Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership

working together to make communities safer

Strategic Assessment
September 2021

Contents

INTRODUCTION	Page 3
Purpose	Page 3
Methodology	Page 3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Page 4
Key Findings	Page 7
GENERAL CONTEXT	Page 9
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2020 - 2023	Page 11
Priority One – High Harm & Violence	Page 14
Knife Crime	Page 12
Serious Youth Violence	Page 16
Robbery	Page 19
Domestic Abuse	Page 23
Serious Sexual Offences	Page 29
Priority Two – Hidden Harm & Exploitation	Page 35
Preventing Radicalisation	Page 36
CSE and Missing	Page 38
County Lines	Page 42
Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking	Page 43
Cuckooing	Page 46
Hate Crime	Page 47
Priority Three – Building Community Confidence	Page 52
Anti-Social Behaviour	Page 53
Youth Related ASB	Page 56
Alcohol Related ASB	Page 58
Street Drinking	Page 59
Begging & Rough Sleeping	Page 60
COMMON THREADS	Page 63
Drugs Misuse	Page 63
Alcohol Misuse	Page 65
Mental Health	Page 69
Children Known to the Criminal Justice System	Page 72
Re-Offending	Page 75
Serious and Organised Crime	Page 80
Summary of Recommendations	Page 82
APPENDIX 1 – Impacts of COVID-19	Page 83
APPENDIX 2 – Risk Assessment Matrix	Page 84
APPENDIX 3 – Glossary of Terms	Page 85

Introduction

Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was formed in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as a statutory requirement. Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership is a joint partnership of five responsible authorities; Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Offender Management Services and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group who work together to tackle the crimes and anti-social behaviour that affect our communities. The CSP also works closely with partners from the Youth Offending Service, Public Health and local Social Housing Providers alongside the voluntary and community sector.

The quality of life for those who live, work or visit Bedford Borough depends on many organisations: The Council, Police, Fire and Rescue and healthcare organisations, as well as Parish and Town Councils, businesses, voluntary organisations, tenants and residents' associations, community, and faith groups, individual residents, workers and visitors. Tens of thousands of people have an impact on what it feels like to live and work in Bedford Borough.

Purpose

This crime and disorder Strategic Assessment is prepared on behalf of the Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to inform strategic planning and commissioning processes, to ensure that community safety considerations form an integral part of the delivery of statutory services within the CSP. Full statutory requirements can be found in Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations (2007)[1].

The crime and disorder Strategic Assessment is part of an intelligence process that is used to help tackle crime and disorder and to improve community safety. It is produced annually by the Borough's Community Safety Team, with contributions from across the partnership. It is reviewed quarterly through the CSP Safer Thematic Group and by regular assessments that monitor CSP activities. It has detailed analysis that explores key and emerging problems and consultations with community groups. The aim of the crime and disorder strategic assessment is to identify the key issues that affect Bedford Borough. It considers what needs to be achieved to improve community safety, including how the community can feel confident that their fears are being addressed.

Methodology

To ensure the production of a concise and targeted document, a scanning matrix is employed to identify the most significant demands faced by the CSP. To achieve this, a scanning matrix was used with each CSP partner agency was given the opportunity to contribute organisational demands and professional judgement of a broad range of issues. The comparison of organisational demands in this way provides an evidence based approach, which includes experiences, concerns and local knowledge.

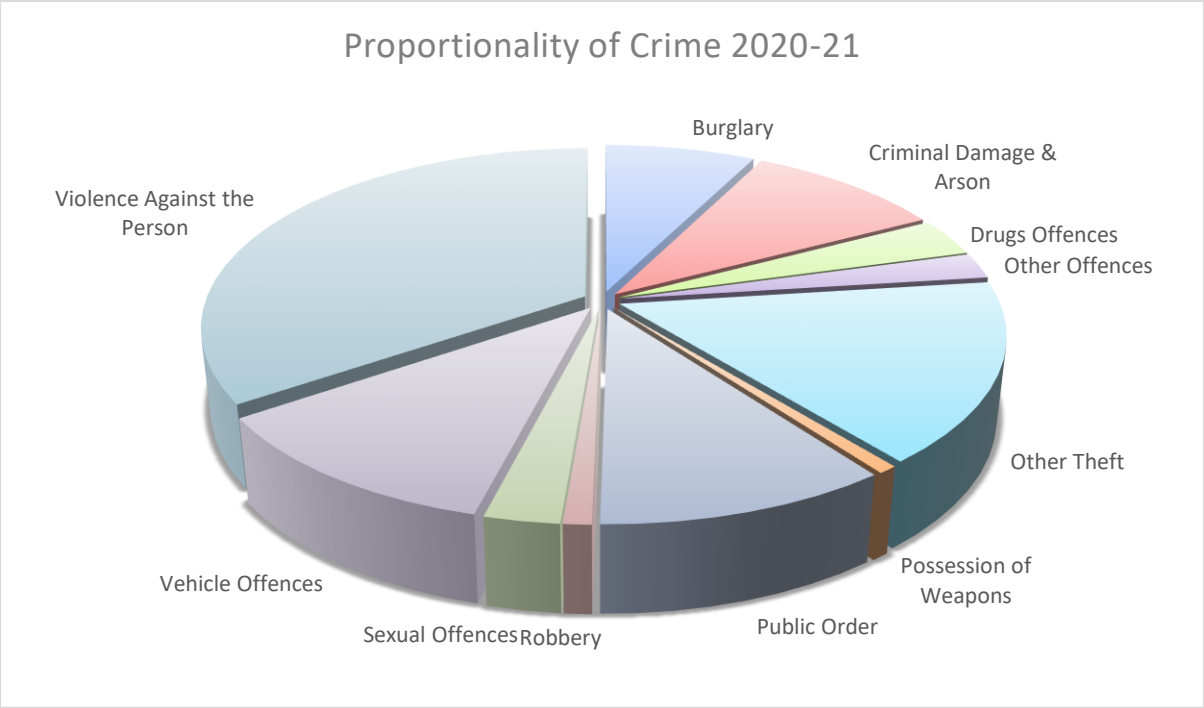
Analysis is focused on a victim, offender and location (VOL) approach to ensure a clear picture of the problem is developed. Unless stated otherwise data for the most recent year is the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021.

[1] http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/legislation26.htm

Executive Summary 2021

In the 12 months (Apr 2020 – Mar 2021), Bedfordshire Police recorded a total of 14,040 offences. This is a reduction of 6.2% (928 offences) on the previous year. The partnership has set targets to reduce many of the Victim Base Crimes whilst continuing to recognise a number of key crime areas as under reported, making the evaluation of overall levels of crime difficult.

Latest figure produces by the ONS for Crime in England and Wales[2] shows that police recorded crime reduced by 10% in the year ending Mar 2021. Total recorded crime saw substantial falls during April 2020 compared with April 2019 (26%) coinciding with the introduction of the first national lockdown. Levels remained low with the difference narrowing again when restrictions were eased.



Crime Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Change	% Change	% Total
All Crime (excl Action Fraud)	15704	14968	14040	-928	-6.2%	100
- Victim Based Crime	13715	12770	11678	-1092	-8.6%	83.2
- State Based Crime	1989	2198	2363	165	7.5%	16.8

In the same period 4,122 non-crime incidents were recorded as Anti-Social Behaviour, an increase of 18.1% on the previous year's figure.

Peaks in reporting occurred in April 2020, when the first national lockdown was introduced and again in June 2020 when the first national lockdown ended.

[2] Crime in England and wales ending March 2020 - ONS

Reductions have been recorded within almost all of the main victim based crime categories within the last year, with the exception of; Violence Against the Person (+4%) and vehicle offences (+2.7%)

Victim Based Crime	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Change	% Change	% All 20-21
Violence Against the Person	**4515**	**4657**	**4842**	**185**	**4.0**	**34.5**
- Homicide	4	0	0	0		0
- Violence with Injury	1490	1286	1207	-79	-6.1	8.6
- Violence without Injury	3021	3371	3635	264	7.8	25.9
Robbery	**255**	**223**	**146**	**-77**	**-34.5**	**1.0**
- Robbery of Business Property	20	26	13	-13	-50.0	0.1
- Robbery of Personal Property	235	197	133	-64	-32.5	0.9
Burglary	**1514**	**1279**	**1044**	**-235**	**-18.4**	**7.4**
- Burglary Residential	937	770	740	-30	-3.9	5.3
- Burglary Business & Community	577	509	304	-205	-40.3	2.2
Vehicle Offences	**1729**	**1576**	**1619**	**43**	**2.7**	**11.5**
- Theft of a Vehicle	277	243	223	-20	-8.2	1.6
- Theft from a Vehicle	1106	989	920	-69	-7.0	6.6
- Vehicle Interference	346	344	476	132	38.4	3.4
Other Theft	**3676**	**3075**	**2264**	**-811**	**-26.4**	**16.1**
- Theft from the Person	195	166	93	-73	-44.0	0.7
- Theft of a Pedal Cycle	619	477	424	-53	-11.1	3.0
- Shoplifting	1398	1103	808	-295	-26.7	5.8
- Other Theft	1464	1329	939	-390	-29.3	6.7
Criminal Damage & Arson	**1530**	**1528**	**1382**	**-146**	**-9.6**	**9.8**
- Criminal Damage	1439	1464	1321	-143	-9.8	9.4
- Arson	91	64	60	-4	-6.3	0.4
Victim Based - Under Reported	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**Change**	**% Change**	**% All 20-21**
Hate Crimes *	260	326	311	-15	-4.6	2.2
Domestic Abuse *	1904	2050	2231	181	8.8	15.9
Sexual Offences	496	432	381	-51	-11.8	2.7
- Rape	204	158	131	-27	-17.1	0.9
- Other Sexual Offences	292	274	250	-24	-8.8	1.8
State Based Crime	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**Change**	**% Change**	**% All 20-21**
Drugs Offences	434	480	471	-9	-1.9	3.4
- Trafficking of Drugs	87	62	69	7	11.3	0.5
- Possession of Drugs	347	418	402	-16	-3.8	2.9
Possession of Weapons	110	83	98	15	18.1	0.7
Public Order	1167	1356	1477	121	8.9	10.5
Misc Crimes against Society	278	279	317	38	13.6	2.3

* These offences will be included within other Victim Based Crimes

ONS Crime Severity Score

Crime Severity Scores, developed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)[3], can be used to show which crime types have the highest impacts on society and therefore require the greatest allocation of resources.

Traditional statistics on police recorded crime data are presented a count of offences or as a rate of per head of population. They take no account of the different levels of severity of the crimes within a category, or the demands these will place on partnership agencies.

The Severity Score is intended to complement existing data, supporting analytical products that can understand the demands on services across the CSP and at a local level. It can therefore help to inform the strategic decision making process.

	2019/20				2020/21			
HMIC Crime Description	**Crime Count**	**Rank by Count**	**Total Severity Score**	**Rank by Severity**	**Crime Count**	**Rank by Count**	**Total Severity Score**	**Rank by Severity**
Rape	158	16	496373.2	1	131	15	399730.2	1
Violence with Injury	1286	6	398448.1	2	1207	5	384557.9	2
Burglary Dwelling	770	8	367460.2	3	740	8	360791.9	3
Other Sexual Offences	274	13	163216.6	5	250	13	156258.5	4
Violence without Injury	3371	1	158619.8	6	3635	1	151734.1	5
Robbery	223	14	178317.2	4	146	14	116745.8	6
Other Theft	1329	5	72367.43	8	939	6	72191.69	7
Vehicle Offences	1576	2	75005.01	7	1619	2	62610.79	8
Miscellaneous Against Society	279	12	36733	10	317	11	41915.19	9
Burglary - Non Dwelling	509	9	67795.87	9	304	12	37397.59	10
Trafficking of Drugs	62	19	31803.36	11	69	18	35394.06	11
Public Order	1356	4	24455.22	12	1477	3	24234.47	12
Arson	64	18	18341.98	13	60	19	22071.96	13
Possession of Weapons	83	17	9460.868	16	98	16	9676.501	14
Shoplifting	1103	7	13076.66	15	808	7	9579.276	15
Theft from the Person	166	15	13347.26	14	93	17	7477.68	16
Criminal Damage	1464	3	7926.607	17	1321	4	7154.878	17
Bicycle Theft	477	10	7238.822	18	424	9	6434.509	18
Possession of Drugs	418	11	1188.231	19	402	10	1046.296	19

Red cells indicate those offence groups that have been ranked in the top 5 and amber cells indicate those groups in ranks 6-10. Only two crime group ranked in the top 5 by volume appears in the top 5 when ranked by Severity scores, Violence without Injury, and Violence with Injury. More interestingly are those offences that are ranked in the top 5 by severity and yet do not appear in the top 10 by volume; Rape and Other Sexual Offences. This pattern is consistent with previous years.

[3] Office for National Statistics – Crime Severity Score data tool

Key Findings – (Apr 2020 – Mar 2021)

Recorded Crimes

- Overall levels of recorded crimes have reduced by 6.2% to 14,040 offences
- Reductions have been recorded within almost all of the main victim based crime categories within the last year, with the exception of; Violence Against the Person (+4%) and vehicle offences (+2.7%)
- Hate Crimes & Incidents recorded in the year increased by 6.9%, with 29.6% of crimes marked with a non-racial motivation
- Knife Crime offences reduced by 8%, with 13 less crimes in the most recent 12 months
- Serious Sexual Offences reported to the police reduced by 9.7% in the last year
- The number of Domestic Abuse Crimes reported to the police increased by 8.5%, an additional 175 offences from the previous year, at the same time the number of incidents increased by 3.2%

Severity Scores (Harm)

- The top five crime categories by harm were; Rape, Violence with Injury, Residential Burglary, Other Sexual Offences and Violence Without Injury. Whilst these categories are broadly consistent with the previous year 'Total Severity Scores' reduced for all five categories in the last year

Recorded ASB

- Police recorded ASB saw an increase of 18.1% (631 incidents) in the last year. Peaks in reporting occurred in April 2020, when the first national lockdown was introduced and again in June 2020 when the first national lockdown ended
- Bedford Borough Council recorded 392 new ASB cases in the same period, a substantial increase of 32.4%
- Street Drinking reported to the Police increased by 53.3%, 40 more than the previous year
- Incidents of Begging and Vagrancy reported to the police increased by 28.8%, 58 more than the previous year

Re-offending

- A review of the cohort managed by IOM recorded a 54% reduction in offences committed; with 72% having reduced or stopped offending

Youth Offending

- The service recorded 27 'First Time Entrants' to the Criminal Justice System in the year, compared to 28 cases recorded in the previous year. The rate per 100,000 remains positive compared to both the region and nationally

- Three young people received custodial sentences in the year; this is a reduction from the previous year's figure of six

Exploitation and Hidden Harms

- Episodes of Missing for Bedford Borough looked after children reduced by 28.4% in the most recent year.
- 6 offences of Child Sexual Exploitation were recorded in the Borough in the last 12 months, this compared to 19 in the previous year
- 19 offences of Modern Day Slavery were recorded in the Borough, this compared to 48 in the previous year.
- The number of Rough Sleepers recorded in Nov 2020 reduced to just 6 individuals from 30 in the previous year.
- Bedfordshire Police identified 82 locations of concern in relation to the cuckooing of a vulnerable adult for the purposes of the production or distribution of illegal drugs
- Adult Safeguarding referrals reduced by 2.8%, with 8.8% less referrals received between Apr and June 2020

General Context

Geographically, Bedford Borough is predominantly a rural Borough covering 476 sq. km and comprising the county town of Bedford, the adjacent urban area of Kempston, and 45 rural parishes. However, the population is concentrated in the urban area, with almost two-thirds (62%) living in Bedford and Kempston.

According to ONS 2020 mid-year estimate, the Borough has a population of 174,687 which has grown by approximately 10% since 2011. Much of that growth has occurred in the rural parishes bordering the urban area where there have been several major residential developments, including the large new community of Wixams.

- There are an estimated 75,652 households in the Borough mid 2019 (Borough Estimate)
- The older population is projected to increase at a much higher rate. Between 2018 and 2025 the 65+ population is projected to rise by 17.4% and the 85+ population by 20.5%
- Long term, the population of the Borough is projected to reach 196,146 in 2043; this would represent a 14.3% increase between 2018 and 2043.

Ethnicity	2001	2011	2001/2011 Change	
			Number	%
White British	80.8%	71.5%	-6879	-5.6%
Other White*	6.2%	9.1%	5067	55.1%
Mixed	2.0%	3.5%	2463	84.3%
Asian/Asian British	8.2%	11.4%	5861	48.6%
Black/Black British	2.6%	3.9%	2356	61.3%
Arab**/Other	0.3%	0.7%	686	160.7%
All groups	**147,925**	**157,497**	**9,554**	**6.60%**

Sources: ONS, 2001, 2011 Census.

*Includes White Irish, White Other and Gypsy/Irish Traveller

** Arab was not identified separately in 2001 Census

The Borough has an ethnically diverse population. The 2011 Census reported that 28.5% of the population was from BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) groups (non- 'White British') compared to 20.2% nationally.

The BAME population has increased by 16,400, between 2001 and 2011. More than 1 in 6 residents (17.6%) was born outside the UK.

The BAME population is concentrated in the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston, with particularly large communities in Queens Park (75%) and Cauldwell (59%) wards. The proportion of BAME residents is highest among younger age groups.

According to 2011 Census data there are 4,170 households in the Borough where no adult has English as a main language, and in a further 600 households where only a child has English as a main language.

These households are particularly concentrated in Castle, Cauldwell, Harpur, Kingsbrook and Queens Park wards.

While overall deprivation levels in the Borough are in the mid-range of all English local authorities, there are pockets of significant deprivation in the urban area, 4 LSOAs within parts of Castle, Cauldwell and Harpur wards are among the 10% most deprived areas in England[4]. A further 10 areas in Bedford and Kempston are among the 10-20% most deprived areas in England.

Unemployment, as measured by those claiming either Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit for those that are out of work, was 5,870 or 5.5% of the population aged 16-64 in September 2021, slightly above that of the rate for England (5.1%). This is a positive reduction from the previous year's figure of 6,995 or 6.6%, which saw significant increases as a result of Covid-19. Rates of unemployment fluctuate through the 27 wards of the Borough from 1.8% on Oakley to 9.7% in Harpur Ward.

In 2011, 66.7% of Borough households were owner occupiers, which was above the national average of 64.2%. However, in keeping with national trends, home ownership levels have declined since 2001 (72.4%), with the private rental market growing significantly from 12% of households in 2001 to 17% in 2011, an increase of 5,000 households

Data from the 2021 national census was not available at the time of this report, statistical data is due to be released in Spring 2022

Recommendation: Census Data from 2021 should be used to better understand the demographic profile of the Borough and how that compares to locally recorded data for priority areas

Community Consultation

The regular Community Consultation exercise that was scheduled for both 2020 and 2021 did not take place due to Covid-19 restrictions on community events and the limited resources of Partners to deliver the exercise.

The CSP recognises the importance of regular engagement with local communities, to inform multi-agency working and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Recommendation: A full Community Consultation should take place in 2022 to inform the development of the new 2023 Strategic plan

[4] Department for Communities and Local Government, the English Indices of Deprivation 2019.

Strategic Priorities 2020-2023

By reviewing the Emerging Issues and Common Threads identified in the 2019 Strategic Assessment, alongside the feedback from the Community Consultation, the Bedford Borough CSP developed a strategic plan for 2020-2023 that can be divided into three priority areas.

Each area has been explored to identify the Key Issues, Partnership Aims and Expected Outcomes.

The Strategic Priorities identified for 2020-2023 are:

- High Harm and Violence
- Hidden Harm and Exploitation
- Building Community Confidence

Each Priority area can be broken down into a number of thematic areas; these will be looked at in the context of the most recent year's data to provide a review on the last performance year and to offer any significant areas of change or concern that may impact on the CSP Plan moving forward

Priority One – High Harm and Violence

This priority focuses on the significant impacts of violence crimes on the victims, families and the wider community, recognising the links between Domestic and Sexual Abuse alongside new emerging patterns of Knife Crime, Youth Violence and Robbery.

Thematic Areas • Knife Crime • Serious Youth Violence • Robbery • Domestic Abuse • Serious Sexual Offences
Key Issues identified in the 2019 Strategic Assessment • Increase in recorded offences of Knife Crime • High proportion of victims of Knife Crime aged 16-20 years • Increase in Severity Scores for Serious Youth Violence • Increase in the proportion of Robberies that involve the use of a knife or bladed article • Increasing numbers or repeat victims with police recorded data for Domestic Abuse • High numbers of repeat cases being heard at the Bedford MARAC • The number of reported offences of Serious Sexual Offences continue to increase

Knife Crime

Knife Crime spans a number of Crime categories within the area of Violent Crime, where a knife or sharp instrument is involved in the offence. Knives are taken to be involved in an incident if they are used to stab or cut or as a threat.

The list of offences that are included in the group are attempt murder, grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm, threats to kill, sexual assault, rape and robbery.

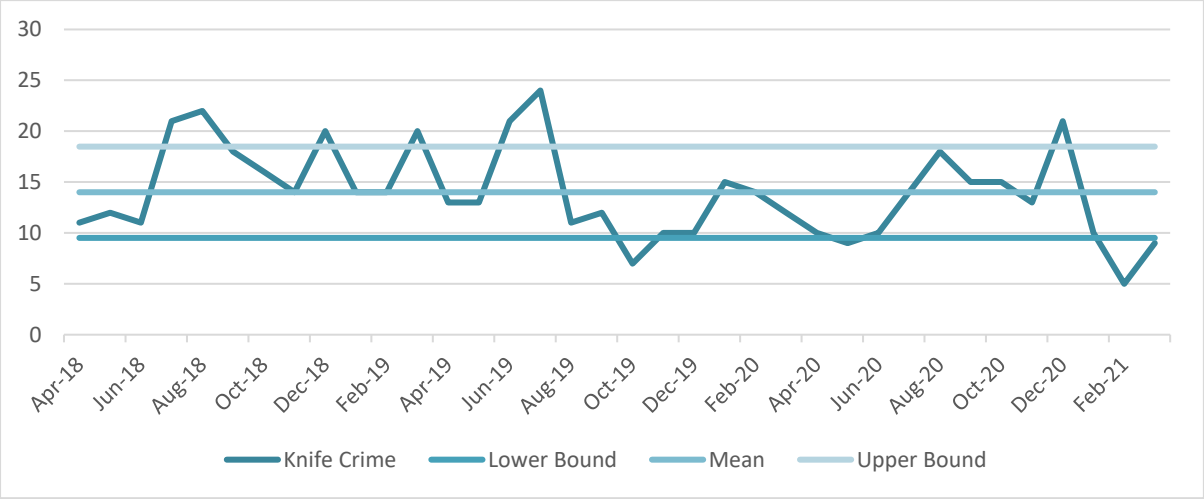
National

Over recent decades, levels of police recorded crime have fallen and in more recent years stabilised. In the last two years, increases have been recorded in lower volume but higher harm types of violence.

Over the last 12 months (year ending Mar 21)[5] Police recorded 44,286 offences, a 15% reduction when compared to the previous year. The largest decreases were seen in April tp June 2020 and January to March 2021 with offences down 20% and 22% compared with the respective periods in the previous year. These period coincide with national lockdowns and the highest level of COVID-19 restrictions. The latest available provisional admissions data for NHS hospitals in England and Wales reported 4,080 admissions, a 14% decrease in admissions for assault by a sharp object for the year ending March 2021.

Local

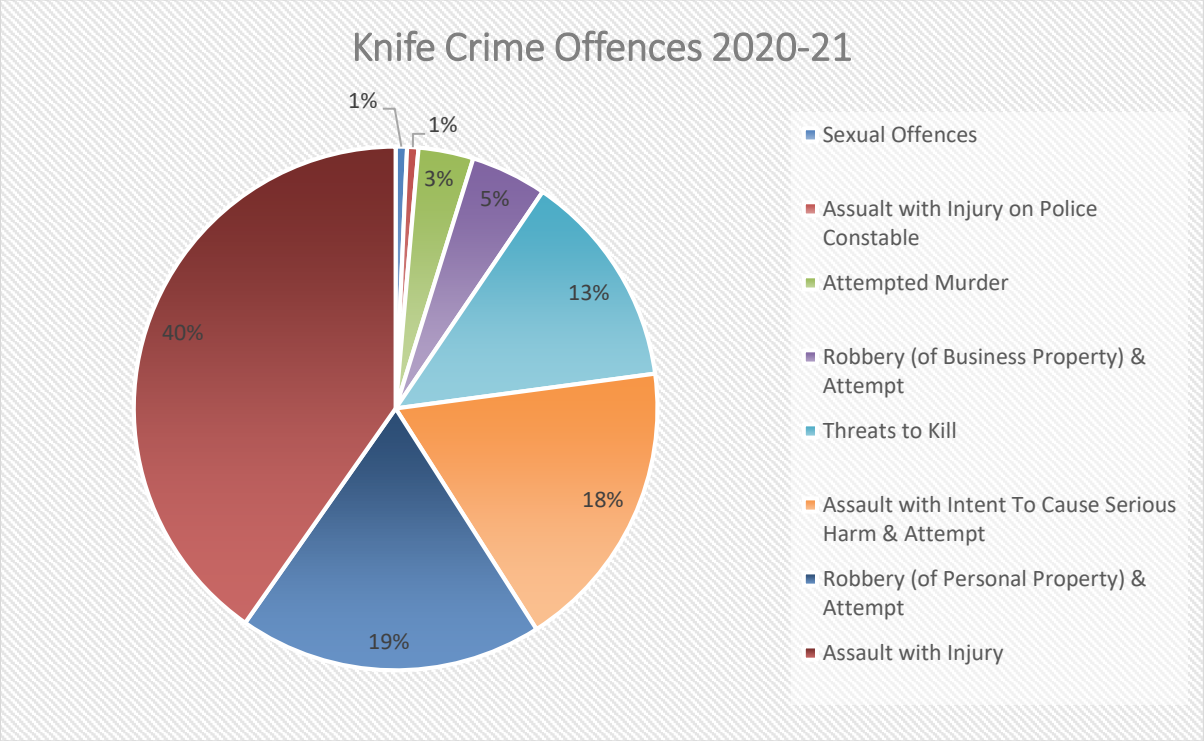
In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 Bedfordshire Police recorded 149 Knife Crimes, a reduction of 8% (-13 offences) from the previous year.



