



Bedford CSP Consultation – 2022

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) carries out an annual Strategic Assessment. This makes use of a range of partnership information including; Police recorded Crime and Anti-social behaviour data, demographic information and environmental services data.

Based on the Strategic Assessment, a Community Safety Strategic Plan is either written or refreshed. Data from this consultation will be used in the 2022 Strategic Assessment and to develop future Strategic Plans for the Partnership.

Public consultations form an important part of the Partnerships evaluation process, gathering information about the community's perception of crime and disorder and awareness of key issues in both their local area and the Borough as whole.

The 2022 consultation has been designed to:

- Understand the public's awareness and perception of the Partnerships ability to tackle crime and ASB
- Understand how safe people feel in their local communities and the positive and negative factors that contribute to their feelings of safety
- Gain an understanding of the issues that cause the greatest level of public concern
- Track how perceptions and concerns have changed over the last three years

This year, for the first time, the survey also includes a question to identify if respondents have themselves been a victim and whether they reported this to the Police. The information in these new questions will help us to identify any barriers to reporting that the Partnership can look to address.

By collecting and using geographic, equality and diversity monitoring data, the CSP is also able to compare the opinions of different sections of the community.

As with previous consultation exercises, much of this year's survey was delivered via face to face engagement at key locations and community events. This creates a positive opportunity to raise awareness of the CSP and promote many of the support services that are available.

An online version of the survey was made available through the Borough's web site and promoted through the Partnership's social media channels and direct messaging platforms.

The data collected in this survey may have a wider use within the Partnership and is shared with CSP members in the Borough to help set priorities, develop plans and support funding bids.

This exercise took place over the summer of 2022, between early July and the end of October.

Over the period a total of 447 respondents completed survey, where a valid postcode was provided this has been matched to the local Ward. Completed surveys were received from all 27 wards in the Borough.

- 67% of respondents recorded a post code from an urban ward
- 33% of respondents recorded a post code from a rural ward.

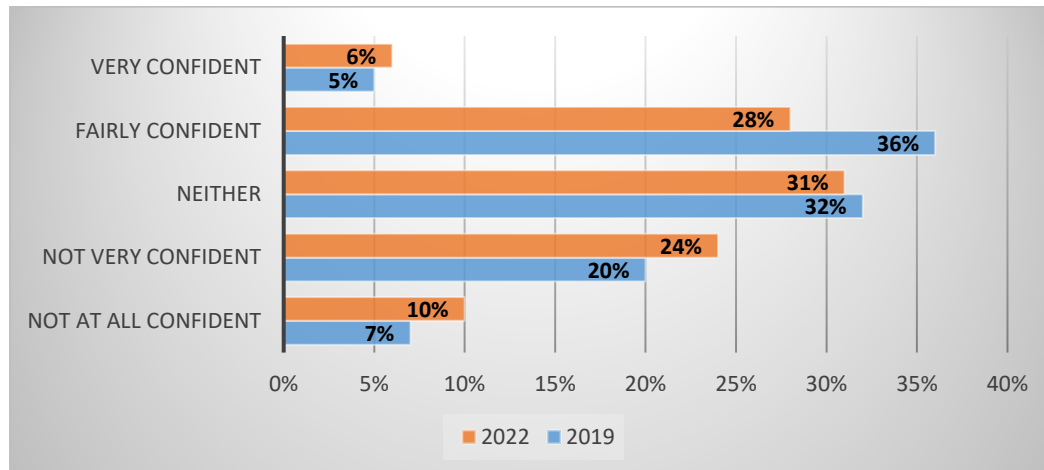
Awareness and Confidence in the CSP

35.5% of respondents stated that they 'Had heard of the Safer Bedford, Community Safety Partnership before completing the Survey. Whilst this is positive it means that nearly two thirds had little or no awareness

When asked about levels of confidence in the Partnership ability to work together to tackle Crime & ASB, 34% stated that they were 'Very Confident' or 'Fairly Confident'.

Overall levels of confidence recorded in the 2022 survey are lower than those recorded in 2019.

Partnership activity and levels of visibility were significantly reduced through in 2020 and much of 2021 due to COVID-19 restriction on public events and face to face working.

