



West Yorkshire
**Violence
Reduction Unit**

Serious Violence in West Yorkshire

Strategic Needs Assessment 2022/2023

December 2022

Authored by the VRU Knowledge Hub



The content of this Strategic Needs Assessment and Violent Crime profile contains graphic references and details sensitive, potentially triggering themes from the outset including but not limited to violence, self-harm, sexual abuse, and suicide. We appreciate this may lead to negative emotional responses and readers are advised to prioritise their emotional wellbeing when reading this document.

Foreword

It is abundantly clear that serious violence remains a blight upon our communities and our experiences in West Yorkshire underline the critical need for continual support and action. 'Early intervention and prevention' is a cross-cutting theme that sits at the very heart of my own Police and Crime Plan, and that is precisely where the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) comes in.

It has a central role in addressing the root causes, using its public health led approach to get up stream of the issues. It is uniquely placed to drive partnership action, co-ordinating the response at both a strategic and street level. To achieve this, however, there must be a deep understanding of the contributing and motivating factors that lead to serious violence.

This Strategic Needs Assessment is therefore a fundamental tool in reaching our collective goal. It explores the obstacles and how they present themselves. Only by unpicking the factors that sit behind serious violence and identifying the associated risks, can we effectively respond. In shedding light on who is perpetrating violence and who is most affected, we can also better understand the nature of our response. Especially where violence against women and girls is concerned, this information can help to shape and guide our approach.

As you will see from the assessment findings, deprivation increases the risk of domestic violence towards women, and influences the likelihood of weapon carrying by young people. With this knowledge, we can better target our interventions in the right places and at the right times, helping to change behaviours in the long term.

As the assessment also rightly highlights, the 'cost of living' crisis, the energy crisis and the prospect of a long recession all hold the potential to exacerbate the situation. This can all lead to a disproportionate effect on the people of West Yorkshire, given many live in some of the most deprived areas nationally. For these reasons alone, the Needs Assessment is one of the most significant documents in tackling serious violent crime and ensuring we are all on the front foot.

During 2021/22 the VRU delivered an intervention portfolio worth over £1.8million, working in partnership to directly support over 6000 Young People aged 24 and under across 41 interventions. In addition, it has also helped 198 people over the age of 25 across the same period. Every year we are adapting to the changing landscapes, responding to the data, and developing new research that puts us at the forefront nationally.

It is an ever-evolving process, which requires us to keep our finger on the pulse as a network of agencies. The 2022/ 23 Needs Assessment take us another step forward in our efforts to reduce serious violence and propel our partnership ambitions of a safe, just and inclusive West Yorkshire.



Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin

The 2022/23 Strategic Needs Assessment is one of the most comprehensive and informed documents produced since the inception of the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit. Our innovative 'Knowledge Hub' has continued to contribute to the data, expanding our understanding of serious violence through new insights and information. With each year that passes, we are learning ever more about the various elements that affect the frequency and severity of violence across our county. Without this assessment, we would not adequately understand the challenges, nor realise the type of measures that can help remedy them.

By developing a clearer picture of serious violence, we can do more to prevent it from happening, as well as mitigate the impacts. With 'key findings' spanning 16 individual subject areas, from neurodiversity to technology and social media, we are representing a wide spectrum of themes. Some are new and emerging, such as gambling and care leavers, whereas deprivation, employment and mental health continue to be significant obstacles. We have also yet to understand how the impacts of the current cost of living crisis will affect this.

By gathering the relevant insight, we are recognising their connections to serious violence and what that means within a local context. This Strategic Needs Assessment lays the bedrock for the important interchange of partnership knowledge and paves the way for our Response Strategy. It essentially offers a blueprint, which we can all adhere to, tackling the root causes of violence in an evidence based and targeted manner.

I am extremely proud of the work that has been undertaken through previous iterations of this document, but we must move with culture and society. The West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit is leading the way in many areas of research and shaping the future. I know that by maintaining our established partnership ethos and being guided by the facts, we can each continue to change the lives of those across our communities.



Chief Superintendent, Jackie Marsh
Director of the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit

Executive Summary

Between October 2021 and September 2022, **26** people lost their lives to violence in West Yorkshire. In the same period, **1863** people were victims of the most serious violent crime. In purely monetary terms, violence cost West Yorkshire over **£1.2 billion** during the analysed period.

The purpose of this Needs Assessment is to understand the picture of violence in West Yorkshire. We aim to shed light on who is perpetrating violence and who is most affected. We want to understand where violence is happening most frequently and when violence is occurring. We need to know the what, the how and the why of violence in our region.

We also want to examine the factors that underpin violence. What are these risk factors that affect the frequency and severity of violence? Similarly, we want to better understand the factors that ameliorate violence. How do we promote these factors that reduce its worst impacts?

This Needs Assessment is the critical first step in implementing a public health approach to violence: understanding the problem. By building a detailed and nuanced understanding of violence in West Yorkshire, we can implement targeted, effective measures to prevent violence from ever happening, as well as mitigating its impact when it does occur.



Key findings

Behind these figures lie the real stories of violence in our communities: the people affected. Violence affects individuals, families and communities; real people who acutely feel the actual and metaphorical pain, hurt and loss of violence – the majority of which is **preventable**.

Deprivation

- Hospital admissions for violence increases exponentially with increasing deprivation.
- Deprivation increases the risk of domestic violence to women and influences the likelihood of weapon carrying by young people.
- Just under one third of West Yorkshire's population live in neighbourhoods in the 20% most income deprived areas in England, with up to 18% living in the top 10%.
- There are now parts of West Yorkshire where over a third of children are growing up in poverty.

- Residents from Black and Minority Ethnic groups represent 18% of West Yorkshire residents, however they account for 33% of people living in the 10% most deprived LSOA areas.
- The cost-of-living crisis disproportionately affects poorer households with dramatic increases in energy prices and growing inflation leaving less disposable income.
- Absolute poverty is predicted to increase from 17% in 2021/22 to 22% in 2023/24 due to the rise in energy bills.
- Deprivation can increase young people's vulnerability to childhood adversity and poor mental health which are both key risk factors to violence.
- Living in poverty can make the perceived rewards achieved through criminal activity more attractive, aligning young people to potentially violent and exploitative lifestyles.

Ethnicity

- Nationally, in 2019/20, those of mixed ethnicity were most likely (20%) to be a victim of crime.
- In West Yorkshire, race-related hate crimes account for 63% of all hate crimes and have been increasing since 2017.
- People from Black & Minority Ethnic communities, including children, are over-represented at almost all stages of the criminal justice system.
- The rate of stop and search in West Yorkshire in 2020 was highest for Black people at 19/1,000 compared to 9.1/1000 for White people.

- In the year up to March 2021, the arrest rate was highest for Black people at 29 for every 1,000 Black people, compared to an overall rate of 12 per 1,000 and an arrest rate of 9/1,000 for White people.

Housing and Homelessness

- Families in England are facing a housing emergency. Coupled with gross inequality in the housing system, families in low-income households, from Black and Asian communities, adults with a significant disability and single mothers are disproportionately affected.
- An estimated 1500 people in West Yorkshire are either homeless, in temporary accommodation or rough sleeping.
- Almost 50% of women leave prison without settled accommodation.
- There is significant overlap between the factors driving youth violence and homelessness/rough sleeping – poverty, social exclusion, family breakdown, unmet mental health needs and experience of trauma.
- Digital exclusion, transport costs, mental health and drug and alcohol dependence have been highlighted by people who have experienced homelessness in West Yorkshire.
- An estimated 741 deaths were registered for homeless people in England and Wales 2021, of which 35% were related to drug poisoning.

Employment

- Employment levels within West Yorkshire have continued to increase, with the number of pay rolled employees increasing by around 0.3% between the months of August and September 2022.
- 89,870 people were claiming Universal Credit in West Yorkshire in September 2022, approximately 4.7% of the eligible population compared to 3.8% in England.
- The current unemployment rate for West Yorkshire is at 4.2%, above the national average of 3.9%.
- Between July 2021 and June 2022, 23% of the population in West Yorkshire were economically inactive.
- Women in employment are more likely to be paid below the Real Living Wage than men, 20.4% compared to 14%.
- 78% of workers paid below the Real Living Wage said the cost-of-living crisis was the worst financial period they had ever faced.
- Using crime data where an offender is identified, almost half of violent crime offenders were unemployed. This increases for female offenders and offenders aged over 25.

Children in Care

- The Prison Reform Trust estimated that 50% of the youth custody population have care experience.
- Leeds Youth Justice Service reported 10.4% of the children and young people they work with have care experience compared to less than 1% of the overall 10-18 population.

- This over-representation is suggested to be due to complex emotional needs, multiple placement breakdowns and placements in high crime and high deprivation areas.
- Care experience, especially if continuous, can act as a protective factor for some children and young people, associated with improved mental health and lower offending rates.
- Care experienced young people are also vulnerable to Child Criminal Exploitation with missing from care episodes increasing this vulnerability.

Substance Use

- Alcohol intoxication is associated with increasing violence perpetration and is likely to be a contributing factor in around half of all violent crimes.
- Higher levels of alcohol use in young people is associated with weapon carrying.
- Cases seen by the Family Plus team had gone through Family Drug and Alcohol Court or Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference proceedings which suggests they may also have been victims of violence.
- Young women who were using substances had a strong association with an undiagnosed history of sexual abuse.
- Co-occurring mental health needs and substance use was highlighted as a barrier to young people accessing mental health support.

Mental Health

- Evidence suggests people with mental health problems are four times more likely to be victims of violence than those not experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Hospital admissions for self-harm in West Yorkshire are noticeably higher for those aged 15 to 19 years compared to other years, this is consistent with national trends.
- In the quarter to June 2022, the IAPT recovery rate overall for West Yorkshire was 49%, which is below the national target threshold of 50% and the recovery rate for Black and Minority Ethnic patients was also below the target level at 43%.
- Papyrus highlights that mental health, grief and loss, money worries, addiction, abuse and assault can lead to feeling suicidal. These are also risk factors for violence perpetration or victimisation.

Neurodiversity and Special Education Needs

- Neurodiversity is a term covering a broad range of conditions.
- The number of children and young people with autism known to schools is increasing both on a national and local level.
- The Criminal Justice Joint Inspection report highlighted that neurodivergence is more prevalent in the CJS than in the community.
- Neurodiverse young people can experience violence perpetration, usually through violence against parents and carers, radicalisation, knife carrying and sexual offences,

although this was less common than experiencing violence as a victim.

Disability

- Family Resources Survey (2022) showed that roughly 22% of the UK population had a disability in 2020/21.
- 24% of people within Yorkshire and the Humber reported a disability in 2020/21.
- Data from the 2021 Census, when made available, will further develop our understanding of disability in West Yorkshire.
- The Joseph Rountree Foundation (2022) estimates that 14.9% of people in families where someone is disabled are in deep poverty and 2.1% are very food insecure.
- There is an increasing need for informal care driven by an aging population, rising age of parenthood, long-term illness and likely the COVID-19 pandemic, the responsibility of informal care is increasingly shared by young people.
- Young carers are reported as having poorer mental health, more symptoms of anxiety and depression, lower amounts of self-esteem, poorer health-related quality of life, and more antisocial behaviour than their peers.

Education

- Engagement in full time, quality education is a strong protective factor against the risk of a young person becoming involved in serious violence.

- In June 2022, 10.4% of young people aged 16-24 were not in employment, education, or training.
- Young people classed as NEET who experience a mental health condition has almost tripled from 7.7% in 2012 to 21.3% in 2021.
- In West Yorkshire, Bradford has the highest NEET rate (3.8%) and Leeds the lowest (2.3%).
- Being NEET is associated with having a criminal record, lower life satisfaction, health problems, and substance abuse.
- 2020/21 data broadly showed decreases in permanent exclusion rates and increases in suspension rates.
- There appears to be a shift in reasoning for exclusions and suspensions. While persistent disruptive behaviour is still often cited as the most common reason for suspensions and exclusions, we have seen “use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item” (a new recorded reason) and “physical assault against a pupil” emerge as more prominent reasons in 2020/21 in West Yorkshire.
- Schools are disproportionately likely to exclude/suspend children with special education needs, children eligible for free school meals and from Gypsy Roma backgrounds.
- Our analysis suggests that the year-by-year increase of numbers in Elective Home Education has stemmed in 2021/22, with significantly fewer numbers citing COVID-19 as a reason for home educating.
- Combining the Autumn and Spring Term for 2021/22, we have seen a significant increase in absence rates and the percentage of persistent absentees in West Yorkshire.

