

Violence against women and girls

Problem Profile

March 2022

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1. Introduction

Every three days, a woman is killed by a man in the UK.¹ Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is preventable and is estimated to affect one third of all women in their lifetime². The existence of VAWG is a problem for all of society is a public and clinical health issue.

Crimes of violence against women and girls include rape, other sexual offences, stalking, domestic abuse, 'honour-based' abuse (also known as 'honour-based' violence, which includes 'honour' killings, threats to kill, harassment, rape and false imprisonment in the name of 'honour'), female genital mutilation, forced marriage, 'revenge porn' and 'upskirting', as well as many others. Whilst the different types of VAWG have their own distinct causes and impacts on victims and survivors, what these crimes share is that they disproportionately affect women and girls. The most prominent impacts of VAWG crimes include:³

- *A detrimental effect on mental health:* both short or long term and can include anger, frustration, decreased self-esteem, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder and loss of identity
- *Physical harm:* victims of VAWG have been found to experience poorer physical health outcomes. Evidence also suggests that women and girls who have been victims of these crimes engage in poorer health behaviours, including, smoking, substance misuse and poor eating habits
- *Negative employment, educational and financial impacts:* VAWG has been linked to having an impact on victims and survivors' educational attainment, employment and income prospects due to being absent from school or work, being unable to find and keep employment or being forced to incur debt. Evidence also suggests a link between a lack of financial independence and sustained levels of domestic abuse, where this can be a barrier to victims leaving an abusive situation. Domestic abuse is associated with a range of complex issues, including low income
- *Homelessness:* domestic abuse can lead to homelessness, either arising from victims losing their home due to lack of income or from the fact many victims have to flee their home to find safety and escape an abusive situation

¹ Femicide Census (2020). Online Available at: <https://www.femicidecensus.org/>

² Department for International Development (2014) - A summary of the evidence and research agenda for What Works: A Global Programme to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls. Online available at: [A summary of the evidence and research agenda for What Works: A global programme to prevent violence against women and girls \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270421/summary_of_the_evidence_and_research_agenda_for_what_works_aglobal_programme_to_prevent_violence_against_women_and_girls.pdf)

³ Home Office (2021) Tackling violence against women and girls strategy. Online available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy>

- *Negative impact on children and family:* being exposed to domestic abuse is an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and children experiencing ACEs are more likely to have poorer outcomes, particularly those relating to educational attainment, health and crime
- *Making women and girls feel less safe:* local and national surveys have consistently highlighted that females feel significantly more unsafe walking alone after dark than males

Violence against women and girls is not a new issue; however, ‘trigger’ events such as the murder of Sarah Everard, alongside many others, has brought violence against women and girls to the forefront of the nation’s attention. Additionally, sharing of personal experiences of sexual abuse by women and girls across the UK via the ‘Everyone’s Invited’ website led to an urgent Ofsted review in schools and colleges.⁴

In July 2021, the Government published its *tackling violence against women and girls* strategy, which sets out an ambitious programme of work to reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls, and improve the support and response for victims and survivors. This strategy follows on from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the upcoming complimentary strategy on domestic abuse. The Government outlines four key priorities, which are summarised below:

- *Prioritise prevention:* perpetrator focused on tackling the root causes of the problem, including education about consent, gender equality, boundaries and a change at societal level
- *Supporting victims:* supporting victims so that they can access quality and timely support as well as having the confidence to report their abuse and feel assured that the criminal justice system will support them to do so
- *Pursuing perpetrators:* focused on bringing perpetrators to justice and tougher sentences, as well as breaking the cycle of re-offending and re-victimisation. It is also important that the criminal law is robust, effective and addresses new emerging forms of these crimes
- *A stronger system:* a cross system approach is needed to prevent and tackle these crimes, which demands that every person and organisation plays their role

⁴ Home Office (2021) Tackling violence against women and girls strategy. Online available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy>

1.1 Scope of Profile

This profile will explore different definitions of VAWG using police recorded crime data to understand patterns of VAWG in Southampton. This profile recognises that police recorded crime data only includes those crimes that have been reported to and recorded by the police, with sexual offences and domestic abuse known to be underreported⁵. However, alongside survey and insight work, it provides the best measure available.

The Home Office VAWG strategy outlines the following police recorded VAWG:

- Rape and sexual violence
- Sexual and other forms of harassment
- Stalking
- Harmful practices including ‘honour’-based abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage
- Domestic abuse
- Violence against women and girls in public places
- Violence against women and girls perpetrated online
- Violence against sex workers

It is important to note that reporting and recording of police recorded VAWG outlined above will also vary. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the impact of VAWG on vulnerable groups such as sex workers, as they are much less likely to report violent and sexual incidents to the police for fear of police retribution or of being prosecuted for engaging in sex work.⁶ Additionally, ‘honour’-based abuse is difficult to identify in police recorded crime data. Due to data limitations, this profile cannot explore violence against women and girls that is perpetrated online.

This profile also acknowledges the impact of COVID on certain types of VAWG, particularly domestic abuse, with national and local data showing an increase in domestic abuse-related crimes between 2019/20 and 2020/21⁷. The impact of COVID on domestic abuse and other crime types has been examined extensively locally and as part of the [Southampton Community Safety Strategic Assessment](#) and will therefore be beyond the scope of this profile.

⁵ Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2021, Online available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2021>

⁶ World Health Organisation (2012) Addressing violence against sex workers. Online available at: https://www.who.int/hiv/pub/sti/sex_worker_implementation/swit_chpt2.pdf

⁷ Southampton Safe City Strategic Assessment 2020/21. Online available at: https://data.southampton.gov.uk/images/safe-city-strategic-assessment-report-2020-21_tcm71-450628.pdf

Where possible, data will be aggregated over a three-year period to look at the overall picture of VAWG in Southampton. This profile will examine three definitions of VAWG outlined in the table below.

Figure 1.1 - Table showing definitions of VAWG that will be explored in this profile

Definition	Criteria
Overall VAWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime group is violent crime OR sexual offence; and • Victim is female
Domestic VAWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime group is violent crime OR sexual offence; and • Victim is female; and • Crime is flagged as domestic
Public Place VAWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime group is violent crime OR sexual offence; and • Victim is female; and • Incidents flagged as domestic are excluded; and • Incident is flagged as occurring in a public place OR licensed premises

This profile acknowledges that not all VAWG will be captured in the definitions above, particularly for domestic VAWG and public place VAWG. However, these definitions provide one of the best measures available to examine the extent and patterns of different types of VAWG in Southampton.

1.2 Information Sources and Caveats

This problem profile collates information from a range of data sources to understand the profile of VAWG in different settings (overall, domestic and public place). These include Hampshire Constabulary, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Southampton City Council, Office for National Statistics, and the Home Office.

Data obtained from the OPCC has undergone data cleaning and pre-processing prior to receipt; therefore, data quality of this data is difficult to determine. In addition, whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, due to the ongoing nature of police investigations, figures may be subject to change and inconsistencies may exist between published and live data.

Due to the nature of crime data and the use of a range of data sources, it has not always been possible to apply the definition of VAWG to all sources of crime data, therefore, this profile will primarily rely on data from Hampshire Constabulary to understand the profile of VAWG in different settings. This profile will use OPCC data to benchmark Southampton against local neighbours, however, due to data fields available from OPCC data, the public place VAWG definition will differ slightly due to the absence of a 'licenced premises' flag field in the OPCC data.

Where rates have been calculated for statistical neighbours and local comparators (section 3.1), the ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates have been used, whereas for in-depth analysis of VAWG (section 3.2) Hampshire Country Council Small Area Population Forecasts have been used. 95% confidence intervals for rates have been calculated where possible in an attempt to account for natural variation and to robustly evaluate if any differences and changes found are statistically significant.

Crime severity scores have been calculated to provide estimates of the relative level of harm caused by VAWG. This score gives more severe offence categories a higher weight than less severe ones using crime sentencing weights calculated by ONS using data from the Ministry of Justice. For each crime type the crime severity score is calculated as:

Sum [(Severity weight * Number of offences) / (Area) mid-year population estimate]

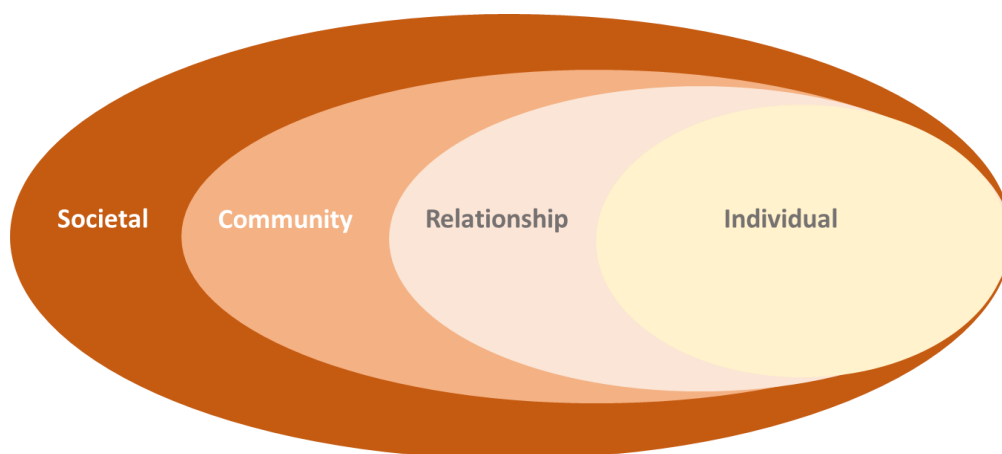
Data covering the period of April 2020 to March 2021 has been significantly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and government instructions to limit the spread of the virus. Therefore, caution should be taken if looking trends and changes in patterns over a single year. However, the majority of data has been aggregated over a three-year period, which should minimise the impact of COVID on the picture of VAWG in Southampton.

1.3 Risk Factors and a Public Health Approach to tackling VAWG

A public health approach provides a framework for understanding and preventing violence in all forms, including violence against women and girls. A public health approach uses evidence to understand the underlying causes of a problem and then target interventions to address these causes, with a focus on long term as well as short term solutions.^{8 9}

Risk factors of violence can be set out in an ecological framework (Figure 1.2), which emphasises that no single risk factor can explain why someone, or groups of people, are at a higher risk of violence than others. It is the interaction among many of the different risk factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal level that influences level of risk. Figure 1.3 shows risk factors of violence against women and girls.

Figure 1.2 - Ecological framework for understanding the risk factors of violence¹⁰



⁸ Local Government Association: Public health approaches to reducing violence (2018). Available at: https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/15.32%20-%20Reducing%20family%20violence_03.pdf

⁹ UK Faculty of Public Health: the role of public health in the prevention of violence (2016). Online available at: <https://www.fph.org.uk/media/1381/the-role-of-public-health-in-the-prevention-of-violence.pdf>

¹⁰ UN Women: The Ecological Framework (2013). Online available at: <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1509-the-ecological-framework.html>

Figure 1.3 - Risk factors of violence against women and girls¹¹

Societal	Community	Relationship	Individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poverty ▪ Economic, social and gender inequalities ▪ Poor social security ▪ Masculinity linked to aggression and dominance ▪ Weak legal and criminal justice system ▪ Perpetrators not prosecuted ▪ No legal rights for victims ▪ Societal and cultural norms that support violence ▪ Conflict or post-conflict ▪ Internal displacement & refugee camps ▪ Emphasis on women's purity and family honour ▪ Discriminatory family law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High unemployment ▪ High population density ▪ Social isolation of females & family ▪ Lack of information ▪ Inadequate victim care ▪ Schools and workplaces not addressing GBV (gender-based violence) ▪ Lack of legal or moral sanctions against GBV; ▪ Weak community sanctions against GBV ▪ Poor safety in public spaces ▪ Challenging traditional gender roles ▪ Blaming the victim ▪ Violating of victim confidentiality ▪ Community violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family dysfunction ▪ Inter-generational violence; ▪ Poor parenting practices ▪ Parental conflict (involving violence) ▪ Association with friends who engage in violent or delinquent behaviour ▪ Low socio-economic status; ▪ Socio-economic stress ▪ Friction over women's empowerment ▪ Family honour more important than female safety ▪ Poor communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender, age and education ▪ A family history of violence ▪ Witnessing GBV ▪ Victim of childhood abuse or neglect (including, but not limited to sexual abuse and/or neglect) ▪ Lack of sufficient livelihood and personal income ▪ Unemployment ▪ Mental health and behavioural problems ▪ Alcohol and substance misuse ▪ Prostitution ▪ Refugee internally displaced ▪ Disabilities

There are three key levels of violence prevention under a public health approach, with the target population decreasing in size with progression from primary to tertiary prevention. These are outlined below in the context of violence against women and girls:¹²

¹¹ UN Women: The Ecological Framework (2013). Online available at: <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1509-the-ecological-framework.html>

¹² Public Health England: A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention (2019), Online available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency-approach-to-serious-violence-prevention.pdf

- Primary – focused on preventing violence before it happens; to reduce the number of new cases of violence in the population. Focused on tackling the root causes of violence, which in the context of VAWG includes challenging societal and cultural norms that can lead to violence.
- Secondary – groups or individuals at risk of becoming a perpetrator of violence against women and girls. These individuals or groups could be illustrating poor attitudes or prejudices towards women and girls.
- Tertiary – groups or individuals already committing harm, for example, crimes against women and girls. At this level, the focus is to minimise harm and prevent further acts of violence.

The UK Health Security agency notes that to successfully prevent violence against women and girls in the future it is essential to tackle the root causes of violence, which includes challenging societal and cultural norms that can lead to violence. There is a need to place greater emphasis on the wider determinants of health and address wider system issues such as parenting, poverty, unemployment, education, housing and homelessness.¹³

The World Health Organisation and United Nations RESPECT Framework for preventing and responding to VAWG describes seven inter-related intervention strategies that aim to address wider determinants across the life course. The RESPECT framework is outlined below:¹⁴

- **R** – Relationship skills strengthened. This refers to strategies to improve skills in interpersonal communication, conflict management and shared decision-making.
- **E** – Empowerment of women. This refers to economic and social empowerment strategies including those that build skills in self-efficacy, assertiveness, negotiation, and self-confidence.
- **S** – Services ensured. This refers to a range of services including health, police, legal, and social services for survivors of violence.
- **P** – Poverty reduced. This refers to strategies targeted to women or the household, whose primary aim is to alleviate poverty.
- **E** – Environments made safe. This refers to efforts to create safe schools, public spaces and work environments, among others.
- **C** – Child and adolescent abuse prevented. This includes strategies that establish nurturing family relationships.
- **T** – Transformed attitudes, beliefs and norms. This refers to strategies that challenge harmful gender attitudes, beliefs, norms and stereotypes.

¹³ UK Health Security Agency: Tackling violence against women and girls (2021). Online available at: <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2021/03/16/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls/>

¹⁴ World Health Organisation – RESPECT Framework (2019). Online Available at: <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/violence/respect-women-framework/en/>

2. Context

Southampton is on the south coast of England and is the largest city in Hampshire. It is a diverse city with a population of approx. 260,111; comprising 107,695 dwellings, 63,386 children and young people aged (0-19 years)¹⁵, 53,000 residents who are not white British¹⁶ and approximately 33,175 students.¹⁷ As the table below illustrates, the population of Southampton is predicted to rise by 6.1% by 2027, with the largest proportional increases projected among those aged 75+ and 15-19.

Figure 2.1 - Table showing forecasted change in resident population (2020-2027)

Age Group	2020	2027	Change	% Change
Aged 0-4	14,366	14,943	577	4.1
Aged 5-9	15,291	13,744	-1,547	-10.1
Aged 10-14	13,500	14,356	856	6.3
Aged 15-19	20,229	23,202	2,973	14.7
Aged 20-24	30,529	30,659	130	0.4
Aged 25-44	75,258	79,348	4,090	5.4
Aged 45-64	54,376	57,462	3,086	5.7
Aged 65-74	18,923	20,826	1,903	10.1
Aged 75-84	12,085	15,143	3,058	25.3
Aged 85 plus	5,554	6,304	750	13.5
Total	260,111	275,987	15,876	6.1

Since 2004, economic migration from Eastern Europe has contributed to the development and sustainability of many business activities, thereby bringing in greater richness and diversity to city life. Strong community relations over many decades have contributed to maintaining cohesiveness. Long-term international migration between June 2019 and June 2020 shows that Southampton has more international incomers than leavers (6,790 compared to 3,869). There is also a high level of internal migration, with 15,500 people arriving and 19,000 leaving over the same period. Southampton now has residents from at least 55 different ethnicities who between them speak 149 different languages. 12% of the population do not have English as a main language; 80% of these can speak good English, 17% cannot speak it well and 3% cannot speak English at all.

