

Serious Violence in B&NES

PROBLEM PROFILE

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Context and Overview

Methodology and approach

The project involved gathering and sharing information from:

- Avon & Somerset Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Police & Crime commissioner
- Local partner agencies
- VRU Conference
- Police recorded crime
- We analysed local data sets
- B&NES Council data
- National Probation Service SWSC data
- Avon & Somerset Constabulary bespoke data request
- Third sector/arms-length body data

Executive Summary

How can we define serious violence in B&NES

There is no single definition of serious violence and the local partnership is in discussion about this – and its relationship with the work and governance of the Violence Reduction Unit. B&NES' ambition is that everyone should lead lives free of serious violence at home and in the community. This arises from our understanding of serious violence as being wider than the original, national, focus on street-based violence often associated with exploitation, to additionally include domestic abuse and serious sexual assault and rape, but not child abuse. Therefore, B&NES' definition of serious violence is broader than that currently used by Avon and Somerset Constabulary, and is consistent with how serious violence is understood by the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Office. Application of our understanding of serious violence will be flexible to take account of its impact on individuals, families and communities and can extend to the threat of serious violence. We also recognise that some people have been both harmed by and perpetrators of serious violence, sometimes quite independently and sometimes within the same violent incident.

In practice, ours will be an umbrella definition for the Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership and in terms of governance and delivery, it is likely that the following Sub Groups will lead and report on different elements:

- Serious domestic abuse – Domestic Abuse Partnership
- Serious sexual assault and rape – Vulnerable Communities Group
- Serious physical assaults including knife crime – Exploitation Sub Group; the Serious Violence Steering Group currently reports in to this Sub Group.
- B&NES has a low overall rate of recorded violence, though certain serious violent offence groups have risen significantly over the last five years. Whilst data for under-25s is not currently available, evidence suggests this trend is also true of the Youth Offending Service cohort
- Serious violence has largely remained consistent and continues to be concentrated in Bath City Centre, though there are signs of a spillover into other areas such as Keynsham, Twerton, and Somer Valley

- Violence and knife admissions to hospital are concentrated in the early hours of the morning
- Knife crime victims are concentrated in the 25-34 age bracket, and are overwhelmingly male
- Domestic abuse is the most common circumstantial flag for serious violent offences, and domestic violent offences have a particular profile requiring attention
- A low proportion of serious violent offences lead to charge / summons

Serious Violence: Context

In the last 12 months, the number of all violent offences has followed a similar pattern as in the previous two years. However it is noted from September to mid November 2021, the number increased, this coincides with the lifting of lockdown restrictions and therefore must be considered as a contributing factor.

[\\banes-shared\Shared\\$\VRU Project\Strategic Needs Assessments by year \(problem profiles\)\2022-23\Submitted version\B&NES SNA information, 14.01.22.docx](#)

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Over the last 12 months there has been a general decrease in knife related offences, which is a success story for BANES VRU when considering force data which shows an increase. The success could be in part attributed to education such as knife packages in schools, work with other agencies such as project 28. The greater sharing of information from agencies to enable us to be much more reactive and start engaging and working with young people at risk of carrying weapons.

As a local authority area, Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) was formed in 1996 and covers approximately 135.2 square miles. The B&NES population in mid-2020 is estimated to be 196,357. The GP registered population was 214,251 in July 2020. It is projected that the student age population will remain significant in B&NES. The local population is projected to continue to become older with further implications, for example, increasing the strain on the NHS and adult social care

Topography and Features

Bath is the largest urban settlement in the area and forms the main urban centre, acting as the commercial and recreational centre of the district. It is home to just over 50% of the population and is one of the few cities in the world to be named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Keynsham lies to the west of Bath, a traditional market town with a population of just over 9% of the total population of B&NES. Midsomer Norton and Radstock are small historic market towns, located in the south of the district with approximately 6% of the total

population split between them. They both have a strong heritage of mining and industry stemming from the North Somerset coalfield. The rest of the district consists of 69 diverse rural communities of varying sizes and characteristics, including a line of villages along the foothills of the Mendips, the Chew Valley and Cotswolds villages around Bath.

Population and Demography

The local population's age structure is similar to the UK's population as a whole but there is higher number of people aged between 20-24 highlighting the area's notable student population. Between 2001 and 2019, the growth in the 20-24 age range accounted for nearly 40% of the area's population growth. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) project that the Bath and North East Somerset population will increase to 202,821 by 2030, an increase of nearly 5% from 2020.

B&NES is less ethnically diverse than the UK as a whole, 91% of local residents define their ethnicity as White British. This is followed by 4.2% defining as White Other and 1.6% defining as Asian. From the school census data in January 2021, 83.2% children define themselves as White British. No data is held on religion.

In 2020, 87% of the population were either very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live, which is a 3% increase from 2019.

Covid-19 Pandemic - The impact of Covid 19 and the restrictions from lockdown have created a challenge to the delivery of front-line services. This has impacted on the ability to deliver relationship-based support to young people and adults.

Economy

- As a whole, Bath and North East Somerset remains one of the least deprived local authorities in the country and continues to become relatively less deprived over time. However, within some areas, inequality is widening and deprivation remains significant. There are now two small areas within the most deprived 10% nationally.
- Approximately 12% of children in Bath and North East Somerset were living in poverty in 2017/18, increasing to approximately 19% when housing costs had been taken into account.
- There are wide variations in the child poverty figures across different wards and LSOAs in Bath and North East Somerset
- Despite a range of excellent outcomes, Bath and North East Somerset is one of the more expensive places to live in the country. This creates a potential cost of living challenge, as residential wages are below the national average.

The number of violent offences in the last 12 months has remained fairly static at between 10-15 per month, with three noticeable peaks in mid July, mid August and mid September. There is a national trend of offences increasing in summer months and we would expect to see this. In B&NES there was a spate of violent incidents in the city centre, predominantly involving young people aged under 18. This series of incidents involved two particular groups well known to the VRU. A contextual safeguarding approach including multi-agency complex strategy meetings was used to tackle these issues and the actions agreed appear to have been successful in reducing further offending.

Over the last 12 months, there has been an increase in some knife related offences, including violence without injury and possession of weapons.

Violence against the person* accounted for almost a third of recorded crime in B&NES in the year ending September 2019, with violence without injury making up the biggest share. This mirrors national proportions, but at lower rates.

Levels

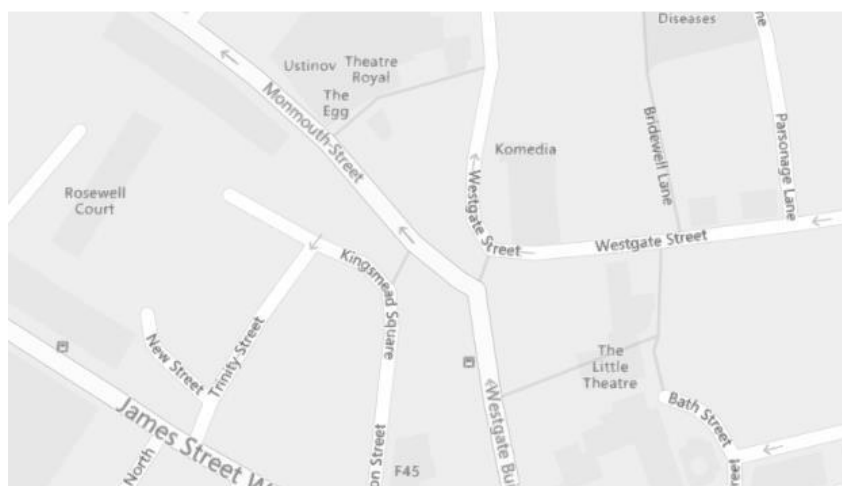
Violence against the person, robbery and serious sexual offences have all seen significant increases since 2014/15, although this has steadied or reversed over the last year. Interviews suggested possible under-reporting in B&NES – Sexual assault data continues to show a similar pattern

The most common violence and robbery offences are common assault and personal robbery respectively. More serious offences are limited in number, with 45 ‘threat to kill’ offences and 32 ‘malicious wounding’ offences in the last year.

