



Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership

working together to make communities safer

Strategic Assessment 2023

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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 partnership of five responsible authorities; Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Offender Management Services and Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board 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 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.

This year's assessment also reflects the new Serious Violence Duty, which was introduced through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSO) Act 2022. The Act places a duty on specified organisations within the CSP to collaborate to prevent and tackle serious violence in their area. The PCSO Act also amends section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act requiring all CSPs to have included serious violence in their strategies and plans. As per the guidance², Bedford CSP aims to incorporate this new work into existing processes such as the annual strategic assessment and CSP plan.

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. This year's assessment will inform the development of a new 2024-27 Strategic Plan for the partnership.

¹ [Crime and Disorder Act – section 17](#)

² [Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance](#)

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. 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.

Where data allows, analysis focuses 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 April 2022 to March 2023.

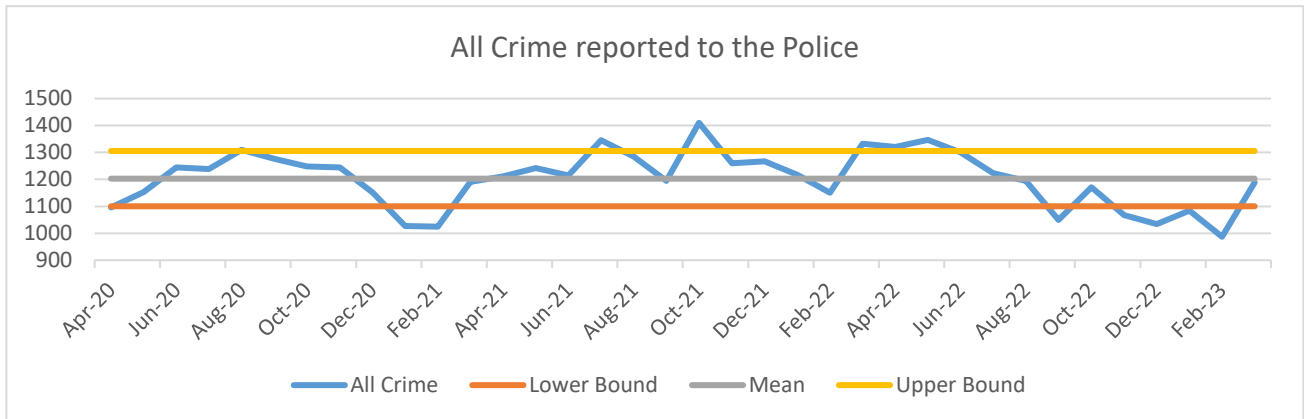
Changes to the Borough's ward boundaries came into effect at the May 2023 elections, moving from 27 to 28 wards and an additional 6 councillors, with all but one ward's boundaries being altered.

All the location-based analysis within this year's assessment reflects the new boundaries. To ensure a clear year on year comparison, data from the previous two years (2020-21 and 2021-22) have also been reviewed by the new boundaries.

However, statistics from national datasets such as the 2021 Census and English Indices of Deprivation 2019 are based on the previous ward boundaries (before 2023), as these have not been updated since the boundary changes came into effect.

Executive Summary 2023

In the 12 months (April 2022 – March 2023), Bedfordshire Police recorded 13,932 offences in Bedford Borough. This is a reduction of 7.4% (1119 offences) on the previous year. This represents a crime rate of 75 offences per 1,000 of the population in the most recent year.

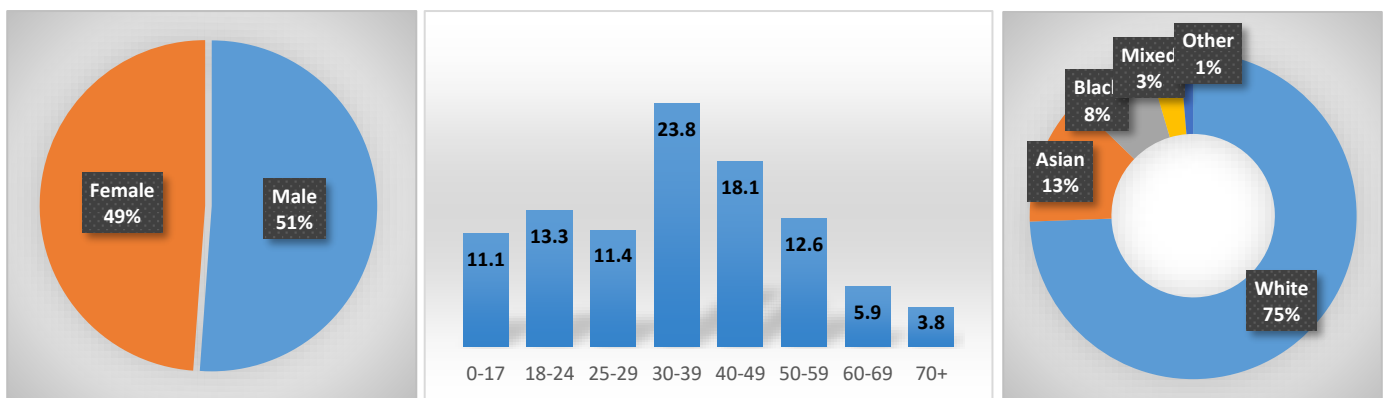


Police recorded crime in England and Wales³ in the year ending March 2023 increased by 6.3% to 6.7 million offences when compared with the previous year, which exceeded pre-coronavirus pandemic levels and was 11% higher compared with the year ending March 2020 (6.1 million offences). This overall increase was largely influenced by rises in the offence categories that are most subject to changes in reporting and recording practices, so are therefore unlikely to reflect a genuine increase in crime.

Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates for the same year suggests people aged 16 years and over experienced 8.7 million offences, a reduction of 15% when compared year ending March 2020.

All Crime data 2022-23 - Victim Profile

Key characteristics which are recorded for victims are summarised below. It should be noted that victim details are not present in a quarter (25%) of the offences recorded in the year.



- 11.1% of victims were aged under 18 years, with a further 13.3% aged 18 to 24 years.
- 9.7% were over 60 years.
- 22% of offences recorded in the year have a repeat victim marker, (3,072 victims).

³ [Crime in England and Wales: Year ending March 2023](#)

Crime Type	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	% Change	% Total
All Crime (excluding Action Fraud)	14942	14065	15051	13932	-7.4	100
- Victim Based Crime	12780	11680	12453	11497	-7.7	82.5
- State Based Crime	2162	2385	2598	2435	-6.3	17.5
Victim Based Crime	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	% Change	% All 22-23
Violence Against the Person	4639	4841	5678	4978	-12.3	35.7
- Homicide	0	0	2	2	0.0	0.01
- Violence with Injury	1278	1203	1461	1381	-5.5	9.9
- Violence without Injury	2119	2191	2596	2350	-9.5	16.9
- Stalking & Harassment	1242	1447	1619	1245	-23.1	8.9
Robbery	224	147	153	164	7.2	1.2
- Robbery of Business Property	26	13	5	7	40.0	0.1
- Robbery of Personal Property	198	134	148	157	6.1	1.1
Burglary	1285	1043	834	715	-14.3	5.1
- Burglary Residential	771	740	522	433	-17.0	3.1
- Burglary Business & Community	514	303	312	282	-9.6	2.0
Vehicle Offences	1582	1622	1241	1238	-0.2	8.9
- Theft of a Vehicle	312	223	333	317	-4.8	2.3
- Theft from a Vehicle	996	922	599	727	21.4	5.2
- Vehicle Interference	274	477	309	194	-37.2	1.4
Other Theft	3107	2268	2684	2625	-2.2	18.8
- Theft from the Person	167	93	112	159	42.0	1.1
- Theft of a Pedal Cycle	487	424	340	405	19.1	2.9
- Shoplifting	1111	809	1124	903	-19.7	6.5
- Other Theft	1342	942	1108	1158	4.5	8.3
Criminal Damage & Arson	1513	1382	1393	1316	-5.5	9.4
- Criminal Damage	1448	1322	1328	1255	-5.5	9.0
- Arson	65	60	65	61	-6.2	0.4
Victim Based - Under Reported	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	% Change	% All 22-23
Hate Crimes *	319	345	457	367	-16.7	2.6
Domestic Abuse *	2061	2231	2418	2284	-5.5	16.4
Sexual Offences	430	377	470	461	-1.9	3.3
- Rape	159	131	150	164	9.3	1.2
- Other Sexual Offences	271	246	320	297	-7.2	2.1
State Based Crime	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	% Change	% All 22-23
Drugs Offences	480	481	533	486	-8.8	3.5
- Trafficking of Drugs	73	80	121	126	4.1	0.9
- Possession of Drugs	379	401	412	360	-12.6	2.6
Possession of Weapons	86	98	97	126	29.9	0.9
Public Order	1336	1486	1602	1511	-5.7	10.8
Misc Crimes against Society	288	320	366	312	-14.8	2.2

* 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)⁴, 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 as a count of offences or as a rate 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.

HMIC Crime Description	2021/22				2022/23			
	Crime Count	Rank by Count	Total Severity Score	Rank by Severity	Crime Count	Rank by Count	Total Severity Score	Rank by Severity
Rape	150	15	460488.3	2	165	15	528322.7	1
Violence with Injury	1475	3	479612.9	1	1394	3	512034.1	2
Violence without Injury	4190	1	218304.6	4	3624	1	284136.2	3
Burglary – Residential	522	8	262985.3	3	436	8	261071.3	4
Other Sexual Offences	323	12	202049.1	5	301	12	190432.6	5
Robbery	153	14	122343.2	6	167	14	165923.1	6
Other Theft	1108	7	84896.2	7	1159	6	112148.9	7
Trafficking of Drugs	121	16	62067.8	9	127	18	84668.1	8
Vehicle Offences	1241	5	63415.3	8	1236	5	69955.1	9
Burglary – Business & Community	314	13	43807.3	11	284	13	44440.4	10
Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	367	10	51290.4	10	312	11	42831.1	11
Public Order Offences	1607	2	26020.7	12	1515	2	29337.1	12
Possession of Weapons	97	18	8556.0	16	128	17	20443.5	13
Arson	65	19	21086.7	13	62	19	17304.8	14
Theft from Person	112	17	9005.4	15	158	16	13747.8	15
Shoplifting	1124	6	13325.6	14	886	7	11594.2	16
Criminal Damage	1329	4	7215.3	17	1250	4	11469.7	17
Bicycle Theft	340	11	5159.7	18	405	9	7512.9	18
Possession of Drugs	413	9	1186.7	19	358	10	1111.6	19

Red cells indicate those offence groups that have been ranked in the top 5 and amber cells those ranked 6-10. Only two crime groups appear in the top 5 by both volume and severity; Violence with Injury, and Violence without Injury. More interesting 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, Robbery, Trafficking of Drugs and Burglary – Business & Community.

⁴ [Office for National Statistics – Crime Severity Score data tool](#)

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 urban areas, with 62% living in Bedford and Kempston.

According to the ONS 2021 mid-year estimate, the Borough has a population of 185,761, which has grown by approximately 6.3% in the last year.

Ethnicity	2011	2021	2011/2021 Change	
			Number	%
White British	71.5%	64.1%	6,191	5.5%
Other White*	9.1%	11.4%	7,042	49.8%
Mixed	3.5%	3.7%	3,200	59.4%
Asian/Asian British	11.4%	12.2%	4,575	25.5%
Black/Black British	3.9%	5.3%	3,646	58.8%
Other**	0.7%	2.3%	2,184	102.4%
All groups	157,497	185,224	27,727	17.6%

Sources: ONS, 2011, 2021 Census.

*Includes White Irish, White Other

**Includes Arab, Chinese and Gypsy/Irish Traveller

The Borough has an ethnically diverse population. The 2021 Census reported that 34.9% of the population was from ethnic minority groups (non-‘White British’) compared with 26.5% in England. Residents from ethnic minority backgrounds increased by 21,554 between 2011 and 2021.

Ethnic minority groups are concentrated in the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston, with particularly large communities in Queens Park (78%) and Cauldwell (67%) wards.

According to 2021 Census data, there are 5,225 households (7%) in the Borough where no adult speaks English as a main language, compared with 5% in England. In a further 1,407 households (1.9%), only a child speaks English as a main language, compared to 1.4% of households in England.

These households are particularly concentrated in Queens Park, Cauldwell, and Castle 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 England⁵. A further 10 areas in Bedford and Kempston are among the 10-20% most deprived areas in England.

The unemployment rate, as measured by those claiming either Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit for those that are out of work, was 4% of the population aged 16-64 in November 2022 (4,275 people), which was slightly above the rate for England (3.8%). This is a positive reduction from the previous year’s figure of 5,870 or 5.5%. Rates of unemployment fluctuate through the 27 wards of the Borough from 1.3% on Oakley to 8.1% in Harpur Ward.

⁵ [English Indices of Deprivation 2019](#)

Community Concerns

Community Consultation 2022

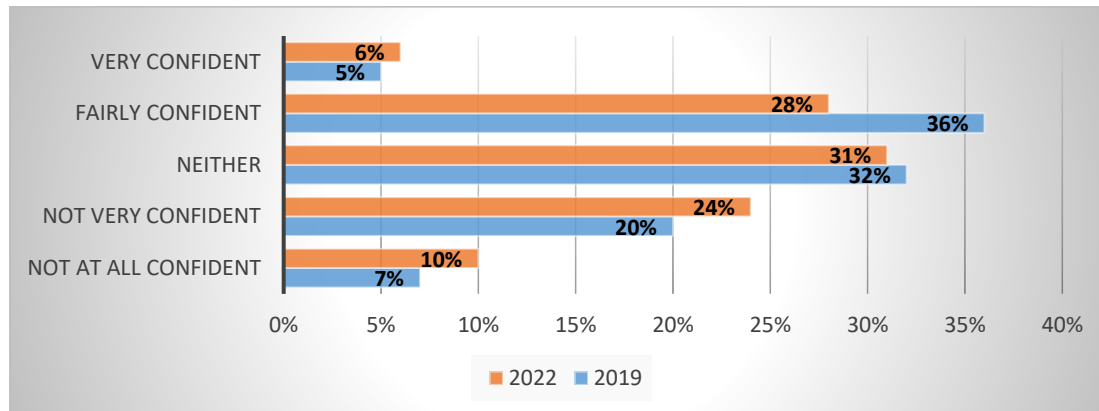
Community Consultation exercises scheduled for 2020 and 2021 did not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions on community events. Therefore, this year's results are compared to the 2019 survey. The CSP delivered a wide-reaching consultation in the summer of 2022, encouraging responses from all sectors of the community. A full evaluation of the survey data has been completed⁶. The data in the survey will inform the development of new priority areas for multi-agency work.



- 289 (67.5%) lived in an urban ward, while 139 (32.5%) lived in a rural ward.
- Where known, 58.2% of responses were from a female and 39.1% from a male.
- 15% were aged under 25 years, 49% between 26 and 55 years and 36% were over 56.
- 19.4% were from ethnic minority groups.
- 12% identified themselves as being from the LGBTQ+ community.

Survey Data Summary

- 36% of respondents stated that they 'Had heard of' the Safer Bedford, Community Safety Partnership before completing the Survey.
- When asked about levels of confidence in the partnership's ability to work together to tackle Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), 34% stated that they were 'Very Confident' or 'Fairly Confident'. This compares to 41% in the 2019 survey.



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

Recommendation: The partnership needs to develop communication and engagement activities which maximises opportunity to promote joint working in the community.

⁶ [Bedford CSP Consultation 2022](#)

Levels of Crime & ASB in the local Area

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

Respondents were asked about their perception of safety in their local area:

Local Area	Day Time 2019	Day Time 2022	After Dark 2019	After Dark 2022
Very Safe	33%	30%	7%	7%
Safe	50%	47%	33%	25%
Neither	10%	12%	21%	21%
Unsafe	6%	9%	28%	32%
Very Unsafe	1%	3%	11%	15%

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

Victims of Crime & ASB

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 had not reported the incident. These have been reviewed and the key themes identified, which fall into four key areas:

- Victims that feel a lack of police resource or significant evidence means that there is no point reporting the incident. Some have chosen to report to other agencies particularly for ASB.
- Previous negative experiences or a general lack of trust is a barrier to the reporting 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.

These barriers to reporting may inhibit the partnership's ability to understand levels of Crime and ASB within our communities and will further contribute to under-reporting issues.

Recommendation: Partnership communications should use a range of methods to improve confidence in services, promote feelings of safety and encourage victims to access support.

Respondents were asked 'How much of a problem are the following crimes in your local area?'

- The greatest proportion (39.9%) suggested that Drug Dealing was a 'Big Problem' in their local area. This is consistent with the 2019 survey.
- There are high levels of concern around Neighbourhood Crimes (Vehicle Crime 23%, Burglary 15%, Robbery 14% and Damage to Property 14%).
- There are also high levels of concern for High Harm Crimes (Knife Crime 12%, Violence against the Person 10%, Hate Crime 8% and Sexual Offences 8%).
- A new area of concern in this year's survey is Organised Crime (16%) which may link Drug Dealing and other crimes of concern.

Three crime categories listed had a high number of respondents suggesting they 'Didn't Know' about the issue in their local area: Domestic Abuse 67%, Cyber Crime 51% and Criminal Exploitation 48%.

Recommendation: The partnership needs to continue to develop opportunities to raise awareness of those issued where communities may not be able recognise the signs to report

Bedford Borough Children and Young People's Survey – Key Stage 2

Pupils attending schools in Bedford Borough were invited to take part in 5 surveys covering a range of topics. A total of 1,685 pupils aged between 7 to 11 years (key stage 2) took part during 2022-23. Responses were anonymous and each school received an individual report of their surveys.

A number of the topics raised in the young peoples' answers link to themes that are explored in this year's assessment and the recommended priority areas for the CSP.

Pupils were asked about the top three things that worried them in their community and environment. 560 pupils completed this question.

- The greatest proportion (44.1%) suggested that Knife Crime worried them the most.
- The third highest response (22.9%) was 'Feeling unsafe outside the home.'
- 14.6% of these pupils indicated that 'Drug issues' was one of the top three things that worried them.
- Similarly, the proportion of pupils who indicated that Gangs worried them most was 14.6%.

Pupils were also asked 'Have you ever felt unsafe because people were drinking alcohol?' 297 pupils answered this question.

- 30.3% of the pupils responded 'Yes.'
- Of those pupils who responded 'Yes,' 37.8% suggested the location of this was a 'Street.'
- Of those pupils who responded 'Yes,' 26.7% stated the location of this was a 'Park.'

Similarly, 297 pupils were asked 'Have you ever felt unsafe because of other people taking drugs?'

- 32.7% of the pupils responded 'Yes.'
- Of those pupils who responded 'Yes,' 46.4% suggested the location of this was a 'Street.'
- Of those pupils who responded 'Yes,' 28.9% stated the location of this was a 'Park.'

Recommendation: The partnership should make use of future children and young person surveys, particularly involving older students, to ensure that concerns and awareness of young people are reflected in Partnership working

Key Findings – (April 2022 – March 2023)

Recorded Crimes

- Overall levels of recorded crimes have reduced by 7.4% to 13,392 offences.
- Serious Youth Violence reduced by 2.9% (16 offences) from the previous year.
- Hate Crimes & Incidents recorded in the year reduced by 23.5%, with 35% of crimes marked with a non-racial motivation.
- Knife Crime offences remained consistent with the previous year, with 146 offences recorded in the last year.
- Sexual Offences reported to the police reduced slightly by 1.7% (8 offences) in the last year.
- Domestic Abuse Crimes & Incidents reported to the police reduced by 4.1%, a decrease of 134 crimes and 37 non-crime incidents from the previous year.
- Violence Against Women and Girls offences reduced by 11.7% in the last year.
- Robberies reported to the police increased by 9.2% (14 offences) in the last year.
- Residential Burglary offences reduced by 16.6% (87 offences) in the last year.
- Vehicle Crimes recorded by the police reduced by 11.7% (128 offences) in the last year.

Severity Scores (Harm)

- The top five crime categories by severity score were: Rape, Violence with Injury, Violence without Injury, Residential Burglary, and Other Sexual Offences. Whilst these categories are consistent with the previous year, 'Total Severity Scores' increased for the top three categories.

Recorded Anti-Social Behaviour

- Police recorded ASB saw a reduction of 19.6% (700 incidents) in the last year. Peaks in reporting occurred between May and August 2022, which is consistent with other years.
- Bedford Borough Council recorded 232 ASB cases in the last year, a reduction of 18.8%.
- Street Drinking reported to the police reduced by 58.1% (50 incidents) in the last year.

Re-offending

- A review of the Bedfordshire cohort managed by Integrated Offender Management (IOM) in the year ending March 2023 recorded a 65% reduction in the number of offences committed.
- Bedfordshire IOM demonstrated a 43% reduction in the number of Residential Burglary offences committed by individuals across all cohort groups.

Youth Offending

- The service recorded 22 'First Time Entrants' to the Criminal Justice System in the year, compared to 38 cases recorded in the previous year. The rate per 100,000 remains positive compared to regional and national data.
- Six young people received a custodial sentence in the year, an increase of three on the previous year.

Exploitation and Hidden Harms

- 13 crimes and a further 18 non-crime incidents with a Child Sexual Exploitation marker were recorded in the Borough, an increase from the previous year of 12 crimes and 16 non-crime incidents.
- 28 offences of Modern Slavery were recorded in the Borough, this compared to 36 in the previous year.
- The safeguarding team at Bedford Borough recorded a 2% reduction in referrals using the Adult Protection Referral Form in the last year.
- The number of Adult Safeguarding referrals submitted to the council that identified potential exploitation increased by 62% over the last three years.
- The number of Multi Agency Information Forms submitted to the Police increased by 3.6% since the previous year.

CSP - Strategic Priorities

By reviewing the Emerging Issues and Common Threads identified in previous Strategic Assessments, alongside the feedback from the Community Consultation, the Bedford Borough CSP has developed a strategic plan that can be divided into three priority areas.

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

The current CSP Strategic Priorities are:

- Tackling Serious Violence
- Protecting Vulnerable People
- Developing Safer Neighbourhoods

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 and over a three year period to identify any significant areas of change or concern that may impact on the CSP Strategic Plan.

Priority One – Tackling Serious Violence

This priority focuses on the devastating impacts of serious violence on the victims, families and the wider community. This priority area aims to deliver the new Serious Violence Duty⁷ for the partnership as outlined in chapter 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The priority will focus on public space youth violence but also recognises the links to domestic abuse and sexual offences.

Key areas

- Knife Crime
- Serious Youth Violence
- Violence Against Women and Girls

Links to

- Robbery
- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Offences

for the purposes of this report and the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty the Partnership uses the following as a definition of Serious Violence, as agreed by the Bedfordshire Serious Harm Board.

