



Wales Safer Communities Network

Annual Statement 2025

Introduction and context

Welcome to the Wales Safer Communities Network's annual statement for activity undertaken during 2025. The Network was established to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and support community safety initiatives across Wales.

This first annual statement provides an overview of the Network's activities during the year, highlighting key achievements, the positive impact made, and value the Network brings our members, stakeholders and partners to create safer, more resilient neighbourhoods through innovation, partnership, and shared learning. This statement demonstrates how investment in the Network enables coordination, capacity-building and landscape leadership that would be difficult to achieve through individual organisations acting alone. The Network's work is overseen by an executive group of the Safer Communities Board.

Since its creation in 2021, the Network has established itself as a key part of the partnership landscape in Wales. This year saw an important step in maintaining that momentum with a number of key events and exciting initiatives that enhanced our ability to champion and support community safety practitioners and strengthen our approach to partnership working.

Community safety is becoming increasingly complex, shaped by evolving risks that span physical and digital spaces, including the rapid growth of online harms and exploitation. At the same time, local services across Wales are operating under sustained pressure, making it more important than ever to focus on prevention, early intervention and effective partnership working. The Wales Safer Communities Network plays a vital role in this landscape by bringing practitioners and partners together to share knowledge, build capability and support coordinated responses that help communities remain safe, resilient and connected.

Our purpose and priorities

The Wales Safer Communities Network provides national coordination, leadership and support for community safety practice across Wales as we continue to work towards a future where communities across Wales are safer, stronger and more connected. Guided by our five-year strategy [Making Wales Safer Together](#), the Network focuses on strengthening prevention, early intervention and partnership

working, while supporting practitioners to respond effectively to increasingly complex community safety challenges.

Our work is focused on four core strategic priorities:

- Making the connections - Bringing together practitioners, partners and networks to improve coordination, reduce duplication and strengthen links between local delivery and national policy.
- Supporting practitioners - Championing the community safety workforce by sharing knowledge, facilitating engagement and ensuring practitioner experience informs policy and practice.
- Building training and capability - Developing accessible training and professional development opportunities that build a consistent baseline of skills and knowledge across Wales.
- Promoting continuous improvement - Using evidence, feedback and evaluation to shape priorities, support prevention and early intervention, and promote effective practice across the system.

We create and sustain a national community for those involved in community safety.

What we delivered in 2025 against our Strategic Plan priorities

1. Make the connections

The Network has become a single convening point by reducing duplication, providing consistent messaging and improving access to information. We have:

- Improved coordination and created the opportunity to avoid duplication and find commonalities by consolidating our relationship with Welsh Association of Community Safety Officers (WaCSO), ASB practitioners and WDAIIN groups. The three groups have now been brought under the Network allowing us to co-ordinate activity more effectively and share information and knowledge to encourage joint initiatives.
- Strengthened the links with criminal justice partners through the Criminal Justice Board for Wales. The Network website also hosts information for both the Board and the Independent Oversight and Advisory Panel for the Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Plan. This demonstrates the growing links between community safety and criminal justice issues and provides value by reducing duplication and costs whilst also promoting a partnership approach.
- Organised and participated in events including:
 - Annual WaCSO conference – bringing together practitioners across different organisations and sectors
 - WLGA Annual Conference fringe event – focussed on improving awareness and knowledge of councillors.

This is in addition to the variety of boards, panels and working groups we attend that allow us to gather intelligence, share information and make connections between organisations and practitioners.

2. Support practitioners

We provide a programme of informative sessions for practitioners to help them develop their skill sets and delve into areas of community safety they might not have considered in their current roles.

We hosted [five online seminars](#) attended by 230 individuals during the spring-summer focussing on social justice and community impact, and sharing best practices and initiatives that practitioners can implement in their roles. Topics included health inequalities, hate crime, substance misuse diversion, neurodivergence and extremism, and RCRP mental health response.

Feedback included:

“I can apply learning from this session to my volunteering in Mind and in the Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Youth Offending Service.” – Youth Offending Service, Local Authority

“The seminar was engaging, informative, useful, and interesting. I feel that I have more up to date knowledge that I had before, this will apply to both my job now, and in the future.” – Refugee Resettlement Caseworker, Local Authority

Our 2025 Safer Communities Awareness week continued this theme with over 150 attending [four lunch and learn sessions](#). These covered Incels and the manosphere, perceptions about rural fire, the work of probation with prison leavers and county lines.

Feedback included:

“Everyone working in this space should attend this training” – Policy and Partnership Manager, Local Authority

In addition, the Network provides year-round support through to practitioners, which includes Briff, our monthly briefing newsletter reaching over 500 subscribers, our website resources and social media presence on LinkedIn.

