

**Scottish Community  
Safety Network**

A History and Context of  
**Community Safety in Scotland**



[www.safercommunitiesscotland.org](http://www.safercommunitiesscotland.org)

# A History and Context of Community Safety in Scotland

## Guidance Note

This guidance note aims to provide a basic history and context of community safety in Scotland. It is not intended to be an in-depth guide but rather to provide the reader with an understanding of community safety in the Scottish context. A more in-depth account is detailed in the e-learning module which is available on the Scottish Community Safety Network's (SCSN) website<sup>1</sup> and further exploration of the topic is possible through the [Introduction to Community Safety training course](#).

## What is community safety?

The term community safety can be difficult to define. It encompasses a wide range of issues and is constantly evolving to take into account new developments and reports such as the recent Christie Commission report and the Police and Fire Services reform. There is no universally accepted definition of community safety as it tends to mean different things to different people at different times of their lives.<sup>2</sup> The most commonly accepted definition, utilised by most Scottish Community Safety Partnerships, was devised by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and states that community safety is about “protecting people’s rights to live in confidence and without fear for their own or other people’s safety.”<sup>3</sup>

Community safety is therefore about being able to feel safe at home, at work, in the park, walking down the street, in a shopping centre, or in a country lane. Given this type of definition, each individual has a part to play in making communities safe regardless of circumstance such as age, how long they have lived in the community, ethnic background, gender or religious belief. It relates to quality of life and encourages individuals to seek the most favourable opportunities available to them, to enable them to live their lives safely and without fear of crime and disorder.

In Scotland, the community safety landscape contributes towards the five national strategic objectives set by the Scottish Government: Smarter, Wealthier and Fairer; Healthier; Safer and Stronger and Greener.<sup>4</sup> It also directly relates to the 16 National Outcomes<sup>5</sup> and the 50 National Indicators<sup>6</sup> that the Government wants to achieve over the next 10 years. These outcomes and indicators form the National Performance Framework for Scotland<sup>7</sup>.

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1. [www.safercommunitiesScotland.org](http://www.safercommunitiesScotland.org)

2. *Threads of Success: A Study of Community Safety Partnerships in Scotland*, The Scottish Executive, 2000, P7

3. *ibid* P7

4. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Strategic-Objectives>

5. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/outcomes>

6. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/indicators>

7. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/purposestratobjts>

**Over the last twenty years the notion of partnership working has gone from strength to strength and currently the emphasis is on more effective and efficient partnership working and outcomes**

## How has community safety evolved?

Community safety has its origins in the late 1980's/early 1990's which saw the beginning of a more defined political will to create safer and healthier communities where people had the opportunity to thrive and reach their potential. The term "community safety" was first used in the 1991 Morgan Report, which concluded that the best way to achieve safer communities was through partnership working. Partnership working was recommended as the report indicated that no single agency, be they police, fire and rescue service, or local authority, could work in isolation to deliver safer communities. Instead, a joined-up, partnership approach of agencies such as police, local authority, fire and rescue, NHS, alcohol and drugs partnerships, Scottish Government and voluntary organisations was favoured. Over the last 20 years the notion of partnership working has gone from strength to strength and currently the emphasis is on more effective and efficient partnership working and outcomes.

By June 1997, community safety was firmly on the political agenda and funding had been secured from the then Scottish Executive for a National Community Safety Advisor to work with local authorities and partners to develop a partnership model. The following year the Scottish Executive, COSLA and the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS) agreed on an approach to develop community safety and published the "Safer Communities Through Partnerships – A Strategy for Action" document. This document recommended that the best way forward was to establish the partnerships under the leadership of local authorities and/or the police. That year, the Scottish Local Authorities Community Safety Forum (SLACS) was formed as an informal network of practitioners to provide and share support and effective practice. By 2005, SLACS became known as the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN). The main role of the organisation is to provide a forum for

officers responsible for the strategic development of community safety at both local and national levels. Over recent years the organisation has expanded its network to engage more effectively with police forces, fire and rescue services, NHS, RoSPA and other key organisations involved with CSPs. Currently the membership includes local authorities, ACPOS, Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), British Transport Police, Network Rail and the Scottish Government.

