

Thurrock Health And Wellbeing Strategy

2022-2026

Levelling the Playing Field
in Thurrock



Created through the partnership of Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board



Introduction and overview report to Thurrock Health
and Wellbeing Board

Domain 6, Community Safety

Domain 6 Community Safety

Domain Aims and Ambitions

To ensure that Thurrock is a place where people feel and are safe to live, socialise, work and visit. We will also ensure that victims/survivors of crime are able to access support to cope and recover from their experiences, should they need it.

What we want to achieve

We know that certain groups are more likely to be the victims of crime, including; women and girls, children and young people, the elderly and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Crimes disproportionately affecting these groups include but are not limited to domestic violence and abuse, sexual violence and abuse, hate crime, fraud, scams and cuckooing, as well as other forms of abuse and exploitation.

We want Thurrock to be a place where people feel and are safe, whether this is in the community, schools, workplaces or within homes. We want to prevent and safeguard the most vulnerable in our society from being victims of crime, abuse and exploitation. In the tragic instances where this does occur, we want to ensure that victims/survivors are able to access appropriate support to cope and recover from their experiences.

How this Domain levels the playing field

This will Level the Playing Field by:

- Reducing the number of victims locally, and therefore preventing the physical and mental impacts they might have otherwise experienced
- Preventing those who already experience vulnerabilities from facing further inequalities
- Ensuring victims/survivors are supported to cope and recover from their experiences and are able to live safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.
- Improving the health (both physical and mental) of perpetrators

Domain Goals

- **6A We want all children to live safely in their communities**
- **6B Work in partnership to reduce local levels of crime and opportunities for crime to take place**
- **6C Improve the local response to supporting victims/survivors of abuse and exploitation to improve their health and wellbeing**
- **6D Protect residents from being the victims of crime, with a focus on those with increased risk of experiencing exploitation and abuse**

Goal 6A. We want all children to live safely in their communities



What we want to achieve

All children in Thurrock are able to feel safe and be safe in their communities.

Some key challenges

High rates of crimes, including violent crimes, are observed amongst young people locally. We are now seeing young people with a more entrenched pattern of offending and a greater degree of complexity and risk. Particular concerns include:

- Thurrock has the second highest rate of recorded violence with injury offences against young people aged 10-24 in Essex and the 4th highest rate of ambulance call outs to young people because of violence.
- Recent years have seen an increase in gang activity within the borough. There has been an increase in the 'County Lines' model of offending as well as the development of Thurrock based gangs involved in the supply of drugs. This is further exacerbated by the relocation of gang nominals into Thurrock by other local authorities.
- The increasing use of knives and offensive weapons.
- Gangs taking over the homes of vulnerable people and using them as a base of drug dealing, also known as 'cuckooing'.

The outcome of these challenges is:

- The significant demand placed on the local system, including Health, Social Care, Police and the Criminal Justice System.
- The exploitation of residents, particularly those who are already vulnerable, is further exacerbating conditions and inequalities they may already be facing.

Goal 6A. We want all children to live safely in their communities



How we will achieve this Goal

This priority will primarily be achieved through facilitating a coordinated strategic approach to tackling Serious Youth Violence and Vulnerability. This includes delivery of the Brighter Futures Strategy's Strategic Priority 3 '*Enable all children to live safely in their communities, with a Focus on Youth Justice*' and implementation of the recommendations from the 2019 Annual Public Health Report 'Youth Violence and Vulnerability'.

The ambitions of Strategic Priority 3 are to:

- Further develop insight to identify the most at-risk children and families and intervene early with tailored intervention packages.
- Deliver targeted and tailored primary prevention for populations with greater need.
- Intervene early with tailored secondary prevention to reduce the harms of exposure to violence and violence risk behaviours.
- Provide tertiary prevention for perpetrators and victims of violence to reduce further harm

Further to this we will:

- Continue to tackle exploitation by Organised Crime Groups (i.e., gang related activity) including the use of offensive weapons and support young people and vulnerable people at risk of being exploited by gangs (including cuckooing)

What will we do differently under this strategy?

- Implement a Public Health approach to Youth Violence and Vulnerability – for example developing integrated data insight to identify the most at-risk children and families and intervene early with tailored intervention packages
- Ensure a multi-agency approach to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and ensuring all possible actions are taken to protect victims. This will include the implementation of a Contextual Safeguarding approach across the Thurrock Partnerships

Goal 6B. Work in partnership to reduce local levels of crime and opportunities for crime to take place

What we want to achieve

We want to ensure that everybody in Thurrock is able to feel safe and be safe, resulting in fewer victims of crime.

Some key challenges

It is becoming increasingly difficult to protect residents and ensure they are able to feel safe at all times, with reasons including:

- The use of technology is making it easier for people to engage in criminal activities online and for victims, particularly the vulnerable to be targeted. A higher proportion of adults reported having become more worried about fraud than about crime in general during the pandemic (16% and 10% respectively).
- Children and young people are at increased risk of experiencing extra-familial risks and harm (i.e., harm outside of their home) and concerning and harmful sexual behaviours.
- Due to limited resources, it is not always possible to have a police or authority presence across the borough at all times.

