

Community Safety Partner Updates



January 2026

Community Safety Update and Events



Nicola's Wish Upon a Star update

97 vulnerable children and young people received a gift at Christmas thanks to Folkestone & Hythe District Council staff and Probation Service who took part in the 10-year anniversary of 'Nicola's Wish Upon a Star' scheme.

Those who benefit from the scheme range from new-born babies to 18-year-old young adults with hundreds of presents being distributed as part of the 'Wish Upon a Star' appeal.



Microchipping Cats and Dogs

Microchipping is a legal requirement across the UK and from 10 June 2024 for cats in England.

The UK has several DEFRA, Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs [DEFRA-Compliant Pet Microchip Databases in the UK](#) that ensures pets are registered and their details are traceable which meets all government standards.

January 2026

When a new cat or dog enters your home and becomes one of the family, please ensure they are microchipped. You can be fined up to £500 if your cat or dog is not microchipped.

Your cat must be microchipped and registered by the time they are 20-weeks old, and all dogs must be microchipped and registered by the time they are 8-weeks old.

Enquire at the local vets to microchip your pet. The chip contains a unique ID number linked to your contact details on a secure database and vets can scan and trace the owners.



Partner Updates

'Talking signs' help Folkestone prepare for flash flooding



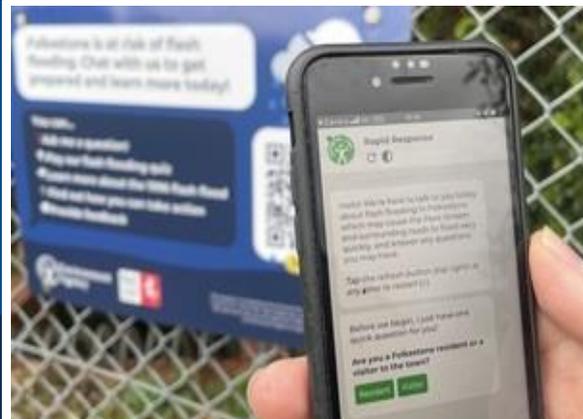
Folkestone is at risk of flash flooding. Chat with us to get prepared and learn more today!

You can...

- Ask me a question!
- Play our flash flooding quiz
- Learn more about the 1996 flash flood
- Find out how you can take action
- Provide feedback

Scan Me

This project is funded by the Environment Agency and Kent County Council. For more info: <http://city/privacy-policy/environment-agency/>. We will never ask you for payment information. If you don't see the Environment Agency logo in the QR code, don't scan!



At the end of last year, the Environment Agency and Kent County Council launched interactive signage across Folkestone to help residents and businesses prepare for flash flooding.

The signs, provided by Hello Lamp Post – a two-way communication platform accessible via mobile phone – were installed at four locations along the Pent Stream: Morehall recreation ground, Fairway Avenue, Three Hills Sports Park and Folkestone fire station.

Flash flooding is dangerous and can happen very quickly, with devastating effects. Knowing what to do in a flood can significantly reduce the risk to life, property and possessions.

Folkestone remains at risk of flash flooding. 2026 marks 30 years since flash flooding devastated the town.

On 12 August 1996, the town endured its worst flooding on record when 200 homes were flooded after two months' worth of rain fell in just two hours. The Pent Stream burst its banks, causing water up to 2 metres deep to flood properties.

Around 400 homes and businesses in Folkestone are in a 'rapid response catchment area,' where the river is highly responsive to heavy rainfall and liable to cause flash flooding – sometimes before flood warnings can be issued.

Smartphone users can scan QR codes on the signs to watch news footage from the 1996 floods and an interview with a local resident affected by the flooding. They can find out how to be better prepared, ask questions about flooding, provide feedback and can also play a flash flooding quiz.

You can also join the conversation here: <https://api.hlpst.app/qr/agent/2107/?db=uk>



How you and your family can be 'flash flood ready':

Check if you're at risk of flooding by entering your postcode at gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk

- 1) Know how to recognise a flash flood: heavy rain and severe weather reports, fast-rising water, churning dark water in the Pent Stream, fast-flowing water, and debris
- 2) Plan where to go if there is a flash flood – you may need to act before receiving an Environment Agency flood warning or before the emergency services can reach you
- 3) Sign-up for free flood warnings at gov.uk/get-flood-warnings. You'll be alerted by phone, e-mail or text when flooding is expected
- 4) Download a Prepare, Act, Survive plan at gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan
- 5) If you are flooded, call 999 if in immediate danger and follow advice from the emergency services.

If you would like more information, please visit gov.uk/guidance/flash-flooding

Please contact the Flood Resilience Team directly at FloodResilienceKSLES@environment-agency.gov.uk if you would like more information, or if you could host a 'talking' poster, banner or some promotional postcards.

