



St. Helens Council

St Helens Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2017/2020

1. Introduction

This Strategic Assessment and its contribution to the development of a strategy to address local issues of crime and disorder is a statutory requirement of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) as required by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. The legislation places a joint responsibility upon specific agencies (see below) to work together to protect their local communities from crime and to help people to feel safer.

The strengthening of partnership arrangements within St Helens saw the formation of the St Helens People's Board, which has assumed the statutory responsibilities of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). A number of agencies represented on the Board including Police, Local Authority, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services, Probation Services and the St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group will continue to work closely with the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to develop shared priorities to address crime and disorder, reduce re-offending and tackle substance misuse.

The five priorities set by the PCC in the current PCC plan, 2017-2021 are to:

- ✓ Prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.
- ✓ Provide a visible and accessible neighbourhood policing style.
- ✓ Tackle serious and organised crime.
- ✓ Support victims, protect vulnerable people and maintain public safety.
- ✓ Working with partners to improve road safety.

These priorities along with the findings of this Strategic Assessment will be evaluated and given due consideration when developing the Borough's Local Crime and Disorder Strategy, scheduled for publication in 2018.

Merseyside Police introduced their Community First model of Policing at the end of January 2017. This effectively removed existing boundaries (previously Policing areas were coterminous with Local Authority boundaries) and centralised a number of resources and departments. The impact of the changes will be ongoing for some time. Further, events in Manchester and London more recently will undoubtedly mean that the Police will need to think and work differently and that support from the community and CSP partners is as important as ever.

At a time where more and more is expected of our collective workforce, we will aim to ensure that the outcomes being delivered locally are supportive of the wider PCC objectives and to ensure that strong partnership working remains in place during a period of organisational change for many of the CSP members.

This Assessment looks at trends in various categories of crime, examining the findings of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and Police recorded crimes. It also looks at local trends using local Police recorded crime data and aims to identify key and emerging trends. Its purpose is to inform and support the development of a revised local Crime and Disorder Strategy. Although, the assessment highlights the key trends in crime in St. Helens, it is acknowledged that this is not a fully comprehensive picture. Further information at a sub-district level is available via the local information website, info4St.Helens.

2. St. Helens Profile

St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council is one of the 6 local Merseyside authorities that make up the Liverpool City Region. Situated strategically at the heart of the North West and central to the 'Northern Powerhouse,' the Borough also enjoys strong connections to Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cheshire.

There are approximately 178,000 residents in St Helens, a population that is expected to grow steadily over the next 10-20 years, although at a lesser rate than that predicted for the North West and England (Office for National Statistics Mid-year Population Estimates 2016).

Relatively high levels of deprivation and inequality exist within the Borough. St. Helens ranks as the 36th most deprived local authority in England out of 326 (IMD 2015). Nearly a quarter of all neighbourhoods within the Borough fall within the most 10% deprived of neighbourhoods nationally.

There is evidence of increasing growth within the Borough. East Merseyside, which encompasses St Helens, is one of the top performing areas in the North for economic growth with GVA increasing by 23% since the low point of the recession in 2009. Only Cheshire East has performed better. New Business Registrations also show a positive picture increasing by 75% over the last 5 years.

