

Crime and community safety (incorporating victims of crime and anti-social behaviour)

Headlines

Crime

The level of total recorded crime at the end of March 2012 reduced by 37% since 2002. There were sustained reductions in violence against the person, vehicle crime, burglary and theft since 2010.

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) covers a wide variety of behaviours, which can be broadly categorised as personal, nuisance and environmental. Local survey measures showed that perceptions of anti-social behaviour were broadly stable but there was significant variation at ward level.

Fear of crime

The direct experience of crime as a victim had a negative impact on a person's sense of health and wellbeing. The fear of crime also impacted on health and feelings of personal safety. Although levels of crime reduced over the past decade, these reductions were not always reflected in residents' feelings of safety and their confidence that the Police and partners were dealing with their concerns.

Why is this issue important?

Crime³

The level of crime influences how people perceive their local area, and direct experience of it as a victim has a negative impact on personal health and wellbeing. It also influences how people use public space. Crime has continued to fall in Kirklees. It is now lower than in 2010 when the last JSNA was produced and the downward trajectory that started in 2002 has continued. Overall crime is now 37% lower than 2002. Huddersfield South, with the presence of the town centre, continued to have more crime reported to the Police than elsewhere, with 11 crimes reported per 100 residents compared to 8 Kirklees-wide.

The level of total recorded crime at the end of March 2012 reduced by 37% since 2002. Recorded crime in Kirklees was lower than the average in the IQUANTA family of comparable districts.

The breakdown of overall recorded crime by offence type changed over the past decade. Sustained reductions in violence against the person, vehicle crime, criminal damage, burglary and theft, have taken place.

Domestic burglary has fallen between 2010 and 2012 after peaking in 2009 and the year to March 2012 saw 3,235 domestic burglaries in Kirklees. There remained hotspots in Huddersfield North (3.6% of households suffered a burglary) and Huddersfield South (2.4%). The Kirklees average is 1.9%.

Alongside the good partnership work undertaken over the past decade, changes in technology such as immobilisers and integrated entertainment systems resulted in a 61% reduction in vehicle crime since 2002/03 to 3,728 offences in the year to March 2012. Concerted effort to tackle violent crimes (assault with injury), particularly those related to alcohol, led to a 44% fall in the number of offences from a peak in 2005/06. In 2011/12 there were 2,248 assaults with injury and 464 offences of robbery. Hotspots in Huddersfield South reflect the presence of the town centre and offences related to the night-time economy and also at certain times of the year. These figures are also associated with [domestic abuse](#) which is prevalent across Kirklees. Robbery ranges from armed bank robbery to a child threatening violence to take another's possessions. It is low and reducing but impacts on fear of crime in the community.

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour covers a wide variety of behaviours which can be broadly categorised as personal, nuisance and environmental. Local survey measures showed that perceptions of anti-social behaviour were broadly stable. 1 in 8 (14%) residents of Kirklees felt there was a problem in their area but this ranged from 1 in 20 in Denby Dale & Kirkburton (5%) to 1 in 7 (15%) in Dewsbury and Mirfield¹. Some of this variation was linked to higher levels of environmental trigger factors such as fly-tipping although sometimes there was no correlation with recorded offences.

Analysis of a range of data sources relating to personal, nuisance and environmental anti-social behaviours highlighted a number of repeat locations and hotspots. This analysis also highlighted different issues in different areas. For example, police incidents and noise nuisance were more likely to be factors in urban areas whereas dog complaints were more common in rural areas. Analysis also identified a significant seasonal dimension to anti-

social behaviour with an increase in nuisance motorbikes in summer and fireworks and related youth anti-social behaviour in October and November.

Fear of crime

Being a victim of, or living in fear of, crime or anti-social behaviour affected people in a number of ways including financial, physical and emotional. Whilst crime or anti-social behaviour had an impact on all victims, for some particularly vulnerable people, this victimisation could be a precursor to being unable to live independently (for example domestic burglary of older people). The effects of long-term and continuous cases of anti-social behaviour, such as neighbour disputes, impacted directly on the [mental health and wellbeing](#) of individuals and created stresses on relationships on issues such as sleep patterns.

Although levels of crime reduced over the past decade, these reductions were not always reflected in residents' feelings of safety and confidence that the Police and partners were dealing with their concerns³. When questioned, residents consistently identified crime as one of the main issues that affected how they felt about their local area, yet only 41% of people in March 2012 were satisfied with the manner in which the Police and Kirklees Council deal with crime and anti-social behaviour in their area. Likewise, 19% of people felt crime had increased in their local area despite the opposite being true across all localities. The perception that crime had increased was highest in Dewsbury (23%), Huddersfield South (23%) and Huddersfield North (25%), and lowest in Denby Dale & Kirkburton (12%). In 2012 86% of people in Kirklees felt safe outside during the day, though this ranged from 78% in Dewsbury to 95% in Denby Dale & Kirkburton¹.

What significant factors are affecting this issue?

The collective responsibility to create safer communities was formally recognised through the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. This legislation brought partners such as the Police, Kirklees Council, NHS and the probation service together to understand and address issues that are often interlinked and beyond the scope of a single agency. Effective partnership working lessened the effect of the recession on crime compared with previous economic downturns³.

[Drug](#) and [alcohol](#) misuse is also associated with crime and offending and the Partnership plan includes a range of interventions designed to reduce the impact of these factors³.