¹⁵ Hampshire County Council – Small Area Population Forecasts 2019 to 2026 – totals are based on ward sums from M/F

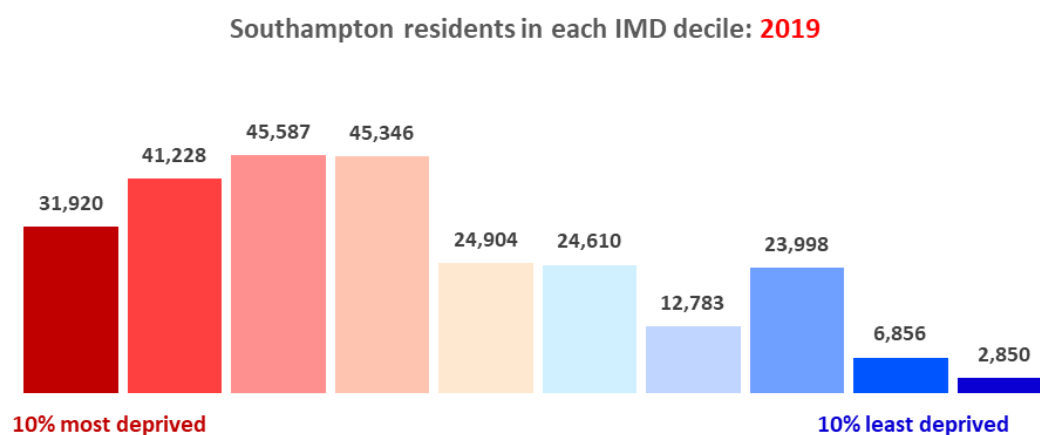
¹⁶ ONS 2011 Census

¹⁷ Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Prior to the impact of coronavirus, unemployment in Southampton declined in recent years, similar to the national trend. In 2019/20, unemployment was estimated to be 5.4% in Southampton, higher than the national (4.1%) and South East (3.2%) average. The proportion of working age population aged 16-64, who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work (claimant count) in November 2021, was 5% or 8,630 people compared with 3.6% in the South East and 4.7% in England.¹⁸ The impact on jobs in Southampton and across the country have already become apparent. However, coronavirus and the restrictions imposed to stop the spread of the virus will likely have long-term socio-economic implications. The extent of which is too early to fully understand, however, the impact on jobs in Southampton and across the country have already become apparent. Despite a decline in the claimant count in recent months, the Southampton claimant count in November 2021 (5%) remains above the pre-pandemic baseline (3.1% in January 2020), with this trend also experienced nationally.

Whilst the city has achieved significant growth in the last few years in line with the region, the city's characteristics relating to poverty and deprivation present challenges. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD 2019) ranks Southampton as the 55th most deprived local authority (out of 317) in the country, based on the average deprivation rank of its neighbourhoods. The chart below shows that 12.3%¹⁹ of residents in Southampton live within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally. This rises to 16.3% for under 18's, suggesting that deprivation has a disproportionate impact on young people in Southampton.

Figure 2.2 - Chart showing the number of Southampton residents by deprivation decile



Deprivation and inequalities between residents and neighbourhoods in Southampton are significant and continue to be a driver for crime and poor health outcomes. Outcomes for people in Southampton are poorer than the national average and significantly poorer for those residents living in the most

¹⁸ Nomis - counts the number of people claiming JSA and Universal Credit who are out of work – please note claimant count figures are provisional and recent months are subject to minor revisions

¹⁹ Hampshire County Council – Small Area Population Forecasts 2020 to 2027 and Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019)

deprived areas of the city compared to those living in the least deprived areas across a number of domains: ²⁰ (more information can be found on [Southampton Data Observatory](https://data.southampton.gov.uk))

- Life expectancy & mortality
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Healthy behaviours
- Healthy start in life (incl. children and young people)
- Wider determinants of health

It should also be noted that the coronavirus pandemic has introduced new challenges to the city and has the capacity to exacerbate existing challenges, such as deprivation, poverty and inequality. More information on the impacts of coronavirus can be found on the [Southampton Data Observatory](https://data.southampton.gov.uk).

²⁰ Southampton Data Observatory, Health Inequalities (2019), Online available at: <https://data.southampton.gov.uk/health/health-inequalities/health-inequalities/health-inequalities.aspx>

3. Violence against women and girls in Southampton

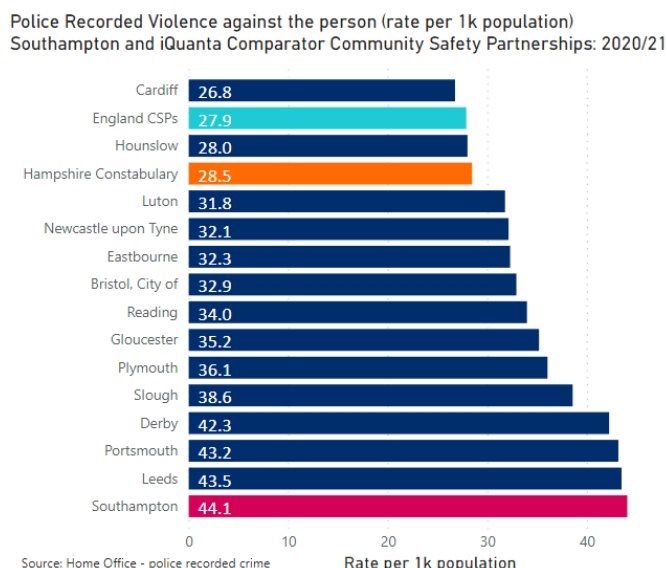
Due to the definitions of VAWG used in this profile and limitations of published police recorded crime data from the Home Office, it has not been possible to compare Southampton against iQuanta statistical neighbours for different definitions of VAWG. However, we can compare Southampton against statistical neighbours for overall violent crime and sexual offences to give an indication of how Southampton performs against similar areas.

The [Southampton Community Safety Strategic Assessment](#) has consistently highlighted the following three priority crime groups over the last three years in Southampton: violent crime (all forms), domestic crimes and sexual offences. These crime types are also known to disproportionately impact on women and girls.

Violent crime

In the most recent financial year (2020/21), Southampton had a violent crime rate of 44 crimes per 1k population (Figure 3.1), which is highest among comparator Community Safety Partnerships and significantly higher than the England CSP average (28 per 1k). Southampton is ranked 21st among English CSPs for the rate of violent crime, which is an improvement compared to the previous year (rank 15 in 2019/20). However, despite this improvement Southampton remains among the worse 10% of CSPs nationally.²¹ Southampton’s rate of violent crimes has remained significantly higher than the national average since 2011/12 (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.1 - Chart showing the rate of violent crimes for Southampton and iQuanta comparators



²¹ of 279 CSPs in England that had a valid violent crime rate

Southampton experienced a -5.1% decline in the number of violent crimes between 2019/20 and 2020/21. This is also observed nationally and across Hampshire Constabulary, with the decline attributed to a reduction in stranger violence²² and violence taking place in public spaces.

Figure 3.2 - Trend in the rate of violent crimes for Southampton, Hampshire Constabulary and England

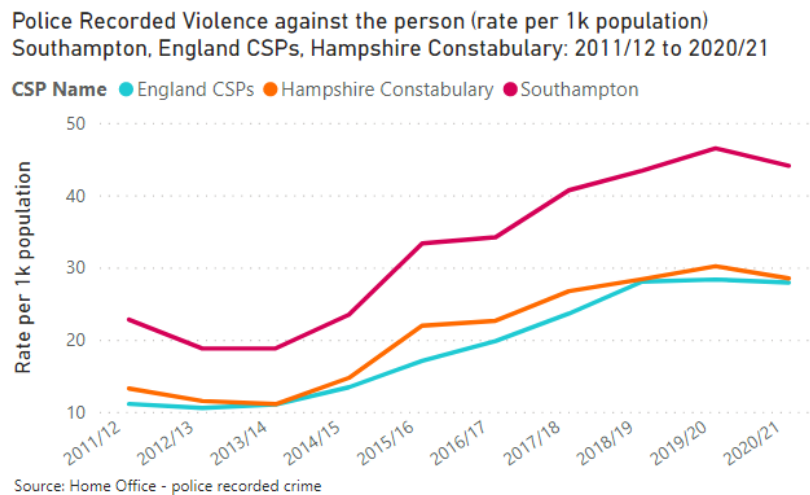
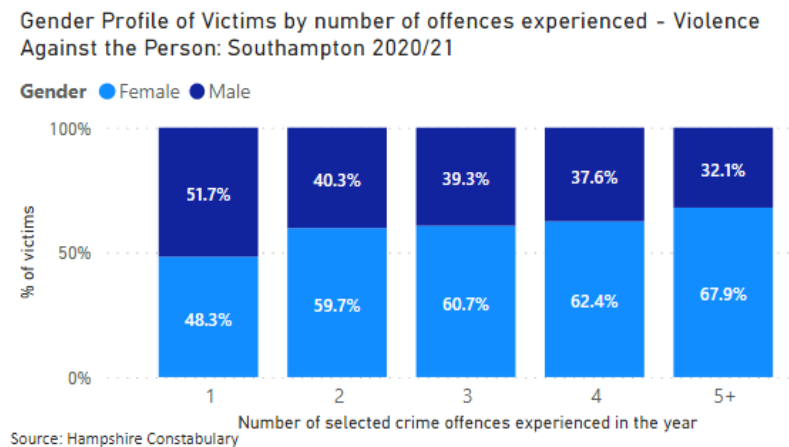


Figure 3.3 - Chart showing gender profile of violent crime victims by the number of offences experienced in the year



Females (51.3%) accounted for a significantly higher proportion of violent crime victims than males (48.7%) in 2020/21. Females also account for more violent crimes than males overall and are more

²² Violent crimes where the offender was a stranger

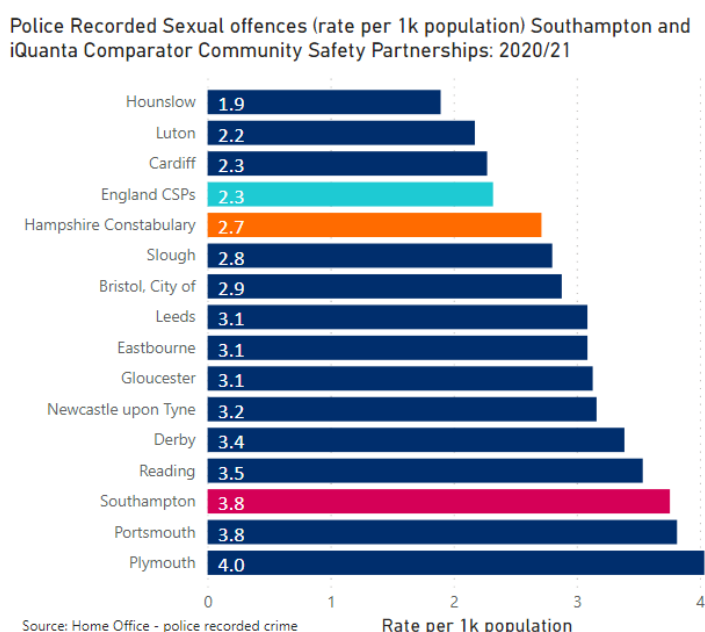
likely to be repeat victims of violent crime than males (Figure 3.3). The majority of known violent crime offenders are male (67% in 2020/21).

Sexual offences

Southampton is ranked 3rd highest among comparators and 13th highest in England for the rate of sexual offences (Figure 3.4)²³, placing Southampton among the worse 10% of CSPs nationally.

Over the latest financial year (2020/21), Southampton experienced a -13.5% decline in the number of sexual offences (Figure 3.10), with Hampshire Constabulary (-5.4%) and England (-9.8%) also experiencing a decline during the same period. The decline over the last year has largely been attributed to a decline in *stranger* and *acquaintance* sexual offences²⁴, which have been previously linked to the night-time economy. Volumes and patterns of sexual offences are expected to return to the pre-pandemic baseline for the 2021/22 financial year.^{39 25} There may also be an increase in police recorded sexual offences through belated reports and rising focus on violence against women and girls, encouraging more women and girls to come forward and report these crimes when experienced.

Figure 3.4 - Chart showing the rate of sexual offences for Southampton and iQuanta comparators

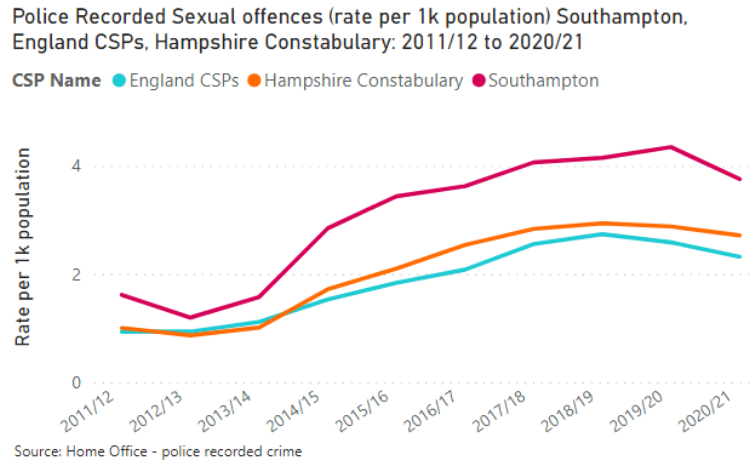


²³ Of 279 CSPs that had a valid rate

²⁴ Hampshire Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2021

²⁵ Langton *et al.* Six months in: pandemic crime trends in England and Wales, Crime Science, Online available at: <https://crimesciencejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40163-021-00142-z>

Figure 3.5 - Trend in the rate of sexual offences for Southampton, Hampshire Constabulary and England



Females aged under 25 have been highlighted as a high-risk victim group for sexual offences, with 86% of victims female and over half of victims aged under 25 in 2020/21. 92.9% of identified sexual offence offenders were male.

The above information highlights that Southampton is an outlier among comparator CSPs and nationally for the rate of violent and sexual offences, with these crimes known to disproportionately impact on women and girls.

3.1 Local Benchmarking

This section will benchmark Southampton against local neighbours for the three VAWG definitions (overall, domestic and public place) being explored in this profile. Data presented in this section is from InterACT (OPCC tool) and covers the period of January 2019 to December 2021. Due to limited data fields in the InterACT data, the public place VAWG definition does not include where the incident occurs in a licenced premises. Therefore, caution should be taken when making comparisons between data presented in this section and section 3.2 due to the different public place VAWG definition, different data sources, population denominators and data periods.

Overall VAWG

Figure 3.6 shows that Southampton had an overall VAWG rate of 57 crimes per 1k females (2019-2021), which is highest among local areas and significantly higher than the Hampshire Constabulary (36 crimes per 1k) and Hampshire district average (29 crimes per 1k). Southampton accounted for 20% (1 in 5) of all overall VAWG incidents across Hampshire Constabulary during January 2019 and December 2021. As well as the highest rate of overall VAWG, Southampton also has the highest severity score among local neighbours (Figure 3.7), with the Southampton severity score (18.4) more than double the Hampshire district average score (8.8).

Figure 3.6 - Chart showing rate of overall VAWG for Southampton and local areas

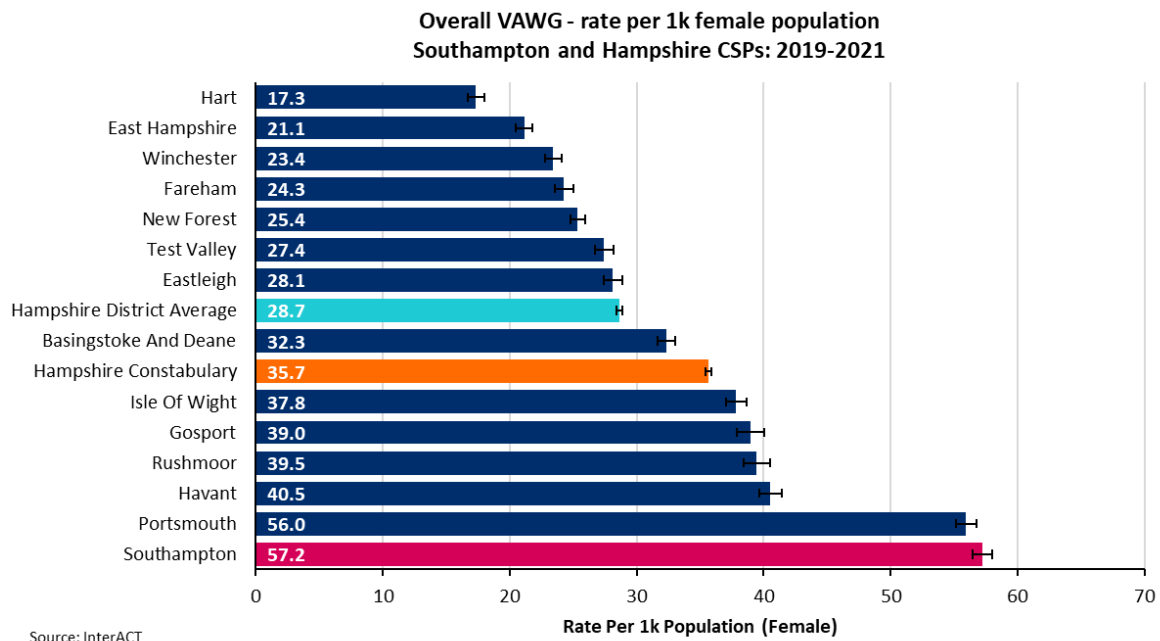
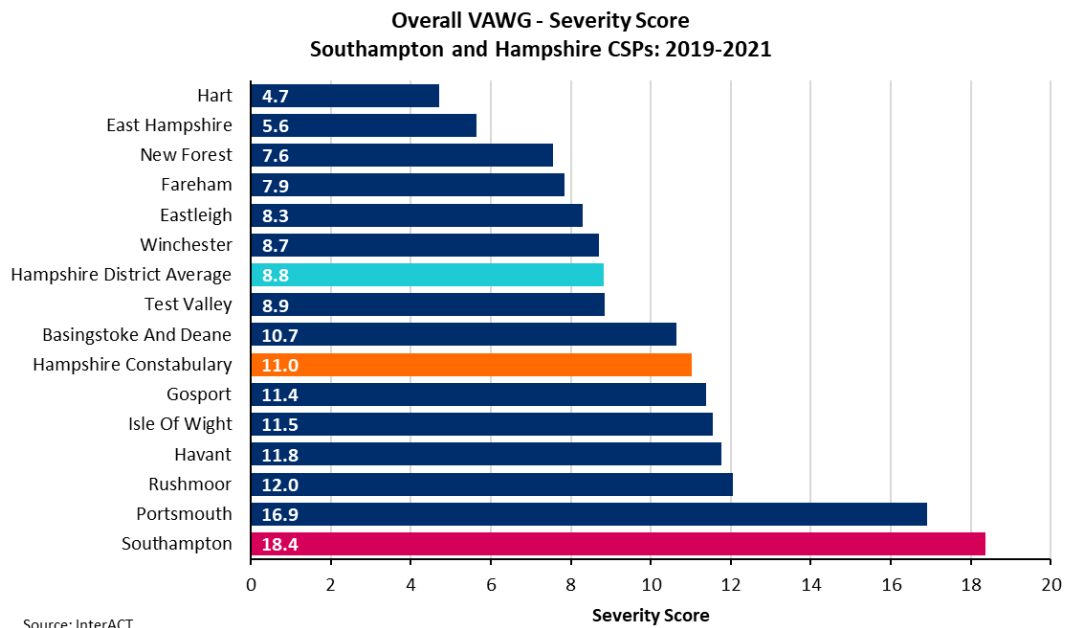


