

## **Executive summary**

**Long-term underlying priorities (not in ranked order):** This strategic assessment has identified and recommended the following priorities for the Safer Portsmouth Partnership:

- **Alcohol Misuse**
- **Young People at Risk**
- **Drug Misuse**
- **Adult Re-offending**
- **Domestic Violence**

These long-term underlying priorities are not mutually exclusive, can be inter-related and are most often the underlying driving factors behind, or contributors to, a range of crime types and the key indicators below.

These priorities should be considered by the partnership when allocating resources and developing collaborative approaches to tackling crime and anti social behaviour in Portsmouth.

### **Key indicators (not in ranked order):**

- **Violence, Acquisitive Crime and Anti Social Behaviour**

Key indicators requiring additional analysis were identified through a scanning process of all crime and anti social behaviour types (Appendix A).

**Introduction:** The strategic assessment provides a summary of analysis to assist the SPP in setting and revising its three year rolling partnership plan by:

- Checking the partnership's current long-term priorities and identifying any emerging priorities (known as key indicators)
- Providing a better understanding of local issues and community needs, and
- Providing knowledge of what is driving the problems to help identify appropriate responses.

This strategic assessment relates to the period: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

**Demographics:** Portsmouth's population of 207,100 live in the most densely populated area in the UK outside of London. Over 15% of the population is from a black or minority ethnic background. It is a regional visitor destination with a university catering for 19,000 students and some of the most deprived areas in England.

The combination of space restrictions within an island city, over representation of young adults, density of population and the type of housing (poor sound insulation and on-street parking) impacts on the nature of crime and disorder within the city.

**Overview of community safety:** 'All recorded crime' in Portsmouth fell by 5.5% from 22,925 to 21,654 in 2010/11, a reduction of almost a quarter (24%, n6,905) since 2006/07. This is in line with decreases seen nationally and in Hampshire.

"Crime and the safety of the local community" has consistently been the number one issue of residents. Anti social behaviour is perceived as a bigger problem than it is nationally, and among our peers. Residents were most worried about being burgled or mugged, but their experience of crime was much lower than their concern and the types of crime people were most likely to experience were different and less severe.

The main source of information about local priorities is now the regular discussion at the Community Tasking Groups (Appendix B). The most common local priorities are to target anti social behaviour occurring in specific areas/streets, reduce theft from motor vehicles and motor vehicle related anti social behaviour/speeding.

## **Alcohol misuse**

Alcohol remains a significant health and crime related issue in Portsmouth, however things are improving.

Portsmouth now has a similar proportion of hazardous drinkers to the South East and England average, and a lower proportion of hazardous, high risk and binge drinkers than our peers.

While alcohol related hospital admissions remain higher than for England, the South East and similar areas, the gap is narrowing as the rate of growth in Portsmouth is much lower than in other areas.

Although the number of males that die specifically from misusing alcohol is higher than other areas, the number of females that die is showing some real improvement.

The capacity of treatment services to help people with alcohol issues (such as the Alcohol Specialist Nurse Service at QA Hospital and the Alcohol Intervention Team) are increasing rapidly in combination with targeted publicity (such as the Save Dave campaign) and focusing on the highest cost/most at risk people (such as the 'frequent flyers' interventions).

Males aged over 30 remain the largest group likely to experience alcohol misuse problems.

Alcohol is known to be a key driver for a range of crimes. Although the recording by police of whether an incident was affected by alcohol still needs improving, the information available does support national research that violent offences are the most likely to be affected by alcohol.

Although Portsmouth's alcohol attributable crime rate remains higher than our peers, assaults specifically related to the night time economy areas are showing improvements.

## **Young People at Risk**

One of the major influences on youth offending in Portsmouth this year has been the continuation of triage (also known as Youth Restoration Disposals). Triage involves putting Youth Offending Team staff in contact with the police to influence and discuss disposals and interventions to divert young people from being formally dealt with by the police, using a Youth Offending Team assessment and intervention as an alternative. This means that these young people had still committed an offence, but were considered at low risk of re-offending, so diverted from the youth justice system in this instance.