Levels of recorded offences were significantly lower in the periods where COVID-19 lockdowns were enforced and local restrictions were highest, this mirrors the national picture.

[5] ONS - Crime in England and Wales – Year Ending Mar 21

The greatest proportion of offences in the last year were for Assault with Injury at 40% (60 offences), followed by Robbery with 24% (28 personal and 7 business). Whilst the overall levels of Knife Crime reported to the police reduced, both Threats to Kill and Attempted Murder saw increases in reporting when compared to the previous year.



Victims

71.7% of victims recorded in the last 12 months were male; this is consistent with the previous year's figure of 71.3%.

- Over the last three years the number of female victims has increases by 46.4% from 28 in 2017-18 to 41 in 2020-21.
- Where known, the greatest proportions of victims, 22.6%, were aged 21 - 25 years. 16 victims were under the age of 18 years at the time of the offence; this is a reduction from the previous year's figure of 25.
- 68.6% of victims were White, an increase from the previous year's figure of 60%. 16.8% of victims were Asian and 14.6% were Black.

Offenders

Where known the majority of offenders are male, 82.4%, this is a slight reduction from the previous year's figure of 85.9%.

- Over the last three years the number of female offenders has increases by 47% from 17 in 2017-18 to 23 in 2020-21.
- 26.2% of Victims described the offender as either 'Partner/Ex Partner' (14.8%) or as 'Relative/Member of their Family' (11.4%), this is an increase from 22.8% in 2019-20

- Where known the greatest proportions of offenders (15.8) were aged 16-20 years, this is consistent with the last three years
- 20 Offenders (15%) were described as being under 18 at the time of the offence; this is a significant reduction from the previous year's figure of 41 (29%).

Where known the majority of offenders are described as White 63.5% this is an increase from the previous year but there is still and an under representation when compared to the Borough's Ethnic profile.

- 11.1% of offenders in the last 12 months were described a Black, and 24.6% were described as Asian. There is an over-representation of BAME offenders when compared the Borough demographic profile, particularly for those described as Asian.

Outcome data

Knife Crime data includes some details of the police outcomes of each offence; (crime data will not include criminal justice outcomes).

- 18.4% of offences in the last 12 months resulted in a positive outcome (Charge, Summons or a Community Resolution) a reduction from the previous year's figure of 20.1%
- Nearly half of all offences (44.9%) recorded a named suspect but did not result in a positive outcome
    - 23 offences where evidential difficulties were recorded
    - 43 offences where the victim did not support the investigation
- 17% of offences had an outcome that suggested no named suspect had been recorded and the victim did not support the investigation

Overall nearly half (46.3%) of all Knife Crimes recorded in the 12 months resulted in an outcome that described the victim as being unwilling to support the investigation.

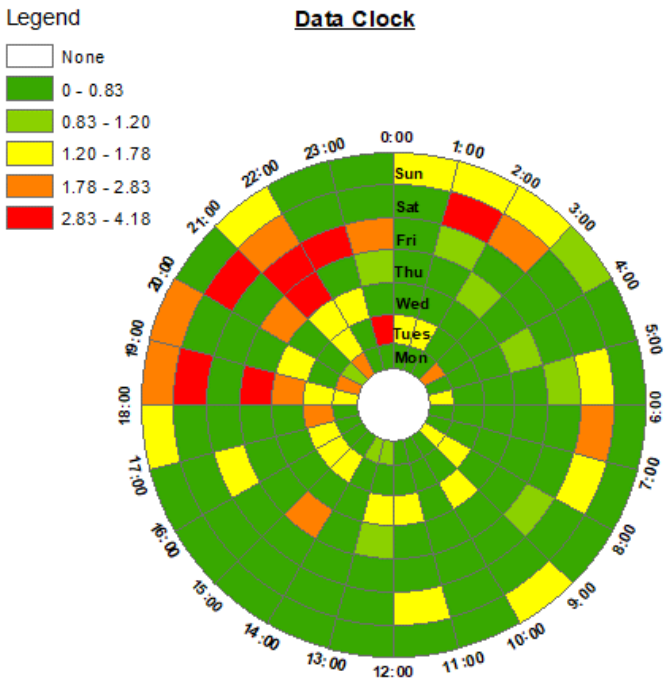
Temporal

There is no clear seasonal pattern to the levels of Knife Crime reported through the last three years.

Generally, Knife Crime offences take place throughout the late afternoons and evenings throughout the week.

This pattern is consistent with previous year's assessments.

Peaks in reporting take place at the weekend on Friday evenings to the early hours of Saturday.



Location

88.6% (132) of all Knife Crimes reported in the last 12months took place in the Urban Wards of the Borough; this is a slight reduction from the previous year's figure of 89.4%. 17 offences in the year took place in Rural Wards, this is consistent with the previous year's data.

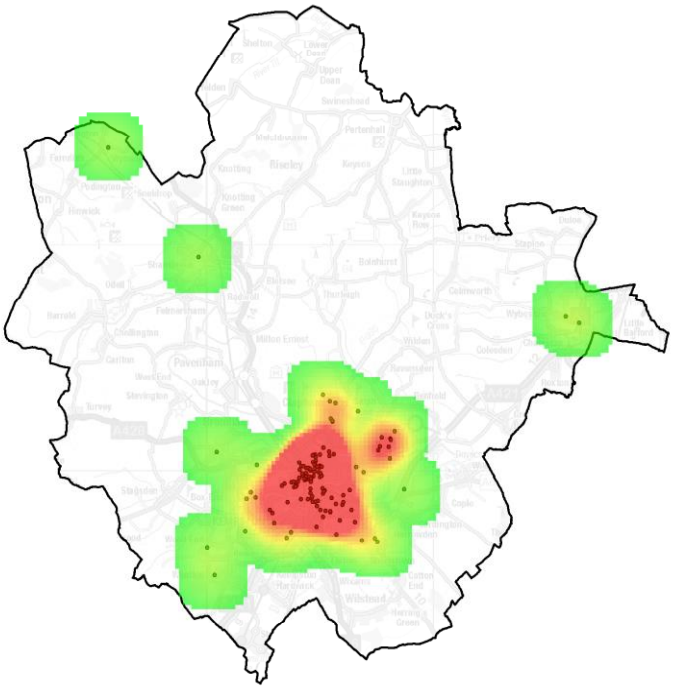
Top 5 Wards by numbers	Total	% Total
Castle Ward	32	21.5
Harpur Ward	23	15.4
Cauldwell Ward	18	12.1
Queens Park	13	8.7
Kingsbrook Ward	10	6.7
Other Wards	53	35.6
Total	149	100

Five Urban wards contribute 64.4% of all Knife Crime in the year.

The greatest proportion, 21.5%, took place in Castle Ward which includes Bedford Town Centre and the CSP area of focus, the Midland Road area.

The ward with the greatest increase in the last year was Queens Park (+ 8 offences)

Hotspot Map of all recorded Knife Crime 2020-21



There is a significant hotspot that is centred over the main town centre and Midland Road areas of Castle Ward, spreading north in Harpur Ward and west into Queens Park.
There is a second smaller cluster in Ampthill Road area of Cauldwell Ward.

Serious Youth Violence

For the purposes of this report the definition of Serious Youth Violence is as follows:
Offences of most serious violence, assault with injury or knife crime or gun crime, where either the victim or the offenders were aged under 25 years at the time of the offence.

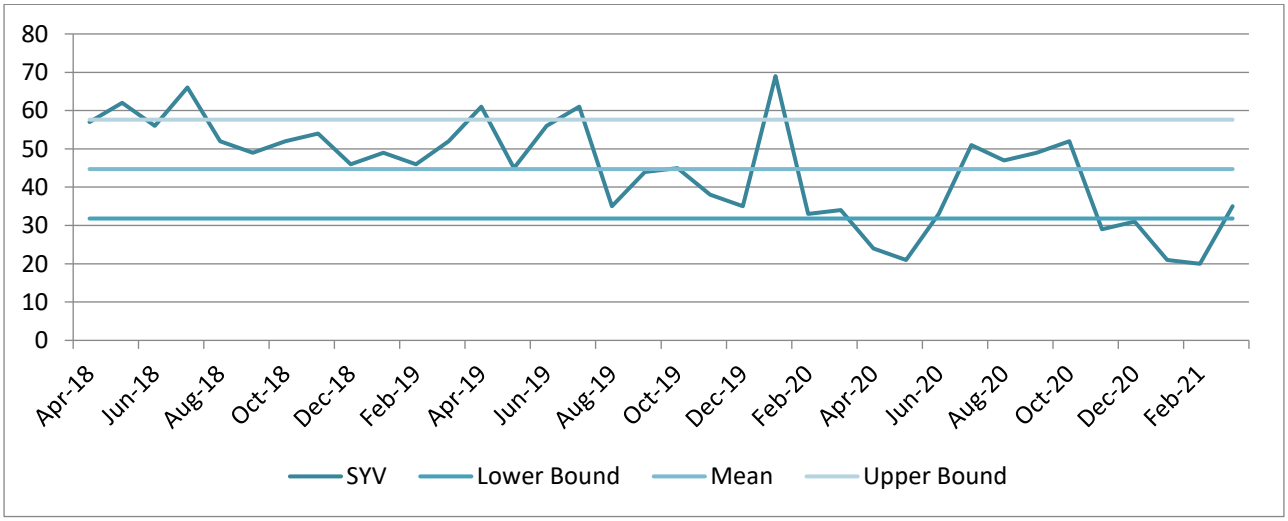
National

There are no statistic produced at a national level that cover this entire group, but over the last 12 months (year ending Mar 21)[6] Police recorded data saw a 15% reduction in Knife Crime (44,286 offences) compared to the previous year. The largest decreases were seen in April to June 2020 and January to March 2021 with offences down 20% and 22% compared with the respective periods in the previous year. These period coincide with COVID-19 national lockdowns and the highest level of restrictions.

- The latest available provisional admissions data for NHS hospitals in England and Wales reported a 14% decrease in admissions for assault by a sharp object in the year ending March 2021 (to 4,080 admissions).
- Recorded Offences involving a firearms decreased by 14% to 5,709 offences. Offences involving a firearms were at their lowest level since the year ending Mar 2016

Local

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 Bedfordshire Police recorded 413 offences that would be defined as Serious Youth Violence, a reduction of 25.7% (-143 offences) from the previous year.



The greatest proportion of offences in the group were recorded as 'Assault with Injury' this accounted for 72.4% (299 offences), a further 15.4% (64 offences) as 'Robbery – Personal' and 8.5% (35 offences) as Possession of a Weapon.

- 15 offences of Gun Crimes were recorded in the year, an increase of 4 from last year

[6] ONS - Crime in England and Wales – Year Ending Mar 21

- 57 offences of Knife Crime were recorded in the year, a reduction of 28 from last year
- 5 offences were flagged as a Hate Crime an increase of 3 from last year

Victims

73.4% of victims were Male, an increase from the previous year's figure of 60%, and 26.6% of victims were female.

The greatest proportion of victims recorded in the last year were aged 11-15 Years (26.9%). *(The age specific definition of this theme will affect the profile of this group.)* 163 victims were under the age of 18 at the time of the offence.

The majority of victims (78%) were White. 9% were Asian and 12.4% were Black.

Offenders

In the last 12 months nearly a third of offences (31.5%), had no suspect details recorded.

- Of the 130 Offences with no suspect details, 48.5% record an outcome that suggests that the 'Victim does not support the investigation'.

There is a concern amongst professionals that victims of youth violence that may be linked to gang activity do not disclose details of the offence due to previous negative contact with authorities or a fear of further violence from the suspect or their associates.

- Where known 81.8% of offenders were male and 18.2% were female, the proportion of female offenders has reduced by 3.2% compared to the previous year.

The greatest proportion of offenders recorded in the last year were aged 16-20 Years (28.1%). *(The age specific definition of this theme will affect the profile of this group.)* 99 offenders were under the age of 18 at the time of the offence.

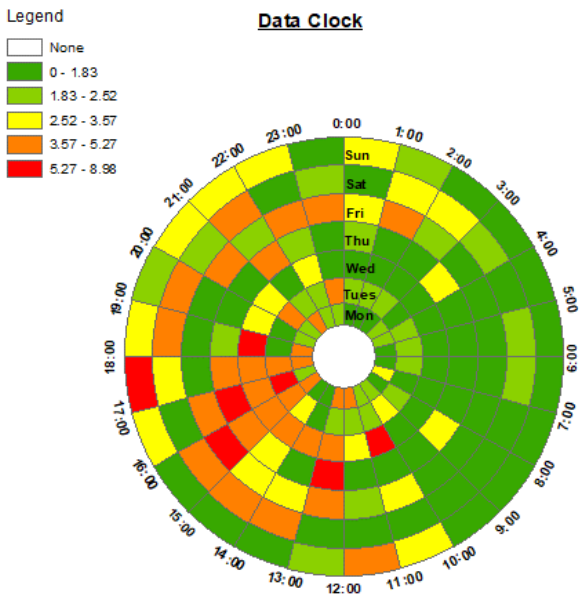
Where known the majority of offenders were White (63.4%), 19.2% were Black and 16.7% were Asian. When compared to the Borough's ethnic profile there is a significant over-representation of offenders that are described as Black.

Temporal

28% of offences were recorded on a Saturday or Sunday.

Monday to Thursday offences are spread throughout the afternoon and early evenings

This pattern changes at the weekend (Friday to Sunday) where a great proportion of offences are committed in the evening and night time



Location

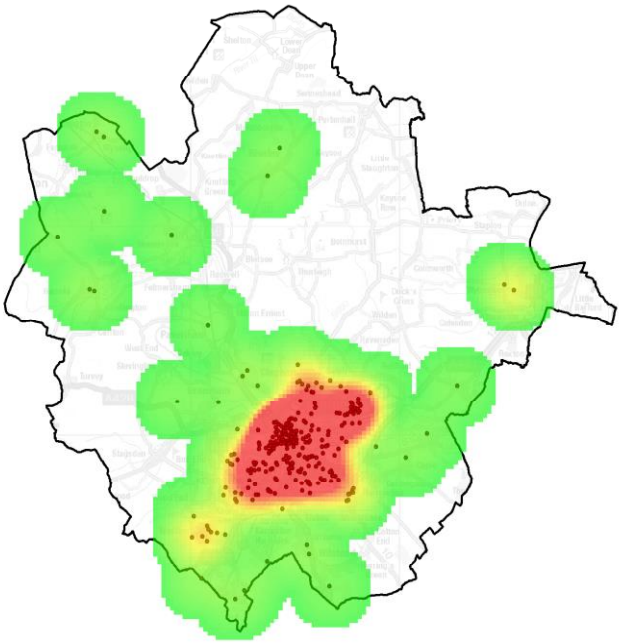
81% of all offences are recorded in the Urban Wards of the Borough; the greatest proportion of offences (17%) took place in Castle ward, which includes both the town centre and the CSP geographic area of focus, the Midland Road area.

Top 5 Wards by numbers	Total	% Total
Castle Ward	69	17.9
Harpur Ward	61	15.1
Cauldwell Ward	33	8.1
Goldington Ward	29	7.2
Kingsbrook Ward	27	6.7
Other Wards	164	45.9
Total	405	100

The top five wards account for 54.1% of all offences reported in the year, these wards are consistent with the previous year's report.

There is a strong relationship between these areas and mapped gangs that are currently managed by the specialist 'Op Boson' team for the north of the county. These gangs have a high proportion of Under 25s and have been linked to both local and county lines drug dealing.

Hotspot map of all Serious Youth Violence Offences recorded in 2020-21



There is a significant hotspot that is centred over the main town centre and Midland Road areas of Castle Ward, spreading north in Harpur Ward and west into Queens Park.

There are two smaller clusters in Ampthill Road area of Cauldwell Ward and the Needwood Road area of Goldington.

Crime Severity Score

There are a number of offences that form the Serious Youth Violence group in the most recent year severity scores range from Attempted murder at 7973.339 to Harassment at 6.811
Offences can be evaluated by the levels of harm caused rather than the count of volumes of crime

Serious Youth Violence Offences	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	% Change
All SYV Crimes	579	642	641	556	413	-25.7
Most Serious Violence Crimes	37	47	53	39	20	-48.7
Total Severity Score	193094	238842	303993	206406	164043	-20.5
Average Severity Score	333.5	372.0	474.2	371.2	397.2	6.9

The average severity score has increased by 6.9% in the last year, at the same time the number of offences have reduced by 25.7%. This suggests that whilst the overall volume of offences have reduced, the impacts of Serious Youth Violence are still increasing.

- The number of offences recorded as 'Most Serious Violence' has reduced by 48.7% in the last year. The 20 offences recorded include a number of high profile incidents with 2 Attempt Murders in the most recent year.

Robbery

Robbery is defined as: *Taking the property of another, with the intent to permanently deprive the person of that property, by means of force or fear.*

National

Police recorded Robbery offences decreased by 34% in the year ending March 2021[7] compared with the previous year, to 59,615 offences. This contrasts with the upwards trend seen since the year ending March 2015. These falls were driven by COVIC-19 national lockdowns and restrictions, with non-essential shops and the night-time economy being closed and people staying in their homes.

Local

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021, Bedfordshire Police recorded 146 robbery offences, a reduction of 31.5% from the previous year's figure of 213. Whilst the proportion of all offences is small, (1%) the impacts on both the victim and the wider community are high.

The offence category is divided into two key areas:

- Robbery of Business Property, with 13 offences recorded in the most recent year, a reduction of 50% on the previous year, this may be linked to many businesses being closed for long periods due to COVID-19 restrictions
- Robbery of Personal Property, with 133 offences recorded in the last 12 months, a reduction of 28.9% from the previous year.

[7] Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2021

Offence recorded	18-19	% Total	19-20	% Total	20-21	% Total	Change	% Change
Robbery (Personal)	235	92.2	26	12.2	13	8.9	-13	-50
Robbery (Business)	20	7.8	187	87.8	133	91.1	-54	-28.9
Total	**255**	**100**	**213**	**100**	**146**	**100**	**-67**	**-31.5**
Knife Crime	80	31.4	54	25.4	35	24.0	-19	-35.2
Gun Crime	8	3.1	9	4.2	6	4.1	-3	-33.3
Serious Youth Violence	44	17.3	32	15.0	18	12.3	-14	-43.8
Single Offender	108	42.4	105	49.3	70	47.9	-35	-33.3
2-3 Offenders	83	32.5	80	37.6	58	39.7	-27.5	-27.5
4+ offenders	54	21.2	28	13.1	17	11.6	-39.3	-39.3

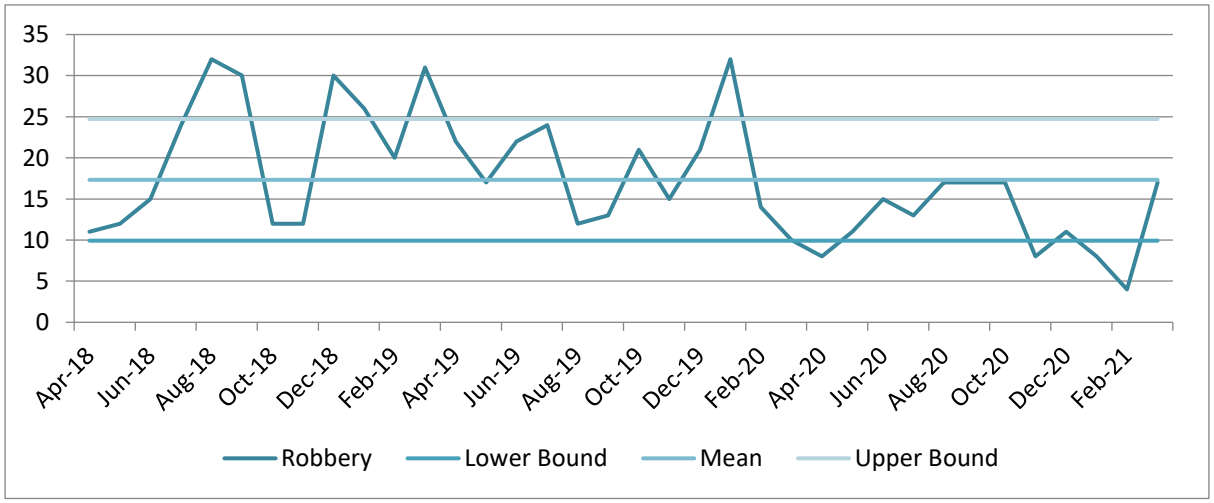
The offence category is divided into two key areas:

- Robbery of Business Property, with 13 offences recorded in the most recent year, a reduction of 50% on the previous year, this may be linked to many businesses being closed for long periods due to COVID-19 restrictions
- Robbery of Personal Property, with 133 offences recorded in the last 12 months, a reduction of 28.9% from the previous year.

- 24% of Robberies recorded in the 12 months mentions the use of a knife or bladed article, this is a slight reduction from the previous year's figure of 25.4%
- Six offences recorded in the 12 months mention the sighting or threat of a firearms in the offence, this is a reduction of three offences when compared to the previous year
- 18 offences (12.3%) are flagged as Serious Youth Violence, where either the offender or victims in aged under 25 years at the time of the offence.
- 17 offences (11.6%) include descriptions of four or more offenders in the crime report, this is a reduction from previous two years.

Temporal

Whilst there is no recognised seasonal pattern to robberies there is a noticeable peak within recorded data in August of each of the last three years.

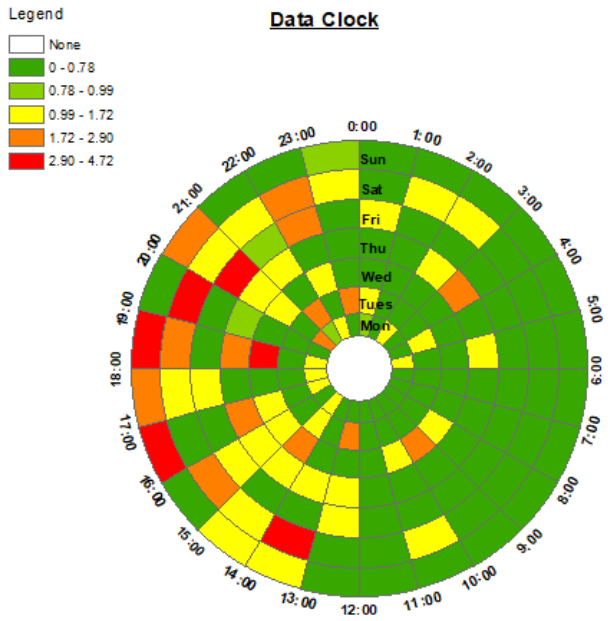


Levels of recorded robberies have been significantly low in four of the last 12 months, with the lowest number of offences being reported in April (8), at the start of the first lockdown, Nov (8), Jan (8) and Feb (4) when further restrictions were enforced

Generally, Robbery offences take place throughout all days of the week.

Higher levels of offences take place at the weekends from Friday evening and through the day on Saturday to Sunday.

This pattern is broadly consistent with previous year's assessments



Victims

Where known the greatest proportion of victims were Male (86.8%) an increase on the previous year's figure of 78.7%.

- The greatest proportion, 18.5% of offences recorded the victim as aged 16-20 years.
- Six victims were aged 65 years or older (4.4% of offences in the year) this was a reduction from the previous year's figure of 13 offences.
- 46.7% of victims were aged under 24, this is an increase from the previous year's figure of 31.3%
- 79.7% of victims were White, this is a slight increase from the previous year but broadly consistent with the Borough's ethnic Profile

Offenders

Where known 95.8% of offenders were described as Male, just three crime reports included an offender described as female.