The intentional use of physical force or power to threaten or harm others (including young people) that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in serious injury.

⁷ [Serious Violence Duty: Statutory Guidance for responsible authorities – Dec 2022](#)

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 then stabilised. In the last two years, increases have been recorded in lower volume but higher harm types of violence.

Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police increased by 3% to 50,489 offences in the year ending March 2023, up from 49,027 in the year ending March 2022. Within this crime category, the greatest increase over the last year was for knife-enabled robbery (19.8%), which rose from 15,416 for the year ending March 2022 to 18,476 for the year to March 2023.⁸

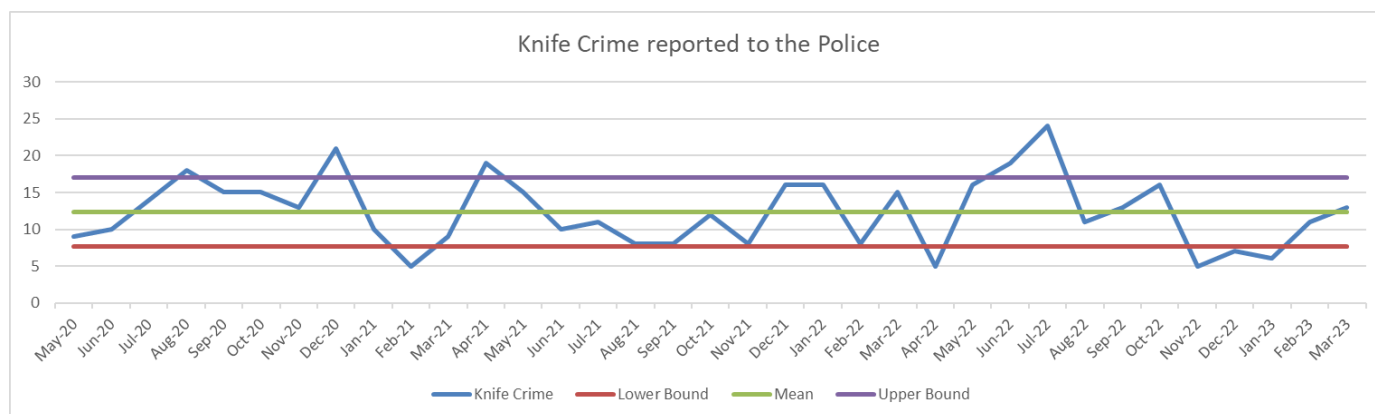
Despite the annual increase, there has been an 18% reduction in knife-enabled robberies over the last three years, from the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020, to March 2023. This has contributed to an overall reduction of 7% for broader knife-enabled crime in this same period.⁸

The number of 'Possession of an article with a blade or point' offences recorded by the police has increased significantly over the last three years. Offences in the year ending March 2023 (28,013) were 20% higher than in the year ending March 2020 (23,276). This figure is an increase of 13% when compared with last year (24,799 offences). It should be noted that these increases could have been influenced by specific action by police to tackle knife crime.⁸

Admissions data for NHS hospitals in England and Wales reported 3,780 admissions for assault by a sharp object in the year ending March 2023. This figure shows a continued reduction from 4,769 in the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020, and 4,185 admissions in the year ending March 2022.⁸

Local

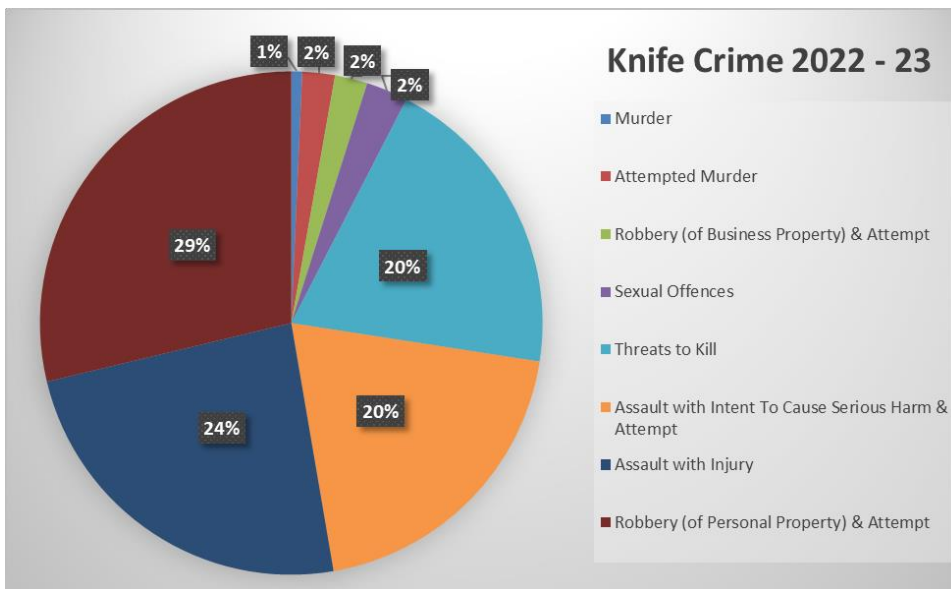
In the period April 2022 to March 2023 Bedfordshire Police recorded 146 Knife Crimes, which is consistent with the previous year.



⁸ [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/crime-in-england-and-wales)

There is no clear seasonal pattern in Knife Crime offences in the last three years. However, in the last year there was a significant peak in offences in the early summertime, contrasted with lower than average numbers over the winter months.

The greatest proportion of offences in the last year were for 'Robbery' with 28.8% (42 offences), followed by 'Assault with Injury' at 24% (35 offences), which is consistent with last year. The 'Threats to Kill' and 'Assault with Intent to Cause Serious Harm' categories each made up 19.9% (29 offences) of recorded Knife Crime offences.



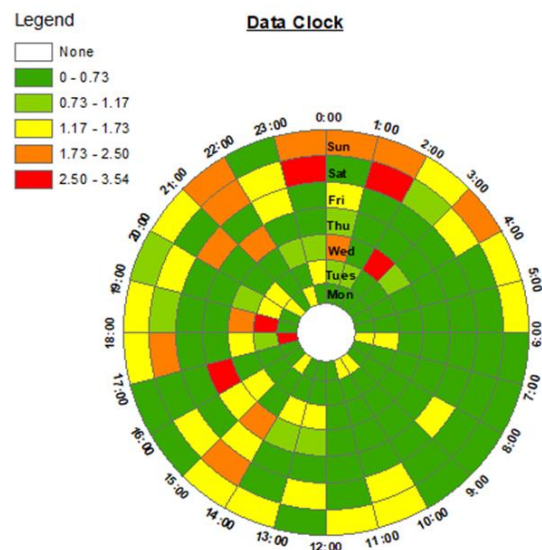
The local trend for knife-enabled robberies matches the national trend of an increase in the year ending March 2023, despite a decrease over the last three years. Police recorded an increase of 10.5% in knife-enabled robberies locally (42 offences), despite a three-year reduction of 10.6%.

By contrast, the number of 'Threats to Kill' offences recorded by Bedfordshire Police reduced over the last year by 14.7% (5 offences), but the three-year trend from the years ending March 2020 to March 2023 shows an increase of 123.1% (16 offences).

All Knife Crime Offences 2022-23

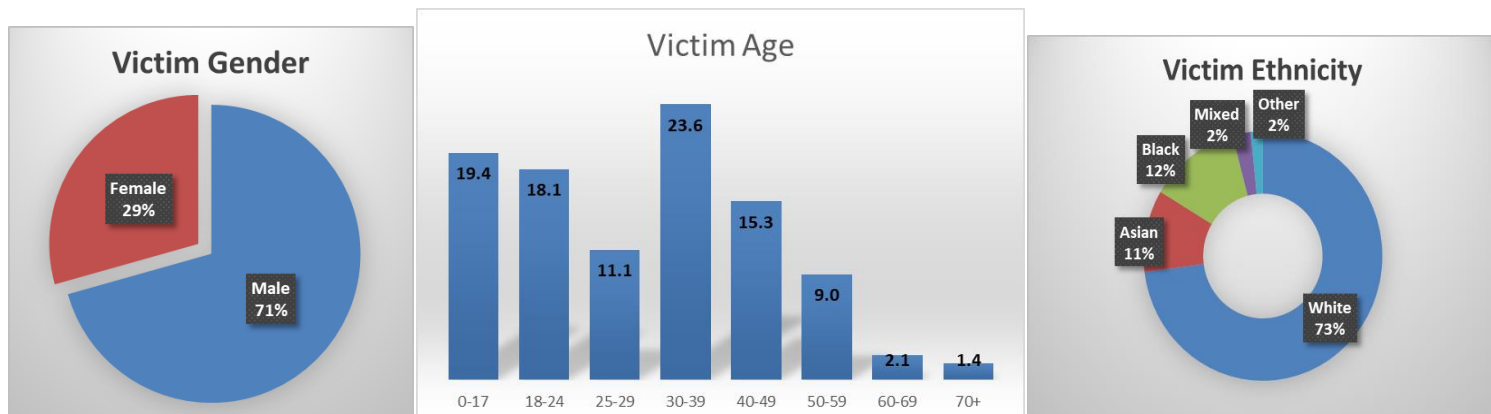
Generally, Knife Crime offences take place across all days of the week.

However, reporting tends to peak at the weekend, between the hours of 9pm on Saturday evening to 6am on Sunday morning.



Victims

Key Characteristics recorded for victims, where known, are summarised below.

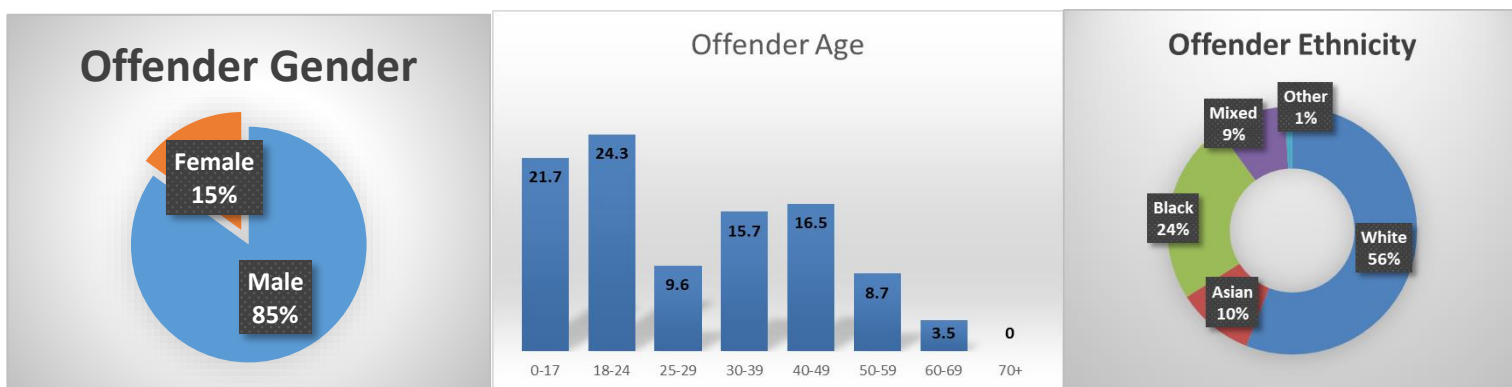


- 29.4% of victims recorded in the last 12 months were female; this is a slight decrease on the previous year's figure of 31.5%. Over the last three years, the proportion of female victims of Knife Crime has remained consistent, while the actual number has reduced by 8.7%, to 42 victims for the year ending March 2023, over this period.
- The greatest proportion of victims were aged 16-20 years (19.4%), which is consistent with last year.
- 28 victims (19.4%) were under the age of 18 years at the time of the offence, which is consistent with the previous year's figure.
- 73% of victims were White, representing an increase of 10% on the previous year, 10.7% of victims were Asian and 12.3% were Black.

Offenders

39.7% of Knife Crime offences recorded in 2022-23 include no description of the offender.

Key Characteristics for offenders, where known, are summarised below.



- 85% of offenders were male, which is a slight increase on the previous year's figure of 83%.
- The greatest proportion of offenders (27.8%) were aged 16-20 years in the year ending March 2023, which is an increase of 100% (16 offences) since last year.

- 25 Offenders (21.7%) were described as being under 18 at the time of the offence, which is a reduction from the previous year's figure of 30 (26.8%). 46% of offences identified an offender aged under 25 years, which is consistent with the previous year.
- The majority of offenders were described as White (56%), which is an increase from the previous year's figure of 48.4%, but is still an under-representation in the local population when compared with the 2021 Census profile for Bedford.
- 10% of offenders were described as Asian, which is a significant decrease in last year's figure of 19.4%, and 24% were described as Black.

Outcome data

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

- Where known, 16.2% of offences in the last 12 months resulted in a charge, which is an increase on last year's figure of 13.8% of offences.
- 44.6% of all offences included a named suspect but did not result in a positive outcome. This is broadly comparable with last year.
 - 20 offences where evidential difficulties were recorded.
 - 38 offences where the victim did not support the investigation.
- 17.7% of offences had an outcome that suggested no named suspect had been recorded and the victim did not support the investigation.

Overall, nearly half (46.9%) of all Knife Crimes recorded in the most recent year recorded an outcome that referenced the victim being unwilling to support the investigation.

Location

91% (132 offences) of Knife Crime reported in the last 12 months took place in the urban wards of the Borough, an increase on the previous year's figure of 87%. 13 offences in the last year took place in rural wards, a reduction of 3 on the previous year's data.

The top wards by number of offences contributed 66.2% of all Knife Crime in the year, which is consistent with the previous year. However, the wards that rank highest by number have changed since last year.

Top wards by numbers	Total Incidents	% Total
Cauldwell ward	24	16.6%
Greyfriars ward	22	15.2%
Castle & Newnham ward	17	11.7%
Harpur ward	15	10.3%
De Parys ward	9	6.2%
Kingsbrook ward	9	6.2%
Other wards	49	33.8%
Total	145	100

The greatest proportion, 16.6%, took place in Cauldwell ward, south of Bedford Town Centre.

The ward with the greatest increase in the last year was Castle & Newnham ward (+ 9 offences).

Severity Scores

Whilst the number of Knife Crime offences recorded in the last 2 years remained consistent, when the same data is reviewed by severity scores (which take into account the harm caused by the incident and the average severity of the offence) the average severity increased by 15.5%, from 985.38 to 1138.25.

The proportion of Knife Crime offences recorded in the rural wards is small, just 13 in the last year and 46 over the last three years which represents 10.4% of all offences in the Borough.

The average severity score of offences recorded in rural wards over the last three years is 1103, 7.1% above that of the average recorded in the Urban wards over the same period.

Hotspot Map of all recorded Knife Crime 2022-23



There is a significant hotspot over the main Town Centre and Midland Road areas of Greyfriars and Castle & Newnham wards, spreading north into Harpur ward and west into Queens Park.

South of the Town Centre, offences extend into Kingsbrook and Cauldwell wards.

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected from a list of 15 crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area

- 11.9% of those that answered the question suggested that Knife Crime was a 'Big Problem' in their local area, which is a reduction from the 2019 survey's figure of 13.1%

Young People Survey – Key Stage 2

Pupils attending schools in Bedford Borough were invited to take part in a Community and Environment survey. 590 pupils from 9 primary schools aged between 7 to 11 years (key stage 2) took part in 2022-23.

Respondents were asked to pick the top three things that worry them in their community and environment.

- The greatest proportion (44.1%) suggested that Knife Crime 'worried them the most'.



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.

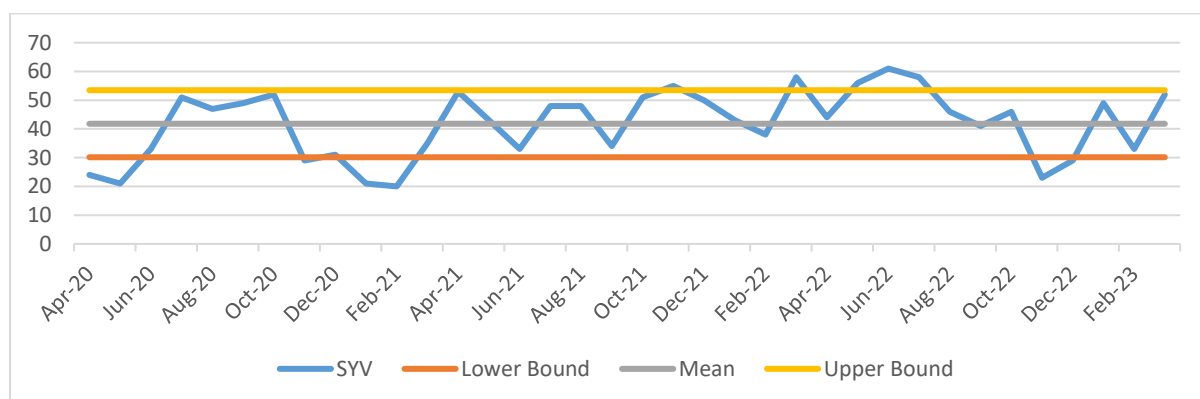
National

There are no statistics produced at a national level that cover this entire group, but over the last 12 months (year ending March 2023)⁹ knife-enabled crime recorded by the police saw a 3% increase to 50,489 offences. Levels of knife-enabled crime in the year ending March 2023 remained 7% below levels recorded in the pre-coronavirus year ending March 2020.

- The latest available provisional admissions data for NHS hospitals in England and Wales reported 3,780 admissions; a reduction from both the previous year (4,185) and the pre-COVID-19 year ending in March 2020 (4,769).
- Police recorded 6,365 offences involving firearms in the year ending March 2023, a 13% increase compared with the year ending March 2022 (5,752). However, there was a reduction of 2% when compared with the pre-COVID-19 year ending March 2020.

Local

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, Bedfordshire Police recorded 538 offences that would be defined as Serious Youth Violence, a reduction of 2.9% (16 offences) from the previous year. When compared with the pre-COVID-19 year ending March 2020, this represents a reduction of 3.2%.



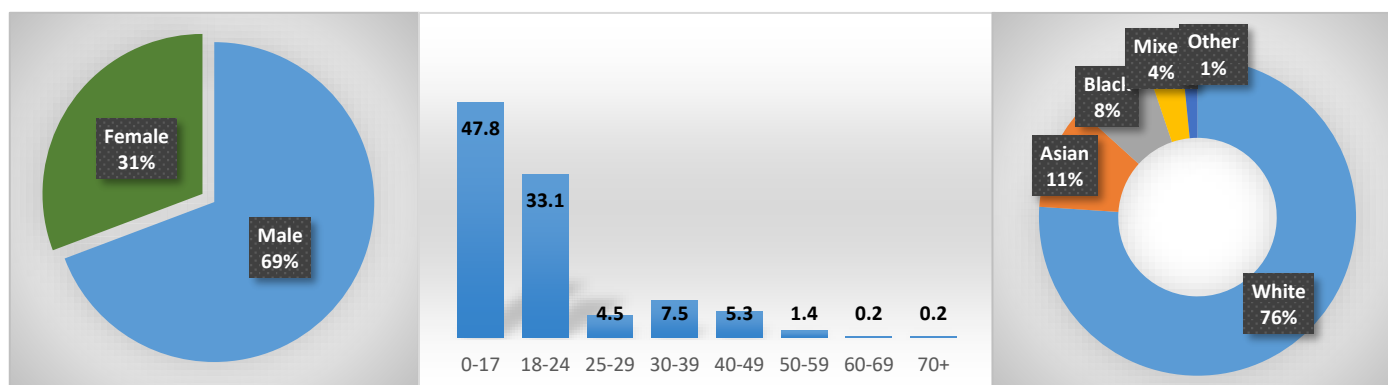
The greatest proportion of offences in the group were recorded as ‘Violence Against the Person’ which accounted for 77.7% (418 offences), a further 14.1% (76 offences) as ‘Robbery’ and 7.6% (41 offences) as ‘Possession of a Weapon.’ These are broadly consistent with the previous year.

- 5 offences of Gun Crimes were recorded in the year, an increase of 2 from last year.
- 62 offences of Knife Crime were recorded in the year, which is consistent with last year.
- 8 offences were flagged as a Hate Crime, an increase of 2 from last year.

⁹ [ONS - Crime in England and Wales – Year Ending Mar 23](#)

Victims

Key characteristics recorded for victims are summarised below.



31% of victims were female, a slight reduction from the previous year's figure of 34%, and 69% of victims were male.

The greatest proportion of victims recorded in the last year were aged 11-15 years (28.5%). *(The age specific definition of this theme will affect the profile of this group.)*

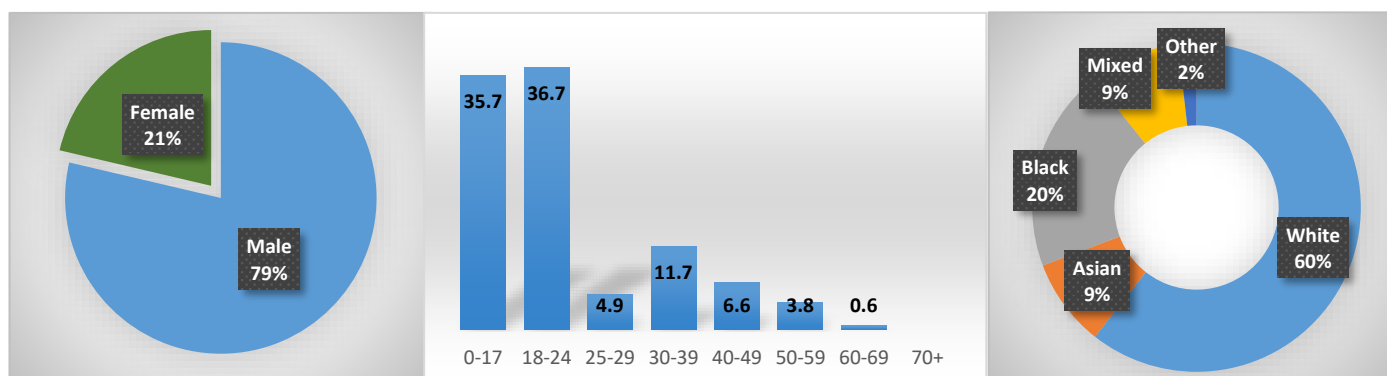
47.8% of victims (235) were under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, which is an increase from the previous year's figure of 45.9%.

The majority of victims (75%) were White. 11% were Asian and 8% were Black.

Offenders

In the last 12 months, 13.8% (74 offences) had no suspect details recorded.

Where known, the key characteristics recorded for offenders are summarised below.



79% of offenders were male and 21% were female; the proportion of female offenders has reduced by 4% compared to the previous year.

