

Sandwell Strategic Needs Assessment Serious Violence 2023

Ensuring that the communities of Sandwell feel safe, protected and confident in their homes and neighbourhoods.

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Foreword

As the chair of the Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board I am extremely proud of the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment 2023 and grateful to the authors who have worked tirelessly to produce such a detailed document .

It brings to the fore the challenges that Sandwell communities are facing as a result of known drivers for violence. It is a must read for anyone who has a desire to prevent violence, improve the life chances of local communities or hold partners to account for change.

We have committed as a partnership to turning the themes in this report into action, knowing that through a Public Health approach, violence is not inevitable and as a result we will strive to make Sandwell Safer. We will do this in collaboration with communities and the Violence Reduction Partnership, tackling issues at their root cause by delivering against the recommendations made in line with our responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty

Chief Superintendent Madill



Executive Summary

The Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) for Sandwell identifies serious violence as a complex issue that requires effective prevention and intervention strategies. An urgent need for investment in early intervention and prevention programs based on an evidence-based theory of change is highlighted. The use of technology and data analytics can improve the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies, and education and awareness-raising initiatives can promote positive attitudes towards such prevention.

The SNA identifies a range of challenges facing Sandwell including: domestic abuse; sexual assault; modern slavery; child exploitation; knife and gun crime and violence against people. The economic and social costs of crime are significant and wide-ranging, impacting individuals and society as a whole. A holistic approach that considers the underlying factors contributing to violence, such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality, is emphasised.

Multi-agency collaboration is essential for tackling the root causes of violence and a coordinated and integrated approach is needed to create safer communities. The SNA identifies gaps in existing commissioned services and where further investment is needed to support effective prevention and intervention. Data collaboration is essential, and ongoing evaluation and monitoring of serious violence trends are crucial to ensure that prevention and intervention efforts are evidence-based and effective.

Overall, the SNA provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing Sandwell and the urgent need for effective prevention and intervention strategies based on an evidence-based theory of change. By taking a coordinated and strategic approach that is grounded in an evidence-based theory of change, Sandwell can make real progress in reducing the incidence and impact of serious violence and create safer communities for all.

Methodology

The following methodology was developed and implemented for the Sandwell Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) on serious violence:

- **Literature Review:** A comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify best practice interventions for preventing and reducing serious violence. This included a review of relevant academic literature, government reports, and local policies and strategies
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Multiple data sources were utilised including police recorded crime data, health data, census data and local authority data to identify trends and patterns of serious violence in Sandwell. The data was analysed using various statistical methods to identify correlations and patterns
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** A wide range of stakeholders were engaged in the process including: local authorities; police; health services; community organisations and residents. Engagement methods included surveys, focus groups, interviews, and workshops. The Sandwell Shape Forum helped to capture the voice of young people affected by serious violence and their recommendations for interventions
- **Deep Dives:** Deep dives were undertaken into young repeat offenders, domestic abuse homicides, weapons and schools and sexual exploitation in relation to Romanian nationals to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and identify effective interventions
- **Local Problem Profiles:** Local problem profiles were developed for priority areas in relation to: domestic abuse; sexual assault and abuse; modern slavery; child exploitation; violence against the person; knife crime, and firearm offences
- **Economic Costs of Crime:** Home Office calculations for the economic costs of crime were used to inform decision-making around interventions

Early intervention and Prevention

- Sandwell faces challenges related to various forms of serious violence.
- Prioritize evidence-based prevention strategies and support for at-risk individuals.
- Investment in early intervention programs is crucial for long-term reduction of serious violence.
- Tailored interventions considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are needed.
- Education and awareness initiatives promote positive attitudes towards violence prevention.

System Challenges and Effective Partnerships

- Lack of coordination and data-sharing hinders addressing root causes of serious violence.
- Improved collaboration and information-sharing among agencies is necessary.
- Crime in Sandwell has significant economic and social costs.
- High referrals to social care indicate complex needs and vulnerability.
- Data collection and analysis on exclusions and transitions need improvement.

Disproportionality :

- Inequalities and disproportionality contribute to serious violence in Sandwell.
- Young people, particularly affected by knife and gun crime, are disproportionately involved.
- Poverty and social exclusion increase the likelihood of involvement in crime.
- Sandwell has higher rates of serious violence offences and prior offences compared to the national average.
- Children in care are more involved in the criminal justice system.
- COVID-19 has increased rates of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and child exploitation.
- Low attendance and high exclusion rates indicate academic and behavioral challenges.

Public Health Approach

- Sandwell has observed increases in most forms of violence in the past five years.
- Poverty and social exclusion are strongly correlated with serious violence.
- Promote holistic approaches addressing underlying social and economic factors.
- Education and awareness initiatives foster positive attitudes and a culture of safety.
- Utilize technology and data analytics for improved prevention and intervention.
- Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of serious violence trends are crucial.

Key Messages

Early intervention and prevention is key to reducing serious violence including support for families, schools and community organisations.

Addressing disproportionality for those involved in serious violence including those from black and minority ethnic communities, is critical to reducing disparities and promoting equity.

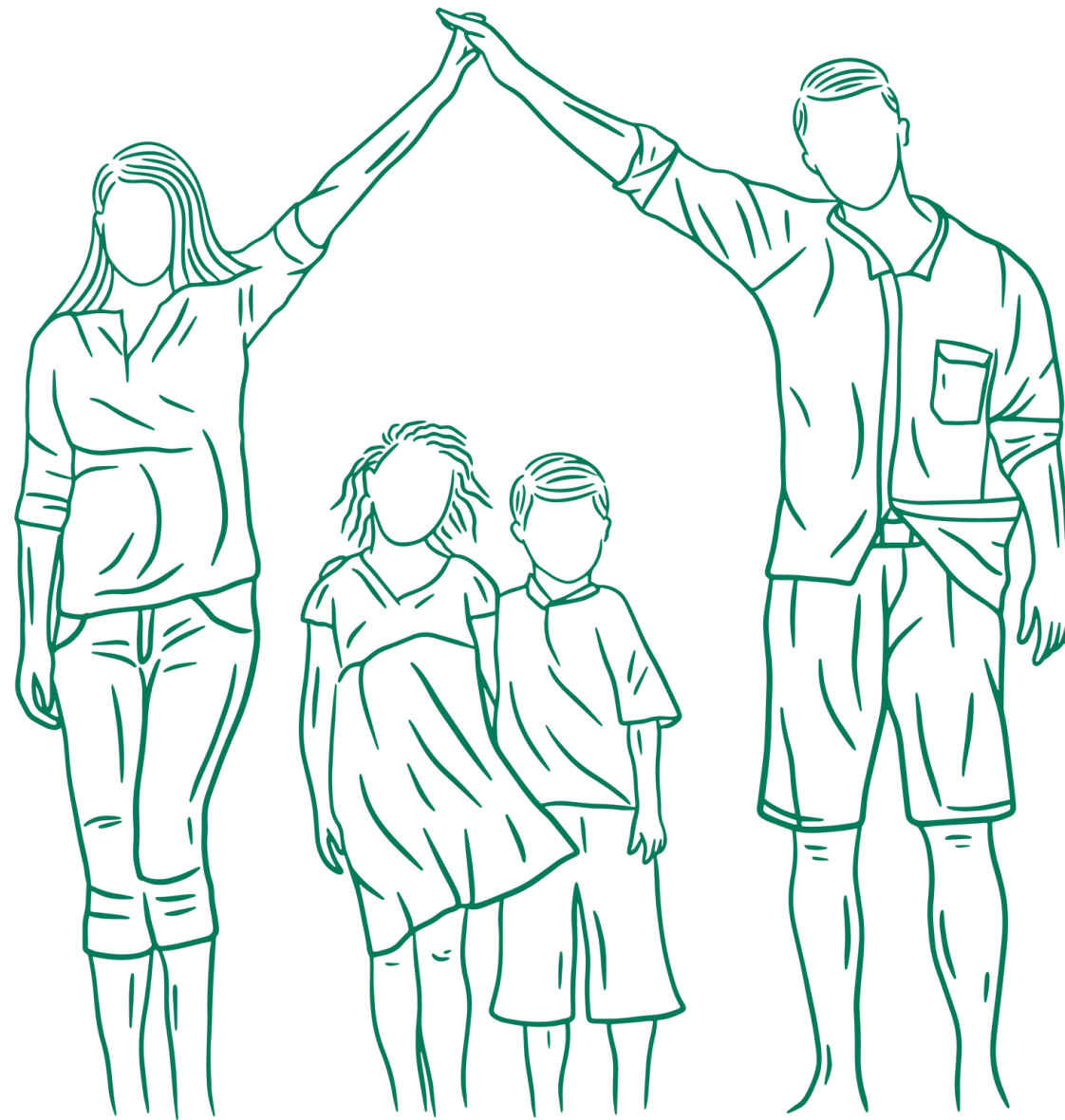
Effective partnerships and collaboration between agencies including local authorities, police, health and the voluntary sector are essential to ensure a coordinated response to serious violence.

A public health approach that focuses on the underlying causes of violence, including poverty, inequality and social exclusion can help to prevent violence before it occurs.

Engaging with young people and empowering them to make positive choices can help to reduce their risk of involvement in serious violence.

Improving data collection and collaboration between agencies is crucial for developing effective strategies and measuring progress in reducing serious violence.

Serious violence around school attendance requires collective action. Early intervention, addressing disparities, effective partnerships, a public health approach, engaging with young people, and improving data collection are key to reducing violence.



Why do we need a Strategic Needs Assessment for serious violence?

A Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) for serious violence is a critical tool for understanding the root causes and contributing factors of violent crime. Sandwell has experienced a consistent increase in violence over the past few years, which is also a trend seen on a regional and national level. To address this the government has implemented the Serious Violence Duty, aimed at reducing serious violence through a multi-agency approach focused on prevention and early intervention, informed by evidence. The ambition is for Sandwell to be able to demonstrate effective partnership working to prevent and reduce serious violence.

What is the scope of the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA)?

The Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) for serious violence has three key objectives:

- Understand established and emerging trends in serious violence and identify high-risk locations and issues
- Provide an evidence-based analysis of violent crime types, drivers of crime and the most vulnerable cohorts
- Identify data or intelligence gaps and improve analysis

These objectives will help develop effective interventions and measure progress towards enhancing community safety and security. By gaining a better understanding of serious violence in our communities and identifying high-risk areas and issues, targeted interventions can be developed to reduce violent crime. Providing evidence-based analysis of violent crime types, drivers of crime and vulnerable cohorts will help develop more effective interventions and support victims. Identifying data or intelligence gaps and improving analysis will also enable better informed decisions and measure the impact of interventions.

The following areas will be the main focus of the SNA:

Domestic Abuse

Sexual Assault and Abuse

Modern Slavery

Child Exploitation

Violence Against The Person (knife, gun crime and homicides)

Definition of Serious Violence

Serious violence is defined as any form of violence that results in or has the potential to cause significant harm to an individual, a community or society as a whole.

To adhere to the government's guidance for defining serious violence, as outlined in the Serious Violence Strategy (2018), the Safer Sandwell Partnership definition encompasses a range of offences including: crimes involving knives or guns; domestic abuse; sexual violence and criminal activities that involve serious violence or its threat such as county lines drug dealing.

Additionally, the definition includes public space violent crimes that are often associated with the night-time economy. A coordinated and collaborative response from a range of agencies and partners including law enforcement, health services, education providers and community organisations, is required to address the complex issue of serious violence.

How Will We Measure Success?

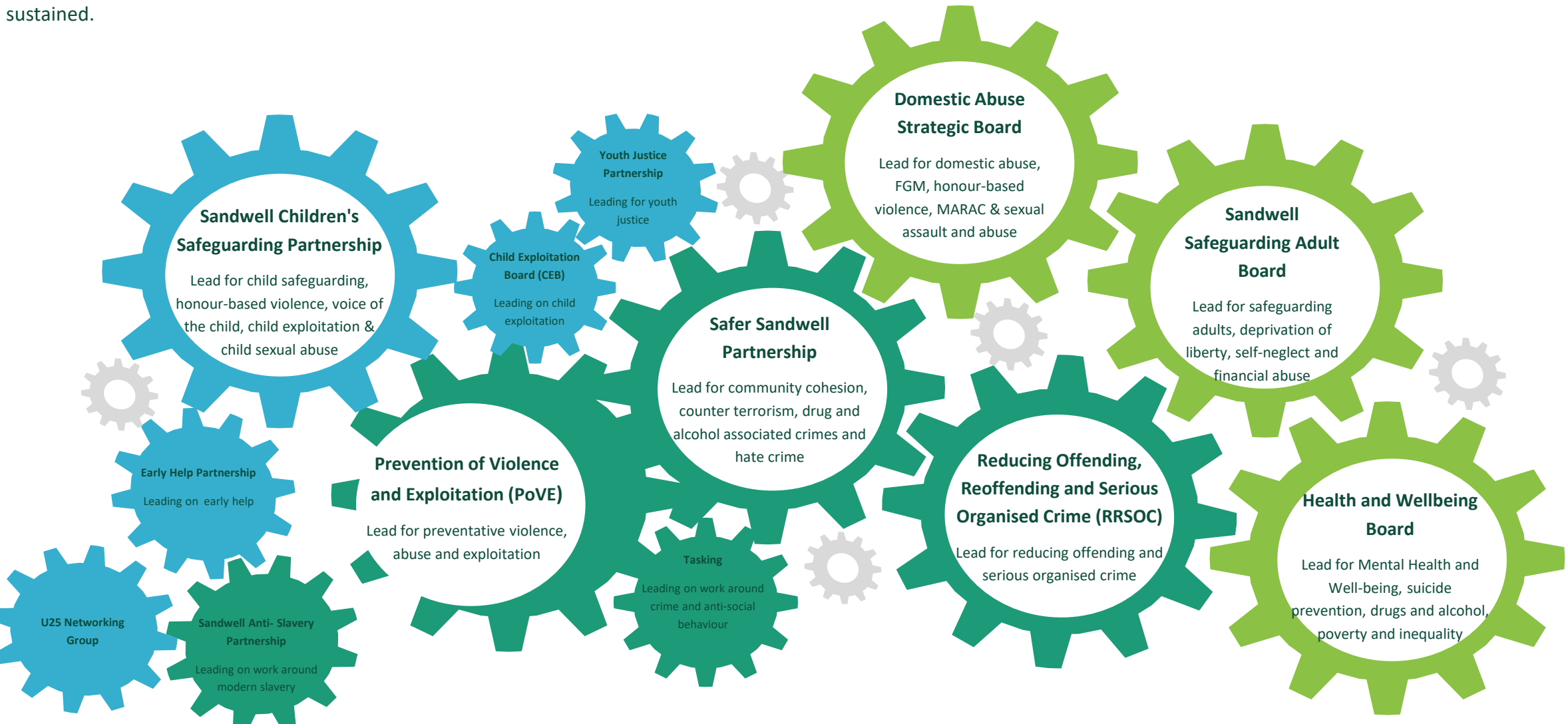
Local partners will incorporate the findings of the SNA to develop a plan that includes specific action recommendations. The Home Office has established performance metrics to aid in fulfilling this responsibility which encompass:



Sandwell Serious Violence Governance

The governance arrangements in Sandwell are designed to support effective partnership working. The Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board is the main body responsible for leading on the prevention and reduction of violence, abuse and exploitation. The Board is supported by a sub-group that focuses on prevention and reduction of violence. Other strategic boards, sub-groups and forums provide additional support and collaboration on these issues.

Community Safety Partnerships are essential in this structure, as they bring together representatives from various agencies and organisations to address community safety issues. These partnerships ensure that efforts to prevent and reduce violence are coordinated and effective. By working together, the Safer Sandwell Partnership can enhance safety, security and assurance for its residents. The governance arrangements in place also ensure that everyone involved is working towards the same goal and that efforts are integrated, effective, and sustained.



UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT FOR SERIOUS VIOLENCE

The following section provides an overview of the current situation and context for serious violence. This includes an examination of the definitions and types of serious violence, as well as an analysis of the factors that contribute to its occurrence.

This section also explores the impact of serious violence on individuals and communities, as well as the current strategies and approaches being used to address it. By understanding the current situation and context for serious violence, we can better identify and implement effective prevention and intervention strategies to reduce its occurrence and mitigate its impact.



Serious Violence is Rising

In the last decade, local, national, and international data consistently indicate a rise in incidents of violence.

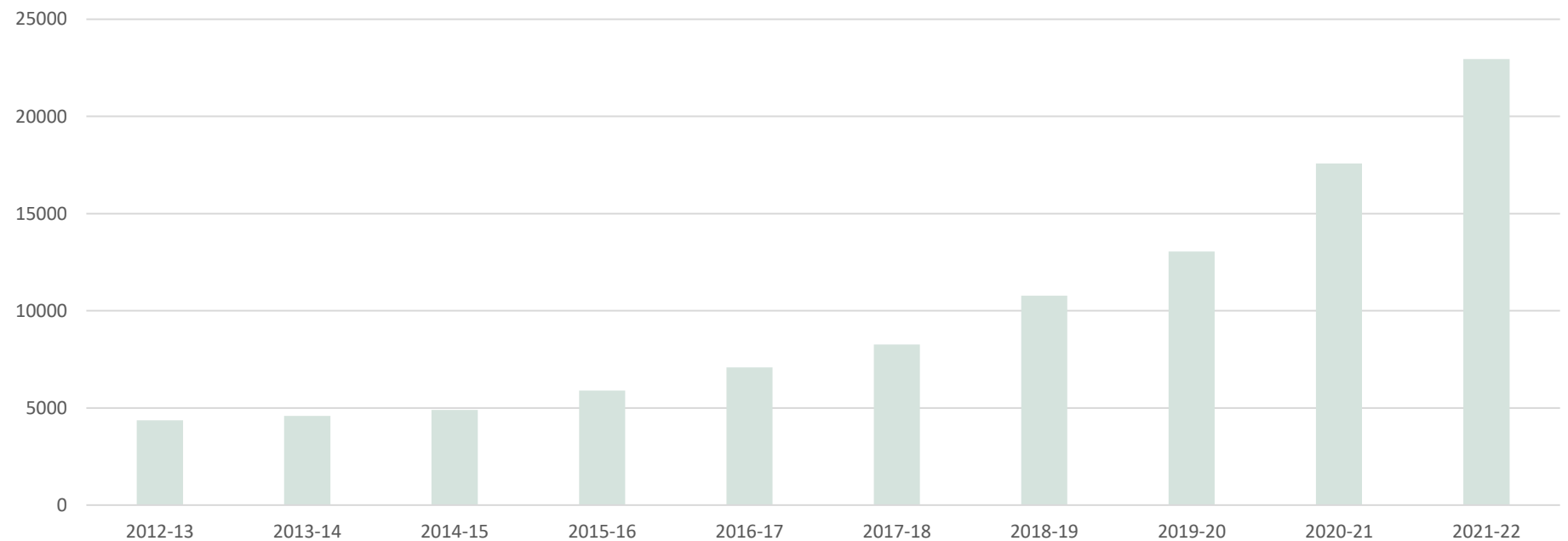
This can be attributed to better recording systems, increased awareness, targeted interventions, and multi-agency partnerships. In the past 10 years, reported incidents of violence have increased fivefold, from just over 4,000 to over 20,000.

Highest Recorded Number of Offences

Based on the report "[Serious Violence in Context: Understanding the Scale and Nature of Serious Violence](#)" there are some clear applications we can apply to Sandwell including:

- The current situation and context for serious violence is complex and challenging
- There has been an increase in the number of incidents in the area similar to the national picture
- The cost of serious violence in Sandwell is substantial, estimated at over £550 million in the 2021-2022 period
- Poverty, social exclusion and youth unemployment are key risk factors for serious violence in Sandwell
- Early intervention and prevention strategies are crucial, including outreach to at-risk groups, support for victims and their families, and targeted educational and employment opportunities for young people
- Effective partnerships between local authorities, community organisations and law enforcement are crucial in addressing serious violence in Sandwell
- A comprehensive multi-agency approach is needed to reduce serious violence

Reports of violence, abuse and exploitation in Sandwell



Understanding Sandwell's Population and Links to Violence

Understanding the context of violence in Sandwell is crucial for developing effective prevention strategies. The latest census data is a valuable source of information for identifying vulnerable populations and high-crime areas.

Sandwell has a young, diverse population with high levels of deprivation, poverty, low educational attainment and unemployment. By using census data, targeted interventions can be developed to meet the specific needs of local communities and improve overall safety and well-being.

Population



The 11% rise in Sandwell since 2011 is the highest in the West Midlands



Age Structure

| | |
|-----------------|-------|
| Aged 14 & Below | 20.8% |
| Aged 15-24 | 12.4% |
| Aged 25-64 | 52.2% |
| Aged 65 & Above | 14.5% |

Ethnicity

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| White British | 65.8% |
| Asian | 19.2% |
| Black | 6.0% |
| Other White | 4.1% |
| Mixed | 3.3% |
| Other | 1.6% |

Sandwell

- Located in the West Midlands
- Borders the fellow Black Country boroughs of Dudley, Walsall & Wolverhampton & also Birmingham
- Six towns - Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury & West Bromwich
- Covers 32.9 square miles
- The M5 & M6 motorways & railways including the West Coast Mainline & the Midland Metro go through the borough
- Deprivation is spread across Sandwell



Life Expectancy (years)



76.1 80.7
Male Female



Expected years lived in 'Poor Health'

14.5 20.2

Deprivation



The darker the more deprived Sandwell is the 12th most deprived overall & 16th most deprived affecting children out of 317 local authorities

Education

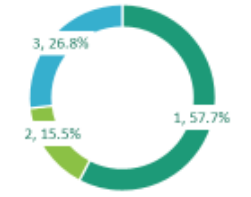


27.2%
Degree or above
74.0%
GCSE or above

Housing



133,085
Dwellings in borough



Employment



69.7%
Economically Active

18.0%
Workless Households

Jobs Density

Around 2 jobs for every 3 working age person (0.63)

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A Young Borough

33% of the population of Sandwell were under 25, which is higher than the average for England and Wales (29%)

A Diverse Borough

34% of residents are from black and minority ethnic communities

30% of children living in Sandwell do not have English as a first language

Deprivation

Sandwell is the 12th most deprived overall & 16th most deprived affecting children out of 317 local authorities

Around 24% of households in Sandwell are income deprived with 30% of children in Sandwell living in poverty

Low Educational Attainment

Almost a third (32%) of children did not achieve a good level of educational development at Early Years Foundation Stage

Around 50% of the population are educated to a Level 2 or above

Growing Population

The 11% rise in population in Sandwell since 2011 is the highest in the West Midlands

High Levels of Unemployment

25.5% of the working age population are out of work due to long term sickness

31.3% of the working age population are out of work as they are looking after the family/home

Understanding Where Violence Happens

Serious violence can occur in a variety of settings including public places such as streets, parks, and shopping centres, as well as in private places such as homes and other buildings. It may also occur in institutions such as schools, prisons and care homes.

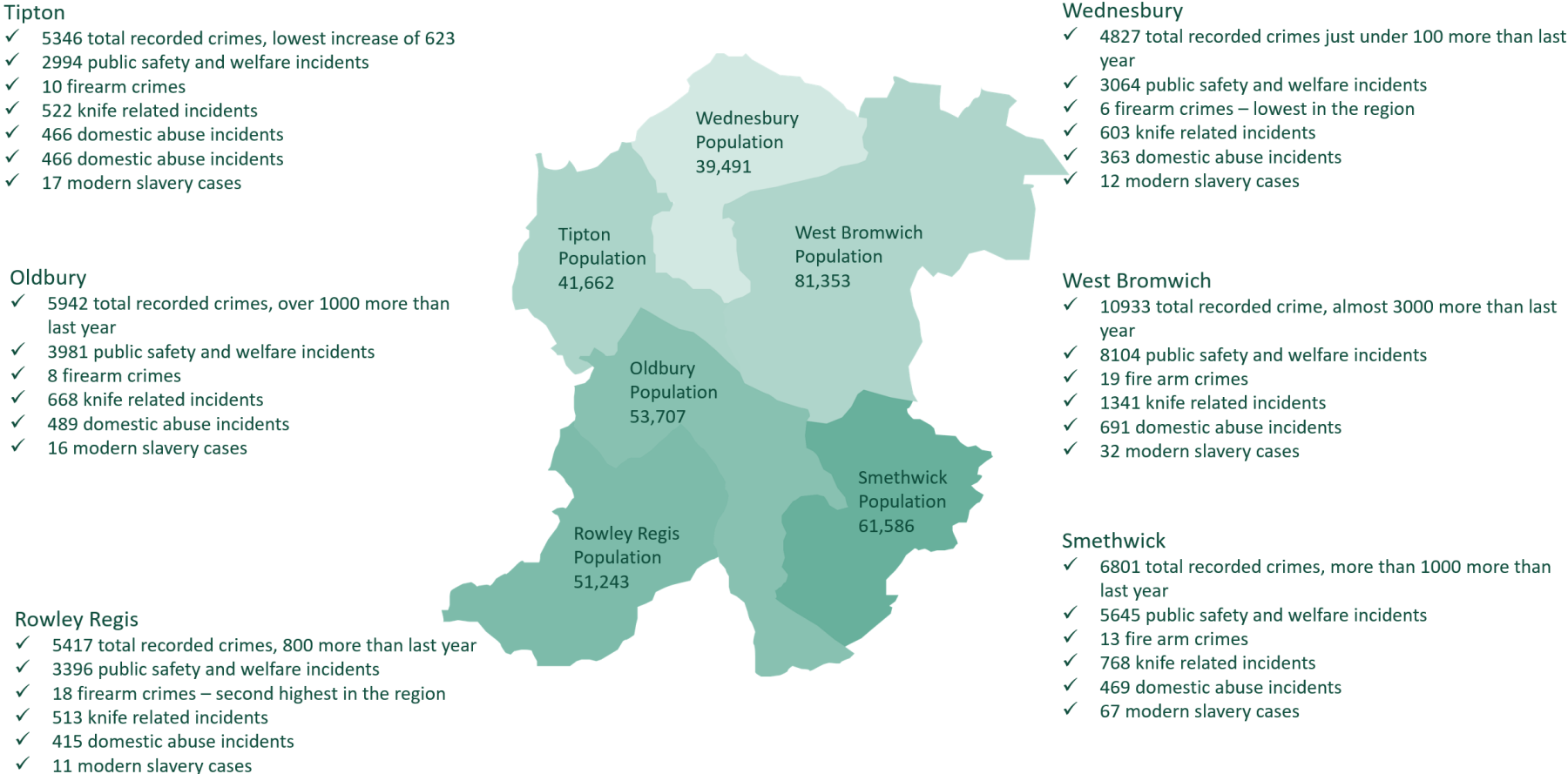
The location and context of serious violence can vary depending on the type of violence and the individuals involved. For example, gang-related violence may be more likely to occur in specific neighbourhoods or areas where gangs operate, while domestic violence may be more likely to occur in the home.

Understanding where serious violence occurs in Sandwell involves looking at population data and serious violence data together.

- All towns in Sandwell, except Tipton, have observed a rise in the overall number of recorded crimes
- Smethwick and West Bromwich have the highest total number of recorded crimes
- Tipton and Oldbury have a higher number of public safety and welfare incidents compared to other towns, while West Bromwich has the highest number overall
- Rowley Regis ranks second in the region for firearm crimes, while West Bromwich has the highest number of firearm crimes
- Smethwick stands out with a considerable number of modern slavery cases compared to other towns in Sandwell

Understanding the specific locations and contexts where serious violence occurs can help in developing targeted interventions and prevention strategies.

Serious Violence across Sandwell 2021-2022



Breaking Down Violence in Sandwell


Cross-referencing data on violence against census and population data is a crucial step in understanding the incidence of serious violence in Sandwell. By breaking down the data to a hypothetical town of 100, it can be seen that rates of violence are relatively similar across all towns in Sandwell.

This, in turn, can help to identify patterns and trends to inform understanding of the root causes of violence and to develop more effective strategies for addressing and reducing violence in these areas.

To help understand where serious violence occurs in Sandwell, a number of approaches have been adopted including:

- Breaking down the incidences of violence data into a hypothetical town of 100 people which shows that rates of serious violence are spread out relatively evenly across all towns in Sandwell
- By cross-referencing data on violence against census and population data, it can be seen how incidences of violence compare to other towns and areas within Sandwell and beyond
- Analysing demographic data (age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status) can help identify patterns and trends related to serious violence in the Borough
- This information can inform understanding of the root causes of violence and help partners to develop more effective strategies for addressing and reducing violence in Sandwell

Population




| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Wednesbury | 41,662 |
| Tipton | 41,662 |
| Rowley | 51,243 |
| Oldbury | 53,707 |
| Smethwick | 61,586 |
| West Bromwich | 81,353 |

Sandwell **341,832**



49 would be male
51 would be female

Under 25



| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| Wednesbury | 33 people |
| Tipton | 35 people |
| Rowley | 33 people |
| Oldbury | 33 people |
| Smethwick | 39 people |
| West Bromwich | 33 people |

Sandwell **33 people** would be under 25

Ethnic minority



| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| Wednesbury | 19 people |
| Tipton | 19 people |
| Rowley | 12 people |
| Oldbury | 28 people |
| Smethwick | 56 people |
| West Bromwich | 35 people |

Sandwell **30 people** would be from an ethnic minority

Children first language not English

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Wednesbury | 24 children |
| Tipton | 24 children |
| Rowley | 14 children |
| Oldbury | 29 children |
| Smethwick | 53 children |
| West Bromwich | 38 children |

30 children would not have English as their first language

Deprivation



| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| Wednesbury | 26 people |
| Tipton | 28 people |
| Rowley | 22 people |
| Oldbury | 21 people |
| Smethwick | 27 people |
| West Bromwich | 22 people |

Sandwell **24 people** would live in income deprived households

Child poverty



| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Wednesbury | 26 children |
| Tipton | 35 children |
| Rowley | 28 children |
| Oldbury | 26 children |
| Smethwick | 32 children |
| West Bromwich | 28 children |

Sandwell **30 children** would live in poverty

If Sandwell towns were 100 people



- Violence patterns across towns are generally similar when compared to town populations
- Smethwick and Tipton have a higher number of individuals under the age of 25 compared to other towns
- Smethwick and West Bromwich have higher levels of individuals from ethnic minorities and children with a first language other than English
- Tipton has the highest number of individuals living in income-deprived households and children living in poverty
- Tipton and West Bromwich have the highest number of crime victims
- Smethwick and West Bromwich have the highest number of public safety and welfare incidents
- Except for West Bromwich, towns experience similar volumes of knife-related incidents
- While domestic abuse cases vary across towns, the number of victims supported by IDVAs is consistent when adjusted for population
- National data underrepresents domestic abuse, which does not correlate with the statistic of 1 in 4 women or 1 in 6 men experiencing domestic abuse, which would translate to 12 victims in Sandwell

Victims of a crime



| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Wednesbury | 12 victims |
| Tipton | 13 victims |
| Rowley | 11 victims |
| Oldbury | 11 victims |
| Smethwick | 11 victims |
| West Bromwich | 13 victims |

Sandwell **11 people** would be a victim of crime

Public safety/welfare



| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Wednesbury | 8 victims |
| Tipton | 7 victims |
| Rowley | 7 victims |
| Oldbury | 7 victims |
| Smethwick | 9 victims |
| West Bromwich | 10 victims |

Sandwell **8 people** would have a public safety and welfare incident

Knife incidents



| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Wednesbury | 1 victim |
| Tipton | 1 victim |
| Rowley | 1 victim |
| Oldbury | 1 victim |
| Smethwick | 1 victim |
| West Bromwich | 2 victim |

Sandwell **1 person** would be a victim of knife crime

Domestic abuse



| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Wednesbury | 1 victim |
| Tipton | 1 victim |
| Rowley | 1 victim |
| Oldbury | 1 victim |
| Smethwick | 1 victim |
| West Bromwich | 1 victim |

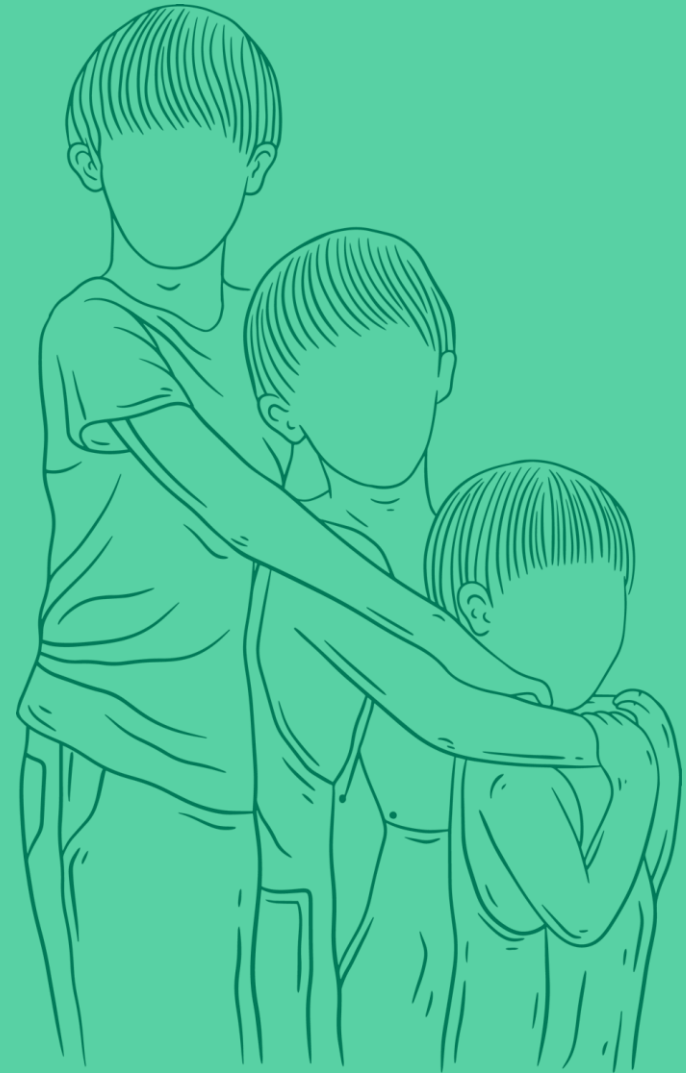
1 person would be supported by an IDVA

IDENTIFYING THE DRIVERS OF SERIOUS VIOLENCE

Violence is a complex and multi-dimensional issue that affects individuals, families, communities and societies around the world. Serious violence in particular, has devastating consequences for victims and their families, as well as for the wider community. To effectively prevent serious violence it is important to understand the drivers and risk factors that contribute to its occurrence.

This chapter explores some of the key drivers of serious violence, with a focus on the context of Sandwell, a Borough in the West Midlands region of England. The various risk factors associated with serious violence, including poverty, unemployment, exposure to violence and mental health are explored and how different strategies can be employed to prevent serious violence, particularly among young people. By gaining a deeper understanding of the drivers of serious violence, more effective prevention strategies can be developed to help to build safer and more resilient communities.

