

Herts  
**Sport &  
Physical  
Activity**  
Partnership

# Crime Reduction through Sport: August 2025

In partnership with



**Police & Crime  
Commissioner**  
FOR HERTFORDSHIRE



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## Introduction

Consultation with Hertfordshire Constabulary shows there are several youth engagement programmes being implemented at local policing level, but on inspection many of these lack an evidence base or clear referral pathway. As a result, the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP) secured funding from Hertfordshire's Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) via the Home Office, in association with Hertfordshire County Council's statutory responsibility on The Serious Violence Duty, to further develop the Crime Reduction through Sport work.

Whilst this work does not seek to replace existing programmes, it aims to enhance service provision through a joined-up approach using evidence-based methodologies. In addition it aims to align professional practice, development meaningful evaluation and improve access for young people. The funding aimed to ensure that the Hertfordshire community sport sector is providing well designed, targeted, and accessible sporting activity in areas where criminal behaviour has been identified.

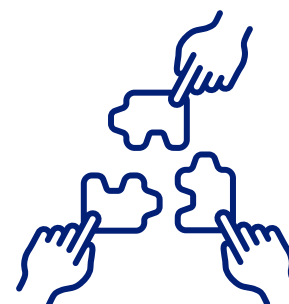
The Partnership has a strategic alliance with StreetGames, a national charity which harnesses the power of sport to create positive change in the lives of young people living in underserved communities right across the UK. Both organisations are working together to enhance the community sport provision offer for crime reduction in support of the Hertfordshire Serious Violence Strategy between 2023 and 2025 and beyond .



## Relationship with the OPCC



**6**  
quarterly reports  
submitted



**15**  
new partnerships/  
collaborations



**180k**  
invested



**9**  
community  
events



**180**  
attendees across  
**12** new training  
opportunities



**1,170+**  
views on the  
Dashboard

# Hertfordshire Crime Reduction through Sport Board



The Hertfordshire Crime Reduction through Sport Board relaunched in early 2024, and is made up of representatives from multiple organisations covering both statutory and non statutory partners.

Local Statutory/public body representatives include County Council (Youth Justice, Families First and Services for Young People, Hertfordshire's Integrated Care Board, District/Borough Council, OPCC, Education (inc. schools and the University of Hertfordshire) and Hertfordshire Constabulary).

Non statutory/community organisations include representatives from local charities (Forever Young People, HACRO & Sporting Inspirations), national organisations (Sported & StreetGames) plus the county's three professional sports clubs charitable arms Stevenage Football Club Foundation, Saracens Foundation and Watford Community Sport & Education Trust.

The Board is currently administered by HSP and was also elected to chair at the first meeting.



# ‘Harnessing the Power of Sport to Create a Safer Society’ Panel Event

In May 2024, the University of Hertfordshire hosted the first ever Festival of Ideas weekend – an exciting showcase of innovation aimed to educate, inform and inspire.

HSP was fortunate to be included on the Festival of Ideas event and hosted the “Harnessing the Power of Sport to Create a Safer Society Panel” session, after inviting a team of experts to attend and discuss their beliefs on how sport can reduce crime, improve lives and make society safer.

This discussion explored the power of sport from a new perspective, considering the transformative potential that participation in physical activity has for creating safer communities in Hertfordshire and beyond.

Panellists shared evidence-based, professional strategies for utilising sport to tackle crime and violence, and stories of lived experiences in the session that provided attendees with a deeper appreciation of the positive power of sport, and how it can be a catalyst for positive change.

## Panel Members:

Claire Khan – Insight and Strategy Manager – Safer, *StreetGames*  
James Mapstone – Chief Executive, *Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice*  
Annie Brewster, JP – *High Sheriff of Hertfordshire (2024-2025)*  
Graham Helm – National Partnerships Manager – Safer, *StreetGames*  
Dr Haydn Morgan – Associate Professor, *University of Bath*  
Matt Rayner – Strategic Lead for People, Places and Programmes, *HSP*



# Launching the Dashboard

The Partnership had the privilege of hosting the Hertfordshire Community Sport Audit Playback event in early 2024, launching the Hertfordshire Community Sport & Serious Violence Dashboard to take the Crime Reduction through Sport work into the next phase of the project.

Data collection for the Hertfordshire Community Sport Audit was carried out during Winter/Spring 2024 period across the 10 Local Authorities of Hertfordshire, and StreetGames oversaw the Audit on behalf of and in partnership with HSP, commissioned through the Serious Violence Duty.