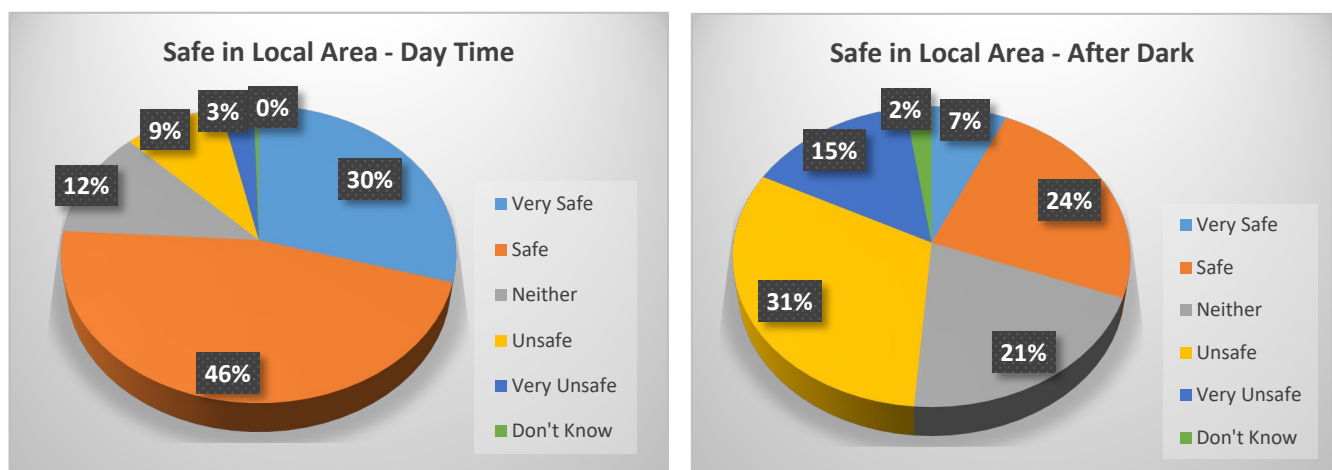


Recommendation: The Partnership needs to look for more opportunities to raise awareness of joint working in the Community

Perceptions of Safety, ASB & Crime in the Local Area

Respondents were asked a number of questions about their local area where they live

How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in the local area where you live?



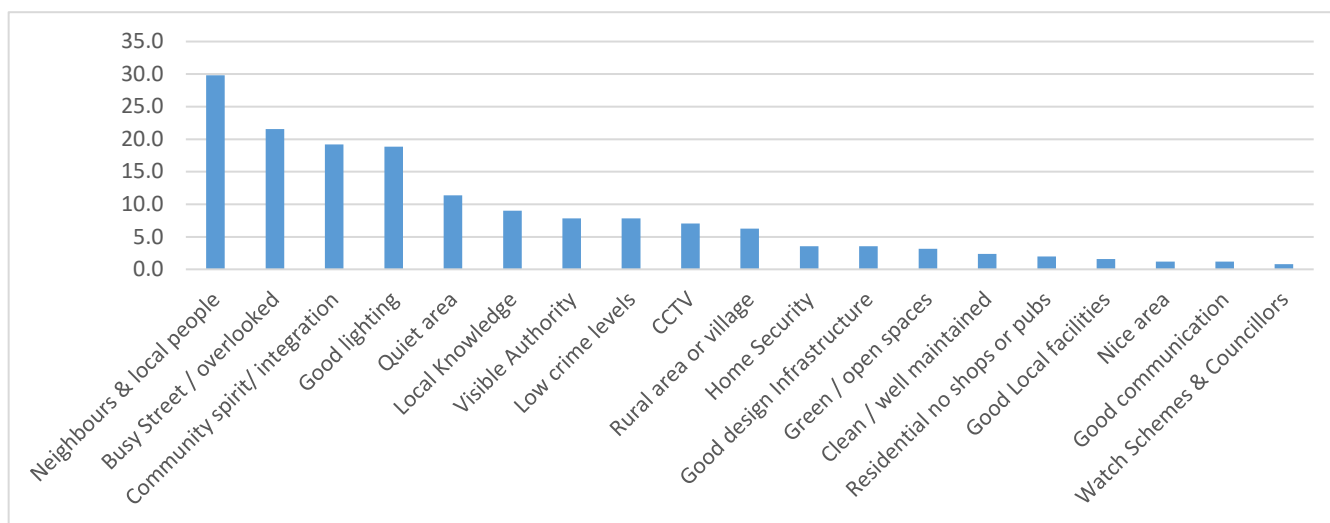
Overall there has been a reduction in perceptions of safety since the last survey in 2019

- 76% felt 'Very Safe' or 'Safe' in the day time, compared to 88% in 2019
- 31% felt 'Very Safe' or 'Safe' after dark, compared to 40% in 2019
- 3% felt 'Very Unsafe' in the day time, compared to just 1% in 2019
- 15% felt 'Very Unsafe' after dark, compared to 11% in 2019

Respondents were asked to provide examples of what makes their local area 'Safe' or 'Unsafe'. This was an open text question, each of which has been reviewed to identify key themes.

'What make your local area a safe place?'

255 respondents completed this question listing one or more reasons, the graph below shows the percentage of respondents that mentioned each theme



The top 10 themes are listed below, alongside those themes that were identified in the 2019 report.