The greatest proportion of offenders (35%) recorded in the last year were aged 16-20 years. *(The age specific definition of this theme will affect the profile of this group.)*

168 offenders were under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, a reduction of 27.6% (64 offenders) when compared to the previous year.

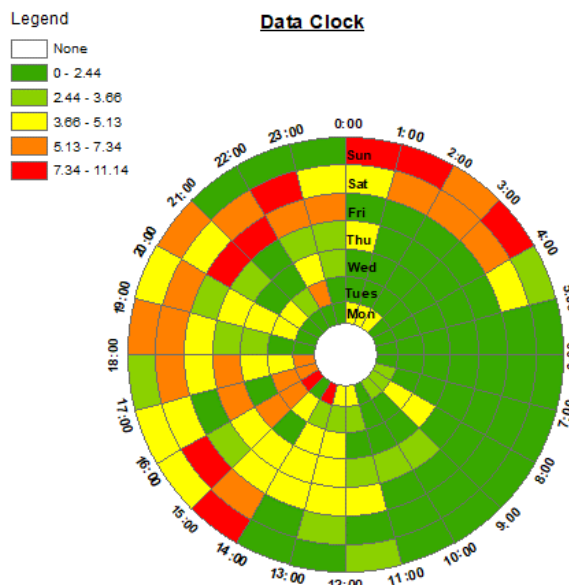
The majority of offenders were White (60%), 20% were Black and 9% were Asian. When compared to the Borough’s ethnic profile there is an over-representation of offenders that are described as Black.

Temporal

34.4% of offences are recorded on a Saturday or Sunday.

Between Monday and Thursday, offences are spread through the afternoon and early evenings.

This pattern changes at the weekend (Friday to Sunday), where a greater proportion of offences are committed in the evening, through the night and into the early hours of the morning.



Location

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, 78.3% of all recorded Serious Youth Violence offences were recorded in the urban wards of the Borough, a reduction from the previous year’s figure of 80.4%.

Whilst the majority of offences continue to occur in urban areas, incidents in rural areas have been increasing. In the period since March 2021 the number of offences recorded in rural wards of the Borough have increased by 55.4%; in the same period offences in urban wards increased by 19.5%.

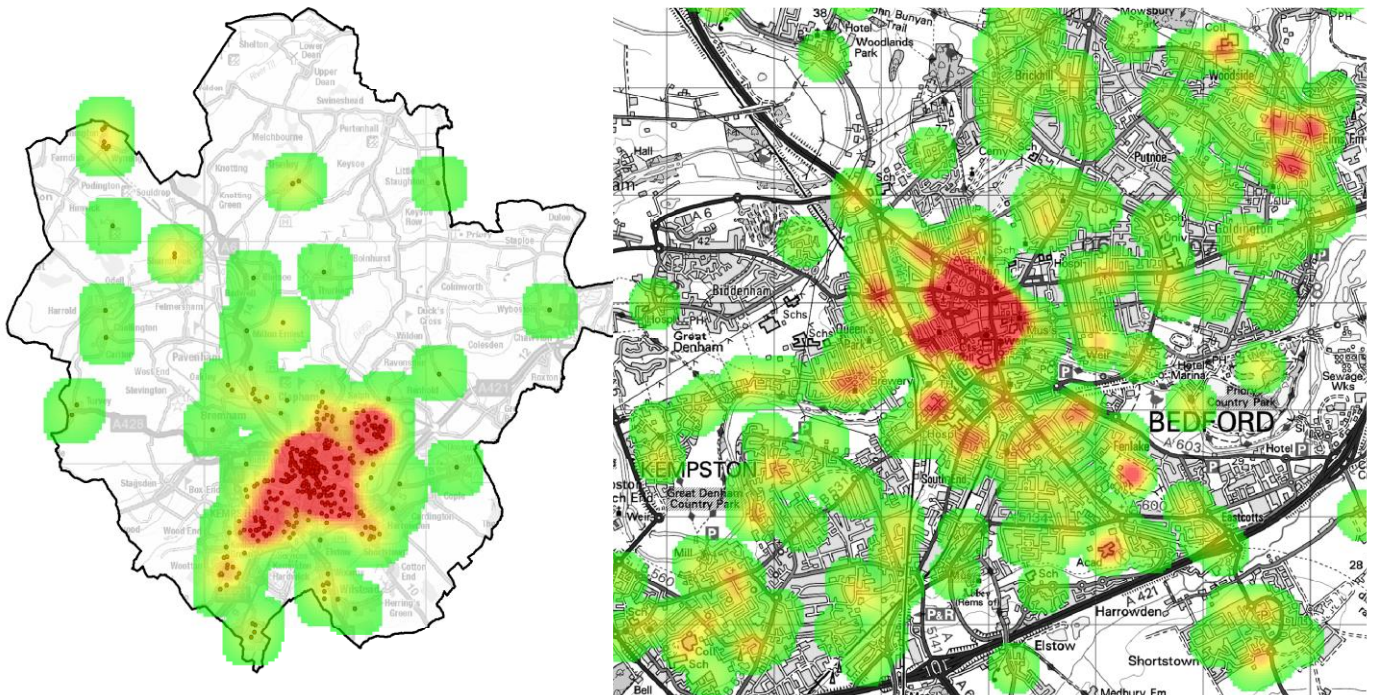
The top five urban wards contribute 50.3% of all reported Serious Youth Violence in the Borough. When the same offences are reviewed by severity rather than volume the top five wards are quite different, with just two wards appearing on both lists; Cauldwell Ward and Greyfriars.

Top 5 Wards by Volume	2022-23	% Total
Harpur ward	68	12.8
Greyfriars ward	63	11.9
Castle & Newnham ward	61	11.5
Cauldwell ward	42	7.9
Kingsbrook ward	33	6.2
All other wards	264	49.7
All Serious Youth Violence	531	100

Top 5 Wards by Ave Severity	2022-23
Biddenham ward	2087.85
Cauldwell ward	850.61
Shortstown ward	648.81
Greyfriars ward	609.90
Kempston Central & West ward	537.48
All other wards	325.30
All Serious Youth Violence	448.53

There is a strong relationship between high volume 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 2022-23



There is a significant hotspot centred on the Bedford Town Centre and Midland Road areas of Greyfriars and Castle & Newnham wards, spreading north in the Tavistock Street area of Harpur ward.

There are also smaller clusters in the majority of urban wards.

Crime Severity Score

The Serious Youth Violence category is made up of a number of criminal offences, with a wide range of severity scores. In the most recent year these range from 'Murder' at 7832, to 'Assault without Injury' at 12.9. The table below evaluates Serious Youth Violence offences both by volume and by severity (the levels of harm caused).

Serious Youth Violence Offences	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	3 yr Change	% Change
All SYV (volume)	556	413	554	538	-18	-3.2%
Total Severity Score (harm)	206406	164043	216282	240921	34515	16.7%
Average Severity Score (harm)	371.2	397.2	390.4	448.5	76.58	20.6%

The average severity score has reduced by 1.7% in the last year, however at the same time the number of recorded offences has increased by 34.1%. This suggests that whilst the overall volume of offences may have increased, the impacts of Serious Youth Violence have reduced slightly.

- The number of offences recorded as 'Most Serious Violence' has increased by 95% in the last year. This year's figure of 39 offences is equal to that of the pre-COVID-19 year ending March 20.

Violence Against Women and Girls

The United Nations 1993 defines Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) as:

"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".

The term "Violence Against Women and Girls"¹⁰ covers a range of unacceptable and deeply distressing crime types which, although men and boys also suffer from, disproportionately affects women and girls. Offences include rape and other sexual offences, stalking, domestic abuse, 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and 'honour' killings), 'revenge porn' and 'up-skirting', as well as many others.

Crimes can occur between strangers, friends, acquaintances, current or ex-partners, or family members and work colleagues.

National

Violence Against Women and Girls takes place every day and can have profound long-term effects on survivors and people close to them. It is a topic of even greater public interest following several high-profile cases.

The range and prevalence of these crimes is widespread¹¹. An estimated 1.6 million women aged 16 to 74 suffered domestic abuse in England and Wales in the last year, and around 5.1 million women aged 18 to 74 were victims of some form of abuse as a child. Tragically, in the year ending March 2020, 81 women were killed in a domestic homicide.

When considering some of the less hidden crimes, we estimate 1 in 3 women over the age of 16 in Great Britain were subjected to at least one form of harassment in the last year. This increases to 2 in 3 for women aged 16 to 34.

There were 709,388 stalking and harassment offences in the year ending March 2023¹². This was a 43% increase compared with the year ending March 2020 (495,034 offences) and a slight fall (1%) from year ending March 2022.

¹⁰ [Violence against women and girls: research update Nov 2022](#)

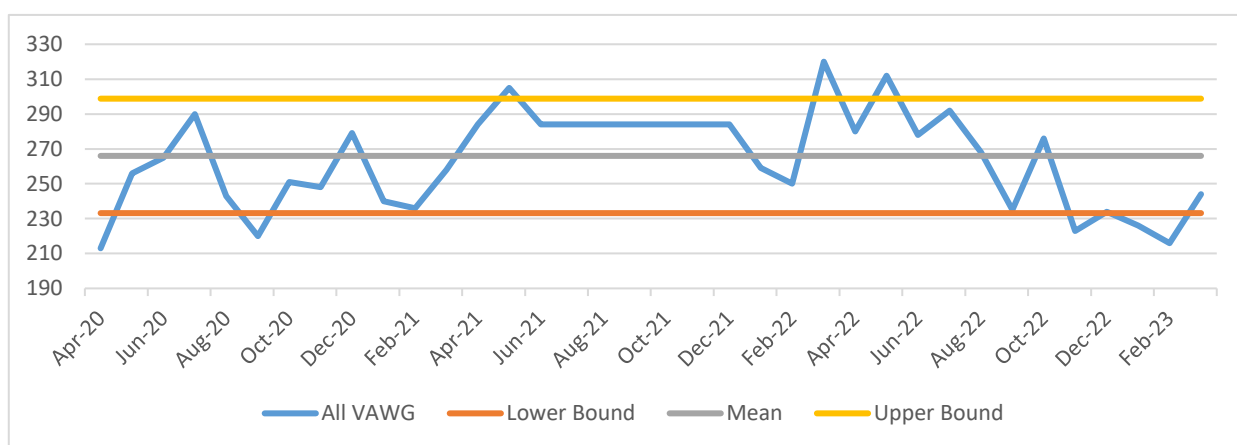
¹¹ [Violence against women and girls: Helping to understand the scale and impact of the problem Nov 2021](#)

¹² [Crime in England and Wales: Year ending March 2023](#)

Local

In the year April 2022 – March 2023, 3,084 Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Offences were reported to the Police in Bedford Borough, a reduction of 409 offences (11.7%) on the previous year. Overall recorded levels of VAWG Offences have increase by 2.8% (85 crimes) in the period between April 2020 and March 2023.

Offence	20-21	% Total	21-22	% Total	22-23	% Total	% Change	Change	20-23 Change
Threats to Kill	55	1.8	79	2.3	67	2.2	-15.2	-12	21.8
Other Offences	51	1.7	76	2.2	81	2.6	6.6	5	58.8
Acquisitive Crime/Theft	44	1.5	77	2.2	85	2.8	10.4	8	93.2
Coercive Control	48	1.6	54	1.5	88	2.9	63.0	34	83.3
Criminal Damage	130	4.3	134	3.8	103	3.3	-23.1	-31	-20.8
Malicious Communications	367	12.2	428	12.3	285	9.2	-33.4	-143	-22.3
Sexual Offences	260	8.7	331	9.5	341	11.1	3.0	10	31.2
Common Assault	456	15.2	470	13.5	440	14.3	-6.4	-30	-3.5
Stalking & Harassment	519	17.3	579	16.6	493	16.0	-14.9	-86	-5.0
Public Order Offences	560	18.7	613	17.5	538	17.4	-12.2	-75	-3.9
Violence With Injury	509	17.0	652	18.7	563	18.3	-13.7	-89	10.6
Total	2999	100	3493	100.0	3084	100.0	-11.7	-409	2.8



Reporting of Non-recent Offences

In the period April 2022 and March 2023, just 2.3% of all recorded VAWG offences were non-recent (reported within 1 year of the offence). This figure is broadly consistent over the last three years.

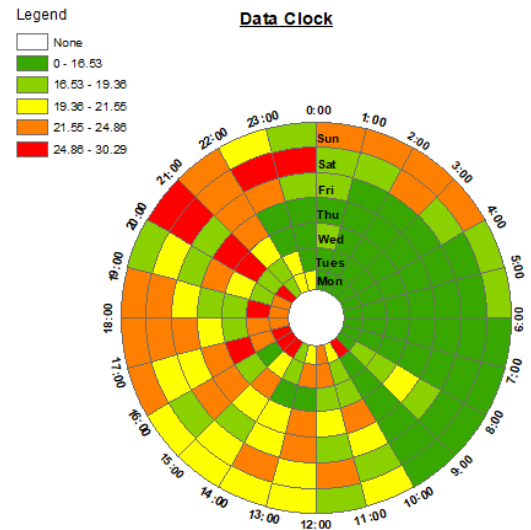
Recording Gap	2020-21	% Total	2021-22	% Total	2022-23	% Total
Current (0-2 days)	2382	79.4%	2654	76.0%	2333	75.6%
Recent (2 - 365 days)	538	17.9%	761	21.8%	679	22.0%
Non-Recent (>1 yr.)	79	2.6%	78	2.2%	72	2.3%
Total	2999	100%	3493	100%	3084	100%

Temporal

Generally, Violence Against Women and Girls offences take place throughout all days of the week.

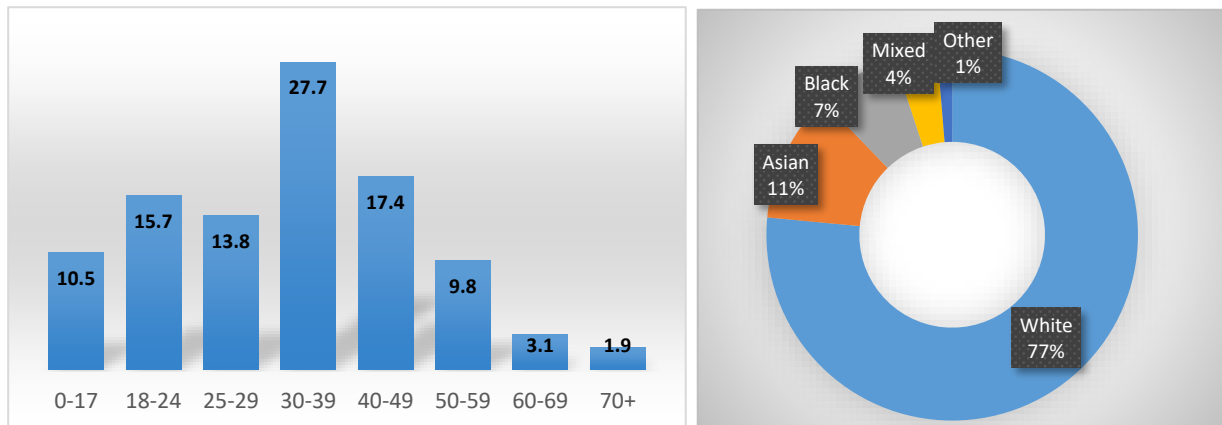
Higher levels of offences take place between 16:00 and 22:00 on all days.

These higher levels continue through the night at the weekends Friday-Saturday and Saturday-Sunday.



Victims

Key characteristics recorded for victims are summarised below; by definition of this thematic area, all victims are female.



- The greatest proportion of victims (14.2%) are aged between 31-35 years, this is consistent with the previous year.
- 10.5% of victims (325) were under 18 years old and a further 15.7% (438) aged between 18 and 24 years.

Where known, 77% of victims are White, 11% are Asian, and 7% are Black. These figures are broadly consistent with the previous year and are similar to the Borough's ethnic profile.

- Where recorded only 5.2% (103 victims) described the offender as a stranger. This suggests that up to 94.8% may have known the offender in some way prior to the offence taking place.
- Where the offender was known, the greatest proportion of victims described their relationship to the offender as a 'partner' or 'ex-partner' (60.8%), or a 'relative' (16.6%).
- 7.1% suggest that the offender was a 'friend' or 'acquaintance' and 5.8% a 'neighbour'.

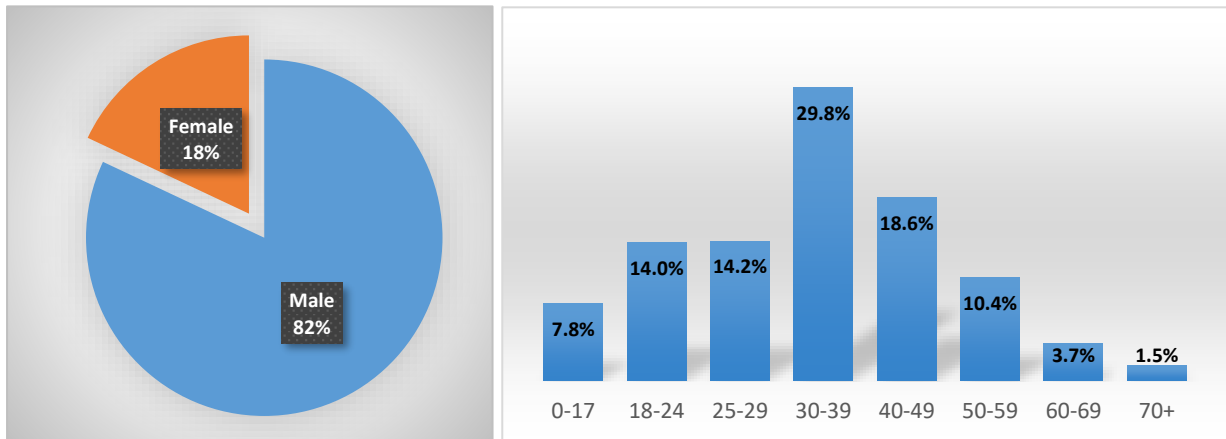
Young Victims

Data in this section relates only to those offences where the victim's age is under 18 years.

- 10.5% of victims (325) were aged under 18 years at the time of the offence.
- Nearly a third (32.2%) of VAWG offences reported by young victims were for a Sexual Offence; this compares to just 9.5% in the whole victim group.
- Young victims are more likely to be a 'friend' or 'associate' of the offender (27.6%), compared to 7.1% in the whole victim group.
- A greater proportion (26.9%) of young victims (under 18 years) recorded a familial relationship (a relative) with the offender, compared to 16.6% in the whole victim group.

Offenders

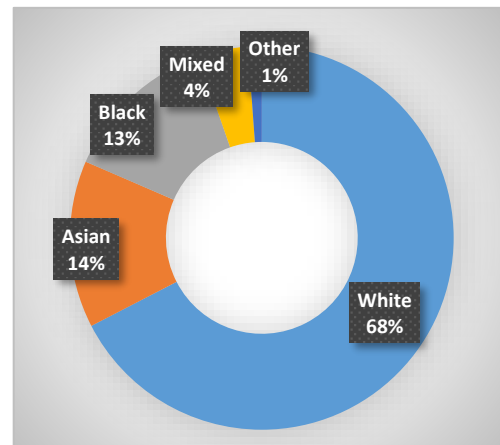
Where known, key characteristics recorded for offenders are summarised below.



- 82% of offenders were male, this compares to 79% in the previous year.
- The greatest proportion of offenders (15.5%) were aged 31-35 years, this is consistent with the previous year.
- 7.8% of offenders were under 18 years at the time of the offence and a further 14% were aged 18 to 24 years.

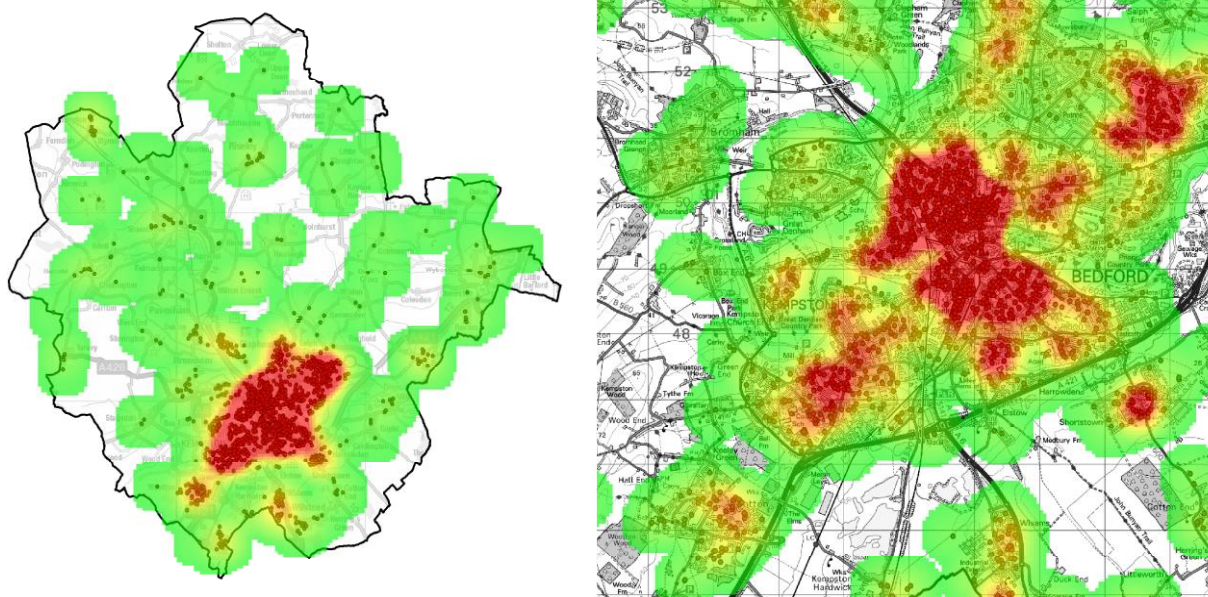
The ethnicity of offenders is as described by the victim and is not known in all cases.

- Where known, 68% of offenders are described as White, this is consistent with the previous year.
- The proportions of Asian offenders was 14% and Black offenders was 13%. These figures are a slight increase from the previous year for both groups. Compared to the Borough ethnic profile there is an under representation of White Offenders.



Location

Hotspot map of all VAWG offences reported in 2022-23



Violence Against Women and Girls Offences are recorded in all areas of the Borough, with a noticeable concentration in the urban wards focused on Bedford Town Centre.

When looked at in more detail, there is visible hotspot centred on Greyfriars ward and Harpur ward. This extends out into neighbouring areas of Castle & Newnham, Cauldwell, Kingsbrook, Queens Park and De Parys.

There are smaller hotspots in Kempston and Goldington.

Safer Streets Initiative

Over the last two years, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire has been awarded funding¹³ through the Home Office 'Safer Streets' fund to develop focused activities and engagement in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls.



