

Community Safety Strategic Assessment Full Assessment Report

Newcastle-under-Lyme 2022

Produced on behalf of



and



Working in partnership with



Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**

Title	Newcastle-under-Lyme Community Safety Partnership: Community Safety Strategic Assessment Refresh Report (2022)
Description	This Community Safety Strategic Assessment provides evidence and intelligence to inform the strategic decision-making process - helping commissioners and partners to determine the priorities that require particular attention in their local area.
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Introduction and 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'.

Evidence-based data is required to relate to crime and disorder taking place within the local area, which includes Recorded crime, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Alcohol, Drug and Substance misuse.

It is a statutory obligation for Community Safety Partnerships to produce or procure an annual localised Strategic Assessment (SA), providing a strategic evidence base that identifies future priorities for the partnership and evaluates year on year activity. The approach and format of these is not prescribed by legislation.

SAs should be used to underpin a local area Community Safety Plan which is made publicly available through the partnership's and Commissioner's Office websites by 1st April each year. In Staffordshire agreement has been reached that Community Safety Plans will be produced three yearly and refreshed annually in line with the SA.

This SA (2022) is being produced as a full assessment, with refresh reports to follow in 2023 and 2024. The previous full assessment was undertaken and published in 2019.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the Cost of Living

Over the last two years the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has had an unprecedented global and local impact. While restrictions have been lifted for some time now, a vaccine has been deployed, and both transmission and severity of Covid have reduced, the country is in a stage of recovery and the impact of the pandemic is still being felt.

The pandemic and periods of lockdown also had a considerable impact on crime and disorder. With people instructed to stay at home and out of public spaces, levels of public space ASB (such as Rowdy & Inconsiderate behaviour) and Public Order offences fell, as did traditional crime such as Theft and Burglary. However, with more people spending time online and using online shopping and marketplaces, levels of Fraud (and particularly cyber-enabled Fraud) increased considerably. Additionally, there have been increases in reports of Domestic Abuse during the pandemic, with practitioners providing support stating that cases have become increasingly complex and high-risk.

Locally the pandemic has had a negative impact on mental health and well-being for many – with increases in GP diagnoses of depression and anxiety and increases in crimes where mental health was considered to be a factor.

With significant disruption to the global supply chain during the pandemic, and the impact of sanctions placed against Russia as a result of the war in Ukraine, many of the costs of living in the UK (particularly energy and gas, food, and vehicle fuel) have increased considerably over the past 12 months – with Consumer Price Index inflation peaking at 11% in October 2022¹ having increased sharply from June 2022 onwards. (ONS, 2022).

Similarly to the impact of the pandemic, while everyone has been effected by increases to the cost of living, the level of impact is unlikely to be felt equally across all communities, locally or nationally.

While there is speculation from the Bank of England that the UK is likely to enter a period of recession, at this time it is not possible to know how Government actions and intervention may affect the impact of cost of living challenges on individuals, families, and communities – therefore is it presently too difficult to make reliable predictions about how cost of living may impact Community Safety over the coming year.

Impact of the pandemic on Strategic Assessments

The accurate identification and assessment of Community Safety challenges and risks relies heavily on the analysis and interpretation of a considerable amount of data, which usually (as a minimum) covers the previous financial year.

In the 2020 refresh of CSSAs, the latest financial year (2019-20) included one week which was spent under full nationwide lockdown restrictions, affecting approximately 2% of all data for the year.

This was significantly different for the 2020-21 financial year; by comparison, around 75% of the financial year was spent with some degree of Covid-related measures in place. These measures had an easily observed impact on several types of crime and disorder, which saw drastic reductions in 2020-21.

In practice, this means that comparison of the current year (2021-22) to the previous year (2020-21) is not always reliable – due to the impact of Covid-related measures. As a result, where comparison is made within this report – it will attempt to look at the period pre-Covid (2019-20) as well as at the last financial year.

¹ONS – Consumer Price Inflation - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/november2022>

Overall direction of travel

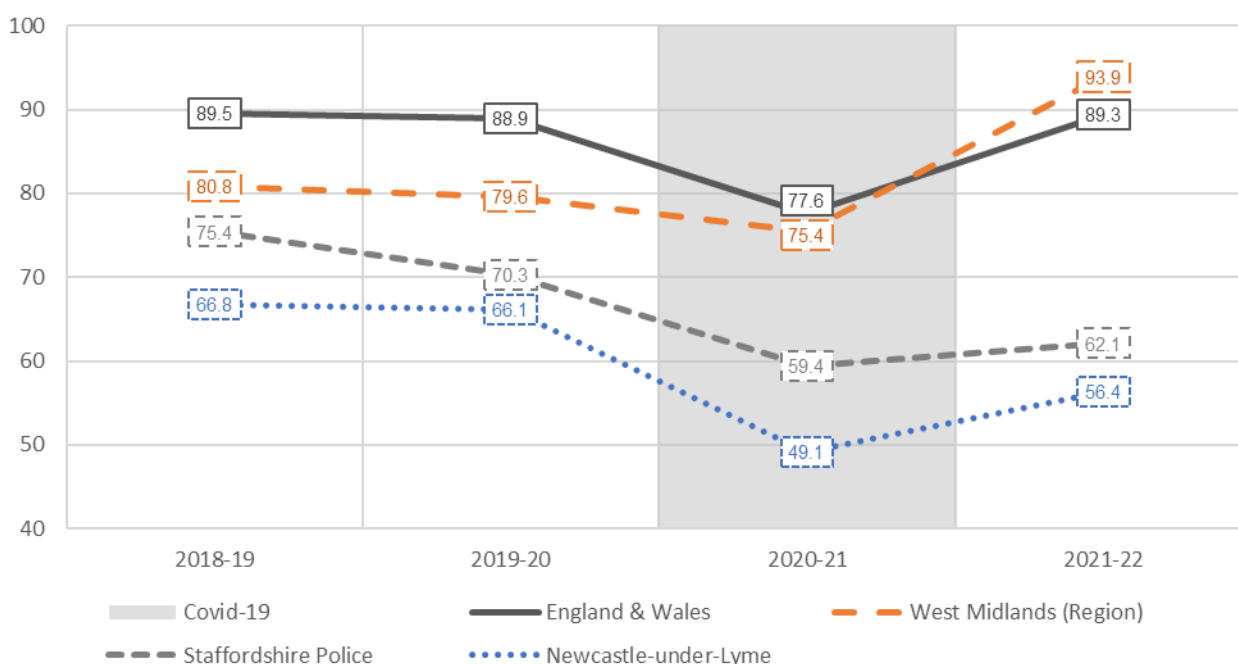
Change over time

Restrictions imposed as part of the government approach to controlling the Coronavirus pandemic resulted in significant reductions in recorded crime and disorder at the time of the first UK Lockdown in March 2020. Many reductions which were becoming initially evident in the previous (2020) refresh, continued during much of 2021-22.

While data for 2021-22 shows that as restrictions on society have been removed, recorded crime has increased compared to the period of the pandemic, the scale of increase has been quite different at different geographies. Nationally overall recorded crime had returned to pre-pandemic levels, while across the West Midlands region crime has increased considerably – and is now well above pre-pandemic rates.

In Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent the slower-than-national increase in recorded crime, observed at the time of the previous (2021) assessment, continued throughout the remainder of the 2021-22 financial year; the result is that overall recorded crime for the force area, while increasing slightly post-pandemic, sits well below pre-pandemic levels – with a considerable gap between rates of recorded crime in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent and England & Wales.

Rates of Police Recorded Crime (excl. fraud) per 1,000 population (Home Office, 2022)



Rates of recorded crime in Newcastle-under-Lyme have increased over the last year, but are still below rates seen pre-pandemic. The area sits slightly below the force rate for overall crime and well below the national rate.

Similarly to the previous year, in 2021-22 all Safety Partnership areas in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent recorded overall levels of crime which were either statistically similar to, or lower than, the levels seen across England & Wales.

There is no CSP area in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent which has recorded overall levels of crime which are statistically high and above the national level.

Although rates of recorded crime are significantly lower than national levels, rates of recorded Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) are similar to those seen nationally. However, although levels overall are similar, compared to the national picture the local area tends to experience considerably more “Personal” ASB (incidents affecting individuals or groups) than “Nuisance” ASB (incidents affecting the wider community) and comparatively small levels of “Environmental” ASB incidents.

Year-to-date recorded crime

While the increases in crime in the 2021-22 financial year were slower than those seen at a national level, the following six months of data (April 2022 to end of October 2022) shows that levels of reported crime have continued to steadily increase.

By the end of October 2022, monthly reported crime has risen in line with the upper limit of ‘normal’ monthly levels; with a 25% increase in the local area. This compares to a 22% increase on the previous 12 months across the force area overall – comprising of a 25% increase across Staffordshire County, and 18% increase in Stoke-on-Trent.

Staffordshire Commissioner's Office Priorities

It is recommended Safety Partnerships consider their approach to community safety challenges in the context of the priorities identified in the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's 2021-24 Police and Crime Plan;

A Local and Responsive Service: Understand and deal with what matters to communities, respond promptly to incidents and work with partners to solve problems and prevent them from getting worse. This will mean that crime and ASB reduces, our roads are safer and confidence in Staffordshire Police increases.

Prevent Harm and Protect People: Prevent harm and protect people (particularly children and those that are vulnerable) by ensuring they are appropriately safeguarded and receive the help and support they need.

Support Victims and Witnesses: Ensure victims and witnesses are provided with exceptional specialist support services so they feel able to cope and recover from the impact of crime and ASB.

Reduce Offending and Re-offending: Ensure people are challenged and supported to make life choices that will prevent them from offending and perpetrators don't reoffend. Doing so will mean fewer victims of crime.

A More Effective Criminal Justice System: Ensure Staffordshire Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, Courts, the National Probation Service and HM Prison Service all work seamlessly so that effective justice is delivered quickly.

The Staffordshire Commissioner's Office recommends that the approach to tackling priorities should be *Community Focussed*, consider *Prevention and Early Intervention*, use partnerships to *Solve Problems Together*, provide *Value for Money* and be *Open and Transparent*.

Summary of Local Community Safety Priorities

A new assessment of potential priorities and risks has taken place for this report. The assessment of priorities has considered the volume and frequency at which these issues occur, the harm they potentially cause to individuals and communities, and the level of public expectation that these issues will be prioritised and addressed. These have been cross referenced against existing priorities and findings for each locality, as well as through local intelligence, research and insight held by partners (including Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service).

Identified priorities are as follows:

- Domestic Abuse (DA)
- Drugs & County Lines
- Fraud
- Community Cohesion & Tackling Extremism
- Public-Place Violence (PPV) and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Vulnerable Persons and Contextual Safeguarding

The following are not considered a main priority for Newcastle-under-Lyme, but they are recommended for additional consideration due to their volume, impact on communities and level of public expectation:

- Repeat and Persistent Offending
- Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)

In addition, there are some challenges which, while not necessarily overly present in the partnership area, require the work of the whole partnership to address. It is important for each partnership to consider how they can contribute to the force-wide approach and strategy. These challenges are highlighted as:

- Modern Slavery
- Fire and Rescue
- Business Crime
- Safer Roads

People and Communities at Greatest Risk

Vulnerability is cross-cutting; many of those considered vulnerable for a range of concerns (including general safeguarding, social isolation, economic stress, and health and mental health concerns) are also additionally vulnerable to criminal exploitation and victimisation through crime and ASB.