Robbery over the last 8 months, show offences have remained comparable to previous years apart from the period between April 2020 – September 2020. Where a sharp increase can be seen. This increase coincides with the first Covid-19 lockdown, as such, we must consider the significance in relation to the increase.

B&NES Serious Violence Hotspots NTE

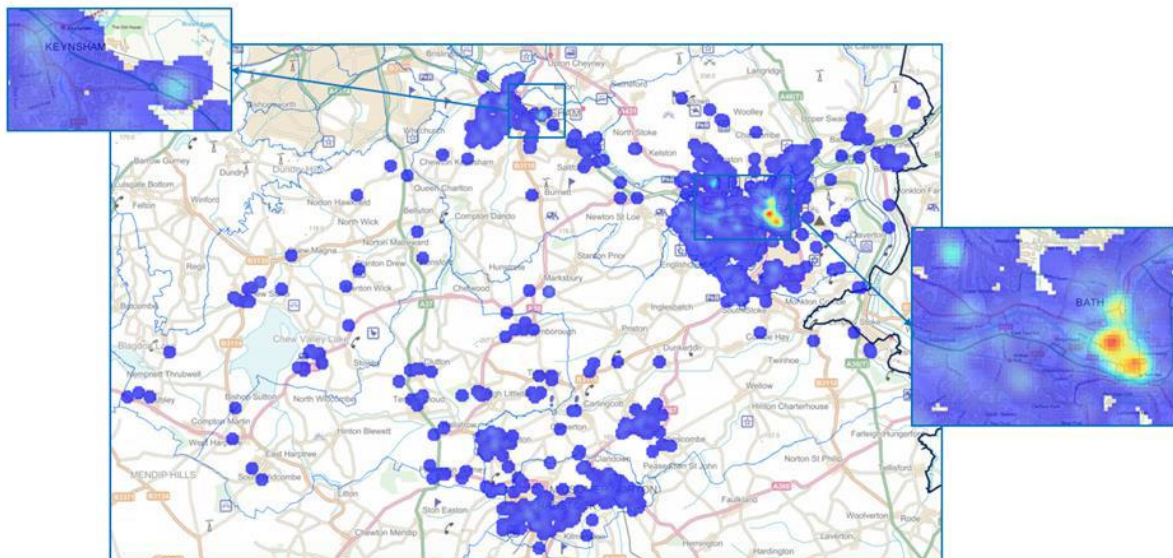
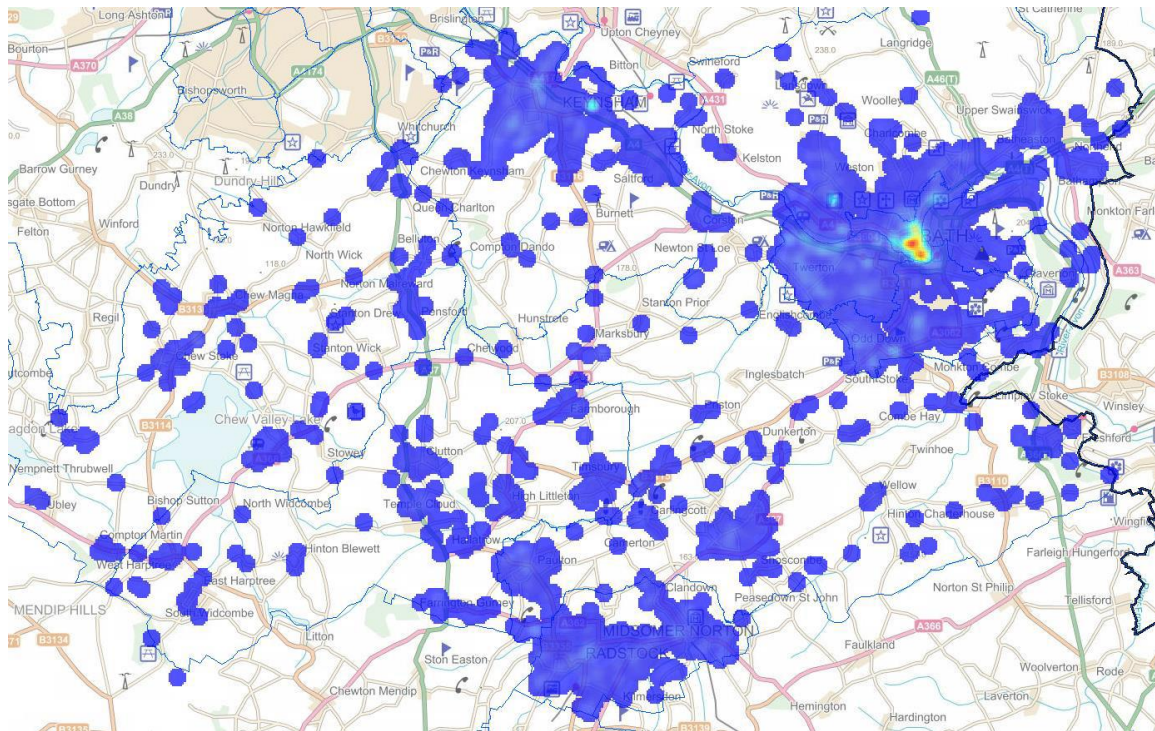
Persistent non-domestic violence hotspots focus on high footfall areas with access to shops and NTE sites such as nightclubs and takeaways, including central Bath (around Monmouth Street and Westgate Street), Manvers Street and Walcot Street. Some areas, such as Northgate Street, have been identified as having a higher footfall due to being a key connecting route between locations. The area of Central Bath includes numerous pubs, bars, restaurants and takeaways. It is likely to attract a number of students due to Bath College and Student accommodation within the area. Kingsmead Square is an open space likely to attract gatherings.



Additional locations around Snow Hill are believed to be due to ongoing disputes between neighbours. Serious violence in B&NES, excluding Domestic Violence and NTE locations, can still be found in the central city and can be attributed to higher levels of footfall due to its

central location, shops and NTE sites such as bars and takeaways. An additional location has been identified at Keynsham custody unit. This is due to offences that occur within the police station or could be a default pattern of recording where the offence was reported. Maps showing serious violence incidents excluding those with domestic violence indicators that those that occur during NTE.

Maps showing serious violence incidents excluding those with domestic violence indicators that those that occur during NTE.