	2019 - Top Ten		2022 - Top Ten	% Total
1	Neighbours & Local People	1	Neighbours & Local People	30%
2	Good Lighting	2	Busy Street / Overlooked	22%
3	Busy Street / Overlooked	3	Community Spirit/ Integration	19%
4	Rural Area or Village	4	Good Lighting	19%
5	Community Spirit/ Integration	5	Quiet Area	11%
6	Quiet Area	6	Local Knowledge	9%
7	Visible Authority	7	Visible Authority	8%
8	Local Knowledge	8	Low Crime Levels	8%
9	Low Crime Levels	9	CCTV	7%
10	Nice Area	10	Rural Area or Village	6%

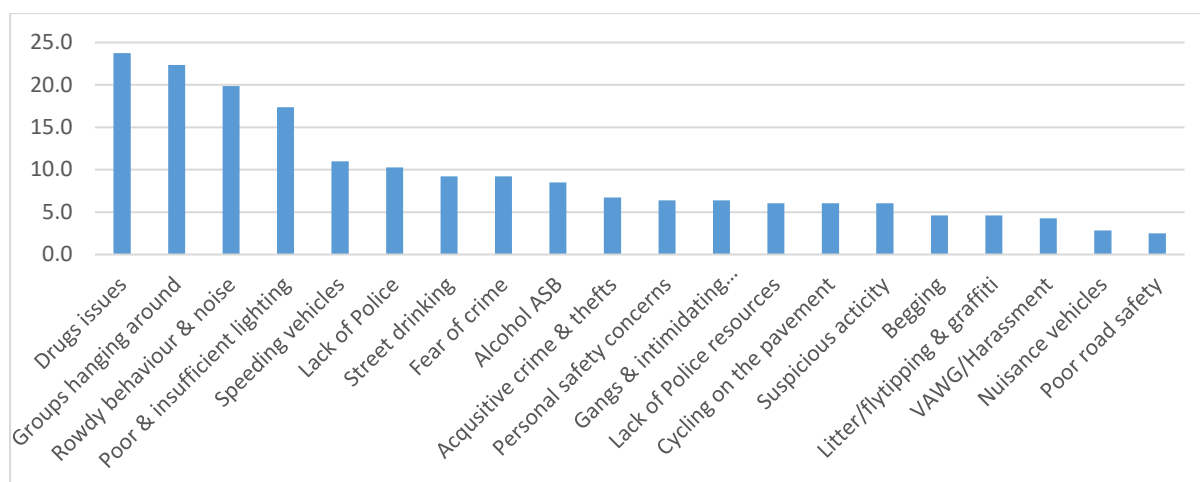
There is a consistent message that indicates that the people within the local community make others feel safe; their immediate neighbours and those that live in the area.

The presence of organisations who have a role in addressing community safety issues are also key. The only physical assets that appears to increase people perception of safety are Street Lighting and CCTV.

The physical makeup of the local area also affects perceptions of safety, some reference the benefits of a 'busy area' whilst others talk about a 'quiet area' or a 'rural village'.

'What make your local area an unsafe place?'

282 respondents completed this question listing one or more reasons, the graph below shows the percentage of respondents that mentioned each of the top 20 themes



The top 10 themes are listed below, alongside those themes that were identified in the 2019 report.

	2019 – Top Ten		2022 – Top Ten	% Total
1	Drugs Issues	1	Drugs Issues	24%
2	Groups of People Congregating	2	Groups Hanging Around	22%
3	Poor/ Insufficient Lighting	3	Rowdy Behaviour & Noise	20%
4	Lack of Police Resources	4	Poor / Insufficient Lighting	17%
5	Speeding	5	Speeding Vehicles	11%
6	Gangs/ Intimidating Groups	6	Lack of Police	10%
7	ASB - Threatening & Rowdy Behaviour	7	Street Drinking	9%
8	Acquisitive Crimes	8	Fear of Crime	9%
9	Alcohol	9	Alcohol ASB	8%
10	People Acting Suspiciously	10	Acquisitive Crimes & Thefts	7%

The overall list of concerns is broadly consistent with previous surveys, there are some increases in concerns around ASB in the community both in terms of general 'Rowdy and Inconsiderate Behaviour' but also for 'Street Drinking'

Levels of Crime & ASB in the local Area

Respondents were asked if they felt levels of Crime and ASB in their local area had 'increased', 'stayed the same' or 'decreased' in the last 12 months. These were new questions in this year's survey.