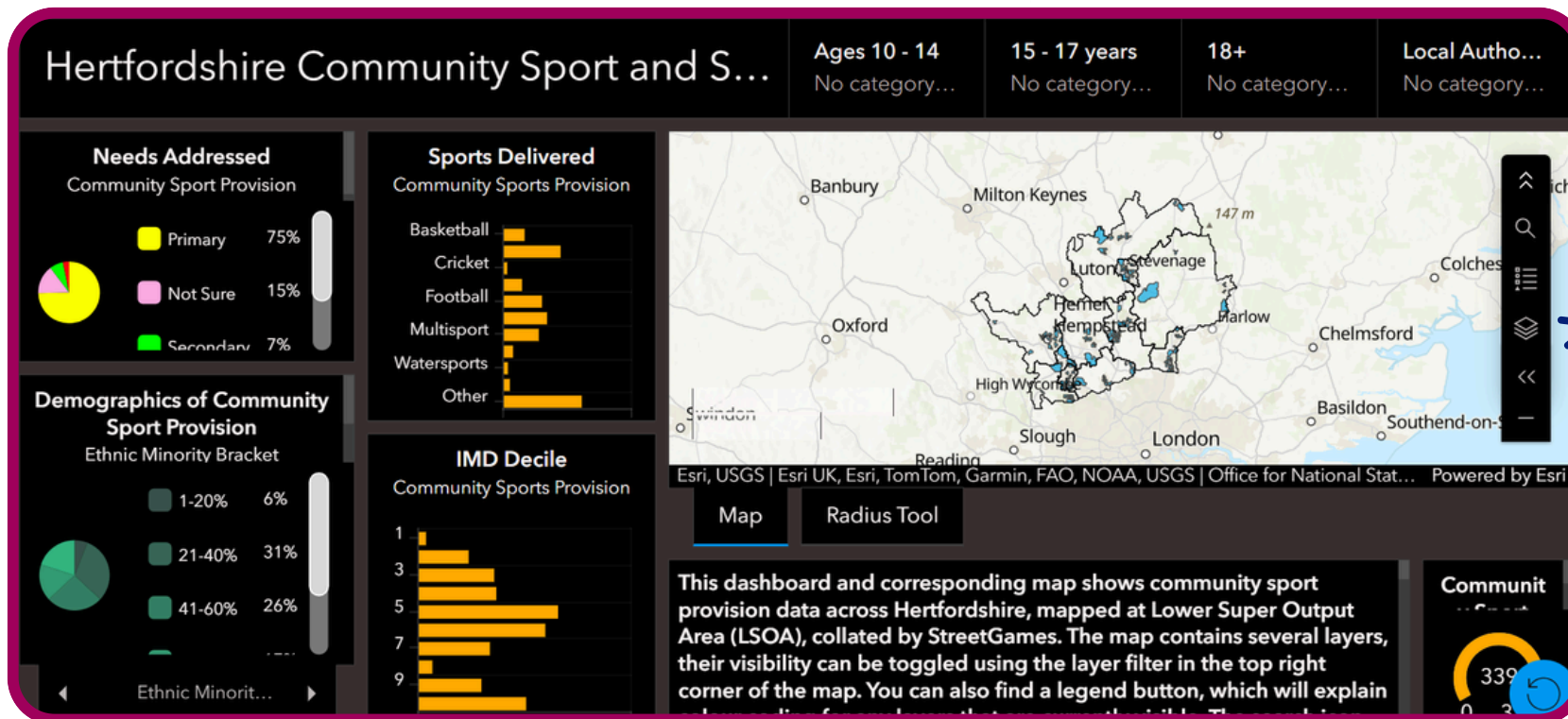
The Playback session was opened by Jonathan Ash-Edwards, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, and enabled colleagues from StreetGames, Hertfordshire County Council and HSP to present the information gathered in the Audit, which was completed by 85 community clubs and organisations across the county.

Attendees at the Playback Session included Local Authority colleagues, Hertfordshire Constabulary, National Governing Bodies, Academics from the University of Hertfordshire, and representatives from national and local charities, as well as the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire.

Following a presentation from Graham Helm, National Partnerships Manager, and Claire Khan, Insight and Strategy Manager at StreetGames, attendees had the chance to interact with the Dashboard and play around with the newly embedded data layers.