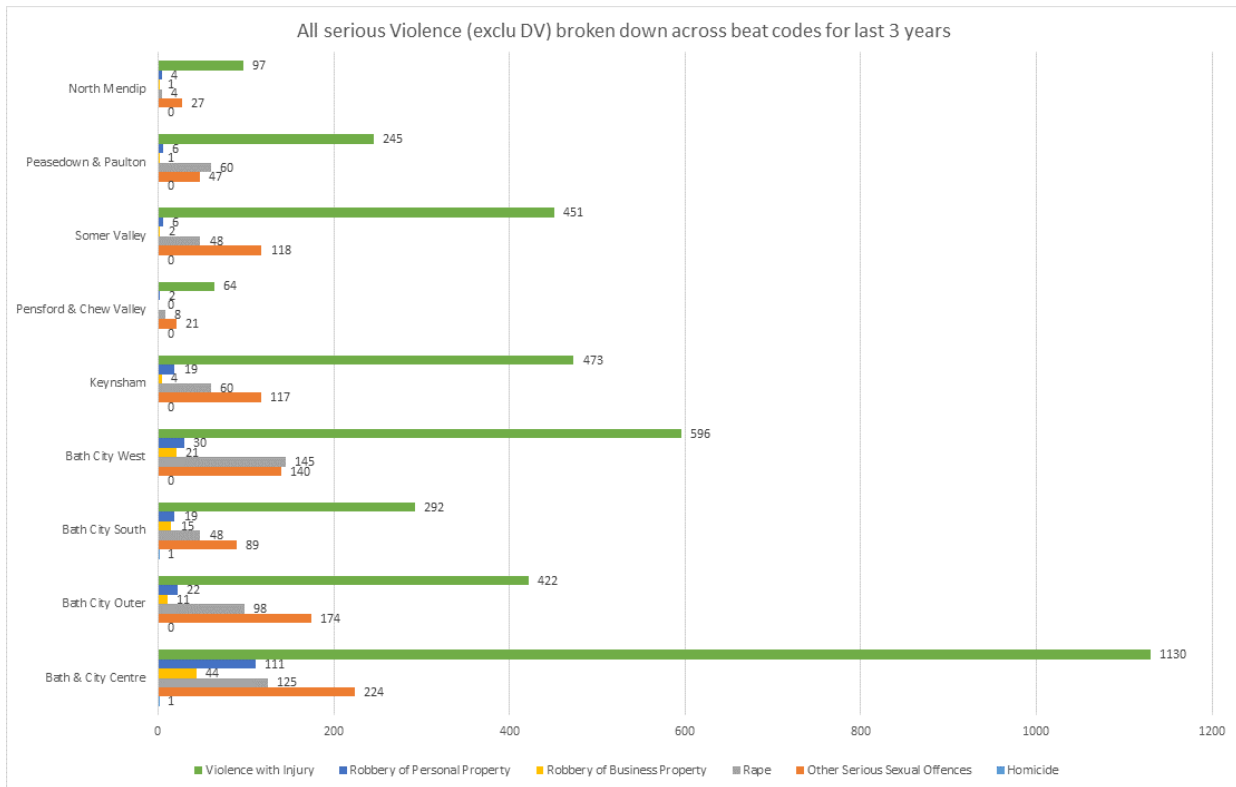
Current B&NES NTE initiatives to ensure the safety of users of the NTE a virtual team approach, with a joint briefing at the beginning of each shift which includes the Police, Taxi Marshals, Street Pastors, and the street medics.

NTE issues are also now overseen by the Safe and Secure Night time Meeting which combines the roles of the previous Night Time Economy, Pubwatch and Nightwatch meetings.

'Be the Change' Working with the Student Community Partnership, both Universities and Bath College, create & deliver a co-training package for University & FE staff. It will build on the University's old #neverok campaign and SARSAS's previous 'pause-play-stop' which now be badged 'Be the change' and align with Bath Spa University's major strategic project on Sexual Violence and Mental Health. FE colleges and schools year 10-11 will also be targeted. With greater emphasis on bystanders, in addition to helping the community spot problematic behaviour and respond, it focusses on the behaviour of male perpetrators rather than giving women advice for e.g., about how to dress.

The following table represents incidents related to beat areas for B&NES 2021 – 2022, however, the local data can only be accredited to 8 months of that year.

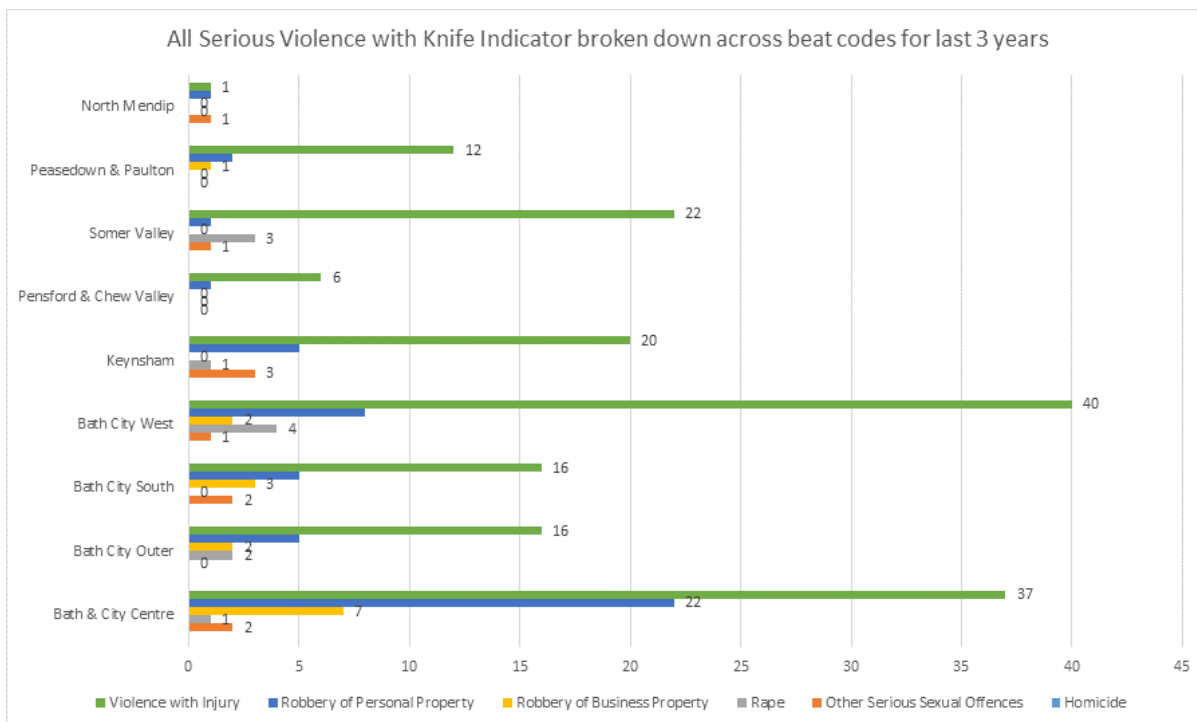
Area	Homicide	Other Serious Sexual Offences	Rape	Robbery of Business Property	Robbery of Personal Property	Violence with Injury
Bath & City Centre	1	253	154	44	112	1399
Bath City Outer	1	206	127	11	22	604
Bath City South	1	102	76	15	20	431
Bath City West	0	172	209	21	30	873
Keynsham	0	135	75	4	19	667
Pensford & Chew Valley	0	22	9	0	2	85
Somer Valley	0	143	65	2	6	648
Peasedown & Paulton	0	58	79	1	6	336



Violence against the person is concentrated in Bath City Centre, Keynsham and Somer Valley. Increases have also been seen in these areas in the last year.