Technology, Social Media and Online Trauma

- Research has found that some young people’s problematic social media activity acts as a driver for some ‘in real life’ violent offending in West Yorkshire.
- More than two thirds of the young people surveyed in West Yorkshire view upsetting content on social media.
- Research has identified the damaging effect social media can have on young people’s mental health.
- Our 2022 VRU School Survey found that 65% found there was adequate support at home in relation to negative social media experiences, with 33% and 26% saying support was adequate at school and online respectively.
- The ‘Metaverse’ poses a new and emerging threat. Although the existing evidence base is limited, there are cases of sexual violence and harassment occurring in virtual reality spaces, in addition to other risks we have identified.
- The Online Safety Bill should have a significant impact on the online landscape and the safety of children and young people online, once it receives Royal Assent.

Gambling

- In 2022, 31% of 11-16 year olds in England and Scotland had gambled in the last 12 months.
- Research has found that gambling in any capacity related to significantly increased risk of violence.

- Financial hardship caused by gambling could lead to involvement in crimes, such as property crimes and to a lesser extent violent crime, such as assault.
- Gambling problems can exacerbate incidents of intimate partner violence.
- There are several other harms that can occur because of gambling, including: relationship harms, mental and physical harms and employment and educational harms.
- The Prison Reform Trust reported that 50% of women in custody had suffered from domestic violence and 53% had experienced emotional, physical, or sexual abuse as a child.
- Research suggests 93.7% of women have experienced street harassment.
- Misogynistic attitudes are becoming increasingly prevalent online with the rise of social media and online forums. These attitudes are displayed by involuntary celibacy “incel” communities.

Violence Against Women and Girls

- West Yorkshire is home to over 1.2 million women and girls.
- Women experience higher rates of domestic and sexual violence victimisation and are much more likely to be coerced and experience fear, than men.
- Of the 124 Domestic homicide reviews, for the 12 months from October 2019, 80% of victims were female and 83% of perpetrators were male.
- For the year ending March 2021, there was a 36% increase in reports of coercive and controlling behaviour.
- The social and economic cost for victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales to be approximately £66 billion with the average unit cost of a domestic abuse victim is calculated at £34,015.
- Women’s Aid have reported that 66% of domestic abuse survivors disclosed their abusers had used the cost-of-living crisis and financial hardship to increase their control and as a justification for them reducing access to finances.

Sexual violence

- Estimates from the CSEW for year ending March 2022 reported up to 2.7% of adults aged 16 to 59 years had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences).
- Nationally, sexual offences recorded by the police were at the highest level recorded within a 12-month period in the year ending March 2022, a 32% increase from 2021.
- Sexual assault is a traumatic experience which can leave lasting physical and psychological effects including the triggering or exacerbation of serious mental health and substance use issues.
- Research suggests 92% of individuals who had had their drink spiked did not report it.

Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA)

- Child to parent abuse can constitute a 'double stigma' as it combines the stigma of being a victim of domestic/family abuse with the stigma of being the parent of a 'difficult' or 'troublesome' child.
- Parents can be reluctant to disclose their experiences of child to parent abuse due to accompanying shame.
- Mothers and female carers appear to be much more likely to be targeted than fathers or male carers.
- The gender of a child may have varying effects.

Stalking and Harassment

- The number of stalking and harassment reports are likely to be underestimates, as on average a victim will suffer 100 incidents before they report it to the police.
- Studies which have examined those charged with stalking demonstrate that up to 56% of stalking offenders go on to reoffend.
- Research has noted a link between unchecked stalking and harassment behaviours and escalation to sexual assault and domestic homicides.
- Online spaces are new venues for stalking and harassment behaviours as the far reach and permanency of statements and images, can often facilitate and exacerbate online harassment and its adverse effects.

Contents

Foreword	ii	Risk Factors for serious violence in West Yorkshire.....	11	Children in Care and the Youth Justice System.....	27
Executive Summary	7	Deprivation.....	11	Children in Care and Child Criminal Exploitation	28
Key findings.....	vii	How is deprivation calculated?	11	Substance Use	29
Contents	xii	How is deprivation linked to violence?....	12	Alcohol.....	31
Glossary of terms	xv	Deprivation in West Yorkshire	12	Drugs	33
Introduction.....	1	Ethnicity	17	Treatment	34
Background	1	Victims	17	Building the evidence base: commissioned research.....	36
National context	1	Policing	17	Building the evidence base: ongoing research.....	37
Local Context	2	Offences and Reoffending	19	Mental Health	37
Definition of Violence	2	Housing and Homelessness.....	19	Suicide.....	39
A Public Health Approach to Violence	3	Young people.....	20	Building the evidence base: commissioned research.....	40
The West Yorkshire Improving Population Health Programme	4	Overcrowding.....	21	Promising interventions and best practice	41
Being Trauma Informed	5	Homelessness	21	Neurodiversity and SEN	42
Risk and Protective Factors for Violence	5	Building the evidence base: ongoing research	22	Building the evidence base: commissioned research.....	43
Cost of Violence	7	Promising interventions and best practice	23	Building the evidence base: ongoing research.....	44
2022 Approach.....	7	Employment.....	23	Promising interventions and best practice	45
Our Priorities	7	Universal Credit	24		
Our Ambitions	8	Unemployment.....	25		
Data Sources	8	Economic inactivity	26		
Demographic update.....	9	Children in Care	27		
Population	10				

Disability	45	Building the evidence base: ongoing research	76	Knife Crime Offenders	100
Young carers	46	Promising interventions and best practice	76	Victims of Knife Crime	100
Education	46	Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA)	77	Gun Crime	101
School Readiness	47	Stalking and harassment	78	Gun Crime Offenders	102
Educational Attainment	47	Building the evidence base: ongoing research	78	Sexual Violence.....	103
Not in Education, Employment or Training	48	Community Voice.....	79	Sexual Offences Offenders	104
Exclusions	49	Causes and risk factor consultation.....	79	Victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences	104
Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners	54	Youth Justice Service Engagement.....	83	Cyber enabled sexual crime.....	105
Elective Home Education (EHE)	57	Your Views survey	83	Harassment and stalking.....	105
Attendance and Absence	58	Schools survey	86	Robbery	106
Technology, Social Media and Online Trauma	60	Children, violence and vulnerability	88	Robbery Offenders	109
Building the evidence base: commissioned research	62	Our next steps	89	Violence in prisons	110
Building the evidence base: ongoing research	63	Future directions for research.....	89	Violence without Injury	110
The Metaverse	64	Violent Crime	91	Cruelty to children/young persons.....	111
A note on the Online Safety Bill	65	Overview	91	Attacks on the Fire & Rescue Service.....	111
Gambling.....	66	Violence with Injury.....	92	Antisocial behaviour (ASB).....	112
Prevalence of Gambling.....	66	Most Serious Violence	93	Youth Crime.....	112
Harms associated with gambling	68	Homicide	93	Youth offenders of Knife Crime	114
Violence Against Women and Girls	70	Grievous Bodily Harm.....	94	Young offenders of the Most Serious Violence.....	114
Attitudes towards women	72	British Transport Police.....	96	Weapons Possession amongst young people.....	115
Building the evidence base: consultations	73	Health impact of violent assaults	97	Hate crime	116
Sexual violence	74	Possession of Weapons	98	Appendix 1: Previous research recommendations	118
		Knife Crime	99	Appendix 2: VRU's Theory of Change	120

Glossary of terms

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
BD	Bradford District
BTP	British Transport Police
CAPVA	Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CD	Calderdale District
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSEW	Crime Survey for England and Wales
CSS	Crime Severity Score
EHE	Elective Home Education
ED	Emergency Departments
F&RS	Fire & Rescue Service
IAPT	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
KD	Kirklees District
LA	Local Authority
LD	Leeds District
LSOA	Lower Super Output Areas
MSV	Most Serious Violence
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NTE	Night Time Economy
ONS	Office of National Statistics
RASSO	Rape and Serious Sexual Offences
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SNA	Strategic Needs Assessment
VRU	Violence Reduction Unit
WD	Wakefield District
WY	West Yorkshire
WY HCP	West Yorkshire Health Care Partnership
WYP	West Yorkshire Police
YEF	Youth Endowment Fund

Introduction

The West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) are committed to embedding a public health approach to violence reduction in West Yorkshire. Structured with a dedicated research and evidence team at its core, the Knowledge Hub, the VRU seeks to understand and address the inequalities that can lead to involvement in serious violence, improving the safety of all members of our community.

A key element of a public health approach is putting evidence at the heart of initiatives. As a VRU, we are continually developing the evidence base of 'what works' to prevent violence in our region. To do this we have an extensive and evolving programme of internal and commissioned research which is shaped by previous learning and emergent themes. Our evidence led approach enables us to commission interventions that address the risk factors associated with violence, thereby preventing violence from occurring in the first place.

Building on our previous Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) published in March 2022, this iteration provides a refreshed baseline and shared understanding of the reality of violence in West Yorkshire through the analysis of a comprehensive suite of local and national data. Setting out our understanding of the problem of violence in this way is critical to the success of the West Yorkshire VRU and our partners.

Our aims are:

- To understand the nature and extent of violence in West Yorkshire through the systematic collection of information about the magnitude, scope, characteristics and consequences of violence.
- To establish why violence occurs using research to determine the causes and correlates of violence, the factors that increase or decrease the risk for violence, and the factors that could be modified through interventions.
- To find out what works to prevent violence by designing, implementing, and evaluating interventions.
- To implement effective and promising interventions in a wide range of settings. The effects of these interventions on risk factors and the target outcome should be monitored, and their impact and cost-effectiveness should be evaluated.

Background

National context

In March 2019, the (then) Home Secretary announced a £100 million Serious Violence Fund to help tackle rising levels of serious violence nationally. £35 million of this figure was allocated to the establishment of Violence Reduction Units in the 18 areas most affected by violence. The intention of the Home Office was to bring together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and other key partners to ensure a

multi-agency response to the identification of local drivers of serious violence and agreement to take necessary action to tackle these.

In a funding package announced in April 2022, the Government pledged an additional £64 million for Violence Reduction Units, supporting the existing 18 and enabling two new units to be established in Cleveland and Humberside.

Local Context

In April 2022, the Home Office announced that the West Yorkshire VRU would receive £5,863,803 to continue in its pioneering response to serious violent crime, with an added guarantee of funding for the next three years. It came alongside news of a further £1,651,943 to support the operational response to knife crime.

In previous years, West Yorkshire received grants of £3.37 million in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 to establish and maintain the VRU.

The core function of the VRU is to offer leadership, working with all relevant partners to provide strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence. The VRU supports a multi-agency, public health, long-term approach to preventing and reducing serious violence.

Definition of Violence

The Home Office outlined three key success measures for VRUs:

- I. A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object and especially among those victims aged under 25.
- II. A reduction in knife-enabled serious violence and especially among those victims aged under 25.
- III. A reduction in all non-domestic homicides and especially among those victims aged under 25 involving knives.

Beyond these three success measures, the Home Office allowed for flexibility for VRUs to adopt a broader definition of serious violence. As such, we have utilised the emerging themes identified through our Needs Assessment and developed a broader, vision, definition and framework of success measures which also allows a response to the Serious Violence Duty:

“Violence and serious violence includes specific crime types where there is the use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community”.

The specific crime types included in this Needs Assessment include homicide, knife crime, personal robbery, gun crime, sexual violence, domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, hate crime and violence in custody.

The definition will focus on geographic areas of criminality and specific groups where serious violence, or its threat or impact, is evident; this is young people, women and girls, public places and the night-time economy.

For the purposes of this SNA, Organised Crime and Sexual Exploitation are not included as they are covered by West Yorkshire Police's Programme Precision and the multiagency safeguarding partnerships directly.

A Public Health Approach to Violence

A public health approach to violence encapsulates a series of underlying principles of which focus on improving population health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities with and for communities. By utilising this approach, violence reduction attempts are not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries and remain focused on generating long term as well as short term solutions. At the core of the approach, data and intelligence is used to identify the burden on the population, including any inequalities, meaning actions responding to the problem are rooted in evidence of effectiveness.