In February 1999, the then Scottish Executive produced further guidance in the form of "A Safer Scotland". This document detailed the Government's strategy for tackling crime and identified the way forward in terms of building public confidence and safer communities. Later that same year, the Scottish Executive published "Safer Communities in Scotland" which detailed guidance for Community Safety Partnerships to develop and implement strategies to effectively tackle local problems.

The next significant document was the renowned "Threads of Success" published by the Scottish Executive in November 2000, which centred on a study of five local authorities' Community Safety Partnerships: Angus, East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh, Fife and South Ayrshire. This publication is an excellent reference guide for community safety practitioners as it detailed the fragmented emergence of Community Safety Partnerships across the country and provided a number of recommendations for implementation at local and national level, the results of which are still relevant within Community Safety Partnerships today.

Community safety, as an objective, does not exist in isolation. Instead it is interlinked with other elements such as Community Planning and Best Value. These three areas were inextricably linked under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003,<sup>8</sup> which was designed to enable the delivery of efficient, integrated local services that were to specifically meet the needs of communities across Scotland.

8. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/localgov/cpguidance.pdf>

## How has community safety changed?

Many things have changed, including the communities in which we live, since the early 1990s when community safety first appeared on the political agenda. As issues continue to change, so will the community safety agenda. In order to survive as a sector and to assist Scottish communities, the area of community safety must be organic.

Since the early days of inception, all local authorities now have fully functioning Community Safety Partnerships which involve a range of organisations such as the local authority, police, fire and rescue, NHS, alcohol and drug partnerships and a range of third sector organisations. The main aims of the Community Safety Partnership are to encourage partnership working and to recognise that in order to provide sustainable community safety services, a number of agencies and approaches should be employed.

The creation of SLACS practitioners forum in 1997 has assisted greatly in the development of community safety. Over the years SLACS has developed and evolved and is now known as the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN). SCSN acts a conduit between the Scottish Government and local authorities where community safety is concerned. SCSN brings together people who are involved in community safety in Scotland to work towards the vision that:

*People are safe from crime, disorder, danger and free from injury and harm; and communities are socially cohesive and tolerant; are resilient; and able to support individuals to take responsibility for their wellbeing.*

SCSN is the national forum for officers who are responsible for the strategic development of community safety at both local and national level. Over recent years the organisation has expanded its network to engage more effectively with police forces, fire and rescue services, health organisations and other organisations involved with Community Safety Partnerships.

SCSN has also been striving to be an effective “strategic voice” for the community safety sector in Scotland with a view to embedding community safety and partnership working as a way to achieve a cultural change in behaviour and working practices within community safety organisations.

## Anti-social Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004

Anti-social behaviour refers to any form of nuisance, incivility, disorderly or offensive behaviour which negatively impacts on the quality of life of the wider community. This term encompasses everything from nuisance neighbours and drug dealing, to antisocial drinking and vandalism.

The term can apply to anyone, however, the media frequently (erroneously) associate it with young people. Individuals/groups from more deprived neighbourhoods are also often associated with the term. This Act of the Scottish Parliament provides Scottish local authorities with the legislative framework to tackle antisocial behaviour in their area. Among the tools at their disposal are *Acceptable Behaviour Contracts/Agreements (ABCs/ABAs)* which can be used prior to obtaining *Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)*. Other tools include ASB notices, Youth Notices, Verbal and Written Warnings. There is also a focus on diversionary activities, particularly for children, for example anti-gang initiatives.