# The Hertfordshire Community Sport & Serious Violence Dashboard



The Dashboard presents community sport provision data across Hertfordshire, mapped at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). The interactive map contains several data layers whose visibility can be toggled using the layer filter in the top right corner of the map along with a legend button, which explains the colour coding for any layers that are currently visible. The search icon allows users to search and zoom in on a particular area or address. All graphs/charts are interactive (excluding Sports Delivered), and the user can click on a value to filter provision on the map according to their needs.



# The Commissioning Process

Working with StreetGames, the Partnership launched a funding opportunity for Hertfordshire based voluntary and community sports organisations to carry out targeted work and support children and young people who were at risk of becoming involved in serious violence.

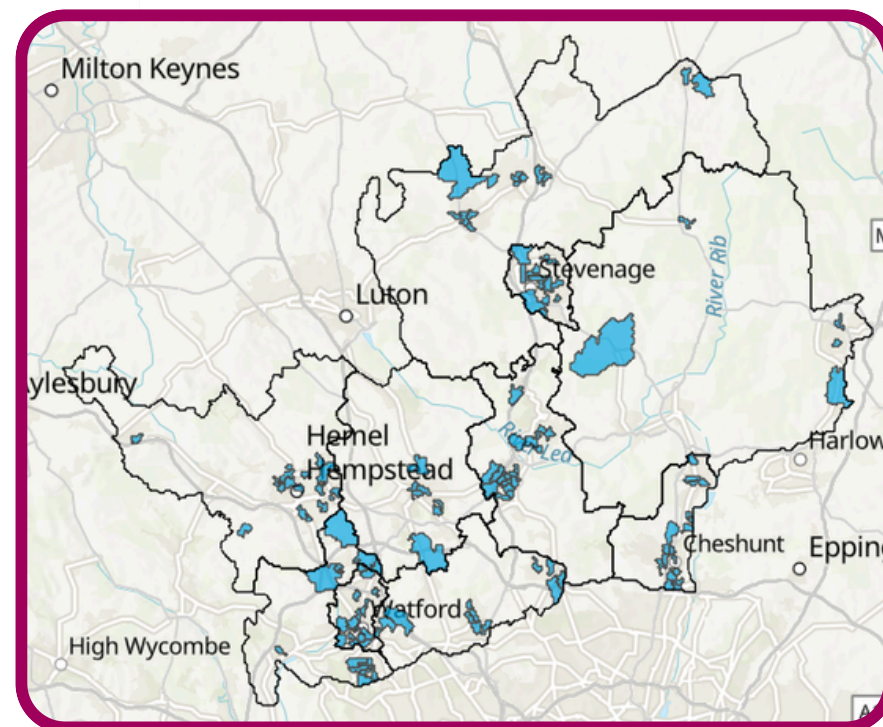
The investment focused on communities that had Very High or High population size of children and young people residing within it AND Very High levels of serious violence, as determined by the Hertfordshire Commissioning Layer on the Dashboard platform (see map).

Successful applications had to demonstrate a recent track record of working with vulnerable young people using community sport and/or physical activity to create positive outcomes. Additionally, funded organisations had to commit to one of the following objectives over a 12-month period:

- develop existing primary (universal) provision in priority communities to meet the needs of CYP presenting with secondary tier of vulnerability through sport and sport plus activities.

OR

- develop new secondary (early intervention) provision to meet the needs of CYP through sport and sport plus activities, in priority communities where no current offer exists.



# The Commissioned Projects

## Cast A Thought CIC

Cast A Thought CIC is registered with the Angling Trust as an Approved Wellbeing Provider, working towards a primary goal of harnessing the therapeutic power of fishing activities to promote mental health and well-being across all age groups. The team intend to develop new secondary provision (FISH FEST) to meet the needs of Children and Young People through sport and sport plus activities, in priority communities where no current offer exists. Cast A Thought CIC is working closely with Herts Constabulary in Stevenage.

## Sporting Aid CIC

The project proposal offers two sessions per week for 50 consecutive weeks, empowering young people through physical activity, mentorship, and leadership development, targeting two distinct age groups with tailored programming. This intervention is needed due to the area's high crime rates, including violence, theft, and antisocial behaviour, and the urgent need for structured youth engagement. As of 2025, the crime rate in Waltham Cross is 57% higher than the East of England and 47% higher than the England. In 2023, Waltham Cross was identified as the most dangerous small town in Hertfordshire, with a crime rate of 127 incidents per 1,000 people, far exceeding the county's average.

