

Wirral JSNA: Crime and Disorder Summary (October 2015)

What do we know?

Why is this important?

There are many links between crime and health. Some of the most obvious are the effects of personal violence and assault, which can have both mental and physical consequences for health in the short and long term. Crime inevitably involves some costs to the NHS. This is partly because of the treatment needed for resulting health problems, and partly because community workers, including NHS staff, are especially vulnerable to some forms of crime. Crime can be associated with social disorganisation, low social capital, and relative deprivation and health inequalities. The same social and environmental factors that predict geographic variation in crime rates may also be relevant to explaining community variations in health and well-being. Public insecurities about crime are widely assumed to erode individual wellbeing and community cohesion. A key study of [Health and Crime](#) suggests a strong statistical effect of mental health and physical functioning on worry about crime. Findings conclude with the idea that, while fear of crime may express a whole set of social and political anxieties, there is a core to worry about crime that is implicated in real cycles of decreased health and perceived vulnerability to victimisation.

Facts and figures (Wirral)

Nationally crime peaked in 1995 and has been declining since then. The two main sources for crime data are Police Recorded Crime and the Crime Survey in England and Wales (or CSEW) formerly the British Crime Survey (BCS). The National Crime Reporting Standard (NCRS) came into effect in 2002 and accurate comparisons prior to this are problematic.

The CSEW shows a rise in crime through the 1980s, a sharp increase in the early 1990s and a sustained fall from 1995. This fall has continued to the present day albeit at a slightly decreasing rate, despite the financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent economic downturn. See Figure 1.

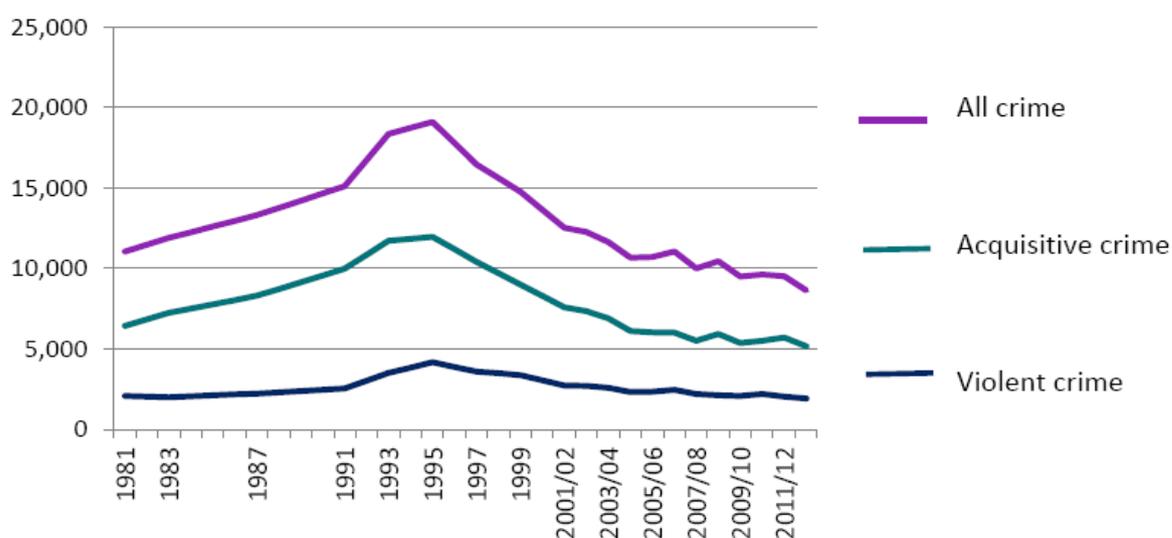


Figure 1
Crime in England and Wales - 1981 2013

Source Home Office Report July 2014:

"The heroin epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s and its effect on crime trends - then and now"

The CSEW is a better measure of long-term trends because it is unaffected by changes in levels of public reporting or in police practice in recording crime. However, as it is a dip sample it is not representative below Force level, e.g. Merseyside Police Force. Police Recorded Crime statistics illustrate crime trends to a far higher geographic resolution with comparable measurements available down to Basic Command Unit e.g. Wirral.