This chapter will focus on the six key drivers of crime and prevention strategies based on The Modern Crime Prevention Strategy 2016 which include the following: opportunity; character; effectiveness of the criminal justice system; profit; drugs and alcohol.



| | Opportunity | Character | Effectiveness of Criminal Justice System (CJS) | Profit | Drugs | Alcohol |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Strategy | Removing the opportunity to offend reduces the likelihood that an individual will engage in violent or criminal behaviour by removing the triggers, temptations and incentives that contribute to the behaviour | Character can play a significant role in the likelihood of an individual engaging in violent behaviour. Certain personality traits and behavioural patterns can increase the risk of violent behaviour, while others can reduce the risk | Ensuring that the CJS acts as a powerful deterrent to would-be offenders. The CJS plays a critical role in maintaining public safety and holding individuals accountable for their actions | Making it harder for criminals particularly organised criminals, to benefit financially from their crimes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent drug misuse in our communities Help people resist getting involved in drugs Support people dependent on drugs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making the night time economy safe Understanding links between alcohol and other types of violence |
| Key findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime increases when there are more opportunities to offend Crime falls when the number of opportunities is reduced Opportunities flourish when crimes are hidden Crime can be prevented by removing the opportunity to commit it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small minority of people commit the majority of crimes Individuals who are impulsive, aggressive and have poor self-control may be more likely to engage in violent behaviour, especially in response to triggers such as stress, anger or frustration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge and arrest rates have collapsed as recorded crime has increased The increasing time from offence to charge has added to rising court waiting times Charge rates for serious violence are declining | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profit is the primary motivation for most organised crime Profit can also drive spikes in certain types of high-volume theft Profit driven offenders are adaptive, switching their focus in response to enforcement action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a well-established link between drugs markets and violence. The drugs market is changing and becoming increasingly associated with violence and exploitation Drug-related violence can occur as a result of disputes over drug transactions, such as disagreements over price or quality or the enforcement of drug debts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol is a known risk factor for violent behaviour Alcohol impairs judgment, reduces inhibitions and increases impulsiveness which can all increase the risk of violent behaviour Alcohol consumption is often associated with social contexts in which violence is more likely to occur such as bars, parties, and other social gatherings |
| What works from evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging retailers to take steps to ensure knives can not be easily accessed or stolen. Continue to carryout test purchase operations Targeted searches of habitual knife carriers, weapons sweeps and use of knife bins Continue delivering measures designed to deter young people from carrying knives CCTV operations in areas where there is more violence Focused deterrence – communicating the consequences of violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reachable, teachable moments Building positive character traits and increasing young people’s abilities to make good decisions and achieve positive life outcomes Set out what can be done to help those who are at more immediate risk of becoming involved in crime Intensive support for those who have become habitual offenders Mentoring – providing guidance and support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater use of Out of Court Disposals Pre-court diversion, diverting children who have committed low-level offences away from the criminal justice system Restorative justice, supporting someone who has committed a crime to communicate with the victim to understand the impact of their actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to target profit as a driver of organised crime by preventing crimes that currently generate large amounts of money for criminals Making it harder for criminals to release any illegal profits they make Some forms of economic exploitation and inequality can contribute to poverty, social marginalisation, and political instability, which can increase the risk of violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the demand for drugs can reduce the crime it drives too Ensure that low level drug offenders are diverted towards treatment and harm prevention where appropriate Greater use of Out of Court Disposals and Community Sentence Treatment Requirements. Monitor disproportionality in the use of diversion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local intelligence to better inform decisions taken about the sale of alcohol Establishing effective local partnerships, so that people can enjoy a safe night out without fear of becoming a victim of alcohol-related crime or disorder Well-managed premises working in partnership with the police, reduces the risk of drug and alcohol related harm and exploitation |

UNDERSTANDING RISK

Violent crime is a serious problem that affects individuals, families and communities, causing physical and emotional harm that can last for years. Understanding the risk factors associated with serious violence is essential for preventing violent incidents and protecting vulnerable people.

In this chapter, the various risk factors associated with serious violence including individual, family, community and societal factors are explored. Relevant research and systematic reviews are used to identify the most significant indicators of risk and offer insights into effective prevention strategies. By understanding the factors that contribute to serious violence, more targeted interventions that address the root causes of violent behaviour and protect those who are most at risk can be developed.

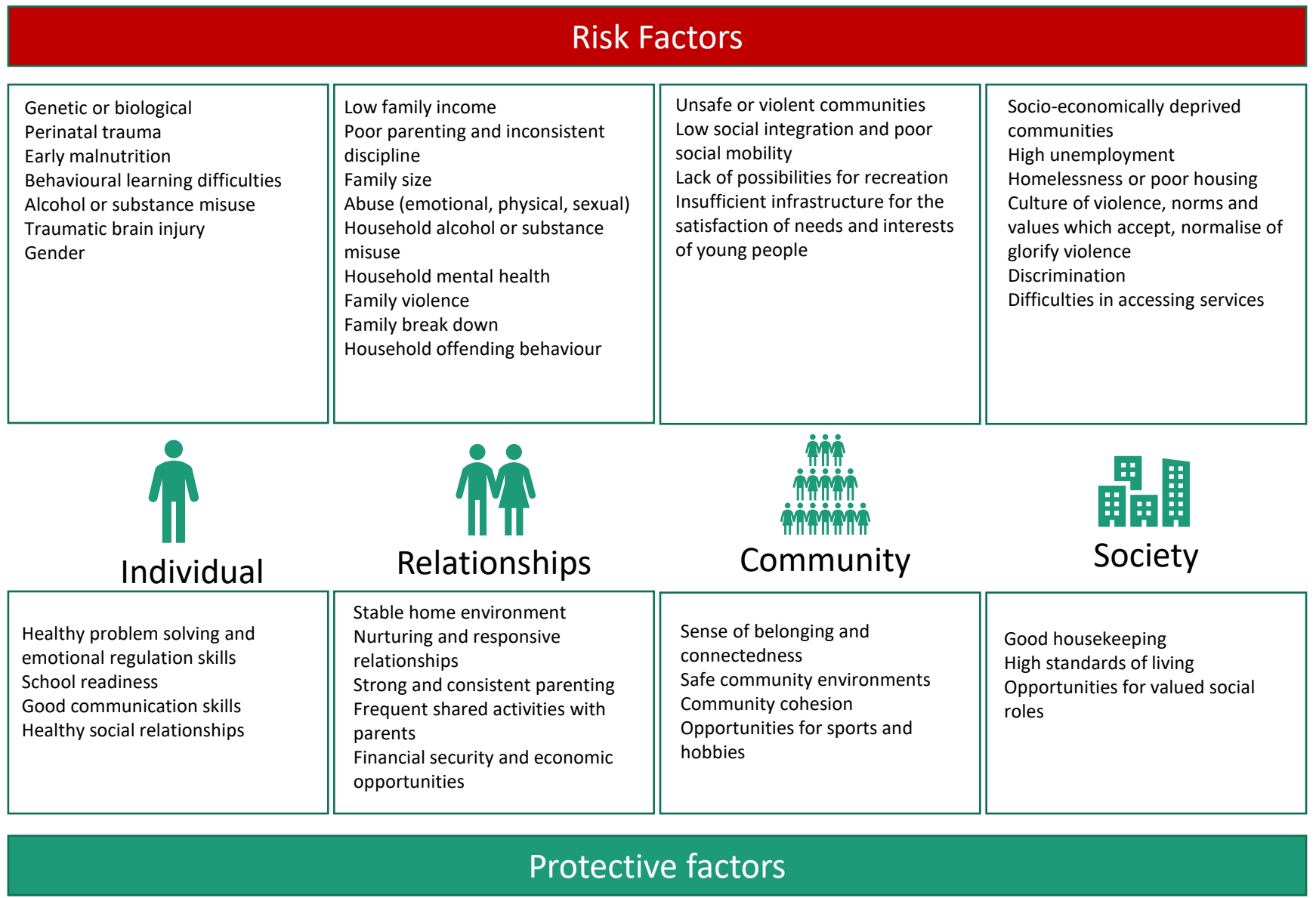


Understanding Risk

A **risk factor** is a characteristic or attribute that increases an individual's susceptibility to become a victim or perpetrator of serious violence. In contrast, a **protective factor** is a characteristic or attribute that reduces an individual's likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of serious violence or serves as a buffer against the effects of risk factors.

Protective factors can include: positive relationships; access to support services; effective communication and problem-solving skills and a strong sense of self-worth among others. By identifying and addressing both risk and protective factors, strategies can be developed to mitigate the likelihood of serious violence occurrence

The causes of violence are multiple and complex. It is important to understand that there is no single cause of serious violence – it arises from a complex interplay between a wide range of risk factors operating within and across individual, relationship, community and societal domains. The chart below shows the risk factors which increase the likelihood of violence and protective factors which mitigate against such perpetration or becoming the victim of violence (11-16) as identified in the [Multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention](#).



Sandwell Risk Factors

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Alcohol or substance misuse: Sandwell has high levels of alcohol and drug misuse which can increase the likelihood of violence</p> <p>Gender: Men are more likely to commit violent acts than women and Sandwell has a higher proportion of men than women</p> <p>Early malnutrition: Sandwell has high levels of deprivation and poverty which can lead to malnutrition and developmental problems in children</p> <p>Perinatal trauma: Sandwell has a high rate of premature births which can increase the risk of developmental problems and behavioural difficulties</p> | <p>Family violence: Sandwell has high levels of domestic violence which can increase the risk of violent behaviour</p> <p>Poor parenting and inconsistent discipline: Sandwell has high levels of deprivation and poverty which can lead to parenting difficulties and inconsistent discipline</p> <p>Household mental health: Sandwell has high levels of mental health problems which can impact parenting and increase the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> | <p>Unsafe or violent communities: Sandwell has high levels of violent crime and anti-social behaviour which can increase the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>Low social integration and poor social mobility: Sandwell has high levels of deprivation and poverty which can lead to social exclusion and poor social mobility</p> <p>Lack of possibilities for recreation: Sandwell has limited opportunities for recreation and leisure activities which can lead to boredom and increased anti-social behaviour</p> | <p>Socio-economically deprived communities: Sandwell has high levels of deprivation and poverty which can lead to social exclusion and increased risk of violent behaviour</p> <p>Culture of violence: Sandwell has high levels of violent crime and anti-social behaviour which can contribute to a culture of violence and increase the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>Difficulties in accessing services: Sandwell has limited access to social and health services which can increase the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> |
|---|--|---|--|



Individual



Relationships



Community



Society

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Good communication skills: Developing strong communication skills can reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>Healthy social relationships: Building positive relationships with others can provide support and reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>Healthy problem solving and emotional regulation skills: Developing these skills can help individuals manage their emotions and reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> | <p>Stable home environment: A stable and supportive home environment can reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>Nurturing and responsive relationships: Positive relationships with family members can provide support and reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>Strong and consistent parenting: Consistent discipline and strong parental support can reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> | <p>Sense of belonging and connectedness: Building a sense of community can reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>Safe community environments: A safe and secure community can reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>Community cohesion: Building strong relationships between community members can reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> | <p>Good housing: Adequate housing and resources can reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>High standards of living: Access to education, employment and healthcare can reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> <p>Opportunities for valued social roles: Opportunities for meaningful social roles and community involvement can reduce the likelihood of violent behaviour</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

Protective factors

Sandwell's risk profile of serious violence is influenced by risk factors which increase the likelihood of violence and protective factors which mitigate against perpetration or victimisation of violence (11-16) as identified in the [Multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention](#)

Additional Risks to Consider

The issue of serious violence in Sandwell is complex and multifaceted and requires a nuanced understanding of the various factors that contribute to it. Risks associated with serious violence include poverty, social exclusion, adverse childhood experiences, mental health issues, substance misuse, school exclusion and absence, ethnic disproportionality, online risks, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing these risks requires tailored interventions that take into account the specific needs and experiences of young people in Sandwell and which focus on early intervention, prevention and support services. By addressing these risks, the partnership can work towards creating a safer and more equitable community for all.

Poverty, social exclusion and serious violence:

- Holistic approaches needed
- Address underlying social and economic factors contributing to violence such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality

Adverse childhood experiences:

- Abuse, neglect and trauma are all strongly associated with increased risk of involvement in serious violence
- Need for early intervention and support services for children and families at risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence

Mental health issues:

- Trauma, substance misuse and anxiety are significant risk factors for involvement in serious violence
- Need for early intervention and support services that address the underlying mental health issues that contribute to violence and provide appropriate treatment and care for those affected

Impact of COVID-19 on serious violence:

- Rates of domestic abuse, sexual assault and abuse and child exploitation have all risen
- Need for tailored interventions that recognise the specific challenges posed by the pandemic and its impact on violence

School exclusions, school absence and special educational needs (SEN):

- Risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of involvement in serious violence
- Need for early intervention and prevention strategies that address root causes and provide support to those at risk of exclusion or who are struggling at school

Drug and alcohol use:

- Risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of involvement in serious violence
- Need for prevention and treatment services that address underlying substance misuse issues that contribute to violence and provide support and treatment for those affected

Online risks:

- Cyberbullying, online grooming and exploitation are growing concerns, particularly for young people
- Need for targeted interventions that address the risks and challenges posed by technology and social media

Ethnic disproportionality:

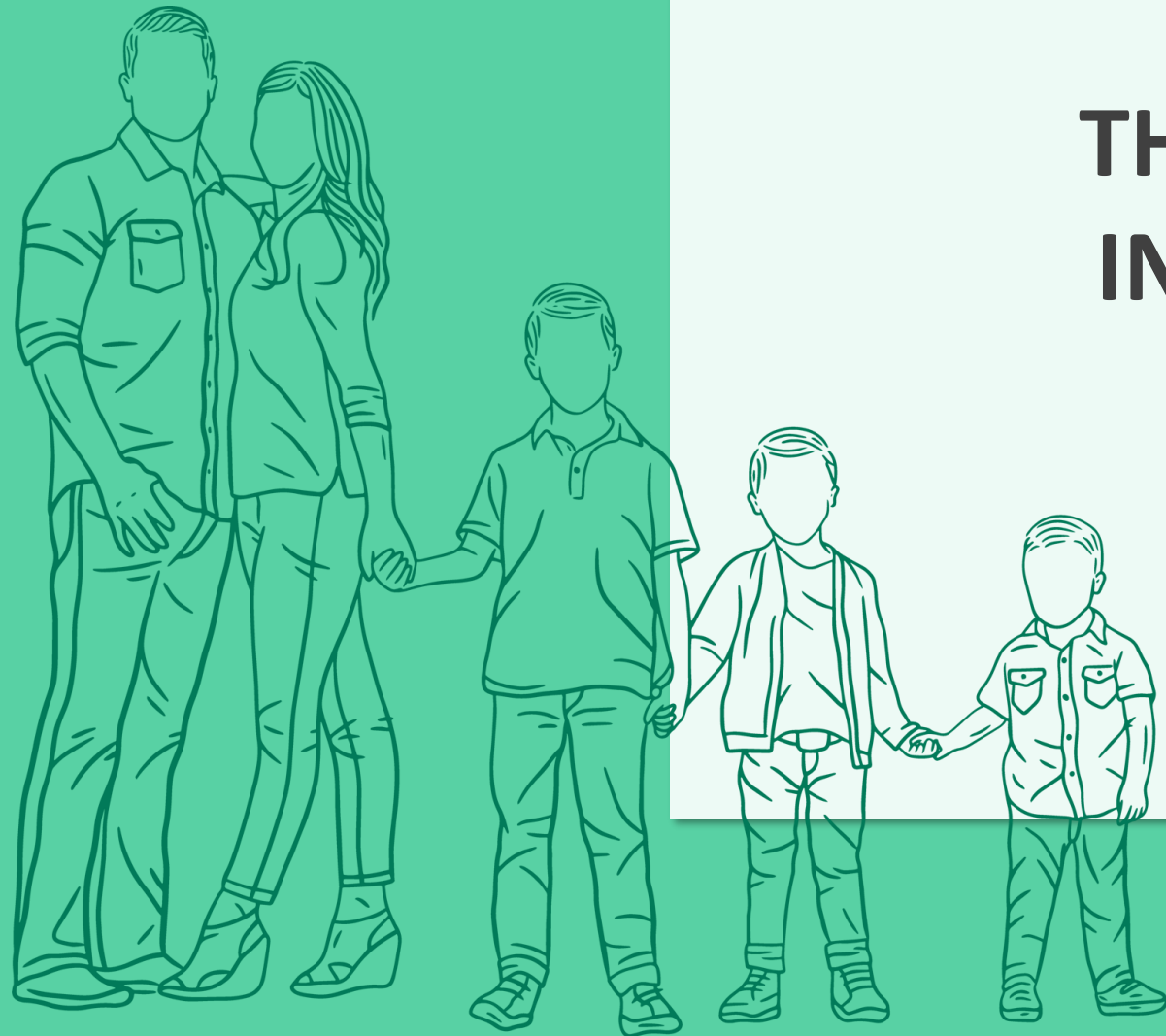
- Over-representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in the criminal justice system is a concern
- Need for targeted interventions that address root causes of disproportionality such as discrimination, inequality and institutional bias

Cost of living and financial pressures:

- Risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of involvement in serious violence particularly in relation to gang involvement and drug-related crime
- Need for prevention and support services that address underlying economic factors that contribute to violence.

UNDERSTANDING THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SERIOUS VIOLENCE

The issue of serious violence has been a growing concern in many communities and Sandwell is no exception. To address this issue, it is important to understand who is involved in this type of violence and what factors contribute to their involvement. This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the data on serious violence in Sandwell, with a particular focus on ten young offenders who have been involved in multiple violent incidents. By cross-referencing data from various sources and collaborating with different stakeholders, a better understanding of the root causes of violence can be gained and effective strategies developed to prevent it.



Education, Social Care and Offending Data Share

Key Points

The following chart compares the national and Sandwell data for serious violence from the education, social care and offending data share as well as the data from the recent deep dive in Sandwell

| Key theme | National sample | Sandwell | Recent Deep Dive |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------|------------------|
| % male | 84% | 90% | 100% |
| Persistently absent | 85% | 88% | 30% |
| Had been suspended | 21% | 89% | 80% |
| Permanently excluded | 21% | 16% | 40% |
| Had a EHC plan | 30% | 15% | 70% |
| Had SEN | 80% | 65% | 40% |

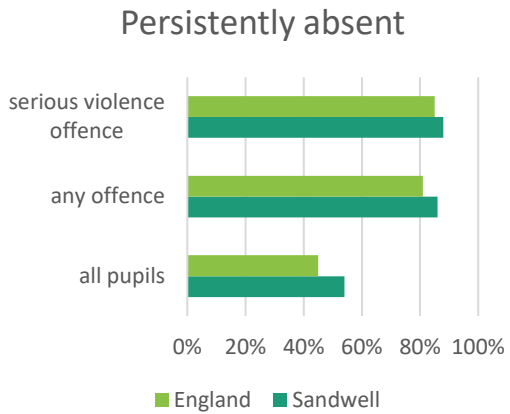
According to the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education [data share 2020](#), approximately 77,300 children had been cautioned or sentenced for an offence. The work was developed further to create an [interactive dashboard](#), which includes Sandwell Specific data. The analysis of education and children's social care backgrounds for Sandwell found:

- 4% of children in Sandwell have been cautioned or sentenced for an offence, and 1% for a serious violence offence.
- 32% of children who have been cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence have a prior offence.
- 19% of children who live or go to school in Sandwell attend a school outside of the local authority.
- There is a significant gender disparity in offending, with 85% of males and 15% of females having committed an offence and 90% of males and 10% of females having committed a serious violence offence.
- There is a strong link between school attainment and offending, with lower attainment associated with higher levels of offending.
- Persistent absence is also strongly linked to offending, with higher levels of persistent absence associated with higher levels of offending.
- There is a high prevalence of SEN support and Child in Need (CIN) plans among children who have been cautioned or sentenced for an offence or serious violence offence.
- A significant percentage of children who have been cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence have been on a CIN plan or in care before their first offence.
- A majority of children who have been cautioned or sentenced for an offence have been eligible for free school meals at some point.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing risk factors such as adverse childhood experiences, trauma and social and educational disadvantages as they can contribute to the likelihood of young people becoming involved in serious violence. Early intervention and support, including effective education and social care provision, can play a key role in reducing the risk of young people getting involved in violent behaviour.

Sandwell undertook a deep dive into ten young repeat offenders. This is small sample of individual cases and it is difficult to make a direct comparison to the broader population of children who have been cautioned or sentenced for an offence. However, the risk factors and issues highlighted in the case studies, such as exposure to domestic abuse, neglect, trauma, and involvement in gangs or criminal activity, are consistent with the findings of the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education analysis.





Sandwell has a higher percentage of persistently absent pupils across all indicators

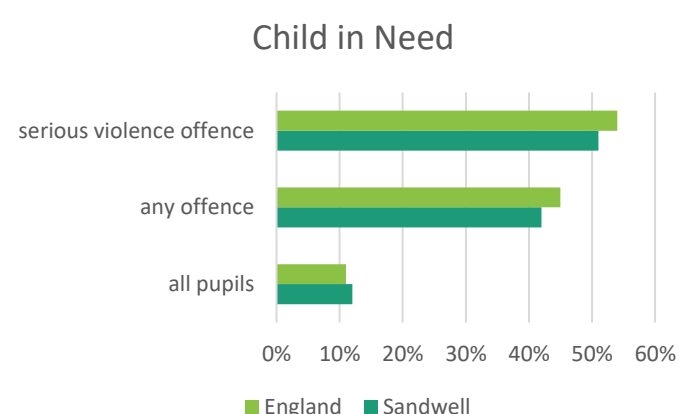
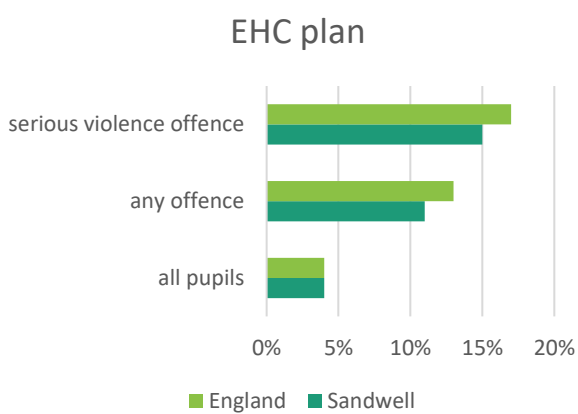
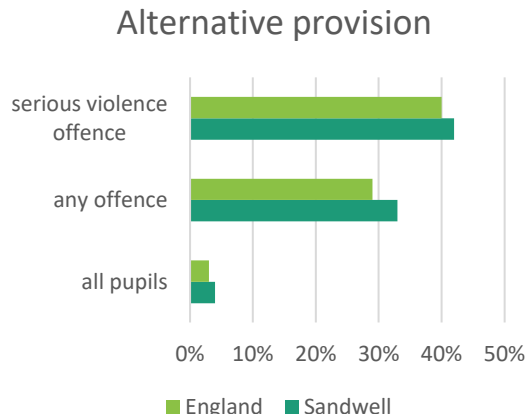
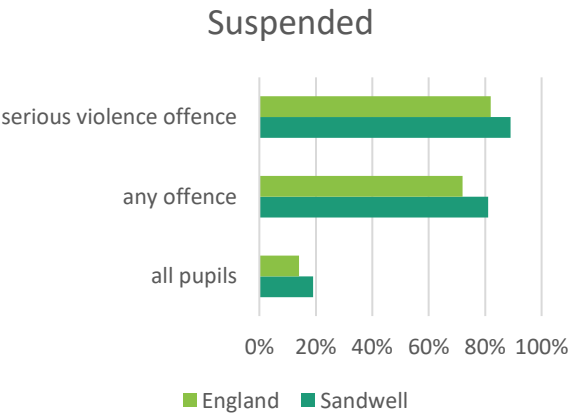
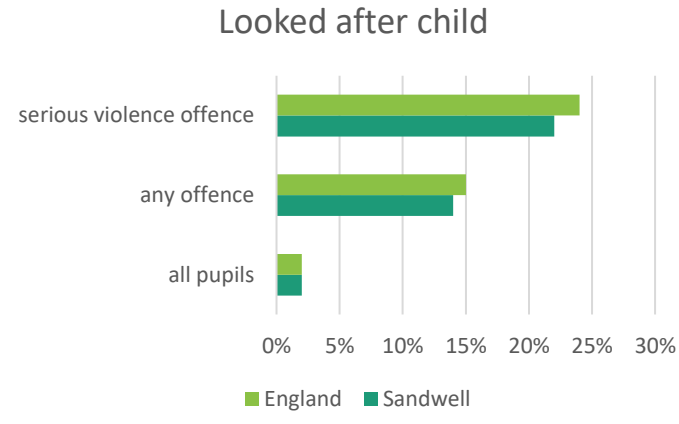
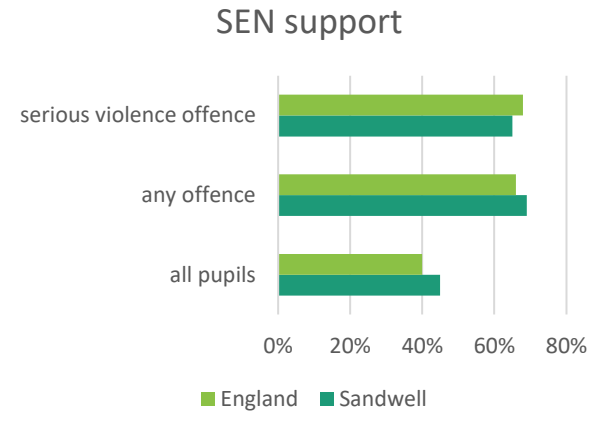
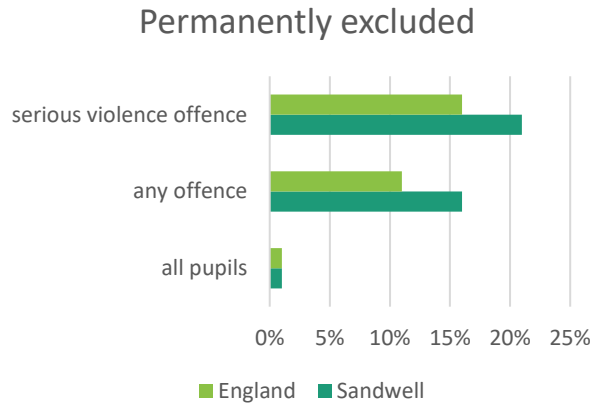
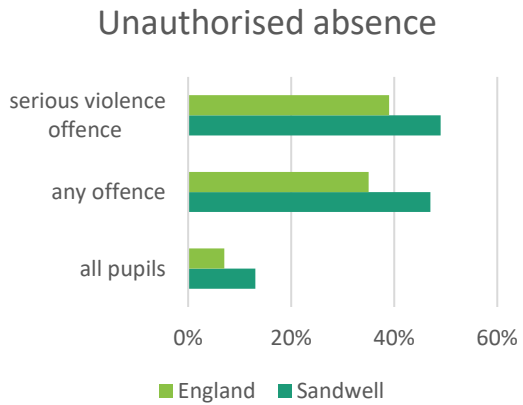
Sandwell has a higher percentage of children attending alternative provision, particularly for serious violence offences.

Sandwell has a higher percentage of pupils with SEN support and an EHC Plan

Sandwell has a slightly lower percentage of children in need across all indicators

Sandwell has a higher percentage of looked after children who have committed a serious violence offence

The following graphs are taken from Education, children's social care and offending: [local authority level dashboard](#) and compares Sandwell with the rest of England



Analysis of the Top Ten Repeat Young Offenders

An analysis of the top ten young repeat offenders in Sandwell between April and June 2022 highlights some important trends and issues related to serious violence and the need to support young people who have offended to reduce their offending.

Overall, the data on the top ten young repeat offenders in Sandwell reinforces the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to reducing serious violence among young people. This approach should involve a range of agencies and services, including criminal justice, education, social care and health and should prioritise the needs and well-being of the young people themselves. By addressing the underlying causes of their offending behaviour and providing tailored and holistic support, young people can be assisted to turn their lives around and build positive futures.

Key Findings

- **Offending profile:** High previous sentences and interventions, and prevalence of aggravated vehicle taking and knife possession indicate persistent and serious criminal behaviour among these young people. Criminal justice responses alone may not be effective; a personalised, holistic approach is needed
- **Education profile:** Low attendance and high exclusion rates suggest academic and behavioural challenges, increasing the risk of disengagement and further offending. Support to stay in education or training and to address the underlying causes can reduce risks of offending and improve life outcomes
- **Social care profile:** High referrals to social care, with child protection, children in care and exploitation indicate complex needs and vulnerability. Coordinated support should address physical, emotional, and social needs as well as offending behaviour
- **Family life profile:** High house moves, homelessness applications and anti-social behaviour reports, along with domestic abuse, suggest significant instability and trauma. Support to strengthen family relationships and address housing, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse can reduce the risk of further offending and improve well-being
- **Police profile:** High intelligence, custody and crime logs, prevalence of weapons, knives, county lines and gang activity indicate serious and violent criminal activity. Interventions should address not only offending behaviour, but also broader social and environmental factors contributing to involvement in such activities
- **Violence profile:** High prevalence of weapons, knives and violent offences including attempted murder and sexual offences indicate serious offending behaviour. Support should address underlying factors, such as trauma, poverty and social exclusion and promote positive alternatives to violence and crime

| Young person profile | Offending profile | Education profile | Social Care profile | Family Life profile |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| 10 male offenders Aged 14-18, with half aged 17 50% live in Smethwick 60% White British, 4 BME 3 living out of area | 23 previous sentences 9 out of court disposals/interventions 40% aggravated vehicle taking, 20% theft from a shop, 20% possession of knives, 10% criminal damage, 10% robbery 4/5 possession of a knife live in Smethwick | education data for 7/10 young people, with 3 out of area 47 schools attended, averaging 6 schools each 48 fixed-term exclusions (average 7), 4 permanent exclusions 8 referrals to police, 29 referrals to social care from school 50% EHCP, 100 professionals | 40% children in need, 10% child protection, half children in care 40% supported by Decca for drugs/alcohol, 90% boys had history of exploitation 55% supported by Horizons, 40% supported by MST Over 60% of those involved in County lines are from Smethwick | 20 house moves, with one child moving 7 times, one child 5 times, one child 4 times 6 homeless applications made for family, all cases of homelessness had ASB 22 Anti-Social Behaviour reports, over 60% of ASB reports were for child in need 6 out of 10 boys had domestic abuse in their family |

Police profile
642 intelligence logs (average of 64 per person), 145 custody logs (average of 29 per person), 396 non-crime reports (average of 72 per person), 117 crime reports (average 21 per person)

Analysis of the top ten young offenders who had repeat sentences between April – June 2022

Violence profile
7/10 weapons/firearms, 9/10 possession of knife
8 physically assaulted another person, 6 involved in county lines, 8 gang affiliations, 6 involved in vehicle crime
2 attempted murder, 6 committed sexual offences



Analysis of Deep Dive of Young Offenders

The deep dive undertaken highlights the complex and interconnected factors that can contribute to serious violence among young people. These cases demonstrate the significant impact of adverse childhood experiences, including neglect, abuse and exposure to domestic violence. Many of these young people have experienced multiple traumatic events and have not received adequate support or interventions to address these issues.

Another common thread in these case studies is the impact of educational disruptions and exclusion on a young person's trajectory towards serious violence. Many of these young people have attended multiple schools, experienced fixed-term exclusions and struggled with low attendance. These disruptions can exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and make it more difficult to access early support.

The influence of gangs, exploitation and county lines is also a prominent factor across these case studies. Many of these young people have been groomed, coerced, or exploited by others, leading to their involvement in criminal activities and serious violence. It is essential to recognise the complex and nuanced nature of these issues and take a trauma-informed approach when working with these young people.

Effective early intervention is critical to addressing the risks associated with serious violence among young people. Early help and support from a range of agencies including social care, education, health and the police can help identify and address issues before they escalate. It is important to work collaboratively with families and young people to provide a coordinated approach to support that meets their individual needs.

Overall good practice in addressing the risks of serious violence among young people requires a holistic and trauma-informed approach. This includes early intervention and prevention efforts, effective multi-agency collaboration and a focus on addressing the underlying factors that contribute to violence, including adverse childhood experiences and the impact of exploitation and grooming. By taking a comprehensive approach that addresses the complex needs of young people work can be undertaken towards preventing serious violence and supporting positive outcomes for young people in Sandwell.

Key Findings

Risk Factors:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Domestic abuse and neglect
- Trauma
- School exclusion and poor educational attainment
- Exposure to violence and criminal activity
- Gang affiliation and grooming for criminal exploitation
- Drug and alcohol misuse

Preventative Factors:

- Early intervention and support from services such as Early Help and DECCA
- Access to mental health support and trauma-informed care
- Stable and safe home environments
- Positive relationships with trusted adults and role models
- Opportunities for education and employment
- Support for families and caregivers

Ways to prevent serious violence from happening:

- Increased awareness and education around ACEs and the impact of trauma on young people
- Accessible mental health support and trauma-informed care
- Increased resources and support for families and caregivers, including parenting classes and financial assistance
- Address root causes of domestic abuse and neglect through prevention programs and support for victims
- Increased investment in education and opportunities for young people to prevent school exclusion and improve educational attainment
- Address the influence of gangs and criminal activity on young people through targeted interventions and support for those at risk of exploitation
- Increased access to drug and alcohol misuse support and prevention programs

4% of children have been cautioned or sentenced for an offence in Sandwell, which is similar to the percentage for England as a whole

Sandwell has a higher percentage of children (32%) who have been cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence and who had a prior offence (37% national)

54% of children in Sandwell have persistent absence and 13% have persistent unauthorised absence. This is significantly higher than the national average of 45% and 7%, respectively

Children in Sandwell are more likely to be cautioned or sentenced for an offence than their peers nationally

Children in Sandwell who have been excluded from school are at a higher risk of becoming involved in crime

Children in care in Sandwell are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system than their peers.

Young people in Sandwell who experience poverty and social exclusion are more likely to be involved in crime.

There is a need for early intervention and prevention programs to address the underlying social and economic factors contributing to children's involvement in crime in Sandwell

Schools play a critical role in violence prevention and investing in school-based prevention programs and resources is essential to address the issue of children's involvement in crime

Between 2009 and 2020 there have been 7293 violent crime hospital admissions in Sandwell

The violent crime hospital admissions rate in Sandwell was statistically worse than the West Midlands region and England

Hospital Admissions for Violence

Hospital admissions for violence was looked at for the those aged 24 and under (for any violent cause) including knife crime and sexual assault. Over the previous four years the number of admissions were :-

| Financial Year | Aged 24 & Under | Knife Crime | Sexual Assault |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 2018-2019 | 77 | 53 | 1 |
| 2019-2020 | 69 | 44 | 0 |
| 2020-2021 | 32 | 33 | 0 |
| 2021-2022 | 59 | 38 | 1 |

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES)

In the most recent three financial years (2019-20 to 2021-22): -

- Aged 24 & under admissions fell between 2019-20 and 2020-21 and then increased between 2020-21 and 2021-22 to 59
- Admissions including a knife crime diagnosis fell between 2019-20 and 2020-21 and then increased between 2020-21 and 2021-22 to 38
- The only admission including sexual assault in the diagnosis was in 2021-22
- The pandemic could have impacted the lower level of admissions in 2020-21 where there were more lockdowns and restrictions

The National Measure for Serious Violence Related to Hospital Admissions

Based on the [analysis](#) released by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, there are several key findings related to the levels of hospital admissions for under 25s with sharp object wounding, police recorded crime data for Violence With Injury and improvements in the system recordings.

Firstly, after several years of increases, the levels of hospital admissions for under 25s with sharp object wounding have reduced since the peak in the baseline year (2019). The last 12 months (March 2021 to February 2022) saw 160 episodes, a reduction of 55 compared to the national baseline year ending June 2019. Additionally, over the last 12 months' hospital admissions have been stable at between 10-15 each month.

Secondly, police recorded crime data for Violence With Injury is showing an increase of 20% compared to the year ending June 2019. However, this increase is partly due to an improvement in Crime Data Integrity, as highlighted in the last HMIC PEEL inspection. The biggest increase coincided with the introduction of the CONNECT system, which incorporates the functionality for these revised crime recording practices.

Overall, these findings suggest that improvements in the system recordings have had a positive impact on the levels of hospital admissions for under 25s with sharp object wounding. However, the increase in police recorded crime data for violence with injury indicates that there may still be room for further improvement in the accuracy and reliability of this crime data.

Violent Crime Hospital Admissions (rate per 100,000 population)

Number of violent crime hospital admissions for Sandwell



Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) Fingertips

Analysis of a Child Safeguarding Practice Review

This case review focuses on the serious violence issue in Sandwell and the actions required to address it. The review highlights several key concerns related to the disproportionate impact of serious violence on black and ethnic minority children and young people, as well as those with complex needs, receiving additional support via Early Help/Social Care, the YJT and children subject to an EHCP or SEND. The review also identified the need for formal processes to collect and analyse data around fixed or permanent exclusions and managed transitions in order to differentiate cohorts of children.

The review found that there is a persistent breach of school behaviour policies, leading to disproportionate exclusions of certain groups. It recommended a review of the themes and patterns of behaviour leading to these exclusions and the effectiveness of approaches used to prevent them. Additionally, the review highlighted the importance of understanding young people's experiences of alternative provision, particularly those with complex needs, who are being exploited or at risk of exploitation, or who are disproportionately affected by exclusions.