Figure 3.7 - Chart showing severity of overall VAWG for Southampton and local areas



Domestic VAWG

Southampton has a domestic VAWG rate of 24 crimes per 1k female population (Figure 3.8), which is again highest among local areas and significantly higher than the Hampshire Constabulary (15 crimes per 1k) and Hampshire district average (12 crimes per 1k). Similar to overall VAWG, Southampton accounted for 20% of domestic VAWG crimes across Hampshire Constabulary during the three-year period. Southampton also has the highest severity of domestic VAWG among local neighbours (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.8 - Chart showing rate of domestic VAWG for Southampton and local areas

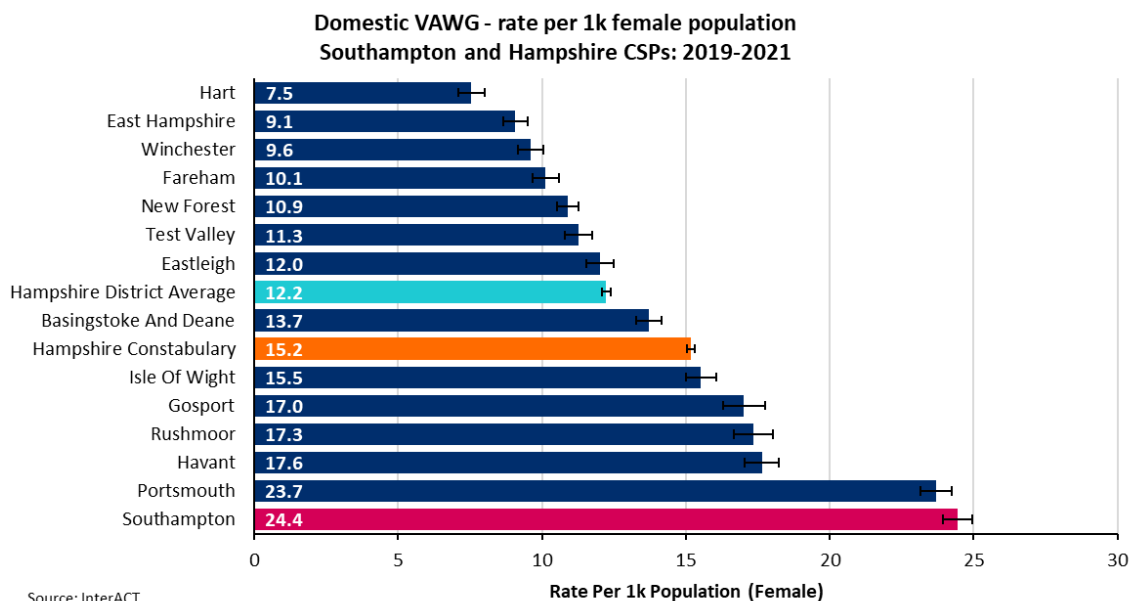
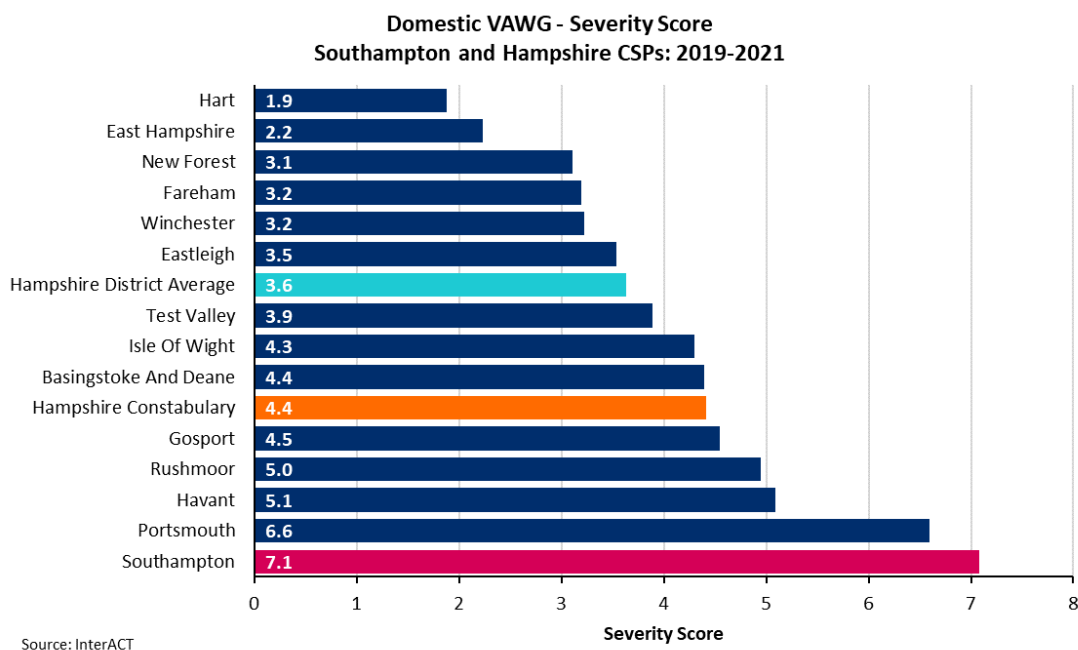


Figure 3.9 - Chart showing severity of domestic VAWG for Southampton and local areas



Southampton Violence Against Women and Girls Problem Profile: March 2022

Public Place VAWG

Southampton has a public place VAWG rate of 10 crimes per 1k females (Figure 3.10), which is highest among local neighbours and significantly higher than all areas (including Hampshire Constabulary) except Portsmouth. Southampton accounted for 21% of all public place VAWG incidents occurring across the Hampshire Constabulary force area during the period. Similar to overall and domestic VAWG, Southampton also has the highest severity of public place VAWG among local neighbours (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.10 - Chart showing rate of public place VAWG for Southampton and local areas

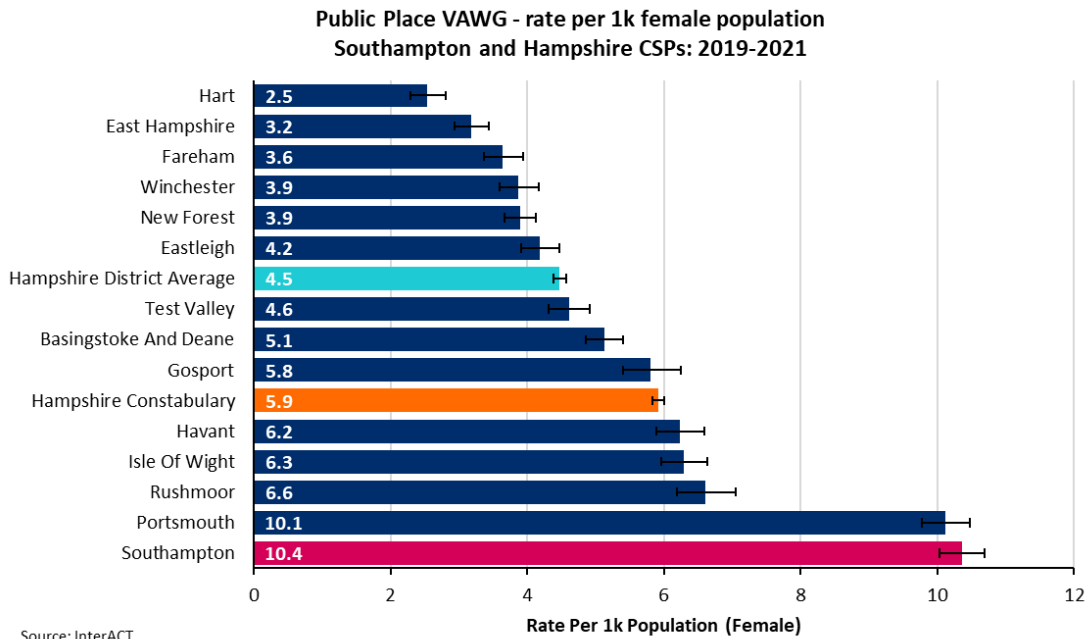
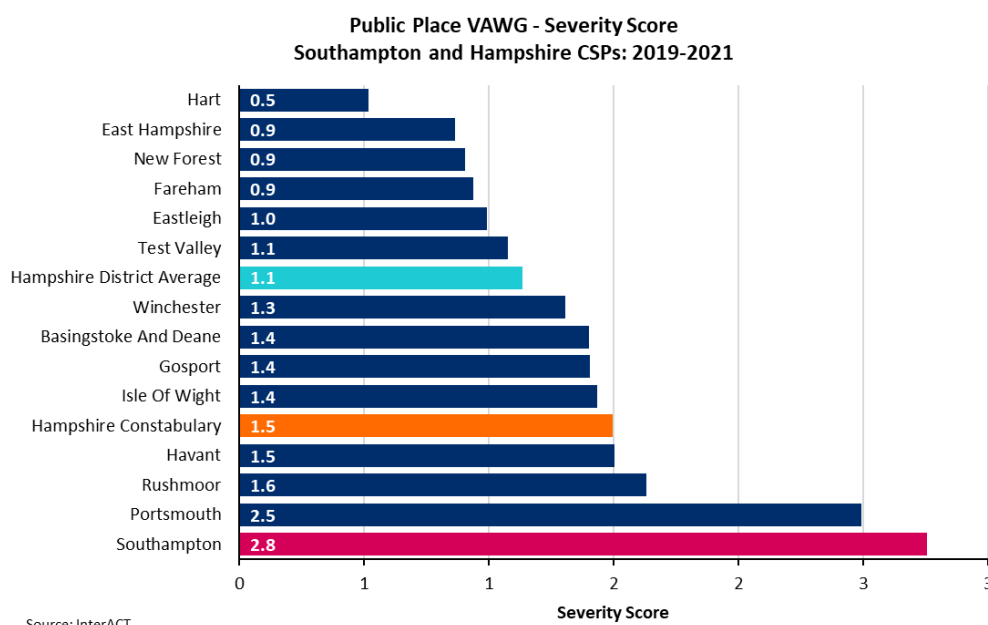


Figure 3.11 - Chart showing severity of public place VAWG for Southampton and local areas



3.1.1 Key messages

- Southampton is an outlier for violent and sexual offences, with Southampton ranked among the worse 10% of CSPs nationally for the rate of violent and sexual offences in 2020/21.
- The decline in violent crimes and sexual offences over the latest financial year has been linked to the pandemic; however, it is expected that volumes and patterns of violent and sexual offences will return to the pre-pandemic baseline for the 2021/22 reporting year and potentially higher due to the rising national profile of VAWG encouraging more women and girls to report crimes when they are experienced.
- Southampton has the highest rate among local comparators for all three VAWG definitions (overall, domestic and public place), with the Southampton rate significantly higher than the Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire district average for all definitions. This illustrates that Southampton is the area most affected by VAWG among local neighbours.
- Southampton has the highest severity score for all three VAWG definitions, with the Southampton severity score more than double the Hampshire district average for overall and public place VAWG. This suggests that Southampton has the most severe case mix of VAWG crimes among local neighbours.
- During the three-year period, Southampton accounted for around 20% (1 in 5) of VAWG crimes that occurred across the Hampshire Constabulary force area, which highlights that Southampton is a substantial VAWG hotspot.

3.2 In-depth analysis of Violence Against Women and Girls

Data presented in this section is from Hampshire Constabulary and unless stated will cover the period of 2018/19 – 2020/21. As the data is pooled over three financial years, the impact of COVID on crime statistics during 2020/21 will be minimised. This section will explore spatial, temporal, associated factor analysis and victim and offender profiling for the three definitions of VAWG to see how patterns and trends vary across the definitions.

During the three years there were 18,920 incidents of overall VAWG, 8,177 incidents of domestic VAWG and 3,526 incidents of public place VAWG. However, it is important to emphasise that these figures only include those incidents reported to the police. Additionally, not all VAWG incidents will be captured in the definitions (Figure 1.1) due to the nature of police recorded crime, however, these definitions provide one of the best measures available to examine the extent and patterns of different types of VAWG in Southampton. Caution should be taken when making comparisons between data presented in this section and section 3.1 due to the different public place VAWG definition, different data sources, population denominators and data periods.

Any spatial hotspots of VAWG in Shirley and Freemantle should be interpreted with caution, as there are key police sites located in these wards. If a crime comes through these police sites and is against the state or the location is unknown, they will be assigned to the ward where the station sits. At present it is not possible to remove these incidents from spatial analysis.

3.2.1 Spatial analysis

Overall VAWG

Bitterne (72 per 1k females), Bevois (71 per 1k females) and Redbridge (69 per 1k females) wards have the highest rate of overall VAWG incidents (2018/19 - 2020/21) and are significantly higher than the Southampton average (50 per 1k females, Figure 3.12).

Bitterne is ranked fifth among wards for severity, this suggests that whilst Bitterne has the highest rate of overall VAWG crimes, Bevois and Bargate wards have the most severe mix of overall VAWG crimes (Figure 3.13), with the severity score of overall VAWG in Bevois (29.5) and Bargate (24.7) much higher compared to the Southampton average (16.5) and other wards. This is likely due to the crime mix, with 17.4% of overall VAWG crimes in Bargate and 14.3% in Bevois being sexual offences, compared to 8.8% for Bitterne ward and 12.8% for Southampton. Sexual offences, particularly rape have some of the highest severity weightings, with the exception of some serious violent crimes such as homicide and attempted murder, which would explain why Bargate and Bevois wards have the

highest severity score among wards for overall VAWG. High volumes of sexual offences occurring in Bargate and Bevois ward have previously been linked to the night-time economy.²⁶

Figure 3.12 - Chart showing rate of overall VAWG for Southampton wards

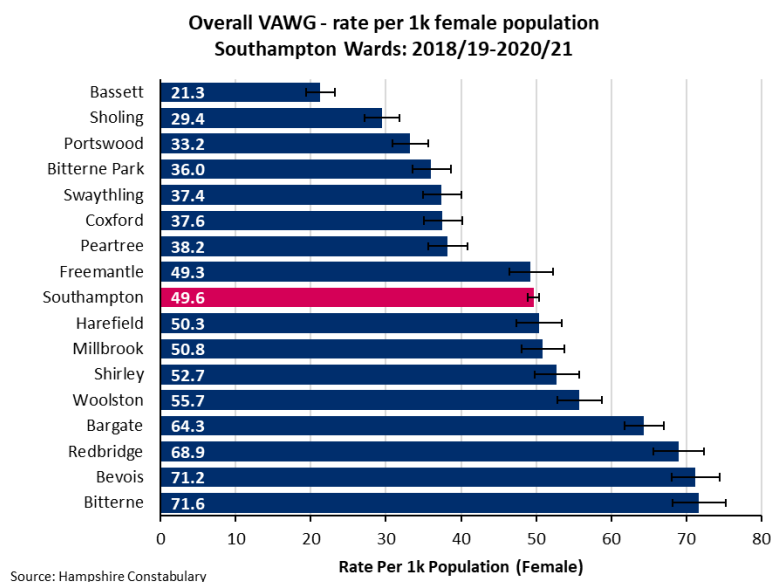
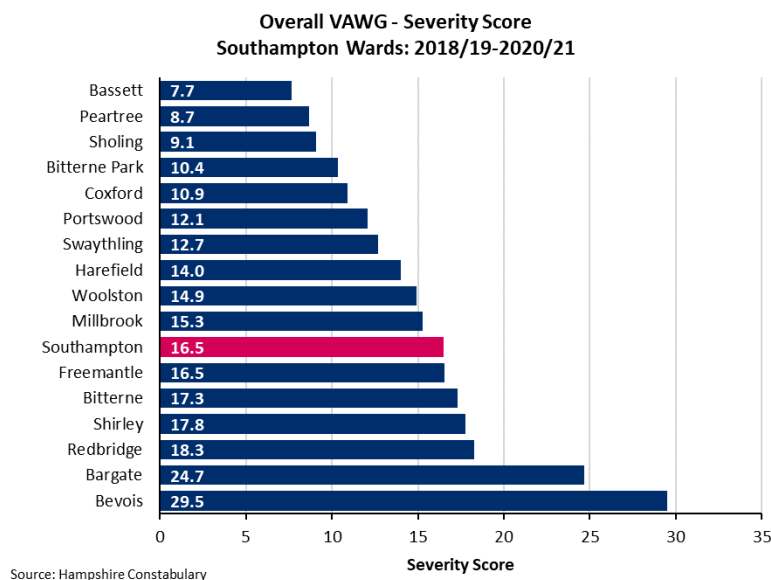


Figure 3.13 - Chart showing severity of overall VAWG for Southampton wards



²⁶ Southampton Safe City Strategic Assessment (2020/21). Online available at: https://data.southampton.gov.uk/images/safe-city-strategic-assessment-report-2020-21_tcm71-450628.pdf

Figure 3.14 shows hotspots of overall VAWG incidents, there are notable hotspots in the city centre (Bargate and Bevois), as well as in Bitterne, Woolston, Millbrook and Redbridge wards, which alongside Bevois is where some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city are located. There is a strong relationship with overall VAWG and deprivation (Figure 3.15), with the overall VAWG rate 5.8 times higher in the 20% most deprived areas in the city compared to the 20% least deprived areas.