On average recorded Crime in England and Wales¹ fell by 4.9% year on year for 10 years between 2002/3 and 2012/3. However, between 2013/14 and 2014/15 there was an increase of 2.1%

Between 2003/4 and 2014/15 there has been a 40% reduction in Police Reported Crime. Despite this there have been increases in certain crime categories such as drug, sexual and public order offences by 38%, 13%, and 4% respectively. Drug offences reflect societal change as do public order offences, though they may also be explained by changes in legislation. The increase in sexual offences is a complex picture which overall is positive in demonstrating a reduction in under reporting and a 'zero tolerance' approach by Police.

The crime categories with the greatest reductions over the period have been criminal damage and arson, vehicle offences and burglary each having dropped by over 50%.

Source: Office for National Statistics:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/index.html>

¹ England and Wales is the largest area with comparable crime counting rules.

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/datasets-and-tables/index.html?pageSize=50&sortBy=none&sortDirection=none&newquery=crime&content-type=Reference+table&content-type=Dataset>

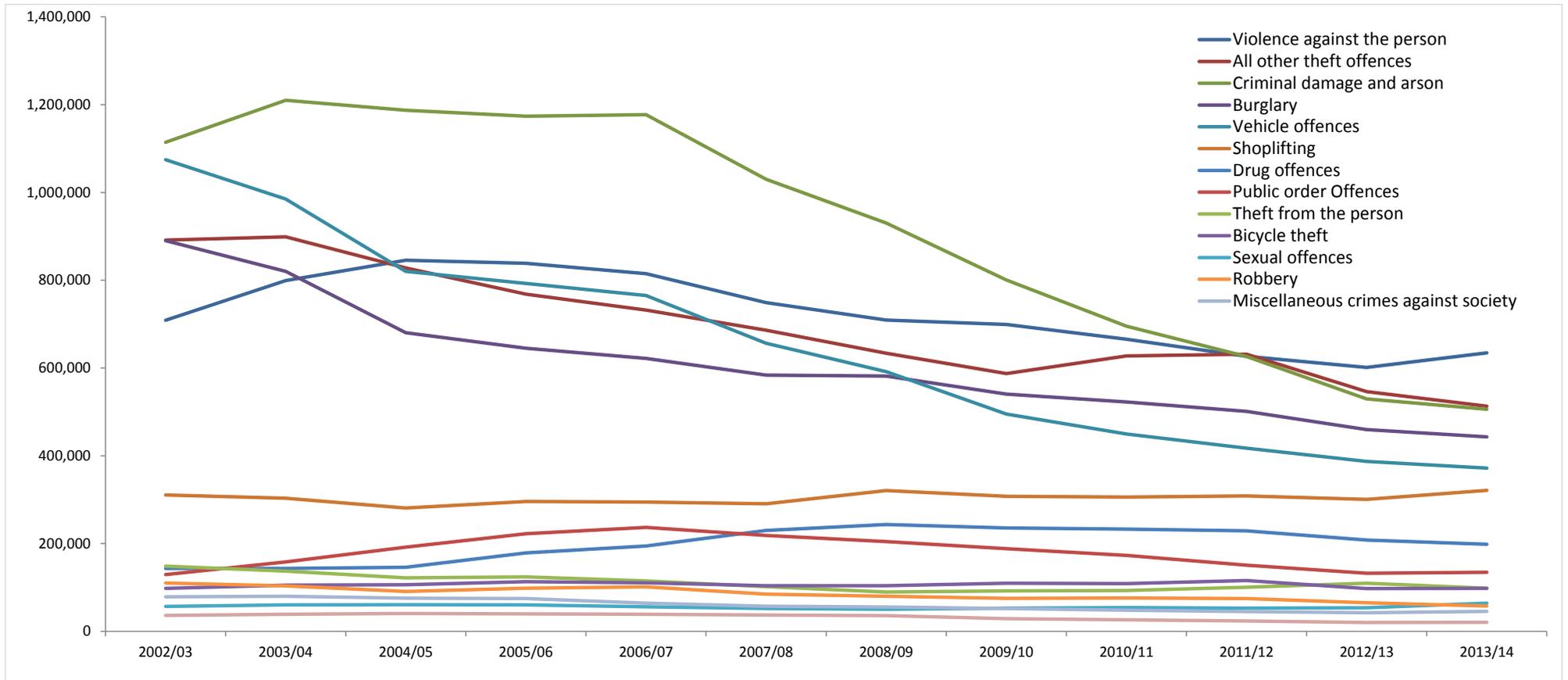


Figure 2

**England and Wales Crime Trends by Crime Category 2002/3 to 2013/14
(Legend in order of crime category count during 2013/)**

