

Community Safety Strategic Assessment Full Assessment Report

Tamworth

2022

Produced on behalf of



and



Working in partnership with



Title	Tamworth Community Safety Partnership: Community Safety Strategic Assessment Full Assessment 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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Contents

Introduction and Context	4
Key findings and comparison to previous (2021) refresh	5
Staffordshire Commissioner’s Office Priorities	6
Summary of Local Community Safety Priorities	6
People and Communities at Greatest Risk	7
Overview of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	9
Community Safety Strategic Priorities	10
Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)	10
Community Cohesion & Tackling Extremism	11
Domestic Abuse (DA)	13
Drugs & County Lines.....	15
Serious Violence (SV) & Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).....	17
Vehicle Crime	19
Vulnerable Persons	20
Additional Challenges for Consideration	22
Repeat and Persistent Offending	22
Fraud	23
Fire and Rescue	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Safer Roads.....	24
Modern Slavery	26
Quality of Life and Wider Determinants	27
Public Confidence & Feeling the Difference	28
Appendices	29
Appendix A: Overall recommendations	29
Appendix B: Specific recommendations for key priorities	30
Appendix C: Methodology	35
Appendix D: Data tables.....	36
Appendix E: Mosaic Groups - Source: Experian Mosaic 7 (2021)	37

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>

Key findings and comparison to previous (2021) refresh

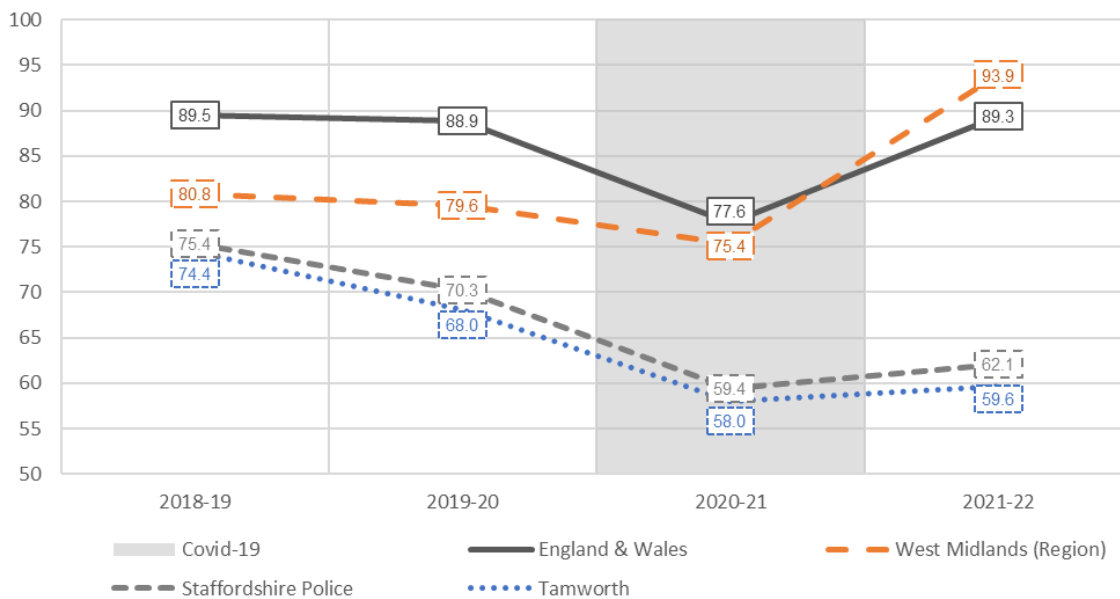
Significant overall changes and findings

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 Tamworth and wider Staffordshire force area, 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 area, while increasing slightly post-pandemic, sits well below pre-pandemic levels – with a considerable gap between rates of recorded crime in Tamworth and England & Wales.

Figure 11: Rates of Police Recorded Crime (excl. fraud) per 1,000 population (Home Office, 2022)



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.

Although rates of recorded crime are significantly lower than national levels, rates of recorded Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) are high in Tamworth – with a rate of 35.0 per 1,000 residents, compared 21.2 at a national level and a rate of 22.7 per 1,000 population across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

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 local data (April 2022 to end of October 2022) shows that levels of reported crime have continued to steadily increase towards levels seen prior to the pandemic.

By the end of October 2022, monthly reported crime has risen in line with the upper limit of ‘normal’ monthly levels; showing a 16% increase on the previous 12 months in Tamworth.

It should be noted that this is the smallest increase amongst the Community Safety Partnership areas within the Staffordshire Police force area and is below the increase seen across the force (+22%) and the County (+25%).

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 partnership to *Solve Problems Together*, provide *Value for Money* and be *Open and Transparent*.

Summary of Local Community Safety Priorities

A review of the priorities identified and confirmed in the three-yearly full CSA has taken place, in order to identify any changing or emerging key strategic priorities and risks for the local area. These have been cross referenced against known existing local priorities and findings for the locality. The identified priorities are as follows;

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Domestic Abuse and Stalking & Harassment
- Community Cohesion & Tackling Extremism
- Drugs & County Lines
- Serious Violence & Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Vehicle Crime
- Vulnerable Persons

The following are not considered a main priority for Tamworth, but they are recommended for additional consideration due to their volume, impact on communities and level of public expectation;

- Repeat and Persistent Offending
- Fraud

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;

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

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.

It is considered, based on existing UK research (IFS and ONS), that the wider impact of the Coronavirus pandemic will be an increase in the numbers of vulnerable persons in the UK, rather than a dramatic shift in reasons for vulnerability. However, anecdotally, it is considered that pressures as a result of the pandemic are already being observed by front-line services, and that the needs of those who are vulnerable are becoming increasingly complex.

