

**Hampshire, Isle of Wight,
Portsmouth & Southampton**

Violence Reduction Unit

Strategic Needs Assessment

March 2023

Introduction

The Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) aims to capture the picture of violence across the Hampshire policing area with a primary focus on the preceding twelve month period (01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022) where data is available. The assessment will consider the level of Serious Violence incidents, associated risk factors, identify geographical locations, people impacted and capture communities views on how these issue impact their lives. In line with the Homes Office guidance for Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) this assessment will primarily focus on violence impacting young people in public places.

The SNA gives an overview of the Hampshire footprint by combining partnership data, open source data and community surveys as well as the key findings from four local problem profiles produced by the local authorities in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (HIPS). The result is to give an in-depth understanding of the current situation across Hampshire. The SNA will consider both what is known about individuals already involved in violence and the factors that increase the risk of involvement.

This insight will feed into the HIPS VRU Response Strategy, allowing strategic and operational activity to be targeted towards the key drivers of violence. This will enable the partnership to achieve the highest possible impact to reduce violence and allow residents to live their lives free from violence and the fear of violence.

The SNA will be refreshed in January 2024 in line with the Serious Violence Duty to provide an on-going understanding of violence across the HIPS area and allow the Partnerships strategy to adapt to emerging issues impacting on the levels of violence.

Foreword

Reducing violence is important for everyone. Individuals who carry knives or use violence present a risk to us all and the cost of reacting to violence weighs heavily on the public purse. The cost of a homicide to the tax payer is now estimated to be in the region of £4 million, in addition to the incalculable family and personal loss.

The vast majority of people living in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight can expect to live their lives relatively free from the trauma and harm of violence. However, sections of the community are disproportionately likely to be victims or perpetrators of violence. It is now well established that by understanding the underlying causes of violence, and tackling those causes, we can reduce violence in our communities; this is the aim of the Violence Reduction Partnership. Agencies in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are committed to coming together through this partnership to make sure that we take a ‘public health approach’ to tackling violence. This commitment is now a legal obligation under the Police Crime and Sentencing Act referred to as the ‘Serious Violence Duty’.



In large public sector organisations, senior leaders make key decisions on how to spend money and frontline professionals make decisions every day about support and interventions for people in need, including those at risk or involved in violence. The purpose of this Strategic Needs Assessment, and subsequent iterations of it, is to give professionals the best information and understanding of violence in our communities, including the drivers of violence and identifying where individuals need help. Good quality information and access to data will drive better decision-making at a personal or strategic level and challenge human assumptions. These improved and informed decisions will maximise the opportunities for communities, partners, and individuals to stop violence and make our communities safer.

The next iteration of this Assessment will be produced in January 2024, bringing together more partner expertise and data. This Strategic Needs Assessment will inform and shape a Delivery Plan and Response Strategy which will set out steps that the Violence Reduction Partnership will take to enable the most effective use of public money that focusses on reducing violence to make our communities safer.

Jim Pegler

Violence Reduction Unit Director

Background

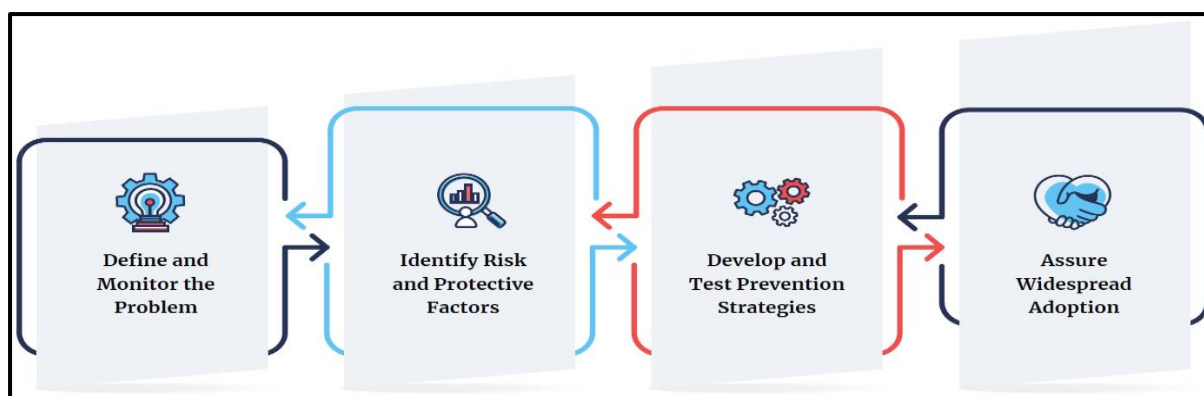
Serious Violence has a devastating impact on the lives of victims, offenders and their families. It instils fear within communities and is costly to society. Incidents of Serious Violence have increased in England and Wales since 2014¹ and in response the Government invested in the establishment of Violence Reduction Units in 2019 in the police force areas worst affected by violence. As one of these initial twenty areas Hampshire has received annual funding which in 2022 was extended for a further three years. In addition, the Home Office have also provided GRIP funding to the coinciding police forces area for operational activity, including increased patrols in hotspot areas.

The aim of the VRU is to build capacity in local areas to tackle the root causes of violence². Police, local government, health, education, community leaders and other key partners make up the SVRP. Bringing together these partners ensures a multi-agency response to address the varied drivers of violence and recognises that law enforcement alone will not reduce violence. The Partnership drives local strategy and embeds cultural change, as a means to make the SVRP sustainable.

VRUs adopt a Public Health Approach to violence reduction with the following underlying principles³:

- Focused on a defined population, often with a health risk in common
- With and for communities
- Not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries
- Focused on generating long term as well as short term solutions
- Based on data and intelligence to identify the burden on the population including inequalities
- Rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem

The World Health Organisation identifies four steps to defining and addressing violence using the Public Health Approach:



¹ Home Office, (2022). [Serious Violence Duty - Statutory Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

² Home Office, (2020). [Violence Reduction Unit interim guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

³ Public Health England, (2019). [A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The VRU prevention interventions can be categorised into three levels⁴:

Primary interventions aimed at groups or the general population without regard to individual risk; examples include violence prevention sessions delivered to all students in a school.

Secondary interventions aimed at those considered at heightened risk for violence, for example parenting training provided to low income, single parents.

Tertiary interventions aimed at those who have already demonstrated violent behaviour, such as treatment for perpetrators of Domestic Violence.



The HIPS VRU has recently restructured from a *Hub and Spoke Model* to a centralised team hosted by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). This centralised approach provides a larger co-located resource which will enable a synchronised approach to violence reduction. The team comprises of a Director, four place-based VRU Managers, an Evaluation & Data Officer and an Analyst. The aim is for the VRU Managers to connect local partners into this co-ordinated HIPS-wide approach, leading to a more sustainable solution than the previous structure was able to offer. In addition, the Violent Crime Taskforce Police Inspector and Sergeant are co-located with the VRU.

In January 2023 the Government enacted legislation introducing a new Serious Violence Duty. This Duty requires a range of specified authorities to work together to share information in order to target their interventions, to collaborate and produce plans to reduce serious violence within their communities. Across Hampshire the VRU will act as an agent for the SVRP Board to facilitate actions to meet the Duty. Furthermore, the VRUs will offer leadership and strategic co-ordination of the HIPS areas response to serious violence, supporting organisation to work collaborative to develop a consistent partnership approach.

⁴ WHO, (2002). [World report on violence and health \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/world-report-on-violence-and-health)

Serious Violence Definition

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2002 sets out specific crimes of concern but does not define Serious Violence. This approach allows for local definitions to integrate geographical differences including the prevalence of violence in a specific area, the impact on the community and evidence-based Strategic Need Assessments.

The HIPS VRU definition has recently been reviewed due to different definitions being used across the HIPS area making any meaningful analysis difficult. A single Serious Violence definition for the Partnership will ensure clarity and aid collaboration with analysis and communication.

The new definition focuses on crimes of particular concern as follows: 'Most Serious Violence (MSV)', robbery, possession of weapon, violent disorder, riot and any violence with injury where a bladed implement was used⁵.

When formulating the new definition, consideration was given to the crime categories included in the previous VRU in particular the 'narrow definition', the police definition of Serious Violence, partners common understanding of Serious Violence, recent analysis and community surveys. This was discussed in a focus group and was consulted on with strategic partners.

It has been agreed that a specific focus on Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) will not be included at this time due to there being robust strategic focus and governance on these violent crime types across the HIPS area, including the Hampshire and Isle of Wight VAWG Task Group⁶, Portsmouth Domestic Abuse Strategy⁷ and Southampton Domestic Abuse and VAWG Strategy⁸. Furthermore, this is in line with the primary VRU focus being on violence involving under 25s in public places. The SVRP will review the definition in a year following production of the first Serious Violence Duty SNA to ensure that it adequately captures the spectrum of violence locally.