Without taking triage into account, the headline rates for young offenders show massive reductions in the number of young people in the Youth Justice System, dropping by 40%, and the number of offences they were responsible for dropping by a quarter. There is also a dramatic reduction in the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system, of almost 60%, making it a much lower rate in Portsmouth than the Wessex and national average.

However, if triage is taken into account and the possible issues of double counting are ignored, there has been a lesser, but still impressive, reduction in the total number of young offenders but an increase in the number of offences they are responsible for. If all those referred to triage were counted as first time entrants, then there would not have been any change in the number of first time entrants from last year.

It could therefore be inferred that the real reductions are being made with the number of young people who re-offend this year, rather than with first time entrants. This could be a positive knock on effect of the triage last year, and/or that resources are

freed up to deal with re-offenders rather than low-level first time entrants. However, poor performance this year with the re-offending rate (previously NI 19) and the slightly higher number of young people receiving custodial sentences would counter this inference.

Those referred to triage include a high proportion of young females and shoplifting offences, so this needs to be taken into account when interpreting the Youth Offending Team information. For example, while the YOT information shows the alarming trend that violence against the person is the most common offence by young females, this is soon overshadowed if triage offences are included as the most common offence for young females reverts back to shop theft.

When taking account of triage offences, males continue to commit a broader range of offences than young females, the most common being shop theft, criminal damage and violence against the person.

The peak age range for males is 15-17, while it is younger for females at 15 (and even younger for female first time entrants).

A disproportionately high number of young offenders were again resident in Charles Dickens ward compared with other wards. This was supported by triage data.

The proportion of young offenders engaged in education, training or employment (a key protective factor against re-offending) is higher than Southampton and the average for the Wessex areas.

Young people in Portsmouth are far more likely to be the victim of an assault, rather than an offender, and the proportion of 'youth-on-youth' violence remains low.

Alcohol remains the most commonly used substance by young people. Parents providing alcohol was stated by young people as the main way alcohol is obtained, although a survey of parents had contradictory findings. Cannabis remains the most commonly used drug of young people, although usage is declining nationally.

Last year this section noted the importance of continuing to work with young offenders and to identify young people at risk of offending as early as possible, ensuring that they are engaged with services which can bolster protective factors. This is particularly important for education services, adult social care, substance misuse services and family intervention project, in line with the 'think family' ethos as well as targeted youth crime prevention services. The planned reconfiguration of youth services in the city may have an impact on the consistency of this work in the next 12 months and the Safer Portsmouth Partnership should monitor carefully.

### **Drug Misuse**

There is a strong link between drug misuse, adult re-offenders and acquisitive crime, although serious acquisitive crimes have reduced substantially over the last two years. Drug users in Portsmouth stated shoplifting as the second most common method of funding drug use and drug misuse was identified as a criminogenic need for a third of adult offenders. Drug misuse was also identified as a key underlying issue for many crime and disorder types by Hampshire Constabulary's Portsmouth Strategic Summary.

Nationally, there was a reported reduction in drug use and there was a new national Drug Strategy (2010), which focuses on achieving recovery and supports the work undertaken in Portsmouth.

There are an estimated 1,400 problem drug users (using opiates and/or crack cocaine) in Portsmouth, accounting for approximately 1% of the working age population and most commonly males in the 25-34 year age group. Almost half of these problem drug users are in effective treatment.

## **Adult Re-offending**

This year's analysis continues to identify strong links with the other long-term underlying priorities of alcohol (third most common criminogenic need of offenders) and drug misuse (a third of offenders identified this as a criminogenic need) and the key indicators of violence (the most common offence committed by re-offenders) and acquisitive crime.

A relatively small number of known offenders in Portsmouth, one in six, are responsible for almost half of detected crime. Within this group, just under 5% of all offenders are responsible for almost 20% of detected offences

Only one in five offenders was not known for a previous offence. The level of previous offences and the length of criminal career were proven as factors in the level of re-offending in Portsmouth. For example, almost half of offenders were previously known for six or more offences, and this group were responsible for 80% of domestic burglary, theft from motor vehicles and theft of motor vehicles.

The key implication is that effective action against these small numbers of known re-offenders could have a significant impact on overall levels of crime in Portsmouth.