3. Build training and capacity

One of the Network’s priorities is to develop and implement a community safety training programme, and due to our work developing the content in 2025, we are on course to launch this in 2026. This training programme will be a free foundation level module that will provide new and existing practitioners, stakeholders and partners with a solid knowledge base of all aspects of community safety, including legislative understanding, statutory responsibilities and partnership working. This will provide resilience to community safety teams, reducing the need to pay for training and

supporting a sustainable workforce at a time where practitioners are taking on multiple roles.

The Network has also been developing a mechanism for promoting professional development and aim to implement this in 2026 to enhance practitioner's skills and knowledge and recognise the commitment they make by attending our training seminars and workshops.

4. Promote continuous evaluation and improvement

In 2025 we launched [Voices from the Frontline: Community Safety Perspectives](#), a Wales-wide survey to build an honest picture of the challenges and opportunities facing community safety teams. Key themes included youth violence and exploitation, harms linked to drugs, mental health and homelessness, and persistent barriers to effective partnership working. Findings highlighted workforce capacity pressures, increasing role complexity, and a strong call for greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention. This insight directly shapes the Network's priorities for training, events and policy engagement in 2026. The Network has used the survey evidence to reinforce long-standing funding arrangement concerns and will continue to advocate for sustainable change with both Welsh Government and the UK Government.

In 2025, the Network hosted the third annual Safer Communities Awards at Aberystwyth University, with over 120 attendees and 253 nominations across 16 categories. Thirty-four awards were presented, recognising excellence in partnership working and innovation across Wales. The joint overall winners were Sidestep Flintshire, Action for Children and Positive Masculinity Initiative, Media Academy Cymru. The Awards play a key role in surfacing innovation and evidence-based practice, supporting wider learning and influencing policy and practice at a national level.

The difference we've made - outcomes and impact

Network activity in 2025 strengthened practitioner knowledge, confidence and capability across a wide range of roles, from frontline practitioners to elected members. Feedback demonstrates that seminars and Lunch and Learn sessions directly informed practice and professional development. By providing free, Wales-wide access to learning opportunities, the Network reduced the need for paid-for training; based on average costs, this is estimated to have saved organisations across Wales £20,330 in event attendance fees.

"I felt I learned a lot from the sessions, I would attend them as often as you provide them! Excellent" – Councillor, Elected Member

Feedback from across the community safety landscape highlights the Network's role as a trusted national convenor, enabling collaboration, shared learning and a stronger collective voice. Practitioners consistently emphasise the value of having a single forum that brings together local experience, good practice and national engagement.

“Just more please. I feel it is really important to work collaboratively and learn from others. So much good work going on out there we need to make sure that we bring it all together and also make our voice heard across the sector and also within the government both here in Wales and also in London.”
Community Safety Manager, Housing

Through coordinated engagement in [21 public consultations](#), the Network has ensured that practitioner insight from across Wales is consistently represented in national and devolved policy discussions. Network evidence and recommendations have been directly cited in national reports, including the Senedd publication [Co-operation over Conflict: Wales must Act](#), demonstrating the credibility and influence of the Network's collective voice. This collective approach has strengthened the connection between frontline experience and policy development, increasing the credibility, coherence and impact of community safety perspectives at a national level.

Our impact is demonstrated through practice recognised and amplified by the Network. For example, the Weapons in Schools and Education Settings (WSES) guidance developed by Cardiff Council, highlighted through the Safer Communities Awards, [has been recognised by Welsh Government](#) as the basis for the development of all-Wales school safety resources. This illustrates how the Network helps identify, elevate and scale effective local practice to achieve national impact.

Taken together, these outcomes demonstrate the Network's value as a system enabler — building capability, reducing duplication, amplifying practitioner voice and supporting evidence-led approaches that improve community safety across Wales.

Looking Ahead: Priorities for 2026

- Focus on prevention and early intervention in events and engagement, following feedback from the Voices from the Frontline survey.
- Enable practitioners to make connections and inform their practice by hosting the first annual Safer Communities Conference in March.
- Launch a foundation module training package to inform and support practitioners.

- Offer professional development opportunities for practitioners in the form of seminars, workshops, partner groups and other training sessions.
- Work with partners on the change in Police governance outlined in the Police Reform paper to provide clarity and ensure there is a model that works for Wales within the current partnership landscape.
- Further developing data-sharing and evaluation frameworks to promote evidence-led work across all areas of community safety practice.
- Secure sustainable funding and resources for continued growth of the Safer Communities Network, allowing us to continue supporting practitioners.

For further information, contact the Wales Safer Communities Network at safercommunities@wlga.gov.uk.