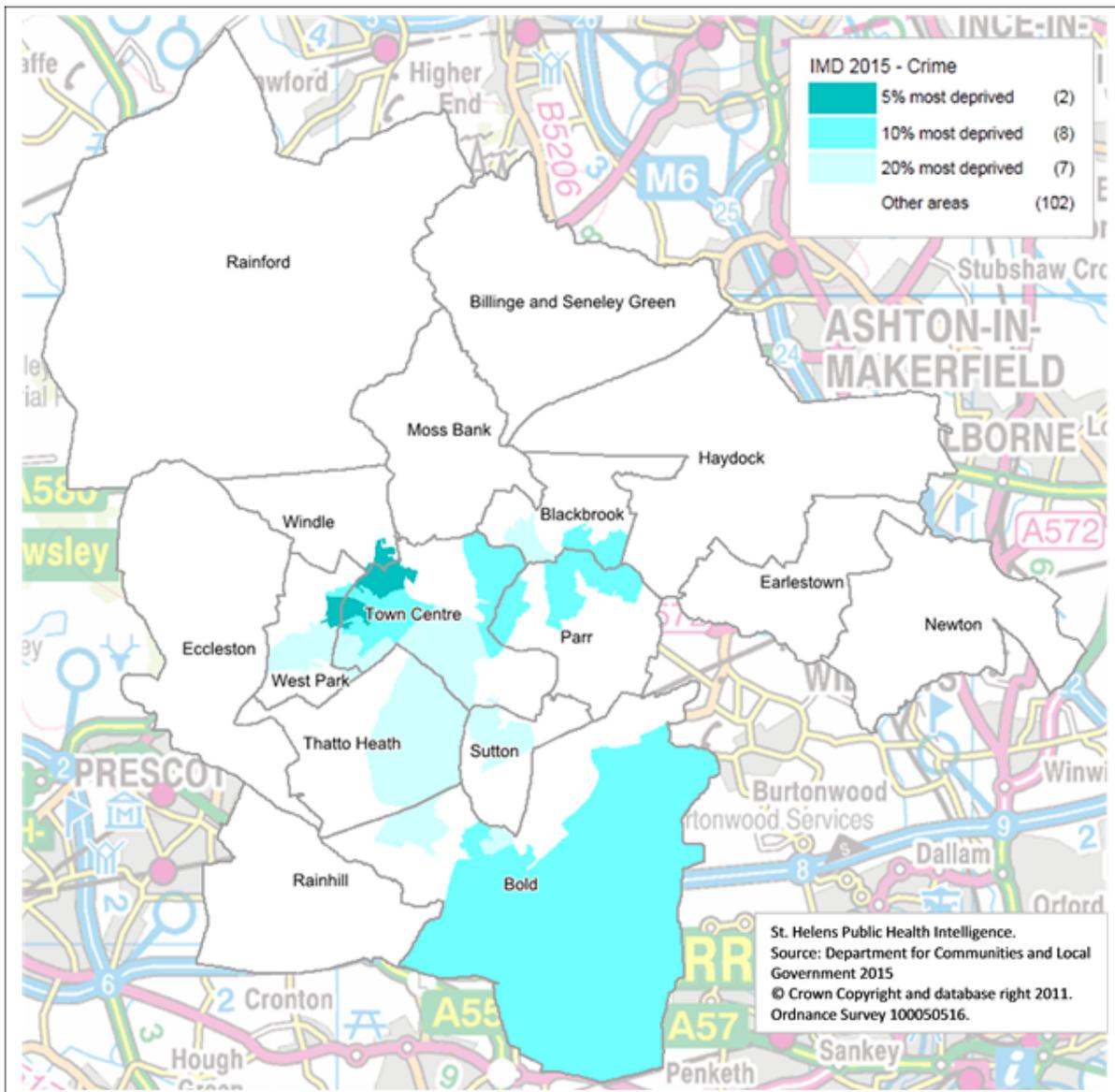
Resident's average gross weekly pay of £499 is similar to the North West average of £502, but lower than the national average of £545 (ONS 2016).

Skill levels although improving, still lag behind regional and national averages, particularly at the higher levels NVQ 3 and 4 and above.

Housing affordability is an issue within the Borough with the average house price now 5.2 times the median gross annual earnings (ONS 2016). However, affordability is good compared to many neighbouring areas. The semi-rural nature of the Borough makes it an attractive place to live.

The Crime domain within the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 based on police recorded crime rates for violence, theft, burglary and criminal damage, measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level. St Helens ranks as the 116th most deprived authority out of 326 nationally when ranking the average crime domain deprivation scores. 10 of St Helens neighbourhoods rank within the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods nationally.

The highest relative levels of crime deprivation are found in the Town Centre, Parr and Bold Wards. (see map below).



For further information on St. Helens visit <https://info4.sthelens.gov.uk/>

3. National Picture of recorded crime - Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a face to face survey which presents a range of crime statistics based on people’s experiences of a selected range of offences during a 12 month period.

Unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices, the CSEW provides a strong measure of trends over time since the survey began in 1981. The statistics produced are reliable and hold National Statistics status.

The CSEW is of particular value because it is able to find out about crimes which do not get reported to, or recorded by, the police. The survey has previously shown that only 4 in 10 crimes are reported to the police, so conducting the survey is useful in understanding all of the other crimes, which go unreported. Typically the Crime Survey records a higher number of crimes than police figures because it includes these unreported crimes, but covers a narrower range of offences than police recorded crime.

The latest CSEW figures presented in this release are based on interviews conducted between April 2016 and March 2017.

Police Recorded Crime

The latest annual police recorded crime figures relate to crimes recorded during the year ending March 2017.

Police recorded crime figures are restricted to a subset of notifiable offences that have been reported to and recorded by the police and cover a wider population and a broader set of offences than the CSEW (for example, residents of institutions, tourists and crimes against commercial bodies). However clearly it does not include crimes that do not come to the attention of the police or are not recorded by them.

Police recorded crime is not currently considered a reliable measure of trends in crime for most crime types, since it is prone to changes in recording practices and police activity, as well as changing behaviour in public reporting of crime. In 2014 police recorded crime data were found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) Official Statistics draw on two main sources to measure crime levels and trends: the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime; neither of these sources can provide a complete picture and each have different strengths and limitations.