As seen in the following tables robbery offences appear to have increased specifically 2021 – 2022, however, the local data can only be accredited to 8 months of that year. Personal Robberies appear to have increased in the same 8 months in BANES.

Area	Robbery of Business Property	Robbery of Personal Property
Bath & City Centre	44	112
Bath City Outer	11	22
Bath City South	15	20
Bath City West	21	30
Keynsham	4	19
Pensford & Chew Valley	0	2
Somer Valley	2	6
Peasedown & Paulton	1	6



All serious sexual assaults over the last three years, have followed the previous years' trends, however, although an increase is noted for 2021-2022 the data represents an 8 month period.

Area	Other Serious Sexual Offences	Rape
Bath & City Centre	253	154
Bath City Outer	206	127
Bath City South	102	76
Bath City West	172	209
Keynsham	135	75
Pensford & Chew Valley	22	9
Somer Valley	143	65
Peasedown & Paulton	58	79

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

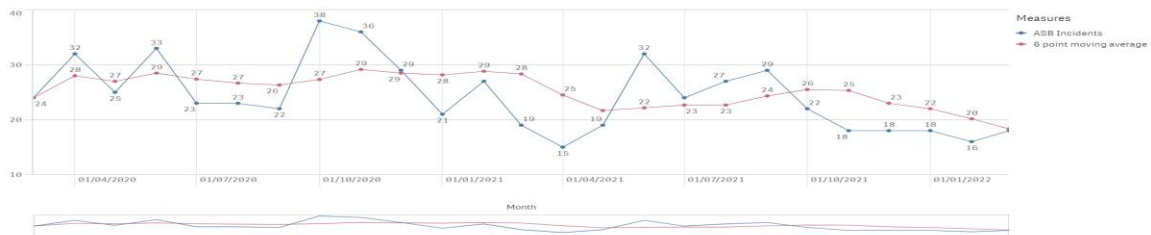
The VRU attends the multi-agency ASB meeting which is chaired by the Police ASB Team. This was held on a monthly basis up until December and the current format is now being revised. The ASB Team acknowledges antisocial behaviour as being a risk factor for violence and VRU input is valuable along with our partners from Youth Connect, Project 28 substance misuse service and the Youth Offending Service. Individuals are discussed and

appropriate interventions put into place. The ASB Co-ordinator has suggested establishing a mechanism for referral of high risk/escalating young people into the ASB MAM for further discussion regarding suitability of ASB Tools & Powers. Closer join up of work is being considered, including involvement in regular information sharing meetings, as these may be a better way to agree multi-agency approaches with those considered to be at higher risk. With a low proportion of serious violence offences leading to charge or summons, in part due to victims' lack of confidence in reporting and fear of reprisals, the ASB Co-ordinator is interested in exploring the use of ASB Tools and Powers including positive requirements, as an alternative.

The following two tables shows an overall slight increase of anti-social behavior in Bath central locations. November 2021- January 2022, shows a decrease, comparable with 2018 - 2021, we cannot rule out the impact of the pandemic and lockdowns, influencing this data.

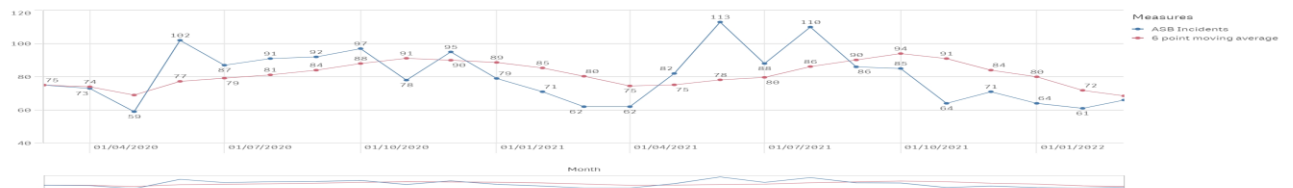
Kingsmead

Anti-Social Behaviour Trend
 Moving average shows the count of ASB incidents averaged over a rolling six months



City Centre

Anti-Social Behaviour Trend
 Moving average shows the count of ASB incidents averaged over a rolling six months



Data on crime types in B&NES during Covid-19 Lockdowns

The following data presents the increase and decline of crime types in B&NES during the 2020 lockdown in 2020 due to Covid-19, in comparison with the same months in 2019. The data shows a noticeable increase in robbery from the person, criminal damage and arson, possession of weapons, and public order. However, during the same period of lockdown, the

following offences decreased, robbery from the person, bicycle theft, burglary, drugs, violence and sexual offences and shoplifting.

Serious violence – what do we know about those involved in serious violence?

Slightly more victims of serious violence are female than male. 6% are recorded as being from “BAME” heritages but ethnicity is not recorded in nearly 30% of cases and so this proportion could be higher. 44.5% of those harmed are aged under 25, of whom 9.6% are aged under 15.

Serious violence offenders are predominantly male (84%). 9% are recorded as being from “BAME” heritages but ethnicity is not recorded in nearly 14% of cases and so again, this proportion could be higher. 46% are aged under 25 years old, with 8.5% being under 15, supporting a continuing focus on this age group.

The gaps in this data are disappointing given recommendations in the Lammy report and the Identifying Disproportionality Report [\\banes-shared\Shared\\$\VRU Project\Reports\Identifying Disproportionality Report.pdf](#) about recording ethnicity. Part of the VRU’s activity going forward will be working with Police to consider how this can be addressed.

Drivers of Serious Violence in B&NES: the national picture

The government’s Serious Violence Strategy identifies a number of underlying drivers of serious violence nationally, including drug markets, technology, and criminal justice effectiveness. Whilst these are likely to play a role locally, the following section explores the specific drivers of violence in B&NES.

Looking closer: What are the key risk-factors and additional drivers of Serious Violence?

An individual’s previous criminal activity or involvement in offences

Looked after children / regular missing persons

B&NES has comparatively few missing reports and the Police Missing Person’s Coordinator sees the involvement of the VRU as a protective factor in this.

Data from LiquidLogic shows 279 missing children episodes reported in 2021, involving 92 different children. Of these, the majority of children (62%) were known to Social Care at the point they were reported missing, with just 49 episodes involving 35 children (38%) not known. The accuracy of this data is being reviewed as this would represent a significant change on previous years, when the majority of missing children were not known to Social Care. A tiny minority of individual Looked After Children are frequently reported missing. Independent return home interviews are offered by the Compass team within the Youth Offending Service. There are few return home interviews separately recorded as being completed because they are conducted by allocated Social Workers in the course of their work. There is an ongoing piece of work to better understand the recording and practice of this area of work.

The last audit undertaken, in 2020, of a small sample of 14 completed independent return home interviews, found no clear patterns in the ‘push-pull’ factors and 90% parental engagement in the contacts made.

