Kerry | LOCAL COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Community Safety: A new approach

The term "community safety" was introduced to encourage community participation, involving all sections of the community working together to foster greater feelings of safety in their community.

As outlined in the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration's Community Safety Policy, community safety is about people being safe and feeling safe in their own communities. The Department developed this Community Safety Policy based on a key principle identified in the 2018 report by the Commission on the Future of Policing (CoFPI), that policing is not the responsibility of An Garda Síochána alone and that a strategic partnership approach, which brings together a range of service providers and the community, will have a significant impact on helping people be and feel more secure in their communities.

The new community safety approach goes far beyond the traditional policing response and requires all relevant state bodies and voluntary organisations to work together in a joined-up way, in partnership with the local community, to prioritise and address issues in their own area. This new partnership approach is being introduced to encourage greater community participation and empowerment, involving all sections of the community working together to foster greater feelings and experiences of safety in localities throughout Ireland.

The Community Safety Policy is also part of a fundamental change now underway in how government policy in relation to community safety will be delivered and implemented. This "whole-of-government" approach will focus all relevant government services on prevention and early interventions. A shared approach to problem solving can ensure that potentially harmful situations do not develop in any given community. Harm prevention and interventions should be delivered proactively, by the service best placed to deliver it, and in a joined-up, integrated way with other services.

Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024

A further recommendation in the CoFPI Report was that this new approach to community safety should be established in legislation. The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024, addresses this recommendation.

The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024, was commenced on 2nd April, 2025 by The Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Jim O'Callaghan. Part 3 of this Act relates to community safety and provides for the establishment of local and national infrastructure to support the new approach to community safety, including Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs).which will operate at each local authority level. The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act also provides for the establishment of the National Office for Community Safety.

Minister O'Callaghan signed regulations for the establishment of Local Community Safety Partnerships under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act and these came into operation on 30th June, 2025.

A Guidance Document for the Operation of Local Community Safety Partnership was received from the National Office for Community Safety on the 31st July, 2025. This document, in tandem with the regulations, provides a framework for the establishment and operation of Local Community Safety Partnerships

The Partnerships replace Joint Policing Committees and will be responsible for bringing all the relevant state services and the community together at local authority level and will play a pivotal role in addressing some of the challenges facing communities across the country.

National Community Safety Infrastructure

The Policing Security and Community Safety (PSCS) Act 2024 provides for a number of key structures and tools to support the Community Safety Policy and Local Community Safety Partnerships:

- **A national strategy for improving community safety**: to support public bodies and communities working together to improve community safety. The strategy will also provide an overarching policy framework and programme of actions, underpinning a whole-of-government approach where community safety is concerned. It is envisaged that the strategy will be prepared and submitted to the Government no later than 12 months following the commencement of the Act.

- **A designated Committee of the Government**: may be established to provide high-level political oversight and accountability to Government.

- **National Community Safety Steering Group**: to provide senior leadership and direction for the implementation of the national strategy and for fostering interagency cooperation. It is comprised of Assistant Secretary, or equivalent, level representation from relevant Government bodies (listed in part 3 of the Act) and agencies (listed in regulations for the Steering Group), supporting the Government's commitment to this new approach.

- **National Office for Community Safety**: to bring strategic direction to the roll out and implementation of Local Community Safety Partnerships; provide training, guidance, and other supports to the Local Community Safety Partnerships; monitor implementation of local community safety plans; to foster and to conduct or commission research and evaluations relating to the operation of Safety Partnerships.

Local Community Safety Partnerships

Local Community Safety Partnerships will be responsible for bringing all the relevant state services and the community together at local authority level and will play a pivotal role in addressing some of the challenges facing communities across the country. These Safety Partnerships will serve as collaborative platforms, bringing together relevant state services, community representatives, and stakeholders to identify and prioritise local safety concerns, develop local community safety plans, and coordinate multi-agency efforts to address them.

Functions of Local Community Safety Partnerships

The functions of Safety Partnerships are listed in Section 116 of the Policing, Security, and Community Safety Act 2024 and are as follows:

Act as a forum for discussion: to serve as a platform for discussing community safety concerns and developing coordinated approaches to improving community safety at the local level.

