soLUTiONs
Annual Report 2014
Making Luton a safer place in which to live, work and have fun
You can find out more about the work of the soLUTiONs partnership on Luton Borough Council’s website:
http://www.luton.gov.uk/community_and_living/crime-and-community-safety/soLUTiONs/

Here you will also see a copy of our quarterly update magazine and the current Partnership Plan (2013/14).

If you have any queries or would like a paper copy of the Plan, please email sara.farr@luton.gov.uk, write to the Partnership Support Officer, Community Safety, Luton Borough Council, Town Hall, Luton LU1 2BQ or call 01582 547124.
We need you!

During March we are trying a different approach to reach as many people as possible to ensure our work going forwards considers the views of Luton residents and workers.

We have put together a questionnaire to help us understand your experience and view of community safety in Luton, and we are inviting your comments on where you think our future work should be focussed. We are also looking for your suggestions on how local residents can help to make their communities safer.

Please complete and return the paper questionnaire you have received if you have attended an event, or take part in our online questionnaire – see http://consult.luton.gov.uk/portal/lbc. The questionnaire will only take a few minutes and help us to ensure our work captures the needs and concerns of local residents and workers.

The deadline for receipt of completed questionnaires is 31 March.

Introduction

Foreword

The past year has been a period of significant change and challenge for the Community Safety Partnership. Locally, many of our partner agencies have had to restructure services while nationally, the Probation Service is undergoing an unprecedented change and redesign.

Despite these challenges, the partnership has remained focused and continued to deliver reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) across the town.

This report summarises the work of the partnership over the past year towards our strategic priorities; our key achievements and, most importantly, outlines how you can help inform our priorities for the year ahead.

As a partnership, we are committed to reducing and preventing crime and ASB in Luton, and ensuring people who live here feel safe and secure. To achieve this we will continue to engage with our local communities and residents.

Finally, I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the previous Chair of the Partnership, Linda Hennigan, for her hard work, commitment and contribution towards making Luton a safer place.

Trevor Holden
Chief Executive, Luton Borough Council
Chair of the Community Safety Partnership
What is soLUTiONs?

soLUTiONs is a statutory partnership of organisations working together in the town to address crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB), drug and alcohol problems and (re)offending behaviour. As a partnership, we believe that by working together we can tackle some of the most deep-seated crime and disorder problems affecting Luton.

soLUTiONs partners – including the Council, Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Probation and the Clinical Commissioning Group - have undergone significant restructuring to minimise the effects of large budget cuts by Central Government, and this is likely to continue over the next few years. We will continue to use partnership working to maximise outcomes by using the strengths of each partner organisation at a time of reducing resources.

Following a recent review, the vision for the partnership remains:

To make Luton a safer place in which to live, work, learn and have fun.

A place where:

- levels of crime, ASB, drug and alcohol problems are reducing year on year below the national average
- local communities are engaged in problem solving and feel confident and safer - free from the fear of crime and ASB
- underlying causes of crime and ASB are identified and tackled directly
- crime prevention is promoted and properly resourced
- offenders are appropriately punished and their behaviour managed to reduce re-offending
- victims are well supported.

Partnership performance

Reducing reoffending

It was a key priority for the partnership to reduce reoffending in 2013/14.

IOM (Integrated Offender Management) is a multi-agency team with co-located partners including Bedfordshire Police, Bedfordshire Probation, Westminster Drug Project (WDP) drug workers, local authority funded accommodation, workers and health professionals.

The IOM team works with offenders at high risk of re-offending to support changes in their behaviour and remove issues influencing offending. Support can range from help in finding accommodation, obtaining training and employment, right through to anger management and treatment for substance misuse. If offenders commit further crimes, they will be swiftly caught and brought to justice.

Without help to break the cycle of crime, many offenders spend large parts of their lives revolving around the criminal justice system causing harm to themselves, their families and the communities where they live, and costing the taxpayer huge amounts of money.

Over 7 out of 10 offenders who went through the programme in 2012/13 did not reoffend, or committed many less offences than before.

During 2013/14 across the county, offences by those who had been through the programme during 2012/13 dropped by 31 per cent - that is 308 fewer victims in Luton. This means fewer burglaries, drugs related offences, assaults and robberies in Luton in the past 12 months.
Partnership performance

Anti-social behaviour

During 2013/14, the team has been so successful it has been able to expand its caseload to include medium-level cases. This means medium-level cases have not escalated into more serious issues, so there has been a drop in reported ASB incidents in the town as a whole as repeat reports have reduced. The team dealt with 835 cases in 2012, and 676 in 2013; a fall of 19 per cent.

If you are aware of any incidents of ASB please report them to 101, or 999 if it is an emergency.

Our strategic priorities 2013/14

The Community Safety Partnership is required to undertake a strategic assessment every year to identify work areas on which to focus Partnership activity in the next year.

The Partnership identifies issues important to the local community through consultation events, feedback from elected members and other community representatives and neighbourhood surveys. The strategic assessment also involves analysis of local crime data to identify crime hotspots, crime trends (whether crime is increasing or decreasing) and determines how crime in Luton compares with similar towns and cities.

For 2013/14 the following priorities were identified as a result of the strategic assessment:

- ASB and environmental ASB
- domestic burglary
- personal robbery
- domestic abuse
- reducing reoffending.