- 36% felt that levels of ASB had increased over the last 12 months, whilst just 7% felt they had reduced
- 38% felt that levels of Crime had increased over the last 12 months, whilst just 5% felt they had reduced

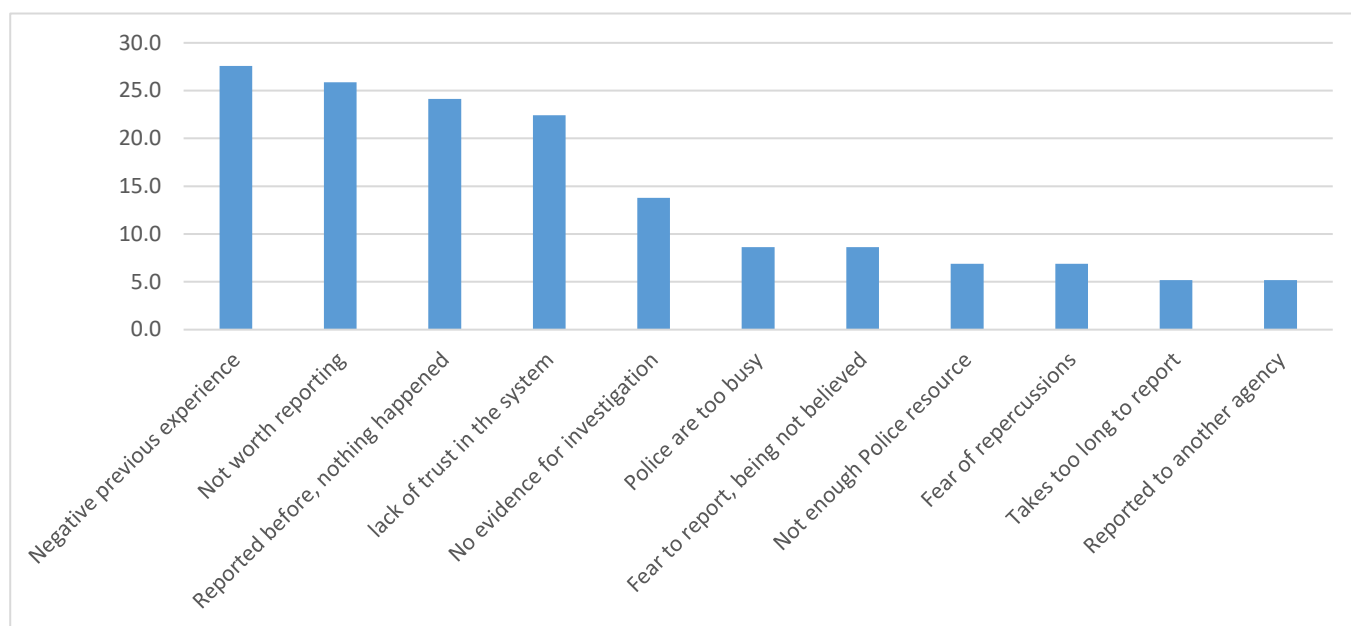
Recommendation: These perceptions should be compared to recorded Crime & ASB in the Borough. It may provide evidence of under reporting or lack of awareness in some communities

Victims of Crime & ASB

Respondents were asked if they have been 'a victim of crime or ASB in the last 12 months' they were also asked they had 'reported to the Police'

- 28% of those that completed the survey said that they had been a 'victim of crime or ASB in the last 12 months'
- 44% of those victims stated that they 'Did not report it to the Police'

A second open text question allowed respondents to comment on why they has not reported the incident. 58 people answered the question giving one or more reason, these have been reviewed and the key themes are recorded below.



The answers given to this question fall into four key themes.

