

Southampton Safe City

Strategic Assessment

2023/24

Summary of Findings

December 2024



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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 Justice Service (YJS), Southampton Voluntary Services (SVS), schools, businesses, Spectrum Centre for Independent Living, Victim Support, No Limits, Yellow Door, Go Southampton, the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) 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.¹ 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.² Additionally, the ongoing and work to support the prevention and reduction of Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women

¹ 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>

² 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

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. Moreover, caution should be taken when comparing figures in this assessment to previous assessments.

Changes to crime counting rules were introduced in June 2023, which is a reversal of previous changes made in 2018. Prior to 2018, only the most serious crime was recorded for incidents that involved more than one type of crime; this was called the principal crime rule. The change in 2018 mandated that, in addition to the most serious crime, where a crime of stalking or harassment was disclosed, this would also be recorded, this change led to an increase in overall violent crime and stalking and harassment offences. The 2023 change reintroduced the principal crime rule for all offences, except for modern slavery offences and passport application fraud, which are still exempt.³ The Domestic Abuse Commissioner has highlighted concerns around the recent changes in terms of how this will

³ Office for Statistics Regulation – The quality of police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales. Available online via: [The quality of police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales – Office for Statistics Regulation \(statisticsauthority.gov.uk\)](#)

affect police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes.⁴ The impact of these changes will be considered throughout relevant sections in this assessment.

⁴ Domestic Abuse Commissioner – Briefing from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales – Home Office counting rules. Available online via: [2404-Home-Office-Counting-Rules-Briefing-from-the-Domestic-Abuse-Commissioner.pdf](https://www.domesticabusecommissioner.uk/2404-Home-Office-Counting-Rules-Briefing-from-the-Domestic-Abuse-Commissioner.pdf) ([domesticabusecommissioner.uk](https://www.domesticabusecommissioner.uk))

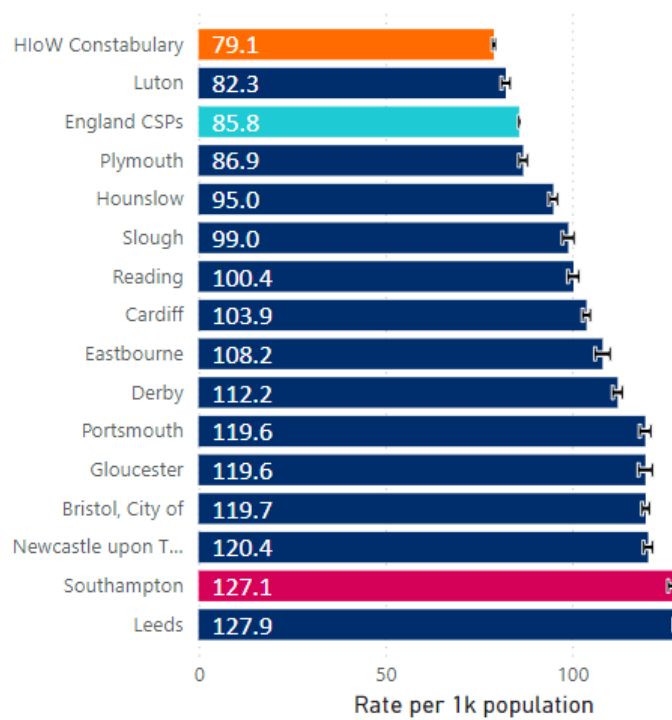
2. Summary of crime in Southampton

2.1 Crime volume and severity

In 2023/24, Southampton had an overall crime rate of 127 crimes per 1k population, which is significantly higher than the national average (86 per 1k) and the 2nd highest amongst comparator Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) (Figure). Southampton accounted for 20% of total recorded crime across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary in 2023/24 and has the 14th highest total recorded crime rate among English and Welsh CSPs with a valid crime rate (312 total).⁵

Figure 2.1: Overall crime benchmarking chart

Police Recorded Total Crime (rate per 1k population) Southampton and iQuanta Comparator Community Safety Partnerships: 2023/24



Source: Home Office - Police Recorded Crime

There were 32,555 police recorded crimes in Southampton during 2023/24, which is a decrease of -8.2% (-2,900 crimes) compared to the previous year (2022/23). This decrease is in line with local and national trends, with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary also experiencing a -8.2% decrease and England a -3.6% decrease over the same period.

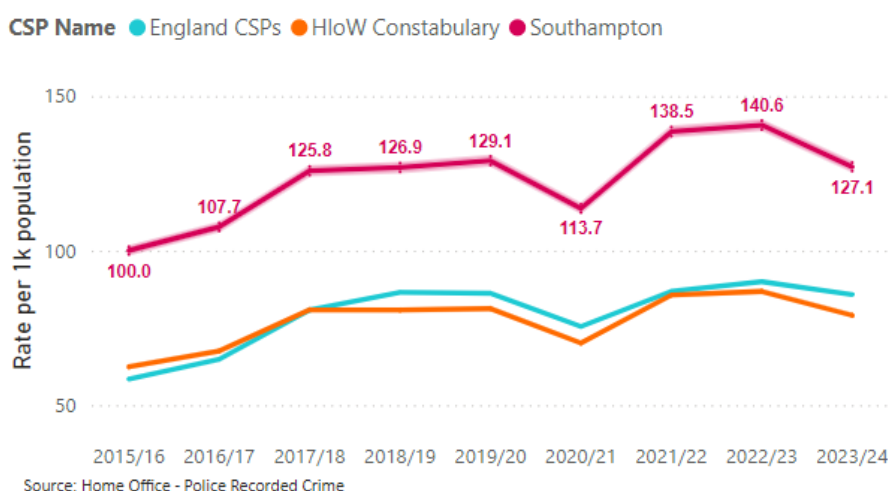
⁵ Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2024. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2024>

However, it is important to note that changes in the volume of crimes vary across different crime groups. As police recorded crime only includes crimes that have been reported to and recorded by the police, ‘hidden’ crimes such as domestic abuse are far more likely to be underreported than other offences such as theft. Additionally, changes in crime counting rules implemented in June 2023 will have an impact on the volumes of police recorded crime, particularly violent crimes, domestic crimes, stalking and harassment, public order offences, and may affect overall volumes of crime.

Police recorded crime in Southampton declined by -8.2% in 2023/24 compared to the previous year. The decline in total recorded crime over the last year is unlikely to reflect a ‘true’ decline in crime, particularly as changes in counting rules were re-introduced in June 2023, which has led to a reduction in violent, domestic crimes and public order offences (see [Section 3](#)). The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment also highlights that the above changes in counting rules have likely contributed to the decline in overall crime observed in 2023/24.⁶ It should also be highlighted that police recorded crime can be influenced by improved awareness of key issues, changes to crime reporting and improvements in recording by the police.

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: 2015/16 to 2023/24



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.⁷ The CSEW estimates that total headline crime (which includes theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse

⁶ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2024

⁷ Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2024. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2024>

and violence with or without injury) in 2023/24 has no statistically significant change compared to 2022/23.

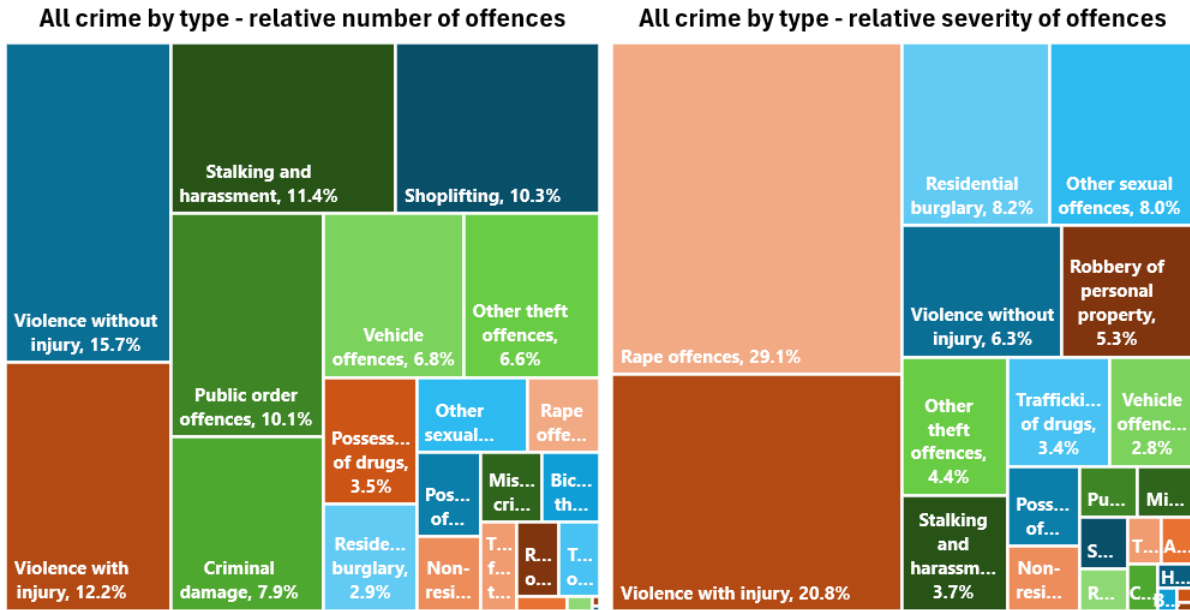
It is important that not only the volume of crime in Southampton is considered, but also the harm caused to victims and society. For example, high volume but low harm offences may be less of a priority to the Partnership than lower volume but high harm offences. A crime severity score estimates the harm caused by crimes. The score gives more severe offence categories a higher weight than less severe ones using crime sentencing weights calculated by Office for National Statistics (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 1.6% of overall recorded offences, yet rape represented 29.1% of the relative severity or 'harm' caused by crime in Southampton during 2023/24. 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 2023/24, Southampton had a crime severity score of 22.3 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 -10.3% decrease in overall crime severity, which is in line with the decline in the volume of offences (-8.2%). Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (-10.8%) also experienced a similar decline in severity during the same period.

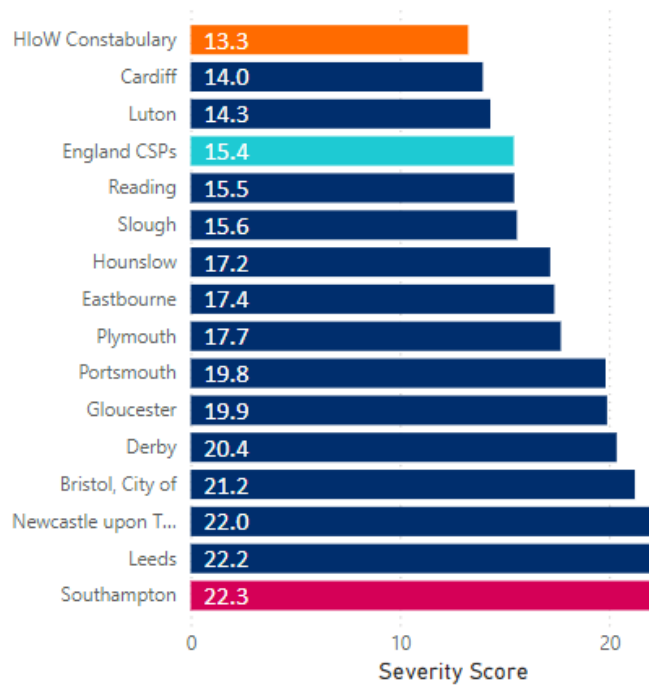
Figure 2.3: Tree maps showing relative number (left) and severity of offences (right) for police recorded crimes in Southampton during 2023/24



Source: Home Office - police recorded crime

Figure 2.4: Overall crime severity benchmarking chart

Police Recorded Total Crime (Severity Score) - Southampton and iQuanta Comparator Community Safety Partnerships: 2023/24



Source: Home Office - Police Recorded Crime

Overall, Southampton remains one of the 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 a decrease in the volume of 24 out of 32 of the offence types shown below between 2022/23 to 2023/24.

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	2022/23 count	2023/24 count	2022/23 crime severity score	2023/24 crime severity score	Formal action taken %**	Percentage change 2022/23 to 2023/24 count	Percentage change 2022/23 to 2023/24 crime severity score	iQuanta CSP position*
Total crime*	35,455	32,555	24.90	22.34	14.3%	-8.2%	-10.3%	2
Violent crime*	14,290	12,772	7.49	6.93	12.6%	-10.6%	-7.5%	2
Violence with injury*	4,296	3,955	5.13	4.64	15.7%	-7.9%	-9.6%	1
Violence without injury*	5,544	5,105	1.30	1.41	11.2%	-7.9%	8.5%	3
Stalking and harassment*	4,444	3,703	0.92	0.82	6.8%	-16.7%	-10.9%	3
Malicious communications*	1,846	939	0.14	0.07	5.9%	-49.1%	-50.0%	2
Most serious violence (iQuanta definition)*	203	168	1.79	1.50	22.7%	-17.2%	-16.2%	9
Violent crime with public place flag**	4,776	4,315	3.04	2.86	19.8%	-9.7%	-5.9%	N/A
VAWG**	8,327	7,351	11.42	10.46	9.9%	-11.7%	-8.4%	N/A
Sexual offences*	1,343	1,323	9.05	8.30	8.0%	-1.5%	-8.3%	1
Sexual offences - rape*	554	520	7.09	6.51	3.0%	-6.1%	-8.2%	1
Sexual offences - other*	789	803	1.95	1.79	11.1%	1.8%	-8.2%	1
Crimes with domestic flag**	5,662	4,936	5.55	5.91	9.5%	-12.8%	6.5%	N/A
Domestic violent crime**	4,543	3,906	2.64	3.22	9.7%	-14.0%	22.0%	N/A
Theft offences*	10,002	9,838	5.29	4.06	11.1%	-1.6%	-23.3%	6
Burglary residential*	1,324	956	3.10	1.83	4.9%	-27.8%	-41.0%	3
Burglary non-residential*	471	452	0.30	0.31	8.1%	-4.0%	3.3%	6
Vehicle offences*	2,722	2,219	0.76	0.63	2.7%	-18.5%	-17.1%	6
Robbery*	369	338	1.45	1.31	7.5%	-8.4%	-9.7%	7
Possession of weapons offences*	517	517	0.32	0.39	28.2%	0.0%	21.9%	1
Possession of bladed implement*	262	239	0.07	0.07	28.3%	-8.8%	0.0%	1
Firearms offences*	47	60	0.20	0.27	23.2%	27.7%	35.0%	3
Crime involving a bladed implement**	791	829	1.38	1.27	17.4%	4.8%	-8.0%	N/A
Serious knife crime**	322	310	0.77	0.70	13.2%	-3.7%	-9.1%	N/A
Modern slavery*	54	59	0.33	0.36	0.0%	9.3%	9.1%	4
Cruelty to children/young persons*	202	212	0.13	0.13	22.1%	5.0%	0.0%	6
Hate crime**	1,106	937	0.28	0.24	14.8%	-15.3%	-14.3%	N/A
Alcohol affected crime**	2,821	2,594	2.17	2.22	30.0%	-8.0%	2.3%	N/A
Drug offences*	1,214	1,427	0.58	0.77	64.5%	17.5%	32.8%	1
Drug affected crime**	1,214	1,241	0.89	0.87	46.0%	2.2%	-2.2%	N/A
Anti-social behaviour***	3,633	3,069	N/A	N/A	N/A	-15.5%	N/A	N/A
Criminal damage and arson*	3,122	2,632	0.26	0.19	10.7%	-15.7%	-26.9%	5

* 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

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 2022/23 to 2023/24, there were notable increases in the volume of drug offences (+17.5%) and drug affected crimes (+2.2%), with this type of crime often linked to policing activity. Increases were also seen for crimes involving a bladed implement (+4.8%), which is in line with national trends (Section 1). Other sexual offences also experienced a +1.8% increase. There have also been increases in the number of firearms offences (+27.7%), modern slavery (+9.3%) and cruelty to children/ young

persons (+5.0%), although numbers of firearms offences, modern slavery and cruelty to children/young persons are small, therefore percentage changes should be interpreted with caution.

On the other hand, there have been notable declines in overall violent crime (-10.6%), with this overall decline likely influenced by the change in counting rules, as shown by declines in stalking and harassment (-16.7%) and malicious communications (-49.1%). Violent crime with a public place flag (-9.7%) and VAWG (-11.7%) also experienced a decline, however, these types of violent crime are also likely affected by the change in counting rules as stalking and harassment and malicious communication offences are included in the above definitions. Violence with injury and without injury also experienced declines of -7.9% and Most Serious Violence also declined by -17.2%.

There has also been a decline in domestic flagged crime (-12.8%) and domestic violent crime (-14.0%), however, these do not reflect true declines and will be influenced by the change in counting rules.

Notable declines were also observed for sexual offences (-1.5%) and rape (-6.1%), however, despite a decline in offences, these crimes still cause significant harm to victims. Theft offences (-1.6%), residential burglary (-27.8%), hate crime (-15.3%) and alcohol affected crime (-8.0%) also experienced a decline.

There continues to be a decline in anti-social behaviour offences in Southampton, with a -15.5% decline in the last year. Similar declines have been observed across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (-16.2%) and Portsmouth (-8.6%) 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 73% of respondents witnessing or experiencing anti-social behaviour in the 2024 Southampton community safety survey not reporting the incident ([Section 4.1.5](#)).

Several of the above declines are likely influenced by the change in counting rules, the impact of which will be explored in more detail throughout relevant sections below.

However, despite changes in volume over the last year, Southampton remains an outlier among comparators for several of the crime groups above, with Southampton ranked in the top 3 for 14 of the 22 offence groups shown in the table above.⁸ Southampton ranks highest for violence with injury, sexual offences, rape, other sexual offences, possession of weapons offences, possession of bladed implement and drug offences. Violent Crime, violence without injury, stalking and harassment, malicious communications and firearm offences are ranked second or third amongst comparators.

⁸ Only includes crime groups where CSP rank is available

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):

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

Sexual offences, violent crimes and domestic offences have consistently featured among the top priority areas for the last six years.

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: drugs and alcohol, hate crime and resident views.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) ranks as a priority for the Safe City Partnership in 2023/24. 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	2022/23 count	2023/24 count	2022/23 crime severity score	2023/24 crime severity score	Formal action taken %**	Percentage change 2022/23 to 2023/24 count	Percentage change 2022/23 to 2023/24 crime severity score	iQuanta CSP position *	Overall priority rank
Total crime*	35,455	32,555	24.90	22.34	14.3%	-8.2%	-10.3%	2	
Violent crime*	14,290	12,772	7.49	6.93	12.6%	-10.6%	-7.5%	2	4
Violence with injury*	4,296	3,955	5.13	4.64	15.7%	-7.9%	-9.6%	1	4
Violence without injury*	5,544	5,105	1.30	1.41	11.2%	-7.9%	8.5%	3	9
Stalking and harassment*	4,444	3,703	0.92	0.82	6.8%	-16.7%	-10.9%	3	13
Malicious communications*	1,846	939	0.14	0.07	5.9%	-49.1%	-50.0%	2	25
Most serious violence (iQuanta definition)*	203	168	1.79	1.50	22.7%	-17.2%	-16.2%	9	31
Violent crime with public place flag**	4,776	4,315	3.04	2.86	19.8%	-9.7%	-5.9%	N/A	11
VAWG**	8,327	7,351	11.42	10.46	9.9%	-11.7%	-8.4%	N/A	3
Sexual offences*	1,343	1,323	9.05	8.30	8.0%	-1.5%	-8.3%	1	1
Sexual offences - rape*	554	520	7.09	6.51	3.0%	-6.1%	-8.2%	1	2
Sexual offences - other*	789	803	1.95	1.79	11.1%	1.8%	-8.2%	1	8
Crimes with domestic flag**	5,662	4,936	5.55	5.91	9.5%	-12.8%	6.5%	N/A	7
Domestic violent crime**	4,543	3,906	2.64	3.22	9.7%	-14.0%	22.0%	N/A	10
Theft offences*	10,002	9,838	5.29	4.06	11.1%	-1.6%	-23.3%	6	6
Burglary residential*	1,324	956	3.10	1.83	4.9%	-27.8%	-41.0%	3	15
Burglary non-residential*	471	452	0.30	0.31	8.1%	-4.0%	3.3%	6	24
Vehicle offences*	2,722	2,219	0.76	0.63	2.7%	-18.5%	-17.1%	6	21
Robbery*	369	338	1.45	1.31	7.5%	-8.4%	-9.7%	7	22
Possession of weapons offences*	517	517	0.32	0.39	28.2%	0.0%	21.9%	1	20
Possession of bladed implement*	262	239	0.07	0.07	28.3%	-8.8%	0.0%	1	30
Firearms offences*	47	60	0.20	0.27	23.2%	27.7%	35.0%	3	25
Crime involving a bladed implement**	791	829	1.38	1.27	17.4%	4.8%	-8.0%	N/A	14
Serious knife crime**	322	310	0.77	0.70	13.2%	-3.7%	-9.1%	N/A	23
Modern slavery*	54	59	0.33	0.36	0.0%	9.3%	9.1%	4	15
Cruelty to children/young persons*	202	212	0.13	0.13	22.1%	5.0%	0.0%	6	29
Hate crime**	1,106	937	0.28	0.24	14.8%	-15.3%	-14.3%	N/A	28
Alcohol affected crime**	2,821	2,594	2.17	2.22	30.0%	-8.0%	2.3%	N/A	18
Drug offences*	1,214	1,427	0.58	0.77	64.5%	17.5%	32.8%	1	12
Drug affected crime**	1,214	1,241	0.89	0.87	46.0%	2.2%	-2.2%	N/A	19
Anti-social behaviour***	3,633	3,069	N/A	N/A	N/A	-15.5%	N/A	N/A	17
Criminal damage and arson*	3,122	2,632	0.26	0.19	10.7%	-15.7%	-26.9%	5	27

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

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Colour Key	
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	Year on year decrease

2.4 Distribution of crime

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 (278 crimes per 1k population) ward had the highest overall crime rate among Southampton wards in 2023/24. 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 (162 per 1k), Freemantle (151 per 1k), Banister & Polygon (140 per 1k), Thornhill (133 per 1k) and Millbrook (131 per 1k) wards also show significantly higher total crime rates than the Southampton average in 2023/24 (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

