

Community Safety & Crime Reduction Strategy 2026–2029: Summary Feedback from Online Consultation

The draft Community Safety Strategy was open to online consultation from 1 December to 23 January 2026. We received 147 responses - a significant increase compared with the 82 received during the 2023 consultation.

The consultation received a broad range of responses from residents, community groups, statutory partners, and businesses. Across all priority areas, respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the overall aims and plans, but raised concerns about implementation, enforcement, and resourcing. Free-text comments provided rich insights into community priorities, anxieties, and expectations.

1. Serious violence, drugs & exploitation

Agreement levels were high, with over three-quarters supporting the aims and plans. Key themes included:

Top concerns

- Visible drug use and dealing in central centre areas (especially Kemptown, St James' Street, Brighton Station, North Laine)-centre areas (especially Kemptown, St James' Street, Brighton Station, North Laine).
- Lack of visible policing and low confidence in police response.
- Homelessness, begging and hostel locations linked by respondents to safety concerns.
- Need for joined-up safeguarding across police, social care, health and community services.-up safeguarding across police, social care, health and community services.
- Calls for stronger enforcement, targeted raids, and tackling repeat offenders.
- Concerns about young people's vulnerability, lack of youth provision, and links to poverty.

Suggestions

- More place-based, nighttime safety approaches and night-time safety approaches.
- Better reporting mechanisms, including instant reporting tools.
- Expanded harm reduction, safe use spaces, and investment in support services.

2. Domestic abuse, sexual violence & VAWG

Respondents showed very strong support for the aims.

Key themes

- Need for better police training, greater trust, and more consistent responses.
- Better focus on early prevention, including healthy relationships education in schools.
- Increased public / community awareness of VAWG and services available
- More refuge spaces and specialist women-led services.
- Strong emphasis on holding perpetrators to account.
- Repeated calls to ensure trans, non-binary, and intersex survivors are explicitly included.
- Need for support tailored to people with multiple and compound needs.
- Greater consideration of male victims.

3. Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Agreement remained high but feedback highlighted frustration with current ASB responses.

Top concerns

- ASB is perceived as worsening, especially in:
 - Kemptown
 - Brighton Station
 - St James' Street
 - The Level
 - Hove Lawns
- Repeat offenders and hotspots not being proactively tackled.
- Insufficient visible policing and lack of follow-up when incidents are reported.
- Youth-related ASB linked to lack of spaces, activities, and support.
- Perception that council-run events sometimes increase ASB.

Suggested actions

- Stronger enforcement and clearer thresholds for action.
- Improved communication back to residents after reports.
- More youth services and preventative community work.

4. Hate incidents & hate crime

This section generated the most polarised and high-volume feedback, with over a third of comments relating to tensions between Jewish and Palestinian communities.

Key issues

- Conflicting views on:
 - The nature of local protests
 - Whether criticism of Israel constitutes anti-semitism
 - Whether policing is biased *for or against* particular communities
- Requests for:
 - Clearer definitions of hate crime
 - Address the root causes of hate crime - with greater education for young people and countering of divisive narratives in communities and online
 - A more balanced and transparent approach to community tensions
 - Reinstatement of third-party reporting centres
- Widespread concerns about:
 - Under-reporting due to mistrust of authorities
 - Rising antisemitism, Islamophobia, and hostility toward TNBI and BRM communities
 - Hate speech and intimidation at public protests
- Calls to ensure legitimate protest is not criminalised, alongside concerns that protests can feel intimidating.

5. Prevent

Agreement levels were positive overall, but free-text comments revealed strong polarisation.

Key concerns

- Fear that Prevent could criminalise protest
- Concern from others about extremist activity, radicalisation of young men, and rising islamophobia and antisemitism.
- Calls for greater focus on:
 - Far-right extremism
 - Online radicalisation and misogynistic influencers (“manosphere”)
 - Supporting young, isolated men and boys
- Repeated concerns about Prevent disproportionately impacting BRM and Muslim communities and damaging trust.

Suggestions

- More community engagement, transparency, and balanced narratives.
- Stronger emphasis on education, critical thinking, and youth support.

Cross-cutting themes across the consultation

1. Visible policing & enforcement

Across all priority areas, respondents expressed extremely low confidence in police responsiveness.

Increased place-based work/ tackling geographical city centre hotspots

2. Addressing root causes

Strong calls to invest in:

- Poverty reduction
- Youth provision
- Housing and homelessness support
- Mental health and substance-misuse services

APPENDIX 2

3. Communication and reporting

People want:

- Better ways to report crime/ASB
- Clear feedback loops
- Transparency about thresholds, actions, and outcomes

4. Community tensions around Israel/Palestine

The conflict strongly shaped feedback, with:

- Both Jewish and Palestinian communities expressing fear
- Confusion and disagreement about what constitutes hate crime
- Concerns about protest rights, safety, and bias in policing