The public health approach to violence seeks to identify the common risk factors driving violence and the protective factors preventing violence. It encourages identification of these factors and implementing interventions across all levels: individual, relationship, community and societal, at the same time. It considers which interventions will be universal (aimed at the general population) and which will be targeted to those more at risk.

In understanding the causes and contributing factors of violence, we can deliver across three different levels of prevention aimed at addressing the risk factors, reducing prevalence and threats:

- **Primary prevention**, meaning preventing violence before it happens
- **Secondary prevention**, being an immediate response to instances of violence
- **Tertiary prevention**, focusing on long term care and rehabilitation

Public health is a multi-disciplinary approach, drawing on knowledge from a range of specialisms including areas such as education, economics, and policy development. Accordingly, this approach ensures that the wider system is engaged and that interventions are based on robust data that evidences both need and potential impact.

These Public Health Approach principles are encompassed in the following graphic.



FIGURE 1 - PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH PRINCIPLES

Through the development of our SNA and the body of research generated by the team, we can ensure that the foundations are set for delivery across the system in West Yorkshire to be evidence led in terms of delivering interventions and projects for those individuals and communities who need them.

It is then through an intensive programme of project level evaluations and our relationship with the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) and use of their [Toolkit](#) that we are also able to advise on ‘what works’ to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence.

The Toolkit summarises the best available research evidence about different approaches to preventing serious youth violence. It is based on real life data about what has happened when these approaches have been used before.

Through these methods we can embed our evaluation strategy aims of ensuring a culture of evaluation and evidence-based commissioning and practice within the VRU and spread this approach into business-as-usual practice across the partnership.

The West Yorkshire Improving Population Health Programme

Alongside our colleagues at the NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, the VRU supports and promotes the West Yorkshire Improving Population Health Programme. The programme was established by the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership in June 2019 to provide a route for working together to improve population health. Looking at the health and wellbeing of the people who live in West Yorkshire, it gives us an opportunity to consider what partners and communities can do to contribute to people leading healthy lives.

The programme areas of focus reflect the priorities of the partnership and include:

- Understanding and addressing health inequalities
- Delivering prevention at scale and making prevention everyone's business
- Embedding a public health approach to reducing violent crime
- Taking forward approaches to population health management

Through shared priorities, the programme adds value to the VRU's objectives and team through working in partnership to deliver at scale, to collaborate and share good practice, and to address difficult issues together to improve population health and reduce serious violence.

Being Trauma Informed

The VRU embodies the [Adversity, Trauma and Resilience Programme's ambition](#) of *working together with people with lived experience and colleagues across all sectors and organisations to ensure West Yorkshire is a trauma informed and responsive system by 2030 and develop a whole system approach to tackling multiple disadvantage.*

Throughout all our work and this SNA, we practice [Trauma Informed Care](#). This framework recognises the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role trauma may play in an individual's life – including those who work in that service.

The guiding principles of a [trauma informed framework](#) are:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration
- Empowerment, voice, and choice
- Cultural humility

These principles underpin all aspects of this document and support us in raising awareness about the impact of trauma and works towards creating services that do not add to harm.

As shown throughout this document, the risk and protective factors for resilience mirror those for reducing serious violence, including trusted relationships, safe and secure environments, access to education, living in good quality housing, stable employment, friendships, networks and support. More details of risk factors can be found in the following section.

Risk and Protective Factors for Violence

The risk factors for violence are numerous and complex, occurring at individual, relationship, community and societal levels. The diagram below illustrates some of the risk factors at each of these levels, though it is important to note that the risk factors highlighted here are not

exhaustive. It is also important to bear in mind that the risk factors listed here do not directly cause violence.

The following diagram illustrates protective factors, which appear to mitigate the occurrence of violence.



FIGURE 2 - RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS DIAGRAM - PHE

These risk and protective factors are also referred to as determinants of health. As well as being correlated with violence, these factors together help to determine the quality of living, health, wellbeing and the safety of the population.

Understanding these risk and protective factors is a crucial part of reducing violence, helping communities stay safe as well as improving health and wellbeing. At its most fundamental level, the VRU aims to reduce the frequency and intensity of violence risk factors whilst promoting protective factors. The following sections of this Needs Assessment explore key risk factors for violence in greater detail.

Despite 2022 being a year without COVID-19 related lockdowns or social restrictions, the subsequent impacts of the pandemic can be seen across the region. As highlighted in our previous iteration, the VRU anticipate that the direct and indirect consequences of the pandemic will be felt for several years to come.

Cost of Violence

The costs of serious violence in West Yorkshire have been estimated by multiplying the number of recorded crimes (Oct 21 – Sep 22) by the unit cost of crime provided by the Home Office. These unit costs have been adjusted to factor in inflation rates since the publication of the original costs in 2018. *Please note this figure of inflation is an estimate that has been calculated using the Bank of England [Inflation Calculator](#).*

The table breaks down the costs of serious violence for West Yorkshire.

TABLE 1 - ESTIMATED COST OF VIOLENCE IN WEST YORKSHIRE

The Estimated Cost of Violence in West Yorkshire – 2021/22	
Overall Cost	
The overall estimated cost for Serious Violence in West Yorkshire is £1,221,480,515	
Cost of Violence by Crime Type	Cost of Violence in Each District
Homicide – £104,887,640	Bradford – £378,230,760
Robbery – £40,731,040	Calderdale – £132,070,215
Violence without injury – £714,421,715	Kirklees – £226,280,306
Violence with injury – £210,916,080	Leeds – £509,672,510
Rape – £112,163,458	Wakefield – £212,462,717
Other Sexual Offences – £38,360,582	

2022 Approach

Informed by the evidence base of our Needs Assessment, the VRU's 2022 Response Strategy sets out our understanding of serious violence, local needs and how we, the VRU and partners, will respond to this. The strategy provided West Yorkshire with framework for preventing and reducing serious violence. As a result, VRU delivery was redefined across five priorities and seven ambitions:

Our Priorities

- Risk factors for vulnerability and victimisation
- Violence against women and girls
- Substance misuse and alcohol
- Place based problem solving
- Young people

Our Ambitions

- 1. Criminal Justice and Reducing Re-offending:** Reducing the risk of young people entering the criminal justice system and reducing reoffending.
- 2. Domestic and Sexual Abuse:** Supporting families affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse.
- 3. Complex Needs and A&E attendance:** Supporting people to move away from violent lifestyles, providing support with some of the complex needs that make many frequent attenders in Emergency Departments.
- 4. Education:** Promoting meaningful engagement in education.
- 5. Violence Against Women and Girls:** Creating an environment where women and girls can feel safe and be safe.
- 6. Local solutions through co-production:** Working with communities to develop locally based initiatives.
- 7. Adversity, Trauma, Resilience:** Reducing adversity and ensuring a trauma informed approach throughout partner's work.

Data Sources

This SNA utilises a wide range of data sources to develop a nuanced understanding of violence in the region. Building on previous iterations, this refreshed document also incorporates findings from the VRU's own empirical research on violence in West Yorkshire, as well as primary, secondary and tertiary sources of evidence to build a comprehensive picture of how things currently stand.

Of critical importance is data provided by West Yorkshire Police and British Transport Police, which allows us to present the picture of violence in West Yorkshire, including those responsible and victims of violent crime. This year, the VRU has moved beyond looking at crime hotspots alone to considering where identified offenders reside with a view to better understanding the root causes and risk factors impacting on those areas which can contribute to violence. This approach also develops our understanding of the protective factors which appear to mitigate violence.

The findings presented have greatly benefited from our [multiagency partnership data hub](#). This continually developing resource compiles information from hospital trusts across West Yorkshire (A&E attendance information), the Yorkshire Ambulance Service (paramedic attendance data) and West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. The hub continues to evolve with the recent addition of police stop & search data as well as open-source education data.

Information has been gathered from open-source public health tools to provide health, societal and environmental context as well as ONS data to help us understand the local population demographics. These data are complimented by other open-source information such as the Department for Education and the GOV.UK sites.

Information sharing relationships have been developed with our Community Safety Partnerships, with elected home education data provided for this iteration of the Needs Assessment. We also intend to feed in further data once available to us, such as cohort data from Youth Offending Teams.

The updating and development of relevant, proportionate, and timely information sharing agreements for the Violence Reduction Partnership is a key priority for the VRU, with regular reporting back to the Home Office on progress made.

The introduction of the Serious Violence Duty in 2024 raises several additional data sets highlighted in draft guidance to be considered by duty holders in the production of the locality serious violence duty partnership Needs Assessments.

It is with these data sharing ambitions in mind that our VRU data strategy outlines our position and pathway for collaborative data sharing, both now and into the future. This pathway seeks to advance our data sharing arrangements over 4 phases with analytical products being continuously enhanced with each new data source to provide a strong evidence base from which our priorities are derived;

1. Working with those VRU core partners who were identified as holding relevant data for inclusion in the partnership data hub and resolving data sharing protocols / agreements.
2. Working with Serious Violence Duty Holders to identify specific data sets and establish data sharing agreements relevant to the duty to inform new quarterly reporting requirements.
3. Expanding the data hub to specifically report on the 3 core Home Office measures
4. Expanding the data hub across measures correlating with the Mayor's pledges and Policing and Crime Plan as well as measures from within the wider West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Demographic update

West Yorkshire is a county that consists of 5 metropolitan boroughs: Calderdale, Kirklees and the Cities of Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield – a mixture of busy cities and towns with quiet villages and picturesque rural locations.

West Yorkshire is home to several universities across Bradford, Leeds and Huddersfield in addition to a number of further education colleges. West Yorkshire has a predominantly comprehensive secondary education system with an additional 3 grammar schools and 52 independent schools.

West Yorkshire Integrated Care System became a statutory organisation on the 1 July 2022 as part of the Government's new Health and Care Act. The new organisation is now known as the NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and is proud to be part of West Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership.

There are five prisons in West Yorkshire; Category A HMP Wakefield, Category B HMP Leeds and Category C HMP Wealstun, as well as HMYOI Wetherby for boys and young men aged 15-18. HMP New Hall, also in Wakefield, is the county's only female prison.

Population

Initial findings from the 2021 Census infer that the population of West Yorkshire is now 2.35 million, an increase of 6% from 2.23 million in 2011, and an increase of 16% since 1981. Based on population density, West Yorkshire is the 4th most densely populated Combined Authority area in England.

In the last decade, West Yorkshire's population has grown at a similar rate to the national average and changes to the age distribution are broadly similar. In the region, Wakefield and Leeds have recorded the greatest population growth in the last decade (8%), whilst Calderdale has seen the least (1%).

West Yorkshire has a greater share of young people compared to England overall; 18.8% are under 15 (vs 17.4% in England) and 38.4% are under 30 (vs 35.7% in England). Out of all the Local Authorities in England, Bradford has the 4th highest proportion of under 15's (21.4%).

In terms of dependency, whereby the working age population are supporting a growing dependent population, West Yorkshire has a dependency ratio of 57%, an increase of 6 percentage points since 2011.

