

# **Southampton Safe City**

## **Strategic Assessment**

### **2022/23**

**Summary of Findings**

**November 2023**



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## 1. Introduction and aims

The Southampton Safe City Partnership co-ordinates multi-agency action to improve lives and foster stronger communities by reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, alcohol misuse and supply, and the use and harm caused by drugs throughout the city. Partners include the five statutory authorities: Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HloW) Constabulary, Southampton City Council, Hampshire Fire and Rescue, Probation Services and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB). In addition, there are representatives from the Youth Offending Service (YOS), Southampton Voluntary Services (SVS), schools, businesses, Spectrum Centre for Independent Living, Victim Support, No Limits and the Integrated Commissioning Unit (ICU).

The Safe City strategy was refreshed in 2022, with the 2022 strategy spanning five (rather than three) years. This will continue to be assessed every year using the findings of the annual Safe City Strategic Assessment.

The Southampton Safe City Strategic Assessment is a public document, which seeks to provide direction for the Southampton Safe City Partnership. It provides an overview of the current and future crime, disorder and community safety issues affecting Southampton and, as such, it will inform the Partnership of any requirements to increase focus or to add developing issues that may lead to a change of focus for the Safe City Strategy and local delivery plans.

Key products produced as part of the strategic assessment include an interactive dashboard, slide set and summary report which highlight key changes. These products contribute to the overall picture of Community Safety in Southampton and therefore need to be reviewed alongside each other.

This assessment also recognises the work of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in understanding and tackling serious violence. Violence Reduction Units focus on tackling the root causes of violence through a programme of early intervention with young people and local communities. A key principle of VRUs is to use local knowledge to support an evidence-based, multi-agency approach to tackling the root causes of violent crime<sup>1</sup>. VRUs are a non-statutory collaborative partnership, with the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty in January 2023 placing a statutory duty on specified authorities to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the ongoing and planned work to support the prevention and reduction of Domestic Abuse and Violence Against

<sup>1</sup> Public Health England: A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention (2019). Available online via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-serious-violence-a-multi-agency-approach>

<sup>2</sup> Home Office: Serious Violence Duty – Preventing and reducing serious violence Statutory Guidance for responsible Authorities – England and Wales (December 2022). Available online via: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1125001/Final\\_Serious\\_Violence\\_Duty\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_-\\_December\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1125001/Final_Serious_Violence_Duty_Statutory_Guidance_-_December_2022.pdf)

Women and Girls is recognised through the work of partners and the Southampton Domestic Abuse and VAWG Strategic Partnership Board.

The Strategic Assessment provides a broad overview of the issues in the city. Whereas more detail can be found in specific topic-based reports. For example, serious violence and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) profiles. Topic-based reports and analysis produced as part of the wider community safety workstreams in combination with the Strategic Assessment contribute to the overall picture of community safety in the city. Published analysis products relating to community safety can be found on the [Southampton Data Observatory](#).

This report will provide an overview of crime in Southampton; specifically, overall crime, key priority areas and themes. Wider determinants of crime and residents' views on community safety will also be examined to help understand the overall picture of community safety in the city. This report will also include key points for the Partnership to note which can be used to help guide the strategic decision making of the Partnership. In line with the single assessment model, where appropriate and possible, data will be presented in the following ways:

- Benchmarking of the most current data to ascertain how Southampton compares with England and the city's statistical neighbours
- Time trend data to ascertain if the situation is improving or deteriorating
- Deep dive analysis to fully understand the issues within the city; analysis by sub-city geography, area-based deprivation, profiling of victims/offenders etc.

It is also important to note that due to the ongoing nature of police investigations, police recorded crime data may be subject to change and inconsistencies may exist between published and live data. Wherever possible, historical data will be refreshed in this report. Additionally, this report analyses HloW Constabulary data by the date reported, whilst previous assessments have used the date validated. This change was implemented to be in line with operational reporting. Although, this change in methodology had a negligible impact on total crime, victim and offender counts overall. Southampton ward boundaries were revised in 2023, resulting in the introduction of Banister and Polygon as a new ward in the city centre, Bitterne ward being renamed Thornhill and many other wards undergoing boundary changes. Therefore, analysis by wards will differ from that published in previous assessments. Moreover, caution should be taken when comparing figures in this assessment to previous assessments.

Devon and Cornwall Police were unable to provide crime data to the Home Office from October 2022 to March 2023, following the implementation of a new IT system<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, Devon and Cornwall crimes and population have been excluded from all national rates presented in this assessment. Additionally, Plymouth has been excluded from benchmarking despite being an iQuanta comparator.

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023>

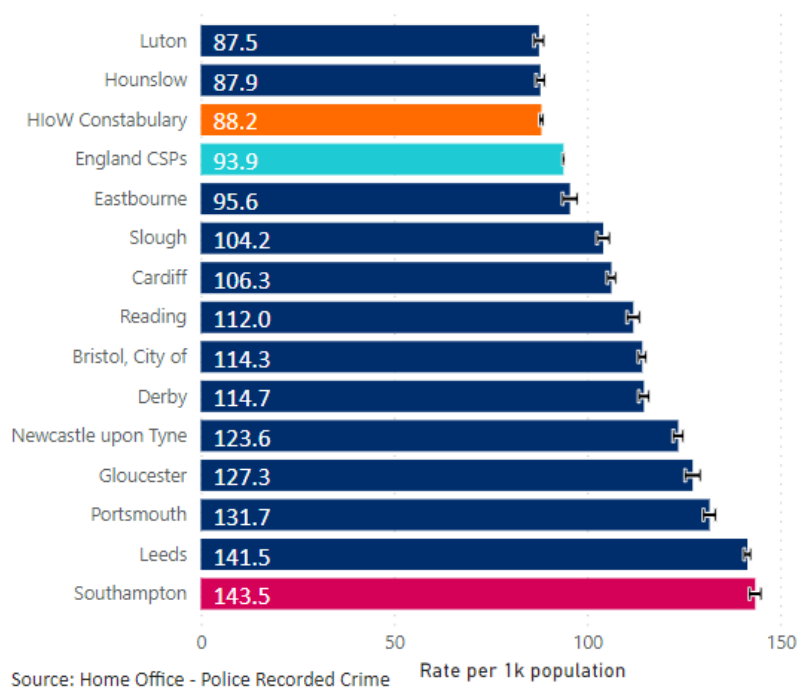
## 2. Summary of crime in Southampton

### 2.1 Crime volume and severity

In 2022/23, Southampton had an overall crime rate of 144 crimes per 1k population, which is significantly higher than the national average and remains the highest amongst comparator Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) (Figure 2.1). Southampton accounted for 20% of total recorded crime across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary in 2022/23 and has the 9<sup>th</sup> highest total recorded crime rate among English and Welsh CSPs with a valid crime rate (296 total)<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 2.1: Overall crime benchmarking chart

Police Recorded Total Crime (rate per 1k population) Southampton and iQuanta Comparator Community Safety Partnerships: 2022/23



There were 35,485 police recorded crimes in Southampton during 2022/23, which is an increase of +3.8% (+1,296 crimes) compared to the previous year (2021/22). This increase is in line with local and national trends, with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary experiencing a +2.8% increase and England (excluding Devon and Cornwall Police) a +4.6% increase over the same period.

However, it is important to note that changes in the volume of crimes vary across different crime groups. Additionally, police recorded crime only includes crimes that have been reported to and

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023>

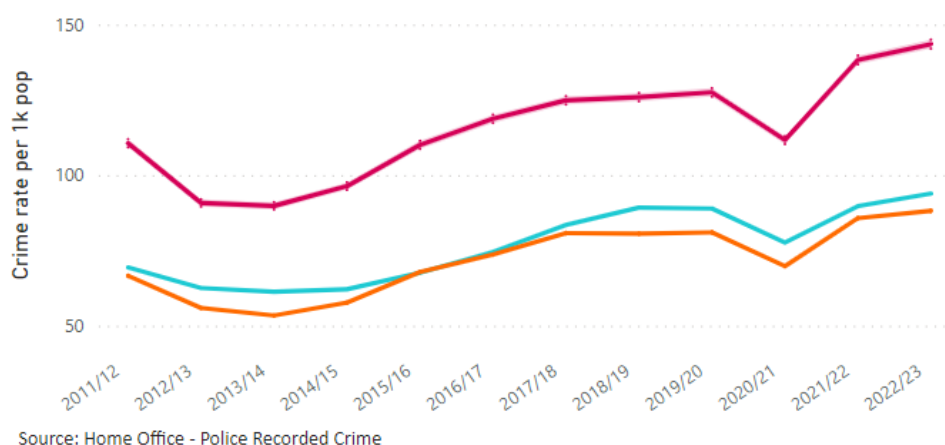
recorded by the police, with ‘hidden’ crimes such as domestic abuse far more likely to be underreported than other offences such as theft.

Crime in recent years has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2.2). Southampton experienced a decline in total recorded crime during the coronavirus pandemic (-12.3% from 2019/20 to 2020/21). However, since restrictions were lifted in early 2021, some police recorded crimes have returned to and others even exceed pre-pandemic levels, such as violent crime and sexual offences. Reasons behind these increases will be explored in more detail throughout this report in relevant sections.

Figure 2.2: Trend in overall crime rate for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England

Police Recorded Total Crime (rate per 1k population) Southampton, England CSPs, HloW Constabulary: 2011/12 to 2022/23

CSP Name ● England CSPs ● HloW Constabulary ● Southampton



The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) notes that police recorded crime is not the most reliable measure of crime trends. This is because police recorded crime trends can be impacted by changes to recording practices, policing activity and public reporting of crime<sup>5</sup>.

The CSEW estimates that total crime decreased by -15% in the year ending March 2023 compared to the pre-pandemic baseline (year ending March 2020). However, the change in total police recorded crime nationally and in Southampton between 2019/20 (pre-pandemic baseline) and 2022/23 represents a statistically significant increase. Differences between CSEW findings and police recorded crime are likely in part due to different methodologies. Additionally, trends in police recorded crime data are influenced by factors including increased awareness and reporting of crime. For example,

<sup>5</sup> Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023>

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary had a local goal to reduce victim-based crimes (e.g. domestic abuse, sexual offences, hate crime) over the last year<sup>6</sup>.

Therefore, the increase in total recorded crime over recent years may not reflect a ‘true’ increase in crime, as recorded crime can be influenced by improved awareness of key issues, more people reporting crime and improvements in recording by the police.

It is important that not only the volume of crime in Southampton is considered, but also the harm caused to victims and society. For example, high volume but low harm offences may be less of a priority to the Partnership than lower volume but high harm offences. A crime severity score estimates the harm caused by crimes. The 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:

$$\text{Sum } [(Severity\ weight \times Number\ of\ offences) \div [Area] Mid\text{-}year\ population\ estimate]$$

Figure 2.3 illustrates the differences between these two approaches to measuring recording crime. For example, rape offences in Southampton accounted for 1.5% of overall recorded offences, yet rape represented 28.2% of the relative severity of ‘harm’ caused by crime in Southampton during 2022/23. Crime severity scores also help in understanding the ‘case mix’ of crimes within particular crime types, which can be valuable when assessing changes and prioritisation of issues.

In 2022/23, Southampton had a crime severity score of 25.4 across all crimes; the highest among comparators (Figure 2.4), suggesting that Southampton has a more severe mix of crimes. When compared to the previous year, Southampton experienced a +3.3% increase in overall crime severity, greater than the increases for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (+2.0%) and similar to England (+3.5%). However, Southampton’s crime severity score was higher to begin with; 1.7 times higher in Southampton than Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary in 2022/23.

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<sup>6</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024



Figure 2.3: Tree maps showing relative number (left) and severity of offences (right) for police recorded crimes in Southampton during 2022/23

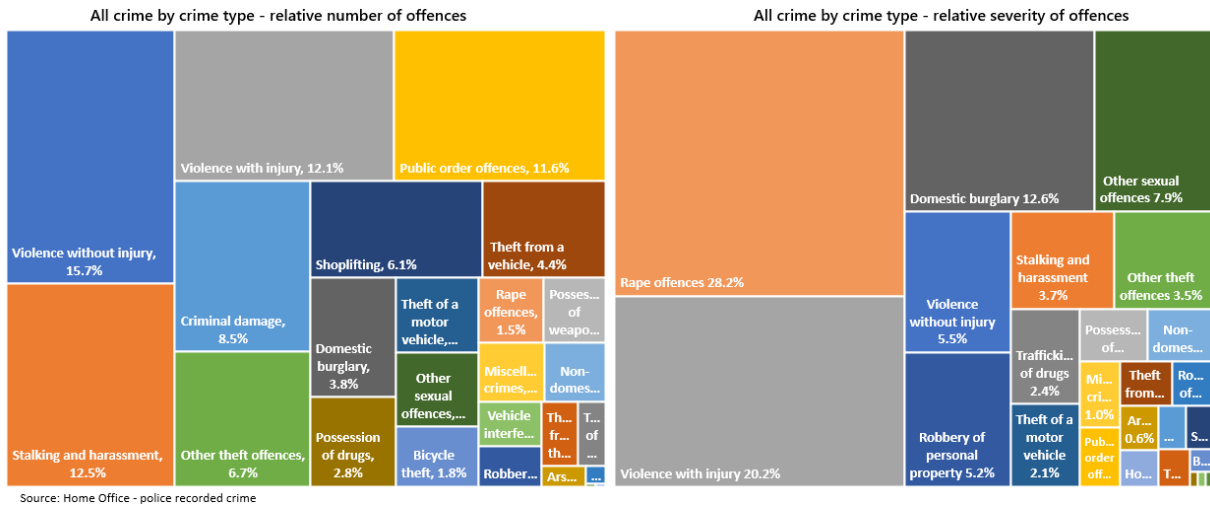
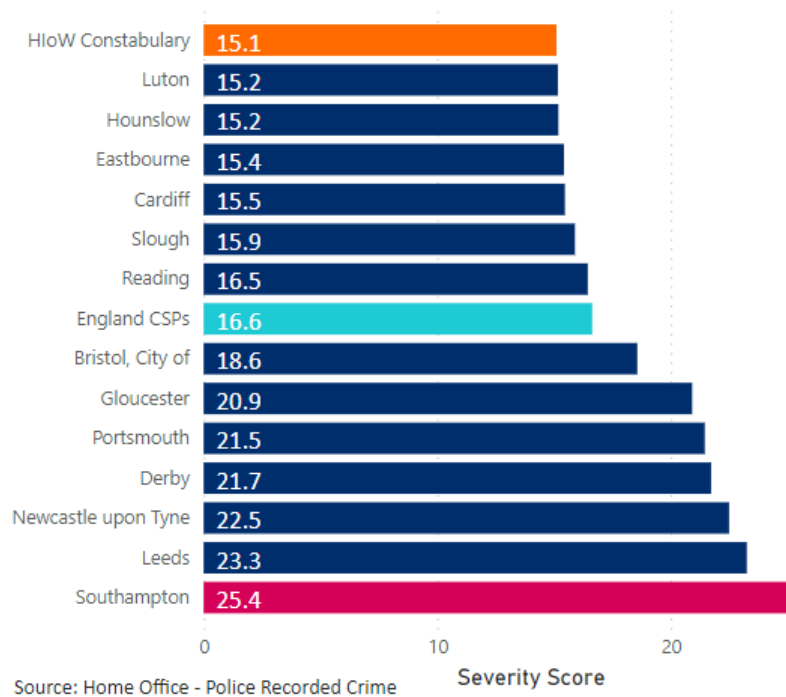


Figure 2.4: Overall crime severity benchmarking chart

Police Recorded Total Crime (Severity Score) - Southampton and iQuanta Comparator Community Safety Partnerships: 2022/23



Overall, Southampton remains highest amongst iQuanta comparator CSPs and higher than the national average when considering both the volume (rate) and severity of total police recorded crime. This suggests that Southampton experiences more crimes per population, as well as a more severe mix of crimes compared to comparators and the national average.



## 2.2 Changes by crime type

Figure 2.5 highlights changes in the volume and severity of offences in recent years. Southampton has seen an increase in the volume of half (16) of the offence types shown below from 2021/22 to 2022/23. However, the volume of 24 of the 32 offence types remain above the pre-pandemic baseline (2019/20). These trends suggest that police recorded crime levels for many crime types have returned to the pre-pandemic baseline, and in some cases are exceeding pre-pandemic volumes.

Figure 2.5: Summary of changes by crime type. Changes highlighted in red illustrate an increase in the number or severity of offences; declines in green

Indicator	2019/20 count	2021/22 count	2022/23 count	2021/22 crime severity score	2022/23 crime severity score	Percentage change 2019/20 to 2022/23 count	Percentage change 2021/22 to 2022/23 count	Percentage change 2021/22 to 2022/23 crime severity score	iQuanta CSP position +
Total crime*	32,193	34,189	35,485	24.56	25.42	10.2%	3.8%	3.5%	1
Violent crime*	11,827	14,555	14,276	7.64	7.61	20.7%	-1.9%	-0.4%	2
Violence with injury*	4,264	4,322	4,275	5.45	5.14	0.3%	-1.1%	-5.7%	1
Violence without injury*	4,964	5,815	5,555	1.28	1.40	11.9%	-4.5%	9.4%	2
Stalking and harassment*	2,589	4,456	4,440	0.90	0.94	71.5%	-0.4%	4.4%	3
Malicious communications*	1,394	1,926	1,850	0.15	0.14	32.7%	-3.9%	-6.7%	2
Most serious violence*	198	326	261	2.10	1.86	31.8%	-19.9%	-11.4%	5
Violent crime with public place flag**	4,216	4,675	4,719	2.87	2.96	11.9%	0.9%	3.1%	N/A
VAWG**	6,573	8,336	8,262	9.79	10.48	25.7%	-0.9%	7.0%	N/A
Sexual offences*	1,100	1,332	1,343	8.71	9.15	22.1%	0.8%	5.1%	1
Sexual offences - rape*	462	506	548	6.62	7.16	18.6%	8.3%	8.2%	1
Sexual offences - other*	638	826	795	2.10	2.00	24.6%	-3.8%	-4.8%	1
Crimes with domestic flag**	4,684	5,808	5,645	5.00	5.39	20.5%	-2.8%	7.8%	N/A
Domestic violent crime**	3,825	4,756	4,527	2.07	2.54	18.4%	-4.8%	22.7%	N/A
Theft offences*	10,449	8,494	9,996	5.10	5.44	-4.3%	17.7%	6.7%	2
Burglary residential*	1,644	1,349	1,334	3.18	3.20	-18.9%	-1.1%	0.6%	1
Burglary non-residential*	645	387	466	0.25	0.32	-27.8%	20.4%	28.0%	4
Vehicle offences*	2,317	2,126	2,719	0.67	0.76	17.4%	27.9%	13.4%	4
Robbery*	439	368	373	1.48	1.50	-15.0%	1.4%	1.4%	5
Possession of weapons offences*	361	445	521	0.31	0.33	44.3%	17.1%	6.5%	1
Possession of bladed implement*	183	210	257	0.06	0.07	40.4%	22.4%	16.7%	1
Firearms offences*	55	45	50	0.21	0.25	-9.1%	11.1%	19.0%	3
Crime involving a bladed implement**	646	644	789	1.36	1.45	22.1%	22.5%	6.6%	N/A
Serious knife crime**	253	273	322	0.91	0.95	27.3%	17.9%	4.4%	N/A
Modern slavery*	34	62	61	0.39	0.38	79.4%	-1.6%	-2.6%	2
Cruelty to children/young persons*	215	206	196	0.13	0.13	-8.8%	-4.9%	0.0%	4
Hate crime**	797	1,178	1,094	0.30	0.27	37.3%	-7.1%	-10.0%	N/A
Alcohol affected crime**	2,615	3,135	2,795	2.04	2.13	6.9%	-10.8%	4.4%	N/A
Drug offences*	934	1,027	1,222	0.59	0.63	30.8%	19.0%	6.8%	1
Drug affected crime**	849	1,138	1,224	0.73	0.95	44.2%	7.6%	30.1%	N/A
Anti-social behaviour***	7,258	5,217	3,633	N/A	N/A	-49.9%	-30.4%	N/A	N/A
Criminal damage and arson*	3,267	2,979	3,119	0.23	0.27	-4.5%	4.7%	-8.0%	3

\* The Home Office. Office for National Statistics. Crime in England and Wales - previous year figures have been revised

\*\* Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

\*\*\* Police.UK

Serious knife crime\*\* - Violence against the person where bladed implement was used

Vehicle offences\* - Includes theft from a vehicle, theft of a motor vehicle and vehicle interference

VAWG\*\* - Violent crimes and sexual offences where the victim was female

Violence without injury formal action taken includes stalking and harassment due to older classifications being used

Firearms offences include possession of firearms and other firearms offences

Colour Key	
	Year on year increase
	Year on year decrease

From 2021/22 to 2022/23, there were notable increases in the volume of sexual offences (+0.8%), particularly rape (+8.3%), theft offences (+17.7%), especially non-residential burglary (+20.4%) and vehicle offences (+27.9%), possession of weapons (+17.1%), crimes involving a bladed implement (+22.5%) and serious knife crime (+17.9%), drug offences (+19.0%) and drug affected crime (+7.6%). There have also been increases in the number of firearms offences (+11.1%), although numbers of firearms offences are small and therefore percentage changes should be interpreted with caution.

On the other hand, there have been notable declines in overall violent crime (-1.9%), other sexual offences (-3.8%), domestic flagged crime (-2.8%), domestic violence (-4.8%), residential burglary (-1.1%), hate crime (-7.1%) and alcohol affected crime (-10.8%). The volume of modern slavery (-1.6%) and cruelty to children/young persons (-4.9%) also declined over the last year. However, numbers of these offences remain small.

There continues to be a decline in anti-social behaviour offences in Southampton, with a -30.4% decline in the last year (-49.9% since 2019/20). Similar declines have been observed across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (-23.5%) and all other districts (-28.7% in Portsmouth) in the last year. However, it is important to note that this does not necessarily reflect a true decline, due to perceived barriers to reporting crime and ASB, with over 70% of respondents witnessing or experiencing anti-social behaviour in the 2023 Southampton community safety survey not reporting the incident (Section 4.1.5).

Changes in the crime types outlined above will be explored in more detail throughout the relevant sections in this report.

### 2.3 Crime prioritisation

Similar to previous assessments, a simple score was calculated to help inform priority settings for crime types in Southampton. This was based on ranking the following factors for each crime type:

- Crime frequency
- Crime severity score
- Proportion of crimes with formal action taken
- Year on year percentage increase in crime
- Relative position of Southampton among its comparator group of CSPs

These ranks were then combined into an overall score with each factor given an equal weighting. Based on the overall rank of these factors, the top four priorities were identified to be (Figure 2.6):

- Theft offences, including residential burglary
- Sexual offences
- Violent crime (all forms)
- Domestic offences, including domestic violence

Sexual offences, violent crimes and domestic offences have consistently featured among the top priority areas for the last five years. Residential burglary has featured as a priority in previous assessments and ranks highly as a priority again despite a decline in volume. However, overall theft offences ranks highest in 2022/23, given increases in both volume and severity over the last year. This

is likely an impact of the cost of living crisis and recent financial pressures<sup>7</sup>. Although, the volume of overall theft offences remains below the pre-pandemic baseline.

It is important to note that these are not the only areas of community safety that the Strategic Assessment recommends the Partnership prioritise. However, it provides an additional tool for the Partnership to consider when determining areas of focus. In addition to the priority areas highlighted above, the assessment continues to examine the following areas in more detail: modern slavery, drugs and alcohol, hate crime and cruelty to children and young persons.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) has been added to the prioritisation matrix this year and ranks as the fourth highest priority for the Safe City Partnership. This is unsurprising as it includes a combination of sexual offences, violent crime and domestic crimes, where a disproportionate number of victims are female. Violent crimes, sexual offences and domestic offences will be examined in detail. However, VAWG will not be examined in detail in this assessment, as key themes will be picked up in Section 3 and a separate VAWG problem profile; available on the [Southampton Data Observatory](#).

Figure 2.6: Crime change and prioritisation matrix

Indicator	2021/22 count	2022/23 count	2021/22 crime severity score	2022/23 crime severity score	Formal action taken %**	Percentage change 2021/22 to 2022/23 count	Percentage change 2021/22 to 2022/23 crime severity score	iQuanta CSP position *	Overall priority rank
Total crime*	34,189	35,485	24.56	25.42	10.6%	3.8%	3.5%	1	
Violent crime*	14,555	14,276	7.64	7.61	9.6%	-1.9%	-0.4%	2	6
Violence with injury*	4,322	4,275	5.45	5.14	12.5%	-1.1%	-5.7%	1	9
Violence without injury*	5,815	5,555	1.28	1.40	8.3%	-4.5%	9.4%	2	15
Stalking and harassment*	4,456	4,440	0.90	0.94	4.7%	-0.4%	4.4%	3	12
Malicious communications*	1,926	1,850	0.15	0.14	4.9%	-3.9%	-6.7%	2	22
Most serious violence*	326	261	2.10	1.86	32.2%	-19.9%	-11.4%	5	30
Violent crime with public place flag**	4,675	4,719	2.87	2.96	15.5%	0.9%	3.1%	N/A	10
VAWG**	8,336	8,262	9.79	10.48	7.3%	-0.9%	7.0%	N/A	4
Sexual offences*	1,332	1,343	8.71	9.15	4.2%	0.8%	5.1%	1	2
Sexual offences - rape*	506	548	6.62	7.16	2.1%	8.3%	8.2%	1	3
Sexual offences - other*	826	795	2.10	2.00	5.6%	-3.8%	-4.8%	1	13
Crimes with domestic flag**	5,808	5,645	5.00	5.39	7.5%	-2.8%	7.8%	N/A	8
Domestic violent crime**	4,756	4,527	2.07	2.54	6.7%	-4.8%	22.7%	N/A	11
Theft offences*	8,494	9,996	5.10	5.44	4.9%	17.7%	6.7%	2	1
Burglary residential*	1,349	1,334	3.18	3.20	3.6%	-1.1%	0.6%	1	5
Burglary non-residential*	387	466	0.25	0.32	9.0%	20.4%	28.0%	4	25
Vehicle offences*	2,126	2,719	0.67	0.76	1.2%	27.9%	13.4%	4	7
Robbery*	368	373	1.48	1.50	5.4%	1.4%	1.4%	5	21
Possession of weapons offences*	445	521	0.31	0.33	29.4%	17.1%	6.5%	1	19
Possession of bladed implement*	210	257	0.06	0.07	32.1%	22.4%	16.7%	1	27
Firearms offences*	45	50	0.21	0.25	29.8%	11.1%	19.0%	3	29
Crime involving a bladed implement**	644	789	1.36	1.45	18.1%	22.5%	6.6%	N/A	14
Serious knife crime**	273	322	0.91	0.95	10.2%	17.9%	4.4%	N/A	17
Modern slavery*	62	61	0.39	0.38	0.0%	-1.6%	-2.6%	2	22
Cruelty to children/young persons*	206	196	0.13	0.13	19.6%	-4.9%	0.0%	4	31
Hate crime**	1,178	1,094	0.30	0.27	14.3%	-7.1%	-10.0%	N/A	28
Alcohol affected crime**	3,135	2,795	2.04	2.13	25.2%	-10.8%	4.4%	N/A	26
Drug offences*	1,027	1,222	0.59	0.63	70.8%	19.0%	6.8%	1	16
Drug affected crime**	1,138	1,224	0.73	0.95	43.5%	7.6%	30.1%	N/A	24
Anti-social behaviour***	5,217	3,633	N/A	N/A	N/A	-30.4%	N/A	N/A	20
Criminal damage and arson*	2,979	3,119	0.23	0.27	9.6%	4.7%	-8.0%	3	18

\* The Home Office - Office for National Statistics - Crime in England and Wales - previous year figures have been revised

\*\* Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

\*\*\* Police UK

Serious knife crime\*\* - Violence against the person where bladed implement was used

Vehicle offences\* - Includes theft from a vehicle, theft of a motor vehicle and vehicle interference

VAWG\*\* - Violent crimes and sexual offences where the victim was female

Violence without injury formal action taken includes stalking and harassment due to older classifications being used

Firearms offences include possession of firearms and other firearms offences

Colour Key	
	Year on year increase
	Year on year decrease

<sup>7</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

## 2.4 Distribution of crime

As of the May 2023 local elections, the Southampton electoral ward boundaries were reviewed by the Local Government Boundary Commission. As a result of this review, Banister and Polygon was introduced as a new ward in the city centre, Bitterne ward was renamed Thornhill and many wards underwent boundary changes. There were 2,827 crimes recorded in Banister and Polygon in 2022/23. Compared to the old ward boundaries, 39.7% would have previously been counted in Bevois ward, 38.2% in Bargate and 22.0% in Freemantle. Therefore, it is not advisable to compare the distribution of crime by wards to that published in previous assessments.