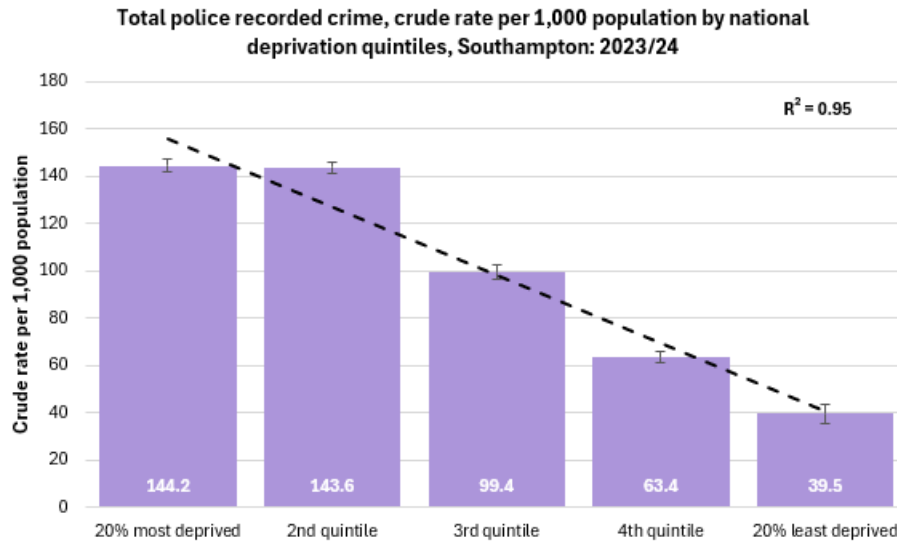
Community Safety - Total Offences (Southampton analysis)	Rate 1,000 population																
	All Crime	Domestic Flagged Crime	Domestic Violence	Hate Crime	Crime involving a Bladed Implement	Alcohol Affected Crime	Drug Offences	Drug Affected Crime	Violence Against the Person	Violence Against Women & Girls	Sexual Offences	Rape	Other Sexual Offences	Robbery	Theft Offences	Burglary Residential	Criminal Damage and Arson
Southampton	122.8	18.6	14.7	3.5	3.1	9.8	5.4	4.7	48.2	53.1	4.9	1.9	3.0	1.3	37.1	3.6	10.0
Banister & Polygon	140.0	16.1	12.6	5.2	3.6	20.2	10.3	7.0	56.2	62.0	5.8	2.0	3.8	1.7	39.8	5.3	8.9
Bargate	277.8	18.7	15.1	8.6	5.8	23.1	20.5	13.3	76.9	85.9	9.0	4.0	5.0	5.4	115.3	3.7	16.2
Bassett	53.3	8.1	6.5	1.7	1.4	3.3	0.9	1.7	18.9	20.4	1.5	0.9	0.6	*	18.0	2.9	6.8
Bevois	161.7	23.0	18.8	4.3	5.0	11.1	8.7	5.7	72.7	79.1	6.5	3.3	3.2	2.1	38.1	4.8	12.2
Bitterne Park	71.9	13.5	10.6	1.5	1.7	5.3	2.4	2.8	29.6	32.4	2.8	1.3	1.5	*	22.8	4.0	5.0
Coxford	76.1	19.1	14.9	1.8	2.4	5.1	1.4	1.8	37.4	40.7	3.3	1.4	2.0	0.5	15.8	2.4	7.2
Freemantle	150.6	21.2	16.8	5.1	4.2	15.6	10.1	7.7	52.0	55.8	3.8	2.1	1.8	1.2	48.5	4.4	12.4
Harefield	99.8	17.9	14.3	2.6	1.4	4.9	1.4	1.5	41.1	45.4	4.3	1.6	2.6	0.7	31.5	4.1	8.2
Millbrook	131.1	24.4	19.2	2.6	2.8	7.5	3.1	3.8	51.8	56.1	4.3	1.8	2.5	1.1	45.2	3.1	9.5
Peartree	98.8	16.5	12.8	3.2	2.3	7.6	2.7	3.7	39.8	44.0	4.2	1.4	2.8	0.8	29.7	3.0	8.2
Portswood	115.5	14.7	11.6	4.3	3.2	8.7	3.6	4.3	40.0	43.7	3.6	1.2	2.4	1.8	40.1	4.6	9.7
Redbridge	126.4	22.5	17.4	2.4	3.5	6.5	3.2	2.9	56.2	67.9	11.7	2.4	9.3	0.7	25.3	2.0	12.2
Shirley	124.2	18.8	14.8	3.9	3.1	9.6	3.2	4.6	55.2	60.3	5.1	1.7	3.4	1.5	32.2	2.8	9.9
Sholing	78.5	13.7	10.8	1.7	1.9	4.3	1.6	1.7	33.3	36.5	3.2	1.5	1.7	*	22.6	3.5	8.7
Swaythling	72.7	14.4	11.7	2.6	2.3	5.4	1.9	2.4	32.5	35.2	2.6	1.0	1.6	0.6	18.1	2.6	8.1
Thornhill	133.2	29.3	23.4	3.2	4.2	10.0	4.5	6.0	58.7	63.7	4.9	1.3	3.6	0.6	34.9	4.7	14.2
Woolston	93.1	20.0	15.8	1.8	2.3	6.0	2.5	2.7	40.6	43.0	2.5	0.9	1.6	0.9	26.6	2.4	8.7

Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

*Note that values have been suppressed due to small numbers

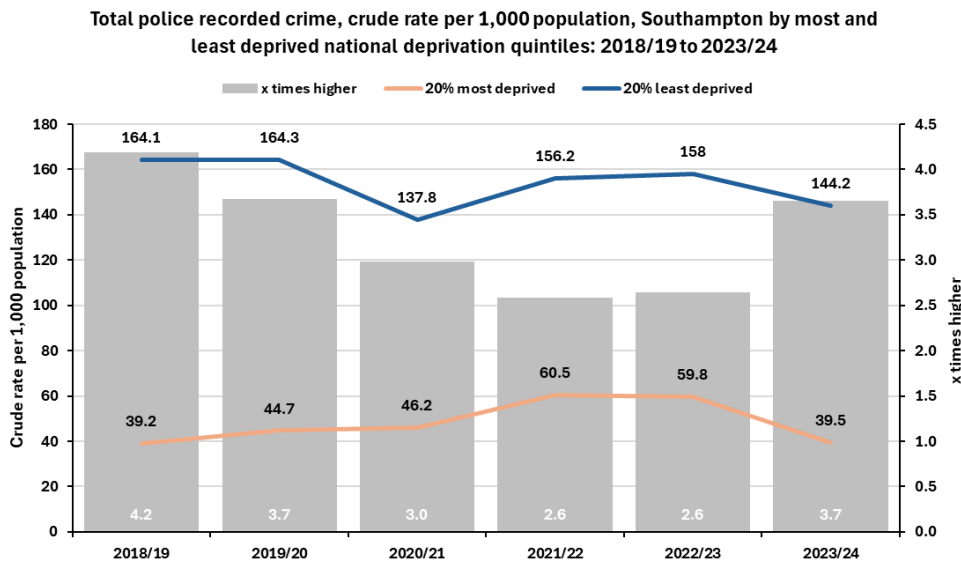
Overall crime continues to be strongly patterned with deprivation. In 2023/24, the overall crime rate in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods was 3.7 times higher than in the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in Southampton (Figure 2.8). Although crime rates remain significantly higher in the 20% most deprived Southampton neighbourhoods compared to the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods, the inequality gap appears to be widening again. This change appears to be driven by a decrease in crime rates among the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods (-33.9% decrease in the crime rate), with the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods experiencing a -8.7% decrease in the crime rate between 2022/23 and 2023/24 (Figure 2.9).

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



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

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



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

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). It should be noted that any changes in overall crime, violent crimes and domestic crimes could be influenced by the change in counting rules. From 2022/23 to 2023/24, total crime increased in 2 out of 17 wards (Figure 2.10). The largest percentage increase in total crime between 2022/23 and 2023/24 was in Sholing ward (+12.5%), followed by Millbrook (+0.3%) ward. Notable declines in total crime were seen in Harefield (-22.2%), Bassett (-17.7%) and Swaythling (-16.4%) wards.

It is important to note that 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.

2023/24 saw increases in drug offences in 11 out of 17 wards, which is often linked to operational activity, with the number of stop checks increasing across Southampton by +27.9% between 2022/23 and 2023/24.⁹ Sexual offences experienced a small decrease (-1.7%) overall, but varying increases across 9 out of 17 wards, with the largest increases experienced in Redbridge ward (+114.1%, +89 crimes). Robbery and theft offences also increased across 7 wards. On the other hand, 14 wards saw a decline in violent crime. Similarly, domestic flagged crime decreased or stayed the same across 14 wards. The above declines in violent crime and domestic crimes are likely linked to the change in crime counting rules and are unlikely to represent a genuine decline. Additionally, hate crime declined across 12 wards. Alcohol affected crime saw a decline across 13 wards. There has been a decline in anti-social behaviour across 12 wards, but Banister & Polygon ward showed notable increase (+68.8%, +181 crimes). It should be noted that percentage changes should be interpreted alongside changes in counts, especially when the number of crimes is low.

⁹ Hampshire Constabulary crime extract

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

Key: Percentage change from 2022/23

- Increase
- Decrease
- No change

Change in recorded crime from 2022/23 to 2023/24	Percentage (and count) change in number of incidents - 2022/23 to 2023/24													
	Total recorded crime	Domestic flagged crimes	Domestic Violence	Hate Crime	Alcohol Affected Crime	Drug offences	Violence against the Person	Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)	Sexual offences	Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)	Robbery	Theft offences	Residential Burglary	Vehicle offences
Southampton	-7.8% (-2757)	-12.8% (-726)	-14% (-637)	-15.3% (-169)	-8% (-227)	19.9% (238)	-10.1% (-1431)	-9.4% (-1454)	-1.7% (-23)	-15.5% (-564)	-5.5% (-20)	-1.7% (-173)	-28.8% (-383)	-18.5% (-502)
Banister & Polygon	-11.8% (-333)	0% (0)	-2.2% (-5)	7% (6)	12.8% (41)	16.6% (26)	-3.4% (-35)	-3% (-34)	1% (1)	68.8% (181)	-18.4% (-7)	-19.3% (-170)	-41.6% (-67)	-26.8% (-60)
Bargate	-3.8% (-211)	-19.7% (-88)	-21% (-77)	9.9% (15)	-14.8% (-77)	54.5% (139)	-11.2% (-186)	-10.8% (-200)	-7.5% (-14)	12.8% (47)	17% (15)	-3.6% (-83)	-20.9% (-19)	-19.4% (-62)
Bassett	-17.7% (-186)	7.4% (9)	20.5% (18)	-34.9% (-15)	12.8% (6)	-39.1% (-9)	-21.9% (-86)	-24.8% (-109)	-48.9% (-23)	7.5% (5)	*	-16.6% (-58)	-38.2% (-29)	-55.7% (-73)
Bevois	-13.7% (-426)	-14.2% (-63)	-13.8% (-50)	-37.4% (-43)	-7.1% (-14)	-8.8% (-14)	-3.7% (-46)	-4% (-55)	-7.8% (-9)	-15% (-60)	2.9% (1)	-24.2% (-202)	-42.4% (-59)	-33.9% (-101)
Bitterne Park	-16% (-210)	-30.3% (-90)	-33.3% (-81)	-42.5% (-17)	-27% (-30)	12.1% (4)	-24.1% (-144)	-22.5% (-144)	0% (0)	16.5% (19)	*	5.7% (19)	7% (4)	17.6% (21)
Coxford	-4% (-47)	16.9% (41)	14.5% (28)	-33.3% (-13)	8.6% (6)	-12.5% (-3)	5.1% (27)	5.8% (33)	14% (6)	-18.6% (-29)	*	-5.3% (-13)	-23.9% (-11)	-22.1% (-21)
Freemantle	-3.5% (-85)	-13.5% (-51)	-17.3% (-54)	-22.8% (-23)	-12.1% (-33)	8.4% (12)	-15.4% (-146)	-15.4% (-156)	-14.5% (-10)	-35.2% (-57)	-10% (-2)	23.1% (140)	-29.9% (-29)	-17.1% (-32)
Harefield	-22.2% (-388)	-8.6% (-23)	-10.6% (-23)	-45.5% (-30)	-36.2% (-38)	-26.9% (-7)	-16.8% (-113)	-13.6% (-97)	38.1% (16)	-62.6% (-119)	-44.4% (-8)	-19.2% (-102)	-1.8% (-1)	-7.3% (-9)
Millbrook	0.3% (6)	-6.3% (-23)	-4.6% (-13)	-17.8% (-8)	-0.9% (-1)	53.6% (15)	0.6% (4)	-2.7% (-22)	-30.2% (-26)	-47.8% (-107)	15.4% (2)	14.5% (80)	-31.3% (-20)	-50% (-82)
Peartree	-1.5% (-23)	-19.2% (-62)	-20.1% (-51)	24.4% (10)	-2.4% (-3)	16.7% (6)	-13.1% (-95)	-10.8% (-84)	20% (11)	-23.5% (-42)	30% (3)	30.6% (110)	-9.4% (-5)	11.3% (15)
Portswood	-3.5% (-59)	-5% (-11)	-7.4% (-13)	52.5% (21)	-4.7% (-6)	-20.3% (-13)	-4.3% (-25)	-3.8% (-24)	2% (1)	-8.6% (-14)	136.4% (15)	-7.4% (-45)	-34% (-33)	-18.9% (-39)
Redbridge	-6.3% (-121)	-26.2% (-114)	-29.7% (-105)	-10.5% (-4)	-19.3% (-22)	58.6% (17)	-9.7% (-86)	0.3% (3)	114.1% (89)	-4.2% (-8)	-33.3% (-5)	-20.8% (-95)	-67.4% (-60)	-22% (-29)
Shirley	-8.5% (-178)	11.1% (29)	12.8% (26)	-36.5% (-35)	2.8% (4)	14% (6)	3% (25)	3.4% (31)	8.2% (6)	-28.5% (-65)	-23.3% (-7)	-7.3% (-39)	-31.3% (-20)	-24.1% (-39)
Sholing	12.5% (126)	-22.9% (-59)	-27.8% (-60)	31.6% (6)	-21.3% (-17)	53.3% (8)	-6.8% (-35)	-5% (-28)	17.5% (7)	29.9% (26)	-60% (-3)	59.5% (122)	56.3% (18)	35.9% (28)
Swaythling	-16.4% (-244)	-3.5% (-9)	-5.7% (-12)	-16.7% (-9)	-11.5% (-12)	-25% (-11)	-10.2% (-63)	-10.3% (-69)	-11.8% (-6)	-11.7% (-16)	37.5% (3)	-19.3% (-74)	-44.3% (-35)	-36.9% (-48)
Thornhill	-7.3% (-153)	-21.2% (-115)	-19.6% (-83)	-13% (-7)	-14.6% (-25)	37.5% (18)	-17.5% (-181)	-16% (-177)	5.9% (4)	-40.1% (-87)	-59.1% (-13)	35.1% (132)	1.5% (1)	37.5% (33)
Woolston	-12.1% (-207)	-22.9% (-96)	-23.7% (-79)	-49.1% (-28)	-22.4% (-28)	14.3% (5)	-23.6% (-203)	-25.6% (-240)	-48.1% (-37)	-11.3% (-24)	7.7% (1)	22.9% (80)	-22% (-11)	-5.5% (-6)

Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary; ASB from data.police.uk

*Note that values have been suppressed due to small numbers

2.5 Victims and offenders

2.5.1 Victims

In 2023/24, there were 16,608 unique victims (excluding businesses and the state) who were involved in 70.6% of crimes in Southampton.¹⁰ This is notably less than the number of unique victims identified in 2022/23 (18,347). It is worth highlighting that any changes to victimisation patterns, particularly repeat victimisation could be influenced by the change in crime counting rules ([Section 1](#)).

Figure 2.11 shows the number of victims by the number of offences they experienced during 2023/24, with most victims experiencing only one crime in the financial year (80.4%). In 2023/24, 19.6% of victims experienced more than one crime, compared to 22.8% in 2022/23. Repeat victims experienced

¹⁰ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – only includes victims with valid age and sex information recorded

41.9% of crimes where a victim was recorded in 2023/24. The evidence above highlights that repeat victimisation continues to be a prominent issue in Southampton.

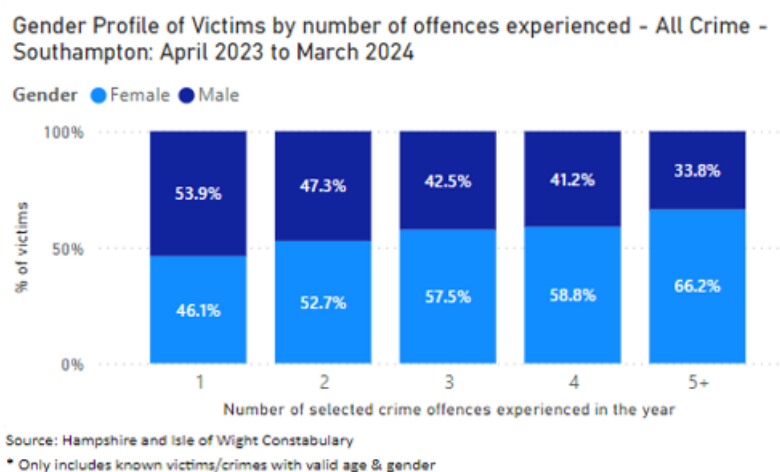
Figure 2.11: Table showing number of offences experienced by know victims in 2023/24

No. of crimes experienced	No. of all crime offences	% of all crime offences	No. of all crime victims	% of all crime victims
1	13,346	58.1	13,346	80.4
2	4,024	17.5	2,012	12.1
3	1,857	8.1	619	3.7
4	1,116	4.9	279	1.7
5 or more	2,627	11.4	352	2.1

A small number of individuals (352, 2.1%) experienced 5 or more crimes in 2023/24. Yet collectively these individuals accounted for 11.4% (2,627) of recorded crimes where a victim was recorded. The number of individuals experiencing 5 or more crimes has decreased compared to 2022/23 (453 individuals) and 2021/22 (471 individuals), again the change over the last year could be linked to changes in counting rules.

Overall, males (52.0%) made up a higher proportion of victims than females (48.0%) in 2023/24. However, similar to previous years, females continue to be more likely to be repeat victims across all crime types; accounting for 66.2% of the victims experiencing 5 or more crime in the latest financial year (Figure 2.12).

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



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 (27.4%), followed by 25

to 34 (22.9%), 18 to 24 (15.7%), 50 to 64 (15.3%), 1 to 17 (13.7%) and lastly those aged over 65 years (5.9%).¹¹

Figure 2.13: Chart showing age profile of victims and offences



The majority of victims identified in 2023/24 were white (53%), 9.9% of victims were ethnic minorities and 37.1% unknown ethnicity.¹² Ethnicity information should be interpreted with caution, 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 2023/24, 9,858 individual suspects or offenders were identified from police systems for offences that occurred in Southampton.¹³ This is similar to the 9,871 identified during 2022/23. These individuals were collectively responsible for 61.4% of the crimes committed in Southampton during 2023/24. 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 were not caught or who committed offences that were not recorded. Any changes to offending patterns, particularly repeat offending could be influenced by the change in crime counting rules ([Section 1](#)).

¹¹ 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.

¹² Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

¹³ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – only includes suspects and offenders with valid age and sex

Figure 2.14 shows that the majority (65.3%) of offenders committed just one offence during 2023/24, which is higher than the previous financial year (61.4% in 2022/23). Despite most offenders committing just one crime in the year, these individuals account for 32.2% of crimes with a known suspect or offender. Those committing more than one crime account for 34.7% of offenders, but collectively account for 67.8% of crimes. This highlights that repeat offending remains a substantial issue in Southampton.

Figure 2.14: Table showing number of offences committed by known suspects or offenders in 2023/24

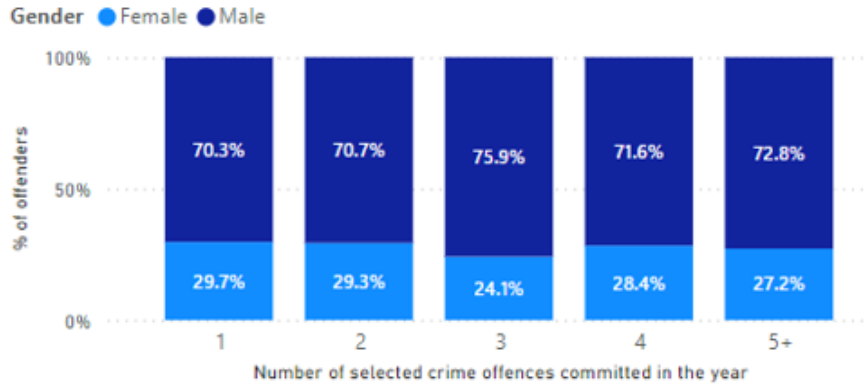
No. of crimes committed	No. of all crime offences	% of all crime offences	No. of all crime offenders	% of all crime offenders
1	6,436	32.2	6,436	65.3
2	3,396	17.0	1,698	17.2
3	2,112	10.8	704	7.1
4	1,312	6.6	328	3.3
5 or more	6,730	33.7	692	7.0

The proportion of the most prolific offenders dropped slightly than the previous financial year, with 7.0% of offenders in 2023/24 committing 5 or more offences, compared to 8.2% of offenders in 2022/23. Despite prolific offenders accounting for 7.0% (692 individuals) of suspects or offenders in 2023/24, these individuals committed 33.7% of crimes with a known suspect or offender. Therefore, it remains important to tackle reoffending of the most prolific offenders if crime levels are to reduce in Southampton.

The majority of suspects or offenders identified in 2023/24 were male (71.0%), which is similar to previous years (70.4% in 2022/23). Males continue to be more likely to commit multiple offences than females, with 72.8% 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 2023 to March 2024

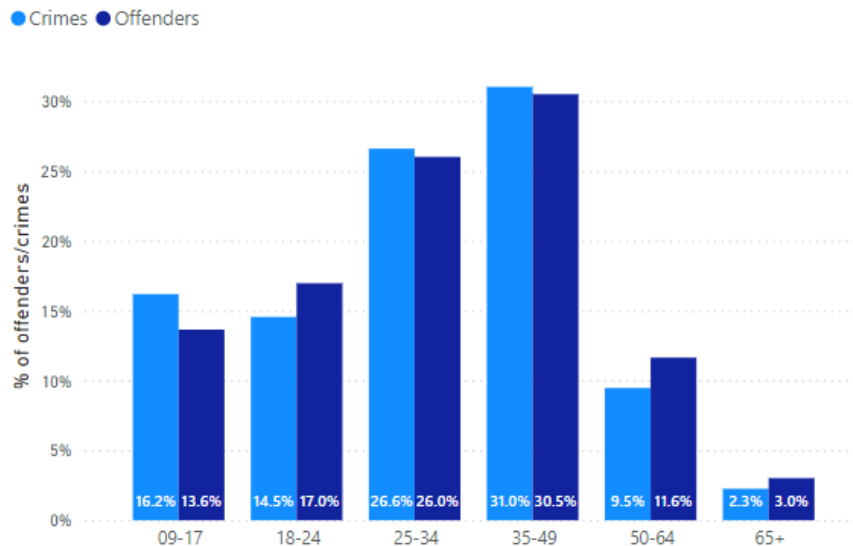


Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary
 * Only includes known offenders/crimes with valid age & gender

Figure 2.16 shows the age profile of offenders for all crimes in 2023/24. The age profile for offenders is similar to previous years, with those aged 35 to 49 years old (30.5%) continuing to commit the most crimes, followed by 25 to 34 (26.0%), 18 to 24 (17.0%), 9 to 17 (13.6%), 50 to 64 (11.6%) and lastly those age 65 and over (3.0%).¹⁴

Figure 2.16: Chart showing age profile of offenders and offences

Age Profile of Offenders - All Crime - Southampton: April 2023 to March 2024



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

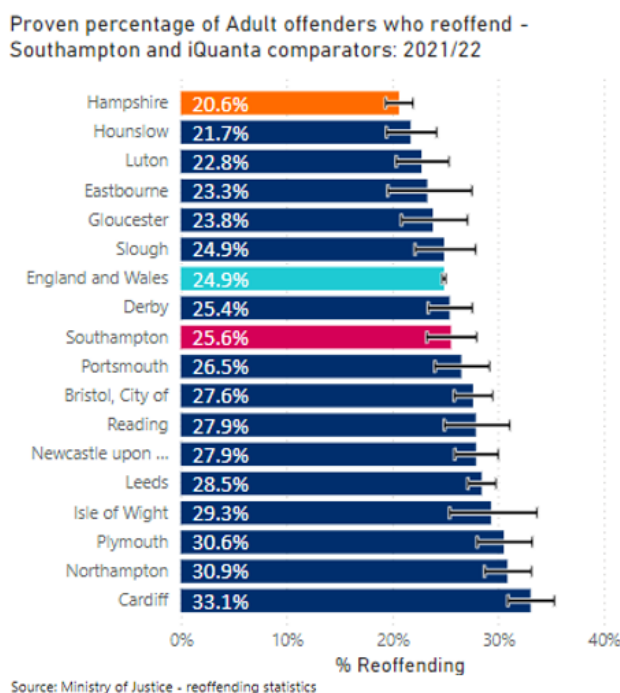
¹⁴ An offender may be counted more than once if they have moved age groups in the year, however this affects less than 1.7% of records.