Main findings

The police recorded almost 5 million offences in the year ending March 2017, an annual rise of 10%. **However, the large volume increases driving this trend are thought to reflect changes in recording processes and practices rather than actual crime.** At the same time it is acknowledged that there has been under-recording of crimes by the Police.

Latest figures from the CSEW show there were an estimated 5.9 million incidents of crime in the survey year ending March 2017, a decrease of 7% from the 6.3 million incidents estimated in the previous year's survey. These estimates cover crimes against the person (for example, violence or theft from the person) and against households (for example, domestic burglary or criminal damage), but exclude fraud and computer misuse offences.

The likelihood of being a victim of CSEW crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse) has fallen considerably over time; around 14 in 100 adults were victims in the latest survey year compared with around 25 in 100 a decade ago (in the survey year ending March 2007) and around 40 in 100 in 1995 (the peak survey year).

How have trends for individual crime types changed?

National Picture

The CSEW showed that most individual offence categories did not show significant changes compared with the previous year, although the 10% decrease in total theft offences was statistically significant. The latest decrease in total theft offences estimated by the CSEW reflects the long-term trend; with total theft offences now 71% lower than the peak in 1995 and at the lowest number recorded since the survey began in 1981. Locally, theft offences recorded by the Police show a mixed picture since 2014. Theft of pedal cycles and thefts from motor vehicles show reductions. Theft from the person shows a slight rise and theft – other, theft from shops and theft of motor vehicles a mixed picture.

In comparison the 10% increase in the number of police recorded crimes in the latest year was largely driven by increases in violence against the person offences (up 175,060 offences, 18%), theft offences (up 118,774 offences, 7%) and public order offences (up 78,697 offences, 39%). There were smaller increases in criminal damage and arson offences (up 5%), sexual offences (up 14%), burglary (up 3%), robbery (up 16%) and possession of weapons (up 20%).

4. Three years reported (local) crime data, St Helens

The following table shows a mixed picture, showing both increases and decreases in various crime categories. However, care should be taken in the interpretation of this data due to issues previously outlined in relation to national police recorded crime data. Recording practices aside, this does suggest that domestic burglary offences have increased over the past twelve months and the increases in reported violent crime offences largely mirrors those seen nationally.

Crime in St Helens - Financial Year (April - March)				
Crime	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	% Change (last year)
Burglary Dwelling	780	756	886	17%
Burglary Other	862	590	615	4%
Criminal Damage	2260	2224	2370	7%
Drugs	817	535	455	-15%
Other	675	670	1076	61%
Robbery Business	21	18	21	17%
Robbery Personal	63	61	66	8%
Sexual	242	258	314	22%
Theft	3930	3655	2729	-25%
Violence	2346	3095	3783	22%
Grand Total	11996	11862	12315	4%

Source- Merseyside Police

Encouragingly, the trend in respect of reporting theft offences is downwards with 926 fewer offences reported in 2016/17 than the previous year. The biggest reduction in this category is in respect of theft from motor vehicle offences reported. The impact of the Integrated Offender Management programme may be in part responsible for the reductions in this category.

The 'other' category includes possession of weapons, public order offences and miscellaneous crimes against society (offences with no direct victim). A 61% increase since 2015/16 is an example of the previously mentioned changes to Police crime recording. Offences that may not have previously been recorded are now recorded 'according to the victim's perspective at the time'. Ethical crime recording as promoted through Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary will give a more accurate picture of the state of crime over time than was previously recorded.

The 'other' category mirrors national trends, which see increases in public order offences (up 39%) and possession of weapons offences – see knife crime below (up 20%).

Further detail on reported crime in the area can be found at:

<https://info4.sthelens.gov.uk>

This next section outlines some of the key trends in crimes nationally and locally.

5. Violent Crime - National

Violent crime covers a wide range of offences including minor assaults (such as pushing and shoving), harassment and abuse (that result in no physical harm), through to wounding and homicide.

Latest violent crime figures continue to present a complex picture. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the better measure of trends in overall violent crime.

In contrast to the recent flat trend shown by the CSEW, violence against the person offences recorded by the police in the latest year increased by 18% compared with the previous year (up from 992,366 to 1,167,426).

Police recorded violent crime locally shows a 22% increase in reported offences since 2014. However, it must be emphasised that recent changes in recording practice make interpreting trends in violence against the person offences difficult. It is known that violent offences are more prone than some other offences to subjective judgement about whether or not to record a crime and these offences had the highest under-recording rates across police forces in England and Wales. Nationally, an estimated 1 in 3 (33%) reports of violence that should have been logged as crimes were not recorded as such. Due to the renewed focus on the quality of crime recording by the police, this crime series is not currently believed to provide a reliable measure of trends, owing to the ensuing efforts of police forces to tighten recording practice and improve recording processes.

Within the overall category of violence against the person, the expansion of the harassment category to include two additional offences has accounted for 4 in 10 of the recent rise in violent crime. Alongside this and improved Police recording practices, it is possible there have been small, but genuine, increases in some types of violent crime.