Figure 2.7 shows the distribution of crimes by type and ward, with rates colour coded based on the difference to the city averages. Bargate (295 crimes per 1k population) ward had the highest overall crime rate among Southampton wards in 2022/23. Bargate ward covers the city centre, which is where a large proportion of the day and night-time economy is in Southampton, which are associated with certain crime types, such as alcohol affected crime. However, it is important to note that the high crime rates in the city centre will be influenced by the resident population being used as the denominator. Therefore, the ‘transient’ population; those that travel into the city centre, are not captured in the denominator. Bevois, Banister & Polygon, Freemantle and Thornhill wards also show significantly higher total crime rates than the Southampton average in 2022/23 (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: ‘Tartan rug’ showing crime distribution (rate per 1k population) by type and ward

Key: Difference to the Southampton average

- Significantly worse
- Significantly better
- Worse but not significantly
- Better but not significantly

Community Safety - Total Offences (Southampton analysis)	Rate 1,000 population																
	All Crime	Domestic Flagged Crime	Domestic Violence	Hate Crime	Crime Involving a Bladed Implement	Alcohol Affected Crime	Drug Offences	Drug Affected Crime	Violence Against the Person	Violence Against Women & Girls	Sexual Offences	Rape	Other Sexual Offences	Robbery	Theft Offences	Burglary Residential	Criminal Damage and Arson
Southampton	133.5	21.4	17.2	4.1	3.0	10.6	4.6	4.6	53.6	31.6	5.0	2.0	3.0	1.4	37.9	5.0	11.8
Banister & Polygon	166.2	16.8	13.5	5.1	4.8	18.8	8.9	7.4	60.8	34.6	5.9	2.1	3.8	2.3	51.8	9.5	12.0
Bargate	294.7	23.7	19.3	8.1	7.0	27.4	13.4	11.5	88.1	44.8	9.8	4.0	5.8	4.8	122.2	4.9	16.1
Bassett	64.5	7.4	5.4	2.5	0.9	2.8	1.4	0.8	24.3	12.0	2.9	1.1	1.8	*	21.6	4.8	5.9
Bevois	187.0	26.4	21.5	6.7	4.4	11.7	9.4	6.4	75.2	42.8	6.8	3.1	3.7	2.0	50.1	8.4	16.5
Bitterne Park	85.5	19.4	15.8	2.5	1.9	7.2	2.3	3.4	38.5	21.3	2.8	1.0	1.8	0.7	21.6	3.7	7.7
Coxford	81.6	16.8	13.4	2.7	1.1	4.8	1.7	2.1	36.7	25.5	3.0	0.8	2.2	0.9	17.2	3.2	11.0
Freemantle	158.1	25.0	20.8	6.7	2.3	17.9	9.3	9.0	62.7	30.9	4.3	2.3	2.0	1.3	40.1	6.4	15.5
Harefield	127.4	19.4	15.8	4.8	2.3	7.5	1.9	3.4	49.0	29.7	3.1	0.8	2.3	1.3	39.0	4.2	13.9
Millbrook	127.5	25.4	19.6	3.1	2.5	7.2	1.9	2.6	50.5	39.9	6.1	2.0	4.1	0.9	38.6	4.5	13.3
Peartree	100.0	20.6	16.2	2.6	3.2	7.6	2.3	2.8	45.8	28.0	3.5	1.8	1.8	0.6	22.8	3.4	10.2
Portswood	120.0	15.5	12.6	2.9	2.3	9.0	4.5	4.6	41.8	20.7	3.6	1.4	2.3	0.8	43.3	6.9	8.8
Redbridge	130.9	29.6	24.0	2.6	2.5	7.8	1.9	2.1	60.0	39.0	5.4	2.3	3.1	1.0	30.7	6.0	13.6
Shirley	133.5	16.5	12.8	6.1	3.2	9.0	2.7	5.4	52.6	34.4	4.6	1.1	3.6	1.9	33.9	4.1	14.0
Sholing	69.0	17.9	15.0	1.1	0.9	5.7	1.1	1.8	35.1	19.9	2.5	0.9	1.6	*	14.3	2.2	5.7
Swaythling	86.8	14.9	12.2	3.1	3.0	6.1	2.4	2.3	36.1	23.8	3.0	1.7	1.3	0.5	22.4	4.6	8.8
Thornhill	141.6	36.7	28.6	3.6	3.1	11.5	3.2	4.3	70.1	42.2	4.6	1.1	3.4	1.4	25.5	4.6	16.4
Woolston	107.6	26.5	21.1	3.6	2.1	7.9	2.1	3.8	53.9	33.9	4.8	2.1	2.6	0.8	22.1	3.2	8.7

Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

\*Note that values have been suppressed due to small numbers

Overall crime continues to be strongly patterned with deprivation. In 2022/23, the overall crime rate in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods was 2.6 times higher than in the 20% least deprived

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neighbourhoods in Southampton (Figure 2.8). Although crime rates remain significantly higher in the 20% most deprived Southampton neighbourhoods compared to the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods, this gap appears to be narrowing; having been 3.7 times higher in 2019/20, 3 times higher in 2020/21 and also 2.6 times higher in 2021/22. However, this change appears to be driven by higher crime rates in the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods (+33.8% increase in the crime rate from 2019/20), rather than lower crime rates in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods (-3.8% decline in the crime rate from 2019/20) (Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.8: Quintile chart showing the relationship between overall crime and deprivation

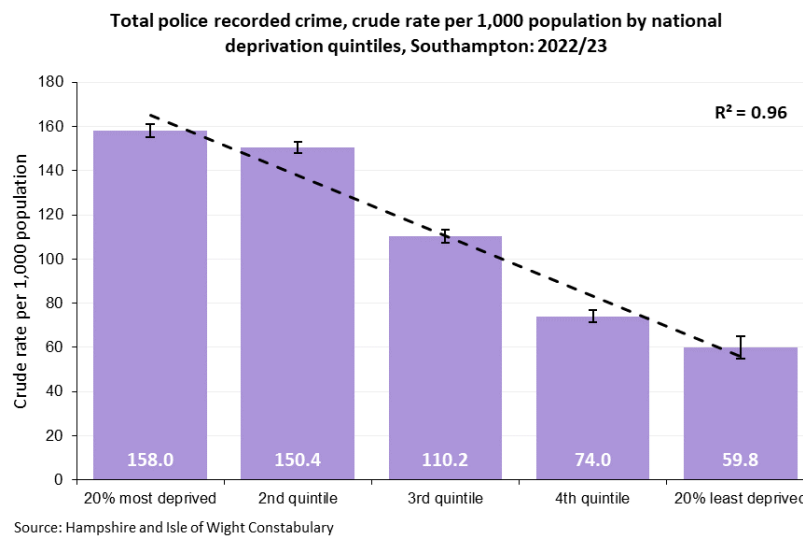


Figure 2.9: Chart showing the trend in overall crime for the most and least deprived quintiles

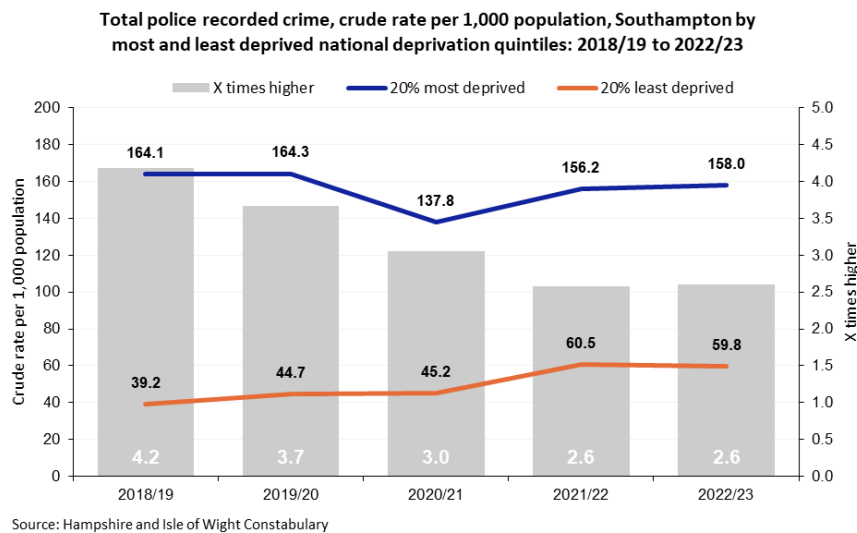


Figure 2.10 shows the change in crimes by type and ward, with numbers and percentages colour coded based on whether there has been a year-on-year increase (red) or decrease (green). From 2021/22 to 2022/23, total crime increased in 10 out of 17 wards (Figure 2.10). The largest percentage increase in total crime between 2021/22 and 2022/23 was in Harefield ward (+22.3%), followed by Thornhill



(+17.9%) and Bargate (+10.3%) wards. Notably, declines in total crime were seen in Millbrook (-11.1%), Shirley (-10.2%) and Swaythling (-8.0%) wards. Although, geographical analysis may be influenced by key police sites located in Freemantle and Shirley 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 geographical analysis.

2022/23 saw increases in theft offences in all but three wards; Bitterne Park (-14.6%), Freemantle (-10.3%) and Shirley (-4.8%). This was partially driven by increases seen in vehicle offences in all wards excluding Freemantle (-6.4%). Sexual offences saw relatively small increases across 10 out of 17 wards, with the largest increases experienced in Redbridge ward (+33.9%). Drug offences also increased across ten wards. On the other hand, nine wards saw a decline in violent crime; the other eight experienced increases. Similarly, domestic flagged crime decreased across ten wards, although domestic abuse remains a citywide issue. Additionally, hate crime declined or stayed the same across all but five wards. Alcohol affected crime saw a decline across 13 wards. There has been a continued decline in anti-social behaviour across all wards. It should be noted that percentage changes should be interpreted alongside changes in counts, especially when the number of crimes is low.

Figure 2.10: Tartan rug showing year on year change (count and percentage) by crime type and ward

Key: Percentage change from 2021/22  
 Increase  
 Decrease  
 No change

Change in recorded crime from 2021/22 to 2022/23	Percentage (and count) change in number of incidents - 2021/22 to 2022/23													
	Total recorded crime	Domestic flagged crimes	Domestic Violence	Hate Crime	Alcohol Affected Crime	Drug offences	Violence against the Person	Violence Against Women & Girls	Sexual offences	Anti-social Behaviour	Robbery	Theft offences	Residential Burglary	Vehicle offences
Southampton	3.2% (1100)	-2.8% (-163)	-4.8% (-229)	-7.1% (-84)	-10.8% (-340)	15.3% (157)	-2.7% (-392)	-0.9% (-74)	0.4% (5)	-30.4% (-1584)	-89.4% (-329)	17.8% (1508)	-0.7% (-10)	28% (594)
Banister & Polygon	-3% (-88)	-20.1% (-72)	-20.2% (-58)	-14.7% (-15)	-23.1% (-96)	31% (36)	-14% (-168)	-18.2% (-107)	-20% (-25)	-17.7% (-54)	62.5% (15)	4.8% (40)	-4.7% (-8)	17.8% (34)
Bargate	10.3% (520)	-6.3% (-30)	-10.1% (-41)	-6.7% (-11)	-13.3% (-79)	53.7% (88)	-2.9% (-50)	-2.5% (-21)	1.1% (2)	-30.7% (-264)	-15.7% (-17)	31.5% (551)	27.8% (20)	49.3% (105)
Bassett	8.7% (84)	-13.7% (-19)	-18.7% (-20)	-10.9% (-5)	-2.2% (-1)	9.5% (2)	15.2% (52)	27.8% (54)	20.5% (8)	-59.3% (-105)	*	8.7% (28)	-18.1% (-17)	25% (26)
Bevois	8.7% (250)	-5.4% (-25)	-7.5% (-29)	-9.8% (-12)	-28.3% (-77)	18.2% (24)	-6.2% (-82)	-5.2% (-37)	0.9% (1)	-3.5% (-14)	6.3% (2)	45.4% (260)	70.7% (58)	45.1% (93)
Bitterne Park	-6.3% (-88)	11.6% (31)	8% (18)	-11.6% (-5)	-1.8% (-2)	-10.3% (-4)	-1.7% (-10)	7.3% (24)	-8.5% (-4)	-47.9% (-104)	*	-14.6% (-57)	0% (0)	8.2% (9)
Coxford	0.1% (1)	3.4% (8)	0% (0)	21.9% (7)	-9.2% (-7)	41.2% (7)	-10.6% (-62)	-14.8% (-54)	2.4% (1)	-41.4% (-110)	*	5.1% (12)	-17.9% (-10)	4.4% (4)
Freemantle	-3.8% (-94)	-1.8% (-7)	9.4% (27)	24.7% (20)	8.9% (22)	-6% (-9)	7.6% (67)	4.3% (20)	-16.7% (-13)	-16.8% (-42)	-32.1% (-9)	-10.3% (-69)	1.1% (1)	-6.4% (-13)
Harefield	22.3% (318)	-10.8% (-32)	-12.9% (-32)	37.5% (18)	17% (15)	8.3% (2)	8.2% (51)	5.2% (21)	-31.1% (-19)	-9.9% (-21)	100% (9)	52.3% (183)	-12.3% (-8)	61% (47)
Millbrook	-11.1% (-229)	-11.8% (-49)	-19.7% (-69)	-50% (-44)	-33.3% (-52)	-15.6% (-5)	-26.6% (-263)	-15.7% (-90)	10.1% (8)	-18% (-46)	8.3% (1)	21.5% (98)	-28.1% (-25)	18% (25)
Pear tree	7.4% (110)	-6% (-21)	-8.5% (-24)	-4.7% (-2)	-13.5% (-19)	8.8% (3)	2.5% (18)	3.6% (16)	14.3% (7)	-26.7% (-77)	-37.5% (-6)	24.7% (72)	58.8% (20)	54% (47)
Portswood	5.6% (89)	19.9% (36)	12.8% (20)	-42% (-29)	-10.6% (-15)	61.5% (24)	4.8% (27)	14.1% (41)	-3.8% (-2)	-32.5% (-81)	-56% (-14)	24.9% (121)	3.2% (3)	68% (83)
Redbridge	-1.1% (-21)	10% (39)	14.1% (43)	-28.3% (-15)	4.6% (5)	-30% (-12)	-0.7% (-6)	4.2% (24)	33.9% (20)	-47.2% (-174)	-11.8% (-2)	20.9% (77)	17.6% (13)	12% (14)
Shirley	-10.2% (-239)	-24.3% (-83)	-29% (-82)	-11.1% (-12)	-28.6% (-57)	0% (0)	-15% (-146)	-20.5% (-111)	9% (6)	-21.6% (-63)	-6.3% (-2)	-4.8% (-27)	-47.1% (-57)	3.8% (6)
Sholing	8.1% (74)	6.3% (15)	17.6% (32)	-20% (-4)	-3.6% (-3)	45.5% (5)	15% (65)	9.9% (28)	-39% (-23)	-36.8% (-49)	*	25.2% (41)	-25.6% (-11)	40% (22)
Swaythling	-8% (-129)	-18.2% (-57)	-17% (-43)	0% (0)	-19.2% (-25)	-27.6% (-16)	-12.7% (-90)	-8% (-33)	-16.4% (-10)	-38.4% (-86)	-46.7% (-7)	7.8% (28)	17.9% (12)	40.9% (38)
Thornhill	17.9% (318)	21.5% (96)	11% (42)	28.6% (12)	23% (32)	41.2% (14)	12.6% (116)	10.1% (63)	25.9% (14)	-30.4% (-96)	150% (12)	33.2% (94)	1.5% (1)	11.5% (9)
Woolston	2.8% (47)	1.4% (6)	0% (0)	14% (7)	-10.6% (-15)	-26.1% (-12)	3.4% (28)	8% (43)	13.4% (9)	-49.1% (-197)	44.4% (4)	9.3% (30)	-9.1% (-5)	38.8% (31)

Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

\*Note that values have been suppressed due to small numbers

## 2.5 Victims and offenders

### 2.5.1 Victims

In 2022/23, there were 18,347 unique victims (excluding businesses and the state) who were involved in 74.4% of crimes in Southampton<sup>8</sup>. This is similar to the number of unique victims identified in 2021/22 (18,026).

Figure 2.11 shows the number of victims by the number of offences they experienced during 2022/23, with most victims experiencing only one crime in the financial year (77.2%). In 2022/23, 22.8% of victims experienced more than one crime, compared to 23.3% in 2021/22. Repeat victims experienced 46.4% of crimes where a victim was recorded in 2022/23. The evidence above highlights that repeat victimisation continues to be a prominent issue in Southampton, as the proportion of repeat victims remains above the pre-pandemic baseline (19.6% in 2019/20) despite declining over the last year.

Figure 2.11: Table showing number of offences experienced by know victims in 2022/23

No. of crimes experienced	No. of all crime offences	% of all crime offences	No. of all crime victims	% of all crime victims
1	14,162	53.6	14,162	77.2
2	5,112	19.4	2,556	13.9
3	2,484	9.4	828	4.5
4	1,392	5.3	348	1.9
5 or more	3,256	12.3	453	2.5

A small number of individuals (453, 2.5%) experienced 5 or more crimes in 2022/23. Yet collectively these individuals accounted for 12.3% (3,256) of recorded crimes where a victim was recorded. The number of individuals experiencing 5 or more crimes has risen compared to 2019/20 (320 individuals) and 2020/21 (316 individuals) but remains similar to 2021/22 (471 individuals).

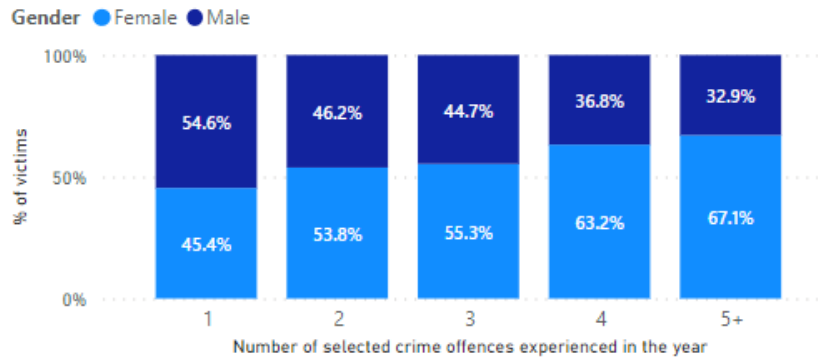
Overall, males (52.1%) made up a higher proportion of victims than females (47.9%) in 2022/23. However, similar to previous years, females continue to be more likely to be repeat victims across all crime types; accounting for 67.1% of the victims experiencing 5 or more crime in the latest financial year (Figure 2.12). This proportion has also increased compared to the previous financial year (61.4% in 2021/22).

<sup>8</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – only includes victims with valid age and sex information recorded



Figure 2.12: Chart showing the gender profile of victims by number of offences experienced

Gender Profile of Victims by number of offences experienced - All Crime - Southampton: April 2022 to March 2023

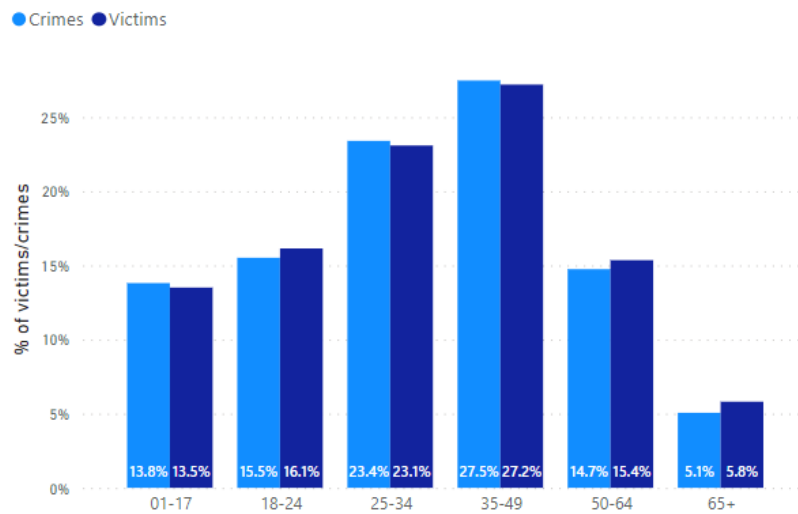


Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary  
\* Only includes known victims/crimes with valid age & gender

Victim age profiling for all crime follows a similar pattern to previous years (Figure 2.13), with the most common age group for victims continuing to be those aged 35 to 49 years old (27.2%), followed by 25 to 34 (23.1%), 18 to 24 (16.1%), 50 to 64 (15.4%), 1 to 17 (13.5%) and lastly those aged over 65 years (5.8%).<sup>9</sup>

Figure 2.13: Chart showing age profile of victims and offences

Age Profile of Victims - All Crime - Southampton: April 2022 to March 2023



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary  
\* Only includes known victims/crimes with valid age & gender

The majority of victims identified in 2022/23 were white (52.1%), 9.2% of victims were ethnic minorities and 38.7% unknown ethnicity<sup>10</sup>. Ethnicity information should be interpreted with caution,

<sup>9</sup> A victim may be counted more than once if they have moved age groups in the year, however this affects less than 1.2% of records.

<sup>10</sup> Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

as the proportion of unknown ethnicity is high. However, the ethnicity profile of victims is in line with the census; the majority of the Southampton population is white, with other ethnicities making up 19.3% of the Southampton population (2021 census).

## 2.5.2 Offenders

During 2022/23, 9,656 individual suspects or offenders were identified from police systems for offences that occurred in Southampton<sup>11</sup>. This is similar to the 9,911 identified during 2021/22. These individuals were collectively responsible for 58.3% of the crimes committed in Southampton during 2022/23. Using this data, suspects and offenders in the city can be profiled. However, it should be emphasised that this only relates to identified suspects or offenders, who may have different characteristics to those who those who were not caught or who committed offences that were not recorded.

Figure 2.14 shows that the majority (61.4%) of offenders committed just one offence during 2022/23, which is similar to the previous financial year (60.9% in 2021/22). Despite most offenders committing just one crime in the year, these individuals account for 28.7% of crimes with a known suspect or offender. Those committing more than one crime account for 38.6% of offenders, but collectively account for 71.3% of crimes. This highlights that repeat offending remains a substantial issue in Southampton and potentially a growing one, as the proportion of repeat offenders has increased over the last four years.

Figure 2.14: Table showing number of offences committed by known suspects or offenders in 2022/23

No. of crimes committed	No. of all crime offences	% of all crime offences	No. of all crime offenders	% of all crime offenders
1	5,929	28.7	5,929	61.4
2	3,572	17.3	1,786	18.5
3	2,238	10.8	746	7.7
4	1,600	7.7	400	4.1
5 or more	7,338	35.5	795	8.2

The proportion of the most prolific offenders remains similar to the previous financial year, with 8.2% of offenders in 2022/23 committing 5 or more offences, compared to 8.6% of offenders in 2021/22. Despite prolific offenders accounting for 8.2% (795 individuals) of suspects or offenders in 2022/23, these individuals committed 35.5% of crimes with a known suspect or offender. Therefore, it is important to tackle reoffending of the most prolific offenders if crime levels are to reduce in Southampton.

<sup>11</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – only includes suspects and offenders with valid age and sex

The majority of suspects or offenders identified in 2022/23 were male (70.3%), which is similar to previous years (69.7% in 2021/22). Males continue to be more likely to commit multiple offences than females, with 75.6% of the most prolific offenders (5 or more) male (Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15: Chart showing the gender profile of offenders by number of offences committed

Gender Profile of Offenders by number of offences committed - All Crime - Southampton: April 2022 to March 2023



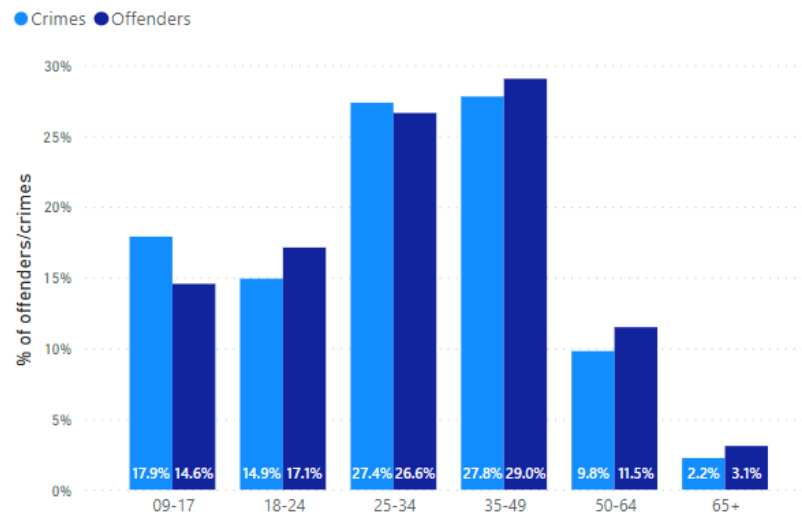
Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary  
 \* Only includes known offenders/crimes with valid age & gender

Figure 2.16 shows the age profile of offenders for all crimes in 2022/23. The age profile for offenders is similar to previous years, with those aged 35 to 49 years old (29.0%) continuing to commit the most crime, followed by 25 to 34 (26.6%), 18 to 24 (17.1%), 9 to 17 (14.6%), 50 to 64 (11.5%) and lastly those age 65 and over (3.1%).<sup>12</sup> The proportion of offenders aged under 18 has risen above the pre-pandemic baseline (13.2% in 2019/20); having fallen below in the previous two financial years to 12.1% in 2020/21 and 12.7% in 2021/22. Further analysis shows that this increase is likely influenced by improvements in reporting and recording of knife-enabled crime, child peer-on-peer sexual offences and on-street youth violence.

<sup>12</sup> An offender may be counted more than once if they have moved age groups in the year, however this affects less than 1.7% of records.

Figure 2.16: Chart showing age profile of offenders and offences

Age Profile of Offenders - All Crime- Southampton: April 2022 to March 2023



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary  
\* Only includes known victims/crimes with valid age & gender

The ethnic profile for suspects and offenders is similar to that of victims and in line with previous years, with the majority identified as white (69.5%), 14.0% of offenders were ethnic minorities and 16.5% unknown ethnicity (2022/23).

### 2.5.3 Reoffending <sup>13</sup>

In Southampton, 24.8% of adult offenders in the 2020/21 cohort reoffended (*Figure 2.17*), higher but not significantly than the England and Wales reoffending rate (24.0%). Southampton adult reoffenders will on average commit 3.5 reoffences, similar to the England and Wales average of 3.6 reoffences<sup>14</sup>. Due to changes in the data source and methodology of reoffending statistics<sup>15</sup>, it is not possible to examine trends beyond the last five years. Southampton experienced an overall increase in the adult reoffending rate between 2016/17 and 2017/18. However, the reoffending rate has been declining since, falling by -2.1 percentage points in 2020/21 (*Figure 2.18*). Whilst declines have not been statistically significant year-on-year, the 2020/21 cohort has a significantly lower proportion of adult reoffenders compared to the 2017/18 cohort.

<sup>13</sup> Reoffending statistics may be impacted by delays in court process due to the pandemic

<sup>14</sup> Caution is required when interpreting reoffending data as it does not account for differences or changes in the case-mix of offenders either over time or between areas

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Justice – Guide to proven reoffending statistics (2021). Available via: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1006061/Guide-to-proven-reoffending-July21\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1006061/Guide-to-proven-reoffending-July21_Final.pdf)

Figure 2.17: Benchmarking chart showing proven adult reoffending rate

Proven percentage of adult offenders who reoffend - Southampton and iQuanta comparators: 2020/21 cohort

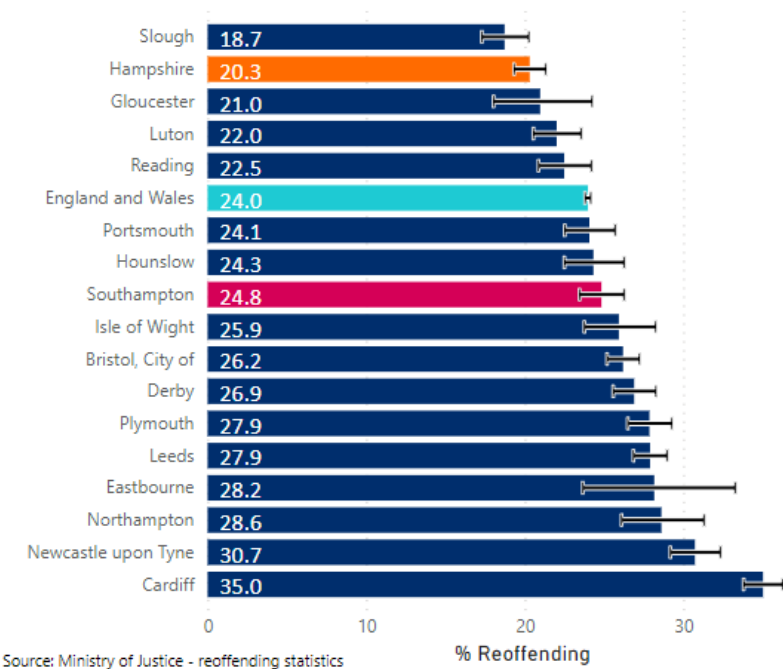


Figure 2.18: Trend chart showing proven adult reoffending rate

Proven percentage of adult offenders who reoffend - England and Wales, Hampshire and Southampton: 2009/10 to 2020/21 cohorts

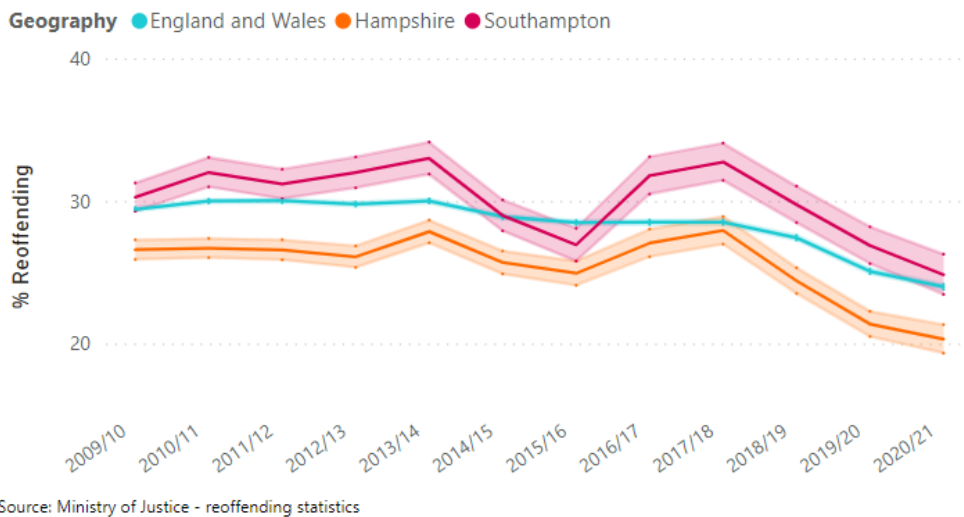


Figure 2.19 shows that 41.6% of the 2020/21 youth offending cohort in Southampton reoffended, significantly higher than the England and Wales average (31.2%). Youth reoffenders in Southampton will commit an average of 3.5 reoffences, similar to the England and Wales average of 3.5 reoffences. Due to the small number of reoffenders, Southampton has seen greater fluctuations in youth reoffending rates compared to adult reoffenders. However, the youth reoffending rate increased by

+6.0 percentage points from 35.6% in 2019/20 to 41.6% in 2020/21. Again, these changes are not statistically significant due to the small cohort of youth offenders (548) and reoffenders (228).