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 (68.8%), 15.8% of offenders were ethnic minorities and 15.4% unknown ethnicity in 2023/24.

2.5.3 Reoffending ¹⁵

In Southampton, 25.6% of adult offenders in the 2021/22 cohort reoffended (*Figure 2.17*), higher but not significantly than the England and Wales reoffending rate (24.9%). Southampton adult reoffenders will on average commit 3.3 reoffences, similar to the England and Wales average of 3.7 reoffences.¹⁶ Due to changes in the data source and methodology of reoffending statistics,¹⁷ it is not possible to examine trends beyond the last five years. The adult reoffending rate experienced a non-significant increase over the last year (24.8% in 2020/21 compared to 25.6% in 2021/22) (*Figure 2.18*), despite this increase, the adult reoffending rate remains below the latest comparable period (2017/18).

Figure 2.17: Benchmarking chart showing proven adult reoffending rate



¹⁵ Trends in reoffending statistics may be impacted by delays in court process due to the pandemic

¹⁶ 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

¹⁷ Ministry of Justice – Guide to proven reoffending statistics (2023). Available via: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64c0fea6d4051a00145a939c/Guide-to-proven-reoffending-Jul23.pdf>

Figure 2.18: Trend chart showing proven adult reoffending rate

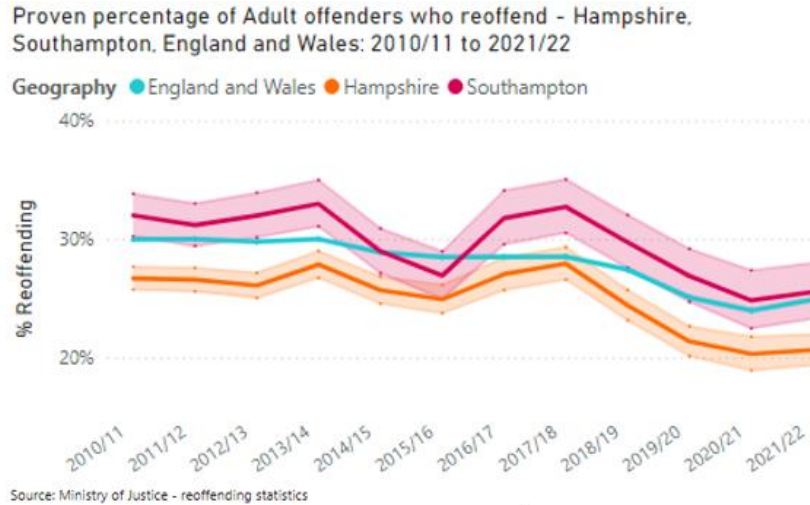


Figure 2.19 shows that 36.5% of the 2021/22 youth offending cohort in Southampton reoffended, higher, but not significantly than the England and Wales average (32.2%). Youth reoffenders in Southampton will commit an average of 4.2 reoffences, similar to the England and Wales average of 4.1 reoffences. 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 decreased by -5.1 percentage points from 41.6% in 2020/21 to 36.5% in 2021/22. Again, these changes are not statistically significant due to the small cohort of youth offenders (85) and reoffenders (31).

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

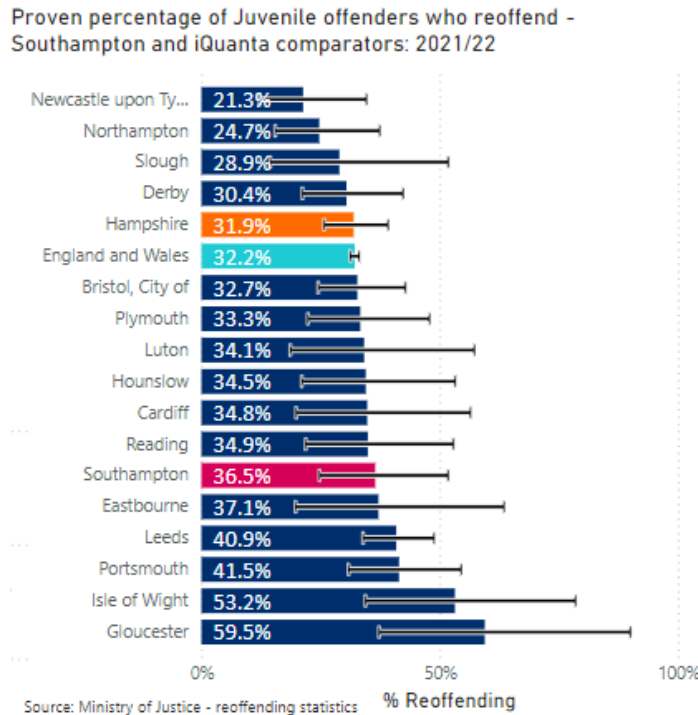
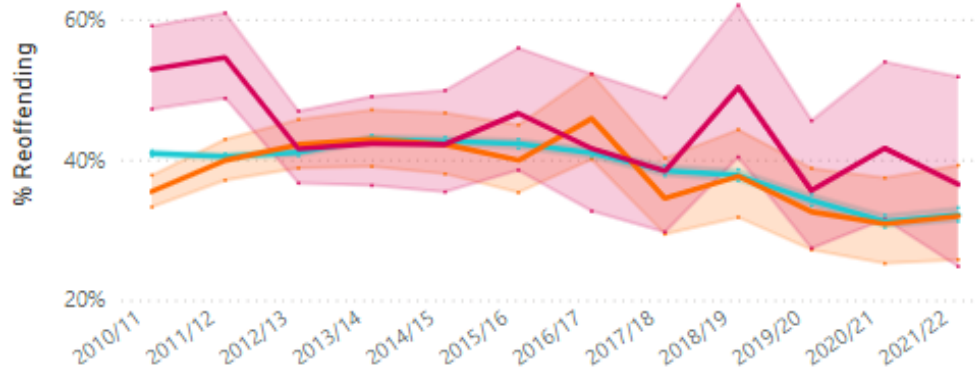


Figure 2.20: Trend chart showing proven youth (juvenile) reoffending rate

Proven percentage of Juvenile offenders who reoffend - Hampshire, Southampton, England and Wales: 2010/11 to 2021/22

Geography ● England and Wales ● Hampshire ● Southampton



Source: Ministry of Justice - reoffending statistics

2.5.4 First time entrants

In 2023, Southampton had a juvenile first-time entrant (FTE) rate of 14.4 per 10k children aged 10 to 17, which is higher but not significantly than the national average of 14.3 per 10k children aged 10 to 17 (Figure 2.21). Since 2012, the juvenile FTE rate has been on a downward trend in Southampton and nationally, with the Southampton FTE rate in 2023 remaining similar to the national average for the third consecutive year (Figure 2.22). It is also important to note that FTE rates for under 18s are reducing locally because offence outcomes are being diverted away from courts, and only offences committed of a youth caution or higher count in the juvenile FTE statistics.

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

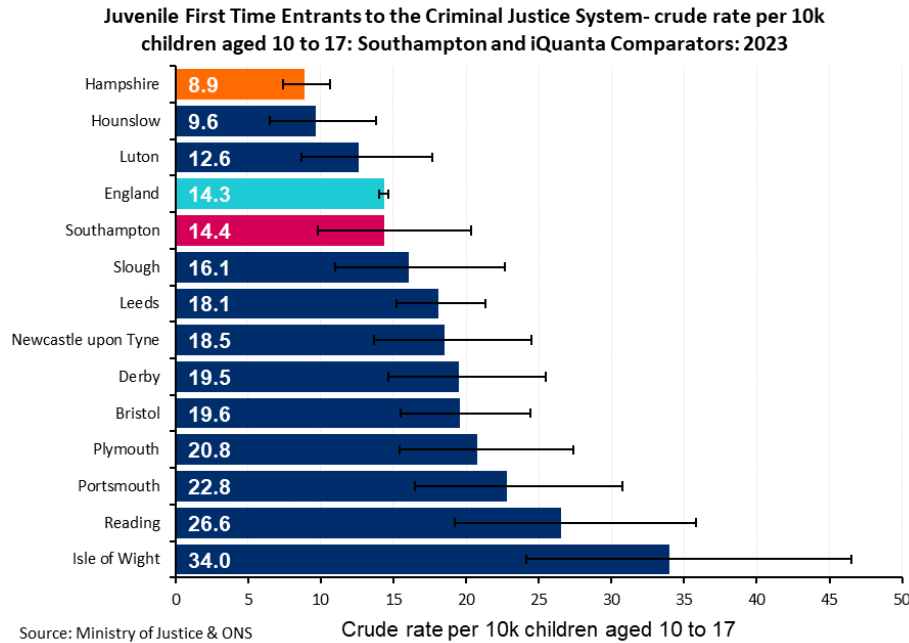
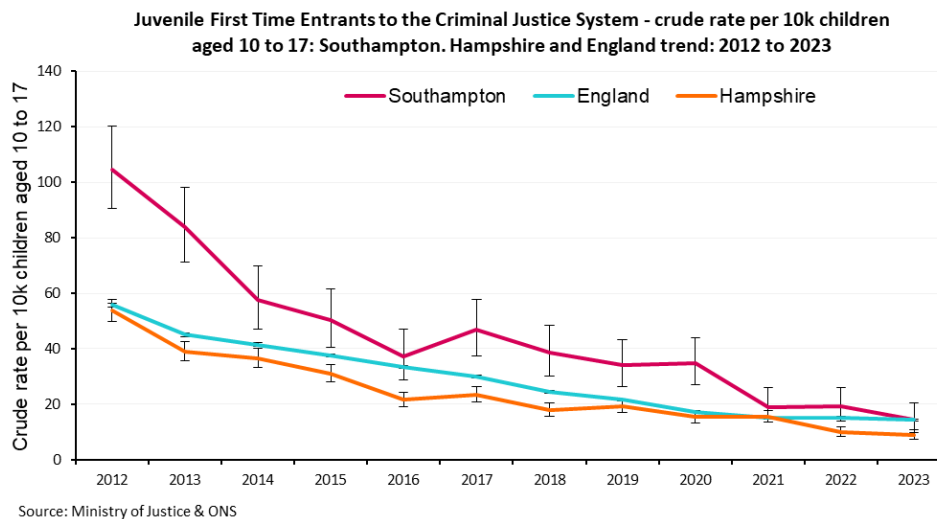


Figure 2.22: Trend chart showing rate of juvenile first-time entrants



2.6 Points for the Partnership to note

- In 2023/24, Southampton experienced a -8.2% decrease in total recorded crime compared to the previous year.
- The decrease in total recorded crime over the last year is influenced by the changes in crime counting rules introduced in June 2023 and is unlikely to reflect a true decline. The change in counting rules is a reversal of previous changes made in 2018. The 2023 change reintroduced the principal crime rule for all offences: only the most serious crime is recorded for incidents that involved more than one type of crime except for modern slavery offences and passport

application fraud, which are still exempt. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner has highlighted concerns around the recent changes in terms of how this will affect police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes. The 2024 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 2023/24. Therefore, a continuation of the trends in crime severity observed over the last six 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.
- Southampton not only remains an outlier among comparators when looking at total recorded crime, but several of the monitored crime groups and subgroups. Southampton is ranked in the top 3 for 14 of the 22 offence groups shown in [Section 2.2](#).
- The crime prioritisation exercise highlighted the following four priorities for the Partnership: sexual offences, violent crime (all forms), domestic offences including domestic violence and theft offences. Theft offences continued to be a priority in this assessment, 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 six 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 almost half of 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 2024 community safety survey are presented in [Section 4](#).
- Repeat victims experienced 41.9% of crimes where a victim was recorded in Southampton during 2023/24. The proportion of repeat victims has declined over the last year but remains higher than the proportion recorded in 2019/20. The decline over the last year could be linked to changes in counting rules. Nonetheless, the above 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. 7.0% of offenders who committed 5 or more crimes, were responsible for 33.7% 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 in 2023 appear to have improved (FTE rate) or experienced no significant change (youth re-offending) in recent years. Reduction in FTE rates locally is likely due to offence outcomes being diverted away from the courts, with

alternative interventions offered to children. However, these indicators alongside outcomes for youth offenders should continue to be monitored by the Partnership.

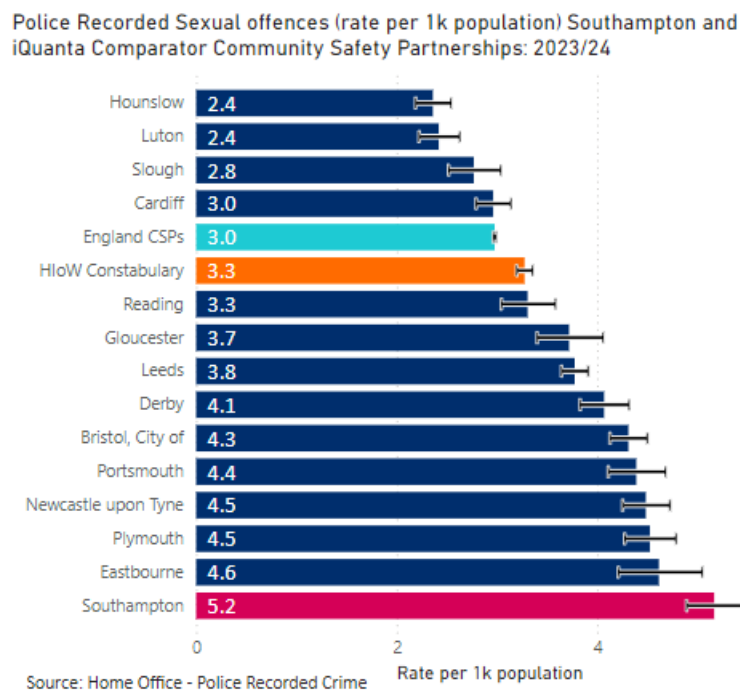
- Young people becoming involved in crime is often linked to wider determinants, such as deprivation, poverty and adverse childhood experiences. The Partnership should continue to work with partners to keep improving outcomes for children and young people to prevent them from becoming involved in crime in the first place. Wider determinants of crime are discussed in more detail in [Section 5](#).

3. Significant community safety issues

3.1 Sexual offences

Southampton is ranked highest among comparators and 7th highest in England and Wales for the rate of sexual offences (*Figure 3.1*).¹⁸ Southampton is ranked highest among comparators for both rape and for other sexual offences (the two subgroups of sexual offences).

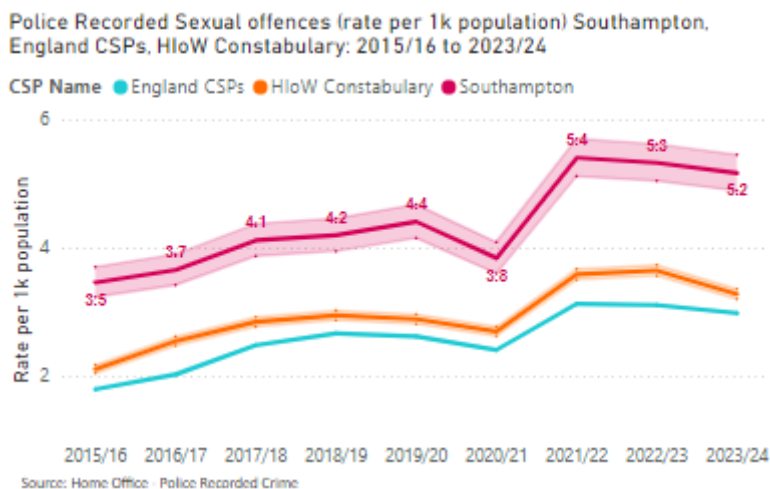
Figure 3.1: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of sexual offences



Between 2022/23 and 2023/24, Southampton experienced a -1.5% decrease in the number of sexual offences, with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (-9.4%) and England (-3.1%) also experiencing a decrease over the last year (*Figure 3.2*). Southampton also experienced a decrease in rape offences (-6.1%), whereas other sexual offences slightly increased (+1.8%) over the same period.

¹⁸ Of 312 English and Welsh CSPs with a valid rate

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



The trend in sexual offences has levelled off over the last few years (since 2021/22), recent increases up to this point were likely influenced by a range of factors including increased reporting, such as through the ‘Everyone’s invited’ website, greater awareness around VAWG, and media focus on high-profile issues and cases, such as the rape and murder of Sarah Everard.^{19, 20} There have also been several Safer Streets projects in Southampton, with some projects focused on safety in the night-time economy and VAWG. Awareness of reporting is linked to the number of police recorded sexual offences. Therefore, decline experienced over the last year may not represent a genuine decline, particularly as there has been absence of significant media attention on sexual offences over the last year.²¹

The proportion of sexual offences occurring in a public place decreased in 2023/24 (22.1% occurring in a public place) compared to 2022/23 (26.6%), however this is not a statistically significant change. *Stranger* (28.6%) and *acquaintance* (29.2%) remain the most frequently recorded relationship between victim and offenders in 2023/24. 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 ward having a significantly higher rate of sexual offences than the city average (*Figure 3.3*), with large portions of the night-time economy located in this ward. Redbridge ward had not previously appeared as a hot spot for sexual offences in previous assessments but has the highest rate of sexual offences across wards and is significantly higher than the city average. Further investigation into this shows the increase in Redbridge ward is driven by historic prolific

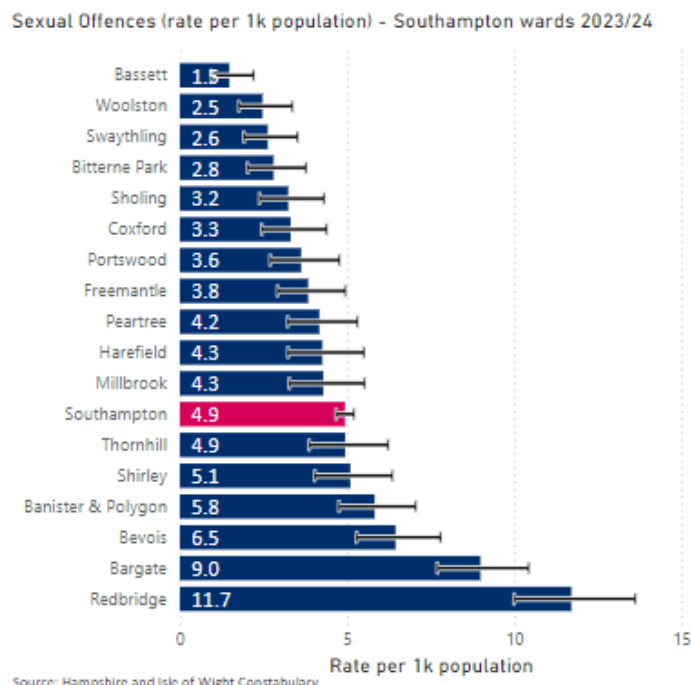
¹⁹ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessments 2022 and 2023

²⁰ Crime Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2024. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2024>

²¹ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2024

offending of other sexual offences (sexual communication with a child) towards young persons aged 01-17.

Figure 3.3: Chart showing rate of sexual offences for Southampton wards



Although the above findings highlight the link between stranger / acquaintance sexual offences, it is important to note that domestic sexual offences remain a substantial issue in the city, with 20% of sexual offences and 37.7% of rapes flagged as domestic in 2023/24.

3.1.1 Victims and perpetrators of sexual offences

There were 983 victims of sexual offences in 2023/24, a decrease in the number of victims identified in 2022/23 (1,233). Repeat victimisation remains low, with 9.7% of sexual offence victims experiencing multiple sexual offences in the year (10.4% in 2022/23). However, the proportion of sexual offence victims who also experience other offences in the year remains high at 30.1%. This could suggest that sexual offence victims are often vulnerable individuals.

In 2023/24, the majority of sexual offence victims were female (80.1%); a slightly higher proportion for rape (90.0%) and lower for other sexual offences (74.0%). The age profile of sexual offence victims is similar to previous years and the proportion of victims aged under 18 is still the most common age group (39.4%). This has previously been linked to greater reporting of child peer-on-peer offences.²² The most common age groups of rape victims were those aged 18 to 24 year olds (29.1%), under 18

²² Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023

years (25.4%) and 25 to 34 year olds (20.6%). For other sexual offences, under 18s continues to be the most common age group for victims (48.5%), followed by 18 to 24 year olds (20.4%). The above evidence suggests that females aged under 25 years continue to be most at risk of being a victim of sexual offences in 2023/24.

During 2023/24, 728 sexual offence offenders were identified in Southampton. Repeat offending of sexual offences within the year remains low, with 8.5% of offenders committing multiple sexual offences in 2023/24; similar to the previous financial year (10.1% in 2022/23). However, 37.9% of sexual offence offenders committed offences of another type in the year.

Similar to previous years, the majority of sexual offence offenders identified in 2023/24 were male (93.5%). The most common age group for sexual offence offenders was those aged 35 to 49 years (25.0%), followed by 25 to 34 (24.2%), 18 to 24 year olds (18.4%) and 9 to 17 (18.4%).

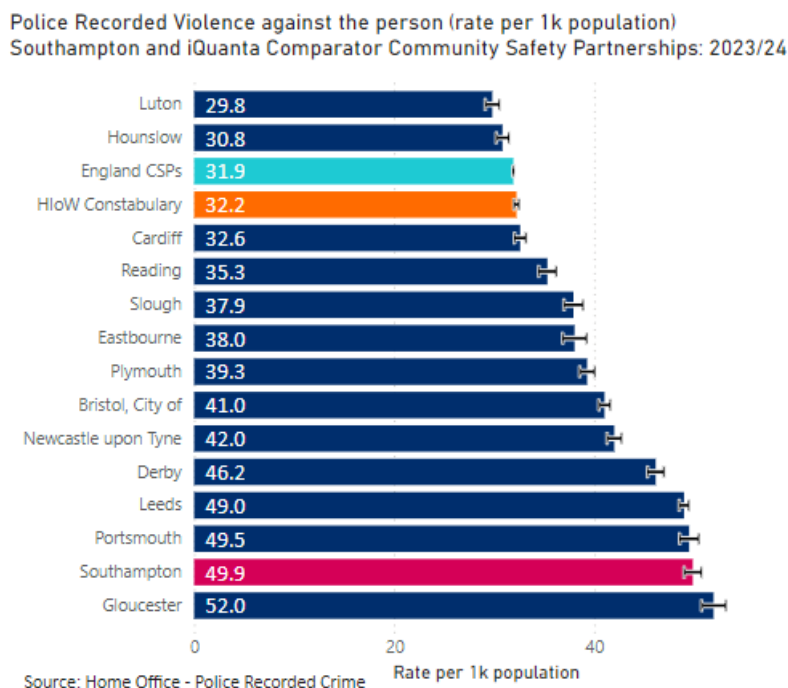
3.1.2 Points for the Partnership to note

- In 2023/24, the number of sexual offences decreased by -1.5%. However, despite this small decline, sexual offences remain a substantial issue and cause a significant amount of harm in Southampton. 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 remains high (22.1%) 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 ward; the city centre. Redbridge ward had the highest rate of sexual offences, which was due to historic prolific offending of other sexual offences (communication). Patterns of sexual offences should continue to be monitored by the Partnership, as its important to monitor patterns of sexual offences as well as the volume.
- Domestic sexual offences remain a substantial issue in the city, with 20% of sexual offences and 37.7% of rapes flagged as domestic in 2023/24.
- 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 48.5% of other sexual offence victims. The Partnership should continue to work with partners to protect and safeguard this high-risk group.
- Findings from the 2024 community safety survey show that 70% of respondents who witnessed or were a victim of sexual assault did not report the incident. The most common reason for not reporting sexual assaults were *reporting it makes no difference*. More detailed findings from the 2024 community safety survey are presented in [Section 4](#).