January 2026



Jo McMullin and Jane Stuart are Information and Advice Officers at the Romney Marsh Community Hub <https://rmch.org.uk> located in Rolfe Lane, New Romney.

They assist anyone over the age of 50 with a TN28 or TN29 postcode to apply for benefits, housing, blue badges, council tax reductions, bus pass applications, and can also make referrals to the Social Prescriber, Community Warden and other third parties. They offer appointments both in the Hub and in the client's own home if needed.

The Romney Marsh Community Hub offers a wide range of activities including health and wellbeing activities, day support services and much more which can be found on [What's On - Romney Marsh Community Hub](#)

Jo and Jane can be contacted at the Hub on 01797 363888 or on ianda@rmch.org.uk



FREE *Mediation Services for Folkestone and Hythe District.

Ashford Mediation Service (AMS) is delighted to announce that in 2026, it is being supported by the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust to offer the delivery of FREE mediation services to the residents of its neighbouring district, Folkestone and Hythe.

The range of mediation services currently offered by AMS:

Pre-mediation Dialogue:

We are aware that most people have never accessed a mediation service or are not even sure what it is. They can be nervous about talking about themselves, the conflict and perhaps eventually talking about the conflict with the other person/people involved. Our Service spends time with people before the mediation process starts and we will offer to speak, in person if preferred, to reassure all those who will be involved in the mediation, of the confidentiality, neutrality and non-judgemental nature of the mediation sessions.

Mediation Types:

We deliver a range of family and community mediation services, including between and within families, intergenerational (between adults and children), between neighbours, in workplaces and across communities.

How we deliver:

We use a co-mediator delivery (two mediators per case), and we offer flexible delivery options using a mix of telephone, online and in person meetings.

Website Resources: www.ashfordmediation.co.uk

Resources include Privacy Notices, Case Studies and 'How To' Mediation Workbooks in a range of languages.

Conflict Coaching:

Where one of the participants will not engage in mediation, we can offer one mediator to talk to listen to the participant who does want to engage, to help them find ways to live with the situation as it is, and to feel listened to.

Our Mediation Process:

- Following a pre-mediation dialogue with participants, if necessary, the next step is for the two mediators to hold the **Initial Meetings** with each participant, usually online, but we do offer in person meetings too. This is the opportunity to get the listening ears of two, trained and experienced mediators who do not interrupt or judge, whilst each participant talks about the situation from their perspective. Following this contact is a brief period of reflection, before the Round Table meeting, to think about and verbalise what they hope the outcome will be and what life will look like after the mediation process.
- **Round Table/Joint Meeting** - can be the next step from the initial meetings, where all participants and the mediators come together, with the aim of potentially finding mutually beneficial agreement on how they can move

forward and live their lives in respectful consideration of others. This agreement can be anything from very small, but positive steps, to a bigger-picture overview and changes in behaviours. Any Mediation Agreement reached is voluntarily arrived at and not legally binding but can provide a useful 'route-map' a reminder of what the shared vision for peaceful living might be. Participants are not required to be friends again or to say sorry.

Mediation and Conflict De-escalation/Resolution Skills Workshops:

We offer tailored Mediation and Conflict De-escalation/Resolution Skills Workshops to students and staff in further education, as well as front-line, customer facing staff in all settings.

Further information, email info@ashfordmediation.co.uk
www.ashfordmediation.co.uk; Charity Number: 1065625



Rising Sun are offering Domestic Abuse Awareness Training, which also provides further insight into violence against women and girls. This training is available exclusively to professionals working within the Folkestone and Hythe area and is delivered in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner via the Folkestone and Hythe Community Safety Unit.

The training aims to develop a clear understanding of what domestic abuse is, how to recognise early warning signs, and the appropriate steps to take when a disclosure is made. Participants will also gain insight into local support services and effective signposting options when supporting a victim.



FREE Violence against Women and Girls Training

This training for professionals will help you:

- Understand VAWG and the dynamics of domestic abuse
- Identify the support that is on offer for individuals and agencies
- Understand how to look out for the signs of domestic abuse
- Learn how best to support victims and survivors

Folkestone
Civic Centre
Council Chambers



Scan the QR Code to book:



Training Dates

21st January from 9am - 12pm
23rd February from 9am - 12pm
27th March from 1pm - 3pm



We are offering three face-to-face training dates, all delivered by our Independent Domestic Abuse Advisers, at Rising Sun who bring extensive knowledge and experience in this field.

Our aim is to try and reach as many local professionals in order to raise as much awareness and understanding in our local community.

Further details and booking information can be found in the attached document or you can click the link below which will take you directly to the booking page. Please feel free to contact us directly if you have any questions.

[Rising Sun Domestic Violence and Abuse Charity Events - 3 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite](#)

Information Awareness



Central ward community engagement : Thu 19 Feb 10:00

PC Djaffar Mehmet will be holding a surgery at Caffè La Delizia, 4 Alexandra Gardens, Folkestone CT20 1SS at 10:00 on Thursday 19th February 2026.