Serious Violence Definition:

- The Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton Violence Reduction Unit aims to reduce violence across the two counties with a focus on crimes of particular concern including 'Most Serious Violence', robbery, possession of weapon, violent disorder, riot and any violence with injury where a bladed instrument was used.

⁵ Crime codes included in the definition:

- MSV – Existing Definition (1a and 1b where it is GBH and above incl. death by dangerous driving)
- Robbery (3a and 3b)
- Possession of Weapon Offences (7)
- Public Order (Violent Disorder [65] and Riot [64/1] only)
- Any Violence with Injury (1b) not included under MSV where a bladed implement was used.

⁶ The Hampshire and Isle of Wight VAWG Task Group & VAWG consultation: [Annual Report - 2022 \(hampshire-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/annual-report-2022)

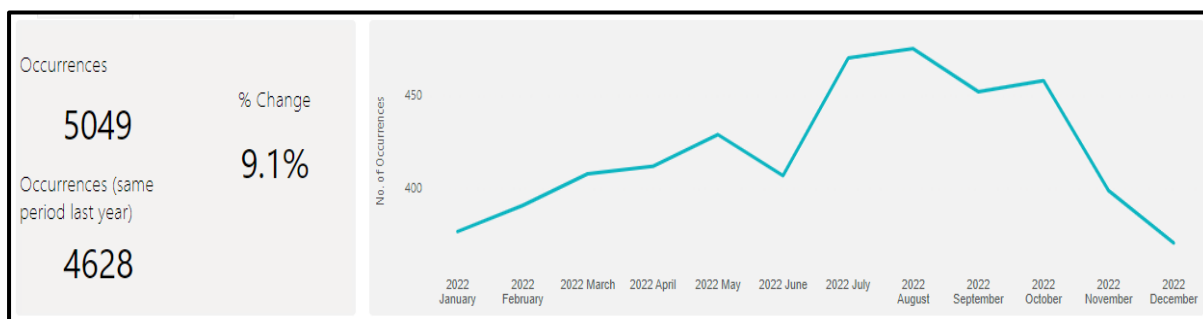
⁷ [Domestic-Abuse-Strategy-2020-to-2023-4.pdf \(saferportsmouth.org.uk\)](https://www.saferportsmouth.org.uk/domestic-abuse-strategy-2020-to-2023-4.pdf)

⁸ [Southampton Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2028](https://www.southampton.gov.uk/media/10000/2023-2028-strategy-for-domestic-abuse-and-violence-against-women-and-girls.pdf)

What has happened in the last year?

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates for the year ending September 2022, adults aged 16 years and over experienced 9.1 million offences. This was a statistically significant decrease (-10%) compared with the year ending March 2020 survey data. This was predominantly because theft offences decreased by 20% (from 3.3 million to 2.6 million offences). Police recorded crime in England and Wales in the year ending September 2022 exceeded pre-coronavirus pandemic levels. The 6.6 million crimes recorded were 10% higher compared with the year ending March 2020 (6.1 million offences). This overall increase was largely driven by increases in the offence categories, which are most subject to changes in reporting and recording practices. Therefore, these estimates should be treated with caution as they may not reflect a genuine increase in crime⁹.

Within Hampshire there have been 175,728 offences recorded throughout 2022 which is an 8.2% increase (+13,388) compared to 2021, this increase is in line with Police recorded crime nationally¹⁰. There have been 5049 Serious Violence offences recorded within Hampshire during 2022, an increase of 9.1% (+421) offences for the same twelve month period in 2021¹¹. The increase throughout 2022 is likely due to the lockdown periods which were still being implemented throughout the first half of 2021¹².



When looking specifically at Serious Violence (including knife enabled and homicide) offences where the victim was recorded as aged under 25 years, there were 1348 offences in 2022 across the HIPS area compared to 1310 offences in 2021 – an increase of 3% (+38 offences). Seasonal peaks clearly correlate with the school holiday periods in July and August, with the most offences recorded in July (143 offences). There has been a 6.2% decrease in offences (-26 offences) when specifically considering non-domestic Serious Violence (including homicides) involving a bladed-instrument where the victim was recorded as under 25 years¹³.

⁹ [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

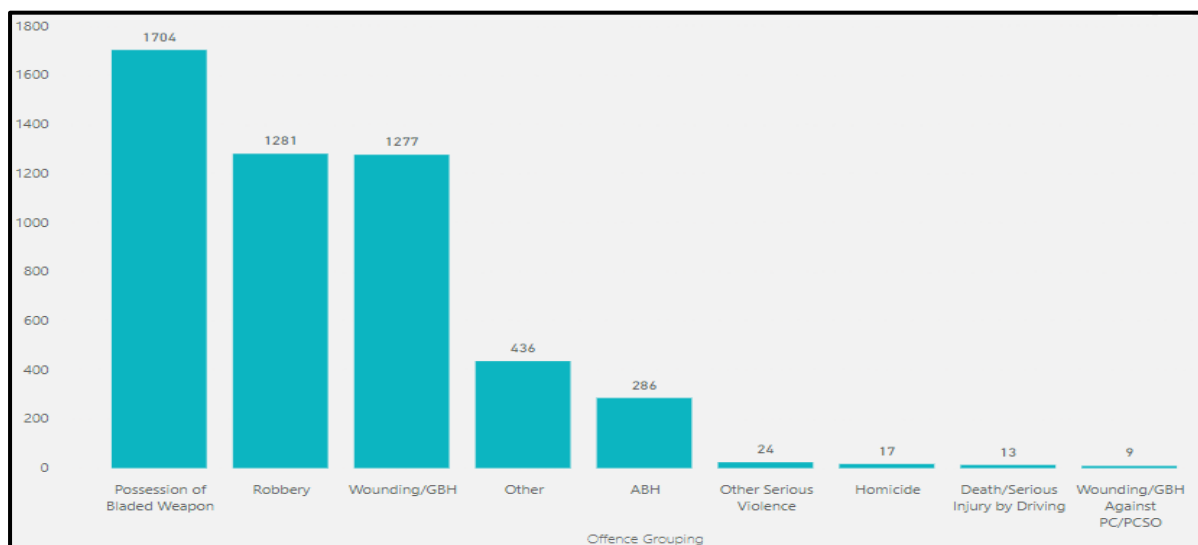
¹⁰ General Crime Summary, Power BI, March 2023.

¹¹ Serious Violence Dashboard, Power BI, February 2023.

¹² [2 Years of COVID-19 on GOV.UK - Government Digital Service \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://blog.gov.uk)

¹³ Serious Violence Dashboard, Power BI, March 2023.

Possession of bladed weapon accounts for 33.7% (1704) of recorded Serious Violence offences.



Across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton the rate of juvenile First Time Entrants (FTE) to the criminal justice system is higher than the England average of 146.9 per 100,000 of the 10-17 year old population¹⁴. Of these four areas Portsmouth has the highest rate at 286.7 per 100,000 of the 10-17 year old population¹⁵ and the FTE rate has increased in Portsmouth despite comparator areas recording a decrease¹⁶. The Isle of Wight had the second highest rate in the South East region at 238.5 per 100,000 of the 10-17 year old population¹⁷.

The financial cost of violence on society is extremely high. The most up to date estimates of total costs of crime against individuals in England and Wales are for 2015/2016 and are approximately £50bn¹⁸. Due to the high physical and emotional costs to the victims of violence offences, violent crimes make up the largest proportion of the total costs of individual crime, almost three quarters, but only one third of the actual number of crimes.

Key Findings:

- There has been a 9.1% increase in Serious Violence from 2021 to 2022.
- The most Serious Violence occurs throughout the months of July and August.
- There has been a 6.2% decrease in non-domestic Serious Violence (including homicides) involving a bladed-instrument where the victim was recorded as under 25 years.
- Possession of bladed instrument accounts for a third of recorded Serious Violence.
- Across the whole of the HIPS area the rate of FTEs is higher than the England average with Portsmouth recording the highest rate in the HIPS area.
- The cost of violent crime on society is extremely high.

