

Southampton Safe City Strategic Assessment 2018/19

6.5 Emerging Themes



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6.5 Emerging Themes

For most crime types, national surveys and police recording help provide estimates to allow the partnership to understand gaps between reported and actual levels of offending and victimisation. With the following issues, there is less understanding around the true extent of offending and therefore greater risk of hidden harm.

6.5.1 Fraud

Police recorded data on fraud incorporates fraud offences collated by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from three reporting bodies: Action Fraud, Cifas and UK Finance. Action Fraud is public facing while Cifas and UK Finance are industry bodies. Incidents of fraud referred to the NFIB therefore include reports from businesses and other organisations and generally reflect only the more serious cases which are thought by the victim to be worth reporting. Another view of fraud is given by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) which suggests that fewer than one in six incidents of fraud (15%) are reported by the victim either to the police or to Action Fraud.¹ Consequently the CSEW provides the best measure of fraud offences directly experienced by individuals in England and Wales as it covers a broad range of fraud offences, including attempts, as well as incidents not reported to the authorities.

For the year ending March 2019 CSEW estimated that the number of fraud incidents in England and Wales (3.8 million) increased by 17% from the previous survey year. The increase was driven mainly by a 15% increase in “bank and credit account fraud” (to 2.6 million offences), with smaller volume increases in “consumer and retail fraud” (to 1.0 million offences) and “other fraud” (to 154,000 offences) contributing to the rise. Over the same period there was a 9% increase in the total number of fraud offences referred to the NFIB (693,418 offences) compared with the previous year (638,358 offences).¹

In Hampshire, 14,776 fraud crimes were reported to Action Fraud in 2018/19, an increase of 13.3%.² Over this period most fraud of individuals in Hampshire related to online shopping and auctions (25% of individual fraud), followed by other advance fee fraud (21%) and computer software service fraud (13%). Total victim losses, including those to businesses, were £28.9 million. As noted above it is estimated that less than 15% of fraud is reported to the police or Action Fraud so these figures are likely to be great underestimates of the true extent of this crime type.

¹ ONS. 2019. Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2019.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2019> [accessed November 2019]

² Action Fraud. 2019. Hampshire Fraud Profile. <https://actionfraud.police.uk/data> [accessed November 2019]

82% of fraud in Hampshire in 2018/19 was cyber-enabled.² Victims are most frequently aged 45-54 and 66-75, with males aged 45-54 being disproportionately affected by online shopping/auction fraud and people aged 66-75 reporting high levels of computer software service fraud.³

The Hampshire Constabulary Strategic Assessment notes that there has been a recent upward trend in dating fraud and it is anticipated that this fraud type will continue to increase as it is facilitated by online delivery.³

