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## Safer Solihull

Involving local people in keeping Solihull safe

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## Safer Solihull

## Strategic Assessment 2021

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## Introduction

This report will aim to provide Solihull Community Safety Partnership with an overview of the 12 month period of October 2019/20 so to support strategic decisions for the next year. Both the issues already occurred and those emerging will be discussed. This report will focus on key themes of violence, Solihull's youth cohort (24 and Under), Solihull's older cohort (75+), Solihull's BAME cohort and Mental Health, identifying crime trends and potential vulnerabilities presented within these themes.

### Covid-19

Over the last 12 months the international emergence of Covid-19 caused countries to go into national lockdowns throughout the early part of 2020, with the UK going into full lockdown on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Depending on the severity of the virus, restrictions varied across countries with the UK moving to tier structures and local restrictions. The unpredictable nature of the virus has also meant restrictions have been continuously altered and updated as new scientific evidence is presented. This has inevitably impacted a multitude of community safety issues including, but not exclusive to, health, crime, social services and education.

In conjunction with the physical impacts of Covid-19 the impacts of the virus have been acknowledged nationally as being detrimental to mental health and other individual issues. The physical aspects include the impact from contraction of Covid-19 or alterations in medical services such as tests or treatment delays. Some of the mental health issues exacerbated were the anxiety caused by fear of contracting the virus, grief for those who lost individuals to the virus and issues influenced by the social isolation of lockdown restrictions. As well as this the lockdown impacted individuals as companies faced difficulties, employees faced job losses and financial security declined for many.

As well as impacting individuals, the pandemic affected communities across the country both influencing positive works such as community volunteering to help those in need but also contributing to rising tensions, particularly in relation to covid-19 breaches. Tensions have also been enhanced due to the perceived inequalities observed during the pandemic including: the health disparity for BAME communities in the severity of the virus, job security within certain industries e.g. hospitality and varying restrictions across borders. In addition to this community services had to continue to operate though many had to alter their service provision routes, and work with a reduced level of staffing.

Overall crime declined when national lockdown was introduced with the force seeing a dip in offences for the month of April. ONS acknowledged that particular offences lessened due to lack of opportunity (such as residential burglary or public place offences), whereas other offences (such as computer

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misuse, drug offences and fraud) increased. The ONS also highlighted that Domestic Abuse and helpline calls increased during the pandemic, indicating an increased level of hidden crime.<sup>1</sup>

## West Midlands Context

West Midlands Police is the second largest police force in the country, covering an area of 348 square miles and serving a population of almost 2.8 million - it is the 3rd most densely populated region in England. The region sits at the very heart of the country and covers the three major cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton. It also includes the busy and thriving districts of Sandwell, Walsall, Solihull and Dudley. Leisure, retail and conference amenities, together with Premiership and Championship football teams, attract millions of visitors annually.<sup>2</sup>

Addressing community safety issues within the West Midlands is ever-challenging due largely to the diversity of its population. The region hosts areas of both extremely high deprivation and low deprivation, all with differing needs and challenges. There is also a typically younger population with lower than average education levels and a 'super-diversity' in which different cultures bring different expectations and engagement, further presenting a need for complex but complimentary approaches for all.<sup>3</sup>

The region also has two significant events upcoming: Coventry City of Culture and The Commonwealth Games 2022. Whilst both of these events will attract significant travel and prosperity into the areas, they also bring with them increased security requirements which may impact the overall community safety of the surrounding areas and businesses. The departure of the UK from the EU is also likely to cause further tensions nationally and within communities due to differing political views, and as the effects of Brexit begin to take place.

*"There are many uncertainties caused by the UK leaving the European Union. It is not known exactly what the positive or negative impact will be but economic modelling of Brexit over a 15 year period indicates that the North East and West Midlands would see the biggest slowdown in growth and could significantly cut manufacturing exports and cause job losses."*<sup>4</sup>

## Local Context

Solihull has a 5 year strategic council plan (2020 – 2025) detailing 5 priorities to be addressed over the 5 year period throughout the longer stride of the seven year time period originally outlined by Solihull (short step changes in the 2 years of 2018-2020 and the longer stride of 5 years 2020-2025).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/coronavirusandcrimeinenglandandwales/august2020>

<sup>2</sup> WMP Force Strategic Assessment 2018/19

<sup>3</sup> Figures below are from Protecting Vulnerable People, WMP Force Management Statement 2018

<sup>4</sup> The Impact of Brexit on Birmingham and the West Midlands, Birmingham City Council 2018

Solihull's strengths were identified as: having a good overall economy, rural environment (2/3 of the borough being green belt), vibrant sense of community amongst its residents with a notable 5,000 registered (and numerous more unregistered) community volunteers acting throughout the pandemic, and a population growing in diversity with estimates suggesting 1 in 5 residents will be of BAME ethnicities by 2029. In contrast to this Solihull's potential challenges were also highlighted: a growing population resulting in likely increased demand on its services, an aging population which may impose demand on health and social care services, along with some 'cluster' sectors which are experiencing decreased demand (such as non-food retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure, construction, passenger and freight transport and automotive manufacturing and supply chain).

In light of the recent pandemic, there is also an acknowledgement that many community aspects will be altered and face future uncertainty whilst the ramifications of the Coronavirus are still being experienced, both nationally and throughout the Solihull borough.

Considering these, the five priorities set were:

- Build a Vibrant Economy
- Promoting and Delivering Social Value
- Enabling Communities to Thrive
- Actioning the Climate Change Declaration
- Improving Skills and Access to Good Work

#### **Solihull Place Survey 2020:<sup>5</sup>**

Solihull Place Survey is carried out by Solihull Council. In 2020, the survey gathered 740 responses from Solihull residents about their local neighbourhood, their participation in civic life, community safety and their wellbeing. Overall, the majority of respondents (89%) stated they were satisfied with Solihull as a place to live, this is higher than the national proportion and an increase from the previous year. However a higher percentage of respondents thought the local area has gotten worse over the last 2 years, in comparison to the national responses. Crime, Traffic Congestion and Road and Pavement Repairs were the top three things voted which need improving across the borough.

A low percentage of people stated they had increased formal volunteering (16%) whereas 41% of people stated they had increased the level of informal help in their local community, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. 56% of respondents agree that people in their neighbourhood look out for each other more than they did at the start of 2020 (30% agree strongly), as opposed to 21% who

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<sup>5</sup> Solihull Place Survey 2020 – Received 02/12/2020

disagree, suggesting that the pandemic has positively impacted on feelings of community togetherness for a significant proportion of the population.

Solihull North was shown to have the lowest level of feeling safe within their local area, both in the day and after dark. Notably, whereas Solihull West and Solihull East saw an increase in safety perceptions after dark in comparison to 2018, Solihull North showed a continued decline (from 2014). Of those who feel unsafe in Solihull after dark the top Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues were noted as rubbish and litter, people using or dealing drugs and vehicle nuisance. Responses also indicated that the ASB types of people using or dealing drugs, vandalism and vehicle nuisance were a greater problem in North Solihull than elsewhere.

### **Impact of Covid-19 on Solihull:**

Covid-19 has reinforced, and in some cases increased, particular inequalities throughout the UK. This is both in regards to the social determinants of health and financial impact of the pandemic.

Whilst Solihull has a low level of deprivation as a borough, in comparison to other England Local Authorities, it also hosts several areas of high deprivation which are largely concentrated within the borough. The Solihull communities that are most at risk from a further extension of the inequality gap, as a result of Covid-19, are those of high deprivation and containing large numbers of people that are vulnerable to the negative health, economic and social effects of the current crisis. Between 2007 and 2019 the inequality gap seen in Solihull North compared to the rest of the borough regarding income deprivation affecting children, employment, health and access to housing & services widened.<sup>6</sup> This may widen further as a result of the pandemic, indicating a vulnerability for some of Solihull's residents.

The pandemic has already had a significant impact financially. In August 2020 the UK announced it had gone into recession, many business sectors have also struggled to remain open which in turn has led to several closures and job losses throughout the country. Those identified as possibly vulnerable to the economic effects of Covid-19 are: women, young people, low income individuals/households, employees of newly formed businesses and those self-employed. In comparison to the UK, Solihull has a historically higher GDP output, higher productivity, above average job growth, above average wages and earnings, a higher proportion of high growth firms, a better than average business survival rate and a workforce that is more likely to have higher qualifications. However, in view of Solihull's population structure and recent claimant count whereby the number of claimants doubled between March and June 2020<sup>7</sup>, there are still likely areas of financial vulnerability within Solihull.

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<sup>6</sup> The Impact of Covid-19 on Inequalities – Solihull Council August 2020

<sup>7</sup> The Impact of Covid-19 on Inequalities – Solihull Council August 2020

## Methodology and Limitations

This Terms of Reference outlines the key points agreed by all seven Community Safety Partnerships/Heads of Community Safety as to how the Strategic Assessments (for the 2020/21 business year) will be prepared and what the content and structure of the documents will include. It will ensure that the Partnerships Intelligence Liaison Team knows what is expected and the Community Safety Partnerships know what to expect.

Following feedback and a workshop between the PILT and Heads of Community Safety, the wishes of each Community Safety Partnerships were collated and summarised. It is proposed that this summary will form the basis for each strategic assessment; the framework and section headers will remain consistent with the content changing to ensure relevance to each local authority area.

Throughout this report there are several data sources included; West Midlands Police Recorded Crime and individual data, West Midlands Police Calls for Service, Census 2011, Office of National Statistics Mid-Year Population Estimates 2019, Triage Team Data, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Office of National Statistics Rape and Sexual Offence Data year ending March 2020. External data sources time periods may vary, however the document and analysis will typically cover the time period of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Alongside this there are qualitative overviews provided by key individuals within particular functions of Community Safety included throughout the report to add validity to the findings.

With the exception of 'offenders' within the 75+ cohort, any referral to "offenders" from West Midlands Police data within this report refers to those which have been detected up to October 2020, therefore due to on-going investigations and procedures these numbers may vary by the time of the reports' dissemination. Those in the 75+ year's cohort have included suspects due to low numbers of detected offenders disenabling analysis, therefore consideration is needed as these suspects may not be charged.

Within the last year, West Midlands Police have introduced a new data system. This has also resulted in some new measurements and reclassifications of previous measures which will need to be considered when comparing this analysis to previous documents. For example: the calls for service data within this document is only available for 6 full months covering 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.



## Key Findings

### **Total Recorded Crime and Overview**

- In total there were 15,503 offences recorded in Solihull between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, a decrease of 556 offences from the previous year (3.5% decline).
- Typically, Solihull mirrored the overall force performance in regards to specific offences however offences where a larger increase was seen in Solihull were Cause intentional harass/alarm/distress, Send Communication/Article conveying a threatening message, Malicious Wounding, Other Criminal Damage and Possession of Cannabis.
- Both Domestic Violence and Hate Crime offences increased to a higher proportion in Solihull than the region, however Vulnerable Adult Crimes increased to a lesser percentage.
- Two neighbourhoods were recorded in the top three for total recorded crime, calls for service and crime severity; Chelmsley Wood and Kingshurst and Fordbridge.
- Two top issues were highlighted from both Solihull's Place Survey 2020 and the West Midlands Community Safety Survey 2020: crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, showing a clear consensus amongst public perception.

### **Violence**

- Overall violence accounted for over ¼ of Solihull's total recorded crime for 2019/20. Though this is a proportional increase from the previous year it accounts for a lesser percentage than the regions' violence.
- Youth violence whereby a victim was aged 24 and Under accounted for 37.9% of total violence in Solihull 2019/20.
- Child Abuse accounted for 30.7% of the violence offences with young victims whereas Domestic Abuse accounted for 17.5%, cumulatively these accounted for almost half (48.2%).
- Domestic Abuse (DA) rose substantially throughout Solihull (37.5% increase), whilst this increase was also seen in youth victims it was to a lesser percentage (21%).
- In view of DA's top outcome, results of victim and offender profiles and the estimated social and economic cost of DA nationally, an intelligence gap was noted regarding the hidden aspect of DA.
- Rape offences showed a decline of over 20% whilst Other Sexual Offences showed an increase of 10% or more in comparison to the previous year.
- Over ⅔ of 'Other' Sexual Offences were recorded against victims aged 24 and Under, showing the prevalence of these offences to be within the youth cohort.
- Females accounted for 81% of youth victims for other sexual offences.
- Since the change in recording for harassment and stalking offences there has been a steady increase, this has continued in 2019/20 with 60.1% increase from the previous year.
- The highest amount of stalking or harassment offences recorded by a young individual was 6 whereas the most by an adult was 9.

### **Youth Cohort (16-24)**

- In total there were 1,734 offences recorded with victims of this age group in October 2019/20, this accounted for 14% of Solihull's total victims.
- The proportion of youth victims 16-24 years is higher than the proportion they account for Solihull's total population (2019 mid-year estimates).
- Almost 2/3 of the offences recorded against this cohort was violence against the person.
- A more distinct gender divide was shown within this cohort with more females recorded than males.
- Females top offences were typically assault offences and a combination of harassment, theft and threatening message offences as their most common whereas male victims of this age had a wider variety.
- Notably from the age of 20 vehicle offences became more prominent for male victims indicating a shift in motivation.
- Similarly to youth victims, violence against the person accounted for the majority of youth offenders' offences (29%).
- Burglary offences were commonly recorded for the top repeat offenders; of the top four repeat offenders three had recorded burglary offences.

### **Adult Cohort (75+)**

- Solihull victims of 75+ years accounted for 3.1% of Solihull's total victims with 379 offences recorded. This is a decline from the previous year when 434 offences accounted for 3.6%.
- The proportion of elderly victims is lesser than the proportion this cohort accounts for Solihull's population.
- Acquisition was shown to be a motivator towards all victims of this cohort with Burglary Residential accounting for 26.4%, followed by theft offences which accounted for 20%.
- 72.3% of offences on victims of this cohort were committed at a residential type location signalling a vulnerability within the home.
- Domestic Abuse accounted for 41.4% of the offences with a defendant or suspect aged 75+ years in Solihull.