3.2 Violent crime

Southampton had a violent crime rate of 50 crimes per 1k population in 2023/24 (Figure 3.), which is the second highest among comparator CSPs and significantly higher than the national average (32 per 1k population). Southampton is ranked 13th highest among English and Welsh CSPs with a valid violent crime rate (312 total). Furthermore, Southampton remains among the worst 5% of CSPs nationally for violent crime (Figure 3.5). Southampton’s rate of violent crimes has remained significantly higher than the national average since 2015/16 (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.4: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of violent crimes



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 3.5 shows the trend in the relative ranking for violent crimes in Southampton against CSPs in England and Wales. There have been no significant changes in the rankings of different violent crime types for Southampton over the last year, with Southampton ranked 5th highest for violence with injury, 17th highest for violence without injury and 35th highest for stalking and harassment. The high ranks for both violence with and without injury should remain a concern and continue to be monitored by the Partnership. The below table suggests that the change in counting rules has had a minimal impact on Southampton’s relative rank among Community Safety Partnerships in England and Wales, likely as all CSPs will be affected by this change, although to varying degrees depending on the case mix of violent crimes.

Figure 3.5: Trend in Southampton ranks relative to England and Wales CSPs for recorded violent crime rates

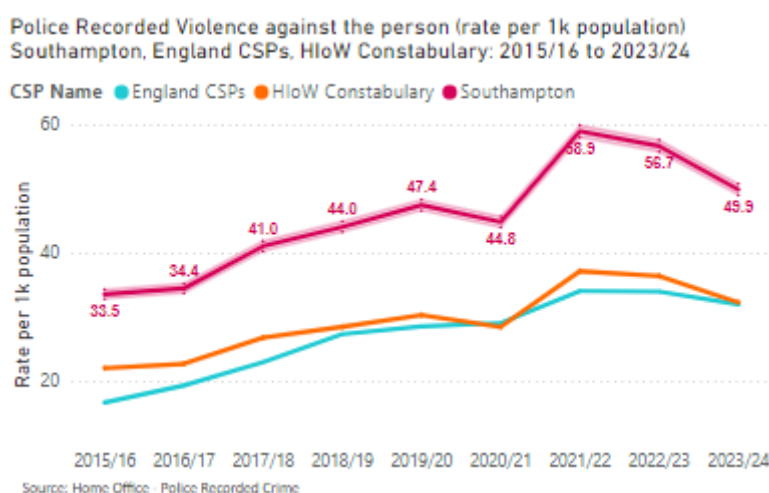
Violent crime group	2019/20 CSP rank (out of 303)	2020/21 CSP rank (out of 300)	2021/22 CSP rank (out of 310)	2022/23 CSP rank (out of 296)	2023/24 CSP rank (out of 312)
Overall violent crime	16 th	22 nd	10 th	11 th	13 th
Violence with injury	4 th	4 th	4 th	5 th	5 th
Violence without injury	20 th	19 th	12 th	14 th	17 th
Stalking & harassment	67 th	80 th	39 th	33 rd	35 th

Southampton experienced a -10.6% decline in the number of violent crimes between 2022/23 and 2023/24, with Hampshire experiencing a similar decline (-10.6%) and England a smaller decline (-4.9%). This may suggest that Southampton and Hampshire Constabulary have been impacted to a greater extent by the changes in counting rules (Section 1); therefore, it will be important to monitor this trend moving forward.

All three of the main violent crime subgroups in Southampton also experienced declines compared to the previous year, with violence with injury decreasing by -7.9%, violence without injury by -7.9% and stalking and harassment by -16.7%. Similar trends are observed nationally and across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (Figure 3.6).

Overall violent crimes and less severe sub-groups (violence without injury and stalking and harassment) are more likely to be affected by the change in counting rules, particularly stalking and harassment. Therefore, changes in the volume of overall crime and some of the subgroups outlined above should be interpreted with caution, as it may not reflect a genuine decline.

Figure 3.6: Trend in the rate of violent crimes for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England

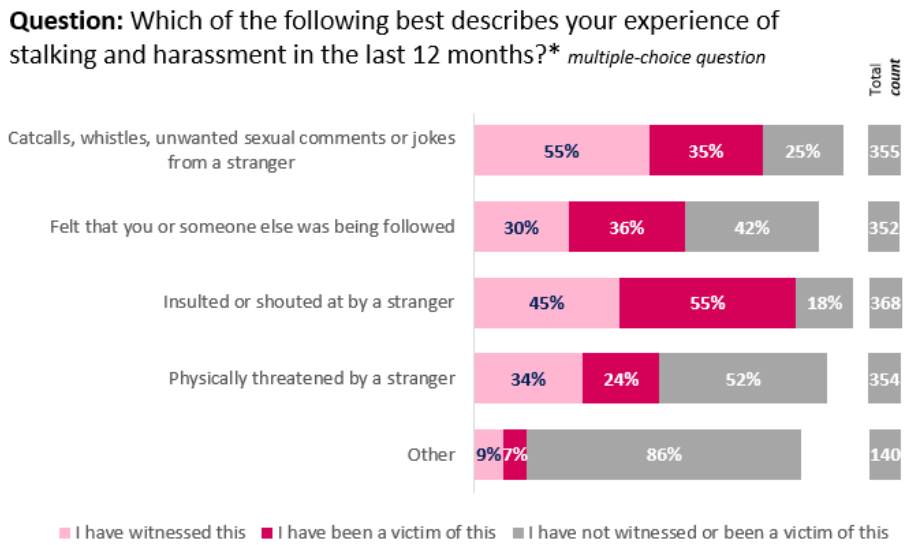


13% of respondents from the 2024 Southampton community safety survey stated that they had witnessed stalking and harassment, with an additional 9% stating that they had been a victim of stalking and harassment in the last 12 months. Figure 3.7 shows the types of stalking and harassment respondents witnessed and/or experienced. Being insulted or shouted at by a stranger was the most

commonly experienced (55%) and catcalls, whistles, unwanted sexual comments or jokes from a stranger was the most commonly witnessed (55%).

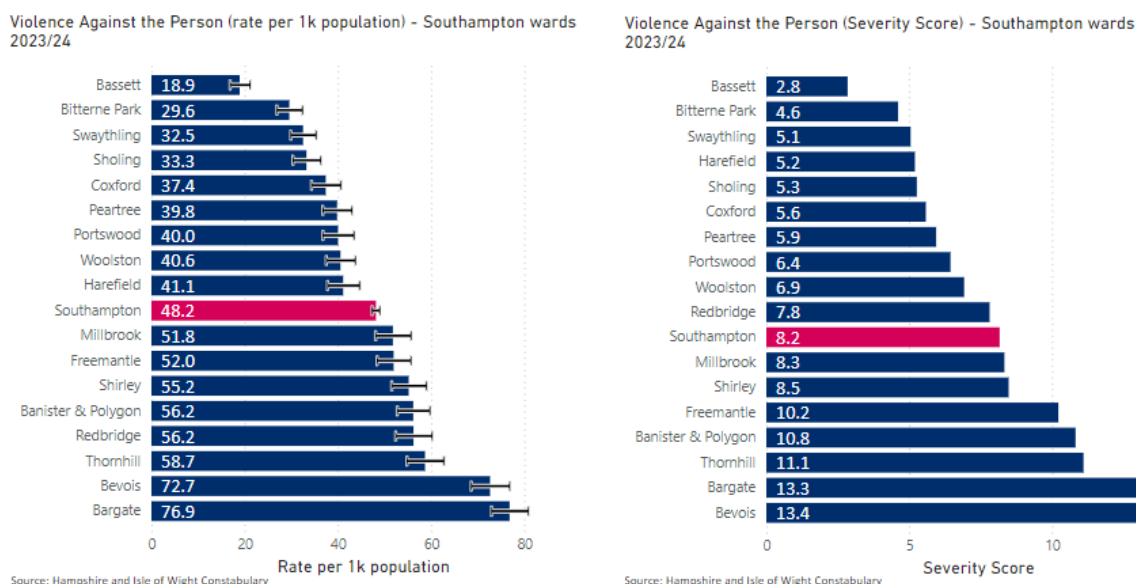
A significantly higher proportion of female respondents (47%) had experienced catcalls, whistles, unwanted sexual comments or jokes from a stranger compared to males (11%). More detailed findings from the 2024 community safety survey are presented in [Section 4](#).

Figure 3.7: Chart showing the experiences of respondents who witnessed/ experienced of stalking & harassment



Sub-city patterns of violent crime continue to be linked to the night-time economy in 2023/24, with Bargate and Bevois wards (city centre) having the highest rates of violent crime (Figure 3.8). Additionally, the peak times for violent crimes continue to be in the early hours on the weekend.

Figure 3.8: 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 30.6% of violent crime in 2023/24 flagged as domestic. This is similar to the proportion recorded in 2022/23 (32.0%).

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, any changes seen in police recorded crime data may not reflect a true change in crime, particularly when there have been changes to counting rules.²³

3.2.1 Crimes involving a weapon

There were 829 crimes in Southampton during 2023/24 that involved the use of a bladed implement, a +4.8% increased from 2022/23 (791).²⁴ This compares with a +4% increase in police recorded knife-enabled crime during the same period nationally. Southampton accounted for over a quarter (26%) of crimes involving a bladed implement across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary in 2023/24, highlighting that Southampton remains a substantial hotspot for knife crime across the force area.²⁵

²³ Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2024. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2024>

²⁴ Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2024. Available online via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2024>

²⁵ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2024

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.²⁶

There were 60 firearms offences in Southampton during 2023/24, 13 more than recorded in 2022/23, this increase is believed to be in part due to improved recording practices.²⁷ Despite the number of recorded firearms offences being relatively low in Southampton, firearms can cause significant harm and are often linked to organised crime. Moreover, Southampton continues to be one of the areas most impacted by firearms crime across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, accounting for 22.2% of firearms offences across the force area.

3.2.2 Victims and perpetrators of violent crime

In 2023/24, there were 8,678 unique victims of violent crimes in Southampton, with 19.6% of these individuals experiencing multiple violent crimes in the year. The proportion of repeat victimisation is lower than the previous financial year (25.1% in 2022/23). Although repeat victimisation of violent crime decreased, it remains a significant issue. However, the decrease in repeat victims, could be in part to changes to crime counting rules, which will have a greater impact on violent crimes, particularly stalking and harassment and domestic abuse. Individuals experiencing more than one violent crime in 2023/24, accounted for 40.7% of all violent crimes with a victim recorded in the year. Additionally, 18.6% of violent crime victims were also a victim of other crimes in the year, lower than that recorded in 2022/23 (22.0%), but again, this may be influenced by changes in counting rules.

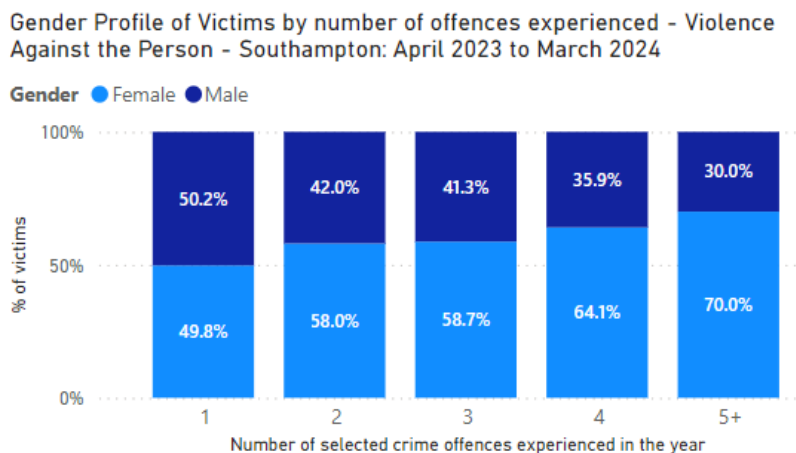
A higher proportion of violent crime victims were female (51.7%) in 2023/24, a pattern initially identified in 2020/21 (the pandemic year) and has continued since. Whereas previously (2019/20 and before), males accounted for a greater proportion of violent crime victims. It was thought that the shift 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.²⁸ However, this trend has continued in recent years, 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 to identify if the shift experienced in recent years is maintained. Nonetheless, females continue to experience more violent crimes than males overall (54.7% of violent crimes), whilst also more likely to be repeat victims of violent crimes (*Figure 3.9*). This continues to highlight the impact and extent of VAWG in Southampton, with VAWG highlighted among the priority areas in this assessment ([Section 122.3](#)).

²⁶ Home Office: Serious Violence Strategy (2018). Available online via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

²⁷ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2024

²⁸ Office for National Statistics – Nature of crime: Violence, year ending March 2020, Online available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/natureofcrimetablesviolence>

Figure 3.9: Chart showing gender profile of violent crime victims by number of offences experienced



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

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 2023/24, with 18.1% aged 01-17 and 15.8% aged 18-24.

There were 6,357 unique suspects and offenders of violent crime identified in 2023/24, with 30.1% of offenders committing multiple violent crimes in the year: accounting for 57.2% of violent crimes with a recorded suspect or offender. The most prolific offenders (5 or more offences) accounted for 3.9% (245) of offenders but committed 17.7% of violent crimes. Additionally, 26.7% of violent crime offenders also committed other crimes in 2023/24, 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 (66.1% in 2023/24). The age profile of violent crime offenders is also similar to previous years, with those aged under 25 accounting for 28.3% of violent crime offenders.

3.2.3 Points for the Partnership to note

- The number of violent crimes in Southampton declined over the last year (-10.6%). This is unlikely to reflect a genuine decline and is likely linked to the change in counting rules introduced in June 2023 (see [Section 1](#)).
- Despite the decline over the last year, Southampton remains among the worst 5% of CSPs nationally for violent crime. There have been no significant changes in the rankings of different violent crime types for Southampton over the last year, with Southampton ranked 5th highest for violence with injury, 17th highest for violence without injury and 35th highest for stalking and harassment. The high ranks for both violence with and without injury should remain a concern and continue to be monitored by the Partnership.

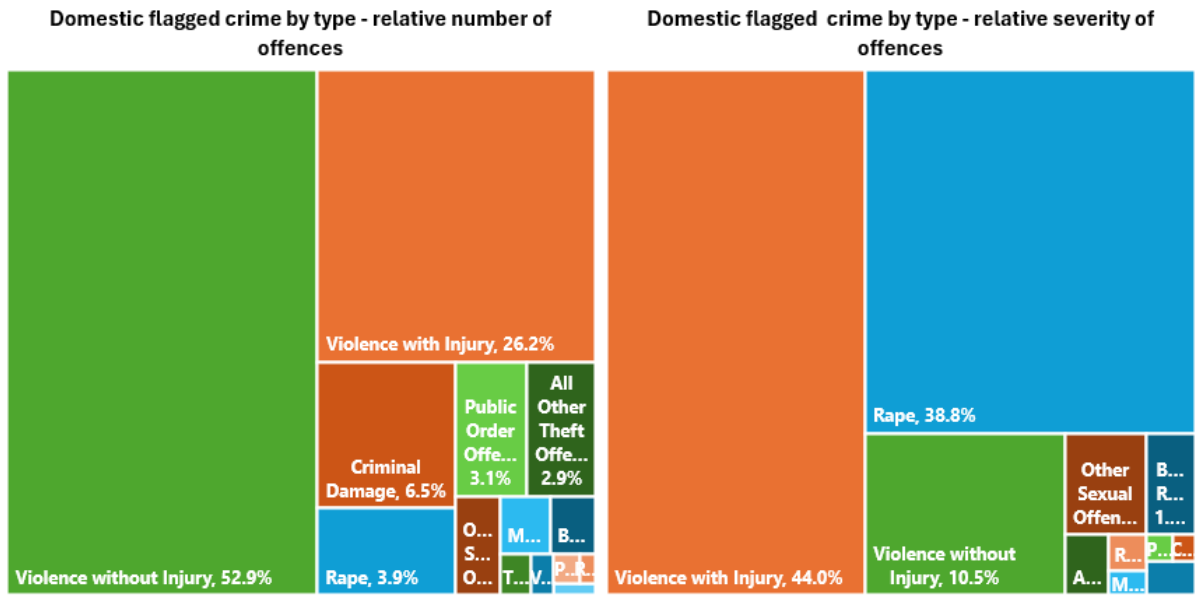
- Victims and offenders of violent crimes have a younger age profile, with over a third of violent crime victims and over 28.3% offenders aged under 25 years. Therefore, the Partnership should continue to focus on early intervention to prevent and reduce levels of violent crime in Southampton.
- Repeat victimisation and offending continue to be substantial issues for violent crime. 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 26% of knife-enabled crimes occurring across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary in 2023/24. 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 30.6% of violent crime in 2023/24 flagged as domestic. Tackling domestic violence continues to be key to reducing overall levels of violent crime.
- Findings from the 2024 community safety survey show that the majority of respondents who witnessed or were a victim of serious violent crime (60%) or VAWG (69%) 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 of negative consequences* and *disappointing previous experience of reporting*. More detailed findings from the 2024 community safety survey are presented in [Section 4](#).

3.3 Domestic crimes

There were 4,936 domestic flagged crimes in Southampton during 2023/24, a -12.8% decrease from 2022/23. Domestic flagged crime accounted for 15.2% of all recorded crimes in Southampton, a similar proportion compared to the previous year (16.0% in 2022/23).

The 'case mix' of domestic flagged crime in 2023/24 is similar to previous years (*Figure 3*). The majority of domestic flagged crimes in Southampton were violent crimes (79.1%), with violence without injury (including stalking and harassment) accounting for 52.9% of domestic flagged crimes in 2023/24. Domestic rape continues to cause significant harm in the city, with rape accounting for 38.8% of the harm (relative severity) caused by domestic flagged crimes; despite only accounting for 3.9% of domestic flagged offences in 2023/24.

Figure 3.10: Tree maps showing relative number (left) and severity (right) of offences for domestic flagged crimes in Southampton during 2023/24



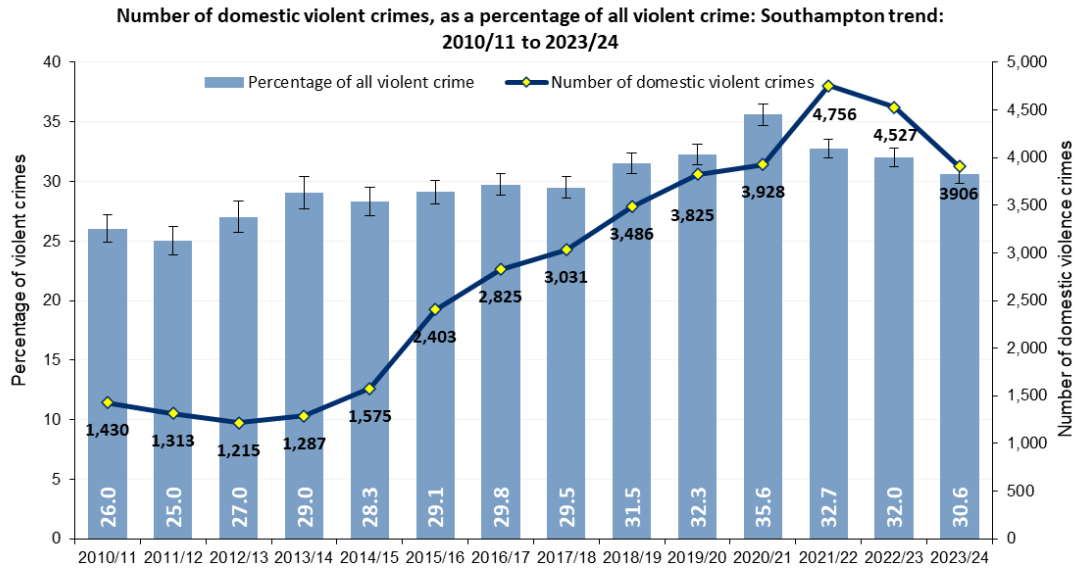
Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

The number of domestic violent crimes in Southampton have decreased for the second consecutive year, having increased consecutively for the previous nine years (Figure 3.11: Trend in the number and proportion of violent crimes that are flagged as domestic). The proportion of violent crimes flagged as domestic in 2023/24 (30.6%) is lower than in 2022/23 (32.0%). However, the decline in domestic crimes, including domestic violent crimes is unlikely to reflect a genuine decline and is influenced by the changes in counting rules, with similar trends observed for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary.²⁹

Nationally, there was a -6% decline in the number of domestic flagged crimes between 2022/23 (911,248) and 2023/24 (857,810). Southampton followed a similar trend overall, although the magnitude of differences locally was greater than those experienced nationally. These differences should be interpreted with caution, as police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes are not the most reliable measure. This is because domestic abuse is often hidden and underreported and are impacted by changes in counting rules. Overall domestic abuse remains a significant issue in Southampton and has again been highlighted as a priority for the Partnership.

²⁹ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2024

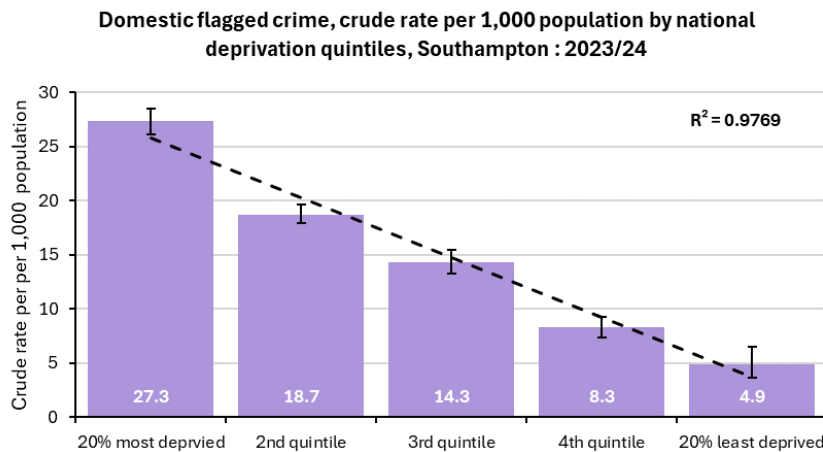
Figure 3.11: Trend in the number and proportion of violent crimes that are flagged as domestic



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

Sub-city patterns of domestic flagged crime are similar to previous years. In 2023/24, rates of domestic flagged crime are significantly higher than the city average in Thornhill, Millbrook, Bevois and Redbridge wards, with notable hotspots of domestic flagged crimes in neighbourhoods across these wards (Figure 3.). Domestic flagged crime continues to have a strong link to deprivation (Figure 3.12), with the rate of domestic flagged crimes 5.6 times higher in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in Southampton.