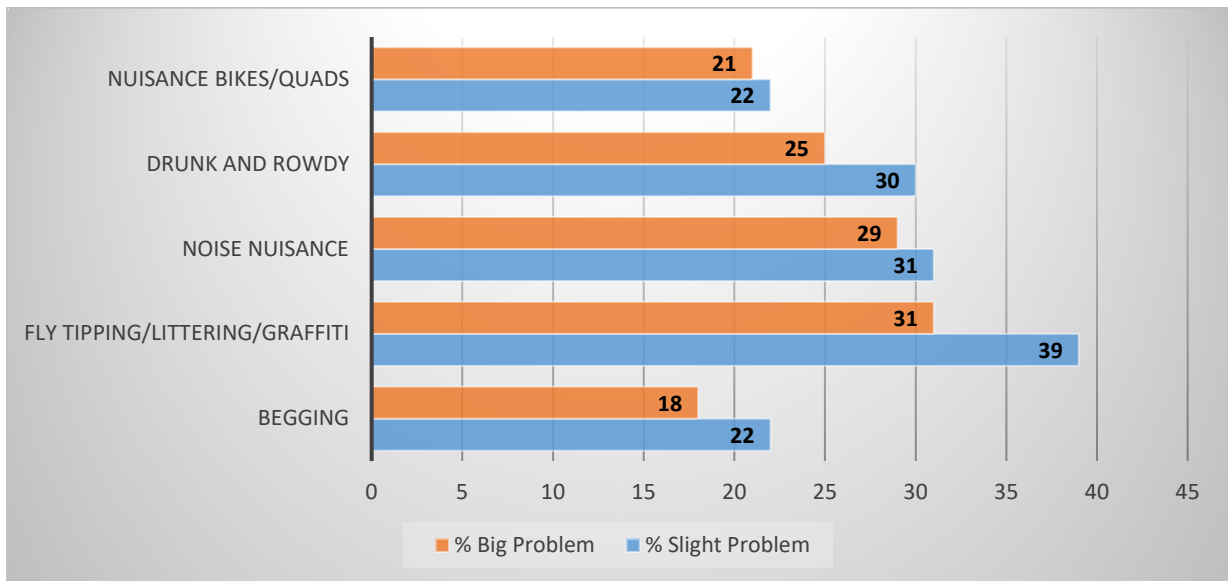
- Victims that feel a lack of police resource or significant evidence means that there is no point reporting the incident. They acknowledge that the Police are busy and feel that what happened to them is not worth reporting. Some have chosen to report to other agencies (particularly for ASB Issues) as a way of reducing demands on the Police
- Victims who describe previous negative experiences or a general lack of trust as their reason for no longer engaging with the recording process
- Victims that feel personally unsafe to report, they are fearful of not being believed or feel that engaging with the Police will put them at risk of further crimes or repercussions
- A smaller group suggest that the process of reporting takes too long to complete

All of these barriers to reporting will inhibit the Partnerships ability to fully understand levels of Crime and ASB within our communities and will further contribute to under-reporting issues.

Recommendation: The Partnership needs to develop a communication plan to improve confidence in services and encourage victims to access support

ASB Concerns in the Local Area

Respondents were given a number of categories of ASB and asked to indicate the level of problem in their local area, the graph below shows the results.

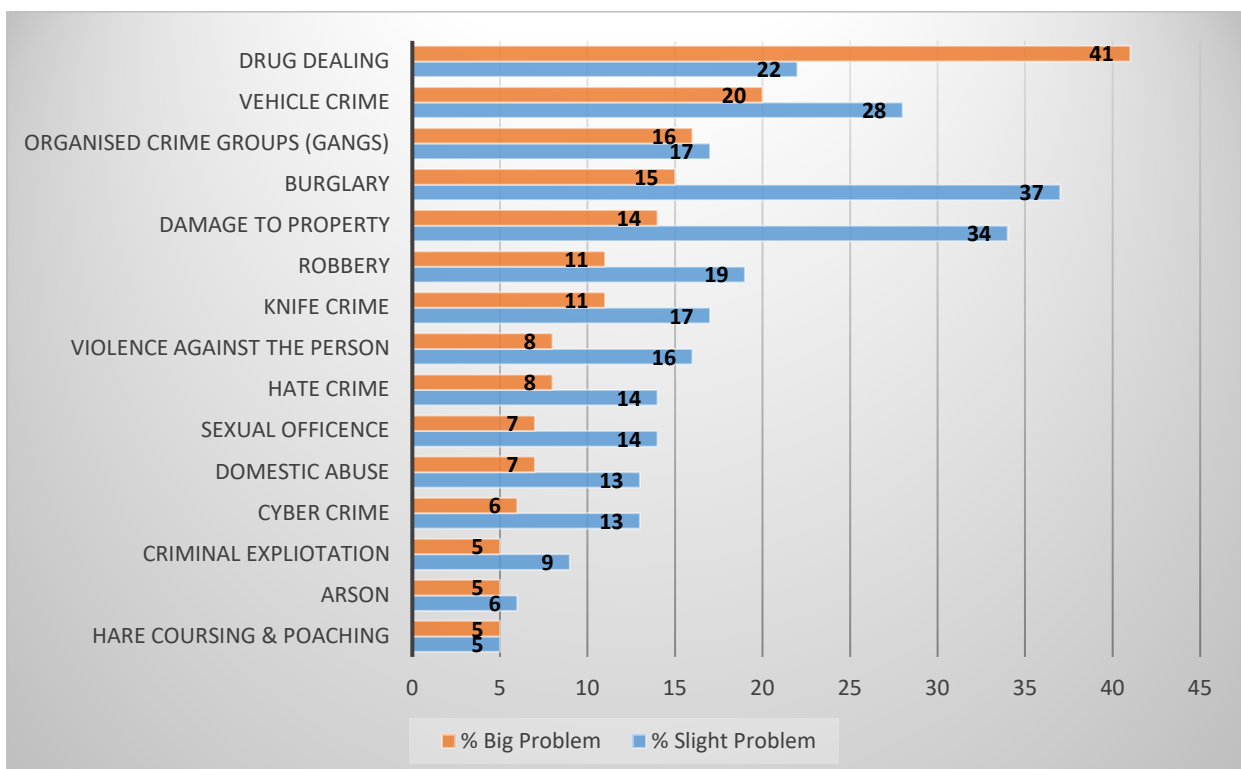


There is a broad consistency in levels of concern from the previous survey, however there has been a significant increase in concerns about Noise Nuisance with 29% suggesting this is a 'Big Problem' compared to just 11% in 2019

Agencies in the Partnership have experienced similar increases in Noise Complaints over the last few years, which some professionals feel are linked to COVID-19. With more people working and studying and socialising at home domestic noise may have a greater impact on Neighbours.