Research into the prolific and other priority offender (PPO) scheme in Portsmouth suggests that those with whom the scheme has worked have reduced their levels of offending on being enrolled on the scheme although there is some suggestion that these reductions are sustained for the first twelve months, offending begins to go up after twelve months (although not to previous levels). PPO research identified a need to improve recording and processes in relation to the current PPO scheme.

Compared to the average Portsmouth population, offenders were disproportionately likely to be male, in the age range 26-49 and/or resident in the PO1 postcode area (covering Charles Dickens, south Fratton and the west of St Thomas ward).

The rate of re-offending by prolific and other priority offenders, and class-A using re-offenders was lower than predicted, and there are a higher proportion of offenders in settled accommodation and in employment in Portsmouth than our neighbours. However, the level of re-offending by all adults in Portsmouth, as measured by the local adult re-offending measure, continues to be above the predicted rate.

## **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence accounted for just over a quarter of assaults in 2010/11, having increased for the second year in a row, and remains the largest driver category since 2006/07. The majority of victims were females and the majority of offenders were male. The number of incidents recorded by the police increased every year since 2006/07, but so did the number of incidents that went on to be recorded as crimes or violent crimes. There continue to be difficulties in getting consistent data about domestic abuse convictions. This needs to be resolved in order to get a true picture of the attrition rate of domestic abuse crimes in Portsmouth.

The level of repeat domestic incidents that were subject to a Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (showing how successfully serious incidents are dealt with) has remained fairly constant. Strong links to alcohol misuse were identified again.

## **Violent Crime**

Violent crime accounted for over a quarter of all crime in Portsmouth in 2010/11, and the number of violent crimes had reduced by 3% on last year. Portsmouth performed slightly better against its peers than in previous years, but is still above the average rate.

After domestic violence, the next two largest driver categories were youth related (17%) and night time economy related (15%) violence.

Youth related assaults continue to decrease, with young people being much more likely to be a victim rather than an offender, and the proportion of 'youth-on-youth' violence remaining low.

Night time economy related assaults appear to have plateaued at approximately 15% of all assaults. 40% of these assaults were linked to licensed premises. Accurate Hospital Emergency Department data was available this year following targeted work with reception staff. The majority of assault injuries the Emergency Department dealt with had involved alcohol. Males were over represented, but the peak age range for both genders was 18-24. Females were far more likely than males to have been assaulted in their own homes, whereas males were more likely to have been assaulted in the street or a bar/pub/club.

There are still approximately 40% of assaults which cannot be easily classified despite recommendations by the Violent Crime Strategy Group last year.

### **Acquisitive Crime**

Shop theft and theft from motor vehicles were identified by the scan as emerging issues. Despite reductions in shop theft from last year, this remains the largest acquisitive crime type and accounts for 15% of all recorded crime. Shop theft remained the most common offence for young people despite a successful 'shop lifting can ruin your life campaign' targeted at young people that contributed to a 50% reduction in the number of shop theft offences by young people in the run up to Christmas 2010.

There are strong links to long-term underlying priorities, in particular drug misuse and adult re-offending.

Excellent performance was achieved this year against the measure of serious acquisitive crime (burglary, robbery and vehicle crime).

### **Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)**

Incidents of anti social behaviour (ASB) across a range of measures have gone down compared to last year, but ASB remains a high volume issue and Portsmouth residents have a high perception of ASB. Criminal damage and arson have both decreased. All areas across the city have recorded decreases in ASB levels during 2010/11.

There are complex cases of ASB that require further analysis to identify the level, and the locations/victims/offenders so that actions can be targeted.

Young people are disproportionately responsible and blamed for ASB. However, they also have the highest perception of ASB as a problem in their local area.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 there has been a change to the ASB categories recorded by the police. The main categories are now: ASB Environmental, ASB Nuisance and ASB Personal. To aid analysis, each of these will also be broken down into seven ASB types that broadly match those previously used by the police.

Work is still required to explore the links/escalation from ASB to violence recommended by the Violent Crime Strategy Group as identified by the detailed analysis of violence in 2010.

The ASB Victims and Witness Review (2011) found that over 70% of ASB victims and witnesses that accessed services were satisfied. The review made a large number of recommendations to improve the services available.