The review also called for Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS to take action to address the disproportionality identified through a recent review of hospital data on ethnicity. It recommended that referrals should be made to Children's Social Care in all cases where young people have presented at A&E with injuries that could indicate serious youth violence, including injuries/wounds from a knife and wounding implements. The Early Help Partnership was also tasked with undertaking a consultation process to understand the reluctance of black and ethnic minority children, practitioners, community groups, and families to engage with Early Help services.

The case review highlights the urgent need for action to address the disproportionate impact of serious violence on certain groups in Sandwell. The review recommends several measures to be taken by different organisations, including schools, healthcare providers and the Early Help Partnership to address these issues. It also calls for government action to reduce inequalities and disproportionality in systems, structures and organisations across the UK. By implementing these recommendations, Sandwell can take a step towards creating a safer and more inclusive community for all its residents.

Key Findings

- The review identified that there are significant inequalities and disproportionality in the systems, structures and organisations across Sandwell and the wider UK that contribute to serious violence among children and young people
- The review found that fixed or permanent exclusions and managed transitions from school are potential risk factors for serious violence, particularly for vulnerable children and those who are overrepresented and at risk of exclusion from education
- The review highlighted the need for formal processes to collect and analyse data around fixed or permanent exclusions and managed transitions, as well as the need to differentiate cohorts of children including by ethnicity, vulnerability, Early Help/Social Care support, YJT, and those subject to an EHCP or SEND
- The review recommended that Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS take action to address the disproportionality identified through the recent review of hospital data on ethnicity, particularly in cases where young people have presented at A&E with injuries that could indicate serious youth violence, including injuries/wounds from a knife and wounding implements
- The review also recommended that the Early Help Partnership undertake a consultation process with black and ethnic minority children, practitioners, community groups and families to understand the reluctance to engage with Early Help services and devise an action plan which addresses the barriers
- The review found that there is a need for clear guidance and a definition of "persistent breaches and school exclusion" based on guidelines provided by the DfE regarding behaviour and discipline in schools
- The review recommended that the Education Directorate should consult with the DSL and a "Group Head" before making decisions on whether to exclude a vulnerable pupil (either permanently or for a fixed period) to evaluate risks and plan how to ensure the child is kept safe from significant harm during the exclusion
- Finally, the review recommended writing to Ofsted, the Secretary of State for Education and the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing to share the findings from the report and fully support the need for the government to take action and introduce regulatory standards for local authorities to comply with in reducing inequalities and disproportionality that exist in systems, structures and organisations across the UK

Schools

Violence in schools has become a growing concern in many communities and Sandwell is no exception. The data on incidents in schools over the past year shows an alarming trend with increases in weapons incidents, assaults, drug incidents, sexting and sexual offences.

The data is broken down by town: with Oldbury having the highest levels of assaults and weapons; Wednesbury having the highest levels of drug incidents and West Bromwich having the highest levels of sexting and sexual offences and thefts. The data also shows that some towns have a higher percentage of children aged 10-16 involved in violence than others. These statistics highlight the need for action to address violence in Sandwell schools and ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff.

Key Findings

Based on the data provided it seems that the incidence of violence and related offences has increased in Sandwell between 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. In particular the increase in weapons incidents, assaults, drug offences, sexting and sexual offences is concerning.

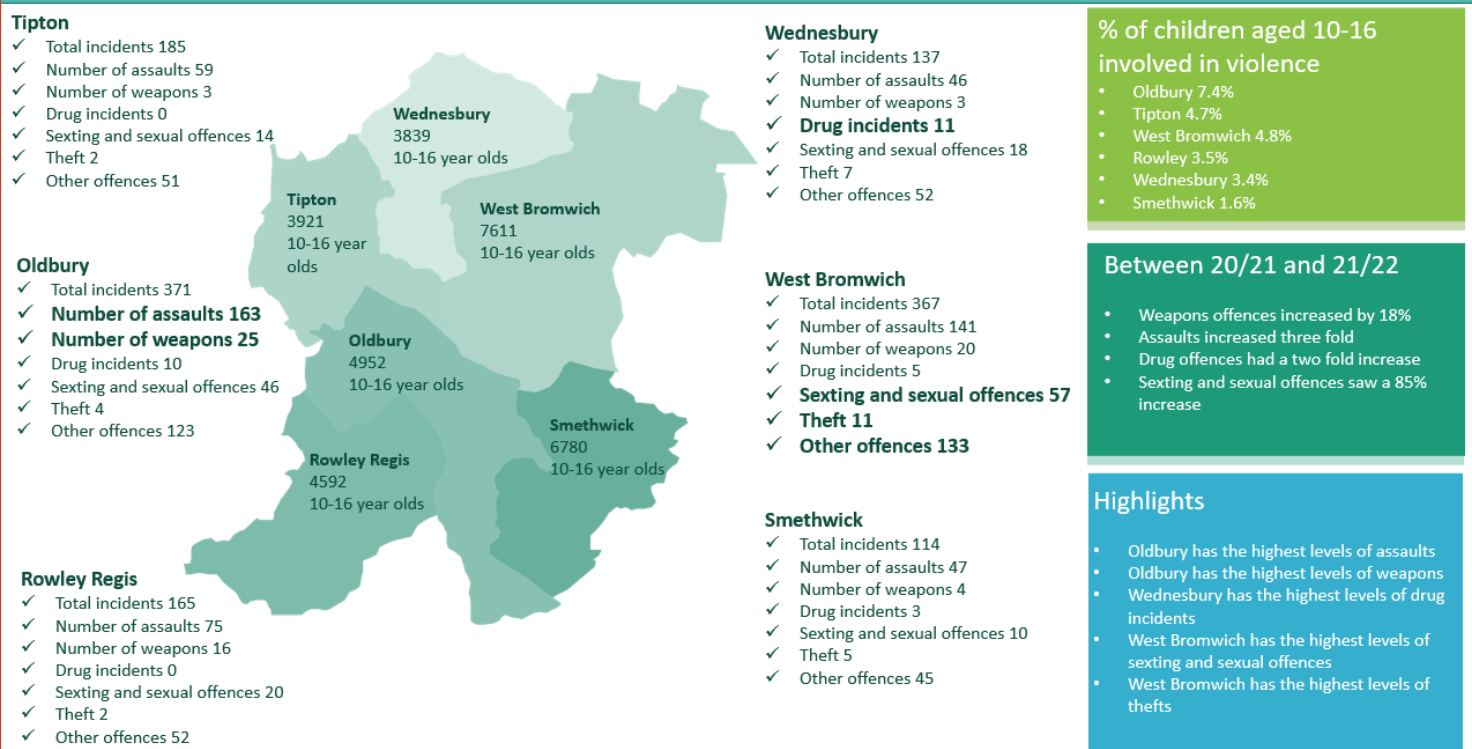
Oldbury stands out as having the highest levels of both assaults and weapons incidents. This could suggest that there are underlying issues in the area that need to be addressed such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and / or social disconnection. Additionally it's notable that Oldbury has the highest percentage of children aged 10-16 involved in violence.

Wednesbury has the highest levels of drug incidents, which may indicate a larger drug problem in the area. This could potentially be related to issues such as drug trafficking, lack of education about the risks of drug use and a lack of access to support services for those struggling with addiction.

West Bromwich has the highest levels of sexting and sexual offences and thefts. This could suggest that there is a need for better education and awareness around these issues, as well as a need for more support services for victims and perpetrators of these types of offences.

- Violence in schools can have serious negative effects on young people's education, mental health and future prospects
- Types of violence in schools can include physical violence, verbal abuse and bullying, including cyberbullying
- Early intervention and prevention efforts are essential in addressing violence in schools
- Schools can play a critical role in identifying and addressing issues related to violence among students
- Teachers and staff need to receive appropriate training and support to address violence in schools effectively
- Collaboration between schools, parents, law enforcement and community organisations is critical in creating a safe and supportive learning environment

Schools and violence Sandwell 2021-2022

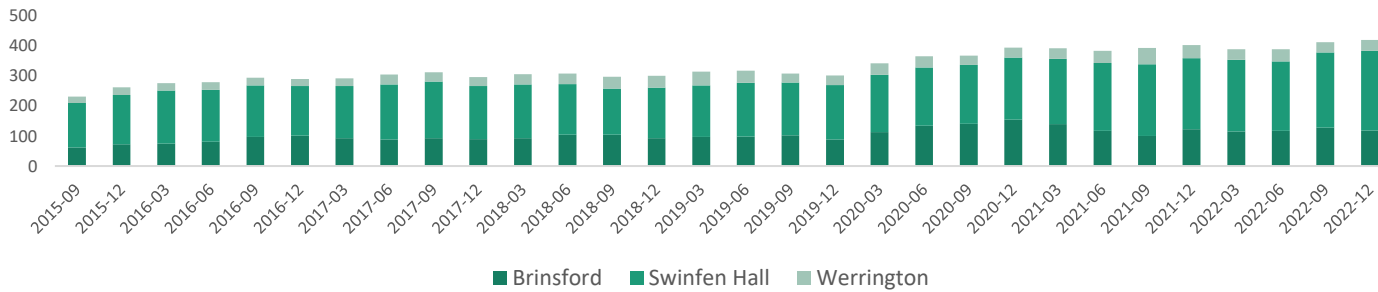


Prisons

In the West Midlands region there are 12 prisons and Young Offender Institutes (YOIs). HMP YOI Werrington holds males aged 15-17, YOI Brinsford and Swinfen Hall hold 18-20 year olds (young women and girls are more likely to go to a secure children’s home).

The number of young people sent to prison for violent offences in the West Midlands has been rising – see chart below - and in December 2022 was the highest ever.

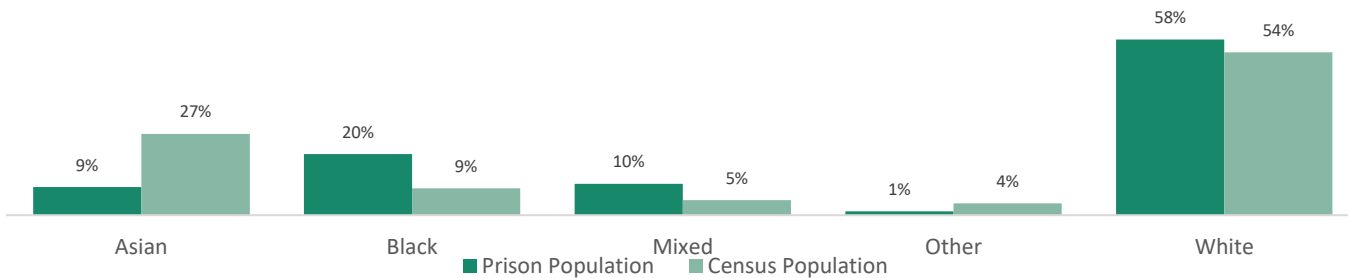
Prison Population for Violence Against the Person



Demographic Disproportionalities in the Prison Population

The ethnicity of the prison population of Werrington, Swinfen Hall and Brinsford (snapshot - December 2022) is shown below and compared to Census data.

Brinsford, Swinfen Hall and Werrington December 2022 Population Compared to Male 15-29 Census Data in the WM



Key Findings

- Ethnicity:** People with Black or Mixed ethnicity are incarcerated at more than double the respective rate in the general population, while people with Asian ethnicity have a much lower rate in the prison population when compared to the census data for West Midlands
- Offence Type:** The most common offence type in Swinfen Hall and Werrington is Violence Against the Person. In Brinsford it is drug offences, followed by violence
- Risk Factors:** People who have been convicted of a violent offence, have a history of drug offences or drug abuse and gang involvement are more likely to be violent in prisons
- Assault Rates:** From April 2021 to March 2022 Brinsford, Swinfen Hall and Werrington all had much higher assault rates than the average across all prisons
- Factors Contributing to Violence:** Violence in prisons is a complex issue, with multiple factors contributing to its occurrence. There is however a correlation between overcrowding, understaffing and levels of violence in prisons
- Violence Against Staff:** Violence against staff is a growing concern, with staff members being subjected to physical and verbal abuse
- Restorative Justice:** Restorative justice programs have shown promise in reducing violence in prisons by promoting empathy and communication between inmates

Young People's Voice

Key Findings

- The pandemic has had a significant impact on young people's education, mental health and wellbeing. Critical education time has been lost and the pressure to do well in exams and academic achievements has mounted, leading to increased stress and anxiety
- Bullying remains a significant issue for many young people in Sandwell, affecting both primary and secondary-aged children and occurs both face-to-face and online. Young people feel that harsher punishments for bullies could help resolve the issue
- Young people want their voices heard and to be involved in decision-making processes regarding their local area and schools. They feel that adults do not listen to their opinions and ideas and this leaves them feeling unheard and ignored
- Tik Tok has emerged as the most popular social media platform for young people during the pandemic and the internet remains the primary source of information for them. A central web platform for young people, such as the Just Youth platform, could be promoted by all agencies to provide a valuable resource for young people
- Young people feel that Sandwell Council should take action to resolve issues such as littering, make areas safer with less crime, and improve parks with more youth provision. They also want more sporting activities, such as football and basketball, to be developed in areas closer to where they live
- Young people have aspirations to move away from Sandwell, but better job prospects and higher education opportunities, as well as the area being perceived as safer, could encourage them to stay.

Serious violence has been a growing concern in Sandwell, especially amongst young people.

The SHAPE survey results provide a valuable perspective on serious violence from the eyes and voices of young people in Sandwell. Young people want to be acknowledged, listened to and supported to address their needs and issues. The recommendations made based on the survey results should be taken into consideration by Sandwell Council, partner agencies and the wider community to make Sandwell a better and safer place for young people to live, learn and thrive. These findings suggest that the concerns of children and young people are changing and evolving over time. It is crucial that attention is paid to these shifts and that strategies are adapted accordingly. It is clear that there is a need for greater support in relation to areas such as gang and youth violence, knife crime and drug and substance abuse. By understanding the concerns of young people, their needs can be better addressed to enable the achievement of safer and more supportive communities for all. The surveys can be accessed [here](#)

| | Primary | Secondary |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Having someone to talk to when you have a problem | More support to plan for my future |
| 2 | Making my move to secondary school easier | Extra support during exam season |
| 3 | Being able to voice your views and opinions freely | More places where I can hang out with my friends |
| 4 | Family support for families who have issues with money | Having someone to talk to (e.g. mentor) |
| 5 | Tackling bullying issues | Being able to voice your views and opinions freely |

Residents Voice

The Safer Sandwell Partnership carried out a consultation to gather feedback from people who live, work or study in Sandwell about how safe they feel in the area; the crimes they are most concerned about and what interventions they think would help increase their feelings of safety. The feedback received was used to update Sandwell's Community Safety Strategy as well as informing this SNA for serious violence.

According to the survey results, a significant number of Sandwell residents have experienced or witnessed anti-social behaviour and crime in the past three years. Out of the 177 respondents, 137 reported experiencing or witnessing incidents, with the most common types being drug dealing (80), youth disorder (56) and street drinking (51). However, only 60 people reported these incidents to the police and of those who did only 11 were satisfied with the response.

In terms of safety, the survey found that while the majority of respondents felt safe in their own homes and during the daytime in public spaces, many felt very unsafe in public spaces in the evenings. The survey also revealed that many residents are worried about being a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour and would feel safer with increased police presence, more CCTV and better street lighting.

It is also noteworthy that a significant number of respondents did not report incidents to the police or other relevant authorities, which may suggest a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of these services. This is a concerning finding and indicates that efforts should be made to improve trust and communication between the community and law enforcement agencies.

Overall, the survey results suggest that while Sandwell is generally a safe place to live, there are areas of concern regarding anti-social behaviour and crime, particularly in public spaces in the evenings. There is also a need to improve communication and trust between the community and law enforcement agencies to ensure that incidents are reported and addressed effectively.

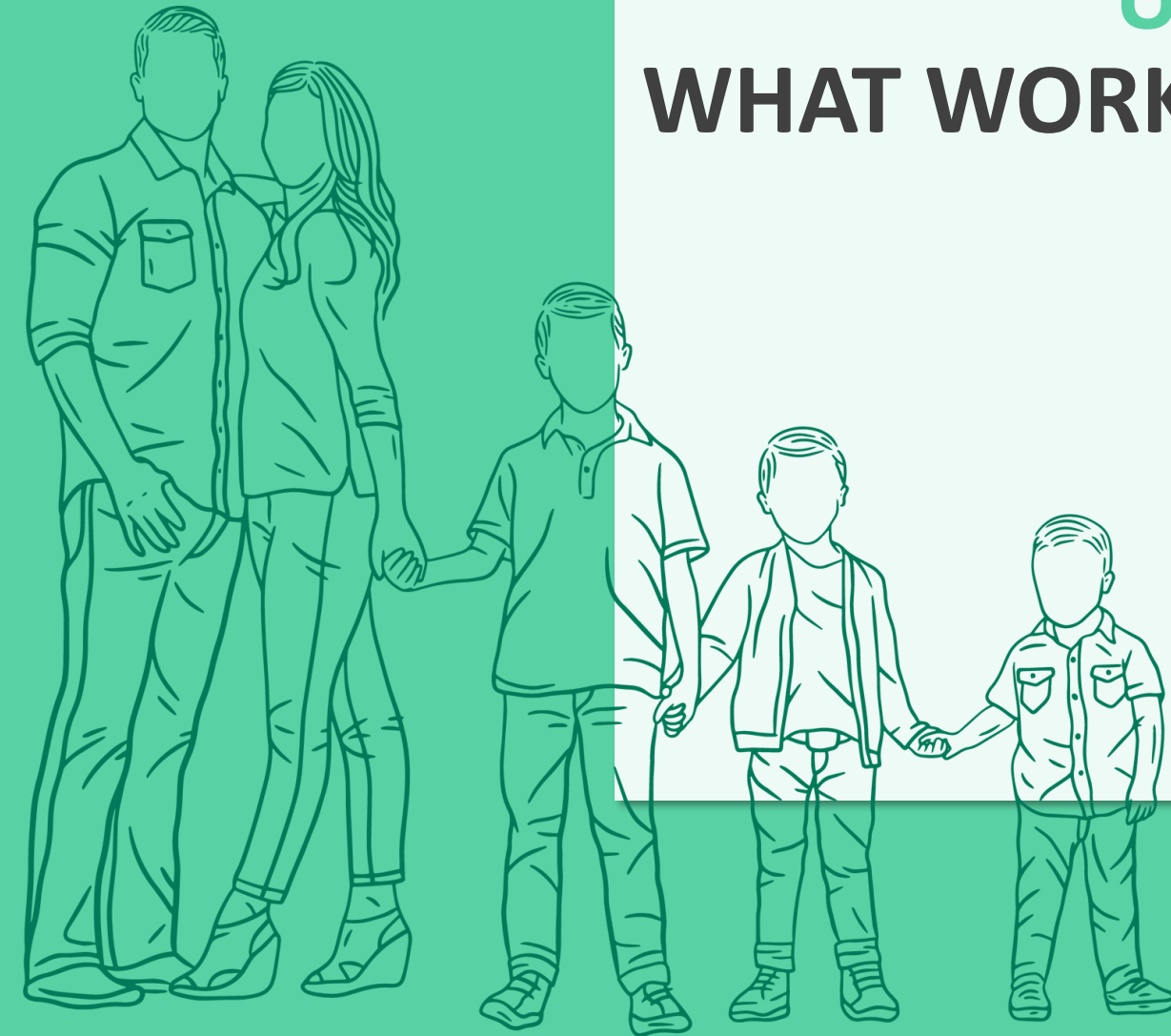
Key Findings

There were several concerns raised by respondents in the survey regarding drug and alcohol misuse, anti-social behaviour, a lack of support for victims, deprivation, a lack of investment in youth services and inadequate law enforcement and council responses. These included:

- **Drug and Alcohol Misuse:** Many respondents were worried about the prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse in the area, with reports of public drug use and large groups of young people congregating in public spaces. It is important that action is taken to address these issues, such as increasing police presence and working with community organisations to provide support for those struggling with addiction
- **Anti-social Behaviour:** A significant number of respondents expressed concern about the high level of anti-social behaviour in the area, including street drinking, vandalism and noise nuisance. The council and police work together to address these issues through targeted enforcement and education campaigns which need to be better promoted
- **Lack of Support:** The survey highlighted a lack of awareness and support for victims of crime and abuse, which is a worrying issue. The council and relevant organisations should work together to raise awareness of the support available to those who have suffered trauma
- **Deprivation and Youth Services:** Many issues in the area are linked to deprivation and a lack of investment in youth services. It is important that the council and community organisations work together to provide more opportunities for young people, including positive activities that can help prevent boredom and reduce vulnerability to exploitation
- **Law Enforcement and Council Responses:** Concerns were raised about the effectiveness of law enforcement and council responses with some respondents feeling that criminals are able to get away with their actions. The council and police should prioritise addressing these issues, with a focus on early intervention and prevention measures and on better communicating positive outcomes
- **Safety of Women and Young Girls:** Respondents highlighted the need to prioritise the safety of women and young girls in Sandwell. The council should work to improve safety through measures such as increasing CCTV and street lighting

UNDERSTANDING WHAT WORKS IN PREVENTING VIOLENCE

The prevention of serious violence requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that addresses its root causes and its immediate and long-term consequences. This section on preventing violence outlines evidence-based strategies, such as addressing risk factors, strengthening community resilience and providing access to education and mental health services, that can help prevent violence. These strategies require collaboration and coordination across sectors including: police; health; education; local authorities; violence reduction partnerships and community organisations. The Sandwell approach, public health approach to violence prevention, 'Five C approach' and alignment with other key strategies are all explored. Additionally, the importance of learning from the voluntary and community sector, analysing early indicators of violence and involving affected groups in solutions are highlighted. The section also discusses the report "The Usual Suspects" by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies which advocates for a more holistic approach that addresses the root causes of violence, including poverty, inequality and social exclusion.



Preventing Violence

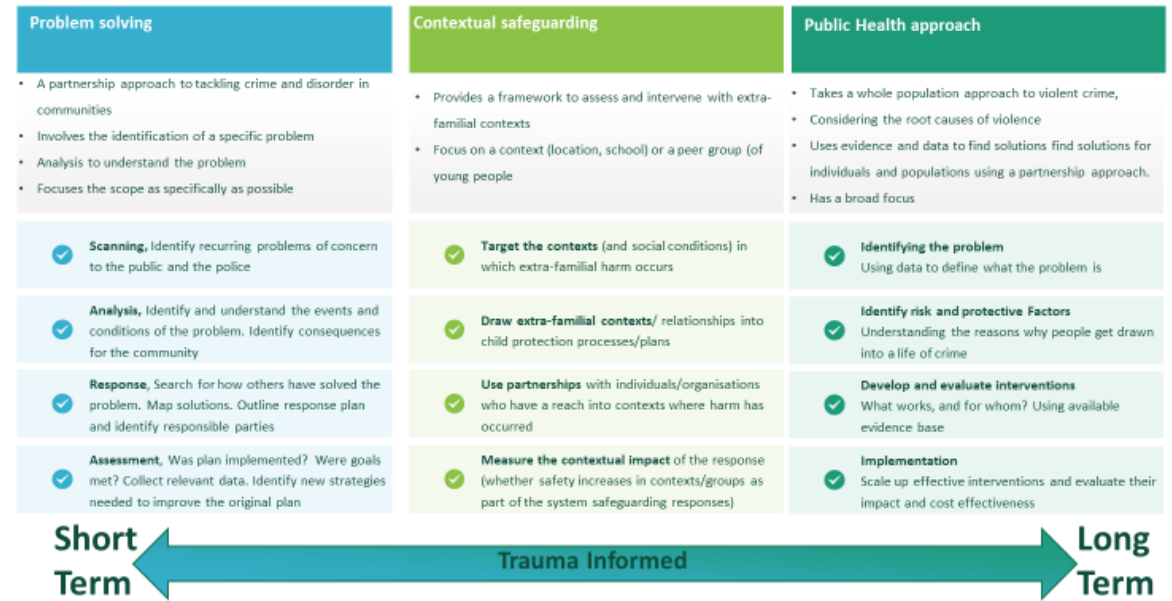
Preventing violence requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that addresses the root causes of violence and addresses its immediate and long-term consequences. Some of the key strategies for preventing violence include:

- **Addressing Risk Factors:** Identifying and addressing the individual, family and community factors that increase the risk of violence, such as poverty, substance abuse and access to firearms
- **Strengthening Community Resilience:** Building strong, supportive communities that promote positive relationships, trust and a sense of belonging, which can reduce the risk of violence
- **Improving Access to Education:** Providing quality education and job training opportunities can help prevent violence by promoting social and economic empowerment and reducing poverty
- **Supporting Healthy Relationships and Positive Parenting:** Providing education and resources to help individuals develop healthy relationships and effective parenting skills can help prevent violence and promote positive family dynamics
- **Addressing Gender-based Violence:** Addressing gender-based violence requires changes to social norms, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate violence against women and girls, as well as changes to laws and policies that protect their rights and safety
- **Trauma-informed Care:** Services and programs that recognise and address the impact of trauma on children and families and provide appropriate support to promote healing and resilience
- **Early Intervention:** Strategies that address the risk factors for violence and promote positive development during the critical early years of a child's life
- **Mental Health Services and Support:** for children and families to address behavioural and emotional problems and promote positive development

These strategies require collaboration and coordination across sectors including police, health, education, local authorities, violence reduction partnerships and community organisations. By taking a comprehensive approach to violence prevention, its impact can be reduced and safer, healthier communities promoted.

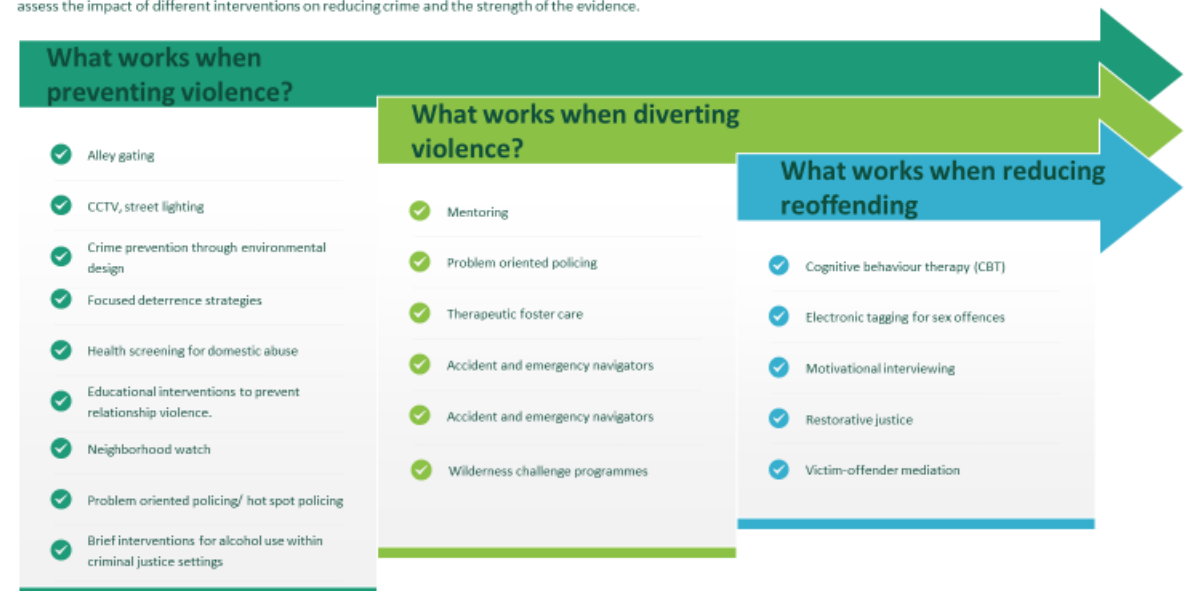
Sandwell approach to addressing serious violence

When working to prevent and reduce complex problems like violence there is not a one size fits all approach, and approaches need to be used together



Evidence of what does and does not work in relation to Preventing violence, diverting and reducing violence

The [crime reduction toolkit](#) summarises the best available research evidence on what works to reduce crime. It uses the EMMIE framework (effect, mechanism, moderators, implementation and economic cost) to present evidence from systematic reviews. The toolkit can be used by crime reduction practitioners and decision-makers. It allows you to assess the impact of different interventions on reducing crime and the strength of the evidence.



World Health Organisation Public Health Approach

The World Health Organisation provides a useful framework with four steps for implementing a public health approach to understanding and preventing serious violence. A public health approach to violence views violence as a preventable health issue, much like a disease, and seeks to address its root causes and reduce its impact on individuals and communities. This approach recognises that violence is not just a criminal justice problem but has wide-ranging social, economic and health consequences for individuals, families and communities. By taking a public health approach to violence, communities can develop a more comprehensive, proactive and evidence-based strategy for preventing violence and supporting those affected by it.

Focus on vulnerable individuals and communities

- Target resources to where they are most needed
- Tailor interventions to specific needs and circumstances
- Use a SNA to gather and analyse data on factors such as demographics, socioeconomic status, education, employment and prior involvement with the criminal justice system
- Develop a common understanding of the most vulnerable cohorts in a specific area

With and for communities

- Engage with communities to develop effective strategies
- Ensure SNA and local strategy reflect community voices and experiences
- Tailor interventions to community needs and circumstances
- Improve community safety and well-being by reducing risk of serious violence

Focus on generating long term as well as short term solutions

- Effective strategies to tackle serious violence require both short-term and long-term solutions
- Short-term interventions are important for reducing immediate harm caused by violence
- Long-term solutions address root causes of violence and reduce risk factors
- Preventing violence before it occurs promotes lasting change in communities

Based on data and useful information to identify the burden on the population

- Data collection and analysis are critical to understanding violence in a community
- Pooling data from different sectors and agencies provides a complete picture of local drivers of serious violence
- Systematic data collection helps identify the burden of violence on the population
- Engaging multiple sectors and fostering partner collaboration leads to effective SNAs and local strategies

Rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem

- Developing evidence-based interventions is critical to tackling serious violence
- Identifying risk and protective factors is key to guiding the selection of effective interventions
- Prioritising interventions with a proven track record is important
- Targeting resources towards those most at risk is crucial

Theory of Change for Preventing and Reducing Serious Violence in Sandwell

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Vision | To ensure that the communities of Sandwell feel safe, protected and confident in their homes and neighbourhoods | | | | | | |
| Mission | To prevent and reduce violence in Sandwell through the application of the public health approach and early help principles. | | | | | | |
| Principles | Adopt a public health approach to violence prevention | Prioritise early help principles | | | Use the 4P approach to prevention (Prevent, Protect, Prepare, Pursue) | Promote co-production and community engagement | |
| Inputs | Activities | | | | Outputs | Outcomes | Impact |
| | Engage | Facilitate | Develop | Sustain | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and data on the drivers and impacts of violence Adequate funding and resources for prevention programs and initiatives Early intervention and support services for at-risk individuals and families Prevention and treatment services Education and awareness-raising campaigns Collaborative partnerships across sectors and agencies Evidence-based research and analysis Multi-agency training and capacity building Meaningful engagement and participation of communities, including young people Political will and commitment to long-term solutions Access to education, training, and employment opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a clear mission and shared goals for violence prevention and reduction Engage and align stakeholders from various sectors, including law enforcement, healthcare, education, and community organisations Embed the principles of the public health approach, early help and the 4P approach in all activities Develop an evidence base on the issues and effective interventions through insights, analysis and research Define co-production processes to engage the community in prevention efforts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build capacity and goal alignment among partner agencies to effectively prevent violence Strengthen multi-agency approach to address serious violence Align goals and build collaborations among key stakeholders Convene and build productive relationships among partner agencies and communities Strengthen community engagement through co-production and targeted interventions Evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and reduction activities Implement problem-focused activities that address root causes of violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and utilise community assets to address the root causes of violence Reduce risk factors for serious violence in high-risk populations Promote counter-narratives to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours Foster productive environments for positive youth development and empowerment Develop and enhance connections for youth and adults Uphold principles of the public health approach and 4P approach Increase access to education, training and employment opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale effective approach and interventions to address serious violence Continuously engage and involve the community in decision-making Identify indicators of change and monitor progress toward goals Know and communicate the contribution of each partner agency Conduct regular governance reviews and performance monitoring Achieve measurable reductions in actual violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders work together effectively to prevent and reduce violence Interventions are evidence-informed and effective in addressing root causes of violence Principles of the public health approach, early help and the 4P approach are central to prevention and reduction efforts The whole system for prevention and reduction is defined, with key players identified The mission and goals for prevention and reduction are jointly owned and everyone is working in the same direction Co-production effectively engages the community in prevention and reduction efforts Prevention and reduction efforts are evidence-based and solution-focused Choice for individuals and communities is increased through targeted interventions and support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration and shared responsibility among partner agencies Principles of public health approach and early help integrated into service delivery Root causes of violence are prioritised and addressed Evidence-based interventions are implemented Community engagement and co-production are prioritised Shared approach and joint ownership of mission and goals Violence is reduced and prevention is effective Increased access to education, training, and employment opportunities Reduced stigma and discrimination associated with violence and victimisation Strengthened criminal justice system response to violence, including increased accountability and support for victims Measurable reduction in the number of individuals involved in the criminal justice system due to serious violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive health and well-being outcomes for individuals and communities impacted by serious violence Improved safety and security in Sandwell communities A sustained reduction in serious violence in Sandwell over time Increased trust and confidence in partner agencies among communities and young people Stronger, more resilient communities with increased social cohesion and civic engagement Fewer individuals impacted by serious violence, leading to improved life outcomes and reduced harm.. |

Preventing Serious Violence Through Early Help

The Sandwell Early Help Strategy provides valuable insights into the issue of violence across the Borough including the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on individuals and families. ACEs such as abuse, neglect, household dysfunction and exposure to violence in childhood can have lasting effects on an individual's physical, emotional and mental health. The data from the Sandwell Early Help Partnership highlights that many children in Social Care have been exposed to ACEs, which can increase their risk of engaging in serious violence.

Overall, the Sandwell Early Help Strategy highlights several key issues that are contributing to the high rates of violence in the area including ACEs. To prevent and reduce violence in Sandwell, a collaborative approach is recommended to identify need as early as possible. This could include improving access to mental health services, providing targeted support to families experiencing poverty and financial exclusion and working closely with schools and community groups to address these underlying causes. Additionally, interventions aimed at reducing the number of children entering the care system and the Youth Justice System could help to break the cycle of violence and improve outcomes for children and families in Sandwell.

Key Findings

Serious violence is a complex issue and data from [Early Help Strategy 2022](#) highlights several areas where improvements are needed to prevent and reduce serious violence including:

- Inappropriate referrals to the "front door" lead to no further action in 80.94% of cases, indicating the need for better screening processes and early intervention services
- Sandwell has a higher than average number of children in care (107.0 per 10,000 children)
- The number of children with child in need plans is slightly higher comparatively and neglect is a significant presenting issue
- Many children in social care are exposed to domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse and mental health issues in their families
- Uptake of Lead Professional is low, suggesting a need for better collaboration and communication among agencies
- Many families closed to Early Help are re-referred within a 12-month period indicating the need for ongoing support and intervention
- Many families receiving Early Help are exposed to financial exclusion and mental health issues, highlighting the need for targeted support and intervention

Overall, the data from the Sandwell Early Help Partnership highlights the need for better screening and early intervention services, better collaboration and communication among agencies and more targeted support and intervention for families affected by domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health issues and financial exclusion. By identifying and addressing these issues, work towards preventing and reducing serious violence in Sandwell would be significantly progressed.