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;

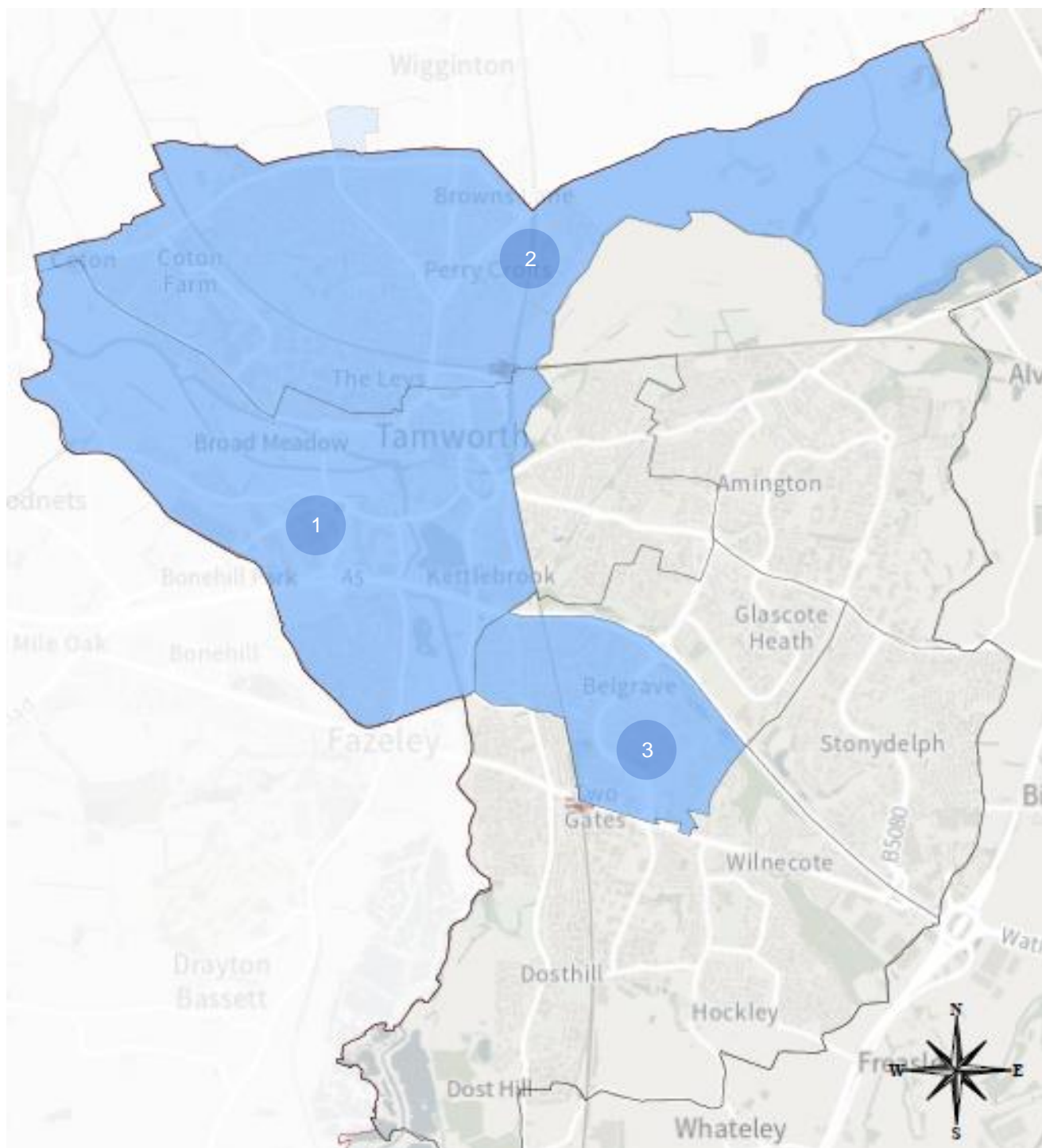
- Socially isolated individuals with mental health needs and learning difficulties
- Socially isolated adults with alcohol and/or drug dependencies
- Offenders with known drug dependencies or previous drug-related offending
- Children (under 10s) in areas with high levels of Domestic Abuse and/or drug-related offending
- Children and young people (aged 10-19) in areas of high deprivation

Those who belong to the 'Family Basics' demographic Mosaic group tend to be the most disproportionately affected by almost all aspects of crime and anti-social behaviour in Tamworth (17% of population, 30% of all victims).

These are primarily younger families (aged 25-40) with infant or primary school-aged children, living in lower-cost housing, in areas with higher levels of deprivation. Adults in these communities tend to have limited qualifications; many are employed in lower-paid and lower-skilled jobs resulting in limited financial resources and high levels of economic stress, with many requiring an element of state support, particularly through access to social housing and through universal credit.

Places at Greatest Risk

It should be noted that there has been no reassessment of high-risk localities and wards using data from the 2020-21 period, as reductions in recorded crime and disorder as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic may potentially distract from areas with long-standing challenges. Locality data will be fully re-assessed in the 2022 full Strategic Assessment.



1. Tamworth Town

High volumes of crime overall combined with a small local population means that rates per 1,000 residents are significantly high compared to the force-average.

2. Mercian & Spital

Overall vulnerability and risk are high compared to the rest of the partnership area – with the area also affected by cross-border acquisitive crime and vehicle thefts.

3. Belgrave

A smaller population combined with moderate volumes of crime results in rates which are above the partnership area average.

Overview of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Overall rates of recorded Crime and ASB in Tamworth are the second-highest in the force-area, but are in line with the overall force-wide rate, and below the rates for the West Midlands region and England & Wales.

Rates of Vehicle Offences in Tamworth have been a local concern but are not above rates for England & Wales or the West Midlands region. Theft offences in the CSP area have previously been above force-wide levels, but are now in line with these, as well as being well below regional and national comparators.

Levels of offending in all neighbourhoods in Tamworth are in line with force-wide averages, with the exception of Tamworth Town – where high volumes of crime (typical of town centres and public spaces) combined with a relatively small residential population, result in significantly high rates of offences per 1,000 residents. This is consistent across town centre areas across Staffordshire, and is not unique to Tamworth.

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

	Tamworth	Staffordshire (Force Area)	Most Similar Forces (Avg)	West Midlands Region	ENGLAND AND WALES
Total recorded crime (excl. fraud)	59.6	62.1	81.0	93.9	89.3
Criminal damage and arson	6.1	6.8	7.9	8.4	8.9
Robbery	0.9	0.6	0.7	1.6	1.1
Sexual offences	2.7	2.8	3.3	3.4	3.3
Theft offences	16.0	16.4	20.1	25.1	25.1
Burglary	1.8	2.9	3.5	5.0	4.5
Residential burglary	1.3	2.0	2.6	3.7	3.2
Non-residential burglary	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.2
Vehicle offences	3.9	3.5	4.8	7.5	6.0
Theft from the person	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.5
Bicycle theft	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.7	1.3
Shoplifting	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.5	4.6
All other theft offences	5.1	5.2	5.9	6.5	7.2
Violence against the person	27.6	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	7.4	7.6	9.0	10.8	9.5
Violence without injury	9.6	9.3	13.5	15.4	13.6
Stalking and harassment	10.6	11.6	12.1	15.3	12.1
Drug offences	0.9	1.2	2.3	2.0	3.0
Possession of weapons offences	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.3	0.8
Public order offences	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)	35.0	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 CPS average

Similar to national CSP average

Statistically higher than national CSP average

Community Safety Strategic Priorities

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

Volume and potential harm:

High volume / Substantial individual harm / Severe community harm

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary:

From April 2020 onwards, instances where Covid-related legislation was breached were recorded locally and nationally as a category of ASB. As a result, rates of total ASB recorded in 2020-21 were considerably higher than those seen in other years. In data for 2021-22 these breaches have been removed. As a result, latest ASB data is more comparable with pre-pandemic.

