



# Partnership Strategic Assessment of Crime, Anti-social Behaviour, Reoffending and Substance Misuse 2019/20

## Executive Summary

## Crime Trends

Overall **levels of crime have remained fairly stable for 2019/20** since last year's assessment, but detailed analysis shows that there is variation in the trends of different types of crime. Acquisitive crimes, such as shoplifting and burglary have decreased, but there have been notable increases in:

- Stalking & harassment
- Public order
- Domestic abuse
- Drug offences, and
- Robbery.

## Violence

In August 2019, Hampshire was awarded funding to set up a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to tackle serious violence, with a particular focus on youth violence and knife crime. The VRUs were tasked with producing a problem profile which would enable an evidence-based 'public health' style response. An update of this problem profile can be found in Chapter 7. **Levels of serious violence have remained fairly stable, despite the increases in robbery offences.** The findings of the problem profile have not changed significantly and **serious violence continues to be of concern.**

**Domestic abuse continues to be the most common known driver for violence**, accounting for approximately 40% of assaults. Most domestic violence offences are between spouses, partners and ex-partners, but **assaults between other family members have doubled since 2012/13.**

## Drug Use

**Drug use is becoming more of an issue in Portsmouth;** people using or dealing drugs is now the most commonly witnessed or experienced type of anti-social behaviour reported to the Community Safety Survey 2020, and the proportion of respondents reporting this type of ASB has increased substantially over the last few years. The number of drug possession and supply offences recorded by the police has also increased during the same time period along with increases in County Lines networks which supply heroin and crack cocaine. There has been an increase in people receiving treatment for drug dependence, but there hasn't been a corresponding increase in those successfully completing treatment, so the performance measures relating to the proportion of successful have reduced and compares poorly with the national rate.

## Young People at Risk

There is plentiful research that identifies risk and protective factors for young people. The ACEs research, amongst others, has demonstrated how not addressing risk factors for young people increases the likelihood of harmful lifestyle choices in adulthood. Therefore, **to address the key issues of serious violence, domestic abuse and drug misuse/dependency, early intervention with young people is key.**

This assessment has picked up a number of concerns, including:

- An increase in the proportion of year 10 pupils who have tried cannabis
- An increase in the young people considered at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation
- An increase in the number of First Time Entrants to the youth justice system

It is recommended that the work to populate the risk and protective factor framework is completed so that there is a better picture of the areas which need focus.

## Impact of Covid-19

The data period covered by this assessment is up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, so the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown and social distancing measures had minimal impact on findings. Therefore, the **crime trends for April to June 2020 were also analysed in Chapter 11. Most types of crime, particularly acquisitive crime, dipped in April and are gradually returning to pre-lockdown levels.** However, reports of anti-social behaviour have increased substantially during this quarter and there was a **higher level of public order and possession of a weapon offences**, often linked to people not following social distancing measures. **Drug possession and supply offences also continued to increase**, while County Line networks appear to have remained active but have adapted their model to bypass lockdown restrictions. There is also concern about the possibility of increased adulteration of substances to keep up with demand.

It was anticipated that domestic abuse would greatly increase during lockdown due to the stresses of families spending increased time together, alongside pressures of home-schooling and working from home and financial instability or hardship. During April to June 2020, there was a slight increase in domestic abuse crimes reported to the police (4%), but not as much as expected. While the national Domestic Abuse hotline saw large increases in calls, there was a marginal increase in high risk referrals, and no increase in medium risk referrals during this time. However, **it is likely that the levels of domestic abuse are higher than the reported crimes suggest, but that the lockdown measures have provided less opportunity for people experiencing domestic abuse to seek support or help, or to engage with specialist services.**

The **situation with regards to the Covid-19 pandemic is uncertain**, and has already had far-reaching impacts on many aspects of people's lives, including emotional and mental health, financial stress or hardship, and physical health where there are long lasting effects from suffering from Covid-19 or being unable to access timely treatment for acute or chronic

conditions. **The full extent of the impact, particularly on children and young people, is unlikely to be known for many years.** However, opportunities have arisen for radically changing the way people work, with a move towards working online from home or using technology to aid collaboration between teams and organisations. These changes are likely to have an impact on crime and crime reporting.

## Key Priorities

Taking all of this into account, it is recommended that the following are the key priorities for the partnership:

- **Tackling violent crime; continuing to focus on domestic abuse, serious violence, and knife-enabled violence**
- **Tackling drug misuse in the city**
- **Early identification of and interventions with children and young people at risk of exploitation or abuse, of misusing substances and of perpetrating anti-social behaviour or offending**