This is your opportunity to raise any concerns you may have and to find out what PC Mehmet is doing to tackle the issues that matter to you.

Everyone is welcome and please share this message on to anyone that you would feel would benefit from attendance by using the share button below.



E-scooters and electric bikes

What is an e-scooter?

Electrical scooters (also known as e-scooters) come under the category of 'powered transporters'. This covers a range of personal transport devices that are powered by a motor.

E-scooters and unregistered e-motorbikes are classed as motor vehicles under the [Road Traffic Act 1988](#). This means the rules that apply to motor vehicles, also apply to e-scooters including the need to have a licence and insurance.

There are two ways of using an e-scooter:

- by privately owning one
- by renting one through an authorised rental scheme

Owning your own e-scooter

It's not currently possible to get insurance for privately owned e-scooters. This means it's illegal to use them on the road or in public spaces, such as parks, street pavements, and shopping centres.

If you use a privately-owned e-scooter in public, you risk the vehicle being seized under S.165 Road Traffic Act 1988 for having no insurance.

If you cause serious harm to another person whilst riding an e-scooter/e-motorbike, the incident will be investigated in the same way it would if you were riding a motorcycle or driving a car.

Where you can use your own e-scooter

If you own an e-scooter, you can only use it on private land, such as in a garden. But you must have the permission of the landowner to do so.

Rental e-scooters

You can rent e-scooters in some parts of the UK through [e-scooter rental trials](#).

Where a rental trial scheme is running, rental e-scooters can be used on public roads, some cycle lanes, and other public spaces. But you must follow the relevant [road traffic laws](#). If you don't, you could face prosecution.

Note that Kent is not currently participating in a trial rental scheme.

To use a rental e-scooter in an approved area you must:

- hold the correct driving licence ([find out about driving licence categories](#))
- have insurance (the rental companies provide this when you hire from them)
- meet the minimum age limit (this can vary depending on the rental company, so please check with them)

When riding an e-scooter, you should always keep to the speed limit. We also always recommend wearing safety protection such as a helmet.

Penalties and offences for e-scooters

If you breach the rules when using an e-scooter/e-motorbike you could face a fixed penalty notice, the seizure of your e-scooter/e-motorbike and its disposal.

Forces set and enforce penalties differently, so the penalty will vary depending on where the offence is committed.

For example, Devon and Cornwall police will not issue fines, so other forms of penalty will be used if you use an e-scooter in a public place when not part of an approved trial.

For other forces in the UK, the fixed penalty notice could include:

- a £300 fine and six penalty points on your licence for having no insurance
- a £100 fine and three to six penalty points for riding without the correct licence

You could also be committing an offence if you're caught:

- riding on a pavement: fixed penalty notice and possible £50 fine
- using a mobile phone or other handheld mobile device while riding: £200 and six penalty points
- riding through red lights: fixed penalty notice, £100 fine and possible penalty points
- drink driving: the same as if you were driving a car, you could face court imposed fines, a driving ban and possible imprisonment

If you're using an e-scooter/e-motorbike in public in an antisocial manner, you can also risk the e-scooter/e-motorbike being seized [under section 59 of the Police Reform Act](#).

Electric bikes and rules for riding them

You can ride an electric bike, or an 'electrically assisted pedal cycle' (EAPC), without a license or insurance if you're 14 or over.

An electric bike:

- must have pedals that you can use to propel it
- can have more than two wheels, for example a tricycle
- must have an electric motor that can run continuously at a maximum power of no more than 250 watts
- must have no electrical assistance once you reach 15.5 miles per hour (mph)

If your electric bike fails to meet any of these requirements it needs to be taxed and insured as either a motorcycle or a moped.

There is more information on what's required to ride your electric bike legally on [GOV.UK](#).

Fraud / Scams

Kent Fraud Alert System



Over £3million lost to romance fraudsters by Kent victims in 2024.

In June 2025, Kent Police warned people to beware of romance fraud after a Swale resident was tricked out of almost £100,000 and lost her home.



She is one of thousands of victims targeted by dating scammers every year in the UK, with Kent residents losing a total of £3.1 million in the last financial year.

This week the force is supporting a national campaign aimed at raising awareness of romance fraud and helping people to spot when someone may be trying to take advantage of them.

A total of 240 reports were received from Kent victims in 2024/25, with each person being conned out of an average of £13,000 each.

Vulnerable

The Swale resident who was targeted was contacted through social media in 2022 by a person purporting to be an American serviceman, at a time when she was vulnerable following a bereavement.

The victim spoke with them over several months and she grew to trust him. After a couple of years, she was persuaded they were in a relationship and, when he said he was deployed overseas and needed help with food and medical expenses, started to send him cash in the form of gift cards.