### **BAME Cohort**

- 13.6% of Solihull's total victims were of BAME ethnicities. This is a slightly higher representation than that of BAME in the overall Solihull population (11%).
- Hate crime was shown to be a significant factor for BAME victims as they account for over half of the total hate crime (53.9%). The offence type also attributed to 11% of the total crime recorded by BAME victims, in comparison to the 2.9% recorded for offences on all victims.

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- Whilst the majority of hate crime offences on the BAME cohort were non-violent offences, in view of the top two locations being outdoors this indicates a confidence amongst offenders in publicly expressing these discriminatory views.
- There was a more distinct gender divide in BAME victims than in the overall victim profile with males accounting for 57.3%.
- The most common outcome for 2019/20 offences recorded by all BAME victims aged 17 and under was case closure with no suspect identified.
- 15.6% of Solihull's offenders were of BAME ethnicities.
- Though the top ethnicity recorded was "Asian" which is similar to the top ethnicity within Solihull's BAME population, the proportional divide was not consistent for those of Black ethnicity as 1/3 of BAME offenders were accounted for by those of Black ethnicity.
- With the exception of those aged 10-17 years and 18-24 years Theft offences were the top offence type for each age group, for 10-17 years the top offence was Robbery and 18-24 years it was Possession of Drugs.

### ***Mental Health***

- Mind.org identified four risk factors which can impact poor mental health; Trauma and Stressful Life Events, Poverty, Unemployment and Housing Insecurity, Social Isolation and Loneliness and Discrimination and Inequality. In view of Solihull's population structure and IMD deprivation data, there is a vulnerability presented for some of Solihull's population.
- Mental health was already understood to have an interlinking relationship with several aspects of community safety, however this is understood to have been impacted and possibly exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Individuals or groups who were already in circumstances whereby mental health would be strained were thought to be inadvertently impacted by the pandemic, as these circumstances worsened pre-existing issues.
- 1 in 8 children aged 5-19 years nationally were found to have at least one mental disorder in the Mental Health of Children and Young People Survey 2017.
- The 2018/19 JSNA reported that Solihull's rate of hospital admissions for Mental Health Conditions in children was higher than England's average but with a significant difference between genders (males being higher).
- Data from police calls for service and the Triage Team both suggested an entanglement for mental health and provision services, however the overall figures were not thought to be completely representative therefore identifying a potential intelligence gap.

## Performance

### Total Recorded Crime<sup>8</sup>

The unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic have inevitably impacted a multitude of aspects of community safety, if not all, including crime with some offences such as Domestic Abuse drastically increasing and others such as residential burglary decreasing. Consequently this year's performance is not comparable to that of previous years. Table 1 shows a comparison of the force and Solihull's performance for the top offences (top 78%) and offence types and calls for service in order to gauge where Solihull has performed well and where their needs of focus are. The offences which have followed the trend of the force are highlighted with grey boxes, those that have increased where the force has decreased are highlighted with red boxes and those which have decreased where the force has increased are highlighted with green boxes.

**In total there were 15,503 offences recorded in Solihull for October 2019/20.**

| Solihull  |         |          |         |            |        |        | Force    | Comparison |
|---|---------|----------|---------|------------|--------|--------|----------|------------|
| Offence   | 2019/20 | % of TRC | 2018/19 | Difference | % Diff | % Diff | to Force |            |
| THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE  | 1312    | 8.5%     | 1539    | -227       | -14.7% | -24.9% |          |            |
| COMMON ASSAULT  | 1269    | 8.2%     | 959     | 310        | 32.3%  | 31.5%  |          |            |
| THEFT FROM SHOP OR STALL  | 1009    | 6.5%     | 1293    | -284       | -22.0% | -31.2% |          |            |
| ASSAULT OCCASION ABH  | 1008    | 6.5%     | 995     | 13         | 1.3%   | 1.0%   |          |            |
| BURGLARY RESIDENTIAL  | 876     | 5.7%     | 1204    | -328       | -27.2% | -23.2% |          |            |
| HARASSMENT  | 608     | 3.9%     | 413     | 195        | 47.2%  | 51.7%  |          |            |
| THEFT OTHER   | 607     | 3.9%     | 744     | -137       | -18.4% | -19.3% |          |            |
| CAUSE INT HARASSMENT/ALARM/DISTRESS                                     | 557     | 3.6%     | 335     | 222        | 66.3%  | 55.3%  |          |            |
| CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO VEHICLE  | 547     | 3.5%     | 659     | -112       | -17.0% | -14.7% |          |            |
| THEFT OF MOTOR VEHICLE  | 529     | 3.4%     | 664     | -135       | -20.3% | -11.5% |          |            |
| SEND COMMUNICATION/ARTICLE CONVEYING A THREATENING MESSAGE              | 485     | 3.1%     | 328     | 157        | 47.9%  | 36.0%  |          |            |
| MAKE OFF W/O PAYMENT  | 475     | 3.1%     | 814     | -339       | -41.6% | -36.0% |          |            |
| INTERFERE WITH VEHICLE  | 391     | 2.5%     | 408     | -17        | -4.2%  | -17.3% |          |            |
| ATTEMPT BURGLARY RESIDENTIAL  | 329     | 2.1%     | 395     | -66        | -16.7% | -21.1% |          |            |
| CRIMINAL DAMAGE - RESIDENCE   | 327     | 2.1%     | 384     | -57        | -14.8% | 1.3%   |          |            |
| FEAR/PROVOCATION OF VIOLENCE  | 307     | 2.0%     | 256     | 51         | 19.9%  | 21.1%  |          |            |
| MALICIOUS WOUNDING  | 270     | 1.7%     | 236     | 34         | 14.4%  | 2.7%   |          |            |
| OTHER CRIMINAL DAMAGE   | 265     | 1.7%     | 193     | 72         | 37.3%  | 8.4%   |          |            |
| WILFULLY ASSAULT YOUNG PERSON UNDER 16                                  | 248     | 1.6%     | 293     | -45        | -15.4% | -9.1%  |          |            |
| BURGLARY BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY   | 244     | 1.6%     | 347     | -103       | -29.7% | -25.5% |          |            |
| ROBBERY-PERSONAL PROPERTY   | 228     | 1.5%     | 285     | -57        | -20.0% | -19.4% |          |            |
| POSSESS CONTROL DRUG-CLASS B-CANNABIS                                   | 203     | 1.3%     | 161     | 42         | 26.1%  | 6.1%   |          |            |
| THEFT OF P/CYCLE  | 149     | 1.0%     | 166     | -17        | -10.2% | -22.4% |          |            |
| SEND COMMUNICATION/ARTICLE CONVEYING INDECENT/GROSSLY OFFENSIVE MESSAGE | 138     | 0.9%     | 94      | 44         | 46.8%  | 57.4%  |          |            |
| Solihull  |         |          |         |            |        |        | Force    | Comparison |
| Offence Type  | 2019/20 | % of TRC | 2018/19 | Difference | % Diff | % Diff | to Force |            |
| Child Abuse   | 741     | 4.8%     | 757     | -16        | -2.1%  | -1.7%  |          |            |
| Domestic Violence   | 2474    | 16.0%    | 1799    | 675        | 37.5%  | 29.5%  |          |            |
| Hate Crime  | 367     | 2.4%     | 272     | 95         | 34.9%  | 30.1%  |          |            |
| Other   | 11862   | 76.5%    | 13176   | -1314      | -10.0% | -7.7%  |          |            |
| Vulnerable Adult  | 59      | 0.4%     | 55      | 4          | 7.3%   | 29.0%  |          |            |

Table 1 - Performance Table

Table 1 shows that for individual offences Solihull typically followed the overall force's trend whether increasing or decreasing in comparison to last year, with the exception of Criminal Damage to Residence which decreased in Solihull but showed a small increase for the force overall. Despite

<sup>8</sup> **Caveat** – Due to reclassifications of the offence "Criminal Damage to Dwelling" to "Criminal Damage to Residence" these offences have been collated in all datasets to "Criminal Damage – Residence" in order to highlight the most accurate trends.

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this, the findings generally indicate that Solihull typically mirrored the regions' activity throughout the last 12 months and the pandemic. The offence types also show little difference. That said, Solihull increased to a lesser extent than the force for vulnerable adult offences. When considering that Solihull's population is marginally older than average this is notable.

Whilst most of the top Solihull individual offences followed the performance trends of the force, there were some notable offences which increased by a greater proportion than the force' (i.e. increases in Solihull were 10% more than the proportionate increases seen across the region). These offences were Cause intentional harass/alarm/distress, Send Communication/Article conveying a threatening message, Malicious Wounding, Other Criminal Damage and Possession of Cannabis. This does not necessarily indicate emerging issues within Solihull but highlights particular vulnerabilities apparent in Solihull which are not featured as strongly across the region.

### Distribution of Crime across Solihull Borough by Neighbourhood

Figure 1 gives a breakdown of how Total Recorded Crime was distributed around the borough. There are 19 police neighbourhoods which make up Solihull Borough.

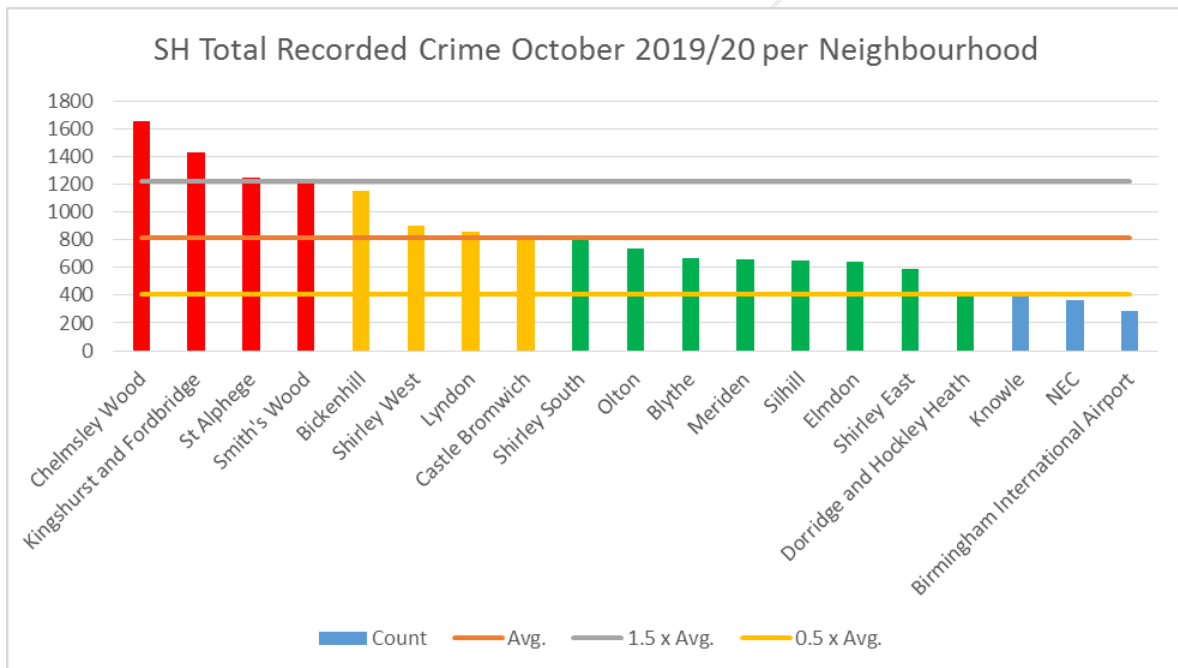


Figure 1 - Crime per Neighbourhood

When compared to the average number per neighbourhood Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge, St Alphege and Smith's Wood were 1.5 times above the average. These are coloured red. Compared to the last strategic assessment St Alphege has ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rather than 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Smith's Wood has recorded over 1.5 times the average whereas last year it was only above the average. As well as this, Shirley South recorded under the average whereas in 2018/19 it was above and the NEC and Airport areas are under half the average whilst Dorridge and Hockley Heath are

now over half the average. Overall the top four neighbourhoods recorded 35.9% of Solihull's Total Recorded Crime for October 2019/20.

### Distribution of calls for service across the borough

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of calls for service per policing neighbourhood<sup>9</sup> and signals demand distribution across the borough. These calls exclude crime, admin and task calls.

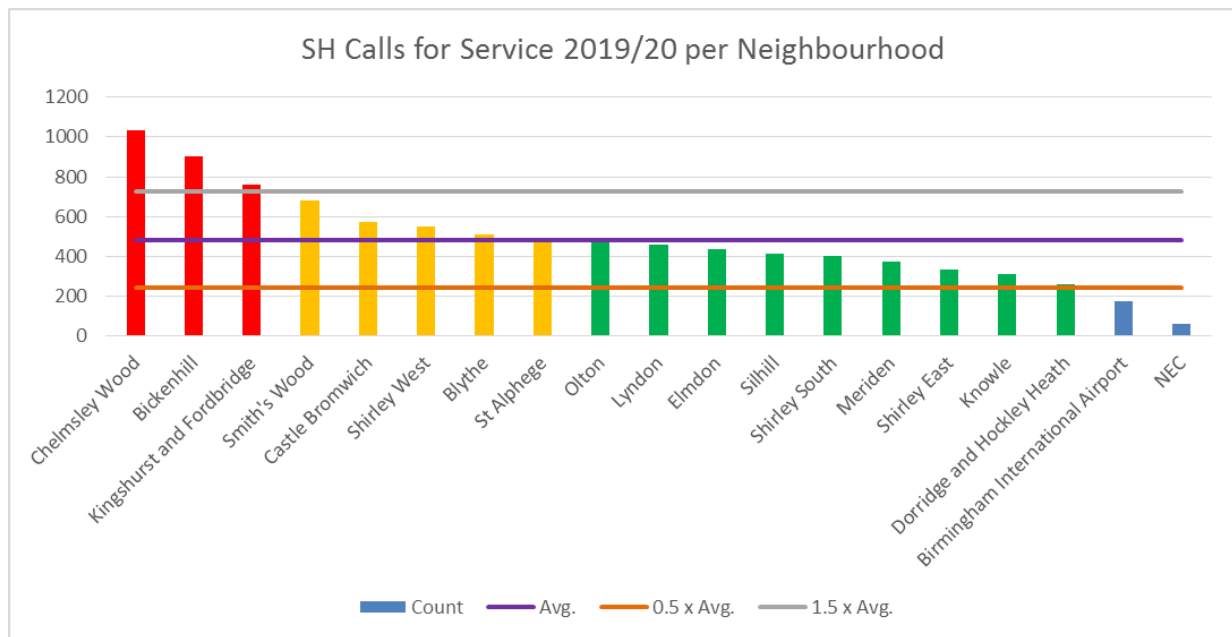


Figure 2 - Calls for Service per Neighbourhood

Three neighbourhoods recorded over 1.5 x the average calls for service: Chelmsley Wood, Bickenhill and Kingshurst and Fordbridge, these have been highlighted in red. A further five neighbourhoods recorded above the average: Smith's Wood, Castle Bromwich, Shirley West, Blythe and St Alphege shown in orange. There were only two neighbourhoods which recorded under half the average: Birmingham Airport and NEC, cumulatively equating to 2.6% of all calls.