Figure 3.12: Quintile chart showing the relationship between domestic flagged crime and deprivation



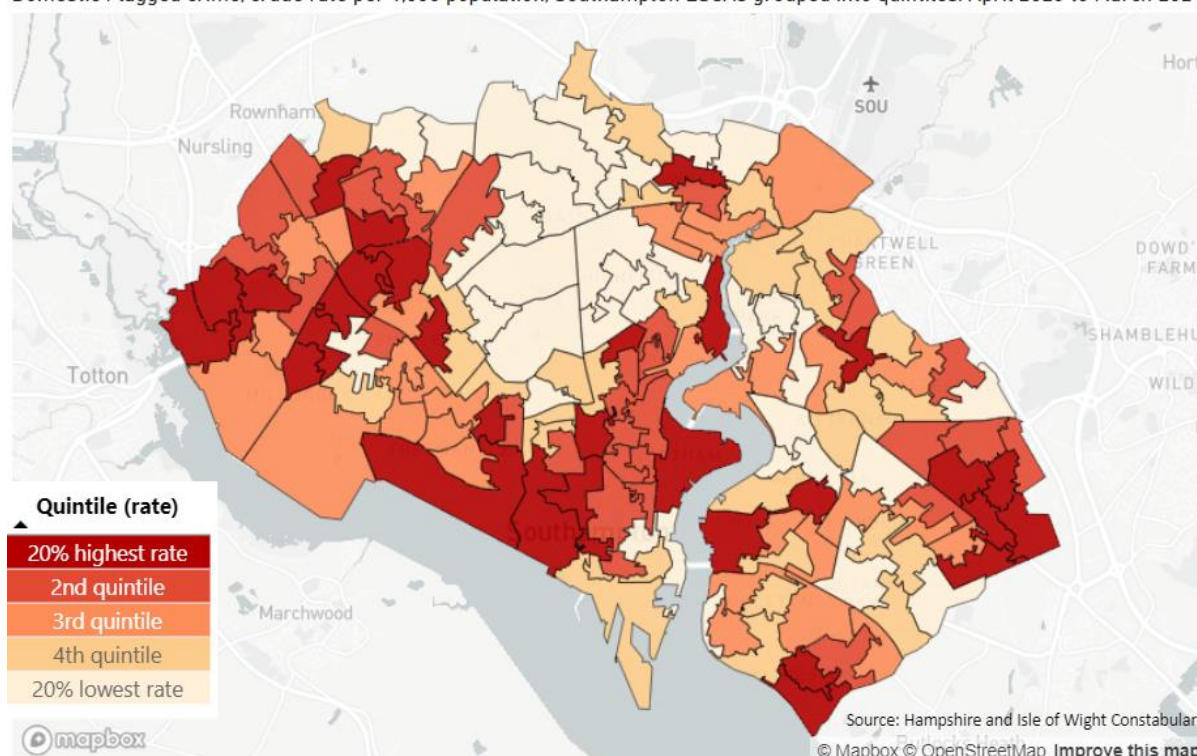
Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

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.³⁰ 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.³¹ The impact on children is illustrated by the fact that 57% of MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, previously High-Risk Domestic Abuse – HRDA) cases in Southampton have children or young people in the household (2023/24).

Figure 3.13: 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 2023 to March 2024



3.3.1 Victims and perpetrators of domestic crimes

In 2023/24, there were 3,388 victims of domestic flagged crimes, which is similar to the previous year (3,559 in 2022/23). 23.5% of victims experienced multiple domestic flagged crimes in the year, which is a decline compared to 2022/23 (30.2% repeat victims), following increases in repeat victimisation since 2019/20. Repeat victims experienced 45.9% of domestic crimes recorded in 2023/24. 22.2% of domestic flagged crime victims also experienced other offences in 2023/24.

³⁰ 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>

³¹ Local Government Association: Public health approaches to reducing violence (2018). Available via: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/public-health-approaches-reducing-violence>

The decline in repeat victims over the last year will be linked to the change in counting rules, with fewer offences being recorded due to the re-introduction of the principal crime rule. Violent crimes, including stalking and harassment are some of the offences most affected by this change (see [Section 3.2](#)), with violent crimes accounting for 79.1% of domestic offences in 2023/24. The decline in repeat victims is unlikely to reflect a genuine decline, with the above evidence suggesting that repeat victimisation of domestic abuse remains a significant issue in Southampton and a trend that should continue to be monitored by the Partnership.

Females continue to account for a significantly higher proportion (68.6%) of domestic flagged crime victims than males (31.4%). Victim age profiling is also similar to previous years, with the most common age groups of domestic crime victims in 2023/24 being those aged 35 to 49 years (32.5%), followed by 25 to 34 (28.0%) and 18 to 24 (17.3%).

Under 18s accounted for 6.1% of victims in 2023/24. 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 3,185 domestic crime offenders identified in 2023/24, which is a -4.6% decline on the number identified in 2022/23 (3,339). 26.9% of domestic crime offenders committed more than one domestic flagged offence in the year, a decline from 34.2% in 2022/23 after increasing since 2019/20. 31.6% of domestic crime offenders also committed other offences in 2023/24. The above decline in repeat offenders of domestic abuse is again unlikely to reflect a genuine decline due to the change in counting rules; therefore, tackling repeat offending continues to be key to reducing rates of domestic crime in Southampton.

3.3.2 Points for the Partnership to note

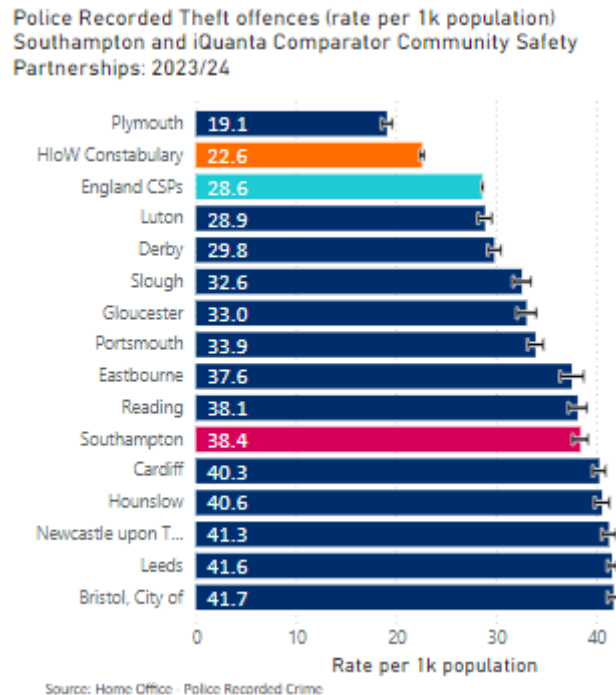
- Domestic abuse remains a priority for the Partnership. The Partnership should continue to work with partners to monitor and understand the extent of domestic abuse across the city using a wide range of sources to fill existing gaps in intelligence, particularly as the changes in counting rules are impacting trends and patterns of domestic crimes.
- The number of domestic flagged and domestic violent crimes have decreased over the last year; however, this is unlikely to reflect a genuine decline and will be impacted by changes in counting rules. This decline in recorded offences is particularly concerning as domestic abuse remains hidden and therefore underreported to the police. The impact of the change in counting rules should be closely monitored by the Partnership.
- The impact of domestic abuse on children continues to be significant, with 57% of MARAC cases in Southampton having children or young people in the household (2023/24). 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 3.9% of domestic flagged crimes, yet 38.8% of the relative harm caused by domestic flagged offences.
- Domestic abuse is a citywide issue, as illustrated by the neighbourhood map ([Section 3.3](#)). However, police recorded domestic flagged crimes continue to show a strong relationship with deprivation. The rate of domestic flagged crime is 5.6 times higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the least deprived neighbourhoods in Southampton.
- The decline in repeat victimisation and offending will not reflect a genuine decline due to the change in counting rules. Both repeat victimisation and offending remain a substantial issue for domestic abuse in Southampton and tackling repeat offenders will be key to reducing the volume and harm caused by domestic abuse in Southampton.
- Findings from the 2024 community safety survey show that over half (57%) of respondents *don't know* if domestic abuse is an issue in their local area. Whilst 26% do see domestic abuse as an issue, which is +4 percentage points higher than that in the previous survey. The above 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.
- 66% of respondents who had witnessed or experienced domestic abuse did not report it. Common reasons for not reporting domestic abuse include *reporting it makes no difference*, *not serious enough to report* and *fear of negative consequences*. More detailed findings from the 2024 community safety survey are presented in [Section 4](#).

3.4 Theft Offences

Theft offences emerged as one of the top priorities for the first time in the previous Safe City Strategic Assessment (Section 2.3), with theft offences also emerging as a priority in this assessment. In 2023/24, Southampton experienced 38.4 theft offences per 1k population. This is a significantly higher rate than the national average (28.6) and sixth highest amongst comparators (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.14: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of theft offences



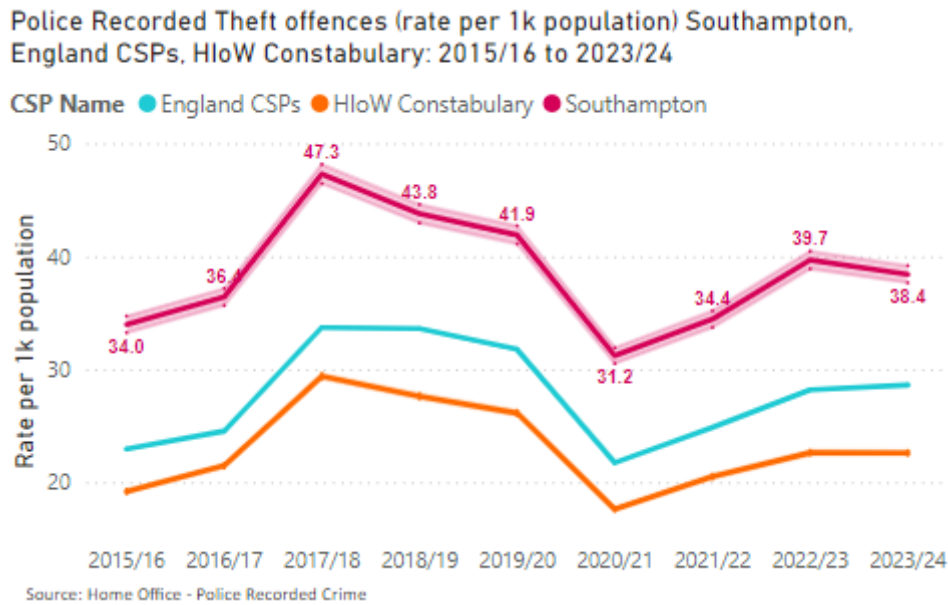
Southampton experienced a -1.6% decline in the volume of theft offences between 2022/23 and 2023/24, with slight increases observed across Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (+0.7%) and England (+2.6%) (Figure 3.15).

Whilst overall theft offences have declined in Southampton over the last year, the increase in acquisitive crimes in the previous year was linked to the cost of living crisis.³² The change in the volume of theft offences over the last year also varies by offence subgroup, with the largest declines in bicycle theft (-39.8%, -258), followed by residential burglary (-27.8%, -368) and vehicle offences (-18.5%, -503). The most notable increase in theft offence subgroups was shoplifting, experiencing a +53.9% (+1,177 crimes) increase, with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary also experiencing an increase during the same period (+38.6%). The increase in shoplifting over the last year could be a result of

³² Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2024

continued financial pressures as well as improvements in the way shops can report crime and therefore more businesses are reporting acquisitive crimes.³³

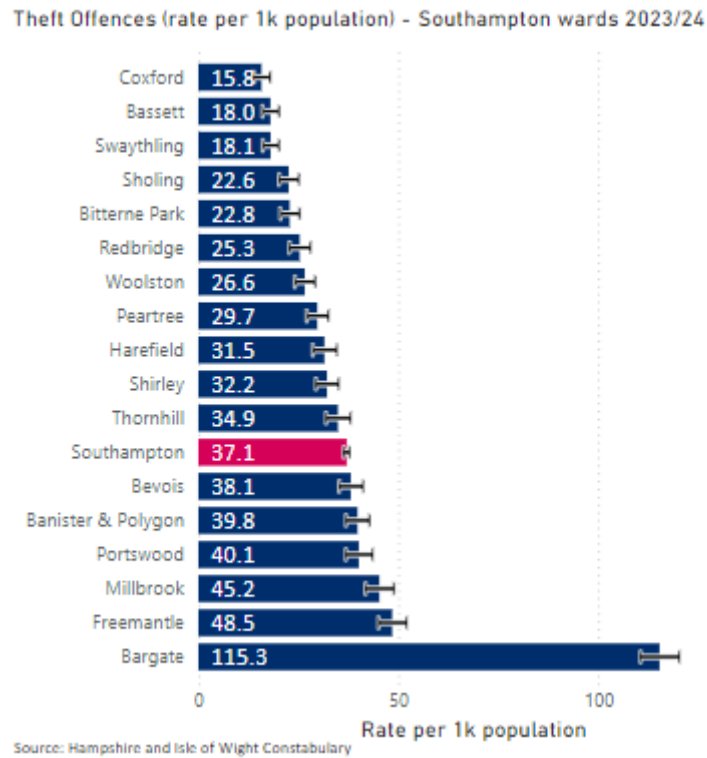
Figure 3.15: Trend in the rate of theft offences for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England



Bargate ward continues to have the highest rate of recorded theft offences (115 per 1k population) in 2023/24, with the Bargate rate more than double that of the second highest ward (Freemantle, 48.5 offences per 1k population) (Figure 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, over a third (35.2%) of all shoplifting offences and 41.7% of theft from the person offences were recorded in Bargate during 2023/24.

³³ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2024

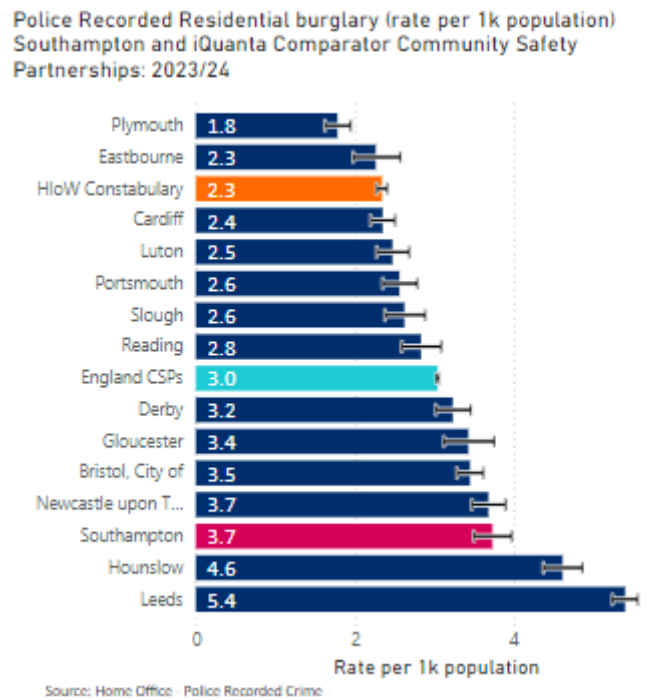
Figure 3.16: Chart showing the rate of theft offences by Southampton wards



3.4.1 Residential burglary

Residential burglary is the most severe theft offence and accounted for 8.2% of the harm (third highest) caused by crimes in Southampton during 2023/24 (Figure 2.3). Residential burglary has also featured as a standalone priority in previous Safe City Strategic Assessments. Southampton experienced a rate of 3.7 burglaries per 1k population in 2023/24, significantly higher than the national average (3.0) and 3rd highest among comparators (Figure 3.17).

Figure 3.17: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of residential burglaries



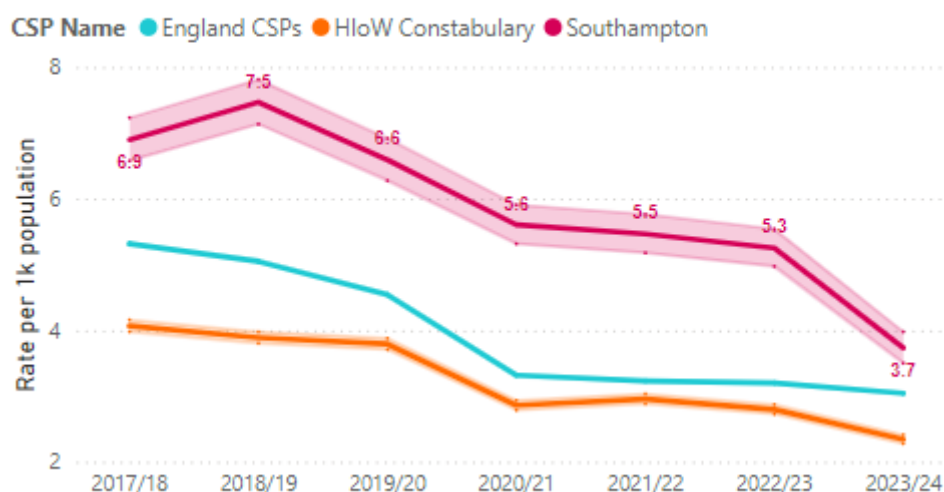
Southampton has experienced a decline in residential burglary for the fifth consecutive financial year, with the number of residential burglaries significantly declining by -27.8% over the last year. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (-15.5%) and England (-3.9%) also experienced a decline over the last year (Figure 3.18). The overall declines observed in recent years are likely to reflect a genuine decline in residential burglaries, as burglaries are well reported to and recorded by the police.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary and all other police forces committed to attending every report of a domestic dwelling burglary in person, with the average attendance rate of a domestic burglary across the force area 98% in 2023/24.³⁴ The formal action taken with residential burglaries in Southampton has steadily increased in recent years, rising from 2.2% in 2019/20 to 4.9% in 2023/24.

³⁴ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2024

Figure 3.18: Trend in the rate of residential burglaries for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England

Police Recorded Residential burglary (rate per 1k population) Southampton, England CSPs, HloW Constabulary: 2017/18 to 2023/24



Source: Home Office - Police Recorded Crime

Despite recent economic uncertainty and the cost-of-living crisis, residential burglaries continued to decline. Increased hybrid working continuing beyond the pandemic, is believed to be a major factor in the reduction of residential burglaries observed over the last five years.³⁵ 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 2023/24, 20% 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 2023/24, rates of residential burglary in Banister & Polygon and Bevois wards were significantly higher than the city average. Sub-city patterns of residential burglary were similar to the previous year.

3.4.2 Victims and perpetrators of theft offences

In 2023/24, there were 4,808 unique victims of theft offences, which is a -17.6% decrease compared to 2022/23 (5,837 victims). This decline is likely due to the change in mix of theft offences, with substantial declines in victim based theft offences such as residential burglary (-27.8%) and vehicle offences (-18.5%). Repeat victimisation for theft offences remains low, with 6% of victims experiencing more than one theft offences in 2023/24.

³⁵ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2023

Victim demographics for theft offences follow a similar pattern to previous years. Males made up the majority of victims (62.3%) in 2023/24 (61.4% in 2022/23). The most common age group for victims of theft offences continues to be those aged 35 to 49 years (29.4%), followed by 25 to 34 (24.0%), 50 to 64 (17.9%), 18 to 24 (16.8%), 65 and over (8.8%) and lastly those aged under 18 (3.4%). However, due to the opportunistic nature of certain theft offences, anyone could be a victim of theft.

On the other hand, there were 1,374 unique offenders identified for theft offences in 2023/24, which is a +14% increase compared to the 1,204 identified in 2022/23. Repeat offending of theft is similar compared to the previous year with 26.7% of theft offenders committing more than one offence in 2023/24. There continues to be a small cohort of prolific theft offenders (5 or more offences in the year), with these individuals accounting for 9.4% of offenders (129 individuals), yet 49.3% of theft offences with a known offender. 49% of theft offenders also committed other offences in the year. 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 (70.6% in 2023/24), with this proportion increasing among the most prolific theft offenders; 81.4% 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 (33.3%) were the most common theft offenders in 2023/24, followed by 25 to 34 (26.9%), 18 to 24 (17.5%), those aged under 18 (13.0%), 50 to 64 (9.2%) and those aged 65 years and over (1.2%).

3.4.3 Points for the Partnership to note

- Theft offences remain a priority for the partnership, after emerging as a priority in the previous assessment for the first time.
- Increases in the number of acquisitive between 2021/22 and 2022/23 and have been linked to the cost of living crisis and economic uncertainty. Despite a small decline (-1.6%) in Southampton over the last year, the volume of acquisitive crimes remains high.
- 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.³⁶ Moreover, if the number of theft offences were to decline, it would likely not feature as a priority in the future.

³⁶ 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>

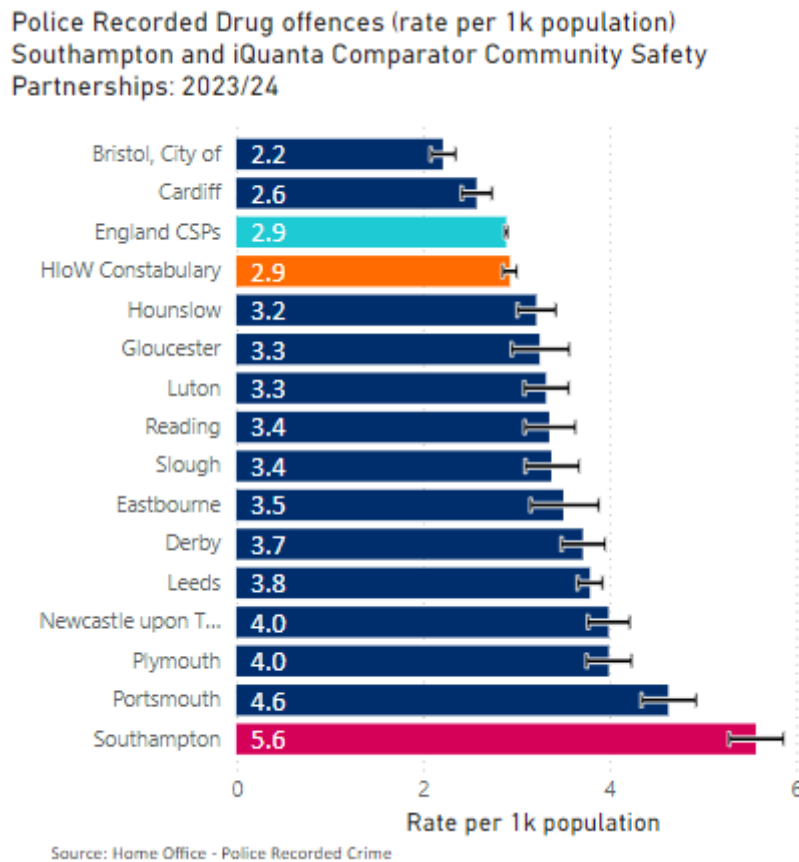
- Police forces across the country, including Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, have committed to attending every residential burglary since October 2022. The average attendance rate of a domestic burglary across the force area was 98% in 2023/24.³⁷
- The formal action taken with residential burglaries in Southampton remains low, but there have been improvements in recent years, rising from 2.2% in 2019/20 to 4.9% in 2023/24.
- There was a -27.8% (-368) decline in residential burglaries recorded in Southampton during 2023/24. 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 is still ranked the 3rd most affected area among comparator CSPs and the most affected across the force area.
- Repeat offending of theft remains a substantial issue among theft offenders, especially among the most prolific offenders (committing five or more thefts). Additionally, almost half (49%) of theft offenders also committed other crimes in 2023/24. Therefore, tackling repeat theft offending would make a substantial contribution to reduce overall theft offences in Southampton.