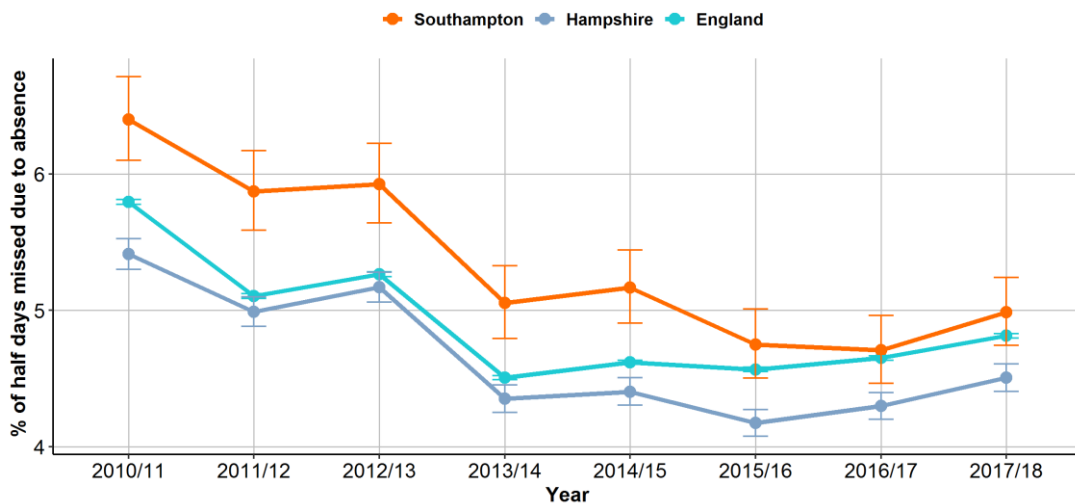
6.5.2 Children at Risk of Exploitation

Periods of time when children go missing are an area of concern as they are times of increased vulnerability and potential exposure to exploitation. Children who are absent from school are also a concern for the same reasons. Pupil absence has been an area of recent improvement for Southampton and it is now not significantly different from the England average (figure 6.5.1).

Figure 6.5.1:

Pupil Absence Trend

Southampton Community Safety Partnership, Hampshire and England - 2010/11 to 2017/18



Source: Department for Education

The Hampshire Constabulary Forces Strategic Assessment notes that, based on reported data, children in care go missing more frequently than other children, although are missing for shorter periods of time on average.³ Southampton has a relatively high rate of looked after children among its comparator areas (chapter 4.7). However, the increased missing frequency of looked after children is at least partly due to more robust reporting of absence for this group.³ Portsmouth has the greatest number of missing children of any district in Hampshire.

³ Hampshire & IOW Constabulary. 2019. Force Strategic Assessment 2018/19.

Portsmouth and Southampton are key risk areas for child criminal exploitation (CCE). The exploitation of juveniles by transient drugs networks, predominantly as drug runners, has been increasing in Hampshire and in the period March 2018 to February 2019, 16% of 627 known or suspected transient drug dealers were juveniles. There has also been an increase in the number of most serious violence crimes involving children, with Portsmouth and Southampton particular areas of concern.³

95% of children flagged by the Constabulary as at risk of CCE are male. MSV victims are also far more likely to be male.³

6.5.3 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the movement of a person from one place to another into conditions of exploitation; using deception, coercion, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone's vulnerability. Modern Day Slavery (MDS) is the exploitation that then happens when said individual/s arrive at their intended location. MDS encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. According to the International Labour Organisation around 40 million people around the world were victims of modern slavery in 2016.⁴ The most robust estimate to date of the scale of modern slavery in the UK was produced by the Home Office in 2014, which suggested that there were between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in 2013.⁵ The average unit cost of a modern slavery crime, £328,720, is higher than the unit cost of any other crime type apart from homicide.⁶

Traffickers and slave masters will use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. Victims are not always forced to come to the UK. Many victims from the European Economic Area report their first contact with a trafficker began with an offer of an apparently legitimate job and so they travel willingly to the UK.

The Modern Slavery Act received royal assent in March 2015. The act consolidated and simplified all existing previous legislation in this area and granted new powers to law enforcement. It increased protection for survivors and strengthened sentencing powers against offenders. It also established the

⁴ International Labour Organization. 2017. Global Estimates of Modern Slavery.

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575540.pdf [accessed November 2019]

⁵ Home Office. 2014. Modern Slavery: an application of multiple systems estimation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-an-application-of-multiple-systems-estimation>