The 3 top neighbourhoods accounted for 29.3% of the borough's call for service.

<sup>9</sup> Calls For Service – 30/12/2020

## Distribution of Solihull's Crime Severity

The below table illustrates the severity of crime per Solihull neighbourhood, colour-coding the severity with rates higher than 16,000 being **red**, 11,000 - 16,000 being **orange**, and below 11,000 being **green**. The average rate was calculated to be 11,466.83. *For this analysis the policing neighbourhoods of NEC and Birmingham International Airport were excluded due to having no residents.*

An index has been devised for each neighbourhood's performance in comparison to Solihull's overall Crime Harm Rate. A neighbourhood with the same crime harm rate as Solihull overall would have the value of **1.0**, a neighbourhood with half the crime harm rate as Solihull overall would have the value of **0.5** and a neighbourhood with double the crime harm rate as Solihull overall would have the value of **2.0**. Solihull's index in comparison to the force was 0.7 (the lowest across the force).

Table 2 is provided by the West Midlands Police Geo-Spatial Team using the following method:

- Each specific offence is allocated a weighting score of severity, based on average length of sentencing
- The offences in each neighbourhood were totalled to give an overall score
- Crime severity rate is calculated through the following sum: Crime Severity X 1000 then divided by the Mid-Year Estimates 2019 population

| Neighbourhood                     | Crime Harm per 1000 Population | Neighbourhood Compared to NPU | Neighbourhood        | Crime Harm per 1000 Population | Neighbourhood Compared to NPU |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| SHAA - Bickenhill                 | 15933.36                       | 1.3                           | SHBA - Elmdon        | 10697.97                       | 0.9                           |
| SHAC - Blythe                     | 6376.93                        | 0.5                           | SHBB - Lyndon        | 10649.30                       | 0.9                           |
| SHAD - Castle Bromwich            | 10562.24                       | 0.9                           | SHBC - Olton         | 9528.17                        | 0.8                           |
| SHAE - Chelmsley Wood             | 18658.80                       | 1.6                           | SHBD - Shirley East  | 7067.81                        | 0.6                           |
| SHAF - Dorridge and Hockley Heath | 6341.01                        | 0.5                           | SHBE - Shirley South | 8984.97                        | 0.8                           |
| SHAH - Kingshurst and Fordbridge  | 20788.35                       | 1.8                           | SHBF - Shirley West  | 12173.96                       | 1.0                           |
| SHAJ - Knowle                     | 7336.34                        | 0.6                           | SHBG - Silhill       | 8308.78                        | 0.7                           |
| SHAK - Meriden                    | 8611.86                        | 0.7                           | SHBH - St Alphege    | 14710.86                       | 1.2                           |
| SHAM - Smith's Wood               | 18205.33                       | 1.5                           |                      |                                |                               |

*Table 2 - Crime Severity Table 2019/20*

## Horizon Scanning

Table 3 highlights offences that were not recorded last year but have recorded 3 or more offences this year. Whilst this can signal emerging issues, consideration is needed of the reclassifications or introduction of new offences.

| Offence   | 2019/20 | 2018/19 |
|---|---------|---------|
| CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO A BUILDING - BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY                | 24      | 0       |
| EMERGENCY WORKER - S.47 ASSAULT OCCASIONING ACTUAL BODILY HARM        | 7       | 0       |
| ARRANGING OR FACILITATING THE COMMISSION OF A CHILD SEX OFFENCE       | 5       | 0       |
| ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE / FACILITATE THE COMMISSION OF A CHILD SEX OFFENCE | 4       | 0       |
| ABSTRACT ELECTRICITY  | 3       | 0       |
| POSSESS IND PHOTO CHILD DISTRIBUTION                                  | 3       | 0       |
| ATTEMPT CRIMINAL DAMAGE OTHER   | 3       | 0       |

Table 3 - Emerging crime trends

When considering offences within the crime tree classification, Solihull performed differently to the West Midlands in one group of offences (Solihull increased where the force did not); Other Sexual Offences. Sexual offences are typically understood to be a hidden crime, therefore increased reporting could indicate a higher confidence in the criminal justice system to and support services. Conversely, the offence groups in which Solihull declined where the force did not were: Arson, Possession of Weapons and Rape.

Further analysis of West Midlands Police Systems highlights the offence types of Domestic Violence and Hate Crime to be those which have performed over the estimated average year to date.<sup>10</sup>

## Community Safety Survey

Below are the results of the Community Safety Partnership Survey, which was completed by members of the public across the West Midlands. For both the region and Solihull individually Crime and ASB were highlighted as the top two areas of concern, remaining consistent from the previous years' findings. In total Solihull received 879 responses, accounting for 15.3% of the survey's total responses.

| Issue Type  | Count of Responses |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Crime (e.g. vehicle theft, burglary, robbery)</b>            | 450                |
| <b>Anti-Social Behaviour (e.g. neighbour disputes/speeding)</b> | 170                |
| <b>Covid-19 Breaches</b>  | 47                 |
| <b>Substance Misuse (e.g. drugs/alcohol)</b>                    | 46                 |
| <b>Traffic and Transport</b>                                    | 45                 |
| <b>Gang Related Crime</b>                                       | 29                 |
| <b>Internet Crime</b>   | 25                 |



|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Violence</b>   | <b>18</b>  |
| <b>Town Centre Safety</b>   | <b>12</b>  |
| <b>Terrorism</b>  | <b>11</b>  |
| <b>Other</b>  | <b>9</b>   |
| <b>Abuse and exploitation (e.g. Domestic abuse, slavery, child sexual exploitation)</b> | <b>8</b>   |
| <b>Fraud</b>  | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>Sexual Offences</b>  | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>879</b> |

Table 4 - Top Issue Community Survey Response 2020

The top two issues highlighted in the Community Safety Survey correlate with the Solihull Place Survey 2020, indicating an overarching public perception. In light of the pandemic and the complexities it has brought throughout the past year the category of Covid-19 breaches was added. Though it did not rank top as respondents first, second or third most important issue, Table 4 shows that it did have a prevalence amongst Solihull's public perception.

| Solihull                  |   |           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |           |
|---------------------------|---|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| Terminology               |   | 1 - Least | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 10 - Best |
| Hate Crime                | N | 74        | 57   | 55   | 42   | 151  | 68   | 149  | 157  | 61   | 65        |
|                           | % | 8.4       | 6.5  | 6.3  | 4.8  | 17.2 | 7.7  | 17.0 | 17.9 | 6.9  | 7.4       |
| Modern Slavery            | N | 98        | 51   | 66   | 61   | 143  | 93   | 126  | 136  | 49   | 56        |
|                           | % | 11.1      | 5.8  | 7.5  | 6.9  | 16.3 | 10.6 | 14.3 | 15.5 | 5.6  | 6.4       |
| Child Sexual Exploitation | N | 93        | 50   | 63   | 55   | 125  | 79   | 132  | 136  | 71   | 75        |
|                           | % | 10.6      | 5.7  | 7.2  | 6.3  | 14.2 | 9.0  | 15.0 | 15.5 | 8.1  | 8.5       |
| Radicalisation            | N | 106       | 57   | 65   | 64   | 148  | 100  | 116  | 121  | 53   | 49        |
|                           | % | 12.1      | 6.5  | 7.4  | 7.3  | 16.8 | 11.4 | 13.2 | 13.8 | 6.0  | 5.6       |
| Cyber crime               | N | 45        | 43   | 59   | 62   | 137  | 116  | 128  | 141  | 91   | 57        |
|                           | % | 5.1       | 4.9  | 6.7  | 7.1  | 15.6 | 13.2 | 14.6 | 16.0 | 10.4 | 6.5       |
| Female Genital Mutilation | N | 124       | 70   | 73   | 83   | 137  | 80   | 86   | 106  | 55   | 65        |
|                           | % | 14.1      | 8.0  | 8.3  | 9.4  | 15.6 | 9.1  | 9.8  | 12.1 | 6.3  | 7.4       |
| County lines              | N | 174       | 71   | 63   | 65   | 134  | 85   | 88   | 108  | 51   | 40        |
|                           | % | 19.8      | 8.1  | 7.2  | 7.4  | 15.2 | 9.7  | 10.0 | 12.3 | 5.8  | 4.6       |
| Gangs                     | N | 75        | 62   | 83   | 94   | 148  | 106  | 104  | 113  | 42   | 52        |
|                           | % | 8.5       | 7.1  | 9.4  | 10.7 | 16.8 | 12.1 | 11.8 | 12.9 | 4.8  | 5.9       |
| Psychoactive substances   | N | 162       | 102  | 109  | 94   | 118  | 81   | 87   | 67   | 27   | 32        |
|                           | % | 18.4      | 11.6 | 12.4 | 10.7 | 13.4 | 9.2  | 9.9  | 7.6  | 3.1  | 3.6       |
| Community Tensions        | N | 121       | 92   | 117  | 98   | 157  | 88   | 81   | 82   | 20   | 23        |
|                           | % | 13.8      | 10.5 | 13.3 | 11.1 | 17.9 | 10.0 | 9.2  | 9.3  | 2.3  | 2.6       |
| Hidden Crime              | N | 251       | 132  | 115  | 74   | 129  | 61   | 45   | 38   | 16   | 18        |
|                           | % | 28.6      | 15.0 | 13.1 | 8.4  | 14.7 | 6.9  | 5.1  | 4.3  | 1.8  | 2.0       |
| Honour Based Violence     | N | 161       | 99   | 91   | 91   | 124  | 89   | 80   | 68   | 37   | 39        |
|                           | % | 18.3      | 11.3 | 10.4 | 10.4 | 14.1 | 10.1 | 9.1  | 7.7  | 4.2  | 4.4       |
| Acquisitive Crime         | N | 342       | 99   | 90   | 68   | 85   | 62   | 42   | 34   | 22   | 35        |
|                           | % | 38.9      | 11.3 | 10.2 | 7.7  | 9.7  | 7.1  | 4.8  | 3.9  | 2.5  | 4.0       |

Table 5 - Solihull's Level of Understanding Community Survey 2020

*The higher proportion of answers for each terminology have been highlighted with a red colour scale.* The table above shows terminology and a scale of 1-10 which indicate Solihull's level of understanding for each term. Those in which there is a level of understanding are hate crime, modern slavery, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and cyber-crime. On the other hand, those in which the majority of responses were on the lower end of the scale were psychoactive substances, hidden crime and acquisitive crime.

Demographics:

- Solihull had 433 male respondents and 437 female.
- The most prominent age group for Solihull's respondents was 65+ years with 384 responses, typically the number of responses increased per age group until this age group.
  - Those aged 45 and over accounted for 85.7%.
- The majority of respondents described themselves as White ethnicity (92.8%)
- Only 43 respondents were registered as disabled.

*Overall these demographics are not wholly representative of Solihull's typical population. Though Solihull's population is typically older this shows an overrepresentation of those 65+ years, therefore consideration is needed when interpreting these results.*

## Violence (24 and Under)

### Solihull Picture

Violence can be described and measured in many ways. It can be analysed using the crime classification tree of ‘violence with injury’ or ‘violence without injury’. It can also be categorised as violence against the person within West Midlands Police systems. Violence can also be broken down into specific areas such as Youth Violence, Domestic Violence and knife crime.

Collectively the categories of “violence with injury”, “violence without injury”, “robbery”, “rape” and “homicide” add up to 4,110 offences. This equates to over ¼ of Solihull’s Total Recorded crime for the year 2019/20 (26.5%). Though this is a proportional increase from the previous year in Solihull this is a lesser proportion than violence accounted across the West Midlands as a whole (32.3%).

*This number is a minimum due to offences sitting within multiple categories e.g. the “Public Order” offence group can include threats of violence offences along with other non-violent offences. The categories included here are those which solely include violent offences.*

### Youth Violence

Youth includes those aged 24 and under, as defined by the United Nations<sup>11</sup>. Violence offences with a victim aged 24 and under in Solihull accounted for 37.9% of the total violence offences (1,558 offences) and 10% of all recorded crime for Solihull 2019/20. This is slightly more than the overall force in which victims of this age group accounted for 35.2% of violence. Below shows the top five offences for both violence with and violence without injury offences.

| Violence With Injury  |     | Violence Without Injury   |     |
|---|-----|---|-----|
| ASSAULT OCCASION ABH  | 337 | COMMON ASSAULT  | 321 |
| MALICIOUS WOUNDING  | 75  | WILFULLY ASSAULT YOUNG PERSON UNDER 16                                      | 236 |
| CAUSE GBH WITH INTENT   | 27  | WILFULLY NEGLECT YOUNG PERSON UNDER 16                                      | 77  |
| INFLECTING GBH WITHOUT INTENT   | 16  | WILFULLY EXPOSE YOUNG PERSON UNDER 16                                       | 62  |
| OWNER/ PERSON IN CHARGE OF DOG DANGEROUSLY OUT OF CONTROL CAUSING INJURY PERSON | 10  | ARRANGE OR FACILITATE TRAVEL OF ANOTHER PERSON WITH A VIEW TO EXPLOITATION  | 27  |
|   |     | ENGAGE IN CONTROLLING/COERCIVE BEHAVIOUR IN AN INTIMATE/FAMILY RELATIONSHIP | 27  |

Table 6 - Violence with or without Injury Top 5 Offence Breakdown

<sup>11</sup> Definon of Youth : <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

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For Violence with Injury offences, though there is a variety of offences within the top five ranging from dangerous animals to wounding, the clear majority is Assault Occ ABH which accounted for 68.6% of the total. For Violence without Injury offences the presence of child or domestic abuse related offences are prominent, though 213 of the Common Assault offences were classed as 'other' violence.

- 133 of the individuals recorded more than one violence offence within the 12 months (9.6% of the total number of youth victim individuals). The highest number of offences recorded by one individual was 5.
- Child Abuse accounted for 30.7% of the violence offences with young victims whereas Domestic Abuse accounted for 17.5%, cumulatively these accounted for almost half (48.2%).
- Whilst female victims saw a consecutive rise in each age group, male victims show two age groups to be most prominent; 10-14 years and 15-19 years.
- The genders also differ as males see declines when entering the 5-9 years and 20-24 years age groups.

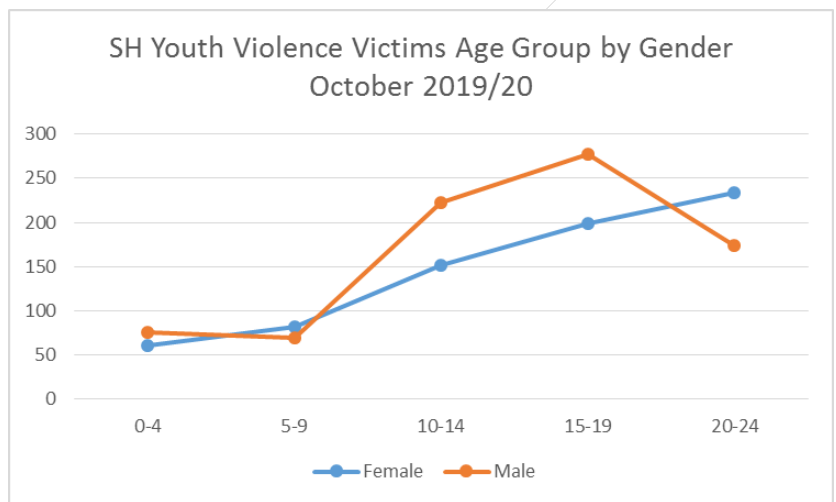


Figure 3 - Youth Violence Victims Age Group by Gender

### Inference

The majority of females youth violence offences for the ages of 20-24 are domestic violence related (61.1%). Not only does this signal the prevalence of domestic violence amongst young females, further analysis shows the emergence of domestic violence within the age group of 15-19 years as offences typically increased towards the older ages within the age group. This should be considered when devising intervention and prevention methods.

- There were 82 defendants aged between 10 and 24 years recorded for violence offences in Solihull for October 2019/20, this cohort consisted of 59 individuals.
- 13 individuals recorded more than one offence in the 12 month time period accumulating to recording 36 offences (43.9%). The most offences recorded by one individual was 7.
- 17 and 18 years were the most common ages for youth offenders with 12 and 13 offences recorded respectively.

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- The large majority of offenders recorded were male (80.5%).
- The top three offences recorded were Assault Occ ABH (17), Common Assault (17) and Robbery of Personal Property (14).
- The top neighbourhood was St Alphege with 27 offences recorded whilst the top location description for the overall detected youth violence offences were Outside Address (13) and Road (12).

### **Inference**

In view of the top locations, reported youth violence often occurs in public. Whilst this should be taken into account when designing intervention methods, it also highlights a potential intelligence gap as to whether offenders only commit violence publicly or if there is a hidden feature of youth violence in private settings which are yet going unreported.

## Domestic Abuse<sup>12</sup>

***“Coronavirus: Domestic violence ‘increases globally during lockdown’” – BBC News<sup>13</sup>***

***Due to the breadth of Domestic Abuse (it encompasses many non-violence related offences) the below analysis will include all ‘Domestic Abuse’ flagged offences.***

Domestic Abuse (DA) has been recognised as reporting a significant increase across the country over the last year, mainly thought to be due to the pandemic. It is understood that factors relating to the pandemic have aggravated DA issues thereby increasing the demand on Domestic Abuse services. A survey conducted through April – June by Women’s Aid provides insight to those experiencing Domestic Abuse during lockdown.

The study highlights the issue to be progressing to a worse state with lesser access for victims to attend or retrieve support, decreased opportunities to leave, children being present at times of abuse, some victims noting an increase in abusive behaviour towards their children and a decline in refuge availability for victims. Services inevitably had to adapt during the pandemic, whilst short term crisis funding was made available the service provision had to alter to lesser community based support to more electronic/telecommunication provision. This presented some positive opportunities to those who are unable to attend face to face support as well as highlighting the importance of community in supporting victims, there was also a perceived increase in awareness throughout the pandemic

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<sup>12</sup> **Caveat – Data includes all recorded crimes with a DA marker which is assigned by officers’ at the time of reporting, therefore this number should be taken as a minimum.**

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-53014211>

as many Women's Aid community ambassadors reported general discussion of these issues to have increased within the wider public.<sup>14</sup>

The above correlates with the contextual update provided by Solihull's DA coordinator (See Appendix for full extract) who recognised the unintended consequences and impact of Covid-19 on services to be the most notable result from the past year. However, whilst it was also highlighted that changes in service provision may have led to confusion for some victims, it was understood that disclosures of abuse for both police and specialist services began to rise from mid-April and continued to do so. The heightened level of abuse was also estimated to continue, even when other aspects of society resume to normality.<sup>15</sup>

### **Inference**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2020 is scheduled for implementation in April 2021. The act introduces the first ever UK statutory definition of domestic abuse, and formally recognises children who see, hear or experience domestic abuse as victims in their own right. The Act seeks to transform responses to domestic abuse and ensure victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences, safe in the knowledge that the state will do everything it can, both to support them and their children and pursue the abuser. The Act will place additional statutory duties on Local Authorities, amongst which will include a responsibility for the provision of 'Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation'. Other elements will have a direct impact on police, courts and probation.

Awareness of the Act and the implications has been widely shared across partnerships and boards operating in the borough, and local compliance and transformation will be led by the newly configured Solihull Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The key principles of the Domestic Abuse Act 2020 are highlighted below, Solihull will be adopting these and using them to guide their work in 2021.

- ***Protect and support victims*** – to enhance the safety of victims and the support they receive;
- ***Transform the justice process*** – to provide support to victims throughout the justice process and an effective response to perpetrators to end the cycle of abuse;
- ***Improve performance*** – to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse
- ***Promote awareness*** – put domestic abuse at the top of everybody's agenda

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/A-Perfect-Storm-August-2020-1.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Email Received – 04/01/2021

**In total Solihull recorded 2,474**

**Domestic Abuse offences in October 2019/20, increasing by 37.5% from the previous year and at a higher proportion than the force overall.** Notably, an increase was also seen in offences with victims aged 24 and Under with the total offences equating to 432 in 2019/20. This was not as substantial with Solihull's youth recording an increase of 21% from

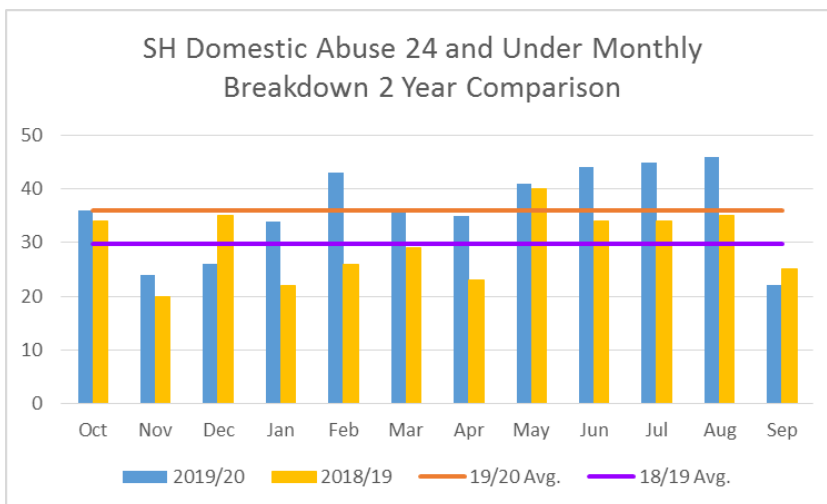


Figure 4 - DA Monthly Breakdown 2 Year Comparison

the 2018/19 which is also slightly lower than the forces' increase. As well as this, the total number of youth victims' offences accounted for 17.5% of the total DA crimes. This signals that, **whilst this is an increasing issue for the region and Solihull, it is not the age group of focus for overall Domestic Abuse.** Figure 5 shows the monthly recorded DA crimes with a comparison to the previous year and the 12 month averages for each year, for victims aged 24 and Under. Unlike the total DA monthly comparison which showed a general increase each month with the peak months correlating with that of the months which featured tighter restrictions. Figure 5 shows, whilst there is a peak in volume of offences alongside the lockdown months, the largest increases from the previous year is in the months of January and February.

### Inference

Consideration is needed for the public health approach to violence, which the West Midlands is currently undertaking, as it explains violence as an illness that can spread through experience. In light of the general increases seen across Domestic Abuse, there is a potential risk that this behaviour becomes normalised for those of the younger cohort. Consequently this may increase victims risk as they have a perception that they are able to sustain the abuse without assistance or support, therefore also enhancing the hidden aspect of DA.

The estimated cost of DA nationally was £6.6billion in year ending March 2017, with each victim of DA accumulating a unit of £34,015 for the cost of anticipation, consequence and response<sup>16</sup>. Considering this is a minimum number due to the hidden aspect of DA, this presents another avenue which demands DA be prevented, addressed on both a national and local scale.

<sup>16</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/918897/horr107.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/918897/horr107.pdf) - January 2019

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Solihull recorded 1,708 total individuals as victims for 2,392 offences in 2019/20. 333 individuals were aged 24 and under who recorded 432 offences.<sup>17</sup> 72 individuals were classed as repeat victims as they recorded more than one offence within the 12 months. This group accounted for 39.6% of the total offences, a lower proportion than adult victims. Whilst this could potentially highlight a less ingrained level of abuse amongst Solihull's younger cohort, it could also indicate a more hidden level of abuse as those who are victims do not know the pathway options available to them. This could also be argued as within this cohort the number of offences typically increases with age (with those aged 24 years recording almost double the offences recorded by those aged 18 years). As 80% of youth victims were female, this may not be representative of male victims. Although repeat victims are usually a sign of a more severe level of abuse, current victim support services for domestic violence encourage victims to continuously report incidents for their service provision or records. In other words this may be increased recording rather than an increased level of incidents, which is a positive sign as it shows a greater level of engagement and support to victims.

Further analysis into male youth victims show the peak age to be 18 years followed by 21 and 22 years, showing a distinction from the female ageing trend. A possible reason for this could be a higher resistance from males to report DA, to save from the perceived stigma regarding masculinity.<sup>18</sup> In regards to the outcomes of DA it is dissimilar from typically violent crimes whereby the physicality of the offence type allows for better identification and prosecution of suspects, as the top outcome is suspect identified but victim withdrawn support. This is top for both adult and youth victims of DA in Solihull 2019/20, however when considering the victims' gender this outcome accounts for a higher proportion of offences for male victims, accounting for a total of 78.8% (in comparison to females 65.3%).

The neighbourhoods of Chemsley Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge and Smith's Wood were the top three recording neighbourhoods for youth and total DA victims indicating the higher vulnerability to be within these locations. However, the neighbourhoods of Knowle, Dorridge and Hockley Heath and St Alphege are also of note as they recorded the highest proportion of youth DA victim offences, with Knowle's youth DA accounting for 28.8% of the total DA.

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<sup>17</sup> **Caveat** – Due to data limitations or misspelling, multiple abbreviations or restrictions the count of individuals is a minimum.

<sup>18</sup> <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/288219173.pdf>



## **Inferences**

Due to the varied communities, challenges and aspects of these neighbourhoods it is difficult to identify particular triggers of trends for the vulnerabilities within these cohorts, therefore highlighting an intelligence gap and presenting the need for detailed analysis of the Solihull DA victims.

There also needs to be consideration of the data limitations of the above analysis as it cannot identify and analyse some of the more hidden victims of Domestic Abuse, such as those of the LGBT+ community. Intelligence is needed on these victims in order to further develop support functions for them, in order to promote reporting and gain the best understanding of the overall DA victim profile.

In total there were 185 offences with detected offenders for DA in Solihull 2019/20, accounted for by 145 individuals. Those aged 24 and under attributed to 29 offences by 21 individuals, 5 of these recorded more than one offence. The youth cohort was responsible for 18% of the detected offences and 14.5% of the individuals.

- Only 1 offence was recorded with an offender under the age of 18 years.
- All offenders were male.
- The top offence for both adult and youth DA offenders was Assault Occasion ABH, Common Assault was also present in both of the top offences.
  - The other top offences for both adult and youth included harassment related offences, however adult offenders were regarding breaches of non-molestation or restraining orders whereas youth were sending threatening communication or threats to kill.
- The most common ages within the youth cohort were 23 and 24 years, however the top repeat offenders may have skewed this analysis.

The above analysis is limited due to the small number of offences. However the small number of offences indicate a change in offences as legal steps have been taken by the victims of older perpetrators in order to restrict their access to victims or their family. Whilst this may indicate an effective approach to DA (as these breaches may be used by the victim for further support) it may also signal an ineffective approach as the perpetrators are willing to commit these breaches.

## Sexual Offences

The below section includes all offences which come under the Home Office Level 2 classifications of 'Rape' or 'Other Sexual Offences'. Notably, for both youth and adult victims, Rape offences showed a decline of over 20% whilst Other Sexual Offences showed an increase of 10.2% in comparison to the previous year.

A key challenge in assessing sexual offences is the issue of underreporting, in the 2017 report on Sexual Offences in England and Wales by the Office of National Statistics it was estimated that 5 out of 6 victims did not report the offence to the police<sup>19</sup>. This is especially in regards to male victims reporting. Consequently, this then allows for little accuracy in analysis of the overall victim profile.

Rape can have a detrimental impact on the victim's mental health whereby they feel ashamed, scared, depressed or suicidal, difficulty focusing etc. It can also have long-term physical implications, if the victim was physically injured during the attack, has contracted a sexually transmitted disease or fallen pregnant by the attacker.<sup>20</sup> Part of NHS England's response to this in their 5 year strategy was to provide those victims of rape or sexual assault with a lifetime of mental health support due to the longevity of suffering<sup>21</sup>. In light of the underreporting acknowledged this indicates a large quantity of individuals who are not accessing imperative services. The likely impact of this will be felt across a multitude of social and health related services.

### **Inference**

Solihull are currently completing their first Sexual Abuse Needs Assessment which provides a detailed overview of the current needs faced throughout the borough, this should be considered when implementing any interventions regarding Sexual Abuse in Solihull. It also acknowledges that specialist provisions which address victim's needs can reduce costs and benefit victims in regards to their health, wellbeing, quality of life and long-term productivity.

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### Rape

The definition of rape is an act in which there was penetration by a penis without the victims consent, and the perpetrator being aware of the lack of consent.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017#main-points>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/rape-and-sexual-assault>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2018/06/lifetime-nhs-mental-health-care-for-sexual-assault-victims/>

<sup>22</sup> Sexual Abuse Needs Assessment – Email Received 04/01/2021

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/part/1/crossheading/rape>

Often, rape is considered a gendered crime with the victims being female and perpetrators being male. This can also be seen within the legislation of rape as, legally, women can only be found guilty of rape if they assist a male in the attack.<sup>24</sup> A common misconception of rape offences is that the perpetrator will be a stranger, however it is more routinely found to be someone known to the individual. With these points in mind this shows similarity to male victims of Domestic Abuse, therefore offering a possible explanation of underreporting.

In Solihull there were 108 rape offences recorded for October 2019/20, a decline of 32 offences from the previous year. Victims aged 24 and under accounted for just over half of these offences (51.9%) recording 56 offences, a decline of 22.9%.

### Key Findings

- Of the total victims, both adult and youth, 7 individuals recorded more than one offence in the 12 month period, 5 of these were aged 24 and under.
- The top offence for youth victims was rape of a female aged 16 or over, showing female victims aged 16-24 years account for 51.7% of the total youth rape offences.
- Differing from 2018/19 the top two months for recorded rape offences were March and June, however some of these were committed prior to the time period.
- 20 of the 56 youth victims offences were dated from 2017 or prior accounting for 35.7%.
- The top three neighbourhoods for youth rape offences were Smith's Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge and Knowle.
- 5 offences were recorded by male victims (8.9%)
- 41 youth offences had been assigned an outcome, which the most common was suspect identified however evidential difficulties prevent further action, victim withdraws support (51.2%)
  - Two offences reported by male youth victims, one resulted in a suspect identified, victim shows support but evidential difficulties prevent further action and the other was no suspect identified.

The above findings correlate with the national context in which female victims are the majority, whilst indicating an element of underreporting. Similar to DA the top outcome includes the withdrawal of victim's support. This could result in a toxic cycle whereby the lack of confidence in the criminal justice system fuels both confidence in perpetrators to commit the act freely whilst diminishing the likelihood of victims reporting the offence.

Notably the Office of National Statistics (ONS) acknowledge that increases in records of sexual offences can be a positive sign in relation to confidence of reporting; however this was not seen in

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.cps.gov.uk/crime-info/sexual-offences>

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Solihull. Whilst aspects of the pandemic may have influenced the reduction in reporting, due to either decreased chances of offences or chances of victim reporting, the above findings show one of the highest months recorded was June whereby 8 offences were recorded. Though some of these were classed as historical as they were committed prior to the 2019/20 time period, this also signals good practice in Solihull's reporting or referral pathways.

### **Inference**

Such as with DA, consideration of the limitations of this analyses as underreporting drives the hidden aspect of these offences. This then supposes there to be an intelligence gap in regards to the overall victim cohort, which is necessary to address in order to form accurate victim support responses.

### Other Sexual Offences

These offences include sexual assaults with or without penetration, exposure, voyeurism and pornography offences (it excludes all 'rape' offences). In total there were 282 offences in Solihull 2019/20 with victims of all ages, with 228 victims. Over  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the offences were recorded against victims aged 24 and under (190 offences) and over 70% of the individuals were 24 and under, showing the majority of offences to be directed at the youth cohort. This is similar to the age profile for the force overall.

Further analysis into the age breakdown showed the majority of victims to be aged 10-17 with 124 offences recorded equating to 65.3% of the total, followed by those under 10 years (23.7%). Whilst this correlates with the force overall the older age group accounts for a slightly higher proportion than represented at a regional level. Notably, the age group of under 10 years increased by 50% from the previous year (15 more offences recorded) whilst the other youth age groups remained stable. In light of the above and the drop seen in reports from those aged 18-24 years, this suggests a better identification of assault for Solihull's school-age population. It is possible that the increased reporting levels are due to better awareness from both professionals and school attendees (as they are likely to have received training or teaching of what constitutes as abuse and what support is available). However, the drop seen in reports from 18-24 years differs from the national findings described by the ONS in 2017 whereby those aged 16-19 and 20-24 are signalled as the most likely to be sexual offence victims.<sup>2526</sup>

<sup>25</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017#how-prevalent-are-sexual-assaults>

<sup>26</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/719902/Sexual\\_violence\\_and\\_sexual\\_harassment\\_between\\_children\\_in\\_schools\\_and\\_colleges.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719902/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf)

## Inference

The Department of Education published a report in 2018 which highlighted the prevalence of sexual violence and sexual harassment within schools and colleges. Though this could be seen as supporting the above findings of higher reporting for those of school age, it also indicates a possible vulnerability for those aged 18-24 years. The report highlights a show of no tolerance from schools to be necessary so to act as a preventative educational measure. In doing this, there will be less students with such views which may develop into stereotypical/sexually discriminative views in later life. In consideration that those aged 18-24 years will likely be in the later stage of college, starting further education or beginning their professional careers this suggests a possible intelligence gap in Solihull for the decline in reporting; is this due to more tolerance for this behaviour within these institutions, people of this age group or is there less awareness of reporting mechanisms?

## Key Findings

- Females accounted for 81% of the total youth victim offences, they were the majority for each youth cohort.
- Of the 165 individual victims 12 recorded more than one offence, with 8 being the highest number recorded in the 12 months. This was also the highest number recorded by a victim of any age.
- Sexual Assault on Female aged 13 or over was the top offence recorded for youth sexual offences, accounting for  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the total.
- Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge and Castle Bromwich were the top three neighbourhoods recorded for sexual offences on those 24 and under.
  - The neighbourhoods of Shirley East, Castle Bromwich and Meriden were the neighbourhoods which recorded the largest proportional increases from the previous year.
- The top location type for each youth age band were types of dwelling suggesting this to be largely occurring in residential locations.
- Almost  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the offences whereby an outcome had been assigned was suspect identified; evidential difficulties prevent further action, victim withdrawn support.
  - Following this was no suspect identified accounting for 26.4%.
- Typically the findings of the youth victim followed that of the overall victim profile, though consideration is needed for the proportion in which youth victims accounted for.

Analysis was limited due to the small sample of detected offenders of this cohort for other sexual offences. A total of 5 offences were recorded by 5 individuals. All were male and aged 18-24 years. The National Crime Agency report that Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation is increasing, especially

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in regards to abuse which takes place online.<sup>27</sup> With an ever-expanding range of technology and media platforms and younger generations being typically more confident in technology usage, having been surrounded by it at a young age and taught the functions at school, this presents a challenge for both law enforcement and parents as they may not be as apt in technology as their children e.g. parents full awareness and monitoring of each app on their children's devices.

## Stalking and Harassment

*These offences are not included in the original violence selection, however due to the increase seen and the relationship between these offences and violence they have been analysed.*

The premise of harassment is behaviour or acts which put a person in alarm, distress or fear of violence.<sup>28</sup> This can include behaviour from individual perpetrators or multiple, along with individual or multiple victims. Harassment can also be incumbent on individuals who are not the intended victim e.g. the victim's family. Stalking is a more specific course of actions or behaviours which are committed to force contact with the victim, this can be done through a multitude of acts such as following, spying or through the use of social media. This is to inhibit the victim's freedom.<sup>29</sup> A recent consultation highlighted considerations to help differentiate between the two offences. On the whole, harassment is considered as behaviour which is less encompassing for an offender as their day to day activities are not inhabited by the harassing actions, whereas stalking is more encompassing for the offender as they may possibly change their routine to commit the acts. Harassment is also more commonly found to be a result of a dispute therefore likely to stop if the dispute is resolved, whereas stalking offenders are less likely to cease the behaviour even if there is a change in circumstance or scenario.<sup>30</sup>

The impact of stalking or harassment for victims can vary from physical or mental health implications to impacts in employment and social life. There are, therefore, implications for service providers. One of the complexities faced with stalking or harassment is that the behaviours and actions can seem trivial when considered individually as it is the persistence of these behaviours which often cause a victim's distress. This can often lead in the actions going unreported. Alternatively the victim may report the behaviours after a prolonged period of time, in which the impact on them may already be significant.<sup>31</sup> This therefore suggests that the scale of harassment and stalking is as yet unknown.

Since the change in the recording of harassment in 2018 (whereby it was counted as a separate offence rather than in conjunction with another) there has been a significant increase seen across

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/stalking-and-harassment>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/stalking-and-harassment>

<sup>30</sup> <http://library.college.police.uk/docs/appref/Stalking-and-harassment-161118.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/living-in-fear-the-police-and-cps-response-to-harassment-and-stalking.pdf>

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the force. In Solihull, in comparison to 2018/19 there were 561 more offences recorded in 2019/20 than the previous year with 1,570 recorded for the 12 month period, equating to 55.6% increase. For the offences with victims aged 24 and under there was a total of 412 offences, 156 more than the previous year equating to 37.9% increase. In total, victims aged 24 and under accounted for 26.2% of the total harassment and stalking offences.

In comparison to the region Solihull increased by a higher proportion for overall victims of stalking and harassment, but to a lesser extent for youth victims. However the volume of the increase suggests this to be a significant contributor to Solihull's Community Safety and so analysis has been conducted.

The below findings are from the offences whereby a victim was recorded, in total this was 1,535 offences.

### Key Findings

- The 412 offences were recorded by 319 individuals with 66 recording more than one offence equating to 20.7% of individuals being repeats.
  - The highest amount of offences recorded by a young individual was 6 whereas the most by an adult was 9.
- The top offences here were harassment (151) and Sending article/communication conveying a threatening message (147), cumulatively accounting for 72.3% of the total.
- 100 of the offences were classed as Domestic Abuse (24.3%) whilst 27 were classed as hate crime (6.5%).
  - This differs to the overall victim profile whereby DA accounted for 34.3%.
- Females account for the majority of offences (67.1%)
- Both male and female victims show the peak age of recording to be 10-17 years, with a decline around 18/19 years, to then rise again towards the end of the youth cohort.
  - In overall victims, females see peaks in recording throughout the later twenties and again at the end of their thirties.
- The top outcome for stalking and harassment offences on Solihull's youth cohort is no suspect identified equating to over 1/3 (39.3%), followed by suspect identified but evidential difficulties prevent further action, victim withdrawn support (33.6%).
- Though the neighbourhoods of Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge and Smith's Wood were the top recording neighbourhoods, notably, the neighbourhood of Shirley West saw the largest increase from the previous year, recording 24 in the 2019/20 and 4 in the previous year.

In total there were 12 offences whereby a young offender was recorded as the offender for stalking and harassment (therefore limiting the analysis). Of those detected there were 9 individuals, with 3 individuals recording two offences each. The top offence was sending a communication/article with

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a threatening message with 5 recorded. 1 offence was attributed to a female offender and the other 11 to males. In total, the young offenders accounted for 15.6% of the total detected offenders for this crime type.

### Inference

In light of previous research highlighting the likelihood that the perpetrators are known to the victim with some being partners or ex partners of the victim, the top outcome being 'no suspect identified' indicates an intelligence gap either in the crime profile or investigation process.

## A study of Solihull's Youth Cohort (16-24 years)

### Cohort Profile

As displayed in Figure 5, the 2019 mid-year estimates of Solihull's population show the borough's population to differ significantly from that of the West Midlands Region. The key difference being that whilst West Midlands overall has a typically younger population between the ages of 20-40 years, Solihull's peak population are aged between 45 and 60 years. The difference in overall demographic also signals different challenges faced by Solihull in relation to community safety.

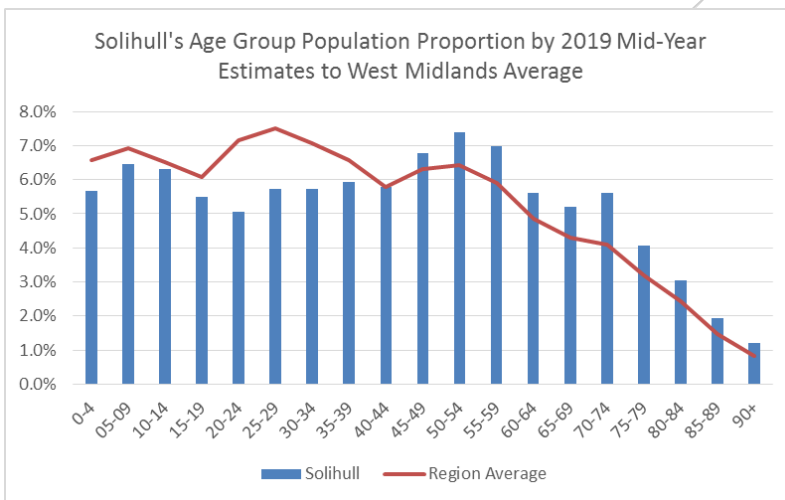


Figure 5 - Solihull and West Midlands Age Population Breakdown

Further analysis shows that the top three neighbourhoods for the youth cohort are Chelmsley Wood, Smith's Wood and Kingshurst and Fordbridge (all of which recorded over the average for Solihull's youth cohort). On the other hand the three neighbourhoods which recorded the lowest representation for this age group were Knowle, Castle Bromwich and Silhill neighbourhoods. With the exception of Castle Bromwich, these findings indicate a large proportion of Solihull's youth to be located within North Solihull, however consideration is needed for these areas may not necessarily be where they spend the majority of their time. Amenities such as schools, retail, entertainment or nightlife venues

In total, whereas Solihull's youth cohort of 16-24 years accounts for under 10% of the demographic (9.3%), the overall region's cohort accounts for 12.7%.