Trends in Crime: Wirral

Wirral maintains a relatively low crime rate despite two successive increases in overall crime rates during the past two financial years. During 2014/15 there were 19,061 crimes in Wirral or 59.5 crimes per thousand (1,000) population. Wirral is below the average for England and Wales which is 62.5 per thousand (1,000) population, and Merseyside which is 77 per thousand (1,000) population. The crime rate for Wirral dropped between 2002 and 2015 by 15%. (See Figure 3, below). Criminal damage remains a high volume crime category but has reduced by over 53%. Violence with injury has decreased by over 36% whilst violence without injury has increased by 36%. Acquisitive crime has also reduced; with domestic burglary, vehicle crime and robbery levels reduced by over 70%. These reductions reflect the national picture and can arguably be attributed to more sophisticated crime prevention interventions.

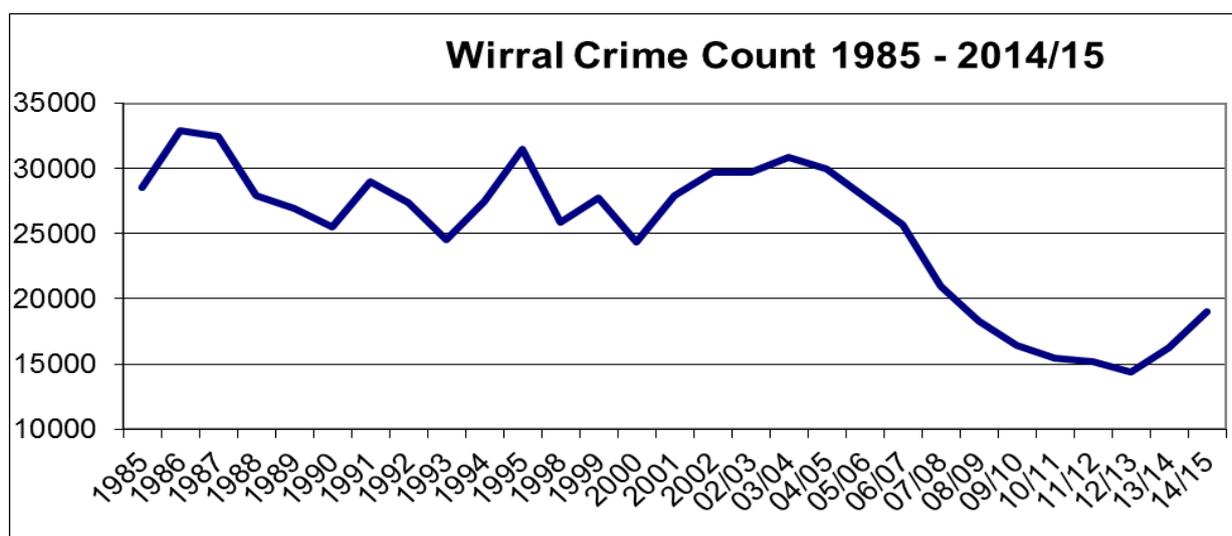


Figure 3 - Wirral Crime -Totals per Calendar Year 85-2002 and Financial Year 02/03–14/15

- Over the 11 years to March 2015 there has been a 10% decrease in the total number of crimes in Wirral. This comprised nine successive year-on-year reductions, followed by a 13% increase during 2013/14, (April 1st 2013 to March 31st 2014) and a 17% increase in 14/15.
- Across Merseyside the same pattern of nine years of annual reductions followed by an increase in the year 2013/14 and 14/15 also occurred. Across all Police Forces in England and Wales, the year-on-year decline in crime has continued for 10 years up to March 2014, followed by a rise of 2.5% in 2014/15.
- Before 2013/14, nine successive years of crime reduction in Wirral resulted in a 53% decrease overall. This compares to a 46% drop across all Merseyside and a 40% reduction across all Police Forces in England and Wales during the same period. There is some debate over the degree to which these statistics are a true reflection of the crimes that occur or whether there may be reasons crimes go unreported. As well as crime as being recorded by the Police there is also the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), formerly known as the British Crime Survey. For the national picture the CSEW overcomes potential under reporting issues or biases of which recorded crime statistics are often accused. However the CSEW does collect statistics

at smaller geographic levels than Merseyside Police Force, and therefore does not reflect crime and disorder trends in Wirral.