Figure 2.19: Benchmarking chart showing proven youth (juvenile) reoffending rate

Proven percentage of juvenile offenders who reoffend - Southampton and iQuanta comparators: 2020/21 cohort

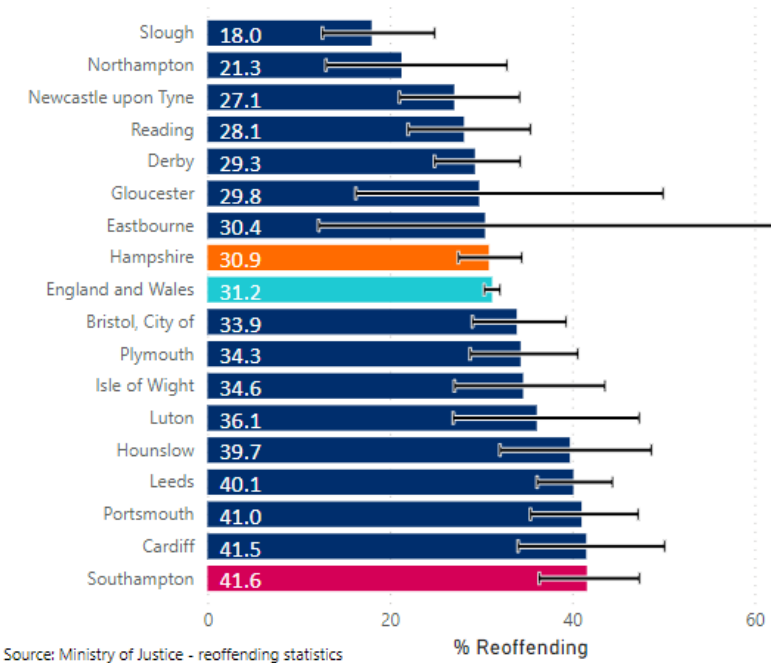
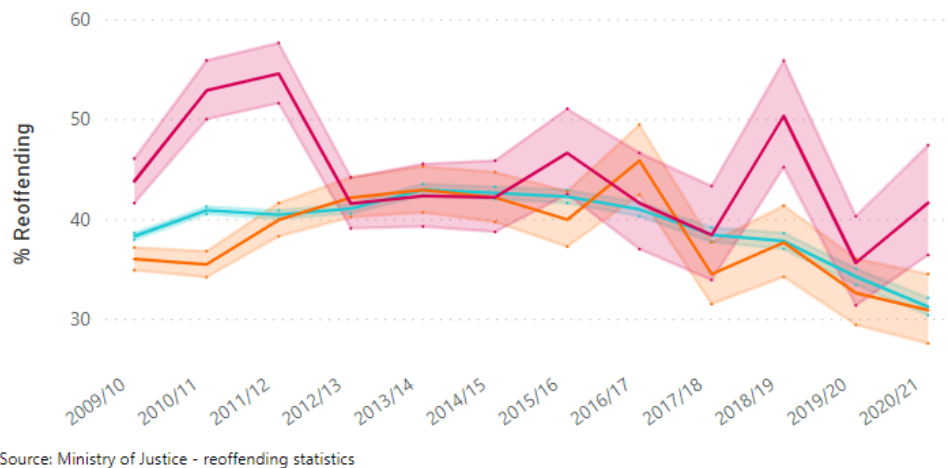


Figure 2.20: Trend chart showing proven youth (juvenile) reoffending rate

Proven percentage of juvenile offenders who reoffend - England and Wales, Hampshire and Southampton: 2009/10 to 2020/21 cohorts

Geography ● England and Wales ● Hampshire ● Southampton



2.5.4 First time entrants

In 2021/22, Southampton had a juvenile first-time entrant (FTE) rate of 18.9 per 10k children aged 10 to 17, which is higher but not significantly than the national average of 14.4 per 10k children aged 10 to 17 (Figure 2.21). Since 2012/13, the juvenile FTE rate has been on a downward trend in Southampton and nationally, with the Southampton FTE rate in 2021/22 no longer significantly higher than the national average for the first time since 2017/18 (Figure 2.22). Please note that youth offending statistics may be impacted by delays in court processes, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Figure 2.21: Benchmarking chart showing rate of juvenile first-time entrants

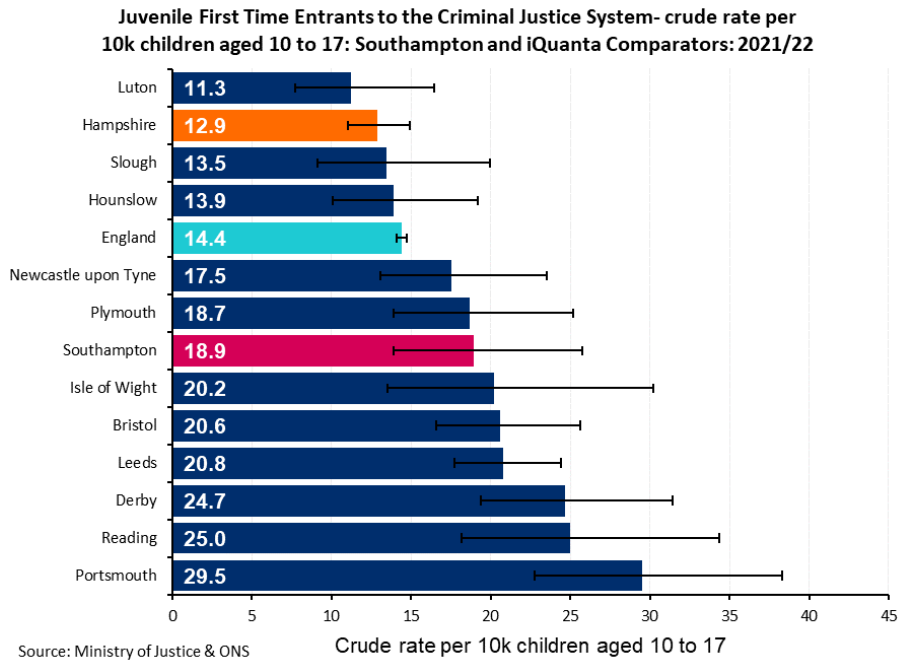
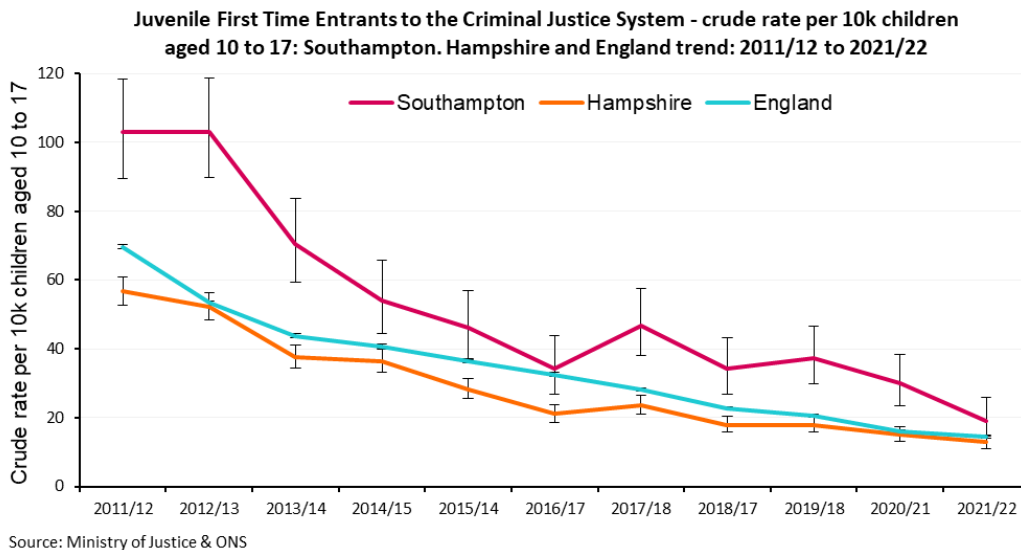


Figure 2.22: Trend chart showing rate of juvenile first-time entrants





## 2.6 Points for the Partnership to note

- In 2022/23, Southampton experienced a +3.8% increase in total recorded crime compared to the previous year.
- The increase in total recorded crime over recent years may not reflect a ‘true’ increase in crime, as recorded crime can be influenced by improved awareness of key issues, more people reporting crime and improvements in recording by the police. Additionally, the CSEW estimates that total crime decreased by -15% in the year ending March 2023 compared to the pre-pandemic baseline. The 2023 community safety survey also found no significant change in reported victimisation compared to the 2019 survey (Section 4.1.5).
- Rape, violence with injury and residential burglary were the crime groups that caused the most harm in Southampton during 2022/23. Therefore, a continuation of the trends in crime severity observed over the last five years. The Partnership should continue to consider the harm caused by different crime types, as well as the volume when examining priorities and areas of focus.
- The crime prioritisation exercise highlighted the following four priorities for the Partnership: theft offences including residential burglary, sexual offences, violent crime (all forms) and domestic offences including domestic violence. Overall theft offences emerged as a top priority for the first time, likely linked to the cost of living crisis and economic uncertainty. Whilst violent crime, sexual offences and domestic offences have consistently featured as priority areas over the last five years.
- Some crime types are more likely to be underreported than others. The Partnership should continue to work to understand the extent of unreported crime in Southampton and take action to understand and address barriers to reporting incidents; particularly among the most vulnerable.
- The most recent community safety survey highlighted that most crimes witnessed or experienced by respondents were not reported. This is especially concerning for high harm and priority crime groups such as stalking and harassment, VAWG, hate crimes, sexual offences, domestic abuse and serious violent crime. More detailed findings from the 2023 community safety survey are presented in Section 4.
- Repeat victims experienced 46.4% of crimes where a victim was recorded in Southampton during 2022/23. The proportion of repeat victims has declined over the last year but remains higher than the proportion recorded in 2019/20. This indicates that repeat victimisation continues to be an issue in Southampton. The Partnership should continue to monitor these trends alongside repeat offending.
- Reoffending remains an issue in Southampton. 8.2% of offenders who committed 5 or more crimes, were responsible for 35.5% of crimes where there was a known suspect or offender. If crime levels are to reduce in Southampton, the high reoffending rate needs to be addressed. The Partnership should continue to ensure that outcomes for offenders are the best possible to reduce reoffending. Particularly targeting the most prolific offenders and those with the highest risk of reoffending.

- Outcomes in Southampton for youth offending indicators appear to have improved (FTE rate) or experienced no significant change (youth re-offending) in recent years. However, these indicators should continue to be monitored by the Partnership.
- Young people becoming involved in crime is often linked to wider determinants, such as deprivation, poverty and adverse childhood experiences. The Partnership should continue to work with partners to keep improving outcomes for children and young people to prevent them from becoming involved in crime in the first place. Wider determinants of crime are discussed in more detail in Section 5.

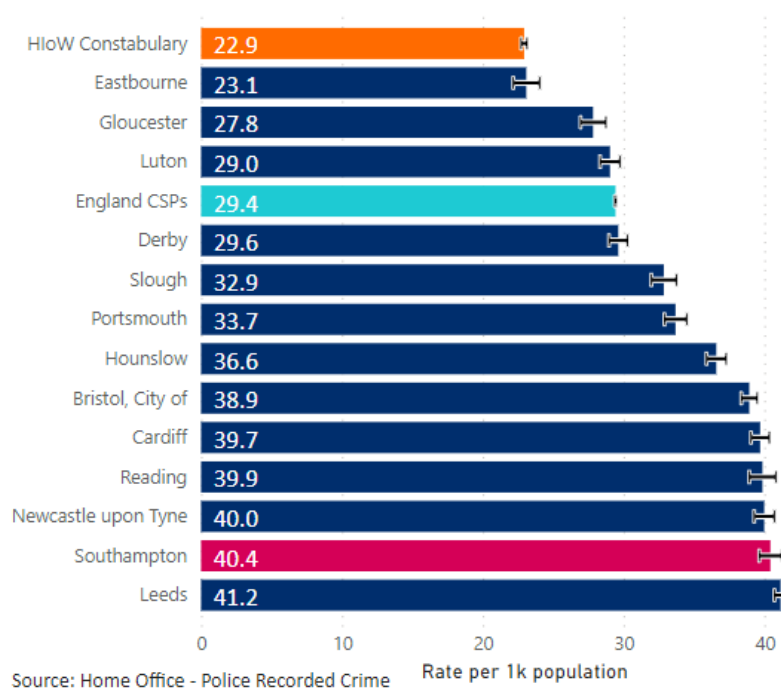
### 3. Significant community safety issues

#### 3.1 Theft Offences

Theft offences emerged as one of the top priorities for the first time in the Safe City Strategic Assessment (Section 2.3). In 2022/23, Southampton experienced 40.4 theft offences per 1k population. This is a significantly higher rate than the national average (29.4) and second highest amongst ONS comparators (*Figure 3.1*).

Figure 3.1: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of theft offences

Police Recorded Theft offences (rate per 1k population) Southampton and iQuanta Comparator Community Safety Partnerships: 2022/23



Southampton experienced a +17.7% increase in the volume of theft offences between 2021/22 and 2022/23, with increases also observed across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (+11.8%) and England (+14.5%) (*Figure 3.2*). This likely represents a true increase, because theft offences are relatively well reported and recorded and in turn less likely to be impacted by changes to recording<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, the observed increases in acquisitive crimes in the last year are likely linked to recent economic uncertainty and the cost of living crisis<sup>17</sup>.

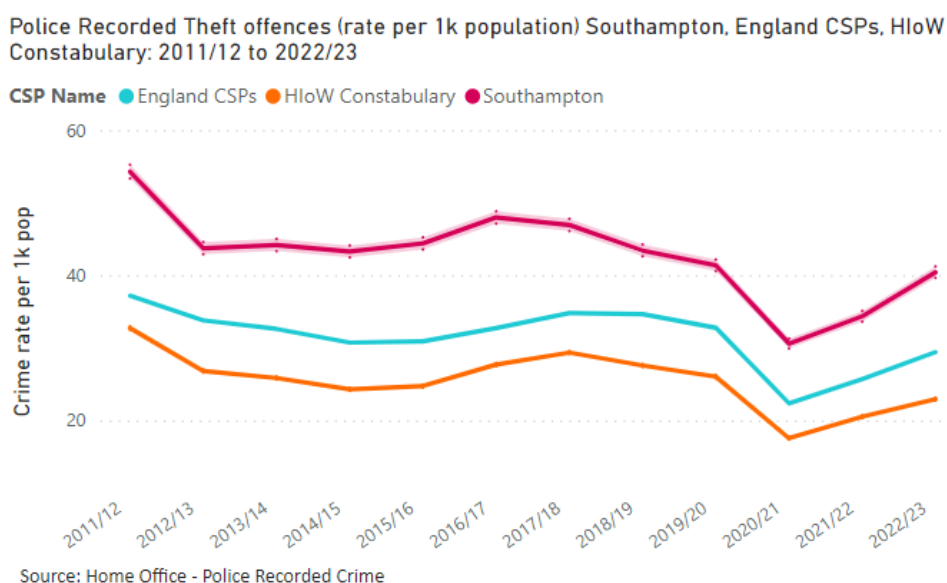
<sup>16</sup> Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023. Available via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023>

<sup>17</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

When assessing the subgroups of theft offences, the largest increases over the last year were recorded in vehicle offences<sup>18</sup> (+593 offences, +27.9%), other theft offences (+426 offences, +22.0%), shoplifting (+367 offences, +20.3%) and theft from the person (+73 offences, +31.3%); all of which were significant increases. An increase in non-domestic burglary (+79 offences, +20.4%) was also recorded, although this was not statistically significant. Whereas residential burglary (-15 offences, -1.1%) and bicycle theft (-21 offences, -3.2%) saw small declines and therefore remained statistically similar between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

However, the Southampton rate of overall theft offences in 2022/23 remains lower; albeit not significantly, than the pre-pandemic rate (41.4 per 1k population in 2019/20) (Figure 3.2). In fact, only vehicle offences saw a significant increase above the 2019/20 rate in 2022/23 (+402 offences, +17.4%). Theft from the person and other theft offences also saw increases over the same period, although they were not statistically significant. Moreover, it could be suggested that vehicle offences; particularly theft from a vehicle, have had the greatest contribution to the increase in overall theft offences recorded in the last year.

Figure 3.2: Trend in the rate of theft offences for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England



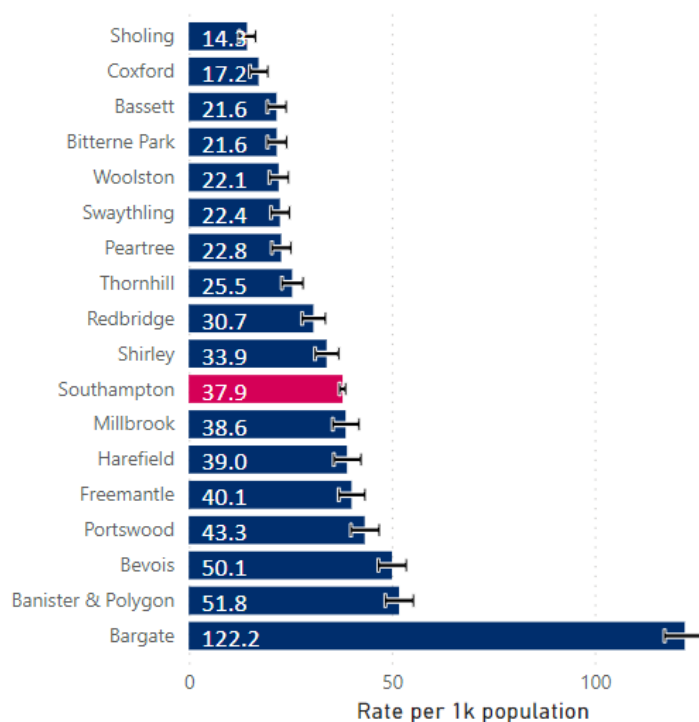
Bargate ward had the highest rate of recorded theft offences (122 per 1k population) in 2022/23, with the Bargate rate double that of the second highest ward (Banister & Polygon) (Figure 3.3). This is not surprising given that the city centre is located in Bargate and therefore holds a greater proportion of businesses and shoppers, which may attract theft offenders. For example, almost half (48.3%) of all shoplifting offences and 43.4% of theft from the person offences were recorded in Bargate during 2022/23. Banister & Polygon, Bevois and Portswood wards also had significantly higher rates than the city average (38 per 1k). Overall, this pattern is similar to the previous year but has been exacerbated

<sup>18</sup> Vehicle offences include theft from a vehicle, theft of a motor vehicle and vehicle interference.

by the increases in theft offences seen across all wards except; Bitterne Park, Freemantle and Shirley (Figure 2.10).

Figure 3.3: Chart showing the rate of theft offences by Southampton wards

Theft Offences (rate per 1k population) - Southampton wards 2022/23



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

### 3.1.1 Victims and perpetrators of theft offences

In 2022/23, there were 5,843 unique victims of theft offences, which is a +6.1% increase compared to 2021/22 (5,506 victims). Increases in the number of victims is in keeping with the increase in recorded theft offences. Repeat victimisation for theft offences remains low, with 94.2% of theft victims only experiencing one offence; which covers 88.0% of all thefts experienced in 2022/23.

Victim demographics for theft offences follow a similar pattern to previous years. Males made up the majority of victims (61.4%) in 2022/23 (62.4% in 2021/22). The most common age group for victims of theft offences continues to be those aged 35 to 49 years (28.5%), followed by 25 to 34 (24.9%), 50 to 64 (18.2%), 18 to 24 (16.8%), aged 65 and over (8.4%) and lastly those aged under 18 (3.3%). However, due to the opportunistic nature of certain theft offences, anyone could be a victim of theft.

On the other hand, there were 1,190 unique offenders identified for theft offences in 2022/23, similar to the 1,117 identified in 2021/22. Repeat offending of theft increased in the past year, from 24.9% in 2021/22 to 26.6% in 2022/23. Furthermore, those who committed five or more thefts accounted for 41.8% of offences, despite only making up 8.2% of theft offenders in 2022/23, a small increase from the previous year (38.8%). Additionally, half (50.5%) of theft offenders committed offences of another

type in 2022/23. Therefore, tackling repeat theft offenders, especially the most prolific offenders, would make a substantial contribution to reduce theft offences in Southampton.

The majority of theft offenders continue to be male (71.4% in 2022/23), the proportion of which increases for more severe subgroups of theft offences. For example, 86.8% of residential burglary offenders were male in 2022/23. Additionally, this proportion increases among the most prolific theft offenders; 85.6% who committed five or more offences were male.

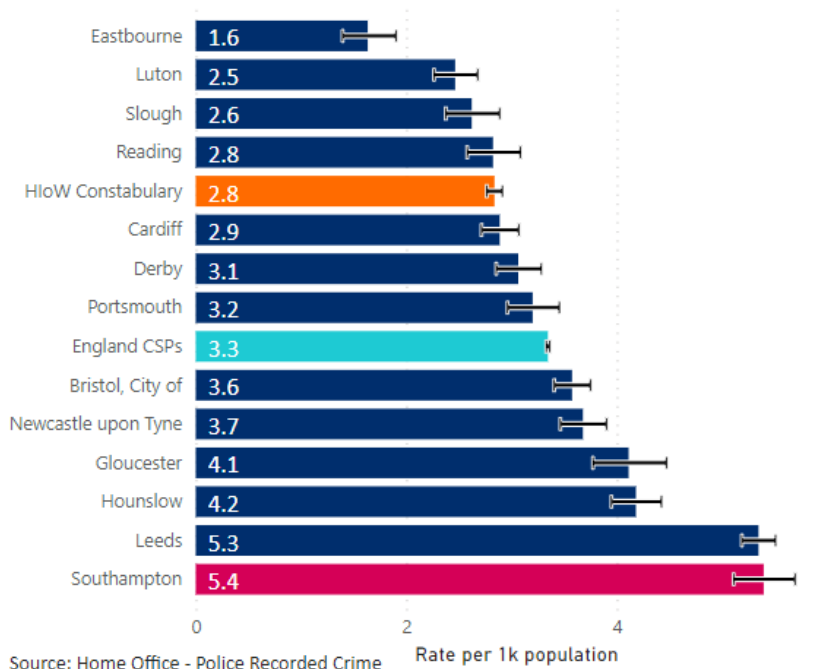
The offender age profile for theft offences is also similar to the previous year. Those aged 35 to 49 years (32.3%) were the most common theft offenders in 2022/23, followed by 25 to 34 (25.4%), those aged under 18 (18.4%), 18 to 24 (15.0%), 50 to 64 (8.1%) and those aged 65 years and over (2.0%).

### 3.1.2 Residential burglary

Residential burglary is the most severe of theft offences and accounted for 12.6% of the harm (third highest) caused by crimes in Southampton during 2022/23 (Figure 2.3). Residential burglary has also featured as a standalone priority in previous Safe City Strategic Assessments. Southampton experienced a rate of 5.4 burglaries per 1k population in 2022/23, significantly higher than the national average (3.3) and highest among comparators (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of residential burglaries

Police Recorded Domestic burglary (rate per 1k population) Southampton and iQuanta Comparator Community Safety Partnerships: 2022/23

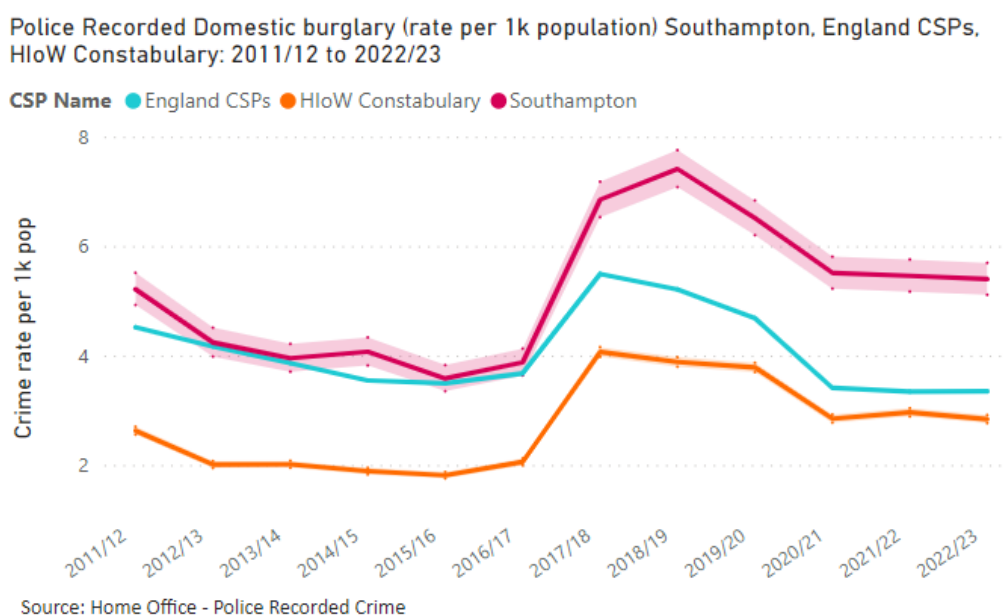


Southampton has experienced a decline in residential burglary for the fourth consecutive financial year, with the number of residential burglaries declining by -1.1% over the last year. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (-4.1%) also experienced a decline over the last year whilst England saw a

Southampton Safe City Strategic Assessment: 2022/23

small increase (+0.1%) (Figure 3.5). The overall declines observed in recent years are likely to reflect a genuine decline in residential burglaries. Additionally, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary and all other police forces have committed to attending every report of a domestic dwelling burglary in person, with this implemented in October 2022. Furthermore, this policy appears to have increased the formal action taken with residential burglaries in Southampton; rising from 2.2% in 2019/20 to 3.0% in 2021/22 and 3.6% in 2022/23. Whilst this proportion remains low and has declined across the whole force area, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary note that planned training for attending officers aims to improve the rate of formal action taken going forwards<sup>19</sup>.

Figure 3.5: Trend in the rate of residential burglaries for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England



Despite recent economic uncertainty and the cost of living crisis, residential burglaries continued to decline, whilst the volume of other acquisitive crimes has increased. Increased hybrid working continuing beyond the pandemic, is believed to be a major factor in the reduction of residential burglaries observed over the last three years<sup>19</sup>. Additionally, the emergence and improvement of security technology for residential homes may have acted as a deterrent to offenders in recent years.

Regardless of the continued decline in residential burglary, Southampton remains one of the most affected areas across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary. In 2022/23, 23.4% of residential burglaries recorded by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary occurred in Southampton. This is a significantly higher proportion compared to all other districts in the force area.

In 2022/23, rates of residential burglary in Banister & Polygon, Bevois and Portswood wards were significantly higher than the city average. Whereas rates in Coxford, Peartree, Woolston and Sholing

<sup>19</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024



wards were significantly lower (Figure 2.10). Sub-city patterns of residential burglary were similar to the previous year.

### 3.1.3 Points for the Partnership to note

- Theft offences emerged as one of the top priorities for the first time in the Southampton Safe City Strategic Assessment, following a +17.7% increase in the last year. This likely reflects a true increase as theft offences are well reported to and recorded by the police. Furthermore, these observed increases in acquisitive crime are likely linked to the cost of living crisis and recent economic uncertainty.
- However, the overall rate of theft offences remains lower, albeit not significantly, than the pre-pandemic year. Only vehicle offences showed a statistically significant increase beyond the pre-pandemic year. Furthermore, it would appear that vehicle offences; particularly theft from a vehicle, have had the greatest contribution to the overall increase in police recorded theft offences locally.
- Trends and patterns in theft offences should continue to be monitored alongside the state of the UK economy and the financial situation of Southampton residents, as research has highlighted a link between acquisitive crimes and financial pressures<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, if the number of theft offences were to decline or stabilise, it would likely not feature as a priority in the future.
- Repeat offending of theft remains a prevalent and potentially growing issue, especially among the most prolific offenders (committing five or more thefts). Additionally, half of theft offenders also committed other crimes in 2022/23. Therefore, tackling repeat theft offending would make a substantial contribution to reduce overall theft offences in Southampton.
- Residential burglary is the most severe theft offences and despite declines for the fourth consecutive year, emerged as a priority in the 2022/23 assessment.
- Police forces across the country, including Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, have committed to attending every residential burglary since October 2022. Whilst the rate of formal action taken remains low locally, there is an ambition to improve this, with training planned for officers attending burglaries.
- Compared to the pre-pandemic baseline (2019/20), there were -18.9% fewer residential burglaries recorded in 2022/23. This is likely to reflect a true decline, as residential burglaries are relatively well reported and recorded crimes. The decline seen over the last few years is likely attributed to increased home working and improved security technology.
- Despite the continued decline in the number of residential burglaries, Southampton remains the most affected area among both comparator CSPs and Hampshire districts.

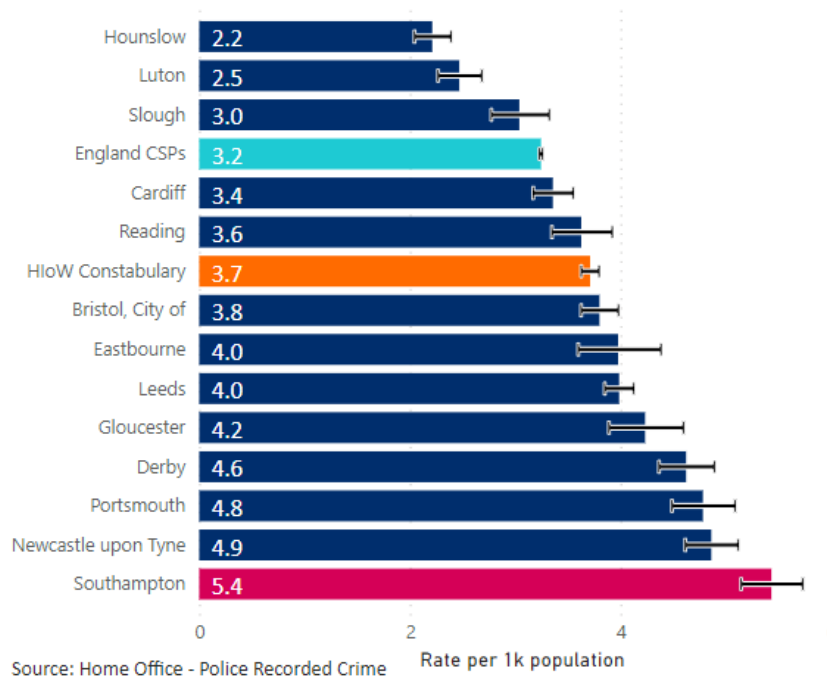
<sup>20</sup> Rosenfeld R & Levin A (2016) 'Acquisitive crime and inflation in the United States: 1960-2012, Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 32. Available via: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10940-016-9279-8>

### 3.2 Sexual offences

Southampton is ranked highest among comparators and 7<sup>th</sup> highest in England and Wales for the rate of sexual offences (*Figure 3.6*)<sup>21</sup>. Southampton is ranked highest among comparators for both rape and for other sexual offences (the two subgroups of sexual offences).