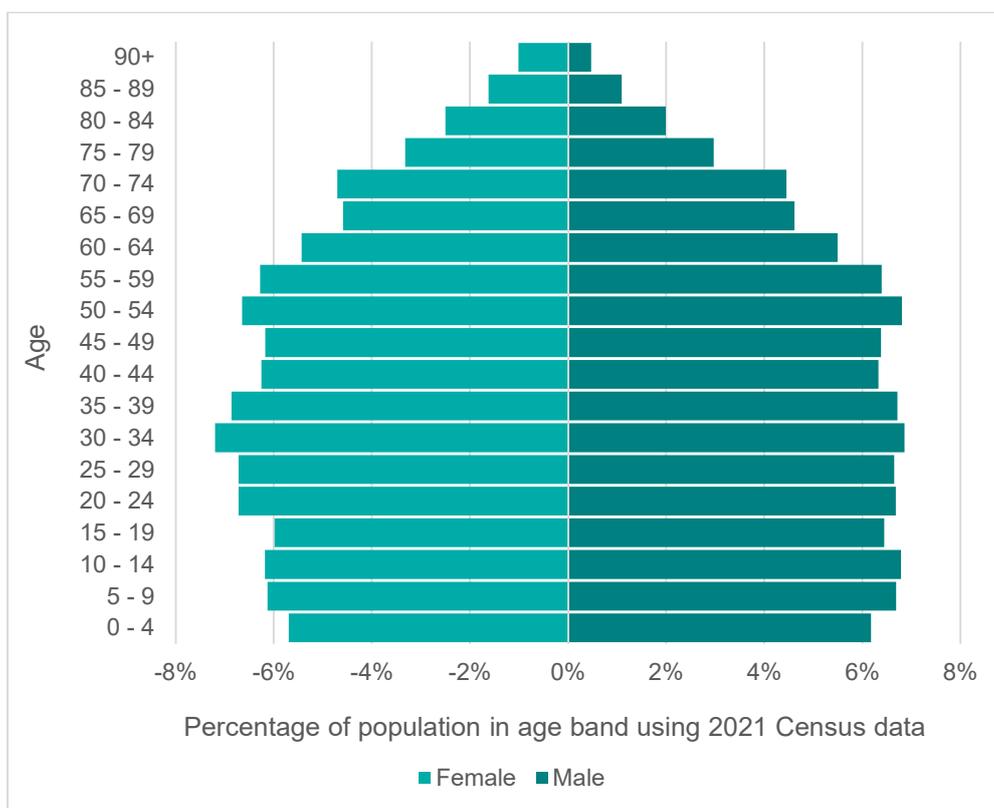


FIGURE 3 - PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN AGE BAND (BY GENDER)

Risk Factors for serious violence in West Yorkshire

Deprivation

Deprivation and poverty can often be used interchangeably but there are distinctions between them. Deprivation refers to a general lack of resources and opportunities meaning unmet needs. Whereas, poverty can be viewed as an outcome of deprivation, such as not having adequate money to get by because of limited resources and opportunities.

“Violence is not simply a manifestation of poverty; it is a force that perpetuates poverty as well.”

Thomas Abt, Bleeding Out

How is deprivation calculated?

Calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official national measure of relative deprivation, it measures relative levels of deprivation in small areas using statistical geographies. To produce an overall relative measure of deprivation, the IMD combines 39 datasets organised into the seven domains of deprivation – income, employment, health, education & skills, housing & access to services, crime and living environment. The domains are weighted, with the income and employment domains given the most weight as shown below.

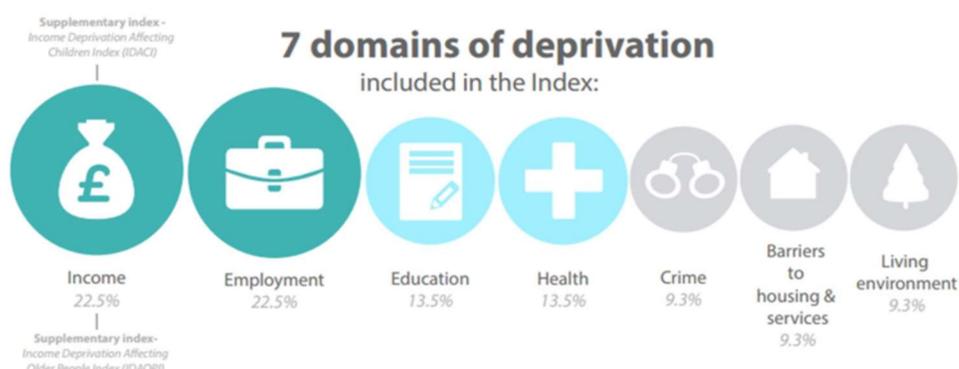


FIGURE 4 - THE SEVEN DOMAINS OF DEPRIVATION

The ONS calculates the IMD scores at neighbourhood level, this data is then aggregated to larger areas, including Local Authority (LA) areas, to describe relative deprivation. The ONS ranks LA areas according to their measure of relative deprivation, where 1 is the most deprived.

The Indices relatively rank each small area in England from most deprived to least deprived. The first decile represents the most deprived 10% (or decile) of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in England. As of 2019, 3,284 LSOAs within England fall into the first decile of deprivation. These areas are commonly concentrated around towns and cities, typically areas of higher population density.

Around one million households in the UK experienced high levels of deprivation in 2019, this roughly equates to 2.4 million people. West Yorkshire is no exception, with a significant number of areas experiencing disadvantage.

How is deprivation linked to violence?

The correlation between deprivation and violence has long been explored. Studies have demonstrated that hospital admissions for violence increase exponentially with increasing deprivation of residence ([Bellis et al. 2011](#)). It has also been found that injury in youth violence intensified with increasing deprivation in UK cities ([Jones et al 2011](#)). Deprivation has been found to increase risk of domestic violence towards women ([Yakubovich et al. 2020](#)), as well as influencing the likelihood of weapon carrying amongst young people ([Brennan 2021](#); [Harding 2020](#)).

Deprivation is not causal for violence, instead it is a contributory factor because of its widespread consequences. Living in a deprived area does not mean an individual will necessarily perpetrate or become a victim of violence.

Deprivation in West Yorkshire

Of those areas ranked as the most deprived nationally, 137 rank as highly deprived on 6 of the 7 domains of deprivation. Twenty-six (19%) of these are in West Yorkshire (Leeds has 13, Bradford has 11 and Calderdale has 2).

Bradford has the highest percentage (33%) of its LSOA's experiencing the greatest degree of deprivation within West Yorkshire, an intensity of deprivation that sees Bradford falling just outside of the national top 10% of most deprived local authorities in England.

Residents from Black, Minority Ethnic groups represent 18% of West Yorkshire residents, however they account for 33% of people living in the 10% most deprived LSOA areas.

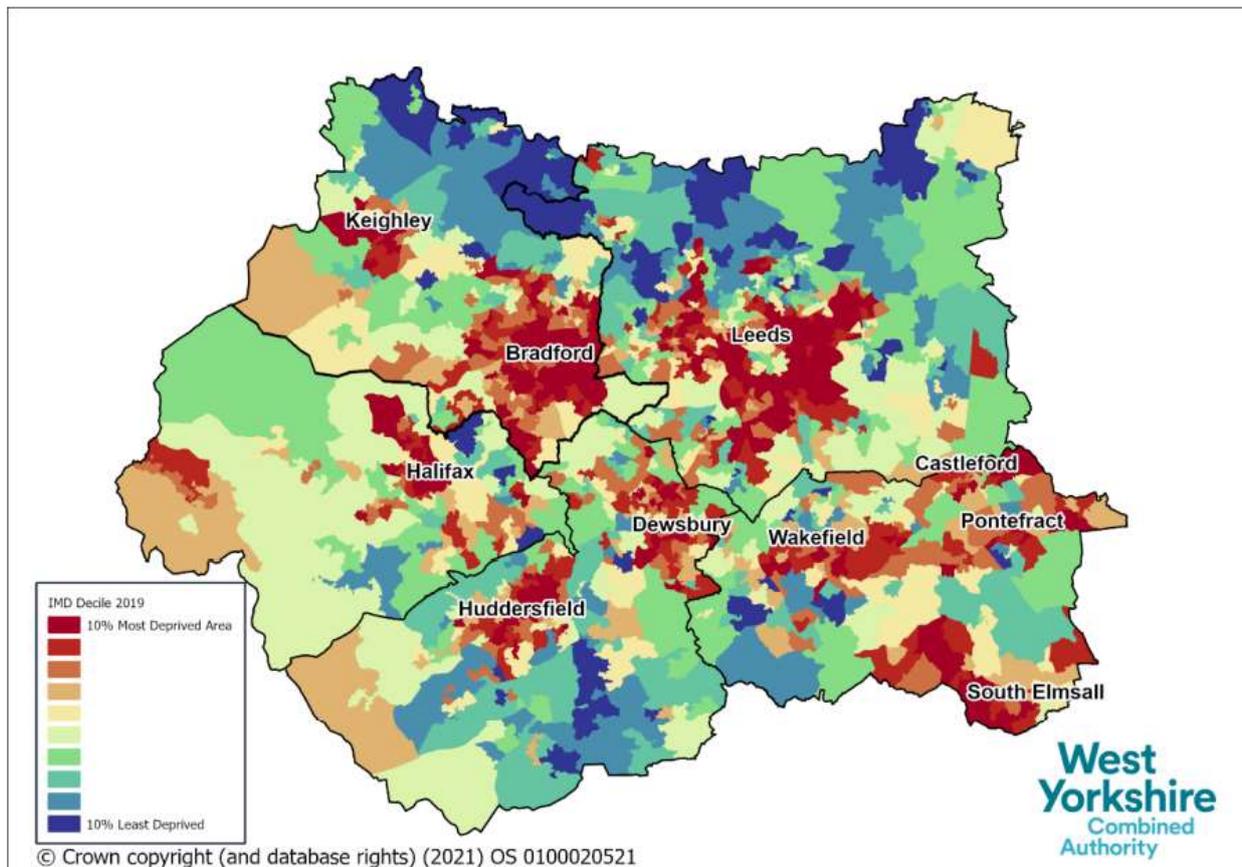


FIGURE 5 - WEST YORKSHIRE AREAS BY LEVEL OF DEPRIVATION (IMD) – [WYCA 2021](#)

Deprivation has been growing in West Yorkshire in recent years. A potential indicator of this is the number of people requiring crisis assistance in the region. Between April 2021 and March 2022, the UK’s largest network of food banks, [The Trussell Trust](#), distributed 156,120 emergency food parcels in Yorkshire and the Humber. This is an increase of 122% from the same period five years earlier in 2016, when 70,305 parcels were distributed.

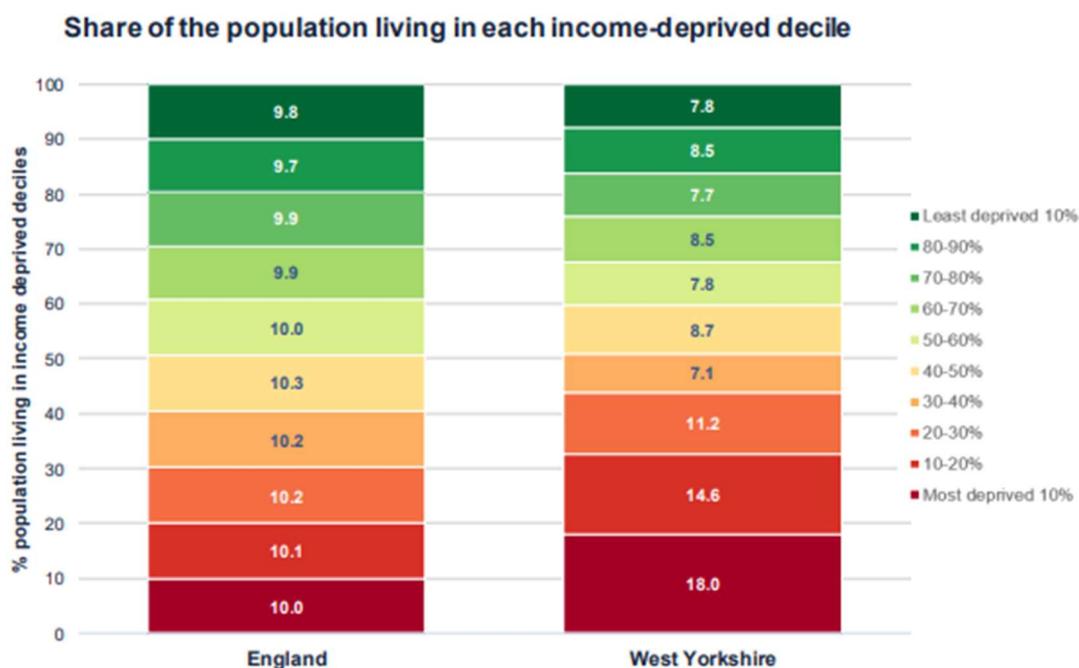


FIGURE 7 - SHARE OF POPULATION LIVING IN EACH INCOME-DEPRIVED DECILE ([WYCA, 2022](#)).

A recent release from the [ONS](#) has signalled the impact of the crisis, with those in the most deprived areas more likely to have reduced their spending on food and essentials than those in areas of less deprivation. The [Resolution Foundation](#) have projected that as a consequence of the significant rises in energy bill prices, absolute poverty is projected to rise from 17% in 2021/22 to 22% in 2023/24, which would push a further 3 million people into poverty.