Of Solihull's youth cohort there are slightly more males than females' with males accounting for 52.2%.



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may encourage them to travel out of their home locations, therefore any targeted works should consider this.

## Crimes/Vulnerabilities

Whilst the youth cohort of 16-24 years account for a smaller proportion of Solihull's populace they are also key to community safety due to their links to many community features such as education, recreational locations, public activities etc. As well as this, the youth cohort are the key age for intervention and prevention methods in order to maintain and improve overall community safety by improving the individual's overall life chances and lessening the likelihood and desire for alternative illegitimate avenues of prosperity.

It is widely understood that previous experiences in both youth and children inevitably impact the likelihood of criminality<sup>32</sup>. For example, if criminality is seen and experienced throughout a young person's home life or wider community this becomes learned as a 'normal' characteristic of life. Other influential factors include poverty, unsettled home life, low education and lower life chances drawing youths to illegitimate activity. Solihull's performance regarding some of these external factors (such as fixed period exclusions, permanent exclusions and children in need) typically correlates with the national average, if not performing to a better rate. However, an area which was highlighted for Solihull was the Claimant Count (unemployment rate) for those aged 16-24 years as it recorded a higher proportion than the national average. This is particularly found within the North of the borough<sup>33</sup>.

In light of the above findings, Solihull's population data showing the largest concentration of the youth cohort to be in the North of Solihull, and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation Map (see Strategic Assessment 2020) showing the North to have some of the top most deprived areas in the country, this signals particular vulnerabilities for Solihull's youth cohort.

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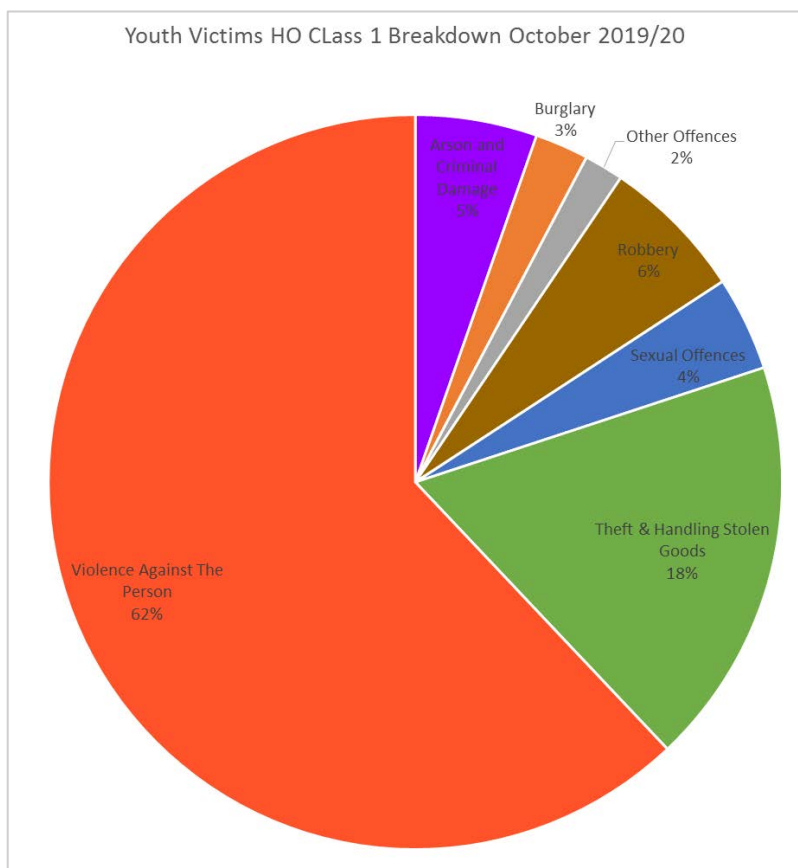
<sup>32</sup> <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/teenagers-at-risk-report.pdf> - 18/11/2020

<sup>33</sup> Exploitation Prevalence in Solihull Doc - Solihull Business and Improvement Division – Received 12/11/2020, ONS/NOMIS Claimant Count June 2020

## Victims

In total there were 1,734 offences recorded with victims of this age group in October 2019/20. This comprised of 1,423 individuals with 214 individuals recording more than one offence. **This cohort accounted for 14% of the individual victims and their offences recorded in Solihull 2019/20.**

As can be seen by Figure 6 to the right, the key offence type recorded against victims of this age group was violence with 1,076 offences recorded. In comparison to the previous year Solihull's youth victims decline in all other HO classifications (level 1) except "other" which increased by 13 and Violence Against the Person which increased by 223 offences. This category inevitably



**Figure 6 - Youth Victims Offence Type Breakdown**

influenced the overall increase seen in victims of this cohort from the previous year, of which there was 9.8% increase. The increase in the youth victim cohort and the largest proportion being held by Violence Against the Person is mirrored throughout the force overall.

The gender divide within this cohort is more distinct than that of the overall victim profile within Solihull as there are more offences recorded with female victims. Further analysis notes that for each year of 20-24 years female victims account for 55% or more of the offences, with those 23 or 24 years accounting for over 60%. For the offence types of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence, females record a significantly higher number of offences than males for each year. When considering each gender's top offences it was apparent that whilst females typically had assault offences and a combination of harassment, theft and threatening message offences as their most common, male victims of this age had a wider variety. Robbery of personal property and assault offences were those most commonly found in the top three however harassment, threatening messages, theft and vehicle offences were also common. **Notably, from the age of 20 for males vehicle offences became more prominent, indicating a shift in motivation.**

### **Inference**

There are different motivations found for each gender within this cohort with male victims becoming more vulnerable to theft offences whilst females vulnerability is consistently towards violence.

In regards to the location of offences for this cohort in Solihull, hotspot analysis was conducted for both 2018/19 and 2019/20. Both years highlighted the north of Solihull to be the main hotspots along with the St Alphege town centre, however in 2019/20 hotspots were also located in Lyndon, Elmdon and Shirley. Due to the pandemic experienced in the last year, usual hotspot areas may have been altered due to the restrictions in place.

### Offenders

In total there were 286 offences with a detected offender of this age group recorded, this comprised of 206 individuals with 42 individuals accounting for more than one offence within the 12 month period. This offender cohort accounts for almost  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the total offenders for Solihull.

Notably the proportion of repeat youth offenders in Solihull was less than that of the overall offenders (20.4% youth offender individuals in comparison to 23.7% overall Solihull offenders), indicating a larger opportunity for intervention methods to be applied to Solihull youth offenders to prevent repeat offending. Burglary offences were commonly recorded for the top repeat offenders; of the top four repeat offenders three had recorded burglary offences, accounting for 54.8% of the cumulative offences recorded from the four individuals. Whilst this could indicate a motivation for youth offenders, in light of the decline seen in burglary across Solihull for both burglary residential and business and community, this could also signal effective working practices in the detection of this offence type.

### **Inference**

Solihull have been focusing on residential burglaries recorded throughout the winter months for the last few years, implementing targeted works to reduce and prevent this offence type. The decline recorded here could be an indicator for the success of these collaborations.

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Similarly to youth victims, violence against the person accounted for the majority of youth offenders' offences (29.4%) however the difference in comparison to the other offence types was not as significant for youth offenders with drug offences closely following (28.3%). For both these offence types the top location type were in public areas such as roads, outside addresses, car parks etc. suggesting a higher likelihood of detection for those offences dependant on non-private settings. Detected drug offences showed a proportional increase from 2018/19 whereby offences accounted for 16%, however consideration is needed here for the time of investigations resulting in 2018/19 having more detected offences than that of 2019/20 so far. These two offence types are also the most common for detected youth offenders for the force overall, however Violence against the Person accounted for a higher proportion regionally than for the Solihull Borough.

### **Key Findings**

- Unlike youth victims, male offenders accounted for 89.5% of the detected offences.
- Theft from Shop or Stalls was the top offence recorded for female offenders (7 offences accounting for 23.3%) whereas males was Possession of Cannabis (73 offences accounting for 28.5%).
- Within the cohort, the age of 18 years was the most common recorded (52 offences accounting for 18.2%).
- The top three neighbourhoods for the detected offences were St Alphege, Lyndon and Chelmsley Wood which cumulatively accounted for 36.7%.
- 72% of detected youth offenders were of White ethnicity, 11% were of Asian ethnicity, 5% were mixed heritage and 4% were of black ethnicity.
- The most offences recorded by one individual was 9.
- The top 5 individuals accounted for 12.9% of the detected offences; four of the top five repeat youth offenders were male.

## A study of Solihull's Adult Cohort (75+ years)

### Cohort Profile

According to Office of National Statistics 2019 mid-year estimates, Solihull's 75+ years cohort account for 10.3% of the borough's population. Figure 7 shows that, whilst this is a declining age group it has a consistently higher representation in Solihull than in the West Midlands overall. The neighbourhood of Smith's Wood had the lowest proportion of the 75+ cohort attributing to their population with 6.6%, in comparison to the neighbourhood of Knowle whereby 14.1% of the population was aged 75+ years.

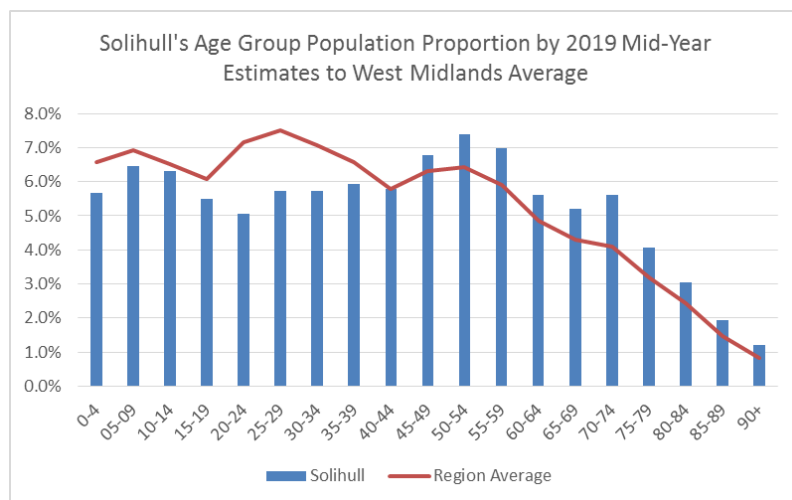


Figure 7 - Solihull's Age Group Population 2019 Mid-Year Estimates ONS

In consideration of this and Solihull's population estimates this signals a potential upcoming weakness for Solihull's residents.

### Crimes/Vulnerabilities

Crimes against the older age group are typically lesser in volume with only 3.1% of Solihull's total victims recorded within this age group, indicating a lesser risk towards this cohort. However, whilst lesser in volume these can also be perceived as higher harm due to a disproportional impact onto the victims. Moreover some of the personal circumstances often experienced within this age group can result in them being targeted making them more vulnerable; some examples of this is those who are lonely, living with dementia or those who are bereaved.<sup>35</sup>

Nationally it is understood that the overall population is ageing, with an increasing demand for care homes. The Nuffield Foundation estimate that by 2038 every 1 in 4 people in the UK will be aged 65 and over.<sup>34</sup> This will not only increase demand on adult social care and health services but also increase those classed as 'vulnerable' to particular community safety issues, or crime types.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/care-home-bed-availability>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/our-work/article/criminal-justice-joint-inspection/crimes-against-older-people-inspection/>

Context provided by Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid<sup>36</sup> highlights particular issues for domestic abuse victims of the age cohort 55+ years, though a slightly younger age group many of these issues will also feature within the older cohort of 75+ years:

### **Systematic Invisibility**

Firstly, systematic invisibility is identified as a possible risk for women of this age as it can lead to a continuation of abuse and fuel the hidden aspect of this type of abuse. One of the assumptions mentioned within the BSWA study highlighted that Domestic Abuse could be often misinterpreted Caregiver Stress. The identified need here is for professional bodies to be aware of the vulnerabilities experienced by women of this cohort, so to correctly identify and offer service to victims.

### **Health**

Health was also highlighted as it can impose complexities in regards to either the victims or offenders' capabilities, for example if a victim is also the carer to their perpetrator then it can add a consideration to stay in the abusive situation. On the other hand, if the health implications are regarding the victim, it can increase their reliance on the perpetrator therefore lessening their likelihood of leaving. A gap is identified here as the options for both the perpetrator and victims' care need to be widely known.

### **Isolation**

Similar to some health aspects, isolation can often include physical or financial dependency on the perpetrator. Isolation can also result in a lesser likelihood for identification of abuse or ease of intervention for services. A need identified here is that whilst there are groups already established to help this, many women cannot physically get to the group or afford the fees.

### **Housing**

Though refuge may be available, women of an older cohort are less wanton of this change due to the vast disparity to their current lifestyle. Financial stability concerns are noted, along with possible difficulties they will face when dividing assets with their perpetrators. There is a need here as these women need advice on their options, legally, financially and regarding accommodation.

Over the pandemic a customer and community support project was undertaken by Solihull Community Housing to identify those of in a vulnerable position during the pandemic, targeting those of 70+ years and with a system identifier for a known disability. This was to help ensure this cohort were receiving the support they needed through identification and then signposting to the correct referral mechanism e.g. for food services, Age UK, rent or other necessary services. Of a total 3,131 identified 2,577 were able to be contacted.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Email Received – 24/11/2020

<sup>37</sup> Solihull Community Housing – Localities Programme Manager – 09/11/2020

## Victims

Solihull victims of 75+ years accounted for 3.1% of 2019/20 victims with 379 offences recorded, a decline from the previous year when 434 offences accounted for 3.6%. This is a higher proportion than the force overall which recorded 1.7% of victims of this age group, however consideration is needed here of Solihull's population typically comprising of more of this age group than the region. The 379 offences comprised of 348 individuals with 25 individuals recording more than one offence. The most recorded by an individual was 4 offences within the 12 months. The top offence types (HO Class Level 2) recorded for repeat victims were Criminal Damage, Burglary Residential and Theft Offences, cumulatively accounting for 64.3%.

Acquisition was shown to be a motivator towards all victims of this cohort with Burglary Residential accounting for 100 offences recorded (26.4% of the total). Following this is theft and vehicle offences, as shown in Figure 8.

Along with those in Burglary Residential, types of residence featured amongst the top location types for both theft and vehicle offences; including driveways, care homes and 'outside address'. Further analysis highlighted that 72.3% of offences on victims of this cohort were committed at a residential type location (for full list of these location types see Appendix).

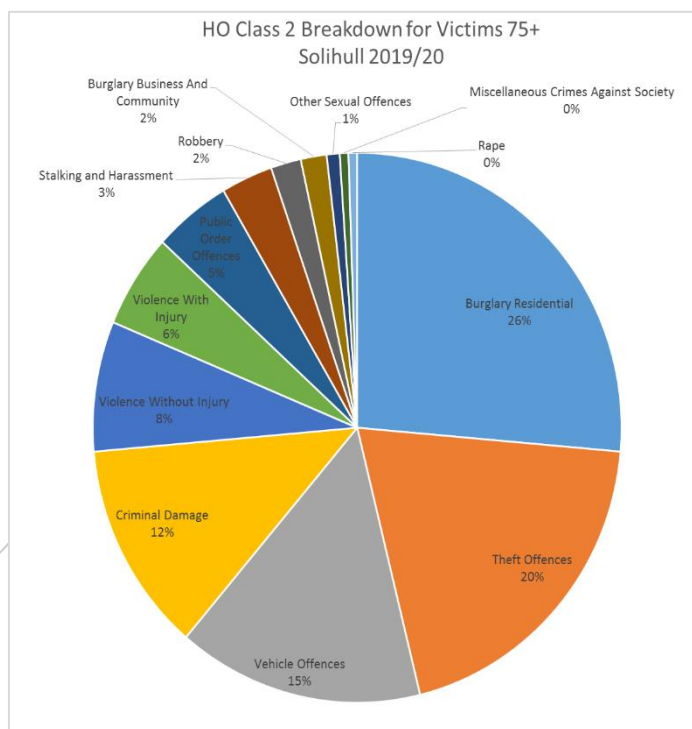


Figure 8 - HO Class Level 2 Breakdown for Victims 75+

### **Inference**

The need for services and interventions to reduce this cohort's susceptibility to being victims of crime are highlighted here, as the findings show a vulnerability in their own homes. This is reinforced by the previously mentioned circumstances often faced by this age group, which can heighten their vulnerability. For example, similar to that of the study undertaken by Solihull Community Housing, identification of those who are within this cohort and what aspects they have which may make them vulnerable.

There was a slightly more definitive gender divide in this victim cohort than overall, with females accounting for 57% and males 43%<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Caveat - 5 offences were recorded as unknown gender so were excluded from this count.

## Offenders

*Too few defendants were recorded of this age group to allow for representative analysis, therefore suspects have been included within the selection for further insight.*

In 2019/20 there were 58 offences with offenders of this age group; one defendant and 57 suspects. This is an increase of 26 from the previous year. This attributed to 44 individuals with 10 individuals accounting for more than one offence within the 12 months.

The majority of these offenders were male, accounting for 69% of the total. Whilst analysis is limited due to the small numbers, a clear majority was shown with offence types as violence with and violence without injury offences accounted for 62.1% of the total. The top three offences were Common Assault, Assault Occasion ABH and Harassment, cumulatively accounting for 60.3%. Domestic Abuse accounted for 41.4% of the offences, again indicating a particular crime type within this cohort of offenders.

Notably the top outcome here was Suspect Identified but Evidential Difficulties as Victim Withdrawn Support with 33 offences (58.9%). Whilst this could signal a general resistance felt in prosecuting offenders of this age (which could be due to factors such as their vulnerability or perceived capacity) it is also notable that the top offence type for this outcome was domestic abuse. 17 domestic abuse offences were recorded with this outcome, accounting for over half of the outcomes' offences. In light of the above findings, albeit small in number and representation, this supports the input provided by Birmingham Solihull Women's Aid.



## A study of Solihull's BAME Cohort

### Cohort Profile

*Caution is needed when considering the below findings as the data is outdated, though a new census is being conducted this will not be available until 2021.*

Similar to that of the UK<sup>39</sup>, Solihull's population is largely comprised of people of White ethnic origins, though overall, Solihull is seemingly less diverse than the UK. The most recent, robust data detailing ethnic breakdowns is that of the 2011 census whereby Solihull recorded 10.9% of their population to be Black or Minority Ethnic (BAME). This differs to their neighbouring areas as Coventry recorded 26.2% and Birmingham East recorded 42.2%.

The majority of BAME community within Solihull are Asian/Asian British with 13,561 recorded accounting for 60.5% of the BAME population. This was followed by Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Origins which accounted for 19.6% and Black ethnicity with 14.4%. The neighbourhoods of Shirley East, Olton and Silhill are where the highest concentrations of BAME communities are in Solihull, with their population attributing to a higher proportion than the national structure whereas Dorridge and Hockley Heath, Knowle and Meriden were the smallest concentrations. Notably the structure of Solihull North's population differs to that of East or West, as the majority of the BAME community are comprised of Mixed Ethnicity or Black/Black British, rather than of Asian ethnic origin.

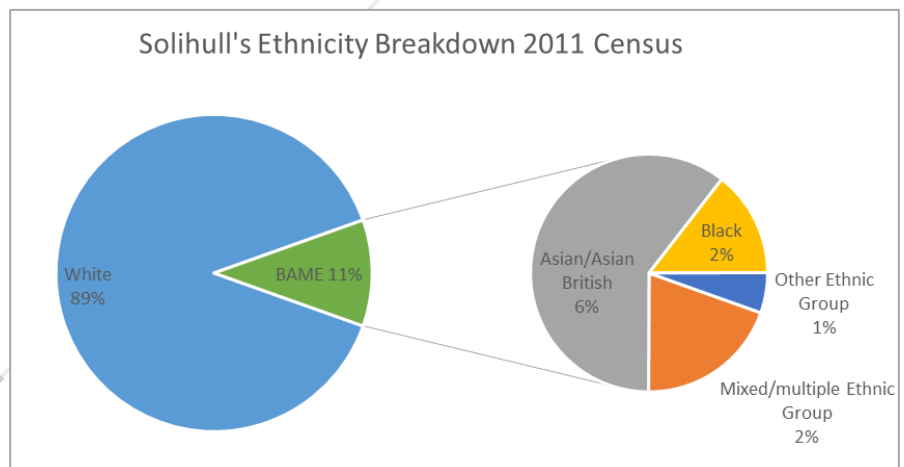


Figure 9 - Census 2011 Solihull's Ethnicity Breakdown

Typically those of the BAME community are of younger age groups in Solihull, with the smallest representation (3%) being of retirement age.<sup>40</sup> This correlates with the growing diversity in Solihull as increases were seen between the 2001 and 2011 census for the BAME population, as more BAME people move into the area and begin to make roots within the borough.

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest#main-facts-and-figures>

<sup>40</sup> <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/recruitment/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2019/09/Solihull-People-Place.pdf>

## Crimes/Vulnerabilities

Though BAME are representative of a minority cohort, it is nationally acknowledged that there are key vulnerabilities distinctive to this group. These particularly relate to inequalities in social status, health, housing, employment, education and throughout the criminal justice system.

Most recently these were highlighted in the pandemic as it is thought that those of BAME communities were adversely affected by Covid-19 in comparison to their White counterparts.<sup>41</sup> Though this is thought to be complex and cannot be solely attributed to one elemental factor, multiple factors were noted which may have influenced this: the higher likelihood of BAME individuals to be living in urban areas, in overcrowded households, in deprived areas and having jobs which would put them at higher risk.<sup>42</sup> A recent survey undertaken by Mind charity suggests that the outstanding impacts of Covid-19 such as financial stresses, job security or housing issues were unfavourably impacting the BAME community in regards to their mental health.<sup>43</sup> Any of these vulnerabilities can also influence involvement within other Community Safety or criminal themes.

The Lammy Review was completed in 2017 and reported on the treatment and outcomes of the BAME community within the criminal justice system. Overall he highlighted the positive steps seen within the community in regards to better educational achievements, larger institutional diversity and growth in the BAME middle class, however noting that the criminal justice system does not correlate with this. Whilst progress for socioeconomic factors have been made the report signifies their importance in the involvement of BAME and the criminal justice system. The report identifies an overrepresentation of BAME individuals in prisons and custody which has led to anger at and distrust of the system. The BAME youth cohort are suggested to be particularly vulnerable as offending and reoffending rates for BAME youth were shown to increase from 2006 to 2016.

### **Inference**

The above findings concur with the concepts highlighted by the “Black Lives Matter” movement which gained international attention following the death of George Floyd, a Black male who was killed whilst being arrested by White officers in America. This has seen a large following in the UK, with the BAME community demonstrating their exasperation at the perceived inequalities. In turn this is likely to intensify uneasy relationships between authorisation bodies associated with the criminal justice system and community tensions within local areas, both of which can negatively impact BAME individuals’ involvement in criminality.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2020/jun/13/leaked-report-says-racism-and-inequality-increase-covid-19-risk-for-minorities>

<sup>42</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/908434/Disparities\\_in\\_the\\_risk\\_and\\_outcomes\\_of\\_COVID\\_August\\_2020\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908434/Disparities_in_the_risk_and_outcomes_of_COVID_August_2020_update.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/existing-inequalities-have-made-mental-health-of-bame-groups-worse-during-pandemic-says-mind/>

The socioeconomic disparities highlighted by both the Lammy Report and the Covid-19 Health Report can negatively influence BAME immersion in criminality, as those with higher deprivation will have more motivation to achieve financial security through illegitimate means. Hostile relationships between communities and authority organisations will enhance likelihood of criminality as it may decrease the level of engagement by individuals in regards to intervention methods. In particular, this could have a detrimental impact on younger BAME cohorts if unresponsive to prevention approaches as this will be reported on and may impact their future prospects in employment, therefore furthering the inequalities. Not only this but the distrust felt by BAME communities towards the criminal justice system and related services will make them less likely to report crimes they have been victim of, consequently making them more vulnerable to being victims, especially becoming repeat victims.

## Victims

Of the Solihull victims with an ethnicity recorded in 2019/20, 13.6% of them were from BAME groups. This was accounted for by 1,694 offences and 1,477 individuals, 153 individuals recorded more than one offence within the 12 month time period.

Analysis showed hate crime to be a significant factor for BAME victims as they account for over half the total hate crime (53.9%) and the offence type attributed to 11% of the total crime recorded by BAME victims, in comparison to the 2.9% recorded for offences on all victims. Looking further into this highlighted that the majority of offences were non-violent however classed as Public Order offences with the top two location types being outdoors. Whilst this could be considered positive with a low level of violence apparent it also indicates a confidence from offenders to outwardly express these discriminatory views. A possible reason for this is the perception that there will be no challenge or repercussion from offending. In view of this, and the top outcome for this offence type on BAME victims being no suspect identified (accounting for 45.9%) the BAME community's perception that they are not supported by the criminal justice system is likely to worsen.

### **Inference**

Lack of positive outcomes for victims can often lead to complexities as distrust of the system ensues and, in the above scenario, could result in community or cultural tensions. Though this is in line with the national picture depicted by the Lammy Review, it is community partnerships work that are highlighted to be key in building and sustaining relationships with community groups therefore showing the need for this within the Solihull borough.

This is a slight increase of overall BAME victims from the previous year of 58 offences (3.5%). Notably increases were only seen in the Black or Mixed Ethnic Origin victims. Whilst the increases seen mirror the force's overall performance Solihull showed a larger proportional increase. The international focus on the Black Lives Matter movement highlighted racial inequalities on an

international scale, however also acted as a support for those of Black heritage. Though the movement was widely accepted across many countries there were also tensions highlighted with those of differing view.<sup>44</sup> This could offer explanation for the increase in Black and Mixed ethnicity victims within Solihull. Alternatively, the popularity of the movement may have increased minorities confidence in support therefore becoming more open to recording crimes against them.

### Key Findings

- The top offence groups (HO Level 2) were Violence without Injury, Vehicle Offences and Violence with Injury, together accumulating to almost half of the total offences with BAME victims (48.4%).
- The gender divide differs from the overall victim profile as males account for the majority with 952 victims (57.3%).
- Males recorded more offences for each offence grouping, with the exception of Stalking and Harassment, Other Sexual Offences and Rape offences.
- Of the 370 offences recorded by repeat BAME victims 106 were domestic violence offences (28.7%).
- Unlike the overall victim profile in Solihull BAME victims' peak age for offences was 35 – 44 years, rather than 25-34 years, accounting for 25.5%.
- Black and Mixed ethnicity victims aged 17 and under account for a higher proportion than their White, Asian or Other counterparts, accounting for 14.7% and 27.1% respectively.
  - This is also slightly higher in Solihull than found regionally.

In view of the above findings regarding some of BAME youth in Solihull this signals a higher vulnerability than for other Solihull residents of this age. The most common outcome for 2019/20 offences recorded by all BAME victims aged 17 and under was case closure with no suspect identified, in light of the Lammy Review emphasising lack of confidence felt towards the criminal justice system this highlights a potential gap whereby targeted partnership interventions could be effective, as familiarising BAME youth with partnership organisations may build confidence in the system and prevent further relationship strains with organisations.