In that period the Community Safety Team at the council has delivered a schedule of over 60 pop up engagement events across the Borough to raise awareness of support services and provide practical advice and materials to help those in communities that feel less safe in the local area.

Many women engaging with Community Safety Officers at the events suggest that they have previously been a victim of VAWG but have chosen not to report to the Police.

Recommendation: Continue to explore opportunities to engage with communities to raise awareness and encourage reporting of VAWG offences.

¹³ [Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner – Safer Streets 4 \(VAWG\)](#)

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 robbery¹⁴ increased by 13% (to 75,265 offences) in comparison with the year ending March 2022 (66,328 offences) but remained 17% lower than in the year ending March 2020 (90,195 offences).

Local

Whilst the proportion of all offences is small, (1%) the impacts on both the victim and the wider community are high.

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, Bedfordshire Police recorded 167 robberies, an increase of 9.2% (14 offences) from the previous year. When compared to the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020, robberies have reduced by 25.1%, with local reporting mirroring national patterns.

The Robbery offence category is divided into two key areas:

- Robbery of Business Property, with seven offences recorded in the most recent year; an increase of 2 offences on the previous year.
- Robbery of Personal Property, with 160 offences recorded in the last 12 months; an increase of 12.7% (12 offences) on the previous year.

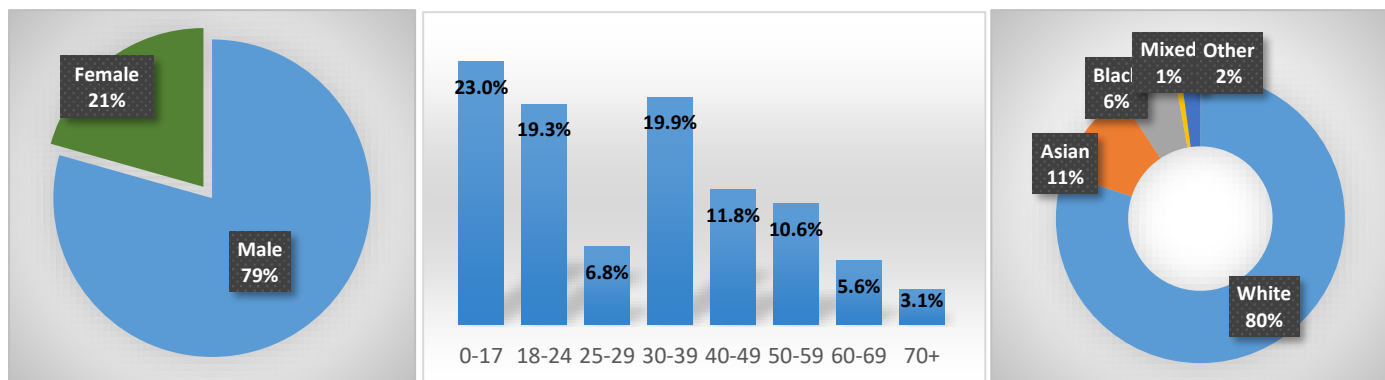
Offence recorded	20-21	% Total	21-22	% Total	22-23	% Total	%Change	3yr %Change
Robbery (Business)	13	8.9	5	3.3	7	4.2	8.1	-18.8
Robbery (Personal)	133	91.1	148	96.7	160	95.8	40.0	-73.1
Total	146	100	153	100	167	100	9.2	-25.1
Knife Crime	35	24.0	39	25.5	45	26.9	15.4	-19.6
Serious Youth Violence	18	12.3	21	13.7	21	12.6	0.0	-34.4
Single Offender	70	47.9	66	43.1	80	49.7	25.8	-21.0
2-3 Offenders	58	39.7	58	37.9	65	38.9	12.1	-18.8
4+ Offenders	17	11.6	29	19.0	19	11.4	-34.5	-32.1

- 26.9% of Robberies recorded in the last 12 months mentions the use of a knife or bladed article, this is a slight increase on the previous year's figure of 25.5%
- 21 offences (12.6%) are flagged as Serious Youth Violence, where either the offender or victims is aged under 25 years at the time of the offence.
- 19 offences (11.4%) include descriptions of four or more offenders in the crime report; this is a reduction from the previous year's figure of 29.

¹⁴ [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 23](#)

Victims

Key characteristics recorded for victims are summarised below.



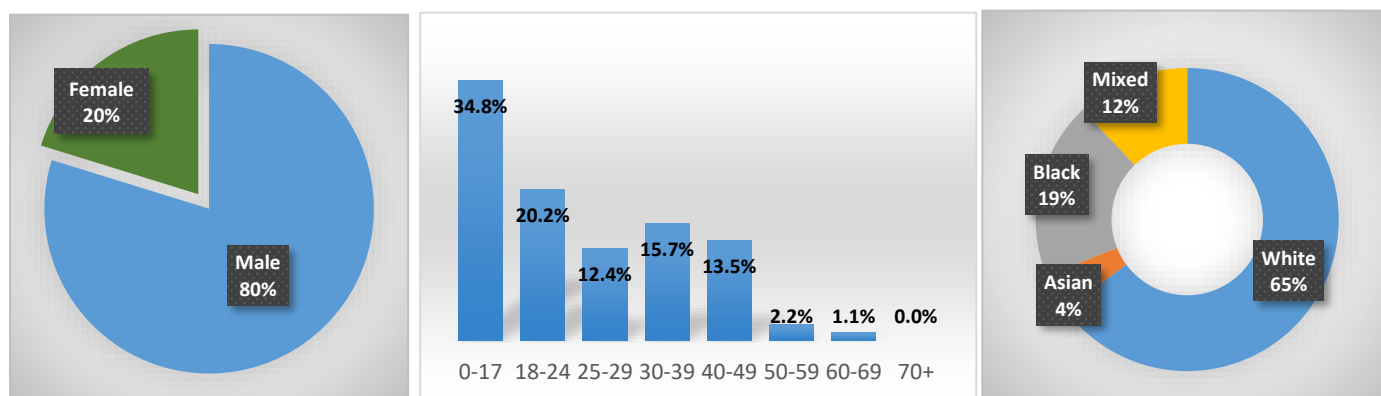
Where known, the greatest proportion of victims were Male (79%) and 33 victims were females, an increase of 3 on the previous year.

- The greatest proportion (21.7%) of offences recorded the victim as aged 16-20 years.
- Six victims were aged 65 years or older (3.7%) an increase of one from the previous year.
- 42.2% of victims were aged under 24, a slight increase on the previous year's figure of 41.9%
- 80% of victims were White, which is broadly consistent with the previous year.

Offenders

46.7% (78) Robbery offences recorded in 2022-23 include no description of the offender.

Key Characteristics for offenders, where known, are summarised below.



Where known 20% of offenders were described as Female, this is a significant increase from the previous year's figure of 6.3%.

- The greatest proportion of offenders (31.5%) were described as aged 16 to 20 years, this is consistent with the previous year.
- 34.8% offences (31) suggest that the offender was under 18.
- More than half (55.1%) suggested that the offender was under 25 years.
- 64% of offenders were described as White, 4% as Asian and 19% as Black. When compared to the Borough's profile there is an underrepresentation of White and Asian offenders.

Location

Hotspot map of all Robbery Offences recorded in 2022-23

The largest concentration of Robbery offences reported in the last year took place in Bedford Town Centre.

There are smaller clusters of offences recorded in the Midland Road area of Greyfriars ward and the Tavistock Street area of Harpur ward.

These patterns are consistent with the previous year's assessments.



Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected from a list of 15 crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area.

- 14.1% of those that answered the question suggested that Robbery was a 'Big Problem' in their local area. This is an increase from the 2019 survey's figure of 12.5%.



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

The crime survey estimates for domestic abuse and sexual assault for the year ending March 2023 are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.

- According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2023, an estimated 5.1% of adults aged 16 to 59 experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year, which represented a slight decrease from the previous year¹⁵.
- The police recorded 889,441 offences (excluding fraud) flagged as Domestic Abuse related in the year ending March 2023. This represented little change compared with the year ending March 2022, but a 14% increase from the year ending March 2020¹.
- This figure included 32,721 sexual offences which were considered to be domestic abuse-related, which represented a 32% increase compared with the year ending March 2020¹.
- The percentage of prosecutions leading to a conviction reduced by 1.7%¹ for the first time since the year ending March 2015.
- The number of cases discussed at multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) in England and Wales¹⁶ increased by 3.5% to 118,104 in the year ending March 2023.
- Of the 2.4 million adults who experienced Domestic Abuse nationally in the year ending March 2022, 699,000 (29.1%) were men.¹⁷
- Safe Lives¹⁸ found that only 4.7% of victims being supported by local services are men and almost half of male victims (49%) do not tell anyone they are a victim of domestic abuse.

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.

¹⁵ [Crime in England and Wales: Year ending March 2023](#)

¹⁶ [MARAC National Dataset](#): Safe Lives

¹⁷ [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview](#): November 2022

¹⁸ [Statistic on Male Victims of Domestic abuse](#): Mankind June 2023

Local

In the period April 2022 – March 2023, Bedfordshire Police recorded 3993 Domestic Abuse crimes and incidents in Bedford Borough, a reduction of 4.1% on the previous year and an average of more than 76 incidents per week.

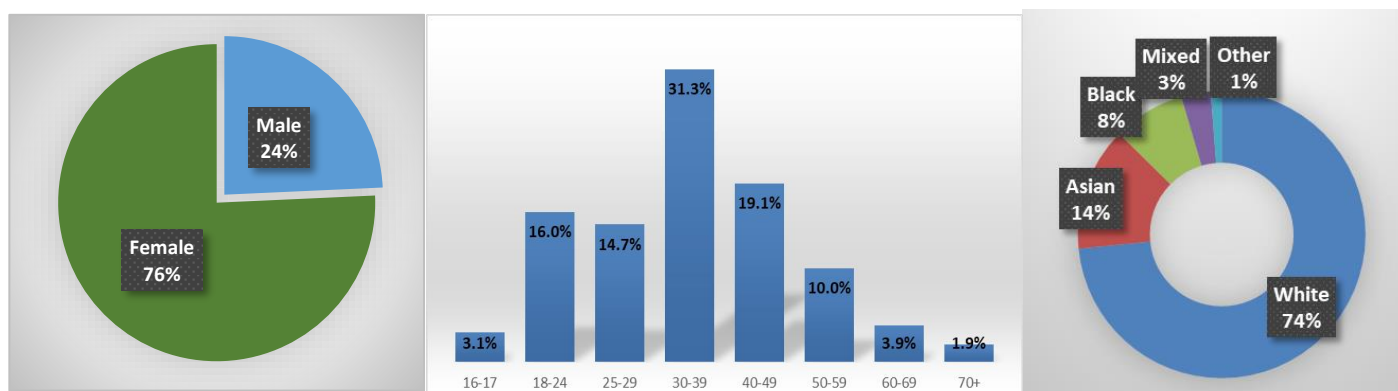
	2020-21	% Total	2021-22	% Total	2022-23	% Total	Change %
Domestic Abuse crimes	2231	54.5%	2418	58.1%	2284	57.2%	-5.5%
Non Crime incidents	1861	45.5%	1746	41.9%	1709	42.8%	-2.1%
All Domestic Abuse	4092	100	4164	100	3993	100	-4.1%
<i>High Risk</i>	251	6.1%	247	5.9%	239	6.0%	-3.2%
<i>Medium Risk</i>	2615	63.9%	2856	68.6%	2829	70.8%	-0.9%
<i>Standard Risk</i>	690	16.9%	630	15.1%	497	12.4%	-21.1%
<i>No Risk Assmt</i>	536	13.1%	431	10.4%	428	10.7%	-0.7%
Repeat Victims (crimes only)	960	43%	916	37.9%	960	42%	4.8%

The number of Domestic Abuse crimes reported to the police decreased by 5.5%, which represented 134 fewer offences than the previous year. Non-crime incidents also reduced by 2.1% for the same time period.

- 6% (239) 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 slight increase from the previous year's figure of 5.9%.
- 42% 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 an increase from the previous year's figure of 37.9%.

Victims

Key characteristics recorded for victims, where known, are summarised below. It should be noted that victim details are not present for non-crime incidents.



- The greatest proportion of victims (15.8%) were aged 31-35 years.
- 76 victims were aged between 16-17yrs at the time of the offence, this is an 11.7% increase from the previous year.

- 76.8% of all Domestic Abuse victims were either in a relationship, or had previously been in a relationship with the offender. 20.5% had a familial connection with the offender.

The greatest proportion of victims, where known, are White (74%) followed by Asian (14%), Black (8%), Mixed (3%) and Other (1%). The proportion of ethnic minority victims is 26%, a slight decrease from the previous year's figure of 27%.

High Risk Victims

Victims that score 14+ on the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist (RIC) are considered to be High Risk. Between April 2021 and March 2022, 6% (239) of all Domestic Abuse crimes and incidents reported to the police were deemed to be High Risk; this is a slight increase from the previous year's figure of 5.9%.

Where known, the demographic profile of High Risk victims and offenders differs to that of the overall group:

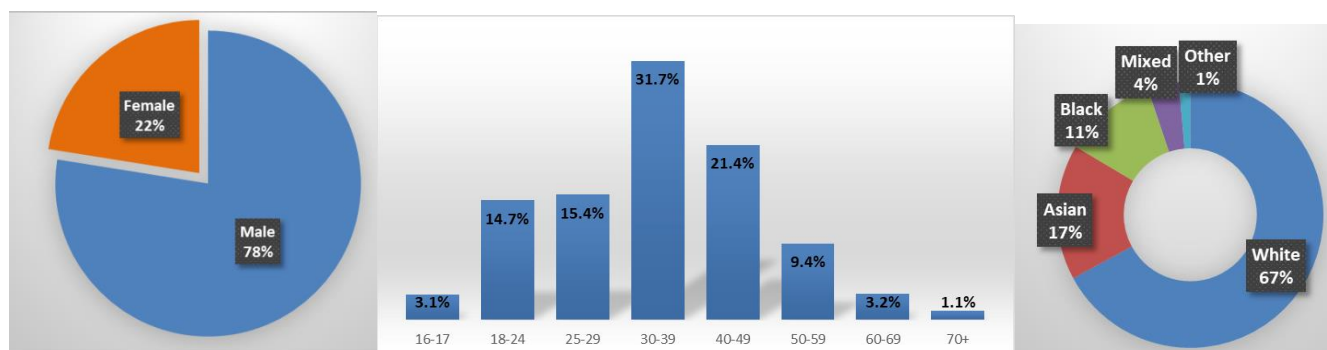
- High Risk victims are more likely to be female; 90.4% (an increase from 87.5% in the year ending March 2022) compared to 75.7% of all victims.
- 45.5% of High Risk Victims are described as being from an ethnic minority (an increase from 26.7% in the year ending March 2022); compared to 26% of all victims.
- 44% of High Risk Domestic Abuse victims are repeat victims, which is comparable to 42% in the whole victim group.
- 49.4% of High Risk Domestic Abuse victims had children in their familial set up, compared with 43.2% of all victims.
- 92% of High Risk Domestic Abuse victims were either in a relationship or had previously been in a relationship with the offender. 6.6% of these victims had a familial connection to the offender.

Male Victims

- 3.5% of male victims were recorded as High Risk, compared with 6% of all victims in the year ending March 2023.
- Where known, the ethnicity and age profiles for male victims of Domestic Abuse in the year ending March 2023 was broadly consistent with the overall victim profiles.
- Where known, male victims are more likely to have a familial connection with the offender than the overall victim profile indicates, with a rate of 33.3% for the year ending March 2023. However, this proportion reduces to 23.5% amongst High Risk male victims of Domestic Abuse.

Offenders

Key characteristics recorded for offenders, where known, are summarised below. It should be noted that offender details are not present for non-crime incidents.



- The greatest proportion of offenders (16.6%) were aged 36-40 years, where known. This is a change from the year ending March 2022, where the greatest proportion of offenders were aged 31-35 and also the year ending March 2021, which was the 26-30 age range.
- 67% of offenders were described as White, 17% as Asian and 11% as Black.

Location

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, 77.2% of all recorded Domestic Abuse was recorded in the urban wards of the Borough. This is an increase on the previous year's figure of 71.8%.

Top 5 Wards by Volume	2022-23	% Total	Top 5 Wards by Average Severity	2022-23
Cauldwell Ward	469	11.8%	De Parys Ward	434.7
Kingsbrook Ward	330	8.3%	Brickhill Ward	376.2
Harpur Ward	322	8.1%	Putnoe Ward	320.8
Greyfriars Ward	269	6.8%	Kempston North Ward	319.3
Goldington Ward	254	6.4%	Clapham & Oakley Ward	316.1
Other Wards	2318	58.5%	Other Wards	203.2
Total	3962	100%	All Domestic Abuse	230.0

The top five wards contributed 41.5% of reported Domestic Abuse in the Borough, all of these are urban wards.

When Domestic Abuse crimes are reviewed by Severity rather than volume, the top five wards are all different. The average severity score across all wards is 230.0, which has increased from 183.1 last year.

Whilst overall reporting of Domestic Abuse reduced by 4.1% in the year ending March 2023, the average severity of those incidents increased by 25.6%.

Recommendation: The Partnership needs to continue to monitor volume and severity of Domestic Abuse to understand the overall impact of offences.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Within Bedford Borough, MARAC meetings take place monthly to share information and agree safety plans to reduce the risk of harm to the highest risk victims of domestic abuse. Those victims that receive a score of 14+ on the DASH assessment are considered to be high risk. MARAC referrals can also be made based on professional judgement for those victims that score below 14 points.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, 296 cases were discussed at the Bedford MARAC, an increase of 28 (10.4%). The proportion of cases referred by the Police remained broadly consistent at 49%.

Bedford MARAC	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	National 2022-23
Cases Heard	327	329	268	296	118,140
Repeats	122(37.3%)	104(31.6%)	86(32.1%)	74(25%)	33%
Children Affected	549	498	407	474	148,012
Ethnic Minority victims	91(27.8%)	94(28.6%)	66(24.6%)	78(26.4%)	16%
Male victims	9(2.8%)	17(5.2%)	6(2.2%)	10(3.4%)	6.3%
Victims 16-17 years	3(0.9%)	10(3%)	9(3.4%)	8(2.7%)	1.3%
LGBT	4(1.2%)	9(2.7%)	11(4.1%)	7(2.4%)	1.5%
Victims with a Disability	36(11%)	32(9.7%)	32(11.9%)	25(8.4%)	9.1%

- The proportion of victims from ethnic minority groups has increased slightly in the last year to 26.4%, above that of the national rate of 16%.
- The proportion of victims recorded as a repeat within the MARAC has reduced to 25% in the most recent year and is below the national rate of 33%.
- The proportion of male victims has increased to 3.4% but is still below the national rate.

Under reporting within these groups is considered to be greater than the overall population and so any increases should be seen as positive.

Domestic Homicide Review (DHR)

‘A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom they were related or with whom they were, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship, or a member of the same household as themselves.’

The CSP has a statutory duty to consider undertaking a DHR¹⁹ where the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a relative, household member or someone they have been in an intimate relationship with.

A review panel, led by an independent chair and consisting of representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies, is commissioned to undertake the DHR. The panel reviews each agency’s involvement in the case and will consider information from the victim’s family, friends and work

¹⁹ [Multi-agency statutory guidance for the conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews](#) – Dec 2016

colleagues. The aim of the DHR is to consider the circumstances that led to the death and to identify where responses to the situation could be improved in the future and areas of best practice.

- 373 domestic homicides were recorded by the police in England and Wales in the period April 2018 and March 2021, a fifth (20%) of all homicides where the victim is aged 16+ in that period.²⁰
- 72.1% of victims were female, with the majority of suspects (77%) being a male partner or ex-partner.

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected from a list of crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area.

- 7.3% of those that answered the question suggested that Domestic Abuse was a 'Big Problem' in their local area. This is an increase from the 2019 survey's figure of 3.2%.



²⁰ [ONS Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales](#): year ending March 2022.

Sexual Offences

There are a range of crimes that can be considered as sexual offences, including non-consensual crimes such as rape or sexual assault, crimes against children including child sexual abuse or grooming, and crimes that exploit others for a sexual purpose, whether in person or online.

Crimes can occur between strangers, friends, acquaintances, current or ex-partners, or family members. The passage of time does not prevent the effective prosecution of sexual offences, and an increasing number of cases referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) by police feature allegations of a non-recent nature.

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.

In the year ending March 2023²¹, 195,315 sexual offences were recorded by the police, which is comparable to the previous year's figure of 193,559. When compared to the year ending March 2020 this represents an increase of 20%.

Of all sexual offences recorded in the year ending March 2023, 35% (68,949) were rape offences, an increase of 16% from the year ending March 2020, but a 1% reduction compared with the year ending March 2022.

The latest sexual offences figures may reflect several factors, including the impact of high-profile incidents, media coverage, changes to operational processes, and campaigns on people's willingness to report both recent and historical incidents. 21% of all sexual offences and 24% of adult rape offences in the year ending March 2023 took place over a year prior to the incident being recorded.

Local

In the year April 2022 – March 2023, 466 Sexual Offences were reported to the Police in Bedford Borough, a slight reduction of 8 offences (1.7%) on the previous year. This reduction mirrors that of national data.

Overall recorded levels of Sexual Offences have increase by 14.5% (+59 crimes) in the three years between April 2020 and March 2023. Whilst levels have fluctuated in that time, this again follows the pattern in national data for that period.

Sexual Offences	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Change	3yr Change
Rape	142	217	147	132	153	165	7.8%	21.2%
Sexual Assault	211	305	260	342	321	301	-6.2%	15.8%
Total	353	522	407	474	474	466	-1.7%	14.5%

²¹ [Crime in England & Wales: year ending March 2023](#)

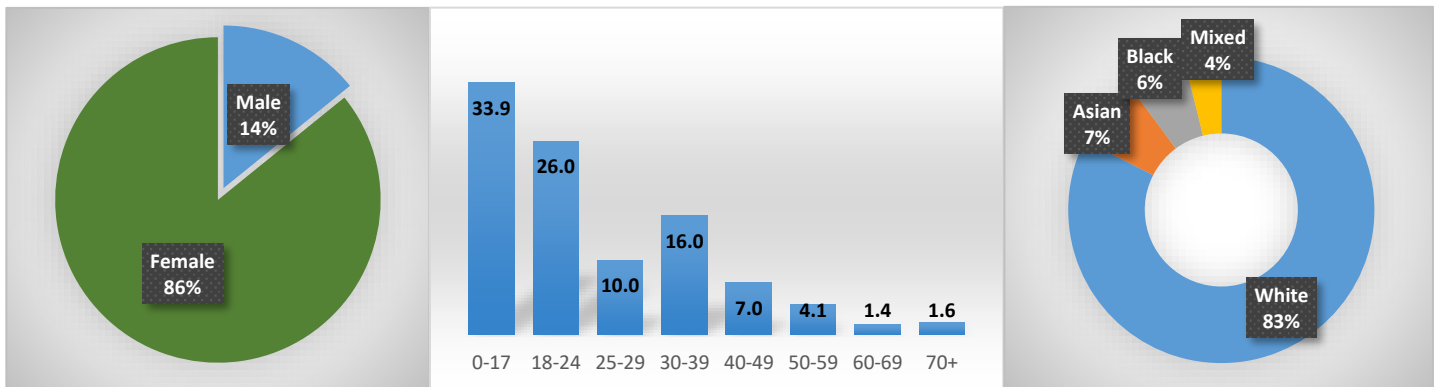
Reporting of Non recent Offences

In the period between April 2022 and March 2023, 15.5% of all recorded offences were non-recent (more than 1 year prior to being reported), this is a slight reduction from the previous year's figure (15.8%).