Areas for improvement to prevent and reduce serious violence in Sandwell, based on data from the Early Help Strategy 2022 include:

- Improving screening processes and early intervention services to address issues before they escalate
- Targeted support and intervention for families affected by domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health issues and financial exclusion
- Better collaboration and communication among agencies to ensure families receive the support they need
- Ongoing support and intervention to prevent issues from recurring

Key findings in relation to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Sandwell:

- ACEs can have a lasting impact on an individual's physical, emotional and mental health and can lead to negative outcomes later in life
- Individuals who experience ACEs are more likely to experience mental and physical health problems, engage in risky behaviours and have a higher risk of involvement in criminal activity and violence
- In Sandwell, adults who experienced four or more ACEs were more likely to experience poor physical and mental health outcomes, engage in risky health behaviours and experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Many children in social care in Sandwell have been exposed to ACEs, which can have a significant impact on their development and increase their risk of engaging in serious violence
- Ongoing support and intervention are necessary to prevent issues related to ACEs from recurring
- Prioritising early intervention services, promoting collaboration and communication among agencies and providing targeted support and intervention for families affected by domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health issues and financial exclusion are necessary to address the root causes of ACEs and prevent them from escalating
- Addressing ACEs and promoting early intervention services and targeted support for families is essential for preventing and reducing serious violence in Sandwell and creating a safer environment for children and families

Preventing Serious Violence – What Works?

The Big Lottery Fund summarised [learning from the voluntary and community sector](#) on what works in preventing serious youth violence presented a number of lessons including:

Prevention – what works?

- ✓ A whole-community approach is needed, involving schools, youth services, community groups and parents
- ✓ Prevention efforts must begin early, ideally in primary school
- ✓ Effective prevention strategies involve building strong relationships with young people, providing positive role models and offering opportunities for personal growth and development
- ✓ Interventions should be tailored to the specific needs of individuals and be culturally appropriate
- ✓ Early intervention is key and can involve a range of services including mental health support, education and training and mentoring
- ✓ Addressing the root causes of violence such as poverty, inequality and social exclusion is critical to preventing violence in the long term
- ✓ Engaging and empowering young people to take a lead role in developing and delivering prevention strategies can be highly effective
- ✓ Multi-agency approaches involving health, education, social services, police and community groups, are essential to tackling the problem of violence
- ✓ Community-led initiatives can be particularly effective in engaging hard-to-reach young people and creating long-term change
- ✓ Effective prevention strategies involve ongoing evaluation and adaptation as well as collaboration between different stakeholders to share knowledge and best practice

Early Intervention – what works?

- ✓ Building people's skills and confidence to manage conflict and cope with peer pressure
- ✓ Help people understand the causes and consequences of conflict; unpack myths and 'de-glamorise' the lifestyle related to crime, prisons, gangs and weapons
- ✓ Give opportunities to practice techniques to avoid and resolve conflict, manage anger and communicate
- ✓ Empower people to make the right choices on the basis of knowledge and support rather than 'scare tactics'
- ✓ Use social media proactively and work together to address its use to incite violence
- ✓ Where possible, consider working with friendship groups or whole gangs rather than just individual offenders
- ✓ Good mentors can have a life-changing effect on at-risk youth
- ✓ Don't rush relationship building - setting artificial deadlines or limits on support doesn't work
- ✓ Enable mentors/key workers to give intensive, longitudinal support for those who need it
- ✓ Ensuring support extends into the community and builds on what is already working well locally
- ✓ Providing support in places young people regularly go to and where they feel comfortable, including music projects, youth clubs, streets, gyms and shopping centres
- ✓ Finding the right time to intervene and offer ways out of violence - a 'teachable moment' when young people may be most receptive to making changes in their lives

Partnership Based Approaches – what works?

- ✓ Partners should be driven by a shared set of goals and values. These should start with the mission rather than each partner's individual priorities
- ✓ Bring together smaller organisations, to produce ideas that are rooted in the experience of communities, with the reach and scope of larger organisations. This has the potential to create the shared system needed to deliver change at scale
- ✓ Don't only consider what different partners can bring to the table but also consider the consequences of leaving them out
- ✓ Building a whole system approach, where statutory services and the VCS work together to develop a long-term response that addresses the root causes of violence
- ✓ Create a movement to recognise serious youth violence as a public health issue that requires a whole community response and a non-judgemental approach
- ✓ Every member of the society should be involved
- ✓ Trust the relationships, expertise and experience of VCS groups in supporting young people involved in serious violence, including their commitment to co-production and valuing lived experience
- ✓ Work with employers and faith leaders
- ✓ The lack of long-term funding hinders the ability of those on the frontline to plan ahead – a climate of short-term, project-based funding can create competition rather than collaboration

The Five C Approach

The 5C approach to violence prevention is a comprehensive and holistic framework that addresses the underlying causes of violence. By adopting a 5C approach, communities can create a more effective and comprehensive response to violence that meets the needs of those most affected.

The 5Cs represent the following five key areas of focus

Collaboration

Collaboration is a critical element in the fight against serious violence, as it enables various stakeholders to work together to prevent and respond to violent incidents and their underlying causes.

This SNA has:

- Identified and brought together local system leaders for collaboration on serious violence
- Helped partners understand their role in violence prevention
- Defined and created a common understanding of a multi-agency approach
- Used data and intelligence to achieve shared understanding of local issues and interventions
- Identified existing and required resources
- Collectively agreed on governance arrangements

Co-production

A co-productive approach should be informed by all perspectives; involving the community is an essential part of co-production. It can positively influence contributions from community organisations and faith groups, which can create trust, as well as building capacity for violence prevention work.

This SNA has:

- Ensured the delivery of core approaches for local responses in serious violence include coproduction with communities
- Explored co-location of teams and secondments between organisations
- Used current coproduction mechanisms to shape violence prevention and reduction approaches
- Strengthened the capacity of individuals, families and communities to prevent and respond to violence, through building skills, knowledge and resources

Cooperation

A collaborative approach, can overcome many of the barriers to effective data and information sharing and ensures that partners work together to mobilise effective preventative and operational interventions.

This SNA has:

- Supported partners to collaborate to understand data routinely collected by different organisations for serious violence prevention
- Assigned agencies with expertise and resources to combine, analyse and interpret data
- Agreed on different analytical products to be produced and their purpose
- Utilised data to identify high-risk areas, victims, perpetrators, consequences and the costs of violence

Counter narrative

To tackle the root causes of violence and prevent it from happening in the future it is essential that the whole system makes a commitment to creating environments that nurture the protective factors that can help to mitigate against perpetration and victimisation of violence.

This SNA has:

- Helped identify local risk and protective factors for serious violence
- Promoted universal upstream approaches to prevent perpetration and victimisation through aligned partnership work
- Ensured collaboration with local communities to identify alternative initiatives using community assets
- Emphasised the importance of alternative narratives to all agencies working with children and young people

Community consensus

Community consensus lies at the heart of a place-based public health approach to serious violence prevention. Work must be undertaken with and for local communities by empowering them to actively take part in tackling issues that affect them.

This SNA has:

- Mapped community assets and explored opportunities to build upon them
- Actively engaged community members using various techniques and methods
- Collaborated with those most at risk of being victims or perpetrators of violence
- Focused on community-level factors such as social networks, social capital, empowerment and environment
- Fostered strong connections and relationships between individuals, families and communities to promote social cohesion and reduce isolation

S.W.O.T Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a useful tool for assessing the current state of a particular issue or area and identifying areas of strength, weakness, opportunities and threats. In the context of the Sandwell Strategic Needs Assessment for Serious Violence, a SWOT analysis can help to identify the key factors that may be contributing to the issue of serious violence in the area, as well as areas where there may be potential for improvement.

By considering the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to serious violence in Sandwell, the assessment can be better informed and more targeted in its approach to addressing these issues. For example, strengths and opportunities identified in the analysis can be leveraged to build on existing assets and help develop more effective interventions, while weaknesses and threats can be mitigated or avoided altogether. Overall, a SWOT analysis can help to ensure that the assessment is comprehensive and well-rounded, with a focus on key areas for action.



Strengths

Strong partnerships between police, local authorities and community groups to tackle violence.

Established violence reduction initiatives through the Safer Sandwell Partnership and other Boards

Access to funding and resources to support prevention and intervention efforts.

Dedicated and experienced staff working in areas such as youth services and community safety.

Strong regional presence and links with the VRP and PCC



Weaknesses

High levels of poverty and deprivation in some areas of Sandwell may contribute to a sense of hopelessness and increase the risk of involvement in violence.

Limited data and understanding of specific factors that contribute to serious violence in Sandwell.

Challenges in engaging with and addressing the needs of marginalised groups who may be at higher risk of involvement in serious violence.

Limited resources for early intervention and prevention efforts, including youth services and mental health support.



Opportunities

Collaboration with neighbouring areas to share best practices and resources in tackling serious violence.

Potential for greater engagement and involvement of affected communities in developing prevention and intervention strategies.

Increased focus on addressing root causes of serious violence, such as poverty, mental health issues and trauma.

Development of new approaches and technologies for data collection and analysis to better understand and address serious violence in Sandwell.



Threats

Ongoing challenges related to COVID-19, including economic uncertainty and increased vulnerability to violence among certain groups.

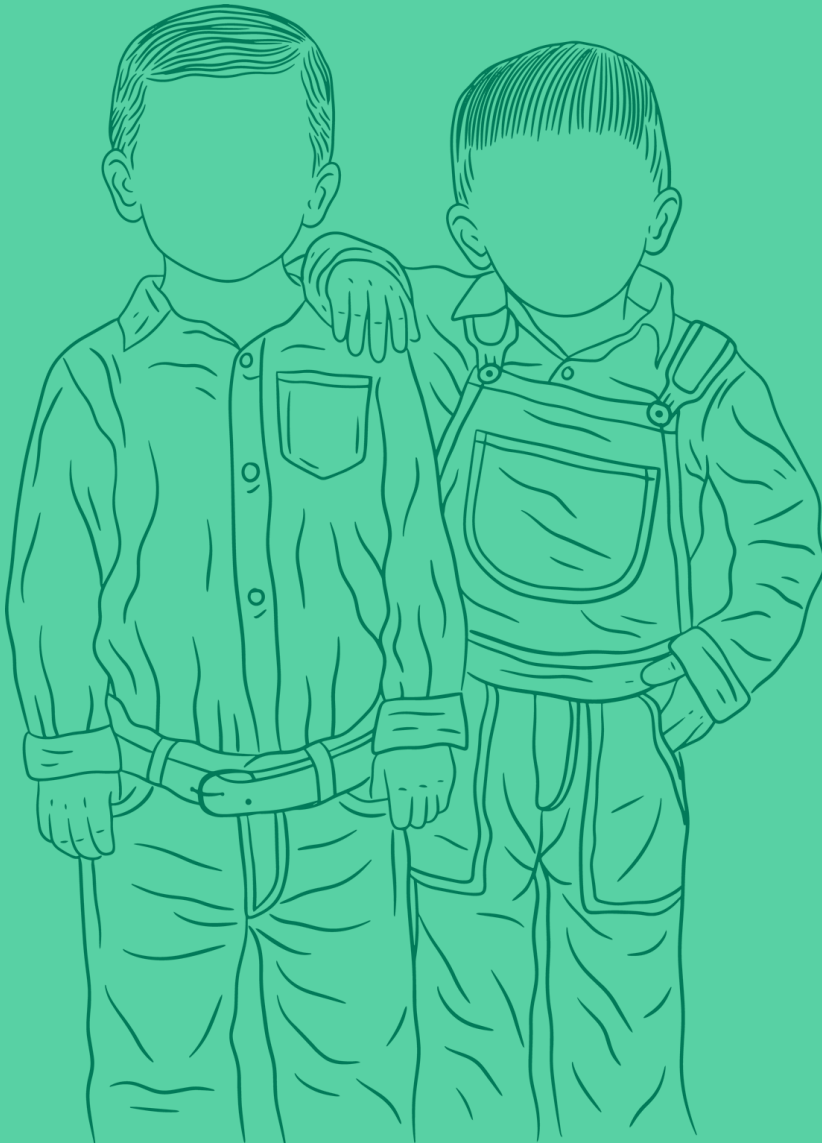
Potential for continued reductions in funding for essential services, including those addressing serious violence.

The impact of national policy changes, such as changes to sentencing guidelines or police funding on local efforts to tackle serious violence.

The risk of serious incidents of violence, such as gang-related shootings or terrorist attacks, which could have significant impact on Sandwell and surrounding areas.

UNDERSTANDING THE EXISTING SERVICES LANDSCAPE

Understanding the existing commissioned services is crucial to developing effective strategies for preventing and reducing serious violence. It is essential to identify what services and resources are currently available, what gaps exist and how these services can be improved or better integrated. This chapter explores the roles and responsibilities of various agencies such as police, probation, education, youth justice and children's social care, in addressing serious violence. It also highlights the importance of effective collaboration and coordination between these agencies, as well as with violence reduction partnerships and other community-based organisations. Additionally, this chapter examines the economic and social costs of violence, which are crucial in developing an understanding of the broader costs and benefits associated with changes in crime rates. Understanding the existing commissioned services is a critical component of developing a comprehensive and effective strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence.



Serious violence has a significant impact on society, both economically and socially, and can cause fear and insecurity within communities. The [economic and social costs of crime estimates](#) is crucial in developing an understanding of the broader costs and benefits associated with changes in crime rates.

The report identifies three main costs associated with violence as follows:

- **Anticipation of crime** - including personal alarms, CCTV and insurance, which people and businesses may invest in to reduce their risk of becoming victims of violence
- **Consequences of crime** - such as damage to property, physical harm and the cost of health and victim services, as well as time off work for victims
- **Response to crime** - which includes costs incurred by the police and criminal justice system, as well as multi-agency interventions to prevent and address violence

By understanding the full costs of violence, it is possible to develop more effective strategies for prevention and intervention, which can reduce the impact of violence on individuals and society as a whole.

Applying the same estimates from this report to Sandwell, the table below provides an estimate of what violence is costing

| | Costs in anticipation of crime | Costs as a consequence of crime | Costs in response to crime | Total cost | Number of crimes in Sandwell 2021-2022 | Costs in anticipation of crime | Costs as a consequence of crime | Costs in response to crime | Total costs for Sandwell |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Violence with Injury | £340 | £11,220 | £2,500 | £14,060 | 4353 | £1,480,020 | £48,840,660 | £10,882,500 | 61,203,180 |
| Violence without Injury | £120 | £3,750 | £2,060 | £5,930 | 4650 | £558,000 | £17,437,500 | £9,579,000 | 27,574,500 |
| Rape | £980 | £31,450 | £6,940 | £39,370 | 419 | £410,620 | £13,177,550 | £2,907,860 | 16,496,030 |
| Other sexual offences | £160 | £5,220 | £1,150 | £6,530 | 510 | £81,600 | £2,662,200 | £586,500 | 3,330,300 |
| Domestic abuse | £5 | £33,115 | £1,520 | £34,640 | 11,498 | £57,490 | £380,756,270 | £17,476,960 | 398,290,720 |
| Modern slavery | £210 | £320,790 | £7,730 | £328,730 | 159 | £33,390 | £51,005,610 | £1,229,070 | 52,268,070 |

Key Points from Cost Analysis

Serious violence has far-reaching and significant impacts on society, both socially and economically. In Sandwell, violence-related crimes have resulted in substantial costs that have affected individuals, communities and the wider economy. By understanding the full extent of these costs more effective strategies for prevention and intervention can be developed which can reduce the impact of violence on individuals and society.

This analysis has identified several key areas where violence-related costs have been significant in Sandwell as follows:

- Domestic abuse is the costliest type of violence, with a total cost of almost £398 million, which is more than two-thirds of the total cost of violence in Sandwell
- Violence with injury is the second most costly type of violence, with a total cost of over £61 million
- Although the number of incidents of rape and other sexual offences are much lower compared to other types of violence, their total cost is still significant, with a total cost of over £19 million combined
- Modern slavery, while having a relatively low number of reported incidents, still has a significant total cost of over £52 million
- The costs associated with the consequences of violence, such as damage to property and physical harm, are generally much higher than the anticipated costs of violence prevention measures, such as personal alarms and CCTV
- The costs incurred by the police and criminal justice system, as well as multi-agency interventions to prevent and address violence, can also be substantial

Key Roles in Preventing Violence

When working to prevent and reduce complex problems like violence there is not a one size fits all approach and approaches need to be used together

Education

Education can play a crucial role in preventing violence by providing young people with the knowledge, skills and values needed to resolve conflicts peacefully and to make positive life choices.

- ✓ **Promoting social-emotional learning:** teach students how to recognise and regulate emotions, develop empathy and resolve conflicts peacefully
- ✓ **Building resilience** by teaching them coping skills, providing positive role models and promoting positive self-esteem and self-worth
- ✓ **Violence prevention curriculum** to help students understand the language of violence and how to seek help
- ✓ **Addressing root causes of violence:** such as poverty, trauma, exposure to violence and using early help to address these factors

Youth Justice

The youth justice system plays a vital role in preventing violence by addressing the needs of young people who have been involved in violent or antisocial behaviour and helping them build a more positive and peaceful future.

- ✓ **Early intervention:** addressing the needs of young people at an early stage can help prevent violent behaviour from becoming more serious
- ✓ **Addressing root causes** such as poverty, trauma, and exposure to violence by connecting young people with mental health and other key services
- ✓ **Providing rehabilitation and support:** rehabilitation and support, including therapy, education and training and mentoring
- ✓ **Promoting accountability:** holding young people accountable for their actions and requiring them to make amends for the harm they have caused

Children's Social Care

Children's social care plays a crucial role in preventing violence by addressing the needs of children and their families and providing them with the support they need to build a safe, stable and peaceful future.

- ✓ **Early identification and intervention:** identify children who are at risk of violence and provide them with early intervention and support.
- ✓ **Promoting positive family dynamics:** promote positive family dynamics and address factors that may contribute to violence
- ✓ **Providing safe and stable homes:** work to ensure that children have safe and stable homes, free from violence and abuse.
- ✓ **Building resilience;** support and opportunities to build resilience and overcome the challenges and difficulties that contribute to violence

Short
Term

Trauma Informed

Long
Term

Key Roles in Preventing Violence

When working to prevent and reduce complex problems like violence there is not a one size fits all approach and approaches need to be used together

| Fire | Probation | Police |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Fire prevention can play a crucial role in violence prevention by addressing underlying factors that contribute to violence and creating safer communities. By reducing the incidence of fires and fire-related injuries, fire prevention efforts can also have a positive impact on community safety and well-being.</p> | <p>Probation can play a significant role in preventing and reducing serious violence by working with individuals who have been convicted of violent offences and supporting them to reintegrate back into society.</p> | <p>The police play a critical role in preventing and responding to serious violence. They are often the first point of contact for individuals affected by violence and have a unique ability to influence community safety.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Addressing social and economic inequality: Fire prevention efforts can focus on communities with higher rates of poverty and social exclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Providing tailored interventions: Probation officers can provide individualised support to those at risk of violent reoffending | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Prevention through community engagement: Police can build trusted relationships with local communities through proactive engagement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Engaging with youth: Fire prevention initiatives involve working with young people and educating them about the risks of fires | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Collaboration with other agencies: to address the underlying factors that contribute to violent behaviour, such as poverty and social exclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Intelligence-led policing: By using data and intelligence, police can target their resources to prevent violence from occurring |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Identifying areas with high levels of fire-related incidents and collaborating with other agencies to develop targeted interventions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Promoting positive behaviours: educate and encourage individuals to adopt positive behaviours and attitudes towards violence prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Partnership working: Work in partnership with other agencies and community organisations to address the root causes of violence. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Providing an emergency response service and working with law enforcement to address incidents of violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Monitoring and evaluation: Monitoring the progress of individuals and evaluating the effectiveness of violence prevention interventions, | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Effective response: Responding quickly and effectively to violence incidents to mitigate harm and prevent further violence |

Short
Term



Long
Term

VIOLENCE PROFILES

These profiles provide a detailed analysis of different types of violence that affect communities, including: domestic abuse; sexual assault and abuse; modern slavery; child exploitation; knife crime; gun crime and violence against the person. Each profile outlines five-year trends in reported incidents, highlighting any significant changes in patterns over time.

The analysis also compares data for Sandwell with regional with national figures to identify any areas of concern or success. Understanding the prevalence and nature of different forms of violence is crucial in developing effective strategies for prevention and intervention. By analysing trends and patterns in reported incidents, areas of high risk and vulnerability can be identified, alongside any gaps in services and support.

The significant impact that violence has on individuals, families and communities is recognised and that partnership approaches are essential to reduce and prevent violence in all its forms. These profiles provide a valuable resource, helping to develop evidence-based strategies that are tailored to the needs of Sandwell's communities.



VIOLENCE PROFILE

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse is a devastating crime that can have serious and long-lasting impacts on victims and their families. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has provided a new statutory definition of domestic abuse that includes a range of behaviours beyond physical violence. In Sandwell domestic abuse is a significant issue that affects a large number of people each year. According to recent statistics, around one-third of violence against the person offences and one-fifth of all homicides in the area are domestic abuse-related.

The Protecting people, promoting health report suggests a number of risk factors associated with domestic abuse including: growing up in a violent home; substance abuse; social isolation and adverse childhood experiences. These experiences can have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of those affected and can increase the likelihood of perpetrating broader forms of violence later in life. As such it is crucial that local authorities take action to prevent and reduce domestic abuse in the area, particularly through early intervention and consistent practice to support children who have experienced domestic abuse.

The Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and the complementary Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan have been put in place to improve collaboration and multi-agency working between organisations, including at a local level. These initiatives aim to address the disproportionate impact of domestic abuse and other forms of violence on women and girls. It is important that Sandwell continues to work towards implementing these strategies and improving support for victims of domestic abuse across the Borough.

One of the key challenges in tackling domestic abuse in Sandwell is the need to pursue perpetrators. Lack of robust perpetrator programmes and inconsistent practice across agencies can make it difficult to hold perpetrators accountable and prevent further harm. Evidence points to the impact of experiencing domestic and sexual abuse in childhood having adverse impacts on children in later life which makes early intervention and consistent practice essential in addressing the root causes of domestic abuse and reducing its occurrence.

Overall, addressing domestic abuse in Sandwell requires a coordinated effort across agencies and sectors, including robust perpetrator programmes, early intervention, consistent practice, and ongoing collaboration and multi-agency working. By working together, Sandwell can make progress in preventing and reducing the devastating impact of domestic abuse on individuals, families and communities.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse, also referred to as domestic violence, involves a repeated pattern of behaviour where one partner in an intimate relationship uses various tactics to exert power and control over the other. This can include physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse and financial abuse. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, religion or socio-economic status and it can occur in all types of intimate relationships, such as dating relationships, married couples and partners who live together. The consequences of domestic abuse can be severe and long-lasting, making it crucial for those experiencing abuse to seek assistance and support.

Why does domestic abuse happen?

There is no single answer to why domestic abuse happens, as it is a complex issue with many contributing factors. However, some common factors that have been identified:

- **Power and control:** Domestic abuse often stems from an abuser's desire to control and dominate their partner. The abuser may use various tactics to assert power and control including physical violence, emotional abuse and / or financial control
- **Substance abuse:** Substance abuse such as alcohol or drug addiction can increase the likelihood of domestic abuse. Substance abuse can impair judgment and increase aggressive behaviour
- **Mental health issues:** Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety or personality disorders can increase the risk of domestic abuse. Mental health problems can make it difficult for individuals to manage their emotions and behaviour in a healthy manner
- **Childhood trauma:** Childhood trauma such as physical, emotional or sexual abuse can increase the risk of domestic abuse in adulthood. Those who have experienced trauma may struggle with relationships and may use abusive behaviour as a means of coping with past experiences
- **Cultural and societal attitudes:** Domestic abuse can also be perpetuated by cultural and societal attitudes that support or condone violence and control in intimate relationships

It is important to note that these factors do not excuse domestic abuse. No matter the cause, domestic abuse is never acceptable and should always be addressed.

What is the impact of domestic abuse?

Victims of domestic abuse often experience a range of emotions and reactions, which can vary depending on the individual and the severity of the abuse. Common reactions to domestic abuse include:

- **Fear:** Victims may live in constant fear of their abuser, which can impact their daily life and well-being
- **Shame and guilt:** Victims may feel ashamed or guilty about the abuse, especially if they are being told by their abuser that it is their own fault
- **Isolation:** Domestic abuse can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, as victims may feel like they have nowhere to turn for help
- **Physical symptoms:** Domestic abuse can also cause physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach problems and sleep disturbances
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** Domestic abuse can result in PTSD, a condition characterised by symptoms such as intrusive thoughts, flashbacks and anxiety

How to prevent domestic abuse?

Preventing domestic abuse involves a combination of individual, community and societal actions and interventions including:

- **Education:** Educating people about the dynamics of domestic abuse including what it is and how it can be prevented, is crucial in preventing such abuse
- **Challenging societal attitudes:** Challenging societal attitudes and beliefs that support or condone domestic abuse is important in preventing it. This includes promoting gender equality and rejecting cultural norms that tolerate violence and control in intimate relationships
- **Providing support for survivors:** Providing support for survivors of domestic abuse is crucial in helping them recover from the experience and in preventing them from becoming victims again in the future
- **Holding perpetrators accountable:** Holding perpetrators accountable for their actions is important in preventing them from continuing to use abusive behaviour. This can include criminal prosecution, as well as offering perpetrator intervention programs that aim to change their behaviour
- **Encouraging bystander intervention:** Encouraging people to speak out and intervene when they witness or suspect domestic abuse can help to prevent it. This can include educating people about how to safely intervene, as well as promoting a community-wide culture of zero tolerance for domestic abuse

Problem Profile: Domestic Abuse

Scanning:

- Domestic abuse incidents reported to West Midlands Police in Sandwell have been steadily increasing since 2016, with a total of 6,389 incidents reported in 2020
- The majority of victims of domestic abuse in Sandwell are female (74%), and the most affected age group is 25-34 years (27%)
- The ethnic background of victims of domestic abuse in Sandwell is diverse, with White British (38%), Asian or Asian British (25%) and Black or Black British (16%) being the most common ethnicities
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on domestic abuse in Sandwell, with a 24% increase in incidents reported to police during the first lockdown in 2020 compared to the same period in 2019
- Referrals to the IDVA service in Sandwell have increased over the past four years, with a total of 3,206 referrals in 2021-22
- The number of high-risk cases referred to the IDVA has been steadily increasing over the past four years, with 1,105 high-risk cases referred in 2021-22

Analysis:

- Domestic abuse is a significant issue in Sandwell, with a higher rate of domestic abuse incidents recorded by West Midlands Police in Sandwell than the national average reported by SafeLives
- The rate of domestic homicides in Sandwell is also higher than the national average
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on domestic abuse in Sandwell, with an increase in incidents reported during the first lockdown in 2020 compared to the same period in 2019
- There is a clear need for increased support for victims, as well as a focus on prevention and early intervention
- The number of high-risk cases referred to the IDVA has been steadily increasing over the past four years, highlighting the need for more targeted and effective support services for victims, particularly those at high risk

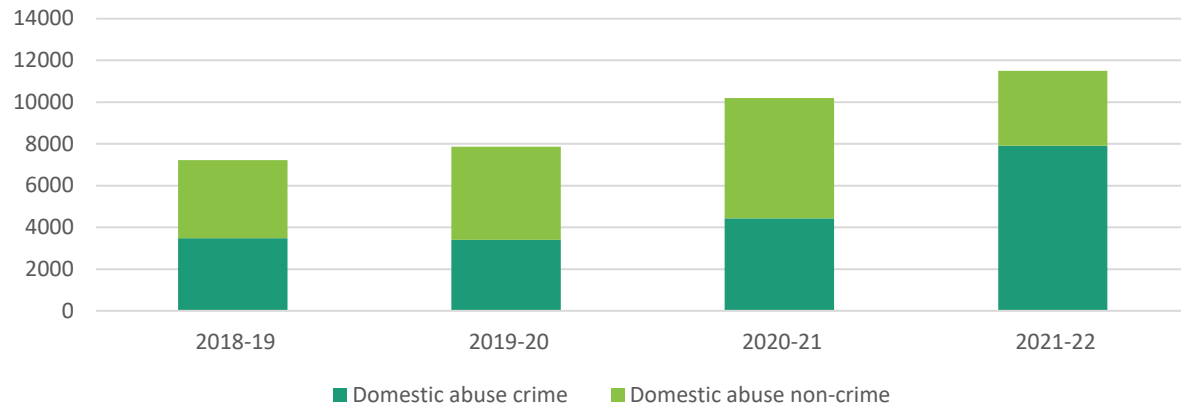
Response:

- Increase awareness of domestic abuse through public education campaigns
- Provide training for professionals to identify and respond to domestic abuse
- Expand access to support services for victims, particularly those at high risk
- Address the underlying factors that contribute to domestic abuse, such as poverty, substance abuse and mental health issues
- Hold perpetrators accountable for their actions
- Develop and implement effective prevention programs aimed at reducing domestic abuse
- Strengthen laws and policies to protect victims and hold abusers accountable
- Support research on the causes and consequences of domestic abuse, as well as on effective prevention and intervention strategies
- Engage men and boys in efforts to prevent domestic abuse and promote healthy relationships
- Empower survivors of domestic abuse by providing them with the resources and support they need to rebuild their lives

Assessment:

- Monitor the number of domestic abuse incidents in Sandwell to assess the effectiveness of interventions
- Evaluate the impact of support services for victims, particularly those at high risk
- Monitor the number of referrals to the IDVA and the outcomes of these referrals
- Continually assess the underlying factors contributing to domestic abuse and adjust interventions accordingly
- Monitor the level of community engagement and participation in domestic abuse prevention activities to evaluate the effectiveness of public education campaigns
- Evaluate the effectiveness of training programs for professionals by monitoring their ability to identify and respond to domestic abuse cases
- Track the number of successful prosecutions of domestic abuse perpetrators to assess the effectiveness of holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.
- Regularly review the quality and accessibility of support services for victims to ensure they are meeting the needs of those at high risk
- Assess the impact of domestic abuse on children and their families and provide appropriate interventions and support

Domestic abuse referrals to Police



Based on police data, domestic abuse reporting has been steadily increasing in Sandwell over the past few years, with a sharp rise in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. In 2021-2022, there were a total of 11,498 reported domestic abuse cases in Sandwell, which is a 12% increase on the previous year.

This increase in domestic abuse cases may be attributed to various factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and increased awareness and reporting. It is important to note that domestic abuse crimes and non-crimes are both significant and require attention from local authorities and organisations.

In terms of serious violence, domestic abuse can be a serious and high-harm crime, particularly for women and children who are often the primary victims. The rise in domestic abuse cases in Sandwell highlights the need for effective strategies and interventions to address the root causes of domestic abuse, such as power and control, and to support victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

Additionally, the data suggests that there may be a need for increased resources and support for victims of domestic abuse, particularly those at high risk, who are currently receiving low levels of one-to-one support engagement. This highlights the need for more targeted and effective support services for victims, such as specialist domestic abuse services, to ensure that victims are able to access the support they need to stay safe and recover from the impact of domestic abuse.

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between different agencies, such as the police, health and social care services.

The number of referrals to MARAC has increased significantly over the years, from 498 in 2018-19 to 839 in 2021-22. This suggests that more high-risk victims are being identified and referred to the conference for multi-agency support and intervention.

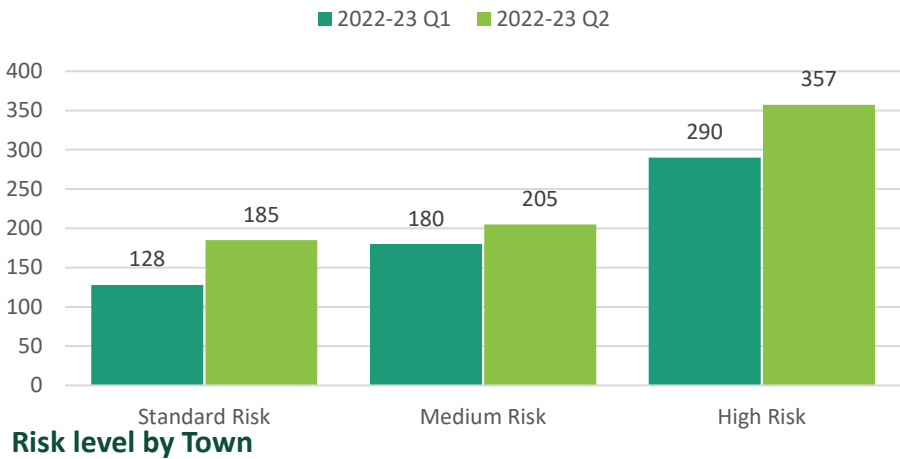
Repeat referrals to MARAC are also an important indicator of domestic abuse. Repeat referrals also increased slightly from 38% in 2019-20 to 43% in 2021-22. This could indicate that some high-risk victims are not receiving the necessary support or interventions to break the cycle of abuse and prevent future incidents.

Overall, the increase in domestic abuse crimes and non-crimes, as well as the rise in MARAC referrals, indicate that domestic abuse is a significant problem in Sandwell that requires attention and intervention from a range of agencies and stakeholders.

Sandwell Children's Trust has also been actively involved in addressing domestic abuse, with 5,789 contacts made in 2019-20, 6,016 in 2020-21, and 5,238 in 2021-22.

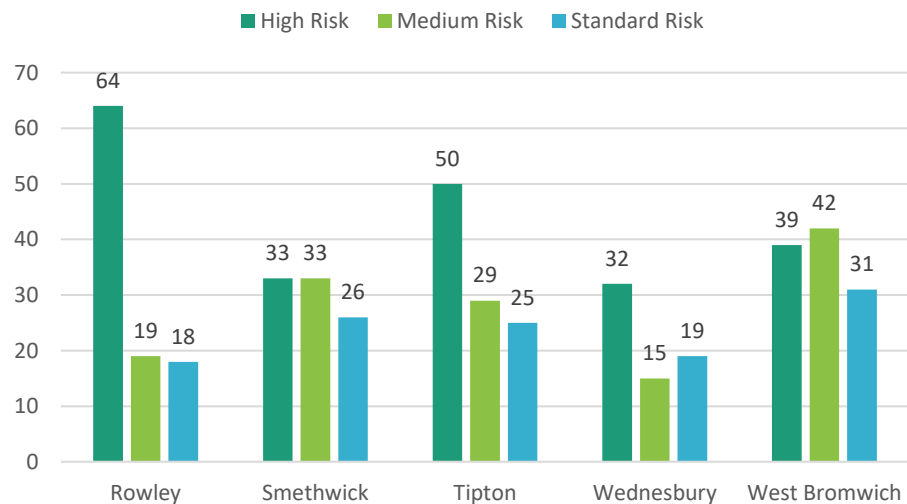
Referrals to SMBC funded specialist IDVA service BCWA

A 25% increase in a 3 month period in referrals across all risk levels to the specialist IDVA service



Rowley has the highest volume of reported domestic abuse with 29%

Rowley also has the highest volume and proportion of high-risk cases



Domestic abuse remains a significant issue in Sandwell, with many victims and families affected by its devastating impact. The latest data from Black Country Women's Aid (BCWA) for the second quarter of 2022-23 highlights the continued need for specialist services to support victims of domestic abuse.

BCWA received 93 referrals from victims who reached out for support during this period. Rowley had the highest volume of reported domestic abuse cases, with 29% of all referrals coming from this area. It was also the area with the highest volume and proportion of high-risk cases. In fact, Rowley had the highest volume of high-risk cases, with the distribution of high, standard and medium risk also being highest in this area.

The victim profile of the referrals received by BCWA during the second quarter of 2022-23 reveals that the majority of victims were female, with 94% of all referrals being women. This is consistent with the fact that domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and girls. The top three ethnicities of victims were White, Pakistani, and Indian, with 49% of all victims being of White ethnicity. The age range of victims was between 19

and 44 years, with 41% of all victims being between the ages of 25 and 34. This indicates that domestic abuse affects victims across a range of ages.

The data also reveals that 408 victims were caring for children and 57 victims were pregnant at the time of referral. Additionally, 12 victims had a disability and 33 were teenagers. BCWA supported 17 children who had witnessed domestic abuse, highlighting the need for specialised services to support those who are exposed to domestic abuse.

BCWA also reported that there were 184 cases referred to the IDVA post Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and 65 victims were referred to MARAC by the IDVA. Referrals made directly by the police to the BCWA for high-risk victims more than doubled from the previous quarter, with 22 referrals being received. Health referrals also doubled, with a 93% increase between quarters, highlighting the importance of early intervention.

It is worth noting that high-risk victims had the lowest level of one-to-one support engagement, with only 27% of high-risk victims engaging in one-to-one case work. In contrast, 56% of all victims engaged in telephone advice and guidance and 26 victims engaged in group work.