Team - at report end date or if null episode start date	Number of Missing Episodes	Number of Missing Children	Episodes: CIA at episode start	Episodes: CPP at episode start	Episodes: CIN at episode start	Episodes: No Referral at episode start	Number RHI Offered Not Accepted	Number: RHI Offered/Accepted	Number RHI within 72 hours
Adolescent & Care Experienced Team (ACE)	143	14	105		30	8	112	5	4
Children In Care Team	35	13	35				10	5	3
Disabled Childrens Team	6	4	4		2		2	2	1
Family Support Team 1 - Hub A	5	4			3	2	4		
Family Support Team 1 - Hub B	5	4		1	4		3	1	1
Family Support Team 2 - Hub A	1	1			1		1		
Family Support Team 2 - Hub B	16	7	4	2	10		5	2	1
Family Support Team 3 - Hub A	16	8	1	4	8	3	10	2	
Family Support Team 3 - Hub B	2	2		1	1		1		
No Team	49	35				49	37	8	6
Triage Team	1	1			1		1		
All Episodes	279	92	149	8	60	62	186	26	16

Emotional health and wellbeing

The local picture and vision for B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire is described in the BSW Thrive Strategy:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s64066/Appendix%201%20BSW%20Mental%20Health%20Transformation%20Plan%20Draft.pdf>.

Family and relationship factors

The wider B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership recognises the importance of these factors and has adopted 'think family' as a key priority (together with 'think community'). Adversity and trauma in childhood are known to correlate with negative outcomes including being exploited and being drawn into offending, including serious violent offending. This means that all the sub groups take this into account in their planning. There is currently little reliable data available but this is being addressed by the Council data team during 2022.

Parental separation – there is no available intelligence on this beyond national statistics from 2011 which will be updated in 2022 when ONS release Census data. Locally, training has been offered to staff on reducing parental conflict in recognition of this being a factor in domestic abuse and family breakdown.

Household alcohol or substance misuse - the last Drug Treatment Needs Assessment was completed in 2019 and parts of it will be refreshed for April 2022. Parental substance misuse is seen as a key risk factor, particularly where there are also parental mental health issues and domestic abuse. A significant piece of work on this was undertaken some years ago but the data is old now

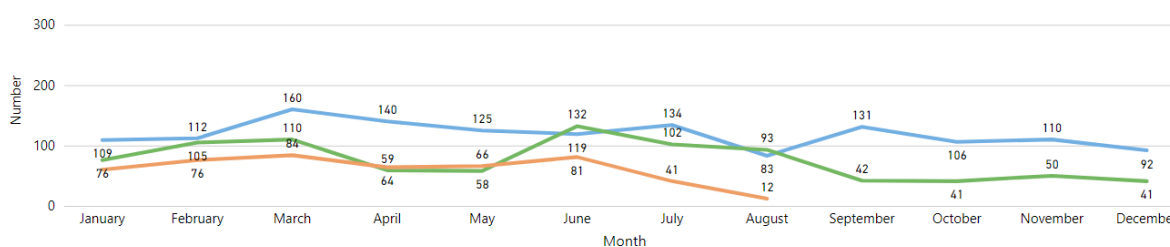
Household mental illness – there is a draft mental health needs assessment but again, there is not much reliable data available at present.

Family violence including domestic violence / abuse

Domestic Abuse Contacts to Children's Social Care:

Domestic Abuse Contacts to Children's Social Care

Year ● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021

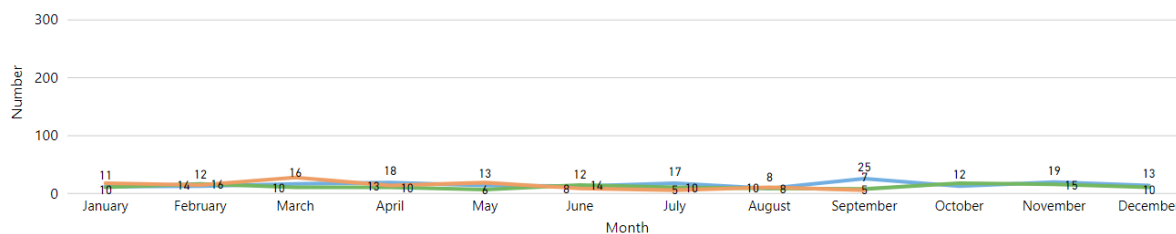


The number of domestic abuse contacts during 2021 were on the whole lower than in 2020. Overall the numbers of contacts during all 3 years have decreased.

Referrals to the Early Help Allocation Panel:

Referrals to the Early Help Allocation Panel

Year ● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021

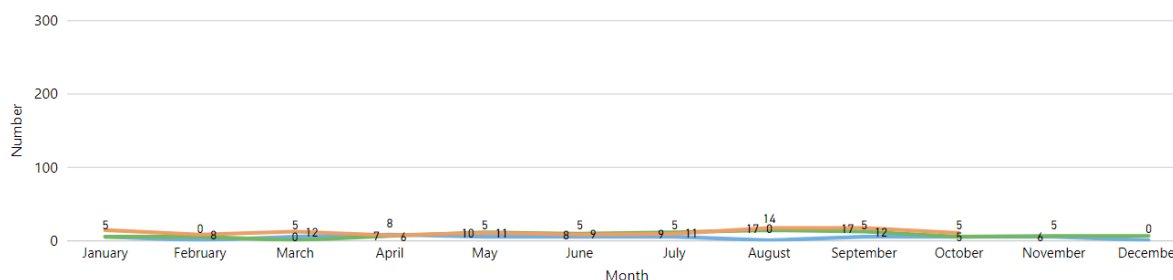


The number of domestic abuse referrals (for families, not individual children) to the Early Help Allocation Panel during 2020 and 2019 remained fairly stable and also saw little change in the first 9 months of 2021. It is though important to note that the numbers are fairly small.

Domestic Abuse Enquiries to Adult Safeguarding:

Domestic Abuse Enquiries to Adult Safeguarding

Year ● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021



The number of domestic abuse enquiries to Adult Safeguarding during 2020 was very similar to 2019 and remained low for the first 9 months of 2021. It is important to note again that numbers are very low.

Data included – completed adult safeguarding enquiries, where the alleged perpetrator was either ‘Partner’ or ‘Other family member’. Adult safeguarding enquiries (section 42 enquiries) are initiated where there are indications of abuse or neglect in relation to an adult with care and support needs and who is unable to protect themselves because of those needs. Important to note – to prevent the identification of individuals, numbers below 5 are either shown as a 5 or 0.

Household offending behaviour and incarceration - The local safeguarding partnership identified children affected by parental imprisonment (CAPI) as a priority cohort in 2016. National data supports recognition of them as a group who may experience a range of negative outcomes including becoming involved in offending but it has proved impossible to collate local data without national changes in criminal justice agency recording practices and information sharing protocols. Work is currently underway to revive the network of ‘CAPI Champions’ who have been trained to support children affected by parental imprisonment either directly or by acting in a consultancy capacity with colleagues.. Further training is

being procured from Barnardos in 2022 to extend awareness of the needs of these children and families and increase the number of agencies who have CAPI Champions in place. All of the above are considered as part of the OASys assessment. The OASys tool can then provide data to inform local commissioning to support local variation in need. The Probation Service has a newly formed Community Integration Unit that will commission services either directly or jointly with partners and stakeholders. This commissioning will be dependent on the existing contracts in place each of which will have its own timescale for review and recommissioning so will take a number of months/years to complete the harmonisation of commissioning.