## Watford FC CSE Trust

The Premier League Kicks initiative aims to inspire young people to achieve their potential and improve their wellbeing, working together to build stronger, safer and more inclusive communities. An add-on session to supplement the current provision of Kicks will create a safe space for young people presenting with secondary tier vulnerabilities, helping to support them now and prepare them for the future. Funding will be used to create 'Kicking On', offering young people the chance to attend an hour prior to their Kicks session, working with the coaches to be further supported in their own personal development, including volunteering with the younger group.

# The Evidence Base

According to research from the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF, 2025) it is suggested that “sports programmes could have a relatively large impact on keeping children safe from involvement in crime and violence.”

Sport could:

- support positive development, providing children with positive peer groups and influences and supporting them to develop social skills and improve their physical and mental health.
- help children develop motivation and self-regulation through committed practice and relationships with positive role models like sports coaches.
- reduce the time that children are exposed to negative influences.
- be a platform to engage children in other helpful interventions.

However, the YEF estimate is only based on one recent and high-quality systematic review, meaning there is low confidence around the impact as the estimate is only based on six studies of low to moderate quality.

A Theory of Change (ToC) written in partnership with Loughborough University formed the evidence base for the criteria within the Hertfordshire Crime Reduction through Sport funding opportunity.

The ToC outlines how and why sport can impact on enhancing positive outcomes for vulnerable young people within the context of youth offending and serious youth violence.

**Click here for the  
StreetGames Theory of  
Change: Sport, youth  
offending and  
serious youth violence  
report**

# Workforce Development

## Level 3 Safeguarding

One Level 3 Safeguarding course was delivered in February 2025, with eight attendees. All passed and the delegates scored the overall training 92% good or above, with great feedback all round.

## ACEs & TIPs Workshop

One Adverse Childhood Experiences & Trauma Informed Practice (ACEs & TIPs) training workshop was delivered in March, with eight attendees. It was a very well delivered course with lots of discussions to aid the learning.

## Coach Education Week 2025

Various courses offered during Coach Education Week 2025 such as Safeguarding Children and Young People, and Safeguarding Adults.

## Drug & Alcohol Abuse Awareness

Following feedback from the Audit, on training and workforce needs, a Drug & Alcohol Abuse Awareness for the Sport and Physical Activity Sector was delivered during Coach Education Week.

## Upshot Training Workshop

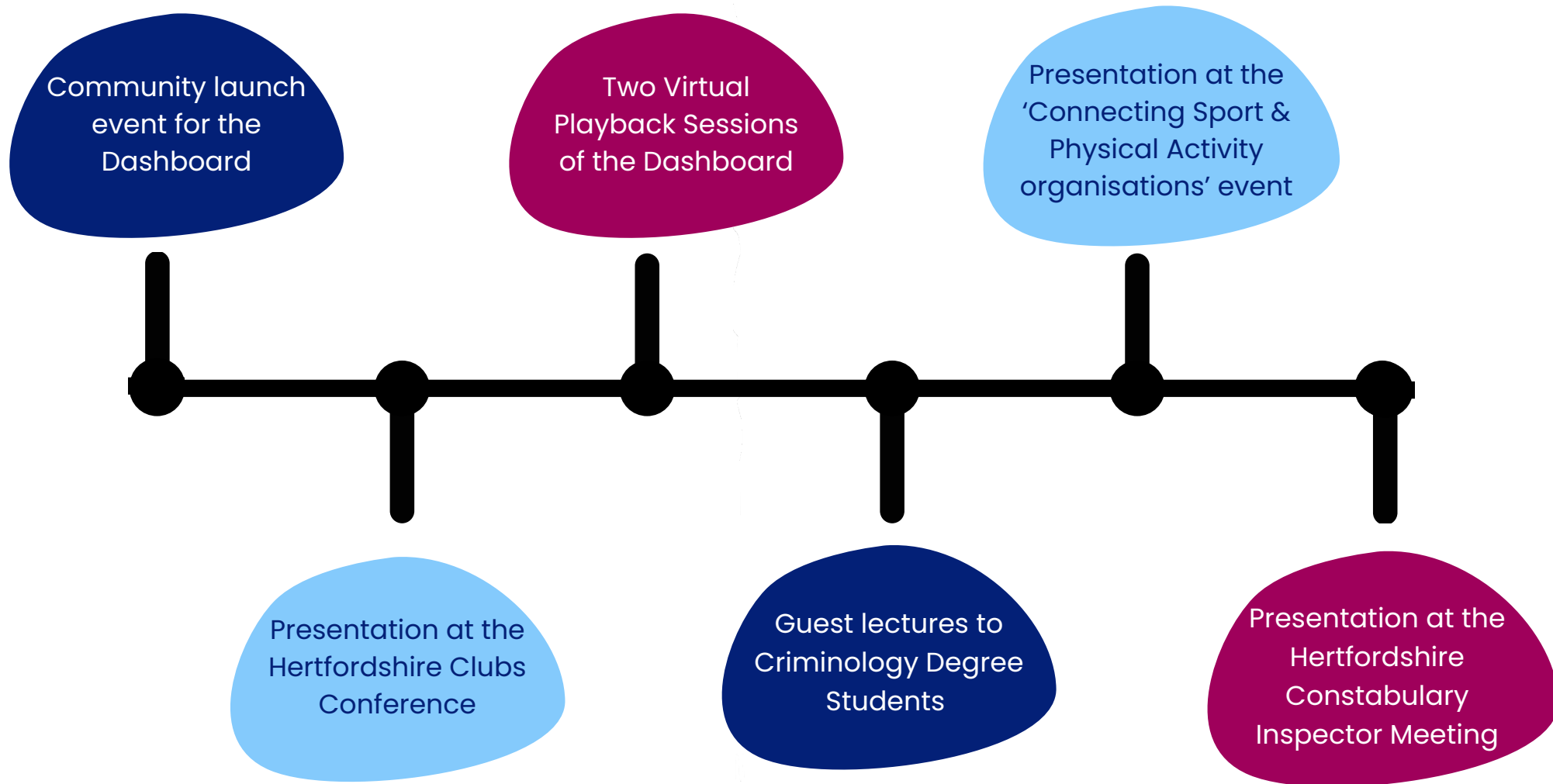
Lead officers from the commissioned projects attended a training workshop for Upshot, an online monitoring, evaluation and learning platform, the use of which is a requirement as per their funding agreement.