- Whilst various crime types have risen in Wirral during 2014/15, most notable was the increase in violence without injury by over 50% but the increase is more reflective of changes in reporting standards, such as changes in 'ethical reporting standards', (see appendix 1), than the amount of violence in Wirral.
- As proportions of all crime during 2014/15 violence, (21%), Criminal damage (19%), and shoplifting (11%), together comprise over half of all crimes in Wirral.
- Those highest volume crimes in Wirral are also those that have seen the greatest increase over the last two years. See figure 4 below.
- Volume crime categories increasing between 2012/13 and 2014/15 include:
 - **criminal damage and arson** increased by 25% from 2,813 to 3,526 crimes,
 - **shoplifting** increased by 31% from 1,640 to 2,144 crimes,
 - **vehicle offences** increased by 50% from 1,307 to 1,959 crimes
 - **violence without injury** increased by 113% from 910 to 1,943 crimes.

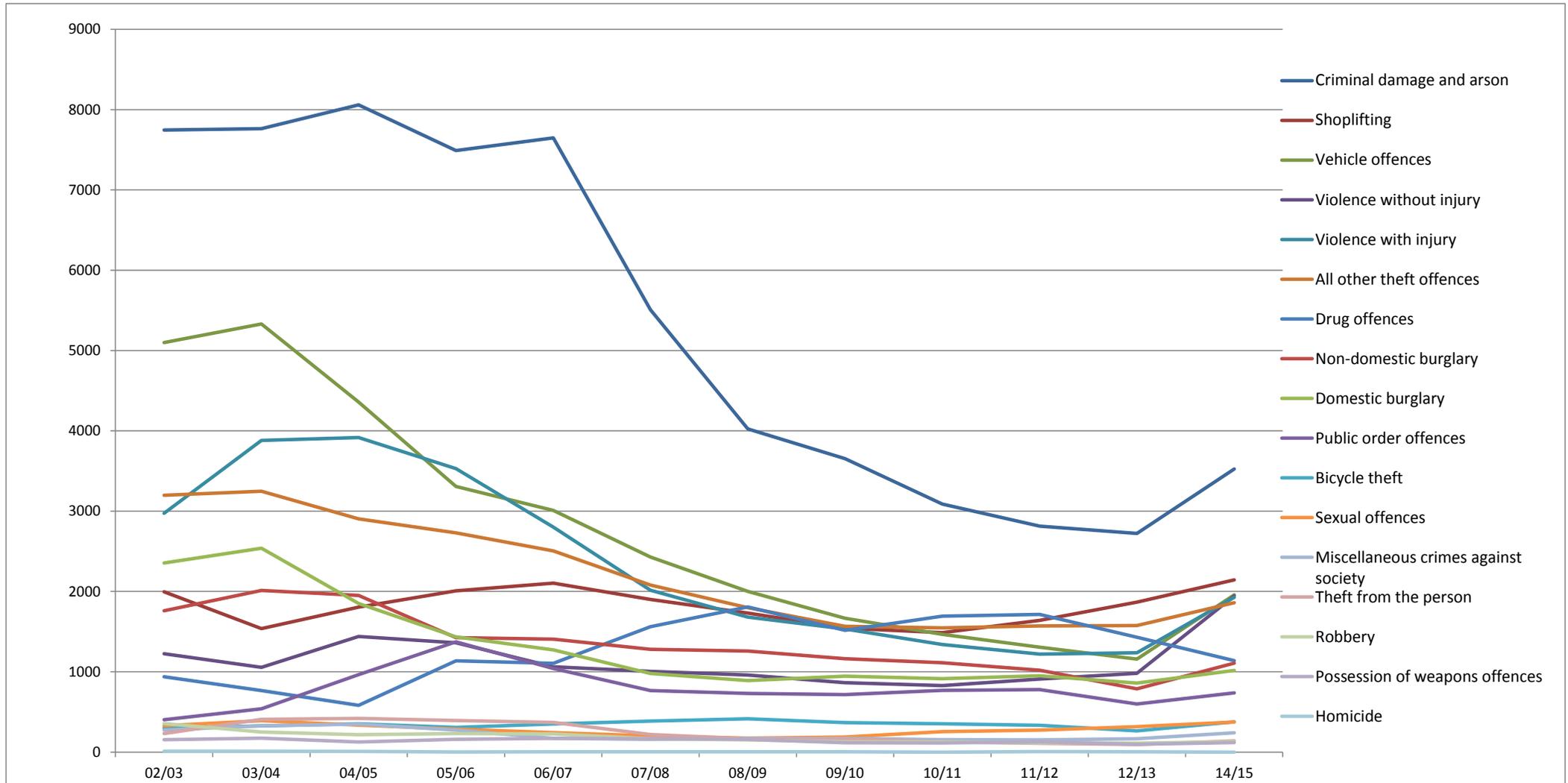


Figure 4 - Wirral Crime Trends by Crime Category by Financial Years 2002/3 to 2014/15

Key issues and groups most at risk

Polarisation

Wirral is an area exhibiting pronounced polarisation in terms of deprivation; with relative affluence on the Western side of the peninsular and pockets of extreme deprivation in the East. Crime is focussed in the most deprived areas, with half of all crime and disorder in Wirral occurring in the Birkenhead Parliamentary Constituency. This means that on average a quarter of Wirral's communities suffer a crime rate 3 times greater than the rest. Whilst crime is only one of seven 'domains' used to determine deprivation,² there is a high correlation between the location of deprivation and the location of crime. Those areas of Wirral where crime clusters into perennial hotspots will invariably also be communities that exhibit extremes of deprivation. Wirral is over-represented by communities suffering severe deprivation, with 10.6% of the population falling within the 3% most deprived in England and suffering 30% of all Wirral's crime.

Anti Social Behaviour

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) affects many communities and a wide range of agencies are involved in ASB recording and prevention. The majority of incidents, (almost 1,000 per month), are reported to the Police. ASB is a term that can include all crime types but is generally used to describe behaviour that is not acceptable, but that does not necessarily culminate in a crime. On average the number of ASB calls made to the Police in Wirral has reduced by 5% per year since 2003/4. See figure 5 below.