ABCs/ABAs are written agreements between a person who has been involved in antisocial behaviour and the local authority. The contract/agreement is agreed and signed by the individual and the local authority. If the person is a child or young person, then the parent or guardian must also sign the document. The contract/agreement should list the types of behaviour that they agree they will not be involved in, highlighting the behaviour types the individual has the opportunity to improve upon. They also document how the local authority can assist the individual in changing their behaviour. The ABC/ABA is a two way agreement. In return for agreeing not to carry out the behaviours listed, the contract/agreement should outline the supports which will be offered, as should details of any form of legal action (e.g. an ASBO) which may be taken should the contract/agreement be broken. ABCs/ABAs do not last for any specific amount of time but are reviewed on a regular basis. Although they are not legally binding they may be referred to in court during an application for an ASBO.

Essentially a preventative measure, ASBOs are intended to protect victims of anti-social behaviour and the wider community from further acts of anti-social behaviour. Originally introduced for people aged 16 or over in 1998, they have been applicable to anyone aged 12 or over who is deemed to be acting in an anti-social manner since 2004. It would be expected that in cases concerning those under 16, an ABC/ABA would always be attempted prior to the raising of an ASBO application. Any local authority or registered social landlord may make an application to a court for an ASBO.<sup>9</sup>

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9. <http://www.cjsw.ac.uk/cjsw/112.html>

## A National Strategy for Public Space CCTV in Scotland

Public space Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) has developed significantly since the 1990s. There are now over 2,500 public space cameras across Scotland with a concentration in major cities and towns across Scotland.

CCTV has played an important role in making streets safer, tackling crime and antisocial behaviour in communities and reducing the fear of crime, as part of a wider package of measures delivered locally and in partnership with community safety stakeholders. However, CCTV has been built in an ad hoc way and been sustained for reasons which may have changed over time. While good practice exists across Scotland, it is crucial that improvements are made to the way CCTV is commissioned, managed and monitored to evidence its contribution to the wider efforts to reduce crime.

There are now a growing number of issues surrounding the sustainability, continuous management, future development and coordination of public space CCTV and related image capture, storage and sharing of data. This is compounded by a lack of common national standards which has led to a wide range of systems being introduced with differing standards and technologies and little in the way of consistent governance of systems.

Following consultation with the sector, one of the key issues arising was the need to reorganise the disjointed landscape in which CCTV currently operates. By providing general principles that can be followed by everyone, CCTV throughout Scotland should become more structured, more efficient and more able to meet the needs of communities.

The National Strategy for Public Space CCTV in Scotland sets out to provide assistance and guidance to local partners - predominantly local authorities but others also - who own, operate or manage public space CCTV systems. It does not impose requirements on anyone, but recognises that the current CCTV landscape is cluttered and thus seeks to provide advice, guidance and clarity to local partners, as and when they make decisions on developing their CCTV systems.<sup>10</sup>

**The main aim of the Concordat is to encourage Local and National government to work together towards the common aims, namely the strategic objectives, the national outcomes and the national indicators**

## The Concordat -A New Relationship

One of the most significant changes in community safety was the introduction and signing of the Scottish Government's Concordat with Local Government in November 2007.<sup>11</sup> The Concordat essentially underpins the funding provided to Local Government over the period 2008-09 to 2010-11 and was sanctioned following negotiations between Scottish Government and COSLA, after consultation with a number of bodies. The main aim of the Concordat is to encourage Local and National Government to work together towards the common aims, namely the strategic objectives, the national outcomes and the national indicators. In sum, this agreement committed local and national authorities to working towards the common goals through a framework known as Single Outcome Agreements (SOA) for all 32 local authorities Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs).

Both Local and National Government share the desire to see public services working with private and voluntary sector partners, which will lead to improving the quality of life and opportunities for people across Scotland. The SOAs are a way for the Government and CPPs to work together to improve local outcomes for communities that have been set by local circumstances and priorities.

One of the most significant changes, as a result of the Concordat, was the removal of ring fenced funding and the transferral of funds into the local government settlement.