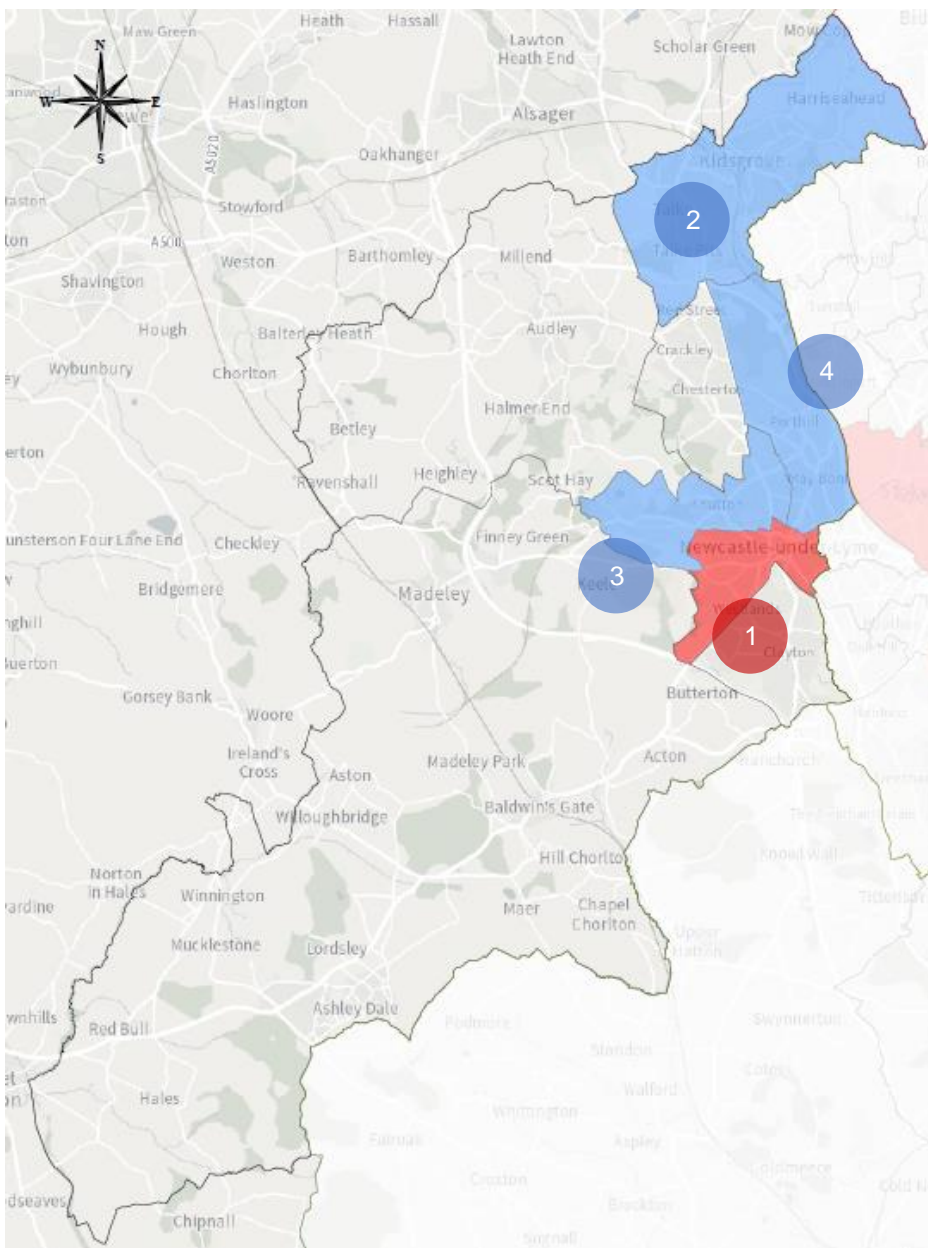
Those considered to be particularly vulnerable to experiencing crime, safeguarding concerns or being criminally exploited tend to be consistent over time. There is no change to these groups from the 2019 Strategic Assessment, and in high-risk groups remain as:

- Offenders with known drug dependencies or previous drug-related offending
- Children (under 10s) in areas with high levels of Domestic Abuse and/or drug-related offending
- Children and young people (aged 10-19) at risk of criminal exploitation
- Socially isolated older adults
- Socially isolated adults with alcohol and/or drug dependencies

Those who belong to the 'Family Basics' demographic Mosaic group are consistently the most disproportionately affected by almost all aspects of crime and anti-social behaviour in Newcastle-under-Lyme (10% of population, 16% of all victims). Those in the Municipal Tenants group are also more present amongst victims of crime than in the general local population (6% of population, 12% of victims). These are primarily younger adults, in low-cost housing provided by social landlords, who are on very low incomes and experience high levels of economic stress - however in Newcastle, a proportion of those who live in these areas are also university students – renting shared housing in the lowest-cost areas, which have historic challenges with deprivation and disadvantage.

Older people living in isolation, who are particularly vulnerable to experiencing Fraud offences, are also vulnerable to 'door step' crime, which may involve intimidating and aggressive behaviour on the part of the offenders or an element of befriending or grooming of the victim to facilitate the offending or repeat victimisation.

Identifying areas for targeted intervention and focus



A considerable piece of work has been undertaken by the Knowledge Hub at Staffordshire Police in order to identify localities within Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent which would benefit the most from a strong partnership focus, in order to address long-standing challenges and vulnerabilities.

Areas have been identified through a combination of different elements of local area data (including crime, ASB and police intelligence and insight) covering multiple years, including pre-pandemic. Assessment of areas has considered levels of crime and disorder over time and the overall levels of vulnerability and risk in each area.

Due to levels of crime, disorder, vulnerability, and risk, some areas are considered a high priority at a force-wide level, while some areas experience challenges which are a priority for their local Safety Partnership area, but which are not likely to require the same intensity of resource as those which are a force-wide priority.

Areas which are identified at a force-wide level as a priority [mapped in red] have been taken directly from Knowledge Hub analysis and reflect those selected by Staffordshire Police as in need of a 'Precision Policing' approach.

Areas which are identified as a local priority [mapped in blue] have been assessed using the same data used to identify force-wide priority localities. These areas have been highlighted at a local level, rather than by Staffordshire Police, and it should be noted that they **have not** been included in the 'Precision Policing' approach.

Risks in these areas are considered in the context of their local Safety Partnership area, rather than in the context of the wider force-area. Localities which have been highlighted as a local priority area for focus, do not experience the same volumes, vulnerability, and risk as those identified as a force-wide priority – but may require a local focus.

Newcastle-under-Lyme	Priority Type	Rationale for selection
(1) Newcastle Town	Force-wide	Similarly to other town centre areas, the neighbourhood experiences a disproportionate volume of crime (including some which is high risk) in addition to public space ASB.
(2) Kidsgrove Parish	Local ONLY	Comparatively high levels of crime and vulnerability for the local area have been consistent over time - with Kidsgrove seeing increases over the past two years. Volumes of ASB relating to neighbour disputes are particularly high in both Newcastle West and North.
(3) Newcastle West	Local ONLY	
(4) Newcastle North	Local ONLY	

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Overview of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Overall rates of recorded Crime and ASB in Newcastle-under-Lyme are statistically similar to the rate for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, although below the rates for the West Midlands region and England & Wales.

In 2021-22 recorded crime in the partnership area saw an increase of around 15% compared to the 5% increase seen across the Staffordshire Police force area – however, this has not pushed rates above the force-wide level.

The types of offences which have seen the most significant increases compared to the previous year, are those which saw the greatest decreases across the pandemic; such as violent crime, shoplifting, and public order. Rather than these increases suggesting a surge in such offending, they are more indicative of a return towards pre-pandemic levels of crime.

Rates for all major types of crime and disorder in Newcastle are in line with rates for the force-area, with rates of Drugs Offences, Public Order, and Crimes Against Society significantly below rates observed across all Safety Partnership areas in England & Wales.

Rates of Recorded Crime – Staffordshire Police (April 2021 to March 2022)

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Staffordshire (Force Area)	Most Similar Forces (Avg)	West Midlands region	ENGLAND AND WALES
TOTAL CRIME (excl. fraud)	56.4	62.1	81.0	93.9	89.3
CRIMINAL DAMAGE AND ARSON	6.6	6.8	7.9	8.4	8.9
ROBBERY	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.6	1.1
SEXUAL OFFENCES	2.6	2.8	3.3	3.4	3.3
THEFT OFFENCES	13.6	16.4	20.1	25.1	25.1
Burglary	2.5	2.9	3.5	5.0	4.5
Residential burglary	1.8	2.0	2.6	3.7	3.2
Non-residential burglary	0.6	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.2
Vehicle offences	2.6	3.5	4.8	7.5	6.0
Theft from the person	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.5
Bicycle theft	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.7	1.3
Shoplifting	3.3	3.9	4.4	4.5	4.6
All other theft offences	4.2	5.2	5.9	6.5	7.2
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	26.8	28.5	34.6	41.6	35.2
Homicide ¹	...	0.008	0.010	0.016	0.012
Death or serious injury - unlawful driving ¹	...	0.001	0.008	0.012	0.012
Violence with injury	7.1	7.6	9.0	10.8	9.5
Violence without injury	8.3	9.3	13.5	15.4	13.6
Stalking and harassment	11.4	11.6	12.1	15.3	12.1
DRUG OFFENCES	1.0	1.2	2.3	2.0	3.0
POSSESSION OF WEAPONS	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.3	0.8
PUBLIC ORDER	4.2	4.5	9.8	8.8	10.0
MISC. CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	0.9	1.0	1.6	1.7	1.9
ASB INCIDENTS (excl. Covid breaches)	21.2	22.7	19.6	17.4	21.2
FRAUD OFFENCES (experimental)²	...	4.0	N/A	4.4	5.3

¹ Due to low volume no statistical comparison is given for 'Homicide' or 'Death or Serious Injury - Unlawful driving'

² Fraud offences reported to Action Fraud (October 2021 to September 2022)

Key

Statistically lower than national average (CSP)

Similar to national average

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Community Safety Strategic Priorities

Domestic Abuse (DA)

Volume and potential harm: Very high volume / Substantial individual harm / Substantial community harm

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary: DA is any incident or incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16+ who are (or have been) intimate partners (regardless of gender or sexuality) or family members.

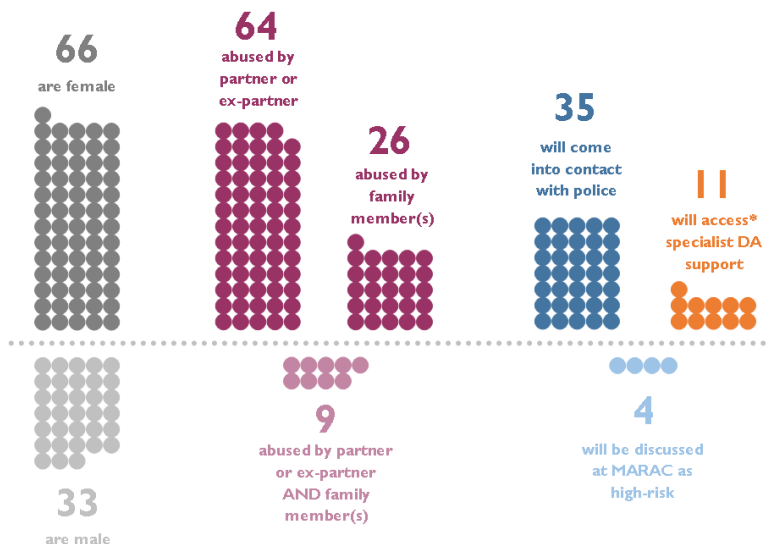
Domestic Abuse affects all communities and is not unique to any one part of Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent. DA presents a significant risk to victims, but also has a wider impact where children are present – with many children who experience DA coming into contact with Social Care services. Within the DA Act (2021) there is a clear legal definition of DA and the recognition of children who witness or experience such abuse as victims of DA in their own right.

DA remains a largely hidden crime; an estimated 65% of all DA overall is not reported to the police or to other support services. In rural communities it is estimated that around 90% of all DA goes unreported.

In 2021-22 there were 2,290 DA-related crimes in Newcastle-under-Lyme; a rate of 17.7 per 1,000 residents, which is in line with the force-wide rate (17.4). This is an increase on the previous year (2020-21) where there were 1,970 recorded DA incidents in the Safety Partnership area. DA accounted for around a quarter (26%) of all crime in the area in 2021-22, which is similar to the force-wide proportion (25%).

Similar to previous assessments, the majority of DA crimes are violent offences (79%) although there have been some reductions in violent offences resulting in injury and slightly increases in violence without injury (largely Stalking). DA-related acquisitive offences have also reduced in 2020-21 (from 6% to 4% of DA) while domestic sexual offences (mostly comprising of rape) remain unchanged, accounting for around 1-in-50 DA crimes.

Of every 100 domestic abuse victims in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (as at 2021)



Comparison to Force: Overall rate similar

Local rate (per 1,000 people): 17.7

Force rate (per 1,000 people): 17.4

Direction of travel: Continued increase both locally and force-wide.

Public expectation: Moderate to Very High

Previous local hotspot wards: Rates are a concern in Newcastle Town, Newcastle West, and Chesterton & Holditch. Volumes of offences (irrespective of rate) are a concern in Kidsgrove Parish.

At risk groups: Disproportionately younger women (aged under 30), and those who live in disadvantaged communities. However, anyone can become a victim of DA, and there are male victims in the area, and victims who are older adults. Households where there are high levels of economic stress and alcohol/drug use and dependency

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are at particularly high risk. Offenders are also disproportionately younger (aged under 40) and male, although there are also female offenders.