The 2018 Serious violence strategy identified risk factors that have been identified as predictors of at least one form of serious violence (homicide, knife crime, gang membership) in systematic reviews and studies¹. These categorise risk factors into five subsets as seen below:



Individual factors: Key risk factors and drivers of serious violence

At-risk cohorts

Alcohol or substance misuse

There have been no substance misuse needs assessments undertaken since the local serious violence needs assessments. The last children's needs assessment was completed in 2015. The last Adult (including Parents) Drug Treatment Needs Assessment was completed in 2019 and parts of it still stand although it is due to be refreshed for April 2022.

The key findings were:

- The local treatment system performs well in a number of areas. For example, no clients wait for longer than three weeks to commence drug treatment.
- There are also some good harm reduction outcomes, for example, Hepatitis C testing rates and Hepatitis B immunisation rates.
- The number of adults in contact with local drug and alcohol services fell by 20% between 2013/14 and 2017/18. This is double the fall seen nationally over the same

period. The fall in the number of clients in treatment over this period has been greater for alcohol only and non-opiate clients - a 39% and 30% fall respectively.

- Throughout 2018 there were 226 people in treatment who were living with children. That's around 1 in 4 clients. Estimates suggest a further 133 opiate dependent parents in B&NES could benefit from treatment but were not in treatment.
- B&NES has a slightly higher percentage of complex - more likely to be injecting and also using alcohol - drug treatment clients than the England average.
- The majority of people (59%) in treatment in 2017/18 were opiate clients, of whom half are now aged over 40 years compared to one third in 2009/10. Among alcohol only clients, 74% are aged 40 or over (compared to 57% in 2009/10). Physical long-term conditions are likely to be an increasing issue for these clients.
- Around half of all drug and alcohol client groups have a mental health treatment need on presentation in B&NES, and just under one third are not having these needs met.
- The number of opiate clients seen in Shared Care by SDAS and GPs has reduced by nearly half since 2012. The complex service is very appropriate for complex and recovering clients but maintaining stable opiate clients in the complex service may be missing opportunities for physical care and local recovery support and may be a less cost effective approach.
- Opiate clients are in treatment longer than the national average, although this may reflect the slighter higher complexity of clients in B&NES.
- Measures of drug-related deaths have been rising over the last few years in B&NES, as well as nationally, and are now one of the leading causes of death in men aged 15-49 years.
- Housing needs appear to be a more significant problem for drug treatment clients in B&NES compared to national averages.
- There are estimated to be around 180 people who are high impact 'blue light' service users.
- An important emerging issue appears to be the recent rise, and greater rate in the local treatment population compared to national, of clients recorded with problematic illicit and licit use of prescription-only and/or over-the-counter medicines

The Probation OASys assessment tool identifies those whose offending is rooted in alcohol or substance misuse and an Order for treatment can be imposed by the Courts. Those treatment requirements are commissioned locally. Where necessary, additional structured interventions can be delivered to support those who do not meet the threshold for the treatment requirements. An additional initiative that is being rolled out is the use of alcohol monitoring tags through the Alcohol Abstinence and Monitoring Requirement . For the Youth Offending Service cohort, Project 28 provides assessment and intervention in suitable cases. This has included Drug Testing and treatment Orders although these are rarely used with children.

Drivers of Serious Violence in B&NES: Vulnerable adults

Interviews with Nik Brown revealed particular concern about the vulnerability of, and violence within, the street community.

“Some members of the street community, whether they are rough sleeping or housed are among the most vulnerable members of our community. This can often be made worse by one of or a combination of poor mental health and substance misuse.”

“Members of the street community are more likely to misuse substances and this in itself is something that may be the cause of violence. This is often related to money.”

“Poor mental health can lead to violence against members of the street community who are mentally unwell as their behaviour has been known to provoke people.”

“Violence can come from within the street based community as well as outside of it”

“The street based community may tolerate serious violence as a consequence of their lifestyle.”

“This is especially true of domestic violence, where practitioners felt the challenges of engaging with the street community to be particularly acute.

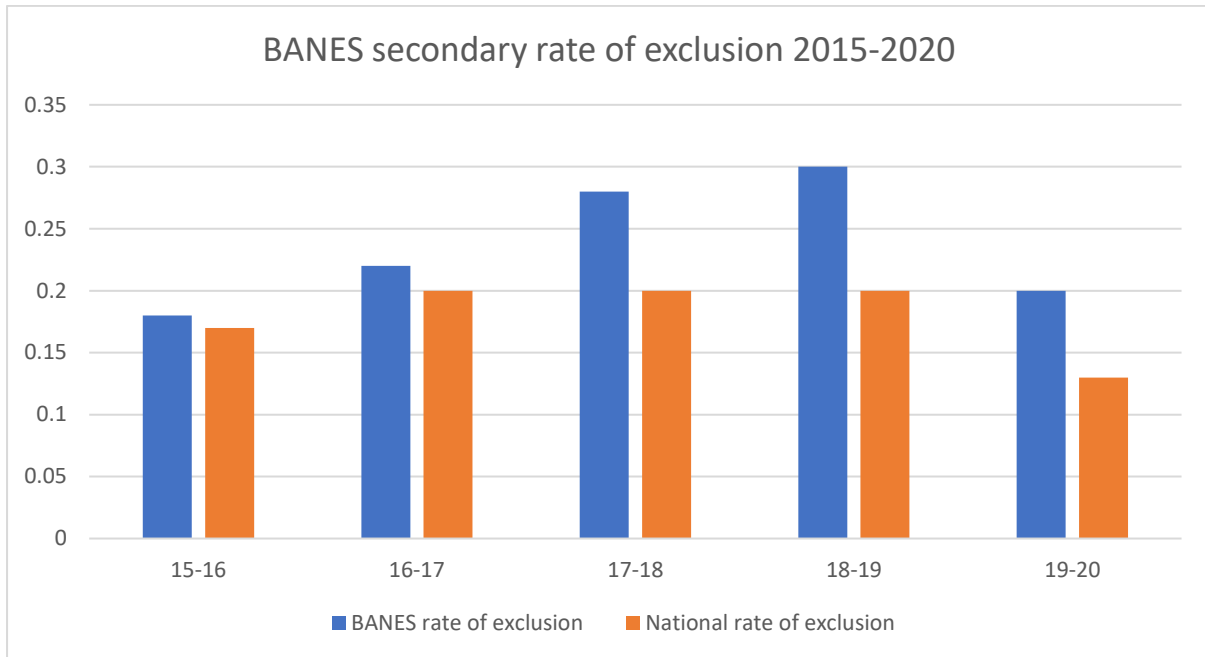
One particular difficulty of engaging with members of the street community can be finding a quiet place to meet with victims of domestic abuse in a safe space away from the perpetrator.

Many victims of domestic abuse (street community or in general) do not recognise that what they are experiencing is abuse.”

Drivers of Serious Violence in B&NES: Youth vulnerabilities

Young people who are vulnerable are at higher risk of being exploited, victimised, or otherwise associated with crime. On a range of indicators, including children subject to care plans, B&NES is below the national average.

The permanent exclusion rate in mainstream secondary schools in BANES has been above the national average since 2015. The Permanent exclusion rate in special schools for the time period 2015 to 2021 is above the national average. Several mainstream secondary schools have higher rates of exclusion than others. This may lead to increased violent crime in those specific geographical areas.