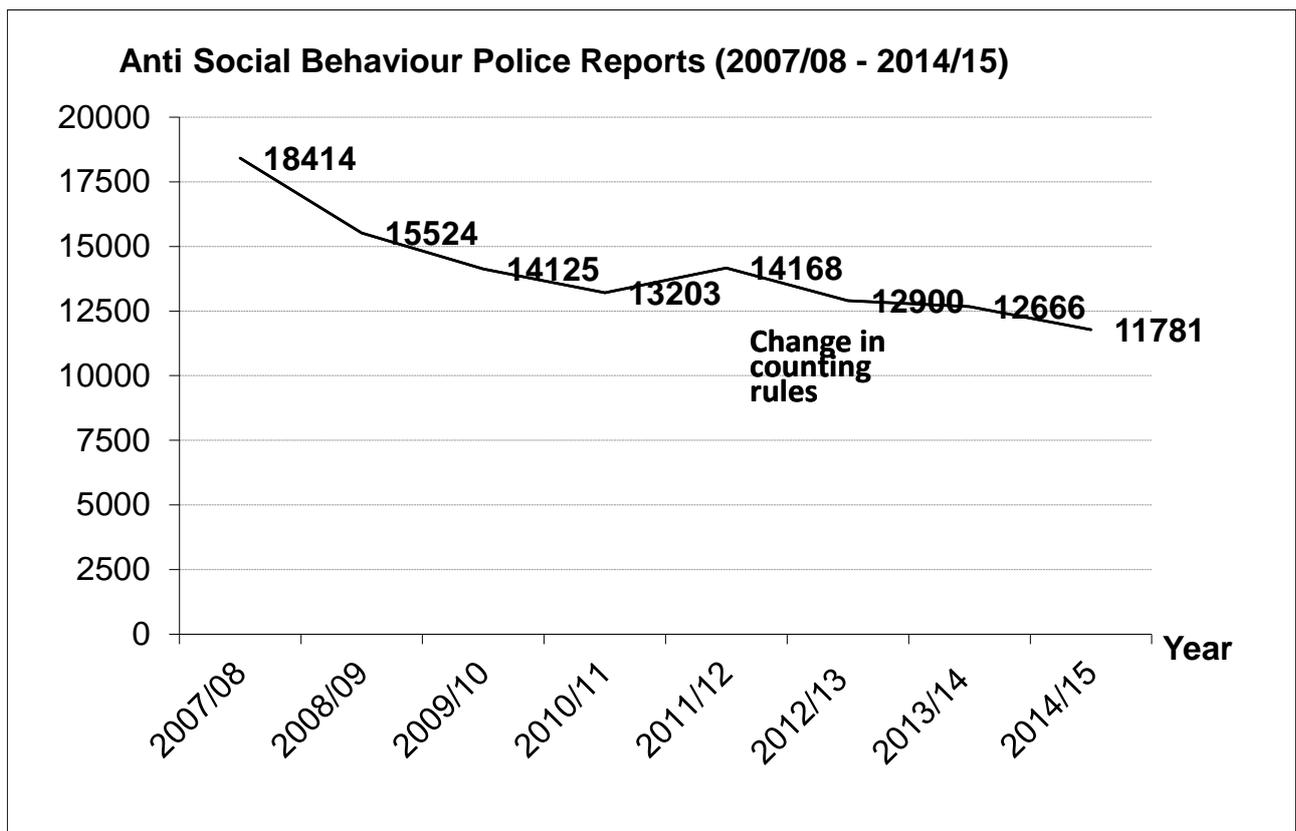


Figure 5 - Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents Reported to Police 2007/8 to 2014/15

² The **IMD 2010** (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government uses 7 Domains to determine deprivation: Income, Employment, Health and Disability, Education, Barriers to Housing, Crime and Living Environment.

As all Police ASB calls are recorded irrespective of outcome this statistic is, to some degree, a measure of the tolerance and perception of the member of the public making the call. This measure is therefore not used as a national comparator.

Hate Crime

The reporting of hate crime is encouraged but still goes widely un-reported. National research has shown that certain equality groups are routinely victimised but suffer in silence. For example research shows that nine out of ten people with learning disabilities have been victims of hate crime. In 2014/15 communities on Wirral reported 367 hate crimes to the hate crime MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference).