¹⁴ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles>

¹⁵ [Child and Maternal Health - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles)

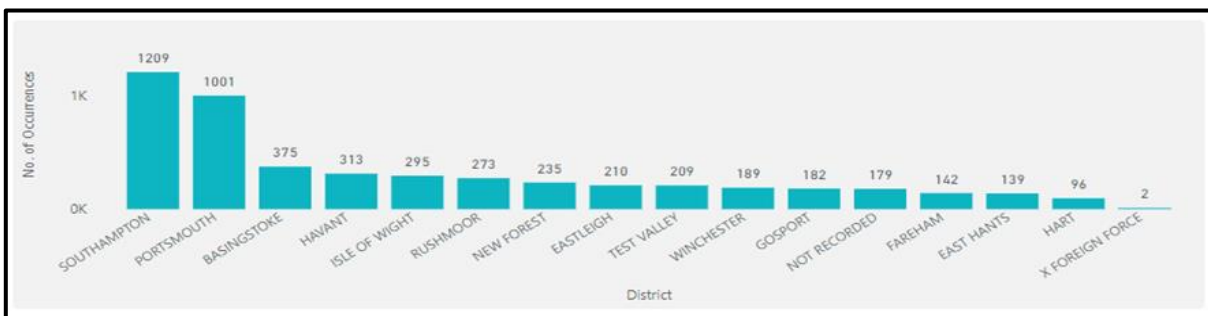
¹⁶ Portsmouth VRU: Problem Profile of Serious Violence, October 2022

¹⁷ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles>

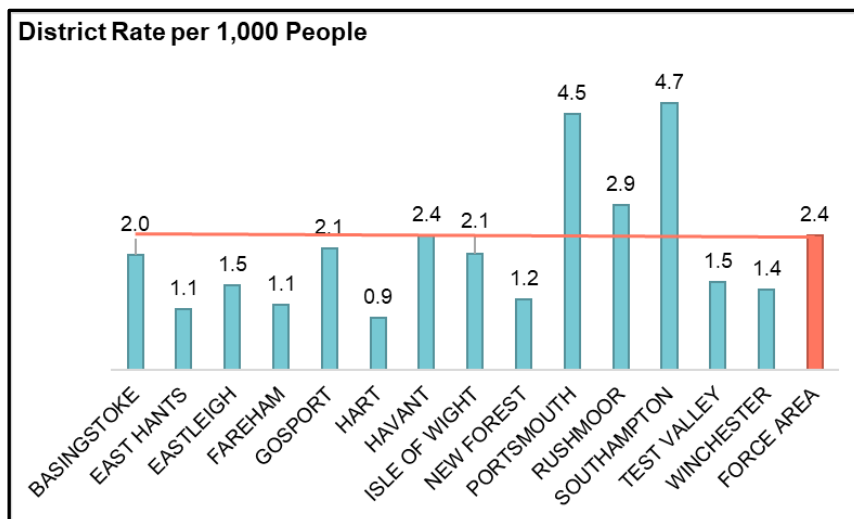
¹⁸ Home Office. (2018). [The economic and social costs of crime \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728222/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-2018.pdf)

Where is Serious Violence happening?

Within the HIPS area Serious Violence is predominantly occurring in the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth accounting for 43.7% (2210) of all Serious Violence offences across the HIPS area¹⁹. These findings are expected given that Southampton and Portsmouth have the largest populations out of the eleven districts and three unitary authorities across the county of Hampshire. Furthermore, both have an urban population of 100% with direct transport links to London and with International ferry ports²⁰.



When taking into consideration Serious Violence in relation to population size per District for 2022, Southampton and Portsmouth have the highest rates of occurrences across the HIPS area. Rushmoor district also has a higher rate than the force average with Havant having the same rate as the force average²¹.



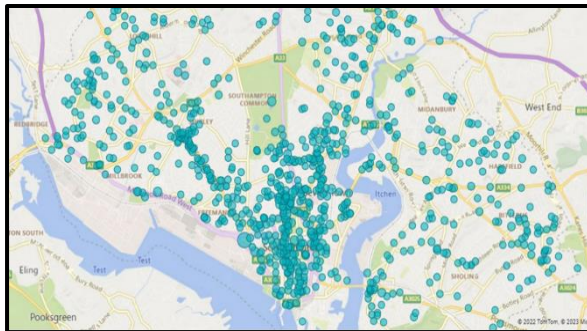
¹⁹ Serious Violence Dashboard, Power BI, February 2023.

²⁰ <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/population/Factsheet-HampshirePortsmouthSouthampton.pdf>.

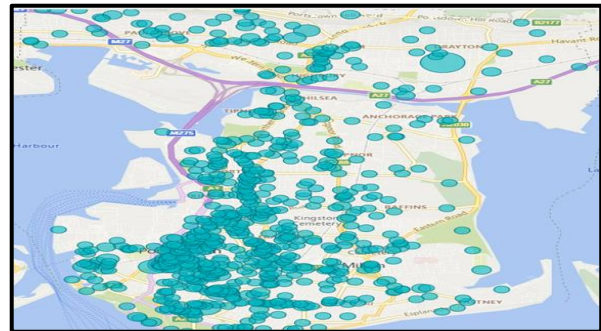
²¹ Serious Violence Dashboard, Power BI, January 2023.

When considering the four districts with Serious Violence rates equal to or higher than the force average, in Southampton, hotspots are seen around Bedford Place/Above Bar Street, Shirley High Street and St Mary's. In Portsmouth, hotspots are seen around Guildhall Walk/Commercial Road, Palmerston Road, Gunwharf Quays and Cosham. In Rushmoor these are in Aldershot & Farnborough town centres and in Havant they are Havant Greywell, Havant Park and Waterlooville Town Centre.

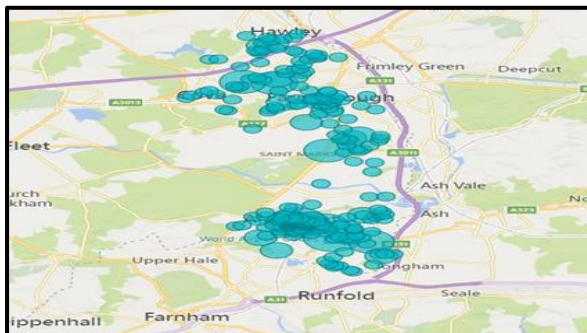
Southampton



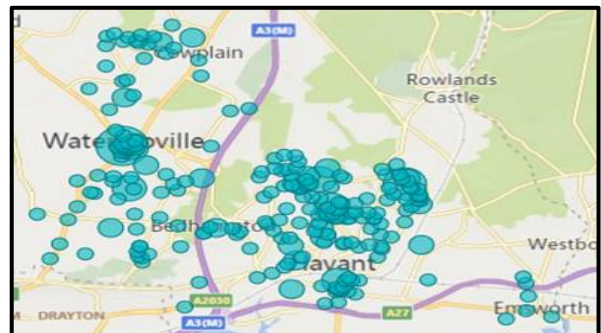
Portsmouth



Rushmoor



Havant



In 2022 serious violence hotspot locations were identified across the HIPS area in line with the Home Office GRIP funding. The hotspots receive frequent high visibility patrols as part of an evidence based approach to reducing crime²². In addition, a Problem Orientated Policing approach has been adopted to tackle the underlying long term issues surrounding the hotspot locations. The hotspot locations have been reviewed in March 2023 with additional weighting being given to offences meeting the new Serious Violence definition. These new locations come into force from April 2023 and will increase the number of current hotspot across the HIPS area from 14 to 19²³.

Key Findings:

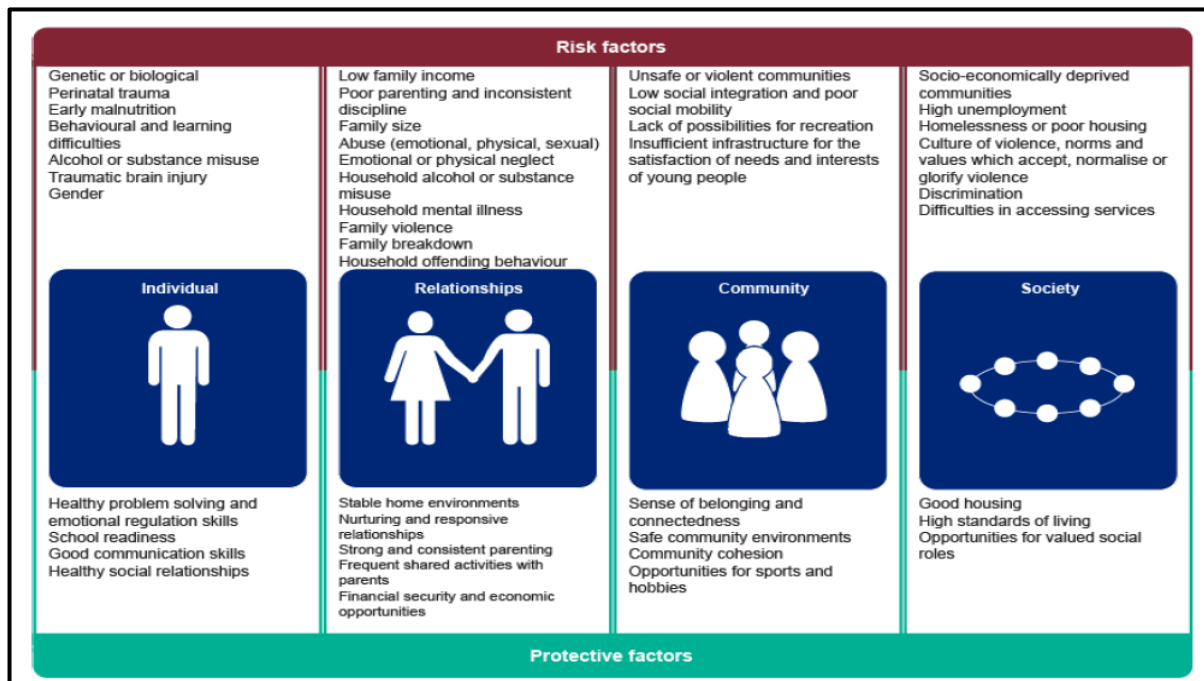
- 43.7% of Serious Violence is occurring within Southampton and Portsmouth.
- Southampton, Portsmouth, Rushmoor and Havant have the highest rates of Serious Violence offences in relation to population size.
- Nineteen hotspot locations across the HIPS area have been identified as part of the Home Office GRIP funding and receive frequent high visibility patrols.