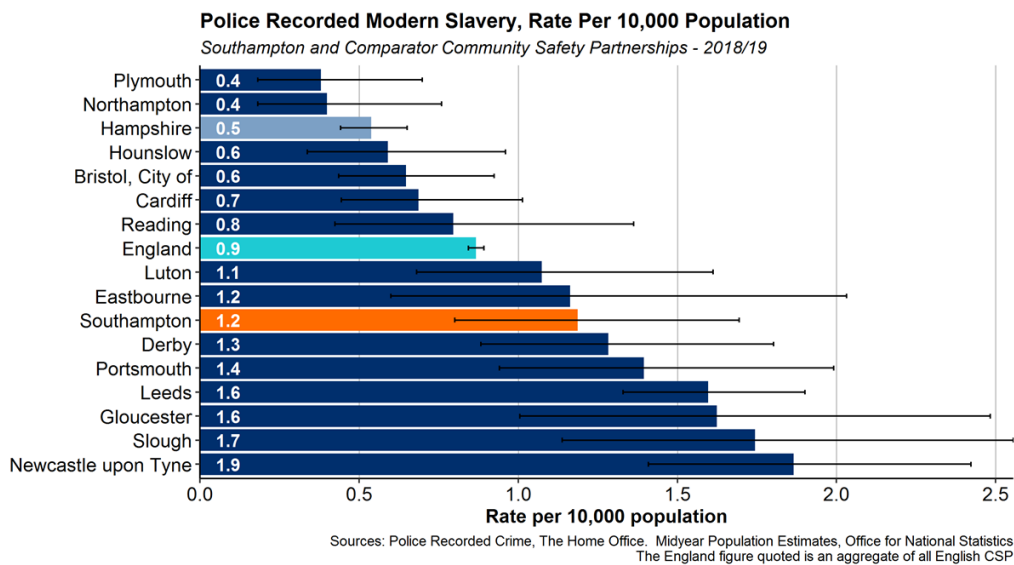
⁶ Home Office. 2018. The Economic and Social Costs of Modern Slavery. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-modern-slavery> [accessed November 2019]

first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and placed responsibilities upon large businesses to play their part in eliminating slavery from global supply chains.⁷

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK’s identification and support system for victims of modern slavery. In 2018, there were 6,985 potential victims referred to the NRM (a 36% increase from 2017), of whom 45% (3,128) were exploited as children.⁸

In the year to March 2019 police in England and Wales recorded 5,059 modern slavery offences, a 49% increase on the previous year.⁸ Southampton had 30 police recorded modern slavery crimes in 2018/19, an increase of 76% from 2017/18 and the seventh highest rate among its comparator group of community safety partnerships (figure 6.5.2). The rate of recorded modern slavery crimes in Southampton has increased more quickly than either Hampshire or England and, although numbers are small, Southampton’s rate is now significantly higher than that of Hampshire (figure 6.5.3). None of the modern slavery crimes in Southampton in 2018/19 resulted in formal action against offenders.

Figure 6.5.2:

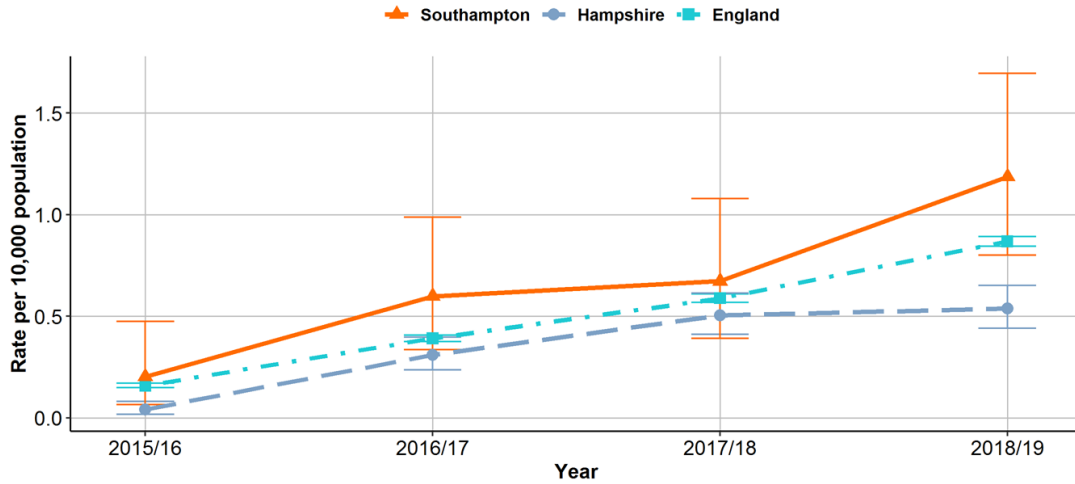


⁷ Home Office (2014) *Collection: Modern Slavery Act 2015* [Online] Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery-bill> [accessed November 2019]