In Tamworth in 2021-22 there were 1,280 incidents of traditional² ASB – which is just over 400 fewer incidents than in the previous year (1,685). This is equivalent to a rate of 16.7 incidents per 1,000 population, which is below the 21.0 seen across the Staffordshire Police force area.

ASB in Tamworth remains dominated by reports of incidents of 'Rowdy and Inconsiderate Behaviour' (69% of ASB) and to a lesser-extent 'Neighbour Disputes' (17% of ASB). Tamworth tends to experience slightly more ASB as a result of nuisance vehicles, compared to the force-area overall; accounting for 7% of local ASB (6% force-wide).

While it is not possible to say with certainty the factors behind the significant reduction in ASB compared to the previous year, it is possible and probable that this is in part due to changes home working habits and the lifting of lock down restrictions. Compared to the previous year (2020-21) the proportion of ASB which related to neighbour disputes has reduced from 21% down to 17% - with the proportion of total ASB which related to neighbour disputes falling below the average seen across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (20%).

Similarly to crime overall, ASB tends to disproportionately affect the most deprived and disadvantaged communities, and town and city centres. The highest rates seen across Tamworth fall into the Tamworth Town neighbourhood (largely comprising of Rowdy and Inconsiderate behaviour) and the Glascote area. This is consistent with assessments made in previous years.

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.

Comparison to Force: Overall rate similar / Some neighbourhood rates high

Local rate (per 1,000 people): 16.7 (excl. Covid)

Force rate (per 1,000 people): 21.0 (excl. Covid)

Direction of travel: Some shift seen post-Covid; with a fall in neighbour disputes and increase in Rowdy and Inconsiderate behaviour (often in public places).

Public expectation: Substantial (previously moderate)

Local hotspot wards:

Tamworth Town: primarily Rowdy and Inconsiderate Behaviour in town centre spaces.

Glascote: average levels of ASB overall. High levels of Neighbour Disputes.

At risk groups: Deprived and disadvantaged communities – particularly those in high housing density areas and with high proportions of social housing. Town centre areas are also high risk, particularly from alcohol-related and drug-related ASB. Castle ward and Stonydelph see additional issues with ASB from Nuisance Vehicles.

² ASB of all types recorded pre-pandemic and excluding any recording of Covid-19 legislation breaches.

Community Cohesion³ & 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 117 incidents of Hate Crime which took place in Tamworth, equivalent to a rate of 1.5 per 1,000 population – which is in line with the rate seen across the force area (1.6).

A little over 2% of recorded crime in Tamworth is flagged for Hate being a factor, which is equivalent to around 1-in-50 crimes being hate-related. This is similar to the proportion seen across the force area and is around the average seen across other local CSP areas.

Local Hate Crime remains dominated by offences relating to race (58% of all Hate Crime) although this proportion is lower than that seen across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (67%). Local LGBTQ+ Hate offences accounted for 22% of Hate Crime in 2021-22 which is similar to the force area. However, offences on the grounds of disability accounted for a significantly greater proportion in Tamworth than in other local CSP areas – making up 18% of Hate Crime locally, compared 9% of Hate offences across the force area.

Hate offences on the grounds of disability, 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' and inflation 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.

³ 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

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.

Domestic Abuse (DA)

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

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary:

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

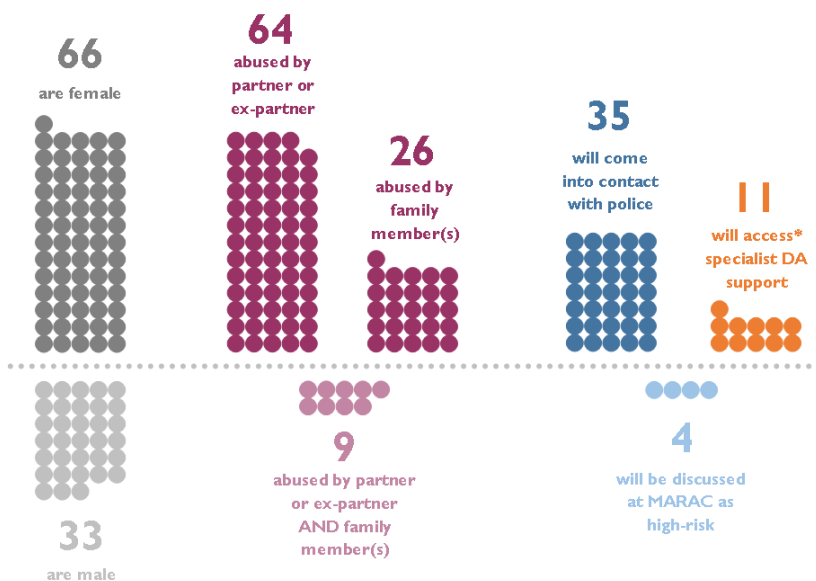
Domestic Abuse affects all communities to some extent and is not unique to any one part of Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent. DA presents a significant risk to victims, but also has a wider impact where children are present. With the passing of the DA Act (2021) there is now a clear legal definition of DA and the recognition of children who witness or experience such abuse as victims of DA in their own right.

In 2021-22 there were 1,300 DA-related crimes in Tamworth; equivalent to a rate of 16.9 per 1,000 population and accounting for 25% of recorded crime in the CSP area. This represents a fall of 70 incidents compared to the previous year (2020-21) and has seen the rate of DA in Tamworth fall in line with the force average, having previously been the second highest amongst local CSP areas.

Domestic offences in Tamworth are consistently dominated by Violent offences (80% of local DA); comprising of a large proportion of violence without injury offences (62% of local DA) which includes offences such as Common Assault, Stalking & Harassment offences, Malicious Communications, and Coercive Control. Around 16% of all DA offences are less-serious violence with injury, and around 1% more serious violence with injury.