The impact of this change has been a reduction in Community Safety Partnership funding as partnerships have to bid for funding against other significant local authority priorities and statutory duties. In addition to this Community Safety Partnerships have become more integrated within local authorities resulting in reduced autonomy and more restrictive working practices.

10. A National Strategy for Public Space CCTV Strategy in Scotland <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/18085554/1>

11. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf>

Since the signing of the Concordat in 2007, the community safety landscape has once again changed, largely through the global economic crisis which has impacted on National and Local Government resources. Many Community Safety Partnerships have experienced significant funding cuts which directly impacts on their resources and services they provide. However, Community Safety Partnerships have shown a level of resilience focussing on opportunities to work smarter, more effectively and efficiently to deliver key services. An important tool in achieving this has been the adoption of the National Intelligence Model business toolkit as an evidence-based approach to targeting resources and tackling community safety issues. The majority of Community Safety Partnerships now have joint control strategies based on the findings of their local strategic assessments.<sup>12</sup>

## Strategic Objectives

The five strategic objectives adopted by the Scottish Government in November 2007, underpin its core purpose, which is to create a more successful country with opportunities to flourish through sustainable economic growth. The strategic objectives comprise the following: *Smarter, Wealthier and Fairer, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, Greener.*<sup>13</sup>

## National Outcomes

These outcomes (listed below) describe what the Scottish Government want to achieve over the next ten years.<sup>14</sup> To measure this, 50 national indicators have been developed to track progress towards the achievement of the outcomes.<sup>15</sup>

- 1 We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe
- 2 We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
- 3 We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
- 4 Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- 5 Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- 6 We live longer, healthier lives
- 7 We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
- 8 We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
- 9 We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
- 10 We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need
- 11 We have strong resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
- 12 We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
- 13 We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity
- 14 We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production
- 15 Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs
- 16 Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it

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12. <http://www.safercommunitiesscotland.org/Safer-Communities-Programme.cfm>

13. <http://scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/objectives>

14. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/outcomes>

15. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/indicator>

## What are the issues affecting community safety today?

There continue to be many issues affecting community safety in Scotland. Some generally accepted themes include:

- personal safety
- home safety
- travel safety
- safety of vulnerable groups
- environmental safety
- public space safety
- offender management
- partnership working

These themes cover a wide range of issues from dog fouling to sexual assault. Issues such as alcohol and drug misuse and levels of deprivation tend to be wide ranging in their impact and cut across the sector.

In a bid to encourage the sharing of good practice, knowledge and initiatives, SCSN maintain and populate a knowledge hub within the Safer Communities Scotland website. The hub comprises a website<sup>16</sup> that contains discussion rooms, practice notes on projects and initiatives, effective interventions (local, national and international) briefing papers and a multitude of publications. The website serves as a one-stop shop for community safety practitioners for knowledge and information and actively encourages and promotes participation in the discussion rooms.

### Personal Safety

Topics covered under personal safety are wide ranging. Personal safety considers the safety of the individual, as opposed to the safety of a community. Topics include; accident prevention, online safety, violent crimes against a person, intimidation/harassment, injury related death and hospital admissions, fear of crime.

### Home Safety

The home safety topic deals with individual or family safety in and around the home in relation to either accidents or crime. Topics include: accident prevention, fire safety, housebreaking, home security, vehicle crime, bogus callers and scams.

### Travel Safety

Travel safety includes a range of issues that communities and individuals may encounter whilst on the move. This may be in relation to public or private transportation. Travel safety considers the prevention of accidents, death and injuries of drivers, passengers and pedestrians, as well as crime prevention. Topics include: road safety, pedestrian safety, rail safety, public transport safety, community satisfaction with transport.

### Safety of vulnerable groups

This topic deals with safety issues in relation to any individuals or groups which may be vulnerable under any circumstances. A list of the issues that may be discussed within this topic are listed below, however, this list is not exhaustive: domestic abuse, child protection, vulnerable adults (including older people), support for victims of crime, hate crime, rape, sexual exploitation and prostitution.