Overall, the data from Black Country Women's Aid reveals the continued need for specialist services to support victims of domestic abuse in Sandwell. The high volume of cases in Rowley highlights the need for targeted interventions and support, while the diverse victim profile highlights the need for culturally sensitive services. The data also reinforces the importance of early intervention and specialised support for children exposed to domestic abuse.

Key findings from analysis of domestic homicide reviews

The [key findings from analysis of domestic homicide reviews](#) summarises information from domestic homicide reviews (DHRs) for the 12 months from October 2019. DHRs are multi-agency reviews, commissioned by community safety partnerships, into the deaths of adults which may have resulted from violence, abuse, or neglect; by a person to whom they were related or with whom they had an intimate relationship, or where they were a member of the same household. This report presents key information from 124 DHRs which were reviewed by the Home Office quality assurance process for the 12 months from October 2019.

Victims

- Sixty-one percent of victims had a vulnerability, with 34% having one vulnerability and 27% having more than one.
- Of the vulnerabilities, 34% were mental ill-health, 28% were problem alcohol use and 22% were illicit drug use.
- For 26% of those with a mental health vulnerability this was depression, 16% had suicidal thoughts. Fourteen percent had attempted to take their life by suicide and, with 14% also, the vulnerability was low mood or anxiety.
- Forty-six percent of the victims had been the target of a perpetrator previously, almost always their previous partner.
- In 64% of the DHRs aggravating factors were identified, with coercive control being the most common.

Perpetrators

- Seventy-one percent of the perpetrators were considered to have a vulnerability and the most common were illicit drug use, mental ill-health, and problematic alcohol use.
- Thirty one percent of perpetrators were affected by mental health issues and for 23% this was depression and 21% were suicidal thoughts.
- Approximately 60% of perpetrators were indicated to have a previous offending history. Of these three quarters had abused previous partners and one third family members. This includes a small proportion who had abused both previous partners and family members.
- Of the court verdicts, 62 perpetrators were sentenced for murder and 25 for manslaughter. Thirteen were deemed to have diminished responsibility or be unfit to plead.

Key themes

This project has analysed in more detail a sample of 50 of the DHRs. The areas identified for improvement are:

- **contact:** the need for greater contact with victims and recognition that the perpetrator can control the victim's contacts with agencies
- **assessment:** the need to improve risk assessments, carer's assessments, or mental health assessments
- **records:** information can be missing and not shared between agencies
- **support:** for staff whose work involved cases of domestic abuse and cases where support for victim was not identified or, where the need for support was identified, but there was no plan to provide it
- **information:** the need to improve information sharing between agencies, to hold accurate information and then use it effectively to manage risk
- **risk:** the right risk level needs to be identified, with information held by other agencies included.
- **referrals:** are not always made when needed
- **training:** the need to update training and make it accessible
- **policy:** occasions when action taken was not in line with policy and there were agencies without a domestic abuse policy

Sandwell Picture

Sandwell has undertaken its own review into DHR's and they are very similar in comparison. The analysis on the following page will give an overview of the Sandwell analysis.

Analysis of Domestic Abuse Homicides since 2012

The review of domestic abuse homicides in Sandwell has revealed important insights into the nature and scope of serious violence in the context of intimate partner relationships. Key trends and risk factors associated with domestic homicides, including victim and perpetrator profiles, common methods of violence and the role of support services in prevention have been identified. Local domestic homicide reviews in Sandwell have also highlighted the importance of early intervention and the need for improved information sharing and communication between agencies. There have been instances where previous incidents of domestic abuse were not effectively communicated or recorded which may have contributed to a lack of support for victims and missed opportunities for intervention. The reviews also stress the need for tailored support and services for specific groups, such as ethnic minority communities and young people, who may face additional barriers to accessing support. Overall, these reviews demonstrate the value of conducting in-depth analyses of domestic homicides in order to identify trends and areas for improvement in local responses to domestic abuse.

Victim profile

80% female
50% White British
Average age 42
80% not supported through MARAC
93% not referred to local DA service
44% stabbed
19% head injuries

Perpetrator profile

94% male
38% history of previous domestic abuse
30% by current partner
19% ex-partner
20% mental health
30% drug and alcohol
13% on a domestic abuse perpetrator programme at the time of the homicide
2 cases were murder suicide, both by husbands

Intimate relationship

Less than half homicides were current intimate relationships
All victims were female
2 individuals referred to MARAC
1 individual referred to BCWA
57% white British
1 victim Indian, 1 Mixed Race, 1 Polish
71% cohabiting, 29% married
Head injury was the highest cause of death (29%)
2 homicides happened when the relationship was ended

Ex-partner

3 homicides were committed by ex-partners
All were female partners
All victims were White British
One victim was stabbed
1 victim was strangled
1 victim was referred to MARAC
Neither victim was referred to local DA service

Child to parent abuse

4 homicides were committed by child to parent abuse
50/50 split male and female
Neither parent was referred to MARAC
50% white British
1 victim Indian,
75% son, 25% daughter
75% of cases involved victim being stabbed
100% of knife incidents were committed by males

The high percentage of female victims (80%) and the fact that most of them were not supported through the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) or referred to local domestic abuse (DA) services (93%) suggests that there are gaps in the current support systems that need to be addressed.

The perpetrator profile also reveals concerning trends, such as a high prevalence of mental health issues (20%) and drug and alcohol abuse (30%), which can contribute to the escalation of violence. The fact that nearly 40% of perpetrators had a history of previous domestic abuse also suggests that there may be missed opportunities for early intervention and prevention.

The analysis also highlights the importance of addressing child-to-parent abuse, which was responsible for four of the homicides reviewed. This underscores the need for better support and resources for families dealing with this type of abuse.

Lessons learned from the DHR reviews in Sandwell and elsewhere include the importance of effective communication and collaboration between agencies, early identification of risk factors and timely intervention to prevent serious violence from occurring. It is essential to have robust systems in place to ensure that victims of domestic abuse receive the support they need and that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.

Overall, the analysis of domestic abuse homicides in Sandwell highlights the need for a trauma-informed, victim-centered approach to preventing serious violence, which considers the individual circumstances and needs of victims and their families. It is essential to continue to gather data and review case studies to identify trends and risk factors that can inform prevention strategies and ultimately lead to better outcomes for victims of serious violence.

Male victims

3 cases were for male victims
Neither were supported through MARAC or local DA service
None of males had full DHR completed
66% of homicides on males were committed by their children
66% of cases involved stabbing, by a male perpetrator

Analysis of domestic homicides in Sandwell since 2012



Female victims

13 cases involved females
61% White British
77% of cases involved an intimate partner
38% involved knife incidents
15% involved strangulation
23% of homicides took place at the end of a relationship

VIOLENCE PROFILE

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND ABUSE

Sexual assault and abuse in Sandwell is a significant concern with local and national research indicating that the problem is increasing. The threat of child sexual abuse continues to rise, with two-thirds of cases occurring in family environments and only one in eight coming to the attention of authorities. The internet is a major contributor to the problem as it allows offenders to groom multiple victims simultaneously and can lead to contact abuse, the production of indecent images and extortion. Sexual offences are defined under the law of England and Wales and are a significant form of serious violence in a local area.

- Along with increased knowledge of this subject, it is highly likely that the scale of the threat from child sexual abuse continues to increase ([NCA](#))
- In 2015, the [Children's Commissioner](#) for England estimated that two thirds of child sexual abuse in England takes place behind the closed doors of the family environment, further estimating that only one in eight children who are sexually assaulted come to the attention of the authorities
- The use of the internet to groom children remains a major threat often leading to contact abuse, victims producing and sharing indecent images of themselves or extortion
- Individual offenders use social media to target multiple victims simultaneously
- According to the Office for [National Statistics \(ONS\)](#), an estimated 3.1 million adults in England and Wales have been sexually abused before the age of 16
- Nationally sexual assault and abuse disproportionately affects women and girls, with 1 in 5 females estimated to experience sexual assault and abuse from the age of 16 years old and 1 in 25 males estimated to experience sexual assault and abuse within the same age bracket (CSEW, 2018)
- Sexual offences recorded by the police were at the highest level recorded within a 12-month period (194,683 offences) in the year ending March 2022, a 32% increase from the same period in 2021
- There are currently 4331 RSOs within the West Midlands, 956 of whom are in prison (WM [PCC](#))
- During Operation Soteria less than 5 cases were found to have been considered for a Sexual Risk Order
- The PCC survey indicates that young girls feel unsafe in public due to fear of sexual assault and harassment, with the problem exacerbated at night time
- Some respondents to the PCC survey felt that violence against women and sexual assault is not taken seriously enough by the police, and victims are often not believed when they report these crimes
- Respondents to the PCC survey thought it was important to address the root causes of violence against women through education of both boys and girls in schools and provide safe spaces for victims to talk about their experiences

What is sexual assault and abuse?

Sexual assault and abuse refer to any non-consensual sexual contact or behaviour. This can include a wide range of behaviours such as unwanted touching, fondling, rape and sexual exploitation.

The use of force, threats, coercion, or manipulation can also be considered forms of sexual abuse. Sexual assault and abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender, race or sexual orientation. It is a serious crime that can have long-lasting physical, emotional and psychological effects on the survivors.

It is important to understand that sexual assault and abuse are never the fault of the survivor and that they have the right to access support and resources to help them heal and move forward.

Why does sexual assault and abuse happen?

Sexual assault and abuse can happen for many reasons and it is important to understand that it is never the fault of the survivor. Some common reasons why sexual assault and abuse occur include:

- **Power and control:** Perpetrators may use sexual violence as a means of exerting power and control over their victims. This can be especially true in cases of intimate partner violence or abuse
- **Lack of understanding of consent:** Some individuals may not understand what constitutes consent and may engage in sexual behaviour without fully comprehending that it is non-consensual
- **Substance abuse:** Substance abuse can impair an individual's judgment and lead them to engage in harmful and abusive behaviours
- **Historical and cultural attitudes:** Societal norms and cultural attitudes can contribute to the normalisation of sexual violence and perpetuate a cycle of abuse
- **Mental health issues:** Some individuals who engage in sexual assault or abuse may have underlying mental health issues that contribute to their behaviour

What is the impact of sexual assault and abuse?

Sexual assault and abuse can have a profound and lasting impact on survivors and it is common for survivors to experience a range of emotions and reactions. Some common reactions include:

- **Shock and disbelief:** Many survivors experience shock and disbelief and may struggle to process what has happened to them
- **Anxiety and fear:** Survivors may feel anxious and fearful after experiencing sexual assault or abuse, especially if they are afraid of further harm or retaliation
- **Shame and guilt:** Survivors may feel ashamed and guilty about the abuse, even though it is not their fault. They may feel like they did something wrong or that they could have done something to prevent the abuse
- **Anger:** Many survivors experience feelings of anger and frustration, especially if they feel that their attacker has not been held accountable
- **Physical symptoms:** Sexual assault and abuse can cause physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach problems and sleep disturbance
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** Sexual assault and abuse can result in PTSD, a condition characterised by symptoms such as intrusive thoughts, flashbacks and anxiety

How to prevent sexual assault and abuse?

Preventing sexual assault and abuse requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses both individual behaviour and societal attitudes. Ways to help prevent sexual assault and abuse include:

- **Promote consent and healthy relationships:** Teach children and young people about the importance of consent and respect in all relationships, including romantic relationships
- **Educate about sexual violence:** Educate individuals about what sexual assault and abuse is, how to recognise it and how to report it
- **Encourage bystander intervention:** Encourage people to speak out and intervene when they witness behaviour that could lead to sexual assault or abuse
- **Address cultural and societal attitudes:** Challenge cultural norms and attitudes that perpetuate violence and abuse, such as victim blaming and rape culture. Promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes
- **Support survivors:** Provide resources and support for survivors of sexual assault and abuse to help them heal and recover. Ensure that survivors have access to resources such as counselling, medical care and legal support
- **Hold perpetrators accountable:** Hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and ensure that they are held responsible for the harm they have caused. This can help to reduce the occurrence of sexual assault and abuse and promote a culture of respect and consent

Problem Profile: Sexual Assault and Abuse

Scanning:

- Sexual assault and abuse is a significant problem in Sandwell, with a consistent increase in reported rape and sexual offences over the past few years
- In 2021-22, the total number of reported rape and sexual offences was 1011, a rise of 30.5% from 2018-19 when there were 773 reported cases
- Exposure and voyeurism increased significantly from 27 reports in 2019-20 to 292 in 2020-21, before decreasing to 66 in 2021-22
- There have been notable increases in some categories of offences, such as rape of a female child under 16 and sexual activity involving a child under 13
- The impact of sexual violence on survivors can be devastating, with long-lasting physical, emotional and psychological effects
- The majority of sexual assault and abuse cases are perpetrated by someone known to the survivor, such as a family member, friend or acquaintance
- The reporting of sexual assault and abuse is often low, with many survivors not feeling comfortable or safe enough to come forward

Analysis:

- Sexual assault and abuse is a complex problem with many different types of offences being reported. Understanding these risk factors and developing effective strategies to address them is crucial for reducing the incidence of sexual violence in Sandwell
- Sandwell has taken several significant steps to address the issue of sexual assault and abuse including establishing a Sexual Assault and Abuse sub-group, completing a needs assessment and drafting a sexual assault strategy
- Prevention efforts are crucial in addressing sexual violence. This may involve promoting healthy relationships and consent education, addressing harmful gender norms and attitudes and working to reduce other forms of violence and inequality
- It's worth considering the role of technology in sexual violence. This may involve addressing issues such as online harassment, revenge porn and the use of social media to facilitate sexual exploitation
- It's also important to ensure that survivors of sexual violence have access to comprehensive and trauma-informed support services

Key Findings

Response:

- Law enforcement agencies and other organisations need to work together to identify the underlying causes of sexual assault and abuse and develop effective strategies to prevent it from occurring in the first place
- Effective responses to sexual violence should include a multi-agency approach that involves police, health and social care providers and victim support services
- Prevention strategies could include education and awareness-raising campaigns that address attitudes and behaviours that contribute to sexual violence
- The Sexual Assault and Abuse sub-group should continue to work on developing and implementing strategies to address sexual violence in the community
- Collaboration between the sub-group, the local authority, police and community groups can help to raise awareness of the issue and increase reporting of sexual offences
- Supporting survivors of sexual assault and abuse should be a priority, with access to appropriate and timely services such as counselling and medical care
- Improved data collection and analysis can help to identify patterns and trends in sexual offences which can inform prevention and response strategies
- Addressing systemic issues such as gender inequality and harmful gender stereotypes will be a key component of prevention work in Sandwell

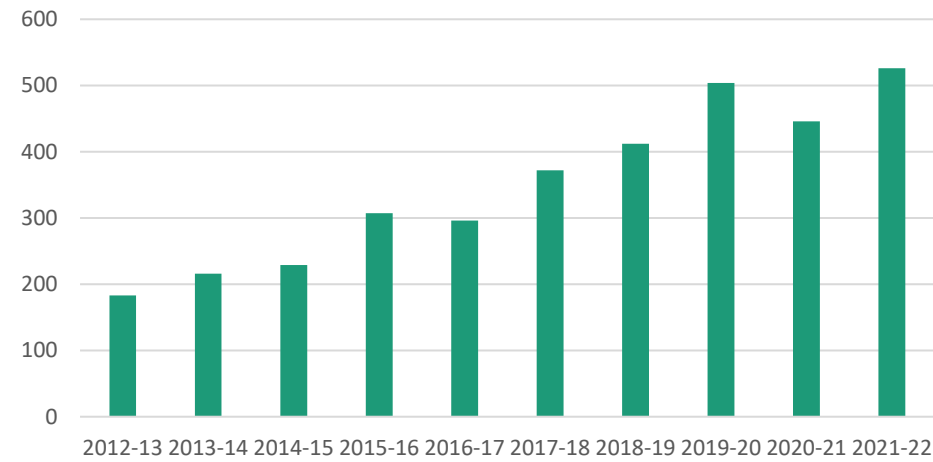
Assessment:

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of prevention and response strategies is crucial for addressing sexual assault and abuse in Sandwell
- Regular data collection and analysis can help to identify emerging trends and inform the development of evidence-based interventions
- Reporting mechanism should be developed to ensure it is easy for victims of sexual assault and abuse to report their experiences
- Adequate support and care should be provided to victims in Sandwell including providing counselling and mental health services
- Law enforcement agencies in Sandwell should conduct regular training for officers to improve their understanding of sexual violence and their response to victims

Responding to Sexual Assault and Abuse in Sandwell

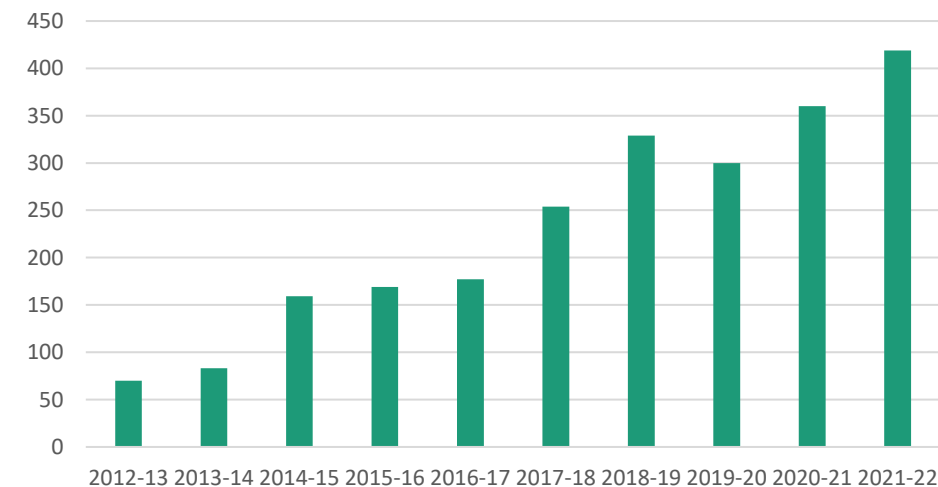
Long Trend Sexual Offences in Sandwell

Nationally there has been a 32% increase in sexual offences over the last 12-month period. Sandwell had a 23% increase which was lower than the national trend



Long Trend rape in Sandwell

Nationally there has been a 26% increase in rapes reported to the police over the last 12 month period. Sandwell had a 16% increase which was lower than the national trend



Sandwell has taken several significant steps to address the issue of sexual assault and abuse. Firstly, a Sexual Assault and Abuse sub-group that reports to DASP, has been established enabling a dedicated focus on this issue. Additionally a needs assessment and a sexual assault strategy have been completed, reinforcing Sandwell's proactive approach to addressing these issues.

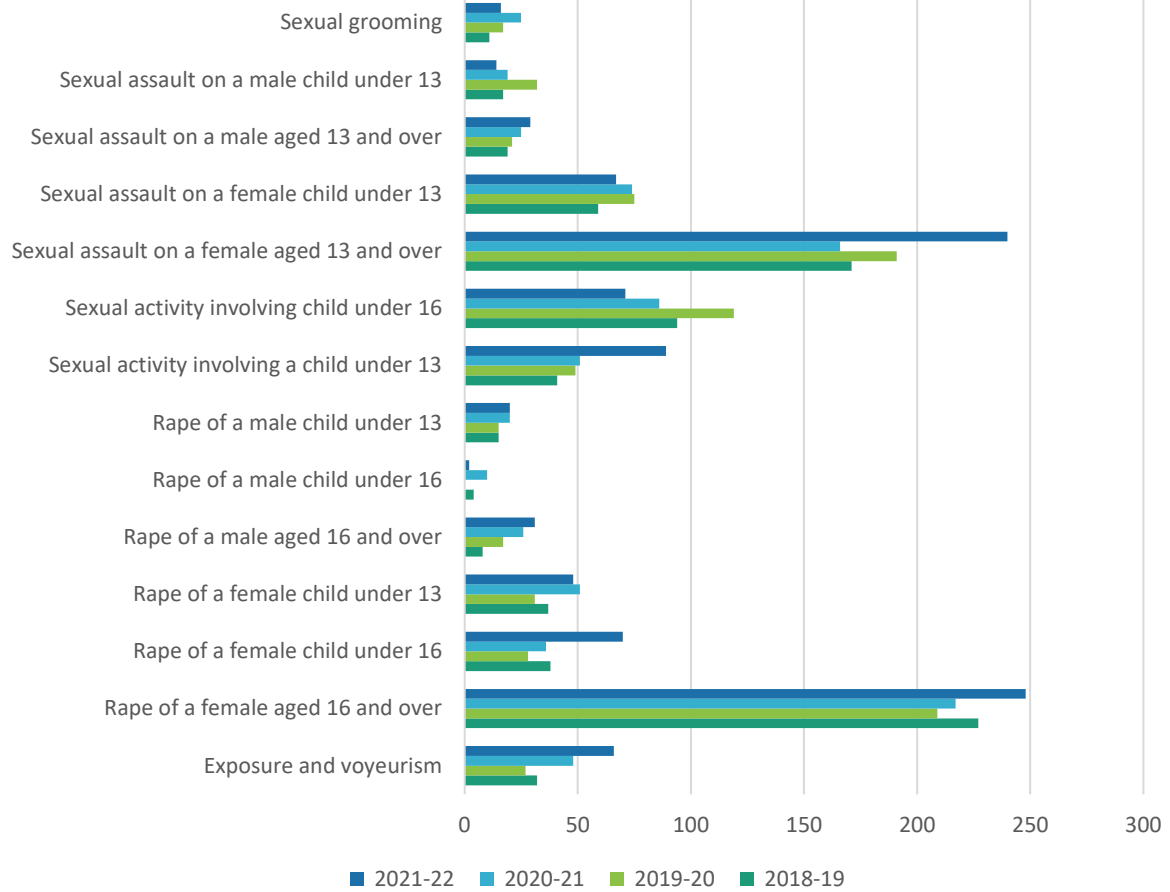
Furthermore, Sandwell is actively engaged in improving the education young people receive around healthy relationships, misogyny and gender norms/stereotypes. This is essential as it promotes positive attitudes and behaviours towards gender and sexuality which can ultimately help prevent sexual violence. Sexual Harassment Training was also rolled out through Safer Street 3 funding, which 185 delegates attended indicating the commitment locally to training individuals to recognise and respond appropriately to sexual harassment.

Sandwell has also invested in new SAA training delivered by the Haven. This training will equip professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to support survivors of sexual assault and abuse more effectively. Furthermore, Sandwell has secured funding through the VRP locality budget to provide schools with "Men at Work" training. This training supports school staff to work with men and boys around the issues of consent, misogyny and gender stereotypes, which supports both the education strand of the SAA Implementation Plan and the wider DA Implementation Plan.

Overall, Sandwell has made significant progress in addressing the issue of sexual assault and abuse, from establishing a dedicated sub-group to developing a needs assessment, implementing a sexual assault strategy and investing in training programs for professionals, educators and young people. All of which demonstrate a commitment to preventing sexual violence and supporting survivors of sexual assault and abuse.

Rape and sexual offences reported in Sandwell

- Sexual assault for a female over the age of 13 is the highest offence category
- Rape of a female aged 16 and over has had the sharpest increase over the last ten years
- Police recording of sexual assault and abuse cases has improved over the last ten years
- Large operations like the truth enquiry and raising awareness has also impacted reporting



Trends

Over a **third** of all police-recorded sexual offences are against children

2021-22 saw the **highest volume** of rape and sexual assault reported across the UK

The vast majority of children who experience sexual abuse were abused by someone they knew

In 2021-22, Sandwell had just under **1000** reported disclosures of rape or sexual abuse

Self-generated child sexual abuse images

- The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has noted year-on-year increases in reports of webpages that were found to contain child sexual abuse imagery
- The the number of reports of webpages containing self-generated imagery (a naked or partially naked image of a child taken by that child) increased almost 13-fold from nearly 13,700 in 2017 to over 182,000 in 2021
- There were sharp increases in self-generated images depicting 7 to 10-year-olds and 11 to 13-year-olds

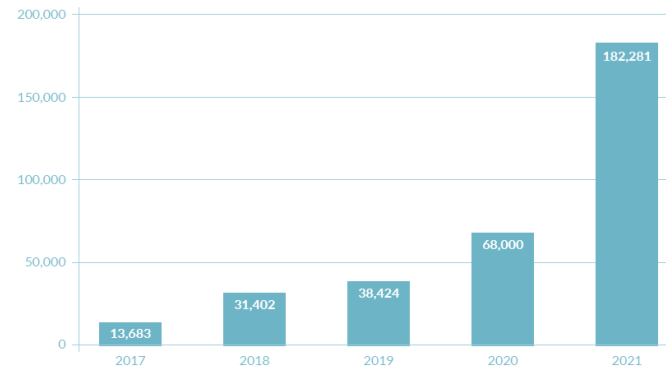


Figure B.3: Number of webpages containing self-generated child sexual abuse images, from 2017 to 2021

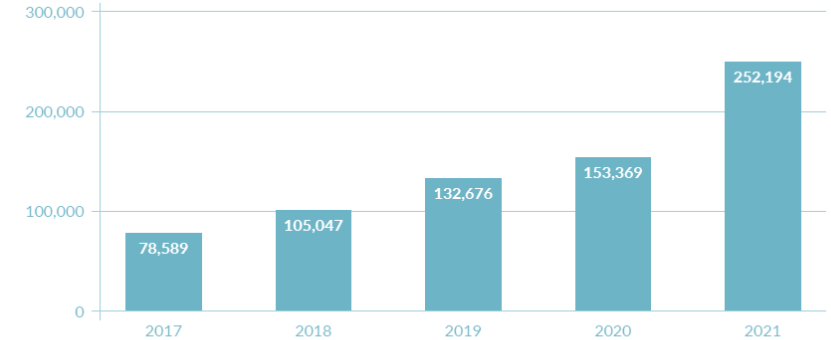


Figure B.2: Number of reports of webpages assessed as containing child sexual abuse images, from 2017 to 2021

VIOLENCE PROFILE

MODERN SLAVERY

Modern slavery is a heinous crime that involves the exploitation of individuals for labour or commercial sex through the use of force, fraud or coercion. Millions of people, including children and adults, fall victim to this global issue, which takes on various forms such as forced labour in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, commercial sectors, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. In Sandwell, victims of modern slavery are often lured into situations of exploitation with false promises of good jobs or better lives, only to find themselves in conditions of debt bondage, unable to escape because they owe their exploiters money. Other victims are forcibly taken or abducted and subjected to physical and emotional abuse.

The hidden nature of modern slavery often reduces the available evidence to make a charging decision, making it one of the most challenging and complex crimes to investigate and prosecute. The level of control and coercion exerted by the perpetrators compounds the issue further. Despite this, Sandwell has established the Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP) to take a coordinated approach to all modern slavery cases, resulting in 547 cases being referred to SHOP since April 2019. It is worth noting that just before the lockdown, cases increased to the highest volume reported ever. Police recorded modern slavery has also continued to rise, increasing by 164% since 2015-16.

Smethwick has the highest volume of reported modern slavery cases in Sandwell, followed by West Bromwich. Between 2018 and 2021, 185 referrals were made to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Sandwell, comprising of 78 children and 107 adults. It is worth noting that there has been an 83% increase in Sandwell referrals between 2018 and 2021.

Most modern slavery cases in Sandwell are reported in private dwellings, accounting for 71% of all reports with 409 cases. It is alarming to note that 5% of reports were for individuals who were homeless. Businesses were also involved in modern slavery, accounting for 10% of reports. Of this, 5% were shops, 6% car washes and 5% factories. Car washes had the highest concerns at 6%, including proactive visits as part of Operation Aidant.

It is concerning to note that 124 brothels have been referred to SHOP over the last three years, with a significant increase during the lockdown in 2021. This data highlights the complexity and severity of modern slavery in Sandwell, requiring a coordinated effort from all stakeholders to end this crime and support its victims.

What is MODERN SLAVERY?

Modern slavery is a term used to describe the exploitation of individuals for profit, where their freedom is taken away from them and they are forced to work against their will. This can include forms of forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking and child exploitation. Modern slavery is a serious violation of human rights, as it involves the exploitation and abuse of vulnerable individuals for the profit of others.

Modern slavery is a global problem that affects millions of people. It is estimated that there are more people living in slavery today than at any other point in human history. It is therefore critical that effective partnership work is in place to end modern slavery and protect the rights of all individuals regardless of their circumstances.

Why does MODERN SLAVERY happen?

Modern slavery happens for a variety of reasons, including poverty, lack of education and job opportunities, conflict and migration. Some of the main **factors that contribute to the prevalence of modern slavery include:**

- **Poverty:** In many parts of the world, poverty leaves individuals and families vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking
- **Lack of education and job opportunities:** Individuals who have limited education and job opportunities may be more vulnerable to exploitation, as they may not have the resources or information they need to make informed decisions about work and migration
- **Conflict:** In areas affected by conflict, individuals may be displaced from their homes and communities, making them vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking
- **Migration:** The movement of people across borders, either voluntarily or involuntarily, can increase the risk of exploitation and slavery, as individuals may be vulnerable to exploitation when they are in unfamiliar surroundings
- **Demand for cheap labour:** The demand for cheap labour in some industries such as agriculture, construction and manufacturing, can drive the exploitation of workers and the creation of modern slavery

What is the impact of MODERN SLAVERY?

The impact of modern slavery is wide-ranging and affects individuals, communities and societies as a whole. Some of the key impacts of modern slavery are:

- **Physical and psychological harm:** Victims of modern slavery are subjected to physical and psychological abuse including forced labour, debt bondage, sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation
- **Economic harm:** Modern slavery deprives individuals of their right to work and receive fair pay and undermines the economies of communities and countries
- **Disruption of families and communities:** Modern slavery often involves the separation of families and the breaking of community ties, which can have lasting effects on the health and stability
- **Increased vulnerability:** Individuals who have been exploited and abused in modern slavery are often left with few resources and little support making them vulnerable to re-exploitation and trafficking
- **Damage to reputation and credibility:** Companies that profit from or tolerate modern slavery in their supply chains damage their reputation and credibility and can face legal action and reputational damage
- **Undermining of human rights and dignity:** Modern slavery is a serious violation of human rights as it involves the exploitation and abuse of vulnerable individuals for the profit of others

How to prevent MODERN SLAVERY?

Preventing modern slavery requires a multi-faceted approach that involves the following key components:

- **Strengthening laws and enforcement:** Governments must enforce laws that prohibit slavery and trafficking and work to close loopholes in existing legislation that allow exploitation to occur
- **Raising awareness:** Raising awareness about the issue of modern slavery including its root causes, the forms it takes and the impact that it has on individuals and communities, is critical to preventing it from occurring
- **Supporting victims:** Providing support to victims of modern slavery including access to healthcare, counselling, legal services and job training can help them to rebuild their lives and reduce the risk of re-exploitation
- **Addressing root causes:** Addressing the root causes of modern slavery including poverty, lack of education and job opportunities, conflict and migration, is critical to preventing it from occurring
- **Collaborating with business:** Companies can play a key role in preventing modern slavery by conducting due diligence on their supply chains, taking steps to identify and address exploitation and supporting anti-slavery initiatives
- **Engaging communities:** Community-based organisations can play a critical role in raising awareness about modern slavery, supporting victim, and working with local businesses and governments to prevent it from occurring

Problem Profile: Modern Slavery

Scanning:

- Modern slavery involves the exploitation of individuals for labour or commercial sex through force, fraud or coercion
- Millions of people, including children and adults, fall victim to this crime globally, in various forms such as forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation and domestic servitude
- Sandwell has seen an increase in the number of cases reported since 2015-16, with Smethwick and West Bromwich having the highest volume of reported cases
- The majority of cases in Sandwell were reported in private dwellings (71%), with 5% of reports involving homeless individuals and 10% of reports related to businesses such as car washes, shops and factories
- Brothels also contribute to modern slavery reports in Sandwell, with 124 referred cases over the past three years, showing a significant increase during the lockdown in 2021

Analysis:

- The hidden nature of modern slavery makes it one of the most complex crimes to investigate and prosecute, with the level of control and coercion exerted by the perpetrators reducing the available evidence to make a charging decision
- Sandwell has established the Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP) to take a coordinated approach to all modern slavery cases. 547 cases have been referred to SHOP since April 2019
- Modern slavery is often linked to social issues such as homelessness, isolation and substance abuse which contribute to victim vulnerability
- The increase in cases reported in Sandwell since 2015-16 indicates the need for stronger laws, greater international cooperation, increased awareness and education

Key findings

Response:

- A coordinated effort is required to tackle modern slavery in Sandwell, including stronger laws, increased awareness and education and greater international cooperation to help prevent and support the victims of this form of exploitation
- Sandwell's SHOP takes a coordinated approach to all modern slavery cases and demonstrates that combating modern slavery requires a multi-faceted approach
- Improved collaboration between law enforcement agencies, NGOs and community groups is essential to identify and report cases of modern slavery and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice
- Engaging with businesses and industries is critical to ensure supply chains are free from exploitation and to encourage responsible sourcing practices
- Measures need to be strengthened to prevent the exploitation of vulnerable groups including children, migrants and those with mental or physical disabilities
- Regular reviews and evaluation of current policies and practices are needed to identify areas for improvement and ensure effectiveness in combating modern slavery

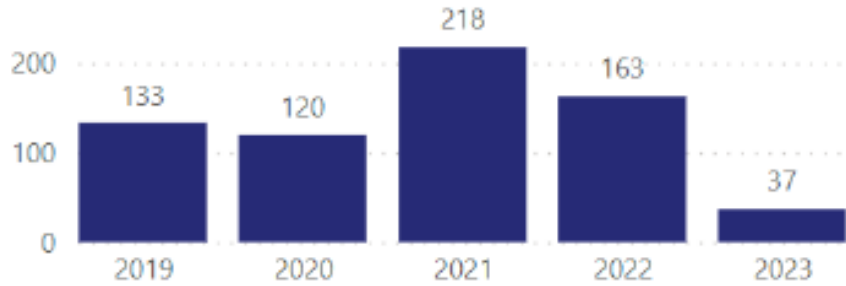
Assessment:

- Sandwell needs to continue its efforts to combat modern slavery including: raising awareness; providing support to victims and ensuring the effective implementation of existing laws and policies
- Collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organisations and the public is necessary to eradicate modern slavery across the Borough
- Regular evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of anti-modern slavery measures in Sandwell need to continue to identify any gaps or areas for improvement
- Ensuring victims of modern slavery are provided with adequate support and assistance, including access to safe housing, legal aid, healthcare and counselling services
- Increasing efforts to prevent modern slavery by addressing the root causes, such as poverty, inequality and discrimination and promoting decent work and fair wages
- Fostering partnerships and cooperation with other regions, both nationally and internationally, to share best practices and knowledge and to facilitate the identification and prosecution of perpetrators across borders