The outcome of these challenges is that:

- Residents who have a high perception of fear are likely to experience negative impacts such as poorer mental health, social isolation and lack of willingness to engage in health improving activities outdoors.
- Harmful behaviours that are not addressed via early intervention can lead to more serious severe consequences for perpetrators and potential victims.
- We must continuously adapt our approaches to protecting and safeguarding residents, particularly those with additional vulnerabilities such as children and vulnerable adults.



Goal 6B. Work in partnership to reduce local levels of crime and opportunities for crime to take place

How we will achieve this Goal

The priority will be achieved via strong multi-agency collaborative working between a range of partnerships including the Community Safety Partnership, Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Board.

We will also incorporate community safety and crime reduction approaches such as 'Designing Out Crime' and 'Secure by Design' within the council's Housing Strategy and the Local Plan, both of which are currently in development. By implementing such approaches, we will reduce the vulnerability of people and property to crime by reducing opportunities that might be provided inadvertently by the built environment.

Specific aims for this priority include:

- Working in partnership, including with communities, to strengthen local approaches to reducing crime and opportunities for crime to occur e.g., through appropriate use of CCTV, lighting and isolated areas.
- Strengthening local approaches to reducing crime through addressing the drivers of violence and early intervention with those displaying harmful behaviours, particularly harmful sexual behaviours.
- Implementing a Contextual Safeguarding Approach across the Thurrock Partnership in order to keep children and young people, and vulnerable adults safe and disrupt criminal activity and exploitation.
- Implementing approaches to reduce perpetrator offending, with a targeted focus on scams, modern slavery, adult sexual exploitation, cuckooing and hate crime.
- Consulting with residents in order to address locations of concern and increase public perceptions of safety. We will promote the appropriate processes for residents to report their concerns, review alternative channels where applicable and consider the role of guardianship within the community.

What will we do differently under this strategy?

- We will adopt and adhere to the Home Office's new Serious Violence Duty which requires local authorities to work in partnership with key organisations to formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in a local area, and then produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to these particular issues. It is anticipated that this will be adopted through a countywide approach.
- Establish a Combatting Drugs Partnership for Thurrock, to be the multi-agency forum that is accountable for delivering the outcomes contained within the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework.

Goal 6C. Improve the local response to supporting victim/survivors of abuse and exploitation to improve their health and wellbeing



What we want to achieve

Victims/survivors who have experienced abuse or exploitation are offered timely access to appropriate support and services to help them cope and recover from their experiences.

Some key challenges

A recent needs assessment has provided insight into challenges faced by local victims/survivors:

- The majority of abuse and exploitation is largely hidden, with many victims/survivors feeling unable to seek support, essentially suffering in silence.
- Whilst personal choice might be a factor, barriers to accessing support to cope and recover exist and include fear of stigma, poor responses to disclosures or attempts to seek help and lack of awareness of local support and services.
- Disclosures of sexual abuse were often not met with appropriate responses by professionals and other sources e.g., friends and family.
- Victims/survivors value a holistic offer of support to help them cope and recover, often requiring access to multiple services. However, the way in which the current system is set up does not easily permit such an approach and can often lead to fragmented provision and silo working. They are also often required to tell their story multiple times to professionals across different agencies which is often traumatic.

The outcome of these challenges is that:

- Unresolved trauma can increase risks later in life. Victims/survivors who do not access support to cope and recover are likely to experience poor physical and mental health outcomes, thus potentially impacting many areas of their lives including housing, relationships, making unhealthy lifestyle choices and often requiring more extensive support later in life.
- Victims/survivors who are not safeguarded and supported might also be at risk of facing additional violence and abuse, leading to further physical and mental harm and in some tragic cases, can lead to loss of life through homicide or suicide.
- The landscape of service provision can be difficult for victims/survivors to navigate, particularly when they are at a point of crisis, which can hinder or prevent them accessing support.



Goal 6C. Improve the local response to supporting victim/survivors of abuse and exploitation to improve their health and wellbeing

How we will achieve this Goal

The key delivery mechanisms for this priority are the Thurrock Violence Against Women Strategic Action plan and implementing the recommendations from the 2020 Sexual Violence and Abuse Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This will include:

- Working in partnership to enhance holistic approaches to supporting victims/survivors cope and recover from their experiences, including physical and mental health outcomes. This offer should include a clear pathway and offer of support that is strengths based and led by the needs of the victim/survivor.
- Consulting with victims/survivors of abuse and exploitation to understand the barriers and facilitators to accessing support to inform local service provision.
- Upskilling the workforce to identify victims/survivors of abuse or exploitation and respond appropriately to disclosures.

What will we do differently under this strategy?