³⁷ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary Force Strategic Assessment 2024

3.5 Drugs and alcohol

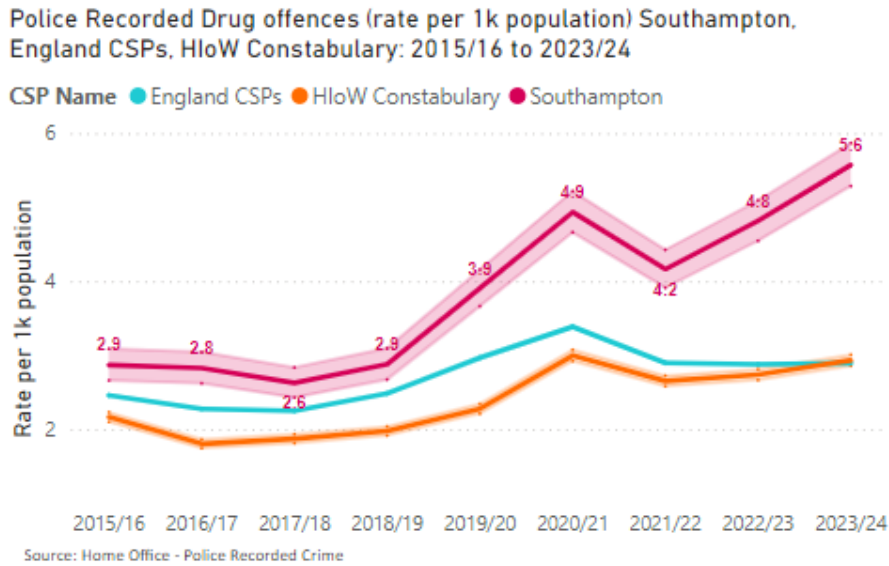
Southampton had a drug offence rate of 5.6 offences per 1k population in 2023/24, significantly higher than the England average of 2.9 offences per 1k population (Figure 3.21). The number of drug offences in Southampton increased by +17.5% over the last year, with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (+8.0%) and England (+1.6%) also experiencing increases, albeit to a lower extent (Figure 3.). 1,241 drug affected crimes were recorded in Southampton during 2023/24, slightly higher (+2.2%) than the previous year (1,214 drug affected crimes).

Figure 3.21: Benchmarking chart showing the rate of drug offences



The number of drug offences recorded by the police is heavily dependent on police activities and priorities. Over the last year there has been a notable increase in stop checks in Southampton, with 2,216 stop checks conducted in 2022/23 compared with 2,834 in 2023/24, an increase of +27.9%. The above increase in stop check activity in Southampton aligns with the increase seen in drug offences (+17.5%).

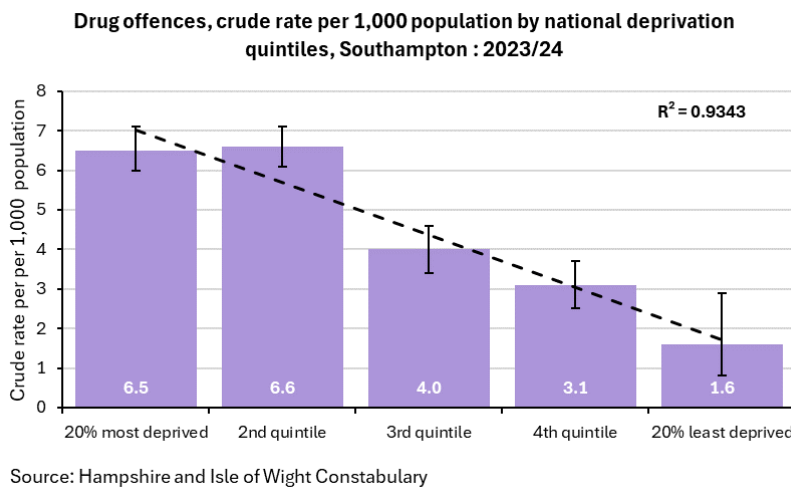
Figure 3.22: Trend chart showing the rate of drug offences for Southampton, HloW Constabulary and England



Sub-city patterns of drug offences show a similar picture to previous years, with Bargate, Banister & Polygon, Freemantle and Bevois wards having significantly higher rates of drug offences compared to the Southampton average in 2023/24. Although it should be noted that, the presence of a key police site in Freemantle may have inflated the rate in Freemantle ward.

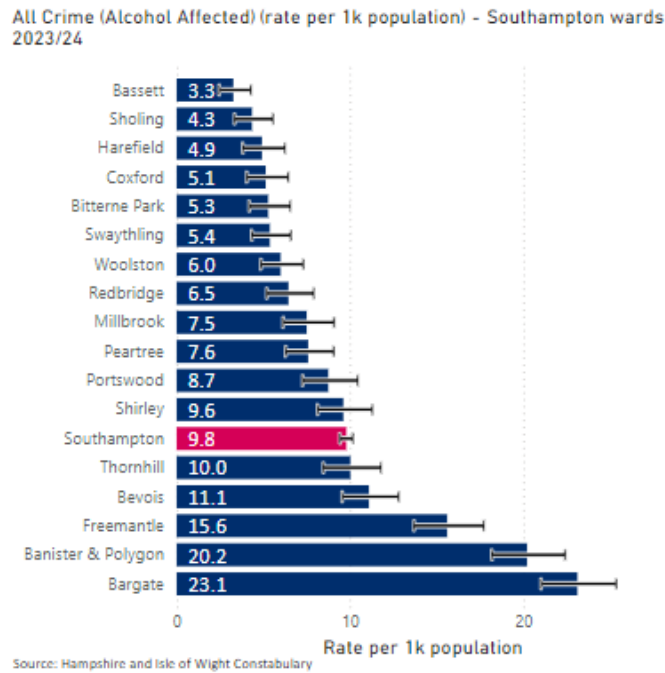
In 2023/24, the drug offence rate was 4 times higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city compared to the least deprived (Figure 3.3); having been 3 times higher in 2022/23 and 4.9 times higher in 2021/22. Similar to the previous year, the highest rate of drug offences was recorded across neighbourhoods in the second deprivation quintile (6.6 per 1k population) in 2023/24. 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



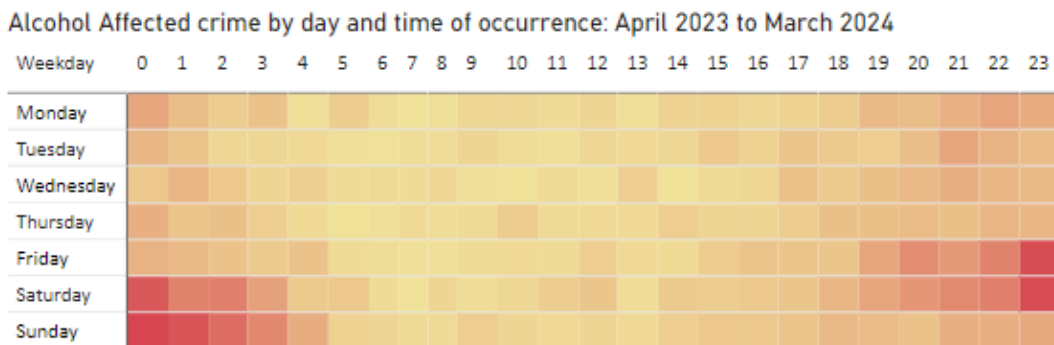
There were 2,594 alcohol affected crimes recorded in Southampton during 2023/24, which is a decline of -8% compared to the previous year. Similar to previous years, the majority of alcohol affected crimes were violent crimes (66.7% in 2023/24).

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



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 3.244). 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



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](#).

3.5.1 Points for the Partnership to note

- The number of drug offences recorded in Southampton during 2023/24 was significantly higher than the previous year. Volumes of recorded drug offences are heavily influenced by policing activity and priorities, with the number of stop checks in Southampton increasing by +27.9% during the same period. 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 declined by -8.0% in 2023/24. 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.

3.6 Hate crime

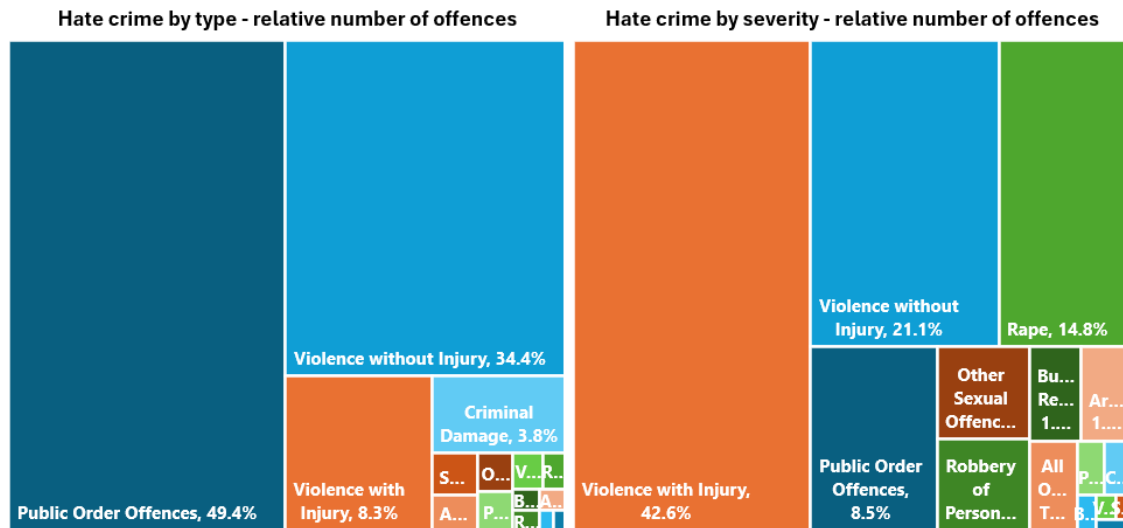
Hate crime is defined as ‘any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic’. There are five centrally monitored strands of hate crime:

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

There were 937 recorded hate crime offences in Southampton during 2023/24, a -15.3% decline from 2022/23, with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary experiencing a similar decline (-16%).³⁸ Across England and Wales hate crime declined by -5% in 2023/24 compared to the previous year; the second annual decline recorded since 2012/13.³⁹

The ‘case mix’ of hate crimes in 2023/24 is similar to previous years (Figure 3.6). The most common recorded hate crime was public order offences (49.4%), followed by violence without injury (34.4%) and violence with injury (8.3%).

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



Source: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

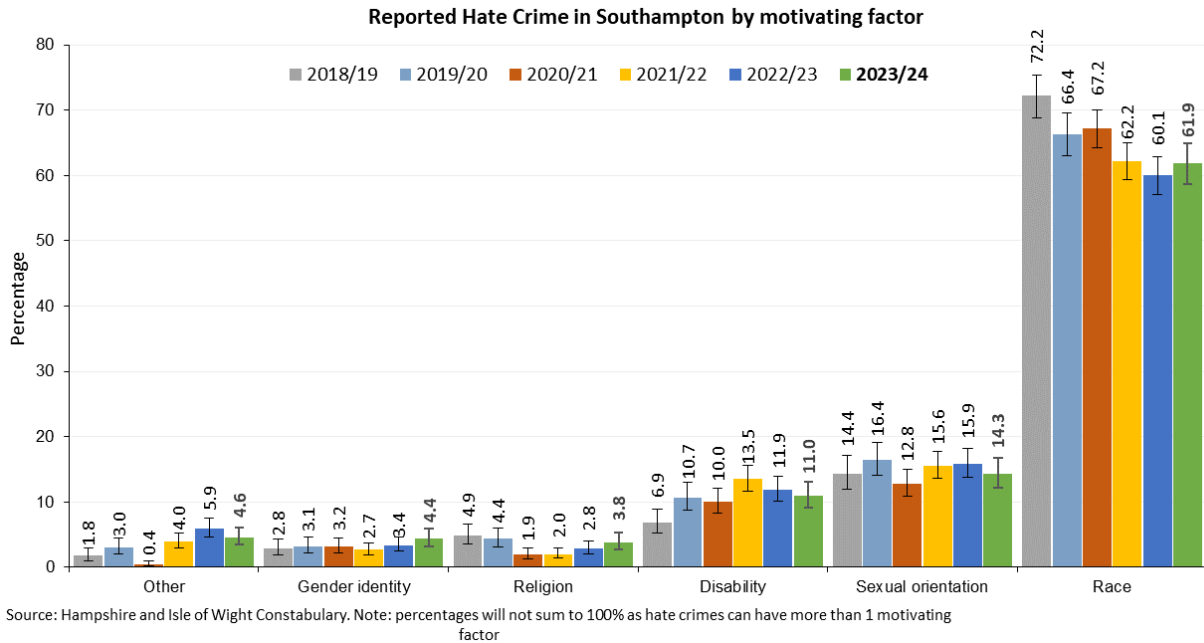
A hate crime can have multiple motivating factors (strands). Race continues to be the most frequently recorded motivating factor of hate crime in Southampton (61.9% in 2023/24), with the Home Office

³⁸ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – Force Strategic Assessment 2024

³⁹ Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2024 Available via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2024/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2024>

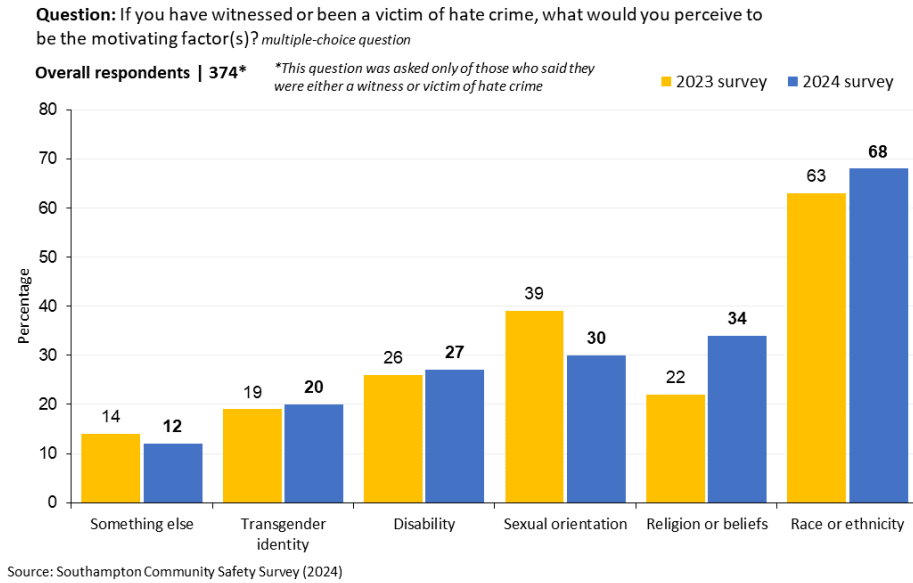
also finding the majority of hate crimes across England and Wales to be racially motivated (70%).⁴³ The second most frequent motivating factor in Southampton is sexual orientation (14.3%), followed by disability (11%) (Figure 3.7).

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



17% of respondents from the 2024 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 3.288 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 (68%), followed by religion or beliefs (34%). This is in line with police recorded hate crime, with race appearing as the most common motivating factor (Figure 3.). More detailed findings from the 2024 community safety survey are presented in Section 4.

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



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.⁴⁰ Hate crime in Southampton has experienced a decline for the second consecutive year.

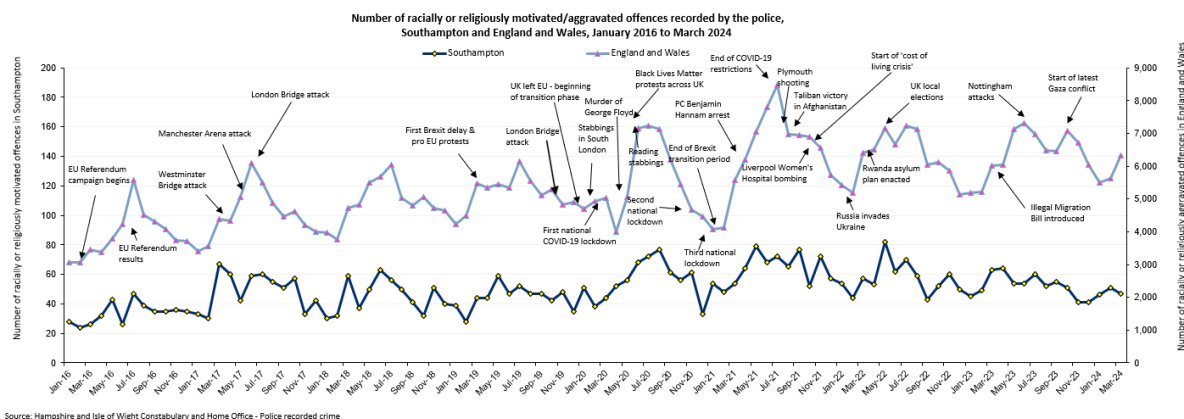
The fall in hate crimes seen nationally in the last two years have been linked with the publication of interim guidance on the recording of non-crime hate incidents (NCHIs) by the College of Policing in 2022, which was later updated in June 2023. This guidance, which followed interim guidance published in 2022, instructed officers to consider whether genuine hostility occurred or if an incident could be free speech. Whilst this was aimed only at the recording of NCHIs, it is possible that the guidance may have led to greater scrutiny of what constitutes a hate crime. Home Office counting rules for hate crime has not changed. Therefore, fewer hate crimes being recorded over the last two years may not reflect a genuine decline.⁴¹

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. 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.).

⁴⁰ Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2024 Available via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2024/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2024>

⁴¹ Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2024 Available via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2024/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2024>

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



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.⁴² This continues to be evidenced locally, with the highest rate of hate crimes recorded in Bargate ward (8.6 hate crimes per 1k population), followed by Banister & Polygon (5.2 per 1k) and Freemantle (5.1 per 1k) wards. All of which had significantly higher rates of hate crime compared to the Southampton average (3.5 hate crimes per 1k population).

3.6.1 Points for the Partnership to note

- Police recorded hate crime decreased by -15.3% in Southampton over the last year. However, this is unlikely to reflect a genuine decline, and this reduction may conceal areas of hidden demand⁴³. The decline experienced nationally has been linked to guidance published by the College of Policing around non-hate crime incidents, possibly leading to greater scrutiny of the threshold of what constitutes a hate crime.
- 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.

⁴² Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – Force Strategic Assessment 2023

⁴³ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary – Force Strategic Assessment 2024

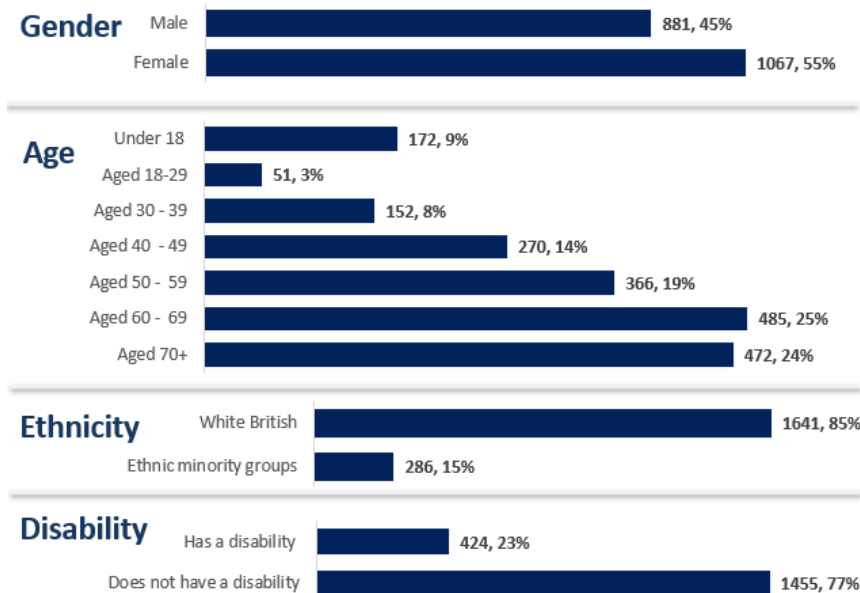
4. Resident views

Each year a survey is conducted to understand the views of people living, studying and working in Southampton on community safety issues. The 2024 Southampton community safety survey ran from 27th August 2024 to 15th September 2024. The survey was promoted through Southampton City Council and the Southampton People’s Panel. The survey was online and had a total of 2,036 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. Due to methodological differences between surveys, any differences should be interpreted with caution. It should also be emphasised that this survey was live between 27th August 2024 to 15th September 2024, whereas published police recorded crime covers the period of April 2023 to March 2024. 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 (85%), with 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 (2024)

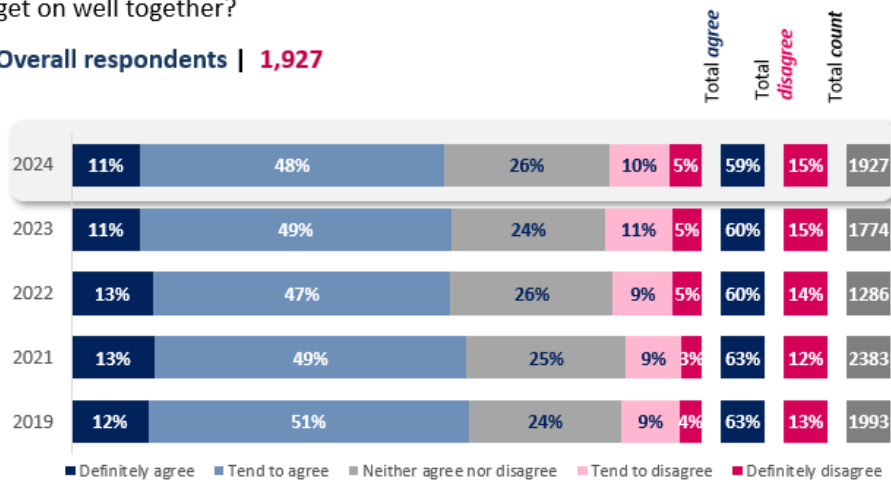
4.1.1 Community Cohesion

The majority of respondents from the 2024 survey agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (59%), 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).

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 2024)

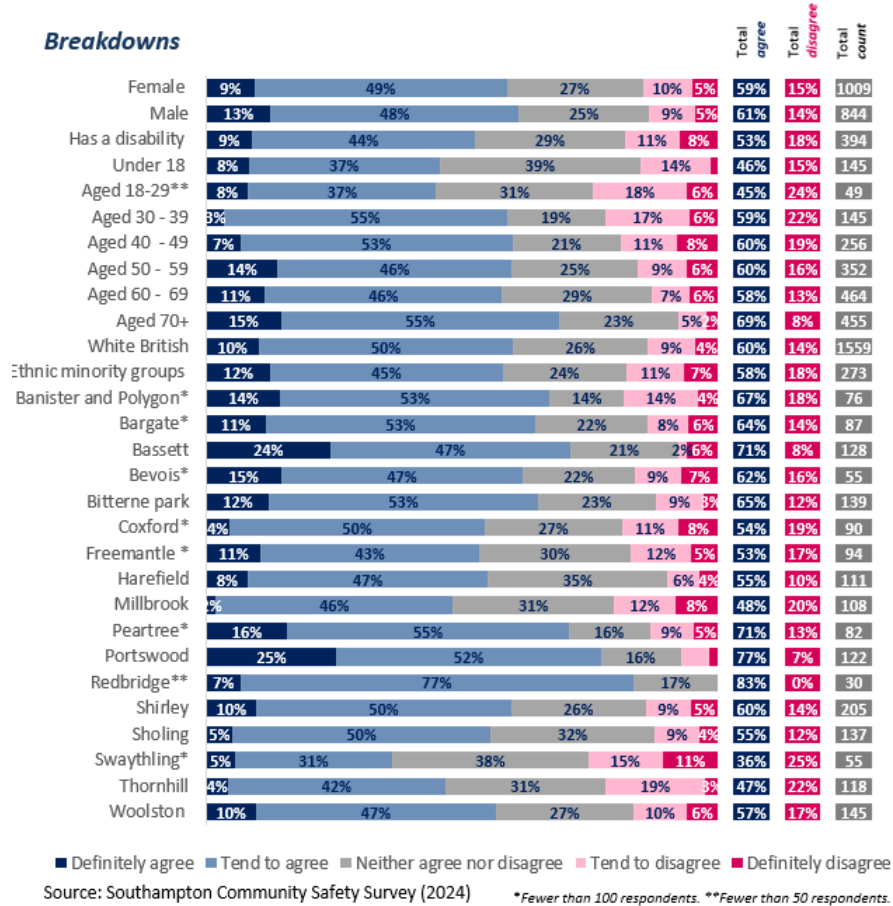
Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?