Hate crime is defined as any notifiable offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by hostility towards someone based on their disability, race, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation, whether perceived to be so by the victim or any other person. Though Wirral has a low BME population, race is the equality group reporting most incidents. The proportions affecting each equality group on Wirral are roughly in line with Merseyside and national trends: Race comprised 68% sexual orientation 16% disability 9%.gender 4% and Belief 3% - there were no reports of hate incidents on the basis of age.

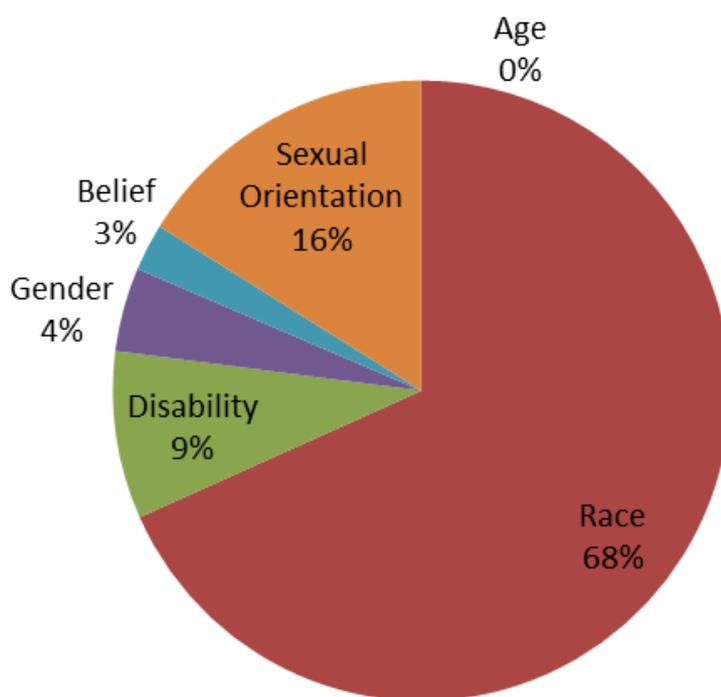


Figure 6 - Wirral Race Hate Crime Referrals Proportionally by Equality Group

For each of the equality groups reporting the greatest number of incidents occurred in Birkenhead and Tranmere ward. For race, disability and gender hate crimes Wallasey ward reported the second highest number of incidents.

Overall there was an increase in reporting of 30% which is attributed more to the support and encouragement for victims of hate crime that would previously have gone unreported. Education to prevent those who commit hate incidents from moving on to commit hate crimes is a critical challenge, recognised in the Government's Hate Crime Action Plan *Challenge It Report It Stop It* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crime-action-plan-challenge-it-report-it-stop-it> and Merseyside's *Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017*. http://www.merseysidepcc.info/36/section.aspx/35/jane_kenne21

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crimes-england-and-wales-2011-to-2012-2>

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/regional-trends/atlas-of-deprivation--england/2010/atlas-of-deprivation-2010.html>

Domestic Abuse

Victims of domestic abuse (domestic violence) are worst affected by both under reporting and repeat victimisation. Due to this suggested under reporting, identifying the scale of domestic abuse is difficult on a local and national level, with almost half of victims staying in an abusive relationship for three years before leaving, (WAFE Census, 2005).

Under Home Office Police reporting rules there is no actual offence of domestic abuse although it is recorded by Merseyside Police as a contributory factor to an offence. During 2014/15 there were 1,856 such offences in Wirral and 8,384 in Merseyside. This was a year on year increase of 58% in Wirral from 1,173 in 2013/14 and 52% in Merseyside from 5,174 respectively. The proportion of domestic abuse in Merseyside which occurs in Wirral is roughly in line with their respective populations at 23%. The majority of this increased reporting of domestic abuse is due to the reduction of under reporting rather than an increase in incidents of abuse.

Local domestic abuse rates are compared nationally, using repeat victimisation rates at the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). MARACs were designed as a multi-agency process to reduce the risk of re-victimisation. Risk is assessed using a national standard assessment matrix. During 2014/15 there were 740 high risk referrals to Wirral MARAC, an 18% increase from 634 in 2013/14.

Between 2013/14 and 14/15 the repeat victimisation rate (high risk domestic abuse victims first referred to MARAC within the previous 12 months), dropped from 18% to 16.5%. During 2014 the Wirral repeat victimisation rate was 16% comparing with a Merseyside rate of 20%, and a national rate of 24%.

Sexual Offences

Reports of sexual offences increased in Wirral and nationally over the past two years. This is widely believed to be a consequence of accusations against high profile personalities as part of 'Operation Yewtree' which commenced in October 2012, following decades of sexual abuse offences perpetrated by the British media personality Jimmy Saville.

Between 2012/13 and 2013/14 there was a 15% year on year increase in reported sexual offences in Wirral. As with the national picture and as reported anecdotally by Victim Support this was likely to be part of the 'Yewtree effect' where victims have been given the confidence to report previously unreported, often historic, sexual offences.

The number of sexual offences has continued to rise and between 13/14 and 14/15 rose by 37% in England and Wales, 40% in Wirral and 42% in Merseyside. As with violent crime this is as a consequence of changes in recording practises, (see appendix 1) but is also as part of the increasing confidence held by victims in reporting and progressive stance now taken in supporting victims in complex social circumstances such as Domestic Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation.

Alcohol and Crime

Nationally, over 10% of crime is deemed as 'alcohol fuelled'. Where violence is involved this rises to 25%, and where that violence causes serious injury, over 50%.

In Wirral, alcohol was a causal or contributory factor in 9% of recorded crime during 2014/15, a slight reduction from 10% in 2013/14. Alcohol was contributory in 25%, (1 in 4), violent crimes and 30% (1 in 3) of violence crimes resulting in injury.

Many crimes go unwitnessed or unreported. Where medical attention is required as a result of assaults Wirral Police records are complemented by victim data provided by Arrowe Park Hospital AED (Accident and Emergency Department).

During 2014/15 1,272 assault victims required treatment at Arrowe Park AED. This is a decrease (12% 169 less victims), than the previous year. 52% of assault attendees were male and 28% aged between 30-59 years. 33% of assaults were recorded as occurring in a public place and 28% were recorded as occurring in the home. 28% of assaults were reported to have occurred in Birkenhead Town Centre.

The majority (60%) of assault victims reported being attacked by one attacker. 92% of people attending A&E had not consumed alcohol; however for assault victims, 51% reported that they had consumed alcohol.

Wirral Alcohol related crime and alcohol related violence levels rates are below the North West and National average. This is despite a context of poor performance for all other alcohol harm measures. This data is collated and published within the 'Local Alcohol Performance for England' <http://www.lape.org.uk>

The number of male alcohol fuelled offenders far outweighs the female offenders, particularly by males in their 20s, whilst women are equally likely to be alcohol-fuelled offenders between 15 and 50 except for a slight drop in offending in their late 30s.