Domestic Abuse (DA)

Stalking & Harassment

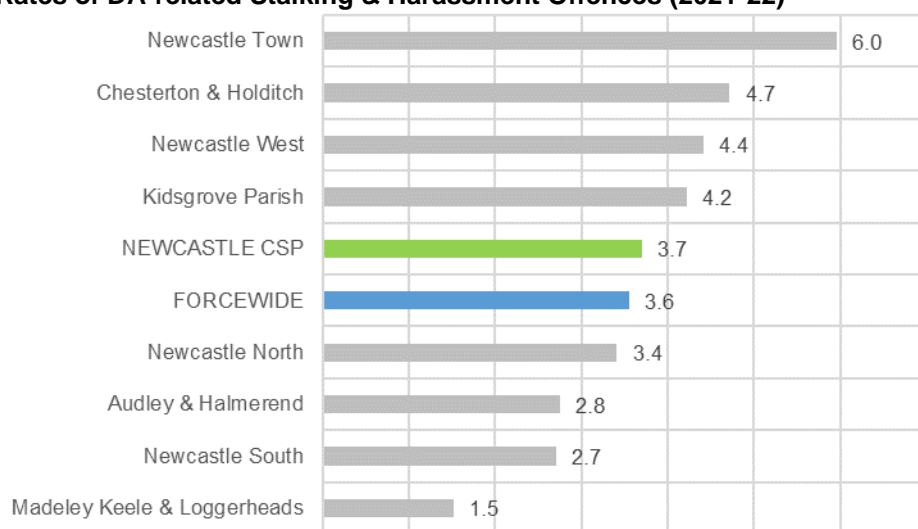
Volume and potential harm: Large volumes / Substantial individual harm / Moderate community harm

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas (as component of Domestic Abuse)

Summary: There have been considerable increases in Stalking and Harassment incidents recorded by the police in recent years, both locally and nationally, although this is considered to partly be the result of improved training for officers, visibility and reporting of offences – rather than solely an increase in the volume of offences that take place.

While rates in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent have been comparatively slightly high in recent years, this is considered to be due to levels of detection and recording resulting from officer training. In the last few years national and regional rates have caught up with the local area, as recording of such offences has improved.

Rates of DA-related Stalking & Harassment Offences (2021-22)



In 2021-22 there were 380 Stalking offences and 440 Harassment offences in Newcastle-under-Lyme. While the proportion of Harassment offences relating to DA (23%) is similar to the proportion of crime overall, the overwhelming majority of Stalking offences (91%) were considered to be DA-related.

There are genuine concerns around risks attached to Stalking and fixated behaviours in particular, as an element of wider DA. Research conducted on behalf of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust (Exploring the Relationship Between Stalking and Homicide, 2017) which reviewed three years of domestic homicides found that:

- Stalking behaviours were present in 94% of the reviewed homicides.
- Stalking is a key indicator of potential future serious harm.
- Stalking should be identified through intentions, as well as actions.
- More actions should be recognised as part of stalking behaviour (e.g. vexatious or baseless allegations or court action.)

The rate of domestic Stalking offences in the local area (2.8) is the same as that observed across the force area – although this rate remains the third-highest amongst local Safety Partnership areas; behind Stoke-on-Trent (4.0) and Cannock Chase (2.9).

Local rate (per 1,000 people): 3.7 Domestic Stalking & Harassment

Direction of travel: Long-term challenge

Public expectation: Moderate to Very High

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Drugs & County Lines

County Lines

Volume and potential harm: Small volume / Substantial individual harm / Severe community harm

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary:

The use of County Lines to traffic drugs from urban areas into rural areas, causes significant issues for communities; particularly through the degradation of local areas through use of properties for drug use, drug supply and other criminal activity, and as a result of violent disorder and disputes between Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and Urban Street Gangs (USGs) over control of particular County Lines and Drug Supply in specific areas.

The use of County Lines by OCGs is not limited to the supply and movement of drugs; the same criminal infrastructure is linked to Modern Slavery and People Trafficking, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Serious Violence, Money Laundering, and the supply of illegal weapons.

County Lines activity often relies heavily on the Criminal Exploitation of vulnerable persons. The practice of 'cuckooing' is commonplace; where criminals take over a vulnerable person's home (while the vulnerable person remains living there) and use that property for criminality. Victims are often people who misuse substances such as drugs or alcohol, but there are cases of victims with learning difficulties, mental health challenges, physical disabilities or who are socially isolated. Criminals who choose to exploit will often target the most vulnerable in society and will establish a relationship with the vulnerable person to gain access to their home. Cuckooed addresses are commonly used to store or distribute drugs - but can also be used in people trafficking and modern slavery, supply or storage of illegal weapons, sex work, or as 'safe houses' for criminals themselves who are trying to avoid detection by the Police.

In addition to cuckooing, OCGs involved in County Lines also exploit vulnerable young people (frequently young men and boys) by "recruiting" them into County Lines activity, often with promises of fraternity and protection from others (including locally active USGs) as well as offering opportunities to make money. These exploited individuals are often used by criminals for very high-risk activity: such as street dealing of drugs, forceful recovery of debts from drug users, and disrupting the activity of competing OCGs and USGs.

Those involved in drug supply offences in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are disproportionately young and male compared to offenders overall; 9-out-of-10 of those suspected or charged with drugs supply offences are men; 6-out-of-10 are 20 to 40 years old, and 2-in-10 are male and under 20 years old. Females are statistically less likely to be involved in drug supply offences than in crime overall.

While policing operations have closed many County Lines within Staffordshire in recent years, a level of County Lines risk continues to exist in all Safety Partnership areas in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent. There are known on going risks around organised drug supply through County Lines as well as people trafficking and modern slavery offences, in addition to the wider threats around Criminal Exploitation of vulnerable persons.

At this point in time (October 2022) while there has been an impact on drugs offending locally, as the result of significant long-term targeted operations conducted by Staffordshire Police in partnership with neighbouring police forces, it is still considered that County Lines pose a substantial risk to individuals and a severe risk to communities.

Direction of travel: Long-term challenge with some increase **Public expectation:** Critical / National expectations

Local hotspots: (To be discussed with relevant Policing leads as required for Community Safety Planning)

At risk groups:

Criminal exploitation:

Young males (aged 10-19) in disadvantaged communities are at particularly high risk of being criminally exploited through organised crime and gang membership, and account for 2 in every 10 individuals suspected of or charged with drug supply offences. These young men are disproportionately likely to be linked to supply offences relating to Class B drugs (such as cannabis) and less likely to be linked to importation and cultivation offences.

'Cuckooing' risk:

Adults with existing drug or alcohol dependency, and adults and young adults with learning difficulties and/or mental health needs – particularly those who are living independently but who are socially isolated. There are significant levels of repeat drug possession offences in a number of wards across the force-area, and it is likely that many of the vulnerable individuals known to services in these areas for Class A drug use are at increased risk of cuckooing.

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Volume and potential harm: Small volume / Substantial individual harm / Severe community harm

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary: In addition to specific County Lines concerns, there are concerns about the wider impact of drugs and drug use in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent. This is an issue which particularly affects the largest metropolitan/urban parts of the force-area; such as the city of Stoke-on-Trent, as well as Burton-upon-Trent in East Staffordshire, but is a challenge which is by no means limited to just these two areas – with a footprint in all local Safety Partnership areas.

In recent years issues have emerged around the use of synthetic Class B drugs (previously commonly known as 'Legal Highs' – although now controlled drugs) and in particular 'Monkey Dust' - which is having some impact on Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and to a lesser extent Stafford.

There are well evidenced links between drug use and offending. As at 2021 around 38% of offenders within the probation service in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent had needs relating to drug use – increasing to 65% of those who had committed acquisitive offences (such as Burglary and Theft) and 85% of those convicted of Robbery offences.

Recent research² including interviews with those in prison custody in Staffordshire, saw individuals commenting on how adverse experiences in childhood and adolescence had often led to use of drugs and alcohol, which in turn resulted in criminality (often Theft), followed by contact with the criminal justice system, and later, periods of custody.

The current (2021-22) local rate of drugs-specific offences (possession and trafficking; 1.0 per 1,000 population) has fallen over the last two years, and is below the national level (3.0) and the level seen across similar force areas (2.3).

Staffordshire Police made 3,100 drug seizures in 2020-21; 79% of which were Class B (primarily Cannabis, 76% of all seizures) followed by Class A which accounted for 19% of seizures (primarily Cocaine, 10% of all; Heroin, 8%; and Crack, 5%). Class C drugs such as controlled steroids and benzodiazepines accounted for around 2% of all drug seizures. The rate of drug seizures per million population for Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent (2,723) is well below the rate for England & Wales (3,736) and slightly below the similar force area average (2,961).

During the same period (2019-20 to 2021-22) the local rate of drugs-related crime (offences where officers consider drugs to be a factor) has increased (from 1.1 to 2.0 per 1,000 residents). In 2021-22 around 1 in 50 crimes in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent was considered to be drug-related, with particular exceptions around;

- Crime where Mental Health is also considered a factor (just under 1 in 10 also flagged as drug-related)
- More serious violence with injury (1 in 20)
- Personal robbery (1 in 20)
- Weapons possession (1 in 25)
- Violence in public spaces (1 in 33)
- Public order offences (1 in 33)

Although slightly dated (2016-17) latest data suggests that while cannabis is the most prevalent drug in the force-area, there are just over 6,200 opiate and crack cocaine users in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent – with the highest concentration in the more densely populated area of Stoke-on-Trent.

As at 2021-22 there were over 5,300 adults in drug and alcohol treatment programmes locally, with around half (2,600) receiving treatment for opiate use. Around half of those in treatment programmes engage with treatment and leave in a planned way.

Deaths from drug misuse in Newcastle-under-Lyme are low in number (average of around 10 per year) and in line with the national and regional rates. They have seen very little upward or downward change over time.

Direction of travel: Long-term challenge

Public expectation: Critical / National expectations

Local hotspots: (To be discussed with relevant Policing leads as required for Community Safety Planning)

² Offending and Offender Needs 2021 – Office of the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue, Crime

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

At risk groups: Research with some of the prison population in Staffordshire suggests that young people who have experienced traumatic experiences in childhood or adolescence, but received limited or no support from agencies or known trusted adults, are vulnerable to using drugs and alcohol to attempt to address their mental health needs.

Fraud

Volume and potential harm: Moderate volume / Severe individual financial harm / Moderate community harm

CSPs with priority: (Cannock Chase), (East Staffordshire), Lichfield, (Newcastle-under-Lyme), South Staffordshire, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, (Tamworth), (Stoke-on-Trent)

Summary: In the 12 months to September 2022 the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) recorded 4,946 Fraud instances against individuals and businesses in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent – with total losses of £17million.

While this represents a decrease in volume on the previous year (1,000 less incidents) it represents an *increase* in losses – with around £0.7million more lost to Fraud than in the previous year. This suggests that while incidents have fallen, the level of loss per Fraud instance has increased. The split between businesses and individuals remains consistent with previous years, with 92% of incidents committed against individuals and 8% against businesses.

The rate of NFIB recorded *personal* fraud in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is 4.0 incidents per 1,000 population, which is slightly lower than the rate seen across England & Wales (5.3) and similar to that for the West Midlands region (4.4). Both locally and nationally Fraud remains more prevalent than residential Burglary.

NFIB reporting³ shows that average monthly Fraud reports have fallen below pre-pandemic levels, after seeing a spike during periods of lockdown – with an average of 378 reports per month (Oct '21 to Sept '22) compared to around 460 per month during the pandemic. There is concern that due to the present cost of living challenges and high levels of inflation, criminals will continue to target individuals using promises of rebates and refunds to encourage victims to part with personal and financial information, and Fraud levels will begin to increase further.

Fraud is often sophisticated, organised and technologically advanced. In Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, figures show that year-on-year around 70% of personal fraud has an online element. Fraud scams using internet banking and remote computer access, mean that criminals can defraud individuals and businesses of large sums of money very rapidly and from anywhere in the world with an internet connection. This is often also the case in incidents of 'Romance Fraud' – with criminals using chat functions in online games and social media to groom their victims online.

Consumer Fraud (including online shopping/auctions and dating/romance scams) is the most prevalent, accounting for 39% of all fraud offences with average losses of around £1,620 per incident – the greatest proportion of which are online shopping/auction fraud. However, within Consumer Fraud, locally dating scams and 'romance fraud' continue to present a significant risk; while volumes remain low (around 1-in-50 fraud cases) average levels of losses are amongst the highest of any type of fraud at around £10,100 per incident.

Those vulnerable to Fraud are also often vulnerable to 'door-step' crime, which may involve intimidating and aggressive behaviour or an element of befriending or grooming of the victim to facilitate offending or repeat victimisation. The average victim of doorstep crime is over 80 years old and lives alone. Locally, over the past 12 months, on average, one doorstep crime per week (including bogus traders) has been reported to Action Fraud.

Figure 1: NFIB: Demography and losses through personal fraud (12 months to Sept 2022)

	Count	Losses		Proportion	
		Total	Per case	of cohort	of all losses
Cyber-enabled	3,171	£ 8,500,000	£ 2,681	70%	59%
Non-cyber	1,372	£ 5,900,000	£ 4,300	30%	41%
Male	1,890	£ 7,000,000	£ 3,704	42%	49%
Female	2,101	£ 6,600,000	£ 3,141	46%	46%
Over 60s	1,224	£ 6,433,600	£ 5,256	27%	45%
Under 60s	3,256	£ 7,777,800	£ 2,389	73%	54%

Direction of travel: Reduction in volume. Increase in loss per incident.