Develop local community safety plans every three years: develop and adopt a local community safety plan on a three-year basis. The plans must take into account the National Strategy for Community Safety (when available) and any guidance from the National Office.

Public consultation process for Local Community Safety Plans: carry out public consultations to identify Local Community Safety priorities and objectives in the development of the Local Community Safety Plan.

Implement local community safety plans: monitor and review the implementation of Community Safety Plans on an ongoing basis against appropriate benchmarks or indicators.

Monitor and review plan implementation: undertake a review of the community safety plan at least once in the lifetime of the plan and after such a review, amend the plan as appropriate.

Collaborate with stakeholders: collaborate and coordinate with relevant stakeholders in relation to actions under a Local Community Safety Plan, a Local Economic and Community Plan[LECP] made pursuant to section 66B of the Local Government Act 2001, and any other plans relevant to its functional area.

Provide views on local policing plans: where a local policing plan relevant to the functional area of the Safety Partnership is being, or has been, prepared, to provide views on such preparation or on the progress of the implementation of any such plan to the relevant divisional officer for the Garda Síochána division or part thereof to which the plan relates.

Host public meetings: to host public meetings concerning matters relating to community safety in its functional area.

Local Community Safety Fora: to coordinate and support area-based local neighbourhood community safety fora in the Safety Partnership functional area, where appropriate.

Reporting: to prepare and submit an annual report, and any other such reports as required, to the National Office for Community Safety.

Objectives and Outcomes

The objectives and intended outcomes of Local Community Safety Partnerships will be to:

- Prioritise issues identified by the community as safety concerns;
- Ensure community engagement and representation on Safety Partnerships;
- Develop a Local Community Safety Plan which will reflect priorities identified by the community;
- Improve multi-agency collaboration in the Safety Partnership area;
- Increase community confidence in service providers; and
- Service providers will be accountable to the community in fulfilling the agreed actions identified in the Local Community Safety Plan.

Guiding Principles

1. **A Whole-of-Government Approach**
   A Whole-of-Government approach that links with other national and local government strategies and structures to focus all involved government services on community safety, particularly on prevention and early interventions. The focus should be on developing integrated and holistic solutions to community safety issues, pooling resources and sharing best practices.

2. **Collaboration and Partnership**
   Community organisations and government agencies should work together in partnership with the local community and their representative organisations to prioritise and address issues in their own area.

3. **Harm Prevention**
   Addressing the root cause of crime involves tackling underlying social, economic, structural issues and disadvantages that contribute to communities being unsafe or feeling unsafe. Safety Partnerships should seek to prioritise actions that prevent harm and proactively address key underlying issues. This will enable a coordinated and effective response.

4. **Targeted Support for Disadvantaged Communities**
   Communities in areas of social and economic disadvantage often experience disproportionately negative outcomes in relation to community safety. They are more likely to be impacted by the key underlying issues that contribute to communities being, or feeling unsafe, such as poverty, marginalisation, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to services. A core objective of Local Community Safety Partnerships is to provide targeted, evidence-based support to these communities, with the aim of fostering safe, inclusive environments for families, residents and local businesses.

5. **A Participative Approach**
   A participative approach is rooted in the belief that communities have the right to identify their own needs and interests, and the responses required to meet these needs. Local Community Safety Partnerships should develop processes and mechanisms to support meaningful consultation, inclusion, and participation of the community in all its diversity.

6. **Social Inclusion**
   Effective and meaningful participatory planning depends on the involvement of those whose voices are most marginalised. They are often most impacted by the decisions that do not include their experiences and concerns. It is important to ensure that marginalised and disadvantaged communities have a strong voice in Safety Partnerships, this should be reflected in both the Safety Partnership membership and the mechanisms in place to ensure socially excluded persons and groups can participate in planning and decision- making.