Recording Gap	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	% Total
Current (0-2 days)	193	203	181	224	224	48.1
Recent (2 - 365 days)	176	137	103	175	170	36.5
Non-Recent (>1 yr.)	153	67	98	75	72	15.5
Total	522	407	382	474	466	100
% Non-Recent	29.3%	16.5%	25.7%	15.8%	15.5%	

Victims

Key characteristics recorded for victims are summarised below; to give a fair reflection of the victim, non-recent cases (reported to the police more than one year after the offence) have been removed.



- 86% of victims were female; this is an increase from the previous year (82%). This figure increases for rape offences where 93.7% of victims are female.
- The greatest proportions of victims (23%) are aged between 11-15 years, this is a change from the last year's data where the greatest proportions were aged 16-20 years.
- A third of victims (33.9%) who reported an offence in the last year were under 18 years old.

Where known, 83% of victims are White, 7% are Asian, and 6% are Black. When compared to the Borough ethnic profile there is an over representation of White victims.

- Where recorded, only 10.4% (17 victims) described the offender as a stranger, this suggests that up to 89.6% may have known the offender in some way prior to the offence.
- Where the offender was known to the victim, the greatest proportions described their relationship as a 'partner' or 'ex-partner' (43.9%), or a 'friend' or 'acquaintance' (25%).
- 9.1% of offences record the relationship between victim and offender as familial (a relative).

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

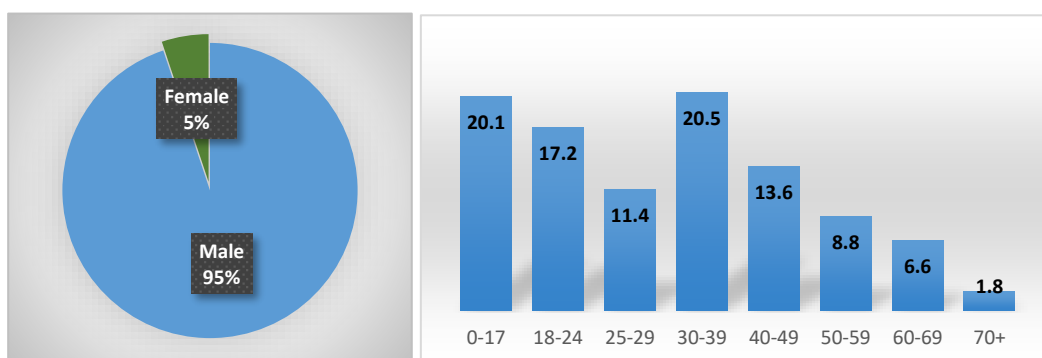
Young Victims

Data in this section relates only to those offences where the victim's age is under 18 years and were reported within 1 year of the offence taking place (non-recent offences have been removed).

- 33.9% of victims (125) were aged under 18 years at the time of the offence; this is a reduction on the previous year's figure of 40.5%.
- 46 offences describe both the victim and offender as being aged under 18 at the time of the offence, this is consistent with the previous year.
- Only 2 young victims described the offender as a stranger suggesting 95.9% may have known the offender before the offence took place, this compares to 89.6% in the all victims data.
- Where the offender was known to the victim the greatest proportion (34.7%) described their relationship as a 'friend' or 'acquaintance', this is higher than in the all victims group (25%).
- A greater proportion (22.4%) of young victims (under 18 years) recorded a familial relationship (a relative) with the offender, compared to 9.1% in the all victims data.

Offenders

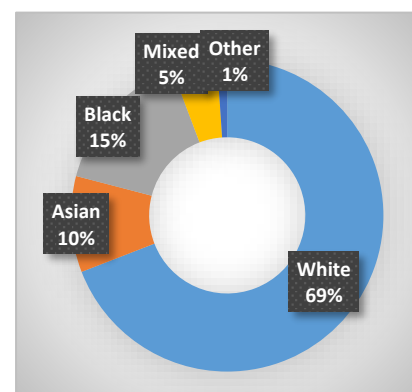
Where known, key characteristics recorded for offenders are summarised below; to give a fair reflection of the victim, non-recent cases have been removed.



- 95% of offenders were male, this compares to 94.2% in the previous year.
- The greatest proportion of offenders (12.8%) were aged 16-20 years, this is a change from the previous year's data where the greatest number of offenders were aged 11-15 years.
- 20.1% of offenders were under 18 years at the time of the offence and more than half of these offenders (39) were under the legal age of consent (16 years old) 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 69.1% of offenders are described as White, this is a reduction from the previous year's figure of 62.4%.
- The proportions of Asian offenders were 10% and Black offenders were 15%. These figures are consistent with the previous year. Compared to the Borough's ethnic profile, there is an under representation of White offenders.



Location

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, 77.3% of all recorded Sexual Offences were recorded in the urban wards of the Borough.

The top five wards, which are all urban, contribute 46.9% of all reported Sexual Offences in the Borough.

When Sexual Offences are reviewed by severity rather than volume the top five Wards are quite different, with just one ward appearing on both lists: Cauldwell Ward.

Top 5 Wards by Volume	2022-23	% Total
Harpur Ward	53	13.5
De Parys Ward	36	9.2
Greyfriars Ward	34	8.7
Cauldwell Ward	32	8.2
Castle & Newnham Ward	29	7.4
Other Wards	208	53.1
Total	392	100

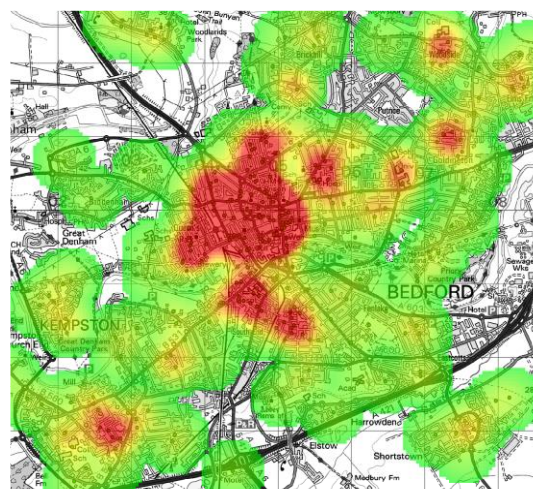
Top 5 Wards by Ave Severity	2022-23
Goldington Ward	2280.7
Biddenham Ward	2061.4
Cauldwell Ward	2053.1
Wootton & Kempston Rural Ward	1907.9
Kempston North Ward	1723.4
Other Wards	1272.7
All Sexual Offences	1468.3

Hotspot map of all SSO offences reported in 2022-23 (with non-recent offences removed)

Sexual Offences are recorded in all areas of the Borough, with a noticeable concentration in the urban wards focused on Bedford Town Centre.

When looked at in more detail, there is visible hotspot centred on Greyfriars ward and Harpur ward. This extends out into neighbouring areas of Castle & Newnham, Cauldwell, Queens Park and De Parys.

These areas are consistent with previous assessments.



Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected from a list of 15 crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area.

- 7.9% of those that answered the question suggested that Sexual Offences were a 'Big Problem' in their local area, this is an increase from the 2019 surveys figure of just 2%.



Priority Two – Protecting Vulnerable People

This priority focuses on the identification and protection of the most vulnerable members of our communities, with an aim of reducing the risks of exploitation. This area applies to young persons and adults, recognising the link between both groups.

The hidden nature of these offences along with the overlapping issues mean that officially recorded data at a national and local level is limited.

Key areas

- Criminal & Sexual Exploitation
- County Lines
- Cuckooing

Links to

- Modern Slavery
- Radicalisation

Exploitation of Children & Young People

Child exploitation may simply be defined as *the act of using a child for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage*. It often results in cruel or harmful treatment of the child, as the activities the child may be forced to take part in can cause emotional, physical, and social problems. Unfortunately, there remains a market and interest in society for using children of all ages for cheap labour, sexual purposes, child abuse images and other criminal purposes.

There are two broad types of child exploitation (CE):

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), refers to when *an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity:*

- *In exchange for something the victim (child) needs or wants.*
- *For the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator.*
- *Through violence or the threat of violence.*

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), refers to when *people use children to create child abuse images, or for personal sexual gratification.*

Tackling Child Exploitation is a complex task. There are similarities between CCE and CSE and victims of child exploitation may, at any one time, be subject to both. Therefore, it is vital that frontline practitioners recognise and, by working together, deploy tactics to disrupt multiple types of exploitation when they occur.

Child Sexual Exploitation

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 data²² 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.
- As of March 2019, 2,230 children in England were the subject of a child protection plan (CPP) for experience or risk of sexual abuse.

According to the Commission on Young Lives²³ – Hidden in Plain Sight report for the year ending March 2022, a number of key factors were identified by local authority social workers in England as part of their end of assessment process.

- 16,000 cases where child sexual exploitation was a factor.
- 11,600 cases where a gang was identified as a factor.
- 10,140 cases where child criminal exploitation was a factor.

Those involved in gang activity and criminal exploitation are disproportionately young, vulnerable, and unknown to services. It has been estimated that there could be as many as 200,000 children in England aged 11 to 17 who are vulnerable to serious violence due to levels of crime and/or income deprivation in their community.

²² [Statistics briefing child sexual abuse – Mar 2020](#)

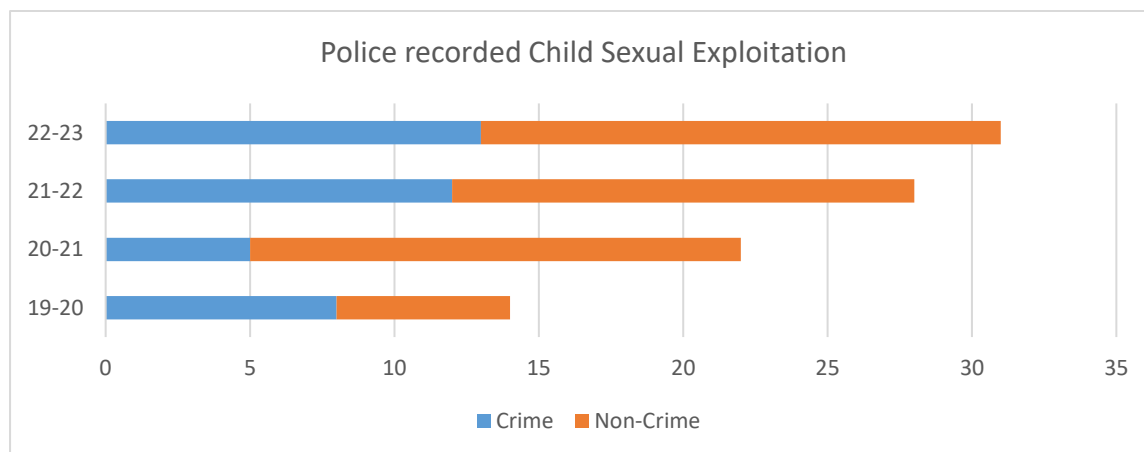
²³ [Hidden in Plain Sight – Commission on Young Lives – Nov 2022](#)

Local

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 2022 to March 2023, a third (33.9%) of victims of all Sexual Offences recorded in the Borough were aged under 18 at the time of the offence.
- In the same year 20.8% of rape offences were aged under 16 years.
- In the last year 13 crimes were reported to Bedfordshire Police with a confirmed CSE marker added, an increase from 12 in the previous year.
- In the same year 18 non-crimes were also reported with a confirmed CSE marker added, an increase from the previous year's figure of 16.

Numbers of CSE crimes and non-crimes recorded by the police are small and full disclosures may take many months. Offences can occur 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.



County Lines

The UK government²⁴ defines County Lines as:

A term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'.

They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

County Lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated and frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by the police.

County Lines incorporates multiple forms of exploitation including coercion, trafficking, child sexual exploitation and gun and knife crime. Young people involved in County Lines are victims of criminal exploitation and adult gang members can be prosecuted under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

National

According to National Crime Agency (NCA) data from 2019, there are 1,000 different County Lines operating in the UK, the majority originating from London, the West Midlands, and Merseyside. Each individual line makes profits of over £800,000 a year.

Potential victims of modern slavery are referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

- 16,938 potential victims were submitted to the National Referral Mechanism in 2022²⁵, representing a 33% increase from the previous year (12,607) and the highest since the NRM began in 2009.
- 7,019 (41%) referrals were for potential victims who claimed exploitation as children; this is a 28.4% increase from the previous year.
- 80% (5,607) of child potential victims were male and 20% (1,978) were female.

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected from a list of 15 crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area.

- 6.6% of those that answered the question suggested that Criminal Exploitation was a 'Big Problem' in their local area.
- 51.5% of respondents stated that they 'Didn't Know' or had 'No Opinion' about levels of Criminal Exploitation in their area. This suggests a lack of awareness for this theme.



²⁴ [County Lines exploitation: Applying All Our Health](#) – Feb 2021

²⁵ [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism Statistics End of Year 2022](#)

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

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 abused 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 April 2022 to March 2023 the safeguarding team at the Borough recorded a 2% reduction in referrals using the Adult Protection Referral Form. When compared to the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020 the number of referrals into the service has increased by 4%.

Some vulnerabilities and risks identified in the referral process have links to areas of concern within the partnership's priority areas.

Referral Vulnerability	19/20 % Total	20/21 % Total	21/22 % Total	22/23 % Total	% Change	3yr % Change
Mental Health	7.3	6.4	8.1	5.9	-28.7	-15.7
Substance Misuse	-	-	-	4.6	-	-
Referral Risk	19/20 % Total	20/21 % Total	21/22 % Total	22/23 % Total	% Change	3yr % Change
Financial Abuse	12.1	10.0	8.7	8.5	-4.4	-27.2
Domestic Abuse	10.0	9.0	8.4	9.3	8.0	-3.3
Sexual Abuse	2.8	3.4	3.5	3.5	-2.9	30.7
Modern Day Slavery	-	-	-	1.1	-	-
Possible Cuckooing	1.9	1.9	1.6	3.0	85.5	62.0

In the last three years (April 2020 to March 2023) two areas of risk have seen significant increases: sexual abuse risks increased by 30.7% and cuckooing risks by 62%.

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 relatively small, accounting for just 3% of all referrals in the last year, the harm to the individual and the surrounding community can be significant.

- The majority of adults (78.3%) identified as at risk of cuckooing were aged between 18 and 64 years; 8.7% were aged 65 to 74 years and 13% were aged over 75 years.
- Seven individuals were referred twice in the year, with three persons being referred three or more times in the year.
- More than a third (37.4%) of referrals gave some details of potential exploiters. Four potential exploiters are mentioned on two or more occasions in the last year.

The main source of referrals relating to Cuckooing in the last year came from the police (37.4%). 12.2% came from housing associations and a further 11.3% from community mental health services. The remaining referrals were split across other areas of the partnership.

Safeguarding Adults Board

In April 2009 the new unitary councils for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire agreed to work together in a joint Safeguarding Adults Board with a wide range of agencies, to develop, implement and monitor work to safeguard people with care and support needs from abuse, maltreatment, and neglect. In September 2017 Luton Borough Council also signed up to the policies and agreed to work in collaboration with Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. From April 2015, the Care Act 2014 puts the Safeguarding Adults Board²⁶ on a statutory footing.

The Bedfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) has three core duties:

- To publish a strategic plan for each financial year that sets how it will meet its main objective and what the members will do to achieve this.
- To publish an annual report detailing what the SAB has done during the year to achieve its main objective and implement its strategic plan.
- To conduct any Safeguarding Adults Review in accordance with Section 44 of the Act.

There is strong representation of safeguarding professionals at CSP meetings to ensure effective joint working where safeguarding concerns overlap with the CSP priorities.

Recommendation: The Partnership should continue to explore opportunities to offer exploitation and information sharing training to safeguarding professionals

²⁶ [The Multi Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy, Practice and Procedures](#)

Multi-Agency Information Sharing

The effective and timely sharing of information, appropriately and securely, between agencies is key to protecting vulnerable people and identifying those that cause them harm.

As a partnership there has been an ongoing focus on encouraging frontline professionals to share concerns and contribute to wider problem solving.

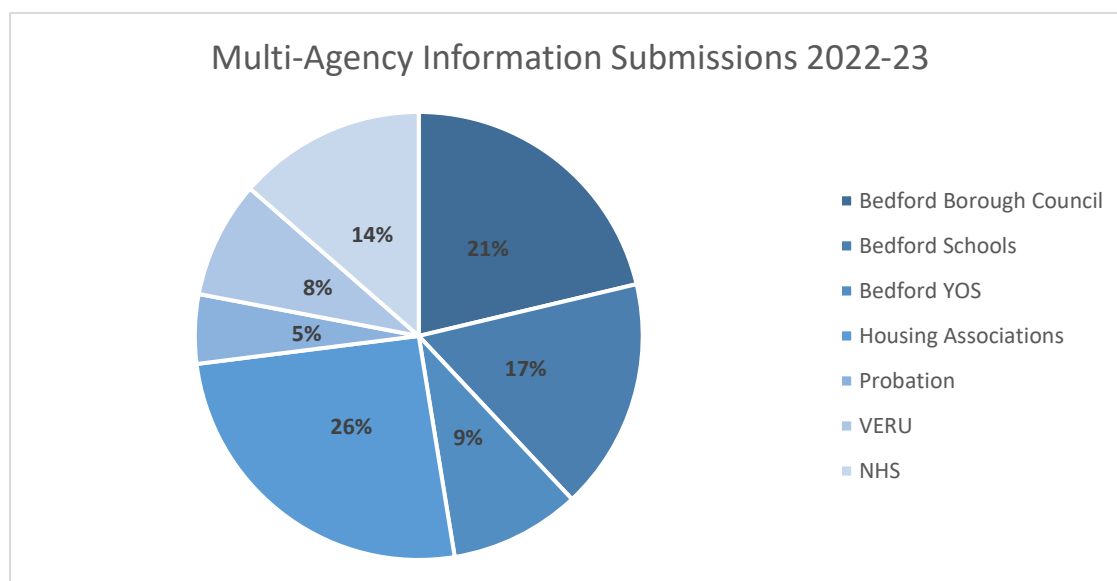
In Bedfordshire the development of a 'Multi-Agency Information Form' has created a simple and accessible mechanism to facilitate that work.

Over the last three years the partnership has worked with the other Bedfordshire CSPs to raise awareness of the form and give training to frontline professionals.

All partners are encouraged to submit concerns that may relate to CSE, alongside other areas of risk and vulnerability, such as the exploitation of vulnerable adults and persons that may be involved in the supply of drugs.

Overall, in the year ending March 2023 the number of intelligence submissions from non-police agencies increased by 3.6% to 700, with 332 submissions from Bedford-specific agencies.

A further 368 submissions came from county-wide partners, Housing Associations, the Probation Service, the NHS and the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU); which cannot be broken down into local areas.



- Submissions from Bedford Schools increased by 15.8% in the last year.
- Submissions from the NHS (across Bedfordshire) increased by 79.2% in the last year.
- Submissions from Probation (across Bedfordshire) increased by 29.6% in the last year.

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

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 trafficked 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 hidden nature of modern slavery makes producing an accurate measure of prevalence difficult.

In 2014 the Home Office²⁷ produced an estimate of the scale of modern slavery in the UK of between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims.

An alternative method has been used by the Walk Free Foundation in 2018, which estimated the number of victims of modern slavery in the UK at 136,000

In the year to March 2021²⁸, there were 8,730 modern slavery crimes recorded by the police, a 5% increase from 8,354 in the previous year.

In the same year, there has been a 20% increase in case referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), including cases referred for early investigation advice, which have resulted in charge.

National Referral Mechanism

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.

²⁷ [Modern Slavery in the UK: March 2020](#)

²⁸ [2021 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery](#)

The NRM was introduced in 2009 to meet the UK's obligations under the Council of Europe 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).

16,938 potential victims were submitted to the National Referral Mechanism in 2022²⁹, representing a 33% increase from the previous year (12,607) and the highest since the NRM began in 2009.

- 49% of potential victims (8,260) claimed that the exploitation occurred only in the UK compared to 58% in the previous year, whilst 41% (6,922) claimed the exploitation only took place overseas compared to 30% in the previous year.
- Over half (52%) were for individuals who claimed to be exploited as adults, whilst 41% were for individuals who claimed they were exploited as children. Age was unknown for 6%.
- For adult victims, 78% (6,874) were male and 22% (1,978) were female. For child victims, 80% (5,607) were male and 20% (1,401) were female.
- The most common type of exploitation for adults was labour exploitation (30%).
- The most common type of exploitation for children was criminal exploitation (43%).
- Potential victims from Albania, the UK and Eritrea were the most commonly reported nationalities to the NRM.

Throughout 2020, a rapid increase in the identification of 'county lines' cases partially drove the increase in NRM referrals for children within the criminal exploitation category.

- 13% of referrals in 2022 (2,281) were flagged as County Lines. The majority (1,710) were for male children.

National Modern Slavery Helpline

The National Helpline operated by Unseen³⁰, based in Bedfordshire, commenced operations in October 2016. It works closely with a range of 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.

2022 has been the busiest year on record for the helpline,³¹ receiving 9,779 calls and contacts, which is an increase of 15.8% from the previous year.

- The helpline received 7,315 calls, an increase of 16%, with the highest numbers of calls in the summer months which may be linked to seasonal workers.
- Webforms into the service increased by 8% to 2,302.

As a result, 6,516 potential victims were identified, a significant increase of 116% from the previous year. 2,588 modern slavery cases were raised which represents an increase of 70%, and 2,207 referrals were sent to law enforcement agencies, an increase of 77%.

The greatest number of cases recorded in England (734) in the 12 months related to Labour Exploitation; this group saw an increase of 153% compared to the previous year.