Public expectation: Critical

³ NFIB – Fraud dashboard - <https://colp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/0334150e430449cf8ac917e347897d46>

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

At risk groups:

While older adults and those who are less skilled with technology are particularly vulnerable to Fraud and doorstep crime, Fraud can affect anyone. Increasingly young people are being targeted through social media for investment scams – usually relating to Cryptocurrencies.

Community Cohesion⁴ & Tackling Extremism

Community Cohesion (including Hate Crime)

Volume and harm: Moderate volume / Substantial individual harm / Moderate community harm

CSPs with priority: (Cannock Chase), East Staffordshire, (Lichfield), Newcastle-under-Lyme, (South Staffordshire), (Stafford), (Staffordshire Moorlands), Stoke-on-Trent, (Tamworth)

Summary:

Nationally, levels of Hate Crime have been increasing steadily since the year of the EU referendum/Brexit (2016-17) and this has also been observed to some extent locally.

In 2021-22 there were 190 incidents of Hate Crime which took place in Newcastle-under-Lyme, equivalent to a rate of 1.5 per 1,000 population. This is similar to the rate seen across the force area (1.6). A little over 2% of recorded crime in the local area is flagged for Hate being a factor, which is equivalent to around 1-in-50 crimes being hate-related.

Local Hate Crime remains dominated by offences relating to race; 56% of all Hate Crime. Local LGBTQ+ Hate offences accounted for 19% of Hate Crime in 2021-22, offences on the grounds of religion accounted for 18% of local hate crime, and those relating to disability accounted for 6% of offences.

While hate offences on the grounds of disability have remained consistent in recent years, offences based on sexual orientation and those against transgender persons have continued to steadily increase – although it is not possible to state whether this is the result of an increase in the volume of incidents, through increased levels of reporting to police when incidents occur – or a combination of the two.

In Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, the areas which tend to experience the highest levels of Hate Crime tend to be those with the highest levels of diversity within communities (notably Stoke-on-Trent and East Staffordshire). However, all local Safety Partnership areas experienced over 100 incidents of Hate Crime each in 2021-22.

The Covid-19 pandemic also had an effect on Community Cohesion; while the pandemic strengthened many communities within Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, with people providing support to those in their local area, it has also exacerbated and highlighted issues within a small number of more fragmented communities – with local outbreaks and compliance with government guidance proving to be a source of friction for some.

The cost of Covid-19 to society and state has been significant. Opportunities for social mixing, one of the most powerful forms of reducing prejudice and promoting empathy, were severely limited throughout 2020 and 2021.

As the full impact of the pandemic has continued to unfold, and the current 'Cost of Living' challenges have emerged, government decision-making has the potential to affect social and political trust, which can be exploited by extremist groups.

Direction of travel: Ongoing concern

Public interest: Very high

At risk groups: Hate Crime offenders are predominantly young men and more likely to be under 18 than offenders overall. Female Hate Crimes offenders tend to be in the 30-39 age group. Victims are predominantly males aged over 18, and particularly those aged 30-39. Although most victims are male, there are more female victims than female offenders. Those with Asian or Black ethnicity are disproportionately likely to be victims of Hate Crime.

⁴ As per the Local Government Association (LGA) definition of cohesive community as one where; There is common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities; The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued; Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and, Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**
Community Cohesion & Tackling Extremism
Extremism and Radicalisation

Volume and harm: Very small volume / Catastrophic individual harm / Catastrophic community harm

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary:

The current (November 2022) threat to the UK from terrorism is **Substantial**, which means that Counter Terrorism and Security Services consider that an attack in the UK is **likely**.

While the current threat level is lower than that reported at the same time last year (Severe, November 2021), threat levels can change at any time as different information becomes available.

There have been several Terror Acts carried out in the UK in recent years, including the attack at Fishmonger's Hall / London Bridge in 2019, and in 2021 the murder of MP Sir David Amess, as well as the bombing at Liverpool Women's Hospital. Additionally, there have been a considerable number of high-risk terror plots which have been foiled by Security Services and Police; including planned attacks on LGBTQ+ parades and an attempt to kill (then Prime Minister) Theresa May.

While many high-profile terror incidents, arrests, and cases have been linked to Islamist Extremism, there have also been notable incidents linked with Right Wing Extremism and Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism; including an attack on worshippers outside Finsbury Park Mosque in 2017 and multiple individuals being sentenced between 2017 and 2021 for membership of proscribed terrorist neo-Nazi groups – including a number residing in the West Midlands.

Both Islamist Extremism and Right-Wing Extremism are a risk in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and as a result, although very low in number, there are genuine risks around individuals becoming radicalised to these ideologies.

However, there are also protective factors which can reduce divert persons vulnerable to radicalisation away from extremist groups and terrorist activity, most notably:

- Understanding and realising the negative connotations of being part of certain groups.
- Good and effective networks of support.
- Effective support and treatment for mental and physical health needs.
- Good and effective support and interest from parents/guardians.

Notably, these potential protective factors frequently apply to anyone who is vulnerable to radicalisations, regardless of the specific ideologies they may be radicalised towards.

Comparison to previous assessment:

- Increasing evidence of Extreme Right-Wing radicalisation.
- Risk and concerns around Al-Qaeda/Islamic State (ISIL) inspired extremism remain high.
- Some increases in overt presence of white nationalist groups locally and regionally (via graffiti and stickering).
- Some increases in community tensions in the wider West Midlands region.

Local hotspots: (Further information available as appropriate via Staffordshire Police and West Midlands CTU)

Direction of travel: Long-term concern

Public expectation: Critical / National expectations

At risk groups: Based on recent Prevent referrals, those at greatest risk of being radicalised remain younger males (aged under 18 years) although a growing number are slightly older age groups, including those aged 30 and over. Around 3 in 50 of those referred through Prevent in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent were female.

Online radicalisation of younger people (particularly young men) remains a credible risk, with groups both inside and outside the UK able to place extremist materials and propaganda online, and able to make contact with and connect vulnerable individuals who may be at risk of being radicalised – however once radicalised, many individuals display extremist behaviour in physical spaces, and not solely online.

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED
Public Place Violence (PPV) and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Volume and potential harm:

Moderate to Very High volume / Moderate to Substantial individual harm / Substantial to Severe community harm

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary:

Historically, Newcastle Town has seen one of the highest rates of Public-Place Violent (PPV) offences in the force area (peak of 70.2 incidents per 1,000 population in 2018-19, compared to a force rate of 9.6 per 1,000 population). The Town ward has also experienced high levels of Rowdy and Inconsiderate Behaviour related ASB.

Since the end of social distancing restrictions, crime in public spaces has increased, with Newcastle Town seeing a rate of Violent crime (61.6) which is amongst the highest in the force area as well as a very high rate of ASB (55.1).

While ASB in Newcastle-under-Lyme is dominated by instances of Rowdy & Inconsiderate Behaviour (64%) and Neighbour Disputes (19%) the area sees more Vehicle-related ASB (8% of all ASB) than the force average (6%). The rate of Neighbour Disputes (6.8) in Newcastle West remains one of the highest in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Alcohol-related crime in Newcastle-under-Lyme is more prevalent than across the force-area (6.0 crimes per 1,000 population, compared to 4.9 force-wide) with these largely centring around Newcastle Town, where the rate (16.0) is more than three-times higher than the force average.

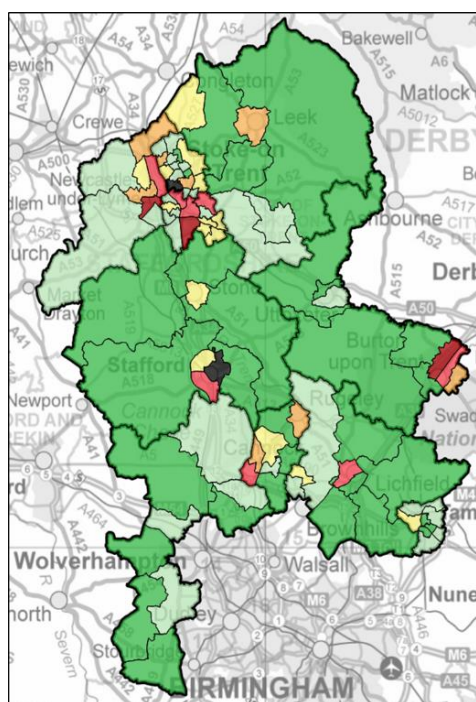
Violent offences remain disproportionately alcohol-related; while 8% of all local crime is flagged with alcohol as a factor, this increases to 15% of violent crime and 24% of public place violent crime. The proportion of PPV where alcohol is recorded as a factor is above the force-wide level (16%) and remains the highest in the force-area.

While alcohol-related daytime or evening PPV offences are an even mix of public order, violence without injury and violence with injury; alcohol-related late-night PPV is heavily dominated by violent offences resulting in injury.

Knife Crime is still a concern in the local area. While the rate of Knife Crime in the Safety Partnership area (0.7 per 1,000 population) is the same as the force-wide rate, this equates to around 95 incidents in the last financial year.

As with crime overall, ASB tends to disproportionately affect the most deprived and disadvantaged communities, and town and city centres. Previous risk assessment concludes that repeat victims of ASB tend to experience the same levels of psychological harm as victims of less-serious violent crime.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Staffordshire Police



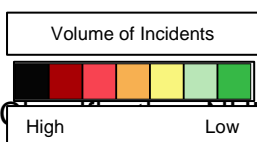
Comparison to Force: Overall rate similar / One ward very high

Direction of travel: Persistent challenge

Public expectation: Substantial

Local hotspots: Newcastle Town

At risk groups: Offenders are predominantly young men (aged 18-29), although there are female offenders, mainly aged under 39 years. Victims are predominantly female (65%) and are usually within the same 10-year age grouping as the offender. Public place violence is polarised towards town centres and commercial areas.



NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

Vulnerable Persons

Alcohol

Volume and potential harm: Moderate volume / Moderate individual and community harm

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary: Alcohol is often present as a factor in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Domestic Abuse, Violent Crime, and Public-Place offences. Those who are dependent on alcohol are also a particularly vulnerable group irrespective of whether they are victims of crime, offenders, or neither; with poorer-than-average health outcomes, limited social and support networks, and vulnerability to being criminally exploited (particularly through activity such as Cuckooing).

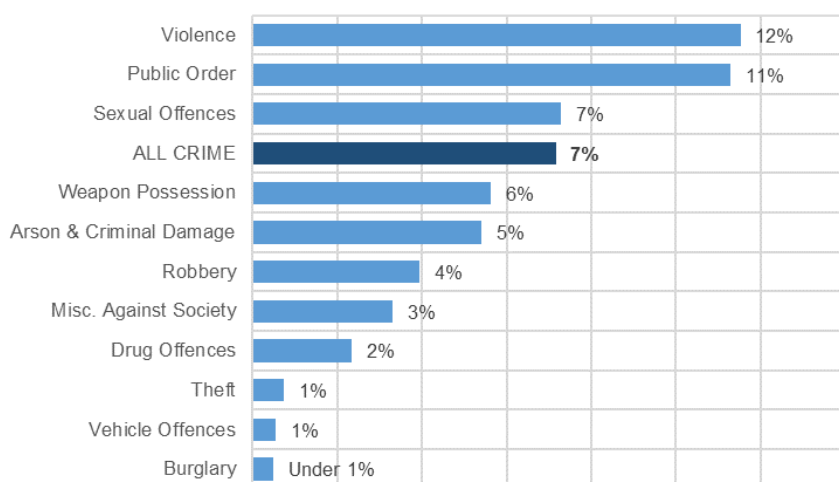
Alcohol remains a local health concern; latest public health data⁵ shows a consistent picture across much of the force area, with no CSP areas showing significant change across key alcohol-related public health indicators. The level of alcohol-specific deaths are similar to national levels across eight CSP areas and significantly higher than the national level in one (Stoke-on-Trent). Alcohol-related deaths amongst females are a particular concern, with three CSP areas (Cannock Chase, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent) having seen rates significantly above national levels.

The rate of alcohol-related offending in the local area (6.0 per 1,000 population) is above the force average (4.9) as is the proportion of local crime flagged for alcohol as a factor (10% in Newcastle-under-Lyme, 7% force-wide).

Most offenders in alcohol-related crime are male and aged under 40 and often aged 18-29 years. While offenders are more likely to be male than female, victims are just as likely to be either gender. The only exception is amongst those who are under 18 years of age, where victims are slightly more likely to be female.

Public-Place Violent (PPV) offences remain twice as likely to be alcohol-related as offending overall. In the last year (2021-22) around 16% of all PPV offences were flagged as alcohol-related, compared to 7% of crime overall. Serious Violent offences are broadly as likely to have alcohol as a factor as Violent offences overall (10% of SV, and 12% of Violent crime are considered to be alcohol-related).

Proportion of offences with alcohol as a factor, Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent (2021-22)



Offending with alcohol as a factor

Force rate (per 1,000 people): 4.9

Local rate (per 1,000 people): 6.0

Proportion of offences flagged as alcohol being an aggravating factor:

All offences: 10% alcohol a factor

PPV offences: 16% alcohol a factor

Direction of travel: Persistent concern

Public expectation: Moderate

Local hotspots:

Alcohol-related crime is at its most prevalent in large town and city centres – with all wards with rates significantly above force-average located in town and city centre areas.