### Offenders

In total there were Solihull 1,150 offences had an offender's ethnicity recorded in October 2019/20. 15.6% of these were of BAME ethnic origins; 192 offences comprised of 140 individuals. The greatest number of offences committed by one person was 7 (this was the case for two individuals). Though the top ethnicity recorded was "Asian", similar to the top ethnicity within Solihull's BAME population, the proportional divide was not consistent for those of Black ethnicity. A larger

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/11/blm-organisers-call-off-london-event-to-prevent-clashes-with-far-right>

proportional representation was seen in the Solihull offenders as almost 1/3 of the cohort were defined as Black, signalling a vulnerability within Solihull's Black community which may benefit from partnership interventions.

The offences recorded for this cohort inclined towards acquisitive motivation as theft offences were the top offence type (HO Class 2), followed by possession of drugs and Violence with Injury. Cumulatively these offence types accounted for 42.7% of the total. Further analysis showed that the theft offences were primarily against shops (26 offences accounting 76.5% of the total theft offences) whilst the main substance within the drug offences was that of cannabis (89.7%).

When considering offenders ages of all BAME offenders, with the exception of those aged 10-17 years and 18-24 years, Theft offences were the top offence type for each age group. For 10-17 years the top offence was Robbery and 18-24 years it was Possession of Drugs.

Notably, further analysis showed that possession of drug offences were primarily recorded for those of Asian ethnicity contributing to 65.5% of the offences with the age group of 18-24 years accounting for 11 offences alone (37.9% of Possession of Drug offences). This differs to the other minority ethnic groups as the top offence group for Black, Mixed ethnicity and 'other' were all Theft Offences. This suggests a different criminal motivation, however caution is needed as these offences are small in volume. <sup>45</sup>

### **Inference**

The West Midlands are currently piloting the DIVERT scheme whereby individuals caught for possession of controlled substances (without the intent to supply) are offered a programme to divert them from the criminal justice system, this differs from the current regulations which typically results in fines or short prison sentences. In view of the above findings and the estimated over-representation of BAME within the criminal justice system this pilot may not only prove beneficial to the individual but also the general community if it lessens the perception of overrepresentation of BAME individuals in prisons, saving taxpayer money and potentially bettering relationships between minority communities and criminal justice organisations.

Following the execution of the programme, analysis of its implementation should consider the proportion of the from BAME communities who have successfully been prevented from entering the system therefore lessening their likelihood of further criminality.

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/pcc-divert/>

## Mental Health

### Overview/Relationship with Community Safety

*“Having a mental health problem can impact on all aspects of our lives, from our relationships, work, and physical health. Without the right support it can prevent us from living the life we want to lead. The personal costs are immeasurable” – mind.org.uk*

Mental health has become more widely acknowledged in recent years with a general view that reports of its challenges are increasing. In 2009/10 the estimated cost to health and social services was £21 billion with a further £30 billion in outputs such as sickness and unemployment. In view of the increasing demand the financial impact on both the public and private sector would likely be significantly more detrimental. Below are some of the risk factors identified by Mind.org which impact poor mental health:<sup>46</sup>

- Trauma and Stressful Life Events
- Poverty, Unemployment and Housing Insecurity
- Social Isolation and Loneliness
- Discrimination and Inequality

Two of the five measures suggested by Mind.org are to work in partnership and have a good understanding of your community and who is at risk. Bearing this in mind, along with Solihull’s typically older population which may be subject to social isolation or loneliness and the range of deprivation throughout the borough, these listed risk factors may be present throughout Solihull.

It is often perceived that mental health is seen largely in offenders. Though prisoners have a higher proportion of reports of symptoms which indicate psychosis, it is also prevalent amongst victims. Nationally, people with mental health issues are 3 times more likely to be a victim of crime, 5 times more likely to be victim of assault (and 10 times more likely to be a victim of assault if the victim is a woman).<sup>47</sup> Taking into account the appearance of mental health issues amongst victims and perpetrators, mental health will undoubtedly be significant in the borough’s upcoming community safety demand.

#### **Inference**

Communities are imperative to enhance mental wellbeing; a combination of an individual’s experience and their ability to function, both on their own and as part of a society. Wellbeing can be positively influenced by ‘social capital’ whereby social networks, local identity, civil engagement and levels of trust all strengthen resilience.

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4420/mind\\_public-mental-health-guide\\_web-version.pdf](https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4420/mind_public-mental-health-guide_web-version.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-mental-health-jsna-toolkit/2-understanding-place>

## Covid-19

Victimisation and vulnerability both have impacts on mental health, albeit differently for each individual. Along with this, this year has brought the Covid-19 pandemic which has been recognised as a catalytic influencer on mental health.

*“Poor mental health is strongly associated with social and economic circumstances, including living in poverty, low-quality work, unemployment and housing. There is also a well-documented burden of mental health disorders following disasters, including evidence from previous viral outbreaks. This suggests that COVID-19, and the response to the pandemic, could have a significant impact on the nation’s mental health through increased exposure to stressors. Exacerbating this, there has been a loss of coping mechanisms for many, and reduced access to mental health treatment.” - Health.org.uk<sup>48</sup>*

Drivers which are thought to be continuing throughout the UK due to the current pandemic are; social isolation, financial stress/fear of job security, housing insecurity, working in front line services, loss of coping mechanisms and reduced access to mental health services. This is expected to continue throughout the pandemic as well as when restrictions begin to ease, the drivers will have a forwarding impact on community health and safety.

Whilst these implications may be felt by all individuals, they may also be exacerbated in certain circumstances whereby mental health is already strained. An example of this is the LGBT+ community; a recent report underlined the disparate impact of Covid-19 on LGBT people as it highlighted pre-existing inequalities may be worsened due to aspects of the pandemic. For example the mental health issues presented for a person having to self-isolate in a LGBT-phobic household, which could then lead to an individual not receiving the support they need as they are unable to talk freely to those around them or via virtual/telephone services.<sup>49</sup>

In light of mental health also being a stimulus in crime, both as a driver or a result of criminal activity<sup>50</sup>, it is likely the impact of the pandemic will tangibly effect community safety.

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<sup>48</sup> [https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/emerging-evidence-on-covid-19s-impact-on-mental-health-and-health?qclid=EAAlaQobChMltNzOyfc7AIVUuh3Ch3a2AoUEAAYASAAEql-YPD\\_BwE](https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/emerging-evidence-on-covid-19s-impact-on-mental-health-and-health?qclid=EAAlaQobChMltNzOyfc7AIVUuh3Ch3a2AoUEAAYASAAEql-YPD_BwE)

<sup>49</sup> Hidden Figures: The Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities in the UK

<sup>50</sup> Mental Health and the Criminal Justice System – Centre of Mental Health - [https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-09/Centre\\_for\\_Mental\\_Health\\_MH\\_and\\_criminal\\_justice\\_PDF.pdf](https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-09/Centre_for_Mental_Health_MH_and_criminal_justice_PDF.pdf)

## Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Solihull's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2018/19 acknowledged mental health to be a rising issue, both nationally and locally.<sup>51</sup>

Nationally, 1 in 8 children aged 5-19 years were found to have at least one mental disorder in the Mental Health of Children and Young People Survey 2017. Emotional, behavioural and hyperactivity disorders were found to be the most common. Figure 10 is taken from the JSNA, showing England's gender breakdown for these types of disorder.

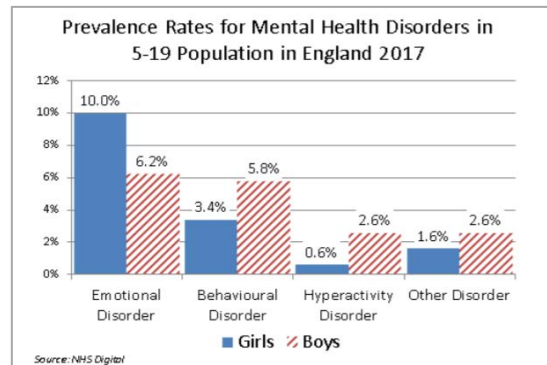


Figure 10 - Gender Breakdown of England's Youth

With regard to Solihull's young population the report highlights a 50% increase between 2015/16 and 2017/18 for SOLAR<sup>52</sup> referrals, for those aged 0-19 years. Solihull's rate of hospital admissions for Mental Health Conditions in children was higher than England's average but with a significant difference between genders (as Solihull's young males were amongst some of the highest in England). Notably, the recreational use of illegal substances is highlighted as a risk to mental health in regards to suicide, depression or disruptive behaviour disorders.

### **Inference**

The above finding reiterates the relationship between mental health and other service providers. In light of the increase seen in Solihull in 2019/20 for drug offences whereby 300 offences were recorded (18.6% increase) this is notable as it may indicate an impending demand upon mental health services.

In 2017 it was estimated that 16% of Solihull's population aged 18-64 year had a Common Mental Disorder, a figure that is estimated to increase. One finding of note was the difference of Solihull's GP Patient Survey 2016/17 which highlighted that Solihull's more deprived areas had a higher proportion report they were suffering from anxiety or depression than the national average, whereas those from lesser deprived areas reported a lesser proportion. This suggests that the variance in deprivation levels in Solihull may need to be addressed separately in order to accurately address the populations' needs.

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/InfoandIntelligence\\_Joint-Strategic-Needs-Assessment-Evidence-Summary.pdf](https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/InfoandIntelligence_Joint-Strategic-Needs-Assessment-Evidence-Summary.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Solar is the emotional wellbeing and mental health service for those aged 0-19 years, in Solihull. Provided by Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust in collaboration with Barnardo's and Autism West Midlands



## Data

Police use 'qualifiers' to help identify certain traits within the calls for service data, one of which is 'mental health'. Caution is needed however as accuracy is reliant upon individual interpretation and consistent assignation of all qualifiers. For the 6 months of calls for service data included in this report (April 20 – Sept 20) there were 9,196 incidents, 1,367 of these had qualifiers allocated to them (14.9%), though not all incidents will require qualifiers this number is not thought to be representative.

In Solihull there were 221 incidents to which a mental health qualifier was assigned, accounting for 2.4% of the total incidents and 16.2% of incidents which had an allocated qualifier. Data provided by the triage team also provides insight into demand. The purpose of the triage team is to offer assessment of an incident from both a health and police standpoint, this can include mental and physical health assessments being conducted face to face. The results of this can be referrals of individuals to the relevant support services, diversion of A&E attendees and an overall cost and demand reduction for both police and health services.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 records show contact which occurred within the policing area of Solihull<sup>53</sup>. The top two types of triage involvement were telephone advice and face to face assessments. Overall the data indicated the entanglement of health and police services whilst also showing the demand and cost-effective methods applied through a multi-agency approach.

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<sup>53</sup> Solihull Contact Report provided by Mental Health Street Triage Team – 03/11/2020

## Appendix

Residence type location list:

- Bungalow - Dwelling
- Care Home
- Detached - Dwelling
- Drive/Driveway
- Farmhouse - Dwelling
- Flat - Dwelling
- Garage Domestic
- Houseboat - Dwelling
- Maisonette - Dwelling
- Nursing Home
- Outside Address
- Semi Detached - Dwelling
- Shed
- Terrace - Dwelling

Commentary regarding Domestic Abuse provided by DA Coordinator Caroline Murray:

*“The main points from the year was the unintended consequences and impact of the COVID pandemic on those subjected to domestic abuse. In March, early learning from other countries showed that lockdown measures introduced across Europe had led to significant increases in rates of domestic abuse. On the basis of this there was a concerted effort to ensure all key agencies were able to identify and respond appropriately to domestic abuse. Key agencies rapidly adapted their services to ensure that those at risk could still have access to crisis help and support.*

*Lockdown started on 23rd march 2020 in the UK. Initially, whilst reports to the police remained stable, all other key points in the system (specialist services, MASH, Housing and health) seen a severe reduction in notifications and disclosures of abuse. It is thought that victims were trying to ‘wait out’ the lockdown, planning to take pro-active action as lockdown relaxed. This maybe because they were unsure of what services were available or because they believed they had no options at this time. #noexcuseforabuse and #youarenotalone were the straplines of a West Midlands and national campaign aimed at letting victims know they should leave home if they are not safe, and that help and support was still available. In Solihull, Multiple opportunities were used during the first lockdown to ‘reach in’ and communicate with anyone who felt unsafe at home. This included those who issuing domestic abuse stickers to local pharmacists and requesting they use them to seal prescriptions.*

*From mid-April the numbers of reports and disclosures began to rise and this trend has continued throughout the remainder of the year. West Midlands Police seen a year to date increase of 36%, meaning the end of 2020/21 will result in the highest recorded period to date. Currently domestic abuse is West Midlands Police largest crime type, equating to 21% of the forces total recorded crime.*

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*Birmingham East, Coventry, Wolverhampton and Solihull are above the regional average, with Solihull showing a 37% increase by the autumn.*

*Demand for specialist support has escalated, with unparalleled requests for refuge. Those who engaged with specialist provision reported an increase in the severity and frequency of abuse they were being subjected to. Nationally, there was an immediate increase in the number of domestic abuse related homicides and Solihull are currently scoping out reviews for three local deaths which appear to meet the criteria for domestic abuse homicide reviews. Extra resources have been added across the system to provide an enhanced service.*

*Towards the end of quarter 2, COVID infection control measures once again tightened and emerging data shows that this is again leading to increases in disclosures and reporting of domestic abuse. There is an expectation that the increase in domestic abuse driven demand will continue for a significant period, well into a time when things begin to return to what is considered business as usual. This is why it is important that we sustain a strong awareness messaging approach.*

*The Domestic Abuse Act 2020 is scheduled for implementation in April 2021. The act introduces the first ever UK statutory definition of domestic abuse, and formally recognises children who see, hear or experience domestic abuse as victims in their own right. The Act seeks to transform responses to domestic abuse and ensure victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences, safe in the knowledge that the state will do everything it can, both to support them and their children and pursue the abuser. The Act will place additional statutory duties on Local Authorities, amongst which will include a responsibility for the provision of 'Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation'. Other elements will have a direct impact on police, courts and probation.*

*Awareness of the Act and the implications has been widely shared across partnerships and boards operating in the borough, and local compliance and transformation will be led by the newly configured Solihull Domestic Abuse Partnership Board."*

**\*\*\*END OF DOCUMENT\*\*\***