²² Research has shown that one 15 minute patrol in a hotspot locations every other day can reduce crime by up to 80%.

²³ Op Sentinel Hotspot Review (2023).

Why might Serious Violence be happening?

Research suggests a range of risk factors that make an individual more likely to become involved in violence, as an offender or victim²⁴. It should be noted that although these factors increase risk, they are not deterministic. Additionally, other factors protect against involvement²⁵.



The VRU 342 Offenders project supported the link between risk factors and knife crime and demonstrated this correlation within a cohort of Hampshire offenders. Bladed weapon enabled offences where the victim or offender was under 25 years were considered (throughout 12 months in 2018-2019). All offences occurred within Hampshire and the majority of offenders were Hampshire residents. High percentages of offenders had experienced abuse, neglect and household dysfunction. Key findings included; 62% had a history of substance misuse, 40% had a history or mental health issues, 35% had a family history of substance misuse, 68% experienced domestic abuse in some way either as a witness (28%), victim (10%) or perpetrator (30%), 36% were subject to a Child Abuse Referral, 75% had been a previous victim of crime with the average of first victimisation being 14 years and 23% had a known family member incarcerated. The study also gave an insight into previous offending and management. Key findings included; 57% had committed at least one previous offence with 17 years being the average age of first arrest but 15 years the most common age, the majority of first arrests were for assault (27%), followed by possession of offensive weapon (11%) with 64% having no prior links to a weapon, 67% were not currently managed by youth or adult services and of those being managed, 57% were repeat offenders.

²⁴ [Home Office – Serious Violence Strategy, April 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682122/home-office-serious-violence-strategy-2018.pdf)

²⁵ Public Health England, (2019).

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)²⁶ is the official and most widely used measure of deprivation, measuring deprivation through a broad range of aspect of living conditions. Patterns of deprivation across and between local authorities can be complex, with deprivation concentrated in pockets and evenly spread in other areas. Similarly, there will be variation in population and geographical area. As such, the summaries at this level are less informative than a lower level focus. Overlaying deprivation at the local authority district level gives some insight into a potential driver of violence in key areas.

The areas highlighted below are those with above average levels of violence. When considering each summary measure of deprivation these highlighted areas appear to have higher levels of deprivation than the remainder of the HIPS areas. Basingstoke & Deane and Rushmoor is an exception, however higher crime levels here may be linked to County Lines activity facilitated by strong transport links and proximity to London. Within the 342 Offenders study a minority of offenders lived outside of Hampshire. Those offenders who travelled to Hampshire from London or Kent primarily offended in Basingstoke (48% of their offences) which may reflect the County Lines connection between London and Basingstoke. In summary, we can conclude that there is a correlation between deprivation levels and higher levels of serious violence.

IMD for Hampshire Districts²⁷

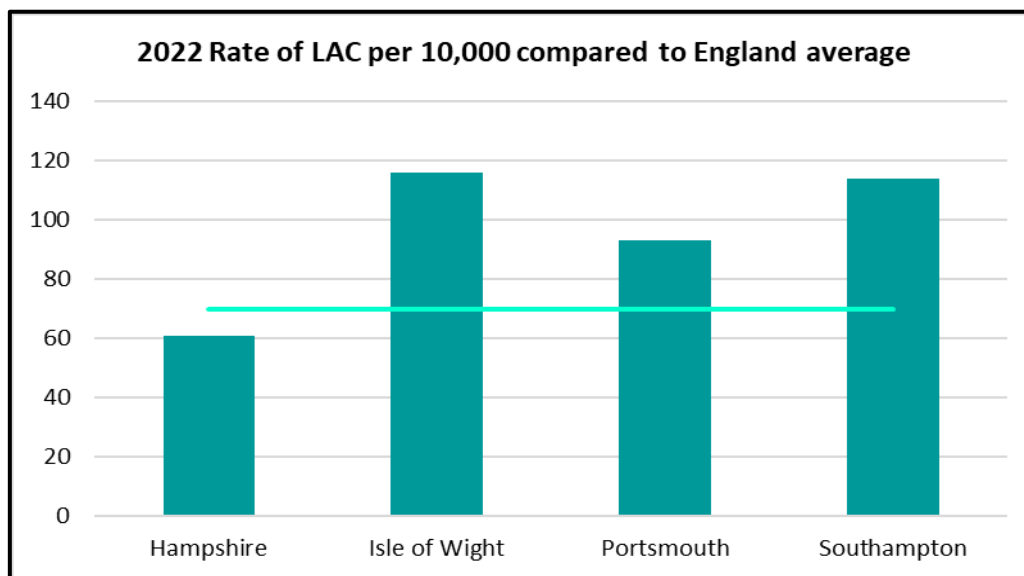
Local Authority	LA Rank (total 317)	LA Score	Proportion of LSOA in first decile: Rank ²⁸
Basingstoke and Deane	246	243	195**
East Hampshire	285	285	195*
Eastleigh	288	287	195*
Fareham	298	298	195*
Gosport	130	133	167
Hart	317	317	195*
Havant	133	119	99
Isle of Wight	80	98	143
New Forest	241	240	195*
Portsmouth	57	59	72
Rushmoor	196	193	195*
Southampton	55	61	68
Test Valley	262	261	195*
Winchester	293	292	195*

²⁶ [English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

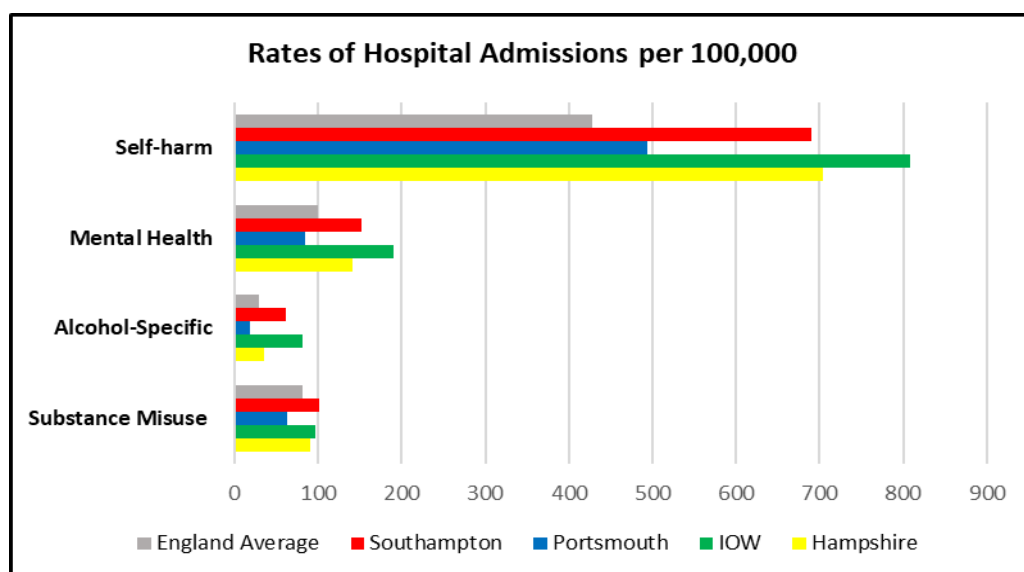
²⁷ For explanation of each summary measure included in the table see: [The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk). Note: the most deprived Local Authority District in England is ranked 1 and larger ranks correspond to lower levels of deprivation.

²⁸ *Local Authority Districts with no Lower-layer Super Output Areas in the most deprived 10 per cent (first decile) nationally receive a score of zero, and a joint rank of 195.

Emotional, physical and sexual abuse are some of the reasons why children may become Looked After Children (LAC) and are an evidenced risk factors for why an individual may become involved in, or the victim of, violence. The HIPS area has some of the highest numbers of (LAC) within the South East area. Only Hampshire has a lower rate than the England average value per 10,000 with the Isle of Wight and Southampton experiencing considerably higher rates²⁹.