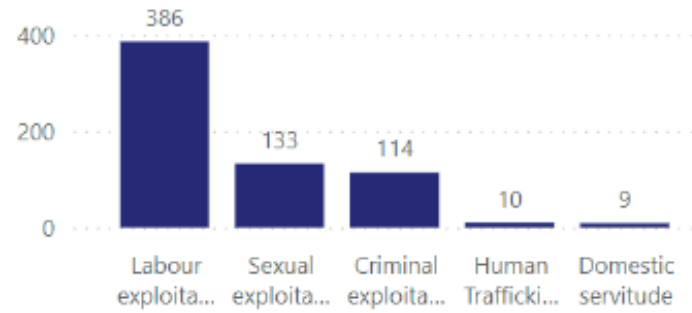
Modern Slavery Referrals to SHOP

Since April 2019 there have been 671 cases referred to SHOP

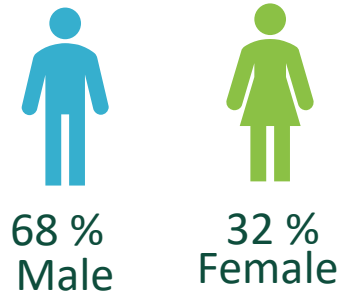
Referrals by year



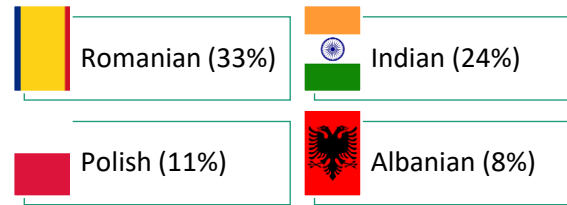
Referral by modern slavery type



Gender



Ethnicity

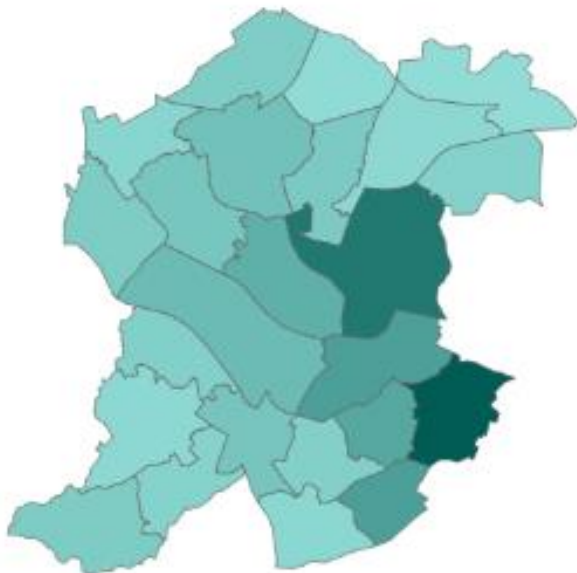


Where does modern slavery happen

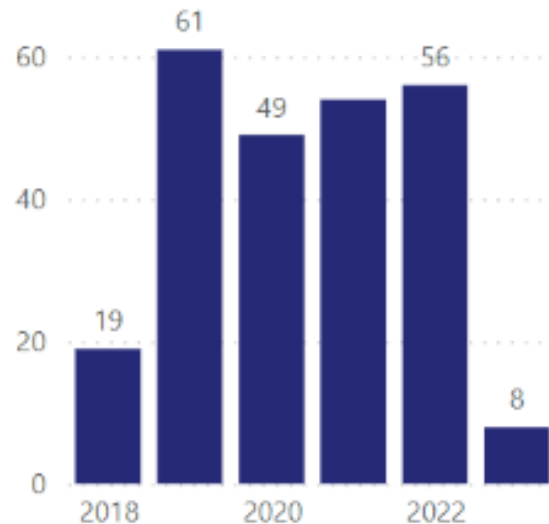
71% of modern slavery was reported in **Private dwellings** with 409 reports

5% of modern slavery reports were for individuals who were **homeless**

Modern slavery concerns by ward



Referrals to the NRM

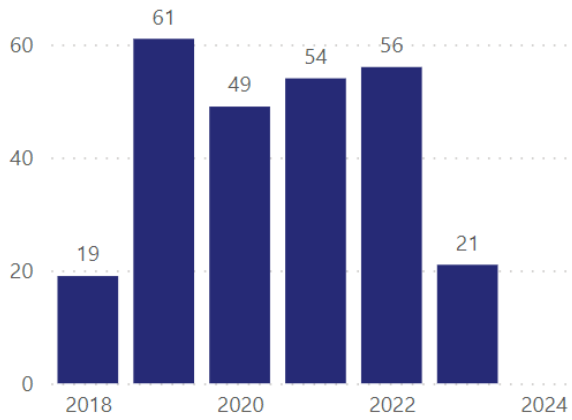


10% of reports were for businesses
5% for SHOPS, 6% Car washes and 5% factories

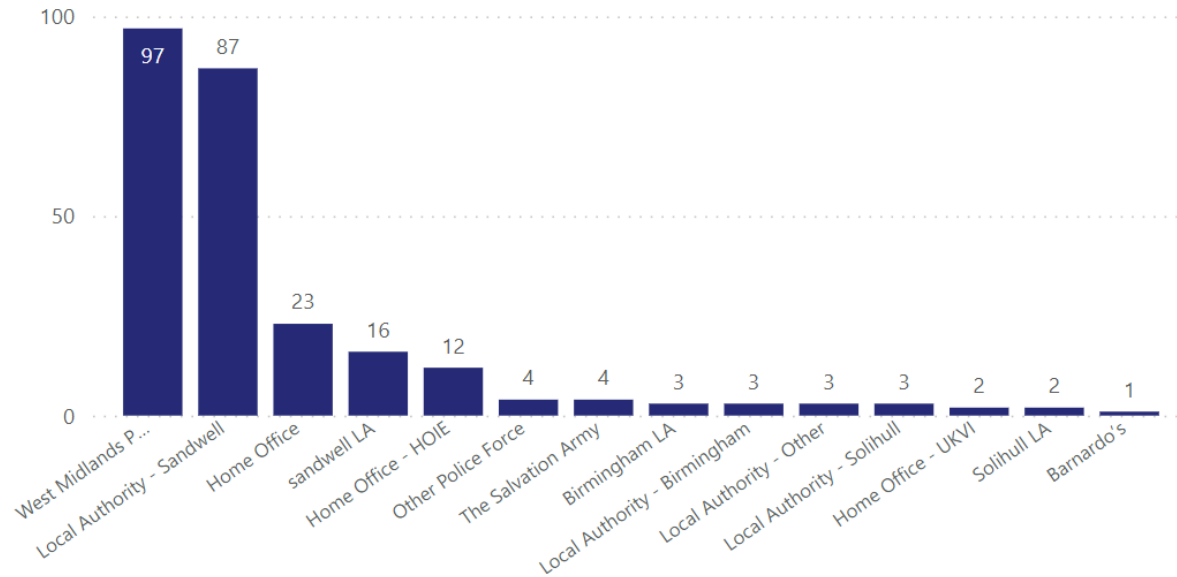
6% of concerns were found at car washes which includes pro-active visits as part of **Operation Aidant**

NRM dashboard

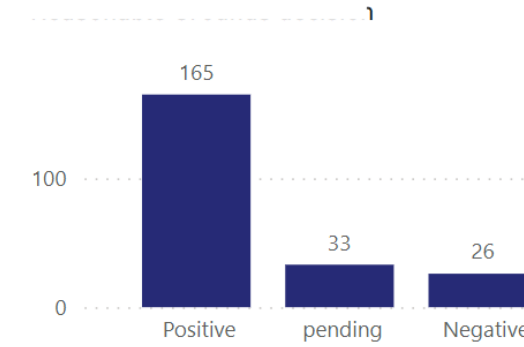
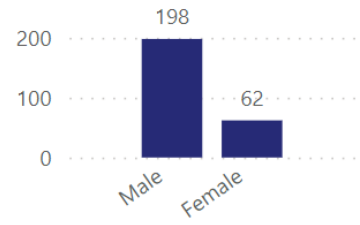
Referrals to the NRM



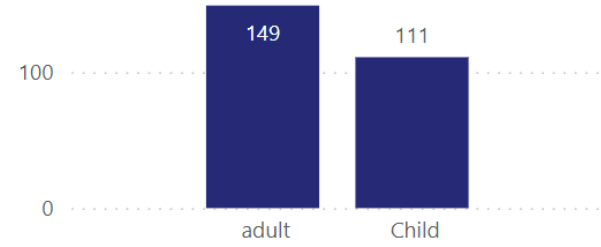
First Responder



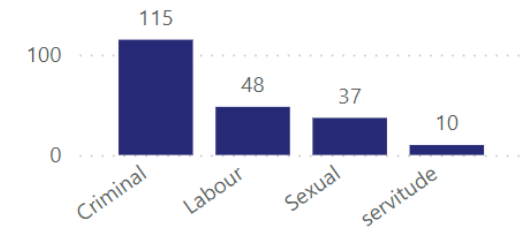
Gender



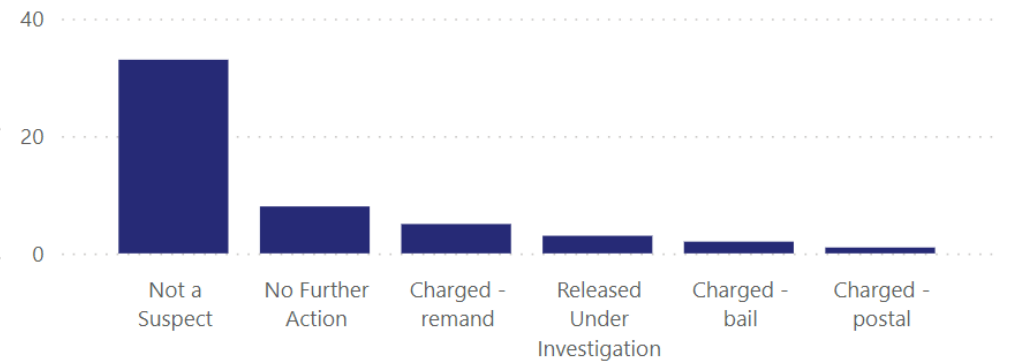
Adult or child



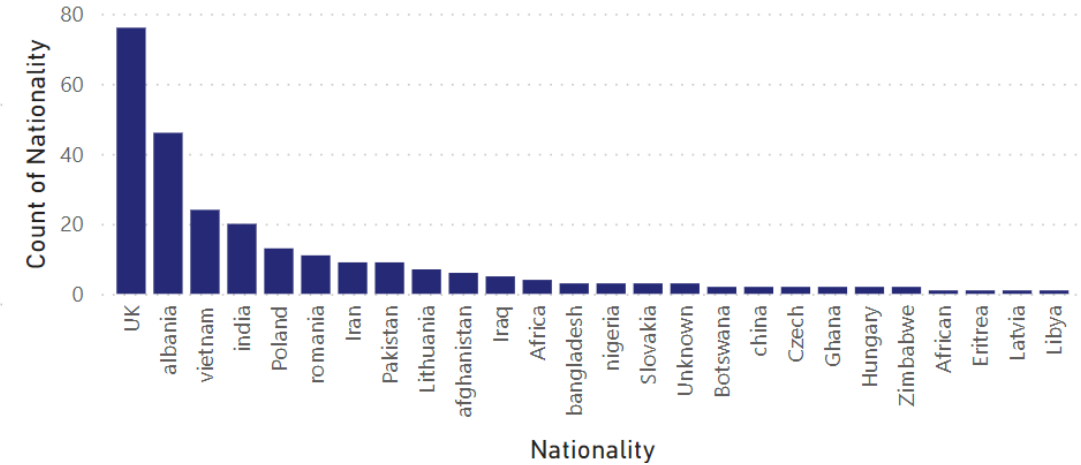
Exploitation Type



modern slavery suspect status



Count of Nationality by Nationality



Tipton

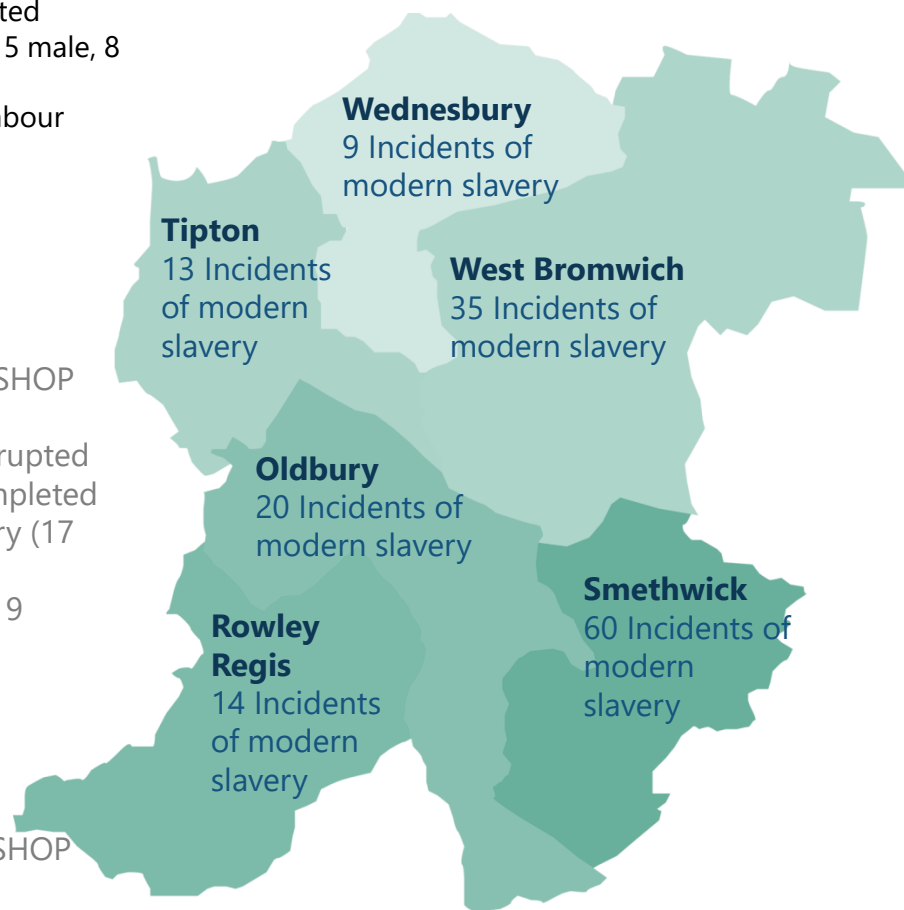
- 13 incidents of modern slavery reported to SHOP
- 13 multi-agency visits were completed
- 8 locations where modern slavery were disrupted
- 30 individual agency interventions were completed
- 23 potential victims were screened for slavery (15 male, 8 female)
- Victim profile includes 2 sexual exploitation, 7 labour exploitation, 4 criminal exploitation

Oldbury

- 20 incidents of modern slavery reported to SHOP
- 22 multi-agency visits were completed
- 19 locations where modern slavery were disrupted
- 59 individual agency interventions were completed
- 26 potential victims were screened for slavery (17 male, 8 female)
- Victim profile includes 9 sexual exploitation, 9 labour exploitation, 2 criminal exploitation

Rowley Regis

- 14 incidents of modern slavery reported to SHOP
- 17 multi-agency visits were completed
- 13 locations where modern slavery were disrupted
- 38 individual agency interventions were completed
- 21 potential victims were screened for slavery (15 male, 6 female)
- Victim profile includes 2 sexual exploitation, 10 labour exploitation, 2 criminal exploitation



Wednesbury

- 9 incidents of modern slavery reported to SHOP
- 15 multi-agency visits were completed
- 9 locations where modern slavery were disrupted
- 28 individual agency interventions were completed
- 7 potential victims were screened for slavery (2 male, 5 female)
- Victim profile includes 2 sexual exploitation, 6 labour exploitation, 4 criminal exploitation

West Bromwich

- 35 incidents of modern slavery reported to SHOP
- 42 multi-agency visits were completed
- 31 locations where modern slavery were disrupted
- 97 individual agency interventions were completed
- 40 potential victims were screened for slavery (20 male, 20 female)
- Victim profile includes 6 sexual exploitation, 16 labour exploitation, 13 criminal exploitation

Smethwick

- 60 incidents of modern slavery reported to SHOP
- 62 multi-agency visits were completed
- 45 locations where modern slavery were disrupted
- 159 individual agency interventions were completed
- 84 potential victims were screened for slavery (45 male, 39 female)
- Victim profile includes 13 sexual exploitation, 41 labour exploitation, 4 criminal exploitation

Place Based Responses to Modern Slavery (1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023)

VIOLENCE PROFILE

CHILD EXPLOITATION

including County Lines

"County lines" refers to criminal networks that exploit vulnerable individuals, often children or young people, to traffic drugs from cities to smaller towns, using a single telephone number (the "county line") to take orders from customers. This is a form of organised crime that often involves violence, exploitation and drug abuse, and it has become a growing problem in many countries, including the United Kingdom.

The name "county lines" refers to the practice of extending drug-dealing operations from cities into rural areas or other counties. The individuals involved in county lines drug trafficking are often vulnerable and may be coerced or threatened into participating. It's a complex issue that requires a multi-agency approach to tackle, including law enforcement, social services and community groups.

- The SCSP Child Exploitation Strategy 2022-2025 aims to promote a culture whereby nobody tolerates or ignores exploitation and where communities, families and all professionals are made aware of how to identify, report and tackle those that perpetrate exploitation, to prevent them from further abusing children and protect those children who are abused
- A victim-first approach is important. Many young people do not disclose what has happened to them for fear of being treated as perpetrators and of potentially facing repercussions such as violence from the gang they are being exploited by
- Multi-agency groups of practitioners have identified concerns that there are low levels of recognition and identification across the sector of the way in which women and girls are exploited through County Lines drugs distribution (VRP SNA 2020)
- Year-to-date, there have been 580 positive drug disruptions carried out. Of these 427 County Lines disruptions have been recorded; 661 arrests and 188 charges. 379 County Lines were closed down during 2021/22 ([WM PCC](#))
- 10 referrals were made to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which mention County Lines as a criminal exploitation sub-type. 80 people were engaged with safeguarding partner agencies, with a further 24 people referred to specialist support service providers ([WM PCC](#))
- West Midlands Police's performance in increasing the number of positive drug and County Lines disruptions are noted
- The County Lines Taskforce has transferred from WMROCU to Force CID. This shift enhances the connectivity between County Lines activity, the Force's investigatory and enforcement capacity and the new SOC Exploitation Hubs, while maintaining good links with regional partners ([WM PCC](#))

What is CHILD EXPLOITATION?

Child exploitation is a form of child abuse that involves using children for personal or financial gain. This can take many forms including:

- **Sexual exploitation:** this refers to the use of children for sexual purposes, such as prostitution or the production of child pornography
- **Labour exploitation:** this involves the use of children for work, often in hazardous or abusive conditions
- **Trafficking:** this involves the transportation or exploitation of children for various purposes, such as forced labour or sexual exploitation
- **Child criminal exploitation (CCE)** this refers to a form of child abuse where young people are coerced, threatened, or manipulated into participating in criminal activities. It is a type of modern slavery and can include activities such as drug dealing, shoplifting and trafficking

Why does CHILD EXPLOITATION happen?

Child exploitation is an horrific and unacceptable crime that occurs for many reasons. Some of the factors that contribute to child exploitation include:

- **Poverty:** Children living in poverty are often more vulnerable to exploitation, as they may not have access to resources or support systems that could help protect them
- **Lack of education:** Children who are not educated about the dangers of exploitation, or who do not have access to education are more likely to become victims
- **Power imbalances:** Children who are marginalised or oppressed in society are more likely to be targeted for exploitation. This can include children who are refugees, migrants or who belong to certain ethnic or religious groups
- **Lack of protection and support systems:** Children who do not have access to protective services, such as social workers or police officers, are more vulnerable to exploitation
- **Online exploitation:** The rise of the internet and social media has made it easier for predators to target and exploit children online

What is the impact of CHILD EXPLOITATION?

Child exploitation can have serious and long-lasting impacts on a child's physical, psychological and emotional well-being. Some of the impacts of child exploitation include:

- **Physical harm:** Children who are exploited may suffer physical abuse, neglect or exploitation, including sexual abuse, forced labour or trafficking
- **Psychological trauma:** Children who have been exploited often experience intense feelings of shame, guilt and trauma that can last a lifetime. They may struggle with depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- **Emotional harm:** Children who have been exploited may have difficulty forming healthy relationships and may struggle with trust and attachment issues
- **Disruption of development:** Childhood exploitation can interrupt a child's normal development, leading to long-term physical, cognitive and behavioural problems
- **Impact on education:** Children who are exploited may miss school, or drop out of school altogether, which can limit their future opportunities and earning potential
- **Health problems:** Children who are exploited may suffer from chronic health problems such as malnutrition, disease, or other physical or mental health problems

How to prevent CHILD EXPLOITATION?

Preventing child exploitation requires a multi-faceted approach that involves a range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society organisations, communities and individuals. Steps that can be taken to prevent child exploitation include:

- **Education and awareness-raising:** Educating children, families and communities about the dangers of exploitation and how to recognise and report it is a critical first step in preventing exploitation
- **Strengthening protection systems:** Governments should work to strengthen child protection systems, including social services, police and the judicial system to ensure that children are protected
- **Addressing root causes:** Addressing the root causes of child exploitation, such as poverty, lack of education and marginalisation, are important for reducing the vulnerability of children to exploitation
- **Combating online exploitation:** Governments and technology companies should work together to combat online exploitation
- **Supporting victims:** Governments, third sector organisations and individuals should work together to provide support and resources to children who have been exploited
- **Enforcing laws:** Governments should enforce laws that criminalise child exploitation and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions
- **International cooperation:** International cooperation is critical in the fight against child exploitation as this is a global issue that requires a coordinated response

Problem Profile: Child Exploitation

Scanning:

- Individuals involved in county lines drug trafficking are often vulnerable and may be coerced or threatened into participating
- There were 10 referrals made to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which mention County Lines as a criminal exploitation sub-type.
- West Midlands Police have increased the number of positive drug and County Lines disruptions.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of CSE crimes reported to the police in the year 2021-22 compared to the previous year, with 59 reported cases, an increase of 168% compared to the 22 cases reported in 2020-21.
- In terms of CSE non-crime, there was a decrease in the number of reported cases from 131 in 2018-19 to only 2 cases in 2021-22, which represents a 98.5% reduction.
- The 139 risk assessment outcome forms and screening tools completed show that there is a robust system in place to identify and manage the risks associated with CSE.
- The number of medium or high CSE risk assessments is relatively low, which could indicate that cases of CSE are being identified and managed at an earlier stage

Analysis:

- Child exploitation is a pervasive issue that poses a significant risk to young people's safety and well-being
- There are several factors contributing to the problem including social and economic inequalities, local drug markets and the prevalence of gangs and violence in the area
- Many young people do not disclose what has happened to them for fear of being treated as perpetrators and of potentially facing repercussions such as violence from the gang they are being exploited by
- Multi-agency groups of practitioners have identified concerns that there are low levels of recognition and identification across the sector of the way in which women and girls are exploited through County Lines drugs distribution

Response:

- The SCSP Child Exploitation Strategy 2022-2025 aims to promote a culture where nobody tolerates or ignores exploitation and where communities, families and all professionals are made aware of how to identify, report and tackle those that perpetrate exploitation, to prevent them from further abusing children and to protect those children who are abused
- West Midlands Police's performance in increasing the number of positive drug and County Lines disruptions are noted
- The County Lines Taskforce has transferred from WMROCU to Force CID, enhancing the connectivity between County Lines activity, the Force's investigatory and enforcement capacity and new SOC Exploitation Hubs, while maintaining good links with regional partners
- Sandwell has implemented various initiatives to combat CSE, including bringing together partners to explore contextual safeguarding risks and the risks for individual young people.
- The number of multi-agency practitioners attending exploitation training is impressive, with 902 individuals trained in identifying and responding to child exploitation

Assessment:

- Overall, the data suggests that while there have been fluctuations in the number of CSE cases reported, there is a robust system in place to identify and manage the risks associated with CSE
- The number of medium or high CSE risk assessments is relatively low, which could indicate that cases of CSE are being identified and managed at an earlier stage.
- The total number of missing episodes is concerning, highlighting the continued risk to vulnerable young people
- The number of mace meetings held, both child and adult, is indicative of a coordinated and multi-agency response to CSE
- Comparison of CSE incidence rates in Sandwell with other similar regions could help identify areas where improvements are needed
- Investigating the prevalence of CSE in online spaces could inform the development of online safety strategies
- The evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the current training programs for frontline workers and professionals dealing with CSE could identify areas of improvement
- Reviewing the level of engagement of young people and their parents/carers in safeguarding measures and assessing how to improve participation and communication

What is Sandwell's strategy in relation to child exploitation?

The [Sandwell Child Exploitation Strategy 2022-2025](#) is a document created by the Child Exploitation Board, a subgroup of Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership. Its goal is to ensure that there are clear and concise multi-agency safeguarding arrangements underpinned by effective procedures and processes that are applicable to all partners in Sandwell to safeguard children and young people from harm caused by exploitation. The strategy covers all the domains of child exploitation including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; modern slavery; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. The strategy focuses on four areas where the agencies will focus their efforts to help structure activities to tackle different and connecting forms of exploitation.

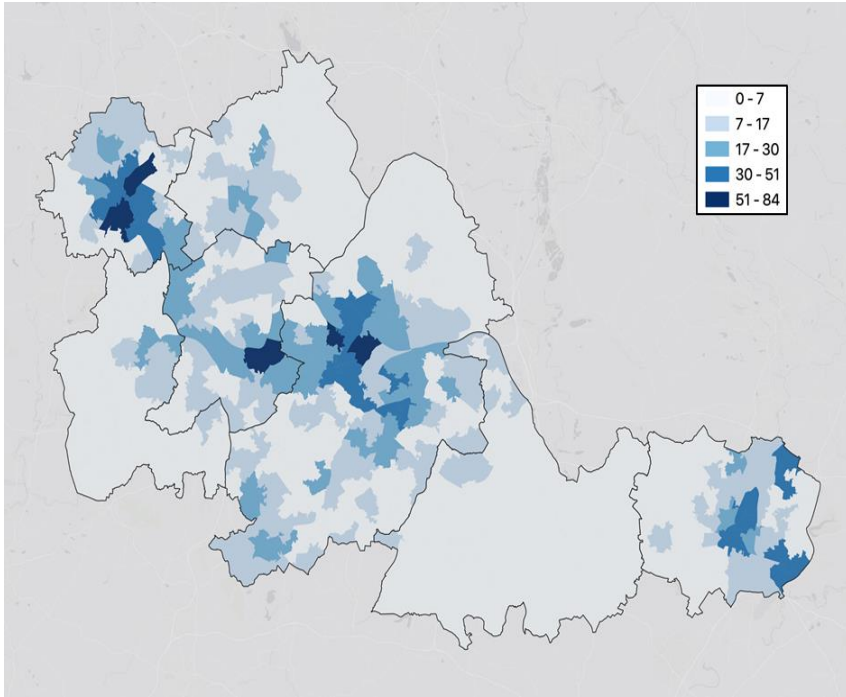
The four objectives for 2022-2025 are:

Prepare – Barriers to preventing and tackling exploitation are reduced
 Prevent – The risk of children being exploited is reduced through a focus on prevention and early intervention
 Protect – Children and young people are effectively safeguarded from harm and exploitation
 Pursue – Offenders who exploit children and young people are effectively targeted, disrupted and brought to justice.

The aim of the strategy is to promote a culture whereby nobody tolerates or ignores exploitation and where communities, families and all professionals are made aware of how to identify, report and tackle those that perpetrate exploitation to prevent them from further abusing children and to protect those children who are abused

What is Sandwell's response to child exploitation?

- Sandwell has taken a proactive approach to addressing child exploitation, particularly through its Horizons team, which is dedicated to working with young people who are at risk of or who have experienced exploitation. Some key initiatives that have been implemented include:
- A multi-agency approach: Sandwell has brought together partners to explore contextual safeguarding risks and individual risks for young people to help identify points of prevention
- Mapping: The Horizons team has completed work with a number of schools in West Bromwich to map and further understand concerns for young people in the area
- High-risk young people: Changes have been made to Multi Agency Child Exploitation meetings, meaning that all high-risk young people are discussed every 4 weeks in this forum
- Contextual Safeguarding Champions Group: The group is working on supporting Q3 Great Barr; a multi-agency locality visit has taken place and plans are being implemented to address contextual safeguarding concerns
- Ofsted inspection: Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT) had a full Ofsted inspection in May 2022 and initial feedback included inspectors recognising the positive impact of the work Horizons were having across the Borough
- Cross-border work: Sandwell is working with Dudley, Wolverhampton and Birmingham Children's Services to undertake more cross-border work, as there are increasing numbers of cross-border issues that link to exploitation and missing. This work includes the mapping and sharing of information between services and areas and also supporting disruptions and identifying people of concern
- Training: Training sessions continue to be delivered across the partnership: Horizons are supporting targeted events, including a Violence Reduction Partnership CLIW training session in conjunction with DECCA; a relaunch of the attendance service event was held; Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board held a relationship event and missing training was delivered at a new residential home
- Recognition: Horizons were nominated as SCT's Team of Excellence 2022 and were the winners of the West Midlands Team Excellence Award 2022, an event where teams across the region come together to shine a light on the best practice the region has to offer
- NRM review: Sandwell is currently reviewing all the National Referral Mechanisms (NRM) with the police, to make sure NRMs are being used to support young people
- Sandwell County Lines Intensification Weeks: The partnership achieved the following outcomes: 9 warrants; 22 children and adults safeguarded; 6 cuckooing visits; £152,000 worth of cannabis seized; £300 worth of heroin seized; £17,000 worth of crack seized; £7000 cash, 8 knives/machetes and a loaded sawn-off shotgun with ammunition and a taser recovered.

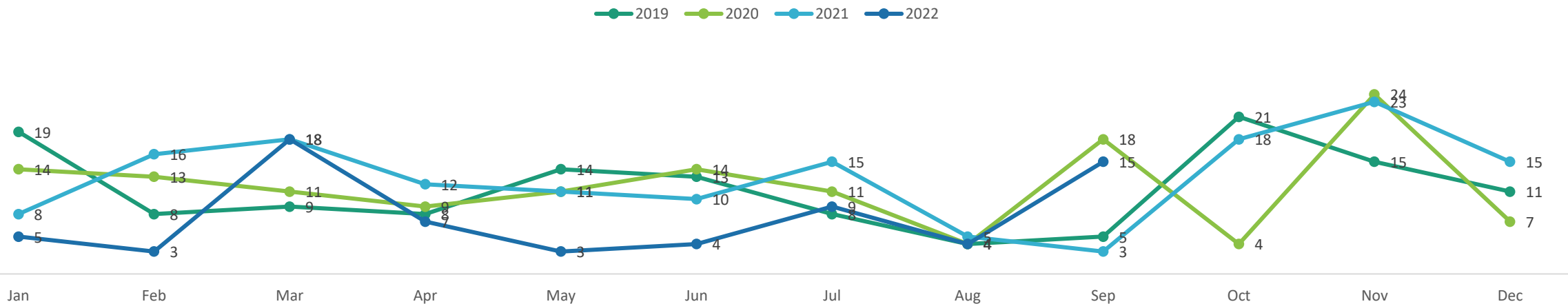


Where is County Lines happening in Sandwell?

The map below shows county lines activity where the location was inside of the West Midlands. Darker blue areas on the map signify areas where there were higher concentrations of county lines activity. Smethwick has significantly higher volumes of County Lines activity in Sandwell with 75 cases, Tipton and Tividale have the next highest volumes with 28

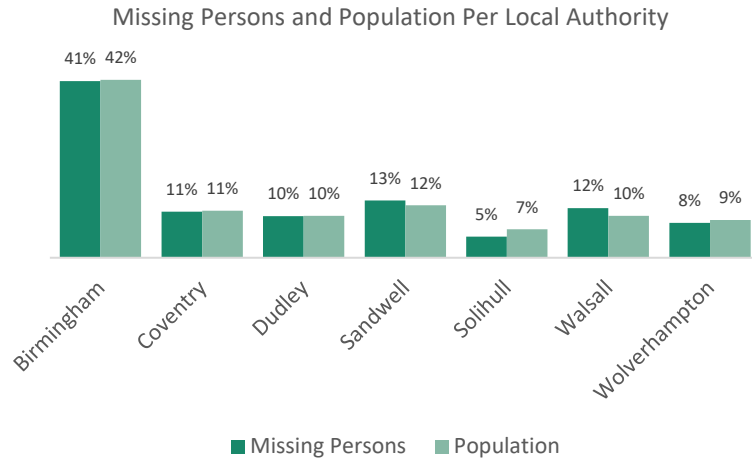
- The VRP regional [County Lines dashboard](#) enables the monitoring of County Lines cases across the region
- By their nature, County Lines drug networks tend to operate across police and local authority boundaries. As a methodology, County Lines are not defined by the distance between the point of control and the point of distribution, but rather the mechanism by which that method of supply is supported
- The West Midlands, with its strategic position in the centre of the country, with good transport links to much of the rest of England and Wales presents additional challenges. When discussing persons involved in County Lines it is noteworthy to understand that this refers to suspects, perpetrators and victims. Not everyone involved in County Lines is a perpetrator, many people are often victims and are exploited
- Increases can be seen around March and October each year, which usually correlates with County Lines intensification weeks where operation on county lines is very focused

Volume of County lines between 2019 - 2022



Regional Missing Episodes 2021 – 2022

4487 children missing
 9322 missing episodes
 2.08 missing episodes per person
 1146 with a high risk exploitation flag

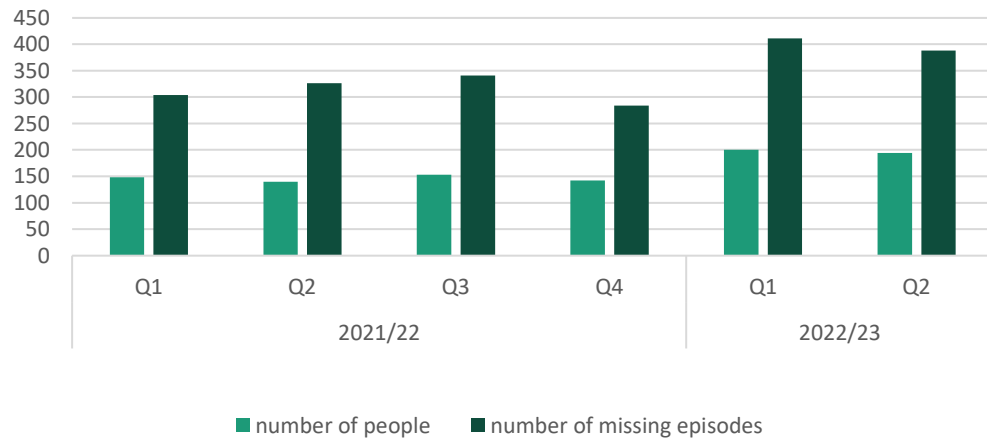


- The VRP regional missing dashboard enables the monitoring of missing cases across the region
- There was a total of 4,487 missing people across the West Midlands in 2021-2022 equating to 9,322 missing episodes, an average of 2.8 missing episodes per person. 1,146 had flags for exploitation
- Sandwell had 583 missing people, equating to 1255 missing episodes, 2.1 missing episodes per person with 85 individuals having an exploitation flag
- Sandwell has more males missing than the averages across the region with 56% compared to an average of 51%

Missing episodes

Outside of Birmingham Sandwell has the highest number of missing episodes recorded

Sandwell also has the highest missing episode per person rates with 2.1 episodes per person



Outside of Birmingham Sandwell has the highest number of missing episodes

Sandwell has one of the lowest rates of missing children with exploitation flags

Between Q1 last year and Q1 this year Sandwell has had the highest % increase in recorded missing episodes

Sandwell has the highest missing episodes per person rate in the west midlands

Sandwell has one of the lowest rates of missing children with exploitation flags

51% of missing persons were male and the typical age of missing persons is 15 or 16

VIOLENCE PROFILE

Knife Crime

- Knife enabled crime is a serious social issue which has devastating consequences for families and communities. Over recent years, the number of reported offences involving a knife or sharp instrument has been increasing
- Levels of knife-enabled crime fell to 46,081 offences in the year ending June 2021 because of government restrictions on social contact. It has increased by 8% in the year ending June 2022 while remaining below pre-coronavirus pandemic levels. (source: [ONS](#))
- For offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, the West Midlands had a rate of 153.1 per 100,000 of the population, the highest in England and Wales (source: [VRP SNA 2022](#))
- It is important to note that there has been an implementation of a new cross-police force methodology for counting the number of recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments which makes it difficult to measure offences year on year (source [ONS](#))
- To improve data quality the Home Office and police forces have been developing a new method for counting crimes involving knives or sharp instruments, also known as knife enabled crime. (source: [ONS](#))
- Sandwell has had over 7000 knife incidents over the last 5 years (source PoVE Score card)
- 348 young people aged 10-17 have been a victim or offender of knife crime over the last 5 years
- 1338 adults aged 18 plus have been a victim or offender of knife crime in Sandwell over the last 5 years (source: PoVE scorecard)
- Hospital data does not distinguish between knife crime and injury with a knife making it difficult to measure any aspects of violence
- 168 individuals presented at Sandwell hospitals for knife crime over the last 4 years, this is also reducing from 53 attendances in 2018-19 to 38 attendances in 2021-22 (source: OHID [fingertips](#))
- Very few agencies alongside the police are able to provide consistent data in relation to knife offences
- Overall Knife Crime is also up (+28%) but this can be partly linked to increased recording: the majority of knife crime is robbery (which is reducing) however, knives are now being recorded in a greater proportion of the crimes. One of the biggest rises in crime relates to the possession of weapons (+124%), which although not attributable to the recovery of more weapons, does indicate that there is a greater proportion of crimes where weapons are recorded as part of the offence ([WM PCC](#))
- A focus for reducing knife crime within the West Midlands is around equipping young people with the life skills needed to respond, in the right way, if they see someone carrying a knife or weapon and to get the message across that if you carry a knife you're much more likely to become a victim of knife crime ([WM PCC](#))

What is KNIFE CRIME?