Figure 3.14 - Heat map showing hotspots of overall VAWG in Southampton

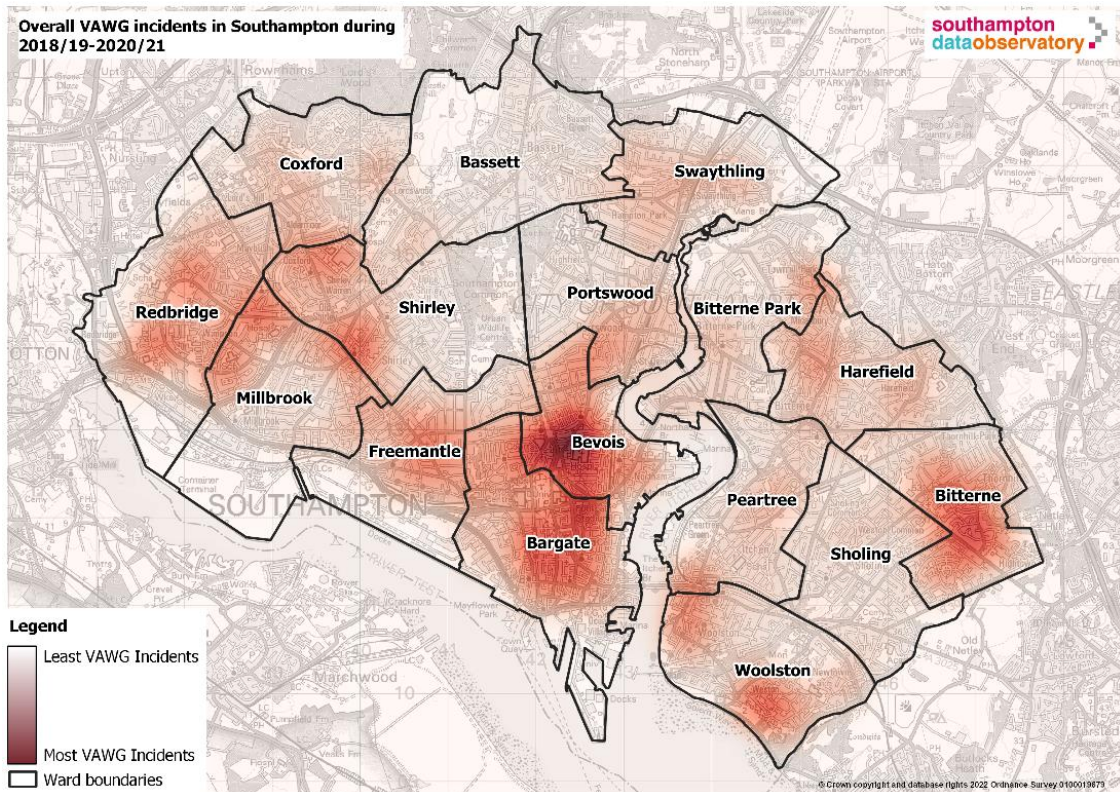
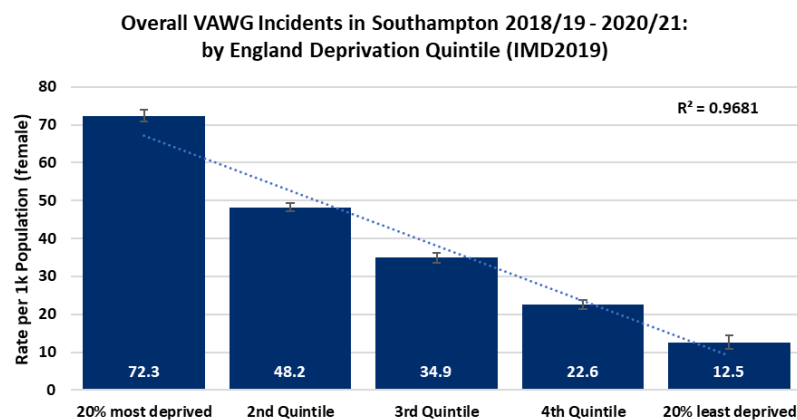


Figure 3.15 - Chart showing overall VAWG incidents in Southampton by England deprivation quintile



Source: Hampshire Constabulary

Domestic VAWG

Similar to overall VAWG, Bitterne (32 per 1k females), Redbridge (31 per 1k females) and Bevois (28 per 1k females) wards have the highest rate of domestic VAWG incidents during 2018/19 – 2020/21, with these wards significantly higher than the Southampton average (21 per 1k females, Figure 3.16). These wards also have the highest severity of domestic VAWG, except for Bitterne, which is 6th highest.

Figure 3.16 - Chart showing rate of domestic VAWG for Southampton wards

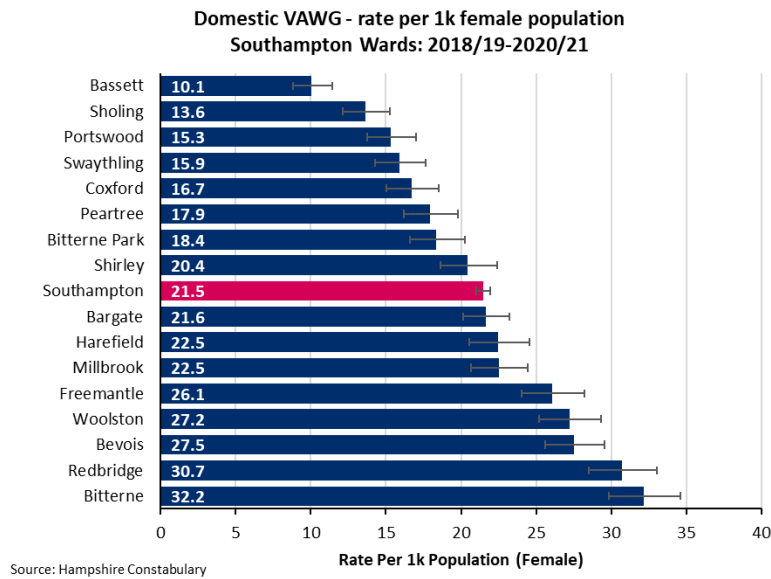
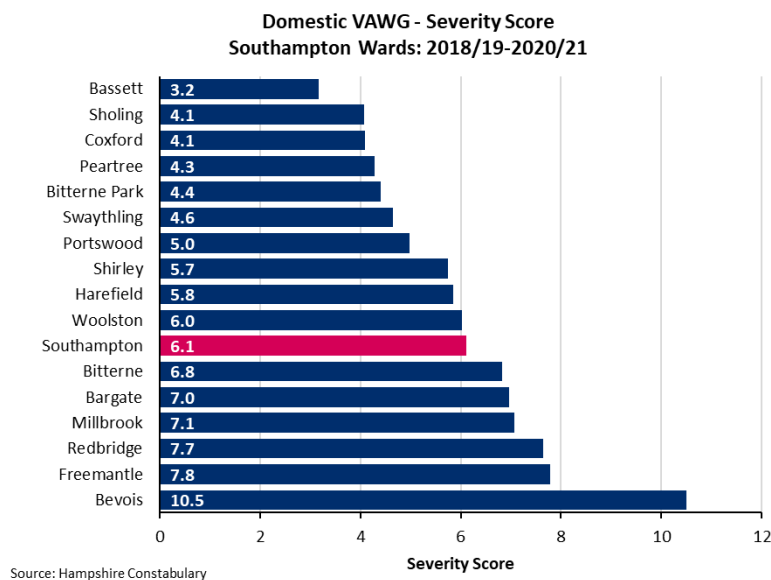


Figure 3.17 - Chart showing severity of domestic VAWG for Southampton wards



Domestic VAWG also shows a strong relationship with deprivation, with the rate of domestic VAWG 5.1 times higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the least deprived neighbourhoods (Figure 3.19). There are also notable hotspots in areas of deprivation within Bitterne, Woolston, Bevois, Millbrook and Redbridge wards (Figure 3.18).

Figure 3.18 - Heat map showing hotspots of domestic VAWG in Southampton

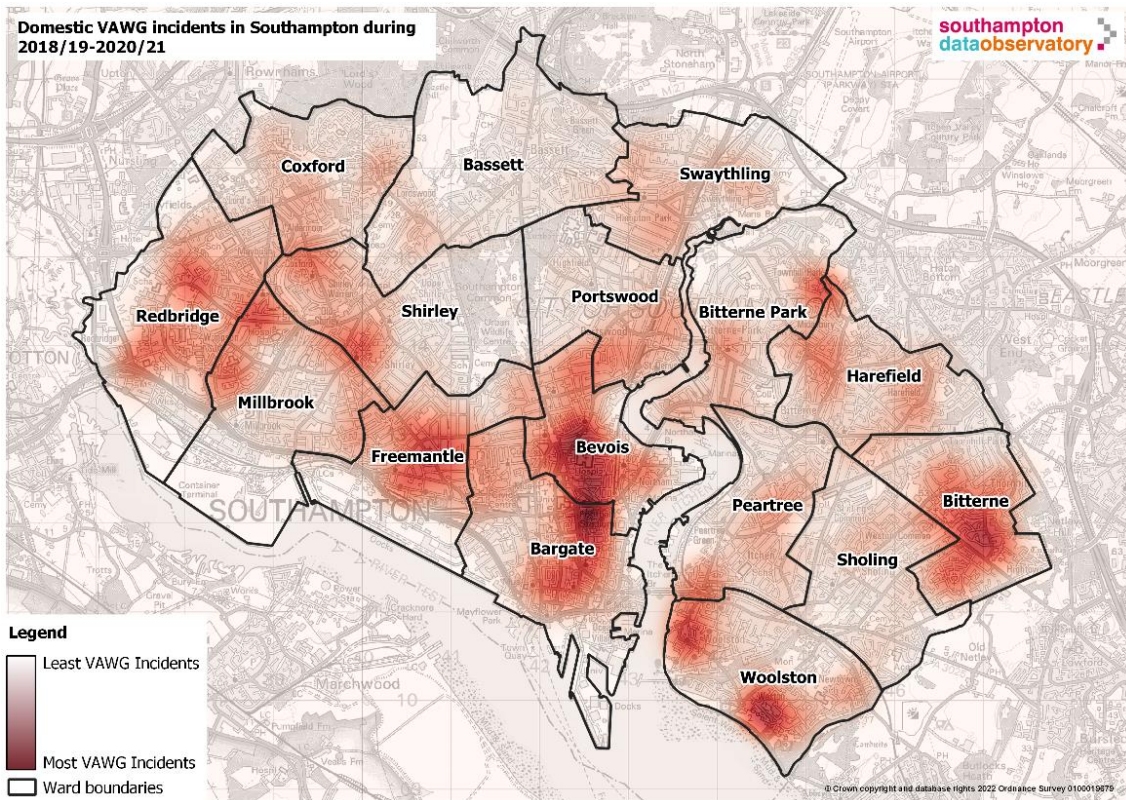
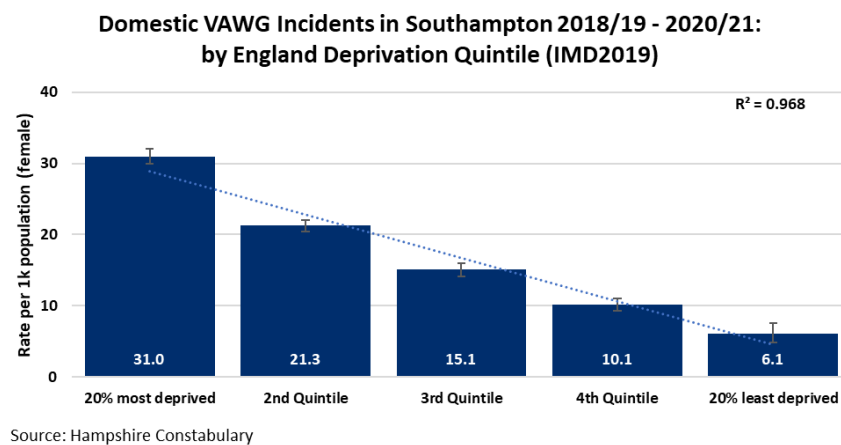


Figure 3.19 - Chart showing domestic VAWG incidents in Southampton by England deprivation quintile



Public Place VAWG

Bargate (22 per 1k females), Bevois (17 per 1k females) and Shirley (13 per 1k females) wards have the highest rate of public place VAWG incidents in 2018/19 – 2020/21 and are significantly higher than the Southampton average (9 per 1k females, Figure 3.20). Bevois, Bargate and Shirley also have the highest severity of public place VAWG, with the severity score for Bargate and Bevois more than double the Southampton average (Figure 3.21).

Figure 3.20 - Chart showing rate of public place VAWG in Southampton wards

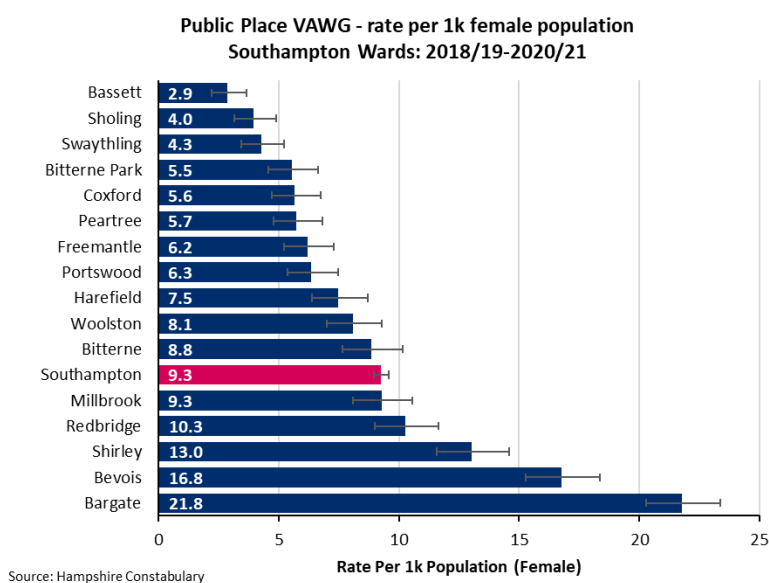
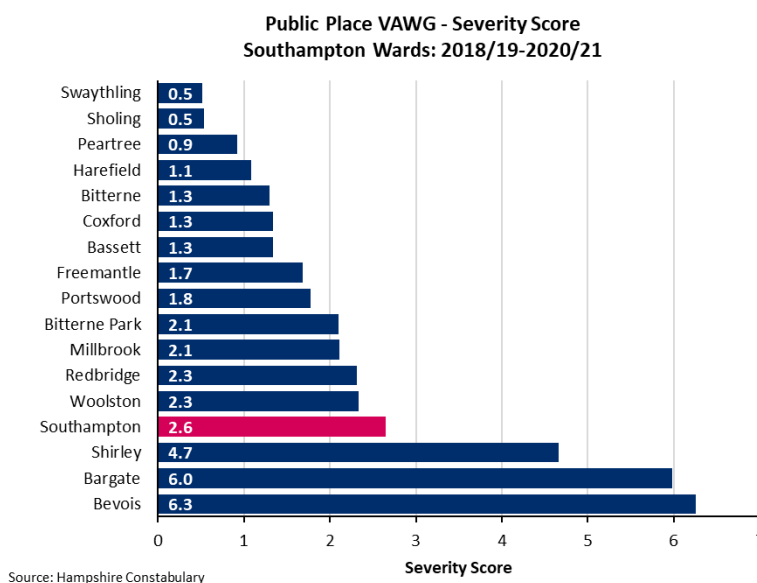


Figure 3.21 - Chart showing severity score of public place VAWG in Southampton wards



Southampton Violence Against Women and Girls Problem Profile: March 2022

Figure 3.22 shows hotspots of public place VAWG, there are notably less hotspots of public place VAWG in the city compared to overall and domestic VAWG (Figure 3.14 and Figure 3.18). The most prominent hotspots of public place VAWG are in the city centre (Bargate and Bevois wards), particularly in areas with high concentrations of night-time economy venues. Similar to overall and domestic VAWG, public place VAWG also shows a strong relationship with deprivation, with the public place VAWG rate 6.7 times higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the least deprived (Figure 3.23).

