

Gravesham Vulnerability Panel

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 The purpose of this Group is to bring together partner agencies (from the statutory, voluntary and community sector) to work collaboratively in providing a coordinated response to particular areas of vulnerability where an individual may be at risk.

1.2 The Gravesham Vulnerability Panel will provide a partnership response to areas of vulnerability and associated crime and its impact on local communities. The areas of focus have been informed by Kent Police's Control Strategy 2020/21 (Appended). Within this document, all areas of focus will be referred to as areas of vulnerability.

These areas will include

- Vulnerable Adults;
- Exploitation;
- Serious Violence;
- High Harm Crime;
- Abuse.

2. Objectives

2.1 The Gravesham Vulnerability Panel will aim to:

- Provide an effective local response to issues related to areas of vulnerability in Gravesham;
- Develop and implement multi-agency plans, specifically tailored to support and meet the needs of individuals, victims and communities affected by areas of vulnerability;
- Raise awareness, amongst partner agencies and within local neighbourhoods, of the areas of vulnerability and the impact on individuals and communities;
- Carry out joint activity to develop techniques and identify interventions to deter people from being drawn into serious and organised criminality.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Agency representatives attending the Gravesham Vulnerability Panel will have responsibility for ensuring that information/intelligence held on individuals believed to be vulnerable or associated with areas of vulnerability, premises/properties being used by them and communities affected is shared with the Panel.

Members will be responsible for leading on agreed actions relevant to their agency/service area to support the Panel in meeting its objectives. Members should endeavour to attend each meeting of the Panel where their attendance is specifically requested; in the event that they are unable to attend, they must send a substitute or provide a written update to the coordinating officer.

It is envisaged that there will be a 'core membership' of key partner agency representatives that will attend each meeting whilst representatives from a broader range of

agencies/organisations may be invited to attend due to the nature of the activity or issue and their relevant expertise and experience.

4 Information-sharing and Confidentiality

4.1 Confidential and effective information exchange is vital to multi-agency working in any sphere. The Gravesham Vulnerability Panel will comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Partners should exchange information, where this is relevant and necessary, for any legitimate activity permitted with the specific objective of reducing crime and disorder in their area.

All members of the Gravesham Vulnerability Panel will at times be privy to sensitive and confidential information and/or material. It is imperative that this is not disseminated further unless necessary in the interests of an on-going criminal investigation. All members will be required to sign an attendance sheet containing a disclaimer in respect of information sharing.

4.2 Frequency of Meetings

The Gravesham Vulnerability Panel will meet on a monthly basis and meetings will be held at the Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend DA12 1AU or via Teams Meetings.

There may be occasion to call an extraordinary meeting depending on intelligence received. If such a need arises, all relevant partners will be invited with as much notice and possible and all should endeavour to attend or provide a fully briefed substitute to attend on their behalf. The Panel will comprise of representatives of the following agencies (to form the 'core membership') but membership will be open to representatives from any statutory, voluntary or community organisation that wishes to join to contribute to the efforts of the Panel.

Core Membership

- Gravesham Borough Council (Community Safety Unit Operations Manager/Strategic Manager (and ASB Officers/Lead Safeguarding Officer when appropriate), Housing Services, Environmental Health and other departments as required);
- Kent Police (local Community Safety Unit/local PCSO);
- Kent County Council (Social Services when appropriate);
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service

4.3 Each organisation will be represented by at least one staff member (in the case of the Council, each Department will be represented). In cases where a representative is unable to attend, they should seek to nominate a deputy to represent the organisation in their place or provide a written update on any activity for which they have accepted lead responsibility.

4.4 Individuals with specialist knowledge and/or experience may be invited to attend meetings without requiring a commitment of regular attendance.

5. Governance and Accountability

5.1 The Gravesham Vulnerability Panel will be an operational group of Gravesham's Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The CSP meets on a quarterly basis and a formal report of progress being made by this Group in addressing issues identified will be provided at each CSP meeting. The work of this Group will also significantly contribute to the Council's Safeguarding Policy and broader Community Safety Strategy therefore, reports will also be provided at regular intervals

through quarterly corporate reporting processes and to relevant Council meetings e.g. Community and Leisure Cabinet Committee.

5.2 The Group may agree to provide presentations and/or reports on its activity to other agencies, organisations and meetings as appropriate e.g. Gravesham's Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

Gravesham Community Safety Unit
September 2021