The [UK Poverty 2022 Report](#), published by the Joseph Roundtree foundation, notes that Yorkshire and the Humber has a high poverty rate (24%), which is driven by higher rates of worklessness and higher proportions of adults in lower-paid 'routine' occupations. [End Child Poverty coalition figures](#) have also reported that child poverty in the Yorkshire and Humber region has risen by 6 percentage points, the second biggest rise in the country. Consequently, there are now parts of West Yorkshire (Bradford – 39.8%, Kirklees - 36.6% and Leeds - 35.9%) where over a third of children are growing up in poverty, compared to one in five in those areas in the country with the lowest child poverty rates. For low-income families this can mean using food banks and parents skipping meals to feed their children, not being able to afford winter coats or school uniforms or suffering from the mental worry that comes when you are not able to pay your bills.

Deprivation can leave young people more vulnerable to childhood adversity and poor mental health ([Nelson et al. 2020](#)), which are both key risk factors for violence. Crowded and inadequate housing conditions, precarious employment, and financial pressures make household conflict more likely ([Clair 2019](#); [Cobb-Clark & Ribar 2009](#)). A 2014 study found that in the most deprived neighbourhoods in England, child protection plan rates for emotional abuse were nine times higher than in the most affluent areas; for neglect, seven times higher; and for physical and sexual abuse, six times higher ([Bywaters et al. 2016](#)).

For both adults and children, poverty is associated with mental ill-health ([Elliott 2016](#)). Precarious employment has a particularly damaging effect on self-esteem and mental health: as [The Marmot Review: 10 Years On](#) points out, 'rates of self-reported work-related stress, depression and anxiety have been increasing, at least partly as a result of poor quality work', and this disproportionately affects young people and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Financial difficulties and mental health are also intricately linked, with those with substantial debt significantly more likely to experience mental health problems ([Money and Mental Health Policy Institute, 2021](#)).

The below figures demonstrate the correlation between violent crime and both Household Income Deprivation and Health Deprivation in West Yorkshire. As is the case nationally, higher levels of violent offences occur in neighbourhoods with the highest levels of deprivation in West Yorkshire.

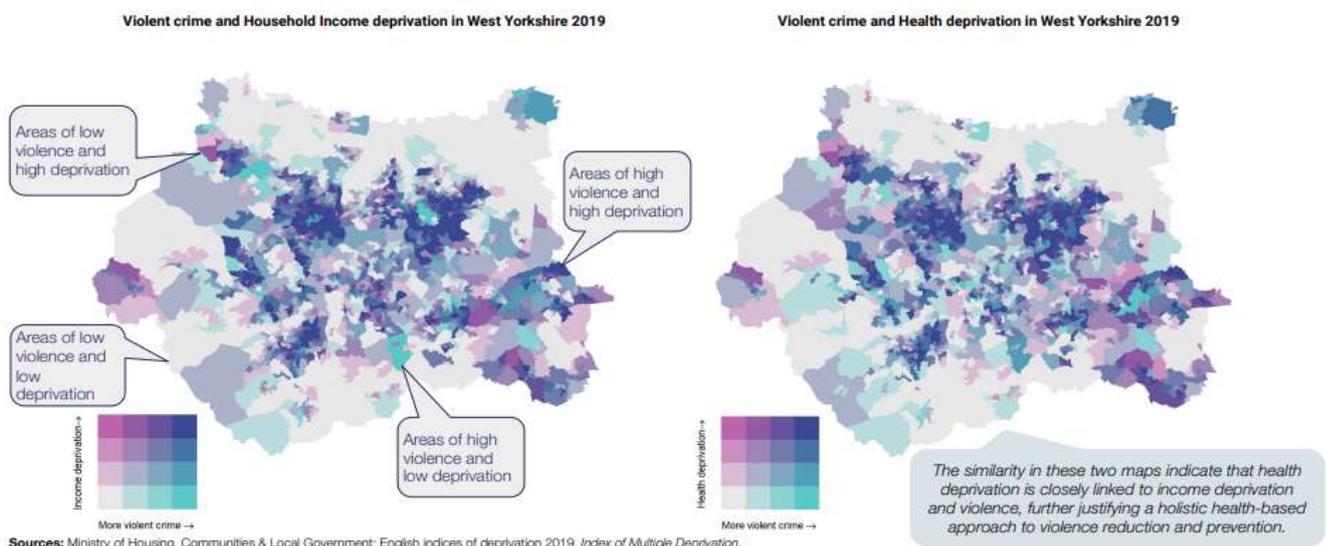


FIGURE 8 - CORRELATION BETWEEN VIOLENT CRIME AND BOTH HOUSEHOLD INCOME DEPRIVATION AND HEALTH DEPRIVATION IN WEST YORKSHIRE.

In addition, living in poverty can make the perceived rewards achieved through criminal activity more attractive, aligning young people to potentially violent and exploitative lifestyles. As part of [research commissioned by the VRU](#), interviews took place with practitioners and young people in West Yorkshire, the most frequently cited factor driving serious violence and exploitation among young people was a lack of economic opportunities, poverty and financial hardship. Although the mechanisms connecting economic inequalities to violence are far from straightforward, we have repeatedly been told by young people in our communities that some of their peers are becoming involved in crime (predominantly drug dealing) to support their families, or to simply buy themselves the luxuries that they see other children enjoying.

Ethnicity

West Yorkshire is a diverse region, with people from a range of ethnicities, lifestyles, and backgrounds, bringing great cultural diversity. Utilising open-source data, we observe the following:

- 6.8% of the [population](#) is non-British, with Bradford having the highest representation (7.8%), whilst Calderdale had the lowest at 5.7%.
- 15.7% of the population in England were born [outside of the United Kingdom](#). In West Yorkshire, the highest proportion was found in Bradford (14.1%) had the highest proportion and Wakefield (8.8%) the lowest.
- Around 89,000 [pupils registered](#) at schools in West Yorkshire do not have English as a first language, which equates to 23% of all pupils. Bradford has the highest proportions of pupils who do not have English as a first language in West Yorkshire with 40% and Calderdale has the lowest with 6%.
- [Fertility rates](#) are highest in Bradford and remain far above the England and Wales average. Only Leeds falls under the national average. The proportion of births to [migrant mothers](#) is highest in Bradford (33%) and lowest in Calderdale and Wakefield (15.7% and 16.2%).

Black and Minority Ethnic groups represent 18.2% of the population in West Yorkshire and includes people of *Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Mixed, and Other* ethnic backgrounds.

Victims

There is a significant gap in data available for ethnicity of victims of violent crime in West Yorkshire. In recorded WYP crime data for the year ending September 2022, ethnicity information was recorded in just 50% of cases. For self-defined victim ethnicity 28% of records were blank, and a further 22% were categorised as not stated.

The largest group of victims are from White backgrounds (39%) and this increases to 77% of all victims where ethnicity data is available. This is the same for both male and female victims.

Over half, 63%, of all hate incidents in West Yorkshire over the year ending October 2022 were racially motivated. Despite this, there is no ethnicity data available for 45% of hate victims.

Policing

People from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, including children ([YEF, 2022](#)), are over-represented at almost all stages of the criminal justice system as displayed in the table below.

TABLE 2 - FIGURES REGARDING RACE AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN 2020

	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Chinese or Other
Population (2020)	85%	3%	8%	2%	2%
Stop and search	63%	18%	14%	4%	2%
Arrests	77%	9%	8%	3%	2%
Convictions	79%	10%	6%	3%	2%
Prison population	73%	13%	8%	5%	1%

In the year ending April 2021, [data](#) from across England and Wales showed the rate of stop and search for Black people was 52.6 for every 1,000 Black people, and this is considerably higher than the rate for White people (7.5%). Black people had the highest stop and search rates out of all ethnic groups; however all Black and Minority Ethnic ethnicities were above the overall rate and rate for White people. The most recent national [data](#) found that individuals from a Black or Black British background were searched at a rate 6.2 times higher than that of those from a White ethnic group.

The rate of stop and search in West Yorkshire during this time period reflected these demographic differences. The stop and search rate for Black people was 19/1,000, followed by Asian people at a rate of 18.6/1000, and those of Mixed Ethnicity at a rate of 15.7/1000. This is compared to a 5.7/1000 stop and search rate for White people a total stop and search rate of 9.1/1000.

Equality [data](#) recorded by West Yorkshire Police in 2020 showed that a higher proportion of stop and search activity within the county takes place amongst Black and Minority Ethnic groups (36.5%). Considering the demographic breakdown within West Yorkshire, the ratio of people from a Black and Minority Ethnic background to White background being stopped and searched is 2.6:1.

The majority of stop and searches of Black people were made under section 1 of the Police and Crime Evidence Act 1984 where the police can stop and search someone they think is carrying items such as stolen property or drugs.

In the year up to March 2021, the arrest [rate](#) was highest for Black people at 29 for every 1,000 Black people, compared to an overall rate of 12 per 1,000 and an arrest rate of 9/1000 for White people. For every Police Force in the UK, the arrest rate was highest for Black people and in West Yorkshire this was 33/1000. There were considerable differences between genders for all ethnic groups with men having a higher arrest rate than women. In line with the above findings, this was most prominent for Black people.

Offences and Reoffending

In 2016, the [Ministry of Justice](#) found that for drug offences, the chance of receiving a prison sentence was 240% higher for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic offenders, compared to White offenders.

Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic defendants, in 2019, were also more over-represented in prosecutions for robbery (39%) and possession of weapons (31%).

National [data](#) concerning reoffending is available from 2018 where Black offenders had the highest reoffending rate (32.7%) compared to White offenders (30.6%). Offenders in the Other ethnic group had the lowest reoffending rate (20.9%). Across all ethnic groups, reoffending rates remain fairly consistent but has decreased slightly for Black reoffenders.

Housing and Homelessness

Shelter's (2021) '[Denied the Right to a Safe Home](#)' report revealed the scale of the housing emergency facing families and the gross inequality in the housing system in England. When children are factored into their results, Shelter estimated that 22 million people were affected by Britain's housing crisis. Of those studied (n=13,000):

- Black and Asian people were 70% and 50% more likely to be impacted by the housing emergency than White people.
- An estimated 1 million Black adults and 1.8 million Asian adults do not have a safe or secure home.
- Up to 54% of adults with a significant disability do not have a safe or secure home, compared with 30% of people without a disability.
- For single mothers, 65% do not have a safe or secure home, compared with 37% of two-parent households.
- Low-income households on less than £20,000 a year are 70% more likely to be impacted than households earning £40-45,000 a year.
- Over 40% of gay or lesbian and 49% of bisexual people are impacted by the emergency, compared with 32% of heterosexual people.



FIGURE 9 IMAGE FROM SHELTER'S HOUSING AND MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN, 2017

As part of their 2017 study exploring the relationship between housing and mental health with General Practitioners (GPs) in six of England's largest cities, none of which were in West Yorkshire, [Shelter in partnership with ComRes](#) found that GPs spontaneously

identified housing issues when discussing factors involved in their patients' mental health presentations. This was both as a sole cause and an exacerbating factor of existing mental health conditions. Where housing was seen as the sole cause, the most cited mental health conditions were anxiety and depression. The condition of properties including damp, insecure tenancies and eviction were referred to by GPs. Financial pressures such as debt and affordability of rent were also highlighted as concerns as well as the impact this was having on the patients' children.

Nearly 50% of women leave prison without settled accommodation with up to one in 25 sleeping rough on release ([Women in Prison, 2021](#)). The [2020 HMI Probation report](#) found women were not able to discuss their resettlement needs with case workers, which undermined effective release planning. Secure housing is a criterion for successful rehabilitation, meaning without a stable place to reside women can face difficulties in regaining primary care of their children, securing employment, and maintaining sobriety. Therefore, the risk of reoffending increases.