Crime Concerns in the Local Area

Respondents were given a number of categories of Crime and asked to indicate the level of problem in their local area, the graph below shows the results.



The list Crime types has changes over the years to reflect emerging issue, but some keys areas can be compared to the previous data in 2019

Crime type	2019 - % Big Problem	2022 - % Big Problem
Drug Dealing	34%	41%
Vehicle Crime	20%	20%
Burglary	23%	15%
Damage to Property	12%	14%
Robbery	13%	11%
Knife Crime	13%	11%
Violence against the Person	13%	8%
Hate Crime	4%	8%
Sexual Offence	2%	7%
Domestic Abuse	3%	7%
Cyber Crime	6%	6%
Arson	2%	5%
<i>Emerging Issues For 2022</i>		
Organised Crime Groups (Gangs)		16%
Criminal Exploitation		5%
Hare Coursing & Poaching		5%

Drug Dealing remains the top category concern for this year, as it was in 2019. Levels of concern around Drugs increased in that time from 33% stating it was a ‘Big Problem’ in 2019 to 41% this year.

A group of offences that could be classified as ‘Neighbourhood Crimes’ are broadly consistent with the previous survey in 2019. They include Acquisitive Crimes like Burglary, Robbery and Vehicle Crimes & Damage to Property

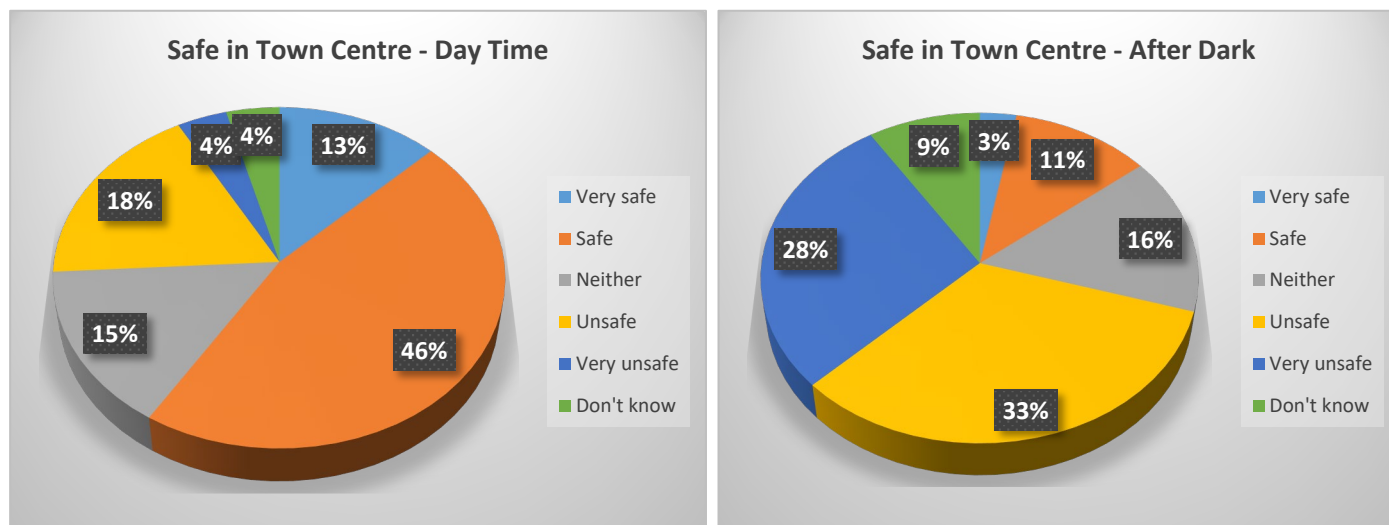
Concerns around Knife Crime and Violence against the Person have seen slight reductions in concern

Another group of crimes have seen smaller increases in concern, they are often considered to be ‘Hidden or Under-reported Crimes’. Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime and Sexual Offences have all seen an increase in concern in this year’s survey. More work is needed to understand if these increases in concern are linked to a wider awareness of these issues or evidence of an increase in offences being committed.

Bedford Town Centre

A number of questions in the survey relate to people's perceptions of Bedford Town Centre.