- The greatest proportion of offenders (21.1%) were described as aged 16 to 20 years, this is consistent with the previous year.
- 29.6% offences (21) suggest that the offender was under 18.
- Nearly half (46.5%) suggested that the offender was under 25 years

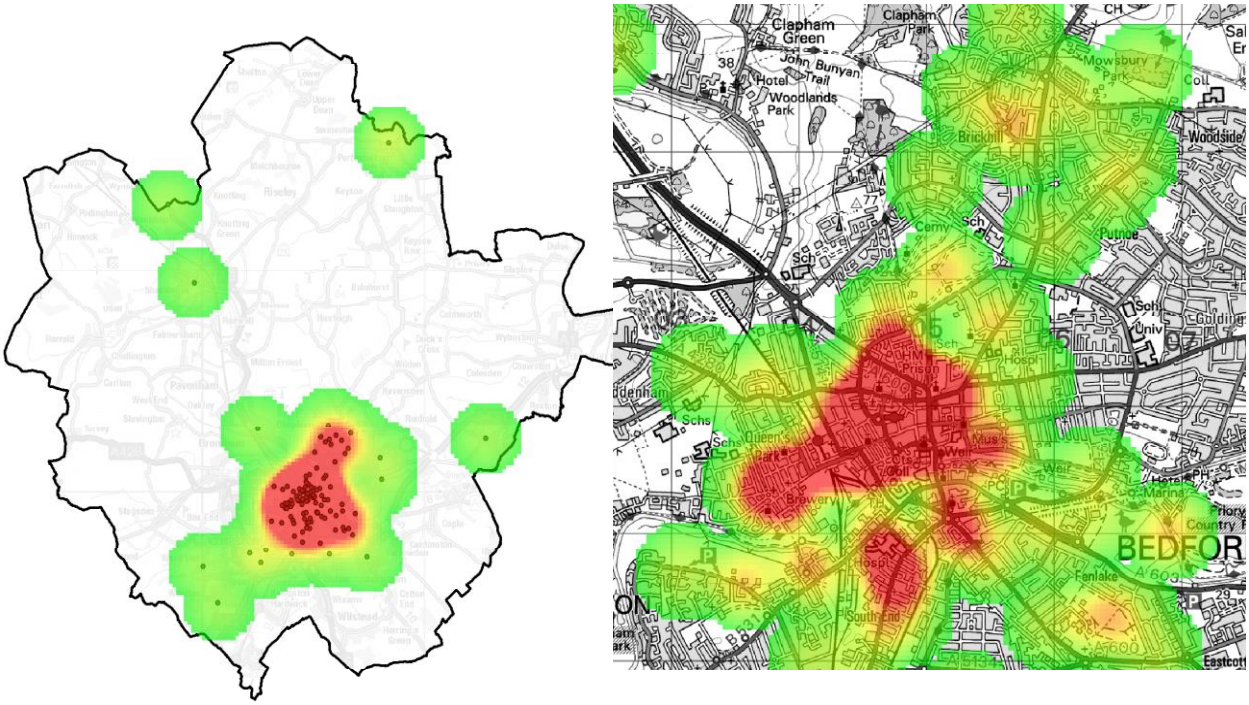
The ethnicity of suspects is not available for all offences; of the 146 robberies committed in the last year just 70 suspects have an indication of ethnicity. This makes the ethnic profile of this category unreliable.

Location

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021, 92.5% (135 offences) were recorded in the Urban Wards of the Borough, just 11 offences were recorded in rural area of the Borough.

- 30.8% (45 offences) were recorded in Castle Ward, which includes the Town Centre and the CSP focus area of Midland Road.

Hotspot map of all Robbery Offences recorded in 2020-21



The largest concentration of Robberies is centered on the town centre, extending west to into the Midland Road area, the main train station and Queens Park. North to include Tavistock Street in Harpur Ward. There are two smaller clusters in the Ampthill Road area of Cauldwell Ward.

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 brings in for the first time a legal definition of Domestic Abuse Section 1 of the Act applies to the definition:

"The behaviour of a person (A) towards a person (B) is "domestic abuse" if

a) A and B are aged over 16 years old and are personally connected to each other and

b) The behaviour is abusive.

Abuse behaviour consist of any of the following:

- *Physical or sexual abuse*
- *Violent or threatening behaviour*
- *Controlling or coercive behaviour*
- *Economic abuse*
- *Psychological, emotional or other abuse*

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct

National

- According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2020, and estimated 5.7% of adults (2.3 million) experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year, a slight but non-significant decrease from the previous year.[8]
- The police recorded 1,288,018 Domestic Abuse-related incidents and crimes in the year ending March 2020. In the same period the police recorded 758,941 Domestic Abuse-related crimes, an increase of 9% from the previous year.
- As the CSEW showed a slight decrease in reporting for Domestic Abuse, increases in police recorded data may reflect improved recording by the police and increased levels of reporting by victims rather than an increase in offending behaviour.
- The police made 33 arrests per 100 crimes[9], the same as in the previous year.
- Over three-quarters of Domestic Abuse-related CPS prosecutions were successful in securing a conviction (78%) slightly above that of last year (77%) and the highest level since 2010.

Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime that is not reported to the police. Therefore, data held by the police can only provide a partial picture of the actual level of domestic abuse experienced.

Local

In the period April 2020 – March 2021 Bedfordshire Police recorded 4092 Domestic Abuse Crimes and Incidents in Bedford Borough, an increase of 6% and an average of more than 79 per week.

	2018-19	% Total	2019-20	% Total	2020-21	% Total	Change
Domestic Abuse Crimes	1904	50.6	2056	53.3	2231	54.5%	175
Non Crime Incidents	1862	49.4	1803	46.7	1861	45.5%	58
All Domestic Abuse	**3766**	**100**	**3859**	**100**	**4092**	**100**	**233**
High Risk	204	5.4	285	7.4	251	6.1	-34
Medium Risk	2426	64.4	2330	60.4	2615	63.9	285
Standard Risk	742	19.7	724	18.8	690	16.9	-34
No Risk Assmt	394	10.5	520	13.5	536	13.1	16

[8] Domestic Abuse in England and Wales : Year ending Mar 2020

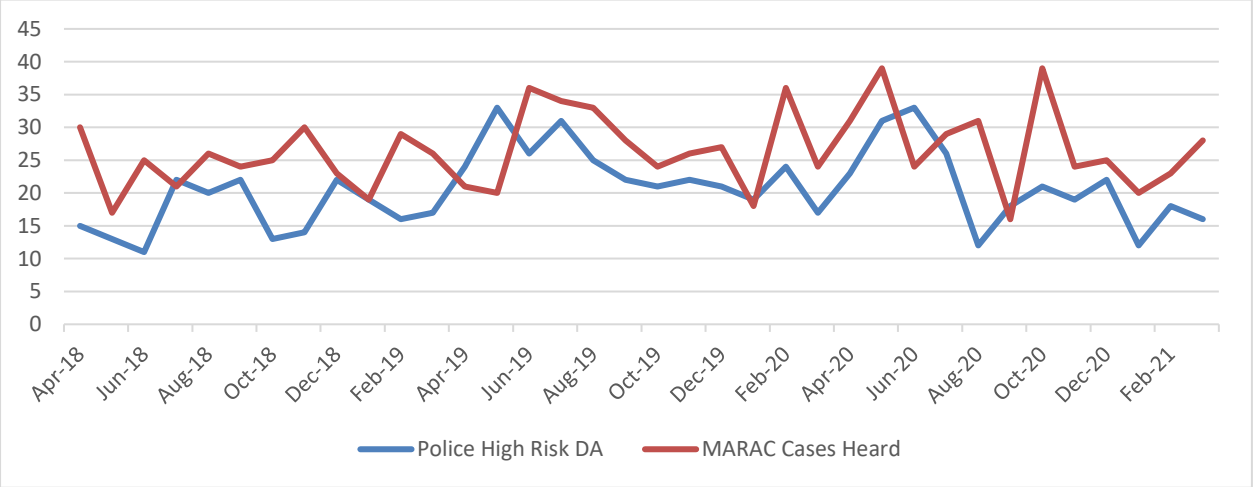
[9] Domestic Abuse and the Criminal Justice System, England and Wales: Nov 2020

The number of Domestic Abuse Crimes reported to the police increased by 8.5%, an additional 175 offences from the previous year, at the same time the number of incidents increased by 3.2%.

- 6.1% (251) of all Domestic Abuse reported to the police in the 12 months were scored as High Risk (greater than 14 points on a DASH assessment) this is a reduction from the previous year's figure of 7.4%
- 43% of all Domestic Abuse Crimes reported to the police in the 12 months identified a repeat victim (one or more additional offence in the previous 12 months). This is a reduction from the previous year's figure of 45.5%

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Within Bedford Borough, MARAC meetings take place monthly. The meetings are supported by approximately 20 agencies that share information and agree safety plans to reduce the risk of harm to the highest risk victims of domestic abuse. Referrals are made within 6 weeks of the most recent incident and by use of the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist (RIC). Those victims that receive a score of 14+ on the DASH assessment are considered to be high risk. MARAC referrals can also be made on the basis of professional judgement for those victims that score below 14 points.



The number of cases heard at each MARAC roughly follows the pattern of reporting in High Risk DA to the police, (MARAC meeting are held in the middle of the month and so will include cases from the second half of the previous month). Whilst the overall numbers of crimes and incidents that are recorded as High Risk have reduced over the last three years; higher numbers can be seen in the summer months and around Christmas, which follows a season pattern that is well documented.

The long term reduction in High Risk DA is particularly positive and supports the CSPS long term aim to encourage victims to seek support at an earlier stage rather than waiting until the risk escalates.

Between Apr 2020 and Mar 2021, 329 cases were discussed at the Bedford MARAC; an increase of 2 (1%) and above the level recommended by Safe Lives.

Bedford MARAC	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Safe Lives Target	Most Similar Force	National
Cases Heard	245	286	327	329	260		
Repeats	76(31%)	131(45.8%)	122(37.3%)	104(31.6%)	28%-40%	26%	25%
Children Affected	393	511	549	498			
Police Referrals	110(44.9%)	162(56.6%)	172(52.6%)	172(52.3%)	60%-75%	72%	64%
BME Referrals	52(21.2%)	76(26.6%)	91(27.8%)	94(28.6%)	30%	12%	15%
Male Victims	7(2.9%)	13(4.9%)	9(2.8%)	17(5.2%)	4%-10%	5%	4.7%
Victims 16-17 years	6(2.4%)	7(2.4%)	3(0.9%)	10(3%)		1.9%	1.7%

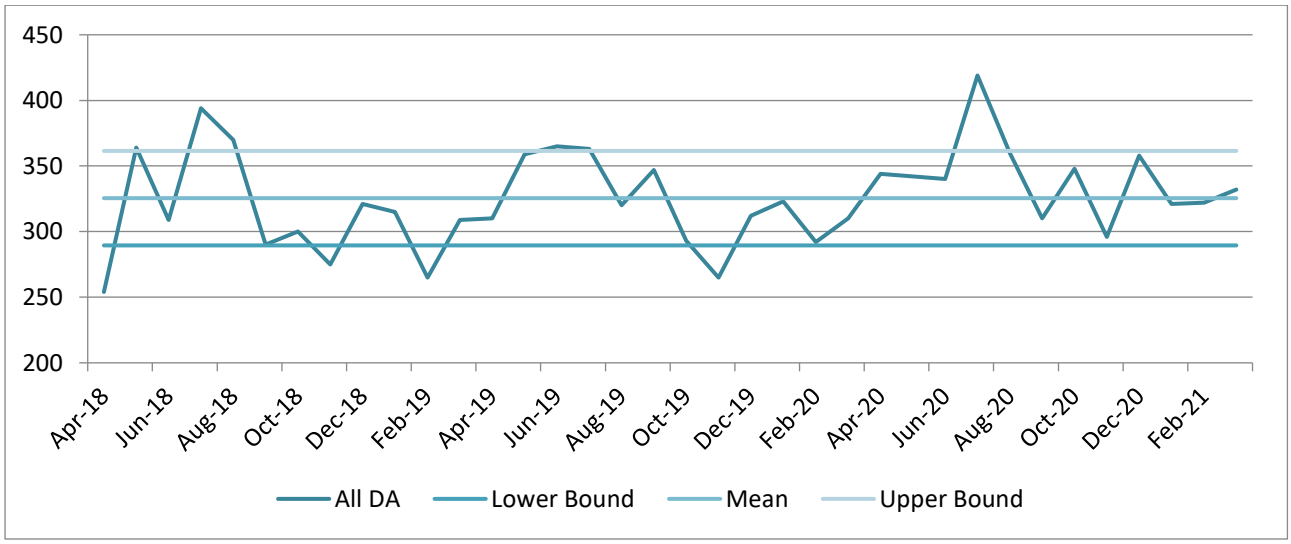
- The number of cases referred by the Police remained consistent at 172.
- The number of cases from the BME community, male victims and victims aged 16-17 years all increased in the year. Under-reporting within these groups is considered to be greater that the overall population and so these increases should be considered as positive.

The number of repeat cases heard at the MARAC reduced to 104 which represent 31.6% of all the cases heard. This is within Safe lives recommend levels.

Temporal

There appears to be some seasonal pattern to recorded offences, with slightly higher levels in the warmer summer months and around Christmas. Data for the last 12 months has recorded some noticeable fluctuations with a significant peak in July 2020.

- Levels of DA reporting are higher at the weekends (Saturday and Sunday) with an average of 12.2 per day, compared to 10.9 per day in the week.

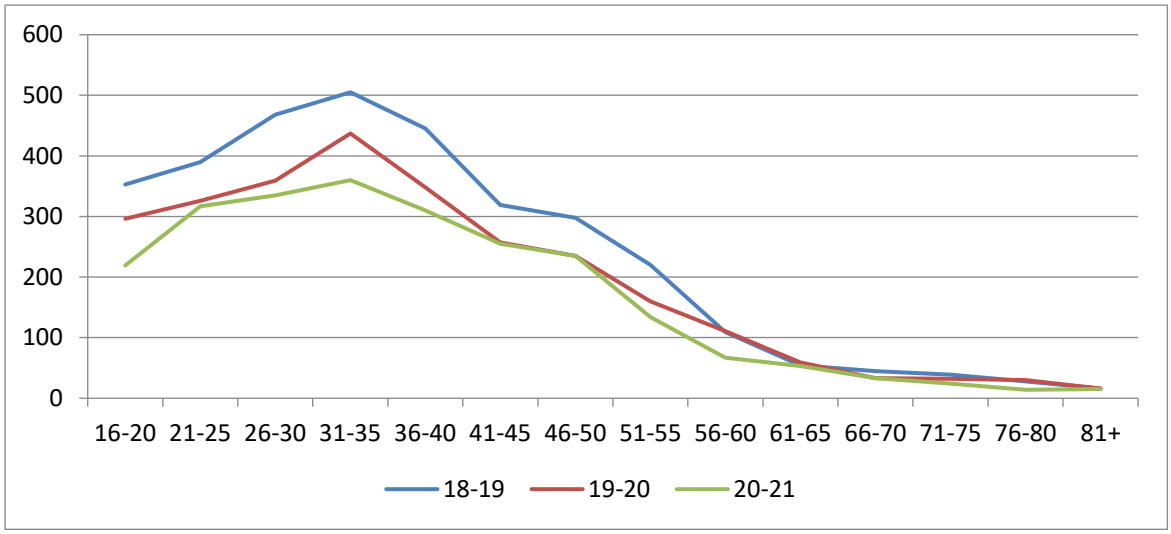


Victims

According to all DA crimes and Incidents reported to the Police between Apr 2020 and Mar 2021, 74.1% of victims were female, a reduction on the previous year's figure of 76.7%.

The proportion of Male victims has continued to increase over the last 4 years. The increased reporting from Male victims should be considered positive as National Crime Survey data suggests that the levels of underreporting amongst male victims is considerably higher.

Gender	2017-18	% Total	2018-19	% Total	2019-20	% Total	2020-21	% Total	%Change
Males	752	22.1%	762	22.4%	662	23.3%	627	25.9%	-5.3%
Females	2646	77.9%	2639	77.6%	2183	76.7%	1792	74.1%	-17.9%



- The greatest proportion of victims (14.8%) were aged 31-35 years.
- 68 victims were aged between 16-17yrs at the time of the offence, this is consistent with the previous year.

Victim Ethnicity	2018-19	% Total	2019-20	% Total	2020-21	% Total
White	1991	77.8	1873	76.1	1648	76.44
Asian	331	12.9	363	14.7	323	14.98
Black	220	8.6	203	8.2	165	7.65
Chinese	9	0.4	8	0.3	1	0.05
Arabic/African	9	0.4	15	0.6	19	0.88
Total	**2560**	**100**	**2462**	**100**	**2156**	**100**
Total BAME	**569**	**22.2**	**589**	**23.9**	**508**	**23.6**

The greatest proportion of victims are White (76.44) followed by Asian (14.98%) and black (7.65%). These figures are broadly consistent with the previous two years. The proportion of BAME victims was 23.6% a slight reduction on the previous year.

There is still an under representation of BAME victims when compared to the 2011 Census data for the Borough that reported 28.5% of the Borough's population being from a BAME group.

High Risk Domestic Abuse

Victims that score 14+ on the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist (RIC) are considered to be High Risk. Between Apr 2020 and Mar 2021, 6.1% (251) of all Domestic Abuse crimes and incidents reported to the police were deemed to be High Risk; this is a reduction from the previous year's figure of 7.4%. The demographic profile of High Risk victims and offenders differs to that of the overall group.

- High Risk victims are more likely to be female, 87.5% for High Risk compared to 74.1% in the overall victim group.
- 26.7% of High Risk Victims are described as BAME, compared to 23.5% in the whole victim group.
- High Risk Victims are younger; 26.7% are aged 25 years or younger, this compares to 22.1% in the overall victim group
- Victims of High Risk DA are more likely to be repeat victims; 57%, this compares to 43% in the whole victim group.

Offenders

According to all DA crimes and Incidents reported to the Police between Apr 2020 and Mar 2021, 77.7% of offenders were male, this is a reduction on the previous year's figure.

Gender	2017-18	% Total	2018-19	% Total	2019-20	% Total	2020-21	% Total	%Change
Males	2738	80.6	2544	80.7	2211	79.6	1915	77.7	-13.4
Females	658	19.4	610	19.3	569	20.4	551	22.3	-3.2

- The greatest proportion of offenders (17.05%) were aged 26-30 years years, this is a change from the previous year where the greatest proportion were aged 31-35 years.
- 3.0% of offenders were under 18 years at the time of the offence, this is an increase on the previous year's figure of 2.5%

Where known, 69% of offenders are described as white, 17.2% as Asian and 14.% as black. BAME offenders account for 31% of offenders in the 2020-21 year, which is broadly consistent with the 2011 Census ethnic profile.

Offender Ethnicity	2018-19	% Total	2019-20	% Total	2020-21	% Total
White	1680	71.5	1564	69.2	1517	69.0
Asian	326	13.9	352	15.6	377	17.2
Black	330	14.0	316	14.0	274	12.5
Chinese	5	0.2	8	0.4	4	0.2
Arabic/African	9	0.4	19	0.8	25	1.1
Total	**100**	**100**	**2259**	**100**	**2197**	**100**
Total BAME	**670**	**28.5**	**695**	**30.8**	**680**	**31.0**

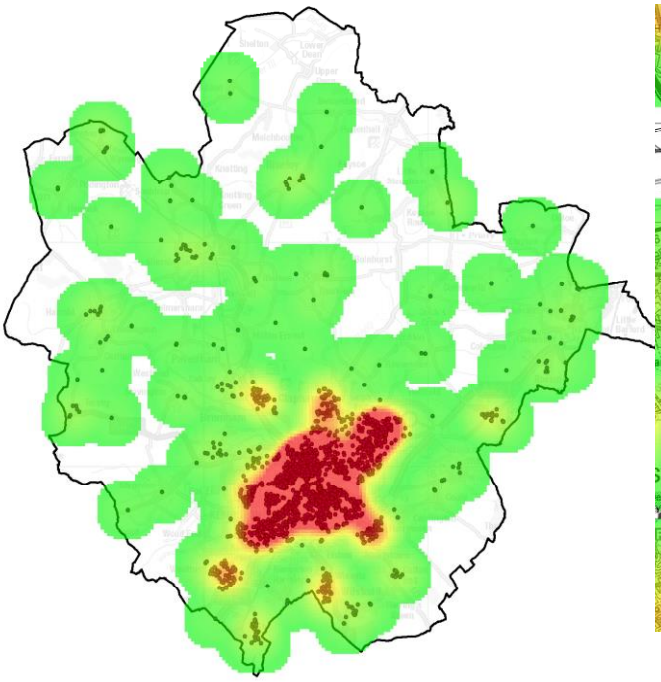
Location

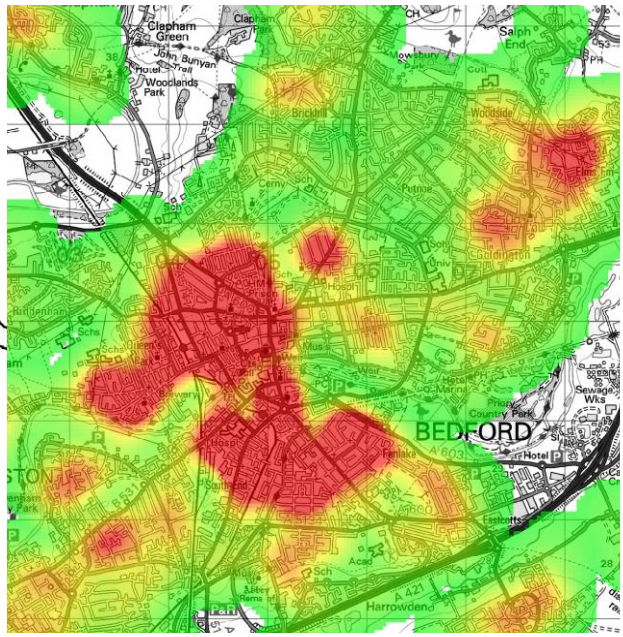
In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021, 76.5% of all recorded DA was recorded in the Urban Wards of the Borough. This is a reduction on the previous year's figure of 79.1%.

The top five urban wards contribute 47.2% of all reported DA within the Borough. This is an increase on the last year's figure of 45%. The greatest proportion, (12.3%) are recorded in Cauldwell Ward.

Top 5 Wards by Volume	2020-21	% Total
Cauldwell Ward	500	12.3
Castle Ward	420	10.3
Harpur Ward	359	8.8
Kingsbrook Ward	356	8.7
Goldington	290	7.1
Other Wards	2150	52.8
Total	**4075**	**100**

Hotspot map of all Domestic Abuse offences recorded in 2020-21





The largest concentration of Domestic Abuse is centered on the town centre, extending west to into the Midland Road area, the main train station and Queens Park, then north to include Tavistock Street in Harpur Ward.

There is a second equally large hotspot that covers the north of both Kingsbrook and Cauldwell Ward.

Serious Sexual Offences

Whilst it is acknowledged that any sexual offence will be a traumatic experience for victims for the purpose of this report all local level data relates to those offences in the 'serious sexual offences' group: rape, attempted rape, sexual assaults and sexual activity with a child.
Some national level figures and trends may relate to a wider definition of 'sexual offences'.

National

It is difficult to obtain reliable information on the volume of sexual offences as it is known that a high proportion of offences are not reported to the police and changes in recorded figures may reflect changes in reporting or recording rates rather than actual victimisation.

The number of sexual offences recorded by the police[10] showed a 9% decrease in the year ending March 2021 (148,114 offences) compared to the previous year. Rape offences also reduced by 6% (55,696 offences) in the same period. This is the second year-on-year decrease; this trend is likely to reflect the diminishing impacts of improvements in recording practices as well as the effects of national lockdown restrictions. Large reductions in reporting took place between April and June 2020, with offences 21% lower than the same period in the previous year.

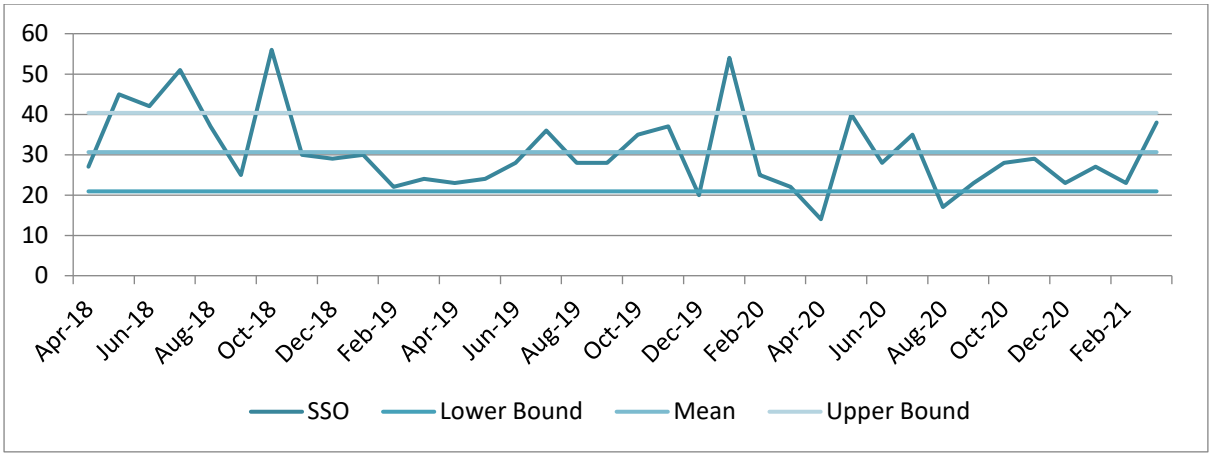
Local

In the year Apr 2020 – Mar 2021, 325 Serious Sexual Offences (SSO) were reported, a reduction of 35 offences (-9.7%) from the same period in the previous year. This reduction is consistent with national data for the broader group of sexual offences.