⁸ HM Government. 2019. Annual Report on Modern Slavery. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2019-uk-annual-report-on-modern-slavery> [accessed November 2019]

Figure 6.5.3:

Police Recorded Modern Slavery Trend, Rate Per 10,000 Population
Southampton Community Safety Partnership, Hampshire and England - 2015/16 to 2018/19



Sources: Police Recorded Crime, The Home Office, Midyear Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics
The England figure quoted is an aggregate of all English CSP

Where known, 69% of victims of modern slavery in Southampton in 2018/19 were male which is consistent with the pattern across Hampshire.³ The male bias in victims is thought mainly to be attributed to increases in child criminal exploitation in respect of county lines and previous knowledge that forced labour is predominantly male orientated.³ 35% of modern slavery victims were aged under 18, with 55% aged under 25. 21% of victims were known to be Asian.

Ten offenders of modern slavery offences in Southampton in 2018/19 were identified from Constabulary data. 80% of these offenders were aged 25-49, 80% were male and 60% were of non-white or unknown ethnicity.

6.5.4 Countering Terrorism

Since 4th November 2019 the UK threat level from international terrorism has been substantial, meaning that an attack is likely.⁹ Prior to this (from September 2017) the threat level had been severe, a higher threat level used to indicate that an attack is highly likely.

Islamist terrorism is the foremost terrorist threat to the UK and extreme right-wing terrorism is a growing threat. Northern Ireland related terrorism also remains a serious threat, particularly in Northern Ireland itself.¹⁰

⁹ MI5. Threat levels. <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels> [accessed November 2019]

¹⁰ HM Government. 2018. CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2018> [accessed November 2019]

Most future terrorist plots in the UK will employ simple methods that can be developed with ease and at speed.¹⁰ The Hampshire Constabulary Strategic Assessment notes that there is a continuing trend towards low sophistication attacks which can occur spontaneously and are difficult to detect, prevent and disrupt. These types of attacks are highly accessible to potential terrorists due to weapons such as knives and vehicles being easy to acquire.³ Terrorists also still have the intent to mount complex, potentially more destructive attacks, while the availability of encrypted online communications allows them to disguise their plans better.¹⁰

Prevent is one of the four strands of CONTEST, the UK strategy for countering terrorism. Its overarching aim is to safeguard and support those vulnerable to radicalisation, to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.¹⁰

Southampton City Council is responsible for delivering Prevent locally. The Prevent Working Group, established in 2016 includes a range of partners from across the city (including both partners with a statutory Prevent responsibility and other non-statutory organisations). The Working Group is responsible for developing and monitoring an action plan to deliver Prevent in the city and reduce the risks of radicalisation. The Southampton Prevent Working Group works closely with neighbouring authorities in Hampshire, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight to ensure a joined up regional approach.

Community cohesion remains a strength for Southampton, and the Council and its partners continue to work closely with local communities to support Prevent and reduce the risks of radicalisation. The Prevent working group receives regular reports from the Council's Community Engagement Officer who delivers training to, gathers information from, and maintains close contact with, local community groups. Furthermore, the working group seeks to reduce the risk of individuals in the city being radicalised through training, effective safeguarding and close support for the Channel Panel, and regularly provides reports to the Safe City Partnership.

Southampton City Council has a Prevent website, which provides links to information and training, including a Southampton-specific Prevent e-learning course developed by the Prevent working group.

6.5.5 Points for the Partnership to Note

- The Partnership should monitor the increasing trend in police recorded modern slavery in Southampton.
- The Partnership should continue to work to improve intelligence on crime types where there are considerable gaps in understanding including fraud, MET children and modern slavery.
- The effective disruption of drug networks/groups will reduce the threat, risk and harm posed to vulnerable children in the city.