At risk groups:

Clinical and public health data suggest that men and women aged 40 to 65 are most likely to require hospital treatment as a result of alcohol dependency – to have arrived at this stage it is likely that many will have been alcohol-dependent for a considerable time prior. Alcohol-related offenders tend to be male and predominantly aged under 40 years (mainly 18 to 29) and primarily live in areas with high levels of deprivation and disadvantage (areas in the top 20% most deprived nationally)

⁵ Public Health England (PHE) Health Outcomes Data – Public Health Outcomes Framework

Vulnerable Persons

Mental Health

Volume and potential harm: Small volume / Moderate to severe individual harm / Low community harm

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary: Mental Health is a cross-cutting theme, with links to a range of other vulnerabilities. Many with mental health needs appear in other high-risk cohorts; including those with drug and/or alcohol challenges, those who are socially isolated and living in poor quality housing, as well as young people and adults at risk of criminal exploitation.

Vulnerable people, including those experiencing mental health issues, are often at greater risk of being a victim of crime - targeted by criminals who exploit vulnerabilities and take advantage through financial or criminal exploitation.

There is reliable evidence that economic recessions and factors such as unemployment, income decline, and unmanageable debts are connected with poor mental wellbeing, increased rates of common mental disorders, substance-related disorders, and suicidal behaviours. It should be anticipated that, should the Bank of England’s recession predictions be correct, such challenges are highly likely to increase locally over the coming 12-24 months.

Mental Health was considered to be a factor in around 5% of all crime in the local area, which is similar to the proportion seen across the force area overall (4%).

GP practice-level data, shows that the level of recorded diagnoses of depression in the force-area are above the national level (14.3% of those aged 18 and over, compared to 12.3% nationally) and both national and local levels of depression diagnoses have increased by around a sixth (+16%) in the last financial year. The rate of detentions under the Mental Health Act⁶ have increased locally from 81.3 to 88.0 per 100,000; an increase of around 8% overall.

Local⁷ and national⁸ surveys highlighted that more than two-thirds of people felt that the pandemic had a negative impact on their life, with many feeling stressed and anxious. Further analysis⁹ found that, taking account of pre-pandemic trajectories, mental health had worsened substantially (by 8.1% on average) as a result of the pandemic.

As well as those with existing mental health conditions being at risk of experiencing crime, experiencing crime itself also exacerbates and can create considerable mental health challenges for individuals. Many types of crime are judged to pose a substantial or severe risk of psychological harm to individuals; in particular, but not limited to; domestic abuse, serious violent and sexual offences, stalking and harassment, hate crimes, and criminal exploitation.

Local research has shown that individuals who have experienced crime first-hand as either a victim or a witness, are likely to score much lower than average in terms of their overall levels of wellbeing, anxiety and feelings of safety.

Latest Public Health England (PHE) estimates for Newcastle-under-Lyme suggest that around 9.5% of children aged 5 to 16 years in the area are likely to have a common mental health disorder¹⁰. This is similar to the national level. Similar estimates from PHE suggest that the prevalence of such disorders amongst adults (aged 16 and over) and older adults (aged 65+) are also similar to national levels.

Estimated prevalence of common mental disorders (Public Health England)

Group	Geography	Percentage of population
Children (age 5-16)	England	9.2
	Newcastle-under-Lyme	9.5
Adults (age 16+)	England	16.9
	Newcastle-under-Lyme	16.6
Older adults (age 65+)	England	10.2
	Newcastle-under-Lyme	10.4

⁶ NHS Digital - Recorded uses of the Mental Health Act: crude rates per 100,000 population

⁷ Staffordshire County Council – Residents Survey

⁸ Office of National Statistics (ONS) - Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain

⁹ Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) - The mental health effects of the [first] lockdown and social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK

¹⁰ Including, but not limited to; Anxiety, Depression, Eating Disorders, Schizophrenia, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Hyperactivity Disorders, Phobias and Paranoia.

Vulnerable Persons

Contextual Safeguarding

Volume and potential harm: Moderate volumes / Moderate to Severe individual and community harm

CSPs with priority: Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, (South Staffordshire), (Staffordshire Moorlands), (Stafford), Stoke-on-Trent, Tamworth

Summary: Levels of safeguarding needs vary significantly across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent; however, all Safety Partnership areas are home to vulnerable people who are in need of safeguarding from potential harm, and all areas have some communities with elevated safeguarding need.

Although the topic of safeguarding is often raised in relation to vulnerable children and young people, it is important to remember that there are vulnerable adults who are also in need of safeguarding and support.

As at the 31st March 2022 there were just over 1,050 children in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent who were subject to Child Protection Plans (primarily as a result of Neglect, followed by Emotional Abuse) and just over 2,300 children who were in the care of the Local Authority (Looked After).

In the past 12 months (to October 2022) across the force area there were over 3,080 missing person episodes involving under 18 year olds. This was an increase of a fifth (+21%) over the previous 12 months with 3-in-5 (60%) flagged as high risk. Missing person episodes have seen an increase in almost all Safety Partnership areas, with increases in Newcastle-under-Lyme being in line with those seen across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent overall.

While safeguarding within the family home is important, as young people move into adolescence, they spend increasing amounts of time socialising independently of their families. During this time the nature of young people's schools and neighbourhoods, and the relationships that they form in these settings, inform the extent to which they encounter safeguarding risks in settings outside their families. There are parts of the force-area where this is a specific concern and there are risks around criminal exploitation, as well as County Lines, gangs, and wider organised crime.

Equally some of these same young people are also potentially vulnerable to radicalisation. Many of those who are referred into services due to concerns about extremist views are school age and older teenagers.

Young people who are Looked After Children (LAC) and who have been placed in care, or who attend pupil referral units (PRUs) are at particularly increased risk of criminal exploitation and gang involvement due to their level of vulnerability and often unstable and limited social networks and networks of support. Young people groomed into criminal activity are often used for high-risk activities, increasingly linked to County Lines drug supply activity, such as street dealing and transporting drugs, and carrying out violent offences against rival organised crime groups/gangs.

The level of children within the care system in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is of some concern due to considerable links (evidenced in Prison Reform Trust research as well Department for Education data) between experience of the care system and the likelihood of contact with the criminal justice system. These are a particularly vulnerable cohort who often require well-coordinated multi-agency support.

Additionally, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent is both home and 'corporate parent' to a number of highly vulnerable unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), many of whom have arrived from areas of conflict, with no networks of support and completely alone. While numbers of UASC have increased slightly at a national level, numbers have remained largely unchanged locally over the past three years (2020, 2021, 2022)

Direction of travel: On-going concern in specific parts of the locality

At risk groups:

Criminal exploitation: Young people aged 10 to 19 years old in disadvantaged communities, as well as those within the care system and those accessing alternative education provision, are at increased risk of all types of criminal exploitation. Those exploited through Organised/Gang Crime and County Lines are very often young men and boys.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) primarily affects females aged 10-14 years, although there are older victims and male victims. CSE offences are more likely to have an online element compared to offending overall.

There are criminal exploitation risks amongst vulnerable adults, particularly relating to the practice of cuckooing. Adults who are vulnerable as a result of alcohol and substance misuse challenges, social isolation, disability and learning difficulties, should be considered to be particularly vulnerable.

Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**

Children's safeguarding: Children (birth to 17) living in communities with higher levels of deprivation, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol use..

Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**

Additional Challenges for Consideration

Repeat and Persistent Offending

Volume and potential harm: High volume / Moderate individual harm / Substantial community harm

CSPs with consideration: All Partnership Areas

Summary:

Repeat and persistent offenders are consistently disproportionately responsible for crime in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, with the minority of offenders responsible for the majority of offences.

Previous local research has shown that 45% of the 22,490 offenders living in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent were considered repeat or persistent – and were responsible for 71% of all recorded crime where an offender was identified. Young offenders (those under the age of 18) were not more likely to be repeat offenders and did not commit significantly more offences than known offenders who were aged 18 and over.

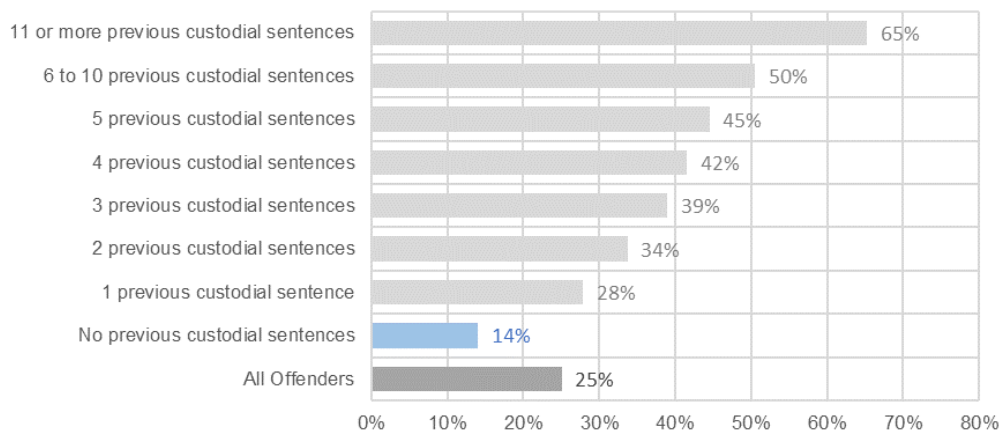
Prior to the pandemic, all major types of crime saw 50% of incidents or more committed by repeat and persistent offenders – and six¹¹ out of eleven major crime types saw three-quarters (75%) or more committed by repeat offenders – including Weapons Offences. Sexual offences, however, were significantly less likely to be committed by repeat or persistent offenders compared to other major types of crime.

Offenders with known drug offences or offences where drugs were considered a factor in their recent offending history, are substantially more likely to be repeat and persistent offenders. Around 2-out-of-3 (66%) of those flagged for drug-related offending in the area were repeat and persistent offenders, compared to 43% of those with no recent drug-related offending.

Local assessment of Offender Needs (2022) found that many of those with repeat periods in custody have drug and alcohol challenges. Many of these had histories of adverse childhood experiences and trauma but no networks of support when these occurred – and later found themselves using drugs or alcohol to attempt to address mental health needs – which later resulted in acquisitive crime (and custodies) in order to sustain addiction and dependency.

Research has found that offenders with unmet rehabilitation needs and unmet needs around accommodation on release from custody are highly likely to reoffend.

Figure 2: Reoffending by previous custodial sentences (Ministry of Justice, 2019-20)



Offenders who have served two or more custodial sentences are also highly likely to repeatedly reoffend and re-enter custody. Generally, the more often an offender enters and leaves custody, the more likely they are to reoffend and receive further custodial sentences – and with each further custody, the risk of reoffending increases.

Force proportion: 45% of repeat offenders commit 71% of recorded crime

Public expectation: Substantial

At risk groups: Offenders with previous drug-related offending are particularly likely to repeatedly offend – primarily committing acquisitive offences such as Shoplifting and Burglary.

¹¹ Arson & Criminal Damage, Burglary, Possession of a Weapon, Robbery, Theft, Vehicle Offences.

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED
Modern Slavery

Volume and potential harm:

Small volume / Severe individual harm / Substantial community harm

CSPs with priority:

East Staffordshire, (Newcastle-under-Lyme), Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent

Summary:

Modern Slavery refers to the offences of human trafficking, slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour. This can then be considered as five sub-threats: sexual exploitation of adults; trafficking of adults into conditions of labour exploitation; trafficking of adults into conditions of criminal exploitation; trafficking of minors into conditions of sexual, criminal or labour exploitation; and other forms of exploitation¹².

The scale and visibility of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent has continued to increase in recent years. In the last year (2021-22) there were just over 100 recorded Modern Slavery offences in the local area – compared to an average of 78 per year in the years pre-pandemic. Offences have been recorded in every local Safety Partnership area. As Modern Slavery offences are largely hidden, it is still considered that recorded increases represent improved detection of offences, rather than an increase in the number of offences taking place.

Local Modern Slavery concerns continue to comprise of offences relating to Forced or Compulsory Labour and Holding Persons in Slavery or Servitude, and to a lesser extent Human Trafficking and Facilitation of Travel with a view to Exploitation. In addition to recorded and prosecuted criminal offences, there have been a number of incidents which have been flagged for potential Modern Slavery concerns and remain under further investigation.

Known victims and perpetrators of Modern Slavery offences in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are predominantly White British, although there have been increases in cases with victims who are Albanian. There remain small numbers of Romanian, Slovakian and Vietnamese victims and perpetrators. Perpetrators often target those with the same geographic origin – and as such the ethnicity of both victim and perpetrator are usually the same.