Locally, St. Helens violence against the person crime rate at the end of 2016/17 was the same as the Merseyside average but 4th highest rate on Merseyside, with the average being skewed by the high rates in Liverpool, but lower than the North West rate.

6. Knife Crime

Police recorded crime offences that involved a knife or sharp instrument also showed a national increase of 10% during the latest year. However, we have seen a general downward trend in this series over the longer-term and hence, the latest figures are 12% lower than in the year ending March 2011.

In the period 1st January 2017 to 11th July 2017, St Helens Police recorded 41 knife crime offences. Whilst a relatively small timescale, Police locally have raised their concerns about rises in reported knife related crimes, specifically with a number relating to offences committed by young people. In the same period last year, there were 36 recorded offences. The trend for which knives are used or feature in the offences has changed slightly too over the periods. In the period in 2016, knives were used in 13 robberies compared to 15 in 2017. Violence related offences (where injury is caused) rose over the two periods from 22 offences to 25 and whilst statistically small, the trauma and long term effects of such crimes cannot be overstated.

Other than arrests, the Police response has been to use intelligence to support deployment of resources in 'hot spot' locations. They have engaged in crime reduction type messaging and considered test purchase operations at suppliers to test challenges. These actions have been under the local 'umbrella' Operation Jinli. Police locally have also engaged in a National Campaign with varying (but not dissimilar) tactics – Operation Sceptre. Tactics included education messages in schools and using social media, test purchase operations, the deployment of knife arches and

weapon 'sweeps' in 'hot spot' areas. This activity has shown an increase in arrests in the periods described above – from 18 in 2016 to 28 in 2017 (possession of offensive weapons).

The three most recent murders in the area (December 2016 to date) all involved use of a knife. The propensity for young people to carry knives is also thought to be increasing – though there are no statistics available at this time to support this.

Health data gives a short summary of hospital data from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) related to knife injuries and cutting. This data is for St Helens CCG patients and please note that data will depend on the accuracy and completeness of coding. Left in the figures are knife-related admissions under the main group of accidents and self-harm, in case patients who had been attacked had not told the full story to hospital staff.

The CCG were asked for hospital admissions where the patient had one of the following diagnoses:

X99 Assault by sharp object

W26 Contact with knife, sword or dagger (under accidents group)

X78 Intentional self-harm by sharp object (could be that people are not honest about the cause)

W25 Contact with sharp glass (under accidents group)

Y28 Contact with sharp object, undetermined intent

St.Helens CCG admissions for knife injuries – age groups

Diagnosis	Age Group	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 *YTD
Assault by sharp object	0-20	5	4	2	4	5	2
	21-30	7	5	7	5	6	0
	31-50	9	8	7	7	4	6
	51+	2	4	1	1	2	0
	Total	23	21	17	17	17	8
Contact with knife, sword or dagger (+sharp object, undetermined intent)	0-20	1	5	1	5	12	3
	21-30	3	9	4	10	12	3
	31-50	6	10	12	5	15	2
	51+	6	6	6	4	11	4
	Total	16	30	23	24	50	12
Intentional self-harm by sharp object	0-20	34	49	71	60	57	22
	21-30	29	28	39	25	30	13
	31-50	26	45	45	45	39	7
	51+	8	5	9	15	7	9
	Total	97	127	164	145	133	51
Contact with sharp glass	0-20	11	5	9	12	8	1
	21-30	19	18	11	9	12	1
	31-50	10	6	11	7	19	4
	51+	7	3	6	2	10	4
	Total	47	32	37	30	49	10

*YTD includes data up to and including June 2017

Source: NHS St Helens CCG. Summarised by St Helens Public Health Intelligence team

As might be expected, the most common of all knife related injuries would be due to self-harm, but the diagnoses that could relate to violence from another person may be higher. Looking by year, the diagnosis of 'contact with knife sword or dagger (under accident main group)' (plus injury with sharp object with undetermined intent) was higher in 2016/17, with 50 admissions. This compares with an average of 23.2 over the four previous years. Cases with specific diagnoses of 'assault by sharp object' have remained steady by total year.

Looking at 2017/18 so far, caution is needed the figures are only based on one quarter's data. However, there were 8 cases of 'assault by sharp object', which, if there are no seasonal affects, would estimate as 32 cases for the year, almost double the previous average. The 12 cases of 'contact with knife, sword or dagger - accident' so far would correlate to 48 cases, similar to the high in 2016/17. The assumption that these Quarter 1 figures will continue throughout the year is a large one, and will be monitored and may merit further investigation.

7. Domestic Abuse

Another possible factor behind the rise in police recorded violent offences is an increase in the reporting of domestic abuse and the subsequent recording of these offences by the police. Recent increases in the number of domestic abuse-related crimes have been found in part to be due to police forces improved recording of domestic abuse incidents as crimes, and forces actively encouraging victims to come forward to report these crimes.