Not all DA offences are violent crime; around 6% are incidents of Criminal Damage, 2% are Acquisitive crimes (such as Theft) and around 2% are Sexual Offences (half of which are incidents of Rape).

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



Comparison to Force: Overall rate similar / One ward above average

Local rate (per 1,000 people): 16.9

Force rate (per 1,000 people): 17.4

Direction of travel: Long-term challenge despite some reductions.

Public expectation: Moderate to Very High

Local hotspot wards: Rates in Amington (21.7) are significantly above the rate for the County (although in line with the force average). Rates in Stoneydelph (19.5) and Glascote (17.3) are consistently high.

At risk groups: Disproportionately younger women (aged under 30), and those who live in already 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 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:

Moderate volume / Substantial psychological harm

CSPs with priority: Cannock Chase, Stoke-on-Trent, Tamworth

Summary:

In 2021-22 there were a total of 243 incidents of Domestic Stalking & Harassment which took place in Tamworth; equivalent to a rate of 3.2 per 1,000 population – which is slightly below the rate seen force-wide (3.6 per 1,000).

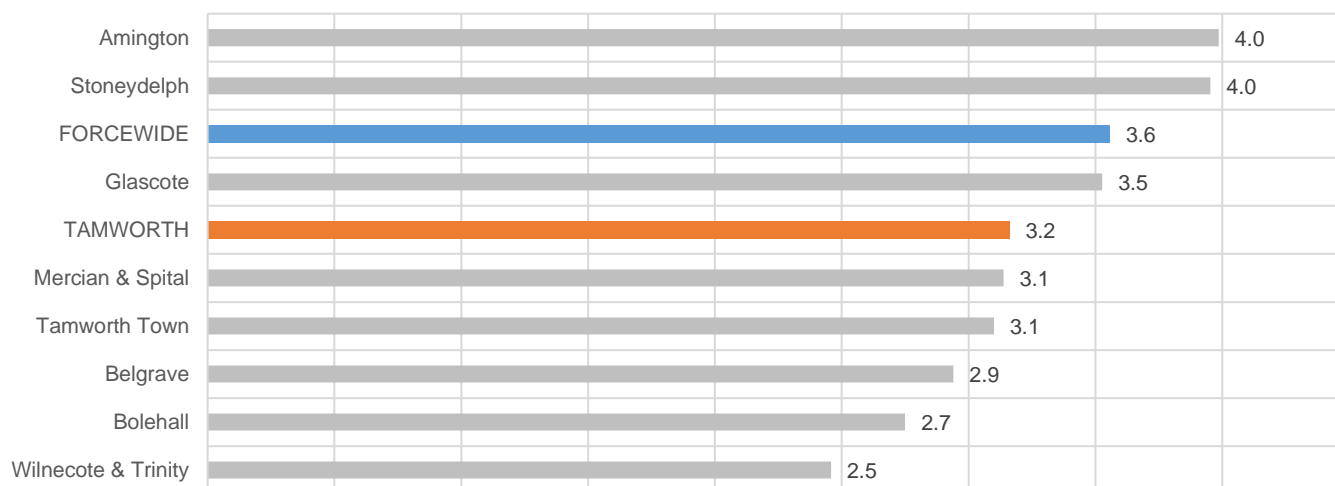
There are genuine concerns around risks attached to Stalking and fixated behaviours in particular as an element of wider DA. Research conducted on behalf of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust (Exploring the Relationship Between Stalking and Homicide, 2017) which reviewed three years of domestic homicides found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

While the proportion of all Harassment offences which are DA-related is a little lower than crime overall (22% DA-related, compared to 25% of all crime in Tamworth) there are strong links between Domestic Abuse and Malicious Communications (37% DA-related) and most notably Stalking (96% DA-related).

Since the time of the last assessment, the most notable change has been in the proportion of Harassment which is linked to DA – with 50% of Harassment offences in 2020-21 being DA-related, compared to 22% in 2021-22. This is largely, however, due to an increase in the overall volume of Harassment offences being recorded – including many which are not DA, rather than a decrease in levels of DA-related Harassment offences.

Domestic-related Stalking & Harassment, 2021-22, Tamworth Policing Neighbourhoods



Comparison to Force: Overall rate similar / Two neighbourhoods high (but not statistically above average)

Local rate (per 1,000 people): 3.2

Force rate (per 1,000 people): 3.6

Direction of travel: Considerable increases in visibility of Stalking offences

Public expectation: Increasing

Local hotspot wards: None significantly above force average (*threshold for significantly above=5.4 per 1,000*). Areas with the highest rates of DA Stalking & Harassment are also flagged for high rates of overall DA.

At risk groups: Victims are disproportionately younger women (aged 20-34) who account for 34% of S&H victims, and particularly those within the 'Family Basics' Mosaic group – living in less-advantaged areas with younger children. Around 70% of S&H victims are female, and 30% male, however, victims do span all age ranges from 10 years up to 75+ and there is some disproportionality of victims amongst males aged 25-30 (7% of all S&H victims).

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.

Drugs & County Lines

Drug-related crime and harm

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 – but does not appear to be an issue in Tamworth or the south of the County.

The current (2021-22) local rate of all drugs-specific offences (possession and trafficking; 0.9 per 1,000 population) in Tamworth has fallen over the last two years and is significantly below national rates (3.0). Rates of Drugs Possession (excl. supply) in Tamworth (0.6 per 1,000 population) are in line with the rate for Staffordshire County (0.7) and slightly below the force-wide rate (0.8).

The case is similar amongst supply offences, where the rate locally (0.3) is the same as that seen across the County, and slightly below the force area rate (0.4) as well as being significantly below the national rate (0.7).

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.

In local police recording, around 1-in-50 crimes in Tamworth (2% of all) are flagged as being drug-related. This is lower than the force-wide proportion (3%) and the third-lowest proportion amongst local CSP areas.

Recent research⁴ including interviews with those in prison custody in Staffordshire, saw individuals commenting on how adverse experiences in childhood and adolescence had often lead 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.

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.

In Tamworth levels of drug related mortality (deaths from drug misuse or poisoning) are particularly low compared to the rest of the force area – with numbers of deaths being so low that the ONS are unable to make statistical comparison between Tamworth and other local areas.

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)

At risk groups:

Research with some of the prison population in Staffordshire suggests that young people who have experienced particularly 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.