Figure 3.6: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of sexual offences

Police Recorded Sexual offences (rate per 1k population) Southampton and iQuanta Comparator Community Safety Partnerships: 2022/23

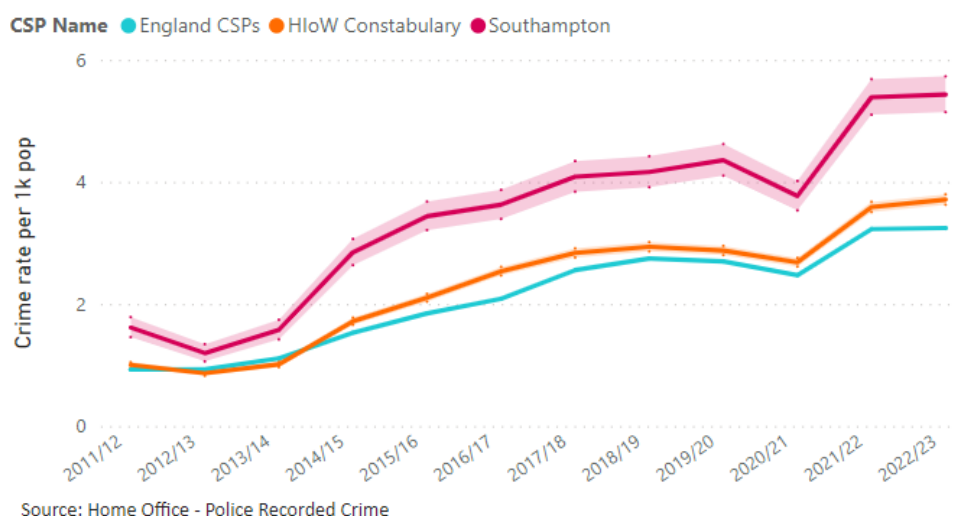


Between 2021/22 and 2022/23, Southampton experienced a +0.8% increase in the number of sexual offences, with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (+3.4%) and England (+0.5%) also experiencing an increase over the last year (*Figure 3.7*). Southampton also experienced an increase in rape (+8.3%), whereas other sexual offences declined (-3.8%) over the same period.

<sup>21</sup> Of 296 English and Welsh CSPs with a valid rate

Figure 3.7: Trend in the rate of sexual offences for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England

Police Recorded Sexual offences (rate per 1k population) Southampton, England CSPs, HloW Constabulary: 2011/12 to 2022/23



The latest sexual offence figures are likely influenced by a range of factors including increased reporting, such as through the ‘Everyone’s invited’ website, greater awareness around VAWG, re-opening of the night-time economy and media focus on high-profile issues and cases, such as the rape and murder of Sarah Everard<sup>22, 23</sup>. There have also been several Safer Streets projects in Southampton, with some projects focused on safety in the night-time economy and VAWG. If awareness and reporting continue to increase, then there could be subsequent increases in the number of police recorded sexual offences.

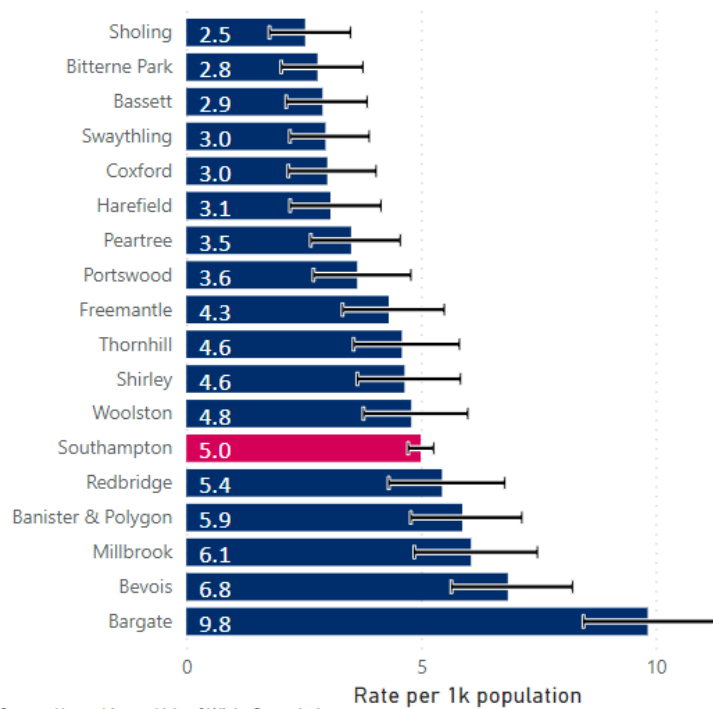
The proportion of sexual offences occurring in a public place continues to increase (19.4% in 2020/21, 23.2% in 2021/22 and 26.2% in 2022/23) and the victim offender relationship recorded as *stranger* or *acquaintance* remains the most frequently recorded (47.5%, 626 offences). Sexual offences happening in a public place and occurring between *strangers* or *acquaintances* have been linked to the night-time economy. This is further evidenced through Bargate and Bevois wards again having significantly higher rates of sexual offences than the city average (Figure 3.8), with large portions of the night-time economy located in these wards.

<sup>22</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessments 2022 and 2023 - 2024

<sup>23</sup> Crime Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023>

Figure 3.8: Chart showing rate of sexual offences for Southampton wards

Sexual Offences (rate per 1k population) - Southampton wards 2022/23



### 3.2.1 Victims and perpetrators of sexual offences

There were 1,216 victims of sexual offences in 2022/23, equal to the number of victims identified in 2021/22. Repeat victimisation remains low but increased, with 10.6% of sexual offence victims experiencing multiple sexual offences in the year (9.0% in 2021/22). However, the proportion of sexual offence victims who also experience other offences in the year remains high at 40.4%. This could suggest that sexual offence victims are often vulnerable individuals.

In 2022/23, the majority of sexual offence victims were female (84.6%); a slightly higher proportion for rape (92.1%) and lower for other sexual offences (80.1%). The age profile of sexual offence victims is similar to previous years, although the proportion of victims aged under 18 has increased. This may have been influenced by greater reporting of child peer-on-peer offences<sup>24</sup>. The most common age groups of rape victims were those aged under 18 years (28.3%), 18 to 24 year olds (28.3%) and 25 to 34 year olds (23.3%). For other sexual offences, under 18s continues to be the most common age group for victims (47.6%), followed by 18 to 24 year olds (20.7%). The above evidence suggests that females aged under 25 years continue to be most at risk of being a victim of sexual offences in 2022/23.

<sup>24</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

During 2022/23, 736 sexual offence offenders were identified in Southampton. Repeat offending of sexual offences within the year remains low, with 10.1% of offenders committing multiple sexual offences in 2022/23; similar to the previous financial year (10.4% in 2021/22). However, 42.0% of sexual offence offenders committed offences of another type in the year.

Similar to previous years, the majority of sexual offence offenders identified in 2022/23 were male (93.6%). The most common age group for sexual offence offenders was those aged 25 to 34 years (24.9%), followed by 35 to 49 (22.8%), 18 to 24 year olds (20.4%) and 9 to 17 (20.0%).

Whilst the age profile of offenders is similar to previous years, there has been a slight shift towards younger offenders, particularly the 9 to 17 age group, with 16.9% of offenders aged 9 to 17 in 2019/20 compared with 20.0% in 2022/23. Of those sexual offences committed by 9 to 17 year olds in 2022/23, almost all were against victims also aged under 18 (96.6%). This highlights that offending among this age group is predominantly driven by child peer-on-peer sexual violence. The increase in offenders aged 9 to 17 is likely a result of increased reporting instigated by the national media attention on under-reporting of child peer-on-peer offences since 2020<sup>25</sup>, <sup>26</sup>. The age profile of sexual offence offenders should continue to be monitored for further changes.

### 3.2.2 Points for the Partnership to note

- In 2022/23, the number of sexual offences continues to increase and exceed pre-pandemic volumes. The increase observed in the last two years is likely influenced by a range of factors, including increased reporting, greater awareness around VAWG, reopening of the night-time economy and media focus on high-profile issues and cases. If awareness and reporting continue to increase, then there could be subsequent increases in the number of police recorded sexual offences. The Partnership should continue to monitor the volume of sexual offences in Southampton, as sexual offences remain a priority area (Section 2.3).
- Patterns of sexual offences in the city continue to be linked to the night-time economy. As the proportion of sexual offences occurring in public places continues to increase and victim-offender relationships of stranger or acquaintance remains the most frequently recorded. This is further evidenced by significantly higher rates of sexual offences occurring in Bargate and Bevois wards; the city centre. The Partnership should continue to monitor patterns of sexual offences as well as the volume.
- Females aged under 25 continue to be highlighted as a high-risk group, with those aged under 25 accounting for over half of rape victims, whilst those aged under 18 account for 47.6% of other sexual offence victims. The Partnership should continue to work with partners to protect and safeguard this high-risk group.

<sup>25</sup> 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>

<sup>26</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

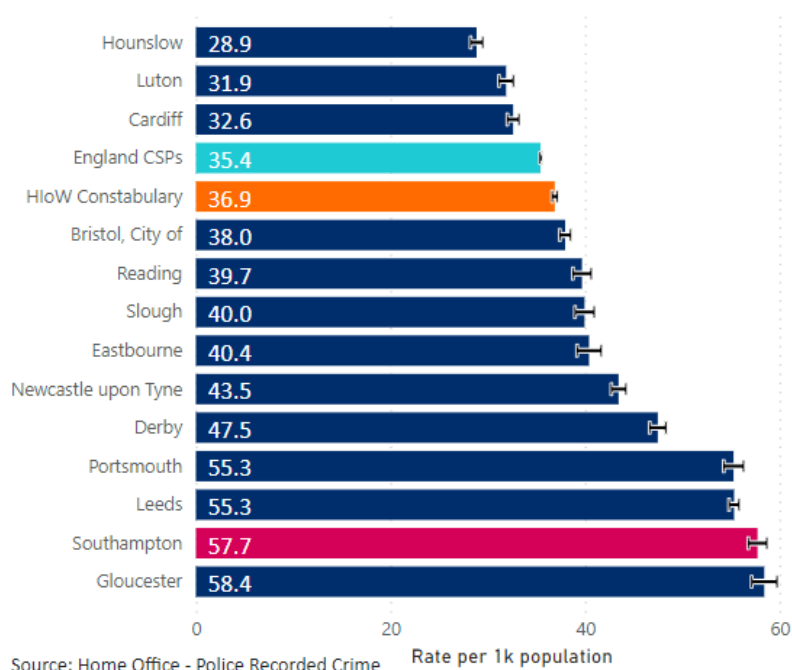
- The age profile of sexual offence offenders has seen a slight shift towards younger age groups. Additionally, 96.6% of sexual offences committed by 9 to 17 year olds were against victims aged under 18 years. Therefore, this highlights the increased reporting of child peer-on-peer offences locally, following national media attention on under reporting of these crimes since 2020.
- Findings from the 2023 community safety survey show that 74% of respondents who witnessed or were a victim of sexual assault did not report the incident. The most common reasons for not reporting sexual assaults were *reporting it makes no difference, disappointing previous experience of reporting and fear of negative consequences*. More detailed findings from the 2022 community safety survey are presented in Section 4.

### 3.3 Violent crime

Southampton had a violent crime rate of 58 crimes per 1k population in 2022/23 (Figure 3.9), which is the second highest among comparator CSPs and significantly higher than the national average (35 per 1k population). Southampton is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> highest among English and Welsh CSPs with a valid violent crime rate (296 total). Furthermore, Southampton remains among the worst 5% of CSPs nationally for violent crime, having previously been among the top 10% during and before the coronavirus pandemic (Figure 3.10). Southampton’s rate of violent crimes has remained significantly higher than the national average since 2011/12 (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.9: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of violent crimes

Police Recorded Violence against the person (rate per 1k population)  
Southampton and iQuanta Comparator Community Safety Partnerships: 2022/23



There are three main violent crime subgroups; violence with injury, violence without injury and stalking and harassment. Death or serious injury – unlawful driving and homicide are also subgroups of violent crime, however numbers for these two subgroups are too small to examine in detail. It is also important to monitor Southampton’s relative position for these subgroups, as this will give an indication on what any overall changes in violent crime are being driven by.

Figure 3.10 shows the trend in the relative ranking for violent crimes in Southampton against CSPs in England and Wales. Southampton had consistently ranked fourth highest for violence with injury between 2019/20 and 2021/22; fifth highest in 2022/23. For violence without injury, Southampton’s rank has risen from 20<sup>th</sup> in 2019/20 to 14<sup>th</sup> in 2022/23. Whereas the rank for stalking and harassment rose from 67<sup>th</sup> highest in 2019/20 to 33<sup>rd</sup> in 2022/23. This highlights the improvements that have been made to the reporting and recording of stalking and harassment locally, as a result of the change in



counting rules introduced in 2018 and increased awareness. Therefore, the rise in rank for overall violent crime is likely driven by improvements in reporting and recording of stalking and harassment. However, the rates of stalking and harassment appear to be levelling off both locally and nationally. The high ranks for both violence with and without injury should remain a concern and continue to be monitored by the Partnership.

Figure 3.10: Trend in Southampton ranks relative to England and Wales CSPs for recorded violent crime rates

Violent crime group	2019/20 CSP rank (out of 303)	2020/21 CSP rank (out of 300)	2021/22 CSP rank (out of 310)	2022/23 CSP rank (out of 296)
Overall violent crime	16 <sup>th</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
Violence with injury	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Violence without injury	20 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
Stalking & harassment	67 <sup>th</sup>	80 <sup>th</sup>	39 <sup>th</sup>	33 <sup>rd</sup>

Southampton experienced a -1.9% decrease in the number of violent crimes between 2021/22 and 2022/23. All three of the main violent crime subgroups also experienced small declines compared to the previous year, with violence with injury decreasing by -1.1%, violence without injury by -3.8% and stalking and harassment by -0.4%. Similar trends are observed nationally and across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (Figure 3.11). Although, it should be noted that the volume of violent crime remains significantly higher than the pre-pandemic baseline (+20.7% compared to 2019/20).

Increases in violent crime since the pre-pandemic period, particularly stalking and harassment, can be attributed to several factors such as the change in counting rules for stalking and harassment offences introduced in 2018, greater awareness around violence against women and girls (VAWG), as well as improved identification and recording of stalking and harassment offences by officers<sup>27, 28</sup>. However, the rate of stalking and harassment offences appears to have stagnated in the last year. It will be important for the Partnership to monitor this trend, as stalking and harassment offences can be a precursor for more serious offending in the future, particularly those that are flagged as domestic.

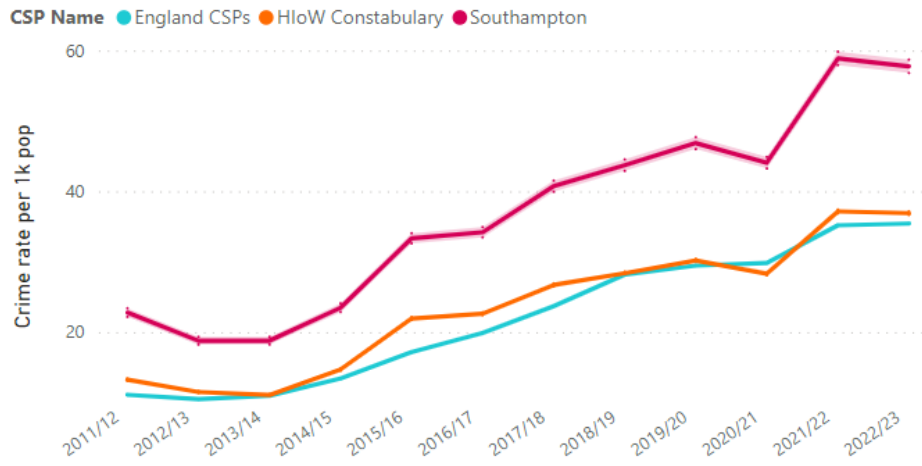
<sup>27</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

<sup>28</sup> Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023. Available online via:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023>

Figure 3.11: Trend in the rate of violent crimes for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England

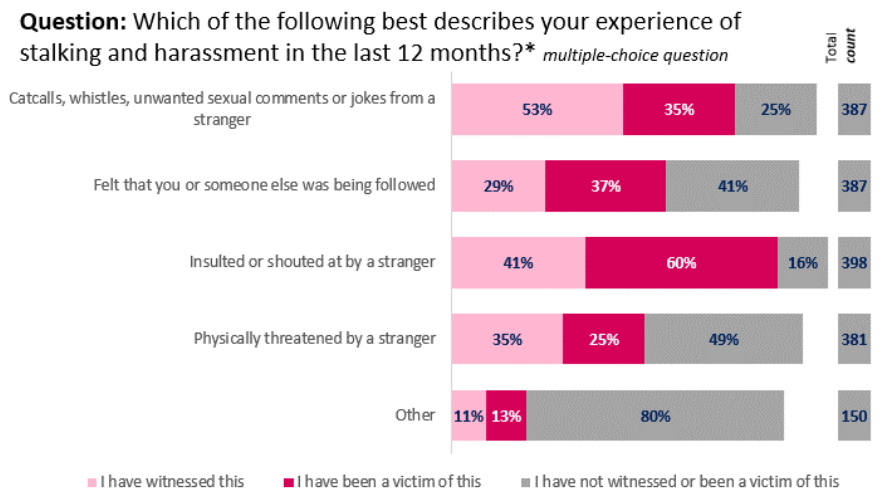
Police Recorded Violence against the person (rate per 1k population) Southampton, England CSPs, HloW Constabulary: 2011/12 to 2022/23



Source: Home Office - Police Recorded Crime

16% of respondents from the 2023 Southampton community safety survey stated that they had witnessed stalking and harassment, with an additional 10% stating that they had been a victim of stalking and harassment in the last 12 months. A significantly higher proportion of female respondents (13%) were a victim of stalking and harassment compared to males (5%). Additionally, a greater proportion of younger respondents stated that they had witnessed and/or experienced stalking and harassment. Figure 3.12 shows the types of stalking and harassment respondents witnessed and/or experienced. Being *insulted or shouted at by a stranger* was the most commonly experienced (60%) and *catcalls, whistles, unwanted sexual comments or jokes from a stranger* was the most commonly witnessed (53%). A significantly higher proportion of female respondents (43%) had experienced *catcalls, whistles, unwanted sexual comments or jokes from a stranger* compared to males (16%). More detailed findings from the 2022 community safety survey are presented in Section 4.

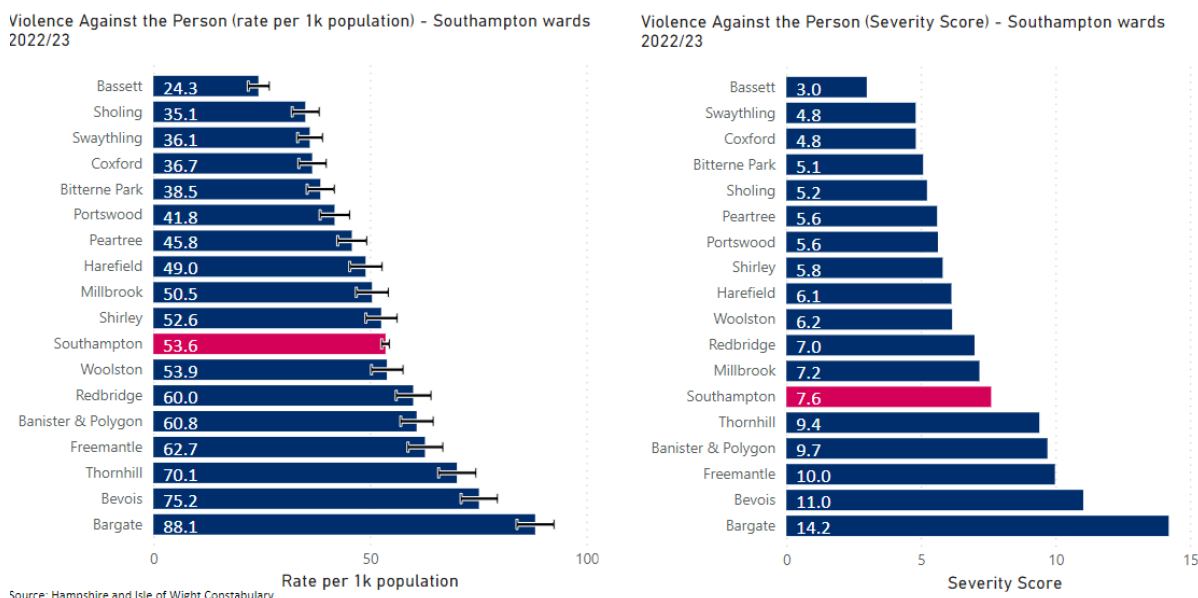
Figure 3.12: Chart showing the experiences of respondents who witnessed/ experienced of stalking & harassment



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023) \*This question was asked only of those that said they were either a witness or a victim in response to the stalking and harassment topic.

Moreover, sub-city patterns of violent crime continue to be linked to the night-time economy in 2022/23. With Bargate and Bevois wards (city centre) having the highest rates of violent crime (Figure 3.13). Additionally, the peak times for violent crimes were in the early hours on the weekend.

Figure 3.13: Ward benchmarking chart showing the rate (left) and severity (right) of violent crimes



Domestic violence continues to be a significant driver of violent crime in Southampton, with 32.0% of violent crime in 2022/23 flagged as domestic. This is similar to the proportion recorded in 2021/22 (32.7%), but lower than that recorded in 2020/21 (35.6%) (Figure 3.16). However, it is important to note the percentage of violent crime that was flagged as domestic in 2020/21 will be inflated by the decline in overall violent crime during that year.

Changes in certain crime types, particularly domestic violence should be interpreted with caution. This is because changes in recording and reporting practices, as well as victim confidence in reporting and awareness will influence volumes of crimes recorded. Additionally, an increase seen in police recorded crime data may not reflect a true increase in crime<sup>29</sup>.

### 3.3.1 Crimes involving a weapon

There were 789 crimes in Southampton during 2022/23 that involved the use of a bladed implement, a +22.5% increased from 2021/22 (644). This compares with a +5% increase in police recorded knife-enabled crime during the same period nationally<sup>29</sup>. Southampton accounted for over a quarter (27.3%) of crimes involving a bladed implement across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, a significantly higher proportion compared to other local districts in 2022/23. The increases in knife-

<sup>29</sup> Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023>

enabled crime both locally and nationally are likely influenced by changes in knife crime recording, with a new methodology introduced for a number of force areas (including Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary) in identifying knife-enabled crime<sup>30, 31</sup>.

The profile of offenders for crimes involving a bladed implement appears to be increasingly skewed towards younger age groups and males. Therefore, highlighting the importance of early intervention<sup>32</sup>.

There were 50 firearms offences in Southampton during 2022/23, 5 more than recorded in 2021/22. Despite the number of recorded firearms offences being relatively low in Southampton, firearms can cause significant harm. Also, firearm offences are often linked to organised crime. Moreover, Southampton continues to be the area most impacted by firearms crime across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight<sup>30</sup>.

### 3.3.2 Victims and perpetrators of violent crime

In 2022/23, there were 9,186 unique victims of violent crimes in Southampton, with 25.1% of these individuals experiencing multiple violent crimes in the year. This proportion of repeat victimisation remains higher than the pre-pandemic baseline (21.3% in 2019/20) and remains similar to the previous financial year (25.0% in 2021/22). Therefore, this indicates that repeat victimisation of violent crime remains a significant issue. Individuals experiencing more than one violent crime in 2022/23, accounted for 47.8% of all violent crimes with a victim recorded in the year. Additionally, 22.0% of violent crime victims were also a victim of other crimes in the year, again greater than that recorded in both 2019/20 (18.5%) and 2021/22 (19.8%).

A higher proportion of violent crime victims were female (51.0%) in 2022/23, a pattern also identified in 2020/21 (the pandemic year) and has continued. Whereas previously (2019/20 and before), males accounted for a greater proportion of violent crime victims. It was thought that the shift in 2020/21 was attributed to changing patterns in violent crime as a result of the pandemic, specifically a reduction in violence occurring between strangers and in a public place, with victims and offenders of this type of violence skewed towards males<sup>33</sup>. However, this trend has continued in 2021/22 and 2022/23, the shift could be influenced by rising awareness of violence against women and girls, leading to increased reporting and recording of these issues. It will be important to monitor this trend going forward to see if the shift experienced in recent years is maintained. Nonetheless, females continue to experience more violent crimes than males overall (54.9% of violent crimes), whilst also being increasingly more likely to be repeat victims of violent crimes (*Figure 3.14*). This continues to highlight

<sup>30</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

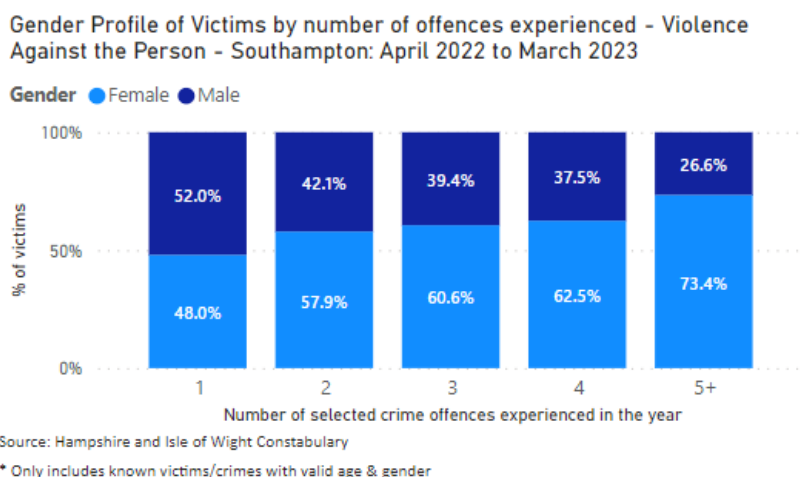
<sup>31</sup> Office for National Statistics – Improving data collection for knife enabled crime in England and Wales (2021). Available online via: <https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2021/05/12/improving-data-collection-for-knife-enabled-crime-in-england-and-wales/>

<sup>32</sup> Home Office: Serious Violence Strategy (2018). Available online via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

<sup>33</sup> Office for National Statistics – Nature of crime: Violence, year ending March 2020, Online available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/natureofcrimetablesviolence>

the impact and extent of VAWG in Southampton, with VAWG highlighted among the top 10 priority areas in this assessment (Section 102.3).

Figure 3.14: Chart showing gender profile of violent crime victims by number of offences experienced



Similar to previous years, those aged under 25 continue to be most at risk of being a victim of violent crime; over a third of violent crime victims were aged under 25 in 2022/23. With the proportion of violent crime victims aged under 18 in 2022/23 (19.3%) now exceeding the pre-pandemic baseline (18.8% in 2019/20).

There were 6,493 unique suspects and offenders of violent crime identified in 2022/23, with 36.0% of offenders committing multiple violent crimes in the year; accounting for 64.1% of violent crimes with a recorded suspect or offender. The most prolific offenders (5 or more offences) accounted for 5.0% (327) of offenders but committed 21.0% of violent crimes. Additionally, 28.1% of violent crime offenders also committed other crimes in 2022/23, with repeat offenders more likely to commit other crimes. The above evidence highlights that repeat offending remains an issue for violent crime offenders.

Males continue to make up two-thirds of violent crime offenders (66.7% in 2022/23). The age profile of violent crime offenders is also similar to previous years, with those aged under 25 accounting for 29.4% of violent crime offenders.

### 3.3.3 Points for the Partnership to note

- The number of violent crimes in Southampton declined slightly over the last year (-1.9%) but remains significantly higher than the pre-pandemic baseline (+20.7% compared to 2019/20). This is likely due to improved awareness, reporting and recording of violent crimes, especially for VAWG and stalking and harassment offences. Moreover, violent crime remains a priority for the Partnership in 2022/23.
- The number of stalking and harassment offences increased by +71.5% between 2019/20 and 2022/23. This increase is likely attributable to the change in counting rules introduced in 2018,

greater awareness around VAWG, as well as improved identification and recording of stalking and harassment offences. However, the rate of stalking and harassment offences has levelled off in the last year both locally and nationally. The Partnership should continue to monitor this trend, as stalking and harassment can be a precursor for more serious offending.

- Southampton remains among the worst 5% of CSPs nationally for violent crime. Southampton's rank for violent crimes relative to other CSPs in England and Wales has increased from 16<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> worst between 2019/20 and 2022/23. Southampton has fallen from 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> highest for violence with injury and seen a small increase from 20<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> for violence without injury. However, the biggest driver in the change in relative position for overall violent crime has been the increase in stalking and harassment; rising from 67<sup>th</sup> to 33<sup>rd</sup>. This highlights the improvements that have been made in the awareness, reporting and recording of stalking and harassment, although the effect of which has diminished in the most recent year. Furthermore, the high ranks for both violence with and without injury should remain a concern and continue to be monitored by the Partnership.
- Victims and offenders of violent crimes have an increasingly younger age profile, with over a third of violent crime victims and over 29.4% offenders aged under 25 years. Therefore, the Partnership should continue to focus on early intervention to prevent and reduce levels of violent crime in Southampton.
- Repeat victimisation and offending continue to be substantial issues for violent crime, remaining above the pre-pandemic baseline for a second consecutive year. The Partnership should continue to monitor this trend.
- Southampton continues to be one of the most affected areas across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary for knife enabled crime, accounting for 27.3% of knife-enabled crimes occurring across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary in 2022/23. Knife-enabled crime can cause significant harm, with victims and perpetrators increasingly skewed towards younger age groups and males. The Partnership should continue to work with schools to raise awareness of the harm caused by weapons among younger people.
- Domestic violence continues to be a significant driver of violent crime in Southampton; with 32.0% of violent crime in 2022/23 flagged as domestic. Tackling domestic violence continues to be key to reducing overall levels of violent crime.
- A [violence against women and girls problem profile](#) was undertaken in early 2022, which looks at the volume and patterns of different types of VAWG in Southampton. The Partnership should take note of key findings from this piece of work.
- Findings from the 2023 community safety survey show that the majority of respondents who witnessed or were a victim of serious violent crime (53%) or VAWG (68%) did not report the incident, which is concerning considering the high harm nature of these offences. The most common reasons for not reporting these crimes were *reporting it makes no difference*, *fear negative consequences* and *disappointing previous experience of reporting*. More detailed findings from the 2023 community safety survey are presented in Section 4.