Alcohol, substance misuse and poor mental health are also risk factors that make an individual more likely to become involved in violence. Taking an average across the HIPS area, hospital admissions for substance misuse (15-24 years), alcohol-specific conditions (under 18s), mental health conditions (under 18s) and as a result of self-harm (10-24 years) are all far higher than the England average³⁰. Of note, the Isle of Wight has particularly high levels of hospital admissions for self-harm and mental health conditions in young people compared to the England average and other HIPS areas.

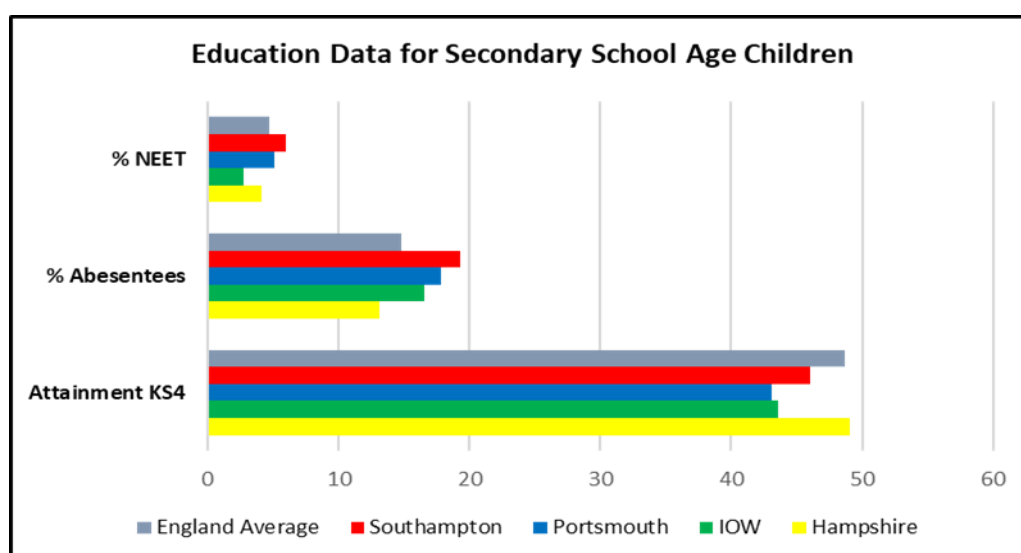


²⁹ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles>

³⁰ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles>

Recent data for young people presenting at A&E demonstrated that self-harm and mental health difficulties are some of the most common presenting issues. Southampton saw increased presentation of young people with escalated mental health support needs or who had self-harmed, taken an overdose or attempted suicide due to reaching crisis point. In Portsmouth, self-harm, overdose and suicidal ideation accounted for around 75% of young people in the Emergency Department at that time. In Winchester and Basingstoke, overdose and disordered eating remained the highest presentations³¹.

Learning difficulties, inconsistent parental discipline and high unemployment levels are also risk factors that make an individual more likely to become involved in violence. Taking an average across the HIPS area Key Stage 4 attainment levels and persistent absenteeism from secondary school are lower than the England average and in the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton the rate of 16 – 17 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEET) are above the England average³².



Key Findings:

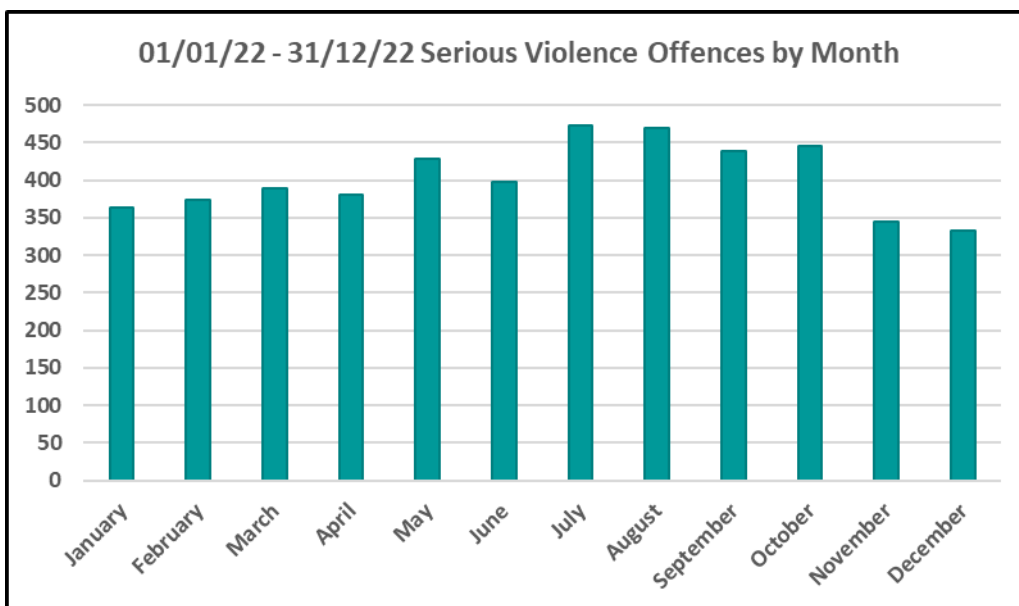
- Analysis of 342 offenders who committed a bladed weapon enabled offence in Hampshire showed high levels of past abuse, neglect and household dysfunction.
- There is a correlation between deprivation levels and higher levels of serious violence.
- Southampton and the Isle of Wight have higher numbers of Looked After Children compared to the England and regional average.
- The Isle of Wight has particularly high levels of hospital admissions for self-harm and mental health conditions in young people compared to the England average and other HIPS areas.
- In Portsmouth and Southampton secondary school age children have a lower than average GCSE attainment rate, as well as higher levels of absenteeism and 16-17 years olds not in employment, education or training.

³¹ VRU Monitoring Report (No Limits), January 2023

³² <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles/data>

When might Serious Violence be happening?

For the period 01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022 more Serious Violence offences took place in the months of July (473) and August (489) correlating with the main school summer holiday period in Hampshire.



When considering the whole of the HIPS area the peak days for Serious Violence offences is on Friday, Saturday and Sunday with an increase in offences taking place from 14:00 – 00:00 hours. Specifically the highest number of recorded Serious Violence offences took place on a Saturday between 23:00 – 00:00 hours and is likely to be linked to the Night Time Economy³³.

Weekday Name	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Total
Monday	18	26	21	9	8	5	8	5	15	10	28	28	26	30	33	45	35	40	48	38	44	36	40	36	632
Tuesday	19	20	18	15	17	7	5	5	7	9	31	26	26	28	35	35	31	51	35	41	25	37	32	28	583
Wednesday	33	19	14	17	8	8	7	7	14	16	20	26	35	17	34	59	46	41	45	26	39	37	48	38	654
Thursday	30	18	16	15	6	12	9	9	12	19	21	30	29	31	41	44	36	43	49	34	43	38	31	25	641
Friday	31	20	20	10	17	9	8	12	11	18	22	27	31	30	42	47	44	35	46	42	37	55	49	65	728
Saturday	48	44	31	38	23	26	16	17	11	23	22	35	30	35	36	33	54	51	46	47	46	44	53	68	877
Sunday	47	41	36	29	25	14	13	5	12	10	21	19	26	25	41	33	52	44	41	36	33	38	50	28	719
Total	226	188	156	133	104	81	66	60	82	105	165	191	203	196	262	296	298	305	310	264	267	285	303	288	4834

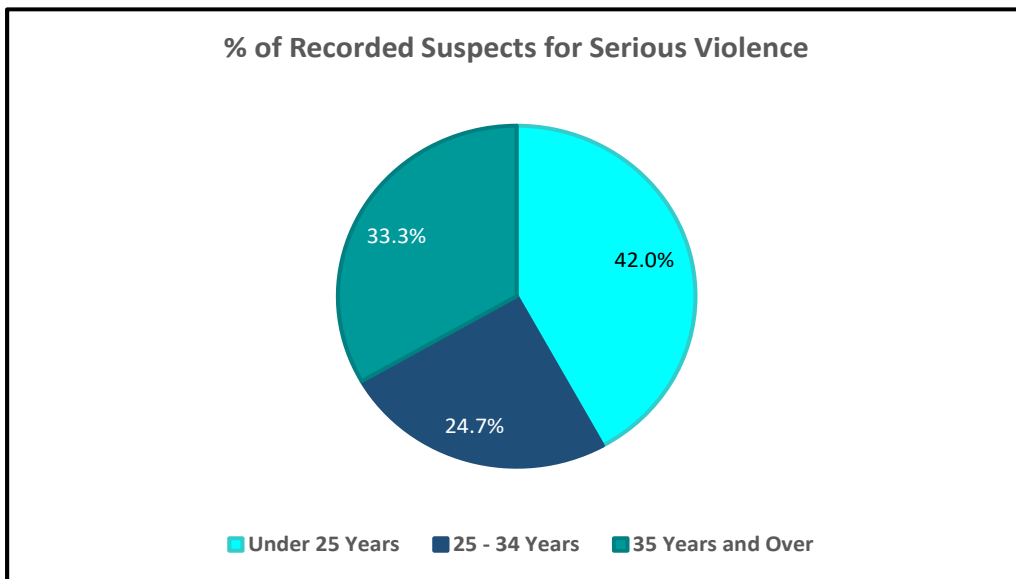
Key Findings:

- Serious Violence is primarily occurring in the months of July and August.
- More Serious Violence offences occur on Friday, Saturday and Sunday with an increase in offences taking place from 14:00 – 00:00 hours

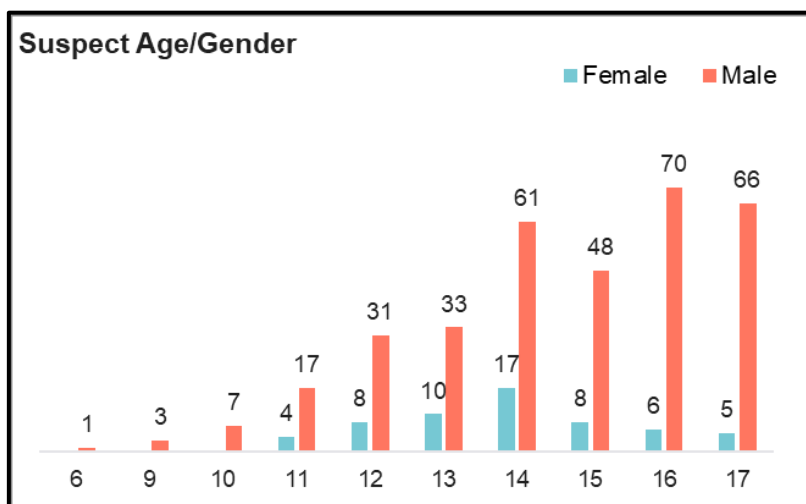
³³ Serious Violence Dashboard, Power BI, March 2023

Who is committing Serious Violence?

For the period 01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022, in 42% (1576) of Serious Violence offences the suspect was recorded as being under the age of 25 years. In 24.7% (924) of Serious Violence offences the suspect was recorded as being between 25 – 34 years and in 33.3% aged 35 years or over³⁴.



When specifically considering young people and knife crime for the period 01/12/2022 – 31/12/2022, 85% (337) of suspects were male with 16 – 17 year olds making up 38% (147) of young suspects³⁵.

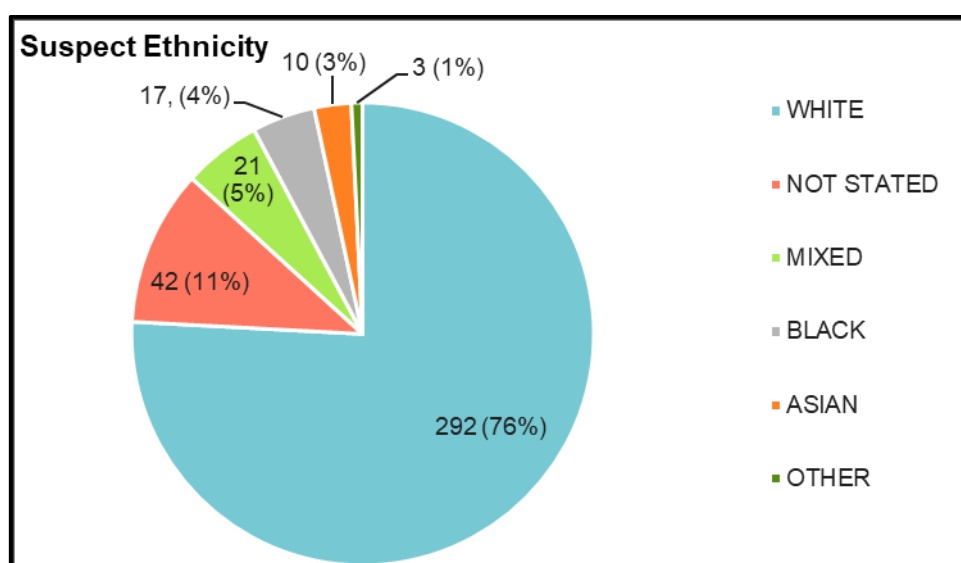


³⁴ Serious Violence Dashboard, Power BI, March 2023

³⁵ Young People and Knife Crime, ITD Organisational Analysis, March 2023

The majority of suspects for these knife crimes, where ethnicity is recorded, are White. Ethnicity is self-defined but where not stated, officer defined ethnicity is recorded and therefore there can be data inconsistencies with multiple different ethnicities recorded for the same person. Where this is the case, the most commonly selected ethnicity is used, as such recording of ethnicity is imperfect but this methodology reduces the number of ‘not stated’ entries to improve analysis.

When considering disproportionality, Black people are 3.6 times more likely to be a suspect in knife related offences than White people and individuals from a mixed ethnicity are 3.1 times more likely. Asian people are less likely to be a suspect than White people. Police disproportionality data has been calculated using 2021 Census data³⁶.



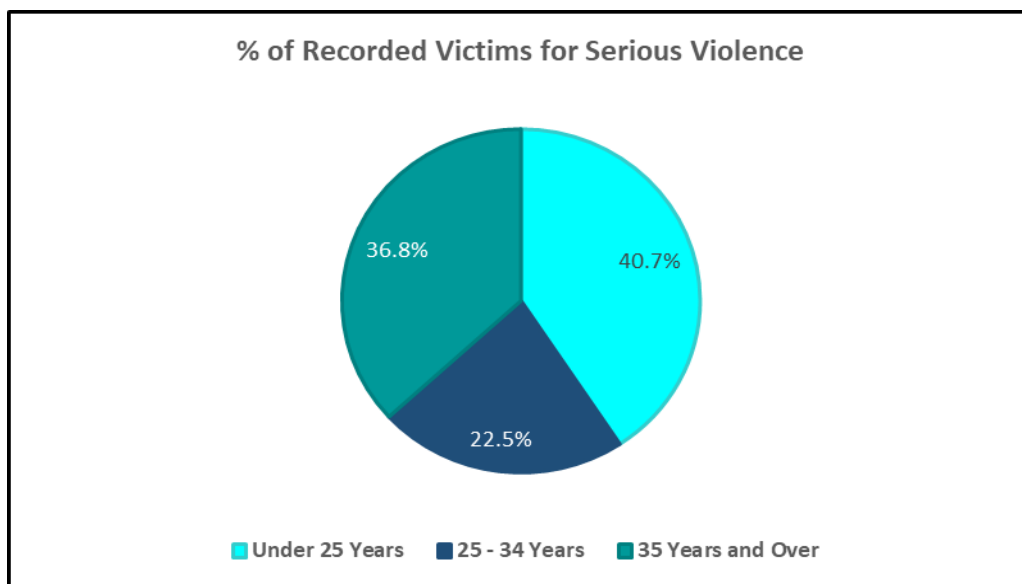
Key Findings:

- 42% of Serious Violence suspects are recorded as being under 25 years.
- Young people carrying knives are most likely to be male and aged 16 – 17 years.
- Black people are 3.6 times more likely to be a suspect in knife related offences than White people with individuals from a mixed ethnicity, 3.1 times more likely to be a suspect.

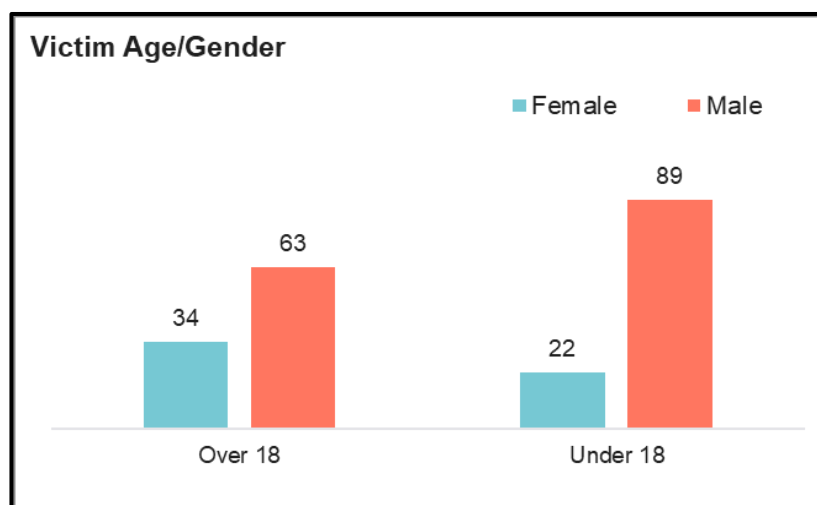
³⁶ Young People and Knife Crime, ITD Organisational Analysis, March 2023

Who are victims of Serious Violence?