How safe or unsafe do you feel when in Bedford Town Centre?



Overall there has been a reduction in perceptions of safety since the last survey in 2019

- 59% felt 'Very Safe' or 'Safe' in the day time, compared to 69% in 2019
- 14% felt 'Very Safe' or 'Safe' after dark, compared to 17% in 2019
- 4% felt 'Very Unsafe' in the day time, compared to 2% in 2019
- 28% felt 'Very Unsafe' after dark, compared to 22% in 2019

It is clear that perceptions of safety are greatly influenced by darkness with the majority of respondents (61%) stating they feel 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe' after dark. This figure is consistent with the 2019 survey data.

- 31.5% of females stated that they feel 'very unsafe', compared to 18.2% of males.
- Whilst the overall number of respondents that identify themselves as being from the LGBTQ+ community is low 81% stated that they feel 'very unsafe' in the Town Centre after dark

What makes Bedford Town Centre a safe place?

186 respondents completed the free text question, many gave more than one reason in their answer.

- A further 48 made a negative comment, suggesting that the Town Centre was not safe
- 17 stated that they did not regularly visit the town centre

Each answer has been reviewed and a list of key themes have been identified, the top five themes are listed below;

- 48% stated that busy streets and lots of other people make them feel safe, (42% in 2019)
- 23% stated that visible authority in the area was positive (24.5% in 2019)
- 21% listed good lighting as a factor of safety (9.5% in 2019)
- 11% recognised the importance of CCTV (12% in 2019)
- 8% reference good local facilities

Many of these themes are consistent with the previous year and are similar to the protective factors identified in residents' local areas.

What makes Bedford Town Centre a safe place?

242 respondents completed the free text question, many gave more than one reason in their answer. Each answer has been reviewed and a list of key themes identified

- 26.4% referenced the negative impacts of groups hanging around
- 24% mentioned drug use and dealing in the Town Centre
- 23.6% raised concerns about begging on their perception of safety
- 22.3% stated that street drinking was an issue in the Town
- 17.4% talked about higher levels of alcohol related ASB
- 14% stated that rowdy inconsiderate behaviour and noise made them feel unsafe
- 13.6% suggested that a lack of police resource in the town was a factor
- 12.4% were concerns about being harassed or receiving unwanted attention
- 11.2% raised personal safety concerns when being in the Town
- 10.7% mentioned an increased fear of being a victim of crime

Many of these areas are broadly consistent with previous surveys and are similar to the issues raised by residents in their local areas. There appears to be great levels of concern around personal safety, particularly harassment issues in the Town Centre

It is clear that the factors that affect levels of safety in the Town Centre are not greatly dissimilar to those recorded in the local areas of the Borough

- Feelings of safety are generally increased by the presence of other people, and further so by the visible presence of Authority.
- Investment in the physical infrastructure is also important in terms of good quality CCTV and lighting
- Factors that negatively impact on safety are predominantly driven by the behaviour of other people in the area; this may be in relation to their misuse of drugs or alcohol or in the way that they congregate in large numbers being rowdy or intimidating
- Concerns around the lack of police resources are consistent with other previous surveys and are reflected in both the Town Centre and local areas
- Some feelings of being 'unsafe' appear to be about the perception of an issue and are more complicated to understand; the presence of people begging, or the way that groups of people are interpreted as threatening; these issues are more prevalent within the Town Centre data.

How will the Survey Data be used?

The information gathered within the consultation will be shared with local Partners to be used to inform both strategic and local level work.

Data captured in this survey has been incorporated into the CSP Strategic assessment for 2022 and will be used to develop the new CSP plan for 2024 -27