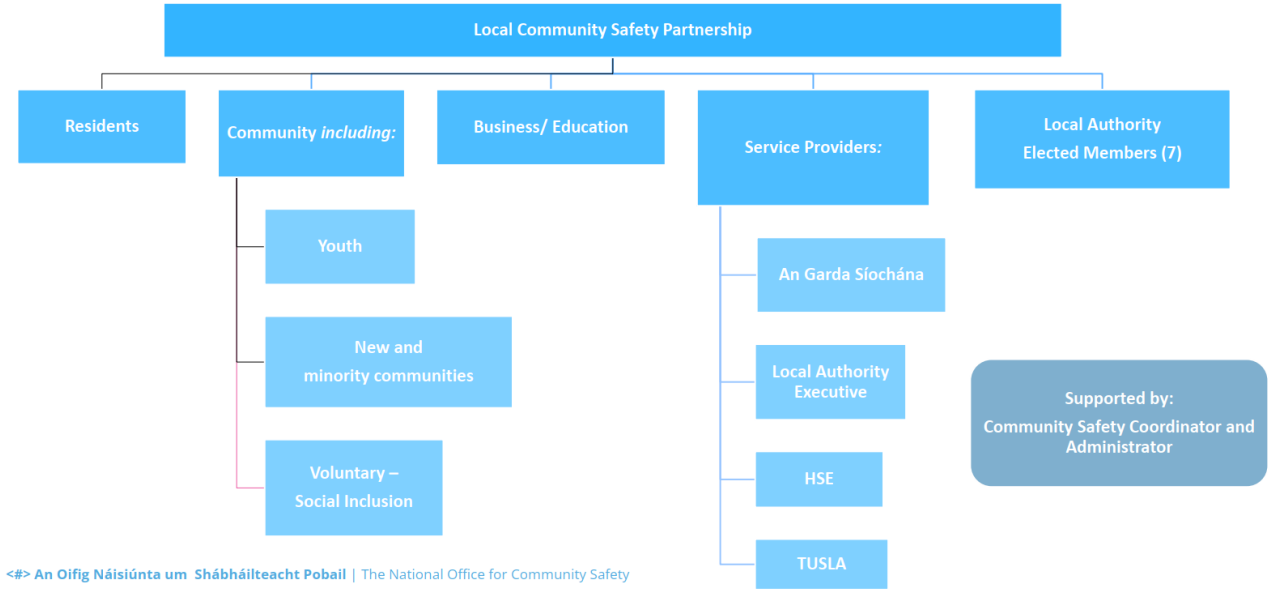
7. **Accountability**
   Service providers should be accountable to the community for fulfilling agreed-upon actions. Communities and community members are active participants in the identification and delivery of community safety responses and, as such, are also accountable for action delivery. Local Community Safety Partnerships must hold themselves as a collective; member organisations; and other stakeholders accountable for the delivery of these actions.

8. **Evidence Based Approach**
   Ensure that decisions and actions are guided by evidence as well as input of community members, grounding these decisions in available data while considering the historic and current knowledge of the community and its stakeholders.

9. **Respect/Recognition of Experience and Contribution of All Members**
   The experience and contribution brought by all Safety Partnership members should be recognised and respected, and approaches that use the strengths and expertise of all members should be developed and implemented.

Membership Local Community Safety Partnership

One of the premises behind the partnership approach is that every community is different and has different problems and issues. Membership should be configured to give the broadest of representation across community safety sectoral interests, demographic and community interests in the Local Community Safety Partnership administrative area, and to achieving the best community safety outcomes for that area. The core structure of the Safety Partnership is outlined below.



The Safety Partnership will have a maximum of 30 members. All members of Local Community Safety Partnerships are appointed by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration for a term of three years.

Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

The inaugural meeting of the Kerry Local Community Safety Partnership was held on the 2nd December, 2025 and Cllr. Niall Kelleher was elected as Chairperson and Mr. Derry Ó Murchú was elected as Vice Chairperson.

Local Community Safety Partnership Meetings

There will be regular meetings annually of the Safety Partnership to include no fewer than:

- four quarterly Safety Partnership meetings,
- one public meeting, and
- one closed meeting for elected representatives for the relevant area

Local Community Safety Plan

Each Safety Partnership is required to develop and adopt, during it's term, a plan to improve community safety in its functional area having regard to the National Strategy and in accordance with the Guide for Local Community Safety Partnerships Developing, Delivering and Reviewing a Local Community Safety Plan from the National Office.

The purpose of each Community Safety Plan is to build a solid foundation in the partnership area for working together with all stakeholders to maintain and enhance community safety.

Contact

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Local Community Safety Partnerships are hosted by local authorities and supported by the National Office for Community Safety, an office of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.