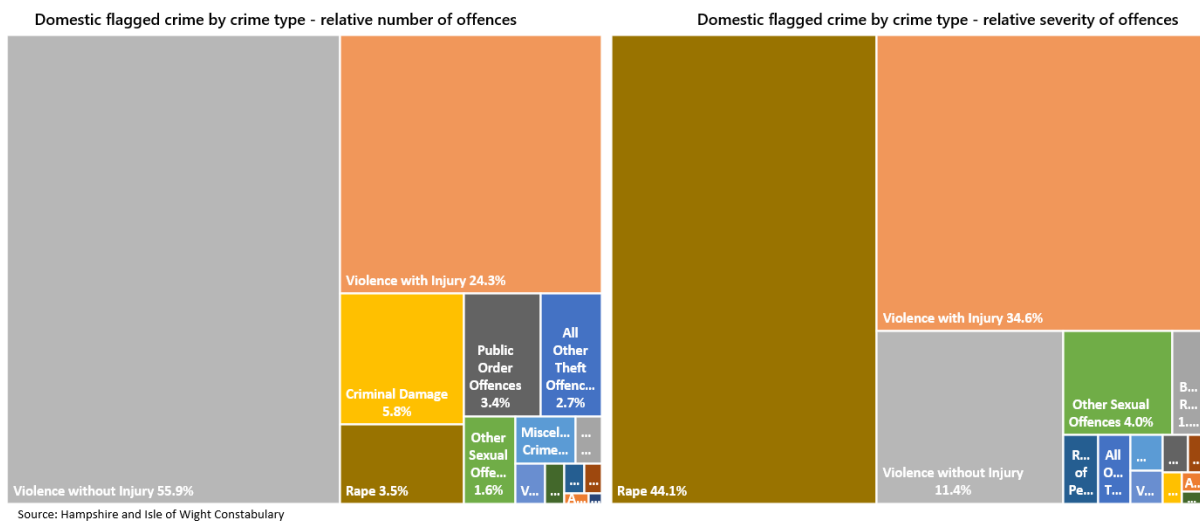


### 3.4 Domestic crimes

There were 5,645 domestic flagged crimes in Southampton during 2022/23, a -2.8% decrease from 2021/22 but +20.5% higher than the number recorded in 2019/20 (the pre-pandemic baseline). Domestic flagged crime accounted for 16.0% of all recorded crimes in Southampton, a similar proportion compared to the previous year (16.9% in 2021/22).

The ‘case mix’ of domestic flagged crime in 2022/23 is similar to previous years (Figure 3.15). The majority of domestic flagged crimes in Southampton were violent crimes (80.2%), with violence without injury (including stalking and harassment) accounting for 55.9% of domestic flagged crimes. Domestic rape continues to cause significant harm in the city, with rape accounting for 44.1% of the harm (relative severity) caused by domestic flagged crimes; despite only accounting for 3.5% of domestic flagged offences in 2022/23.

Figure 3.15: Tree maps showing relative number (left) and severity (right) of offences for domestic flagged crimes in Southampton during 2022/23

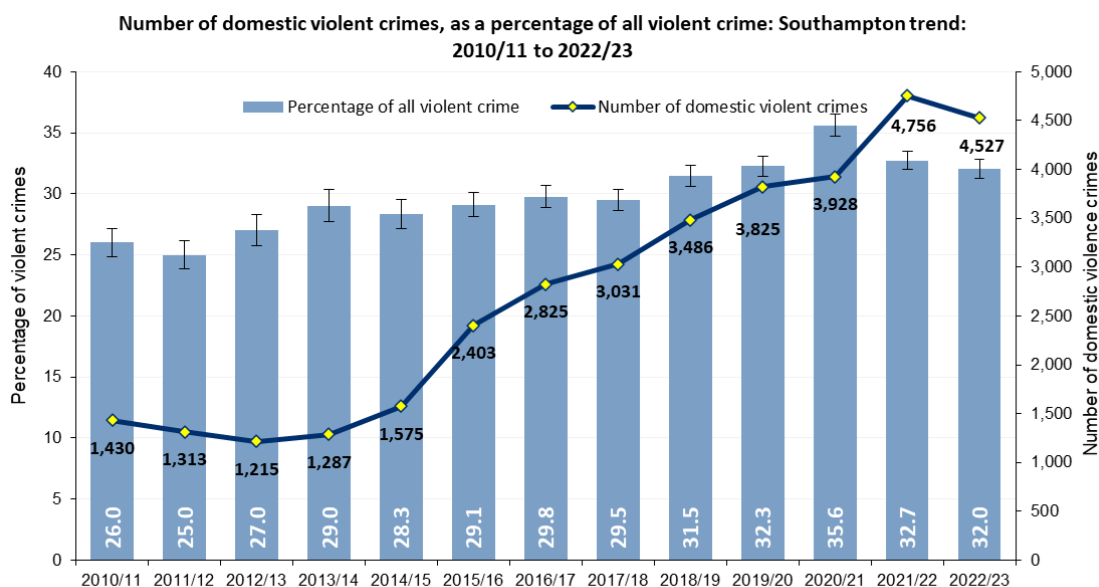


The number of domestic violent crimes in Southampton has decreased for the first time in a decade, having increased consecutively for the previous nine years (Figure 3.16). The proportion of violent crimes flagged as domestic in 2022/23 (32.0%) was significantly lower than 2020/21 (35.6%), but similar to 2021/22 (32.7%). However, it is important to highlight that the proportion of violent crime that was flagged as domestic in 2020/21 was inflated by the decline in overall violent crime during that year.

Nationally, there was little change in the number of domestic flagged crimes between 2021/22 (889,311) and 2022/23 (889,441). However, there was a +14% increase recorded compared to the pre-

pandemic baseline (777,726 in 2019/20)<sup>34</sup>. Southampton followed a similar trend overall, although the magnitude of differences was greater than those experienced nationally. Furthermore, these differences should be interpreted with caution, as police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes are not the most reliable measure<sup>35</sup>. This is because domestic abuse is often hidden and underreported.

Figure 3.16: Trend in the number and proportion of violent crimes that are flagged as domestic



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

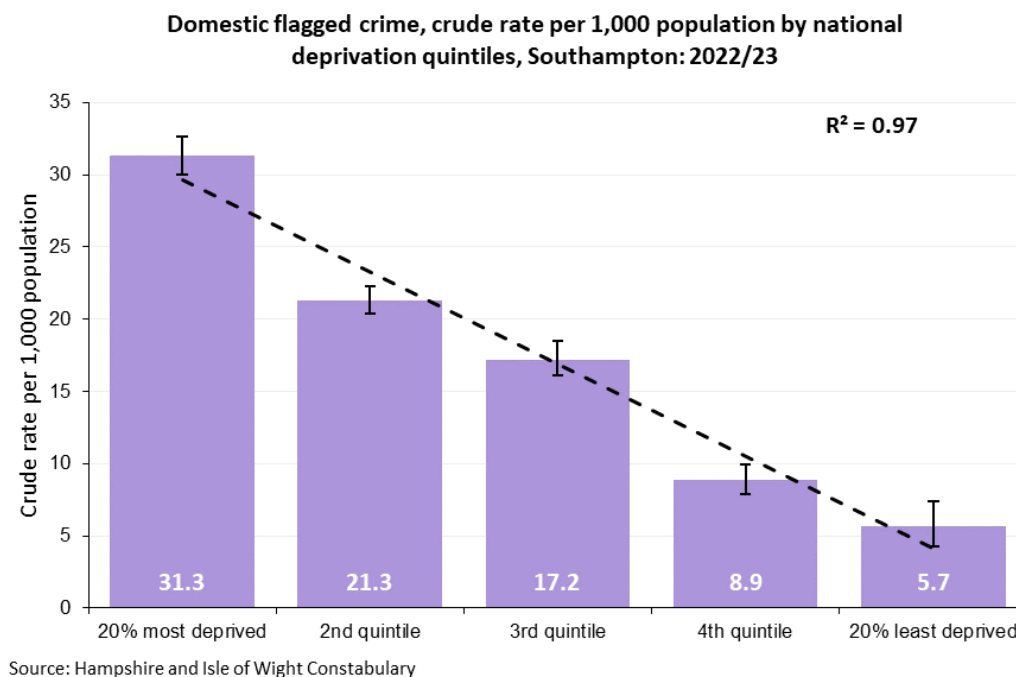
It is difficult to say whether the increase in domestic abuse-related crimes over the last decade reflects a true increase, as police recorded figures of domestic abuse are likely to have been impacted by changes to recording practices, policing activity and public reporting of crime<sup>35</sup>. Nonetheless, domestic abuse remains a significant issue in Southampton and has again been highlighted as a priority for the Partnership.

Sub city patterns of domestic flagged crime are similar to previous years. In 2022/23, rates of domestic flagged crime are significantly higher than the city average in Thornhill, Redbridge, Woolston, Bevois, Millbrook and Freemantle wards. With notable hotspots of domestic flagged crimes in neighbourhoods across these wards (Figure 3.18). Domestic flagged crime continues to have a strong link to deprivation (Figure 3.17), with the rate of domestic flagged crimes 5.5 times higher in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in Southampton.

<sup>34</sup> Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023>

<sup>35</sup> Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023>

Figure 3.17: Quintile chart showing the relationship between domestic flagged crime and deprivation



Domestic abuse not only has an impact on victims, but also close family and children in the household. 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<sup>36</sup>. Children experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse is a key adverse childhood experience (ACE), with children having ACEs more likely to have poorer outcomes; particularly those relating to health, education and crime<sup>37</sup>. The impact on children is illustrated by the fact that 60% of high-risk domestic abuse referrals (HRDAs) in Southampton have children or young people in the household (2022/23). Additionally, 44% of child social care assessments undertaken in 2022/23 had domestic violence recorded as an assessment factor<sup>38</sup>.

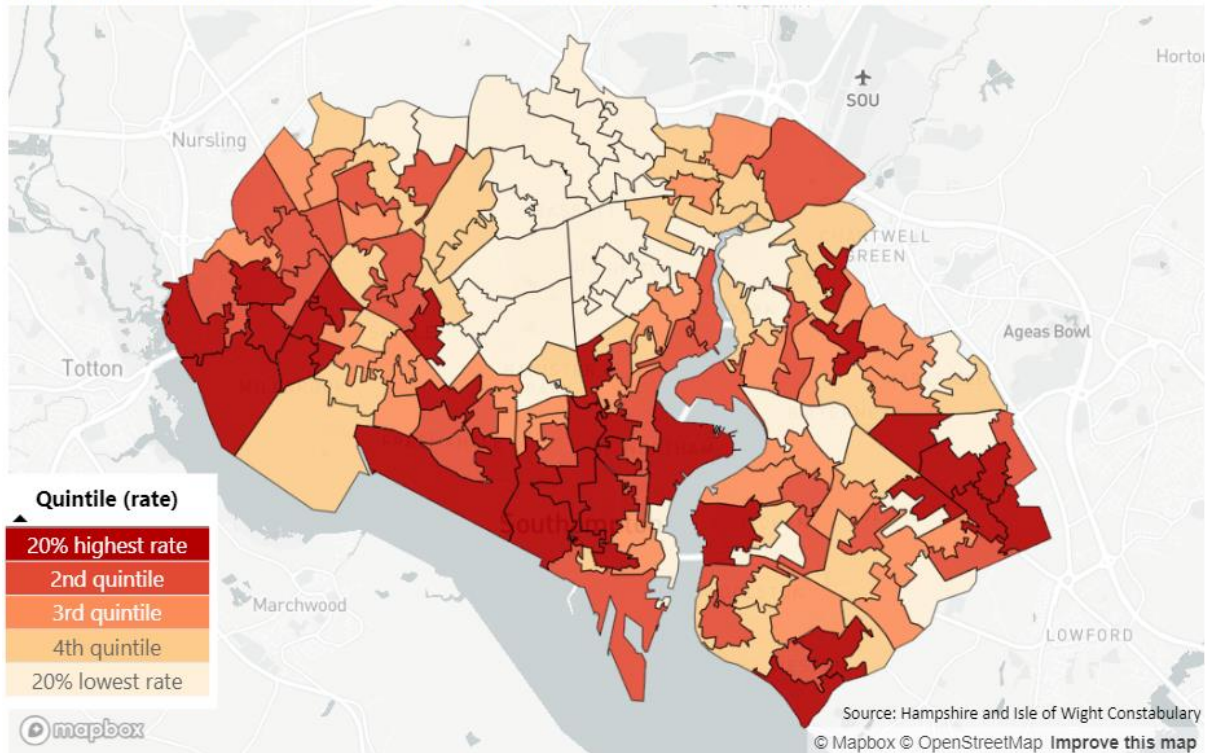
<sup>36</sup> Home Office – Domestic Abuse Act Factsheet (2022). Online Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/statutory-definition-of-domestic-abuse-factsheet>

<sup>37</sup> Local Government Association: Public health approaches to reducing violence (2018). Available via: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/public-health-approaches-reducing-violence>

<sup>38</sup> Domestic Violence is the terminology used in the coding framework set out by the Department for Education

Figure 3.18: Map showing rates of domestic flagged crime by Southampton neighbourhoods (2021 LSOAs)

Domestic Flagged crime, crude rate per 1,000 population, Southampton LSOAs grouped into quintiles: April 2022 to March 2023



### 3.4.1 Victims and perpetrators of domestic crimes

In 2022/23, there were 3,538 victims of domestic flagged crimes, which is similar to the previous year (3,677 in 2021/22). 30.3% of victims experienced multiple domestic flagged crimes in the year; increasing for the fourth consecutive year since 2019/20 (26.9%). Repeat victims experienced 54.9% of domestic crimes recorded in 2022/23. 24.7% of domestic flagged crime victims also experienced other offences in 2022/23. This suggests that repeat victimisation of domestic abuse remains a significant issue in Southampton, and potentially a growing one as the proportion of repeat victims continues to increase. This trend should continue to be monitored by the Partnership.

Females continue to account for a significantly higher proportion (68.1%) of domestic flagged crime victims than males (31.9%). Victim age profiling is also similar to previous years, with the most common age groups of domestic crime victims in 2022/23 being those aged 35 to 49 years (31.2%), followed by 25 to 34 (30.0%) and 18 to 24 (17.8%).

Under 18s accounted for 6.2% of victims in 2022/23. However, it is important to emphasise that this only includes under 18s that are direct victims of domestic abuse and not those related to or under parental responsibility of either the victim or perpetrator, as recognised under the Domestic Abuse Act. Therefore, the above figure does not illustrate the true impact of domestic abuse on children in Southampton and should not be interpreted as under 18s being least affected by domestic abuse.

There were 3,288 domestic crime offenders identified in 2022/23, which is a -6.0% decline on the number identified in 2021/22 (3,498). Similar to repeat victimisation, there appears to be a growing trend of repeat domestic offending in Southampton. 34.2% of domestic crime offenders committed more than one domestic flagged offence in the year, also a third consecutive increase since 2019/20 (28.3%). 31.2% of domestic crime offenders also committed other offences in 2022/23. Tackling repeat offending continues to be key to reducing rates of domestic crime in Southampton.

### 3.4.2 Points for the Partnership to note

- Domestic abuse remains a priority for the Partnership. The Partnership should continue to work with partners to monitor and understand the extent of domestic abuse across the city using a wide range of sources to fill existing gaps in intelligence.
- Both the number of domestic flagged crimes and domestic violent crimes have decreased over the last year but remain above pre-pandemic volumes. Although, the number of domestic violent crimes has declined for the first time in a decade. However, it is unclear whether recent increases reflect a true increase, as police recorded domestic abuse has been impacted by changes in recording practices, policing activity, and public reporting of crime. Plus, much of domestic abuse remains hidden and therefore underreported to the police. Nonetheless, this is a trend that should continue to be closely monitored.
- The impact of domestic abuse on children continues to be significant, with 60% of high-risk domestic abuse referrals (HRDA) in Southampton having children or young people in the household (2022/23). The Partnership should continue to work with partners to support children experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse. As domestic abuse is a key ACE, which in turn leads to increased risk of poorer outcomes for children.
- Domestic rape continues to cause significant harm in the city, accounting for 3.5% of domestic flagged crimes, yet 44.1% of the relative harm caused by domestic flagged offences.
- Domestic abuse is a citywide issue, as illustrated by the neighbourhood map (Figure 3.14). However, police recorded domestic flagged crimes continues to show a strong relationship with deprivation. The rate of domestic flagged crime is 5.5 times higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the least deprived neighbourhoods in Southampton.
- Repeat victimisation remains an issue for domestic crime, with the proportion of domestic flagged crime victims experiencing multiple domestic flagged crimes increasing for the fourth consecutive year. The Partnership should continue to monitor this growing trend and work with partner agencies to support the victims of domestic abuse.
- Similarly, repeat offending for domestic flagged crime perpetrators is also showing a rising trend in recent years and remains a significant issue locally. Focussing actions and interventions on offenders; especially repeat offenders, is key to reducing the volume and harm caused by domestic abuse in Southampton.
- Findings from the 2023 community safety survey show that over half (54%) of respondents *don't know* if domestic abuse is an issue in their local area. Whilst 30% do see domestic abuse as an issue, this is -2 percentage points lower than that of the previous survey. This suggests there is still work to be done in raising awareness of key and priority issues in the city, the



Partnership should continue to work with partners to raise awareness of domestic abuse in Southampton.

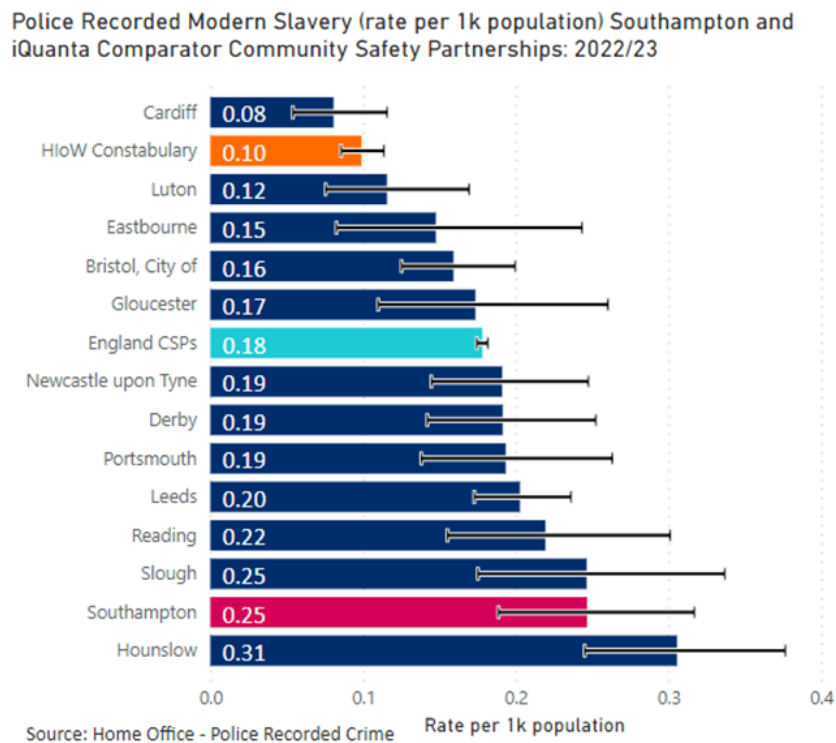
- 58% of respondents who had witnessed or experienced domestic abuse did not report it. Whilst this remains high, this is -6 percentage points lower than the 2022 survey. Common reasons for not reporting domestic abuse include *reporting it makes no difference*, *disappointing previous experience of reporting* and *fear of negative consequences*. More detailed findings from the 2023 community safety survey are presented in Section 4.



### 3.5 Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery is an umbrella term for all forms of slavery, human trafficking and exploitation. It is a crime that affects some of the most vulnerable in society. Police recorded crime only provides a partial picture, because most cases of modern slavery remain hidden and not reported or may be recorded as other offences<sup>39</sup>. There were 61 cases of modern slavery in Southampton recorded in 2022/23; one fewer than recorded in 2021/22. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary also experienced a decline (-8.3%, -18 crimes), whereas England saw an increase in the volume of recorded modern slavery offences (+5.6%, +515 crimes).

Figure 3.19: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of modern slavery offences



There has been an overall increase in the number and rate of modern slavery offences since 2017/18 across Southampton and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (Figure 3.20). However, year-on-year increases are not statistically significant in Southampton due to the numbers of cases remaining low. Yet, the rate of recorded modern slavery crimes in Southampton has now been significantly higher than the national rate for the last two years. Whilst several local operations continue, changes to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 may result in fewer referrals and victims coming forward for fear of not meeting the evidence threshold required<sup>40</sup>.

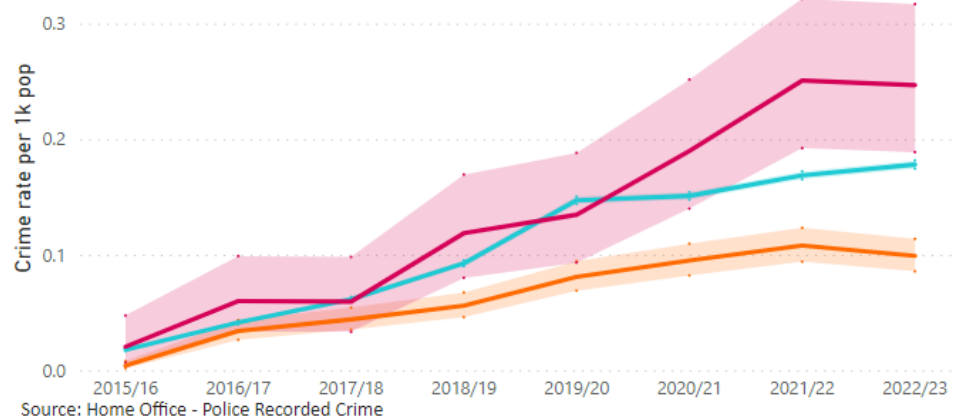
<sup>39</sup> Office for National Statistics – Child victims of modern slavery in the UK: March 2023. Available via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/childvictimsofmodernslaveryintheuk/march2023>

<sup>40</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

Figure 3.20: Trend in the rate of modern slavery offences for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England

Police Recorded Modern Slavery (rate per 1k population) HloW Constabulary, England CSPs, Southampton: 2015/16 to 2022/23

CSP Name ● England CSPs ● HloW Constabulary ● Southampton



Despite the numbers of this offence type being relatively small, the physical and psychological harm caused to victims can have long lasting effects. Also, modern slavery is often linked to organised crime, highlighting the threat that modern slavery and other forms of exploitation pose.

### 3.5.1 Points for the Partnership to note

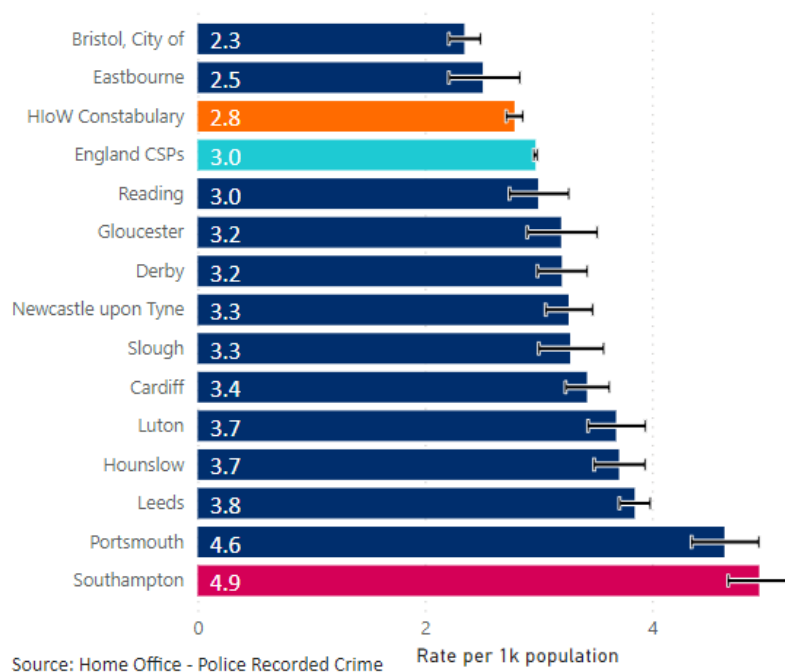
- The number of modern slavery crimes has seen a small decline in the last year, yet the rate of offences in Southampton remains significantly higher than the national average. Increases in recorded modern slavery in recent years are likely due to operational focus and the rising national profile of this crime. However, changes to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 may result in fewer referrals and victims coming forwards in the future, from fear of not meeting the required evidence threshold. The Partnership should continue to monitor this trend.
- Many cases of modern slavery remain hidden and unreported. The Partnership should continue to work with partners to raise awareness and increase identification of modern slavery.

### 3.6 Drugs and alcohol

Southampton had a drug offence rate of 4.9 offences per 1k population in 2022/23, significantly higher than the England average of 3.0 offences per 1k population (Figure 3.21). The number of drug offences in Southampton is significantly higher than the previous year (+19.0%). Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary saw a smaller increase (+4.9%) than Southampton, whereas England experienced a decline (-0.5%) over the last year (Figure 3.22). Additionally, 1,224 drug affected crimes were recorded in Southampton during 2022/23, which is +7.6% higher than the previous year.

Figure 3.21: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of drug offences

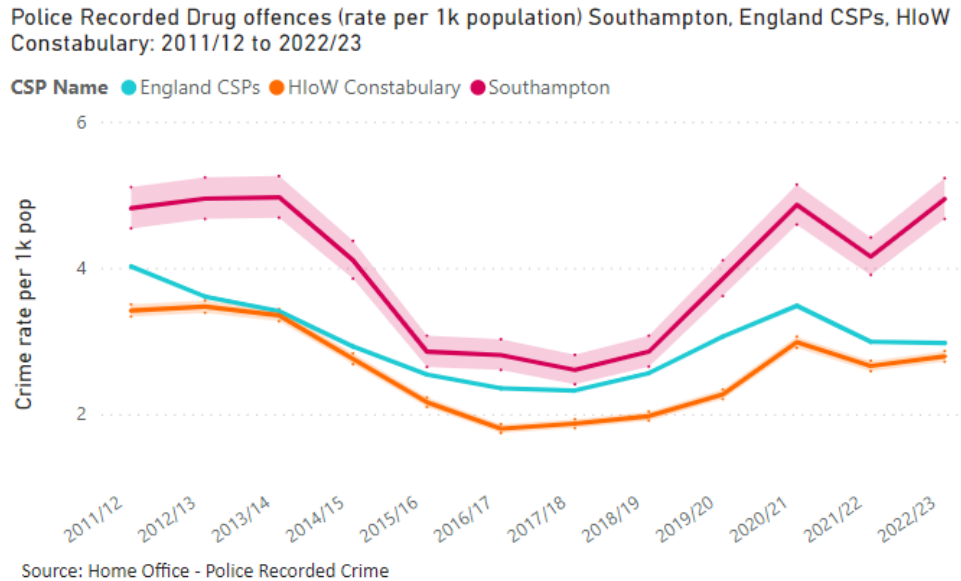
Police Recorded Drug offences (rate per 1k population) Southampton and iQuanta Comparator Community Safety Partnerships: 2022/23



The number of drug offences recorded by the police is heavily dependent on police activities and priorities, which change over time. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary note that Southampton is the most impacted district of organised crime groups. For example, almost half of all cannabis farms identified by the force in 2022 were in Southampton<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

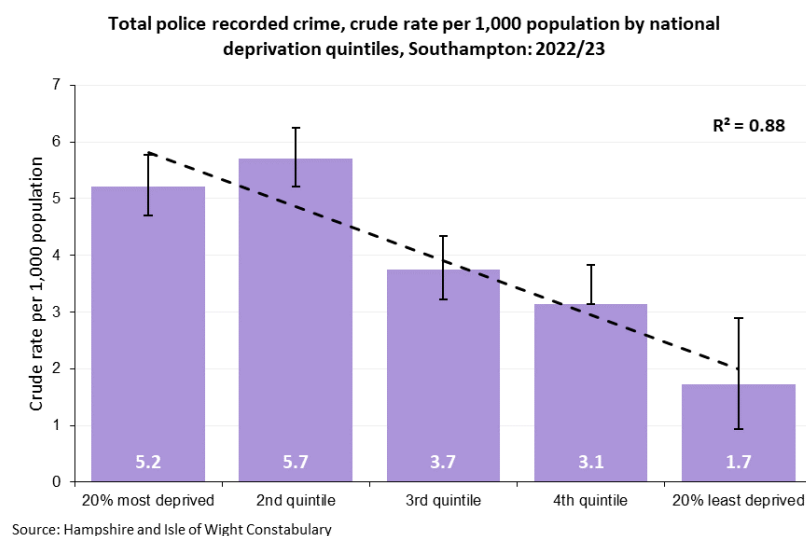
Figure 3.22: Trend chart showing the rate of drug offences for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England



Sub city patterns of drug offences show a similar picture to previous years. Bargate, Bevois, Freemantle and Banister & Polygon wards had significantly higher rates of drug offences and drug affected crime compared to the Southampton average. Although it should be noted that, the presence of a key police site in Freemantle may have inflated the rate in Freemantle ward.

However, the link between drug offences and deprivation is less clear than in previous years. In 2022/23, the drug offence rate was 3 times higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city compared to the least deprived (Figure 3.23); having been 4.9 times higher in 2021/22. Additionally, the highest rate of drug offences was recorded across neighbourhoods in the second deprivation quintile (5.7 per 1k population) in 2022/23. Although, this is not significantly higher than the rate in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in Southampton.

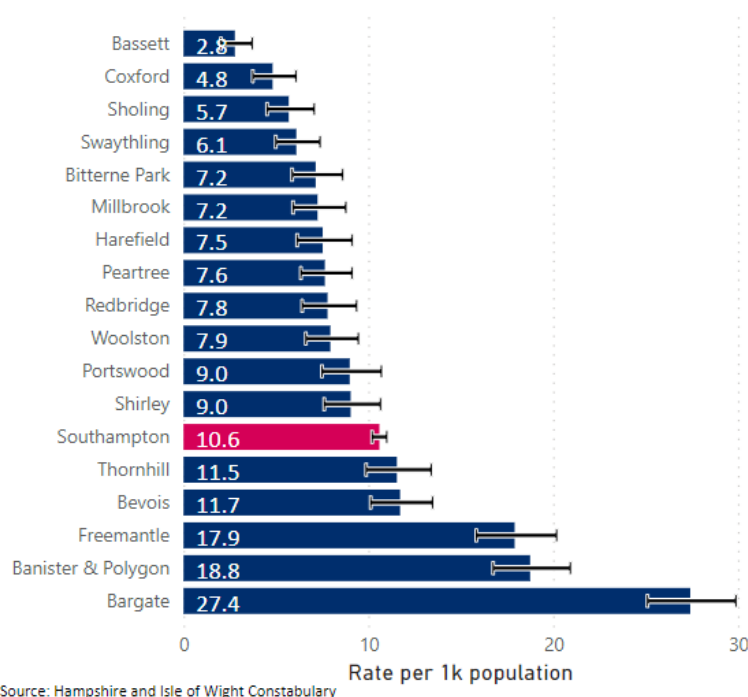
Figure 3.23: Quintile chart showing the relationship between drug offences and deprivation



There were 2,795 alcohol affected crimes recorded in Southampton during 2022/23, which is a decline of -10.8% compared to the previous year, but +6.9% higher than the pre-pandemic baseline (2019/20). A return to normality following the reopening of the night-time economy in 2021/22, may have influenced the decline in recorded alcohol affected crime over the last year. Increases from the pre-pandemic baseline are likely a result of improved reporting, rather than a real change in incidence. Similar to previous years, the majority of alcohol affected crimes were violent crimes (68.4%) in 2022/23.