Which groups are most affected by this issue?

Crime has an impact on people both as victims of offences and through the fear of crime. Often, there was not a direct correlation between the chances of being a victim and levels of fear. For example, [older people](#) across Kirklees exhibited higher levels of fear despite being statistically less likely to be a victim¹.

The more deprived the neighbourhood, the more likely it is to have social and environmental factors presenting risks to health including poor housing, higher rates of crime and more risks to safety from traffic and accidents².

Where is this causing greatest concern?

There was a concentration of crime and anti-social behaviour issues in a number of hotspot areas that tended to reflect deprivation. Property crimes such as burglary were higher in North [Huddersfield](#), with ASB highest in Huddersfield, [Dewsbury](#) and [Batley](#). The Kirklees Safer Stronger Communities Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment, refreshed for 2012, highlighted the following issues by district³:

Batley, Birstall & Birkenshaw

Vehicle crime was high because of the volume of vehicles in out of town retail areas. There were above average levels of alcohol related violence in parts of the area with an established night-time economy. Residents perceived problems with people dealing or using drugs, vandalism and rowdy behaviour in parts of the area.

Denby Dale & Kirkburton

Levels of recorded crime were the lowest in the district. Satisfaction rates were the highest in Kirklees and some of the trigger factors, such as environmental issues (e.g. fly-tipping), were the lowest.

Dewsbury and Mirfield

Residents in Dewsbury expressed proportionately less fear of crime and less overall satisfaction with the local area. This was associated with anti-social behaviour issues such as fly-tipping and nuisance behaviour. [Mirfield](#) had average levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.

Huddersfield North

Higher levels of property crime e.g. vehicle crime and domestic burglary. Perceptions of safety (particularly after dark) were low in parts of the area.

Huddersfield South

Levels of crime in the area were skewed by the presence of Huddersfield town centre. This particularly impacted on offence types where opportunities for crimes were higher, for example violence (night-time economy) and other thefts (town centre shops). There was also a high concentration of anti-social behaviour incidents linked both with the town centre and residential areas.

Spennings Valley

Levels of recorded crime were better than average although fear of crime was proportionately higher, particularly after dark. Parts of the area had above average levels of environmental anti-social behaviour and fire incidents.

The Valleys

Levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime were generally better than average for the district. Satisfaction levels were amongst the highest in the area and trigger factors such as environmental issues (e.g. fly-tipping) were below average.

Views of local people

The largest and most recent gauge of public opinion in the district was the 2012 Your Place, Your Say survey. Overall, 3 in 4 (75%) people were generally satisfied with the area in which they lived. However, the areas with lower levels of satisfaction tended to be urban (Dewsbury, Huddersfield) rather than the rural areas of the district (the Valleys, Denby Dale & Kirkburton). Residents from rural wards tended to feel safer than their urban counterparts. Perceptions of anti-social behaviour also had an urban/rural dimension with higher perceptions of a problem in Dewsbury, Batley and Huddersfield.

The survey also showed there was a correlation between higher subjective wellbeing (e.g. life satisfaction, happiness, lower anxiety) and likelihood of feeling safe.

What could commissioners and service planners consider?

Crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime have a direct impact on victims and communities. This can be financial, emotional and physical and can impact on people's health and wellbeing. The overall priorities for the Kirklees Partnership Plan are therefore³:

Confidence, satisfaction and the fear of crime³

Addressing factors such as graffiti and fly-tipping, which is intended to promote higher satisfaction with services, and reduce fear of crime/promote wellbeing. The Partnership plan aims to reduce the perception amongst residents that crime has increased to below 15% across Kirklees by 2015 (currently 19%) as well as increasing satisfaction with Police and Council responses to crime and ASB from 41-45%.

Property crime³

Continuing to target property crimes such as burglary and vehicle offences. The target is to reduce domestic burglary by 20% and vehicle crime by 15% between 2012 and 2015 to 2,585 and 3,144 offences respectively.

Personal crime

Continuing a Partnership focus on alcohol related offences (locations/individuals), crime prevention for groups at risk of robbery, a targeted approach to domestic abuse and partnership work on child sexual exploitation.

Anti-social behaviour³

Continuing to improve perceptions and engage with local people in addressing anti-social behaviour. The plan will use up to date intelligence from partners to identify and target repeat individuals, locations and times associated with higher levels of anti-social behaviour. This is intended to reduce the perception of residents that their locality has a problem with ASB from 14% to 11% by 2015.

Drugs and alcohol

The assessment highlighted the significant impact of alcohol both relating to issues such as violent crime and drug related offending and identified the need for continued joint working between the Council, Police, public health and the NHS.

Reducing re-offending

This work will focus on the factors associated with higher levels of re-offending including training/education, accommodation, and drugs and alcohol. The priority will also ensure victims and communities are integral to tackling re-offending behaviour.

Community cohesion and involving communities

A key theme running through the plan is the crucial role of residents in developing longer term solutions to local problems through greater involvement in creating safer and stronger communities by supporting easier reporting, promoting volunteering and less formally by creating a culture than promotes neighbourliness.

References

1. Your Place, Your Say, Kirklees Council; 2012.
2. Marmot M. Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post 2010; 2010.
3. Kirklees Safer Stronger Communities Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Partnership Plan; 2012/13.

Date this section was last reviewed

TC 18/7/2013