- 319 cases recorded in England relate to Sexual Exploitation, an increase of 60%.
- 146 cases recorded in England relate to Criminal Exploitation, an increase of 25%.
- 71 cases recorded in England relate to Domestic Exploitation, an increase of 54%.

²⁹ [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism Statistics End of Year 2022](#)

³⁰ [Unseen website](#)

³¹ [Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline – Annual Assessment 2022](#) - Unseen

Preventing Radicalisation

The CONTEST Strategy defines radicalisation as:

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

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

Prevent³² is part of the UK's Counter Terrorism Strategy, known as CONTEST. The aim of Prevent is to stop individuals from getting involved in or supporting terrorism or extremist activity. The programme also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in Terrorism.

The Prevent Duty requires specified authorities such as education, health, local authorities, police and criminal justice agencies to help prevent the risk of individuals becoming involved in terrorism. It sits alongside long-established safeguarding duties of professionals to protect people from a range of harms.

Tailored support of any individual identified as being vulnerable 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 March 2022³³, there were 6,406 referrals to Prevent. This is an increase of 30% on the previous year ending March 2021 (4,915). The increase is likely to have been driven by the associated impacts of lifting public health restrictions that were in place during COVID-19. When compared to the pre-pandemic year, this year's figure represents a 1.9% increase.

The Education sector made the highest number of referrals (2,305; 36%), followed by the Police (1,808; 28%).

- The greatest proportion of referrals (30%) related to those aged 15 to 20 years.
- 89% of those referred were male.
- The number of referrals discussed at a Channel Panel³⁴ (1,486) and adopted as a Channel case (804) increased when compared to the previous year.

The category 'Vulnerability present but no clear ideology or Counter Terrorism risk' accounted for the largest proportion of referrals (2,127; 33%) in the year ending March 2022.

- 20% of Channel cases related to a concern of right-wing extremism.
- 16% of Channel cases were for referrals relating to Islamist extremism.

³² [Prevent duty guidance: for specified authorities in England and Wales](#)

³³ [Individuals referred to and supported through the PREVENT programme 2021/22](#) – Home Office

³⁴ [Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel guidance – Feb 21](#) Home Office

Bedfordshire VERU

The Bedfordshire Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit³⁵ (VERU) was established in 2019, through government funding as one of 22 specialist units across the UK.



The unit offers a network of agencies and groups who aim to tackle the root causes of the issues that affect young people, while working with statutory partners to prevent young and vulnerable people from being drawn into criminality, violence and exploitation.

Bedfordshire Against Violence and Exploitation

Bedfordshire Against Violence and Exploitation (BAVEX)³⁶ is the countywide campaign to raise awareness and reporting on all forms of exploitation, especially those linked to organised crime. This includes things like county lines, modern slavery, cuckooing, human trafficking and child sexual exploitation.



The website has been developed in collaboration with partner agencies and local groups to provide a wide range of materials which raise awareness of the issues in our communities. The aim is to encourage people to come forward with information and for potential victims to seek help.

Targeted campaigns are delivered through the Bedfordshire Exploitation Communications Group and feeds into a series of partnership groups and strategies across the County.

³⁵ [Bedfordshire VERU website](#)

³⁶ [Bedfordshire Against Violence and Exploitation website](#)

Priority Three – Developing Safer Neighbourhoods

Listening and responding to local communities is vital. This priority focuses on the issues that impact directly on the daily life of those that live, work and visit the Borough.

The areas of focus reflect both recorded data and the contributions to the Partnership's consultation, conducted in the summer of 2022.

Key areas

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Identifying and Disrupting Serious Organised Crime

Links to

- Hate Crime
- Neighbourhood Crime

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 himself.*

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'** refers to incidents that deliberately target an individual or group.
- **'Nuisance'** refers those incidents affecting the community, interfering with public interests.
- **'Environmental'** deals with the interface between people and places, including environmental damage and the misuse of public space.

National

The telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending March 2023³⁷ suggests that 34% of people had experienced or witnessed some type of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). This was a 6% reduction when compared to the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020.

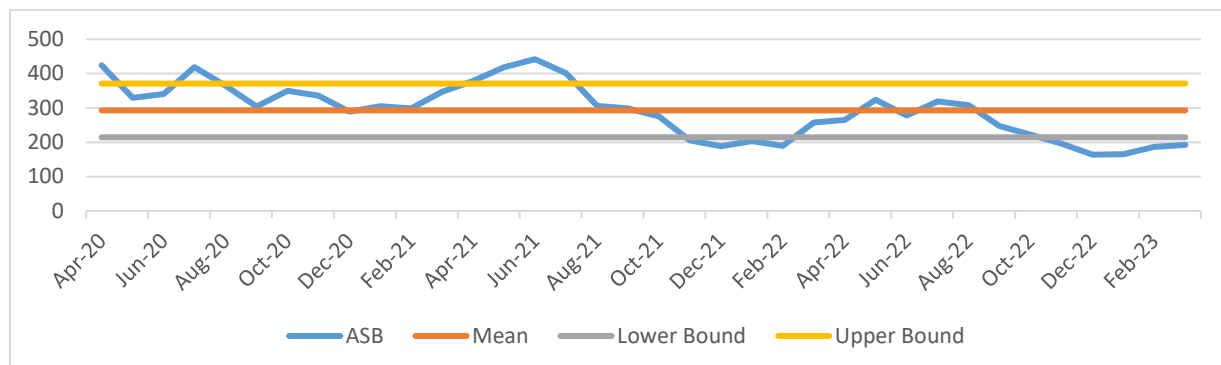
The police recorded 1 million incidents of ASB in the year ending March 2023, a reduction of 20% when compared to the previous year and a 25% reduction compared to the year ending March 2020.

When asked about perceptions of ASB in their local area, 22% of those that took part in the CSEW suggested that it was a 'fairly' or 'very big' problem. 8% of people who completed the survey suggested that their local area had high levels of ASB.

³⁷ [Crime Survey for England and Wales – year ending March 2023](#)

Local

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, Bedfordshire Police recorded 2,867 incidents of ASB. This compares to 3,567 incidents in the previous year, a reduction of 19.6% (-700 incidents). When compared to the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020, reported ASB has reduced by 17.9%.



ASB - Final Class	2019-20	% Total	2020-21	% Total	2021-22	% Total	2022-23	% Total	Change
Nuisance	3081	88.3	3230	78.4	3062	85.8	2432	84.8	-630
Personal	138	4.0	260	6.3	234	6.6	147	5.1	-87
Environmental	272	7.8	632	15.3	271	7.6	288	10.0	17
Total	3491	100	4122	100	3567	100	2867	100	-700

Whilst levels of reporting of ASB have been lower in the most recent year, there is a recognisable seasonal pattern over the three-year period, with higher levels in the summer months (April to August) and lower levels in the winter. This pattern is consistent with previous assessments.

- 84.8% of all incidents reported in the year are attributed to Nuisance ASB; this is slightly below that of the previous year and 3.5% below the year ending March 2020.
- The proportions of Personal ASB have reduced to 5.1%, with no high-risk incidents recorded.
- Environmental ASB accounted for 10% of incidents, an increase of 2.4%.

Within the three broad categories, ASB is subdivided into classifications that give details about the nature of the event. One classification is allocated to each incident, but it must be accepted that on occasions more than one issue may be present. The call handler allocates the incident to the most relevant classification.

The table below shows the top five classifications in the last 12 months. All but one show reductions in the last year, except for 'Nuisance Neighbour' which increased by 8.1%.

Initial Class	2019-20	Rank	2020-21	Rank	2021-22	Rank	2022-23	Rank	3yr Change
Rowdy/Inconsiderate	1150	1	1225	1	1252	1	1068	1	-7.1%
Vehicle Nuisance	573	2	548	2	493	2	403	2	-29.7%
Nuisance Neighbour	209	6	282	4	270	3	226	3	8.1%
Abandoned Vehicles	275	3	183	8	201	5	179	4	-34.9%
Begging/Vagrancy	205	7	264	5	233	4	149	5	-27.3%
Suspicious Activity	229	5	204	6	193	6	149	5	-34.9%

Temporal

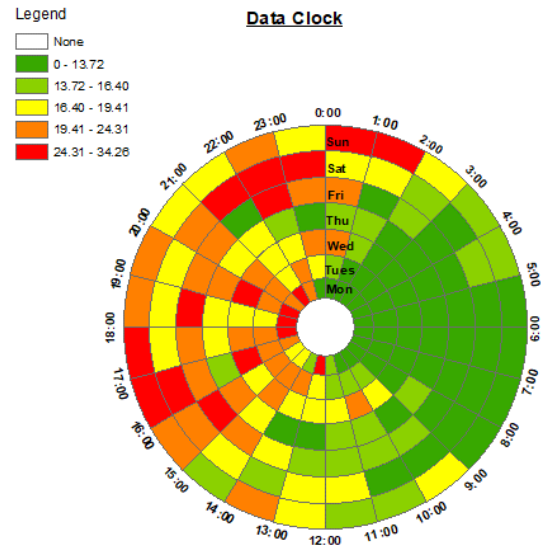
There is a generally accepted seasonal pattern to levels of anti-social behaviour, with higher levels of reporting in the warmer and lighter summer months.

Whilst ASB takes place throughout the week, some peaks in reporting can be identified.

Higher levels of reporting take place between 15:00 and 20:00 on all days of the week.

At the weekends this peak extends through the night to the early hours of the following day.

This pattern is consistent with previous assessments.



Location

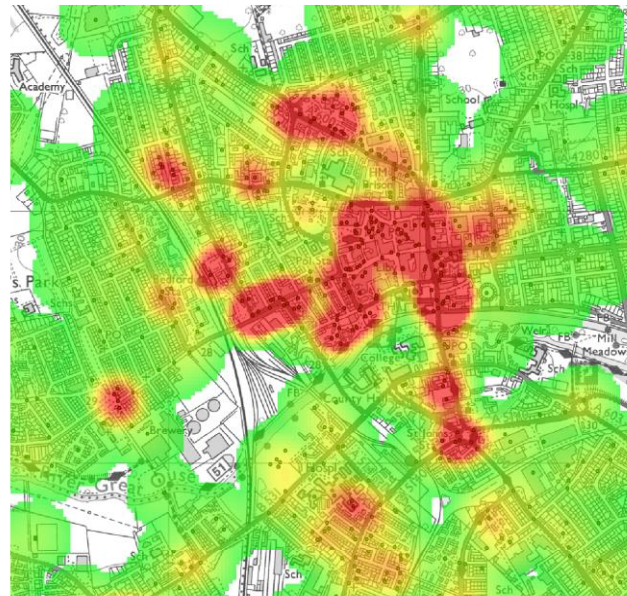
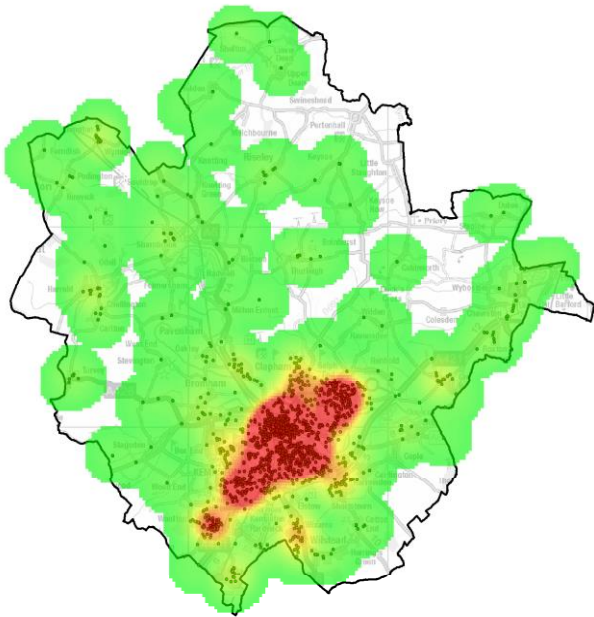
74.6%, (2139) of all Anti-Social Behaviour incidents reported in the last 12 months took place in the urban wards of the Borough; this is a reduction on the previous year's figure of 77%.

25.4% (728) of incidents in the year took place in rural wards. The proportion of ASB reported in rural wards has increased by 3.5% since March 2020.

The greatest proportion (10.1%) took place in Greyfriars ward, which includes the pedestrianised area of Bedford Town Centre and the Midland Road area. This pattern is broadly consistent with previous year's assessment.

Top 5 Wards by numbers	Total	% Total
Greyfriars ward	290	10.1
Kingsbrook ward	255	8.9
Cauldwell ward	240	8.4
Harpur ward	240	8.4
Castle & Newnham ward	229	8.0
Other Wards	1613	56.3
Total	2867	100

Hotspot map of all ASB Incidents reported in 2022-23



There is a significant hotspot over the main Town Centre, extending west along Midland Road in the Greyfriars ward and east into Castle & Newnham ward. There is a second hotspot in the Tavistock Street area of Harpur ward.

Smaller clusters can be seen in most of the urban wards. There is also a pattern of higher reporting levels in some of the larger villages on the periphery of the urban wards in Wootton, Wixams, Shortstown and Clapham.

Bedford Borough managed 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 April 2022 to March 2023, the Community Safety Team at Bedford Borough Council opened 232 new cases relating to ASB issues, a reduction of 18.8% (54 cases).

Five categories of complaint account for the majority of cases (64.7%) opened in the last year.

ASB Category	APP Cases	% Total
Rowdy/Noisy behaviour	50	21.6
Drug Dealing/Use/Production	33	14.2
Exploitation Concerns	24	10.3
Nuisance Neighbour/Dispute	22	9.5
Threatening Behaviour	21	9.1
Other ASB	82	35.3
Total	232	100

- 14.2% of cases relate to issues of Drug Use or Dealing in residential areas.
- 10.3% of cases relate to concerns around the exploitation of a vulnerable person.

Recommendation: The Partnership needs to continue to explore the link between community based ASB and evidence of exploitation and drug issues.

Community Trigger – ASB Case Review

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 sets out the requirement for relevant bodies in a local council area to make arrangements for, and to carry out, ASB case reviews which are also known by the name 'Community Trigger'³⁸. The victim may be an individual, or community group or business. The community trigger is a mechanism for victims of persistent anti-social behaviour to request that relevant body undertake a case review.

Statutory partners are required to attend all community trigger meetings:

- Bedford Borough Council – Community Safety and Safeguarding Leads
- Bedfordshire Police – Community Policing Leads
- Social Housing
- Health Professionals

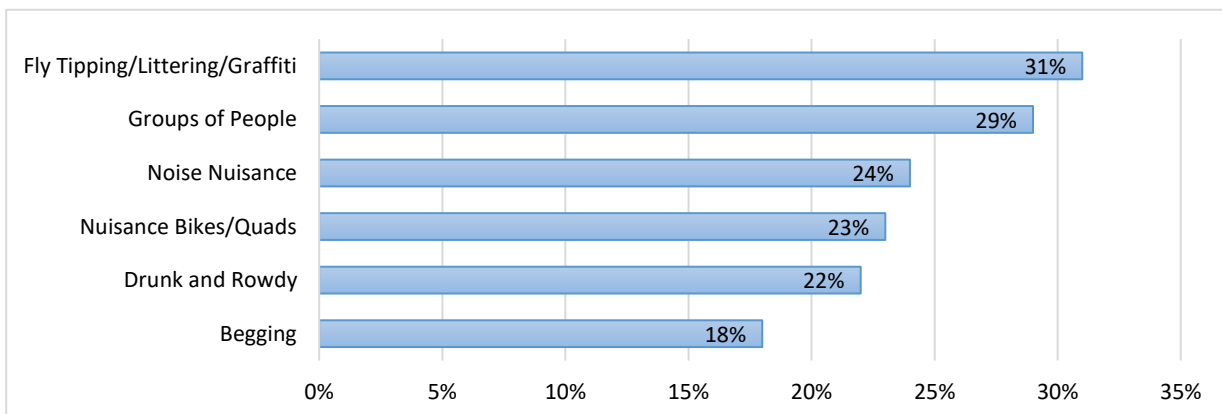
There has been a noticeable increase in the number of community triggers in Bedford Borough in recent years. During the period April 2018 to March 2021, no requests for community triggers were received; this has increased to 11 requests in the period April 2021 to March 2023. Issues being reviewed at trigger meetings are increasingly complex cases and involve a variety of issues including drug use/dealing and noise. A significant number of the cases are also neighbour disputes.

The Bedford Borough Community Safety Team have been working with Bedfordshire Police and the other Bedfordshire local authority areas to develop a Pan-Bedfordshire process for community triggers which is due to be rolled out in the autumn of 2023. This will ensure a standardised procedure for residents across Bedfordshire who request these kinds of reviews.

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected the types of anti-social behaviour they felt were a 'Big Problem' in their area.



³⁸ [Anti-social behaviour case review](#) - Guidance

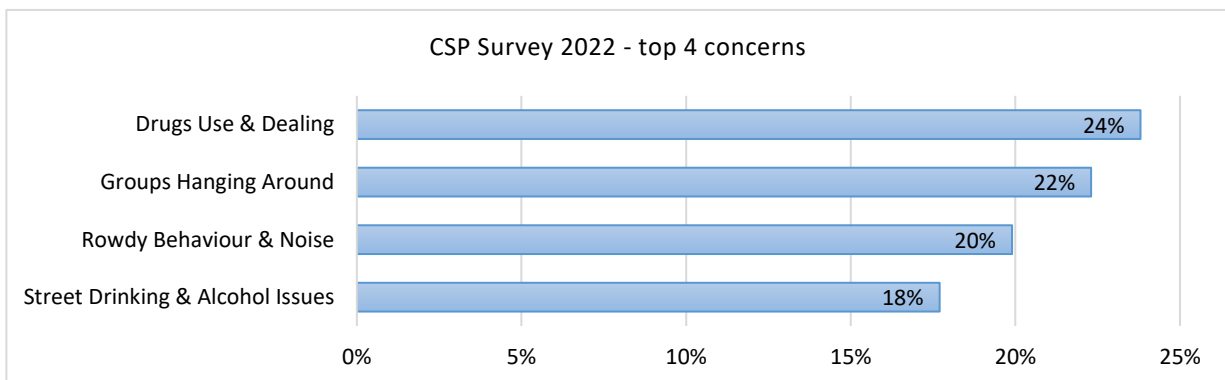
When asked ‘What makes your local area an unsafe place?’ high levels of concern were raised about the contribution that drugs, groups of people and alcohol have on their perception of safety. When asked about levels of ASB in their local area in over the last 12 months:

- 37% (130 respondents) stated that levels had increased.
- 8% (27 respondents) said that levels had reduced.
- The greatest proportion (55%) felt that levels had stayed the same.

Alcohol-related ASB & Street Drinking

Markers can be attached to an ASB incident which give details of contributing factors. One such marker indicates the consumption of alcohol as being significant to the incident.

- In the period April 2022 – March 2023, 160 incidents of alcohol-related ASB were recorded; this represents a reduction of 43.5% (123 incidents) when compared to the previous year.



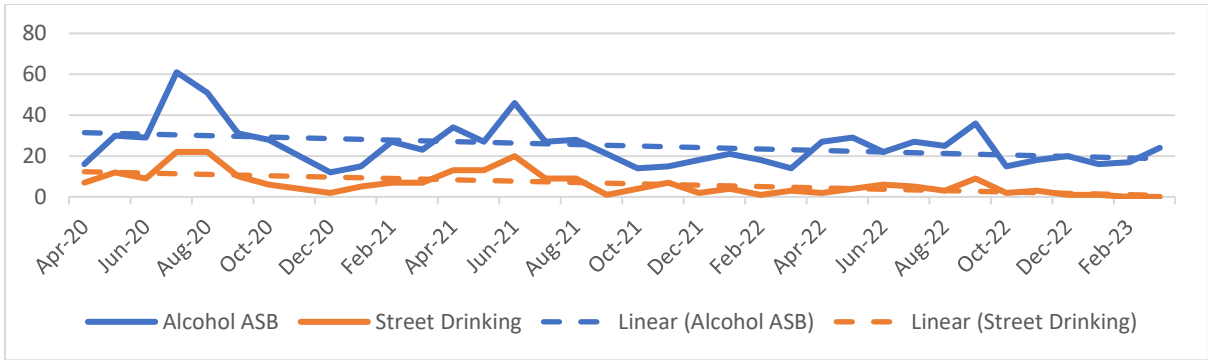
Street drinking is a specific classification of ASB that would appear within the broader definition of alcohol-related incidents.

A street drinker is 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 their own behaviour’.

The effects of street drinking can be costly in different ways. It causes distress to members of the public, impacts on local businesses and can be a significant demand on public services. Additionally, reporters regularly refer to being intimidated by the drinker’s behaviour and that individuals are noisy and abusive.

- In the period April 2022 – March 2023, 36 incidents of street drinking were reported to the police. This is a reduction of 58.1% (50 incidents) when compared to the previous year.
- Street drinking accounted for just 1.3% of all recorded ASB in the Borough during the last year; this was the 13th highest category of ASB recorded in the year.

Reporting in both alcohol-related ASB and street drinking has reduced over the last three years, however there are still significant increases in issues during the summer months.



Temporal

Due to the small number of street drinking incidents, analysis has been completed for a three year period (April 20 – March 23)

There is a generally accepted seasonal pattern to levels of street drinking, with higher levels of reporting in the warmer and lighter summer months.

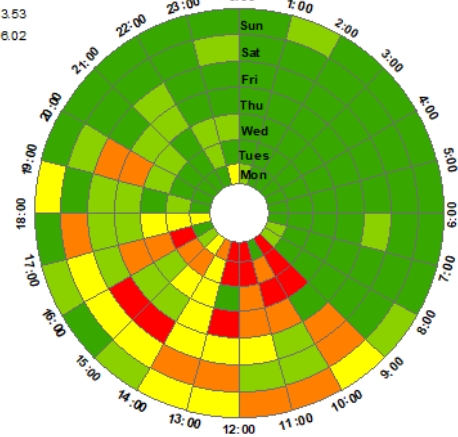
Peak reporting takes place throughout the week between 09:00 and 17:00.

This pattern is consistent with previous assessments.

Legend

- None
- 0 - 1.05
- 1.05 - 1.68
- 1.68 - 2.48
- 2.48 - 3.53
- 3.53 - 6.02

Data Clock



Location

Due to the small number of street drinking incidents, analysis has been completed for a three year period (April 20 – March 23).

Hotspot map of all street drinking incidents reported in the three-year period 2020-23



- Over the three year period more than half (52.3%) of incidents of street drinking have been recorded in the Harpur ward, which includes the Tavistock Street area.
- 31% took place in Greyfriars ward, 6.7% in Castle & Newnham and 4.6% in De Parys.

