

5.5 Community Safety Plan

The Safer Walsall Partnership Board is responsible for the delivery of the Community Safety Plan and is the thematic lead for the creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities' priority. The Community Safety Plan is the overarching community safety document for the borough and identifies the key strategic community safety priorities. It indicates how the agencies that make up the Safer Walsall Partnership will focus their combined activities across the borough to improve community safety and increase community reassurance by reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse and environmental crime. It will therefore contribute directly to improvements in health and wellbeing across Walsall.

Agencies that make up the Safer Walsall Partnership (SWP) are collectively responsible for co-ordinating activity to make Walsall a safer place and include the following:

Walsall Council, West Midlands Police, the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust, West Midlands Fire Service and representatives from the Walsall Housing Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, Walsall Voluntary Action and other key partner agencies.

During 2012-13 Total Recorded Crime fell by 15.4%, which in real terms means 2807 fewer victims (see Figure below). Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) fell by over 27% with 2461 fewer victims. The reductions are in addition to previous substantial year on year reductions that have seen Total Recorded Crime fall by just over 13,500 offences (47%) since 2002-03 and Anti-Social Behaviour by around 10,800 offences (62%) since 2008-09.¹

¹ Walsall Community Safety Plan 2011-2014

WALSALL				
Crime / Incident Type	2011/12	2012/13	Change	% Change
Total Recorded Crime	18232	15425	-2807	-15.4
Serious Acquisitive Crime	3733	3433	-300	-8.0
Anti Social Behaviour (Police Reported)	9082	6621	-2461	-27.1
Youth Related ASB (Police Reported)	3714	2345	-1369	-36.9
Domestic Burglary	1441	1261	-180	-12.5
Burglary Other Building	1522	1275	-247	-16.2
Criminal Damage	3348	2553	-795	-23.7
Vehicle Crime	1923	1892	-31	-1.6
Violence Against the Person	3396	2861	-535	-15.8
Robbery	388	311	-77	-19.8
Deliberate Primary Fires (WMFS Data)	405	287	-118	-29.1
Deliberate Secondary Fires (WMFS data)	1472	623	-849	-57.7
Drug Offences	628	566	-62	-9.9
Domestic Violence	1177	1071	-106	-9.0
Hate Crime	413	189	-224	-54.2

Figure 1 Walsall Crime, by Incident Type

Community Safety Plan Priorities 2011 – 2014

Following a borough-wide strategic assessment that utilised data from a range of partner agencies and extensive stakeholder and resident consultation, the partnership identified the following strategic priorities for 2011-2014 which were reflected in the borough Community Safety Plan.

Priority 1: Tackle violent crime, with specific focus on domestic abuse, town centre violence and serious youth violence.

For the performance year 2013/14 West Midlands police force has introduced a new milestone to measure 'Violence with Injury' (VWI). VWI accounts for approximately 10% of Total Recorded Crime (TRC) and 50% of violence overall.²

1,489 VWI offences were reported during the last financial year (2012/13). 50% of all offences have been identified as being 'Public Place Violence' (the second highest proportion of Public Place Violence offences were reported as being within a public house / nightclub); 10% have been identified as being 'Under the Influence Violence' and a further 6% of offences have been identified as being 'Licensed Premises Violence.' Weapons were identified as being used in 10% of all VWI offences, a third of which were identified as being knife related. Peak days for offending are Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The peak times are 15:00 – 0300 hrs. These days and time correspond with Night Time Economy trends.⁴

² Violence with Injury Problem Profile – West Midlands Police May 2013

Year to date (1st April – 31st August 2013); the Police have recorded 93 Town Centre VWI offences, a 7.9% reduction against the same period in 2012. Activities to reduce town centre violence and in particular night time economy related issues during recent times have included the continuation of Operation Be Safe at weekends and ongoing patrols by Street Pastors. This has led to increased support for vulnerable people and victims who have suffered minor injuries.

Serious Youth Violence

Year to date (1st April – 31st August 2013); the Police have recorded 67 VWI offences whereby the defendant is aged between 10 and 18 , a 27.2% reduction compared with the same period in 2012. There were 153 VWI offences whereby the injured party is aged between 0 and 18 years, a 0.7% increase compared to with the same time last year.

Domestic Abuse

Police reported Domestic Abuse (DA) violent offences have reduced by 7.8% and police recorded domestic incidents have reduced by 2.7% (1st December 2011 to 30th November 2012) compared to the previous year. Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) referrals have decreased by 34% when comparing 2010/2011 to 2011/2012. However, recent exploration of data from across the wide range of referral services dealing with domestic abuse suggests that across some other agencies DA is increasing so that the overall picture of the scale and trajectory, including nature of domestic abuse, across Walsall is unclear. It is possible that victims are turning to other support services rather than reporting directly to the police.³

In 2012, there was further development of the governance and commissioning models for Domestic Abuse practice in Walsall. The lines of governance and communication have been strengthened between the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership Board, the Walsall Safeguarding Children Board and the Walsall Safeguarding Adults Board. Future work will see the continued shared development of a single Domestic Abuse pathway for Children and Adults partnership working and needs assessment and a shared database to facilitate a greater understanding of the overall scale and nature of Domestic Abuse.³

The vast majority of police reported offences of domestic abuse involved violence (85%), followed by Criminal Damage (13%). 47% of violent offences being recorded were Assault Occasion ABH, followed by Common Assault (19%). Data provided by Walsall Domestic Violence Forum between 1st April to 30th November 2012, suggests that the vast majority of victims were female (86.8%). 28.7% of victims were aged 18 to 24 years, with a further 27% aged between 30 to 39 years and 18.8% aged between 25 to 29 years. In terms of ethnicity, the vast majority were White European (78.5%), followed by Asian - Indian (5.9%) and Black - Caribbean (2.7%). Further analysis highlights that victims of domestic abuse have stated that on most occasions boyfriends (27%) have been the alleged offenders involved followed by ex partners (24%) and husbands (15%).³