Overall respondents | 1,927



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

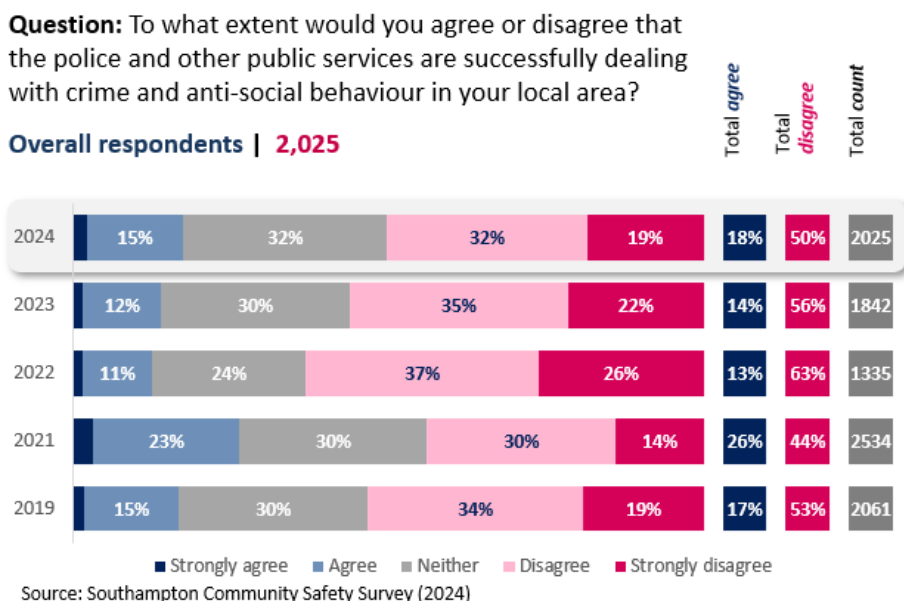
Figure 4.3: Chart showing demographic and geographic breakdowns for the proportions of respondents that agree or disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together



4.1.2 Confidence in the Partnership

18% 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 2024 survey (Figure 4.4), which is a +4 percentage point increase in agreement compared to the 2023 survey (14% agreement). Higher levels of agreement in 2021 have been linked to the coronavirus pandemic and visibility of local services during this period. Although there has been an increase in agreement over the last year, disagreement remains high, with half of respondents disagreeing that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area.

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 2024)

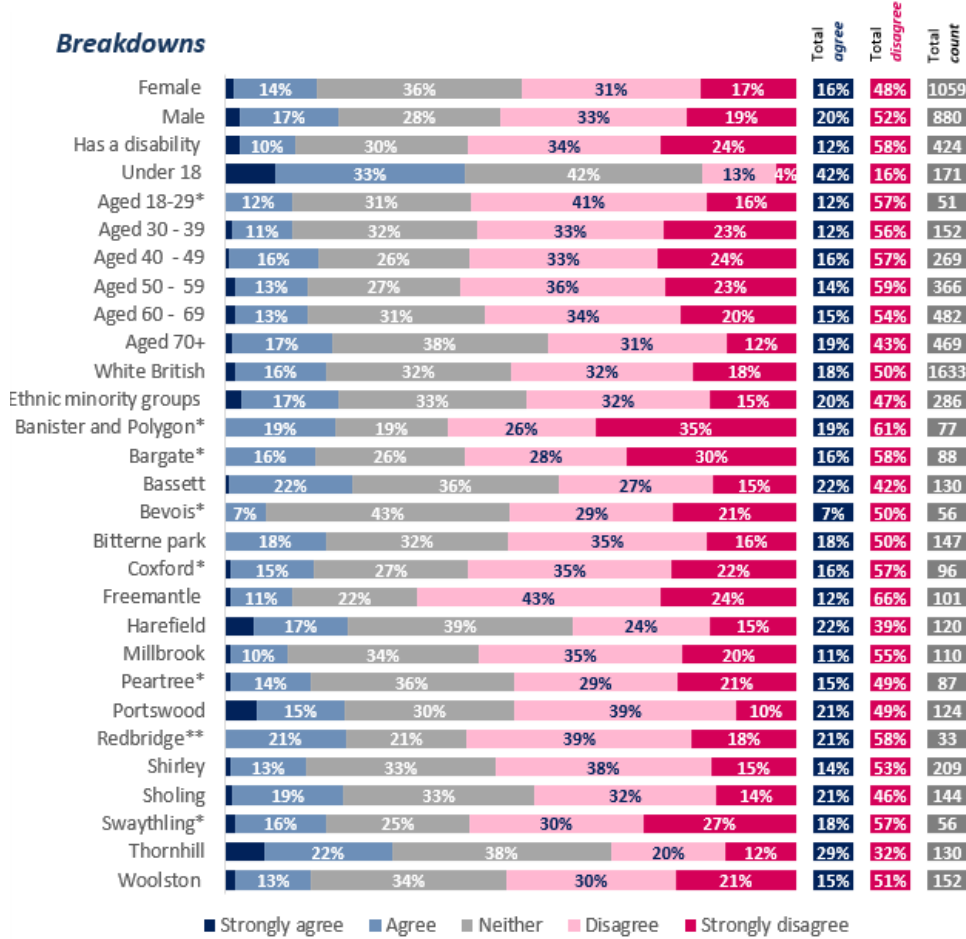


However, it is important to note that public perceptions of how the Partnership are dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour can be influenced by:

- 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 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



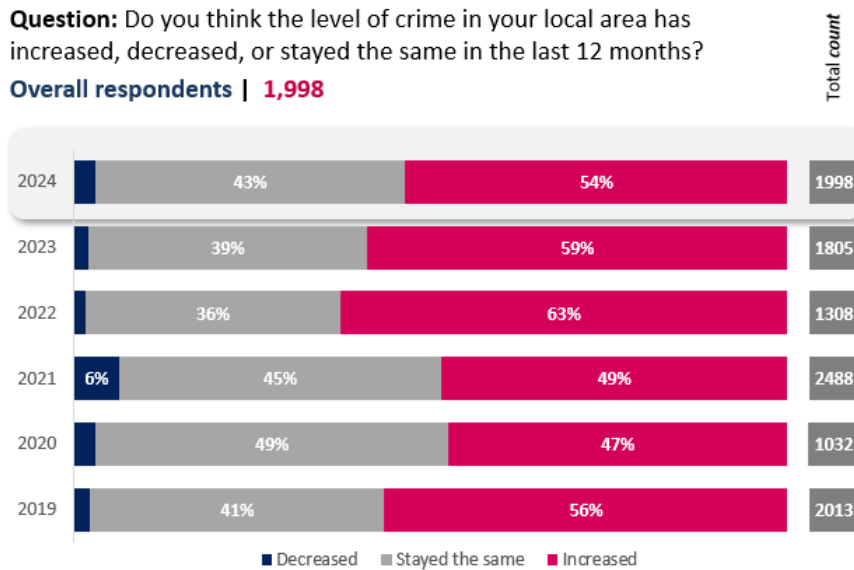
*Fewer than 100 respondents. **Fewer than 50 respondents.
Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

4.1.3 Perception of crime levels

In the most recent survey, 54% of respondents felt crime in their local has increased in the last 12 months and 43% 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 (59%).

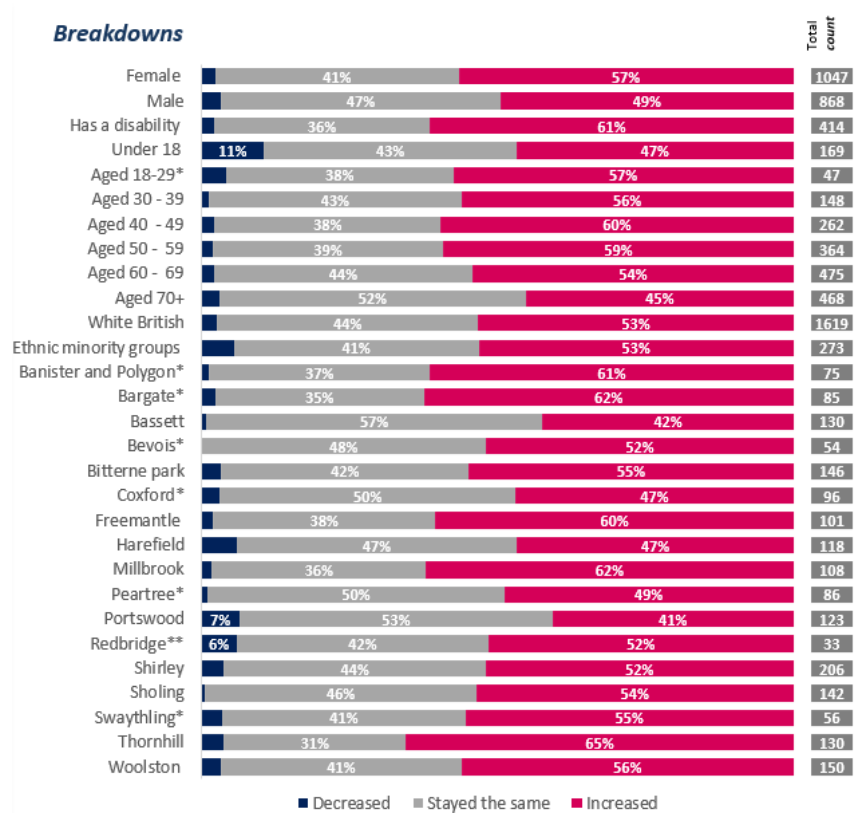
Figure 4.7 shows the demographic and geographic breakdowns of perceived crime levels. A significantly higher proportion of female respondents (57%) felt that crime had increased in the last 12 months compared to males (49%). Respondents who live in Thornhill (65%) felt crime in their local area had increased to the greatest extent, followed by Bargate (62%) and Millbrook (62%) wards. Whereas those that felt crime had increased to a lesser extent lived in Portswood (41%) and Bassett (42%). The above trends are in keeping with sub city patterns of crime, with Thornhill, Bargate and Millbrook wards all having significantly higher rates of crime compared to the Southampton average; Portswood and Basset ward also have significantly lower rates of total recorded crime.

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 2024)



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

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

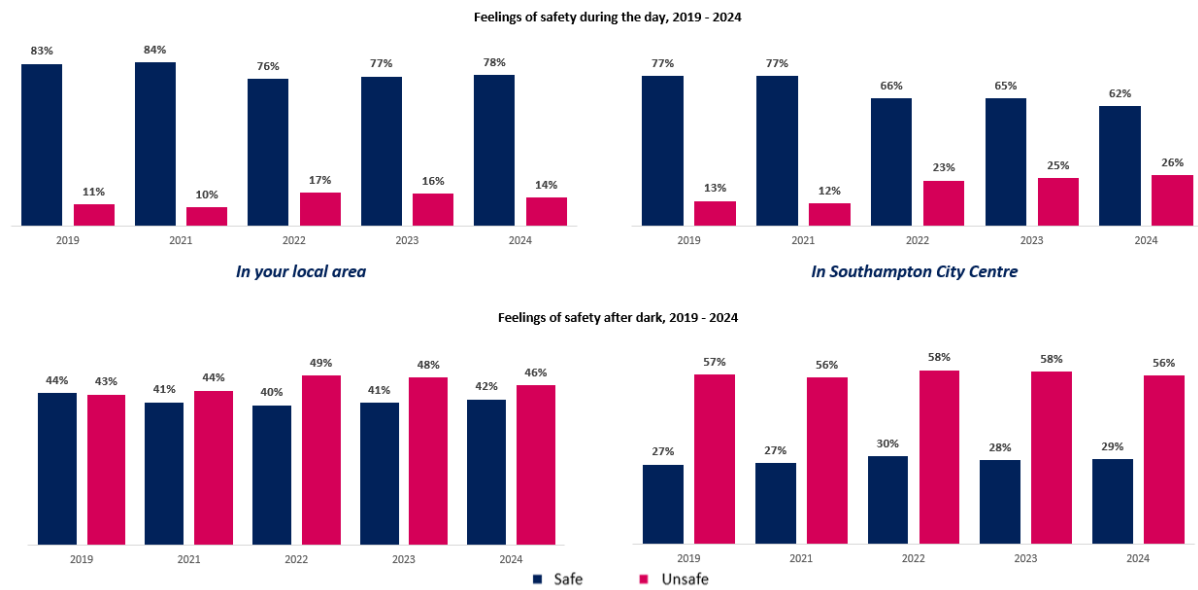


Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

4.1.4 Feelings of safety in Southampton

The majority of respondents in the 2024 survey felt safe during the day in both their local area (78%) and in the city centre (62%). In comparison, 42% of respondents felt safe after dark in their local area and 29% in the city centre. Overall, feelings of safety remain similar to the previous survey. (Figure 4.8). This highlights that Southampton remains an outlier for feelings of safety after dark. There also appears to be a downward trend in the proportion of those feeling safe during the day since 2019, for the city centre and local area.

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 2024)

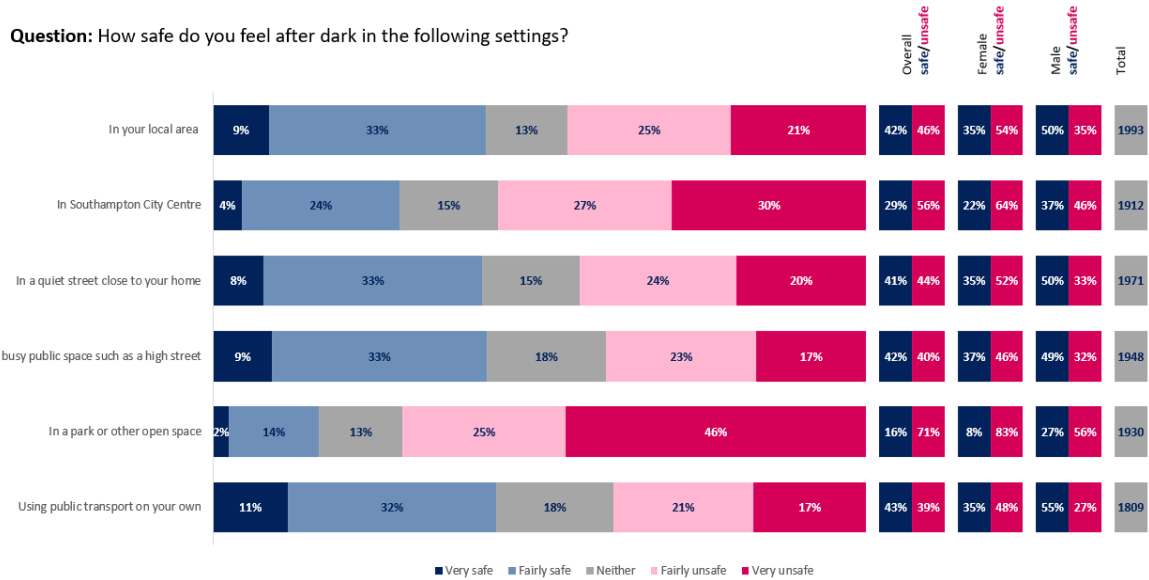


Female respondents continue to feel significantly less safe across all settings after dark (Figure 4.9). Approximately a third (35%) of females felt safe in their local area after dark compared to half of males (50%) and less than a quarter of females (22%) felt safe in the city centre after dark compared to almost two-fifths (37%) of males. Respondents with a disability also significantly felt less safe across all settings in comparison to the survey averages.

Respondents felt the most unsafe in parks and open spaces after dark (Figure 4.9), with just 16% of respondents feeling safe in this setting; 8% of females felt safe compared to 27% 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 2022.⁴⁴

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



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

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 (56%) and stopped walking in quiet places such as parks or open spaces (48%). Notably, 80% of respondents with a disability said that they had changed their behaviour, which is significantly higher than the total respondent average.

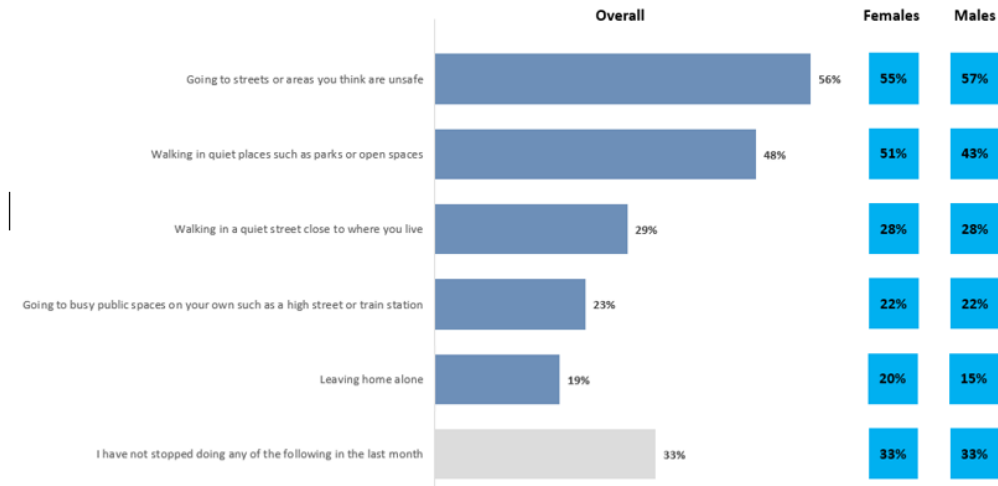
⁴⁴ Office for National Statistics – Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain: 16 February to 13 March 2022. Available via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/perceptionsofpersonalsafetyandexperiencesofharassmentgreatbritain/16februaryto13march2022>

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

Question: If you feel unsafe, have you stopped doing any of the following activities in the last month?

Respondents* | 1,496

*This question was asked only of those that responded either *fairly unsafe* or *very unsafe* for any of the settings in questions six and seven.



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

4.1.5 Perceived community safety issues and reporting of crime

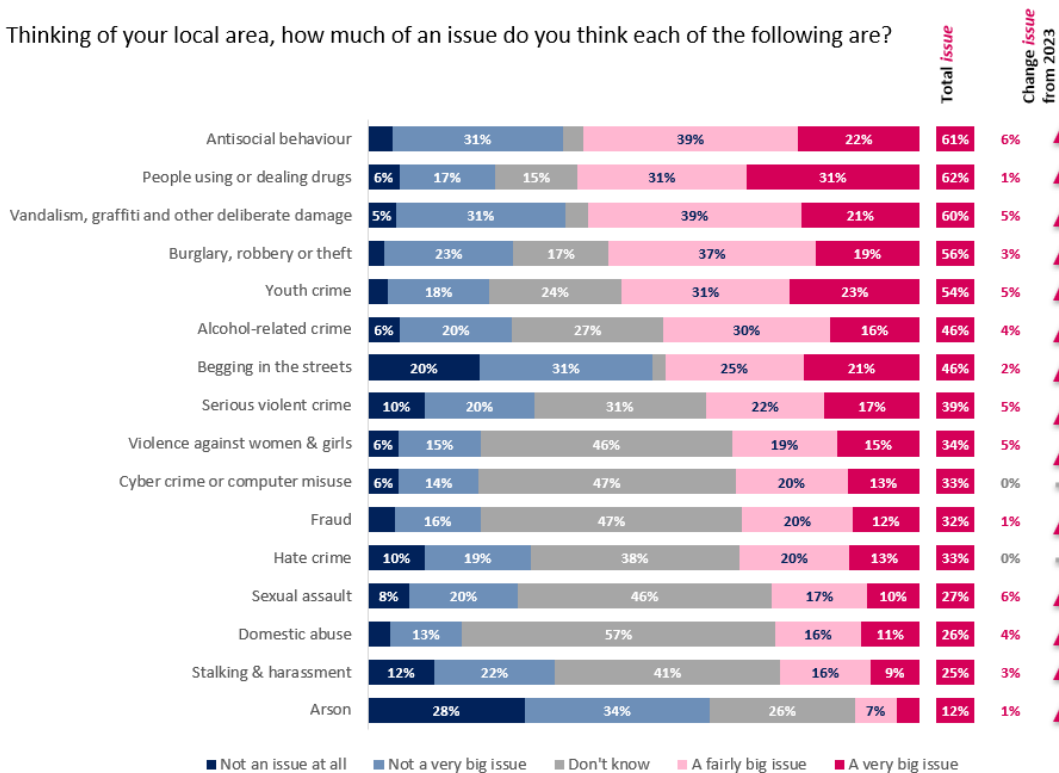
Figure 4.11 shows what respondents perceive to be the biggest issues in their local area. The biggest perceived community safety issues were people using or dealing drugs (62%), anti-social behaviour (61%), vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage (60%), burglary, robbery or theft (56%) and youth crime (54%). 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 2023 survey, 14 out of 16 crimes showed percentage point increases in the proportion of respondents reporting these categories as an issue in 2024, except for cyber crime or computer misuse and hate crime.

The above evidence would suggest that although there has been an increase in the proportion of respondents feeling 14 of the 16 crime groups are an issue, a large proportion of respondents are still answering ‘don’t know’ for a number of key and priority issues such as serious violent crime (31%), domestic abuse (57%), sexual assaults (46%), hate crime (38%) and VAWG (46%). This highlights potential for increasing awareness of these issues in the city, particularly as increased awareness can lead to improvements in crime reporting.

Figure 4.11: Chart showing respondents perceptions of community safety issues in their local area

Question: Thinking of your local area, how much of an issue do you think each of the following are?



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

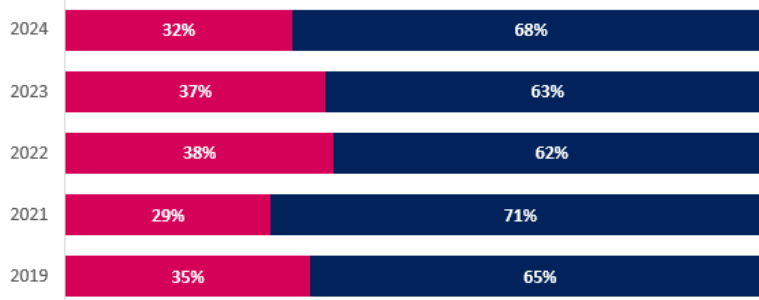
The majority of respondents (68%) in the most recent survey had not been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in Southampton in the last 12 months (Figure 4.12). The proportion of respondents reporting that they had been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in the 2024 survey (32%) is less than in the 2023 (37%) and 2022 (38%) surveys.

Respondents aged 18 to 59 were more likely to be a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour (Figure 4.13). This is in line with victim age profiling outlined in Section 2.5. Respondents with a disability (43%) also reported experiencing crime or anti-social behaviour more frequently than the total respondent average. Respondents from Freemantle (46%), Bargate (44%), Bevois (42%), Banister and Polygon (43%) and Swaythling (41%) wards were more likely to have experienced crime or anti-social behaviour compared to respondents from other wards.