Figure 3.22 - Heat map showing hotspots of public place VAWG in Southampton

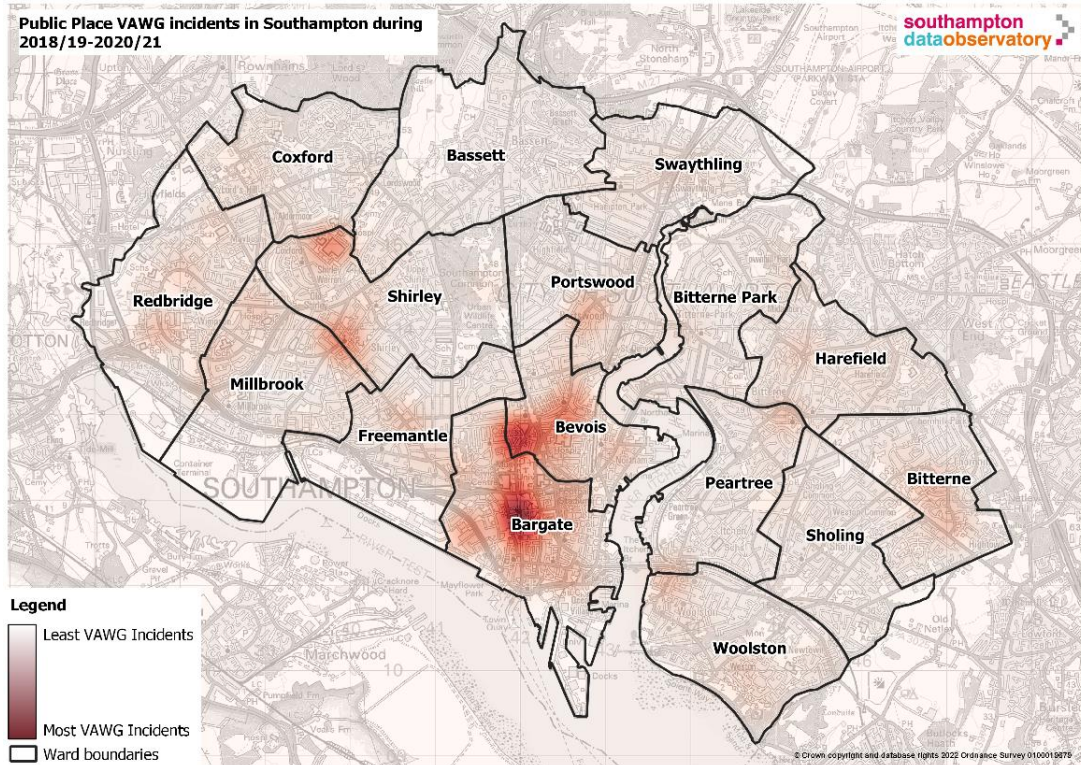
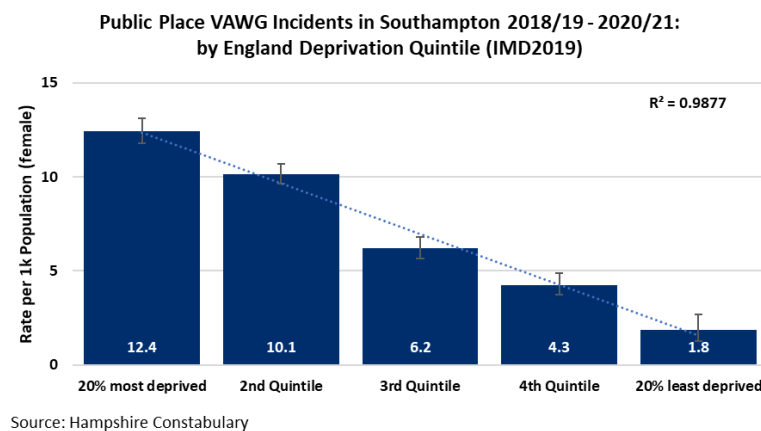


Figure 3.23 - Chart showing public place VAWG incidents in Southampton by England deprivation quintile



3.2.2 Temporal analysis

The heat maps below show peak day and times of overall VAWG (Figure 3.24), domestic VAWG (Figure 3.25) and public place VAWG (Figure 3.26) incidents. There are peaks of overall and domestic VAWG incidents at midnight on most days, which could be linked to the night-time economy, as hotspots are also observed in areas with high concentrations of night-time economy venues (Figure 3.14 and Figure 3.18).

Figure 3.24 - Heat map showing peak time and day of overall VAWG incidents

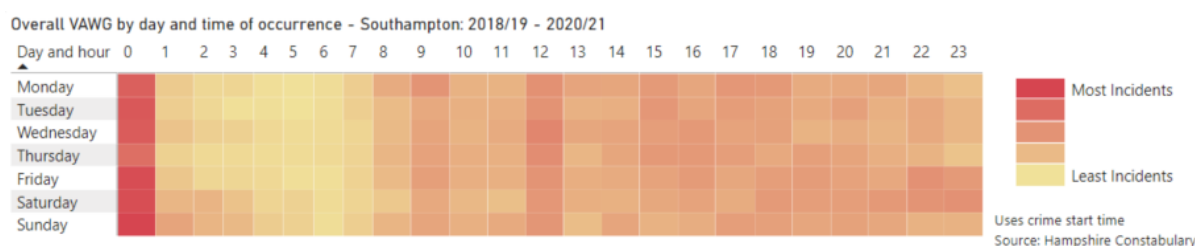
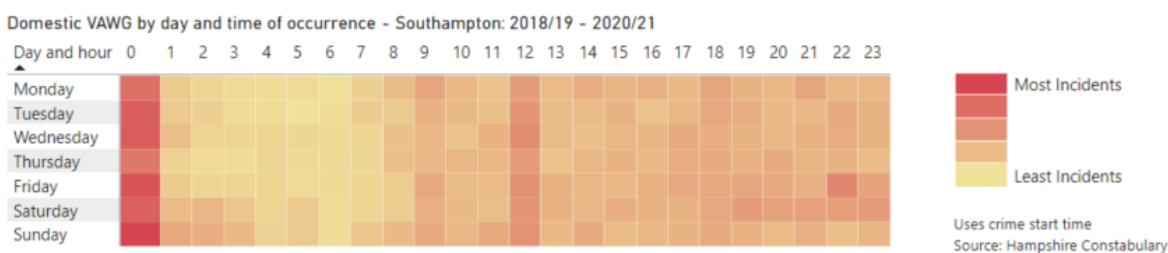


Figure 3.25 - Heat map showing peak time and day of domestic VAWG incidents

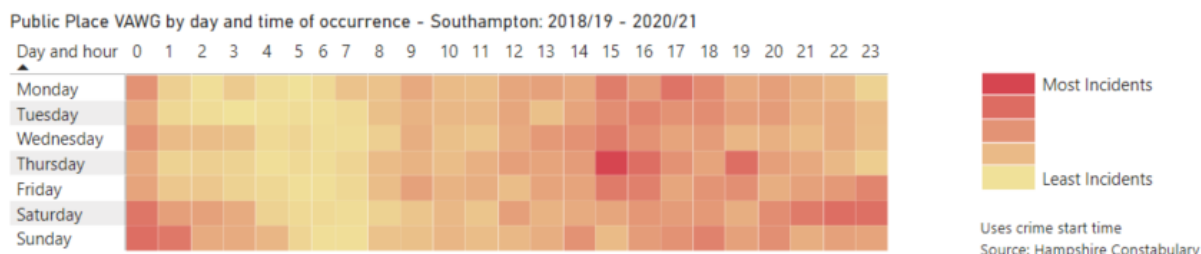


There are also peaks late at night and on the weekend for public place VAWG, with peaks at this time also likely linked to the night-time economy (Figure 3.22). However, the most notable peak for public place VAWG is at 3pm, with 257 incidents occurring at this time. A deep dive into public place VAWG incidents occurring at 3pm found that for 83% of incidents the victim/offender relationship is acquaintance (51%) or stranger (32%). The majority of these offences are violent crimes (95%), with 53% of incidents violence without injury (includes stalking and harassment) and 41% violence with injury. Additionally, victims of these incidents were skewed towards younger females, with 43% of crimes linked to a victim aged under 18. Offender profiling also found that perpetrators of public place VAWG occurring at 3pm are skewed towards younger ages, with 47% of crimes linked to perpetrators aged under 18. This suggests that the 3pm peak in public place VAWG is primarily driven by stranger/acquaintance violence among young people, which may be linked to school and college closing times.

Similar patterns were also found in the OPCC data, which showed a peak of public place VAWG at 3pm across the Hampshire Constabulary force area. A deep dive into this also found the most common victim/offender relationship to be acquaintance and stranger as well as victims skewed towards

younger age groups (under 18). This suggests that this is a force wide trend and not just exclusive to Southampton.

Figure 3.26 - Heat map showing peak time and day of public place VAWG incidents



3.2.3 Associated factors

Some crimes have associated factors (flags) recorded within the dataset, which can provide more information about a crime. It should be noted that some associated factors may be more underreported than others; however, recording is continually improving.²⁷ Crimes can also have more than one associated factor recorded.

Figure 3.27 shows the proportion of VAWG incidents with flags applied. It is important to highlight that figures in red will be skewed by the definition of VAWG, for example, all domestic VAWG incidents will have the domestic flag. These flags have been included in the table as the overall VAWG definition will not be skewed by any of the factors in the table below.

Domestic is the most common flag among overall VAWG incidents, with two fifths (43.2%) of overall VAWG flagged as domestic. This highlights that domestic VAWG is a key driver of overall VAWG in Southampton.

Almost one in four (24.5%) overall VAWG incidents occurred in a public place, highlighting that public place VAWG is also a substantial driver of VAWG in Southampton. Additionally, 14.4% of domestic VAWG is flagged as occurring in a public place, which highlights that not all domestic VAWG happens in the home.

14% of overall VAWG, 20.4% of domestic VAWG and 13.4% of public place VAWG incidents had the alcohol flag. Alcohol-affected crime has been previously linked to the night-time economy.²⁸ It is likely that some the alcohol affected VAWG is related to the night-time economy, as there are peaks in

²⁷ Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2021, Online available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2021>

²⁸ Southampton Safe City Strategic Assessment 2020/21. Online available at: https://data.southampton.gov.uk/images/safe-city-strategic-assessment-report-2020-21_tcm71-450628.pdf

incidents late on the weekend and hotspots in night-time economy areas of the city centre (see section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2).

Domestic VAWG had the highest proportion of incidents flagged as alcohol related across the VAWG definitions. Alcohol consumption (at harmful and hazardous levels) is a major contributor to the occurrence of intimate partner violence, with well-established links between the two.²⁹ Domestic VAWG (4.9%) also had the highest proportion of incidents flagged as drug related compared to overall (3.2%) and public place (2.4%) VAWG.

The proportion of VAWG incidents that are knife enabled are relatively low. However, it is important to emphasise that knife enabled violence can cause significant harm. Domestic VAWG has the highest proportion of knife enabled incidents (2%, 160 crimes) compared to other VAWG definitions.

VAWG incidents flagged as a hate crime for the three definitions are relatively low. Public place VAWG (4.1%) has the highest proportion of incidents across the definitions flagged as a hate crime. This is unsurprising as hate crime often occurs in a public place, with 69% of all hate crime incidents during the three-year period occurring in a public place. It is also important to note that the Home Office are intending to pilot the creation of an additional characteristic to the existing list of hate crime strands, where the victim perceives the crime to have been motivated by a hostility based on their sex.^{30 31}

Figure 3.27 - Table showing percentage of VAWG incidents with flags (associated factors) by definition (overall, domestic and public place)

Flag	Overall VAWG	Domestic VAWG	Public place VAWG
Domestic	43.2%	100%	0%
Public place	24.5%	14.4%	98.2%
Licenced premises	3.4%	1.4%	15.1%
Alcohol	14.0%	20.4%	13.4%
Drugs	3.2%	4.9%	2.4%
Knife enabled	1.4%	2.0%	1.2%
Hate crime	1.6%	0.2%	4.1%

²⁹ World Health Organisation. Intimate partner violence and alcohol. Online available at: https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/factsheets/fs_intimate.pdf

³⁰ Home Office – Hate Crime in England and Wales (2020/21), Online available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021>

³¹ The five strands of hate crime monitored prior to April 2021 include: Race or ethnicity; Religion or beliefs; Sexual orientation; Disability; and transgender identity.

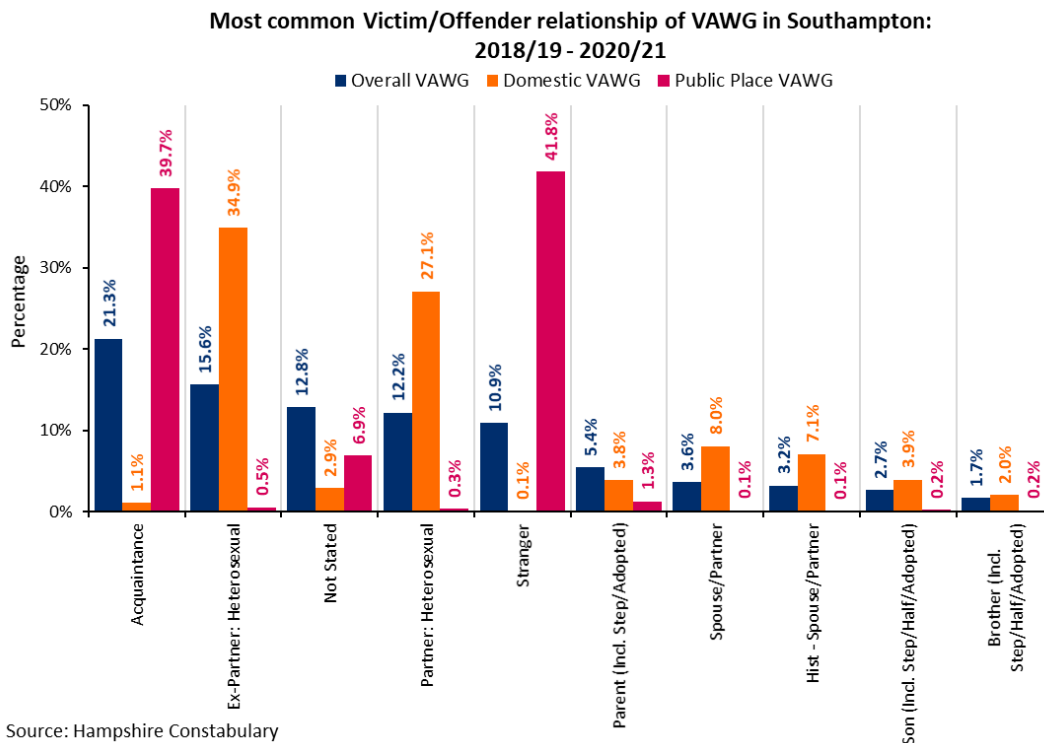
3.2.4 Victim and Offender profiling

Figure 3.28 shows the relationship between victims and offenders for the three definitions of VAWG. The most common victim/offender relationship for overall VAWG incidents is acquaintance (21.3%), followed by ex-partner: heterosexual (15.6%).

Ex-partner: heterosexual (34.9%) and partner: heterosexual (27.1%) are the most common relationships for domestic VAWG, with proportions for these relationships significantly higher for domestic VAWG compared to overall and public place VAWG. Dominance of the above victim/offender relationships (ex-partner and partner) for domestic VAWG is unsurprising due to the nature of domestic abuse, with intimate partner violence one of the most common forms of domestic abuse³².

However, the victim/offender relationship for public place VAWG is considerably different compared to domestic VAWG, with stranger (41.8%) and acquaintance (39.7%) collectively accounting for 81.5% of public place VAWG incidents; significantly higher compared to proportions for domestic and overall VAWG.

Figure 3.28 - Chart showing victim/offender relationship of all VAWG definitions



³² World Health Organisation (2012). Intimate Partner Violence. Online available at: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf

Victims

Figure 3.29 shows the number of unique victims and repeat victims³³ for the different VAWG definitions. It is important to highlight that overall VAWG will include domestic and public place VAWG, but also those incidents that are outside of the domestic and public place VAWG definitions. There were 10,682 unique victims identified for the 18,920 overall VAWG incidents in Southampton during 2018/19 - 2020/21 (Figure 3.29).

Figure 3.29 - Table showing unique victims and repeat victims of all VAWG definitions

VAWG definition	Unique victims	Repeat victims
Overall	10,682	3,541
Domestic	4,779	1,722
Public place	2,867	418

Figure 3.30 shows the age breakdown of victims for the different VAWG definitions. The most common age groups for overall VAWG victims were 25-34 (26.3%), 35-49 (23.5%), 18-24 (21.3%) and under 18 (20.4%).

Those aged 25-34 (33.7%), 35-49 (28.0%) and 18-24 (23.6%) made up the largest groups of domestic VAWG victims. This is in line with findings from the [Southampton Community Safety Strategic Assessment](#), which has consistently highlighted the above victim age groups for domestic-abuse related crimes. Under 18's accounted for 6.4% of domestic VAWG victims. However, it is important to emphasise that this only includes under 18's that are direct victims of domestic VAWG and not those related to or under parental responsibility of either the victim or perpetrator, as recognised under the Domestic Abuse Act.³⁴ Therefore, the above figure does not illustrate the impact of domestic VAWG on children in Southampton and shouldn't be interpreted as under 18's being least affected by domestic VAWG, as 61% of High-Risk Domestic Abuse cases had under 18's in the household (April 2021 – December 2021), which represented 858 child victims.

Those aged 25-34 (23.9%), 18-24 (23.4%), 35-49 (21.9%) and under 18 (19.8%) were the victim age groups most affected by public place VAWG.

The majority of VAWG victims were white regardless of definition, however, the proportion of unknown ethnicity remains high and therefore differences should be interpreted with caution (Figure 3.31).

³³ Only includes victims with a valid age and sex

³⁴ Home Office – Domestic Abuse Act Factsheet (2022). Online Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/statutory-definition-of-domestic-abuse-factsheet>

Demographic profiling of VAWG victims illustrates that VAWG can affect women and girls of any age and from all walks of life.