The Home Office has been collecting information from the police, since April 2015, on whether recorded offences are related to domestic abuse. Data for the year ending March 2017 showed 11% of all police recorded crime was related to domestic abuse and that nearly a third (31%) of all violent crimes against the person were domestic abuse related.

Latest estimates from the CSEW showed that the proportion of all adults aged 16 to 59 who had been victims of domestic abuse in the last year (including attempted offences) has shown no change from the previous year (the apparent decrease to 5.7% from 6.1% was not statistically significant).

As in previous years, data from the year ending March 2017 survey year showed that women (7.3%) were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than men (4.2%) in the last year.

Victims of domestic violence referred to a MARAC are those cases that have been identified as high or very high risk (i.e. of serious injury or of being killed) based on a common risk assessment tool that is informed by both victim and assessor information. 'SafeLives' suggest that for an established MARAC the expected level would be in the range of 28-40%. Since the MARAC was launched in 2007, the St Helens repeat crime and subsequent repeat incident rate has always been lower than the suggested Safe Lives threshold. The outturn for 2016/17 was 26.2%. The data shows that of the total caseload managed by the MARAC, approximately a quarter of these cases have seen repeat victimisation.

The referrals to the local MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meeting are indicated in the below chart.

Year	Referrals	Year on Year Difference
2011-2012	270	-
2012-2013	256	-14
2013-2014	306	+50
2014-2015	480	+74
2015-2016	349	-131

2016-2017	332	-17
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Source – DV Coordinator

SafeLives recommends that the St Helens MARAC should manage 290 cases per year. The figures – other than in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 indicate that the local MARAC are dealing with a greater number of cases than recommended. As mentioned above, it is positive that victims are reporting more incidents to the Police and other agencies however this will have an impact on our ability to protect a growing number of victims.

8. Sexual Offences

The most recent estimates from the CSEW on intimate violence (for the year ending March 2017) showed that the proportion of adults aged 16 to 59 who had been victims of sexual assaults in the last year (including attempted offences) had not statistically significantly changed between the year ending March 2017 (1.9) and the year ending March 2016 (2.0%).

There was an increase of 14% in sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2017 (up to 121,113 offences) compared with the previous year. This follows a 22% increase in sexual offences between 2015/16 and 2016/17, Although, as stated previously it is not thought that police recorded crime data currently provides a reliable indication of trends in sexual offences due to the changes in police recording practice.

9. Child Sexual Exploitation

The true extent of CSE is difficult to establish. CSE is in itself not recorded as a separate crime and will be reported on Police systems in accordance the National Crime Reporting Standards and so data is often hidden as a result. There is no specific crime of CSE and so offenders are often convicted for associated offences such as sexual activity with a child so again making the obtaining of statistics around CSE impossible.

The volume of CSE referrals received in 2016/17 by the National Crime Agency has increased by 229% to 74,342. The St Helens Safeguarding Children's Board have an overview of the picture locally and have measures in place, via the MASH to manage reports/vulnerable individuals.

10. Acquisitive Crime

The theft offences category of police recorded crime covers a range of acquisitive crimes including burglary, vehicle offences (principally theft of and theft from a motor vehicle), theft from the person, as well as theft of unattended items.

The police recorded increases across all theft categories, but the most marked were in vehicle theft offences (up 11%, from 366,248 to 407,057) and shoplifting (up 10%, from 336,322 to 369,440). Both of these categories have seen rising numbers of crimes recorded over the last few years, with shoplifting increasing in each of the last 3 years and vehicle thefts in the last 2 years. However, these latest increases were larger than those seen in the year ending March 2016 (5% vehicle theft offences, 3% shoplifting)

These latest increases should be seen in the context of a longer-term declining trend in theft offences. The current level remains 29% lower than in the year ending March 2007.

In contrast to the police recorded crime figures, the latest data from the CSEW continue to show falls in theft, with the estimated number of theft offences having declined by 10% compared with the previous year. However, this does not necessarily mean that we can conclude that increases in police recorded crime do not reflect a genuine rise in crime. While the CSEW provides a robust measure of long-term trends, it is less reliable for providing an indication of emerging trends.

While general recording process improvements may have spilled over into a number of these theft offence categories, it is likely that for domestic burglary, vehicle theft offences, theft from the person and robbery, these increases reflect a genuine rise in these types of crime. However, despite this recent increase, these rates of crime remain substantially lower than a decade ago.

St. Helens acquisitive crime rate at the end of 2016/17 was the fourth highest on Merseyside, only Liverpool was higher but was lower than North West average.