Overall recorded levels of SSO have increase by 16.9% (+47 crimes) in the five years between Apr 15 and Mar 21; levels have fluctuated in that time with reductions recorded in three of the five years.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Recorded SSO	278	244	291	418	360	325
Change	37	-34	47	127	-58	-35
% Change	15.40%	-12.2%	19.3%	43.6%	-13.9%	-9.7%

[10] ONS - Crime in England and Wales: Year ending March 2021



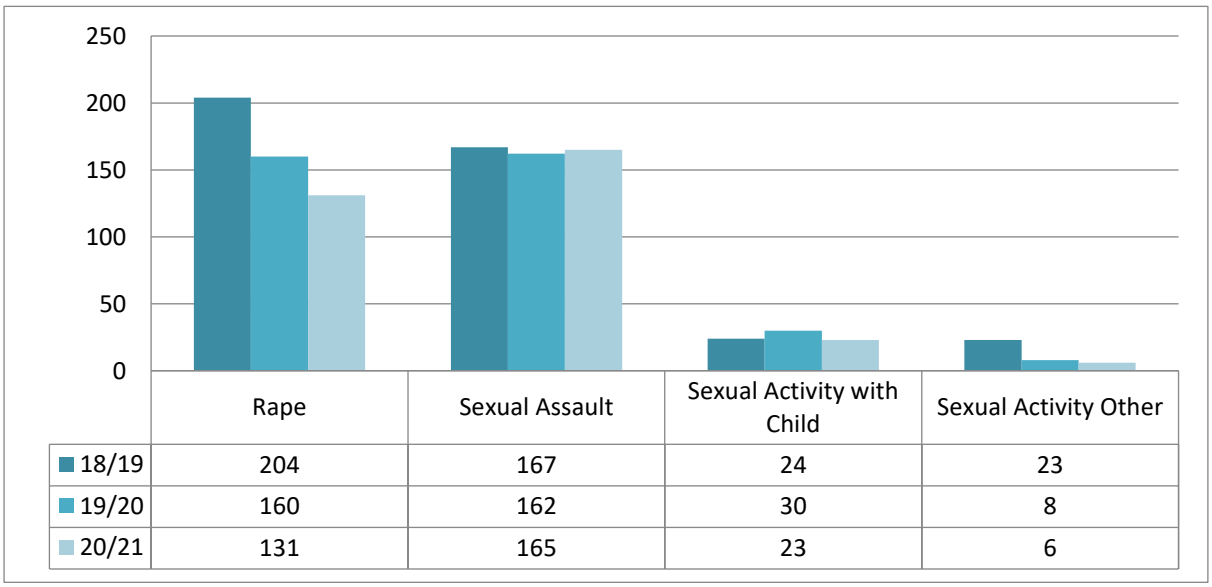
Whilst the numbers of reported offences fluctuate from month to month, no significant levels have been reported in the last 12-month period.

Reporting of Non recent Offences

In the period between Apr 2020 and Mar 2021, 26.8% of all recorded offences were non recent (took place more than 1 year prior to being reported to the police), this is an increase on the previous year.

Recording Gap	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Total	% Change
Current (0-2 days)	99	96	170	167	145	44.6	-13.2
Recent (2 - 365 days)	95	139	127	126	87	26.8	-31.0
Non-Recent (>1 yr.)	50	56	121	68	93	28.6	36.8
% Non-Recent	**20.5**	**19.2%**	**28.9%**	**18.8%**	**26.8%**		

Overall reporting of Serious Sexual Offences reduced by 9.7% in the last 12 months, the group can be split into four main offence categories. Reductions were recorded in three of the four categories, with the largest reduction for Rape (-29 offences).



The table below gives some further breakdown of rape reported to the police over the last four performance years, by gender, age and how quickly the victim reported the offence. Over the period Apr 2020 – Mar 2021 reported offences of rape increased by 27.2%.

Rape	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Change	16-21 %Change
Current	26	33	68	66	44	-33.3	69.2
Recent	48	52	65	50	38	-24.0	-20.8
Non-Recent	29	22	71	44	49	11.4	69.0
Male	14	13	9	11	14	27.3	0.0
Female	89	105	195	149	116	-22.1	30.3
Under 13	18	12	19	18	16	-11.1	-11.1
Under 16	11	14	28	24	9	-62.5	-18.2
Over 16	74	92	157	118	106	-10.2	43.2
Total	**103**	**118**	**204**	**160**	**131**	**-18.1**	**27.2**

In the same period offences reported by male victims have remained unchanged with just 14 offences in the year, this compares to a 30.3% increase for female victims. Evidence suggests that male victims are still less likely to report SSO.

Temporal

There is no clear seasonal pattern in the levels of reporting of Serious Sexual Offences.

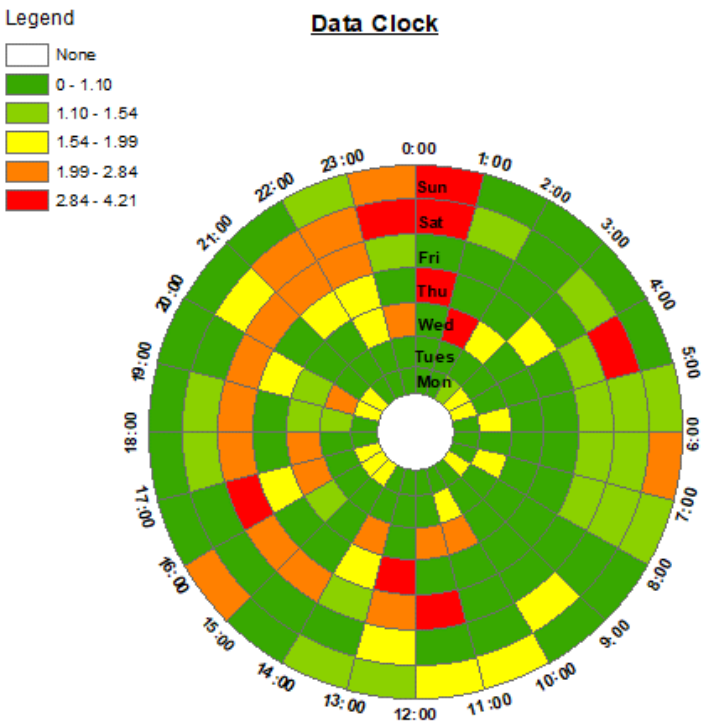
Due to the high proportions number of non-recent offences reported, the details about times and days are likely to be less accurate than for other crime types. By removing all non-recent offences (those reported more than one year after the committed date) from the dataset, a more realistic evaluation can be made.

<u>All Current and Recent SSO Offences 2020-21</u>

Generally serious sexual offences take place throughout all days of the week.

Higher levels of offences take place at the weekends Fri-Sat and Sat-Sun.

This pattern is broadly consistent with previous year's assessments

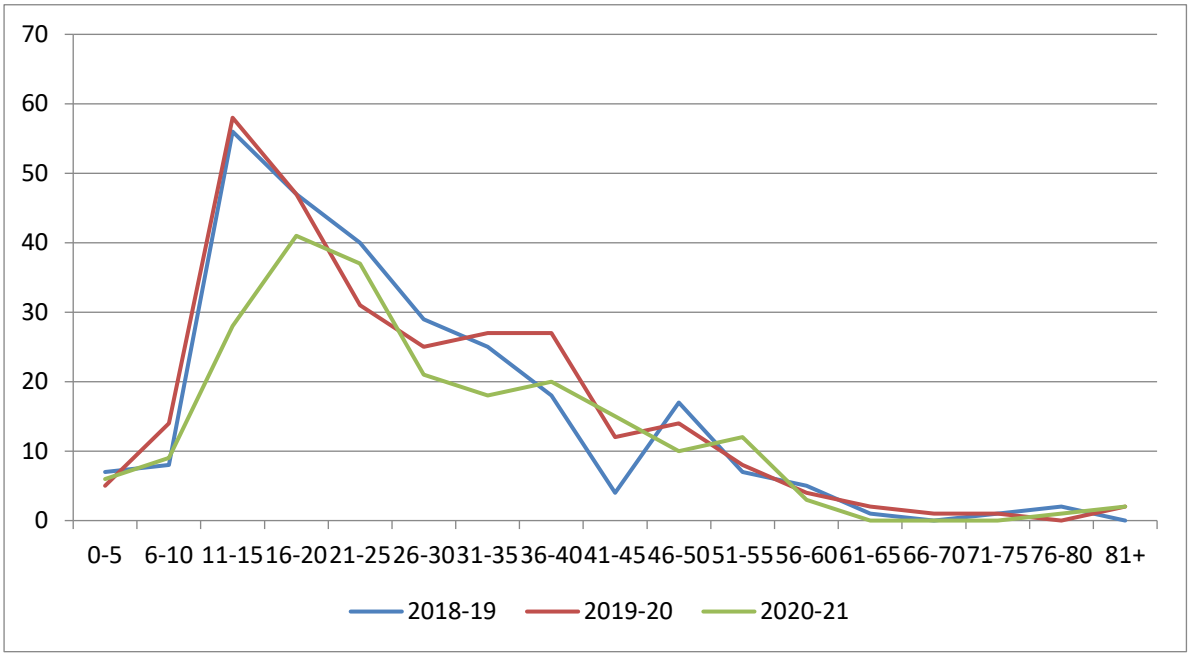


Victims

To give a fair reflection of the victim, non-recent cases have been removed.

83.9% of victims in who reported an offence in the last 12 months were female; this is a slight reduction from the previous year (84.1%).

- The greatest proportions of victims (21%) are aged between 16-20 years, this a change from the last three year's data where the greatest proportions were aged 11-15 years.



Where known, 81% of victims are white, 12.3% are Asian, and 6.1% are black. Compared to the Borough ethnic profile there is still an over representation of white victims.

- Where recorded only 7.1% (9 victims) described the offender as a stranger, this suggests that up to 92.9% may have known the offender prior to the offence taking place.
- Where the offender was known to the victim the greatest proportion of victims described their relationship to the offender as a 'partner' or 'ex-partner' (41.7%), this supports the strong links between Serious Sexual Offences and Domestic Abuse.
- 10.2% of offences record the relationship between victim and offender as familial (a relative)

Relationship data for Serious Sexual Offences continue to support the strong relationship between this group and Domestic Abuse

Safe Lives Insights IDVA national dataset for 2013-14 suggest that 88% of high risk victims of Domestic Abuse experience multiple forms of abuse, including physical and sexual abuse.

Young Victims

Data in this section relates only to those offences that were reported within 1 year of the offence taking place, non-recent offences have been removed.

- 28.3% of victims (63) were aged under 18 years at the time of the offence, this is a reduction from the previous year's figure of 35.3%.
- 17 offences describe both the victim and offender as being aged under 18 at the time of the offence, a significant reduction from the previous year's figure of 53.

Offenders

To give a fair reflection of the offender, non-recent cases have been removed.

Where known 94.2% of offenders were male, this compares to 94.3% in the previous year. The proportions of male offenders reduced slightly in the year compared to the previous five years.

Offender	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Male	97.5%	96.2%	97.2%	96.3%	94.3%	94.2%
Female	2.5%	3.8%	2.8%	3.7%	5.7%	5.8%

The greatest proportion of offenders (14.5%) were aged 21-25 and 31-35 years, this is a change from the previous three year's data where the greatest number of offenders were 16-20 years.

- 11.5% of offenders were under 18 years at the time of the offence, more than half of these offenders (10) were under the legal age of consent themselves at the time of the offence.

The ethnicity of offenders is as described by the victim and is not known in all cases.

Where known 68.6 of offenders are described as white, this is a slight reduction from the previous year's figure of 70.9%. The proportions of Asian offenders were 15.7% and Black offenders were 15.7%. These figures are increases on the previous year's data.

Location

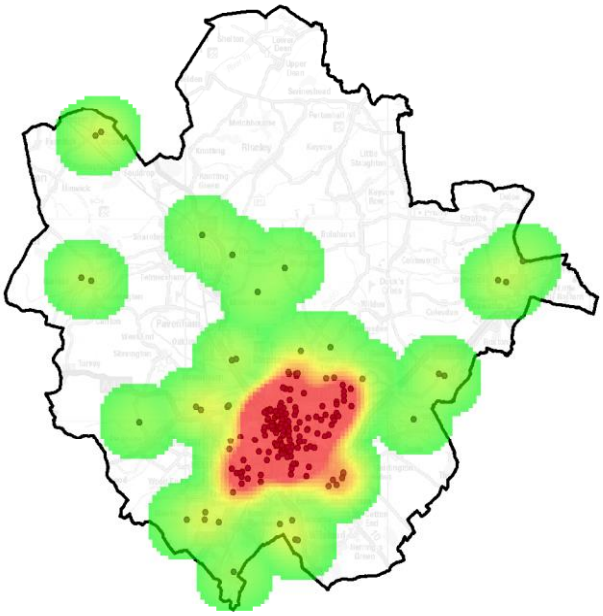
Analysis and hotspot maps have been produced using only recent offences (those reported in the same year as the offence took place) to allow for an accurate assessment of current offending patterns.

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021, 78.4% (178 offences) were recorded in the Urban Wards of the Borough.

The top five urban wards contribute over half (56.8%) of all offences reported in the last 12 months.

Top 5 Wards by numbers	Total	% Total
Castle Ward	42	18.5
Harpur Ward	32	14.1
Cauldwell Ward	29	12.8
Newnham Ward	15	6.6
Goldington Ward	11	4.8
Other Wards	98	43.2
Total	227	100

Hotspot map of all SSO offences reported in 2020-21 (with non-recent offences removed)



Serious Sexual Offences are distributed across all of the Urban Wards in the Borough.

However, there is visible hotspot centred on Castle ward (Town Centre and Midland Road area) extending to the north into Harpur Ward and south into Cauldwell Ward.

Priority Two – Hidden Harm and Exploitation

This priority focuses on the identification and protection of the most vulnerable within our communities. The hidden nature of these issue mean that levels of reporting are still low, as a result the local picture is still being developed.

Thematic Areas • County Lines • CSE and Missing • Cuckooing • Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking • Hate & Extremism
Key Issues identified in the 2019 Strategic Assessment • Levels of crimes reported to the police with a CSE marker continue to increase • Increase in the proportion of Missing episodes with a marker for Gangs and County Lines • Increasing number of safeguarding referrals for Vulnerable Adults submitted using the Adult Protection Referral Form • Increase in number of Modern Day Slavery offences recorded in the Borough • CSP Survey suggests low levels of awareness of exploitation based crimes in the community • High numbers of Hate Crimes that took place in public streets and open spaces • Increasing numbers of Prevent referrals relate to individuals that have no clear confirmed ideology. They may present a range of risks and vulnerabilities, which include a risk of radicalisation, but do not have a coherent or single ideology. • Increasing numbers of submissions to the National Referral Mechanism, particularly for young people that may be linked to County Lines activity

Note: *National and Local data sets for these themes are not clearly defined in Home Office crime classifications. The numbers of offences and incidents in these groups area small and therefore are not suitable to be evaluated using the traditional VOL methodology.*

Exploitation of Young People

Over the last 3 years much of the Partnership's work around the exploitation of young people has focused on the issues around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Whilst this work will and should continue it is necessary to look wider than this and consider other ways that young people may be drawn into areas of criminality either as a victim, as offenders or as is often the case both.

Exploitation is often a hidden activity that will require proactive action from a range of partners to identify. Safeguarding of vulnerable young people will be the primary objective but other partners that can offer significant support in terms of disruption and prevention should not be ignored.

Changes in technology create constant new threats[11]. The use of Live Streaming is a growing concern, due to its lack of moderation and regulation and the increasing number of children's own use of self-broadcasting being exploited by offenders. The standard use of end-to-end encryption within social media platforms may also act to disguise exploitation activity.

According to NSPCC[12] research, 5-15 year olds who go online spend an average of 15 hours a week online. 44% of 5-15 year olds said that they owned a smartphone. 90% of 11-16 year olds stated that they have a social media account.

- More than one in seven young people (11-18 years) surveyed said they had been asked to send self-generated images and sexual messages

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful events occurring in childhood including

- Domestic Abuse
- Parental abandonment through separation or divorce
- A parent with a mental health condition
- Being a victim of abuse (physical, sexual or emotional)
- Being a victim of neglect (physical and emotional)
- A member of the household being in prison
- Growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing substance misuse

When children are exposed to adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on health and behaviour and can be relevant to all sectors.

Preventing Radicalisation

The CONTEST Strategy defines radicalisation as follows:

The process by which people come to support violent extremism and, in some cases, joins terrorist groups.

[11] NCA Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2018
[12] How safe are our children 2019 - NSPCC

Radicalisation is a psychological process where vulnerable or susceptible individuals are groomed, encouraging them to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Prevent is part of the UK's Counter Terrorism Strategy, known as CONTEST. Prevent works to stop individuals from getting involved in or supporting terrorism or extremist activity. The Prevent Programme is designed to safeguard individuals. Tailored support of any individual identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism is offered through the Channel Programme. This is a local Authority led multi-agency panel, which decides on the most appropriate support package for that person. Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty upon certain bodies (listed in Schedule 6 of the Act), in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

National

In the year ending Mar 2021[13], there were 4,915 referrals to Prevent. This is a decrease of 22% compared to the previous year (6,287) and the lowest figure since comparable data are available in 2016. The reduction is likely to have been driven by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The greatest numbers of referrals were received from the Police (1,770; 36%) and the Education sector (1,221; 25%) proportions of referrals received from the Education sector have reduced when compared to previous years which is likely to be the result of closures of schools and Universities.

- The greatest proportion of referrals (29%) related to those aged 15 to 20 years
- 88% of those referred were male
- The number of referrals discussed at a Channel panel (1,333) and adopted as a Channel case (688) saw smaller reductions when compared to the previous year, decreasing by 7% and 0.6% respectively
- 46% of Channel cases related to a concern of right wing extremism
- 30% of Channel cases were for those with a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology
- 22% of Channel cases were for referrals relating to Islamist extremism

An increasing number of referrals relate to individuals that have no clear confirmed ideology. They may present a range of risks and vulnerabilities, which include a risk of radicalisation, but do not have a coherent or single ideology. This group is described as 'Mixed, Unstable or Unclear'

[13] Individuals referred to and supported through the PREVENT programme 2020/21 – Home Office

Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a hugely distressing form of sexual, emotional and physical abuse of children and young people. In February 2017 the government updated the statutory definition to: *Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.*

Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

National

According to ONS data[14] in the year ending March 2019, the police in England and Wales recorded 73,260 sexual offences where there are data to identify the victim was a child, around one quarter(27%) of these were rape offences.

- The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 7.5% of adults aged 18 to 74 years experienced sexual abuse before the age of 16 years (3.1 million people); this includes both adult and child perpetrators.
- The abuse was most likely to have been perpetrated by a friend or acquaintance (37%); around a third (30%) were sexually abused by a stranger.
- The majority of victims did not tell anyone about their sexual abuse at the time, with "embarrassment" being the most common reason.
- At 31 March 2019, 2,230 children in England were the subject of a child protection plan (CPP) and 120 children in Wales were on the child protection register (CPR) for experience or risk of sexual abuse.

It is likely that improved recording of sexual offences by the police, a stronger awareness amongst key partners to identify issues and increased willingness of victims to come forward have all contributed to the rise. Many of the children and young people involved in CSE still do not perceive themselves to be victims of a crime.

- The CSEW estimated that around half of adults (46%) who experienced rape or assault by penetration, including attempts, before the age of 16 years only told someone about the abuse later in life.

[14] Statistics briefing: child sexual abuse – Mar 2020

Local Picture

It is important to remember that CSE is not a single definable offence. Many of the criminal offences that are linked to CSE fall within the category of Serious Sexual Offences (SSO).

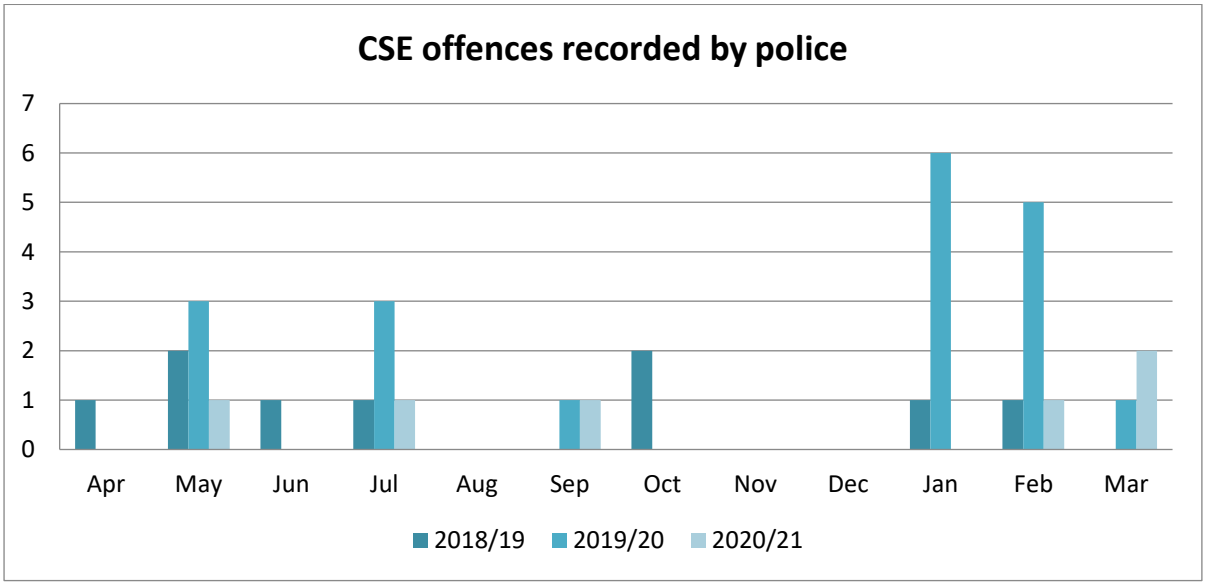
- In the period April 2020 to March 2021, more than a third, 38.5% of victims of all Serious Sexual Offences recorded in the Borough were aged under 18 at the time of the offence.
- In the same year 19.1% of rape offences were aged under 16 years.
- In the last year 6 crimes were reported to Bedfordshire Police with a confirmed CSE marker added, this is a significant reduction from 19 in the previous year.

Reductions in CSE offences may have been influenced by COVID-19 restrictions with limited face to face contact with young people and schools being closed for much of the year.

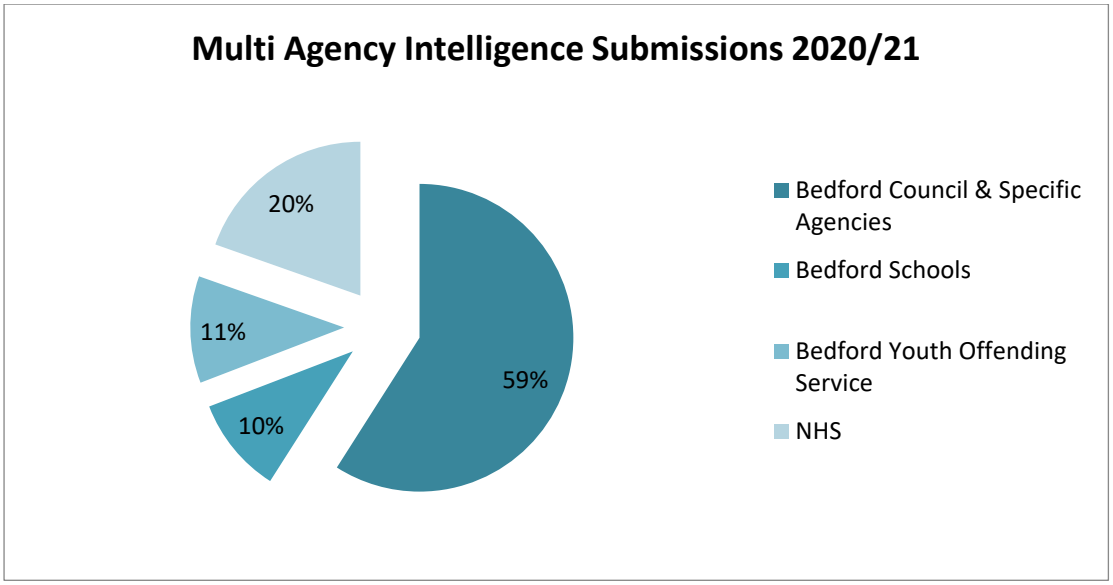
Many partners feel that the decrease in CSE specific offences may also be a result of a change in focus to a broader Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) agenda, as such a Bedfordshire needs assessment in being developed to understand the local picture of CCE and the links to CSE

Recommendation: Partners should contribute data to the CCE needs assessment and consider its findings on release

Numbers of CSE crimes recorded by the police are small and full disclosures may take many months. Offences may take place many years before a crime is recorded with multiple victims and suspects. It is therefore not appropriate to review the temporal pattern of offences for this theme.



All partners are encouraged to submit concerns that may relate to CSE, alongside other areas of risk and vulnerability. Due to the complex nature of Criminal and Sexual Exploitation a single submission may contain information that relates to more than one person and area of risk and criminality.



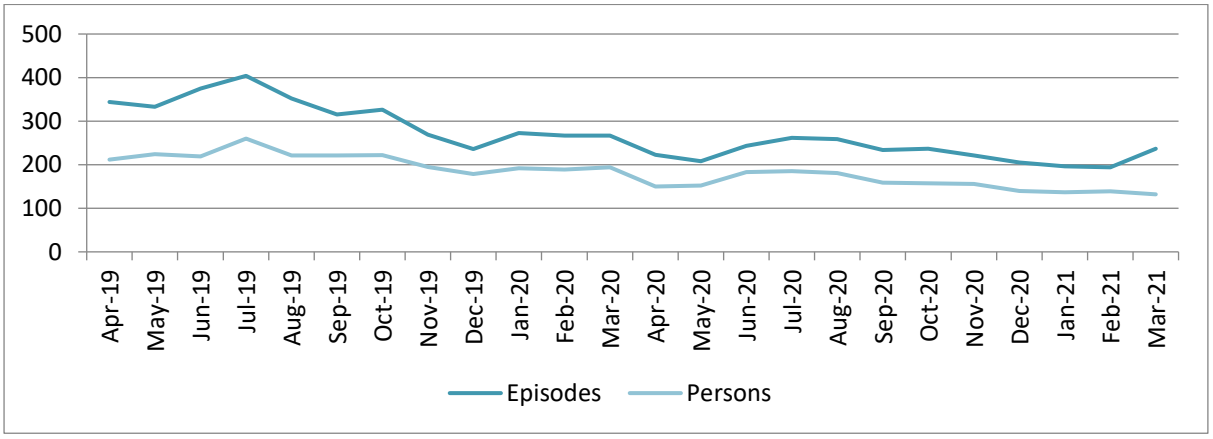
Overall the number of intelligence submissions from non-police agencies were 454 in the most recent year, with 365 submissions for Bedford Borough Specific agencies a 23.3% reduction (111 forms) compared to the previous year. 89 submissions came from health partners (these cannot be broken down into local areas).