Knife crime refers to crimes that involve the use of knives or other sharp or bladed weapons. Knife crime can include a wide range of criminal acts, such as assault, robbery and murder. The use of knives in crime can result in serious physical injury or death, and can cause emotional trauma for victims and their families.

There are a number of factors that can contribute to knife crime including poverty, gang violence, drug trafficking and mental health issues. Addressing knife crime requires a multi-faceted approach that involves law enforcement, community engagement and addressing underlying social and economic factors that can contribute to the problem.

Why does KNIFE CRIME happen?

Knife crime can occur for a variety of reasons, and is often driven by underlying social, economic and cultural factors. Some of the key contributing factors to this include:

- **Poverty:** Poverty and economic hardship can increase the risk of knife crime, as some individuals may turn to crime as a means of survival
- **Gang violence:** Gangs and organised criminal groups may use knives as a weapon of choice and gang-related violence can contribute to a rise in knife crime
- **Drug trafficking:** The drug trade can also lead to an increase in knife crime as individuals involved in drug trafficking may use knives to protect their drugs and profits
- **Mental health issues:** Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and addiction can increase the risk of knife crime, as some individuals may use knives to harm themselves or others
- **Access to knives:** The availability of knives and other bladed weapons can also contribute to knife crime as individuals may use them as a weapon in criminal acts
- **Lack of positive activities:** A lack of positive activities, such as sports, education and arts programs can increase the risk of knife crime, as some young people may turn to criminal behaviour as a means of filling their time

What is the impact of KNIFE CRIME?

Knife crime can have serious and long-lasting impacts on individuals, families and communities. Some of the key impacts of knife crime include:

- **Physical injury or death:** Knife crime can result in physical injury or death, and can leave lasting scars, both physically and emotionally
- **Emotional trauma:** Knife crime can cause severe emotional trauma, especially for victims and their families. This can include fear, anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- **Financial costs:** Knife crime can also have significant financial costs, including medical expenses, legal fees and loss of income for victims and their families
- **Community impact:** Knife crime can also have a negative impact on communities, causing fear and reducing community trust. This can lead to a decrease in community engagement and involvement
- **Incarceration:** For those who use knives to commit crimes, the consequences can include arrest, prosecution and imprisonment. This can have a negative impact on the individual's future and their ability to reintegrate into society

How to prevent KNIFE CRIME?

Preventing knife crime requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that addresses the root causes of the problem and engages communities. Some strategies that can be used to prevent knife crime include:

- **Education and awareness campaigns:** Educating the public about the dangers of knife crime and the consequences of carrying a knife can help to reduce the incidence of knife crime
- **Strengthening law enforcement:** Law enforcement agencies can play a key role in preventing knife crime by cracking down on knife-related crime
- **Addressing poverty and inequality:** Addressing poverty and inequality can help to reduce the risk of knife crime, as some individuals may turn to crime as a means of survival
- **Supporting positive activities for youth:** Providing positive activities and programs, such as sports, education and arts programs, can help to steer young people away from knife crime and provide positive alternatives
- **Improving access to mental health services:** Improving access to mental health services can help to address the mental health issues that can contribute to knife crime and can provide support to individuals who may be at risk of using a knife as a weapon
- **Engaging communities:** Engaging communities in the prevention of knife crime can help to build trust and reduce fear and can lead to increased community involvement in preventing knife crime
- **Restricting access to knives:** Implementing measures to restrict access to knives, such as knife control laws, can help to reduce the availability of knives and decrease the incidence of knife crime

Problem Profile: Knife Crime and Incidents

Scanning:

- Knife-enabled crime is a significant social issue in Sandwell, with over 7000 knife incidents reported in the last 5 years
- The number of reported offences involving a knife or sharp instrument has been increasing nationally over recent years
- The West Midlands has the highest rate of knife-enabled crime in England and Wales
- Hospital data does not distinguish between knife crime and injury with a knife, making it difficult to measure any aspects of violence
- Overall, knife crime is up by 28%, but this can be linked to increased recording

Analysis:

- Sandwell has seen an increase in knife-related incidents over recent years, with 348 young people aged 10-17 and 1,338 adults aged 18 plus being victims or offenders of knife crime
- The Home Office and police forces have been developing a new method for counting crimes involving knives or sharp instruments to improve data quality
- One of the biggest rises in crime relates to the possession of weapons, this isn't just attributable to the recovery of more weapons, but a greater proportion of crimes where weapons are recorded as part of the offence
- A focus for reducing knife crime in Sandwell and the wider West Midlands is around equipping young people with the life skills needed to respond in the right way if they see someone carrying a knife or weapon
- Effective measures to reduce knife crime in Sandwell could include early intervention programs to identify and support young people at risk of involvement in knife crime, increasing police presence and community policing and increasing awareness and education around the dangers and consequences of carrying a knife.
- The increase in knife-related incidents among young people in Sandwell is concerning and may be linked to broader social issues such as poverty, deprivation and social exclusion.


Response:

- Sandwell has implemented various strategies and initiatives to mitigate the risks of knife crime including community outreach programs, targeted interventions for young people and partnership working with other agencies
- Sandwell has also developed a multi-agency approach to addressing knife crime, working in partnership with the police, schools, youth services and community organisations.
- The council has introduced a range of measures to improve community safety, including increased police patrols in hotspot areas, installation of CCTV cameras and improved lighting in public spaces.
- Sandwell has also launched several awareness campaigns aimed at educating young people and the wider community about the dangers of knife crime
- The council is actively involved in the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership, which is a collaboration between local authorities, police and other partners across the region to tackle violence and knife crime.


Assessment:

- Although the number of reported offenses involving a knife or sharp instrument nationally fell to 46,081 offences in the year ending June 2021 due to government restrictions on social contact, it has increased by 8% in the year ending June 2022.
- It is important to note that there has been an implementation of a new cross-police force methodology for counting the number of recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments, which makes it difficult to compare offences year on year.
- Hospital data does not distinguish between knife crime and injury with a knife, making it difficult to measure any aspects of violence. However, the number of hospital attendances for knife crime in Sandwell has reduced from 53 in 2018-19 to 38 in 2021-22.

Five Years of Knife Enabled Violence in Sandwell

7112 knife related incidents over the past five years 

1229 adult victims of knife crime 

319 victims of knife crime under the age of 18 

109 adult offenders of knife crime 

29 offenders of knife crime under the age of 18 

168 individuals presented at Sandwell hospitals for knife crime

1548 victims, and **138** offenders

West Bromwich has had **2083** knife incidents (**30%**)
highest in Sandwell

Smethwick has had **1442** knife incidents (**17%**)

Oldbury has had **1081** knife incidents (**15%**)

Wednesbury has had **1081** knife incidents (**15%**)

Rowley has had **825** knife incidents (**12%**)

Tipton has had **930** knife incidents (**12%**)
Lowest in Sandwell

To date **St Giles** have reached **77** victims in Sandwell Hospital

62% of knife incidents over the last five years occurred in the last 12 months

4415 offences within the last 2021-2022

This Infographic provides a picture of knife crime and offences in Sandwell between 2017-18 – 2021-22

Knife enabled crime is a serious social issue which has devastating consequences for families and communities.

Over recent years, the number of reported offences involving a knife or sharp instrument has been increasing.

Knife offences over the last five years accounts for 4.5% of total police recorded crime.

In partnership with the VRP, St Giles Trust have been commissioned to work within Sandwell and City Hospital to provide teachable moments to victims of knife crime

4415 knife related incidents in 2021-2022 in Sandwell

Significantly higher numbers of victims than offenders

Knife offences have increased seven fold over the last five years

Knife incidents in Wednesbury have a 12 fold increase over the last 5 years, this is the highest increase in Sandwell

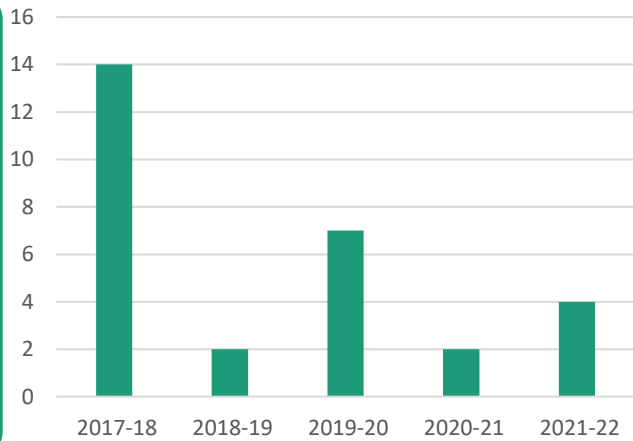
For offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, the West Midlands had a rate of 153.1 per 100,000 of the population, the highest in England and Wales (source: VRP SNA 2022)

In 2021-2022 Sandwell the highest offence location for victims of knife crime was Smethwick

To improve data quality the Home Office and police forces have been developing a new method for counting crimes involving knives or sharp instruments

Reducing knife crime where offender is aged 10-17yrs

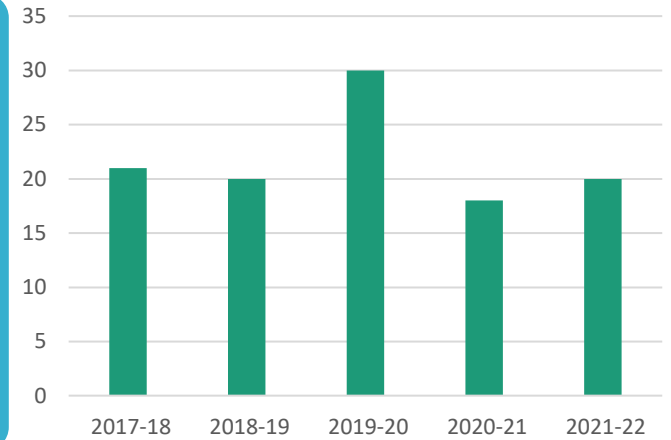
There have been significant reductions in knife crime where the victim is a child since 2018-19. There has been an increase in 2021-22 but figures for 2020-21 would have been impacted by Covid



Reducing knife crime where offender is aged 18+

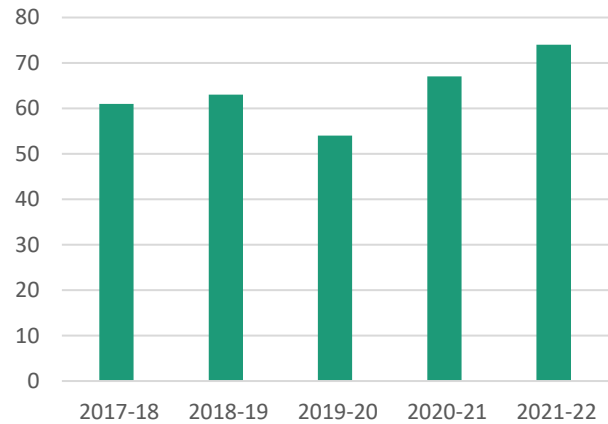
Following a significant increase in 2019-20 knife crime with offenders over the age of 18 decreased

There has been an increase in 2021 with 20 perpetrators aged 18+



Reducing knife crime where victim is aged 10-17yrs

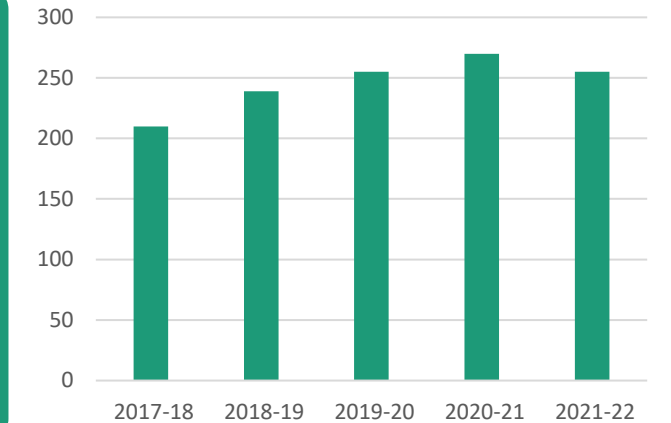
In the last 12 months there have been 74 victims of knife crime aged 10-17



Reducing knife crime where victim is aged 18+

There have been year on year increases in adult victims of knife crime

2021 was the first time we have seen a reduction, early indicators for 2022-23 show a likely further reduction



In 2021-22 there were **4 offenders** of knife crime who were aged 10-17

In 2021-22 there were **74 victims** of knife crime who were aged 10-17

70 victims aged 10-17 had adult perpetrators

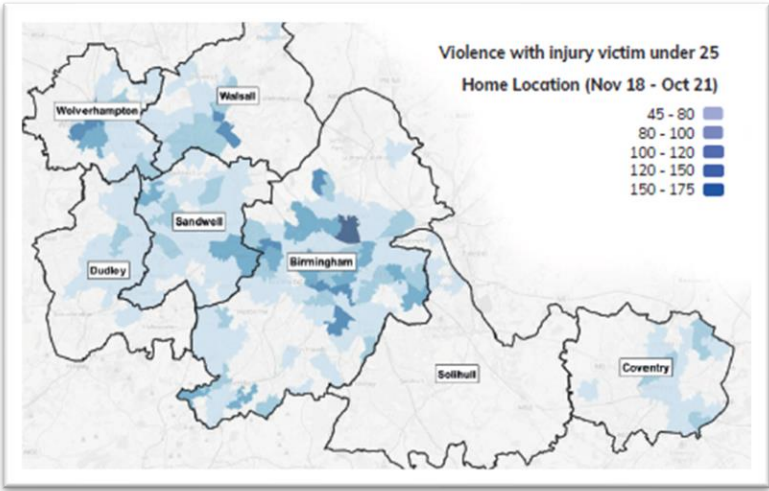
In 2021-22 there were **20 offenders** of knife crime who were aged 18+

In 2021-22 there were **255 victims** of knife crime who were aged 18+

24 offenders and **329 Victims** suggests that offenders are not always identified

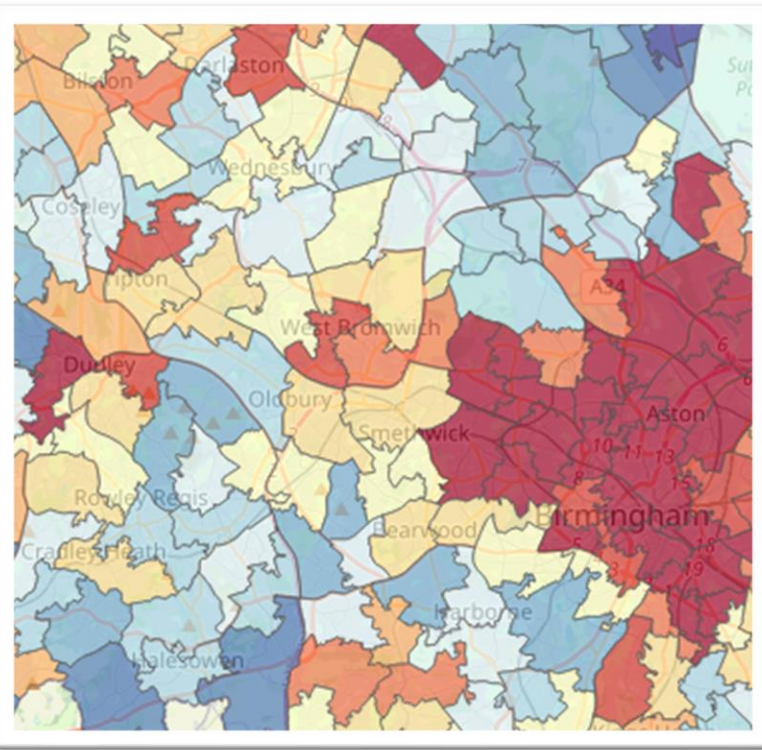
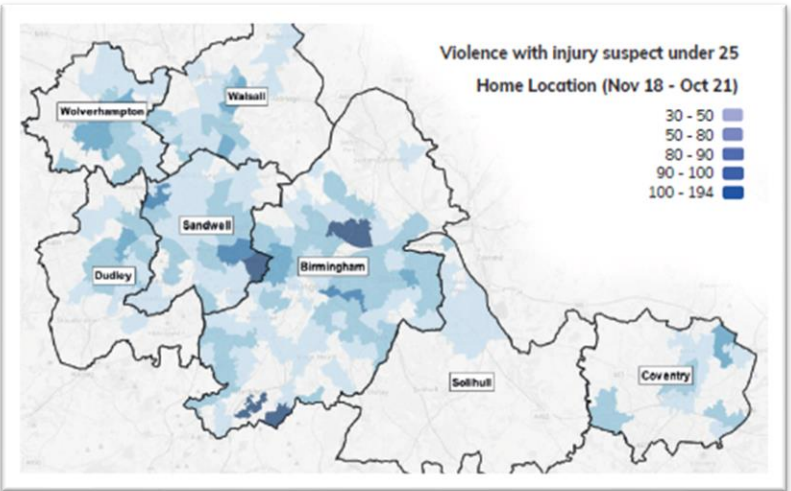
Offence location where the victim was under 25 years of age

Darker areas on the map signify higher amounts of incidents



Home location of victims where the person was under 25 years of age

Darker areas on the map signify higher amounts of home locations



In 2021-2022 the **highest offence location** for victims of knife crime in Sandwell was **Smethwick**

Tibbington and Stone Cross were the **next highest** locations for victims of knife crimes under the age of 25

In 2021-2022 the **highest home location** for victims of knife crime in Sandwell was **Smethwick**

The **distribution of home locations** of victims is broad across West Bromwich, Oldbury, Wednesbury and Tipton

When looking at rates of knife crime per 10,000 population **West Bromwich** has the **highest** rate in Sandwell with **26.5**

When looking at rates of knife crime per 10,000 population **West Bromwich** has the **highest** rate of **possession of weapons 38.6**

Weapons in Sandwell 2021-2022

Tipton

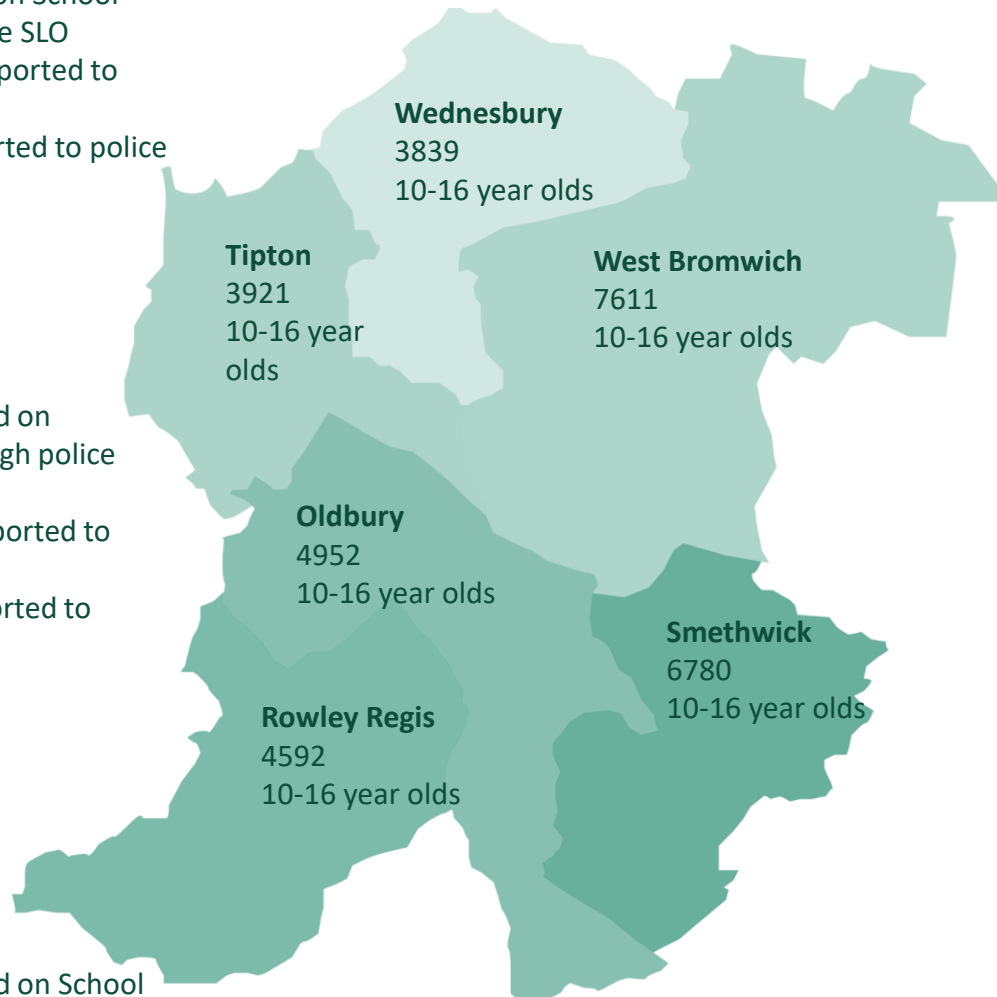
- ✓ 3 weapons identified on School children through police SLO
- ✓ 10 fire arms crimes reported to police
- ✓ 522 knife crimes reported to police

Oldbury

- ✓ 25 weapons identified on School children through police SLO
- ✓ 8 fire arms crimes reported to police
- ✓ 668 knife crimes reported to police

Rowley Regis

- ✓ 16 weapons identified on School children through police SLO
- ✓ 18 fire arms crimes reported to police
- ✓ 513 knife crimes reported to police



Wednesbury

- ✓ 3 weapons identified on School children through police SLO
- ✓ 6 fire arms crimes reported to police
- ✓ 603 knife crimes reported to police

West Bromwich

- ✓ 20 weapons identified on School children through police SLO
- ✓ 19 fire arms crimes reported to police
- ✓ 1341 knife crimes reported to police

Smethwick

- ✓ 4 weapons identified on School children through police SLO
- ✓ 13 fire arms crimes reported to police
- ✓ 768 knife crimes reported to police

90 Firearms incidents in Sandwell in 2021-2022

4415 knife crime incidents in Sandwell in 2021-2022

Proactive working through the Police Schools Link officers they have identified and supported 71 children involved with weapons

Highlights

- Oldbury has the highest levels of assaults
- Oldbury has the highest levels of weapons
- Wednesbury has the highest levels of drug incidents
- West Bromwich has the highest levels of sexting and sexual offences
- West Bromwich has the highest levels of thefts

The MCS (Millennium Cohort Study)

19,000 children born in the UK in 2000 and 2001
Interviews were conducted with 11,884 individuals from 11,726 families



Family Factors for weapon carrying individuals

29% of parents not in employment (15% non weapons carriers)

17% of parents had no qualifications (9% non weapons carriers)

12% of parents using drugs (6% non weapons carriers)

19% frequently arguing with mother (7% non weapons carriers)

Weapon carrying/use by social/school indicators

29% report many risky behaviours (6% non weapons carriers)

81% had experience of victimisation (49% non weapons carriers)

9% truanting every week (0.4% non weapons carriers)

20% suspended from school (6% non weapons carriers)

ASB, Substance Misuse and Criminal Activity

- 33% tried drugs (5% non weapons carriers)
- 39% cautioned or arrested (8% non weapons carriers)
- 55% stopped or questioned by the police (15% non weapons carriers)
- 51% smoked (16% non weapons carriers)
- 36% Gambled (11% non weapons carriers)
- 80% pushed or shoved someone (30% non weapons carriers)
- 63% public disorder (14% non weapons carriers)
- 28% stolen from a shop (4% non weapons carriers)
- 24% cybercrime (4% non weapons carriers)

The MCS (Millennium Cohort Study) is a highly multi-disciplinary longitudinal study following a nationally representative cohort of around 19,000 children born in the UK in 2000 and 2001.

Early and effective intervention to prevent offending requires an awareness of the risk factors so that interventions can be targeted to those most likely to go on to offend.

Some of the strongest indicators of weapon carrying/use, as found in the MCS analysis include: being male; earlier puberty; school suspension or exclusion; truanting and self-harm.

For serious violence more widely, some of the strongest indicators include: being male; experience of maltreatment perpetrated by an adult (physical, sexual or emotional abuse/neglect) and poor self-control.

A higher percentage of weapon carriers/users had **parents** who were **not in work** and parents who generally had **lower levels** of education

Those who have been excluded from school are more likely to carry/use a weapon compared with those who have not been suspended or excluded

Vulnerabilities such as being a victim of bullying, victimisation, self-harm and feeling isolated were **more prevalent** among weapon carriers/users

81.3% of weapon carriers/users reported being victimised compared with **48.8%** of non-carriers/users

41.4% of weapon carriers/users reported self-harming, whereas **only 14.6%** of non-carriers/users reported self-harming

Engaging in ASB, substance misuse or criminal activity are consistently more prevalent among those involved with weapons than those who are not involved.

Those who felt the area around their home during the day to be not very safe or not at all safe were more likely to carry/use a weapon than those who perceived their area as very safe or safe

VIOLENCE PROFILE

Firearms

- Although firearm crime in the UK remains low compared with many other countries, there has been an upward trend in recorded firearms offences since 2014 ([NCA](#))
- In the UK the criminal use of firearms continues to account for a very small proportion of the overall crime rate however the harm caused remains disproportionate
- Evidence shows that after declining for around a decade, homicide gun crime started rising again in 2014 across most police force areas in England and Wales. (source: [Millennium cohort study](#))
- Some of this increase can be attributed to improved police recording of crime but some of the increases are thought to reflect a rise in offences involving knives and firearms (source: [Millennium cohort study](#))
- These increases have been accompanied by a slight shift towards younger victims and perpetrators, which highlights the importance of understanding potential indicators of serious violence, especially in relation to young people (source: [Millennium cohort study](#))
- Firearms offences make up a small proportion of overall police recorded crime
- In the latest ONS [Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2022](#) Police recorded 5,976 offences involving firearms in the year ending June 2022 This was a 10% decrease compared with the previous year
- Sandwell has not seen these levels of decrease, rather a 21% increase in fire arms offences
- There have been 388 firearms incidents in Sandwell over the last five years (source: PoVE scorecard)
- Offences have increased year on year since 2017-18 and in 2021-22 Sandwell saw its highest volume of firearms offences recorded
- Rowley has seen a significant increase with firearms offences, almost tripling from 5 to 18 offences and has the second highest volume of such offences in the Region
- West Bromwich has the highest volume of fire arms offences
- Smethwick has seen year on year reductions in fire arms offences for the last 4 years, with 60% decrease. Early indicators for 2022-2023 data show an even bigger reduction and Smethwick is showing the lowest volume of fire arm offences across all towns with 6 offences recorded.
- Firearm discharges saw 157 incidents in the previous 12 months; this has reduced by 9 in the year ending March 2022 to 148. In the last quarter, a total of 36 discharges took place, with injury being caused in 13 of the incidents (of which four were fatal)
- 11 of the 36 discharges were linked to gang-associated nominals / gang activity. A further nine discharges were linked to drug dealing / County Lines activity. Shotguns have been the most commonly used firearm this quarter with a shotgun being discharged in 24 of the 36 discharges (67%) ([WM PCC](#))

What is a FIREARM CRIME?

Firearm crimes refer to criminal offences that involve the use of a firearm. This can include crimes such as:

- **Homicide:** The intentional killing of one person by another using a firearm
- **Assault:** The threat or use of force against another person using a firearm
- **Robbery:** The theft of property from an individual using a firearm
- **Burglary:** The unauthorised entry into a building or property with the intent to commit a crime, often involving the use of a firearm
- **Kidnapping:** The abduction of a person using a firearm
- **Illegal possession of a firearm:** The possession of a firearm without a legal license or permit

Why does FIREARM CRIME happen?

There is no one single factor that can explain why firearm crimes happen, as the causes can be complex and interrelated. Some of the factors that can contribute to firearm crime include:

- **Poverty and inequality:** In some communities, poverty and inequality can create a sense of desperation that may lead some individuals to turn to crime, including firearm crime, as a means of survival
- **Substance abuse:** Substance abuse can increase the risk of firearm crime, as individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol may be more likely to engage in criminal behaviour
- **Mental health issues:** Mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety and psychosis, can increase the risk of firearm crime, as individuals with mental health problems may be more likely to engage in violent behaviour
- **Gang involvement:** Gang involvement can increase the risk of firearm crime, as gang members may use firearms as a means of asserting control, resolving disputes or protecting their territory
- **Availability of firearms:** The availability of firearms can increase the risk of firearm crime, as individuals with access to firearms may be more likely to use them in the commission of crimes
- **Cultural factors:** Cultural factors, such as a culture of violence or a lack of respect for the law, can contribute to the incidence of firearm crime

What is the impact of FIREARM CRIME?

The impact of firearm crimes can be far-reaching and long-lasting, affecting individuals, families, communities and society as a whole. Some of the ways that firearm crimes can impact include:

- **Physical harm:** Firearm crimes can result in physical harm to the victims, including injury or death. This can lead to long-term physical and emotional consequences, such as chronic pain and disability,
- **Emotional harm:** Firearm crimes can cause emotional harm to the victims, their families and witnesses. This can include fear, anxiety and trauma which can last for many years after the incident
- **Financial costs:** Firearm crimes can result in significant financial costs including medical expenses, lost wages and property damage. This can have a lasting impact on the victims and their families, as well as on society as a whole
- **Community harm:** Firearm crimes can harm communities by increasing fear, reducing trust in law enforcement and disrupting the fabric of community life
- **Imprisonment:** Firearm crimes can result in the imprisonment of the perpetrators, leading to the breakdown of families and communities

How to prevent FIREARM CRIME?

Preventing firearm crimes requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the underlying causes of crime and works to reduce access to firearms by individuals who are at high risk of using them to commit crimes. Some strategies that can be used to achieve this include:

- **Background checks:** Conducting background checks on individuals seeking to purchase firearms can help to prevent firearms from falling into the hands of those who are prohibited from possessing them, such as individuals with a history of violent crime, domestic abuse or mental illness
- **Law enforcement efforts:** Law enforcement efforts to target illegal firearms trafficking and crack down on illegal firearms sales can help to reduce the availability of firearms to criminals
- **Community-based programs:** Community-based programs that work to reduce violence and resolve conflicts non-violently can help to reduce the risk of firearm crime in communities
- **Mental health and substance abuse treatment:** Providing access to mental health and substance abuse treatment can help to reduce the risk of firearm crime by individuals struggling with these issues
- **Education and outreach:** Educating the public about the dangers of firearms, including the risks associated with firearms in the home, can help to reduce the risk of firearm accidents and crimes

These are just a few examples of the strategies that can be used to prevent firearm crimes. By working together and using a comprehensive and evidence-based approach, it is possible to reduce the incidence of firearm crimes and create a safer and more secure society for all.

Problem Profile: Firearms

Scanning:

- Firearms crime in the UK has been on an upward trend since 2014 and Sandwell has seen a 21% increase in such offences
- Sandwell has had the highest volume of firearms offences ever recorded in 2021-22
- West Bromwich has the highest volume of firearms offences, while Smethwick has seen a significant reduction of 60% over the last four years
- Firearms discharges are a major cause for concern, with 148 incidents in the year ending March 2022, with 11 of the 36 discharges linked to gang-associated nominals/gang activity
- Shotguns have been the most commonly used firearm in the last quarter
- The prevalence of firearms offences in Sandwell may be influenced by factors such as poverty, unemployment and social inequality
- A multi-agency approach, involving police, local authorities, community groups and other stakeholders, is necessary to address the root causes of firearms crime and reduce its incidence
- Early intervention and prevention measures, such as youth outreach programs and education campaigns, can help to deter young people from getting involved in gangs and gun-related activities
- Improving intelligence gathering and sharing, as well as increasing police patrols in hotspots, may help to detect and prevent firearms offences

Analysis:

- Firearms offences in Sandwell make up a small proportion of overall police recorded crime but the harm caused can be significant.
- The factors contributing to firearms offences in Sandwell include gang activity, drug dealing and personal disputes.
- Firearms offences are often linked to organised crime group, and the use of firearms in these incidents is often driven by the desire to gain control of a particular area or to settle disputes with rival groups.
- Firearms crimes have a significant impact on the long-term psychological well-being of individuals and communities.

Response:

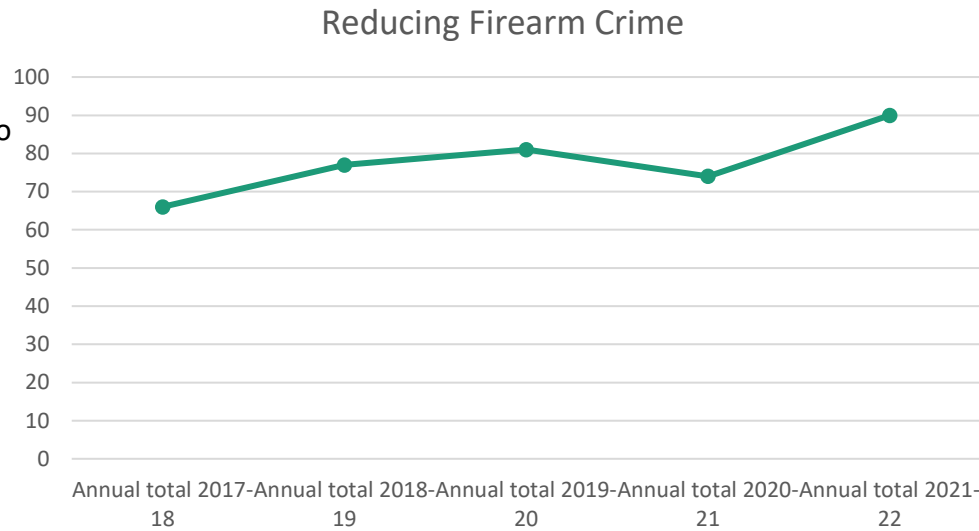
- WMP's response to firearms is through Operation Captiva, which coordinates firearms activity throughout the force, understanding the current threat picture and monitoring performance.
- A total of 140 lethal barrelled firearms have been recovered this year, representing an increase of 16 recoveries compared to the previous year
- The role of Police School Liaison Officers has changed to focus on firearms-related issues and there has been an uplift of officers working with schools, including 6 School Liaison Officers in Sandwell
- The West Midlands Police have set up a dedicated Firearms Investigation Team, which works to detect, disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups involved in firearms offences
- The force has increased its use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras to target criminals transporting firearms and has invested in new technology, including X-ray equipment, to improve its capability to detect firearms
- The police are working with partners, including local councils, to prevent young people from getting involved in gangs and violence. This includes initiatives such as mentoring programmes, diversionary activities and education programmes

Assessment:

- Firearms offences have been increasing steadily in Sandwell in recent years and the impact on victims and communities can be significant
- There is a need to continue working on reducing firearms offences in Sandwell through coordinated efforts, including recovery
- WMP's response to firearms is through Operation Captiva, which coordinates firearms activity throughout the force, understanding the current threat picture and monitoring performance
- A total of 140 lethal barrelled firearms have been recovered this year, representing an increase of 16 recoveries compared to the previous year
- The role of Police School Liaison Officers has changed to focus on firearms-related issues, and there has been an uplift of officers working with schools including 6 School Liaison Officers in Sandwell
- There is a need to continue working on reducing firearms offences in Sandwell through coordinated efforts, including recovery
- The impact of firearms offences on victims and communities can be significant, making it essential to address this issue as a priority

Reducing Fire Arms Crimes

Fire arm crimes have continued to increase over the last 5 years.



Firearms offences involving firearms make up a small proportion of overall police recorded crime.

In the latest ONS [Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2022](#) Police recorded 5,976 offences involving firearms in the year ending June 2022 This was a 10% decrease compared with previous years.