⁴ Offending and Offender Needs 2021 – Office of the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue, Crime

Serious Violence (SV) & Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Violence Against Women and Girls

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

CSPs with priority: All Safety Partnership Areas

Summary:

Evidence shows that many women in the UK do not feel safe in public or online: recent (2021) government research evidenced that girls do not feel safe at school or in other educational establishments, and many women and girls in the UK have experienced verbal abuse, intimidation, and sexual harassment in public spaces.

In late 2020 a call for evidence was made by the UK Government, to inform a revised VAWG strategy, which was published in July 2021. The new VAWG strategy sets out some key objectives for the Government, primarily to:

- Increase support for victims and survivors.
- Increase in reporting to the police, in addition to;
- Increased victim engagement with police, leading to;
- Increases in the number of perpetrators brought to justice, and;
- Reduce the prevalence of Violence Against Women and Girls overall.

The intent of the VAWG Strategy (2021) is to achieve these through improved earlier intervention and prevention and improving and strengthening existing systems – rather than introduction new systems or extensive duties.

While nationally domestic-related crime and incidents are often included within VAWG, in this needs assessment, as DA is covered in its own right, the focus on Violence Against Women and Girls looks in particular at offences which are not believed to be related to DA. This means that the focus in this section is largely on VAWG which is not part of a pattern of abusive behaviour and does not focus on offences which are committed by current or former intimate partners or family members of the victim.

In 2021-22 in Tamworth crime which was flagged by Staffordshire Police as being a VAWG incident accounted for around 1-in-8 (12.5% of) non-domestic related crimes. Amongst violent offences (which were not DA-related) approaching a quarter (23%) were instances of Violence Against Women and Girls. These proportions were the same across the force area overall.

Overall in 2021-22 in Tamworth, excluding domestic-related offences, there were a total of 539 recorded crimes which were flagged by police as being incidents of VAWG.

While the majority of offences flagged as being VAWG incidents are offences which are classified as violent crime, VAWG offences do fall into a wider range of offence types. Of the 539 instances of non-DA-related Violence Against Women and Girls recorded in Tamworth in 2021-22:

- **69% were violent crimes, comprising of;**
 - Malicious Communications (22% of all non-domestic VAWG)
 - Harassment (20% of all non-domestic VAWG)
 - Assault occasioning Actual Bodily Harm (ABH; 19% of all non-domestic VAWG)
 - Stalking (2% of all non-domestic VAWG) and;
 - More serious violence with injury (1% of all non-domestic VAWG)
- **20% were sexual offences, comprising of;**
 - Serious sexual offences (excl. Rape) (11% of all non-domestic VAWG)
 - Rape (6% of all non-domestic VAWG)
 - Other sexual offences (2% of all non-domestic VAWG)
- **12% were Public Order offences**
 - Primarily offences of causing Public Fear, Alarm, or Distress (10% of all non-domestic VAWG)

These proportions are entirely reflective of what is seen across the wider force area, with the types of offences recorded in Tamworth being in line with what is seen elsewhere across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, with no major outliers or significant differences.

There is a clear focus locally on improving the reporting and recording of VAWG offences. While flags have only recently been added to Police record management systems, these will start to allow comparisons over time.

Direction of travel: Increases in recording and visibility

Public expectation: Critical

Serious Violence (SV) & Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Public Place and Serious Violence

Volume and potential harm:

Moderate volume / Moderate to substantial individual harm / Moderate to severe community harm

CSPs with priority:

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

Summary:

While levels of Public Place violence fell during the pandemic, while social and public space restrictions were in place, volumes have started to return towards pre-pandemic levels.

In 2021-22 there were 582 incidents of Public Place violence (PPV) which took place in Tamworth – equivalent to a rate of 7.6 per 1,000 population. This is the second highest rate in the force area, behind Stoke-on-Trent (10.3) but above the next highest (Cannock Chase, 5.3) and above the force-wide rate (5.5).

The current level of PPV represents a 55% increase locally, compared to the previous year (2020-21, 375 incidents) although remains slightly lower than the volume seen in the year pre-pandemic (2019-20, 650 incidents). However, by comparison, while locally PPV sits around a tenth (-10%) below pre-pandemic levels, for the force area overall, levels of PPV sit over a third (-37%) below pre-pandemic volumes.

There are evidenced links between alcohol and violent offences, and particularly those in public spaces; while around 8% of all crime in Tamworth in 2021-22 was alcohol-related, this increases to 15% amongst PPV offences. However pre-pandemic (2019-20) closer to a fifth (19%) of all PPV featured alcohol as a factor.

In several parts of the force-area concerns remain with regards to links between Urban Street Gang (USG) activity, Organised Crime Group (OCG) activity, Drug Supply/County Lines and Serious Violence. Particular issues centre on feuds between rival USGs and rival OCGs and an increased use of violence to 'recover' drug debts from users. Over recent years, levels of serious violence locally have increased - with much of this linked to USGs, OCGs and drugs.

Although a smaller proportion of total violent crime, the level of Serious Violence in Tamworth also shows a notable increase from the previous year, with 156 incidents in 2021-22, equivalent to a rate of 2.0 per 1,000 population (compared to 1.7 across the force area). Similarly to PPV this is the second highest rate amongst local CSP areas.

While force-wide, alcohol is less prevalent in Serious Violence incidents (factor in around 10%) in Tamworth, it is just as present as it is in PPV, with around 15% of Serious Violence incidents being flagged as alcohol related.

Additionally, while drugs are a factor in a small proportion of violent offences (1.6%) in Tamworth, this increases amongst Serious Violence (2.5%) – although this indicates that drugs are very rarely a factor.

Nationally and regionally Knife Crime has been of growing concern, particularly in urban areas. Although Knife Crimes are low in volume in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (768 incidents in 2021-22, a rate of 0.7 per 1,000 population) there has been some increase in 2021-22. Similarly to PPV, Tamworth sees the second highest rate of Knife Crime in the force area (0.8) behind Stoke-on-Trent (1.3) and above Newcastle-under-Lyme (0.7). In the last year (2021-22) there were 61 recorded Knife Crimes in the local area.

While generally low in number, overall there was little impact on Knife Crime as a result of the pandemic. Across the force-area there were only ten fewer incidents in 2020-21 compared to pre-pandemic – and in Tamworth, volumes of Knife Crime have remained fairly consistent over the past few years.

Comparison to Force: Rates high compared to the force. Issues polarised towards the town centre.