## National StreetGames webinar

Members of the network were invited to attend the “Using Sport to Provide Safe Spaces for Young People in the Context of Preventing Serious Youth Violence’ webinar.



## Ongoing Advocacy



## Priorities 2024 – 2027

**Grow the number of high-quality sport provisions in Hertfordshire's most vulnerable communities which contribute to the prevention of violence.**

**Increase the number of vulnerable/at risk young people meaningfully, and successfully, referred into sport through evidence-based, multi-agency referral pathways.**

**Enhance the confidence, competence, and capacity of the sport workforce to ensure high quality delivery which is pro-social in its approach and embeds the principles of trauma informed practice.**

[Read the Hertfordshire Sport and Serious Violence Reduction Priorities - Three Year Plan in more detail here.](#)



**Click  
Here**



The Hertfordshire Youth Justice Management Board fully endorses the Hertfordshire Sport and Violence Reduction Priorities as outlined in the Crime Reduction Through Sport Plan. This plan aims to strengthen local sport provision as a key tool in preventing youth crime and supporting positive outcomes for children and young people. We recognise the significant role that sport and physical activity can play in diverting children and young people away from offending, building resilience, and fostering a sense of belonging.

By growing local provision, enhancing workforce competency, and increasing children's engagement, this plan will drive development of meaningful opportunities for children and young people to develop key life skills, build positive relationships, and stay connected to their communities. The Board is committed to working in partnership to ensure that this approach is fully embedded within wider crime prevention strategies and reaches those most at risk. We welcome this initiative as an important step toward reducing youth crime and improving long-term outcomes for children across Hertfordshire.

**Chair, Hertfordshire Youth Justice Management Board**

# Key Learnings

## Evidence-based Approach

The Dashboard has been well-received and used by partners.

Local data and insight allowed for additional funding to enter the sector.

Other bodies have used the Dashboard to assess and commission funding in this space.

## Learn & Share

Share learning from the commissioned projects to feed into the evidence base.

Develop relationships with each Local Authority Community Safety Partnership.

Build awareness of existing provision across partner agencies.

## Collaboration

Bringing key organisations together allows for a greater joined up approach.

Attendance at key countywide forums helps spread awareness of this work.

Working alongside partners at the appropriate level ensures proactive decision making.

## Workforce Development

Opportunities need to be bespoke and outside the traditional sporting offer.

Consistent support with monitoring, evaluation and learning needed for all partners.

High interest in the network for a countywide conference.



If you would like to discuss any aspect of this report,  
please get in touch by emailing  
[crimereduction@herts.ac.uk](mailto:crimereduction@herts.ac.uk)

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