The partnership has also worked extensively to address other issues affecting the town over the past year, particularly an increase of gun related violence at the start of 2013 and growing concerns from residents about the on-street sex trade in the town.

We have also been working with neighbouring partnerships across Bedfordshire to develop a county wide strategy to tackle Hate Crime.

This report provides a brief overview of our work in 2013/14 and progress so far.
The partnership has achieved significant reductions in both domestic burglaries and personal robberies in Luton.

As the graph above shows, domestic burglary fell by 22 per cent from 1564 offences in 2012/13 to 1220 offences in 2013/14. Personal robbery fell by 16 per cent from 500 offences in 2012/13 to 420 offences in 2013/14.

These reductions were achieved through a range of partnership initiatives including dedicated police operations to target hotspots and known offenders; an undercover police operation to identify those committing burglaries and trading in stolen goods; target hardening (installing security measures, CCTV etc); providing community safety and crime prevention messages and advice, and the success of Bedfordshire’s Integrated Offender Management Programme in reducing reoffending.

**Partnership performance**

### Acquisitive crime: burglary and robbery

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**Anti-social behaviour**

Luton’s ASB soLUTiONs Team was set up two years ago. It aims to provide a holistic approach by:

- placing the victim at the centre of the process
- providing a dedicated case manager to assess the victim’s case, its impact and the victim’s personal needs
- facilitating access to appropriate support and advice
- considering the case as a whole – adopting a case management rather than incident management approach
- strengthening evidence gathering
- taking robust action
- keeping the victim updated
- safeguarding the victim’s wellbeing.

This has led to:

- a swift, effective resolution to the ASB, stopping it happening further or escalating
- increased take up of the mediation and restorative justice services
- offenders being identified, with case management or enforcement actions taken more quickly
- Luton’s ASB soLUTiONs Team achieving local and county awards for its innovative work.
Domestic abuse

Luton Independent Domestic Violence Service

The Luton Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service (IDVA) supports high risk victims of domestic abuse and works alongside Victim Support to ensure a seamless service for all victims in Luton.

Both the Luton IDVA Service and Victim Support offer confidential and non-judgemental service to support to women, men and young people who have suffered domestic abuse.

Victims can get support from the IDVA Service regardless of whether they have decided to report the abuse to the police and whether they are separated from or are still living with the perpetrator. The IDVA Service risk assesses each client to ensure they are offered the best possible level of support. They will listen to their needs, help them to explore options and support them to make choices so they and their children are able to take the first steps towards leading a violence free life. They will work with their client to develop a unique safety plan for them and their children.

The Luton IDVA Service offers practical help, support and advocacy. This can include advice and support with civil orders, housing and criminal court process, and signposting on to other support services.

Over the past year, the partnership has continued to support the IDVA service. There are now five full time IDVA posts working with high risk victims in the town including workers specialising in supporting victims with complex health needs such as mental health, drug and alcohol issues. There are also two extra posts supporting children and young people (aged 4-21 years old) who have suffered from domestic abuse either indirectly (witnessing abuse in the home) or directly in their own relationships.

Crime prevention tips

Burglary

- Use timer switches on main room lights and keep your radio on and tuned in to a talk station so it looks and sounds as if someone is home.
- Securely lock doors and windows at all times. Double lock UPVC doors. Fit opening restrictors to windows. Fit locks to top and bottom of patio doors.
- Visible alarms make burglars think twice.
- Don’t leave valuable items such as handbags, keys and wallets visible in hallways. Security mark valuables and register them at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com).
- Don’t leave keys under the mat or in a flowerpot - that’s the first place burglars look.
- If you think you have a bogus caller keep the chain on the door, don’t let them in, and verify their identification.
- Be aware of strangers loitering in your road; report them on 101 if you have any concerns.
Crime prevention tips – cont …

Robbery

- Don’t make yourself a target - keep valuables such as mobile phones out of sight.
- Avoid remote areas - if you have to use them, try to walk with a companion and stay in well lit areas.
- Never carry excess cash.
- Carry handbags close to you with the clasp facing inwards.
- If you think someone is following you, go to the nearest place with lots of people and call the police.
- If you are young and living at home, tell your parents where you are going and when you will be back. Plan how you will get home and don’t take lifts from strangers.
- Consider buying a personal alarm that continues to sound if dropped.

Domestic abuse

Changes to the Home Office definition of domestic abuse in 2013 (to include 16 and 17 year olds) means the partnership can’t make direct comparisons between the volume of reported incidents of domestic abuse in 2012/13 and reported incidents in 2013/14.

However, as domestic abuse is known to be a significantly under-reported crime, we recognise that reported crime figures for this offence do not provide an effective way of measuring performance. A key objective of the partnership is to increase the confidence of victims of abuse to seek help. So our success in achieving this objective may, in fact, produce an increase in reported incidents.

The partnership continues to support and invest in the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process for identifying and providing support to high risk victims of domestic abuse. It identifies around 350 cases in Luton each year.

Luton has a wide range of services and organisations offering help and support to victims of domestic abuse including those at risk of forced marriage or honour based violence, children and young people, and male victims. One of our key aims for the year has been to improve the ease with which victims can access information about these services.

The partnership has therefore commissioned a Domestic Abuse Services Co-ordinator and Domestic Abuse Partnership website to draw together information about services for victims so individuals can find out about local services quickly and easily.

The domestic abuse partnership website launched in March. Information about domestic abuse and local support services is available from: www.lutondomesticabuse.co.uk