Over time, the woman sent more and more money to a point where she found herself in considerable debt and ultimately lost her house.

When she sought to withdraw from the relationship, she was contacted by other fraudsters threatening to disclose intimate details about her on the internet. She was then contacted by another criminal who said he was from the FBI and could assist her with the threats she had been receiving. On each occasion, the victim lost more money.

Kent Police was contacted by the woman's bank in May 2025 after they suspected she had been the victim of a scam. An investigation is underway and at this stage nobody has been arrested and the missing money has not been traced.

Investigators did, however, approach a jeweller where the victim had deposited a family heirloom to obtain some cash to unwittingly send to the offenders. The managers at the business, once the circumstances were explained, were happy to return the item to the victim at no cost.

Advice

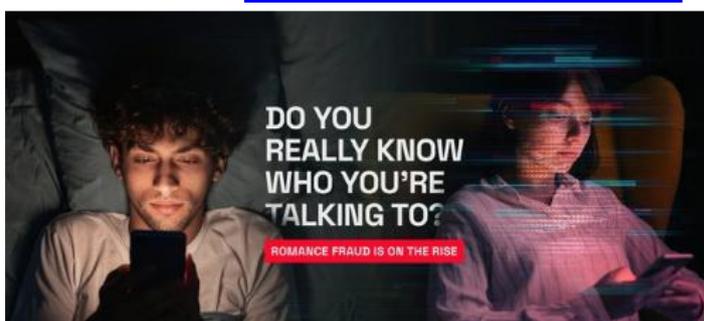
- If you have met someone via a dating app, do not feel pressured to hand over your mobile number and move the conversation over to a chat platform.
- Be suspicious of any requests for money from someone you have never met in person.
- Be cautious about how much personal information you are sharing online and who you are sharing information with.
- Speak to your family or friends to get advice and perspective. Fraudsters will subtly isolate you for their own purposes.
- Profile photos may not be genuine. Performing a reverse image search can find photos that have been taken from somewhere or someone else.

It is important that no matter how long you have been speaking to someone online and how much you think you trust them, do not:

- send them any money, even in the form of gift cards.
- allow them access to your bank account.
- transfer money on their behalf.
- take a loan out for them.
- provide copies of your personal documents such as passports or driving licences.
- invest your own money on their behalf or on their advice.
- purchase and send the codes on gift cards; or
- agree to receive and/or send parcels (e.g. laptops/mobile phones etc.) on their behalf.

Unsure if the person you are talking with is real? Try reverse image searching their profile photos to see if they are used elsewhere online.

Find out more at - [Romance fraud - Report Fraud](#)



STOP!
THINK FRAUD
NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST FRAUD

Get to know the person, not the profile: check the person online using Google Image search or TinEye to see if their profile pictures can be found elsewhere online.

Kent Fraud Alert System



Fake Text Message/One Time Pass Code Scam

A member of the public received a fake text message from a criminal impersonating Halifax with a onetime pass code for a purchase at Argos. However, the intended victim did not have a Halifax account and realised it was a scam. It is uncertain what the one-time pass code was for but may have been an attempt at a Sim Swap to enable them to take control of the intended victim's phone.

If you get any messages like this, never give out the code and forward the text message to **7726**.

If you have been a victim of any type of scam, then contact your Bank immediately, which you can do by calling 159 and reporting to Report Fraud at [Reporting cyber crime and fraud or phishing attempts - Report Fraud](#) or call 0300 123 2040. Find out more by visiting our website at [Advice about fraud | Kent Police](#) and also from the Home Office at [Stop! Think Fraud - How to stay safe from scams](#)

New Published Reports

Mental health

Source: NSPCC Learning

Date published: 19 January 2026

Childline has launched a campaign to help children and young people look after their mental health when using social media. The 'Race to a Milli' campaign video shows TikTok stars compete to achieve one million 'likes' whilst tackling issues such as peer pressure, hateful comments and rage bait. The campaign provides talking points for professionals to use with young people in their schools, clubs and organisations. Supporting Childline data shows that between April 2024 and March 2025, 82,882 counselling sessions were delivered to young people about their mental wellbeing.

Read about the campaign: [Help young people navigate the mental health challenges of being online](#)

Read the news story: [More than half of all Childline counselling sessions support children with mental health struggles](#)

Misogyny

Source: NSPCC Learning

Date published: 19 December 2025

NSPCC Learning has launched a new online masterclass on recognising and responding to misogyny, sexism and gender-based hate. The on-demand training session explores what misogyny means and why it is a safeguarding issue; the impact it has on children and young people; and how to recognise the signs. The masterclass has been designed for professionals working or volunteering with children and young people.

Access the masterclass: [Tackling misogyny masterclass](#)

If you have any information that you would like us to include within any future updates, please email the details to community.safety@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk