

Wirral JSNA: Crime and Disorder Summary

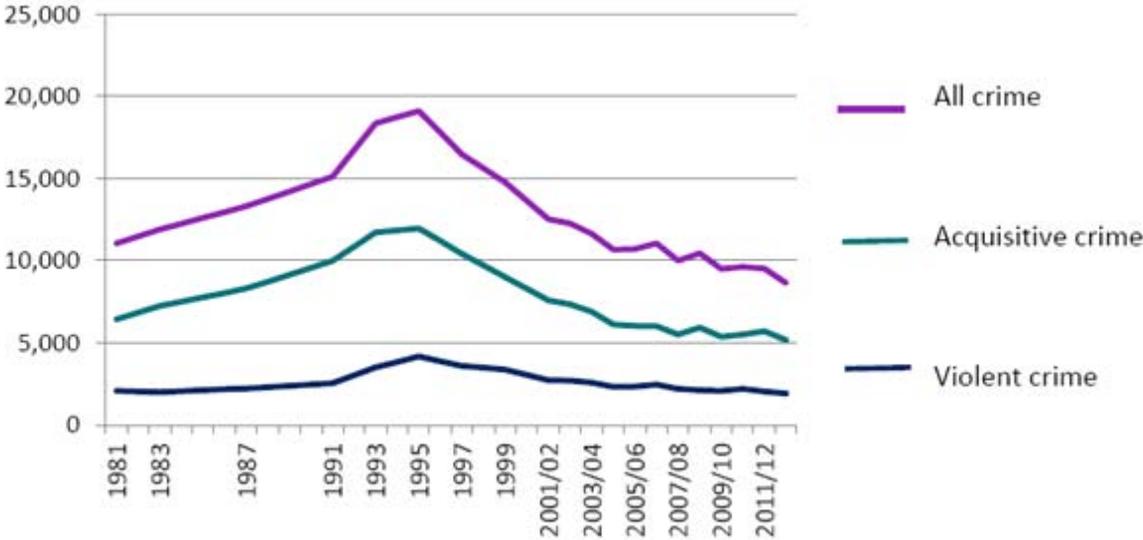
Overview

Introduction

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 (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 below.

Figure 1: Crime in England and Wales - 1981 2013



Source Home Office Report July 2014:

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 Wales*¹ fell by 4.9% year on year for 10 years between 2002/3 and 2012/3. The last year of this decade, 2012/13, saw the greatest reduction of 9.9%, more than double the average.

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.
Wirral JSNA: Crime & Disorder Summary (BL) (v1)

National Context and Trends

- Wirral has a low crime rate. During 2013/14 there were 16,278 crimes in Wirral or 49 crimes per thousand (1,000) population. This is the same crime level as home county boroughs generally considered safe, such as Sevenoaks in Kent or Guildford in Surrey. Wirral is well below the average for England and Wales which is 62 per thousand (1,000) population, and Merseyside which is 67 per thousand (1,000) population.
- The crime rate for Wirral dropped between 2002 and 2013 by almost 50%. (See Figure 2, below). Criminal damage remains a high volume crime category but has reduced by over 60%. Violence with injury has decreased by over 50% whilst violence without injury has remained static. 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.
- Over the 10 years to March 2014 there has been a 47% 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). Across Merseyside the same pattern of nine years of annual reductions followed by an increase in the year 2013/14 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, though the size of annual reduction has diminished in recent years. 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.

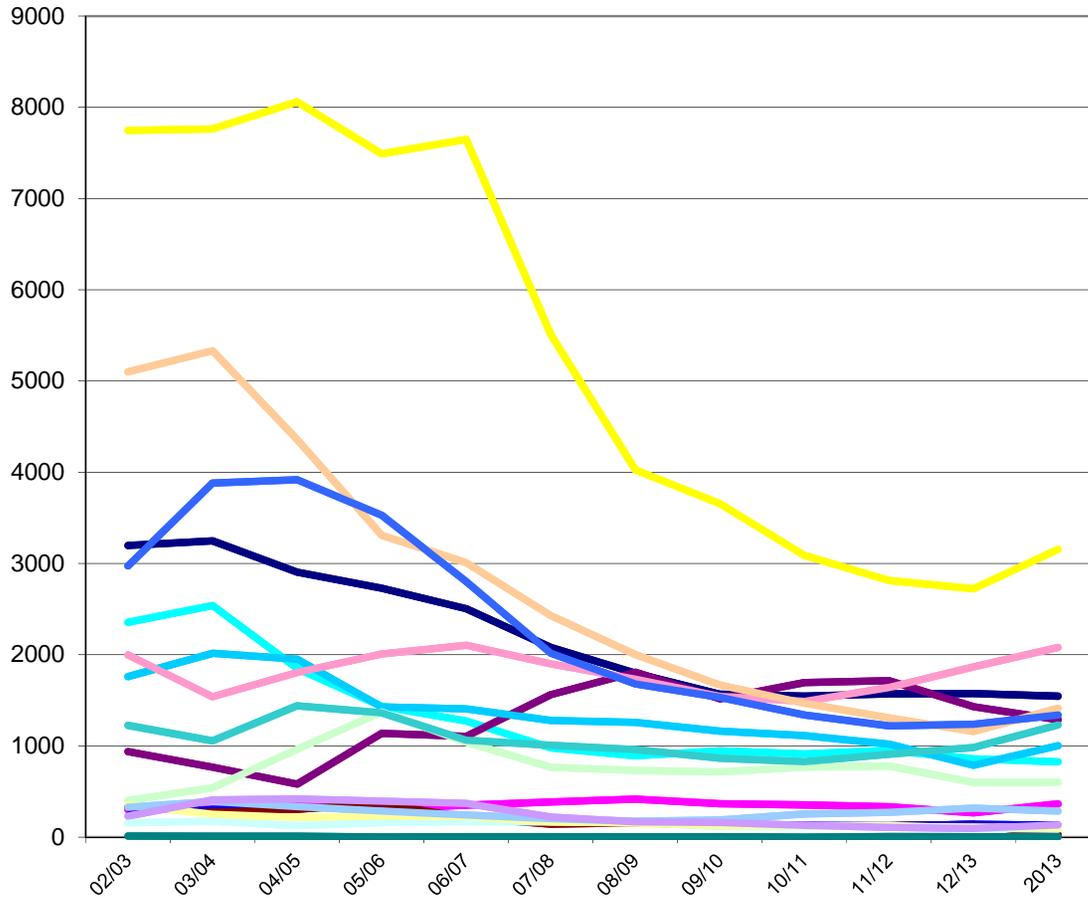
There is some debate over the degree to which these statistics are a true reflection of the crimes that occur or whether there may be reasons crimes go unreported. As well as crime recorded by the Police, there is also the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), formerly known as the British Crime 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 below Merseyside Police Force level, and therefore does not reflect crime and disorder trends in Wirral.

- Whilst various crime types have risen in Wirral during 2013/14, there were large increases in two crime categories in particular; criminal damage (21.4%) and shoplifting (28.1%). Together these two high volume crime types have played a significant role in the increase in overall crime accounting for over one third (33.9%) of all crimes in Wirral during 2013/14, of which criminal damage comprised 20.3%, (over 1 in 5) and shoplifting 13.6%.

Violence and Acquisitive crime have decreased by approximately 40% and 60% respectively over the last 10 years in Wirral but increased by 10% over 2013/14.

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**Figure2: Wirral Crime Trends by Crime Category by Financial Year from 2002/03 to 2012/13
(followed by calendar year for 2013)**



- All other theft offences
- Bicycle theft
- Criminal damage and arson
- Domestic burglary
- Drug offences
- Fraud offences to 2012/13
- Homicide
- Miscellaneous crimes against society
- Non-domestic burglary
- Possession of weapons offences
- Public order offences
- Robbery
- Sexual offences
- Shoplifting
- Theft from the person
- Vehicle offences
- Violence with injury
- Violence without injury
- All other theft offences
- Bicycle theft
- Criminal damage and arson
- Domestic burglary
- Drug offences
- Fraud offences to 2012/13
- Homicide
- Miscellaneous crimes against society
- Non-domestic burglary
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- Robbery
- Sexual offences
- Shoplifting
- Theft from the person
- Vehicle offences
- Violence with injury
- Violence without injury

Crime and disorder themes

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 almost half of all crime 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. 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 2013/14 communities on Wirral reported 232 hate crimes to the Police, comprising 14% of all reported hate crime on Merseyside.

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 71% in Wirral, 83% in Merseyside and 82% nationally, followed by sexual orientation, 13% in Wirral, 10% in Merseyside and 10% nationally and then disability which comprised 12% in Wirral, 4% in Merseyside and 3% nationally.

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-report-it-stop-it>

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.

[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 2013/14 there were 1,173 such offences in Wirral and 5,153 in Merseyside. This was a year on year increase of 18% in Wirral from 998 in 2012/13 and 14% in Merseyside from 4,595 respectively. The proportion of domestic abuse in Merseyside which occurs in Wirral is roughly in line with the population at 23%. It is not possible to say whether increased *reporting* of domestic abuse reflects an *actual* increase, or if it represents a reduction in under-reporting.

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 case management process to look at high risk cases of reported domestic violence with points being scored on a standard risk assessment form. During 2013/14 there were 634 high risk domestic abuse victims referred, of which 18% had been a repeat referral from the previous 12 months. The average repeat rate has been maintained from the previous year 2012/13 where it was also 18%. This compares with the repeat rate in Merseyside of 23%, the North West of 26% and nationally, 24%. Between 2013/2014, the number of high risk referrals dropped marginally from 653 to 634. This came from 634 referrals of which 52% came from the Police, 1072 Children were involved.

Sexual Offences

Reports of sexual offences increased in Wirral and nationally, and this is widely believed to be a consequence of accusations against high profile personalities as part of 'Operation Yewtree' which commenced October 2012, following decades of sexual abuse offences perpetrated by the British media personality Jimmy Saville. During 2012/13 there was a 15% year on year increase in reported sexual offences in Wirral and the subsequent year there was an equivalent reduction. As with the national picture and as reported anecdotally by Victim Support this is likely to be part of the 'Yewtree affect' where victims have been given the confidence to report previously unreported, often historic, sexual offences.

Alcohol and Crime

Alcohol was a causal or contributory factor in 10% of all Wirral's recorded crime during 2013/14, a slight reduction from 11% in 2012/13. Where the crime involves any kind of violence the average percentage deemed as 'alcohol fuelled' rises to 25% and where that violence causes injury over 50% of crimes will be alcohol fuelled. During 2013/14 1, 441 assault victims required treatment at Arrowe Park A&E (Accident and Emergency Department).

This is a slight increase (6 more victims), than the previous year. 67% were male and 51% aged between 15-29 years. 35% of assaults were recorded as occurring in a public place and 17% were recorded as occurring in the home. 28% of assaults were reported to have occurred

in Birkenhead Town Centre. The majority (59%) of assault victims reported being attacked by one attacker. 91% of people attending A&E had not consumed alcohol; however for assault victims, 49% 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 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 10% of anti-social behaviour reports include 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, (2013/14), offending rates were reduced by between 63% and 73%.

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.

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