Figure 3.30 - Chart showing age profile VAWG victims ³⁵

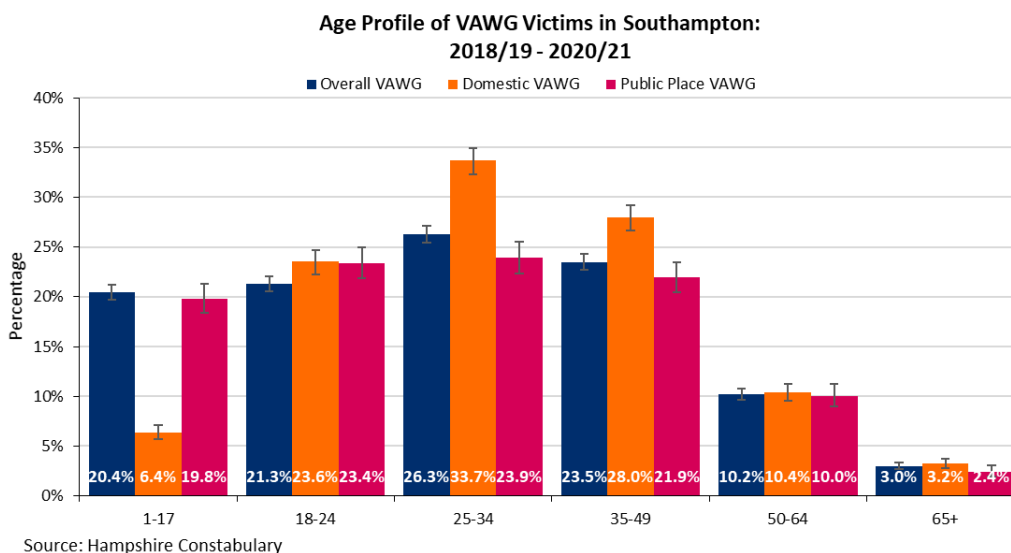
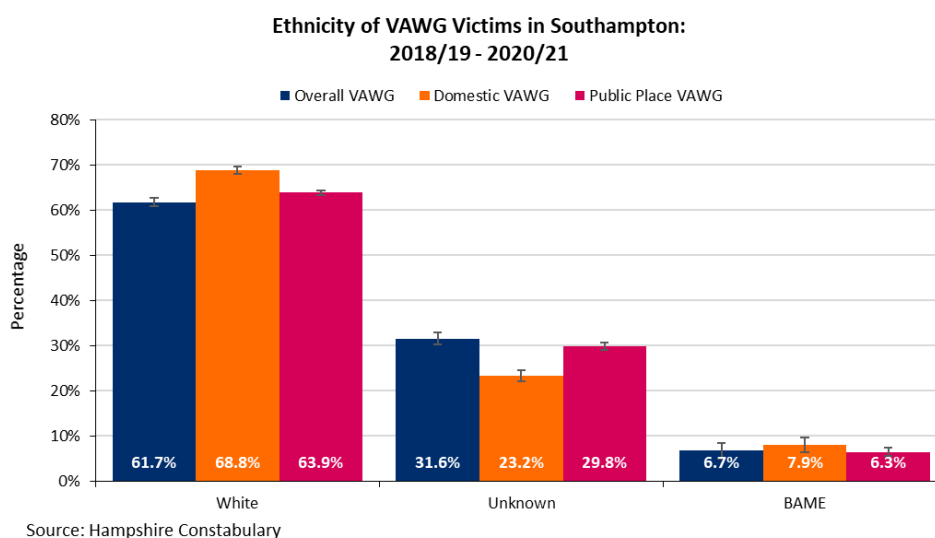


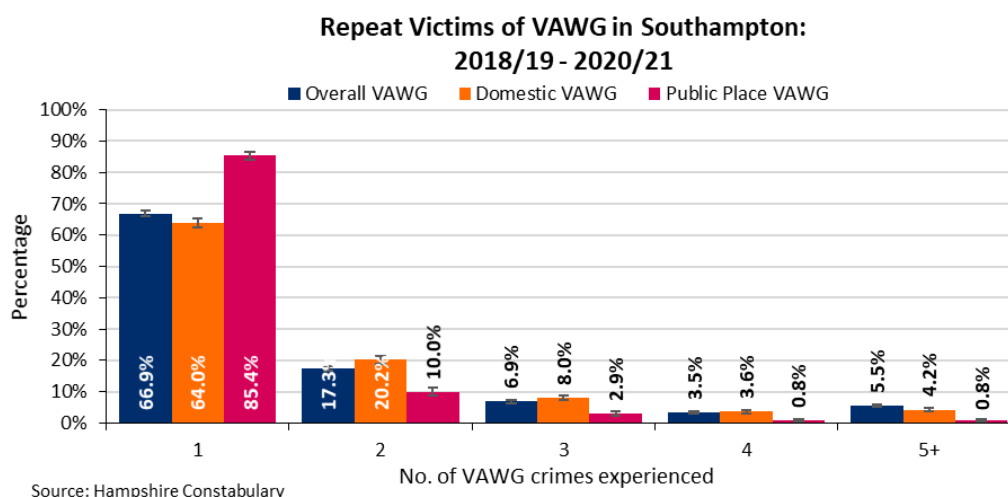
Figure 3.31 - Chart showing ethnicity of VAWG victims



³⁵ A victim may be counted more than once if they have moved age groups, however this affects a small number of records

Figure 3.32 shows the proportion of repeat victims for the different VAWG definitions. Repeat victimisation is highest for victims of domestic VAWG, with 36% of domestic VAWG victims experiencing more than one domestic VAWG crime in the three-year period. This is significantly higher than and more than double the proportion of repeat victims of public place VAWG (14.6% are repeat victims).

Figure 3.32 - Chart showing repeat victims of VAWG



Offenders

Figure 3.33 shows the number of unique offenders and repeat offenders³⁶ for the different VAWG definitions. A total of 8,603 offenders were identified, with these individuals linked to 14,922 overall VAWG incidents.

However, it is important to highlight that not all VAWG incidents have an identified suspect or offender. 23.5% of overall VAWG, 10% of domestic VAWG and 38.4% of public place VAWG incidents did not have a suspect or offender linked to the incident. This is in line with findings from victim/offender relationship profiling, with stranger and acquaintance accounting for the majority of public place VAWG victim/offender relationships (Figure 3.28), therefore it would be expected to have the highest proportion of incidents where there is not an identified suspect or offender.

³⁶ Only includes identified suspects/offenders with a valid age and sex

Figure 3.33 - Table showing unique offenders and repeat offenders of all VAWG definitions³⁷

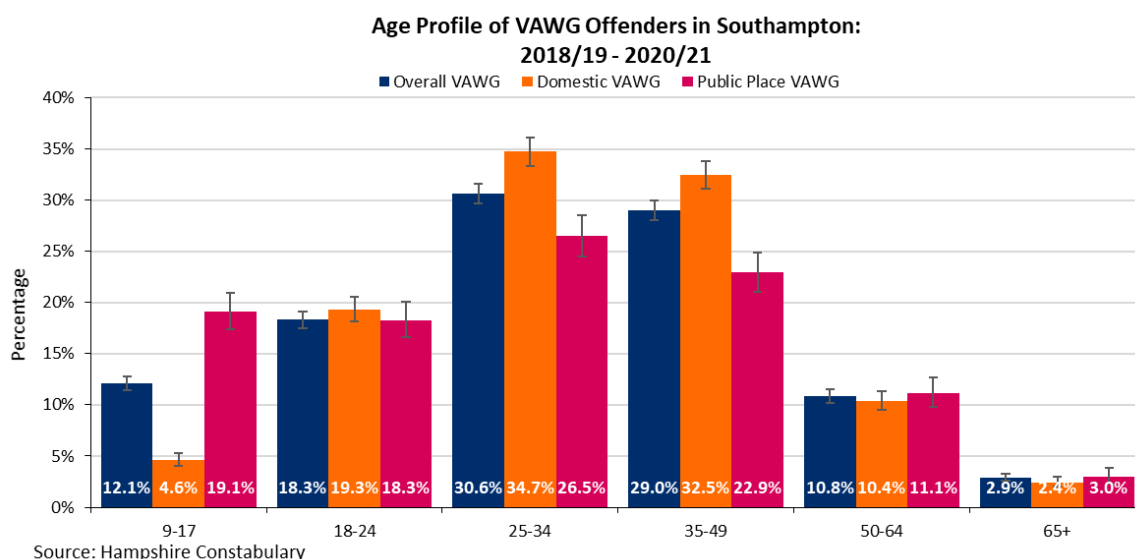
VAWG definition	Unique offenders	Repeat offenders
Overall	8,603	3,005
Domestic	4,462	1,568
Public place	1,886	335

Those aged 25-34 (30.6%), 35-49 (29%) and 18-24 (18.3%) were the top three offender age groups for overall VAWG (Figure 3.34), which is in line with victim profiling.

Offender age profiling of domestic VAWG is also similar to victim profiling, with those aged 25-34 (34.7%), 35-49 (32.5%) and 18-24 (19.3%) making up the largest group of domestic VAWG offenders. 4.6% of domestic VAWG offenders were aged 9-17.

Offenders aged 25-34 (26.5%), 35-49 (22.9%), 9-17 (19.1%) and 18-24 (18.3%) made up the largest groups of public place VAWG offenders, with these age groups also highlighted in victim profiling of public place VAWG (Figure 3.30).

Figure 3.34 - Chart showing age profile of VAWG offenders³⁸



³⁷ Only includes identified suspects and offenders with a valid age and sex

³⁸ An offender may be counted more than once if they have moved age groups, however this affects a small number of records

Gender profiling of VAWG offenders shows that overall VAWG is primarily driven by male on female violence, with males accounting for 72.3% of offenders and females 27.7%. Similar patterns are observed for domestic VAWG, with males accounting for 89% of offenders and females 11%. However, public place VAWG shows a different picture with 56.2% of offenders male and 43.8% of offenders female, this suggests that public place VAWG is also driven by female on female violence, as well as male on female violence. Similar to victims, the majority of VAWG offenders (all definitions) are white, with a high proportion of ethnicity unknown (Figure 3.36).

Figure 3.35 - Chart showing gender profile of VAWG offenders

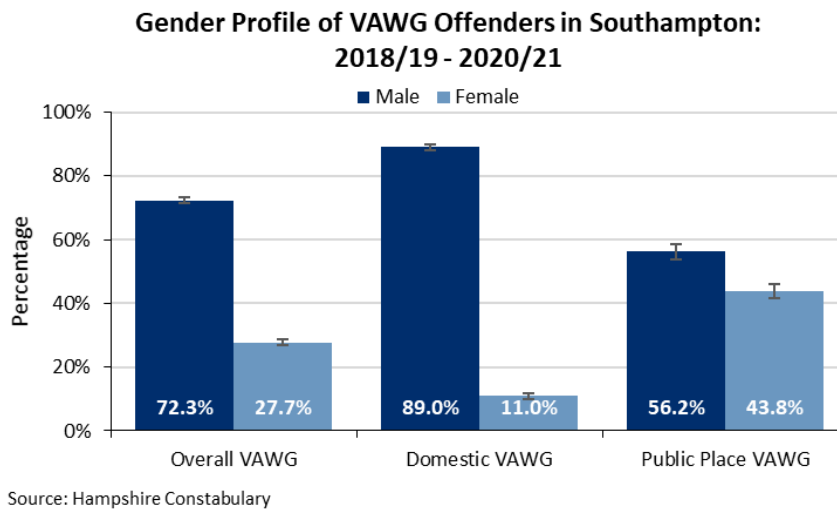
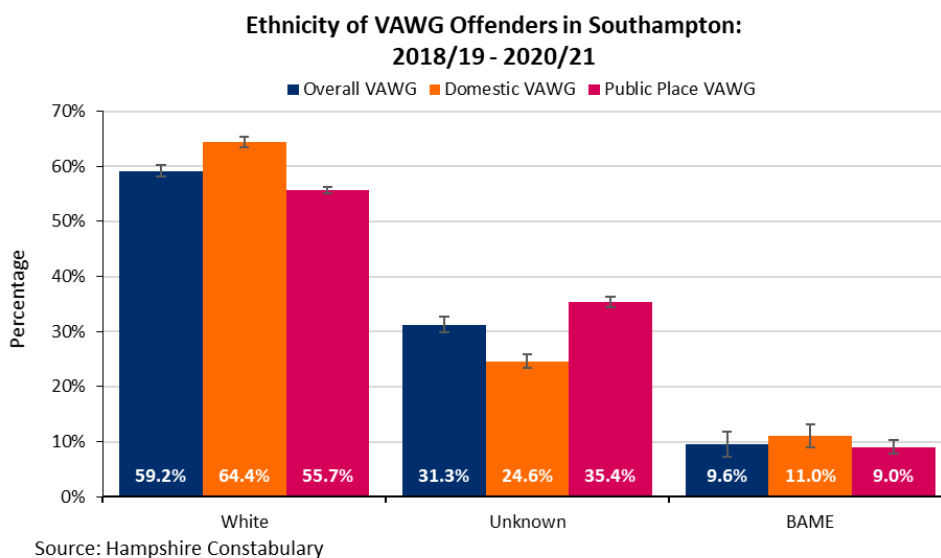
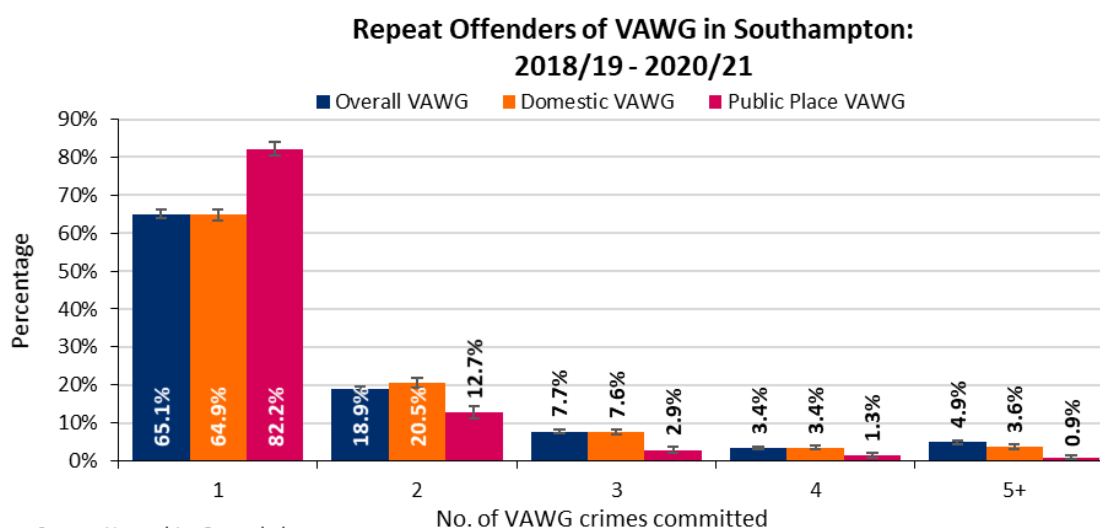


Figure 3.36 - Chart showing ethnicity of VAWG offenders



35.1% of domestic VAWG offenders committed more than one domestic VAWG offence during the three-year period. This is significantly higher than the proportion of public place VAWG repeat offenders, where 17.8% of public place VAWG offenders committed more than one public place VAWG offence. This is in line with victim profiling, with victims of domestic VAWG more likely to be repeat victims than public place VAWG.

Figure 3.37 – Chart showing repeat offenders of VAWG



3.2.5 Key messages

- Bitterne, Redbridge and Bevois wards had the highest rates of overall and domestic VAWG, with Bargate, Bevois and Shirley having the highest rates of public place VAWG.
- The severity of VAWG generally aligned to where rates were highest. Any significant variation is likely due to differences in the crime mix between wards.
- All VAWG definitions showed a strong link with deprivation, with rates of VAWG (regardless of definition) over five times higher in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the city, compared to the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods.
- There is likely a link between VAWG incidents and the night-time economy. This is evidenced through hotspot mapping highlighting concentrations of VAWG incidents occurring in parts of the city centre where a large number of night-time economy venues are located;
- Additionally, temporal profiling highlighted peaks of incidents occurring late at night and on weekends. Analysis of associated factors highlighted that 14% of overall VAWG, 1 in 5 (20.4%) domestic VAWG and 13.4% of public place VAWG incidents had alcohol recorded as a factor. Alcohol is a known driver of violence, particularly intimate partner violence, which would explain levels of alcohol related domestic VAWG incidents.

- Temporal analysis highlighted a peak of public place VAWG incidents occurring at 3pm. Further investigation found that this peak is primarily driven by stranger/acquaintance violence among young people, which may be linked to school and college closing times. However, this is a force wide trend and not exclusive to Southampton; analysis of OPCC data also highlighted a 3pm peak in public place VAWG driven by stranger/acquaintance violence among young people.
- Victim and offender relationship profiling highlighted that public place VAWG is primarily driven by stranger and acquaintance violence. Whereas domestic VAWG is driven by intimate partner violence. Overall VAWG had a more varied mix of offender/victim relationships, which is likely due to the wide scope of the definition.
- Victim profiling highlighted that VAWG can affect women and girls of any age and from all walks of life.
- Although the proportion of domestic VAWG victims aged under 18 was lower than other VAWG definitions, it is important to emphasise that this does not represent the impact of domestic VAWG on children in Southampton, as children related to or under parental responsibility of either the victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse are recognised as victims in their own right under the Domestic Abuse Act. Witnessing or experiencing domestic abuse as a child is an adverse childhood experience, and children experiencing these are more likely to have poorer outcomes, particularly those relating to health, education and crime. Additionally, witnessing gender-based violence is a risk factor of VAWG (Figure 1.3).
- Victims of domestic VAWG (36%) were more than twice as likely to be repeat victims compared to public place VAWG (14.6%). Similar patterns were also found in offender profiling, with 35.1% of domestic VAWG offenders committing more than one offence, compared to 17.8% of public place VAWG offenders. Repeat victimisation and offending of domestic abuse-related crimes has been consistently highlighted as an issue as part of the [Southampton Community Safety Strategic Assessment](#).
- Gender profiling of VAWG offenders found that overall VAWG is primarily driven by male on female violence, with males accounting for 72.3% and females 27.7% of offenders. Similar patterns were observed for domestic VAWG, with males accounting for 89% of offenders and females 11%. However, 56.2% of public place VAWG offenders were male and 43.8% female, this suggests that public place VAWG is also driven by female on female violence, as well as male on female violence.