For the period 01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022, in 40.7% (1352) of Serious Violence offences the victim was recorded as being under the age of 25 years. In 22.5% (748) of Serious Violence offences the victim was recorded as being between 25 – 34 years and in 36.8% aged 35 years or over³⁷.



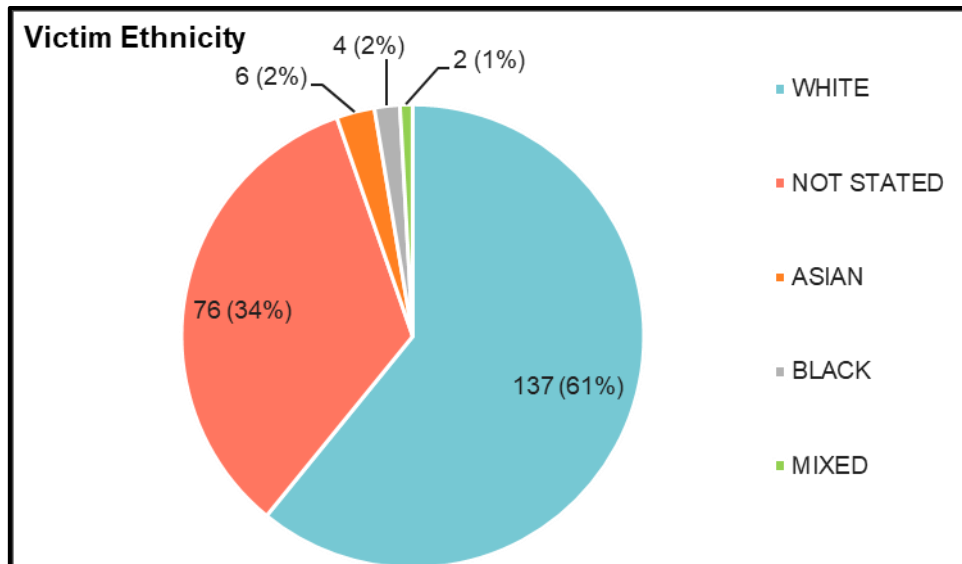
When specifically considering young people and knife crime for the period 01/12/2022 – 31/12/2022 where a victim was recorded, 73% (152) were male and 53% (111) under 18 years. This excludes where the state was recorded as the victim or the victims' details are unknown³⁸.



³⁷ Serious Violence Dashboard, Power BI, March 2023

³⁸ Young People and Knife Crime, ITD Organisational Analysis, March 2023

The majority of victims for these knife crimes, where ethnicity is recorded, are White. However, when consider disproportionality, Black people are 1.8 times more likely to be a victim of knife related offences than White people. Individuals from an Asian and mixed ethnicity are less likely to become a victim. Police disproportionality data has been calculated using 2021 Census data ³⁹.



Key Findings:

- 40.7% of recorded Serious Violence victims are under 25 years.
- The victims of young people carrying knives are most likely male and under 18 years.
- Black people are 1.8 times more likely to be a victim of knife related offences than White people.

³⁹ Young People and Knife Crime, ITD Organisational Analysis, March 2023

What are our communities telling us?

Community surveys have been delivered across the HIPS footprint via a range of organisations and approaches. These have captured views on a variety of topics relating to violence, knife crime, policing and potential crime reduction initiatives. The VRU have reviewed the results to extract the following key findings⁴⁰:

Experiences of violence:

Although the majority of respondents across HIPS have not experienced violence, it is important to recognise the proportions who have, as captured through responses to the statement 'you or someone you know has been victim of violence in past 2 years'; 6% have personally experienced violence, 13% know someone who has experienced violence, 67% have not experienced violence or do not know someone who has and 6% prefer not to say.

Experiences of knife crime:

Reports of experiences of knife crime differed across surveys, possibly reflecting the differing experiences of varied cohorts reached across contexts in Portsmouth; 95% of the wider community have not experienced or witnessed knife crime, 10% of the wider community have seen someone carrying a weapon, primarily knives (80%), 63% of parent / carers have not experienced or witnessed knife crime, 18% of parent / carers have witnessed knife crime and 83% of young people have not experienced a knife crime in the last 12 months.

Beliefs and prioritisation of violence and knife crime:

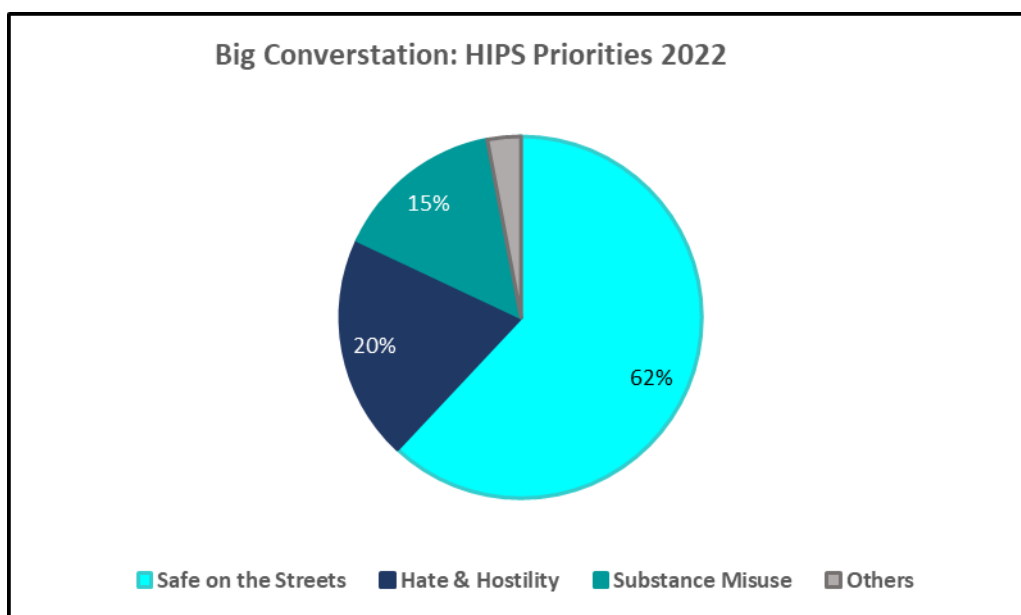
46% Portsmouth residents of all ages, feel that knife crime is an issue in their area. 86% of parents and a third of young people believe knife crime has increased. Beliefs about knife crime were primarily driven by reports in the news and from others.

Although the fear of crime has reduced overall, violent crimes, such as Robbery and Assault, are the most feared and this has increased since 2014. However, fear of victimisation substantially exceeds the proportions who are victimised; 15% of participants were worried about 'being mugged/robbed', while 1.5% reported having been a victim of robbery in the previous twelve months. The opposite is true for less feared crimes. Despite this fear of violence and the high levels of offences within Hampshire cities, Southampton residents of all ages did not perceive violence as a top community safety issue, consistent with 2020/21. Additionally, some violence-related issues were viewed as less significant than in the previous year (Domestic Abuse (-6%) and Sexual Assault (-4%)).

⁴⁰ VRU Community Engagement Review, February 2023

Young peoples' priorities:

Crucially, the low prioritisation of violence by the wider community is not in line with the views of young people across the HIPS area. 'Safe on the streets' was the top priority for 62% of young people in the 2022 survey. They mentioned violence, knives and sexual violence in their thoughts about this priority. Personal experience, witnessing an incident and the issue being present in the local area were cited more frequently than for the second and third priorities. Serious violence was a 2021 priority and addressing knife crime was selected as 'top three' priority in 2018 and 2019 and raised in qualitative responses in 2022.



Substance misuse was also a priority for young people across HIPS in 2022 (15%). Amongst all ages in Southampton, dealing or using drugs was seen as the second biggest community safety issue (64%) and was one of the most commonly experienced crimes, as was alcohol related crime.

Amongst young people in Southampton (2018 & 2019) mental health was a top priority, reflecting national views. This year, health and wellbeing was a priority and aspirations for the future of Southampton involved factors relating to wellbeing, including green spaces, less pollution and a cleaner environment. Just over half of young respondents were happy about their mental health. Other risk factors for violence were of concern for young people in Southampton who selected jobs, money, homes, opportunities, education and learning.

Trust in Police:

High profile cases and media reports suggest that trust and confidence in police has decreased nationally. This is supported locally by the community voice, with a focus on Hampshire's two large cities. In Southampton across all age groups, a minority (13%) agreed that police and other local public services were successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour, with 63% disagreeing. This followed a consistent decline since 2019. Amongst young people, greater trust was seen in police, with 54% stating that they can trust police to keep them safe always, 34% sometimes and

12% never. It should be noted that as the age of the young people increased, trust decreased. The most common reason for lack of trust was 'do not feel like anything will be done / help is not given'. Less commonly, was 'not feeling listened to'. HIPS results of a YouGov survey for Jan-Nov 2022 demonstrate that an average of 62% of residents stated that they trust local police. This follows a decline: 2019 at 67%, 2020 at 66% and 2021 at 65%. However, this pattern is not consistent across all districts⁴¹.