Young people

Housing situations and homelessness are both forms of contextual harm that can lead to increased vulnerability towards violence and exploitation ([Crest, 2021](#)):

- There is significant overlap between the factors driving youth violence and homelessness/rough sleeping – poverty, social exclusion, family breakdown, unmet mental health needs and experience of trauma.
- Homelessness/rough sleeping also makes a young person more vulnerable to exploitation and potentially pushes them toward crime as a means of controlling their current situation.
- Cramped or unpleasant accommodation pushes young people away from their home for longer periods of time and incentivises risky situations. A lack of safe spaces for young people leaves this group particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation.
- Cramped or unsuitable accommodation has been linked to domestic abuse.
- For some groups, a shortage of affordable and available housing can lead to accommodation provision which worsens their situation – particularly women and girls, asylum seekers and children in care.

Previously VRU commissioned [research](#) provided just some of the impacts homelessness or home insecurity can have on young people:

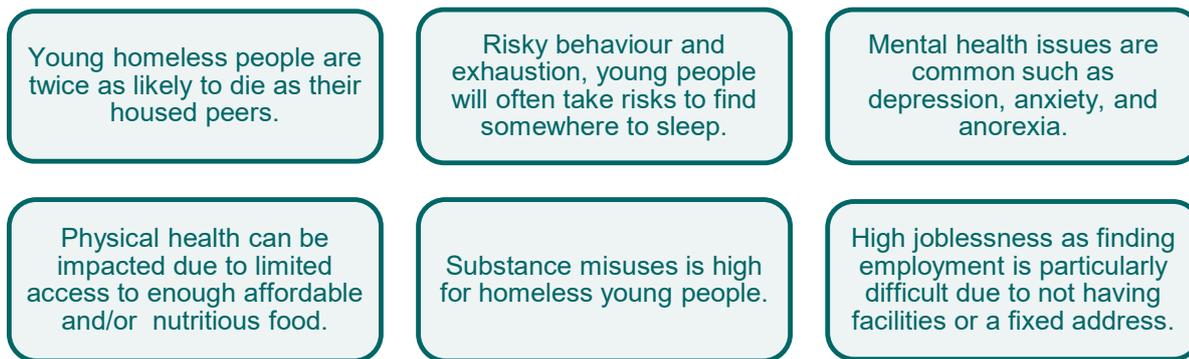


FIGURE 10 - IMPACTS OF HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING INSECURITY ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Overcrowding

Across the four countries in the UK, Addison et al (2022) suggests a clear picture that housing overcrowding rates are higher in minority ethnic communities than in White British communities. Overcrowding may occur for a number of reasons, but available evidence suggests that it is often related to poverty, and that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are disproportionately impacted by both ([Addison et al, 2022](#)).

Overcrowding may also be related to multi-generational living arrangements, the shortage of large social houses suitable for families and clustering in locations where overcrowding is particularly severe and low incomes ([Barnes et al, 2013](#)).

Poverty, family size and minority ethnic inequalities interact with housing options, including location, tenure and size of property ([Addison, 2022](#)). [Shelter \(2021\)](#) notes that in England, more social homes are lost to sales and demolitions every year than are built to replace them. The social housing deficit can increase the cost of the private rented sector forcing individuals and families into unsuitable, overcrowded or temporary accommodation ([Smith and Mackie, 2021](#)).

Homelessness

FEANTSA's [European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion](#) outlines four circumstances that amount to homelessness, including rooflessness, houselessness, living in insecure housing and living in inadequate housing.

As identified in a [2021 report](#) by Shelter, an estimated 1500 people in West Yorkshire are either homeless, in temporary accommodation or rough sleeping, with Wakefield having the highest prevalence, where one in 736 people are estimated to be currently homeless. These figures are likely to be underestimates as they do not account for hidden homelessness.

The latest national homelessness figures suggest that despite being in full-time work 10,560 households were found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness in ([Shelter, 2022](#)).

This is the highest number of people in full-time work recorded as homeless since this government started recording homelessness data in 2018.

Domestic violence is suggested to be among the leading causes of housing instability including homelessness for women and children ([Baker et al, 2010](#)). This calls for further collaboration between housing providers and domestic abuse services to provide holistic, person-centred support. Immigration status, language barriers, racism and the fear of homelessness can place individuals in compromising unsafe situations whether that is staying in abusive households or moving to an inappropriate residence ([Diette & Ribar, 2015](#); [WYVRU 2021](#)). Relocation can also have implications for support networks, commuting length whether that's to schools or work and risk of discrimination.

Whilst exploring how people experience homelessness and health services in Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield, [Groundswell \(2021\)](#) consider homelessness to be broad and encompassing of a range of unsafe, insecure, and temporary accommodation. Several themes were highlighted through the research including:

- **Digital exclusion** – several participants who had experienced rough sleeping described the difficulties when getting hold and maintaining a phone. This can lead to social alienation and isolation from services who are predominately online.
- **Transport costs** – the financial costs of attending health appointments were also referred to as a barrier, especially when individuals had to move out of the area for temporary accommodation. It could be inferred this is also a challenge for individuals to attend other appointments including substance and employment support.
- **Mental health** – 80% of participants reported challenges with their mental health. Of participants who attempted to access mental health services, 60% were successful. When asked whether they felt their homelessness could have been prevented if their health needs had been better met beforehand, 47% of participants said yes. Women were twice as likely to believe this than males.
- **Drug and alcohol dependence** - Participants experiencing drug and alcohol dependency were less likely than others to successfully access mental health services. The stigma of addiction was also noted.

A recently published [ONS dataset](#) highlights the role of drugs and alcohol in the deaths of homeless people. An estimated 741 deaths were registered for homeless people in England and Wales 2021. Of these registered deaths, 35% of deaths were related to drug poisoning and 9.6% were alcohol-specific deaths. Together these causes account for an estimated 45% of registered homeless deaths for 2021. Despite being consistent with previous estimates, this proportion is stark.

Building the evidence base: ongoing research

The VRU have commissioned Humankind to explore the extent to which housing is a risk factor for violence within West Yorkshire and opportunities to mitigate risk in a violence reduction context.

The research is supported by three overarching research questions:

- How, and to what extent, is housing a risk and protective factor for victimisation or perpetration of violence?
- To what extent does insecure, unsafe, and unaffordable housing destabilise families and what are the outcomes of this?
- How can housing and victim services become more aligned to support individuals experiencing insecure or unsafe housing arrangements who also have co-occurring risk factors such as health and substance use issues?

This research will support our understanding of how housing is both a risk and protective factor for serious violence and will support our delivery moving forward.

Promising interventions and best practice

The Shared Outcomes Fund was set up by the Government to test innovative ways of working and drive the modernisation of public service. As part of the fund £20 million was awarded to the [Prison Leavers Project](#). Led by the Ministry of Justice, the project promotes collaboration and innovation to help support people leaving prison. The project will build robust evidence on what works to reduce reoffending by rapidly developing and testing multiple interventions at a small scale, before scaling up the most effective over time. [Examples include:](#)

- Change, Grow, Live: Aims to reduce crime in Cheshire by providing accommodation and support to prison leavers, including those with drug and alcohol issues.
- [St Giles Trust](#): Providing housing and mental health support for offenders in Yorkshire with complex needs who are released on a Friday, when other services are shut.
- The Innovation Unit: Aims to reduce reoffending in the West Midlands by creating support networks for young prison leavers aged 18-25 who have been in care, planning their resettlement and helping them live independently.

Employment

The correlation between unemployment and violence has been well established (see [Anderberg et al 2013](#); [Balotra et al 2021](#); [Nordin & Almen 2017](#)). In the UK Government's Indices of Deprivation 2019, unemployment is [combined with income deprivation](#). Income deprivation is strongly associated with increased risk of violence, as outlined in the earlier in this document.

There are high levels of unemployment evident in perpetrators of violent crime in West Yorkshire, with 47% of all offenders with a recorded occupation as unemployed. For female offenders this rate is higher at 53%. For offenders aged 25 and over, rates of unemployment increase to 52% overall and 61% for female offenders.

Employment levels within West Yorkshire have continued to increase, with the number of payrolled employees increasing by around 0.3% between the months of August and

September 2022. The employee count in the region is now 3% above pre-pandemic levels and is similar to the national rate. However, despite this continued increase, the number of younger people claiming unemployment benefits increased by 8% between June and October 2022.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a single payment for each household to help with living costs for those on a low income or out of work. A total of 89,870 people were claiming Universal Credit in West Yorkshire in September 2022, declining by 20,000 people when comparing to the figures 12 months prior. This figure represents approximately 4.7% of eligible people in the region. The average rate of people claiming UC in the England is 3.8%. The below figure shows how numbers of UC claimants have altered over time, highlighting the significant influence of the pandemic. It also shows that in West Yorkshire, Bradford has significantly higher rates of UC claimants in comparison to the four other local authorities in West Yorkshire.

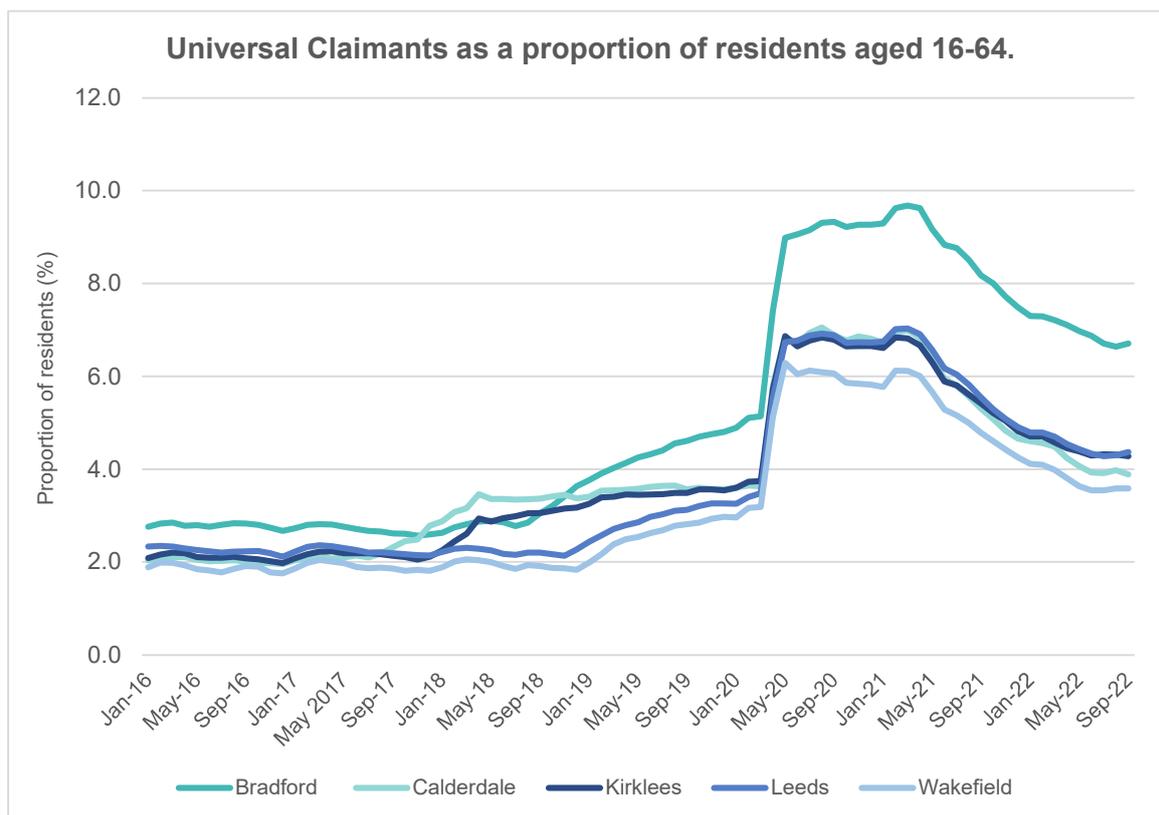


FIGURE 11 [LABOUR MARKET PROFILE - NOMIS - OFFICIAL LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS \(NOMISWEB.CO.UK\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/labour-market-profile)

Temporary mitigating policies introduced to support people during the pandemic provided additional income, for example the £20-a-week increase to Universal Credit and the working

tax credit, which ended in October 2021. This was not extended to other welfare benefits and may have led to inequalities in poverty between recipients of different benefit types during this period. [Annual poverty statistics](#) have shown that about 400,000 children in the UK were lifted out of poverty during the first year of the pandemic when UC was increased by £20 a week.