- A 64.3% reduction in submission from schools is likely to have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic with school closures for much of the year

Recommendation: The Partnership should look for opportunities to promote the use of the multi-agency information form

Missing Persons

The relationship between Young Missing Persons and CSE is well documented. The overall levels of missing persons recorded by Bedfordshire Police have been reducing over the last 2 years, with an average 313 persons being reported as missing each month in 2019/20 decreasing to 227 in the last year (Countywide data)



In the most recent year (Apr 2020 to Mar 2021) Bedfordshire Police recorded 1,747 eposodes of missing were the person was a child (under 18 years), this related to 589 young people in the year.

- 13.6% (08) of missing children were assessed to be High Risk, up from 11.6% in 20219/20.
- 58 children were reported missing three or more times in the year, -66 from the last year.

Markers are added to the report where a risk has been identified by a professional.

Missing Flags	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Change
CSE	380	268	84	168	84
Gang	22	148	92	44	-48
County Lines	3	49	72	64	-12
Criminal Exploitation		1	57	70	13

In the last 12 months CSE markers have increased by 84 cases, Criminal Exploitation cases also increased by 13 cases

Bedford Missing	2019/20	2020/21	% Change
All Children	99	31	-68.7
All Episodes	257	133	-48.2
All Repeats	51	28	-45.1
LAC Children	21	13	-38.1
LAC Episodes	116	83	-28.4
LAC Children missing >=3 times	12	8	-33.3

All categories for missing young persons in Bedford Borough have seen significant reductions in the last year, whilst this may be interpreted as positive the COVID-19 pandemic may well have had an impact on data.

Severe distrution to the delivery of some key services and the closure of many schools may well have impacted on the reporting in some areas

Information Gap: It is not possible to fully understand the impact of COVID-19 on levels of missing in the last year

County Lines

Whilst there is no official definition, County Lines[15] is the police term for;

Urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas, market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile lines or 'Deal Lines'. It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable adults to move drugs and money.

County Lines is a major, cross cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern day slavery and missing persons. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation have a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities. Tackling these issues will require the support of law enforcement agencies, a wide range of local government agencies including health and education alongside local voluntary and community organisations.

- According to the NCA[16], the number of 'deal lines' has increased from 720 in 2017 to around 2,000 in 2018, with one individual line making profits in excess of £800,000 a year.
- There has been a 13% rise[17] in the number of children aged 10-17 arrested for Possession with intent to supply between 2015-16 and 2017-18. When data from the Metropolitan Police is removed, the rise increases to 49%**.**
- Across the UK, National Referral Mechanisms for child exploitation (domestic servitude, labour and sexual) increased from 2,118 in 2017 to 3,137 in 2018. In areas that collect data on reasons for referral to the NRM, more than half children referred to the NRM were linked to criminal exploitation.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) takes a variety of forms; but ultimately it is the grooming of children into criminality. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten or harm other young people. CCE has become strongly associated with county lines with organised criminal networks exploiting young people and vulnerable groups.

[15] Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults – Home Office July 2017
[16] County Lines Drugs Supply, Vulnerability and Harm 2018 – NCA Jan 19
[17] Counting Lives: Disrupting Child Criminal Exploitation – The Children's Society 2019

Exploitation of Adults

Abuse and exploitation of adults at risk can take many forms within our society. The definition of an 'adult at risk' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse or exploitation may be increased by their personal circumstances. Their personal characteristics and life circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Age
- Physical or mental disabilities
- Special educational needs
- Substance misuse
- Isolation or loneliness
- Living conditions
- Finances

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT)

Modern Slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking.

These crimes include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after.
Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern slavery within your own country. It is possible to be a victim even if consent has been given to be moved.

Children cannot give consent to being exploited therefore the element of coercion or deception does not need to be present to prove an offence.

There are several broad categories of exploitation linked to human trafficking, including:

- Criminal exploitation
- Sexual exploitation
- Forced labour
- Domestic servitude
- Forced marriage and illegal adoption

National

The true scale of MSHT within the UK is unknown. According to Home Office estimates, there were approximately 13,000 victims of human trafficking in the UK.

In the year to Mar 2020[18], there were 7,779 modern slavery crimes recorded by the police, a 59% increase from 4,897 in the previous year

In the same year, there has been an increase in case referrals to the CPS, including cases referred for early investigation advice, which have resulted in charge.

[18] 2020 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery

NRM Process

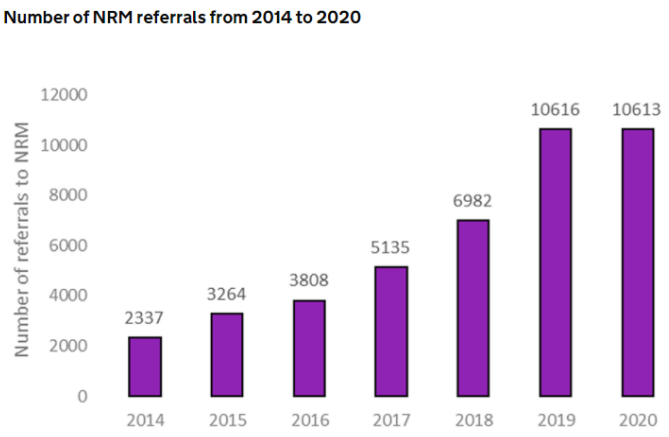
The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive the appropriate protection and support.

The NRM is also the mechanism through which the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) collects data about victims. This information contributes to building a clearer picture about the scope of human trafficking in the UK.

The NRM was introduced in 2009 to meet the UK's obligations under the Council of European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. At the core of every country's NRM is the process of locating and identifying "potential victims of trafficking" (PVoT).

10,613 potential victims were submitted to the National Referral Mechanism in 2020[19], The plateau in referral numbers is primarily thought to result from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions.

- 63% (6,716) claimed that the exploitation occurred in the UK only, whilst 26% (2,722) claimed the exploitation took place overseas only
- Just under half (48%) were for individuals who claimed to be exploited as adults, whilst 47% were for individuals who claimed they were exploited as children
- The most common type of exploitation for adults was labour exploitation
- The most common type of exploitation for minors was criminal exploitation
- Potential victims from the UK, Albania and Vietnam remain the most commonly reported nationalities reported to the NRM



Whilst levels of reporting remained unchanged in the last year use of the NRM have risen from 2,337 in 2014 to 10,613 in the most recent year; an increase of 354% over the six years.

[19] Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism Statistics End of Year 2020

Modern Slavery Helpline

The National Helpline operated by Unseen, based in Bedfordshire, commenced operations in October 2016. It works closely with a range of diverse stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organisations, businesses, media and faith organisations.
It provides victims, the public, statutory agencies and businesses access to information and support on a 24/7 basis.

Modern Slavery Helpline Annual Assessment 2020

During 2020, the helpline[20] received 7,976 contacts (6052 telephone calls and 1924 web forms) The helpline experienced a reduction of 14% in calls, 8.6% in wen reports and 52% reduction in App Submissions in the last year. It is assumed that these reductions are a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result, 3,482 potential victims were identified, 1,742 Modern Slavery cases were raised and 1,582 referrals sent to law enforcement agencies.

- Potential Victims from 80 different countries were identified in the year

The greatest proportion of cases recorded in England (51.3%) in the 12 months related to Labour Exploitation. However, this group did see a reduction of 39% compared to the previous year, this is felt to be linked to the large number of sectors and venues being impacted by COVID-19 lockdowns

- 20.4% of cases recorded in England relates to Sexual Exploitation, an increase of 7%
- 18.7% of cases recorded in England relate to Criminal Exploitation, an increase of 12%
- 9.6% of cases recorded in England relate to Domestic Exploitation, consistent with last year

Local

Levels of reporting in the area of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking are low within both Bedfordshire as a county and Bedford Borough. It is therefore not possible to offer any form of evaluation of recent offices of how this might compare to previous years.

It should be noted that Yarlswood Immigration Centre is located within the Borough and so many referrals recorded by the police may relate to crimes that have taken place outside of the area.

In the year Apr 2020 – Mar 2021, Bedfordshire Police recorded 19 offences of MDS in the Borough, a 60.4% reduction when compared with the previous year. Traditionally a high number of offences are recorded at Yarlswood (72.9% in 2019-20), use of the centre was heavily impacted by COVID-19 which has resulted in a significant reduction in reports received in the last year (-88.6%).

- The number of MDS offences recorded outside of Yarlswood increased by 15.4% in the last year, an additional 2 offences.

Location of Incident	2018-19	% Total	2019-20	% Total	2020-21	% Total	Change	% Change
Yarlswood Centre	31	86.1	35	72.9	4	21.1	-31	-88.6
Other Locations	5	13.9	13	27.1	15	78.9	2	15.4
Total MDS	**36**	**100**	**48**	**100**	**19**	**100**	**-29**	**-60.4**

[20] Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline – Annual Assessment 2020 - Unseen

Some information about the demographic of victims are captured in the report

- 58.8% of those victims that have been identified are male, 41.2% are female.
- The age range of victims was 14 – 44 years, with an average age of 26. 4 victims are described as under 18 at the time of the offence.
- 2 of the 19 that were recorded in the year were non-recent (took place more than 1 year before they were reported)

Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Data

An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is someone who has care and support needs and is therefore unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

All agencies involved in the care, support and protection of vulnerable adults have a duty and responsibility to ensure that they are protected from any form of abuse or inappropriate care. Professionals that suspect or are told that a vulnerable adult is being abuse are expected to record their concerns using an Adult Protection Referral Form, which is submitted to the Safeguarding team within the local authority. An assessment process will take place to understand the care and support needs for that individual and to involve the appropriate agencies that may inform that process.

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 the safeguarding team at the Borough recorded a 2.8% reduction in referrals using the Adult Protection Referral Form. This pattern is not consistent with previous years and appears to be a result of COVID-19 restrictions; with an 8.8% reduction being recorded between Apr and June 2020 (the period of the first national lockdown).

Vulnerabilities and Risks identified in the referral have strong links to areas of concern to the CSP.

Referral Vulnerability	2018/19 % Total	2019/20 % Total	2020/21 % Total	% Change
Mental Health	14.2	7.3	6.4	-12.3
Substance Misuse	1.8	0.6	0.1	-86.4
Referral Risk	**2018/19 % Total**	**2019/20 % Total**	**2020/21 % Total**	**% Change**
Financial Abuse	10.7	12.1	10.0	-17.1
Domestic Abuse	10.6	10.0	9.0	-9.0
Sexual Abuse	3.1	2.8	3.4	23.8
Possible Cuckooing	1.6	1.9	1.9	0.0

In the last 12 months increasing proportions of risks related to increases in the area of Sexual Abuse.

Cuckooing of Vulnerable Adults

A new area of Identified risk is that of 'Cuckooing', a form of exploitation with strong links to the production and distribution of illegal drugs. Whilst the overall numbers recorded in this area are small the harm to the individual and the surrounding community can be significant.

- The majority of adults (80.2%) identified as at risk of cuckooing were aged between 18 and 64, 11.3% were aged 65 to 74 years and 8.5% were aged over 75 years
- 13 individuals were referred more than once in the year (11 persons x2 and 2 persons x3)
- 23 referrals gave details of potential exploiters

The main source of referrals relating to Cuckooing in the last year came from the police (35%), but there were also positive increases in referrals from housing professional that contributed 31%.

Links to Organised Crime and County Lines

In the last year Bedfordshire Police identified 170 locations of concern in relation to the cuckooing of a property for the purpose of the production and distribution of illegal drugs, of which 82 (48.2%) were located in Bedford Borough.

Hate Crime

In Bedfordshire we use the Home Office and Association of Chief Police Officers' definitions of hate crimes and hate incidents:

- **Hate Crime:** any incident which constitutes a criminal offence that is perceived by the victim, or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.
- **Hate Incident:** any incident that may or may not constitute a criminal offence that is perceived by the victim, or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

Hate crime and incidents are motivated by hate of a personal characteristic or perception: Disability – (this also includes people with learning disabilities and/or mental and emotional distress), Gender identity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or belief - this also includes places of worship and Sexual orientation

Hate crime and incidents can take many forms including:

- **Physical attacks** – such as a physical assault, on the victim or his/her family or carer, damage to property or pets, offensive graffiti and arson
- **Threat of attack** – including offensive letter, abusive or obscene telephone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate and unfounded malicious complaints
- **Verbal abuse or insults** – offensive leaflets and posters, abusive gestures, dumping of rubbish outside of homes or through letterboxes and bullying at school or the workplace.

National

In the year ending March 2021, there were 124,091 hate crimes recorded by the police[21] in England and Wales. In the same year 114,958 offences were recorded, an increase of 9% compared to the previous year. This continues an upward trend in recent years with the number of hate crimes recorded by the police having more than doubled since 2012/13 (from 42,255 to 114,958 offences)

Whilst the increases in hate crime over the last five years have been mainly driven by improvements in crime recording by the police, there have been short term genuine rises in hate crime were seen following certain events such as the EU Referendum in June 2016 and terrorist attacks in 2017. There was also an increase in public order hate crimes during the summer of 2020 following the widespread Black Lives Matter protest and far-right counter protests.

Motivation Strand	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% Total	2020-21	% Total	Change	% Change
Race	64829	72051	76158	72.3	85268	74.2	9110	12
Sexual Orientation	10670	13311	15972	15.2	17135	14.9	1163	7.3
Religion	7103	7202	6856	6.5	5627	4.9	-1229	-17.9
Disability	6787	7786	8465	8.0	9208	8.0	743	8.8
Transgender	1615	2185	2542	2.4	2630	2.3	88	3.5
All Offences	86254	97474	105362		114958		9596	9.1

[21] Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2020/21 – Home Office

It is possible for one hate crime offence to have more than one motivating factor which is why the above numbers sum to more than 114,958 and 100 per cent.

Over half (52%) of the hate crime offences recorded by the police were for public order offences and over a third (40%) were for violence against the person offences. Five percent were recorded as criminal damage and arson offences.

Local

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021, 421 hate crimes and incidents were recorded by Bedfordshire Police. This is an increase of 6.9% on the previous year's figure of 394.

Nine offences reported in the 12-month period related to a non-recent event (reported to the police more than 1 year after the offence took place). 77% of Hate crime was reported to the police within in 48hours of the event taking place. This suggests that victims are confident to report and that communities recognise Hate Crime incidents that they witness.

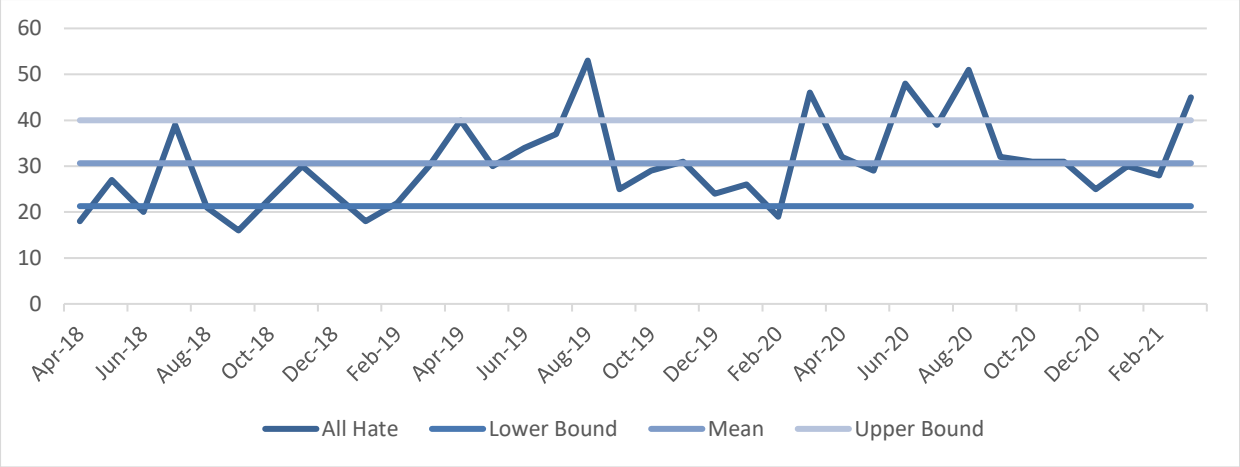
Within the overall Hate crime data, reports can be subdivided by the motivation factor or factors involved in the event.

Aggravating Factor	17-18	18-19	19-20	% Total	20-21	% Total	% Change	National 20-21
Racial	248	225	313	79.4	321	76.2	2.6	74.2%
Religion	36	20	18	4.6	22	5.2	22.2	4.9%
Sexual Orientation	23	32	52	13.5	77	18.3	45.3	14.9%
Disability	22	22	17	4.3	17	4.0	0.0	8.0%
Transgender	4	5	7	1.8	9	2.1	28.6	2.3%
Total Hate Crime	**333**	**288**	**394**	**103.6**	**421**	**105.9**	**6.9**	

Increases have been recorded in four of the five of the motivational strands; the proportions within each strand broadly reflect that of the national picture for 2020-21. with the exception of Sexual Orientation Hate Crime which is over-represented and Disability Hate Crime which is under-represented when compared to national picture.

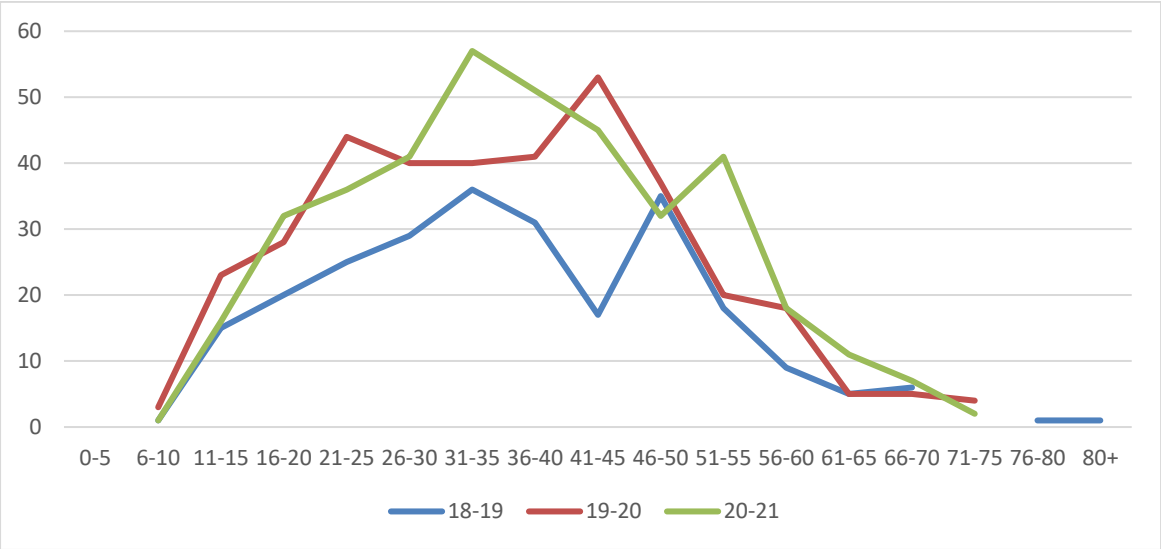
Temporal

Levels of reporting for Hate Crime in the Borough shows a similar pattern to that recorded within the National data with significant peaks in July for each year. It appears that levels and patterns of reporting of Hate Crime have not been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and have continued to follow the same patter as in previous years.



Victims

Where known, 58.1% of victims were male and 41.9% were female, numbers of female victims have reduced in the most recent year by 8.9% (16 cases). Whilst levels have fluctuated in previous years the overall the proportion of male and female victims have remained broadly consistent over the last 4 years.



- The greatest proportions of victims, 14.5% are aged between 31-35 years.
- 6.9% of victims were aged under 18 years at the time of the offence, a 28.9% reduction on the previous year's figure of 38.

- 45.5 % of victims were white; a reduction on the previous year's figure of 49%.

Ethnicity	17-18	% Total	18-19	% Total	19-20	% Total	20-21	% Total
White British	125	41.7	98	51.3	152	49.0	161	45.5
Asian	95	31.7	54	28.3	78	25.2	96	27.1
Black	78	26.0	37	19.4	75	24.2	91	25.7
Chinese	1	0.3	1	0.5	1	0.3	3	0.8
Arab	1	0.3	1	0.5	4	1.3	3	0.8

Offenders

48.5% of Hate crimes recorded in the period has no suspect details; as such the profile of offenders may be less reliable. Whilst it is not possible to analyse those missing suspects it supports the premise that Hate Crime in Bedford Borough is often committed by strangers.

Where stated 68.4% of Offenders of hate crime in the period were described as male, this is a slight reduction on the previous year's figure of 69.1%.

Ethnicity	17-18	% Total	18-19	% Total	19-20	% Total	20-21	% Total
White British	141	71.2	105	78.9	133	75.6	150	76.5
Asian	27	13.6	15	11.3	24	13.6	28	14.3
Black	28	14.1	13	9.8	18	10.2	16	8.2
Chinese	1	0.5				0.0	1	0.5
Arab	1	0.5			1	0.6	1	0.5

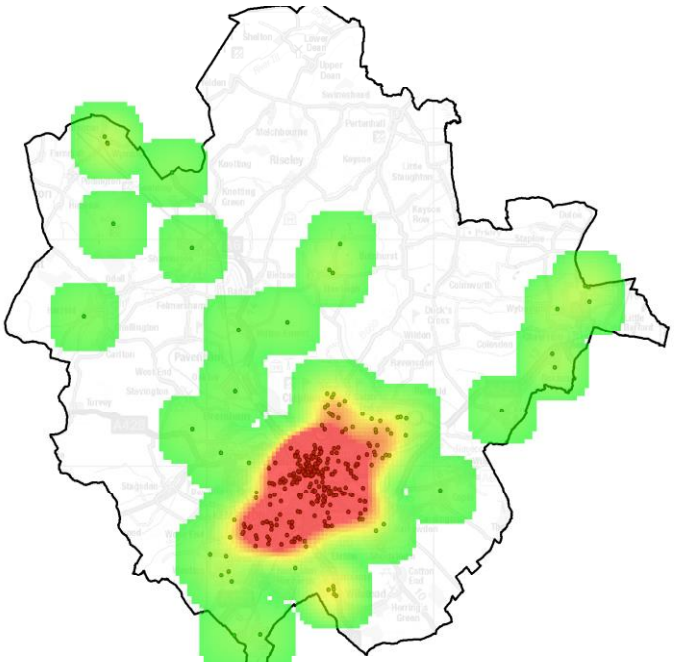
Where known, 76.5% of offenders were white; this is a slight increase from the previous year's figure of 75.6, but broadly consistent with previous four years. The proportions of Asian offenders have increased slightly, whilst Black offenders have reduced.

Location

83.6% of Hate Crime took place in the urban wards of the Borough; this is a slight increase on the previous year's figure of 81.6%.

The greatest proportion of all Hate Crime (20.2%) took place in Castle Ward, which includes both the main town centre and the CSPs geographic area of focus, the Midland Road area.

Hotspot map of all Hate Crime reported in 2020-21



Crime Severity Scores

Hate Crime encompasses a wide range of criminal offences which will inevitably result in varying levels of Harm. Within Hate Crime data recorded in 2020/21, severity scores range from 5.39 for Criminal Damage to 2034.74 for Assault to cause serious harm.

Whilst the number of Hate Crime Offences recorded has increased from 243 in 2018/19 to 421 in the most recent year the average severity score has reduced from 52.2 per offence in 2018-19 to 35.1 in the most recent year. This supports the CSP aim that victims will seek support before issues escalate to more serious offences.

Motivation by Harm	Crimes	Average Severity Score
Racial	321	29.0
Religion	22	39.5
Sexual Orientation	77	50.9
Disability	17	59.9
Transgender	9	155.9
All Hate Crime	**421**	**35.1**

When Hate Crime motivations are looked at by harm rather than volume the picture can be quite different

Whilst the greatest proportion of offences (76.2%) are motivated by Race the average severity score for these offences are lower at 29.0.

The highest levels of harm are caused to Transgender victims with an average severity score of 155.9, significantly above that of the overall victim group.

- Levels of harm also appear to be higher for younger victims. For the 27 offences where the victim was aged under 18 the average severity score was 55.3

Recommendation: Hate Crime data should continue to be regularly reviewed by volume and severity to ensure early identification of any changes to levels of harm

Priority Three – Building Community Confidence

Listening and responding to local communities is vital, it allows us to build the networks and trust that are needed to deliver other key priorities whilst delivering solutions to local issues in a quick and effective manner. It is important to acknowledge the themes that have the greatest impact on the daily life of those that live, work and visit the Borough.

These issues are the visible outcomes that have strong links to the issues identified in Priorities One and Two.