Figure 4.12: Chart showing if respondents have been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months (2019 to 2024)

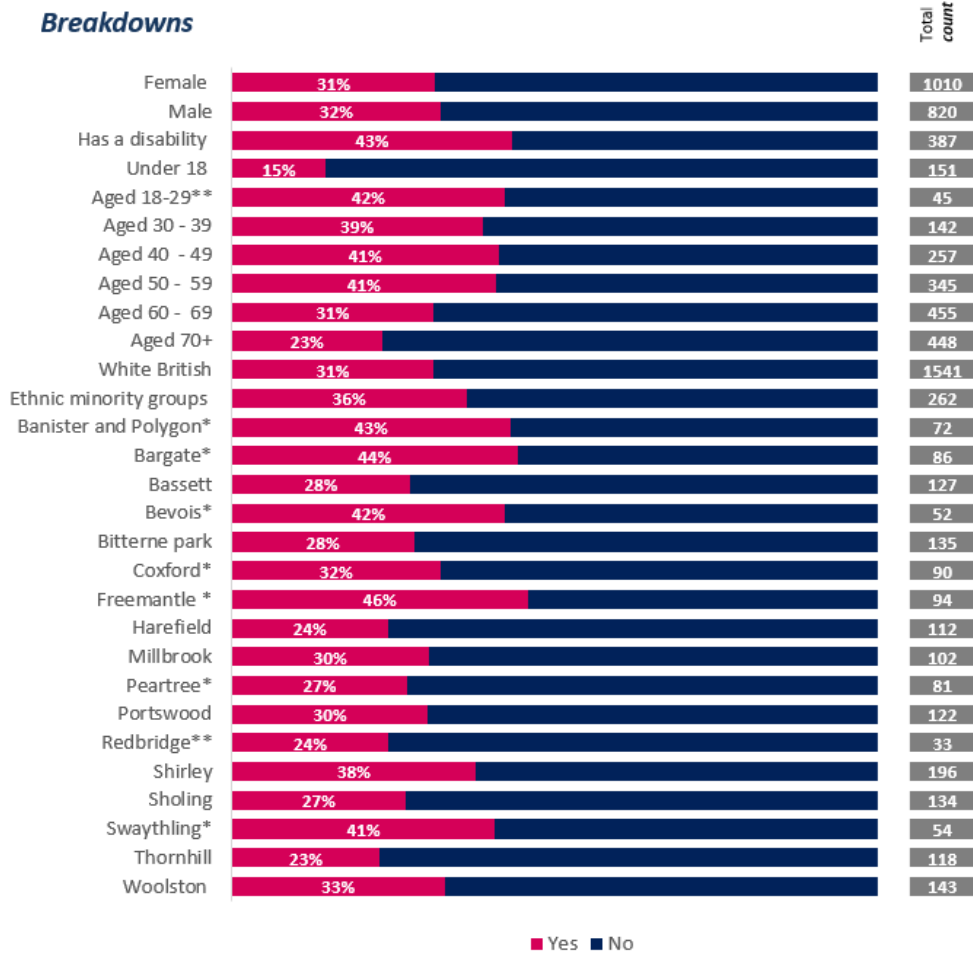
Question: Have you been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in Southampton in the last 12 months?

Overall respondents | 1,894



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024) ■ Yes ■ No

Figure 4.13: Chart showing demographic and geographic breakdowns for whether respondents had been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months

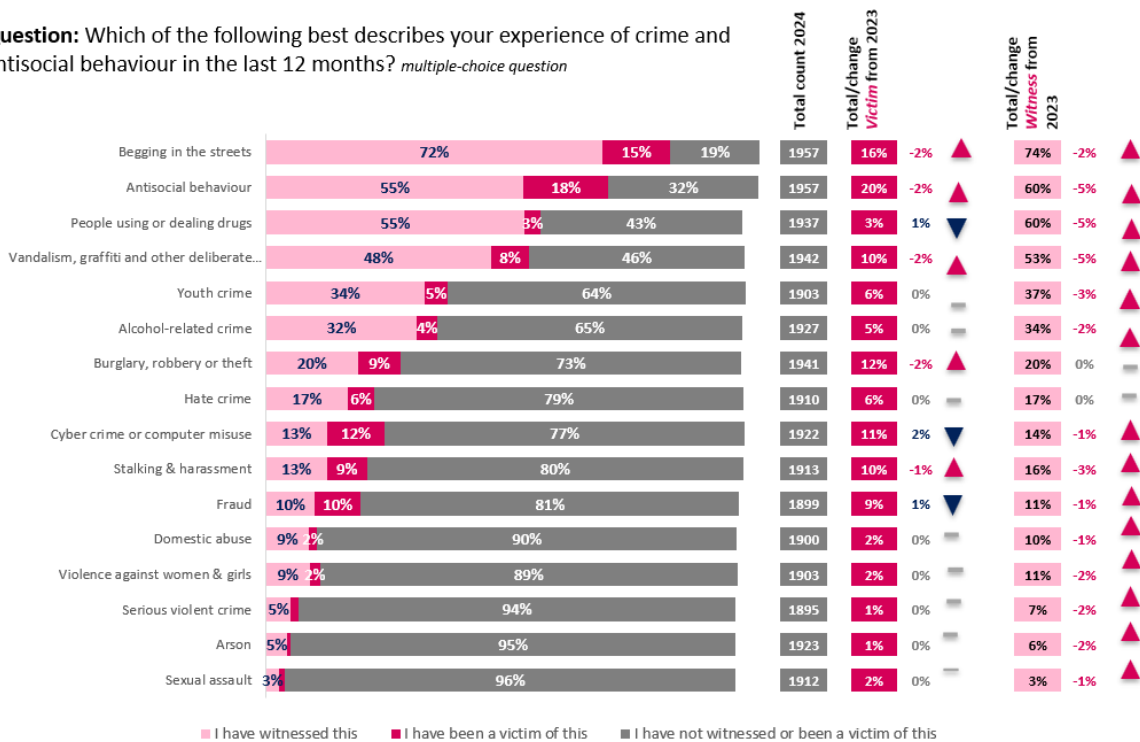


*Fewer than 100 respondents. **Fewer than 50 respondents.

Figure 4.14 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. 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 4.14: Chart showing respondents experiences of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months

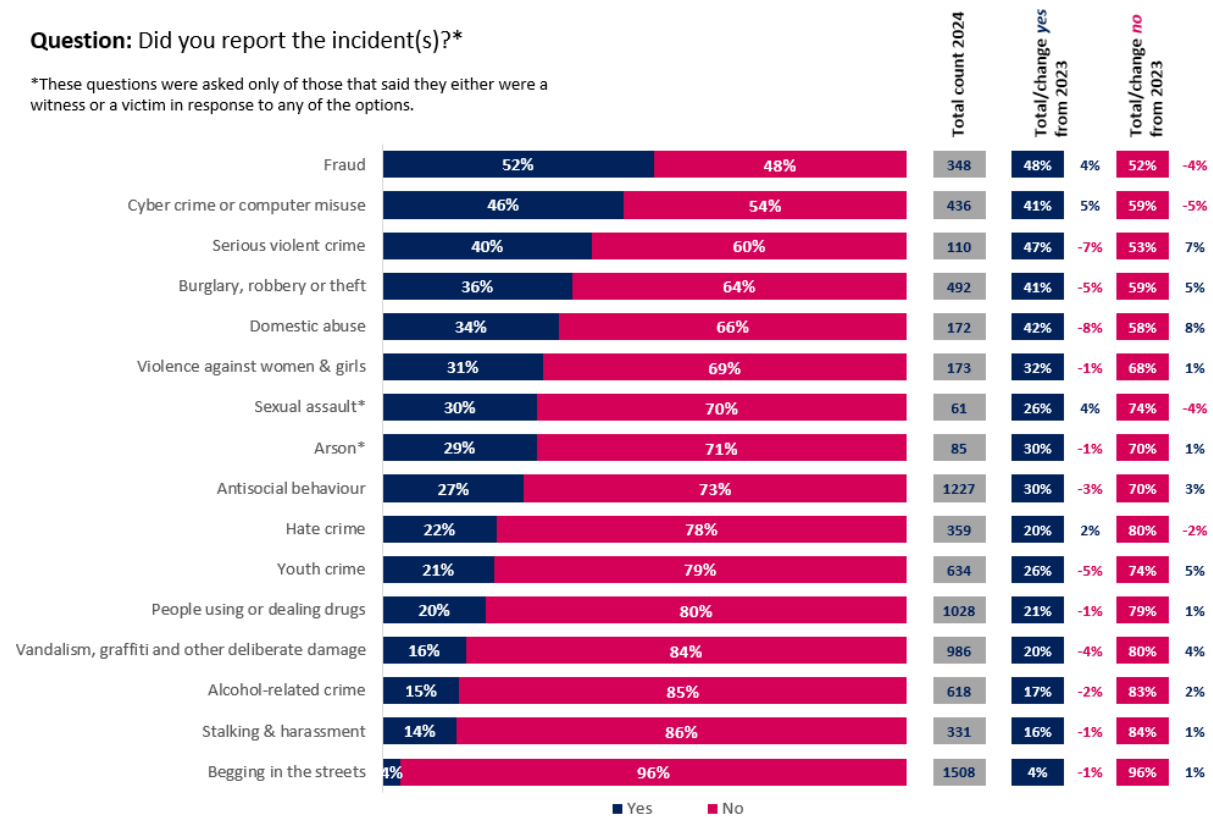
Question: Which of the following best describes your experience of crime and antisocial behaviour in the last 12 months? *multiple-choice question*



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

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). Almost half of respondents did not report incidents when witnessed or experienced for all crime groups shown in Figure 4.15. This is particularly concerning for high harm and priority offences, such as hate crime (78% not reporting), sexual assault (70%), VAWG (69%), domestic abuse (66%) and serious violent crime (60%). In comparison to the previous survey, reporting of some of the higher harm and priority offence groups has decreased. For example, reporting of domestic abuse decreasing by -8 percentage points, as well as serious violent crime -7 and VAWG -1, however, numbers of respondents are lower for these crime types compared to others.

Figure 4.15: Chart showing proportions of respondents that reported crimes when witnessed or experienced



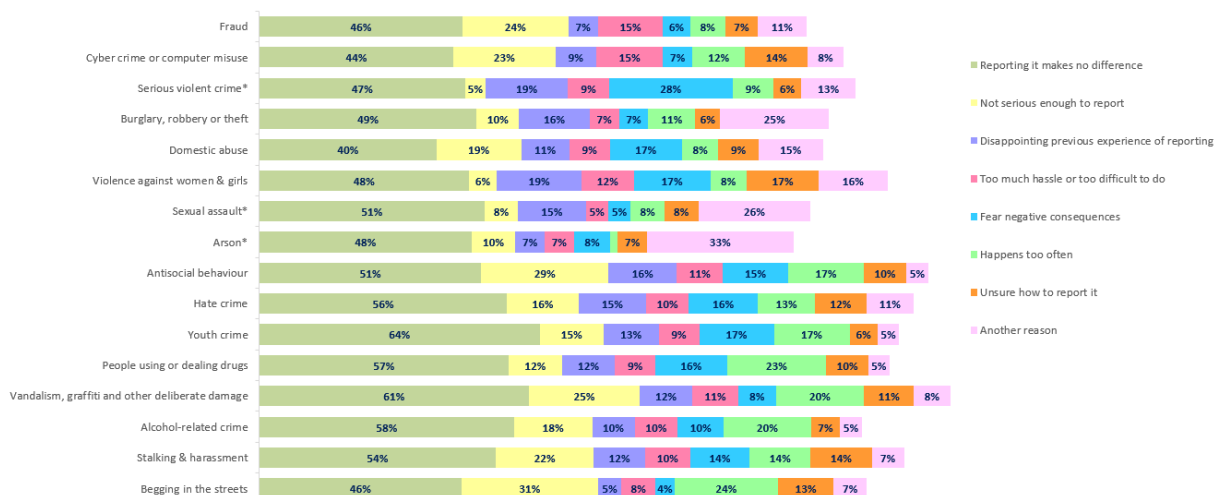
Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

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 4.16. 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 in line with previous surveys. In terms of priority crime groups (see Section 2.3), common reasons for not reporting sexual assaults were that *reporting makes no difference* (51%), *another reason* (26%) and *disappointing previous experience of reporting* (15%). 40% of respondents did not report domestic abuse as they felt *reporting makes no difference* and 17% *feared negative consequences*. *Reporting makes no difference* (47%), *fear of negative consequences* (28%) and *disappointing previous experience of reporting* (19%) were common reasons for not reporting serious violent crime, with similar trends observed for VAWG.

Figure 4.16: 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)

Question: If you didn't report the incident(s), please tell us why?
Multiple choice



Source: Southampton Community Safety Survey (2024)

*Fewer than 100 respondents. **Fewer than 50 resp

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

- 18% 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 half of respondents continuing to disagree (50%) with this statement. Overall, confidence in the Partnership remains low.
- 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* (56%) and stopped *walking in quiet places such as parks or open spaces* (48%). Respondents with a disability changed their behaviour to a greater extent 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 and burglary, robbery or theft were highlighted as the biggest issues by respondents.

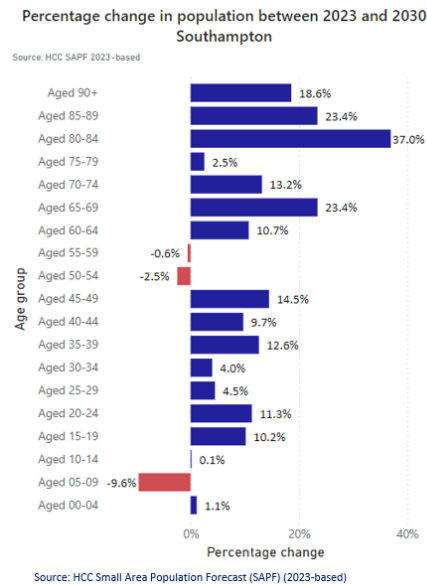
- Although there has been an increase in the proportion of respondents feeling 14 of the 16 crime groups are an issue, a large proportion of respondents are still answering ‘don’t know’ for a number of key and priority issues such as serious violent crime (31%), domestic abuse (57%), sexual assaults (46%), hate crime (38%) and VAWG (46%). This highlights potential for increasing awareness of these issues in the city, particularly as increased awareness can lead to improvements in crime reporting.
- 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 such as violent crime, domestic abuse and sexual assault.
- *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.^{45, 46} 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 +8.5% by 2030 (*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 2023 to 2030



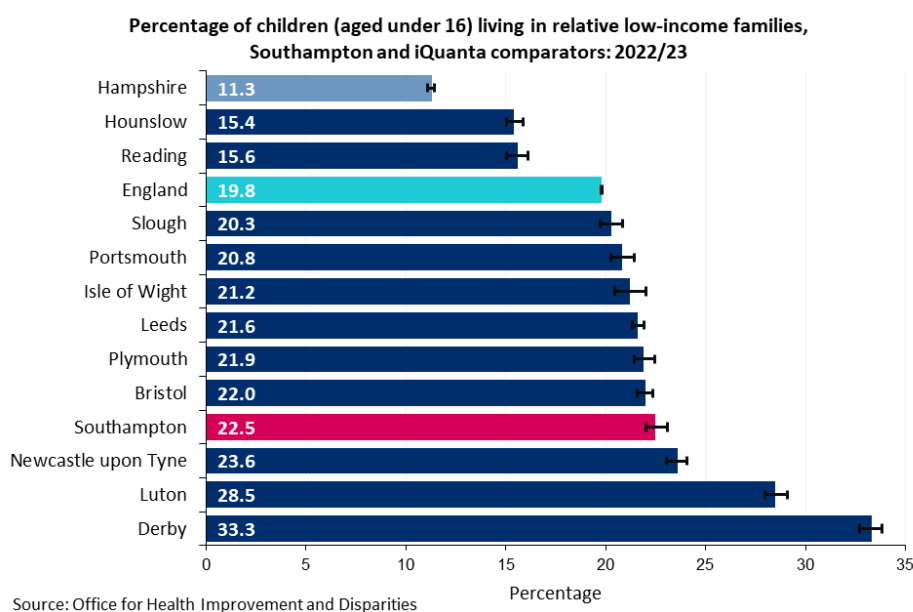
⁴⁵ Weatherburn, D. (2001) 'What Causes Crime?', *Crime and Justice Bulletin*, 54. Available via: <https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Publications/CJB/cjb54.pdf>

⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷ Just under a quarter of children (22.5%, 10,095) in Southampton live in relative low-income families (2022/23), significantly higher than the national average of 19.8% (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.

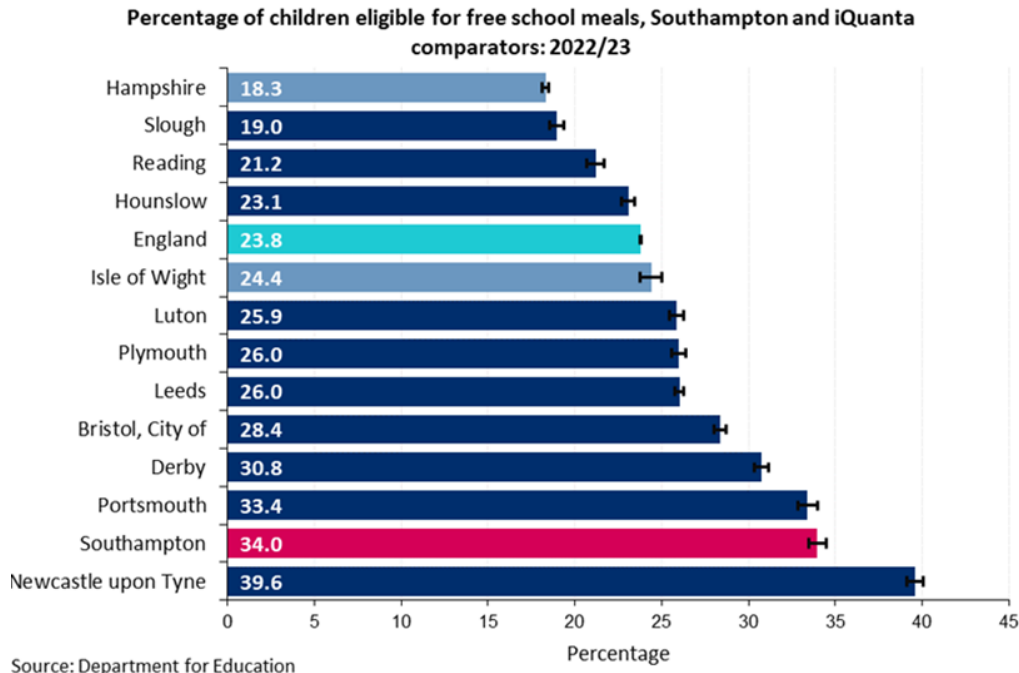
In addition, 34.0% (11,528) of Southampton pupils in state funded schools are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSMs), which is significantly higher than the England average of 23.8% in 2022/23 (Figure 5.3). The proportion of children eligible for FSMs has continued to increase; having been 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



⁴⁷ 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

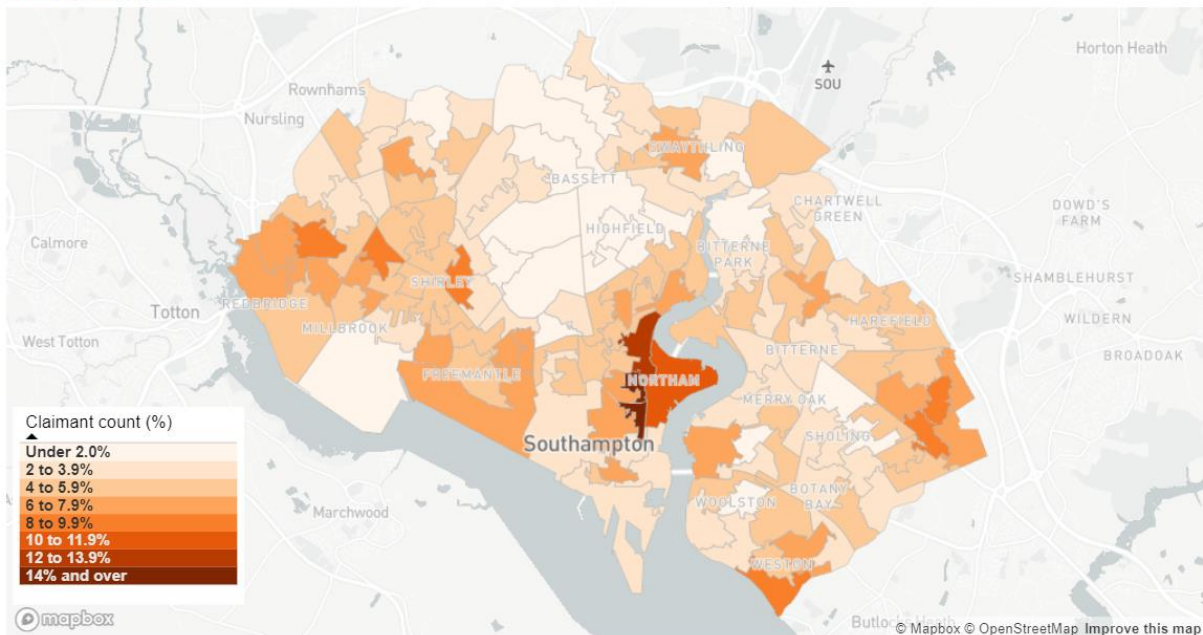
Figure 5.3: Benchmarking chart showing the proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals



As of October 2024, 4.7% (7,885) of the working age population were claiming out of work benefits in Southampton. Figure 5.4 shows the claimant count across Southampton neighbourhoods in October 2024 (4.7% 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 October 2024

Claimant count (total) as a percentage of the working age population by LSOA: October-2024
Source: DWP via Nomis



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.⁴⁸ Research into ACEs suggests that these risk factors are cumulative.⁴⁹

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. 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.

⁴⁸ 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>

⁴⁹ Local Government Association: Public health approaches to reducing violence (2018). Available via: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/public-health-approaches-reducing-violence>

- [Geographical profiles](#) have been developed, which highlights the need in the city across several topics including crime, education, health, demography and social care. [Inequality profiles](#) have also been developed to help understand and monitor differences in outcomes between neighbourhoods. The Partnership should be aware of this work and take note of key findings, as it highlights where need in the city is greatest for many wider determinants.

6. Summary

Southampton remains one of the highest amongst iQuanta comparator CSPs and higher than the national average when considering both the volume (rate) and severity of total police recorded crime, suggesting that Southampton remains the most affected area among comparators for the volume and severity of total crime.

In 2023/24, Southampton experienced a -8.2% decline in total recorded crime compared to the previous year. The decline in total recorded crime over the last year is unlikely to reflect a true decline in crime, due to the change in counting rules implemented in June 2023, which has impacted the volume of several crime types, particularly violent crimes, domestic crimes and stalking and harassment. The impact of the change in the counting rules should be monitored by the Partnership.

Southampton experienced a decline in several offence groups outlined in [Section 2.2](#), some of these declines are linked to changes in counting rules and reasons are explored throughout relevant sections in this report. However, despite changes in the volume of different offence types, its worth highlighting that for 14 of the 22 crime types shown in [Section 2.2](#), Southampton is ranked in the top three highest amongst iQuanta comparators.⁵⁰ The above highlights that not only is Southampton an outlier amongst comparators for many crime types, but residents are also feeling the impact of crime locally, with most survey respondents (54%) feeling the level of crime in their local area had increased over the last year.

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:

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

Sexual offences, violent crimes and domestic offences have consistently featured among the top priority areas for the last six years. Theft offences feature as a priority for the second year in a row, this is likely linked to financial pressures and economic uncertainty over the last two years.

Although the proportion of repeat victims declined over the last year, repeat victimisation and repeat offending remains a substantial issue in Southampton. The decline in repeat victims is likely linked to the change in counting rules, with less crimes being recorded. These trends should continue to be

⁵⁰ Only includes crime groups where CSP rank is available

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; 18% 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 50% of respondents 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 2024 community safety survey also found that 67% of people who felt unsafe had altered their behaviour in the last month. Although the above findings are in line with national research,⁵¹ 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.⁵²

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; 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. Several products have been published over the last year looking at levels of [need](#) and [inequality](#) in Southampton. 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.

⁵¹ 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>

⁵² 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>