Unemployment

At 4.2%, the rate of unemployment in West Yorkshire is marginally above the national average of 3.9%. As can be seen in the below graph, there are some small differences between local authorities, with Bradford consistently having the highest unemployment rates in the region. Looking at the annual data (July to the following June) retrospectively, Wakefield and Bradford appear to be at their lowest rates of unemployment for at least the last six years.

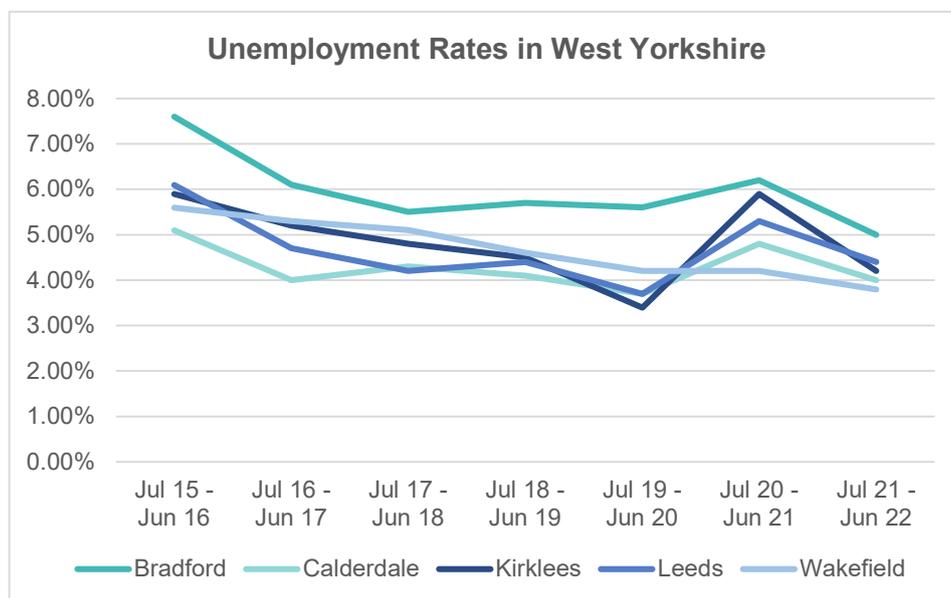


FIGURE 12 [LABOUR MARKET PROFILE - NOMIS - OFFICIAL LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS \(NOMISWEB.CO.UK\)](#)

Job postings in October 2022 were 23% higher than October 2021, and double 2020 and 2019. Nationally, vacancy levels are higher than unemployment levels but there are sectoral differences in job postings. Hospitality, food, and tourism sectors have seen the biggest reductions in job vacancies, which may be evidence of the challenges these sectors are facing due to the lasting effects of the pandemic and rising cost of living.

2021 [data](#) shows demographic differences in unemployment with the rate being higher for Black (9%), Asian (7%), Mixed (10%), and Other (8%) ethnic groups compared to White (4%) and All (4%) ethnic groups. In West Yorkshire, the difference in employment rate is more pronounced for females from an minority ethnic at 51% employment compared to 71% of females overall ([WYCA, 2021](#)).

Economic inactivity

The ONS defines economic inactivity as people of working age (between 16 and 64) not in employment who have not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks.

Reasons for economic activity include studying full time, looking after a family, retirement and long-term sickness. Looking at the period between July 2021 and June 2022, West Yorkshire had 333,700 (23%) economically inactive people. The below graph shows the percentage of those who are currently inactive in each local authority in the region.

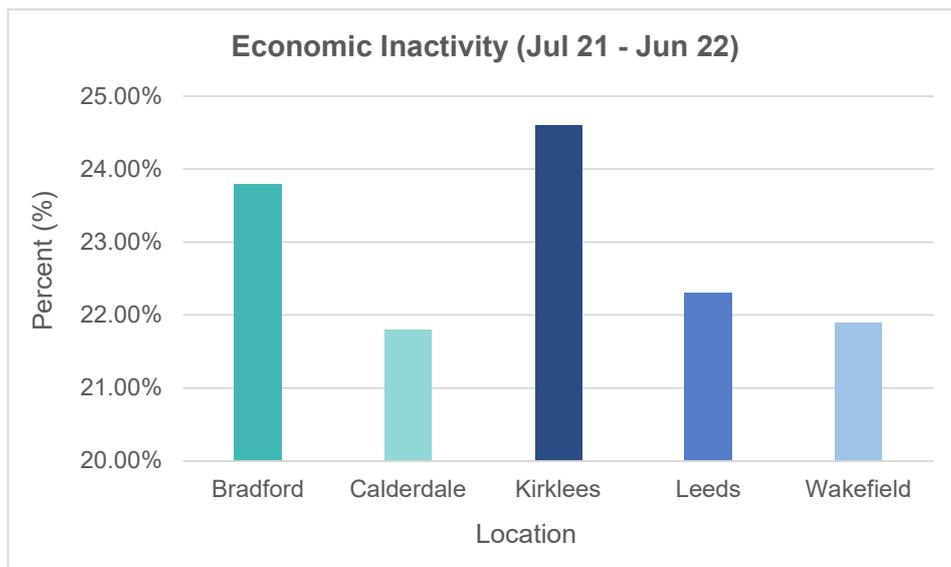


FIGURE 13 - ECONOMIC ACTIVITY JUNE 2021 - JUNE 2022

The table below breaks down the reasons why people in the region are classed as economically inactive. Out of the total of **333,700** people who fall into this category, **47,200** (14.2%) want to find a job.

TABLE 3 - REASONS FOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITY - [ONS ANNUAL POPULATION SURVEY](#)

	West Yorkshire (Level)	West Yorkshire (%)	England (%)
Student	100,800	30.2	27.6
Looking after family home	70,000	21	20.2
Temporary Sick	6,600	2	2.2
Long-Term Sick	74,600	22.3	24.4
Retired	44,600	13.4	13.6
Other	35,000	10.5	11.9
Wants a Job	47,400	14.2	18.4
Does Not Want a Job	286,300	85.8	81.6
Total	333,700	23	21.2

Looking at characteristics, women in employment nationally are more likely to be paid below the Real Living Wage than men. [Analysis](#) of the ONS' Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings shows that over a fifth of women in work (20.4%) are paid below the real Living Wage, approximately 2.9 million people, compared to 14 percent of men (1.9 million). As a result, jobs held by women account for almost 60 per cent (59.7%) of all jobs paid below the Living Wage.

The Living Wage Foundation recently published [research](#) in which 78% of workers paid below the real Living Wage said the cost of living crisis is the worst financial period they have ever faced. Utilising [July 2021 to June 2022 data](#), the employment rate for women (69.1%), those from minority ethnic backgrounds (62.2%) and those who are [Equality Act core or work-limiting disabled](#) (55.5%) is lower than the regional rate of 73.8%. As reflected in [WYCA's State of the Region Report 2021](#), a combination of these characteristics can create multiple disadvantage.

Children in Care

Children in Care and the Youth Justice System

The over-representation of care experienced children and young people in the criminal justice system is well documented. [The Prison Reform trust \(2016\)](#) suggest that around 50% of the youth custody population have lived in care at some point in their life. On a more local level, recent statistics published by Leeds Youth Justice Service showed that 10.4% of the children and young people working with their service are currently looked after, compared to less than 1% of the 10 – 18 population of Leeds ([Leeds Youth Justice Service, 2021](#)).

[The Youth Justice Board \(2015\)](#) argue this over-representation is a result of a number of factors associated with life in care. These include:

- Complex emotional needs of children and young people in care.
- Multiple placement breakdown – children and young people experiencing multiple placement breakdowns are less likely to invest in forming and sustaining meaningful relationships which could act as a protective factor.
- Placements in high crime and high deprivation areas.

[Bateman, Day and Pitts](#) suggest that experiences in care exacerbate earlier experiences which can increase their risk of criminal behaviour. They also propose that the response to lawbreaking may be more likely to result in contact with the criminal justice system than if they were not in care. It's worth noting, that life in care has been shown to improve mental wellbeing for some children and young people ([Forrester, 2008](#)) with continuity of care being linked with lower offending rates ([Hayden & Graves, 2018](#)).

According to a study conducted into youth custody in South and West Yorkshire, children in care are more likely to reoffend due to the lack of settled accommodation and family support to return to when compared to non-looked after children ([Day, Bateman & Pitts, 2020](#)). Unstable or unsuitable accommodation was also linked to breaches in supervision orders post-release ([Day, Bateman & Pitts, 2020](#)).

The dual status of being care experienced and known to the criminal justice system has been linked to poorer long-term outcomes than identifying with just one ([Wilkinson & Lantos, 2018](#)). This can include outcomes relating to education, substance misuse and mental health challenges ([Bilchik, 2010](#)) which have all been identified as risk factors to violence.

Children in Care and Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is said to have occurred when a power imbalance is used to coerce, manipulate, control or deceive a young person ([Shaw & Greenhow, 2020](#)). Children and young people who are living in care are vulnerable to CCE with persistent missing episodes highlighted as an additional risk factor to this ([Home Office, 2018](#)).

The vulnerability of children and young people in care to CCE could also be increased due to the potentially abusive or neglectful experiences that resulted in them coming in to care ([Department for Education, 2018](#)).

Episodes of missing from care is also a risk factor associated with a child or young person being a victim of exploitation. [Ecpat UK and Missing People \(2018\)](#) reported that in 2017, 24% of suspected victims of trafficking had been missing from care. The risk of exploitation is also increased if the child or young person is moved a long way from home, or into unregulated settings ([Crest, 2021](#)).

Those children and young people who have been, or are still, a victim of CCE could contribute to the over-representation of children in care in the criminal justice system. Social workers and the criminal justice system often do not view these children and young people as victims, instead perceiving their actions were a consequence of their choice rather than coercion or exploitation ([APPG, 2017](#)). For those children and young people still involved or at risk to exploitation, this perception can prevent them from accessing the necessary support needed to escape further harm ([Twomey, 2019](#)). The Youth Justice Board are

aiming to rectify this perception with the [Child First](#) approach they are currently implementing across the system. With this they aim to achieve a “*youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society.*” This approach incorporates [four main tenets](#), which include:

- [See children as children](#) – prioritising the child’s best interests whilst recognising their particular needs. Work should be child-focused and developmentally informed
- [Build pro-social identity](#) – promoting the strengths and capacities of children in future-focused work built on supportive relationships
- [Collaborating with children](#) – encouraging active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion
- [Diverting from stigma](#) – promoting a childhood removed from the justice system and minimising the stigma associated with it.

Substance Use

We use the term substance in reference to illicit drugs and alcohol.

The association between alcohol and violence is well established and well documented, with [the Institute of Alcohol Studies](#) finding that alcohol intoxication increases the chances of violent behaviour and is likely to be a contributing factor in around half of all violent crimes. Higher levels of alcohol use amongst young people have also been associated with weapon carrying ([Home Office, 2019](#)).

Similarly, drug use presents significant challenges for society as a high demand for drugs increases drug-related crime and violence. The exploitation of vulnerable groups as part of drug related crime impacts the economy and productivity. Summarised in Dame Carol Black’s [Independent Review of Drugs](#) the prevalence of so-called ‘recreational’ usage can be, or can lead to, problematic use and dependency.

As highlighted in the [PHE](#) graphic below, drug misuse also shares risk factors associated with violence perpetration and victimisation. This reiterates the importance of a whole systems approach to the determinants of health and violence prevention.