Direction of travel: Consistent and now similar to pre-pandemic

Public expectation: High

At risk groups:

Public Place Violence offenders are predominantly young men (aged 18-29), although there are some female offenders, mainly aged under 40 years. Knife Crime offenders are also mainly young men (aged under 30 years) with a particularly high proportion of Under 18s (mostly aged 14+).

With both PPV and Knife Crimes – both offender and victim are mainly young men, in particular those aged under 30 years. In many instances, the offender and the victim are of the same age group.

Public place violence is polarised towards town centres and commercial areas, and poses the greatest risk to the public between 21:00-04:00hrs, particularly where alcohol is a factor.

Vehicle Crime

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

CSPs with priority: Cannock Chase, Lichfield, South Staffordshire, Tamworth

Summary:

In Tamworth in 2021-22 there were 338 Vehicle Offences recorded – equivalent to a rate of 4.4 per 1,000 population. This is slightly above the force-wide rate (3.8) but lower than pre-pandemic. Just over a third (37%) of all Vehicle Crime in Tamworth related to Thefts of Vehicles and just under half (48%) to Thefts from Vehicles.

There were 124 Vehicle Thefts in the same period – comprising of 100 Thefts, 19 Taking without the owner's consent, and 5 aggravated vehicle taking offences. The rate of Vehicle Theft for Tamworth (1.6) is considerably lower than the rate seen pre-pandemic (2.4) but also a slight increase on the rate seen mid-pandemic (1.3 in 2020-21). This averages out to around two vehicle thefts per week in Tamworth.

As anti-theft technology in vehicles has improved, approaches to vehicle theft have changed. With many modern vehicles unable to be driven without their keys, criminals are increasingly using burglary to facilitate vehicle theft; entering properties purely to steal vehicle keys and key fobs - driving the stolen vehicle away from the scene. These offences are often referred to as 'Car Key Burglaries' (CKB).

Where in the past there have been issues with keyless thefts or 'relay attacks' (where criminals use a device to amplify the signal from a car key inside someone's home in order open and start a vehicle without needing the key in hand) these types of thefts have fallen. It is likely that this is the result of both greater awareness of this type of theft amongst the public (and vehicle owners taking relevant measures) and criminals moving away from this approach.

Although less common, and lower volume, changes in anti-theft technology have also resulted in some national and regional increases in aggravated vehicle-taking or 'car-jacking' – where a vehicle is stolen whilst in use, usually on the road, and sometimes while the victim is still on their own property. While very low volumes (five local incidents in 2021-22) these can be highly traumatic offences for victims and communities.

Historically, Tamworth has experienced particularly high proportions of burglaries which have resulted in vehicle theft. These offences have typically been focussed in the south-east of the force-area, with Tamworth and Lichfield particularly affected compared to other CSP areas, although recently these have started to impact Cannock Chase.

During the pandemic there has been a considerable local reduction in Vehicle Thefts. While Vehicle Theft across the force area reduced by a reasonable amount (-8%) in 2021-22 compared to before the pandemic (2019-20) the reduction in Tamworth has been far more significant (-33%).

However, while levels of Vehicle Theft remain well below rates seen in 2019-20 they have been slowly increasing since Coronavirus restrictions ended, even though they have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Equally, while Vehicle Thefts have fallen, the number of Thefts from Motor Vehicles have remained largely consistent.

Offences appear to be particularly targeted and have often affected areas and communities across the force area which typically do not experience high levels of overall crime. However, while some Vehicle Theft in the force area (particularly Lichfield and South Staffordshire) appears to be mostly targeted towards higher value vehicles, those seen in Tamworth often target mid-value vehicles which can be stripped down for parts or used in other criminality.

Comparison to Force:

Pre-pandemic highest rate in the force area. As at 2021-22 in line with force average

Rate of Vehicle Thefts

Local rate: 1.6 per 1,000 pop.

Force rate: 1.6 per 1,000 pop.

Direction of travel: Persistent challenge

Public expectation: Moderate

At risk groups: Communities in higher-value suburban areas with detached homes and lower-levels of overall housing density. Analysis across the force-area suggests that households in the most affluent parts of affected CSP areas have been disproportionately affected by car key burglaries.

However in some CSP areas such as Tamworth and Cannock Chase, vehicles targeted are frequently more common mid-value vehicles rather than luxury manufacturers. It should be considered that there is a degree of risk to car owners in general within priority localities.

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

Vulnerable people, including those experiencing MH challenges, 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.

Around 3% of all crime in Tamworth was flagged as featuring Mental Health as a factor, comparable to the 4% observed force-wide. While the rate of MH related crime increased from being one of the lowest in the force-area pre-pandemic (2.5 per 1,000 population in 2019-20) to the highest (4.6) in 2020-21 these have reduced considerably to a rate of 1.8 MH flagged crimes in 2021-22 (below the force-wide rate, 2.5).

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.

In Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent (the smallest geography with available data) the rate of detentions under the Mental Health Act⁵ (MHA) had increased in 2020-21 from 81.3 (pre-pandemic) to 88.0 per 100,000 population; an increase of around 8%. While the rate has fallen slightly in 2021-22 (to 85.5) this is still above pre-pandemic rates. Those detained under the MHA tend to be disproportionately from deprived communities and of Black and Other Ethnicities, as well as often being middle aged (35-49) or younger adults (18-34). There is no disproportionality by gender.

Local⁶ and national⁷ COVID surveys have 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 analysis⁸ found that, taking account of pre-pandemic trajectories, mental health has worsened substantially (by 8.1% on average) as a result of the pandemic. Young adults and women – groups with worse mental health pre-pandemic – have been hit hardest.

Levels of GP depression diagnoses in 2020-21 for Tamworth residents were higher than national levels, with 14.6% of the adult population having a diagnosis of depression, compared to 12.3% across England.

Public Health England (PHE) estimates for Tamworth suggest that around 9.8% of children aged 5 to 16 years (approximately 1,100 children) in the area are likely to have a mental health disorder. This is the 2nd highest proportion in the force area and falls within the top 20% of highest rates in Local Authorities in England.

Estimated prevalence of common mental disorders (Public Health England):

		% of population
Children (age 5-16)	England	9.2
	Force-wide	9.5
	Tamworth	9.8
Adults (age 16+)	England	16.9
	Force-wide	16.4
	Tamworth	16.6
Older adults (age 65+)	England	10.2
	Force-wide	10.2
	Tamworth	10.5

Comparison to Force: Rates of recorded crime where Mental Health is considered to be a factor have increased significantly in 2020-21 and are currently the highest in force. However, rates of Mental Health diagnoses are largely similar to force-wide and national levels.