- Design strengths-based services based on the needs and experiences of victims/survivors, leading to improved Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and Abuse services based on the findings from engagement with local victims/survivors
- The SETDAB Board, Thurrock Council, Southend Council and Essex County Council's 'discovery project' will look in-depth across the three geographical areas to understand what it is like for a victim to navigate the domestic abuse support system, including their experiences, what support is on offer and what the barriers to access this might be
- Working with LSCP and NSPCC, develop a harmful sexual behaviours framework for Children & Young People in Thurrock
- Working with NHSEI and local partners, implement a supportive screening service for survivors of sexual abuse

Goal 6D. Protect residents from being victims of crime, with a focus on those with increased risk of experiencing exploitation and abuse



What we want to achieve

Fewer Thurrock residents are the victims of abuse and exploitation.

Some key challenges

- The rate of sexual offences recorded in Thurrock is increasing and at a rate faster than the corresponding population group; 2021 saw a 36% increase in reported sexual offences compared to the previous year.
- We know that certain groups are disproportionately at higher risk of being experiencing exploitation and abuse, particularly women and girls. Recent data for sexual offences in Thurrock reported to Essex Police in 2021 identified that 82% of victims were female (13% were male and 5% had no gender recorded).
- Concerns are also noted regarding young people displaying harmful sexual behaviors and committing sexual offences. The highest number of reported offenders of sexual offences locally are aged 11-15 and 37% of victims were aged 11-20 at the age of reporting. Locally, there are particular concerns regarding domestic violence. In 2020/21 domestic violence was related to 35% of all violence against the person crimes in Thurrock and equates to 6,199 reported crimes. Over a quarter of reported sexual offences in 2021 were also linked to domestic abuse.
- For many victims/survivors, the perpetrator is often a person close to them (e.g., partner, ex-partner or family member). This often creates barriers for the victim/survivor to flee or seek help and often abuse and exploitation occurs over extended periods. Those from ethnic minorities, older people and those with disabilities are also likely to face additional barriers.
- The increasing use and accessibility of technology is making it easier for perpetrators to exploit victims online.
- Vulnerable young people who receive support from Social Care can be particularly vulnerable to exploitation once they reach the age of discharge from Children's Social Care.

The outcome of these challenges is that:

- Local residents are unfortunately victims of abuse and exploitation, with particular concerns noted for that of a domestic and/or sexual nature. Certain population groups are disproportionately affected by crimes and may face additional barriers to reporting and/or receiving support.
- Some young people who have previously been known to Children's Social Care are later reaching Adult Social Care following experiences of exploitation, particularly sexual exploitation and often at a point of crisis. It is important that we bridge the gap between Children's and Adult's Social Care for our residents who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

Goal 6D. Protect residents from being victims of crime, with a focus on those with increased risk of experiencing exploitation and abuse



How we will achieve this Goal

This will be achieved via delivery actions within the Thurrock Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategic Action Plan & the delivery of the Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Board 'Transitions Plan'. We will:

- Ensure a dedicated focus on safeguarding vulnerable groups and those with increased likelihood of being the victims of crime and exploitation. We will implement approaches to reduce perpetrator offending, with a targeted focus on scams, modern slavery, adults' sexual exploitation and hate crime
- Provide strong local leadership to transform the way we tackle Violence Against Women and Girls, with a key focus on domestic violence and abuse and sexual violence and abuse. We must ensure we have strong, strategic, multi-agency approaches to tackling domestic violence/abuse and sexual violence/abuse. This approach must include prevention, addressing concerning behaviour, supporting victims/survivors and working with perpetrators to reduce reoffending
- Whilst national and local strategies have a focus on women and girls, due to the disproportionate nature of crimes committed against them, both strategies recognise that men and boys are also affected by these crimes. The Government is expected to update the current 'Men and boys' Position Paper' later this year, which will continue to be reflected within the Thurrock VAWG Strategy. Thurrock's support services for all VAWG crimes are available to any victim or survivor, irrespective of their sex/gender.

What will we do differently under this strategy?

- Implement the Minerva project, responding to identified geographical areas with increased risk of crime against women and girls
- Link with Council-wide work to deliver a more individualised transition of vulnerable young people from children's to adult services including those transitioning from children's to adult social care support



Domain 6, Community Safety

Key deliverables, commitments and milestones

Year One (July 2022 - June 2023)

Goal 6A - We want all children to live safely in their communities

- Develop a Serious Youth Violence Strategy
- Increase in identified gang nominals or children being exploited by gangs engaging in identified interventions under the gang related forum prevention key performance indicators
- Reduction in school exclusions as a result of knife crime
- Decrease the percentage of YOS cohort of offenders who have reoffended

Goal 6B - Work in partnership to reduce local levels of crime and opportunities for crime to take place

- Establish a Combatting Drugs Partnership for Thurrock
- Complete a Joint Local Needs Assessment for Drugs

Goal 6C - Improve the local response to supporting victim/survivors of abuse and exploitation to improve their health and wellbeing

- Completion of the SETDAB Board, Thurrock Council, Southend Council and Essex County Council's 'discovery project'
- Develop a harmful sexual behaviours framework for Children & Young People in Thurrock

Goal 6D - Protect residents from being victims of crime, with a focus on those with increased risk of experiencing exploitation and abuse

- Launch of an animated sexual violence awareness e learning training for professionals
- Refresh of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy including the Minerva project
- Reduction in the number of vulnerable people aged 16-25 who enter the system at a point of crisis by 2026