Crime reporting:

Amongst all age groups in Southampton, over half of respondents did not report incidents when witnessed or experienced, including for high harm offences (sexual assault was not reported by 73%). There was a significant decline in reporting from the previous year. In line with decreasing confidence, the most common reason for not reporting (55%) was that 'reporting makes no difference'. Whereas 19% had a disappointing previous experience of reporting.

In Portsmouth, less than half of respondents who were recent victims of crime reported this to police and 58% reported to an agency (including police). The most common reason for not reporting was that they thought the police would not do anything. These findings demonstrate a significant lack of confidence in the police across the areas of Hampshire experiencing the most violence.

Crime reduction:

Frequently suggested initiatives to reduce crime include:

- Education
- Harsher sanctions
- Increased activities for young people
- Increased police presence
- Increased funding for safety resources

Key Findings:

- In Portsmouth residents feel that knife crime is an increasing issue and violent crimes are the most feared crime type.
- In Southampton, whilst violence is not a top community safety issue across the wider community, it continues to be a priority for young people across the HIPS area.
- Substance misuse, mental health and wellbeing are priorities for young people.
- Areas with high crime levels, such as Southampton and Portsmouth, have low levels of confidence in the police.
- In Southampton and Portsmouth the majority of victims and witnesses did not report crimes, believing nothing would be done.

⁴¹ Interact, March 2022

What are the emerging issues?

The *Serious Violence Duty*, which is encompassed in the Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, is part of the Government's broad approach to preventing and reducing Serious Violence. The key strands are a multi-agency, public health approach to understanding the drivers and impacts of serious violence, and a focus on prevention and early intervention. Under the new Duty, local partnerships will be required to produce an evidence based Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) to identify current and long-term issues in relation to Serious Violence and to understand emerging trends. The SNA requires data from a wide range of partners including Health, Education and Prisons. The Duty also requires an annual Serious Violence Strategy to be produced by the local partnership which identifies the causes of Serious Violence in that area and details a range of new and existing actions to prevent and reduce Serious Violence. The Duty may facilitate greater involvement from partners who now have a statutory duty as a specified authority and act as an enabler to ensuring there is a co-ordinated public-health response to tackling Serious Violence across Hampshire⁴².

The relationship between *social media and violence amongst young people* is complex and multi-layered⁴³. There are emerging cases of violence and sexual violence taking place in the Metaverse or virtual reality spaces⁴⁴. This is also linked to increasing misogynistic attitudes online, including those being expressed on forums by incels⁴⁵. The introduction of the Online Safety Bill⁴⁶ should have a significant impact on the safety of young people online by making social media companies more responsible for users' safety whilst on their platforms.

The *cost of living crisis* disproportionately impacts poorer households with the increase in energy prices and growing inflation leaving little or no disposable income. Linked to this, absolute poverty is predicted to increase to 22% as a result of increasing energy bills⁴⁷. The majority of those paid below the Real Living Wage consider the cost of living crisis to be the worst financial period they have ever faced⁴⁸. Increased poverty levels may link to an increase in criminal activity because of the perceived financial rewards: the more people living in absolute poverty, the more people are likely to consider these rewards attractive. However, it is too early to fully understand the impact of the cost of living crisis on serious violence.

⁴² [Serious Violence Duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/serious-violence-duty)

⁴³ <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/7973/social-media-and-violence-briefing-note.pdf>

⁴⁴ [Metaverse report May 2022.pdf \(eko.org\)](#)

⁴⁵ Understanding and Treating Incels, Van Brunt & Taylor, 2021.

⁴⁶ [Online Safety Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

⁴⁷ [In at the deep end • Resolution Foundation](#)

⁴⁸ <https://thecleanspace.com/cleaning-industry-news-insights/real-living-wage-cost-of-living-crisis>

What is our response to Serious Violence?

The VRU funded interventions in Hampshire fit broadly into the following categories; Primary - stopping the problem before it happens, Secondary – seeking to support people who are likely to become involved in violence before it happens, and Tertiary – dealing with offending after it has happened.

Commissioning & Delivering Interventions:

- CHOICES: Year 6 & 7 Schools Project – A social skills programme which aims to build pupils' knowledge, critical thinking and problem solving skills to empower them to make healthy decisions. It will specifically examine the risks and impact of knife crime, the dangers of exploitation and violence and will support pupils to find their own solutions, enabling them to build positive, healthy relationships and respond appropriately to potentially risky or challenging situations.
- Trauma Informed Practitioners (TIPS) – An expansion of a successful pilot which was the first of its kind in the UK. TIPS patrol with Response & Patrol Policing Teams to support trauma informed policing in situations which may be traumatic for officers, offenders and victims who may already have past traumas. TIPS will provide expert advice on scene, as well as observe and consider incidents through a trauma informed lens, providing feedback based on reflective practice. This will support officers to realise the impact of trauma, recognise the signs, respond to trauma appropriately and prevent re-traumatisation.
- A&E Navigators – This intervention aims to reach children and young people at a 'teachable/reachable moment'; these moments may act a catalyst for self-reflection, making young people more receptive to help and pursuing positive change. Specially trained youth workers support young people and NHS staff across Emergency Departments. After triage, medical staff refer young people who they feel could benefit to a youth worker.
- RESET: Custody Intervention Scheme – A custody navigator style intervention, seizing a reachable, teachable moment and offered voluntarily to 18 to 25 year olds. The aim is to divert young people from future offending and from entering the Criminal Justice System. RESET involves a strength-based needs assessment with ongoing trauma informed support in the community relevant to the young person's individual circumstances.
- Evaluation: Liverpool John Moores University – Commissioned by Hampshire VRU to evaluate the CHOICES, TIPS and A&E Navigators in line with the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF).

Multi-agency Working:

- Strategic Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) – A key development in bringing partners together to drive a consistent public health response to violence is the establishment of the SVRP Board. The SVRP replaces the 'VRU Core Group' and adds specified authorities under the PCSC Act to form a strategic partnership. The SVRP will oversee operational activity of the VRU, VRU Grant Expenditure and SVD Grant Expenditure and is an opportunity to develop common approaches and focus Specified Authorities on developing a sustainable approach to tackling violence at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels.
- Tactical Violence Reduction Partnership (TVRP) – The TVRP will lead on a problem solving partnership response and track progress on the identified people and places supported by a Serious Violence & VRU Analyst. The place-based VRU Managers will then support GRIP funded Violent Crime Task Force Officers to navigate the partnership systems to support partners to manage those at risk of violence, committing violence or communities impacted by violence.

Data Sharing & Analysis:

- VRU Analyst & Access to Police Systems – From March 2023 the VRU has a dedicated Analyst who is co-located within the Police Intelligence and Tasking Directorate (ITD). A monthly multi-agency Data & Analysis Partnership has been established to review the progress of developing key partnership data with a VRU Manager responsible for co-ordinating this work.
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight Together – the HC Executive have approved the move to adopt Thames Valley Together (TVT) as a data sharing platform in HC. There will now follow an implementation programme and a staged approach to using the platform to share police data then overlay partnership data. The first 'Hampshire & IOW Together' (H&IOWT) implementation board has met and a Terms of Reference agreed. The Strategic Violence Reduction Partnership Board has been engaged and is broadly supportive of sharing police data through the H&IOWT.

Engaging Young People & Communities:

- The VRU has conducted a review of the community engagement approach under the previous VRU model. Alongside examples of excellent engagement to capture the voice of the community there are gaps in the cohorts and locations reached⁴⁹. The VRU have worked collaboratively with Greater Manchester VRU, Portsmouth University and HIPS partners to develop a consistent set of questions that can be used by partners and collated by the VRU with the survey hosted on the VRU website. The new community engagement strategy has a focus on the most relevant cohort and a more balanced approach to geography. The more consistent approach to the questions asked in each engagement, extensive survey promotion and tracking of reach will allow the VRU to track sentiment and compare demographic groups and communities. This will influence the response strategy and inform the partnership response.

⁴⁹ VRU Community Engagement Review (2023)

What happens now?

Hampshire VRU has been through a transformation period over the past six months with the change in delivery model. This change is facilitating a true public-health approach to reducing Serious Violence through multi-agency working, understanding the problem through data analysis, engaging with communities and commissioning evidenced-based interventions.

By the end of April 2024 Hampshire VRU will produce an Annual Report which will be made publically available. During May 2024 the focus will be on using the key findings from the SNA to inform the HIPS VRU Response Strategy and articulate how interventions meet identified need.

Furthermore, the Hampshire VRU is currently producing an Evaluation Strategy and outlining the programme level Theory of Change. This will ensure that interventions are evidenced-based, are developed to meet local need as well as providing learning for future commissioning decisions.

Hampshire