Locally, repeat offenders of volume crime offences, e.g. burglary and other acquisitive crimes are mainly managed through the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) processes in place within the area. Individuals who commit these crimes are monitored daily by a multi-agency team based at St. Helens Police Station. Despite some encouraging trends since the IOM commenced their work, most recent figures for 2016 regarding offences committed by the cohort have shown a 5.3% increase in same.

11. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

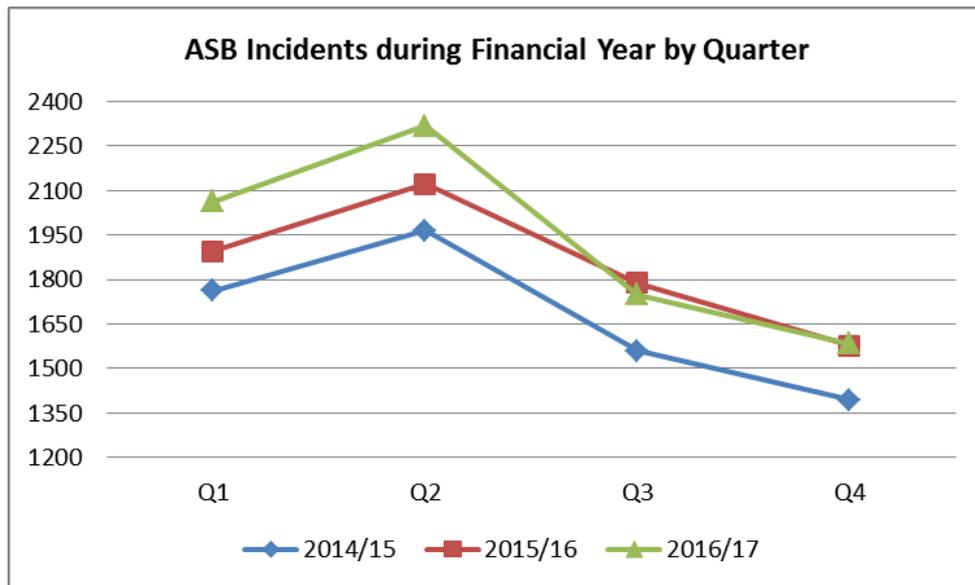
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is any activity that is considered aggressive, destructive or intimidating and influences the quality of another persons life. It can be categorised through these anti-social behaviour strands:

- Teenagers hanging around the streets
- Rubbish or Litter lying around
- Dog fouling
- Vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage to property or vehicles
- Noisy Neighbours or Loud parties
- Abandoned or burnt our cars
- People using or dealing drugs
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places

The CSEW showed that an estimated 30% of respondents reported experiencing or witnessing ASB in their local area in the latest survey year. While this is higher than the 28% found in the previous survey year, this estimate has remained at a similar level (between 27% and 30%) since the data were first collected in the survey year ending March 2012. This is in contrast to the local picture where ASB levels have increased over the past five years.

Police recorded crime also provides information on ASB; around 1.8 million incidents of ASB were recorded by the police in the latest year, a decrease of 1% compared with the previous.

With the St Helens area continuing to see reported incidents showing a steady increase, (as per chart below), the move to a new Policing model introduced in January 2017 needs to be evaluated in terms of efficiency and impact on performance - if any. St Helens as an area has seen an increase, year on year in terms of calls to the Police reporting ASB. St Helens sits only behind Liverpool in terms of volume of calls made per 1000 population when compared with all other areas in Merseyside – see figures in chart below. Performance (hot spots, repeat locations, actions taken to support/address victims, offenders and locations) continue to be monitored through the Neighbourhood Action Group meetings. Meetings are now attended by Youth Justice Service staff so that information on young offenders and those on the cusp of causing problems can be targeted in a timely way.



ASB incidents across Merseyside

ASB rate per 1,000 population					
	Knowsley	Liverpool	Sefton	St. Helens	Wirral
2014/15	42.1	49.0	34.5	37.7	35.5
2015/16	38.3	45.2	32.4	41.6	35.0
2016/17	40.8	46.1	33.8	43.2	31.0

Source Merseyside Police

The increased reports occurring during the first two quarters each year coincide with lighter nights (clocks moved forward) and school holidays (Easter) and prompted the formation and implementation of Operation 'Springwatch', geared to tackle the anticipated rise in reported ASB at this time.

Unfortunately, the calls to the Police which contribute to the rises seen in quarter 2 (which includes the 'Springwatch' period) are categorised as either Rowdy Inconsiderate Behaviour (RIB) or Inappropriate Vehicle Use (IVU). RIB categorisation tends to be the 'closing category' (when calls to the Police are resulted with the type of call dealt with) and covers a large number of scenarios so interpretation without drilling in to each log is difficult. What can be said with certainty is that the calls in relation to IVU do increase in quarter 2, year on year which is probably attributable to the fact that residents, through Springwatch, are encouraged to report such matters.