British victims tend to be those who have fallen on difficult times, often with alcohol or substance misuse challenges, making them vulnerable to promises of well-paid work complete with accommodation. Non-British victims are often brought into the UK from areas of conflict and/or economic hardship, with the promise of a new life, usually paying significant sums of money for transportation.

Frequently traffickers will add debt on to the money already paid and expect those being illegally trafficked to either pay additional money or work for the traffickers until the additional 'debt' has been paid off – in some instances this is linked to County Lines drug supply, with victims expected to manage cannabis farms/cultivations.

Although numbers are low, the level of OCG activity related to Human Trafficking (related to Modern Slavery and Exploitation) and Organised Immigration Offending is of some concern in limited parts of the force-area – with criminals involved in these offences also often involved in the smuggling of other commodities and money laundering.

Direction of travel: Visibility and detection of offences improving

Public expectation: Substantial

Local hotspots and at risk groups:

To be discussed with relevant leads at Staffordshire Police as required for Community Safety Planning

¹² NCA – National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2018

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED
Fire and Rescue

Volume and potential harm: High volume / Varied levels of individual and community harm

CSPs with consideration: All Partnership Areas

Summary:

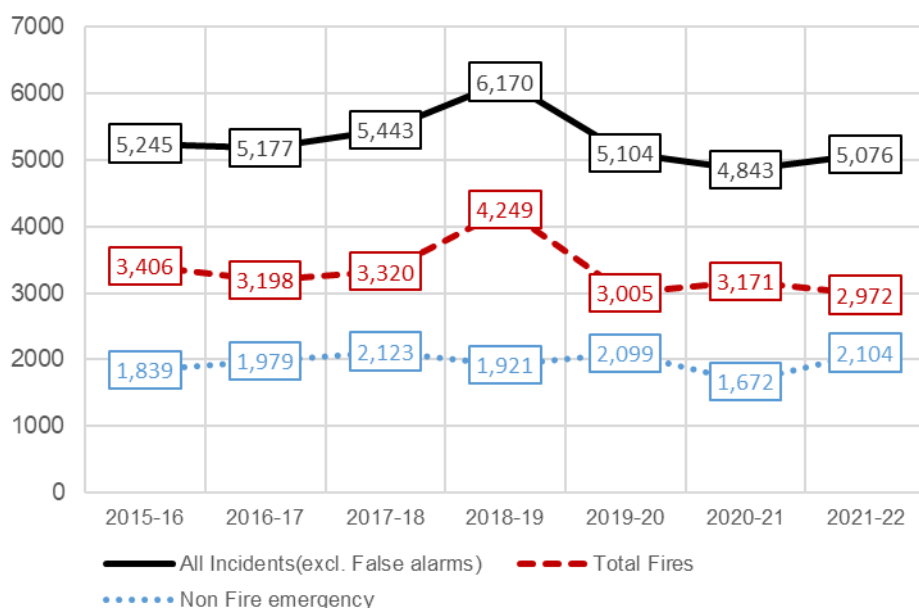
Nationally, Fire and Rescue Service's (FARS) incidents in 2021-22 (577,104) have increased from 2020-21 (518,270) as well as being the highest since 2011-12 (606,941).

This increase can be attributed to non-fire emergencies, with more requests to assist other agencies. Incident numbers during 2020-21, effected by lockdowns during the pandemic, showed a decrease, particularly in the level of false alarms and non-fire emergencies of which road traffic collisions had a significant decrease.

The national increase in 2021-22 compared to 2011-12, is mainly due increase in Non-fire emergencies, such as assisting other agencies, although, incident numbers are much lower than 20 years ago (2001-02; 990,793). While incident demand has decreased over time, Fire and Rescue Service's continued focus on prevention work has been sustained. During 2021-22, 698,648 home fire safety visits were conducted across England.

In 2020-21, Staffordshire had followed the national trend with a lower-level demand again effected by fewer non-fire emergencies. Overall demand in 2021-22 has remained consistent with previous years, with no significant increase in non-emergency incidents as seen nationally. Both nationally and locally, climate change continues to be a significant risk, with likely increases in wildfire and flood-related incidents.

Fire and Rescue Incidents (Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 2015-16 to 2021-22)



To reduce the risk of fire, the service has continued to target older persons and people living alone through its prevention activities. Both groups are more likely to be injured or killed in a fire if it were to occur. Other significant causes of fire continue to be cooking and faulty electrical appliances which drive are large proportion of incidents, however smoking materials cause fewer fires, but have disproportionally higher numbers of casualties. Mental and physical health also have an impact on an individual's ability to escape from a fire.

With the impacts of the Cost-of-Living Crisis, the risk of fire to individuals and households is likely to increase, particularly in areas with higher deprivation. National research and modelling, through the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC), has identified which factors are most closely linked to the likelihood and consequence of a fire. Factors include, poor health, unemployment, overcrowded households, social renters, households with poor energy ratings, and English, not the first language.

The service continues to have a strong focus on the safety and operational response to tall buildings following the Grenfell Tower fire. As well as the service's continued emphasis on fire safety audits, building safety compliance and the promotion and fitting of sprinkler systems, from January 2023, new regulations make it a requirement in law for responsible persons of high-rise blocks of flats to provide information to Fire and Rescue Services to assist them to plan and, if needed, provide an effective operational response.

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED
Safer Roads

Volume and potential harm: Moderate volume / Moderate to substantial individual harm / Moderate community harm

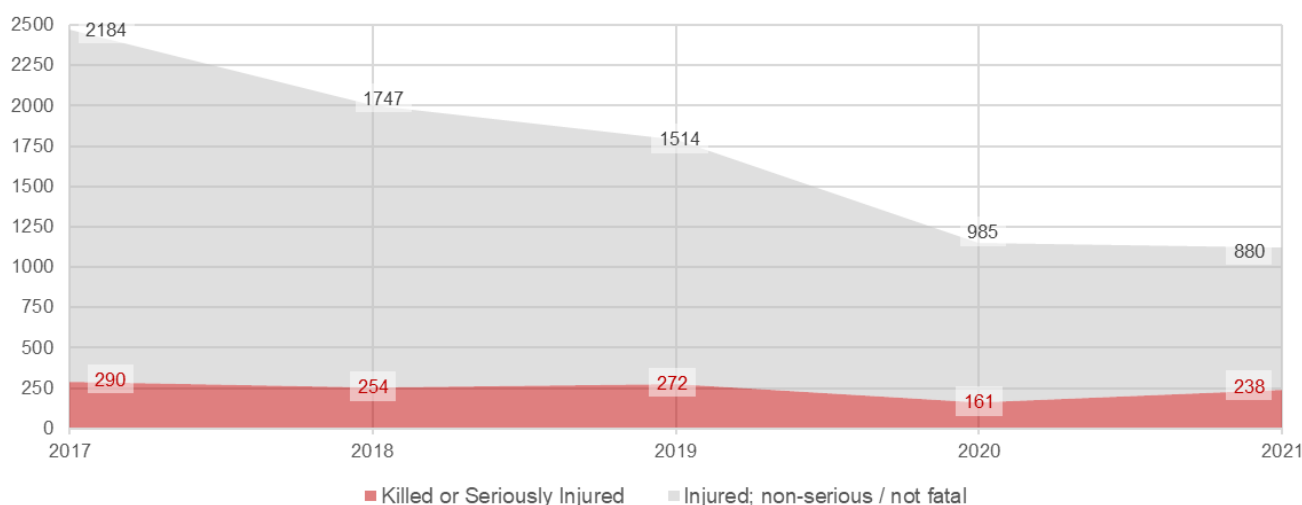
CSPs with consideration: All Partnership Areas

Summary: There have been reductions in overall casualties on roads in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent over the past five years. While there were a total of 2,474 casualties on local roads in 2017 - these have fallen consistently year on year (including pre-Covid) with 1,118 casualties recorded in 2021 – equivalent to a 55% reduction.

However, while casualties have reduced overall – the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) has remained fairly constant and has seen more modest reductions (-18%). The result is that while the overall number of casualties have reduced, the proportion which are KSI has increased – from 13% of casualties in 2017 to 21% in 2021.

Over the past five years, on average, five people per week were killed or seriously injured on local roads.

Figure 3: Number of road user casualties, Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent (2017 to 2021)



While most casualties on local roads are not serious or fatal (79%) there are some road users which are at far greater risk than others of being KSI in a collision than others.

Between 2017 and 2021, for every 10 people who were KSI on roads in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent:

- 4 were in cars (including taxis and minibuses)
- 2 were on motorcycles
- 2 were pedestrians
- 1 was on a pedal cycle
- 1 was in a van / HGV / bus or other vehicle

Motorcyclists are by far the highest risk road user group in terms of the proportion of injuries which are serious or fatal, followed by pedestrians. Between 2017 and 2021 on average one motorcyclist and one pedestrian per week were killed or serious injured in the local area. Although this rate (1 per week) is the same for both road users, while 35% of pedestrians who are injured in collisions are KSI - this increases to 48% amongst motorcyclists.

Road Safety also remains a considerable public concern. While evidence is only anecdotal at this time, there are many comments nationally and from local communities that since the periods of limited road use during lockdowns, post-lockdown driving has become more dangerous, as a result of speeding and more erratic driving habits.

Direction of travel: Reduction in overall casualties. Limited change in KSI (with exception of lockdown periods).

Public expectation: Substantial

At risk groups: Motorcyclists, pedestrians, and those on pedal cycles are particularly vulnerable road users and the most likely to be seriously injured or killed when road collisions take place.

While in the past rural roads have seen a greater proportion of road casualties result in persons being killed or serious injured, in recent data the proportion of casualties KSI on rural roads (21%) has been consistent with the proportion seen on urban roads (also 21%) and the overall rate for the area (21%).

Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**

Business Crime

The total price tag of burglary, shoplifting, robbery, criminal damage, theft and other offences against businesses in Staffordshire is estimated at over £7,300 per hour. Fraud alone costs companies £9.1 billion nationally a year. Over a third (39%) of businesses do not report crime to police.

In the 12 months to October 2022, there were around 410 instances of Fraud recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) affecting organisations in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, with total losses of around £2.9million. Approximately 8% of Fraud in the local area reported to NFIB was committed against businesses.

Unlike fraud committed against individuals, which has shown a local increase over the past two years, fraud committed against businesses in Staffordshire has reduced significantly compared to the previous year – with a large reduction in both incidents (-150; -27%) and in losses (-£800,000; -22%).

Local research conducted on behalf of the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office has highlighted that many small businesses locally are particularly concerned about Fraud and Online crime, and this acts as a barrier to their development of online services.

Staffordshire has a high proportion of small and micro businesses, many of which do not have the same resilience as larger national and multi-national businesses. As a result, smaller businesses risk being significantly harmed and disrupted by experiences of crime. Business crime affects a broad range of businesses in Staffordshire; from incidents of criminal damage and arson, to large businesses who are victims of fraud and cyber-crime, and farms who are victims of machinery and thefts of 'off road' vehicles used in farming and agriculture.

On a national scale there have been significant Cyber-Crime offences committed against large businesses, particularly linked to "Ransom-ware" based extortion, which still present a significant risk to businesses, particularly those who rely on less up-to-date information technology infrastructure and equipment. Businesses in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent experienced a number of cyber-crime incidents in the last 12 months; including hacking of company emails and Malware attacks.

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Quality of Life and Wider Determinants

Across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, not everyone experiences the same quality of life; there are several communities which face considerable disadvantage and deprivation, as well as pockets of affluence and advantage. There are a range of factors which affect individual quality of life, future life chances, and overall vulnerability.

Factors of most concern across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent are deprivation, economic inactivity and financial stress, crime and ill-health related to alcohol and substance dependence/misuse, social isolation, as well as children and young people and vulnerable adults in need of safeguarding against abuse and criminal exploitation.

Mental health was a growing concern throughout the pandemic. Multiple pieces of national and international research evidenced a worsening picture in terms of mental health across most of society as a result of Covid-19 and the measures that governments have been compelled to implement.

There is a strong evidence-base¹³ which concludes that economic recessions and factors such as unemployment, income decline, and unmanageable debts are associated with poor mental wellbeing, increased rates of common mental disorders, substance-related disorders, and suicidal behaviours. It should be anticipated that, should recession predictions be correct, such challenges are highly likely to increase locally over the coming 12-24 months.

Rates of Child Protection Plans (CPP) are a long-standing concern in Kidsgrove and Chesterton, with rates of Looked-after Children (LAC) remaining a particular concern in Kidsgrove and Holditch – all of which see rates which are above the levels observed for Newcastle-under-Lyme overall.

Healthy weights and lifestyles are a challenge across the partnership area; around 69% of all adults are either overweight or obese (as at 2020-21) compared to 64% nationally. At school reception age, around 27% of children are overweight or obese (as at 2021-22) compared to 22% across England.

School attainment in the area has been below the national average at KeyStage 4 (previously GCSEs, now Attainment 8) for some time – and while in the previous year (2019-20), average Attainment 8 scores were back in line with the national average, in latest exams (2020-21) the dropped back below the national level.