These areas are consistent with previous assessments and fall within the designated Public Space Protection Order area for street drinking and related ASB which was first implemented in December 2020 and renewed for a further three years in November 2023.

Bedford Town Centre

Bedford Town Centre sits within the Greyfriars and Castle & Newnham wards 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 'Developing Safer Neighbourhoods' Priority that have a significant impact on those that live, work and visit the town centre, which are supported by comments raised in the CSP survey.

It should also be noted that the high concentration of shoplifting offences committed in the town impact on both businesses and the perception of safety amongst visitors to the town centre.

Operation Highgate

A multi-agency approach, led by the North Urban Community Policing Team, seeks to manage those issues that impact on the Town Centre 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 manage those with complex needs.

- Early identification of vulnerable persons in the town and referral to outreach services.
- Identification of those individuals who persistently commit Crime & ASB in the Town Centre.
- The use ASB powers to reduce the impacts to businesses, staff and the wider community.

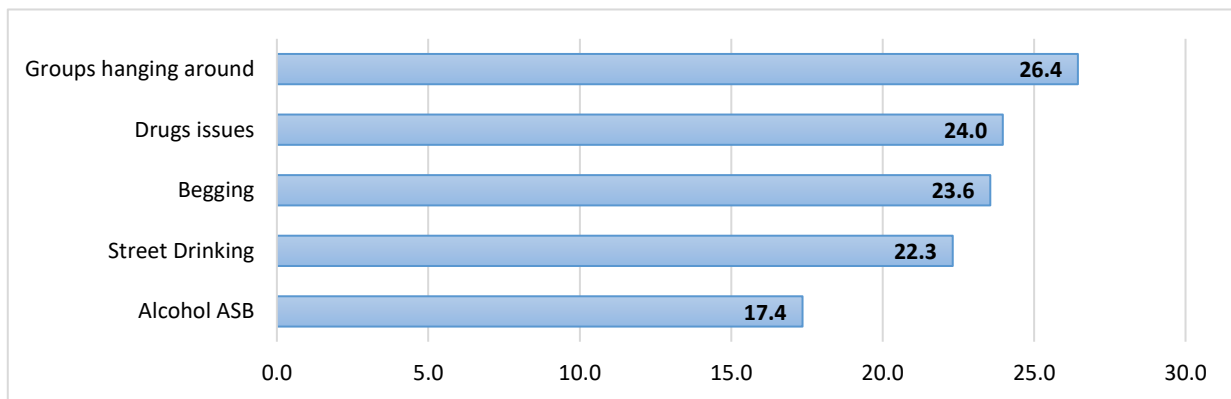
Working with the local Business Improvement District (BID) and local partners to problem solve at an individual level has been key to the success of Operation Highgate, to ensure that issues are contained and those that are identified as vulnerable are referred to support services.



Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. A series of questions in the survey were specific to Bedford Town Centre.

When asked ‘What makes the Town Centre an unsafe place?’ the main areas of concern are broadly consistent with police recorded data.



It is clear that the themes identified by those who work in and visit Bedford Town Centre are consistent with the issues targeted by Operation Highgate.

Serious Organised Crime

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 UK Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy³⁹, 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 and 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 employ novel methods to make money, particularly online.

A large amount of Serious and Organised Crime remains underreported, meaning the true scale is likely to be much greater. Although the impact may often be difficult to see, the threat is real and occurs every day all around us. Criminals prey on the most vulnerable in society, including children, and their abuse can have a devastating, life-long effect. They target members of the public to defraud, manipulate and exploit them, sell deadly substances and steal personal data in pursuit of profit. They use intimidation to create fear within our communities and to undermine 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 abuse to grooming through social media and other sites.

The Strategy outlines four overarching objectives:

- 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 offenders.
- 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.

³⁹ [Serious Organised Crime Strategy Nov 2018 – HM Government](#)

Local

Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) impacts on whole communities requiring considerable police and partnership resource to manage.

Briefings on the local threat picture for SOC are provided to partners at multi-agency meetings on a monthly basis. Partners work collaboratively using a 4P plan to Prepare, Protect, Prevent and Pursue all areas of an Organised Crime Group (OCG).

Whilst the majority of OCGs known to be impacting on the Borough are linked to the production and supply of illegal drugs, there has been an increase in the number of OCGs with links to fraud and counterfeit products.

Evidence of the exploitation of vulnerable persons is a common pattern of behaviour in many of the OCGs that have been investigated in the Borough in recent years.

Partnership awareness of SOC has increased significantly over the last three years with front line professionals regularly submitting information that results in the early identification, disruption and prosecution of new Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) using non-policing powers.

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, 659 disruptions were recorded by the Police in Bedfordshire, with an estimated 30% as a result of action taken by partner agencies in the affected communities.

- 416 persons linked to OCGs in the County were arrested in the year.
- Persons linked to OCGs in Bedfordshire received sentences of 243 years.
- 36 adults were safeguarded, and 40 children protected.

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected from a list of 15 crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area.

- 16.3% of those that answered the question suggested that Organised Crime Groups and Gangs were a 'Big Problem' in their local area; this was the third highest crime category selected by respondents.



Recommendation: The CSP should continue to raise awareness of the prevalence and impacts of serious and organised crime to help community 'spot the signs' and report concerns.

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 Crimes and incidents are motivated by hate of a personal characteristic or perception: Disability (including 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 Crimes and incidents can take many forms including:

- **Physical attacks** – physical assaults on the victim or property, offensive graffiti and arson.
- **Threat of attack** – offensive letters, telephone calls, intimidation and malicious complaints.
- **Verbal abuse or insults** – abusive gestures, dumping of rubbish outside of homes or through letterboxes and bullying at school or the workplace.

National

In the year ending March 2023, there were 145,214 Hate Crimes recorded by the police⁴⁰ in England and Wales, a decrease of 5% compared to the previous year. This represents the first annual fall since the Home Office began collecting comparable data in the year ending March 2013.

It is believed that prior increases in police-recorded hate crime have been driven by significant improvements in crime recording by police.

- 70% of Hate Crimes (101,906 offences) reported in the year ending March 2023 were perceived to be racially motivated, which is similar to previous years.
- Transgender identity Hate Crime increased by 11% to 4,732 offences in the year ending March 2023, the highest number of offences in this category recorded since the year ending March 2012.

Motivation Strand	2020-21	% Total	2021-22	% Total	2022-23	% Total	% Change 2021/22 to 2022/23
Race	90,909	74.4	108,476	70.7	101,906	70.2	-6
Sexual Orientation	18,239	14.9	25,639	16.7	24,102	16.5	-6
Religion	6,288	5.1	8,602	5.6	8,241	5.7	-4
Disability	9,690	7.9	13,905	9.1	13,777	9.5	-1
Transgender	2,728	2.2	4,262	2.8	4,732	3.3	11
All Offences	122,256	104.5	153,536	104.9	145,214	105.2	-5

⁴⁰ [Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 – Nov 2023](#)

It is possible for a Hate Crime offence to have more than one motivating factor which is why the above numbers sum to more than 145,214 and 100 per cent.⁴¹

- 92% of Hate Crime ending in the year March 2023 were either public order (51%) or violence against the person offences (41%), which is consistent with the pattern in previous years.

Local

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, 437 Hate Crimes and incidents were recorded in the Borough by Bedfordshire Police. This is a significant reduction of 23.5% on the previous year's figure of 571.

Just 7 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). 72.1% of Hate Crime was reported to the police within in 48 hours of the incident taking place. This suggests that victims are confident to report and that communities recognise Hate Crime incidents that they witness.

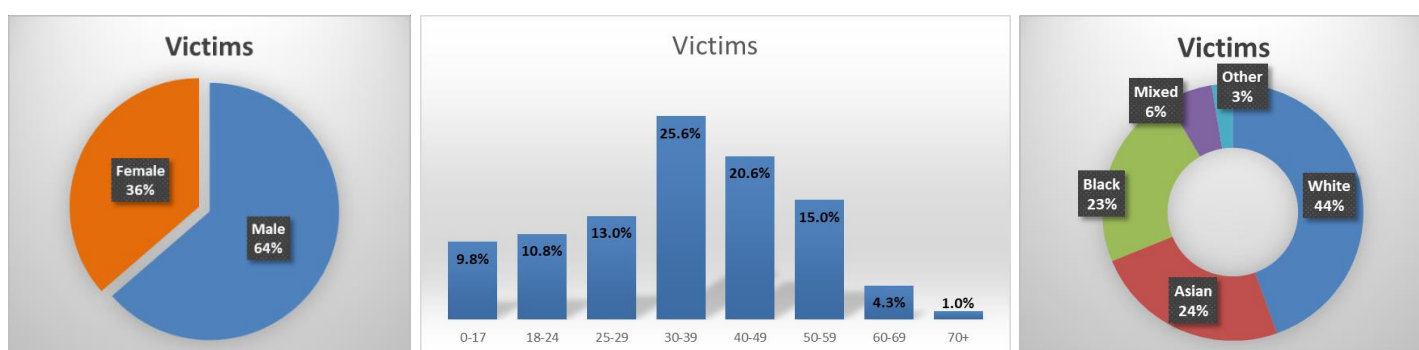
Within the overall Hate Crime data, reports can be subdivided by the motivation factor or factors involved in the event.

Aggravating Factor	19-20	20-21	21-22	% Total	22-23	% Total	% Change	National 22-23
Racial	313	321	416	72.9	339	77.6	-18.5	70.2%
Religion	18	22	28	4.9	20	4.6	-28.6	5.7%
Sexual Orientation	52	77	87	15.2	72	16.5	-17.2	16.5%
Disability	17	17	44	7.7	23	5.3	-47.7	9.5%
Transgender	7	9	10	1.8	5	1.1	-50.0	3.3%
Total Hate Crime	394	421	571	102.5	437	105.0	-23.5	105.2

Reductions were recorded in all five of the motivational strands in the most recent year. The overall proportions of each motivational factor broadly reflect that of the national picture for 2022-23.

Victims

Key characteristics recorded for victims, where known, are summarised below.



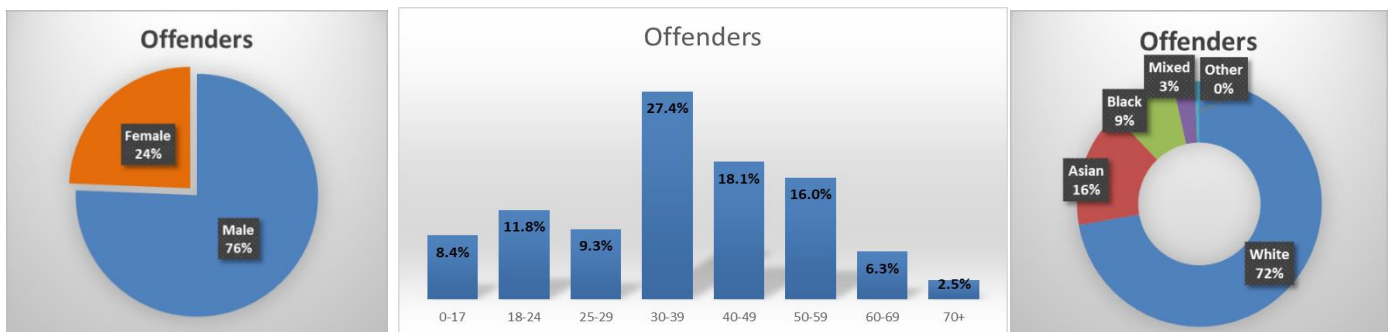
⁴¹ [Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 second edition - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114144/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2022-to-2023-second-edition.pdf)

- 64% of victims were male, an increase from the previous year's figure of 55%.
- The greatest proportion of victims (25.6%) are aged between 30 and 39 years.
- 39 victims (9.8%) were aged under 18 years, a reduction on the previous year's figure of 52.
- 44.5 % of victims were White, 24.3% were Asian and 22.8% of victims were Black.
- The proportions of Asian and Black victims show an over-representation when compared to the 2021 Census profile for Bedford.
- 61.8% of the victims that were able to give a description of the offender suggested that they were known to each other before the incident took place.

Offenders

Almost half (48.9%) of Hate Crimes recorded in the period have no suspect details, which is a consistent proportion to the previous year. Therefore, the profile of offenders may be less reliable.

Where known, key characteristics recorded for offenders are summarised below.



- 24.4% of offenders were described as female, a reduction from the previous year (32.7%).
- The greatest proportion of offenders (27.4%) are aged between 30 and 39 years.
- 8.4% of offenders were described as under 18 years at the time of the offence, a slight reduction on the previous year's figure of 8.9%.
- 72.3% of offenders were described as White, 15.6% of offenders were described as Asian and 8.7% of offenders were described as Black.
- 39.9% of Hate Crimes (59) were recorded as being perpetrated by a neighbour of the victim. In 26 of these 59 reported incidents (44.1%), victims reported that there were ongoing issues with the neighbour(s) or the incident was a repeat offence by the individual(s).

Recommendation: The Partnership needs to explore the strong relationship between neighbour disputes which may be recorded in ASB data and Hate Crime incidents.

Location

78.7% of reported Hate Crime took place in the urban wards of the Borough, which is consistent with the previous year's figure of 77.2%.

The top five wards, which are all urban, contribute almost half (49.2%) of all reported Hate Crime in the Borough over the last year.

The greatest proportion of incidents were reported in Greyfriars ward, which includes Bedford Town Centre and the Midland Road area.

These areas are consistent with previous assessments.

Top 5 Wards by Number	2022-23	% Total
Greyfriars Ward	56	13.0
Harpur Ward	47	10.9
Castle & Newnham Ward	43	10.0
Cauldwell Ward	41	9.5
Kempston Central & East Ward	32	7.4
Other Wards	212	49.2
Total	431	100

Hate 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 2022-23, severity scores range from 7.46 for 'Theft' to 2087.85 for 'Violence with Injury.'

Motivation by Harm	Crimes	Average Severity Score
Racial	339	40.1
Religion	20	21.2
Sexual Orientation	72	102.4
Disability	23	90.3
Transgender	5	44.7
All Hate Crime	437	53.0

Whilst the greatest proportion of offences (77.6%) are motivated by Race, the highest average severity scores are for offences where the motivation is targeted at Sexual Orientation.

This pattern is consistent with the previous year.

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

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

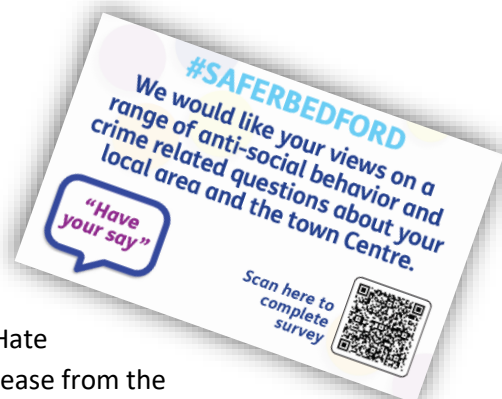
Respondents selected from a list of crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area.

- 8.1% of those that answered the question suggested that Hate Crime was a 'Big Problem' in their local area. This is an increase from the 2019 survey's figure of 3.5%.

During the same period, the CSP has had a target to increase awareness of Hate Crime with an aim that victims and the wider community will have the confidence to report. Therefore, the increase in community concern may be interpreted as positive with residents recognising the signs.

- 46.2% of those that answered the question stated that they 'Didn't Know' or had 'No Opinion' about levels of Hate Crime in their area.

Recommendation: The CSP should continue to develop opportunities to raise awareness of Hate Crime and the support service available to victims.



Neighbourhood Crime

Neighbourhood Crime is a category which encompasses a number of different theft offences, including 'theft from the person,' 'domestic burglary,' and 'vehicle-related theft.'⁴²

Robbery offences have already been included in Priority One as many robbery crimes recorded in the Borough have links to Knife Crime and Youth Violence.

For the purposes of this report, we will focus on Domestic Burglary and Vehicle Crimes, both of which scored highly in the CSP consultation exercise in summer 2022 with local residents.

National

In the year ending March 2023, the Crime Survey for England and Wales found that the number of incidents defined as Neighbourhood Crime has decreased by 26% when compared with the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020.

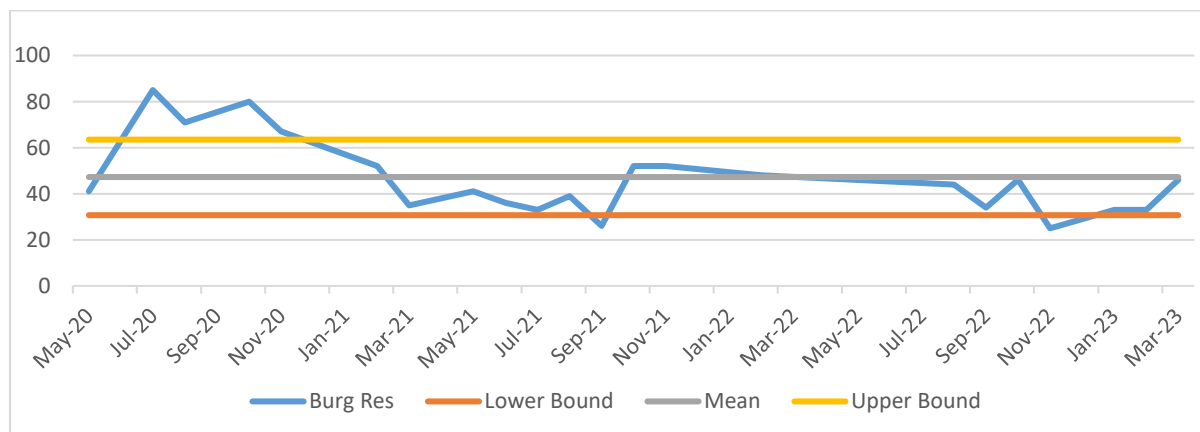
Similarly, a reduction of 20% for theft categories was also recorded in comparison with the year ending March 2020.

This significant reduction was reflected in both the 'domestic burglary' (30% decrease) and 'vehicle-related theft' (18% decrease) sub-categories. These are considered 'Neighbourhood crimes' but also form part of the overall theft statistics.

Domestic Burglary

Domestic Burglary is defined as *entering any of part of a dwelling (a person's home) as a trespasser with intent to commit theft, grievous bodily harm or criminal damage; or having entered as a trespasser, stealing or inflicting/attempting to inflict grievous bodily harm.*

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, Bedfordshire Police recorded 436 domestic burglaries in Bedford Borough, a reduction of 16.6% (87 offences) from the previous year. When compared to the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020, domestic burglary has reduced by 43.3%, which mirrors national patterns.



Traditionally levels of burglary increase in the darker winter months.

⁴² [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#)

- Where known, entry was gained to the property through an insecure door or window in 15.3% (67) of offences.
- Where known, a property's outbuildings such as a shed or garage were targeted in 25.9% (113) of offences.
- Where known, 39.9% of offences were believed to have taken place between the hours of 11pm and 3am.
- In more than a quarter (25.6%) of offences the victim was 60 years or older, with 14.4% (21 offences) describing the victim as 70 years or older.

Hotspot map of all Domestic Burglary Offences recorded in 2022-23



Domestic burglary has been reported in all wards of the Borough, with 77.7% of offences in the last year taking place in the urban wards. This is broadly consistent with previous assessments.

The greatest proportion of offences in the last year were reported in Cauldwell ward (13%) followed by De Parys ward (8.6%) and Castle & Newnham ward (8.4%).

There is a concentration of offences in the wards around Bedford Town Centre.

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected from a list of 15 crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area.

Burglary was the third highest crime type to be selected as a 'Big Problem.'

- 15% of those that answered the question suggested that Burglary was a 'Big Problem' in their local area. This is a reduction from the 2019 survey's figure of 23%.



Vehicle Crime

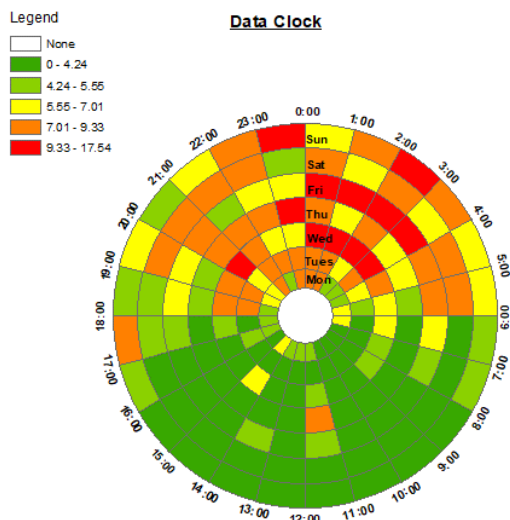
Vehicle Crime can be broken down into two key areas.

- Theft of a Motor Vehicle: *taking a vehicle belonging to another person without their consent, with the intention to permanently deprive the owner.*
- Theft from a Motor Vehicle: *taking property belonging to someone else from, or off the vehicle.*

In the period April 2022 to March 2023, Bedfordshire Police recorded 1044 vehicle crimes in Bedford Borough, an increase of 12% (112 offences) from the previous year. When compared to the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020, vehicle crime has reduced by 20.2%, which mirrors national patterns.

Offence recorded	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	% Change	3yr % Change
Theft of a Vehicle	312	223	333	317	-4.8	1.6
Theft from a Vehicle	996	922	599	727	21.4	-27.0
Total	1308	1145	932	1044	12.0	-20.2

- 41.7% of theft from vehicle offences related to car parts or fuel being taken.
- 23.2% of theft from vehicle offences recorded evidence of forced entry to the vehicle.
- 8.9% of theft from vehicle offences suggested that the vehicle was left unlocked.



It is clear that the majority of vehicle crimes take place over night on every day through week.

Peak reporting takes place between 20:00 and 05:00.

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected from a list of 15 crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area. Vehicle Crime was the second highest crime type to be selected as a ‘Big Problem.’

- 20% of those that answered the question suggested that Burglary was a ‘Big Problem’ in their local area. This is consistent with the 2019 survey.



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

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 Wales⁴³ suggests that illicit drug use amongst adults is fairly stable.

- In 2022/23, 9.5% of adults aged 16 to 59 in England and Wales had taken an illicit drug in the last year. This equates to around 3.1 million people.
 - 3.3% had taken a Class A drug in the last year, this is an increase in the previous year's figure of 2.7%.
- Levels of drug use are higher in the younger age group, with 17.6% of those aged 16 to 24 having taken a drug in the last year, a slight reduction from 18.6% in the previous year.

However, evidence surveys of young people aged 11 to 15 years in schools⁴⁴ conducted in 2018 suggests that drug use in this group is increasing.