Thematic Areas • ASB & Alcohol Related Disorder • Drug Use and Distribution • Gangs and Young People • Homelessness and Begging

Key Issues identified in the 2019 Strategic Assessment
 	
• Respondents to the CSP Survey raised concerns in a number of key areas that they feel contribute to levels of Crime and ASB in their community
  ○ The highest levels of concern were recorded around 'Drug Use' and 'Drug Dealing'
  ○ More than half felt that the 'Gangs and Groups of Young People' contributed to levels of Crime and ASB in their local area
  ○ The most common factors that made visitors to the town centre feel unsafe were 'Alcohol', followed by 'Drugs'
  ○ Groups of youths in the town centre, often described as 'Gangs', also made respondents feel unsafe
  ○ The presence of rough sleepers and people begging in the town centre appears to be a contributing factor to visitors' perception of safety
• Young people surveyed at community events suggested that concerns about Knife Crime, drugs and, gangs affected them and altered where they chose to spend time. Some suggested that their local park was 'a place that made them feel unsafe'
• Young People attending 'Youth Voices' sessions felt there is a distinct lack of opportunities and activities for young people within the town centre area. They felt their views or opinions where not being heard or considered in the matters and issues which impacted them
• In the last 12 months Incidents of Begging and Vagrancy reported to the police reduced, however begging hotspots remain a concern particularly near to ATM machines and transport hubs or car parks (particularly near to payment machines).
• Bedford Borough Council recorded a positive reduction in the number of Rough Sleepers.

Note: *National and Local data sets for some of these themes are not clearly defined in Home Office crime classifications. They are not all suitable to be evaluated using the traditional VOL methodology.*

Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is defined in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) as: *'Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.'*

A more appropriate definition of anti-social behaviour for the purposes of incident recording is provided by the Housing Act (1996): 'Engaging in or threatening to engage in conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to persons engaged in lawful activities'.

From the year ending March 2012, a new set of three simplified categories for ASB were introduced.

- **'Personal'** is designed to identify incidents that are deliberately targeted at a particular individual or specific group or aimed at having an impact on a particular individual or specific group rather than the community at large;
- **'Nuisance'** captures those incidents where an individual or group causes trouble, annoyance, inconvenience, offence or suffering to people in the local community in general rather than being deliberately targeted at specific individuals or groups; and
- **'Environmental'** deals with the interface between people and places. It includes incidents and inconsiderate actions which have an impact on the surroundings including the natural, built and social environments. This category is about encouraging reasonable behaviour whilst managing and protecting various environments so that people can enjoy their own private spaces as well as shared or public spaces.

National

The telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales 2021[22] suggest that 28% of adults personally witnessed or experienced ASB in their area in the last 12 months.

Estimates from the same survey showed that 49% of adults noticed individuals breaching virus restrictions in their area since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic began, just 7% reported the breach to the police.

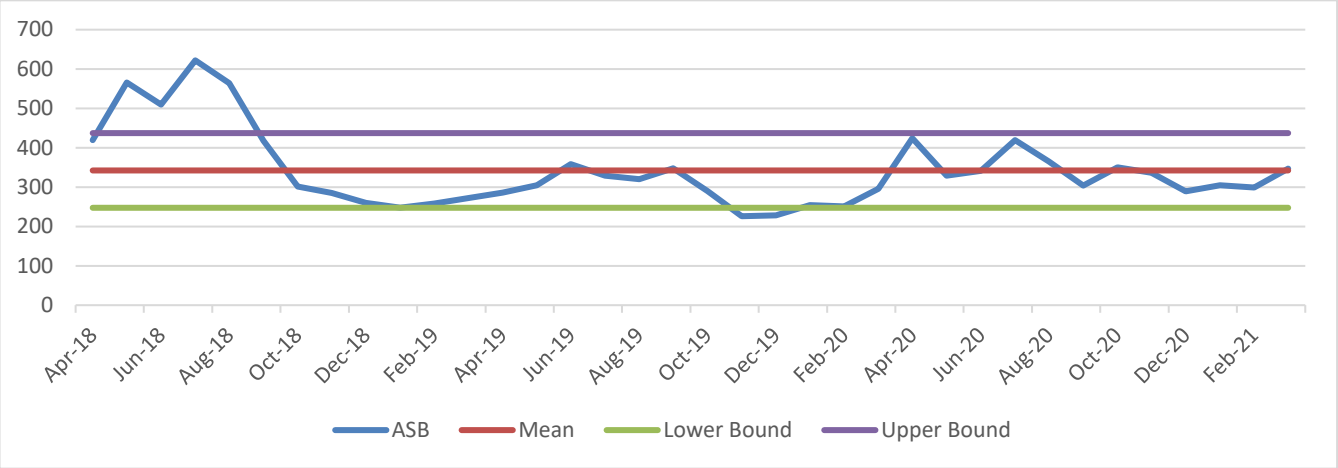
The police recorded 1.8 million incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the year ending June 2021. Following consistent decreases over the past 10 years, this was an increase of 7% (excluding British Transport Police) compared with the year ending June 2020. The largest increase was seen in January to March 2021, with incidents up 46% compared with January to March 2020. This increase may reflect the reporting of breaches to public health restrictions, as most police forces include breaches reported to them by members of the public as an ASB incident.

[22] Crime Survey for England and Wales – year ending March 2021

Local

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021, Bedfordshire Police received 4,122 reported incidents of ASB. This compares to 3,491 incidents in the same period of the previous year, an increase of 18.1% (631 incidents).

Bedfordshire Police initiated a review of recording for ASB in September 2018, whilst the overall pattern of ASB reporting is consistent; numbers of ASB incidents for each month have been lower.



High levels of ASB were reported in both April and Jul 2020

- 31.3% of all ASB incidents recorded in Apr 2020 were marked as Covid-19 related, this marks the start of the first national lockdown.
- July 2020 marked the end to the first lockdown where many restrictions were eased. Increases in Rowdy/Inconsiderate Behaviour and Public Order were noted in this month.

ASB - Final Class	**2018-19**	**% Total**	**2019-20**	**%Total**	**Change**	**2020-21**	**% Total**	**Change**
Nuisance	4188	88.7	3081	88.3	-1107	3230	78.4	149
Personal	268	5.7	138	4.0	-130	260	6.3	122
High Risk	*1*	*0.0*	*1*	*0.0*	*0*	*0*	*0.0*	*-1*
Medium Risk	*24*	*0.5*	*7*	*0.2*	*-17*	*14*	*0.3*	*7*
Standard Risk	*131*	*2.8*	*68*	*1.9*	*-63*	*178*	*4.3*	*110*
No Risk	*112*	*2.4*	*62*	*1.8*	*-50*	*68*	*1.6*	*6*
Environmental	268	5.7	272	7.8	4	632	15.3	360
Total	**4724**		**3491**		**-1233**	**4122**		**631**

- 78.4% of all incidents reported in the year can be attributed to Nuisance ASB; this is a reduction on the previous year's figure of 88.3%.
- The proportions of Personal ASB increased to 6.3% from 4% in 2019-20.
- Environmental ASB accounted for 15.3% of recorded incidents in the year, an increase on the previous year's figure of 7.8%.

Within the 3 broad categories ASB can be subdivided into more meaningful classifications that give details about the nature of the event. Each incident is allocated the classification that best describes the event but it must be accepted that on occasions more than one issue may be present. It is therefore down to the call handler to allocate the most applicable class to each incident.

Over the 12 months recorded incidents were divided into 40 classifications.
Just 5 classifications account for over two thirds of all ASB in the Borough.

Of note 423 incidents recorded in the year related to COVID-19 which would not have been present in previous year's assessments, these account for 10.3% of all ASB recorded in the year.

Initial Class	2018-19	Rank	% Total	2019-20	Rank	% Total	2020-21	Rank	% Total
Rowdy/Inconsiderate	2205	1	46.7	1150	1	32.9	1225	1	29.7
Vehicle Nuisance	665	2	14.1	573	2	16.4	548	2	13.3
COVID-19 Related							423	3	10.3
Nuisance Neighbour	206	5	4.4	209	6	6.0	282	4	6.8
Begging/Vagrancy	205	6	4.3	205	7	5.9	264	5	6.4

Bedford Borough ASB Cases

Where issues relating to ASB are raised with the local authority a case is opened on the Borough's APP system. Unlike Police incident data that records each contact as a separate log, reports relating to the same location or issue are attached to a single case that is used to collectively problem solve.

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 the Community Safety Team at Bedford Borough Council opened 392 new cases relating to ASB issues, an increase of 32.4% (96 cases), significantly above that of police data that increased by 18.1%

Recommendation: ASB data from other Partners should be reviewed alongside Police data to understand any changes in recording habits

Three categories of ASB complaint account for the majority of the increases

- Complaints relating to Drug Dealing & Production increase by 122% (+33 cases)
- Complaints relating to Rowdy/Inconsiderate Behaviour increased by 62% (+38 cases)
- Complaints relating to Neighbour Disputes increased by 62% (18 cases)
- The highest number of cases (138) were opened in the first quarter of the year (Apr – June 2020), which coincides with the first national lockdown

Ward Name	APP Cases	% Total	Rank
Castle Ward	64	16.5	1
Harpur Ward	55	14.2	2
Cauldwell Ward	54	13.9	3
Queens Park Ward	32	8.2	4
Goldington Ward	25	6.4	5
Kingsbrook Ward	25	6.4	5
Other Wards	**133**	**34.3**	

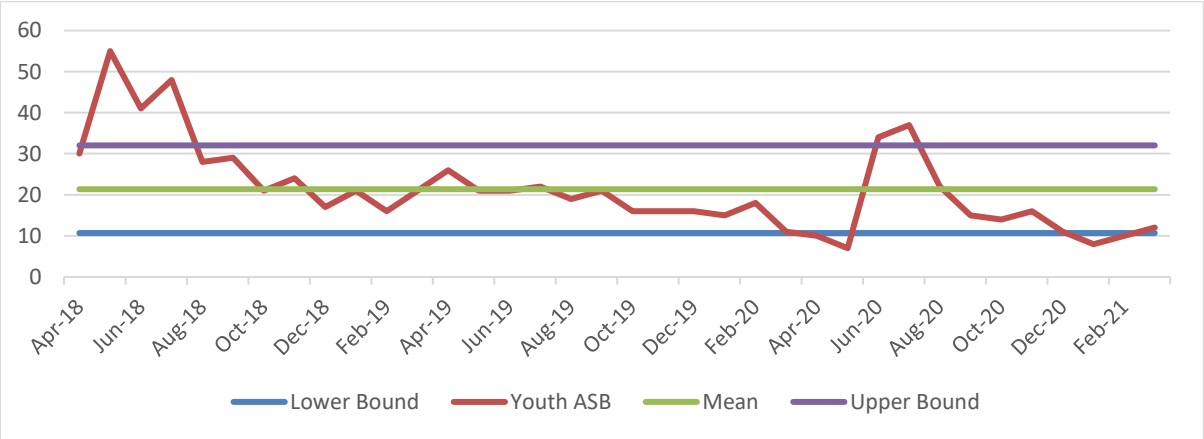
ASB Qualifiers in Police recorded incidents

A number of markers are attached to Police incident data to give further details about the individuals involved. More than one marker can be applied to an incident.

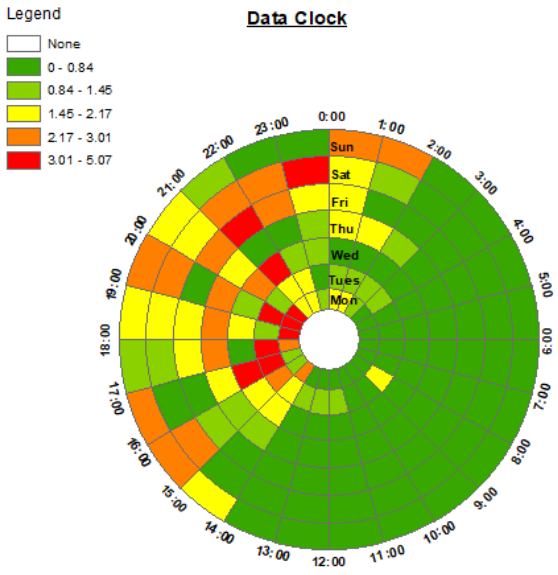
Qualifiers	2018-19	% Total	Change	2019-20	% Total	Change	2020-21	% Total	%Change
All ASB	4724		-1525	3491		-1233	4122		18.1
Youth Related	350	7.4	-290	222	6.4	-128	197	4.8	-11.3
Alcohol Related	587	12.4	-227	291	8.3	-296	343	8.3	17.9
Youth & Alcohol	23	0.5	-6	14	0.4	-9	13	0.3	-7.1
Drugs Related	113	2.4	-23	96	2.7	-17	90	2.2	-6.3

Youth Related ASB

Over the 12 months 4.8% of ASB incidents have a marker that indicates the event is Youth Related, 197 in the period, this is a 11.3% reduction (-25 incidents) from the previous year. This marker indicates that there is evidence to suggest that young people are involved in the incidents; it does not therefore mean that the remaining 95.2% of ASB is committed by adults.



Traditionally Youth ASB incidents tend to peak in the Summer months. Data for the last year appears to has been influenced by Covid-19 restrictions, with low levels through most of the year, and a single peak in June-July 2021 when the first national lockdown finished and restrictions were eased.



- Peak times for Youth ASB are throughout the week between 16:00 – 22:00, peaks reporting at the weekends starts earlier at 15:00 and continues through the entire day.

Hotspot map of all Youth Related ASB Incidents reported in 2020-21

The greatest proportion of incidents 11.2% were reported in Castle Ward that includes the town centre and the CSP area of priority Midland Road

Ward Name	Youth ASB	% Total	Rank
Castle Ward	22	11.2	1
Wilshamstead Ward	16	8.1	2
Wootton Ward	15	7.6	3
Queens Park Ward	14	7.1	4
Kingsbrook Ward	14	7.1	4
Other Wards	**116**	**58.9**	

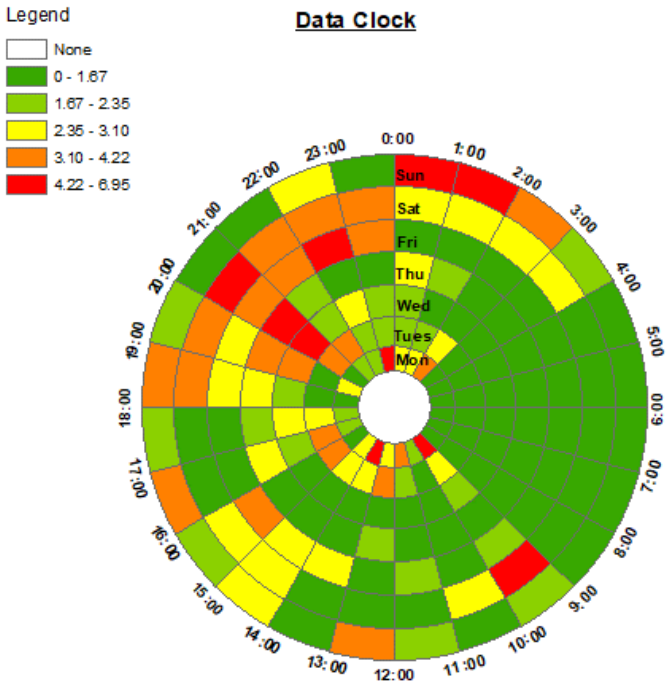
Interesting that 2 of the top 5 wards for youth ASB are Rural, noticeable hotspots in Wixams (in the Wilshamstead Ward) and Wootton, this is not typical when compared to previous year's assessments

Information Gap: It is not possible to know if the increase in Youth ASB in rural areas is linked to other Priority areas such as Youth Violence & County Lines

Alcohol Related ASB

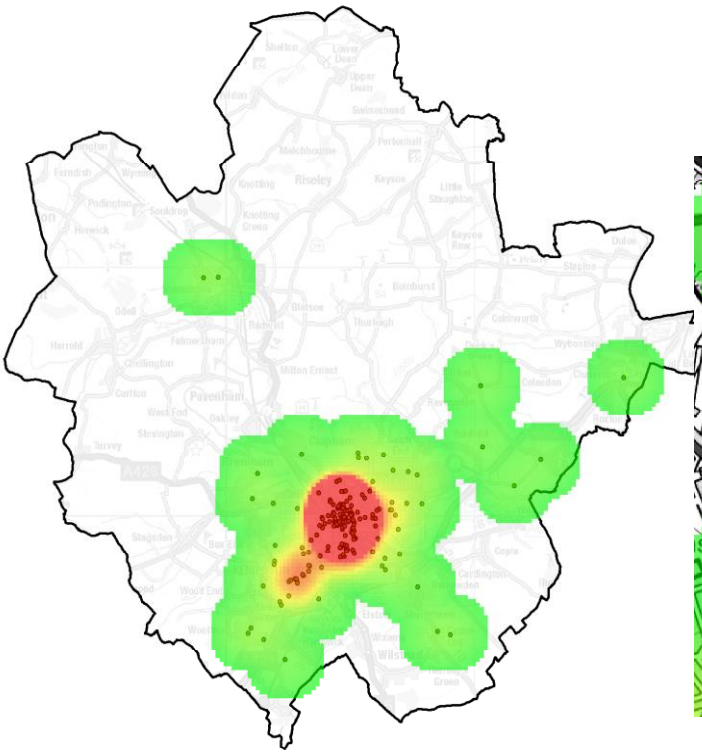
8.3% of ASB incidents have a marker that indicates the event was Alcohol Related, 343 for the period. This represents an increase of 17.9% (an additional 52 incidents) from the previous year.

The three top wards for Alcohol related ASB were Castle (117), Harpur (112) and Cauldwell (19). These areas are consistent with lasts three year's assessments.



- 32% (112 incidents) of Alcohol related ASB was night-time (start time 21:00 – 05:59).
  This is a significant reduction on the previous year's figure of 43% which may be attributed to the closure of the night-time economy and hospitality sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 67.3% (231 incidents) of Alcohol related ASB was recorded in the day (start time 06:00 – 20:59).

Hotspot map of all Alcohol Related ASB Incidents reported in 2020-21



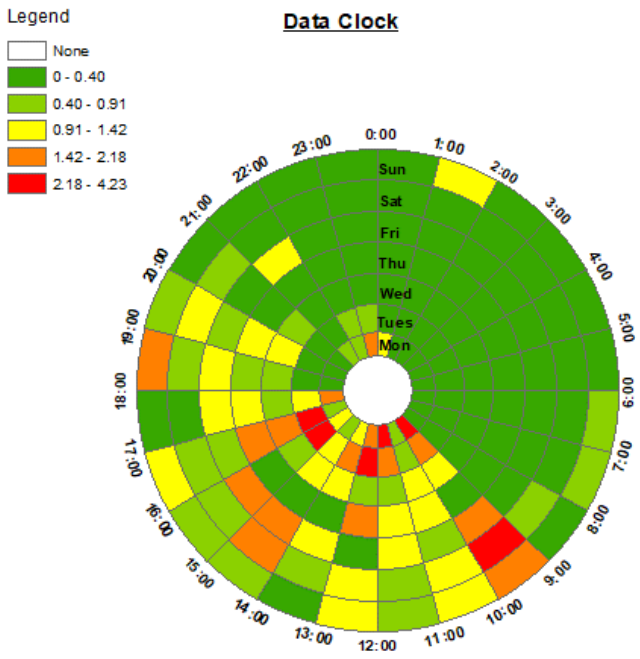
Street Drinking

A street drinker is often described as '*a person who drinks heavily in public places and has been involved in alcohol related crime or ASB. They may appear unable or unwilling to stop or control their own behaviour'.*

The effects of street drinking can be costly in different ways. It causes distress to members of the public; it is bad for business and can be a significant demand on public services.

The impacts on the local community can be significant with callers regularly reporting being intimidated by the drinker's behaviour, being noisy, abusive and on occasions threatening when asked to move away.

- In the period Apr 2020 – Mar 2021, 115 incidents of street drinking were reported to the police. This is an increase of 53.3% (40 incidents) when compared to the previous year's figure of 75.
- Street drinking accounted for just 2.8% of all recorded ASB in the Borough during 2020/21; this was the ninth highest category of ASB recorded in the year, consistent with previous year's data.



63 of the incidents recorded in the last 12 months took place in Harpur Ward (including Tavistock Street), this represents 54.8% of all Street Drinking recorded for the Borough.

A further 45 Incidents (39.1%) took place in Castle Ward (which includes both the main Town Centre and the Midland Road area).

Together these two areas account for 93.9% of all Street Drinking reported in the Borough.

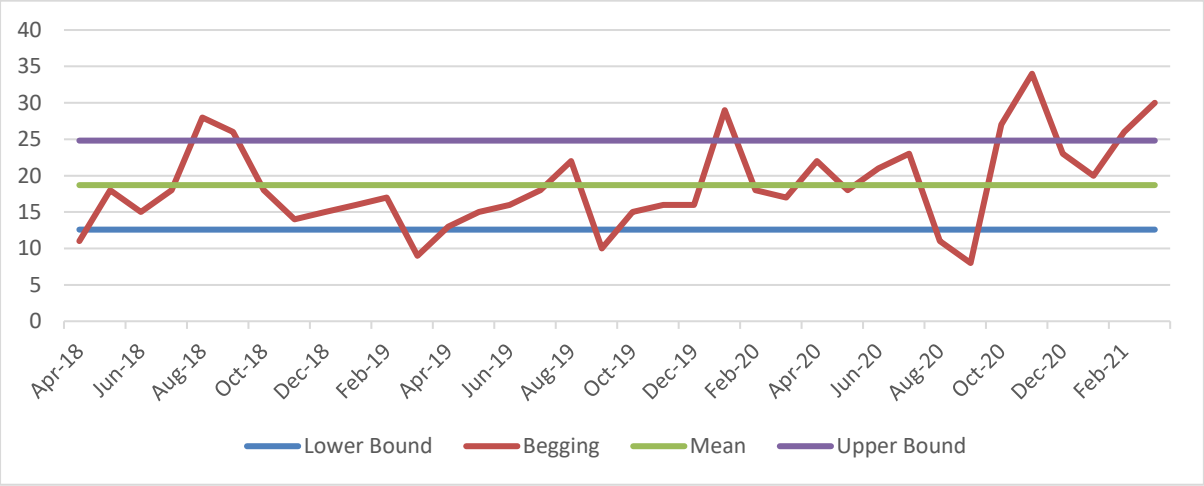
Begging

According to Home Office guidance [23] *Begging can fall into two main areas;* ***aggressive begging****, actively approaching people for money or begging in a way that causes harassment fear or alarm, and* ***passive begging****, sitting in doorways but not actually asking for money.*

Local

Begging and Vagrancy is a defined category recorded within the Anti-Social Behaviour data set which relates to individuals who may be rough sleeping and/or begging in public places.

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021, 263 incidents were recorded as Begging and Vagrancy. This is an increase of 28.3% on the previous two years' figure of 205.



Begging and Vagrancy accounted for 6.4% of all recorded ASB in the Borough during 2020/21; this was the fifth highest category of ASB recorded in the year.

- 33.3% of recorded incident of Begging (88 incidents) took place in the Castle Ward of the Borough, which includes both the main town centre and the Midland Road area. Within this data 44 incidents relate to the town centre.
- A further 22.7% (60 incidents) were recorded in the Harpur Ward, which includes Tavistock Street.
- 53 incidents of Begging (20.1%) were reported in car parks, this represents a 47% increase on the previous year.
- 45 incidents (17%) were linked to aggressive begging near to cash machines

[23] Defining and measuring anti-social behaviour - 2004

Bedford Town Centre

Bedford Town Centre sits within the Castle Ward of Bedford Borough. Whilst it is not unexpected that a town centre would have higher levels of Crime and ASB there are some key areas that have been identified within the 'Building Community Confidence' Priority that have a significant impact on those that live, work and visit the town centre.

High concentrations of Alcohol related ASB, Street Drinking and Begging have all been recorded in this year's assessment

The last CSP Consultation (conducted in 2019) evidenced the impact of these issues on those that use the facilities in the area

- 43% of respondents to the question 'What makes the Town Centre an unsafe place?' raised concerns relating to Alcohol
- 17% of respondents to the same question mentioned the presence of people begging
- A further 8% referred to the high number of homeless people as contributing factor to their perception of safety

Operation Highgate

A multi-agency approached, led by the North Urban Community Policing Team, to managing those issues that impact on the town centre of Bedford in the areas of Street Drinking, Begging and Homelessness. The aim is to support and protect the most vulnerable whilst ensuring that those who persist in committing criminal acts are dealt with swiftly and proportionately. The operation adopts a number of different responses in order to best mange those with complex needs.

- Early identification of new rough sleepers or vulnerable persons within the town centre and referring to outreach services
- Identification of those individuals who persistently commit Crime & ASB in the Town Centre
- Making best use of new legislation and ASB powers to reduce the impacts to businesses, staff and the wider community

Working with the local Business Improvement District (BID) and local partners to problem solve at an individual level has been key to the success of Op Highgate, to ensure that issues are contained and those that are identified to be homeless are supported off the streets.

Street Drinking Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

In December 2020 Bedford Borough Council designated a PSPO under Section 59 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2014. The PSPO gives the Police and authorised officers to enforce against those that commit alcohol related ASB. As part of the application process a consultation exercise identified 91% of responses were in support of the proposal.