Alcohol's influence on anti-social behaviour is far more difficult to assess as victim and witness reports will be biased by perception and tolerance. However around 11% of anti-social behaviour reported on Wirral includes alcohol or suggest it is a causal or contributory factor.

Prolific and Persistent Offenders (PPO)

Targeting the most Prolific and Persistent Offenders (PPO) was an initiative introduced in 2004. The PPO is a Ministry of Justice initiative which mandates local Community Safety Partnerships to concentrate resources on the small proportion of offenders whose volume of offending has caused significant impact in their local community. The PPO initiative continues to reduce offending dramatically in Wirral. Wirral's PPO cohort consists of approximately 50 individuals at any one time.

Criminogenic need is dominated by substance misuse with over two thirds finding this an issue. Almost half found ETE (employment, training or education) a barrier to desisting in offending behaviour. Comparing the offending rates of the year they were identified and the following year, (2014/15), offending rates were reduced by 81%.

Serious Organised Crime and gangs are far fewer and gang crime far less likely in Wirral than the rest of Merseyside. Gun crime and knife crime are commensurately low.

Appendix 1 - Crime Recording Standards

The increase in Recorded Police Crime, particularly violent crime and sexual offences, is frequently attributed to the increase in 'ethical reporting'. This is the strict application of reporting standards following criticism of data integrity of which the below report is a prime example:

Crime recording: A matter of fact

An interim report of the inspection of crime data integrity in police forces in England and Wales © HMIC 2014 - IC ISBN: 978-1-78246-391-7

Excerpt from the Summary of the above report

1.7 These statistics are evidence of a general downward trend in crime, which is of course very welcome, but there remains appreciable public concern that real crime levels are not truly represented in the statistics, particularly those recorded by police forces.² A factor in public concern, and a probable cause for scepticism about national crime figures, is the culture in the police – as in other major government organisations – of pursuing targets and being under pressure to demonstrate good performance. One of the concerns of this inspection is to find any instances where crimes are not recorded or are classified inappropriately. It is essential that crime recording is done honestly and within the rules. Police officers need to understand and properly apply the rules, and appropriate mechanisms must be in place to ensure due compliance, so that the users of crime statistics can rely upon them with confidence.

1.8 Previous and recent HMIC inspections into crime and incident recording practices – inspections which did not have as broad a scope as this one³ – have shown crime was under-recorded to varying extents in a sample of police forces. These inspections also revealed a lack of accuracy in crime-recording practice in areas such as rape and other sexual violence, which is of particular public concern.

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/crime-data-integrity-interim-report.pdf>

Appendix 2 - The PEEL Programme

PEEL is the programme in which Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies; (HMIC) draws together evidence from its annual all-force inspections. HMIC has introduced these assessments so that the public will be able to judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole.

The **effectiveness** of a force is assessed in relation to how it carries out its responsibilities including cutting crime, protecting the vulnerable, tackling anti-social behaviour, and dealing with emergencies and other calls for service.

Its **efficiency** is assessed in relation to how it provides value for money.

Its **legitimacy** is assessed in relation to whether the force operates fairly, ethically and within the law.

Merseyside Police Force PEEL Assessment (27/11/2014)

- Merseyside Police is good at reducing crime and preventing offending.
- The force is good at investigating offending. It is good at tackling anti-social behaviour. Merseyside Police has made good progress and is well placed to respond to further austerity in the future.
- There was clear evidence in Merseyside Police that senior officers of the force take the issues of police integrity and corruption very seriously.
- Senior officers of the force have been proactive in taking important messages to the workforce and in developing a climate in which professional behaviour is encouraged and valued.
- HMIC found there to be effective and efficient governance structures, including an integrity and anti-corruption board.
- The professional standards department works proactively to understand potential as well as actual threats and presents regular

updates to the anti-corruption board.

FORCE AREA 	249 square miles	
POPULATION 	1.39m people	↑ 2% local 10 yr change
WORKFORCE 	76% frontline	78% national level
	4.4 per 1000 population	3.7 national level
	↓ 16% change in local workforce since 2010	↓ 14% national change since 2010
VICTIM-BASED CRIMES 	0.06 per person	0.05 national level
	Local 5 year trend (no change)	↓ National 5 year trend
COST 	64p per person per day local	55p per person per day national

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How can we consider these aspects – directly or indirectly?

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