-solving issues in relation to serious youth violence and reducing demand on statutory services;
 - exploring opportunities for collaborative engagement, intervention and diversion strategies including funding opportunities
- work with communities to raise awareness of alcohol consumption and how to 'stay safe on a night out' and identify areas/premises of concern, review data and agree necessary action through the Licensing and Responsible Local Authority Meetings

CONTACT US

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