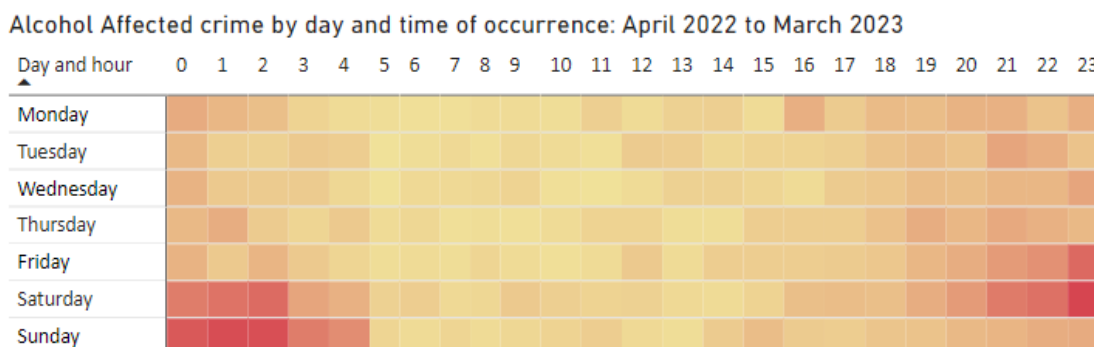
Figure 3.24: Ward benchmarking chart showing the rate of alcohol affected crime

All Crime (Alcohol Affected) (rate per 1k population) - Southampton wards 2022/23



Bargate ward continues to have the highest rate of alcohol affected crime in Southampton; whilst Banister & Polygon and Freemantle also show significantly higher rates than the city average (Figure 3.24). Although these rates may be impacted by high footfall in the city centre, these wards happen to be where most alcohol affected crimes are recorded. Temporal profiling of alcohol affected crimes is also similar to previous years, with peak occurrence times late at night and early hours of the morning on weekends (Figure 3.25). Overall, the sub city and temporal patterns in alcohol affected crime continues to highlight a strong link to the night-time economy.

Figure 3.25: Chart showing peak day and time for alcohol affected crime



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

Not only do drugs and alcohol impact crime, but they can also cause significant physical and psychological harm to individuals, as well as friends and family of those affected. Alcohol is the biggest risk factor for death, ill-health and disability among those aged 15 to 49 years in the UK. More information on the health impacts of alcohol and drugs can be found on the [Southampton Data Observatory](#).

### 3.6.1 Points for the Partnership to note

- The number of drug offences recorded in Southampton during 2022/23 was significantly higher than both the previous year and the pre-pandemic year (2019/20). Given that the number of stop checks with *reason to suspect drugs* remained similar, it is surprising to see this increase, as these figures are heavily influenced by policing activity and priorities. However, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary continue to highlight the impact of organised drug crime in Southampton. The Partnership should continue to focus on drug-related crime, especially drug-related violence and the disruption of drug networks.
- Alcohol affected crime decreased by -10.8% over the last year but remains +6.9% higher in comparison to the pre-pandemic baseline. This trend could suggest a return to normality following the reopening of the nighttime economy in 2021/22. Whereas increases from 2019/20 are likely a result of improved reporting, rather than a true increase in incidence. Overall, geographical and temporal patterns of alcohol affected crime continue to highlight the link to the night-time economy. The Partnership should continue to monitor trends in alcohol affected crime.
- The Partnership should continue to work with partners to raise awareness of the harm caused by drug and alcohol use. Particularly around the risk and harm posed to vulnerable individuals in the city.

### 3.7 Hate crime

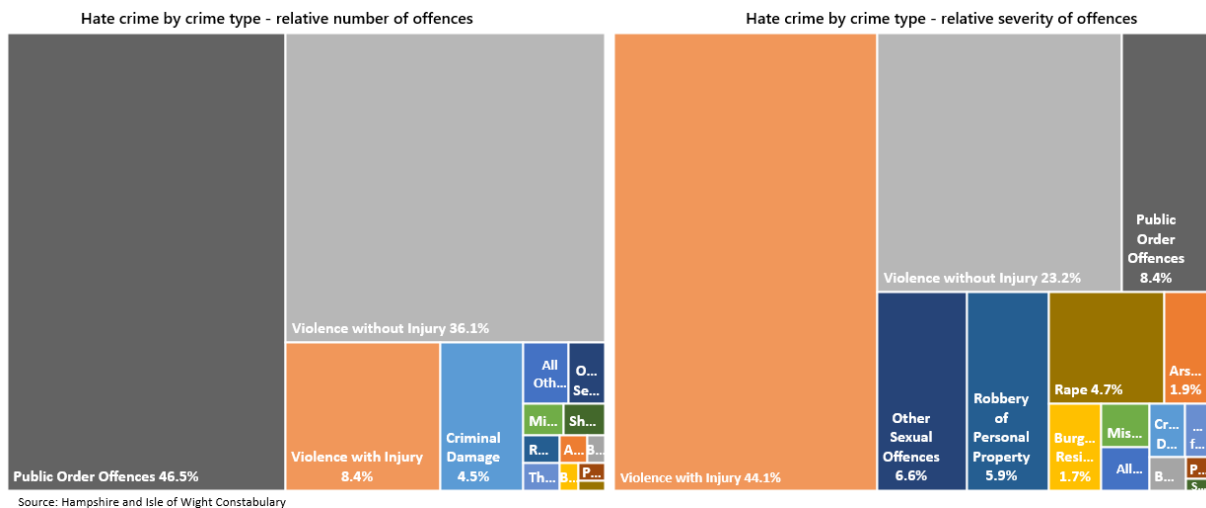
Hate crime is defined as ‘any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic’. There are five centrally monitored strands of hate crime: <sup>42</sup>

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Transgender identity

There were 1,094 recorded hate crime offences in Southampton during 2022/23, a -10% decline from 2021/22. However, this remains +37.3% higher than the pre-pandemic baseline in Southampton. This is in keeping with the national picture, with England and Wales experiencing a -5% decrease in police recorded hate crime compared to the previous year; the first annual decline recorded since 2012/13<sup>42</sup>.

The ‘case mix’ of hate crimes in 2022/23 is similar to previous years (Figure 3.26). The most common recorded hate crime was public order offences (46.5%), followed by violence without injury (36.1%) and violence with injury (8.4%).

Figure 3.26: Tree maps showing relative number (left) and severity (right) of hate crimes in Southampton



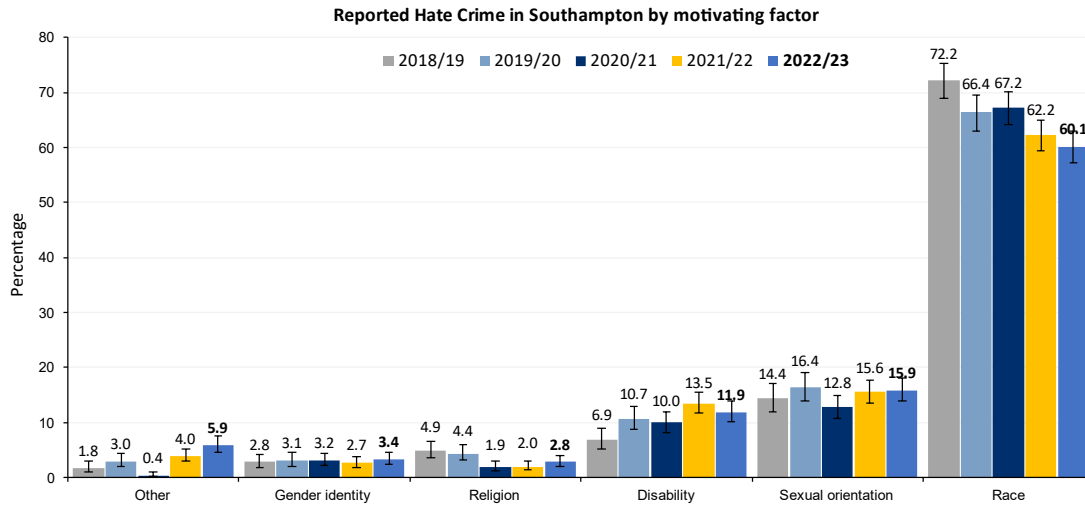
A hate crime can have multiple motivating factors (strands). Race continues to be the most frequently recorded motivating factor of hate crime in Southampton (60.1% in 2022/23), with the Home Office also finding the majority of hate crimes across England and Wales to be racially motivated (70%)<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Home Office – Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 Available via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2022-to-2023/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2022-to-2023>



The second most frequent motivating factor in Southampton remains sexual orientation (15.9%), followed by disability (11.9%) (Figure 3.27).

Figure 3.27: Chart showing hate crime in Southampton by motivating factor (strand)



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary. Note: percentages will not sum to 100% as hate crimes can have more than 1 motivating factor

17% of respondents from the 2023 Southampton community safety survey stated that they had witnessed a hate crime, with a further 6% stating they had been a victim of hate crime in the last 12 months. Figure 3.28 shows the perceived motivating factors of hate crime from respondents who had witnessed or experienced a hate crime. Race or ethnicity was the largest perceived motivating factor (63%), followed by sexual orientation (39%). This is in line with police recorded hate crime, with race and sexual orientation appearing as the most common motivating factors (Figure 3.27). More detailed findings from the 2023 community safety survey are presented in Section 4.

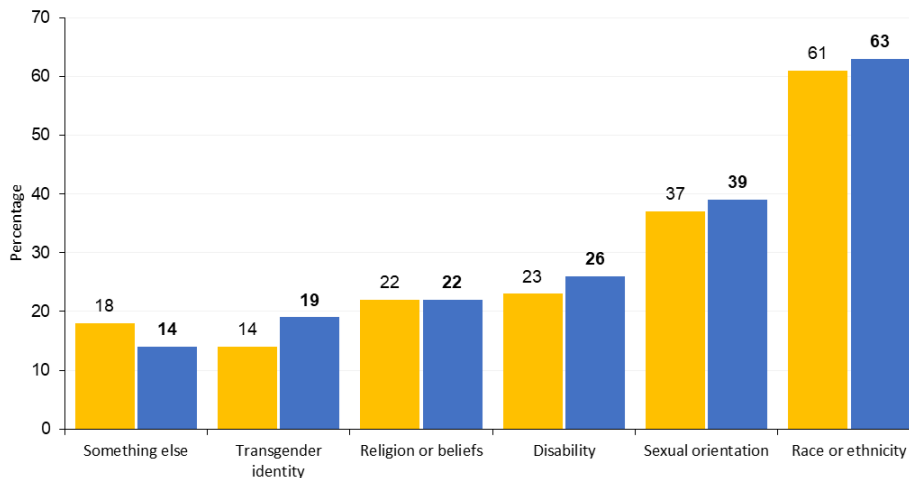
Figure 3.28: Chart showing respondents perceived motivating factors for hate crime in Southampton

Question: If you have witnessed or been a victim of hate crime, what would you perceive to be the motivating factor(s)? multiple-choice question

Overall respondents | 337\*

\*This question was asked only of those who said they were either a witness or victim of hate crime

2022 survey 2023 survey



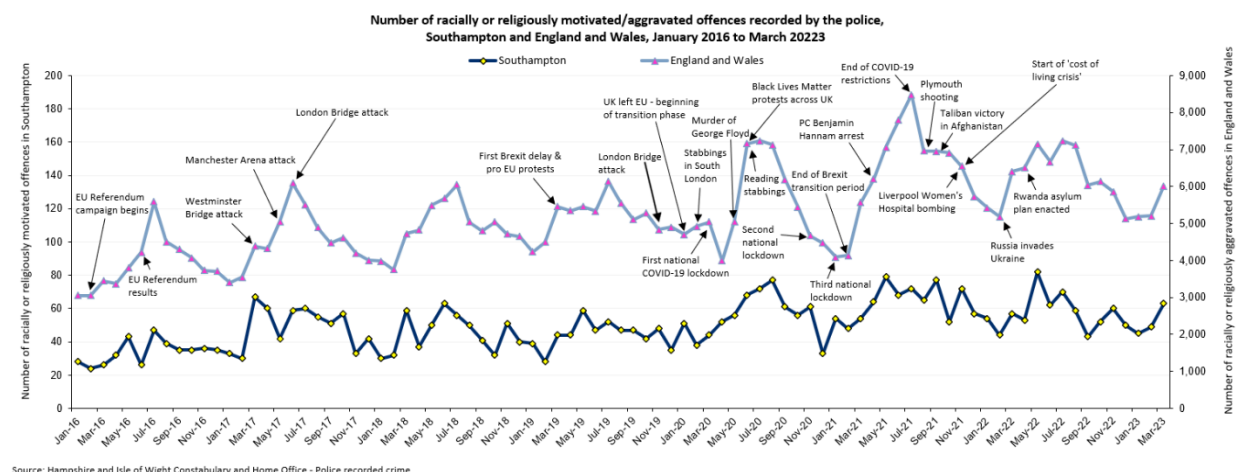
Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023)

The main drivers for increases in hate crime in the last decade, are thought to be greater public confidence to report hate crime and improvements in police recording<sup>43</sup>. Increases seen in Southampton over recent years could also reflect local reporting processes, where individuals reporting a crime are directly asked whether they think the crime is a hate crime or motivated by hate. However, hate crime is still known to be underreported, making it difficult to determine the true picture<sup>44</sup>.

The fall in hate crimes seen nationally in the last year has been linked with the publication of interim guidance on the recording of non-crime hate incidents (NCHIs) by the College of Policing in 2022. This interim guidance instructed officers to consider whether genuine hostility occurred or if an incident could be considered to be free speech. Whilst this was aimed only at the recording of NCHIs, it is possible that the interim guidance may have led to greater scrutiny of what constitutes a hate crime<sup>43</sup>. Home Office counting rules for hate crime has not changed. Therefore, fewer hate crimes being recorded in 2022/23 may not reflect a genuine decline. A new statutory Code of Practice for NCHIs has been published since in June 2023.

Although, there is evidence to suggest that there have been short-term genuine rises in hate crime following trigger events, such as terrorist attacks or political events<sup>43</sup>. For example, increases in hate crime were seen around the EU Referendum in June 2016, terrorist attacks in 2017 and the Black Lives Matter protests and far-right counter protests in summer 2020 (Figure 3.29). There have not been many potential trigger events identified in the last year. This may have also contributed to the observed decline in hate crimes.

Figure 3.29: Chart showing monthly trend in the number of racially or religiously motivated/aggravated offences recorded by the police mapped against potential trigger events



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary and Home Office - Police recorded crime

<sup>43</sup> Home Office – Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 Available via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2022-to-2023/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2022-to-2023>

<sup>44</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary note that there are greater concentrations of hate crime in densely populated and deprived areas, with neighbour disputes and the night-time economy cited as common triggers<sup>45</sup>. This is evidenced locally, with the highest rate of hate crimes recorded in Bargate ward (8 hate crimes per 1k population), followed by Freemantle, Bevois and Shirley wards. All of which had significantly higher rates of hate crime compared to the Southampton average (4 hate crimes per 1k population).

### 3.7.1 Points for the Partnership to note

- Police recorded hate crime in decreased by -10% in Southampton over the last year. However, this may not reflect a genuine decline in the volume of hate crimes. The decline experienced nationally has been linked to interim guidance published by the College of Policing around non-hate crime incidents introduced in 2022, possibly leading to greater scrutiny of the threshold of what constitutes a hate crime.
- Although, there is evidence to suggest that there have been short-term genuine increases in hate crime following certain trigger events, both locally and nationally. The Partnership should continue to monitor any increases in hate crime as well as community tensions, particularly following potential trigger events.
- The Partnership should continue to engage and work with communities to encourage reporting of all forms of hate crime when it occurs.

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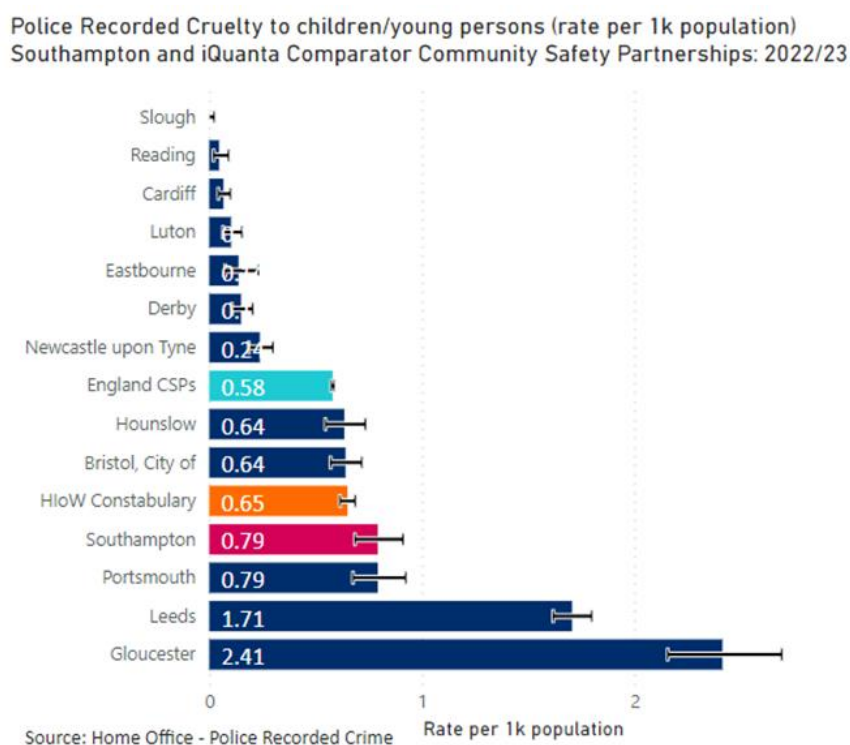
<sup>45</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

### 3.8 Cruelty to children and young persons

It is estimated that one in five adults aged 18 to 74 years experienced at least one form of child abuse before the age of 16 (8.5 million people)<sup>46</sup>. Early childhood experiences have significant impacts on development, educational attainment and future life opportunities. Notwithstanding the long-term physical and psychological impacts children can experience as a result of abuse<sup>47</sup>.

In 2022/23, Southampton is ranked fourth highest among comparators for cruelty to children/young persons (Figure 3.30); having also ranked fourth in 2021/22, but second in 2020/21 and first in 2019/20. However, the rate of cruelty to children/young persons in Southampton (0.8 per 1k population) remains significantly higher than the national average (0.6 per 1k population).

Figure 3.30: Benchmarking chart showing the rate in cruelty to children/young person offences

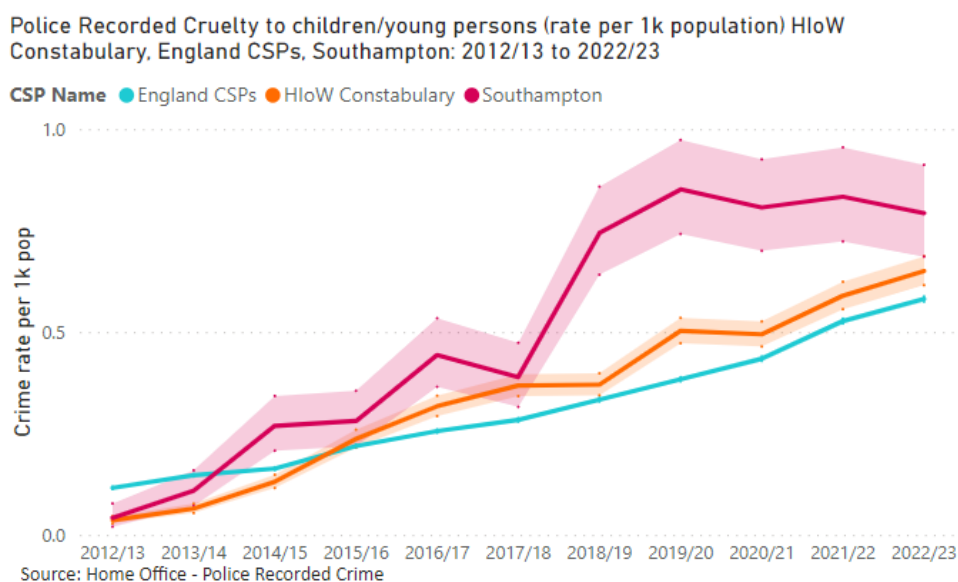


Between 2021/22 and 2022/23, Southampton experienced a -4.9% decline (-10 offences) in the number of recorded cruelty to children/young persons offences. Whereas both Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (+10.3%) and England (+10.3%) experienced increases in the number of offences compared to the previous year (Figure 3.31). Across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, improved local training and policies are believed to be improving child abuse offence recognition<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Office for National Statistics – Child abuse in England and Wales: March 2020. Available via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/childabuseinenglandandwales/march2020>  
<sup>47</sup> Young minds – Mental health statistics. Available via: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/mental-health-statistics/>  
<sup>48</sup> Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – Force Strategic Assessment 2023 - 2024

Whilst this is not necessarily evident in Southampton, the changes observed in cruelty to children offences in recent years are not statistically significant locally. The Partnership should continue to monitor local trends to further develop the understanding of cruelty to children/young persons in Southampton.

Figure 3.31: Trend in the rate of cruelty to children/young person offences for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England



### 3.8.1 Points for the Partnership to note

- Nationally and across the force area, there has been a sustained increase in the volume of police recorded cruelty to children/young persons between 2019/20 and 2022/23. Whereas Southampton experienced a decline during the same period. It is unlikely that this reflects a genuine decline and it is important to highlight that the Southampton change is not statistically significant. The Partnership should continue to monitor cruelty to children and young persons to further develop the understanding of abuse locally.
- The Partnership should continue to work with partners to promote ACE awareness and a trauma informed approach among professionals.

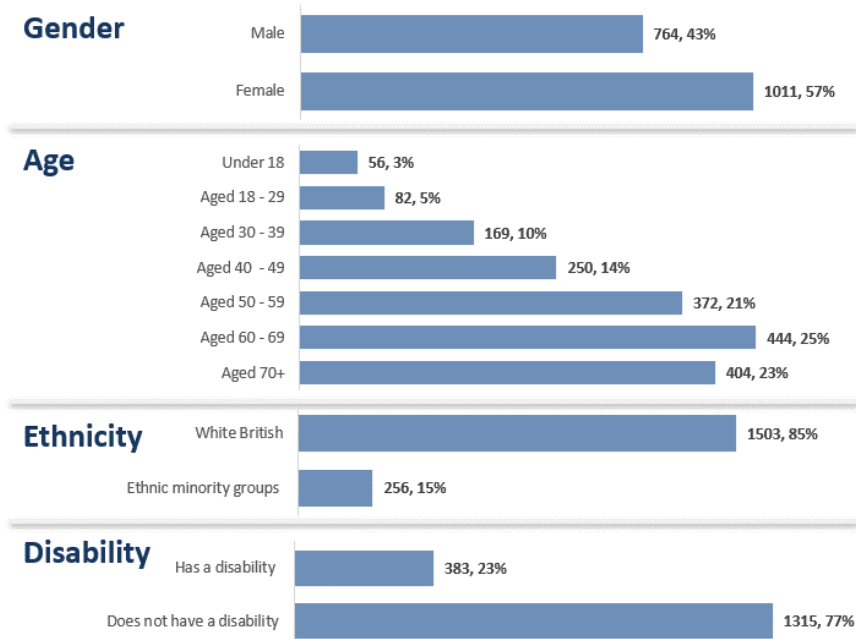
## 4. Resident views

Each year a survey is conducted to understand the views of people living, studying and working in Southampton on community safety issues. The 2023 Southampton community safety survey ran from 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023 to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The survey was promoted through Southampton City Council and the Southampton People’s Panel. The survey was predominately online, but face to face surveys were also conducted. The survey had a total of 1,851 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 allow for comparison with previous years. However, any trends should be interpreted with caution due to methodological differences between surveys. It should also be emphasised that this survey was live between 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023 and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023, whereas published police recorded crime covers the period of April 2022 to March 2023. Therefore, caution should be taken when making comparisons between residents’ views and police recorded crime statistics.

Figure 4.1 shows the demographic breakdown of respondents. The largest respondent age group was those aged 60 to 69, with this age group accounting for a quarter of respondents. There were more female respondents than male, but a good representation from both sexes overall. The majority of respondents were white British, with less than 15% of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds. Also, 23% of respondents indicated that they have a disability.

Figure 4.1: Chart showing the demographic breakdown of respondents

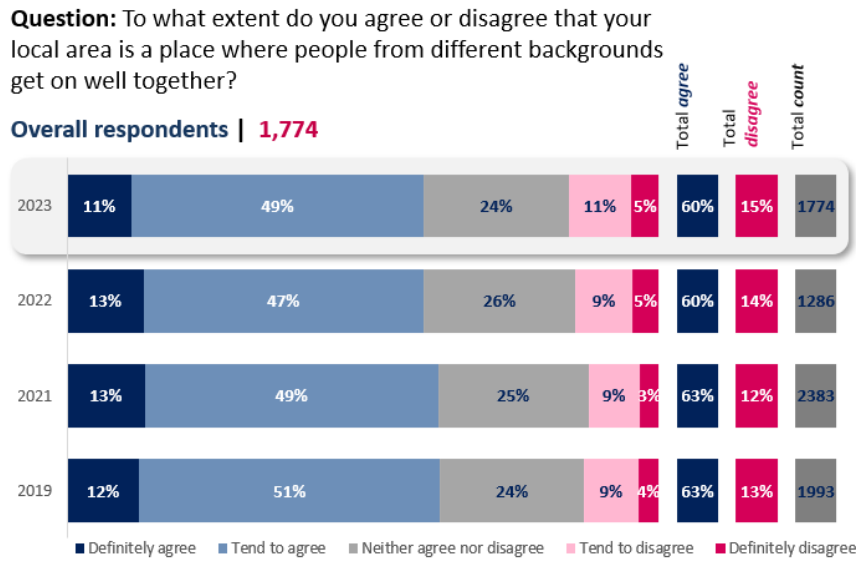


Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023)

4.1.1 Community Cohesion

The majority of respondents from the 2023 survey agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (60%), which is a similar proportion compared to previous surveys (Figure 4.2). Additionally, there are high levels of agreement with the statement across most demographic and geographic groups (Figure 4.3), with the highest levels of agreement recorded among respondents from Portswood ward (80%).

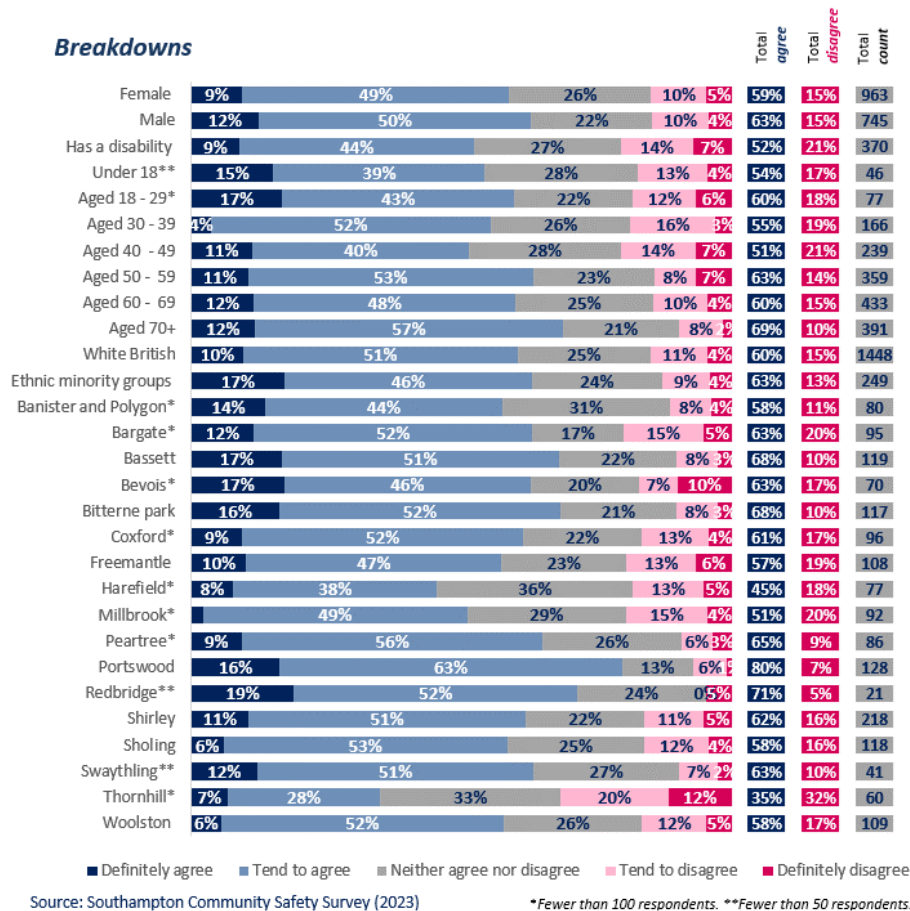
Figure 4.2: Chart showing the proportion of respondents that agree or disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (2019 to 2023)



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023)



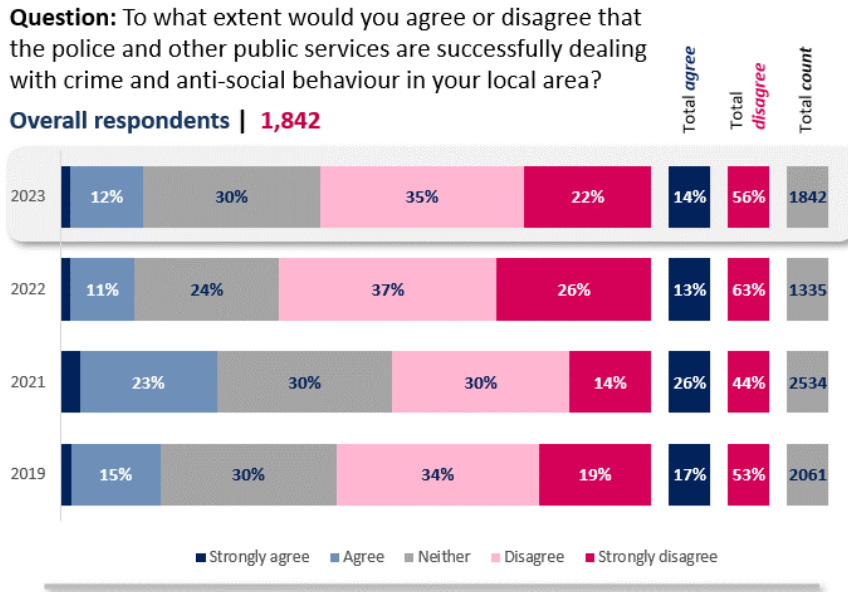
Figure 4.3: Chart showing demographic and geographic breakdowns for the proportions of respondents that agree or disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together



#### 4.1.2 Confidence in the Partnership

Just 14% of respondents agreed that the police and other local public services were successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in their local areas in the 2023 survey (Figure 4.4). This is a similar proportion compared to the 2019 and 2022 surveys, but a -12 percentage point decrease from the 2021 survey. The majority (56%) of respondents continue to disagree with this statement. Although the proportion of respondents who disagree, declined by -7 percentage points compared to the 2022 survey. Overall, confidence appears to have returned to similar levels recorded before the coronavirus pandemic but remain lower than that recorded during the pandemic.