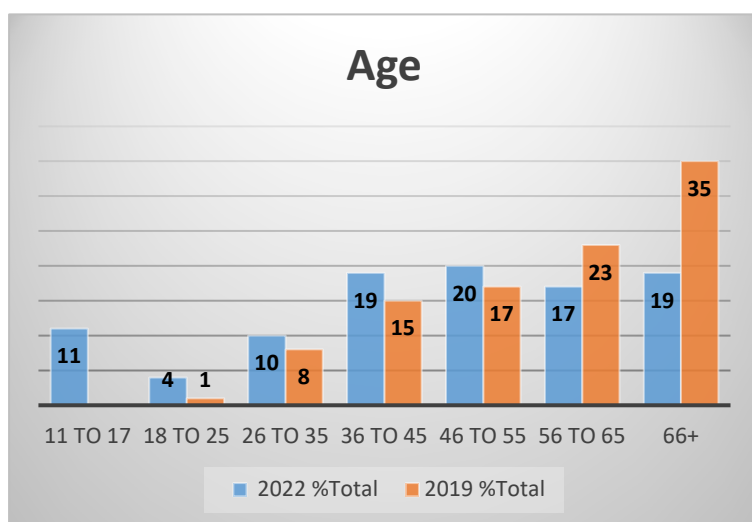
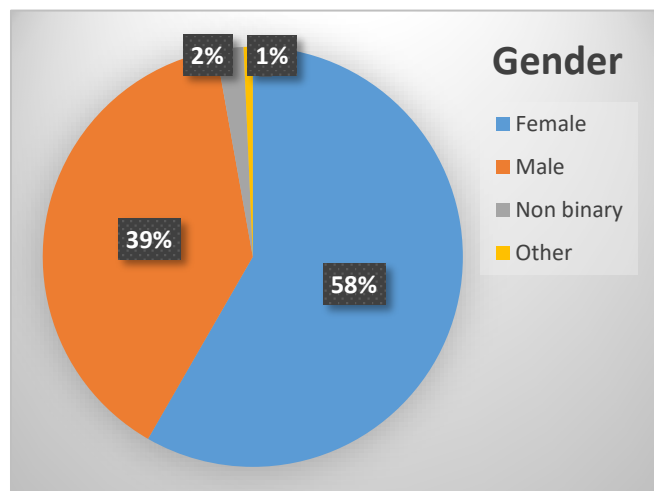
More in depth evaluation will take place to understand how people's opinions, concerns and comments change from one place to another. This will support the development of action plans within a specific place or to address specific issues.

Appendix 1 – Equality and Diversity Monitoring data

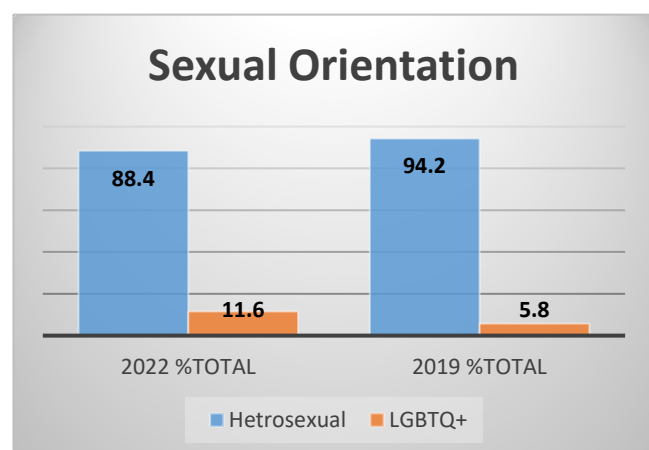
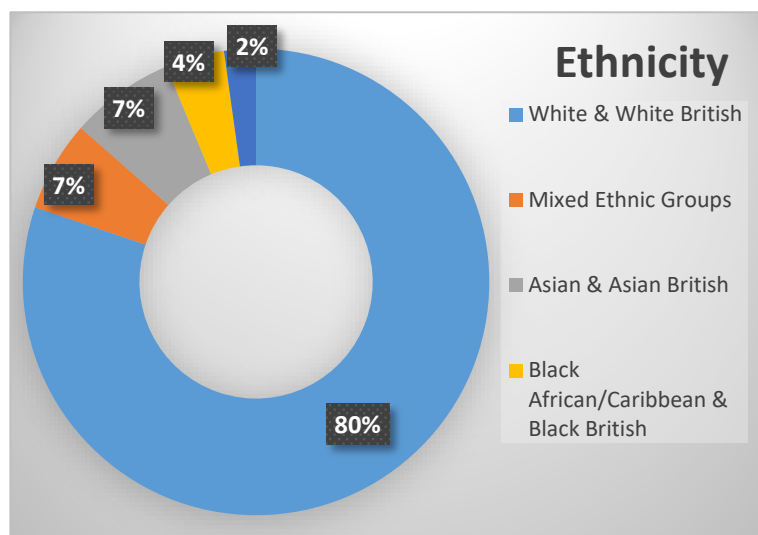
By collecting equality and diversity data the CSP is able to understand the opinions of different communities. It is also important to ensure that the CSP Survey is reflective of the Borough diverse community. Comparisons have been made to 2021 Census data where possible.

Demographic questions in the survey were optional, below is a summary of those that were willing to share their details.

Gender	% Total	Census 2021
Male	39%	49.2%
Female	58%	50.8%
Non Binary	2%	
Other	1%	



Age	% Total	Census 2021
11-17	11%	8.8%
18-25	4%	8.5%
26-35	10%	13.9%
36-45	19%	13.9%
46-55	20%	13.6%
56-65	17%	11.4%
66+	19%	15.8%



Ethnicity	%Total	Census 2021
White & White British	80.2	75.5
Asian & Asian British	7.2	12.2
Black & Black British	4.1	5.3
Mixed Ethnic Group	6.3	3.7
Other Ethnic Group	2.2	2.3