3.3 Survey analysis

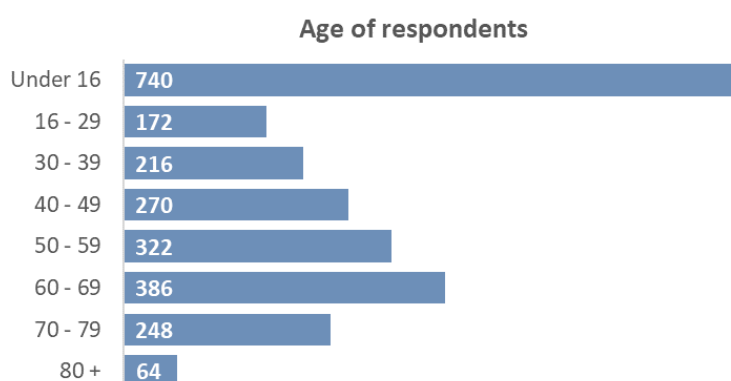
Each year a survey is conducted to understand the views of people living, studying and working in Southampton on community safety issues. The 2021 Southampton Community Safety survey ran from 27th August 2021 to 27th September 2021. The survey was promoted through the Southampton City Council communities’ team and the Southampton People’s Panel. The survey was predominantly online, but face to face surveys were also conducted by the communities’ team. The survey had a total of 2,551 valid responses.

Due to the self-selecting nature of an online survey, participants may have more interest in community safety issues than the general population, and possibly different views. It should also be noted that results presented are based on unweighted data to enable comparisons with previous years, but due to methodological differences between surveys, any differences should be interpreted with caution.

It should also be emphasised that this survey ran between August and September 2021, whereas published police recorded crime in this profile covers the period of 2018 to 2021. Therefore, caution should be taken when making comparisons between resident’s views and police recorded crime statistics, because differences could be due to different data periods. Additionally, the 2021 survey was conducted several months after covid restrictions were eased across the UK; therefore, this may have also affected respondents’ views on community safety.

Figure 3.38, Figure 3.39 and Figure 3.40 show the demographic breakdown of respondents. The largest respondent age group was those aged under 16, with this age group accounting for 31% of respondents. There were more female respondents than male, but overall a good representation from both sexes. The majority of respondents were white (90%), with 10% from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Figure 3.38 - Chart showing age breakdown of survey respondents



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey

Figure 3.39 - Chart showing sex of survey respondents

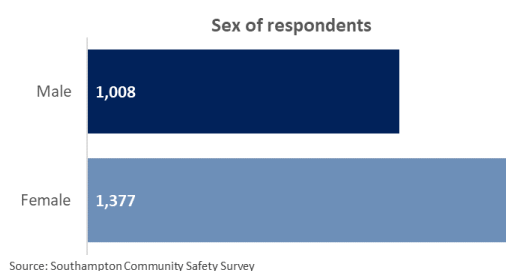
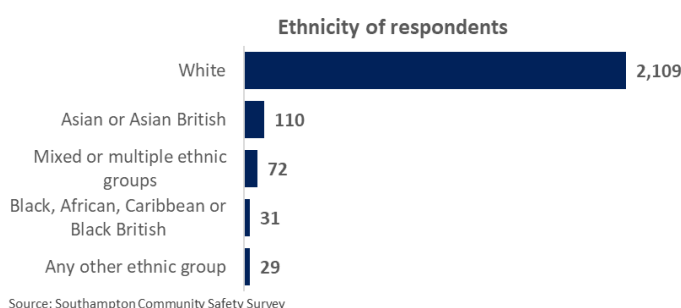


Figure 3.40 - Chart showing ethnicity of survey respondents



Feelings of safety in Southampton

The majority of respondents in the most recent survey (2021) felt safe during the day, both in their local area (84%) and in the city centre (77%). However, feelings of safety after dark continue to be lower, with 41% of respondents feeling safe after dark in their local area and 27% feeling safe after dark in the city centre.

Female respondents felt significantly more unsafe than males after dark, in both their local area and in the city centre (Figure 3.41). One third (33%) of females felt safe after dark in their local area compared to over half of males (52%). Less than 1 in 5 females (19%) felt safe in the city centre after dark, compared with almost two-fifths (38%) of males. Figure 3.42 and Figure 3.43 shows feelings of safety among females after dark by age band. Young working age (16-29 and 30-39) females felt the most unsafe after dark in both their local area and the city centre. It is important to highlight that for some age bands numbers are small, therefore differences should be interpreted with caution. The above findings are a re-occurring theme as previous community safety and city surveys have also found females to feel more unsafe than males after dark.

However, feelings of safety after dark for females are not just an issue in Southampton; a recent national ONS survey found that females feel significantly more unsafe after dark than males. The survey also highlighted females aged 16-34 years felt less safe compared to females in other age groups, which is in line with the above findings. The survey also asked about feelings of safety during the day and after dark when walking alone in different settings, these include a quiet street close to home, busy public space and park or other open space (Figure 3.44); females feel twice as unsafe after

dark than males in all settings, particularly in a park or other open space, with four out of five women feeling unsafe in this setting, compared to two out of five men feeling unsafe.³⁹

Figure 3.41 - Chart showing how safe male and female respondents feel during the day and after dark in their local area and the city centre compared to the survey average (overall)

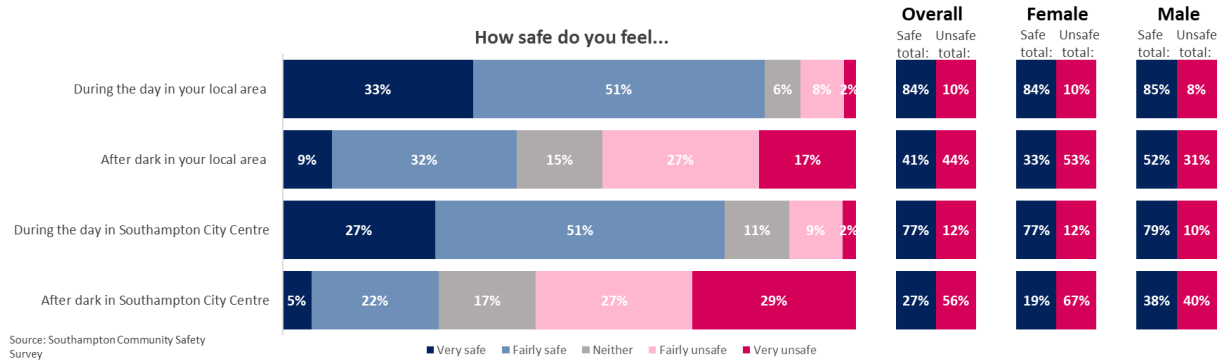
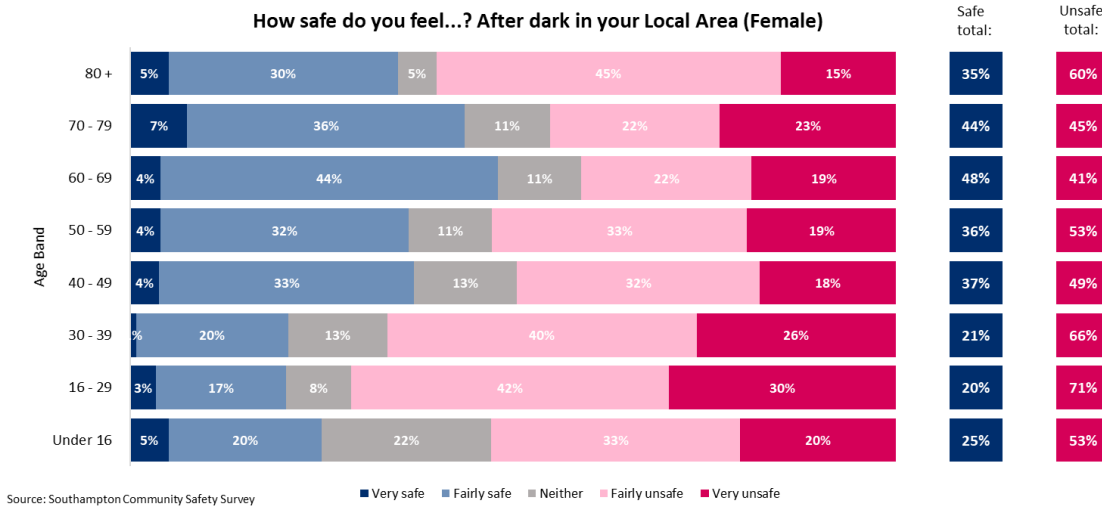


Figure 3.42 - Chart showing how safe female respondents feel in their local area by age band



³⁹ Office for National Statistics – Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain: 2 to 27 June 2021, Online available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/perceptionsofpersonalsafetyandexperiencesofharassmentgreatbritain/2to27june2021>

Figure 3.43 - Chart showing how safe female respondents feel in the city centre area by age band

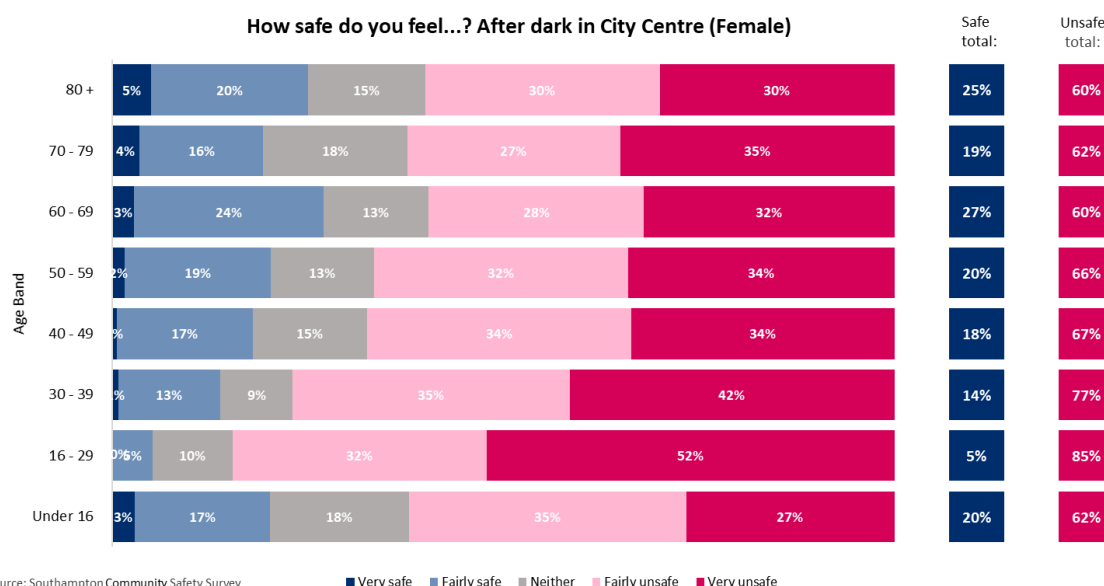


Figure 3.44 - Table showing proportion of males and females that felt unsafe after dark in different settings

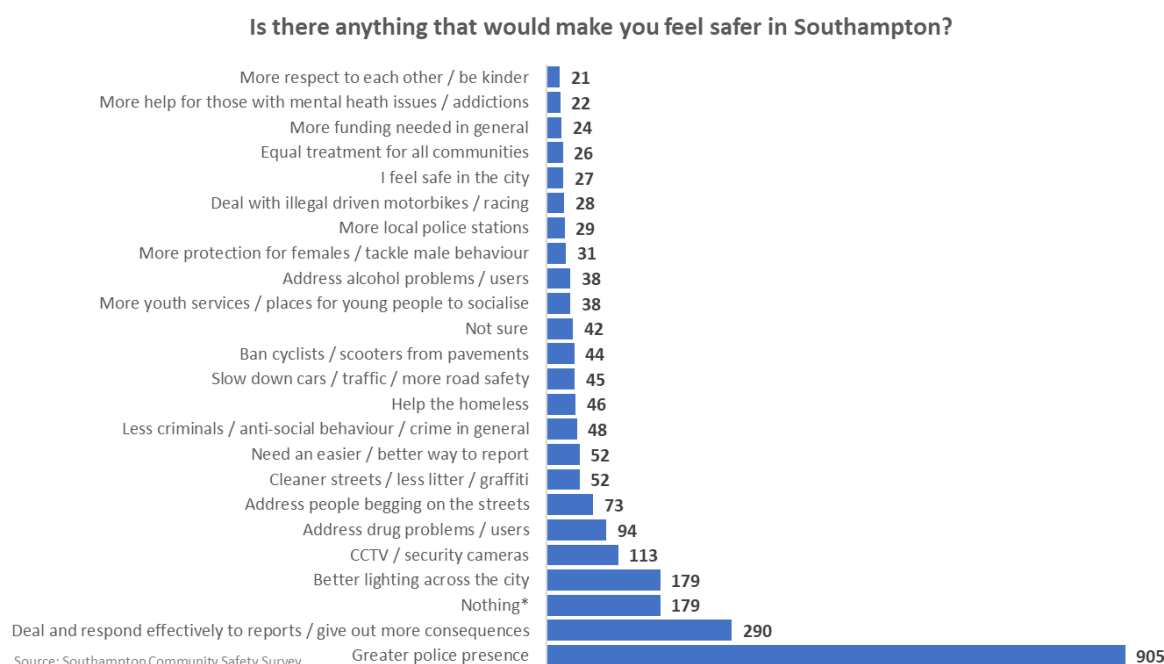
Setting	Male	Female
Quiet street close to home (after dark)	14.6%	48.7%
Busy public space (after dark)	19.4%	48.7%
Park or other open space (after dark)	38.8%	81.3%

Respondents were also asked what would make them feel safer in Southampton, there were 1,739 responses to this question. The top themes highlighted by respondents are shown in Figure 3.45, the largest response was around a greater police presence, with over half (52%, 905 respondents) stating that this would make them feel safer. Other common responses include:

- Deal and respond effectively to reports/more consequences
- Better lighting across the city
- Nothing (please note that this can be interpreted in several ways, see footnote for caveats on interpretation)⁴⁰
- CCTV/security cameras

⁴⁰ It is important to note that this comment framework could be interpreted in several ways. The framework describes respondents that have responded 'nothing' or 'no' to this question and could cover those that already feel safe; therefore, nothing would make them feel safer or those that do not feel safe and nothing would make them feel safer.

Figure 3.45 - Chart showing top responses to the question on what would make respondents feel safer in Southampton



Perceived community safety issues and reporting of crime

Figure 3.46 shows what respondents perceived to be the biggest issues in their local area. It is important to highlight that people’s perceptions of issues are likely influenced by the visibility of crime, people’s personal experiences and the media.

One in three respondents felt that VAWG (36%), domestic abuse (33%) and sexual assault (33%) is an issue in their local area and 29% felt that stalking and harassment is an issue in their local area. The above crimes are known to disproportionately impact women and girls. Domestic abuse experienced a 6-percentage point increase in respondents reporting this to be an issue between the 2020 and 2021 surveys, which potentially suggests rising awareness of this issue in the city. However, it is also worth highlighting that over a third of respondents answered ‘don’t know’ for VAWG (39%), sexual assault (36%), domestic abuse (46%) and stalking and harassment (43%), which could be interpreted as a low awareness of these crimes in the city, despite the increase in respondents feeling domestic abuse is an issue in the city over the last year (Figure 3.46).