Figure 4.4: Chart showing the proportion of respondents that agree or disagree that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area (2019 to 2023)



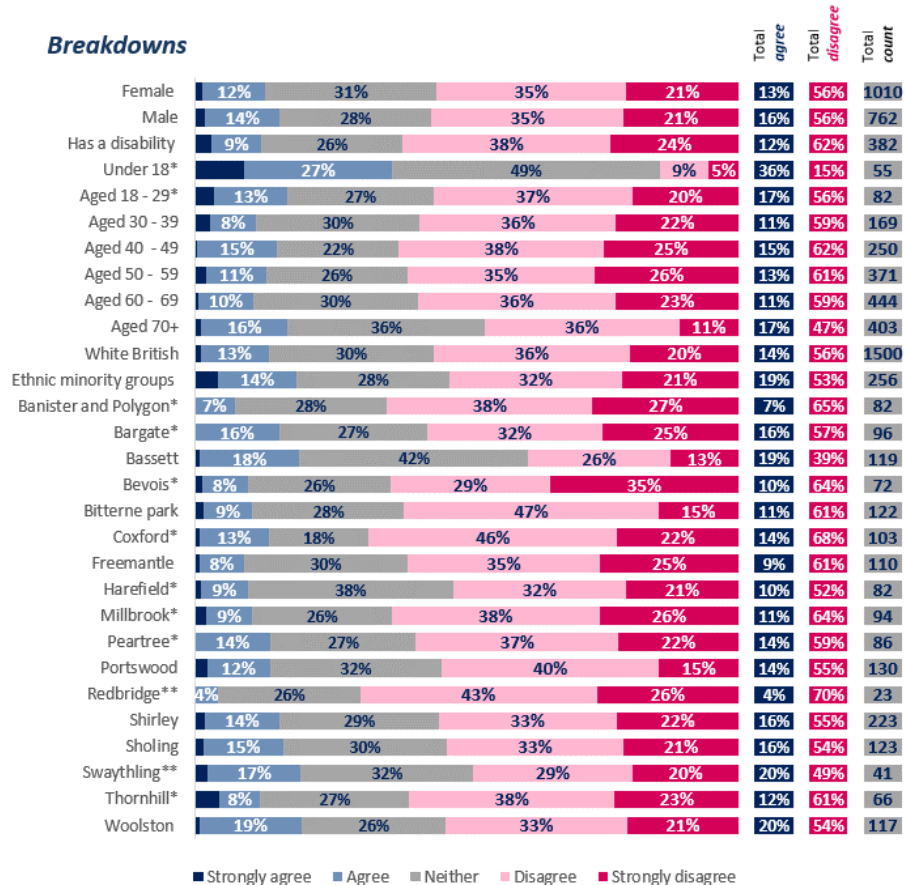
Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023)

However, it is important to note that public perceptions of how the Partnership are dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour can be influenced by:

- High profile national events, particularly around VAWG
- The visibility of officers, for example being higher during the coronavirus pandemic
- Social media and the digital presence of the police, council and other public services

Levels of agreement and disagreement were fairly consistent between different demographic groups, postcodes and wards (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Chart showing demographic and geographic breakdowns for the proportions of respondents that agree or disagree that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area



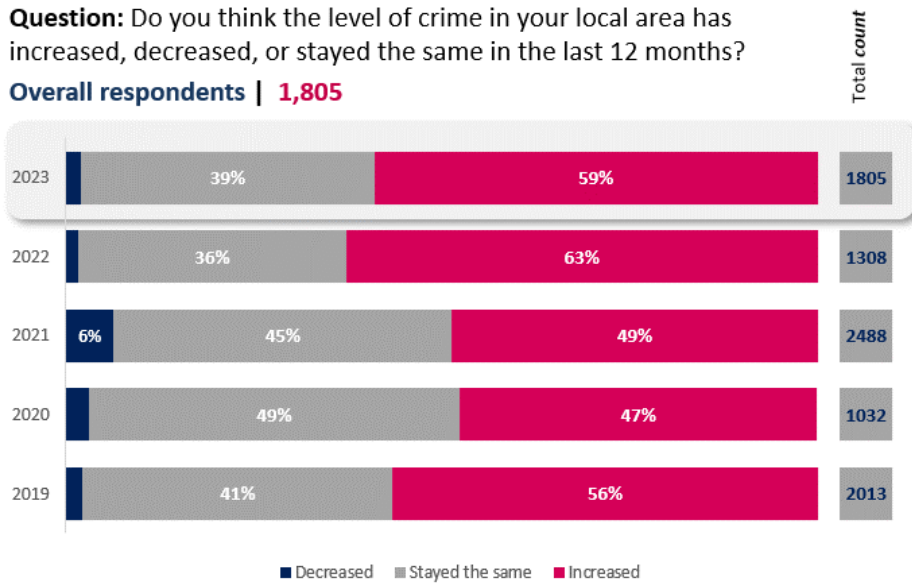
Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023) \*Fewer than 100 respondents. \*\*Fewer than 50 respondents.

### 4.1.3 Perception of crime levels

In the most recent survey, 59% of respondents felt crime in their local has increased in the last 12 months and 39% felt crime levels had stayed the same (Figure 4.6). The proportion of respondents who felt crime levels have increased, is lower than that recorded in the previous survey (63%) but slightly higher than before the pandemic in the 2019 survey (56%).

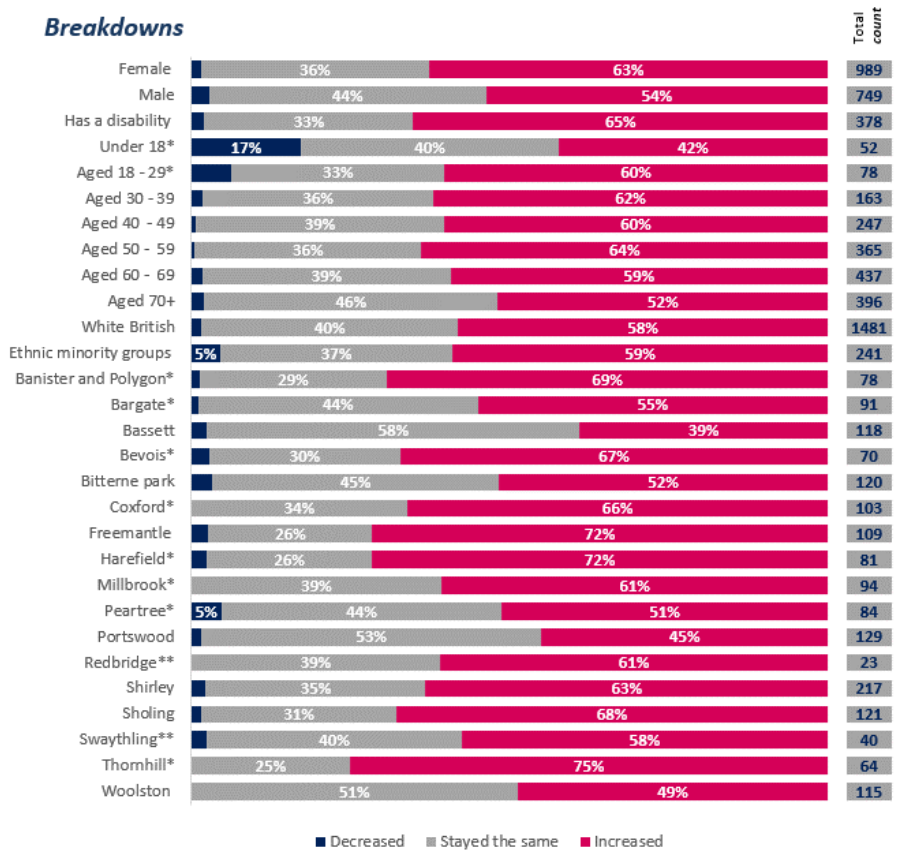
Figure 4.7 shows the demographic and geographic breakdowns of perceived crime levels. A significantly higher proportion of female respondents (63%) felt that crime had increased in the last 12 months compared to males (54%). The proportion of those aged under 18 (42%) and aged 70 (52%) and over felt crime had increased to a lesser extent compared to other age groups (ranging between 59% and 64%). Additionally, a higher proportion of respondents with a disability felt crime had increased (65%). Respondents who live in Thornhill (75%) felt crime in their local area had increased to the greatest extent, followed by Harefield (72%) and Freemantle (72%) wards. Whereas those that felt crime had increased to a lesser extent, mostly lived in Bassett (39%) and Portswood (45%).

Figure 4.6: Chart showing the proportion of respondents that think crime levels have increased, stayed the same or decreased in their local area in the last 12 months (2019 to 2023)



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023)

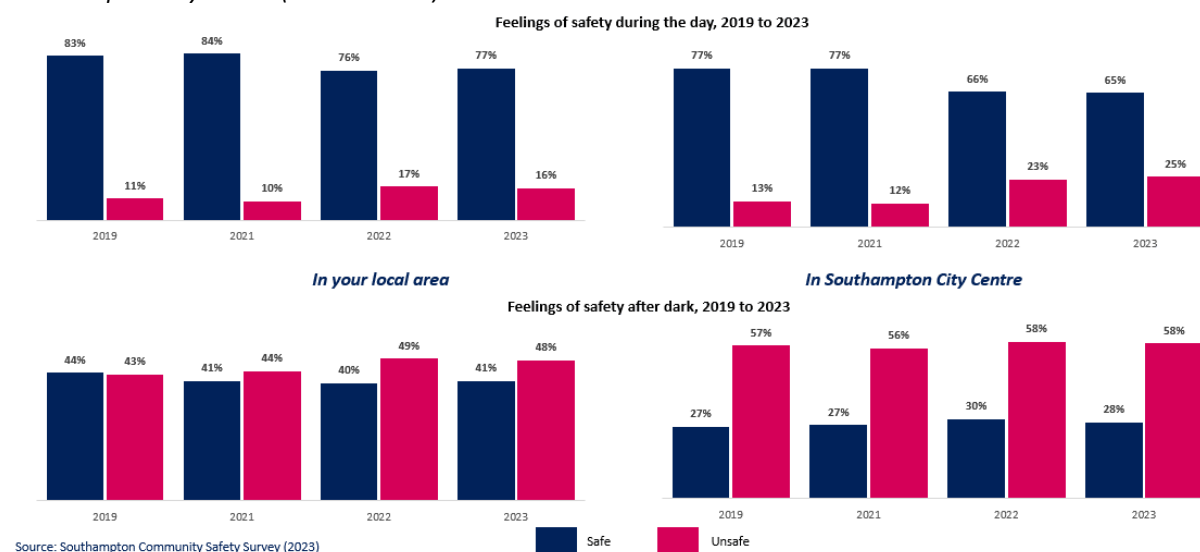
Figure 4.7: Chart showing demographic and geographic breakdowns for the question on whether respondents think crime levels have increased, stayed the same or decreased in their local area in the last 12 months



#### 4.1.4 Feelings of safety in Southampton

The majority of respondents in the 2023 survey felt safe during the day in both their local area (77%) and in the city centre (65%). In comparison, just 41% of respondents felt safe after dark in their local area and 28% in the city centre. Overall, feelings of safety remain similar to the previous survey. However, the proportion of respondents who feel unsafe continues to exceed that of the 2019 survey (Figure 4.8). This highlights that Southampton remains an outlier for feelings of safety after dark.

Figure 4.8: Chart showing how safe respondents felt during the day and after dark in their local area and Southampton city centre (2019 to 2023)



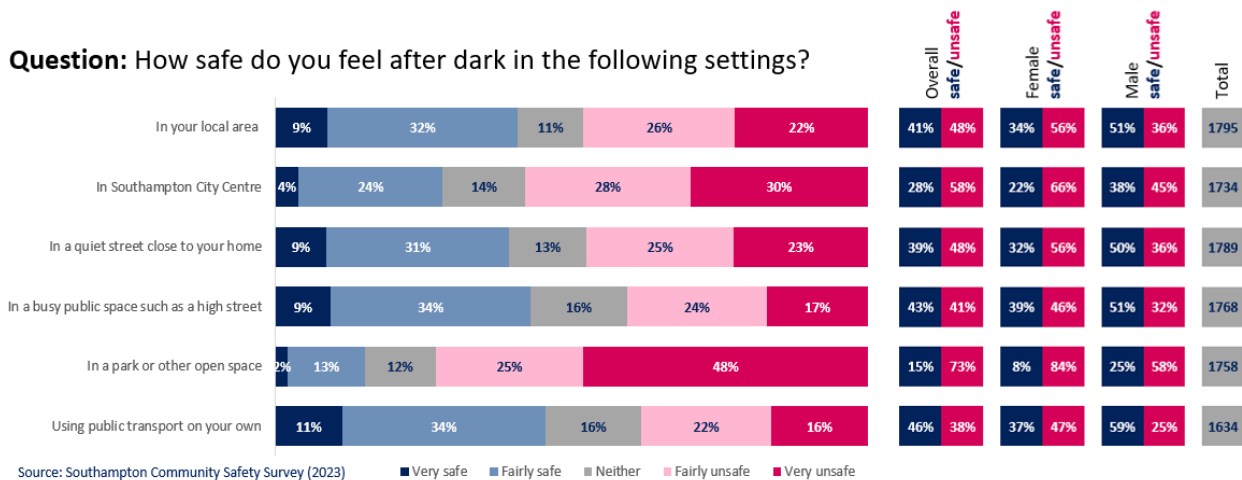
Feelings of safety during the day were similar between males and females across all settings, except for parks and other open spaces (56% of females felt safe compared to 65% of males). However, female respondents felt significantly less safe across all settings after dark (Figure 4.9). Approximately a third (34%) of females felt safe in their local area after dark compared to over half of males (51%) and less than a quarter of females (22%) felt safe in the city centre after dark compared to almost two-fifths (38%) of males. Respondents with a disability also significantly felt less safe across all settings in comparison to the overall averages.

Respondents felt the most unsafe in parks and open spaces after dark (Figure 4.9), with just 15% of respondents feeling safe in this setting; 8% of females felt safe compared to a quarter of males. This is a reoccurring theme, as previous Southampton community safety and city surveys also highlighted that females felt more unsafe after dark. It is important to note that this is not just an issue in Southampton, with national research also highlighting the gap in feelings of safety between males and females. The ONS have reported similar findings from the national Opinions and Lifestyle survey



regarding women and people with disabilities feeling less safe; conducted between February and March 2022<sup>49</sup>.

Figure 4.9: Chart showing the proportion of respondents by feelings of safety after dark across different settings



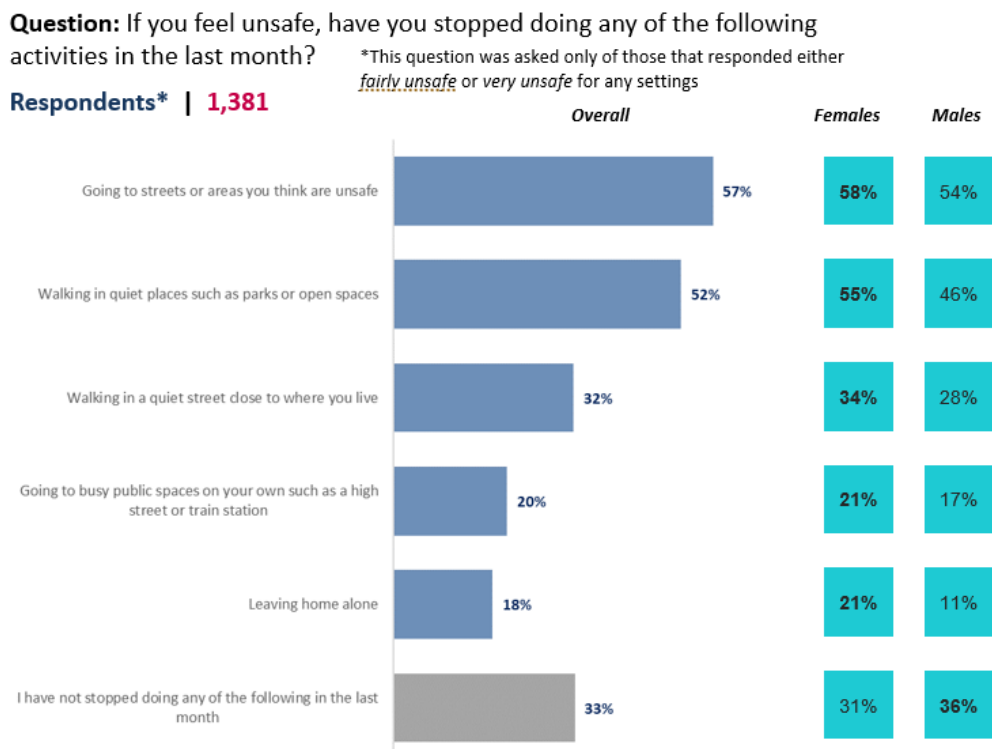
Respondents who indicated that they had felt unsafe in any of the above settings were then asked if they had changed their behaviour. Of those respondents, 67% said that they had changed their behaviour in the last month as a result of feeling unsafe.

The most common behaviour change was that respondents stopped *going to streets or areas they think are unsafe* (57%) and stopped *walking in quiet places such as parks or open spaces* (52%). As a result of feeling unsafe, female respondents changed their behaviour to a greater extent compared to males (Figure 4.10). Notably, 76% of respondents with a disability said that they had changed their behaviour, which is significantly higher than the total respondent average.

<sup>49</sup> Office for National Statistics – Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain: 16 February to 13 March 2022. Available via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/perceptionsofpersonalsafetyandexperiencesofharassmentgreatbritain/16februaryto13march2022>



Figure 4.10: Chart showing proportions of behavioural changes of respondents who felt unsafe



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023)

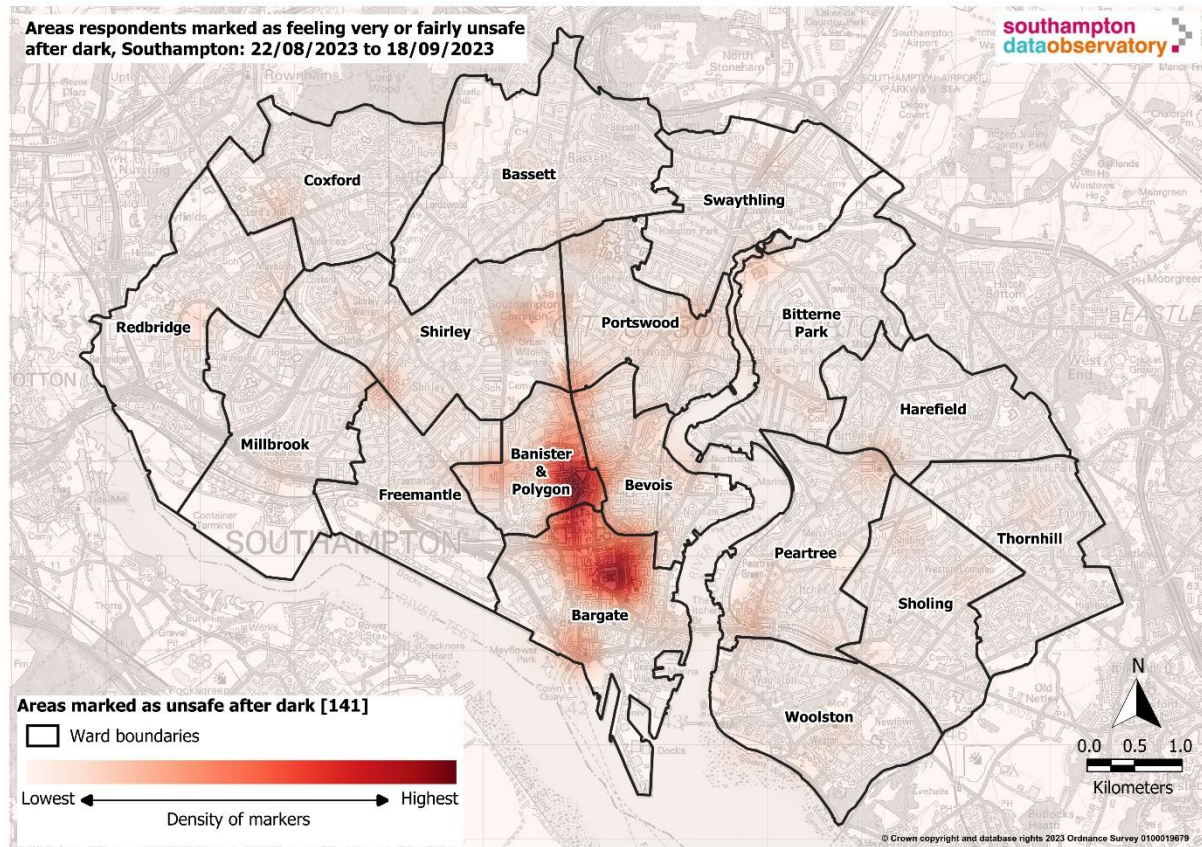
A map engagement activity was also conducted alongside the survey. Whereby people could mark areas in Southampton where they felt were safe and/or unsafe during the day and after dark, whilst also providing additional comments. Overall, 158 markers were placed, the majority of which (141) were marked as areas where respondents felt unsafe after dark (Figure 4.11).

The largest hotspots where people felt most unsafe after dark were across the city centre, with most concerns raised around drug use and anti-social behaviour from homeless and young people. Namely around Bedford Place, greenspaces such as Hoglands Park and East Park and areas surrounding St Marys Street. Similar concerns were raised around Hill Lane, Shirley and Portswood highstreets, as well as comments on road safety. Smaller hotspots also appear in greenspaces throughout the city, such as Southampton Common, Mansel Park, Peartree Green and Riverside Park; which had specific concerns around sexual assaults raised. Additionally, there were frequent comments that increased police presence and better lighting would make residents feel safer across Southampton, which have been common themes highlighted in previous community safety surveys.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Southampton Safe City Strategic Assessment (2021/22). Online available at: [https://data.southampton.gov.uk/media/szeoklcl/safe-city-strategic-assessment-report-2021-22\\_tcm71-463196.pdf](https://data.southampton.gov.uk/media/szeoklcl/safe-city-strategic-assessment-report-2021-22_tcm71-463196.pdf)

It is important to highlight that the above findings are based on a small sample size (158 markers). Although, it does provide valuable insight into where and why people are feeling unsafe in Southampton.

Figure 4.11: Map showing areas respondents marked as feeling unsafe after dark



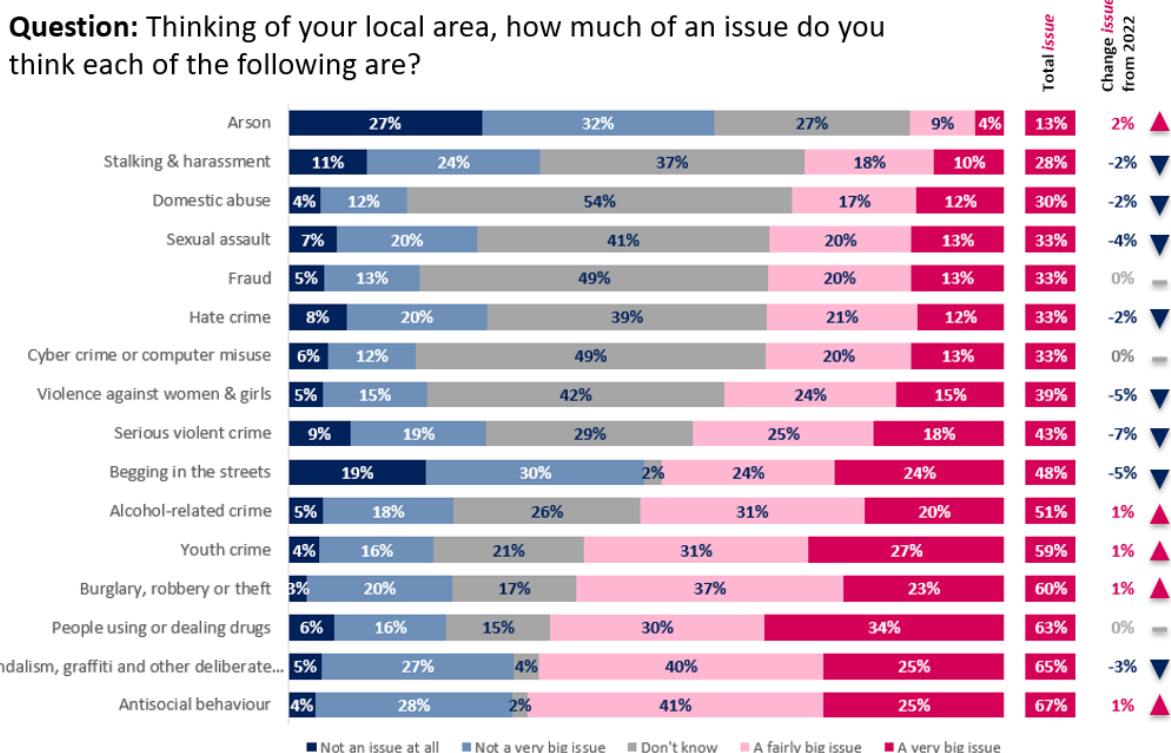
#### 4.1.5 Perceived community safety issues and reporting of crime

Figure 4.12 shows what respondents perceive to be the biggest issues in their local area. The biggest perceived community safety issues were anti-social behaviour (67%), vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage (65%), people using or dealing drugs (63%), burglary, robbery or theft (60%) and youth crime (59%). It is important to highlight that people’s perceptions of issues are likely influenced by the visibility of crime, personal experiences and the media.

In comparison to the 2022 survey, serious violent crime (-7), VAWG (-5), begging in the streets (-5), sexual assault (-4), vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage (-3), domestic abuse (-2), stalking and harassment (-2) and hate crime (-2) have all seen percentage point decreases in the proportion of respondents reporting these categories as an issue. Additionally, large proportions of respondents in the 2023 survey answered ‘don’t know’ when asked about priority issues. For example, 54% of respondents answered ‘don’t know’ for domestic abuse, which was also highlighted in the two previous surveys.

The above evidence would suggest that there is less awareness in the most recent survey of key and priority issues such as violent crime, domestic abuse, sexual assaults, hate crime and VAWG. Additionally, the proportion of respondents answering 'don't know' for these issues remains high. This highlights potential for increasing awareness of these issues in the city, particularly as increased awareness can lead to improvements in crime reporting.

Figure 4.12: Chart showing respondents perceptions of community safety issues in their local area



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023)

The majority of respondents (63%) in the most recent survey had not been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in Southampton in the last 12 months (Figure 4.13). The proportion of respondents reporting that they had been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour (37%) is similar to both the 2019 and 2022 surveys. Therefore, suggesting a continuation of pre-pandemic trends.

Respondents aged 18 to 59 were more likely to be a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour (Figure 4.14). This is in line with victim age profiling outlined in Section 2.5. Respondents with a disability (49%) also reported experiencing crime or anti-social behaviour more frequently than the total respondent average. Respondents from Bevois (51%), Bargate (50%) and Banister and Polygon (48%) wards were more likely to have experienced crime or anti-social behaviour compared to respondents from other wards. This is in keeping with the distribution of crimes by ward outlined in Section 2.4.