The Claimant Count for universal credit in Newcastle increased sharply at the start of the first lockdown – with similar increases seen nationally and force-wide. However the current rate (2.9% of working age adults, November 2022) is below the national level (3.6%) and only slightly above the level seen pre-pandemic locally (2.4%).

Alcohol is a long-term concern, with hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions previously above national levels, with rates of alcohol-specific deaths amongst women significantly higher than the national average.

Although in line with the national average, Newcastle-under-Lyme has a high proportion of over 65s who are believed to be living alone; 32% compared to a force-wide average of around 29%. This is a concern from a crime prevention perspective due to levels of Fraud and Burglary, which tend to target older adults in more isolated areas. It is also a concern in terms of the impact of isolation on mental health and potential numbers of older adults who may be at risk of fuel poverty.

Public Confidence & Feeling the Difference

It should be noted, that in 2019, the decision was made to redevelop the approach to a Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent public confidence residents' survey. As such the Feeling the Difference survey ceased.

The final wave of the Feeling the Difference surveys were completed in late 2018 with a new approach to surveys in development. However, at this present time a longitudinal replacement for Feeling the Difference has not been implemented.

The previous survey was conducted on a 'doorstep' basis and face-to-face, something which was not possible during the pandemic. This is not solely a local challenge; surveys nationally were affected by the pandemic, including those conducted by the Office for National Statistics such as the Crime Survey for England & Wales.

Findings from relevant public perception surveys will be added into future refreshes as relevant.

¹³ Frاسquilho, D., Matos, M., Salonna, F. et al. Mental health outcomes in times of economic recession: a systematic literature review. BMC Public Health 16, 115 (2015).

Appendices

Appendix A: Overall recommendations

Ensure that partnerships maintain links with Staffordshire Police, through the Knowledge Hub and local Policing Commanders, in order to identify emerging risks and priorities in 'real time' as they occur throughout the year – including making use of available Business Intelligence resources such as the Staffordshire Police Knowledge Hub BRAIN Gateway – as well as making use of relevant emerging risk assessment and strategic documents.

Partnerships should engage with Police Thematic Leads for each of their identified areas of priority in order to engage with and influence the Police response to priority challenges.

Ensure that partnerships remain engaged with relevant Needs and Risk Assessments developed through the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office, through Local Authorities, and in other Safety Partnership areas, so that emerging learning and recommendations can be reflected in ongoing partnership strategy and delivery.

Where services have been commissioned centrally, Safety Partnership areas and services should engage with one-another in order to share knowledge and expertise, to ensure that delivery is appropriately meeting local demand, and compliments any existing delivery and services.

Safety Partnerships should continue to share best practice with one another and explore and develop opportunities for joint working – particularly where challenges exist in multiple partnership areas or cross borders.

The full partnership should explore approaches which will allow young people to anonymously report concerns around crime, radicalisation or extremist behaviour, and criminal exploitation - which can then be escalated through mechanisms such as Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) or similar. In particular, but not limited to, giving young people an opportunity to communicate concerns that they may have about;

- Potential criminal exploitation of themselves or others (incl. gang-related activity/recruitment)
- Knowledge of weapons possession or 'stashing'¹⁴ amongst their peers
- Drug or alcohol misuse (their own, or that of others)
- Potential radicalisation or extremism, or other concerning hate-related behaviour
- Knowledge of other criminal behaviour in the community which is a cause for concern

Following the discontinuation of the 'Feeling the Difference' survey which measured public confidence and perceptions, there is a need for partnerships, and possibly the wider pan-Staffordshire partnership to explore the most effective way that this can be replaced – so that Safety Partnerships have a consistent method of gauging what is most important to their communities and individual's perceptions and experiences of community safety in their area.

While budget constraints have made the commissioning and delivery of primary research within communities more challenging, there remains a need to be able to hear and consider the public voice in a broad sense.

¹⁴ Stashing refers to the practice of hiding knives and other weapons in public places, such as parks or undergrowth, so that they are available for individuals to use in violent offences – without the additional risk of being in possession of the weapon.

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Appendix B: Specific recommendations for key priorities

While the analysis behind report has considered all potential priorities from a 'blank page' perspective – where priorities have remained from the previous full assessment, there has been consideration for whether recommendations have needed to change or remain consistent with those already in place.

As a result, many recommendations will be a continuation of those deemed relevant and pertinent from the previous assessment.

Domestic Abuse (DA)

Safety Partnerships should consider the implications of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) which notably has defined children who witness or experience DA as victims in their own right.

The Act further adds statutory duties around the provision of support within DA-related Safe Accommodation and a requirement for responsible authorities to form DA Local Partnership Boards, which include oversight over support delivered within Safe Accommodation: CSPs should ensure that they engage with these accordingly.

It is essential that Safety Partnerships remain engaged with relevant pan-Staffordshire DA boards and commissioners, in order to shape how the changes introduced within the act will support local residents and their children.

There is a continued need for collaborative working across the whole force-area to support the DA agenda, led by established pan-Staffordshire governance arrangements and delivered through the DA Strategy and Action Plan.

There is a continuing need for partners in front-line service to have a strong awareness and understanding of signs of non-physical types of domestic abuse, (e.g. coercive control, financial abuse, psychological abuse including stalking). There is a need to continue to raise public awareness around these types of domestic abuse.

Reaching out to hard to engage cohorts; including men, BME, LGBTQ+, those with Learning Difficulties, Mental Health needs, those in rural areas, as well as those from isolated or marginalised communities is vital in order to give individuals the confidence to come forward and seek support. This should remain linked to other services such as mental health, drug and alcohol misuse and homelessness, as well as education providers from age 14 and up.

Safety Partnerships should engage with partners to develop and improve understanding of Stalking and Harassment offences, and continue to improve awareness and understanding of the Stalking Protection Act (2019) and how the Police can apply for Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs) to address offending and protect victims.

Drugs and County Lines

Given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on physical health, mental health and well-being, employment, and education – in addition to the emerging Cost of Living Crisis and recession – it should be considered that there are likely to be sharp increases in numbers of people and families considered to be vulnerable over the coming 12-24 months. Partnerships must consider that this will not only increase demand on support services and partners, but also increase numbers of individuals who may be at increased risk of criminal exploitation. It is important that mechanisms to document, share, and escalate concerns around exploitation and vulnerability can cope with increased pressure. [Duplicated within Vulnerable Persons recommendations]

Safety Partnerships should continue to develop and enhance partner and community awareness and sharing of concerns linked to County Lines; primarily the signs of criminal exploitation of young people through organised crime and gang activity, and the signs of criminal exploitation of vulnerable adults through cuckooing activity. Partnerships should continue to promote and encourage community use of Crime Stoppers to allow anonymous reporting.

Safety Partnerships should continue to develop and embed an approach which primarily treats vulnerable individuals who have been criminally exploited as victims in need of support, and ensure that there are targeted early intervention and prevention opportunities in place for individuals who are being or who have been criminally exploited.

There is an ongoing need to continue education in secondary schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) around risks attached to gang membership and organised crime, including ensuring that the mechanisms exist to allow young people to appropriately and anonymously raise concerns about the criminal exploitation of themselves or their peers. Centrally there is a need to ensure that those working with children in care (LAC) such as Care Homes and Foster Carers are aware of signs of criminal exploitation and feel confident in reporting concerns as appropriate.

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Fraud

In addition to door-step crime and bogus traders, telephone and courier fraud still present a risk to particularly vulnerable and socially isolated groups. As victims are often not connected digitally, it is essential that awareness raising activity includes a focussed element for identified high-risk groups who might be missed by online and digital campaigns.

With growth in online auction/marketplace fraud and crypto-currency/investment scams carried out through social media, those who are connected digitally are also at increasing risk – awareness raising should consider younger age groups who carry out much of their non-essential shopping online, as well as older age groups who are new to using online services for essential shopping, and younger people active on social media.

Safety Partnerships should support local services and communities in recognising signs of potential fraud and raising awareness of different types of fraud tactics. It is critical that carers, relatives, friends or neighbours of someone who is vulnerable know how to spot signs of fraud.

It remains beneficial to centrally develop and implement a pan-Staffordshire Fraud strategy; to provide knowledge and tools directed towards residents and businesses, and to create a force-wide structured approach to fraud prevention.

Preventative activity remains essential; it is important to raise awareness of types of fraud, and the action that individuals can take in order to verify legitimacy if they are unsure of whether activity is fraudulent or not.

Awareness raising activity must involve mechanisms for reaching those who live in isolation, those with additional needs and especially those who are not digitally, socially or geographically well-connected.

There is a need to develop a co-ordinated approach to doorstep crime across the range of agencies. There remains a need to raise awareness of the signs of doorstep crime, as well as provide advice and support to carers, relatives, friends or neighbours of those identified as vulnerable. At a central level there is a need to consider how doorstep crime can be addressed with existing and emerging strategy, with CSPs contributing towards ongoing development.

Businesses should be kept aware of links between cyber-security and Fraud risks attached to 'ransom-ware' cyber-attacks, and how to protect themselves.

Community Cohesion & Tackling Extremism

Safety Partnerships should engage with the development of Community Cohesion partnership work through the Safer & Stronger Communities Strategic Group, which will link in to existing strategic Hate Crime work and the Prevent board. Partnerships should also strongly consider whether there is a need to work with local partners and stakeholders (such as voluntary sector partners) to develop local Community Cohesion strategy for their local area.

As people spend more time online it should be considered that there is increased risk around online radicalisation. Partnerships should continue to raise awareness of extremism and potential signs of radicalisation within communities, and particularly in those communities at risk of emerging extreme right-wing and far-right extremism. Young people, parents/guardians and community members should have an awareness of prevalent extremist groups and those on the periphery of extremist views.

There should be additional consideration for children who receive home education, including those who started to be home educated during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that they are receiving a well-rounded education in order to prevent any extremist teachings.

All Safety Partnership areas must continue with Prevent activity and the work of the Prevent Board; maintaining and building further positive engagement between communities, police and partners; to enable identification of key individuals who may be radicalising others, and to safeguard any vulnerable persons.

There should be central consideration about whether there may be a need for enhanced mechanisms to allow young people to raise concerns if they feel they or their peers are becoming radicalised or showing extremist behaviour.

There remains a need for the Prevent Board and Safety Partnership areas to support partner agencies with low Prevent referral rates, including supporting their understanding of the referral mechanism to improve referral quality.

Safety Partnerships and Prevent partners should continue raising partner and community awareness of existing and emerging far-right and extreme right-wing groups – as well as right-wing nationalist groups which operate on the periphery of extremism. Partnerships should encourage reporting of any associated concerns through usual channels such as Prevent.

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Safety Partnerships should engage with other partners to improve knowledge and understanding of hate crime amongst groups who are less present in recorded incidents, in particular; the LGBTQ+ community, those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, and those with mental health needs.

Serious Violence (including Public Place Violence)

While activity in public places (including activity linked to the night-time economy) has increased post-pandemic, this has not been to the extent which was initially anticipated. Although levels are not quite at pre-pandemic levels, it is highly recommended that Safety Partnerships continue to anticipate that violent incidents in public places and attached to the night-time economy will increase in line with increases in footfall.

All Safety Partnerships should remain engaged with the development and delivery of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Serious Violence Reduction Strategy.

Partnerships should continue work with licensing authorities to identify and tackle heavy drinking in areas with high levels of alcohol-related disorder and public place violence. Authorities should work with licenced premises to support staff in recognising signs of potential violence amongst individuals/groups and take appropriate preventative action.

There remains a need for pubs, clubs and bars to have mechanisms whereby those who feel at risk of harm for any reason, can covertly raise concerns and be supported to safely leave the premises to a place of safety. It is important that mechanisms are well-publicised and available to anyone who feels concerned for their safety for any reason.

There are a number of areas which see repeat instances of public place violence, there may be value in exploring options for expanding the 'Safer Places' scheme to allow younger people who feel at risk of violence or harm to use the scheme to find a place of safety while Police are contacted.

To reduce re-offending, joined-up multi-agency support should exist for first-time violent offenders (including those who do not progress through the criminal justice system) in order to support and address relevant behavioural needs, any needs relating to mental health, and any relevant needs relating to alcohol or substance misuse.

Partnerships should continue to focus on early intervention for young people at risk of gang involvement and should continue to engage in the delivery and development of gang prevention and disruption strategy as appropriate.

There is ongoing need to work with education settings, pupil referral units, care homes, prisons, youth groups, other youth services, and housing associations to raise awareness of the dangers, risks and legal repercussions associated with carrying knives and other weapons. Local evidence suggests a need to focus on those aged 11-18 years.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

There should be consideration for how partnerships can support and develop a coordinated response to ASB across agencies. This should include work to develop the understanding and use of available tools and powers as part of a joint response to ASB.

Work is needed to better understand where Hate is a factor in ASB and identify if there are communities where Hate-related ASB is of particular concern. Where there are concerns that ASB is hate-related, Partnerships should consider whether circumstances are such that the perpetrator may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and require referral into Prevent.

