



Community Safety Strategic Assessment

Executive Summary

Newcastle-under-Lyme Strategic Assessment

The Centre for Public Innovation

March 2026

The Centre for Public Innovation is a Community Interest Company that provides research, training, support and advice in the fields of health, social care, criminal justice and community development.

Our mission is to improve the outcomes of services for their users, with a particular emphasis on the most disadvantaged.

Executive Summary

Context

Under the Police and Justice Act 2006 (England & Wales) local authorities are duty-bound to 'provide evidence-based data to support Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in their planning and duties'.

It is a statutory obligation for CSPs to produce an annual localised Strategic Assessment providing a strategic evidence-base that identifies future priorities for the partnership and evaluates year-on-year activity.

Strategic Assessments should be reviewed on an annual basis with a fuller assessment carried out every three years. This Strategic Assessment is a full review and so looks at issues in relation to crime, ASB and other factors in depth. The previous full assessment was undertaken and published in 2021/22.

Strategic Context

The wider framework for addressing crime across Staffordshire is set by the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner's priorities for 2024 to 2028 are:

- An outstanding Police service,
- Supporting victims and witnesses,
- Preventing and protecting
- Impactful partnerships.

Staffordshire Police have also set a number of priorities for 2025 to 2027 which CSPs should seek to align with where appropriate:

- Ensure safe and confident communities,
- Develop an exceptional workforce,
- Develop active and productive partnerships,
- Build an outstanding organisation.

Effects of COVID

The data set out in this report reviews crime and ASB over the period 2022-23 to 2024-25. Data from the period of the COVID-19 pandemic has been intentionally excluded. As with many other facets of life

the pandemic had a significant impact on both crime and ASB meaning that the data during and immediately after COVID in no way reflected the norm hence has been excluded.

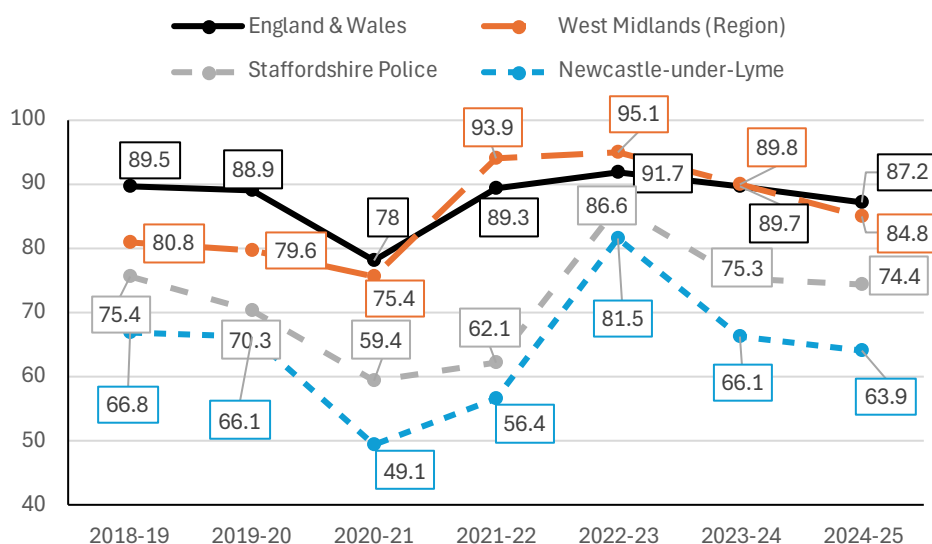
Overall crime in Newcastle-under-Lyme

Levels of crime in Newcastle-under-Lyme have fallen by 20.4% since 2022-23 giving a fall in the absolute number of offences from 10,061 to 8,006 in 2024-25.

While crime is falling across Staffordshire as a whole the rate of decline in Newcastle-under-Lyme is much more pronounced.

It is worth drawing attention to the fact that most of the fall in crime took place between 2022-23 and 2023-24 when crime fell from 10,061 incidents to 8,292. While continuing to fall more recently this has been at a much lower rate. The data therefore suggests that there is no certainty that the downward trajectory will continue.

Levels of crime in Newcastle-under-Lyme are **lower** than the rate for the Staffordshire Police force area as a whole and are also **lower** than the rates for the West Midlands and for England and Wales.