### Environment safety

The Environment Safety topic area primarily deals with aesthetics' of an area and its impact on perceptions of safety in communities. Issues include, but are not limited to: street cleanliness, fly tipping, flyposting and graffiti, criminal damage / vandalism, secondary fires, wildlife safety.

### Public Space safety

Public Space Safety is inherent to community safety as it deals with the safety, and the perception of safety, in public areas such as streets and parks. Topics include: antisocial behaviour, public place CCTV, public disorder and unrest, sectarianism, public protection, terrorism and the threat of terrorism, serious and organised crime, construction safety, business related crime.

### Offender management

The Offender Management topic includes information on issues relating to the justice system, prevention and diversionary schemes and the rehabilitation of offenders. Issues include: crime reduction and prevention, reduce offending, youth justice, criminal justice, activities.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.safercommunitiesScotland.org>

## How is community safety in Scotland now organised?

Within Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and Community Safety Partnerships there is a strong sense and focus on partnership working. Ownership of community safety in Scotland sits with the 32 local authorities, fire and rescue service, police force, health services and a range of other local organisations and third sector agencies that will vary from community to community. All those involved in Community Safety Partnerships are focused on working better together in partnership to ensure that the most relevant and efficient services are delivered and that Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) and local outcome agreements are met.

## What legislation applies to community safety?

Unlike England and Wales there is no statutory requirements with regards community safety. As such there is no specific community safety legislation; however there is a significant amount of legislation that has a direct application to community safety. Much of the legislation applies to more than one area of community safety, for example the Anti-social Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004<sup>17</sup> relates to personal safety, home safety, public space safety and environmental safety.

It should be noted that there is a difference between what local authorities have the *power* (the legal ability) to implement and what they have a *duty* (what is expected) to implement. Some legislation is listed below.

Local Government in Scotland Act 2003	Looks to ensure best value, improve community planning
Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004	Deals with all sorts of antisocial behaviour from noise to assault
The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006	A duty on Fire and Rescue services
Children (Scotland) Act 1995	Duty to provide short term refuge for children who appear to be a risk of harm
Building (Scotland) Act 2003	This looks at dangerous buildings and the duty to carry out repairs
Mental Health (care and treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003	A duty to inquire into individual cases
Roads (Scotland) Act 1984	Covers a multitude of areas including the power to construct a new road, duty to maintain all such roads entered on the list of public roads, power to provide and maintain snow gates.
Housing (Scotland) Act 1987	Power to make an improvement order, power to require information about persons sleeping in a dwelling house,
Environmental Protection Act 1990	Power to serve notice on a person suspected of having committed an offence by unauthorised or harmful deposit, treatment or disposal of waste
Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010	Linked to Licensing Board – alcohol, knives, police, courts etc.

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17. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/10/20153/45717>



The previous table shows that there is a wide range of legislation that refers to areas of community safety. The list is not exhaustive, but highlights the varied areas of legislation and notes that some are a *power* and some a *duty*. Further information is available on the Scottish Governments website.

## What next?

This guidance note has provided a very basic overview of community safety, where it came from, its early development and the subsequent changes since it first appeared on the political landscape. It is not intended to be an in-depth study, however further learning opportunities are available through the e-learning resource. SCSN would appreciate your feedback, which will help inform the areas to be addressed in the coming modules.

**Thank you for your assistance**

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Guidance Paper produced by:

Scottish Community Safety Network

Version 2, June 2012



**Scottish Community Safety Network**

2 Hill Street, Edinburgh EH2 3JZ

T: 0131 225 7772/8700

**[www.safercommunitiesscotland.org](http://www.safercommunitiesscotland.org)**

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Registered in Scotland, Company No:SC357649  
SCSN is Registered Scottish Charity No: SC040464

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