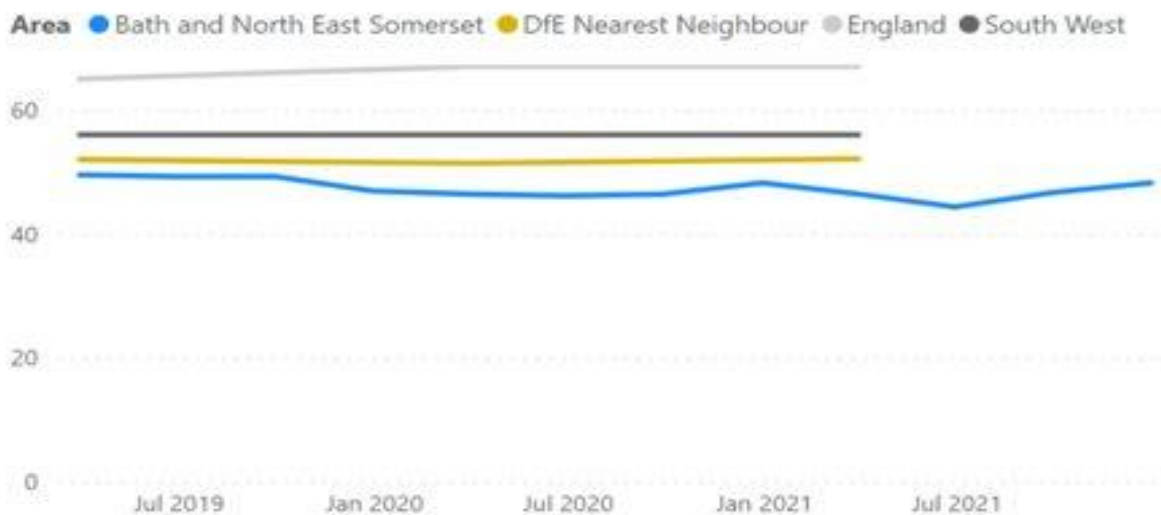


However, the rate of fixed period exclusions in secondary schools has increased at a faster rate compared to England as a whole, with B&NES showing higher than average rates from 2015/16 onwards

FTE rate across BANES schools mainstream secondaries is lower than the national average.

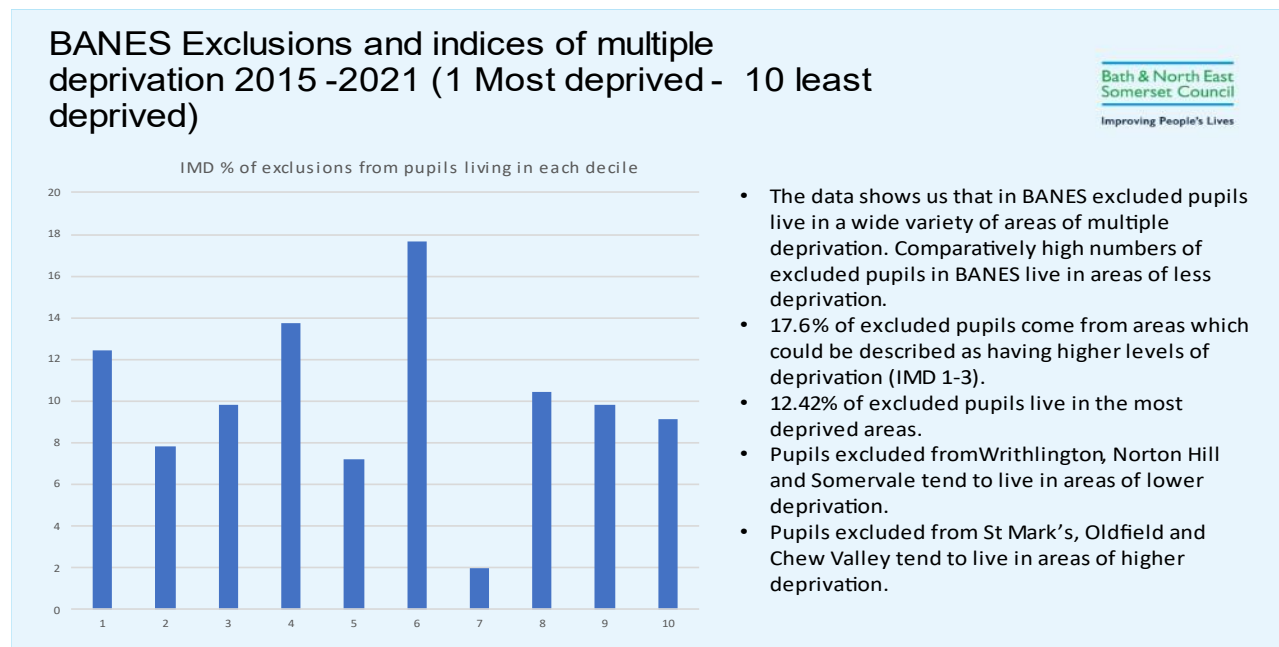
Similarly, despite the rate of looked after children in B&NES remaining consistently below the England average, it has increased more quickly since 2015.

Children Looked After rate per 10,000 children aged < 18



Looked After Children rates have remained stable for several years, however pressures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns have increased the complexity of cases. More recent increases in numbers are associated with an increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, a pattern which is expected to be repeated nationally.

The rate of FTE from B&NES special schools is considerably higher than the national average. B&NES has a consistently high rate of fixed term exclusions of children in need, which is known to put such children at higher risk of exposure to exploitation.



And while educational attainment overall in B&NES is above the national average, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged children and all pupils in Key Stage 2 is significantly higher than the national average

- 12.2% of all excluded pupils live in the most deprived areas of BANES.
- Persistent disruption in school is the primary reason for permanent exclusions in BANES. Child on Child physical assaults is the second highest reason given for permanent exclusions and is above the national average for the time period 2015 – 2021.
- Pupils in year 9 and 10 are the most likely to be permanently excluded.
- Pupils from black ethnicities are permanently excluded at a disproportionately high rate.
- Similarly, despite the rate of looked after children in B&NES remaining consistently below the England average, it has increased more quickly since 2015
- The number of missing episodes has increased over recent years. This has been driven by an increase in the number of missing children, many of whom are not currently subject to care arrangements

Team - at report end date or if null episode start date	Number of Missing Episodes	Number of Missing Children	Episodes: CLA at episode start	Episodes: CPP at episode start	Episodes: CIN at episode start	Episodes: No Referral at episode start	Number RHI Offered Not Accepted	Number: RHI Offered/Accepted	Number RHI within 72 hours
Adolescent & Care Experienced Team (ACE)	143	14	105		30	8	112	6	4
Children In Care Team	35	13	35				10	5	3
Disabled Childrens Team	6	4	4		2		2	2	1
Family Support Team 1 - Hub A	5	4			3	2	4		
Family Support Team 1 - Hub B	5	4		1	4		3	1	1
Family Support Team 2 - Hub A	1	1			1		1		
Family Support Team 2 - Hub B	16	7	4	2	10		5	2	1
Family Support Team 3 - Hub A	16	8	1	4	8	3	10	2	
Family Support Team 3 - Hub B	2	2		1	1		1		
No Team	49	35				49	37	8	6
Triage Team	1	1			1		1		
All Episodes	279	92	149	8	60	62	185	25	16

