

Community Safety

The newsletter from
Hart District Council



Issue 35 March 2024

This Newsletter aims to provide information around safeguarding and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), raise awareness of current issues across the district and promote the good work of our partner agencies and celebrate the successes we have had.

We can be contacted online: [Report antisocial behaviour | Hart District Council](#)

by phone: [01252 774476](tel:01252774476) or by e-mail: communitysafety@hart.gov.uk

Think Safe Returns

With the pandemic preventing much of our community engagement work and challenges with either venue or transportation over the last few years, delivery to schools of **Think Safe** has been significantly hampered but we were delighted to have been able to engage with 582 children from 12 of the Hart Primary and Junior Schools in the week commencing 11 March 2024.

The children, all in Year 6 facing the transition to secondary school this coming September, received critical safety messages in relation to rail safety, arson and wild fires, planet safety and carbon footprints, the importance of engaging in person and online only with **known** persons, the need to recognise when relationships are not healthy and last but not least, what antisocial behaviour is, how it can impact others and what to do in all cases if help and/or support is needed.



The children engaged with the sessions really positively and made the event a really enjoyable one for presenters and attendees alike – a massive thanks goes out to all of the agencies who provided their time and expertise for the event and to the venue provided through MAPP at Watchmoor Park, Camberley.

We hope to run the event again next year – venue and transportation permitting!

Be Spike Aware

Spiking is an increasing concern with figures from the National Chiefs' Council showing 6,732 reports to police during 2022/23 and data from 39 police forces confirming 0.25% of reported cases resulting in a charge. Commonly, spiking is administered in a powder or liquid form, without a victim's consent or knowledge, mainly in drinks, but also through vapes. Needle injection is also used.



The risks lie in many settings, including bars and clubs, work events, parties, and festivals, with victims unaware of their drinks being spiked, then feeling very sick, physically fatigued, in pain and disorientated. Sexual assault and robbery are the main reasons why perpetrators use spiking, however, with such low charging figures, offender profiling is severely lacking.

One substance widely used is GBL (Gamma-butyrolactone) which sedates and incapacitate victims. This substance is used in the chemical trade in cleaning agents and printing ink, and trading is currently unlicensed. It is, however, illegal to purchase, supply or produce GBL if a person knowingly or believes it is used for human consumption, where it is regulated under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 as a Class B controlled substance.

GBL dissipates in the blood system within hours, making it hard to trace. Some venues have testing kits, but these are unreliable. This translates to inherent difficulties in proving spiking was an integral part of a sexual or robbery offence. The Home Office has been urged to create a specific law of Spiking to create awareness and increased reporting, but in December 2023, announced it favoured modernising the existing Offences Against the Person Act 1861 law, relating to the administering of a poison or other noxious substance with intent.

The varied settings used by perpetrators and the targeting of many age groups, prevention through awareness is therefore important. Discussions within families, among friends and colleagues will assist, as well as looking out for one another, particularly 'guarding' unattended drinks and only consuming those supplied by trusted friends and colleagues or purchased yourself. The same applies to your wallet or purse and mobile phone - keep these close to you to safeguard against any theft motive.

If someone you are with appears intoxicated, which does not align with their alcohol consumption, or they become suddenly unwell, stay with them and report to the police immediately. The police have approved testing kits and will safeguard too.

For further information and how to report see the following links: [Spike Aware UK](#) & [Report spiking](#)

Communities in Action

This is a reminder that Hart Community Safety team took part in **Community in Motion** last month. The sessions promote leadership within communities and are designed to support action to be taken, **no matter how small**, to be able to make a difference when witnessing domestic abuse or violence within our communities.

It is not about encouraging anyone to put themselves at risk, or to wade in and potentially escalate a situation further but it is about understanding the psychology behind why we sometimes shy away from 'getting involved' and how to be able to make a difference by taking the active choice to do something to help.

Put in simple terms, it moves to an action breeds action standpoint rather than inaction breeding inaction.

We will be delivering this session to our colleagues shortly and will then look to offer the session out to community groups - **if you are interested in attending this training, or are part of a group that you feel would really benefit from this**, please drop us a line at communitysafety@hart.gov.uk and we will be in touch to arrange a session with you.

Please also drop us a line if you are interested in becoming a trainer in this subject yourself as the 2-day Train The Trainer course is planned to take place again 0900-1600 on 22 and 23 May 2024.

You need to attend both dates to cover the complete course content and venue is as yet to be confirmed but likely to be in Winchester as this is a county wide offering.

There are 20 spaces available – get in touch!

Last Ditch Reminder - Have Your Say

Hampshire County Council's public consultation is still open to ask for people's views on the future of some local services to help the Authority meet the £132 million budget shortfall by April 2025. [Submit your response here](#) – **the consultation closes at the end of this weekend - 31 March, 2024.**

If you have received this monthly **Hart Community Safety Newsletter** forwarded to you and you would like to subscribe and receive it directly, please drop us a line with your request at:

communitysafety@hart.gov.uk