Recommendation: The CSP should look for further opportunities to work collaboratively to support & address the impacts of individuals that persistently commit ASB in the Town Centre

Rough Sleeping

Rough Sleeping is defined by the Government as *'people sleeping or bedding down in the open air; people in buildings or other places that are not designs for habitation.*

Rough Sleeper Count

The rough sleeper count is a single night snapshot of the number of persons sleeping rough in each local authority on a single night between 1 October and 30 November. The data is collated to produce a statistical release including some demographic data.

In the autumn of 2020 there were 2,688 people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night, a significant reduction of 1,578 (37%) from the previous year.

The count coincides with a national lockdown which is very likely to have impacted the results, the ongoing 'Everyone In' has helped to protect many of those sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough.

- 72% were UK nationals, 18% were EU nationals from outside the UK.
- 14% were women
- 5% were under 25 years old

Bedford Borough Council recorded 6 Rough Sleepers in November 2020; this is a significant reduction of 80% (-24) from the previous year. Numbers of people sleeping rough in the Borough was heavily influenced by the introduction of the 'Everyone In' approach that has been adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 2021 count will take place in November and will be supported by contributions from across the partnership to ensure that the figures are reflective of the true picture in Bedford.

Whilst official data from the count is not available at the time of this report, a recent estimate suggests that the number of those sleeping rough in the Borough will have reduced significantly as a result of the 'Everyone In' approach that has been adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Common Threads

A number of cross cutting themes have been identified that relate to one of more of the local community safety priorities.

These are:

- Drug and Alcohol Misuse
- Mental Health
- Children and Young People known to the Criminal Justice System
- Re-Offending
- Serious and Organised Crime

Drug Misuse

The problem of illicit drug use has been one of the key concerns for society during the past 30 years. Many communities across England have experienced the harmful impacts of people using a range of substances, including heroin and crack cocaine. The more obvious ones include crime, discarded needles and other drug litter, and drug-related deaths, whilst there are a range of other less visible health consequences including the spread of blood borne viruses. There are also significant negative impacts on children and families of drug and alcohol users.

National evidence from the Crime Survey for England and Wales[24] suggests that illicit drug use amongst adults is fairly stable.

- In 2018/19, 9.4% of adults aged 16 to 59 in England and Wales had taken an illicit drug in the last year. This equates to around 3.2 million people.
    - 3.7% had taken a Class A drugs in the last year, this is an increase compared both with the previous year's figure of 3% and a decade ago
- Levels of drug use are higher in the younger age group, with 20.3% of those aged 16 to 24 having taken a drug in the last year.
    - 8.7% of this age group had taken a Class A Drug in the year, up from 6.2% in 2011/12

However evidence surveys of young people in schools[25] in 2018 (11 to 15 years) suggests that drug use in this group is increasing

- In 2016, 24% of pupils reported that they had ever taken drugs. This compares to just 15% in 2014, 9% stated they had taken drugs in the last month
- The likelihood of having ever taken drugs increases with age, from 9% of 11 year olds to 38% of 15 year olds.
- 57% of young people aged 11 to 15 years stated that on the first occasion that they tried drugs, they got them from a friend

[24] Statistics on Drugs Misuse - England 2020 NHS Digital
[25] Smoking, Drinking & Drug Use among Young People in England 2018 NHS

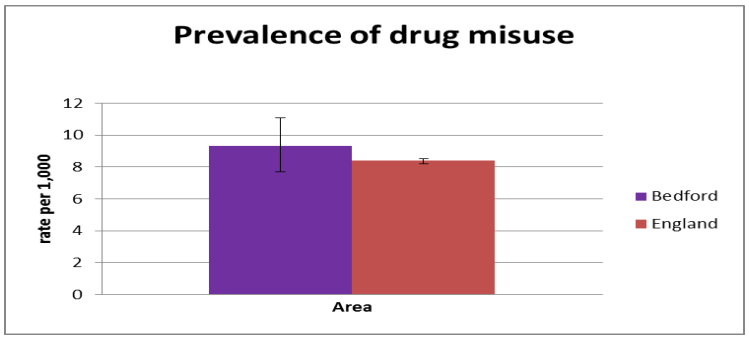
- Overall 11% said that they got drugs from a dealer, but this was 29% where a class A drug was taken.

Hospital data give further information about the harm caused by illicit drugs.

- In the period 2019/20 there were 16,994 hospital admissions for poisoning by drug misuse, this is similar to the previous year, but 9% higher than in 2012/13.
- In 2020 there were 2,996 registered deaths related to poisoning by drug misuse, 19.7% higher than in 2017.
    - There were 777 deaths involving cocaine in 2020, 9.7% higher than the previous year. The number of deaths have increased by five times since 2010 (144 deaths)

Local

Bedford Borough's estimated rate of drug misuse is 9.3 per 1,000 of population, slightly above that of the rate for England. This difference is considered to be due to the geographical nature of Bedford Borough - Bedford Borough is a more densely populated urban area and it is well documented that urban areas attract a higher level of drug misuse activity than more rural areas.



Estimated drug misuse prevalence in Bedford Borough 2011/12

- It is estimated that 51.4% of people in Bedford Borough that are dependent on opiates and/or crack cocaine are not in treatment. This is below the national estimate of 53.7%[26]

	Number of people in effective treatment - Bedford				Number of Successful Completions			
Treatment Group	**2017/18**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2017/18**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**
Opiate	531	549	547	532	35	46	43	24
Non-Opiate	103	99	114	140	49	54	56	71
Alcohol & Non-Opiate	83	93	78	67	24	40	34	29

DOMES Report – 2020/21

The relationship between problem drug use and crime is complex. Even so, all the evidence indicates that problem drug users are responsible for a large percentage of acquisitive crime, such as shoplifting and burglary. As a direct consequence of the crime they commit, these problem drug users are highly likely to end up in contact with the criminal justice system at some point.

[26] Diagnostics Outcomes Monitoring Executive Summary – Q4 2020/21

Alcohol Misuse

Alcohol plays an important part in the cultural life of this country, with large numbers employed in production, retail and hospitality industry. Pubs, bars and clubs contribute to community and family life and also generate revenue to the economy. However, alcohol is a regulated product; its misuse can contribute to crime and anti-social behaviour, preventable illness and early death.

- There were an estimated 1.3 million alcohol related admissions (broad measure) to hospitals in England in 2018/19[27], this is an 8% increase on the previous year. This represents 7.4% of all hospital admissions in the year.
- In 2017/18 there were 358,000 estimated admissions where the main reason was attributed to alcohol (narrow measure), this is an increase of 6% on the previous year and 19% higher than in 2008/09
- In 2018 there were 5,698 alcohol specific deaths which were related to the consumption of alcohol. This is 2% lower than 2076 but an increase of 7% on 2008.
- 67% of all alcohol related deaths were male
- 79% of all alcohol related deaths were for alcoholic liver disease.

Binge drinking is defined as consuming more than double the recognised lower-risk daily limits over a short period of time. According to ONS[28], 28.7% of adult males and 25.6% of adult females 'binged' on alcohol on their heaviest drinking day.

- Whilst 16 to 24 year olds were the least likely to say that they drank in the week prior to the interview, when they did they were the most likely to 'binge'

The problem of excess drinking has primarily developed for the following reasons:

- Cheap alcohol is readily available which has led to a change in behaviour, with increasing numbers of people drinking excessively at home. This includes people drinking before they go on a night out. In 2016[29] the beer from supermarkets and off-licences was 188% more affordable than in 1987. Similarly, wine and spirits were also more affordable, up 131%
- There is still a lack of knowledge and understanding amongst the public about what constitutes safe or harmful drinking and the impact that exceeding the safe drinking levels has on individuals' health.

According to Alcohol Change UK, 64% of stranger violence and 70% of violent incidents at the weekends, evenings and night are alcohol related. The cost of alcohol related crime in the UK is between £8bn and £13bn per year.

- In 2018 there were 8,700 casualties of drink driving collisions in the UK.[30]

[27] Statistic on Alcohol – England 2020 NHS Digital
[28] Adult drinking habits in Great Britain, May 2018
[29] Institute of Alcohol Studies, February 2018
[30] Alcohol Change UK website

Local

"Harmful Drinking" represents the most hazardous use of alcohol where damage to the drinker's health is likely. One possible outcome of harmful drinking is alcohol dependence, where the person:

- Finds it difficult to control their drinking
- Experiences physiological symptoms when not drinking
- Has an increased tolerance of alcohol
- Has evidence of physical harm caused by excessive alcohol use, and
- Prioritises alcohol consumption over other issues, e.g. family, work, nutrition, etc.

The number of people in Bedford Borough who are alcohol dependent is expected to rise over the next 5 years, from an estimated 5,905 people in 2015 to 6,120 in 2020.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020	2025
Males	4246	4289	4324	4350	4411	4507
Females	1660	1666	1683	1696	1709	1749
Total	**5905**	**5956**	**6007**	**6046**	**6120**	**6256**

Number of people aged 18-64 years predicted to have alcohol dependence in Bedford Borough

Source: table developed using PANSI, 2015

The data in the table above is based on a survey of the household population and is therefore likely to under-represent the number of dependent adults, as they are more likely to be homeless or in an institutional setting. In addition, problem drinkers who do live in private households may be less available, able or willing to participate in surveys (PANSI, 2015).

Rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related conditions (Quarterly / Broad definition) (from 2015/16 Q4 to 2017/18 Q1) for Bedford Borough

Period	Hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions (Broad definition)			
	Admissions per 100,000 people			
	Bedford Borough	Minimum for All English regions	Mean for All English regions	Maximum for All English regions
2015/16 Q4	508	436	549	661
2016/17 Q1	512	457	561	668
2016/17 Q2	516	464	568	679
2016/17 Q3	522	457	561	674
2016/17 Q4	523	454	568	693
2017/18 Q1	542	469	580	695

Source:
Public Health England

The rate of hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions has been steadily increasing, this is in line with national increases, but below that mean for English regions

In the last two years the rate of successful completions has risen from 50.7% to 54.1%, 2020/21 rates put the Borough in the top quartile range nationally.

	Number in Effective Treatment		Number of Successful Completions		% of successful Completions		
Treatment Group	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**Top Quartile**
Alcohol	302	268	153	145	50.7%	54.1	44.2 – 54.1%

DOMES – 2019/20 & 2020/21

Change Resistant Drinkers

Whilst the overall measure for those entering and completing treatment in Bedford Borough, not just for dependency, but for treatment of all harmful drinking, is generally positive, there is increasing evidence of a small cohort of individuals who are not engaging effectively with these services. This results in an increased risk of harm to themselves and to the community around them.

There is currently no dedicated outreach service within the Borough for substance misuse, whilst many third sector agencies and the new Rough Sleeper Partnership do promote and encourage their clients to access these service.

National evidence[31] suggests that street drinkers are unlikely to self-refer and will need considerable levels of sustained support to encourage them to accept support.

Drug and Alcohol Health Needs Assessment

The Health Needs Assessment (HNA) uses a wide range of the latest available data to examine the harm caused by drugs and alcohol on the health of the population of Bedford Borough. The causes of drug and alcohol harm are complex and the HNA highlights the importance of effective partnership working. The recommendations of the HNA will form the backbone of a strategic action plan which will be delivered through the Borough's Drug and Alcohol Partnership Board.

Key Findings

There continues to be significant numbers of people who are dependent on drugs and alcohol that are not in treatment as well as groups who appear to be under-represented in the treatment population. Whilst entering treatment is voluntary and only likely to be effective when the client is ready to change, more needs to be done to encourage individuals to seek help.

Nationally, the level of alcohol-related health harms continues to rise across the population and there is nothing to suggest that Bedford Borough is experiencing anything different. Drinking at increasing risk levels, as well as alcohol dependency, are linked to many ill-health conditions and have significant costs for the wider economy, including through crime, meaning that this is an issue for both health and community safety.

[31] Tackling Street Drinking – PCC guidance on best practice Nov 16

Services have traditionally focused on reducing the demand of illegal drugs, i.e. treating addiction and giving prevention messages to reduce health harms, a system-wide focus on restricting supply is not there. There are gaps in knowledge about trends in drug use locally.

Whilst the HNA looks at drug and alcohol misuse in the broadest terms it specifically references a number of key areas that are of direct interest to the CSP strategic assessment, most particularly;

- Domestic Abuse
- Homelessness
- Dependent Drinkers
- County Lines

The following broad recommendations have been collated from each of the chapters of the HNA.

1. Develop effective system-wide data capturing and monitoring
2. Establish clear pathways between all services that support client recovery
3. Address the harm to families and young people of drug and alcohol use in others (hidden harms)
4. Establish an effective partnership approach to enable early identification of problematic drug and alcohol misuse and a shared understanding of local service pathways
5. Reduce the harms caused by alcohol misuse
6. Improve communications to improve understanding of drug and alcohol harm and roles and responsibilities in reducing that harm

Recommendation: The CSP should continue to support the delivery of the strategic aims within the Drug and Alcohol Health Needs Assessment

Mental Health

According to Mind UK, one in four people in the UK will experience mental health problems each year. This figure covers a wide range of conditions, including more common diagnosis such as depression and anxiety and less common diagnoses such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. For some conditions this may a contained period of time and for other a long lasting impact.

According to NHS Digital[32] 2.8 million people were in contact with mental health services between Apr 2020 and Mar 2021, of these 828,461 were aged 18 or under

- 97,107 people in contact with mental health services were admitted to a mental health hospital in the same 12 months, 4,157 were aged 18 or under

In the same year 53,239 new detentions under the mental health act were recorded[33], (overall trend may be higher as not all providers had submitted data at the time of the report). It is estimated that detentions will have increased by 4.5% on the previous year

Despite an increase in people accessing treatment, around a third of all people with a mental health problem have sought no professional help at all[34].

- Women aged between 16 and 24 are almost three times more likely (at 26%) to experience a common mental health problem than males of the same age (9%).

Mental Health and Victims

According to Mind UK, people with mental health problems are three times more likely to be victims of crime than the general population.[35]

- The same group are five times more likely to be a victim of assault, rising to 10 times more for women.
- More likely to be a repeat victim and experience different types of crime.
- Far less likely to be satisfied with the service and support that they receive

Many people who experience mental health problems do not seek help. The fear of being stigmatised, or concerns about being locked up may be a barrier. The levels of crisis care often mean that when people ask for help it is not always available.

Mental Health Care in Prisons

According to the Prisons Reform Trust[36] there is strong evidence of a greater prevalence of mental health issues in the UK prison population.

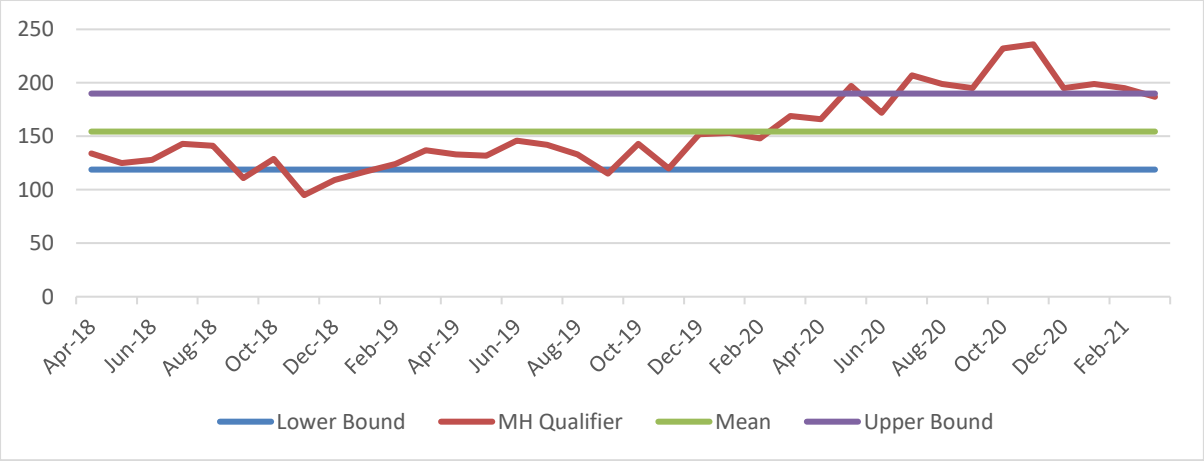
[32] Mental Health Services Statistics April 2021 – NHS Digital
[33] Mental Health Act Statistics 2020-21 – NHS Digital
[34] Mental Health Foundation 2016
[35] Mind UK Website
[36] Mental Health Care in Prisons - 2017

- 49% of female and 23% of male prisoners assessed by MOJ study were suffering from anxiety and depression, this compares to 19% for women and 12% for men in the general UK population
- 26% of women and 16% of men said that they had received treatment for a mental health need in the year before custody
- 25% of women and 15% of men in prison reported symptom indicative of psychosis, the rate amongst the general population is just 4%

Local

Bedfordshire Police estimate that approximately 20% of all police work is related to mental health. This is in line with national police. This is an incredibly broad categorisation and could include people that have been victimised, people who have committed crime, or people who have needed police support during a mental health crisis. This could also include a broad range of issues including dementia, Autism Spectrum Condition and learning disabilities.

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 Bedfordshire Police recorded 2,380 incidents that had a Mental Health Qualifier added to the log, this is 41.2% increase from the previous year. Nine months in the most recent year recoded levels above that of the Upper Bound (189 per month) suggesting significantly high levels.



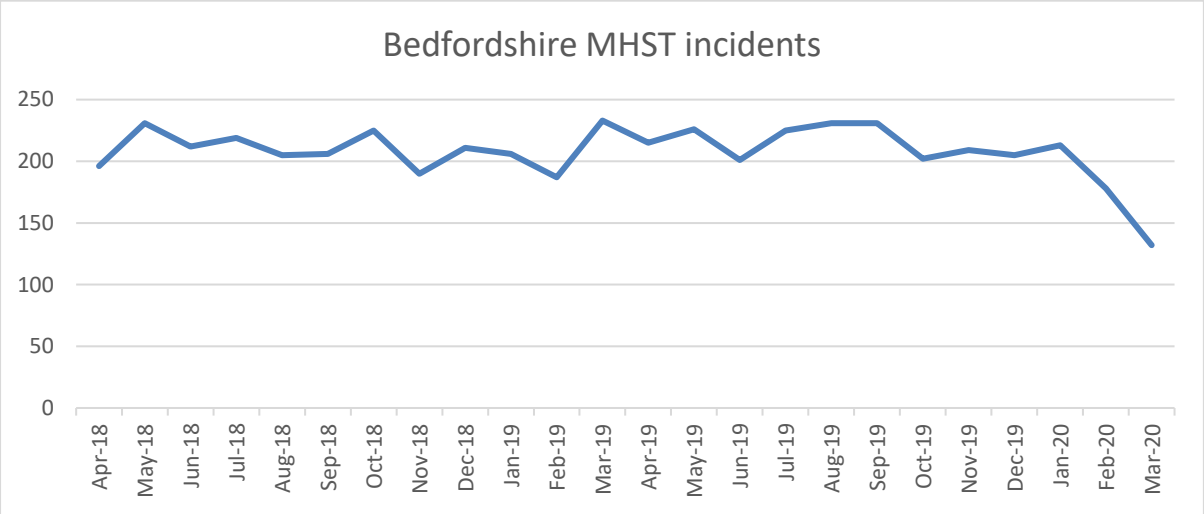
- The greatest proportion (74.7%) relate to incidents categorised as Public Safety or Welfare.

Information Gap: It is not possible to understand the significant increase in Mental Health markers in Police incident data and how it may be linked to COVID-19

Mental Health Street Triage

The Mental Health Street Triage (MHST) project, launched in June 2016, sees police and mental health services work together to ensure people get appropriate care when called to a person in distress.

The overarching aim is to provide a better mental health service. This is achieved by offering a more effective, joined up support for those in mental health crisis. Mental health professionals provide on the spot advice to police officers who are dealing with people with possible mental health problems. This advice can include an opinion on a person's condition, or appropriate information sharing about a person's health history. The aim is, where possible, to help police officers make appropriate decisions, based on a clear understanding of the background to these situations. This should lead to people receiving appropriate care more quickly, leading to better outcomes and a reduction in the use of section 136.



In the period Apr 2020 – Mar 2021, 2468 incidents were supported by the team in Bedfordshire with a slight reduction of 2.1% from the previous year. Low levels were recorded on Feb and Mar 2020 which may be linked to the start of Covid-19 restrictions

Diversions

In the period Apr 2019 to Mar 20209, it is estimated that the MHST service is responsible for the following diversions across the County;

- 781 Ambulance Call Outs diverted
- 711 Accident and Emergency attendances avoided
- 390 Police Call Outs diverted
- On 329 occasions a S136 was avoided

Children Known to the Criminal Justice System

The Criminal Justice system with regard to children and young people under the age of 18 is different to the adult system and is structured to address the needs of children and young people. 10 is the age of criminal responsibility. Those aged between 10 and under 18 at risk of offending or reoffending are dealt with by a range of criminal justice agencies and other partners. The 1989 Crime and Disorder Act made provision for a multi-agency Youth Offending Service (YOS) in each area whose responsibility under statute is to prevent the offending and reoffending of children and young people. The YOS is responsible for delivering youth justice services in its area.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) oversees the work of each individual YOS from a central Government perspective. Locally each YOS is governed by a YOS Management Board made up of senior representatives from the statutory partners (Police; Local Authority; Health and Probation); other relevant agencies are co-opted on to the Board.

The three National Indicators for each YOS relate to:

- The number of First Time Entrants in each area
- The Number of Custodial sentences
- Re-offending

Each YOS also has a range of performance indicators agreed with strategic partners and the YOS Management Board.

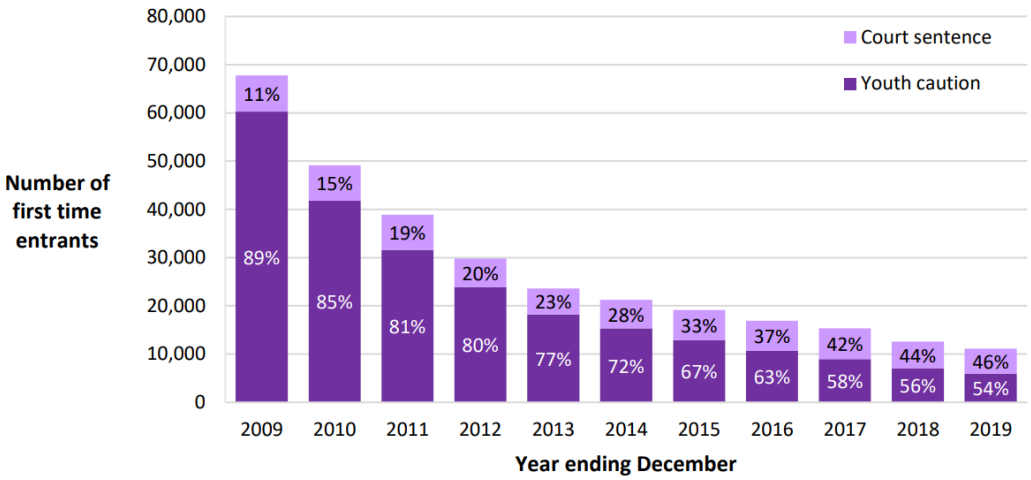
National

From a National perspective[37] the overall number of young people known to the Criminal Justice system has continued to reduce in the year ending March 2020. Reductions have been seen in the number entering the system for the first time (First Time Entrants, FTEs), as well as reductions in those receiving disposals, including those receiving custodial sentences.

- 19,000 Children received a caution or sentence, a reduction of 12% in the last year and 82% over the last 10 years.
- 11,100 FTE to the Youth Justice System were recorded in the year, a reduction of 12% on the previous year and 84% over the last ten years.
- 4,400 Knife and offensive weapon offences were committed by a child, a 1% decrease on the previous year, levels are now 5% lower than those seen in the year ending 2010.
- The average custodial sentence given to children has increased by seven months over the last ten years from 11.3 to 18.6 months.
- There was an average of just over 780 children in custody at any one time during the year. This is a reduction of 9% on the previous year and 68% over the last 10 years.
- Over half of the young people held in young offender institutions are or have previously been looked after children.
- The reoffending rate for the year was 38.5% a decreased by 0.2%, although it remains higher than ten years ago (when it was 37.7%)

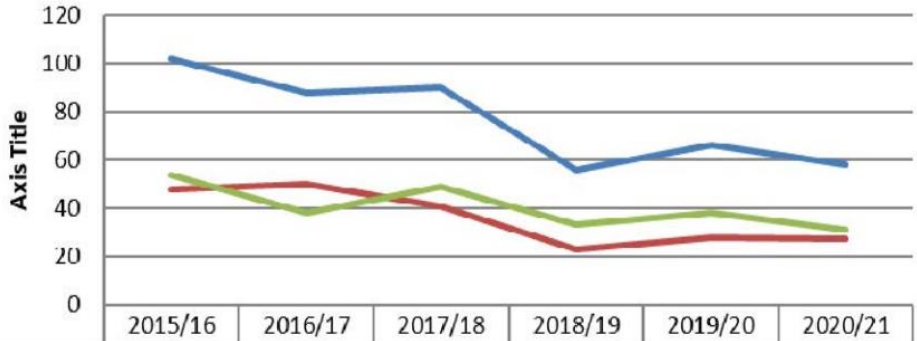
[37] Youth Justice Annual Statistic: 2017-2018

National Trends in first time entrants, years ending Mar 2009 – Mar 2019



Local

Over the long term the local picture very much reflects that of the national, with the overall numbers of young people known to the criminal justice system reducing over the period.



	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
BYOS Actual	102	88	90	56	66	58
BBC Actual	48	50	41	23	28	27
CBC Actual	54	38	49	33	38	31

Over the six-year period ending March 2021, there are now 43.8% fewer young people who were FTEs for Bedford Borough.