⁵ NHS Digital - Recorded uses of the Mental Health Act: crude rates per 100,000 population

⁶ Staffordshire County Council – Residents Survey

⁷ Office of National Statistics (ONS) - Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain

⁸ Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) - The mental health effects of the [first] lockdown and social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK

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:

The 'toxic trio' of risks that are most likely to result in home or family safeguarding concerns – parental mental ill-health, drug and alcohol misuse, and domestic abuse are particularly present in parts of Tamworth, resulting in an elevated level of need for safeguarding of young children (under 11 years of age).

The large majority (63%) of children in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent who are subject to a Child Protection Plan are primarily being safeguarded as a result of neglect, followed by just under a third (31%) who have experienced emotional abuse. Compared to England, the force-area sees a greater proportion of children subject to a plan as a result of neglect, with lower proportions experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

While it is important to consider the safeguarding of young children and risk of harm within the family environment, as young people move from childhood and 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.

In the past 12 months (to October 2022) across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent 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, although increases in Tamworth have been similar to the force average.

There are some concerns in Tamworth relating to the safeguarding of young people outside of their family contexts – particularly the risk of criminal exploitation by Urban Street Gangs (USGs) and organised criminals of vulnerable young people, who can be lured into criminality with the promise of financial gain, and perhaps the appeal of fraternity.

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 due to their level of vulnerability and often unstable social networks and networks of support. Once groomed, these young people are then often used for high-risk activities, increasingly linked to County Lines drug supply activity, such as street dealing and transporting drugs and recovering drug debts.

Rates of Children's Safeguarding referrals and Looked After Children in Tamworth have been a historical concern, and have been a particular issue in Glascote ward.

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.

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.

Direction of travel: Ongoing concern

Local hotspots: Glascote (Rates of Child Protection and Looked After Children)

At risk groups:

Criminal exploitation:

Males aged 10 to 19 in disadvantaged communities (particularly including LAC and those in PRUs)

Children's safeguarding:

Children (birth to 17) living in communities with high levels of deprivation, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol use.

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.

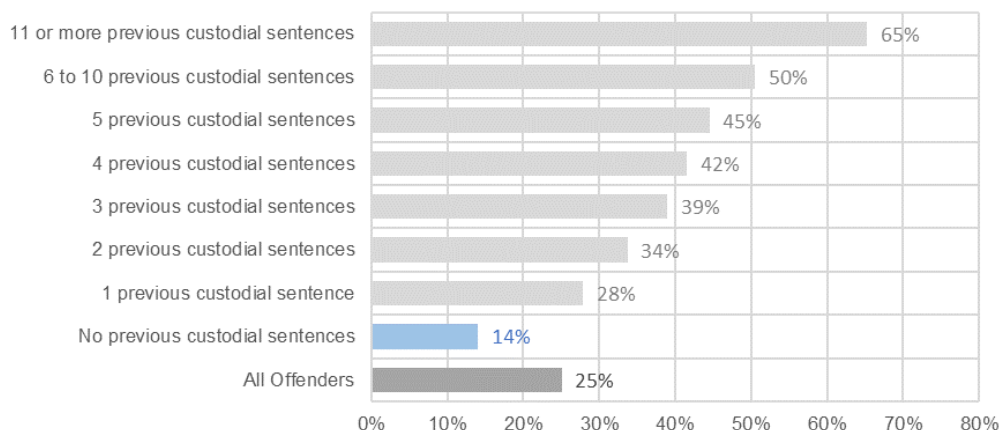
Prior to the pandemic, all major types of crime saw 50% of incidents or more committed by repeat and persistent offenders – and six⁹ out of eleven major crime types saw three-quarters (75%) or more committed by repeat offenders – including Weapons Offences. Sexual offences, however, were significantly 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.

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.

⁹ Arson & Criminal Damage, Burglary, Possession of a Weapon, Robbery, Theft, Vehicle Offences.

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 reporting¹⁰ 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.

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

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.

¹⁰ NFIB – Fraud dashboard - <https://colp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/0334150e430449cf8ac917e347897d46>

Fire and Rescue

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

CSPs with consideration: All Partnership Areas

Summary:

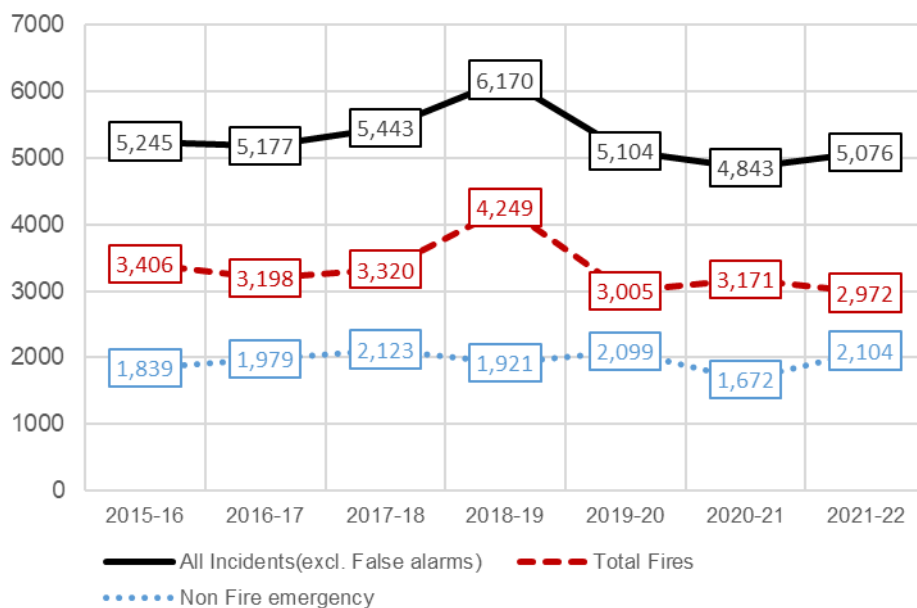
Nationally, Fire and Rescue Service's (FARS) incidents in 2021-22 (577,104) have increased from 2020-21 (518,270) as well as being the highest since 2011-12 (606,941).

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.