The pan-Staffordshire ASB Strategy group should continue to engage with Safety Partnerships and vice versa to help improve our knowledge and understanding of ASB in the force-area. There is a need to continue to develop understanding around risk and protective factors affecting young people and their involvement in ASB.

Partnerships should continue to share information on perpetrators and particularly repeat and younger perpetrators (of both public place ASB and Neighbour Disputes) to ensure that individuals receive multi-agency support where appropriate in order to reduce re-offending. [Cross-cutting to Repeat & Persistent Offending recommendations]

As much ASB is public-place Rowdy & Inconsiderate Behaviour, Partnership areas should continue to consider options to limit ASB in hot-spot areas, including the use of provisions such as Public Space Protection Orders.

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Vulnerable Persons (incl. Alcohol, Drugs, Safeguarding and Mental Health)

Given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on physical health, mental health and well-being, employment, and education – in addition to the emerging Cost of Living Crisis and recession – it should be considered that there are likely to be sharp increases in numbers of people and families considered to be vulnerable over the coming 12-24 months. Partnerships must consider that this will not only increase demand on support services and partners, but also increase numbers of individuals who may be at increased risk of criminal exploitation. It is important that mechanisms to document, share, and escalate concerns around exploitation and vulnerability can cope with increased pressure. [Duplicated within Drug Supply and County Lines recommendations]

Alcohol is a cross-cutting theme across a range of priorities – partners should continue to consider where alcohol may be a factor in offending behaviour or in levels of vulnerability, ensuring support and intervention includes alcohol-related support. Support should be particularly intensive for young people with identified emerging alcohol concerns.

Being under the influence of alcohol remains a factor that disproportionately leads to casualties in dwelling fires, it is vital that those delivering support to individuals around alcohol also assess their residences for fire-related risks.

Centrally there is a need to continue to promote activity to raise awareness of the significant risks attached to drug and substance misuse, including the significant health and psychological risks attached to psychoactive substances previously referred to as 'legal highs'. There is a need to ensure that there is appropriate multi-agency support for young people with drug-related and suspected drug-related offending, in order to deter drug use and provide early treatment where addiction or dependency may be a concern. This should include work with schools, education providers, children's homes and foster carers where appropriate, to ensure that there is a sound understanding of the early signs of substance misuse, so that young people can be supported at the earliest possible opportunity.

There is a need to continue work with appropriate partners, so that workers are able to identify those with drug and substance misuse needs who are at risk of, or may be the victims of, criminal exploitation through activities such as cuckooing or through gang or organised crime activity, and appropriately document, share and escalate concerns.

Stronger knowledge of contextual safeguarding is essential in protecting vulnerable people. Partnerships should help lead the way in moving thinking around safeguarding forwards to address extra-familial risk; including supporting businesses in developing awareness of risks to young people and developing confidence in reporting any concerns.

It is essential that young people are aware of signs of potential criminal exploitation, and that mechanisms exist to allow young people to safely communicate concerns about criminal exploitation of themselves or their peers.

There is an ongoing need to keep prevention and early intervention work at the heart of community safety strategy, particularly focussing on young people who are at risk of either offending or becoming victims of crime. This must include work with looked-after-children (LAC) who are a particularly at-risk group and children in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) who are greater risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system and increased risk of exploitation.

Mental health is a cross-cutting area of need, with many of the most vulnerable victims and offenders (including those under 18) experiencing mental health challenges. It is recommended that partners continue to consider the impact of mental health on individual's levels of vulnerability and on their behaviour, ensuring that there are packages of appropriate multi-agency support for those with appropriate levels of need.

Repeat and Persistent Offending

Continue to engage with partners and Offender Management (as appropriate) to ensure that there are appropriate packages of multi-agency support for offenders, particularly those with drug and substance misuse and dependency. Support should be particularly intensive for younger offenders (under 21) who have drug dependencies or drug and substance misuse challenges.

Partnerships should consider that those who commit repeat acquisitive offences in order to sustain drug or alcohol misuse or dependency are at high risk of criminal exploitation and may need additional support and consideration at multi-agency risk assessment meetings.

Partnerships should continue to share information on perpetrators and particularly repeat perpetrators (of both public place ASB and Neighbour Disputes) to ensure that individuals receive multi-agency support where appropriate. It is particularly important that young people who are repeat perpetrators of ASB are identified and supported appropriately to prevent further patterns of offending. [Duplicated within ASB recommendations]

Continue activity with domestic abuse perpetrator programme providers. Approaches should consider additional support needs for offenders around alcohol and drug/substance misuse, mental health, and behavioural and

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emotional needs and challenges. Support should be particularly intensive for those who are first-time domestic offenders, and domestic offenders who are under 21 years old.

Violence Against Women and Girls

Recently published strategies from both the UK Government and Staffordshire Police have a renewed focus on tackling and ending Violence Against Women and Girls. Given the role of the wider partnership in achieving this, Safety Partnerships should remain engaged with developments in VAWG strategy, and where appropriate and relevant, should contribute to the development of any related delivery plans.

Modern Slavery

Safety Partnerships should continue with co-ordinated partnership activity to tackle modern slavery, including the implementation of consistent training packages to improve awareness and knowledge of the factors which may highlight victims and perpetrators and to increase our understanding of the scale and scope of this threat.

Safety Partnerships should contribute to the multi-agency Anti-Slavery Partnership Tactical Group; to assist with early intervention for victims, disruption of offender networks and support a co-ordinated approach to enforcement activity. It is important for partners to remain engaged and in tune with national discussion around Modern Slavery, and developments to make the National Referral Mechanism better tailored for victimised children and young people.

It is important for partners and front-line services to have strong awareness of the range of offending included under Modern Slavery including that many victims and perpetrators of Domestic Servitude and Forced Labour offences in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent are British. Safety Partnerships should remain engaged with Staffordshire Police and the Police Knowledge Hub in order to become aware of any shifts or emerging changes in Modern Slavery.

Fire and Rescue

Safety Partnerships need to remain closely engaged with Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) and consider where the Partnership's activity and planning can support and compliment the Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Safety Plan, and draw on knowledge and insight held by SFRS.

There is a need for Safety Partnerships to consider how information is shared with SFRS in order to share key information, in order to help build a more detailed understanding of risks to communities, and to identify those who may be at greatest risk.

There is a need for partnerships to consider how they can support engagement and awareness-raising and activity and campaigns led by SFRS. There is considerable evidence held by the Fire Service around risk-factors associated with serious harm through fire; it is important that Safety Partnerships access this and factor this knowledge into their own local planning where relevant.

Safer Roads

The proportion of road user casualties which result in serious or fatal injury has risen in the past 12 months. Continuation of proactive preventative work remains key – particularly with identified vulnerable road users; Safety Partnerships should continue to engage with the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) around community engagement and prevention/education activity and ongoing risk assessment activity.

Partnership areas with rural road networks should consider whether there are specific communities which may benefit from being supported to engage with and volunteer as part of the Community Speed Watch scheme.

Where Safety Partnerships have concerns about road use in specific locations within their partnership area, they should engage with the SSRP to discuss whether there is a need and opportunity for targeted enforcement activity.

Business Crime

Findings from Staffordshire Commissioner's Office report on Business Crime suggests that there may be a need for greater engagement with smaller businesses in partnership areas, in order to better understand their needs and how they are impacted by crime and disorder.

Although instances of Fraud committed against businesses in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent have reduced slightly there are concerns that (similarly to individuals) businesses do not always report Fraud and Cybercrime offences (such as ransomware attacks). There may be a need to ensure that local businesses are connected with appropriate expertise in order to mitigate the risk of such offences.

Continue to engage with Business Crime Advisors at the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce as appropriate.

Engage with the development and delivery of pan-Staffordshire Business Crime strategy.

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

Appendix C: Methodology

This current Strategic Assessment is the first (main) assessment in a new three-year cycle; with refresh reports due in 2023 and 2024. As such, the risk assessment process this year has largely been completed from the ground up – rather than refreshing the position against existing priorities.

Although restrictions relating to the Coronavirus pandemic have been removed for some time at the time of this report (November 2022) there is still evidence that locally, not all types of crime and risks to community safety have returned to pre-pandemic levels. However, equally, there have been some community safety risks which were either unchanged or exacerbated because of the pandemic, periods of lockdown, and social restrictions.

The prioritisation setting process for 2021-22 has included a refreshed assessment of risk, volume, frequency, and harm associated with a broad range of types of crime and community safety challenges. This has been completed using the Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MoRiLE) approach - with harm scoring and intelligence work led by the Staffordshire Police Knowledge Hub.

To identify potential priorities, analysis has looked at each potential priority, considering:

- Levels of physical / psychological / financial harm caused to individuals.
- Levels of harm caused to communities.
- Levels of harm caused to the environment.
- Frequency and volume at which each potential priority occurs.
- Direction of travel in frequency and volume (current trend and forecast).
- Levels of public expectation.

Priority identification and setting has also taken account of existing priorities, analysis, reporting and intelligence, as well as strategic priorities identified by key stakeholders. It has also considered nationally emerging challenges, including those which are likely to be considered a high priority to members of the public. Final priorities set in this report have been validated through discussion with individual CSP leads and relevant stakeholders.

Appendix D: Data tables

Local areas (small geography) recommended for priority focus:

NB: Areas have been identified through a combination of different elements of local area data (including crime data and police intelligence and insight) covering multiple years, including pre-pandemic. Assessment of areas has considered levels of crime and disorder over time and the overall levels of vulnerability and risk in each area.

Due to levels of crime, disorder, vulnerability, and risk some areas are considered a high priority at a force-wide level, while some areas experience challenges which are a priority for their local Safety Partnership area, but which are not likely to require the same intensity of resource as those which are a force-wide priority.

Identified as a force-wide priority (presented in alphabetical order of Safety Partnership)			
Neighbourhood	Partnership Area	Current Crime (2021-22) Per 1,000 population	Current ASB (2021-22) Per 1,000 population
Cannock South & West	Cannock Chase	112.5	24.3
Cannock East & North	Cannock Chase	60.6	16.8
Burton Urban	East Staffordshire	63.5	17.0
Burton Town & Uxbridge	East Staffordshire	143.4	41.2
Winshill & Stapenhill	East Staffordshire	56.9	21.7
Newcastle Town	Newcastle-under-Lyme	159.0	55.1
Stafford Town	Stafford	132.3	41.8
Stafford South	Stafford	63.5	25.3
Etruria & Hanley	Stoke-on-Trent	307.8	85.1
Hanley Park & Shelton	Stoke-on-Trent	306.8	93.9
Blurton & Longton West	Stoke-on-Trent	106.5	33.7
Fenton West & Mount Pleasant	Stoke-on-Trent	130.5	38.8
Bentilee & Ubbertley	Stoke-on-Trent	123.1	41.7
Identified as a local priority (presented in alphabetical order of Safety Partnership)			
Neighbourhood	Partnership Area	Current Crime (2021-22) Per 1,000 population	Current ASB (2021-22) Per 1,000 population
Brereton, Ravenhill & Hagley	Cannock Chase	58.4	16.9
Hednesford	Cannock Chase	59.5	17.5
North Lichfield	Lichfield	81.3	26.6
Burntwood	Lichfield	46.3	11.7
Chasetown	Lichfield	99.9	45.3
Kidsgrove Parish	Newcastle-under-Lyme	54.7	16.0
Newcastle West	Newcastle-under-Lyme	73.7	29.7
Newcastle North	Newcastle-under-Lyme	57.0	21.1
Stone Town	Stafford	50.8	20.6
Wombourne	South Staffordshire	48.6	10.7
Cheslyn Hay & Saredon	South Staffordshire	38.8	10.6
Trysull & Seisdon	South Staffordshire	55.4	9.8
Leek Town	Staffordshire Moorlands	70.4	19.7
Cheadle Town	Staffordshire Moorlands	65.7	20.8
Tamworth Town	Tamworth	196.6	36.1
Mercian & Spital	Tamworth	54.4	11.3
Belgrave	Tamworth	65.9	17.8

Group/Type	Group/Type Name	One-Line Description
A	Country Living	Well-off owners in rural locations enjoying the benefits of country life
B	Prestige Positions	Established families in large detached homes living upmarket lifestyles
C	City Prosperity	High status city dwellers in central locations pursuing careers with high rewards
D	Domestic Success	Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers
E	Suburban Stability	Mature suburban owners living settled lives in mid-range housing
F	Senior Security	Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement
G	Rural Reality	Householders living in less expensive homes in village communities
H	Aspiring Homemakers	Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means
I	Urban Cohesion	Residents of settled urban communities with a strong sense of identity
J	Rental Hubs	Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods
K	Modest Traditions	Mature homeowners of value homes enjoying stable lifestyles
L	Transient Renters	Single people renting low cost homes for the short term
M	Family Basics	Families with limited resources who budget to make ends meet
N	Vintage Value	Elderly people with limited pension income, mostly living alone
O	Municipal Tenants	Urban residents renting high density housing from social landlords