Actual numbers are small, with just 27 FTEs recorded in the most recent year, a slight reduction of 1 from the previous year.

Most recent data provided by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) shows that as a County the Bedfordshire Youth Offending Service (BYOS) continues to outperform at both a regional and national level.

Most recent data for the year ending September 2017 shows the BYOS rate per 100,000 was 118, a slight increase from the previous year's figure of 116 and a positive comparison to 162 for the East and 207 at a National level.

		Bedfordshire Trend Data							Latest Data Set (YDS 106)			
National Indicators	Performance Requirement	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	BYOS	New Family	East	National
									Latest Data set: Jan 19 - Dec 19 (rolling 12mths)			
First Time Entrants (PNC Data) (Actual)	Reduction	104	112	83	93	51	U/A	U/A	**51**	1159	923	11087
Rate Per 100,000	Target <170	255	274	200	222	118	U/A	U/A	**118**	143	162	207

Whilst the overall numbers of young people in the Criminal Justice system continue to reduce, the proportions that reoffend are increasing. This data is only available for the BYOS area showing that the local reoffending rate is slightly above that of the South East and National average.

		Bedfordshire Trend Data							Latest Data Set (YDS 106)			
National Indicators	Performance Requirement	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2019/20	BYOS	New Family	East	National
									Latest Data set: Apr 18 - Mar 19 cohort			
Re-Offending (PNC Data) Binary	Reduction	44.6%	43.7%	44.8%	33.7%	39.20%	U/A	U/A	**39.2%**	35.8%	38.9%	37.8%

The numbers of young people receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to Custody are small and nationally are measured as a rate per 1,000.

- For the year ending Jun 20 the BYOS rate was 0.07, below that of the East (0.10) and the National figure (0.13)

For the most recent year (2020/21) Bedford Borough recorded three custodial sentences, this is a positive reduction of six from the previous year.

Transition to Adult Offender Management

The transfer of cases between the Youth Offending Service and the National Probation Service (NPS) starts within 6 months of the young person's 18th birthday. The key principles of the transfer protocol are:

- Individual needs will be recognised
- Young people who are eligible for transfer will be identified at the earliest point
- Every young person who could transfer to adult services must have a transition plan
- Transition planning must focus on providing flexible and continuous services
- Relevant information about young people must be shared between youth and adult services before transfer

Transfer of Young People to the NPS will be determined by their needs, the order end date, outstanding / pending enforcement action and the involvement of other agencies.

All transfers in the first instance will be made to the NPS. Consideration will then be given by the NPS as to the appropriateness of a referral to IOM based on the Young Persons needs and their offending history

Re-Offending

The Home Office estimates that 0.5% of offenders commit 10% of offences; in addition 10% of offenders commit 50% of offences[38].

The cost of imprisoning an offender for a year is estimated at £41,000 with each re-offender estimated to cost £200,000. To ensure a reduction in crime, prevent offenders reoffending, and see efficiency savings, the CSP needs to work fully with the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) programme. By offering individuals the opportunity to stop offending the CSP is in a position to improve the quality of living for both the offenders and the community at large. Furthermore, the continued implementation of the IOM scheme in the past twelve months has contributed to improvements in the offending patterns of some of the most serious offenders in Bedford Borough. However, other less serious repeat offenders who fall outside the selection criteria for IOM continue to present demands on CSP resources, in particular those individuals who repeatedly commit ASB.

Probation Services

In June 2021 the Community Rehabilitation Companies across the England and Wales, locally known as BeNCH, and the National Probation Service merged to deliver all Probation Services, now known as The Probation Service. For Bedford Borough, Probation is delivered by the Eastern Region and managed by a Regional Director with a local Head of Probation Delivery Unit responsible for Bedfordshire.

The Bedfordshire Probation Delivery Unit carries out sentences given by the courts, in custody and the community, and rehabilitate people in their care through education and employment.

This unified structure is now consistent across the country and has outsourced most of the intervention work through the Ministry of Justice Dynamic Framework. Local providers under this framework are:

- Education, Training and Employment – SEETEC
- Accommodation – SEETEC
- Personal Wellbeing – The Forward Trust
- Women's Services – Advance Charity
- Finance, Benefits and Debt are being commissioned due July 2022

Community Payback - involves doing unpaid work in the community such as removing graffiti, renovating public buildings, improving green spaces and conservation work. Community Payback gives service users an opportunity to learn new skills, gain experience working as part of a team and give something back to their community. They can also gain qualifications, which can help their future job prospects.

Resettlement – 'Through the Gate' is managed by the Resettlement Team within the prison and starts when service users are still in prison so that they can prepare for their release and take action to stop their offending behaviour. Each person works with a resettlement worker to create their own resettlement plan. Support might include:

- Accommodation – support and advice on finding somewhere to live, maintaining an existing tenancy or dealing with any previous mortgage or rent arrears
- Employment, training and education – advice disclosing to potential employers and contacting existing employers to negotiate continued employment.

[38] Home Office PPO Mini website

- Finance – advice on managing money, benefits and debt
- Personal, relationships and community - completing primary care registrations, help to access care, mental health services and trauma support, help to engage with services to tackle alcohol and substance misuse

Departure Lounge – HMP Bedford has instigated a Departure Lounge for residents leaving the prison at the end of their sentence or on early release. This enables probation and other agencies to meet and speak with offenders to make sure they leave the prison with every opportunity to integrate them back into the community.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM)

The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) approach aims to provide a framework for partners to manage and support those offenders at highest risk of reoffending. IOM aims to reduce re-offending and increase social inclusion of service users and their families, by working with identified service users to challenge behaviour and address the underlying issues that lead to reoffending. This will be achieved by assessing individual need and supporting access and engagement with services across the pathway to prevent reoffending.

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021, across all the cohort managed by the service the following positive outcomes were recorded

- 54% reduction in offences committed
- 72% of the total cohort either reduced or stopped offending
- 73% reduction in harm caused to society

As of year-end Mar 2021 The IOM cohort caseload was 130:

- 59 (45%) cases reside in the North of the County (which includes Bedford Borough);
  - 25 within the Burglary Dwelling cohort
  - 11 within the Domestic Abuse cohort.
  - 10 with the High Impact cohort
  - 6 with Serious Violence cohort
  - 4 for Management of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators
  - 2 under the Prolific Intensive scheme

Of the 130 with IOM across the county;

- 129 are male and just one is female
- 79.2% are White, 8.5% are Black, 4.6% are Asian and 7.7% are Other
- The greatest proportion of those on the program (30%) are aged 31-35 years, 21 were aged under 25 years.

County IOM Reoffending Rates		
Bedford Borough – All Cohorts	**Year End 20/21**	
Number of reoffenders that have reduced or stopped offending in 2020/21	Stopped Offending	Reduced offending
	11	8
% Reduction of the number of reoffenders	**34%**	
Number of offences recorded in 2020/21 (arrest with a positive disposal)	Baseline	20-21
	73	33

% Offenders that stopped or reduced offending in 2020/21	**66%**

As of April 2021, 61 historic burglars in the Bedfordshire are being managed by IOM.

- Overall there has been an 71% reduction in burglary offences within the Burglary Dwelling Cohort in the last 12 months.
- In the same year 91% of offenders in the Burglary cohort stopped or reduced their offending.

Based upon the Home Office 'economic and social costs of crime'[39] published in July 2018, the average cost of a Burglary Dwelling is £5,930. IOM burglary crime reduced by 35 offences across the county in the most recent year, delivering a cost saving of £207,550.

As of April 2019, 28 individuals are being managed within the statutory Domestic Abuse cohort.

- Overall there has been an 24% reduction in Domestic Abuse offences with the cohort in the last 12 months.
- In the same year 66% of offenders in the Domestic Abuse cohort stopped or reduced their offending.

Using the ONS harm index it is possible to measure the reduction in harm of offences committed. In the year Apr 2020 – Mar 2021 there has been a 73% reduction in harm across all cohort managed by IOM

'Cost of harm' (based upon the Norfolk and Suffolk Harm Saving Model) can be calculated as £2,389,043.00 over the last 12 months

Serious Youth Violence

The Bedford Serious Youth Violence Panel now considers individuals up to the age of 25 years, as such those young persons aged 18 to 25 will be assessed by the panel and referred to IOM as appropriate.

Implementation of New IOM Cohorts 2021

Towards the end of 2020/21 a new IOM strategy was released by the Home Office and Ministry of Justice (MOJ). The new strategy seeks to reduce "Neighbourhood Crime", including all Burglary offences, Robbery and Vehicle Crime. This is similar to Serious Acquisitive Crime that IOM used to focus on but is now more inclusive of similar crime types to broaden it's scope.

The strategy also seeks to identify offenders with a high risk of reoffending measured through the Probation Offender Group Reconviction Score (OGRS), and high harm caused by their offending, measured through the Office for National Statistics Crime Severity Score (ONS CSS).

There are now three standardised cohorts within the strategy: Fixed, flex and free.

Locally partners have agreed to further define these cohorts as follows:

Fixed: Those Probation managed offenders that have a Very High risk of reoffending (OGRS over 75%) and a proven CSS harm score over 1500 measured over 5 years in the community

[39] The economic and social costs of crime – July 2018

Flex: This group of offenders or suspects include those offenders with a proven record to commit Neighbourhood Crime. Some will also have recorded a 'near miss' on scores not quite reaching the Fixed criteria.

They are assessed through a Multi-Agency Case Conference and only accepted if they are of concern and there is value to added through partnership working to reduce their reoffending.

A positive weighting is also applied for:

- Women
- Those aged 18-25 years old
- And, those transitioning from youth to adult services.

Free: This cohort allows flexibility so that local priorities and needs can be met whilst applying the partnership approach to managing offenders.

In Bedfordshire, IOM used to manage a substantial Domestic Abuse cohort. Through refinement this has now been determined to work with the MARAC and Police Emerald Team to identify a small number of perpetrators that need further support or targeting to reduce the risk posed to victims of Domestic Abuse.

Similarly, there is also a small number of offenders that require the support and work of IOM that pose a risk of offending and high harm to our communities.

Electronic Management Service Tagging of offenders:

In 2021 the Ministry of Justice carried out a pilot scheme, across a small number of Police force areas, to GPS tag offenders leaving prison having served 12 months or more for a Neighbourhood Crime.

In September 2021, Bedfordshire joined this scheme. All these offenders now automatically join IOM as a result of their Neighbourhood Crime conviction. It is likely that they will remain on tag and IOM for 12 months post-conviction. Early indications show that, on average, 6 offenders will be released per month across the county. These tags are managed by Probation Officers within the IOM team and are able to highlight quickly breaches in their licence conditions and also their proximity to recorded Neighbour Crimes, both facilitating swift enforcement action if required.

Direction for Bedfordshire

Launched in Bedfordshire in April 2019 YouTurn Futures were commissioned to deliver 'Direction for Bedfordshire[40], an on-line hub for ex-offenders, families, professionals and those with concerns about someone heading towards offending. The free and confidential service aims to promote partnership working and make the best use of services across the county.

The service can be accessed online, through a helpline or as part of a face to face consultation.

Trained professionals will look to develop an understanding of the whole picture, offer advice and make referrals onto specialist support.

[40] Direction for Bedfordshire website

In the period Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 the website recorded 7,880 hits, and increase of 14% on the last year.

- In the year the service received 479 referrals, an increase of 192% from the previous year
- 749 signposts made to other agencies, of which 78% had positive outcomes recorded

Out of Court Disposals

Throughout 2021 Bedfordshire Police implemented a new strategy of reducing reoffending through the use of Out of Court Disposals (OoCDs), and therefore making efficiencies by reducing court workloads.

All people receiving a caution now have to have conditions attached to that caution, now termed a Conditional Caution. Whilst traditional conditions such as a letter of apology or monetary reparation still apply, both Victim Support through their Victim Awareness Course, and YouTurn Futures, through Direction, both offer more positive conditions to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

The Direction+ Conditional Caution offers a one-to-one bespoke approach to the offender receiving the caution and is designed to tackle to root causes of their offending with one of the Criminal Justice Professionals on the YouTurn team taking a lead.

A lower sanction with OoCDs is the Community Resolution. This typically replaced a number of other disposal methods, such as Cannabis Warnings and Penalty Notices for Disorder. YouTurn Futures had also, through Direction, taken the lead on these crimes and offers the one-to-one bespoke service and support for offenders committing these offences.

Serious Organised Crimes

Serious and organised crime (SOC) is defined as *individuals planning, coordinating and committing serious offences, whether individually, in groups and/or as part of transnational networks. The main categories of serious offences covered by the term are: child sexual exploitation and abuse; illegal drugs; illegal firearms; fraud; money laundering and other economic crime; bribery and corruption; organised immigration crime; modern slavery and human trafficking; and cybercrime.*

National

According to the HM Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy[41], SOC affects more UK citizens, more often, than any other national security threat and leads to more deaths in the UK each year than all other national security threats combined. It costs the UK at least £37 billion annually. It has a corrosive impact on our public services, communities, reputation and way of life. Crime is now lower than it was in 2010, although we are also aware that since 2014 there have been genuine increases in some low volume, high harm offences.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) assesses that the threat from serious and organised crime is increasing and serious and organised criminals are continually looking for ways to sexually or otherwise exploit new victims and novel methods to make money, particularly online.

A large amount of serious and organised crime remains hidden or underreported, meaning the true scale is likely to be greater than we currently know. Although the impact may often be difficult to see, the threat is real and occurs every day all around us. Serious and organised criminals prey on the most vulnerable in society, including children, and their abuse can have a devastating, life-long effect on their victims. They target members of the public to defraud, manipulate and exploit them, sell them deadly substances and steal their personal data in ruthless pursuit of profit. They use intimidation to create fear within our communities and to undermine the legitimacy of the state.

Serious and organised crime knows no borders, and many offenders operate as part of large networks spanning multiple countries. Technological change allows criminals to share indecent images of children, sell drugs and hack into national infrastructure more easily from all around the world, while communicating more quickly and securely through encrypted phones. Continuously evolving technology has meant that exploitation of children online is becoming easier and more extreme, from live-streaming of abuse to grooming through social media and other sites.

The Strategy outlines four overarching objectives:

[41] Serious Organised Crime Strategy Nov 2018 – HM Government

- The Relentless disruption and targeted action against the highest harm serious and organised criminals and networks to target capabilities on criminals exploiting vulnerable people, including the most determined and prolific child sex
- To build the highest levels of defence and resilience in vulnerable people, communities, businesses and systems to reduce vulnerabilities in our systems and organisations
- To stop the problem at source, identifying and supporting those at risk of engaging in criminality, to develop and use preventative methods and education to divert more young people from a life of serious and organised crime and reduce reoffending.
- To establishing a single, whole-system approach at the local, regional, national and international levels, to align collective efforts to respond as a single system.

Local

Serious and organised Crime touches on a number of areas of criminality covered in this report

Briefing on the local threat picture for SOC are provided to partners at multi-agency meetings on a monthly basis. Collaborative working to deliver the four objectives as outlined in the national strategy

Partnership awareness of SOC has increased significantly over the last 2 years resulting in the identification, disruption and prosecution of new Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) by non-police agencies.

Recommendation: The CSP should continue to raise awareness of the prevalence and impacts of serious and organised crime to wider partners

Summary of Recommendations 2021

The following have been identified within the main body of this report and highlighted as areas of opportunity for future partnership work. They have been broken down into key areas; Recommendations and Information Gaps. They will be used to refresh the 2020-23 CSP Plan and will be incorporated into CSP processes and new Action Plans.

No	Thematic Area	Page	Recommendations
R1	General Context	10	Census Data from 2021 should be used to better understand the demographic profile of the Borough and how that compares to locally recorded data for priority areas
R2	General Context	10	A full Community Consultation should take place in 2022 to inform the development of the new 2023 Strategic plan
R3	Child Sexual Exploitation	39	Partners should contribute data to the CCE needs assessment and consider its findings on release
R4	Child Sexual Exploitation	40	The Partnership should look for opportunities to promote the use of the multi-agency information form
R5	Hate Crime	51	Hate Crime data should continue to be regularly reviewed by volume and severity to ensure early identification of any changes to levels of harm
R6	Anti-Social Behaviour	55	ASB data from other Partners should be reviewed alongside Police data to understand any changes in recording habits
R7	Anti-Social Behaviour	61	The CSP should look for further opportunities to work collaboratively to support & address the impacts of individuals that persistently commit ASB in the Town Centre
R7	Drug & Alcohol Misuse	68	The CSP should continue to support the delivery of the strategic aims within the Drug and Alcohol Health Needs Assessment
R8	Serious and Organised Crime	P81	The CSP should continue to raise awareness of the prevalence and impacts of serious and organised crime to wider partners
R9	Impacts of COVID-19	81	The CSP should continue to make use of Covid-19 scenario models when creating Action Plans for the coming year
No	**Thematic Area**	**Page**	**Information Gaps**
I1	Missing Person	41	It is not possible to fully understand the impact of COVID-19 on levels of missing in the last year

I2	Anti-Social Behaviour	57	It is not possible to know if the increase in Youth ASB in rural areas is linked to other Priority areas such as Youth Violence & County Lines
I3	Mental Health	70	It is not possible to understand the significant increase in Mental Health markers in Police incident data and how it may be linked to COVID-19

Appendix 1 – Impacts of Covid-19

Most of the time period for data in this report has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. At the time of writing this report it is still unclear what the full impacts of the restrictions on peoples' movements and the closure of certain sectors of the economy have been. It also not possible to predict what the easing of restrictions or the potential for new measure in the future will mean for the Partnership, which has already been hindered the delivery of Multi-Agency work.

There is already some evidence to suggest that patterns of reporting are starting to return to Pre-COVID levels in some crime type areas. There is also evidence of continued increased demands on services within the partnership.

The true effects of the reductions in information sharing, as a result of persistent school closures and the removal of many face to face services that engage with vulnerable persons are not yet fully understood and may have repercussions for many years to come.

Thematic Area	Apr – Sep 2019	Apr - Sep 2020	% Change	Apr – Sep 2021	% Change
Knife Crime	93	67	-28.0	70	4.5
Serious Youth Violence	261	199	-23.8	254	27.6
Robbery	110	82	-25.5	67	-18.3
Domestic Abuse Crimes & Incidents	2071	2121	2.4	2018	-4.9
Serious Sexual Offences	161	160	-0.6	212	32.5
CSE Offences	7	6	-14.3	6	0.0
MDS Offences	15	8	-46.7	16	100.0
Hate Crimes & Incidents	217	234	7.8	309	32.1
Adult Safeguarding referrals	1896	1779	-6.2		
Missing LAC Children	79	35	-55.7	69	97.1
Multi-Agency Information Forms	243	180	-25.9	177	-1.7
Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents	1948	2153	10.5	2228	3.5
Covid-19 Markers	0	269			
Alcohol Related ASB	169	212	25.4	178	-16.0
Youth Related ASB	122	129	5.7	86	-33.3
Bedford Borough ASB Cases	166	226	36.1		

As restrictions change at a local, National and International level so will demands on services and the ability to deliver multi-agency work and community engagement.

Considerable work has taken place over the last 18 months to monitor the impacts on services and the associated risks through different phases of the pandemic. As a result, scenario models can be created to help understand how future changes in restrictions may continue to impact the Partnership.

Recommendation: The CSP should continue to make use of Covid-19 scenario models when creating Action Plans for the coming year

Appendix 2 – Risk Assessment Matrix

MoRiLE Thematic Matrix - Bedford CSP Nov 2021															
SCORING INFORMATION	IMPACT & HARM					LIKELIHOOD				RISK	ORGANISATIONAL POSITION				ORI
	Victim(s)					Scale of Activity		Prediction			Resourcing				
Thematic Area	Physical	Psychological	Financial	Community	Environmental	Frequency	Volume	Trend	Forecast	RISK SCORE	Economic Cost	Capacity	Capability	Total OP Score	ORGANISATIONAL RISK INDICATOR
ASB	Low	Low	Moderate	Substantial	Low	Daily	Very large volumes	>10% increase	<10% increase	52.5	Med-Long Term -	Impede manageme	Lack of skills	10	4
Domestic Abuse - repeat and children	Substantial	Severe	Moderate	Moderate	None/Neglible	Daily	Moderate volumes	<10% increase	<10% increase	54	Med-Long Term -	Issues exist	Lack of skills	9.5	4
Child Sexual Exploitation	Substantial	Severe	Moderate	Low	None/Neglible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	>10% decrease	Same	26	Med-Long Term -	Issues exist	Lack of skills	9.5	4
Knife Crime	Substantial	Substantial	Low	Low	Low	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	<10% decrease	<10% increase	26	Long Term - Internal	Issues exist	Lack of skills	9	4
County Lines/Drug dealing	Substantial	Substantial	Severe	Substantial	None/Neglible	Daily	Large volumes	<10% increase	<10% increase	78	Med-Long Term -	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	8.5	4
Serious Youth Violence	Substantial	Moderate	Low	Low	None/Neglible	Daily	Moderate volumes	Same	<10% increase	24.75	Med-Long Term -	Issues exist	Lack of skills	8.5	4
Organised Crime Groups	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None/Neglible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Moderate volumes	>10% increase	<10% increase	24	Long Term - Internal	Issues exist	Lack of skills	8	3
Cuckooing	Moderate	Substantial	Severe	Moderate	None/Neglible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Moderate volumes	>10% increase	>10% increase	58.5	Med-Long Term -	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	7.5	3
Modern Slavery & Trafficking	Moderate	Severe	Severe	Low	None/Neglible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	>10% decrease	>10% increase	42.5	Med-Long Term -	Limited issues	Lack of skills	7.5	3
Serious Sexual Offences	Substantial	Substantial	Moderate	Low	None/Neglible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	Same	<10% increase	27	Long Term - Internal	Issues exist	Lack of skills	7.5	3
Cyber Dependent Crime	None/Neglible	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None/Neglible	Daily	Large volumes	<10% increase	<10% increase	26	Long Term - Internal	Issues exist	Lack of skills	7.5	3
Stalking & Harassment	Low	Substantial	Moderate	None/Neglible	None/Neglible	Daily	Moderate volumes	<10% increase	>10% increase	22.75	Medium Term -	Issues exist	Lack of skills	6.5	3
Domestic Abuse - general	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low	None/Neglible	Daily	Very large volumes	<10% increase	>10% increase	26.25	Long Term - Internal	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	6	2
Hate Crime	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate	None/Neglible	Daily	Moderate volumes	<10% increase	>10% increase	29.25	Medium Term -	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	5.5	2
Personal Robbery	Moderate	Substantial	Moderate	Low	None/Neglible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	>10% decrease	>10% increase	21.25	Medium Term -	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	5	2
Less Serious Voilence	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	None/Neglible	Daily	Large volumes	<10% increase	<10% increase	19.5	Medium Term -	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	5	2
Most Serious Violence	Substantial	Moderate	Low	Low	None/Neglible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	>10% decrease	<10% increase	16.875	Medium Term -	Limited issues	Minimal lack of skills	5	2
Burglary Dwelling	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None/Neglible	Daily	Moderate volumes	<10% decrease	Same	15.75	Medium Term -	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	5	2
Domestic Extremism	Low	Moderate	Low	Moderate	None/Neglible	Monthly / Quarterly	No/Very Small volume	Same	Same	13	Long Term - Internal	Limited issues	Minimal lack of skills	5	2
Vehicle Crime	None/Neglible	None/Neglible	Moderate	Low	None/Neglible	Daily	Large volumes	>10% decrease	<10% increase	10.5	Medium Term -	Impede manageme	Yes	5	2
Criminal Damage	None/Neglible	None/Neglible	Low	Low	Low	Daily	Large volumes	<10% decrease	Same	12.5	Short Term	Impede manageme	Minimal lack of skills	4.5	2
Shoplifting	None/Neglible	None/Neglible	Moderate	Low	None/Neglible	Daily	Moderate volumes	<10% decrease	<10% increase	10	Medium Term -	Impede manageme	Yes	4.5	2
Arson/Deliberate fires	None/Neglible	None/Neglible	Low	Low	Moderate	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	<10% decrease	<10% increase	14	Medium Term -	Limited issues	Minimal lack of skills	3.5	2
Business robbery	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None/Neglible	Weekly / Fortnightly	No/Very Small volume	Same	Same	13.125	Short Term	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	3.5	2
Theft from the Person	None/Neglible	Low	Low	Low	None/Neglible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	>10% decrease	Same	6.5	Short Term	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	3.5	2
Terrorism	Critical	Substantial	Low	Moderate	Low	Annually	No/Very Small volume	Same	Same	33.75	Medium Term -	Yes	Yes	3	1

Appendix 3 - Glossary of Terms

ACRONYM	Description
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
ASBMG	Anti-Social Behaviour Management Group
BID	Business Improvement District
BAME	Black Asian and Minority Ethnic
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DASH	Domestic Abuse Stalking & Harassment
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FTE	First Time Entrants
HBV	Honour Based Violence
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisers
IOM	Integrated Offender Management
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MDS	Modern Day Slavery
MHST	Mental Health Street Triage
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NCA	National Crime Agency
NPS	National Probation Service
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
NSPCC	National Society for the prevention of Cruelty to Children
NWG	National Working Group
OCG	Organised Crime Groups
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
RSMAP	Rough Sleeper Multi-Agency Panel
SARC	Sexual Abuse Referral Centre
SSO	Serious Sexual Offences
SYV	Serious Youth Violence
UC	Universal Credit
VERU	Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOS	Youth Offending Service