Summary of trends in youth vulnerabilities

- B&NES ranks low on aggregate national indicators of child vulnerability. However, it does possess a small group of very vulnerable children with particularly complex needs. This presents an opportunity to design services to tackle problems in a very small group:
- Rates of looked after children, children subject to S47 enquiries and child protection plans have all remained lower in B&NES compared to the England average
- However, the rate of children excluded from school (permanent and fixed period) has increased faster than the England average, and is now higher than the England average
- The rate of school exclusions for children with Special Educational Needs also sits above the England average, despite the presence of an even higher rate in Somerset
- The educational attainment gap in B&NES is above the national average
- The number of missing children episodes has increased substantially over recent years
- At the extreme end of vulnerability sits the B&NES Youth Offending Service cohort:
- This group has a comparatively high rate of multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and face particular issues relating to substance misuse and witnessing domestic abuse in the home

Girls and Young Womens Survey

In response to a reported increase in girls and young womens involvement in serious violence, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) conducted a survey which was circulated to all B&NES children's services staff, the LCS network, Police and other partner agencies. There were just 37 respondents. A summary of our findings are as follows:

- Over a third (35%) of respondents believe girls' involvement in serious violence has increased since June 2021; 32% believe it remains at the same level and 11% believe it has reduced (other respondents didn't know).
- Most of those seeing an increase said it was across B&NES.
- The main age range identified is 14-17 years, followed by 18-24 years.
- Much of the serious violence is committed in groups with other girls and some in evenly balanced groups; very little is committed alone.
- Some girls are believed to carry and use knives.

- Compared with boys and young men:
 - 46% respondents believed it was more likely to be due to anti-social behaviour getting out of control and 38% believed it was the same.
 - 62% respondents believed it was more likely to be due to general feuding between groups of young people and 24% believed it was the same.
 - There was a greater range of responses about planned fighting with 32% believing planned fights were more likely between girls than boys
- Girls are victims of a wide range of violent assaults.
- Clear links recognised with exploitation including child sexual exploitation

A wide range of support services was identified but nothing specifically for girls and young women – most services are mixed and some more suitable for adults. Gaps were identified including access to mental health support and responses to trauma.

VRU Recommendation from this survey

1. The Steering Group notes the feedback from partner agencies, indicating there may be a growing issue locally with girls' involvement in serious violence.
2. The VRU makes a summary of this information and of services available for girls and young women more widely available through its web page.
3. The VRU considers how it can gain a greater understanding of this issue and related unmet needs, including hearing directly from girls and young women and their parents/carers.
4. All agencies consider whether their approaches and interventions have an evidence base for meeting the specific needs of girls and young women.
5. This report is made available to commissioners to contribute towards their understanding of the needs of girls and young women and future commissioning intentions.

Exploitation Sub Group Knife Crime Audit

In 2022 B&NES Exploitation Sub Group conducted a knife crime audit. The findings and recommendations from Knife Crime Audit, presented to the Serious Violence Steering Group in June 2022, including feedback from a parent.

The audit reviewed 4 records of children to consider how effectively organisations in B&NES were responding to issues relating to knife crime. The audit sought to clarify areas of good practice and areas of development and themes that emerged from the audit findings

There were 4 incidents relating to knife crime over a relatively short period of time.

The exploitation sub group agreed that this should be an area of focus to gain understanding and assurance of effective multi agency safeguarding processes.

What Worked Well?

- Good use of the flagging system developed from the OEM group
- Having an enduring relationship with one key person
- Good multi agency work
- Good work around SALT
- Good multi agency working CG

Feedback from a parent:

- More joint work between education and CSC
- More preventative work be completed before children get excluded from school
- A matched worker to the family. This supported the family with engagement with services and having the same worker supported building a trusting relationship
- YOS to consider recommending psychological support as part of any orders

Areas for development:-

- Ensuring that all agencies are communicated with at critical incidents
- Earlier intervention from all relevant agencies
- Handover to adult services and whether they can provide support to address trauma
- Disruption strategies with police
- Permanent exclusions and wrap around support
- Use of chronologies to assess risk accurately and consider earlier traumatic experiences
- Enhanced support for SGO carers
- Additional training around NRMs
- Flagging system at Emergency Departments for Care Leavers.
- Work with Judiciary

Conclusion and recommendations

The landscape around tackling the causes of serious violence is complex.

The VRU considers recommendations from our previous Problem Profiles to still be relevant. Data suggests B&NES hotspots remain the same as previous years with slight variations. Any new areas will be supported inline with Avon & Somerset Pulse Patrols and the wider Partnership.

A number of trends and drivers have been identified in this report and in Identifying Disproportionality, that highlight our most at risk children and young adults at risk of serious violence in Bath and North East Somerset. Insufficient access to education and gaps within the criminal justice system, often leads to increased exposure of risks. Therefore the VRU and wider partnership seeks to address some of the recommendations made in the Identifying Disproportionality Report 2022.

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Identifying-Disproportionality-Report.pdf>

Areas where no recent, updated data to support has been found can be accessed in the following links to our B&NES 2020 Problem Profile:

https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/bnes_problem_profile_2021_problem_profile_2021.pdf

and our updated B&NES 2021 Problem Profile:

https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/serious_violence_in_bnes_2020.pdf

Lessons learned and forward planning/recommendations

The VRU highlights that while levels of reported knife crime in B&NES remains low, current data suggests that there has been a further reduction in reported knife crime offences in B&NES in the last 12 months. The VRU recognises the valuable contribution of Detached Youth work, and contributing input in bringing the levels of reported knife crime down.

Detached youth work has been commissioned in B&NES since the onset of the VRU, proving to be one of the VRU's most successful commissioned initiatives at engaging children and young adults. The VRU is committed to continuing this valuable piece of work in partnership with the police.

Lived Experience Mentoring Pilot ran for 6 months, due to the shortness of this pilot, learning and outcomes have been difficult to measure, However, the need for mentoring of this type is noted by the VRU. Despite risks & challenges due to covid, staff bereavement and a mentor recognising they had not reached a point where they felt able to effectively mentor. This pilot has been successful, further to this the VRU aims to further commission this intervention, taking into account the recommendations from the end of pilot study.

The VRU was able to mobilise at pace and deliver against the initial priorities for 2019-20, and 2020- 21, but achieving the intended aims of a longer-term Public Health preventative approach to serious violence had been hindered by funding only being available for a one year time period and the requirement to re-bid for additional funds. VRU's now have a commitment for longer-term funding, an approach needed for a Public Health approach to serious violence is to be achieved.

Aspects of this report include data from the Avon & Somerset Strategic Needs Assessment. Click on the icon below to read the report.



A&S SNA 2021-22
HO.pdf

Glossary

ACEs - Adverse Childhood Experiences

FTE – Full time education

LSOA - Lower-layer Super Output Areas are small areas designed to be of a similar population size, with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households. There are 32,844 Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England

NTE – Nighttime Economy

SARSAS - Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support - a specialist support service for women and girls who have experienced any form of sexual violence, at any point in their lives.

VRU – Violence Reduction Unit

YJB - Youth Justice Board