³ Safer Walsall Partnership Strategic Assessment – February 2013

In March 2009, the Manor hospital implemented a database within their A&E department in order to anonymously record the details of each victim of assault was dealt with. Utilising A&E data between March 2009 and December 2012, 464 victims of assault attending Walsall hospital A&E said the incident took place in the home; committed by an acquaintance (26%), relative (26%) or partner / ex partner (48%). Of this figure, 154 incidents were recorded in 2010, 140 in 2011 and 77 in 2012 representing a decrease in A&E attendances and possibly signalling a decrease in the number of Domestic Abuse incidents within the borough over the last three years. 75% of all incidents had been reported to the police prior to going to A&E and of the 117 incidents that hadn't been reported, 19% intended to do so later.⁴

Year to date (1st April – 31st August 2013) the Police have recorded 550 Domestic Violence crimes. This is a 15.8% increase compared to the same period last year. There has however been a 10.7% decrease in recorded Domestic incidents for the same period.

There have been 383 female victims of VWI year to date (1st April – 31st August 2013). This is a 17.8% increase compared to the same period last year. The highest intensity of which occurred within Walsall Town Centre.

Priority 2: Tackle anti-social behaviour

Tackling ASB remains a priority for the communities of Walsall and consistently comes out as an area of concern. There is a clear link between the satisfaction with public services and the level of perceived ASB in an area. Whilst positively analysis of police recorded ASB during 2012-13 illustrates a further reduction of 27% compared to the previous year, it is apparent that less than half of reports are made to the police. ASB covers a wide range of behaviours and can be reported to a number of agencies.⁵

The partnership continues to work collectively to tackle this issue and activities include monthly multi agency tasking documents highlighting reoccurring issues that require a partnership response, a monthly Vulnerability and Problem Solving Forum that supports the most vulnerable victims and looks at complex issues and a partnership wide review of how agencies can work more effectively together to tackle ASB which will include work on common definitions and categories.

Year to date (1st April – 31st August 2013); there have been 2,711 ASB incidents reported to the Police. This is a 16.6% reduction compared to the same period in 2012. The highest intensity of ASB is within Walsall Town Centre.

Priority 3: Address harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse

Many of the 6 priorities are related to drug and alcohol abuse. Drug and alcohol treatment service are becoming increasingly recovery focussed with success being measured in terms of positive outcomes rather than just numbers in treatment.

⁴ Domestic Violence Report (Utilising A&E data) – February 2013

⁵ Walsall Community Safety Plan 2011-2014

The Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) is central to government plans to tackle drug related crime. The idea is to offer offenders who commit crime to fund their drug habits the support they need to kick the habit. The testing in police custody process ensures drug users are continued to be assessed and directed into drug treatment which is proven to reduce crime, whilst reducing time drug testing those likely to test negative.⁶ Between 1st December 2011 and 30th November 2012, 1,252 tests were completed in relation to individual offenders who entered the Walsall custody block. The majority (64%) of these tests proved to be negative. However these figures suggest that there is still a significant amount of offenders who are committing crime in Walsall to fund their drug habit. The most common trigger offence for individuals testing positive was theft, with a total of 58% of all records, followed by Burglary (17%). Additionally data from Walsall Probation illustrates that just over a quarter (26%) of offenders who started on an order during last year have stated that one of the reasons for their offending behaviour has been due to use of drugs.⁷

Between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013 there were 1503 alcohol related arrests. The top five offences were Drunk and Disorderly in a public place, Assault a person thereby occasioning them actual bodily harm, Drive motor vehicle with alcohol above limit, Criminal damage to property valued over £5000 and Assault by beating. Data from probation suggests that 35% of offenders who started on an order during last year stated that one of the reasons for their offending behaviour has been due to misuse of alcohol.⁸

Priority 4: Community, with specific focus on counter terrorism, community cohesion and public perceptions.

Walsall continues to experience low levels of extremist activity when compared with other areas of the country. Where issues do arise they are dealt with through a strong partnership approach that coordinates both proactive and reactive action.

Priority 5: Tackle serious acquisitive crime, with specific focus on reducing domestic burglary.

Overall Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC), the definition includes Vehicle Crime, Domestic Burglary and Robbery offences has seen a reduction of 14% during the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months.¹⁰ Various partner activities, in addition to robust and targeted policing have contributed to this reduction.

Year to date (1st April – 31st August 2013), there have been 1,294 SAC offences, an 8% reduction compared to the same period in 2012. Over the same time period, Burglary Dwelling has had 431 recorded crimes, an 8.7% reduction compared to the same period in 2012.

Priority 6: Reduce re-offending, a cross cutting theme across all other priorities.

Through the Walsall Integrated Offender Management Programme, partners work together to reduce crime and reoffending by addressing the key issues facing perpetrators and their

⁶ PowerPoint Presentation -

http://intranet2/hq_departments/central_justice_services/drug_interventions_programme/targeted_testing.aspx

⁷ Safer Walsall Partnership Strategic Assessment – February 2013

⁸ Safer Walsall Partnership Strategic Assessment – February 2013

families. This is achieved by supporting the greater coordination of agencies and the programmes they deliver to manage offenders and ensure that individuals do not fall through the gaps. This work takes a holistic approach seeking to address the issues that contribute to offending behaviour and also to target and convict those whose behaviour does not change. Linking priority offenders between the police, probation, housing and drug and alcohol services have delivered some notable successes.