- In 2021, 18% of pupils reported that they had never taken drugs. This compares to 24% in 2018. 6% stated they had taken drugs in the last month, down from 9% in 2018.
- The likelihood of having taken drugs increases with age, from 9% of 11 year olds to 38% of 15 year olds.
- 49% of young people aged 11 to 15 years stated that on the first occasion they tried drugs, they got them from a friend.
- Overall, 16% said that they got drugs from a dealer, but this rose to 29% where a Class A drug was taken.

⁴³ [Drugs Misuse in England and Wales 2023](#) ONS

⁴⁴ [Smoking, Drinking & Drug Use among Young People in England 2021](#) NHS

Hospital data⁴⁵ give further information about the harm caused by illicit drugs.

- In the period 2022/23, there were 9,690 hospital admissions for poisoning by drug misuse, a reduction of 24% on the previous year.
- 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 has increased by five times since 2010 (144 deaths).

Local

In the last year the number of people in treatment for Opiate use has risen, whilst those successfully completing treatment has increased in all three groups. 2022/23 completion rates for the Borough are currently within the top quartile range nationally.

Treatment Group	Number of people in effective treatment - Bedford				Number of Successful Completions			
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Opiate	547	532	546	569	43	24	17	40
Non-Opiate	114	140	133	110	56	71	31	49
Alcohol & Non-Opiate	78	67	88	88	34	29	28	29

DOMES Report – 2022/23

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.

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

Respondents selected from a list of 15 crime types that they felt were a problem in their local area.

- 39.9% of those that answered the question suggested that Drugs Issues were a ‘Big Problem’ in their local area, this was the highest crime category selected by respondents. This is an increase from the 2019 surveys figure of 33.5%.



⁴⁵ [Statistics on Public Health, England 2023](#) NHS

Alcohol Misuse

Alcohol plays an important part in the cultural life of this country, with large numbers employed in the production, retail and hospitality industries. 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 280,000 alcohol related admissions to hospitals⁴⁶ in England in 2019/20 where the main reason was attributable to alcohol, 20% higher than in 2018/29 and 8% higher than 2016/17.
- 167,000 prescription items dispensed in 2020/21 where to treat alcohol dependence, 1% higher than 2019/20 but 15% lower than 2014/15.
- In 2021⁴⁷ there were 9,461 alcohol specific deaths registered in the UK. This is an increase of 7.4% on the previous year.
- Rates of alcohol-specific deaths for males are twice those of females, this is consistent with previous years.

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.

“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.

Local

The rate of hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions has been steadily increasing; this is in line with national increases, but below the mean for English Unitary Authorities.

Rate of NHS hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related conditions (Quarterly / Narrow definition) - Male (from 2017/18 Q3 to 2019/20 Q2) for Bedford Borough

Period	Quarterly male hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions (Narrow definition)			
	Admissions per 100,000 people			
	Bedford Borough	Minimum for All English unitary authorities	Mean for All English unitary authorities	Maximum for All English unitary authorities
2017/18 Q3 ^{↑↑}	707.4 ^{↑↑}	425.6 ^{↑↑}	844.2 ^{↑↑}	1,375.2 ^{↑↑}
2017/18 Q4	724.3	471.4	828.9	1,308.8
2018/19 Q1	765.9	532.6	908.1	1,395.2
2018/19 Q2	843.8	476.0	918.7	1,408.0
2018/19 Q3	894.1	532.1	903.2	1,491.9
2018/19 Q4	838.5	467.1	891.9	1,456.0
2019/20 Q1	834.0	495.2	922.9	1,512.8
2019/20 Q2	795.1	485.6	905.9	1,552.3

Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)

⁴⁶ [Statistics on Alcohol, England 2021](#) NHS

⁴⁷ [Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK 2021](#)

In the last year the number of people in treatment for Alcohol was consistent with the previous year. The number of people successfully completing treatment continues to fall, 2022/23 completion rates for the Borough are below the top quartile range nationally.

Treatment Group	Number of people in effective treatment - Bedford				Number of Successful Completions			
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Alcohol	302	268	285	285	153	145	106	97

DOMES – 2022/23

Change Resistant Drinkers

Whilst the overall measure for those entering and completing treatment in Bedford Borough not just for dependency but also 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 services.

National evidence⁴⁸ suggests that street drinkers are unlikely to self-refer and will need considerable levels of sustained support to encourage them to accept support.

Community Concern – CSP Survey

Over the summer of 2022, the CSP conducted a community survey recording levels of awareness and concerns over a broad range of issues. In total, 447 residents completed the questions.

When asked ‘What makes your local area an unsafe place?’ high levels of concern were raised about the negative contribution that alcohol has on their perception of safety.

- 9.2% referenced the negative impacts of Street Drinkers on their local community.
- A further 8.5% stated that Alcohol related ASB made them feel unsafe in their local area.

When asked the same question in relation to their perception of safety in Bedford Town Centre these figures increased to 22.3% for Street Drinking and 17.4% for Alcohol related ASB.



⁴⁸ [Tackling Street Drinking – PCC guidance on best practice](#) Nov 16

Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment

In response to the Dame Carol Black review recommendations and the 10-year national drug strategy, *From Harm to Hope*⁴⁹, Public Health teams from Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Councils work alongside Bedfordshire Police to undertake a drug and alcohol needs assessment. The aim of this assessment is to provide an analysis of current alcohol and drug related harms and understanding of local activities that contribute to the delivery of the strategic priorities of the national drug strategy.

- Breaking drug supply chains
- Delivering a world-class treatment and recovery system
- Achieving a generational shift in the demand for drugs

Overview of Alcohol and drug related harms in Bedfordshire

The unmet treatment need for all drug groups across Bedfordshire remains high, with higher unmet treatment needs for opiate and crack users (OCUs) in both Luton (60.7%) and Central Bedfordshire (72.6%) compared with comparators and rising unmet need for alcohol users in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

In terms of alcohol-related and alcohol-specific hospital admissions, Luton has significantly higher rates than the national averages for adults and Central Bedfordshire has a significantly higher rate for young people. A rise in hospital admissions for substance misuse among young people in both Luton and Central Bedfordshire was also observed, while the rates in Bedford Borough and comparators declined.

The rate of alcohol-related deaths in Luton is similar to that of comparators and lower than comparators in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. However, Bedford Borough has a similar-to-comparator rate of drug-related deaths, but rates are lower than comparators in Luton and Central Bedfordshire.

Drug and alcohol-related harms disproportionately affect wards with the highest Index of Multiple Deprivation scores (namely Harpur, Greyfriars and Cauldwell in Bedford Borough), with the highest rates of hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions recorded in these localities.

National data suggests that black and minority ethnic communities are underrepresented in treatment services and drug use is higher among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+).

Recommendation: The partnership should support the delivery of the outcomes framework within the drug and alcohol needs assessment which accompanies the 10-year drug strategy.

⁴⁹ [From Harm to Hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives](#)

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 be for a contained period of time and for others, have a long lasting impact.

According to NHS Digital⁵⁰ 1.76 million people were in contact with mental health services at the end of March 2023, the majority of these (1.15 million) were in adult mental health services.

- There were 440,607 people in contact with children and young people’s mental health services and 222,871 in learning difficulties and autism services.
- 21,016 people were subject to the Mental Health Act at the end of March 2023, including 15,861 people detained in hospital.

Mental Health and Victims

According to a survey conducted by Victim Support⁵¹, people with mental health problems experienced high rates of crime and were considerably more likely to be victims of crime than the general population.

- 45% of people with severe mental illness (SMI) were victims of crime in the past year.
- One in five people had experienced a violent assault, a third were victims of personal crime and a quarter were victims of household crime.
- They report high rates of sexual and domestic violence.

Victims with SMI described barriers to reporting crime to the police. Most had some previous experience with the police either as a victim, witness, offender or when being detained under the Mental Health Act. Where these prior experiences were poor, individuals were reluctant to contact the police again.

Mental Health Care in Prisons

According to the Prisons Reform Trust⁵² there is strong evidence of a greater prevalence of mental health issues in the UK prison population.

- 49% of female and 23% of male prisoners assessed by a Ministry of Justice (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 symptoms indicative of psychosis, the rate amongst the general population is just 4%.

⁵⁰ [Mental Health Services Statistics April 2022](#) – NHS Digital

⁵¹ [At risk, yet dismissed – The criminal victimisation of people with mental health problems](#) – Victim Support

⁵² [Mental Health Care in Prisons](#) - 2017

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 April 2022 – March 2023, 2,000 incidents were supported by the team in Bedfordshire, with a reduction of 17.5% from the previous year.

Diversions

During the 2022 calendar year, it is estimated that the MHST service is responsible for the following diversions across the County.

- 705 Ambulance Call Outs diverted.
- 550 Accident and Emergency attendances avoided.
- 529 Police Call Outs diverted.
- On 215 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. The age of criminal responsibility is 10. 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 perspective⁵³, the overall number of young people known to the Criminal Justice system has continued to reduce in the year ending March 2022. 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 custodial sentences.

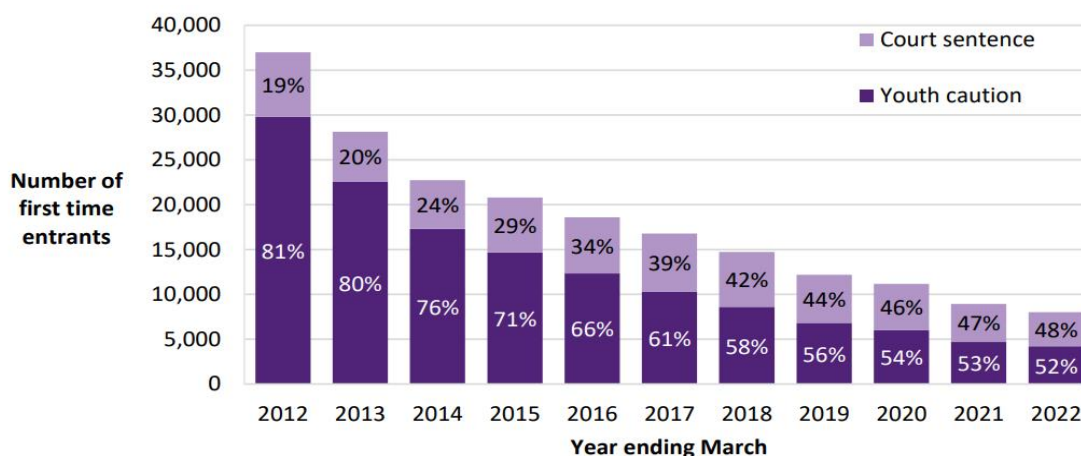
- 13,800 Children received a caution or sentence, a reduction of 13% in the last year and 79% over the last 10 years.
- 3,500 Knife and offensive weapon offences were committed by a child, a 2% decrease on the previous year. Levels are now 3% lower than those in the year ending 2012.
- There was an average of 450 children in custody at any one time during the year ending March 2023. This is a reduction of 19% on the previous year and a 77% fall compared with the year ending March 2012.
- Reoffending reduced by 3% in the last year and is the lowest on record, but is likely to have been impacted by periods of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Almost three quarters of children remanded to custody received a non-custodial outcome.
- 8,000 FTEs to the Youth Justice System were recorded in the year, a reduction of 10% on the previous year and 78% over the last ten years.

In the year ending March 2022, the most common offence for FTEs were summary offences excluding motoring and ‘possession of weapon’ offences. These offence types both accounted for 21% of all offences committed by child FTEs. Compared with the year ending March 2012, the proportion of theft offences fell from 27% to 9%.

- The proportion of child FTEs committing ‘possession of a weapon’ offences increased by 17% over the last 10 years and is the only offence group to see a real term increase in that period.

The number of First Time Entrants has continued to fall. In the year ending March 2022, levels reduced by 10% and when compared to the year ending March 2012 numbers have fallen by 78%.

National Trends in first time entrants, years ending March 2012 – March 2022



⁵³ [Youth Justice Annual Statistic: 2021/22](#)

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.

Data for the year ending March 2022 shows the BYOS rate per 100,000 as 135, an increase from the previous year but a positive comparison to 137 for the East and 148 at a National level.

Bedfordshire Trend Data								Latest Data: Jan 22 - Dec 22 (rolling 12mths)			
National Indicators	Performance Requirement	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	BYOS	YJS Family Average	Eastern	National
First Time Entrants (PNC Data) (Actual)	Reduction	83	94	55	52	51	61	46	105	826	8,338
Rate Per 100,000	Target <170	199	225	204	118	111	135	100	133	137	148

At the same time as the overall numbers of young people in the Criminal Justice system continue to reduce, the proportions that reoffend also continue to reduce. Data for the BYOS area shows the local reoffending rate is slightly above that of the Eastern Region and National average.

Reoffending rates after 12 months - Yearly Cohort								Latest Data set: Jul 20 - Jun 21 Cohort			
National Indicators	Performance Requirement	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	BYOS	YJS Family Average	Eastern	National
Re-Offending (PNC Data) Binary Rate	Reduction	44.8%	33.7%	39.2%	34.6%	34.4%	N/A	34.3%	29.3%	30.9%	31.1%

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

- For the year ending March 2022 the BYOS rate was 0.06, below that of the East (0.08) and the National figure (0.11)

For the most recent year (2021/22) Bedford Borough recorded three custodial sentences, this is consistent with 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 or 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 to the appropriateness of a referral to IOM based on the Young Persons needs and offending history.

Re-Offending

The Home Office estimates that 0.5% of offenders commit 10% of offences; an additional 10% of offenders commit 50% of offences.

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 wider community. 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 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

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.
- 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) is a nationally recognised scheme initially introduced by the Home Office in 2009 as a cross-agency response to crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. Persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies with the aim 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 April 2022 to March 2023, across all the cohort managed by the service the following positive outcomes were recorded:

- 65% reduction in the overall number of offences committed.
- 43% reduction in the number of Burglary offences committed.

As of year-end March 2023, The IOM cohort caseload was 113. The top three pathways needs identified in the cohort were:

- Support for Mental and Physical Health.
- Support for Education, Training and Employment.
- Support for Alcohol and Drugs misuse.

Using the ONS harm severity index it is possible to measure the reduction in harm of offences committed. In the year April 2022 – March 2023 there has been an 70% 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 a saving of over 4.4 million pounds 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

The ministry of Justice and the Home Office released a refreshed national IOM strategy in 2020/21, to specifically target neighbourhood crime such as burglary, robbery, vehicle crime and theft from person within local neighbourhoods.

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

Fixed: Probation statutory managed Neighbourhood Crime offenders.

Flex: A mix of offenders and offence types, some based upon police intelligence. Bedfordshire partners identified the following groups as a priority: 18 to 25 year olds, youths in transition to adult services and female offenders.

Free: Other local priorities, including risk based Domestic Abuse perpetrators.

Electronic Management Service Tagging of offenders

Bedfordshire is one of the national pilot areas for the MoJ EMAC scheme whereby some offenders are released from prison with a GPS tag fitted and managed under Probation License conditions. All these offenders will be managed under IOM and fit the cohort according to the relevant criteria.

Direction for Bedfordshire

Launched in Bedfordshire in April 2019, YouTurn Futures were commissioned to deliver 'Direction for Bedfordshire'⁵⁴, an online 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.

- In the year ending March 2023 the website recorded 10,990 hits, with 343 direction referrals received.
- 82% of referrals in the same year were closed due to a positive outcome, an increase from the previous year's figure of 74%.

⁵⁴ [Direction for Bedfordshire website](#)

Summary of Recommendations 2023

The following have been identified within the main body of this report and highlighted as areas of opportunity for future partnership work. They will be used to support the delivery of the CSP Plan and will be incorporated into CSP processes and new action plans.

No	Thematic Area	Page	Recommendations
R1	Executive Summary	9	The partnership needs to develop communication and engagement activities which maximises opportunity to promote joint working in the community.
R2	Executive Summary	10	Partnership communications should use a range of methods to improve confidence in services, promote feelings of safety and encourage victims to access support.
R3	Executive Summary	10	The partnership needs to continue to develop opportunities to raise awareness of those issued where communities may not be able recognise the signs to report.
R4	Executive Summary	11	The partnership should make use of future children and young person surveys, particularly involving older students, to ensure that concerns and awareness of young people are reflected in Partnership working.
R5	Violence Against Women and Girls	28	Continue to explore opportunities to engage with communities to raise awareness and encourage reporting of VAWG offences.
R6	Domestic Abuse	35	The Partnership needs to continue to monitor volume and severity of Domestic Abuse to understand the overall impact of offences.
R7	Exploitation of Adults	47	The Partnership should continue to explore opportunities to offer exploitation and information sharing training to safeguarding professionals.
R8	Exploitation of Adults	48	The Partnership should continue to look for new opportunities to promote the use of the multi-agency information form.
R9	Anti-Social Behaviour	56	The Partnership needs to continue to explore the link between community based ASB and evidence of exploitation and drug issues.
R10	Serious Organised Crime	62	The CSP should continue to raise awareness of the prevalence and impacts of serious and organised crime to help community 'spot the signs' and report concerns.
R11	Hate Crime	65	The Partnership needs to explore the strong relationship between neighbour disputes which may be recorded in ASB data and Hate Crime incidents.
R12	Hate Crime	66	Hate Crime data should continue to be regularly reviewed by volume and severity within each motivation to ensure early identification of any changes to levels of harm.
R13	Hate Crime	66	The CSP should continue to develop opportunities to raise awareness of Hate Crime and the support service available to victims.

R14	Common Threads – Alcohol Misuse	74	The partnership should support the delivery of the outcomes framework within the drug and alcohol needs assessment which accompanies the 10-year drug strategy.
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Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment Matrix

MoRiLE Thematic Matrix - Bedford CSP - June 2023																	
SCORING INFORMATION	IMPACT & HARM					LIKELIHOOD				RISK	ORGANISATIONAL POSITION					ORI	
	Victim(s)					Scale of Activity		Prediction			External Factors		Resourcing				
Thematic Area	Physical	Psychological	Financial	Community	Environmental	Frequency	Volume	Trend	Forecast	RISK SCORE	Public Interest	Reputation & Polit	Economic Cost	Capacity	Capability	Total OP Score	ORGANISATIONAL RISK INDICATOR
County Lines/Drug dealing	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Severe	None/Negligible	Daily	Large volumes	<10% increase	Same	84	High	Regional Interest	Med-Long Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	9	4
Domestic Abuse	Moderate	Severe	Severe	Moderate	None/Negligible	Daily	Very large volumes	Same	<10% increase	71.5	Moderate	Regional Interest	Med-Long Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	8.5	4
Serious Violence	Substantial	Severe	Moderate	Severe	None/Negligible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	<10% increase	Same	67.5	Very High	Regional Interest	Med-Long Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	9.5	4
Modern Slavery & Trafficking & OIC	Low	Severe	Severe	Low	None/Negligible	Monthly / Quarterly	Small volumes	<10% increase	>10% increase	47.5	High	National Interest	Med-Long Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	9.5	4
Serious Youth Violence	Substantial	Moderate	Low	Moderate	None/Negligible	Daily	Moderate volumes	<10% increase	Same	30.25	High	Local Interest	Med-Long Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	8.5	4
Cuckooing	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None/Negligible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	<10% increase	Same	22.5	High	Local Interest	Med-Long Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	8.5	4
Knife Crime	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate	None/Negligible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	<10% increase	Same	20.25	Very High	Local Interest	Med-Long Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	9	4
Child Sexual Exploitation	Moderate	Substantial	Low	Low	None/Negligible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	Same	Same	18	Moderate	Regional Interest	Med-Long Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	8.5	4
Organised Crime Groups	Moderate	Substantial	Moderate	Substantial	None/Negligible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Large volumes	<10% increase	Same	44	High	Regional Interest	Med-Long Term	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	8	3
ASB	Low	Low	Moderate	Substantial	Low	Daily	Very large volumes	>10% decrease	Same	36.75	High	Local Interest	Short Term	Impede management	Lack of skills	6.5	3
Sexual Offences	Moderate	Substantial	Low	Low	None/Negligible	Daily	Moderate volumes	Same	<10% increase	24.75	High	Local Interest	Medium Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	6.5	3
Personal Robbery	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None/Negligible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	>10% increase	Same	20	Very High	Local Interest	Long Term - Internal	Issues exist	Lack of skills	8	3
Cyber Dependent Crime	None/Negligible	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None/Negligible	Daily	Large volumes	<10% increase	<10% increase	19.5	Low	National Interest	Long Term - Internal	Issues exist	Lack of skills	7.5	3
Residential Burglary	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None/Negligible	Daily	Moderate volumes	>10% increase	Same	14.875	High	Local Interest	Internal Medium Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	6.5	3
Street Drinking	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	>10% decrease	Same	14.625	High	Local Interest	Medium Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	6.5	3
Hate Crime	Low	Moderate	None/Negligible	Moderate	None/Negligible	Daily	Small volumes	<10% decrease	Same	14	High	Local Interest	Med-Long Term	Limited issues	Minimal lack of skills	6.5	3
Radicalisation	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	None/Negligible	Monthly / Quarterly	No/Very Small volume	Same	Same	9.75	High	National Interest	Medium Term	Limited issues	Lack of skills	6.5	3
Vehicle Crime	None/Negligible	None/Negligible	Moderate	None/Negligible	None/Negligible	Daily	Moderate volumes	<10% increase	Same	5.5	High	Local Interest	Medium Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	6.5	3
Arson/Deliberate fires	Low	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Weekly / Fortnightly	Moderate volumes	>10% increase	<10% decrease	18	Moderate	Local Interest	Long Term - Internal	Limited issues	Minimal lack of skills	5	2
Criminal Damage	None/Negligible	None/Negligible	Low	Moderate	Low	Daily	Large volumes	<10% decrease	Same	15.75	Moderate	Local Interest	Medium Term	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	5	2
Less Serious Violence	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	None/Negligible	Daily	Large volumes	<10% decrease	Same	15	Moderate	Local Interest	Short Term	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	4	2
Theft from the Person	None/Negligible	Low	Moderate	Low	None/Negligible	Weekly / Fortnightly	Small volumes	>10% increase	<10% increase	13.75	Moderate	Local Interest	Short Term	Issues exist	Lack of skills	5	2
Shoplifting	None/Negligible	None/Negligible	Moderate	Low	None/Negligible	Daily	Moderate volumes	<10% decrease	<10% increase	10	Low	Local Interest	Medium Term	Impede management	Yes	4.5	2
Business robbery	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None/Negligible	Monthly / Quarterly	Small volumes	<10% decrease	<10% decrease	8.75	High	Local Interest	Medium Term	Issues exist	Minimal lack of skills	5.5	2
Terrorism	Critical	Substantial	Low	Moderate	Low	Annually	No/Very Small volume	Same	Same	33.75	Moderate	National Interest	Medium Term	Yes	Yes	3	1

Appendix 2 – Horizon Scanning

Horizon Scanning allows the Partnership to identify national and local factors that may impact on Community Safety in the Borough in the future. The Process considers seven key areas; Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, Organisational.