Changes to legislation via the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 which aimed to simplify powers available to agencies working to thwart ASB in our communities need to be evaluated as to their effectiveness.

The chart below indicates the numbers of calls to the Police recorded as ASB incidents by Ward, with the highest rates in Town Centre, Parr and Bold Wards. This corresponds with the findings of the Indices of Deprivation 2015, which shows that these Wards have the highest relative levels of crime deprivation.

ASB rate per 1,000 population			
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Billinge and Seneley Green	12.4	21.1	22.2
Blackbrook	21.9	32.6	33.1
Bold	77.7	75.4	74.1
Earlestown	28.4	41.1	40.2
Eccleston	20.3	14.4	12.9
Haydock	25.3	39.2	35.7
Moss Bank	22.0	37.6	32.9
Newton	21.8	25.0	39.3
Parr	56.4	70.3	72.9
Rainford	6.4	14.6	17.8
Rainhill	14.8	16.5	17.4
Sutton	36.5	39.4	46.6
Thatto Heath	41.1	35.9	48.4
Town Centre	146.2	142.7	132.6
West Park	34.7	26.9	34.5
Windle	26.7	23.4	22.8

Source Merseyside Police

For further detail, including the types of ASB calls made and data at Ward level, please visit <https://info4.sthelens.gov.uk>

12. Key and emerging issues for the area

Cross Divisional – Hate Crimes

The drive to promote the reporting of hate crimes in line with various initiatives and to coincide with local and national events (Hate Crime Awareness Week, Pride etc) continues in the area. The local campaign revolves around the 'St Helens – No Place for Hate' Pledge and encourages people who support the notion to 'sign' an electronic pledge. To date 258 persons have signed the Pledge.

As part of the UK's asylum seeker dispersal arrangements and refugee resettlement programme, the Leader of St Helens Council announced in September 2015 that the council and local partner organisations would be working with the Government to identify 30 homes across the borough for asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the UK. This work has started, assisted by partners working together to place and settle families into the area. As part of the induction and welcome processes, families are given information about how to report crimes, including hate crimes should the need arise.

Most recent figures available nationally show that in 2015/16, there were 62,518 offences recorded by the police in which one or more hate crime strands were deemed to be a motivating factor. This was an increase of 19 per cent compared with the 524,651 hate crimes recorded in 2014/15.

There were 243 reported hate crimes in St Helens in 2016/17 compared with 167 in the previous year. All other areas in Merseyside, with the exception of Knowsley recorded more hate crimes in 2016/17 than the previous year. As it is believed that there is an under reporting of hate crimes, any increases are viewed as positive and possibly indicate that victims have confidence in reporting the matter and that they will be treated seriously in doing so.

Cross Divisional – Youth Offenders

There is potential for further work to be undertaken in terms of prevention – ensuring young people ‘stay out of trouble’. The development of a youth ‘Integrated Offender Management’ type approach (Deter Young Offenders) is being considered to focus on those causing, or at risk of causing most harm to themselves and our communities through their actions.

Cross Divisional– Needle Waste

Disposal of drug ‘waste’ - an emotive issue and one which has provided a number of adverse stories in local media over the previous twelve months.

Emerging during 2016 and becoming more frequently reported during 2017, reports of discarded needles, wipes and other items associated with drug use and abuse have been collated by the Safer Communities Team. Reports come via our cleansing services, Parks and Open Spaces, businesses and through observation of known or suspected ‘needle sites’. Public Health, through commissioned service Change Grow Live (CGL) introduced a model of treatment/needle exchange during August 2017 which is hoped will have a big impact on the correct and safe disposal of needles/sharps.

There are approx. 1000 people registered for treatment with CGL with drug/alcohol ‘split’ being roughly 50/50.

The number of needles issued through the needle exchange programme during the year to end March 2017 is:

Syringe Exchange Transactions = 16,322
Syringe Exchange Returns = 1,288

Since March 2017, seven physical site visits have been completed by Safer Communities staff with a large number of needles etc. seen on public and private land. 155 reports of needles being found/logged for removal have also been collated since December 2016 – most reports within the Town Centre area (a full list of known ‘regular’ sites is maintained by Safer Communities).

Cross Divisional - Rough Sleeping

Per the Department for Communities and Local Government, the most up to date data regarding rough sleeping in the UK (Autumn 2016) is as follows:

- The autumn 2016 total number of rough sleepers counted and estimated is 4,134.
- This is up 565 (16%) from the autumn 2015 total of 3,569.
- The number of rough sleepers has increased by 3% in London and 21% in the rest of England since autumn 2015.
- London had 964 rough sleepers in autumn 2016, which is 23% of the England total. This is down from 26% of the England total in autumn 2015.

In St Helens, the rough sleeper count reported nine persons found during the ‘count’ which took place in October 2017.