Safer Roads

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

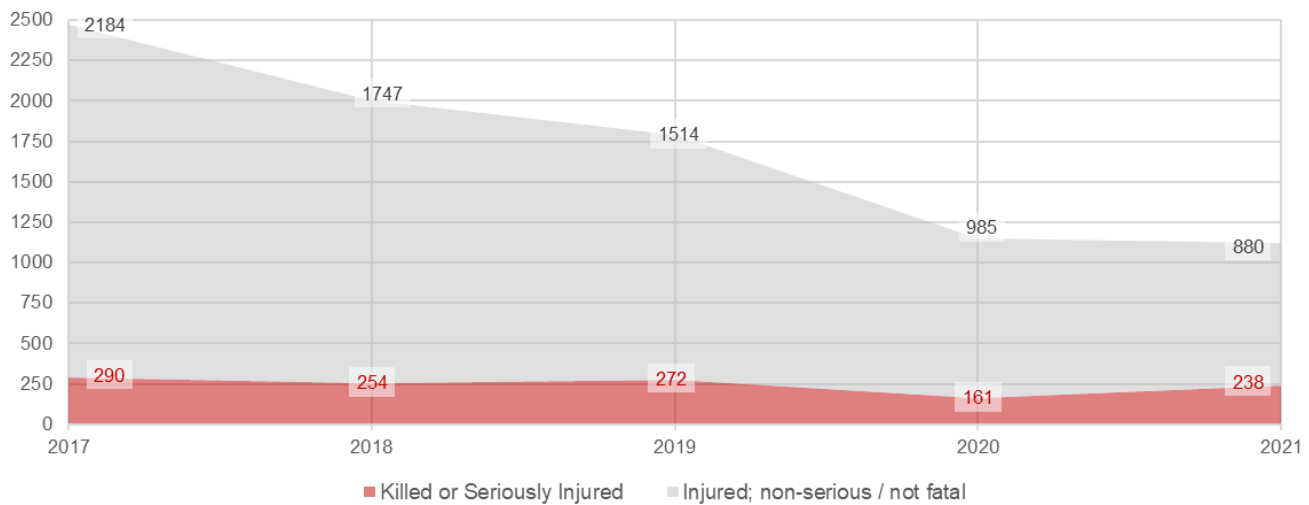
CSPs with consideration: All Partnership Areas

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 22: 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%).

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

CSPs with consideration: All remaining CSP areas

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 exploitation¹¹.

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.

While the number of offences recorded in Tamworth recently does not make Modern Slavery a key priority for the local area, it is a challenge which is present locally, and still requires a degree of consideration.

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

¹¹ NCA – National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2018

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 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.

It is clear that the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic (including its impact on global supply chains) and the growing impact of the war in Ukraine are creating challenges in the UK – both in terms of inflation in the cost of everyday essentials (such as food, energy, and fuel) and pressures on government finances and fiscal decision-making.

At the time of this report (November 2022) analysts at the Bank of England consider the UK to be at the start of a long period of economic recession. Experience from the deep period of global recession from 2007 to 2009 suggests that many more people are likely to become vulnerable during the coming 12-24 months, and many of those already considered vulnerable are likely to become even more so.

Tamworth, and particularly the Glascoate area of the CSP area, has historically experienced challenges around children's safeguarding demand – particularly relating to high rates of children and young people subject to Children's Social Care interventions such as Child Protection Plans and levels of children in care (Looked After Children).

While rates of conceptions amongst under 16 year olds in Tamworth have previously been significantly higher than national levels they have showed very little significant change over the last two years (2019 and 2020) and are statistically similar to national levels at present.

School attainment at KeyStage 4 (previously GCSE now Attainment 8) is below the national level, and has been for a period of time, which may have links to slightly higher local levels of universal credit claims amongst younger people. Latest attainment data (2020-21) shows that average Attainment 8 scores in Tamworth (47.1) have not improved significantly since 2019-20 (46.1) are well below national levels (50.9) and amongst the lowest five scoring Local Authority areas in the West Midlands.

Missing the national standard for KS4 can be particularly problematic, as it can act as a barrier to accessing college and sixth form learning and as a barrier to securing apprenticeships. There are risks that this might result in limited employment opportunities and make some young people more vulnerable to being criminally exploited.

The pandemic and lockdowns have had a considerable impact on Universal Credit claims both nationally and locally. In Tamworth, during the first lockdown the Claimant Count (percentage of working age adults claiming universal credit) doubled within two months between February 2020 (3.2%) and May 2020 (6.4%). This is in line with rates seen nationally. As at the end of September 2021 this rate had reduced (4.8%) but remains higher than pre-pandemic.

A good proportion of adults are in work in Tamworth – with a claimant count of 3.5% of working adults – which is similar to the national level and a notable reduction from the 6.2% seen at the peak of the pandemic (March 2021).

Earnings in Tamworth have managed to catch up with the national average (an increase of 14% locally). However with considerable inflation levels observed in 2021 and 2022 there are still many who are likely to be in full time work, but still experiencing economic hardship. Affordability of housing is a considerable challenge, although in line with the national and regional pictures, with the average home in Tamworth costing 7.9 times the average local salary.

Healthy lifestyles are a significant concern for Tamworth; particularly healthy weights for adults. Latest data (2020-21) shows that 75% of adults in Tamworth have a BMI score which sits in the Overweight or Obese range. This is significantly higher than the national level (64%) and shows a local increase from the previous year (71%, 2019-20).

While alcohol-dependency and related concerns have reduced in Tamworth in recent years, latest Public Health data (2020-21) shows that hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions have not increased since the previous Strategic Assessment, but still remain significantly above the national level. While hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions are high, alcohol-specific deaths in Tamworth are in line with national levels.

There are some concerns around older adults in Tamworth; in previous years, rates of hospital admissions due to falls in both over 65s and over 80s were significantly above national levels. Although these rates are now (2020-21) in line with levels seen across England, fall-related admissions amongst the over 80s in Tamworth are still very close to being significantly above the national level.

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.

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'¹² 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.

¹² 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.

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.

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 at 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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.

Vehicle Crime

There is a need to raise awareness of measures that individuals can take to reduce the risk of becoming victims of such types of crime, particularly in high risk and hot-spot areas, and amongst high-risk groups. This is equally the case for business and small business owners who rely on vehicles as a business asset.

Safety Partnerships should continue to engage with Staffordshire Police to identify emerging hot-spot areas and vehicle makes/models which are at particular risk, in order to direct relevant preventative activity as appropriate.

Vulnerable Persons (incl. 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 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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 & Ubberley	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
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

Appendix E: Mosaic Groups - Source: Experian Mosaic 7 (2022)

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

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