Figure 3.46 - Chart showing respondents perceptions of issues in their local area

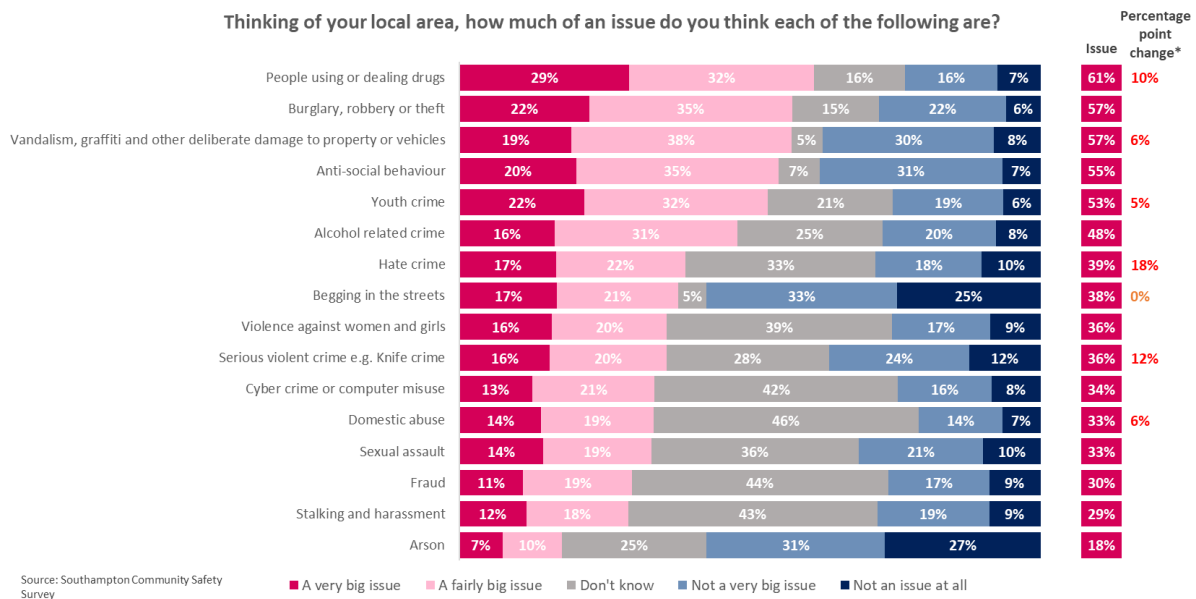
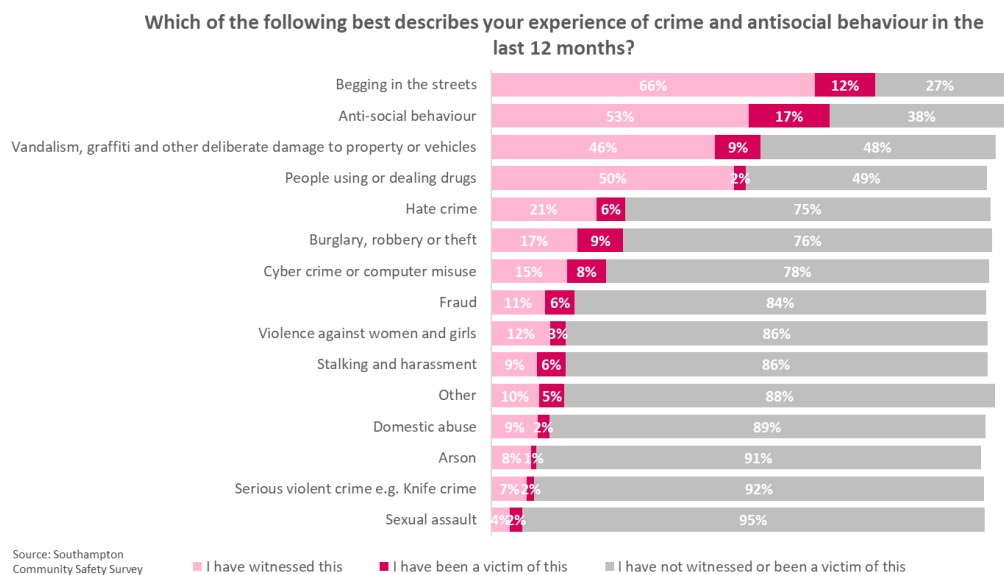


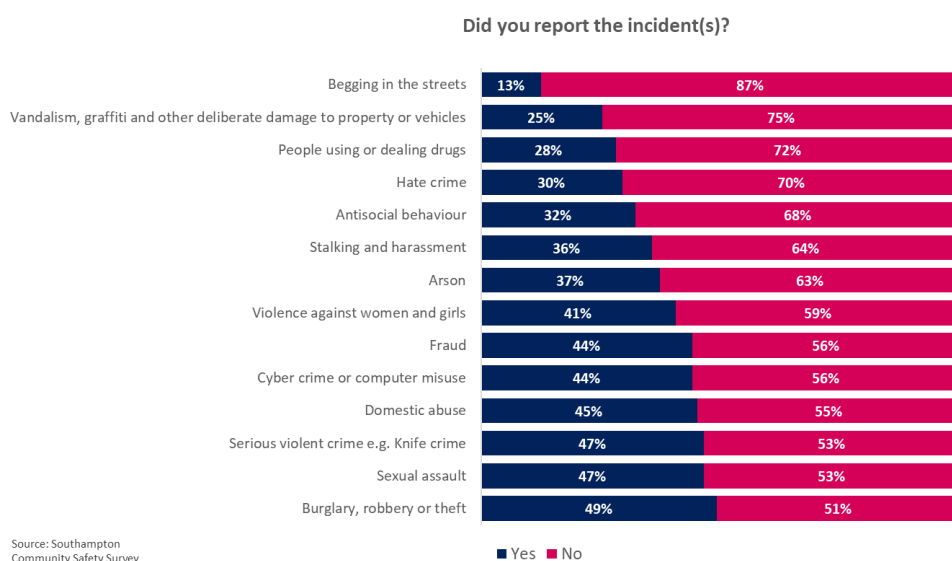
Figure 3.47 shows respondents' experiences of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months. It is important to note that this question is multiple choice, so respondents could have witnessed and/or been a victim of the crime grouping. It is important to highlight that the survey is self-selecting, and certain nature of offence groups are more 'hidden' than others, for example domestic abuse is often a hidden crime and not easily identified.

Figure 3.47 - Chart showing respondents experiences of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months



If respondents had witnessed or been a victim of the crime group selected, they were then asked if they reported the incident/s. Figure 3.48 shows reporting of incidents by crime group and illustrates that over half of respondents did not report the incident when witnessed or experienced for all crime groups. Most notably, over half of respondents are not reporting offences that disproportionately impact women and girls, these include VAWG (59%), sexual assaults (53%), domestic abuse (55%) and stalking and harassment (64%) when witnessing or a victim of these crimes.

Figure 3.48 - Chart showing proportion of respondents that reported crimes when witnessed or a victim of by crime group

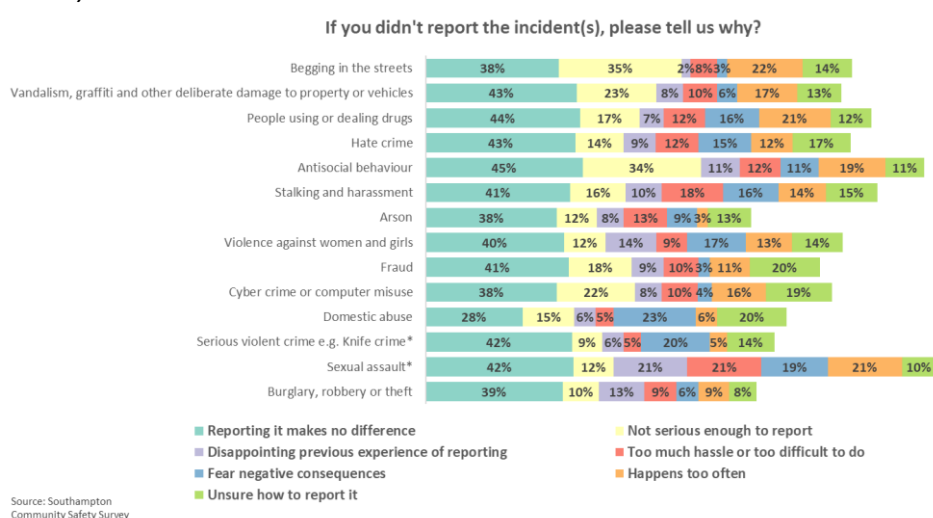


Respondents were then asked why they did not report the incident, with respondents able to select multiple reasons for not reporting, therefore it is possible for rows to sum to more than 100% (Figure 3.49). It is important to highlight that reasons for not reporting vary across the crime groups and numbers for some crime groups such as serious violent crime and sexual assaults are small. Nonetheless, responses may provide some valuable insight into why respondents are not reporting offences, particularly those that disproportionately impact on women and girls. Key findings include:

- 40% of respondents that had witnessed or been a victim of VAWG felt *reporting it would make no difference* and 17% *feared negative consequences*.
- *Reporting makes no difference* (42%), *disappointing previous experience of reporting* (21%), *happens too often* (21%), *too much hassle/too difficult to report* (21%) and *fear of negative consequences* (19%) were commonly cited reasons for not reporting sexual assaults.
- 28% of respondents who witnessed or were a victim of domestic abuse felt *reporting makes no difference*, 23% *feared negative consequences*, whilst 1 in 5 (20%) were *unsure how to report* domestic abuse.
- Two-fifths (41%) of respondents did not report stalking and harassment because they felt *reporting makes no difference* and 18% felt that was *too much hassle or difficult to report*.

The above findings highlight the barriers to reporting for crime types that disproportionately impact women. *Reporting makes no difference* is a common theme for VAWG, sexual assault, stalking and harassment and domestic abuse. This brings up an issue for us to consider how best to build confidence among the public that reports are responded to and acted upon. *Fear of negative consequences* was also a commonly cited reason across the above crime groups. Additionally, how best to improve awareness and understanding of the crime reporting process should also be taken into account as *unsure how to report* and *too much hassle/difficult to report* were also common themes across these crime groups.

Figure 3.49 – Chart showing respondents reasons for not reporting crimes when witnessed or a victim of for different crime groups (percentages can sum to more than 100% because the question is multiple choice)



3.3.1 Key messages

- Females were significantly more likely to feel unsafe after dark (local area and city centre) than males. One in three (33%) females felt safe after dark in their local area and less than 1 in 5 (19%) females felt safe after dark in the city centre. This compares with over half of males (52%) feeling safe after dark in their local area and almost two-fifths (38%) feeling safe in the city centre after dark.
- The most common responses to the question on what would make people feel safer in Southampton include a greater police presence, deal and respond effectively to reports/more consequences, better lighting across the city and CCTV/security cameras.
- Comparisons of respondents' perceptions of issues with the previous survey shows a rising awareness of domestic abuse. However, in the 2021 survey over a third of respondents answered 'don't know' when asked about key crime groups that disproportionately impact women and girls (VAWG, domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking and harassment). This could be interpreted as a low awareness of these crimes in the city. However, it is important to note that this survey was undertaken in late 2021, and VAWG has experienced rising national and local focus over the last 12 months. Therefore, awareness is continually

improving, which is something that should continue to be monitored. Increased awareness could also lead to improvements in reporting of these crime types.

- Over half of respondents did not report a crime when witnessed or experienced for all crime groups. This is concerning, but particularly for those crime groups that disproportionately impact on women and girls;
- Key reasons for not reporting VAWG, sexual assaults, stalking and harassment and domestic abuse include *reporting makes no difference, fear of negative consequences, unsure how to report and too much hassle/difficult to report.*

4. Additional considerations

This profile has used police recorded crime data alongside survey insights to understand the picture of violence against women and girls in Southampton. Police recorded crime data has provided a breadth of information to allow different definitions of VAWG to be examined. However, it is acknowledged that police recorded crime isn't the only source of information on VAWG and due to the nature of police recorded crime there may be some groups such as sex workers who will be underrepresented in the data. Additionally, information on harmful practices within the data is limited, this is likely due to the nature of these crime, which are often 'hidden'.

It is also worth highlighting that whilst there is a national definition on what constitutes a crime against women and girls, there is no recording framework within police recorded crime data which identifies if an offence is classified as VAWG. This profile has used national definitions and a local understanding of the data to apply definitions of VAWG. However, this will not capture all types of VAWG, particularly crimes enabled using technology, which can be used by offenders to commit established offences such as stalking, as well as new behaviours such as cyber flashing. At present, these crimes are very difficult to identify using police recorded crime data. However, this is something that will likely require national changes in reporting and recording practices.

Analysing the risk factors of VAWG outlined in section 1.3 was beyond the scope of this profile; however, there are several pieces of work that have extensively examined the risk factors of violence, crime and other outcomes in Southampton. These include the Serious Violence Problem Profile, [Southampton Community Safety Strategic Assessment](#) and [Neighbourhood Needs Analysis](#). There is also additional insight work that is being undertaken in partnership with the OPCC to explore students experience of VAWG across Hampshire.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Violence against women and girls is a societal problem that will require a multi-agency ‘public health’ approach to prevent future incidents of violence against women and girls as well as reducing existing levels. There are three key levels of prevention under a public health approach, these include primary, secondary and tertiary, which are outlined in more detail in section 1.3.

Risk factors of VAWG are outlined in section 1.3; however, it is important to emphasise that no single risk factor can explain why someone, or groups of people are at a higher risk of violence than others. It is the interaction among the different risk factors at the individual, relationship, community and societal level that determines risk. Although this profile has not analysed risk factors, many of them highlighted in section 1.3 are present at a population level in the city and have been highlighted in other key pieces of work (Serious Violence Problem Profile, [Southampton Community Safety Strategic Assessment](#) and [Neighbourhood Needs Analysis](#)).

Recommendation: Responses to tackle VAWG should consider structuring interventions around the three levels of violence prevention (see section 1.3) to prevent future incidents of violence against women and girls as well as reduce existing levels in the city.

Recommendation: The additional work undertaken that examines the risk factors of violence should be considered alongside this profile to understand the level and range risk factors present at a population level in Southampton. Additionally, the socio-economic impacts of coronavirus may worsen some of the risk factors, which could lead to subsequent increases in violence.

Three definitions of VAWG (overall, domestic and public place) were explored in this profile using police recorded crime data. Local benchmarking (section 3.1) highlighted that Southampton accounted for approximately 1 in 5 VAWG incidents across the Hampshire Constabulary force area during the three-year period. Southampton is the area most affected by VAWG across the Hampshire Constabulary force area; as regardless of definition, Southampton had the highest rate and severity of among local neighbours, with the Southampton rate significantly higher than the Hampshire district and Hampshire Constabulary averages.

In-depth analysis of VAWG in Southampton highlighted a strong link between VAWG incidents and deprivation, with the rate of VAWG over 5 times higher in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the 20% least deprived.

There is also likely a link between VAWG incidents and the night-time economy. This was evidenced through concentrations of VAWG occurring in areas of the city centre (section 3.2.1), peak incidents occurring late at night and on the weekend (section 3.2.2) and more than 1 in 10 VAWG incidents flagged as alcohol related (1 in 5 for domestic VAWG) (section 3.2.3).

A peak of public place VAWG at 3pm was identified. This peak was primarily driven by stranger/acquaintance violence among young people, which could be linked to school and college closing times. Further analysis found that this is a force wide trend and not just exclusive to Southampton.

Domestic VAWG was primarily driven by intimate partner violence, whereas public place VAWG was primarily driven by stranger and acquaintance violence. Victim profiling highlighted that VAWG can affect women and girls of any age and from all walks of life. Although the proportion of victims aged under 18 for domestic VAWG was lower compared to other definitions, it is again important to emphasise that this is not reflective of the impact domestic VAWG has on children in Southampton.

Victims of domestic VAWG were more than twice as likely to be repeat victims compared to public place VAWG. Similar patterns were also found for offenders, with 35.1% of domestic VAWG offenders committing more than one offence, compared to 17.8% of public place VAWG offenders.

Profiling of offenders highlighted that overall and domestic VAWG is primarily driven by male on female violence, whereas whilst public place VAWG is also driven by female on female violence as well as male on female violence.

Recommendation: Consider place-based interventions. For example, concentrations of VAWG in the city centre is likely linked to the night-time economy, whereas concentrations of VAWG occurring in the periphery of the city are in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods (Bitterne, Redbridge, Millbrook and Woolston);

Recommendation: Different interventions will be required to tackle different types of VAWG. For example, domestic VAWG is primarily driven by intimate partner violence, with alcohol identified as a key driver. Repeat victimisation and offending is a substantial issue for domestic VAWG. Public place VAWG is driven by stranger and acquaintance violence, with repeat victimisation and offending less of an issue for this type of VAWG. Additionally, peaks of public place VAWG occurring at 3pm could be linked to school and college closing times.

Females feel significantly more unsafe than males after dark, both in the city centre and their local areas, with one in three (33%) females feeling safe after dark in their local area and less than 1 in 5 (19%) females feeling safe after dark in the city centre. This compares with over half of males (52%) feeling safe after dark in their local area and almost two-fifths (38%) feeling safe in the city centre after dark. However, this not only an issue in Southampton, but nationally as highlighted in ONS surveys.

Recommendation: There is a substantial gap in feelings of safety after dark between females and males. The national VAWG strategy emphasises that women and girls should be able to go about their lives without fearing for their safety. Future work should consider how best to improve feelings of safety after dark for females.

In the 2021 community safety survey, over a third of respondents answered ‘don’t know’ when asked about key crime groups that disproportionately impact women and girls (VAWG, domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking and harassment). This highlights potential for improving awareness of these issues in the city, which could lead to subsequent improvements in reporting of crimes, as over half of respondents did not report the above crimes when witnessed or experienced. Key reasons for not reporting VAWG, sexual assaults, stalking and harassment and domestic abuse include *reporting makes no difference, fear of negative consequences, unsure how to report and too much hassle/difficult to report.*

Recommendation: Improving awareness and understanding of key issues in the city is essential to increasing reporting of crimes. Additionally, consider how best to build confidence among the public that reports of crimes, particularly those against women and girls are responded to and acted upon, as reporting makes no difference was a common reason for not reporting crimes that disproportionately impact on women and girls. Additionally, how best to improve awareness and understanding of the crime reporting process should also be considered, as unsure how to report and too much hassle/difficult report were also commonly cited reasons for not reporting crimes.

Although there is a national definition of VAWG, there is currently no framework within police recorded crime data to enable identification of VAWG crimes. As a result, this makes it difficult to identify certain types of VAWG, particularly those perpetrated online or enabled using technology.

Recommendation: Work with partners to ensure a common definition and approach to measuring VAWG is adopted locally. This will ensure best practice as well as provide a platform to raise data recording and reporting issues in relation to police recorded VAWG at a local and national level.