It may be questioned how the image of St Helens, particularly the Town Centre will be affected by the sight of apparently homeless people sitting on sleeping bags and begging on the streets. Anecdotally (from staff at Salvation Army) one resident (now deceased) apparently returned to the hostel each days with ‘thirty’ pies which he distributed to residents having been handed same by well-meaning people.

Cross Divisional - Prevent

Prevent is one of four strands of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, known as Contest. It was created by the Labour government in 2003 and its remit was widened by the coalition government in 2011. The other strands are: Prepare; Protect; and Pursue.

Prevent is designed to support people at risk of joining extremist groups and carrying out terrorist activities. In practice it aims for Police and other organisations to build relations across the UK and requires faith leaders, teachers, doctors and others to refer any suspicions about people to a local Prevent body. An assessment is then made about whether further action is needed. Social services departments have become increasingly involved in identifying Prevent cases because of their duty to counter radicalisation.

About 7,500 referrals were made to the scheme in 2015-16 - the equivalent of 20 a day - according to a Freedom of Information Request to the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

Out of those referrals, action was taken in one in every 10 cases. No action at all was taken in 37% of the cases, while a quarter of people referred were found to be vulnerable but not at risk of terrorist involvement. The remaining 28% were still being considered.

In cases where an ideology was recorded, just over half related to Islamist extremism and nearly one in 10 were linked to far-right extremism. In some areas of the country, including parts of north-west England, the number of far-right referrals outstrips the number of Islamist cases. Where action is taken, an individual can be placed on the government's Channel Programme. This is a support plan which may include mentoring.

In June 2015, the Government published its Prevent Duty document. The main points within the document are to:

- explain what the Prevent duty means for schools and childcare providers;
- make clear what schools and childcare providers should do to demonstrate compliance with the duty; and
- inform schools and childcare providers about other sources of information, advice and support.

The paper lists what the Prevent Duty means for schools and childcare providers and details what is meant by risk assessments, working in partnership, staff training IT Policies and building childrens resilience to radicalisation.

13. Fraud

The extent of fraud is difficult to measure because it is a deceptive crime; victimisation is often indiscriminate, covering organisations as well as individuals. Some victims of fraud may be unaware they have been a victim of crime, or that any fraudulent activity has occurred for some time after the event. Others might be unwilling to see themselves as victims or reluctant to report the offence to the authorities, feeling embarrassed that they have fallen victim. The level of fraud reported via administrative sources is thought to significantly understate the true level of such crime.

Based on Experimental Statistics from new CSEW fraud and computer misuse questions, adults aged 16 and over experienced an estimated 3.4 million fraud with over half of these (57%; 1.9 million incidents) being cyber-related.

In the latest year, there was a 5% increase in the number of fraud offences recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) in England and Wales (up to 649,770 offences) compared with the previous year.

For further information on small area crime data in St. Helens visit:

<https://info4.sthelens.gov.uk/>

14. Summary of Priorities

Based on the analysis contained within this assessment, the priorities set out below are to be included within the St Helens Strategic Community Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

Knife Crime - A multi-agency knife crime action group has been established. This delivers a series of initiatives aimed at preventing and reducing incidents of knife crime across all age groups. Work has already been delivered using material from the Ben Kinsella Trust to educate children across a number of schools in the borough around the dangers and consequences of knife crime. Young Advisors have been engaged to develop messages and publicity which have been distributed to children and young people. Street Doctors have been commissioned to deliver sessions on the consequences of knife crime to young people accessing the Youth Justice Service. Work is now taking place in partnership with the family of Danny Fox to consider ways in which they can assist agencies in delivering preventative approaches to knife crime. In April 2018, knife wands will be made available to the majority of town centre bars.

Domestic Abuse - A multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy has received approval from Cabinet. As part of the implementation of the strategy, a review of MARAC arrangements will take place as well as a detailed analysis of the reason driving high levels of repeat victimisation.

Homelessness - The revised strategy will provide a delivery plan to assist in reducing the numbers of people sleeping rough and addressing the links between rough sleepers and anti-social behaviour. The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act from April 2018, and the developments around the implementation of a City Region Housing First Model will also drive activity in this area.

Child Sexual Exploitation - The Council's Community Safety Team will continue to be part of a partnership approach to identify and intervene to incidents of child sexual exploitation.

Acquisitive Crime - Consideration will be given to the development of a Young Person Integrated Offender Management Programme during 2018 as well as the implementation of a Youth Justice Re-offending Sub Group.

Anti-social behaviour - A multi-agency town centre workshop will take place on 14 March 2018. To develop a plan to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) to support the plan around the regeneration of the town centre. It is planned that the long term approach to the management of ASB within the town will be delivered through a model similar to that of Joint Agency Action Groups.

Hate Crime - A full review will take place during 2018 to assess what else can be done to improve people's confidence to report hate crime.