Figure 4.13: Chart showing if respondents have been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months (2019 to 2023)

**Question:** Have you been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in Southampton in the last 12 months?

Overall respondents | 1,749

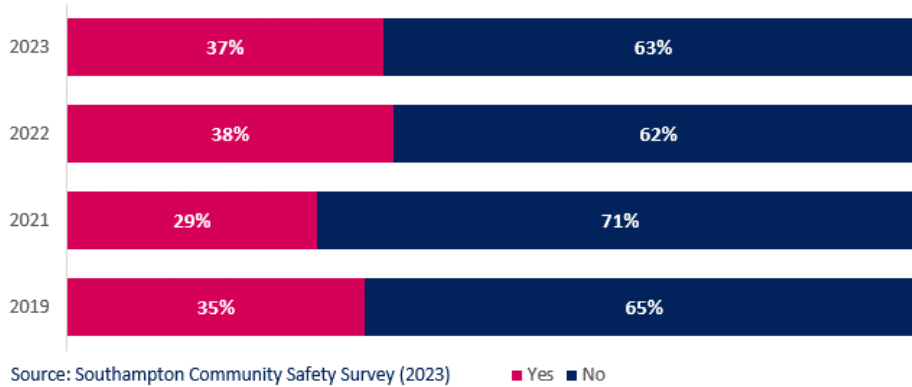


Figure 4.14: Chart showing demographic and geographic breakdowns for whether respondents had been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months

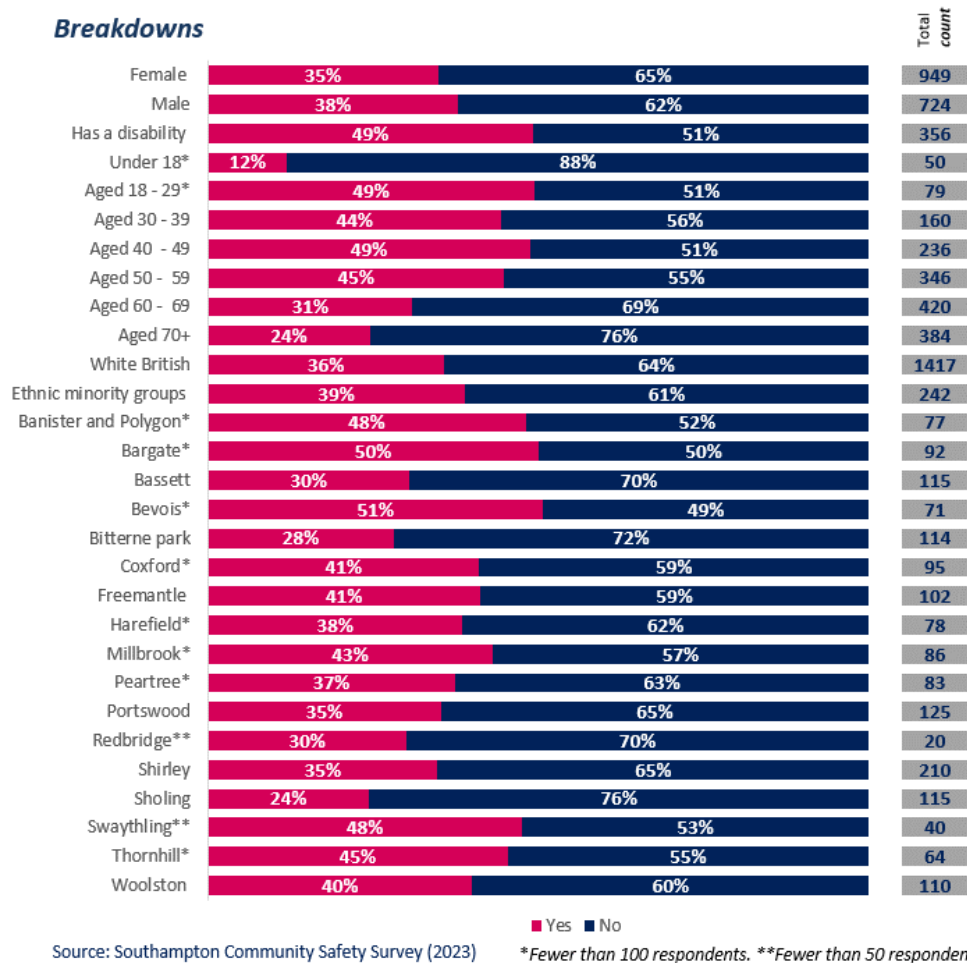
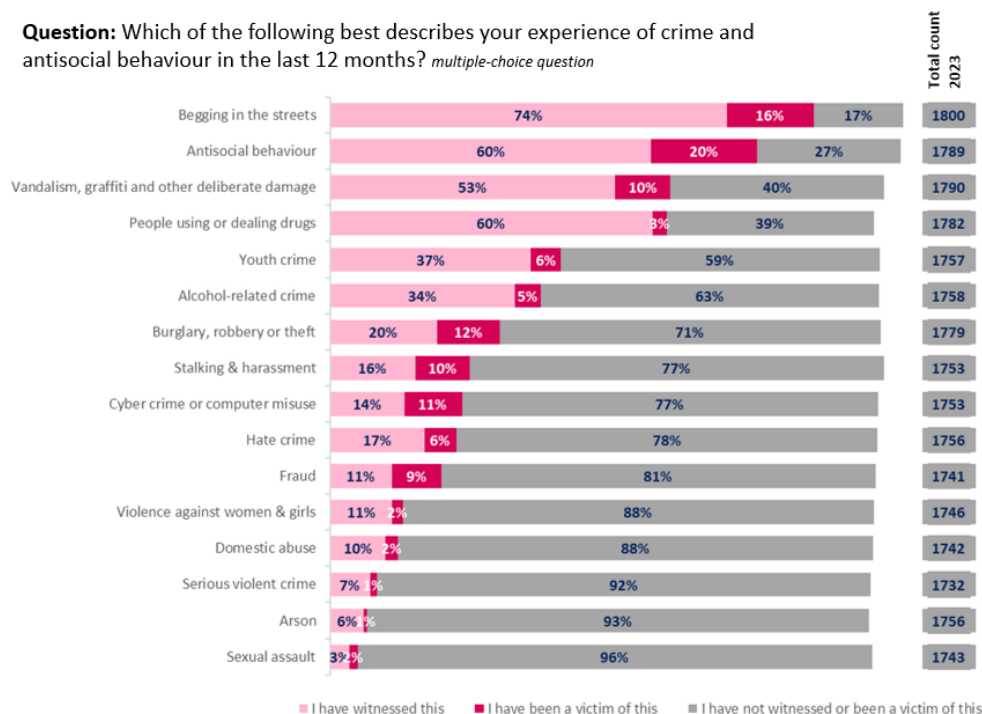




Figure 4.15 shows respondents' experiences of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months. It is important to note that this is a multiple choice question, because respondents may have witnessed and/or been a victim of multiple crime types. Begging in the streets, anti-social behaviour, people using or dealing drugs and vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage continue to be the most common; with over half of respondents experiencing and/or witnessing these crimes. This is in line with police recorded crime data, with higher volume but lower harm offences occurring more frequently. These crime groups are also some of the more visible offences. In addition to this, low volume but high harm offences such as sexual offences and serious violent crime were less frequently witnessed or experienced by respondents. It is important to note that this survey is self-selecting and certain offence groups are more hidden than others. For example, domestic abuse is less visible than vandalism and graffiti.

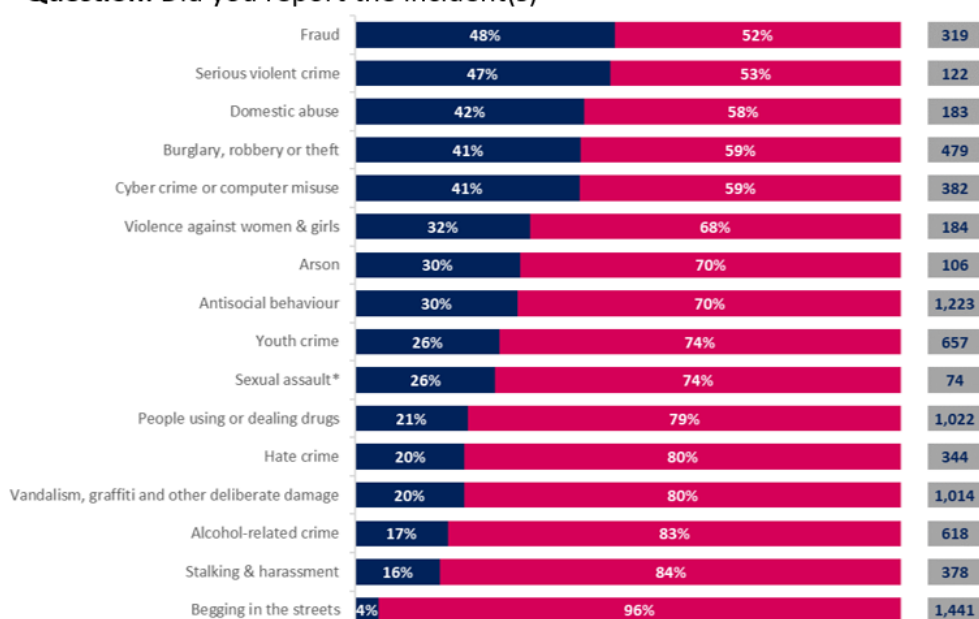
Figure 4.15: Chart showing respondents experiences of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months



If respondents had witnessed or been a victim of a crime or anti-social behaviour, they were then asked if they had reported the incident(s). Over half of respondents did not report incidents when witnessed or experienced for all crime groups shown in Figure 4.16. This is particularly concerning for high harm and priority offences, such as hate crime (80%), sexual assault (74%), VAWG (68%), domestic abuse (58%) and serious violent crime (53%). In comparison to the previous survey, reporting of some of the higher harm and priority offence groups has increased. For example, reporting of domestic abuse increasing by +10 percentage points, VAWG +6 and serious violent crime +4, however, numbers of respondents are lower for these crime types compared to others. Additionally, the proportion of respondents reporting incidents remains low across the board.

Figure 4.16: Chart showing proportions of respondents that reported crimes when witnessed or experienced

Question: Did you report the incident(s)



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2023)

■ Yes ■ No

\*Fewer than 100 respondents..

Respondents were then asked a multiple-choice question of why they did not report incident(s); therefore, it is possible for rows to sum to more than 100% in Figure 4.17. It is important to highlight that reasons for not reporting crime vary across crime groups and that the number of crimes for some crime groups are small; notably serious violent crime and sexual assault. Nonetheless, responses can provide valuable insight into why respondents are not reporting offences, especially for high harm offences.

The overall picture for reasons for not reporting incidents is similar to that of the previous two surveys. The most common reason for not reporting burglary, robbery or theft was *reporting it makes no difference* (51%), followed by *disappointing previous experience of reporting* (20%) and *another reason* (19%). Common reasons for not reporting sexual assault included *reporting it makes no difference* (40%), *disappointing previous experience of reporting* (22%) and *fear negative consequences* (16%). *Another reason* (34%), *reporting it makes no difference* (33%) and *fear negative consequences* (25%) were common reasons for not reporting serious violent crimes. 37% of respondents who had witnessed or experienced domestic abuse felt *reporting it makes no difference*, 23% had *disappointing previous experience of reporting* and 23% selected *fear negative consequences*, whilst 30% chose *another reason*. Of those who had witnessed or experienced VAWG, 41% felt that *reporting it makes no difference*, whilst *another reason* (23%) and *disappointing previous experience of reporting* (19%) were also commonly cited. The most common reason for not reporting hate crime was *reporting it makes no difference* (58%), followed by *fear negative consequences* (18%).



Figure 4.17: Chart showing respondents' reasons for not reporting crimes when witnessed or experienced for different crime types (percentages can sum to more than 100% because the question was multiple choice)



The above findings highlight the barriers to reporting different crime types. *Reporting it makes no difference* is the most common reason across all crime types, including high harm and priority offences. The Partnership should consider how to improve confidence among the public that reports are responded to and acted upon.

## 4.2 Points for the Partnership to note

- Just 14% of respondents in the most recent survey agreed that the police and other local services are successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area, with the majority of respondents continuing to disagree (56%) with this statement. Overall, confidence in the Partnership remains low but has returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Feelings of safety after dark remain an issue in Southampton. Females were significantly more likely to feel unsafe after dark than males across all settings. In addition to this, respondents with a disability felt significantly less safe than the survey average across all settings. The Partnership should take note of these findings and consider how best to improve feelings of safety after dark in Southampton, particularly for females and people with disabilities.
- 67% of respondents who said that they had felt unsafe said that they had changed their behaviour in the last month as a result of feeling unsafe. The most common behaviour changes were stopped *going to streets or areas they feel are unsafe* (57%) and stopped *walking in quiet places such as parks or open spaces* (52%). Female respondents changed their behaviour to a greater extent than males, as did respondents with a disability compared to the survey average.

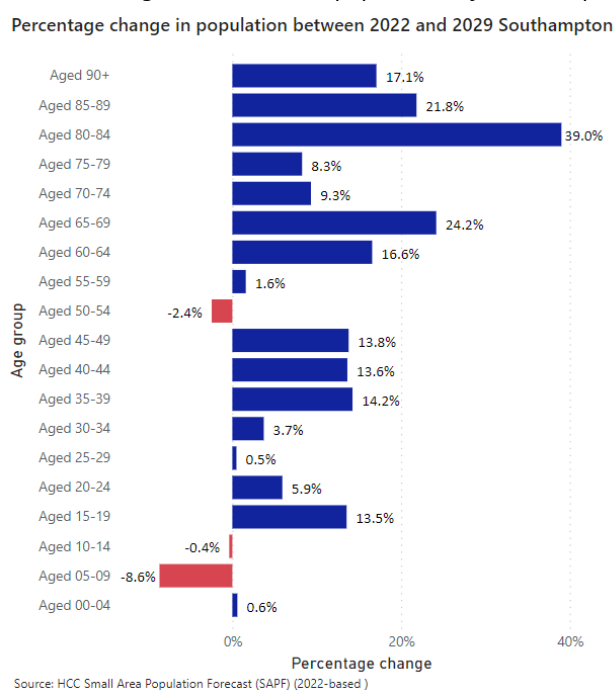
- Respondents' perceptions of the biggest issues are likely linked to the visibility of crime. Anti-social behaviour, vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage, people using or dealing drugs, burglary, robbery or theft and youth crime were highlighted as the biggest issues by respondents. These are some of the of the most visible crime types.
- In comparison to the previous survey, the perception of priority issues; notably violent crime, sexual offences and domestic abuse, has continued to decline in the city. High proportions of respondents also answered that they 'don't know' if these are issues in their local area. The Partnership should continue to raise awareness of these key issues in Southampton, as better awareness could lead to improved reporting of these crime types. This is important because large proportions of respondents did not report these crimes when they had witnessed or been a victim of them.
- Respondents' experiences of crime are in line with police recorded crime data, with high volume but lower harm offences more commonly witnessed or experienced. However, the majority of respondents did not report incidents witnessed or experienced across all crime groups. This is especially concerning for high harm and priority crime groups where proportions of respondents who did not report crimes increased; namely hate crime, sexual assault, VAWG, domestic abuse and serious violent crime.
- *Reporting it makes no difference* is the most common reason across all crime types, including high harm and priority offences. The Partnership should consider how to improve confidence among the public that reports are responded to and acted upon.

## 5. Wider determinants of crime

It is important to not only consider police recorded crime, but also the factors that make individuals more or less likely to become involved in crime; known as wider determinants. This is because if wider determinants worsen, we could expect to see subsequent increases in crime. Wider determinants such as deprivation and poverty are not just linked to crime, but a wide range of outcomes; particularly those relating to health and education. Examining wider determinants provides an opportunity to understand and address the root causes of crime and to try and prevent individuals; especially young people, from becoming involved in crime in the first place. More information on wider determinants can be found on the [Southampton Data Observatory](#).

Young people are at a disproportionately higher risk of becoming involved in crime, either as a victim or offender<sup>51, 52</sup>. This is evidenced locally in Southampton, especially for more harmful crimes such as violent crime and sexual offences outlined in Section 3. In Southampton the population aged 10 to 24 years is forecast to grow by +7.0% by 2029 (Figure 5.1). This may lead to an increase in offending and/or victimisation due to the forecast growth of young persons in Southampton. However, early intervention has the capacity to offset some of this expected increase. This is because early interventions can prevent young people becoming involved in crime, either as a victim or perpetrator.

Figure 5.1: Chart showing forecast change in the resident population of Southampton from 2022 to 2029



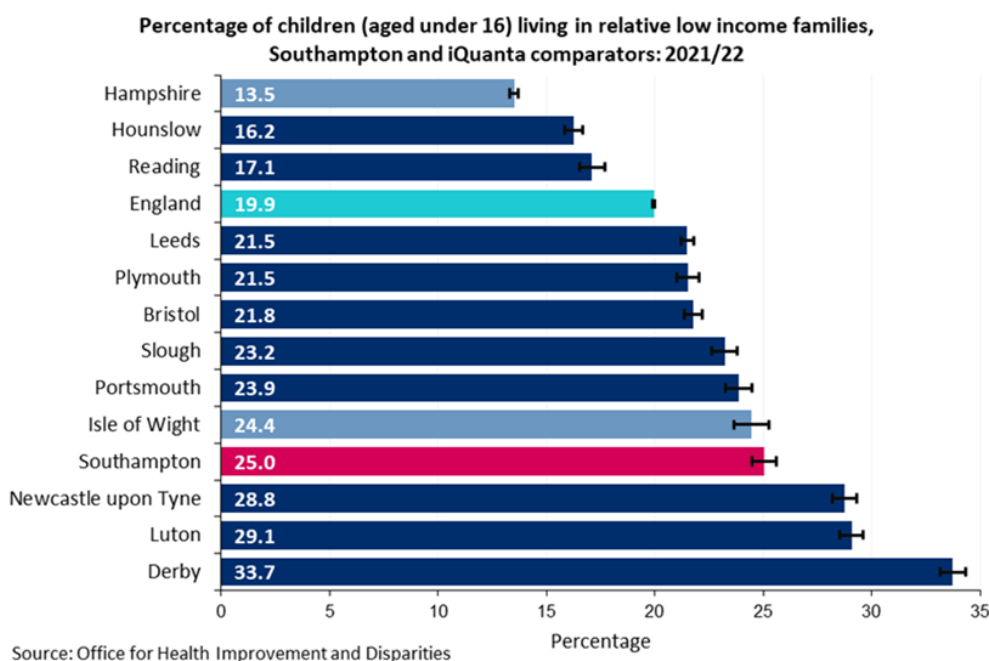
<sup>51</sup> Weatherburn, D. (2001) 'What Causes Crime?', *Crime and Justice Bulletin*, 54. Available via: <https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Publications/CJB/cjb54.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Victim Support – Working with young victims of crime. Available via: <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/young-victims-crime/teachers-and-professionals/working-young-victims-crime/>

Income inequality is linked to crime, with individuals living in poverty; particularly children, on average more likely to become involved in crime<sup>53</sup>. A quarter of children (25.0%, 11,128) in Southampton live in relative low-income families (2021/22), significantly higher than the national average of 19.9% (Figure 5.2). Given current financial pressures and economic uncertainty, it is likely that income inequality will further widen, and a greater proportion of children will live in low-income families. Children in poverty are more likely to have poorer outcomes, particularly those related to health, education and crime.

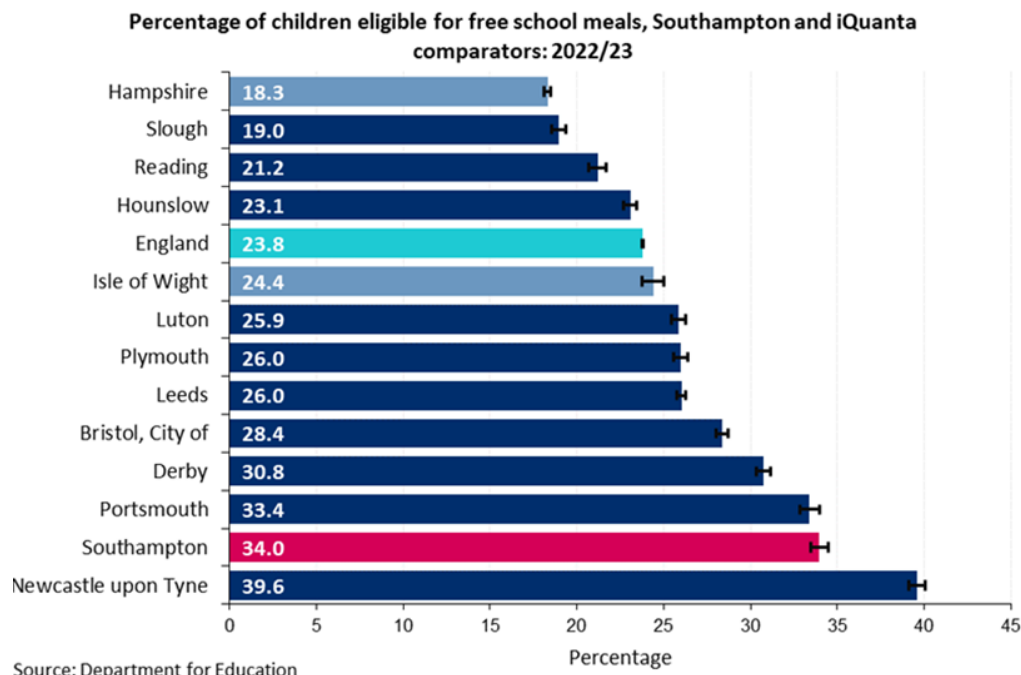
In addition, 34.0% (11,528) of Southampton pupils in state funded schools are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSMs), which is significantly higher than the England average of 23.8% in 2022/23 (Figure 5.3). The proportion of children eligible for FSMs has continued to increase; having been 24.7% in 2019/20, to 30.4% in 2020/21 and 33.0% in 2021/22. Although, some of this increase will in part be due to ‘protected’ status of FSM eligible pupils; a result of increased universal credit rollout during the pandemic. This potentially suggests a growing need among children in Southampton, which could be further exacerbated due to recent financial pressures and economic uncertainty.

Figure 5.2: Benchmarking chart showing the proportion of children living in relative low income families



<sup>53</sup> Rufrancos, H. G. et al. (2013) ‘Income Inequality and Crime: A Review and Explanation of the Time-series Evidence’, *Sociology and Criminology*, 1 (1). Available via: [https://equalitytrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Income%20Inequality%20and%20Crime%20-%20A%20Review%20and%20Explanation%20of%20the%20Time%20series%20evidence\\_0.pdf](https://equalitytrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Income%20Inequality%20and%20Crime%20-%20A%20Review%20and%20Explanation%20of%20the%20Time%20series%20evidence_0.pdf)

Figure 5.3: Benchmarking chart showing the proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals

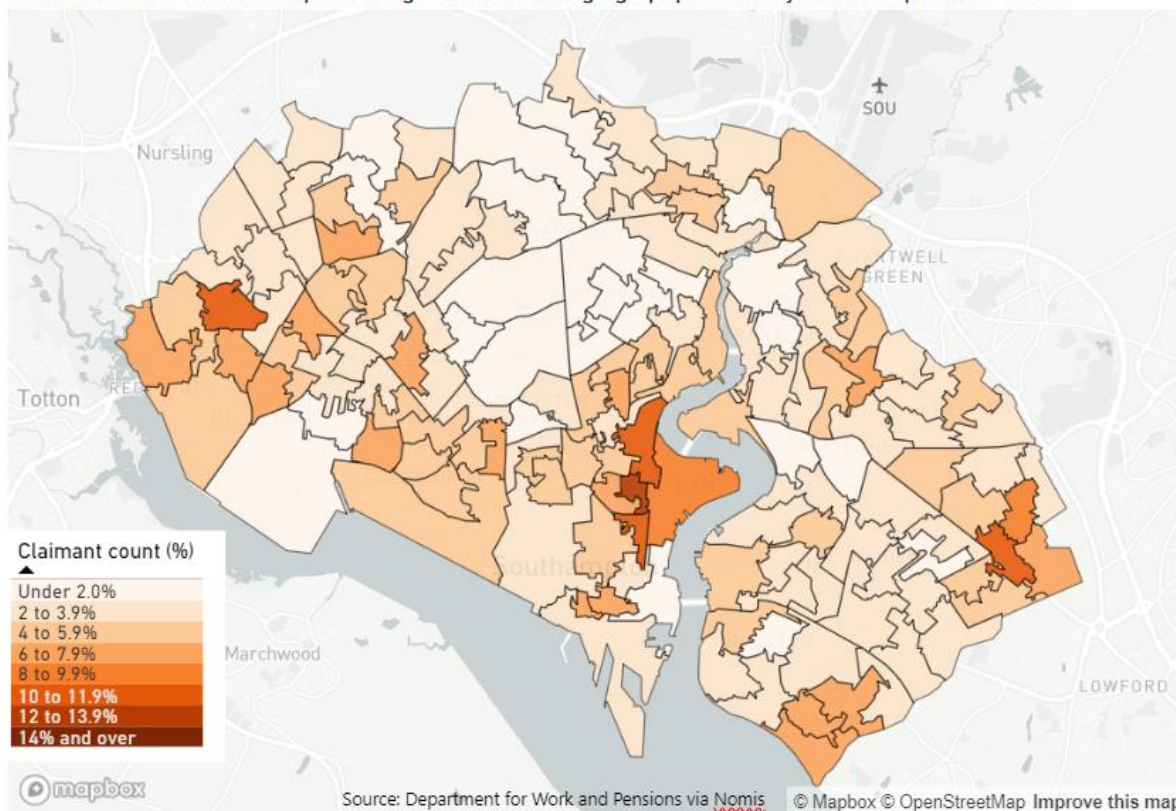


Locally and nationally the number of adults claiming out of work benefits has significantly decreased over the last two years, following the end of the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions. As of September 2023, 4.2% (7,025) of the working age population were claiming out of work benefits in Southampton. The claimant count has declined since 2021 but remains above pre-pandemic levels (less than 3.5% in Southampton). Additionally, the claimant count has slowly increased in recent months, which is possibly linked to recent financial pressures and economic uncertainty. *Figure 5.4* shows the claimant count across Southampton neighbourhoods in September 2023 (4.2% total). It is evident that unemployment is not evenly distributed across Southampton, with higher claimant counts generally seen in more deprived neighbourhoods.



Figure 5.4: Map showing the claimant count by Southampton neighbourhoods (LSOAs) as of September 2023

Claimant count (total) as a percentage of the working age population by LSOA: September-2023



It is important to note that deterioration in the measures outlined above, increases the risk factors associated with crime. Consequently, this may have subsequent impacts on future levels and patterns of crime in Southampton. Whilst we have seen the impacts of the pandemic on some of these measures, recent economic uncertainty could have further negative socio-economic impacts. Therefore, it remains important to monitor these wider determinants.

The risk of individuals, especially young people, becoming involved in crime also increases with negative risk factors such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); which have been linked to young people becoming involved in serious violence<sup>54</sup>. Research into ACEs suggests that these risk factors are cumulative<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Bellis, M. A. *et al.* (2018) 'Adverse childhood experiences and sources of childhood resilience: a retrospective study of their combined relationships with child health and educational attendance', *BMC Public Health*, **18** (782). Available via: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5699-8>

<sup>55</sup> Local Government Association: Public health approaches to reducing violence (2018). Available via: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/public-health-approaches-reducing-violence>



Therefore, the more factors a young person experiences, the greater the risk of that individual becoming involved in crime. Examples of ACEs include:

- Emotional, physical or sexual abuse
- Emotional or physical neglect
- Observed or experienced domestic violence
- Parental abandonment through separation or divorce
- Living with household members who are/were substance users, mentally ill, suicidal or imprisoned
- Household member in prison
- Bullying or exposure to community or collective violence

### 5.1 Points for the Partnership to note

- It is important to monitor the wider determinants of crime, as if these worsen, we may see subsequent increases in crime. This is important as socio-economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic have been observed in Southampton, such as increases in the claimant count. Additionally, recent economic uncertainty, financial pressures and the cost of living crisis will likely exacerbate the socio-economic situation for many. Therefore, the Partnership should continue to monitor and consider how to positively influence the wider determinants of crime, such as poverty and deprivation, when setting priorities and implementing interventions.
- Southampton has high levels of deprivation, poverty and inequality across the city. Tackling the wider determinants of crime is key to reducing overall levels of crime in Southampton. As well as improving a wider range of outcomes, such as those relating to education and health. It is important to prevent individuals, especially young people from becoming involved in crime in the first place through a programme of early intervention.
- A project was undertaken that examined need across a number of theme areas including but not limited to poverty and deprivation, education, child health and adult health across Southampton neighbourhoods. Please note that this work refers to old Southampton ward boundaries. The Partnership should take note of key findings from this work, as it highlights where need is greatest in the city for many wider determinants. Findings from this work are available on the [Southampton Data Observatory](#).

## 6. Summary

Southampton continues to have the highest total crime rate and severity among comparator CSPs, suggesting that Southampton remains the most affected area among comparators for the volume and severity of total crime. In 2022/23, Southampton experienced a +3.8% increase in total recorded crime compared to the previous year.

The increase in total recorded crime over recent years may not reflect a 'true' increase in crime, as recorded crime can be influenced by improved awareness of key issues, more people reporting crime and improvements in recording by the police. Additionally, the CSEW estimates that total crime decreased by -15% in the year ending March 2023 compared to the pre-pandemic baseline. The 2023 community safety survey also found no significant change in reported victimisation compared to before the pandemic (section 4.1.5).

However, it is important to emphasise that this varies by crime type. Although volumes of some offence types have increased, such as overall theft offences and sexual offences, others have decreased, for example violent crimes, domestic flagged crimes and residential burglary. It will be important for the Partnership to monitor these trends moving forward.

Similar to previous years, a simple score was calculated to help inform priority setting for crimes in Southampton. Based on this exercise the following areas were highlighted as priority areas for the Partnership:

- Theft offences, including residential burglary
- Sexual offences
- Violent crime (all forms)
- Domestic crimes including domestic violence

Sexual offences, violent crimes and domestic offences have consistently featured among the top priority areas for the last five years. Residential burglary has featured as a priority in previous assessments and ranks highly as a priority again despite a decline in volume. However, overall theft offences ranks highest given increases in both volume and severity over the last year; likely influenced by the cost of living crisis and recent financial pressures. Although, the volume of overall theft offences remains below the pre-pandemic baseline.

Repeat victimisation and repeat offending remains issues and are potentially growing issues in Southampton. Whilst the proportion of repeat victims declined over the last year, it remains above the pre-pandemic baseline. Whereas the repeat offending has continued to increase, now consecutively for the last four years. These trends should continue to be monitored; particularly as tackling repeat offending is key to reducing overall levels of crime in the city.

Findings from the most recent community safety survey shows that confidence in the Partnership remains low. Just 14% of respondents agreed that the police and other local public services are

successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area, with the majority of respondents (56%) disagreeing with this statement. The Partnership should take note of these findings and consider how best to improve public confidence.

Feelings of safety after dark remain a substantial issue in Southampton, with females and respondents with a disability feeling significantly less safe after dark in all settings. The 2023 community safety survey also found that 67% of people who felt unsafe had altered their behaviour in the last month, with females and respondents with a disability also changing their behaviour to a greater extent. Although the above findings are in line with national research<sup>56</sup>, they highlight that not only are residents feeling unsafe in Southampton, but they are also feeling unsafe to the extent where they are altering their behaviour. The Partnership should take note of these findings and consider how best to improve feelings of safety after dark for all, but particularly for females and those with disabilities, as people should be able to go about their daily lives without fearing for their safety<sup>57</sup>.

The majority of community safety survey respondents indicated that they did not report crimes they had witnessed or been a victim of in the last 12 months. This is especially concerning for higher harm and priority offence groups where proportions of respondents not reporting crimes increased; namely hate crime, sexual assault, VAWG, domestic abuse and serious violent crime. However, the survey highlighted barriers to reporting for different crime types, which the Partnership may be able to act upon. The most common reason for not reporting crimes was *reporting it makes no difference* across all crime groups. However, other barriers vary between crime groups (Section 4.1.5).

It is also important to consider the wider determinants of crime; the factors that make individuals more or less likely to become involved in crime. If the wider determinants worsen, we may see subsequent increases in crime. There is evidence to suggest that some wider determinants have worsened in recent years, most likely as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and could potentially worsen further due to recent financial pressures and economic uncertainty. The Partnership should continue to monitor the wider determinants of crime alongside police recorded crime, whilst also giving consideration as to how partners can positively influence these factors.

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<sup>56</sup> Office for National Statistics – Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain: 16 February to 13 March 2022. Available via:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/perceptionsofpersonalsafetyandexperiencesofharassmentgreatbritain/16februaryto13march2022>

<sup>57</sup> 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>