Sandwell has not seen those levels of decrease, rather a 21% increase in fire arms offences

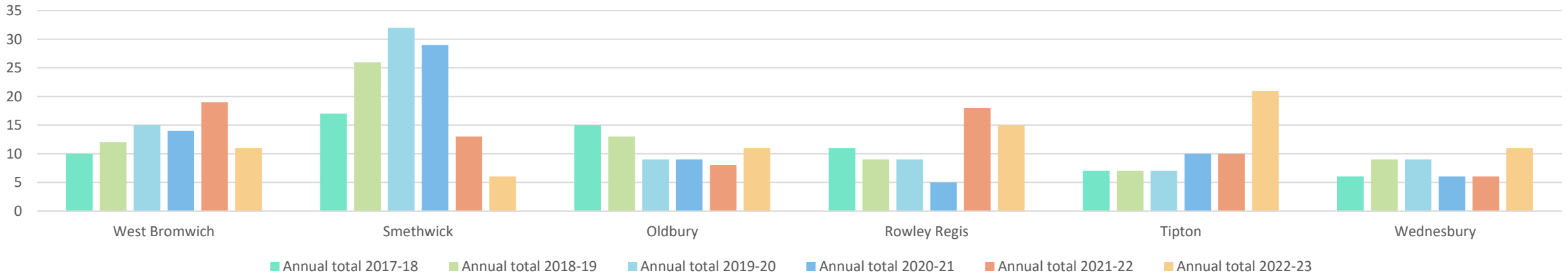
Rowley has seen a significant increase with firearms offences almost tripling from 5 to 18 offences and has the second highest volume of offences in the Region

West Bromwich has the highest volume of fire arms offences overall

Smethwick has seen year on year reductions in fire arms offences for the last 4 years, with 60% decrease. Early indicators for 2022-2023 data show an even bigger reduction and Smethwick is showing the lowest volume of fire arm offences across all towns with 6 offences recorded.

Distribution of Fire Arms Crimes Across Sandwell

West Bromwich and Rowley have both had increases in Gun Crime , all other areas have stayed the same or have reduced



VIOLENCE PROFILE

VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON

- The evidence shows that after declining for around a decade, homicide, knife crime and gun crime started rising again in 2014 across most police force areas in England and Wales.
- Some of this increase can be attributed to improved police recording of crime but some of the increases are thought to reflect a rise in offences involving knives and firearms
- These increases have been accompanied by a slight shift towards younger victims and perpetrators, which highlights the importance of understanding potential indicators of serious violence learnt behaviours (SVLBs) especially at younger ages
- The volume of Homicides in West Midlands has remained relatively stable in recent years, averaging five a month. April 2021 to March 2022 saw 53 homicides, compared to 52 in the year ending June 2019 (when national baselines were set by the Home Office), a 1.9% increase. (WM [PCC](#))
- A significant proportion of homicides are often linked to Organised Crime Groups activity (13%) or domestic-related offending (26%). Drugs (47%) and alcohol (24%) are also significant factors. Analysis of victims and offenders also show the high proportion of victims (15%) and suspects (44%) that are under the age of 25. Almost one in four homicides take place within WMP's Impact Areas (WM [PCC](#))
- These factors will drive activity towards improving performance over the forthcoming quarter, Gang Related Violence remains one of the Force Tactical Priorities for the next period (WM [PCC](#))
- The national measure for Serious Violence relates to hospital admissions, after seeing several years of increases, levels of hospital admissions for under 25s with sharp object wounding have reduced since the peak in the baseline year (2019). The last 12 months (March 2021 to February 2022) saw 160 episodes, a reduction of 55 compared to the national baseline year ending June 2019 (WM [PCC](#))

What is VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON?

Violence against the person refers to any act of violence or abuse that is directed towards another person. This can include physical violence, such as assault or battery, as well as emotional, psychological or sexual abuse. Examples of violence against the person include: domestic violence; child abuse; sexual assault; elder abuse; human trafficking and hate crimes.

In some cases, violence against the person can also take the form of stalking or harassment, which can have a profound impact on the safety and well-being of the victim.

Why does VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON happen?

There are many different factors that can contribute to violence against the person. Some of the common causes include:

- **Personal and family issues:** Domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse often stem from issues within the family or household, such as power imbalances, relationship conflicts and financial stress
- **Substance abuse:** Substance abuse can lead to impulsive and violent behaviour, especially when combined with other risk factors such as mental health issues or a history of violent behaviour
- **Mental health issues:** Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and personality disorders can contribute to violent behaviour in some individuals
- **Societal factors:** Societal factors, such as poverty, inequality and discrimination, can create conditions that increase the risk of violence against the person
- **Cultural norms and attitudes:** Cultural norms and attitudes that promote violence or condone abusive behaviour can contribute to a culture of violence
- **Easy access to weapons:** Easy access to firearms and other weapons can increase the severity and frequency of violent incidents
- **Lack of effective response:** When violence against the person is not taken seriously or is not properly addressed by law enforcement or the justice system, it can create a culture of impunity that contributes to the continued prevalence of violence against the person

What is the impact of VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON?

The impact of violence against the person can be far-reaching and long-lasting. Some of the most common affects include:

- **Physical harm:** Violence against the person can result in serious physical injuries, including bruises, broken bones, lacerations and even death.
- **Emotional trauma:** The psychological and emotional toll of violence against the person can be severe and long-lasting, affecting the victim's ability to trust others
- **Financial harm:** Victims of violence against the person often incur significant financial costs, including medical expenses, lost wages and property damage
- **Disruptions to daily life:** Violence against the person can interfere with a person's ability to attend school or work, maintain healthy relationships and participate in other activities.
- **Stigma and social isolation:** Victims of violence against the person may experience stigma and discrimination, which can further isolate them
- **Legal and criminal justice system involvement:** Violence against the person often involves involvement with the criminal justice system, which can be traumatic and complicated for the victim

How to prevent VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON?

Preventing violence against the person requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the root causes and risk factors for violence. Some key strategies for preventing violence against the person include:

- **Addressing underlying issues:** Addressing issues such as poverty, inequality, substance abuse and mental health problems can help to reduce the risk of violence against the person
- **Promoting healthy relationships:** Encouraging healthy and respectful relationships, especially in the family and among young people, can help to prevent violence against the person
- **Providing education and resources:** Providing education and resources such as training on conflict resolution, anger management and healthy relationships
- **Strengthening the criminal justice response:** Strengthening the criminal justice response to violence against the person, including improving the reporting and investigation of crimes, can help to hold perpetrators accountable and prevent future violence
- **Enhancing community-based interventions:** Supporting community-based interventions, such as hotlines, crisis centres and advocacy programs, can provide victims with access to support and resources to help them recover from violence against the person
- **Addressing cultural norms and attitudes:** Addressing cultural norms and attitudes that condone or promote violence against the person can help to change societal attitudes and reduce the prevalence of violence

Problem Profile: Violence Against The Person

Scanning

- Violence against the person is a serious issue across the UK
- Sandwell has seen a steady increase in recorded incidents of violence with injury over the past four years
- While homicide rates in West Midlands have remained stable, increasing numbers of homicides are now linked to organised crime groups, domestic-related offences and drugs and alcohol
- Almost one in four homicides take place within WMP's Impact Areas
- In 2021-22, there was a significant jump in incidents of violence with injury from 3794 to 4353
- Assault without injury has also seen a sharp increase in Sandwell over the past year.
- There has been a rise from 3583 in 2020-21 to 4650 in 2021-22
- Attempted murder numbers have remained relatively stable with 16 incidents recorded in both 2019-20 and 2021-22
- Threats to kill have shown a disturbing upward trend increasing from 155 in 2018-19 to 713 in 2021-22
- Assault with intent to cause serious harm has seen a slight increase from 344 incidents in 2018-19 to 451 in 2021-22

Analysis:

- The overall increase in recorded incidents of violence against the person requires a multi-faceted approach including early intervention and prevention
- Partnership funded interventions such as Stand Against Violence, Believe to Achieve and Men at Work are increasing
- Sandwell has worked with local partnerships to mitigate the risks of a summer violence spike including additional youth interventions
- The VRP has increased its capability to deliver more primary prevention programs in Sandwell, such as MVP - Mentors in Violence Prevention, Trauma Informed Practice, Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention, Round Midnight VR and Info Real
- Sandwell provided with a local delivery budget of £74,500 for violence prevention.
- Successful delivery of Safer Streets Round 3 focused on violence against women and girls

Response:

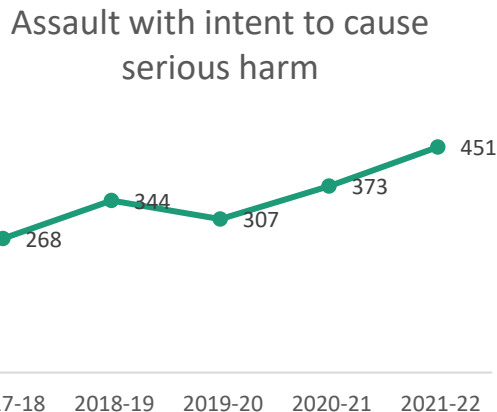
- Increased patrols in areas where incidents of violence with injury and assault without injury have been reported
- Launch of a public awareness campaign targeting young people to raise awareness of the dangers and consequences of carrying weapons and being involved in violent behaviour
- Work with schools, colleges and youth clubs to promote positive role models, build self-esteem and encourage young people to pursue positive and constructive activities
- Work with the community and faith groups to build trust, foster positive relationships and promote community cohesion
- Introduction of a West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) to develop and implement a long-term strategy for reducing violence against the person
- Increased community engagement and partnership working with organisations involved in violence reduction, prevention and intervention
- Development of diversionary activities including sports, arts and cultural programs to provide alternative positive opportunities for young people
- Increased capacity and capability of the police to respond to and investigate incidents of violence against the person
- Provide specialist training for frontline staff on identifying potential indicators of SVLBs and providing early intervention and support to vulnerable individuals

Assessment:

- Monitor trends and patterns in incidents of violence against the person to identify emerging issues and risks
- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and strategies for reducing violence against the person
- Regularly review and update the SARA response to reflect changing circumstances and emerging risks
- Monitor the impact of the VRP on reducing incidents of violence against the person in Sandwell
- Referrals to other agencies such as counselling, legal services or housing assistance
- Promote awareness and education on the consequences of violence against the person and the importance of reporting incidents to the police
- Work with local schools, youth organisations and community groups to provide education and prevention programs on healthy relationships and non-violent conflict resolution

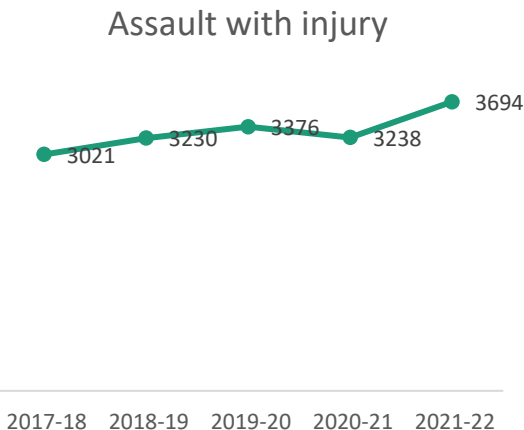
Assault with intent to cause serious harm

There has been a 68% increase in assaults with intent to cause serious harm over the last 5 years



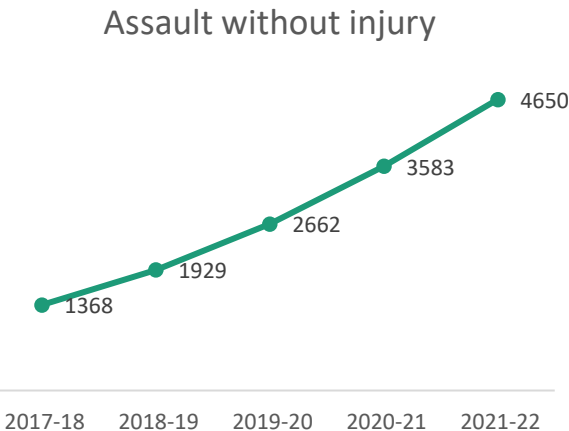
Assault with injury

There has been a 22% increase in violence with injury over the last 5 years



Assault without injury

Assault with injury has shown year on year increases and has nearly a 3-fold increase. 2021-22 is the highest that this has been



- Violent crime covers a range of offence types from minor assaults, such as pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm, to murder. This includes offences where the victim was intentionally stabbed, punched, kicked, pushed or jostled, as well as offences where the victim was threatened with violence, regardless of injury
- Overall, police recorded violence against the person continued to increase to 2.1 million offences nationally in the year ending June 2022 (20%) (source: [ONS](#))
- Assaults make up around 20% of total recorded police crime across the last five years in Sandwell

Over the last five years there were

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>33,000 incidents of assault in Sandwell over the last 5 years</p> | <p>1550 threats to kill were made, a ten-fold increase from 56 in 17-18 to 713 in 21-22</p> | <p>62 cases of attempted murder - this has tripled</p> |
| <p>210 assaults with injury were racially or religiously motivated - these have doubled</p> | <p>326 assaults without injury were racially or religiously aggravated - these have tripled</p> | <p>210 assaults with injury were racially or religiously aggravated – these have doubled</p> |

STRATEGY

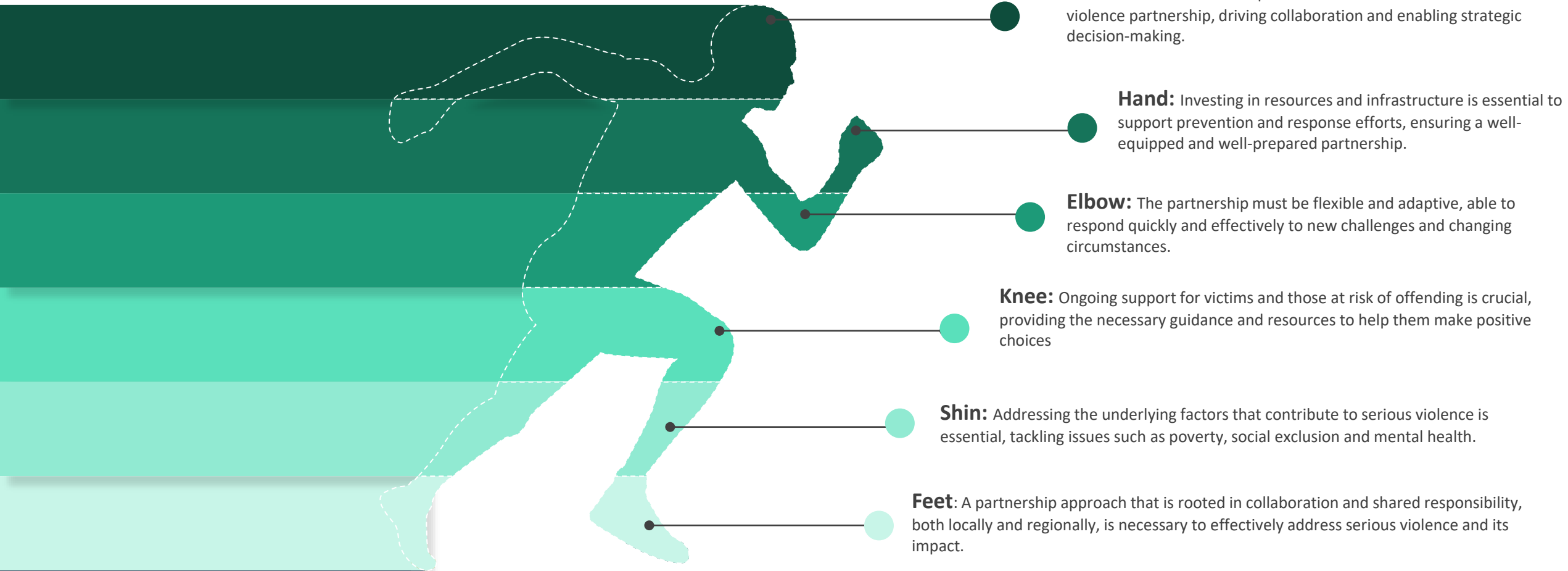
SUMMARY AND RECOMENDADTIONS



We Are The Solution

Serious violence is a complex issue that requires a collective response. The solution lies in a strong and collaborative partnerships, with each member playing a crucial role. When we invest in the right resources, remain flexible and adaptive and provide ongoing support for individuals and communities, we can begin to tackle the underlying factors that contribute to serious violence. Poverty, social exclusion and many other factors need to be understood and addressed.

Our approach must be rooted in local and regional partnerships, with shared responsibility and a focus on collaborative working. Together, we are the solution to serious violence and by working together, we can continue to move forward towards a safer and more inclusive society.



Summary Headlines

- Sandwell faces significant challenges related to serious violence, including: domestic abuse; sexual assault; modern slavery; child exploitation; knife and gun crime and violence against the person
- Year-on-year increases in most forms of violence have been observed in Sandwell over the past five years
- Multi-agency collaboration is essential for tackling the root causes of violence in Sandwell and a coordinated and integrated approach is needed to create safer communities for all
- The lack of coordination and data-sharing between agencies in Sandwell creates challenges for identifying and addressing the root causes of serious violence
- Investment in early intervention and prevention programmes is crucial for reducing rates of serious violence in Sandwell in the long-term
- Violence in Sandwell occurs at different times and in different places but certain patterns have been identified. For example, violence involving young people often occurs on weekends and in public places such as parks and shopping centres
- There are multiple risk factors associated with violence in Sandwell including: poverty; inequality; family breakdown; substance abuse and mental health issues
- To prevent and reduce serious violence in Sandwell a multi-agency approach is needed that addresses both the immediate causes and underlying risk factors
- Addressing the root causes of violence and taking a multi-agency approach, may help support the reduction and impact of serious violence in the area
- There is a need for ongoing evaluation and monitoring of serious violence trends in Sandwell to ensure that prevention and intervention efforts are effective and evidence-based

Conclusion

In conclusion this Strategic Needs Assessment for Sandwell provides an important baseline for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies to tackle serious violence in the Borough. It is important to recognise that many agencies are still building their response to serious violence and there is a need for ongoing evaluation and monitoring to ensure that prevention and intervention efforts are evidence-based and effective.

The SNA has identified a range of challenges facing Sandwell, including: rising levels of domestic abuse; sexual assault; modern slavery; child exploitation; knife crime; gun crime and violence against the person. These challenges require a public health approach that addresses the root causes of violence with a focus on prevention and early intervention work. The assessment has emphasised the importance of multi-agency collaboration and a coordinated and integrated approach to create safer communities for all.

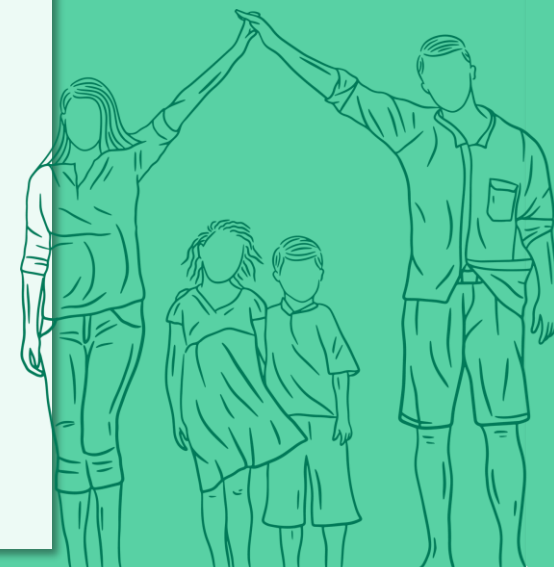
The SNA has also highlighted the strong correlation between poverty, social exclusion and serious violence in Sandwell, emphasising the need for holistic approaches to tackling these issues. Young people are disproportionately affected by serious violence and the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the issue.

Investment in early intervention and prevention programs is crucial for reducing rates of serious violence in Sandwell in the long-term. The use of technology and data analytics can also improve the effectiveness of existing prevention and intervention strategies. Moreover, education and awareness-raising initiatives can help to promote positive attitudes towards violence prevention and create a culture of safety.

In summary, the SNA has provided a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing Sandwell and the urgent need for effective prevention and intervention strategies. By working together and taking a coordinated and strategic approach, Sandwell can make real progress in reducing the incidence and impact of serious violence in the area and creating safer communities for all.

Recommendations

- **Invest in evidence-based early intervention and prevention programs:** The SNA has highlighted the urgent need for investment in evidence-based early intervention and prevention programs that can address the root causes of violence in Sandwell. Such programs can include mentoring, parenting support, cognitive-behavioural therapy and social skills training for at-risk individuals and families. These programs should be grounded in a clear theory of change that is based on the latest research on violence prevention.
- **Improve data sharing and collaboration:** The SNA has identified the need for multi-agency collaboration to address the root causes of violence in Sandwell. To support this, there should be a focus on improving data sharing and collaboration between agencies and services. This can be achieved through the development of shared data systems, regular meetings between agencies to discuss trends and emerging issues, training for staff on effective collaboration and communication and strengthening shared analytical resources to enable this.
- **Address the underlying economic and social factors:** The SNA emphasises the need for an holistic approach to tackling the underlying economic and social factors that contribute to violence in Sandwell. This may involve targeted interventions to support vulnerable groups and investment in community-based initiatives, such as job training programs, affordable housing initiatives and community development projects. The goal is to create a more inclusive and equitable society that provides all residents with the opportunities they need to thrive.
- **Focus on education and awareness-raising initiatives:** A greater focus on education and awareness-raising initiatives can help to promote positive attitudes towards violence prevention and create a culture of safety. This could include targeted campaigns and interventions aimed at different groups within the community, such as young people, parents and educators. Such initiatives can raise awareness of the root causes of violence and promote positive behaviours that support safer communities.
- **Develop effective and responsive commissioned services:** The SNA has identified gaps in existing commissioned services in Sandwell and further investment is needed to support effective prevention and intervention. Developing effective and responsive commissioned services that can respond to the needs of individuals and communities is crucial to creating safer communities. Such services can include mental health support, substance abuse treatment, additional domestic abuse support better encompassing children and crisis intervention programs.
- **Ensure ongoing evaluation and monitoring of serious violence trends:** Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of serious violence trends in Sandwell are crucial to ensure that prevention and intervention efforts are evidence-based and effective. This will enable services to adapt and respond to emerging trends and ensure that resources are being used effectively. Regular reporting on progress and outcomes, as well as ongoing data collection and analysis, can support data-driven decision making and improve the effectiveness of existing prevention and intervention strategies.
- **Take a public health approach:** Develop a Serious Violence Strategy that takes a public health approach, focusing on the root causes of violence with a view to preventing and reducing it in the long-term. This involves addressing the social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to violence, as well as promoting positive health behaviours and social norms. A public health approach can support a holistic and sustainable response to violence in Sandwell, with a focus on prevention and early intervention.
- **Target disproportionality:** Address ethnic disproportionality, particularly among Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in Sandwell, by developing targeted interventions that address the root causes of disproportionality, such as discrimination, inequality and institutional bias. This could include initiatives that aim to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across all services, as well as training and awareness-raising for frontline staff to reduce the impact of unconscious bias and discrimination on decision-making. It is important to involve affected communities in the design and implementation of these interventions to ensure their effectiveness and relevance.



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- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-findings-from-analysis-of-domestic-homicide-reviews/key-findings-from-analysis-of-domestic-homicide-reviews>

Appendix



Oldbury Town facts and figures

53,707
residents




3rd highest in Sandwell

17,901
under the
age of 25




3rd highest in Sandwell

4952
10-16 year
olds




3rd highest in Sandwell

6135
17-18 year
olds



3rd highest in Sandwell

28%
ethnic
minority




Sandwell 30.1%

29% of children
first language is
not English


England 19%

21% living in
income
deprived
households




Lowest in Sandwell

26% children
living in
poverty



Lowest in Sandwell (29.9)

4.8% of
population
actively
seeking work



Sandwell 5.3

median gross
weekly pay is
£479.10 per
week



Lowest in Sandwell (£502.50)

5942 total
recorded
crimes




Sandwell Total 39266

3981 public
safety and
welfare
incidents



Sandwell total 28340

8 firearm
crimes



Sandwell total 74

668 knife
related
incidents




Sandwell total 4415

489
domestic
abuse
incidents



Sandwell total 2983

16
modern
slavery
cases



Sandwell total 155

To put serious violence
in context
If Oldbury was a town of 100
people this is how it would look

- 33 would be under the age of 25
- 11 would be aged between 17-18
- 9 would be aged 10 - 16
- 28 would be from an ethnic minority
- 29 children would not have English as a first language
- 21 would be living in income deprived households
- 26 children would live in poverty
- 5 people would be seeking work
- 70 people would be in employment
- 51 people would have a level 2 or above qualification
- 11 people would be a victim of crime
- 7 people would have had a public safety and welfare incident
- 1 person would have been a victim of a knife incident
- 1 person would experience domestic abuse

Crime has seen a
41% increase
over the last five years,
this is the 2nd
lowest increase
in Sandwell

Fire arm crimes
have seen a **46%**
reduction, this is the
highest reduction
in Sandwell

Domestic
abuse victims
supported by an IDVA
increased by
33% over the
last 5 years

Public safety
and **welfare**
incidents in Oldbury
have **reduced by**
35% over the last 5
years

Knife incidents
have a **7 fold**
increase over the
last 5 years, this is the
second lowest
increase in Sandwell

Modern slavery
has **remained** the
same for the past 3 years


Rowley Town facts and figures

51,243
residents




4th highest in Sandwell

16,713
under the
age of 25



4th highest in Sandwell

4592
10-16 year
olds




3rd highest in Sandwell

5775
17-18 year
olds



4th highest in Sandwell

12%
ethnic
minority




Sandwell 30.1%

14% of children
first language is
not English


England 19%

22% living in
income
deprived
households




Lowest in Sandwell

28% children
living in
poverty



Lowest in Sandwell (29.9)

2.8% of
population
actively
seeking work




Sandwell 5.3

median gross
weekly pay is
£536.60 per
week



Highest in Sandwell (£502.50)

5417 total
recorded
crimes




Sandwell Total 39266

3396 public
safety and
welfare
incidents



Sandwell total 28340

18 firearm
crimes



Second highest in Sandwell
Sandwell total 74

513 knife
related
incidents



Lowest in Sandwell
Sandwell total 4415

415
domestic
abuse
incidents



Sandwell total 2983

11
modern
slavery
cases



Sandwell total 155

To put serious violence in context
If Rowley was a town of 100
people this is how it would look

- 33 would be under the age of 25
- 9 would be aged between 17-18
- 9 would be aged 10 - 16
- 12 would be from an ethnic minority
- 14 children would not have English as a first language
- 22 would be living in income deprived households
- 28 children would be living in poverty
- 3 people would be seeking work
- 77 people would be in employment
- 63 people would have a level 2 qualification
- 11 people would be a victim of crime
- 7 people would have had a public safety and welfare incident
- 1 person would have been a victim of a knife incident
- 1 person would experience domestic abuse

Crime has seen a
56% increase
over the last five years
this is the **joint**
highest increase in
Sandwell alongside
Smethwick

There has been a **64%**
increase in fire
arm crimes over the
last 5 years, this is the
2nd highest
increase in Sandwell

Domestic
abuse victims
supported by an IDVA
increased by
50% over the
last 5 years

Public safety and
welfare incidents in
Rowley have almost
reduced by 36%
over the last 5 years

Knife incidents
have a **8 fold**
increase over the last
5 years, this is the
second lowest
increase in Sandwell

Modern slavery
has **reduced by**
15% over the past 3
years

Smethwick Town facts and figures

61,586
residents



2nd highest in Sandwell

23,954
under the
age of 25



2nd highest in Sandwell

6780
10-16 year
olds



2nd highest in Sandwell

8499
17-18 year
olds



2nd highest in Sandwell

56%
ethnic
minority



Sandwell 30.1%

53% of children
first language is
not English

England 19%

27% living in
income
deprived
households



Lowest in Sandwell

32% children
living in
poverty



2nd highest in Sandwell
(29.9)

4.8% of
population
actively
seeking work



Sandwell 5.3

median gross
weekly pay is
£479.10 per
week



lowest in Sandwell (£502.50)

6801 total
recorded
crimes



2nd highest in Sandwell.
Sandwell Total 39266

5645 public
safety and
welfare
incidents



Sandwell total 28340

13 firearm
crimes



3rd highest in Sandwell
Sandwell total 74

768 knife
related
incidents



2nd highest Sandwell
total 4415

469
domestic
abuse
incidents



Sandwell total 2983

67
modern
slavery
cases



Highest in Sandwell
total 155

To put serious violence in
context
If Smethwick was a town of 100
people this is how it would look

- 39 would be under the age of 25
- 14 would be aged between 17-18
- 11 would be aged 10 - 16
- 56 would be from an ethnic minority
- 53 children would not have English as a first language
- 27 would be living in income deprived households
- 32 children would be living in poverty
- 5 people would be seeking work
- 73 people would be in employment
- 56 people would have a level 2 qualification
- 11 people would be a victim of crime
- 9 people would have had a public safety and welfare incident
- 1 person would have been a victim of a knife incident
- 1 person would experience domestic abuse

Crime has seen a
56% increase
over the last five years,
this is the **largest**
increase alongside
Rowley

Fire arm crimes
have reduced by **23%**
over the last five years,
this is the **2nd highest**
reduction in
Sandwell

Domestic
abuse victims
supported by an IDVA
increased by
67% over the
last 5 years

Public safety
and **welfare**
incidents in Smethwick
have **reduced by**
33% over the last 5
years

Knife incidents
have a **5 fold**
increase over the last 5
years, this is the **third**
lowest increase in
Sandwell

Modern slavery
has **remained** the
same for the past 3 years

Tipton Town facts and figures

41,662
residents



5th highest in Sandwell

14,601
under the
age of 25



5th highest in Sandwell

3921
10-16 year
olds



5th highest in Sandwell

4871
17-18 year
olds



5th highest in Sandwell

19%
ethnic
minority



Sandwell 30.1%

24% of children
first language is
not English

England 19%

28% living in
income
deprived
households



Highest in Sandwell

35% children
living in
poverty



highest in Sandwell (29.9)

5.3% of
population
actively
seeking work



Sandwell 5.3

median gross
weekly pay is
£522.50 per
week



Middle range Sandwell
(£502.50)

5346 total
recorded
crimes



Lowest in Sandwell.
Sandwell Total 39266

2994 public
safety and
welfare
incidents



Lowest in Sandwell
total 28340

10 firearm
crimes



4th highest in Sandwell
Sandwell total 74

522 knife
related
incidents



5th highest Sandwell
total 4415

466
domestic
abuse
incidents



4th highest Sandwell
total 2983

17
modern
slavery
cases



3rd highest in Sandwell
total 155

To put serious violence in
context
If Tipton was a town of 100
people this is how it would look

- 35 would be under the age of 25
- 12 would be aged between 17-18
- 9 would be aged 10 - 16
- 19 would be from an ethnic minority
- 24 children would not have English as a first language
- 28 would be living in income deprived households
- 35 children would be living in poverty
- 5 people would be seeking work
- 73 people would be in employment
- 52 people would have a level 2 qualification
- 13 people would be a victim of crime
- 7 people would have had a public safety and welfare incident
- 1 person would have been a victim of a knife incident
- 1 person would experience domestic abuse

Crime has seen a
36% increase
over the last five years,
this is the **lowest**
increase in
Sandwell

Fire arm crimes
have **increased by**
43% over the last five
years, 3rd highest increase
in Sandwell

Domestic
abuse victims
supported by an IDVA
increased by
54% over the
last 5 years

Public safety
and welfare
incidents in Tipton have
almost **halved** over
the last 5 year, this is the
largest reduction in
Sandwell

Knife incidents
have a **5 fold**
increase over the
last 5 years, this is the
lowest increase
in Sandwell

Modern slavery
has **remained** the
same for the past 3 years


Sandwell
Partnership
MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

Safer Sandwell
Partnership

Local Police and Crime Board


West Bromwich Town facts and figures

81,353 residents 
highest in Sandwell


27,143 under the age of 25 
highest in Sandwell


7611 10-16 year olds 
highest in Sandwell


9522 17-18 year olds 
highest in Sandwell


35% ethnic minority 
Sandwell 30.1%


38% of children first language is not English
England 19%

22% living in income deprived households 
4th highest in Sandwell


28% children living in poverty 
5th highest in Sandwell (29.9)

7.5% of population actively seeking work 
Sandwell 5.3

median gross weekly pay is £500.80 per week 
Middle range Sandwell (£502.50)

10,933 total recorded crimes 
highest in Sandwell. Sandwell Total 39266

8104 public safety and welfare incidents 
Highest in Sandwell total 28340

19 firearm crimes 
highest in Sandwell Sandwell total 74

1341 knife related incidents 
highest Sandwell total 4415

691 domestic abuse incidents 
highest in Sandwell total 2983

32 modern slavery cases 
2nd highest in Sandwell total 155

To put serious violence in context If West Bromwich was a town of 100 people this is how it would look

- 33 would be under the age of 25
- 12 would be aged between 17-18
- 9 would be aged 10 - 16
- 35 would be from an ethnic minority
- 38 children would not have English as a first language
- 22 would be living in income deprived households
- 28 children would be living in poverty
- 7 people would be seeking work
- 65 people would be in employment
- 56 people would have a level 2 qualification
- 13 people would be a victim of crime
- 10 people would have had a public safety and welfare incident
- 2 people would have been a victim of a knife incident
- 1 person would experience domestic abuse

Crime has seen a **46% increase** over the last five years, this is the **4th highest increase** in Sandwell

Public safety and welfare incidents in West Bromwich have **reduced by 28%** over the last 5 years

Fire arm crimes have seen a **90% increase** over the last 5 years, this is the **highest increase** in Sandwell

Knife incidents have a **7 fold increase** over the last 5 years, this is the **second lowest increase** in Sandwell

Domestic abuse victims supported by an IDVA **increased by 18%** over the last 5 years, lowest increase in Sandwell

Modern slavery has **remained** the same for the past 3 years


Wednesbury Town facts and figures

39,491
residents



Lowest in Sandwell

13,192
under the
age of 25



Lowest in Sandwell

3839
10-16 year
olds




Lowest in Sandwell

4773
17-18 year
olds



Lowest in Sandwell

19%
ethnic
minority




Sandwell 30.1%

24% of children
first language is
not English


England 19%

26% living in
income
deprived
households




3rd highest in Sandwell

32% children
living in
poverty




3rd highest in Sandwell
(29.9)

5.3% of
population
actively
seeking work




Sandwell 5.3

median gross
weekly pay is
£522.50 per
week



Middle range Sandwell (£502.50)

4827 total
recorded
crimes




Lowest in Sandwell.
Sandwell Total 39266

3064 public
safety and
welfare
incidents



Lowest in Sandwell
total 28340

6 firearm
crimes



Lowest in Sandwell Sandwell
total 74

603 knife
related
incidents



4th highest Sandwell
total 4415

363
domestic
abuse
incidents



Lowest in Sandwell
total 2983

12
modern
slavery
cases



5th highest in Sandwell
total 155

To put serious violence in context
If Wednesbury was a town of 100
people this is how it would look

- 33 would be under the age of 25
- 12 would be aged between 17-18
- 9 would be aged 10 - 16
- 19 would be from an ethnic minority
- 24 children would not have English as a first language
- 26 would be living in income deprived households
- 32 children would be living in poverty
- 5 people would be seeking work
- 73 people would be in employment
- 57 people would have a level 2 qualification
- 12 people would be a victim of crime
- 8 people would have had a public safety and welfare incident
- 1 person would have been a victim of a knife incident
- 1 person would experience domestic abuse

Crime has seen a
53% increase
over the last five years,
this is the **3rd**
highest increase in
Sandwell

Fire arm crimes
have **almost stayed**
the same over the
last five years

Domestic
abuse victims
supported by an IDVA
increased by
107% over the last
5 years, significantly
higher than Sandwell

Public safety
and **welfare**
incidents in Wednesbury
have **reduced by**
29% over the last 5
years

Knife incidents
have a **12 fold**
increase over the
last 5 years, this is the
highest increase
in Sandwell

Modern slavery
has **remained** the
same for the past 3 years



Safer Sandwell
Partnership
Local Police and Crime Board