While crime is falling there is evidently an issue regarding residents' perception of crime in the district. While only 8% of Newcastle-under-Lyme respondents to the Police's perception survey had actually been a victim of crime in the last year, over a fifth (21%) felt that they were likely to become a victim of

crime. It is evident therefore that local residents do not feel as safe as actual levels of crime would tend to suggest might be the case.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

ASB has been on a downward trajectory with a drop of 32.8% since 2022-23. The fall in ASB is a long-term one and numbers of ASB incidents have been falling since 2021-22. This strongly indicates that efforts to address ASB in the district are proving to be effective.

Key areas of interest

Drug offences experienced a very pronounced growth of 21.9%, reaching a rate of 2.1 per 1,000 population. Drug offences now represent 3% of all crime up from 2.1% in 2022-23.

The absolute numbers show an increase from 215 offences in the year 2022-23 to 262 in the year 2024-2025.

We note that partners are aware of this increase and report that it reflects proactive policing activity, intelligence-led operations, and targeted stop and search rather than an increase in actual levels of drug-related activity. Much of the rate of increase is therefore due to increased enforcement.

We note that drug offences are a key priority among local residents with 22% of respondents from Newcastle-under-Lyme to the Police's survey highlighting this as a priority, coming second only to ASB.

Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society

Miscellaneous crimes have increased by 7.7% since 2022-23. Given the composite nature of this offence (constituting "miscellaneous" offences) it is difficult to discern what this means locally.

There may therefore be value in local partners scrutinising the crime that has been recorded under this heading to determine whether this rise is related to police recording or represents a shift in a particular type of offending.

Possession of Weapons

While absolute numbers remain very low (96 offences in 2024-25) the data indicates that **possession of weapons offences increased by 20% since 2022-23** and now stand at 0.8 per 1,000 population. This

represents 1% of total crime in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The rate all but exactly aligns with that of Staffordshire as a whole (0.9) and England and Wales (0.9) but is below the West Midlands at 1.5.

It is possible that this increase is linked to proactive policing in which case the rate of increase is a positive story representing more enforcement work rather than an increase in criminality. While this may be the case partners should be mindful of the data from the survey of young people which indicates that 60% of young people in Newcastle-under-Lyme thought that violence is a problem and 16% of young people thought that it was normal to carry a knife.

Theft

There has been a downward trend in theft offences overall with a **fall of 10.8% since 2022-23**.

Contrary to the overall fall in theft offences there has been a **steep increase in shoplifting which has increased by 70.4% since 2022-23**. This is the highest rate of increase (by some margin) for any crime type in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Shoplifting now accounts for over a third (38%) of all thefts having gone up from 19.8% of theft offences in 2022-23.

Violence

Violence against the person remains the dominant crime category accounting for 43% of all recorded crimes in Newcastle-under-Lyme with a rate of 28.0 offences per 1,000 population.

There has been a very marked **fall in violence offences which have dropped by 26.8% since 2022-23**. This means that the rate in Newcastle-under-Lyme remains below that of Staffordshire as a whole (31.5), the West Midlands (33.8), and England and Wales (31.9).

Consideration of future priorities

ASB

Whilst on a downward trajectory **ASB is the top priority among residents** and therefore, this in itself, warrants retaining this priority.

Business crime and theft

Given that **shoplifting has seen, by some margin, the greatest rate of increase of any crime in Newcastle-under-Lyme (70.4%)**, this would strongly suggest that local partners need to retain a substantial focus on this issue. Given this business crime and theft must, we would argue, be retained as a local priority.

Drugs and County Lines

We endorse the position set out in the Local Police and Crime Plan that recent events and the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis means that, 'we are likely to see a sharp increase in numbers of people and families considered to be vulnerable'. The data in this report validates this conclusion, setting out a pronounced **upward trajectory in drug-related offending** (albeit that this is also associated with proactive policing).

Given the upward rise in offending, combined with the associated vulnerabilities that exist alongside drugs markets (as also set out in the Local Police and Crime Plan) we believe that there is considerable merit in retaining this priority.

Domestic Abuse

The current Local Police and Crime Plan captures the rationale for domestic abuse as a priority well, particularly as it references the impact not only to victims but also on children.

The volume of domestic crimes (1,742 in 2024-25) means that an ongoing focus on domestic abuse is appropriate.

Serious Violence

While violence is on a downward trajectory (down by 26.8% since 2022-23) it continues to constitute – by some margin – **the largest single offence type with 3,471 offences of violence in 2024-25**. This in itself would justify retaining this priority. Moreover, noting the link between violence, domestic abuse and VAWG would further suggest the need to retain this priority.

Stalking and harassment

With **1,421 offences in 2024-25** the number of stalking and harassment offences would suggest that this continues to be a problem in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Its associations with both domestic abuse and VAWG would, again, warrant retaining this priority.