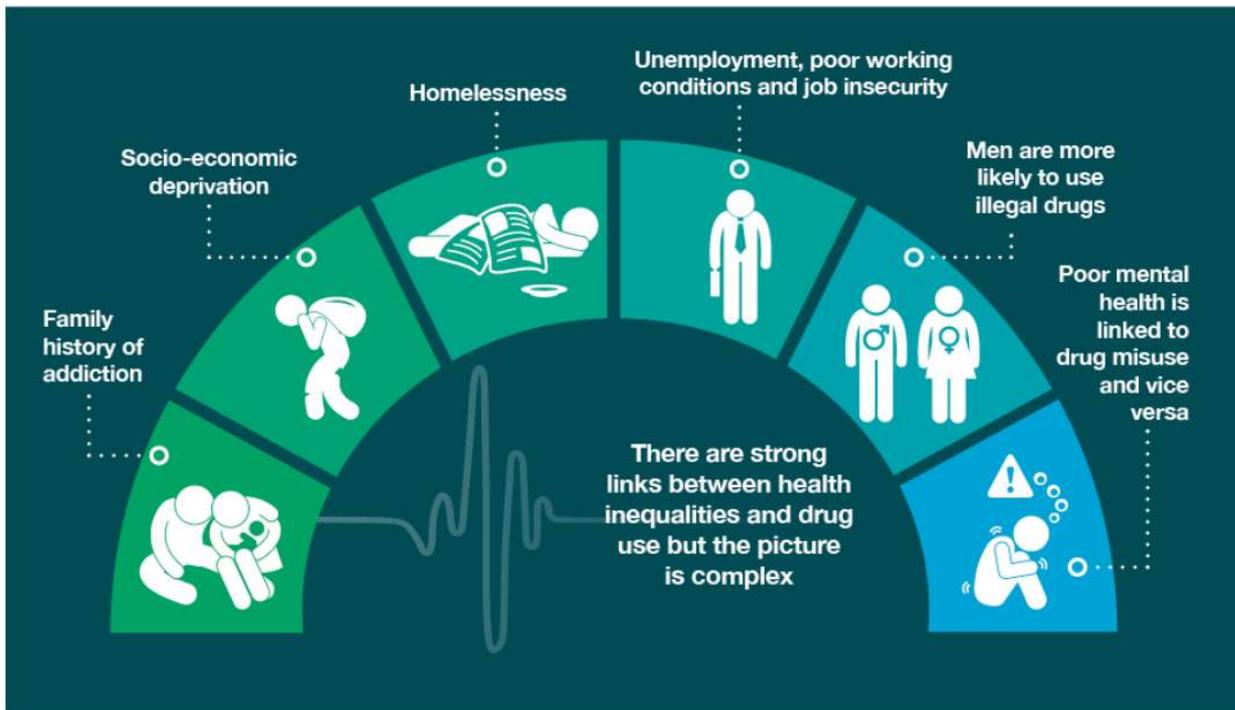


FIGURE 14 - RISK FACTORS FOR DRUG MISUSE

The use of substances has been closely associated to poor mental health. Previous [PHE data](#) suggests 19.3% of individuals attending a drugs misuse service and 18.5% of individuals attending an alcohol misuse service, in West Yorkshire, have concurrent contact with mental health services. This is lower than the average for England at 24.3%, which could infer improvements are required in referral services to support more individuals with complex needs.

For the period 2018/19 – 2020/21, the national average for [substance misuse hospital admissions](#) for young people aged 15-24 years was 81.2 admissions per 100,000 people. Admissions in Bradford were significantly higher than the national average with 109.5 admissions per 100,000 people. Calderdale and Wakefield were also above the national average, the difference much lower with 92.1 and 86 admissions per 100,000. Kirklees and Leeds show lower than average rates of hospital admissions (76 and 71 per 100,000).

Using Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), the following table shows a summary of West Yorkshire Hospital Admissions for violence between 2018-19 and 2020-21, which are substance misuse related. As can be seen around half of admissions for violence related injuries where substance misuse related.

FIGURE 15 - A SUMMARY OF WEST YORKSHIRE HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS FOR VIOLENCE BETWEEN 2018-19 AND 2020-21

	Sex		Age Group							England IMD Quintile				
	Male	Female	0 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	1	2	3	4	5
Overall Violence Admissions	3020	730	95	485	1115	950	590	325	105	2060	825	450	280	135
Of which are Substance misuse related	1130	260	0	120	430	415	260	120	35	840	310	145	70	25
% of Substance misuse related admissions	37%	36%	0%	25%	39%	44%	44%	37%	33%	41%	38%	32%	25%	19%
Bradford														
Overall Violence Admissions	745	195	20	135	240	255	155	90	25	615	175	95	35	20
Of which are Substance misuse related	425	110	0	45	130	165	105	65	10	355	100	55	15	10
% of Substance misuse related admissions	57%	56%	0%	33%	54%	65%	68%	72%	40%	58%	57%	58%	43%	50%
Calderdale														
Overall Violence Admissions	240	60	0	40	85	75	35	35	15	140	75	45	30	10
Of which are Substance misuse related	130	40	0	15	50	45	25	20	10	90	40	25	10	0
% of Substance misuse related admissions	54%	67%		38%	59%	60%	71%	57%	67%	64%	53%	56%	33%	0%
Kirklees														
Overall Violence Admissions	480	120	20	90	210	135	85	40	10	280	185	60	60	15
Of which are Substance misuse related	245	65	0	35	105	85	55	20	0	155	100	30	25	0
% of Substance misuse related admissions	51%	54%	0%	39%	50%	63%	65%	50%	0%	55%	54%	50%	42%	0%
Leeds														
Overall Violence Admissions	1015	235	30	155	385	315	195	105	35	710	215	165	100	55
Of which are Substance misuse related	460	125	0	40	170	175	110	60	20	365	95	75	40	10
% of Substance misuse related admissions	45%	53%	0%	26%	44%	56%	56%	57%	57%	51%	44%	45%	40%	18%
Wakefield														
Overall Violence Admissions	535	120	20	65	195	165	120	55	20	315	170	85	55	30
Of which are Substance misuse related	295	60	0	30	95	100	75	30	10	190	85	45	25	10
% of Substance misuse related admissions	55%	50%	0%	46%	49%	61%	63%	55%	50%	60%	50%	53%	45%	33%

Alcohol

The hospital admissions relating to alcohol specifically can be seen in the following table. Notably, females under 18 are more likely to be hospitalised for alcohol specific conditions than males, in all districts. Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield have lower admission rates for both boys and girls than the national average. Based on the rates, Calderdale experience the highest rate of admissions for both boys and girls under 18 in the region, but this is likely affected by Calderdale’s smaller population size.

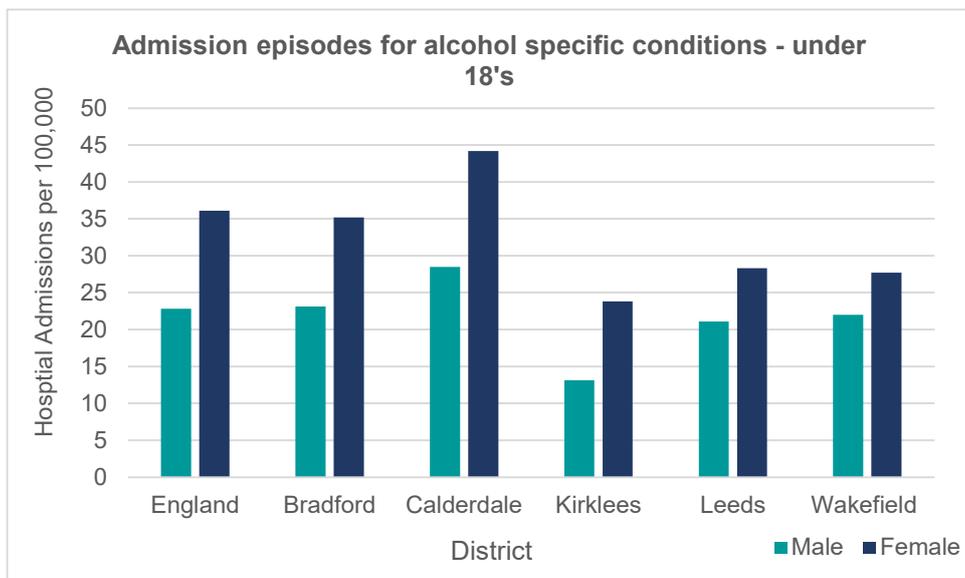


FIGURE 16 - HOSPITAL ADMISSION EPISODES FOR ALCOHOL-SPECIFIC CONDITIONS FOR UNDER 18S 2018/19 – 2020/21

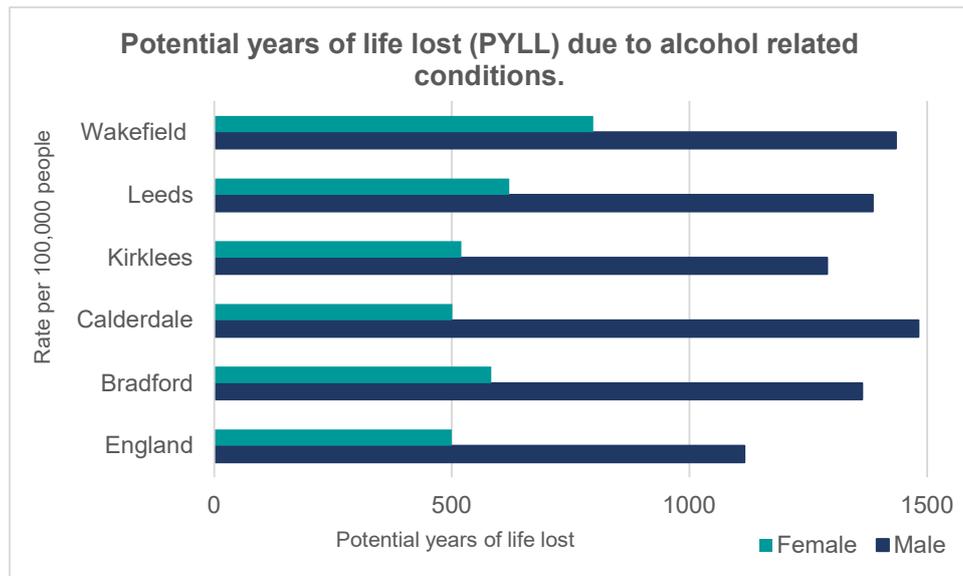
Despite being slightly dated, estimates suggest that West Yorkshire has a higher percentage of regular drinkers at age 15 than the national average ([7.7% compared to 6.2%](#)).

The recent survey exploring national trends of [Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England](#) (2021) found that:

- There was a 4% increase in the number of pupils who said they had ever had an alcoholic drink since 2018 (40% vs 44%) with more girls reporting having ever had an alcoholic drink than boys (42% vs 39%). Unsurprisingly, prevalence of having ever had an alcoholic drink increased with age.
- 6% of all pupils said they usually drank alcohol at least once per week and 11% reported usually drinking between once a fortnight and once a month.
- Yorkshire and the Humber had the 2nd highest region prevalence of having a drink behind the Southwest.
- Parents not discouraging, other pupils and recent drug use were found to be associated with drinking behaviour.
- 48% of 15 year olds and 32% of 14 year olds thought it was OK to drink alcohol once a week.
- 21% of 15 year olds had been drunk in the last four weeks and 19% of 15 year olds thought it was OK to get drunk once a week.
- Of pupils who obtained alcohol in the last four weeks, they were most likely to have been given it by parents (75%) with 8% said they had bought alcohol from a shop or pub.
- Pupil's most commonly said they drank at home or at someone else's house.
- The most commonly held belief among young people was that pupils of their own age drank to look cool in front of their friends (74%). Other common beliefs were because their friends pressured them into it (66%), to be more sociable with friends (62%), and because it gave them a rush or a buzz (62%).
- Pupils were more likely to have drunk alcohol, either in the last week or ever, if they had a higher family affluence score; 11% and 35% respectively for higher scoring pupils, compared with 6% and 25% for lower scoring pupils.

Alcohol use has profound consequences for populations and public health, with alcohol use contributing to a large proportion of acute and chronic health conditions ([Iranour and Nakhaee, 2019](#)). It is the seventh leading risk factor for both deaths and disability-adjusted life years globally ([Doyle, 2021](#)). The extent to which alcohol contributes to potential years lost is shown in the graph below. Significantly, potential years lost is much higher than females than males for West Yorkshire

FIGURE 17 - POTENTIAL YEARS OF LIFE LOST (PYLL) DUE TO ALCOHOL RELATED CONDITIONS



Drugs

Responding to the findings and recommendations made in DCB Independent Review, in December 2021 the UK Government published '[From Harm to Hope](#)', their 10 year drug strategy. Breaking drug supply chains, delivering a world-class treatment and recovery system and achieving a generational shift in demand for drugs are the 3 strategic priorities.

The latest drug misuse data shows that up to 9.4% of adults aged 16 to 59 years were estimated to have taken a drug(s) in the year 2019/20, with [1.1million](#) people reporting the use of Class A drugs. More recent [ONS data](#) shows a 6.2% increase in rates of deaths related to drug-related poisoning from 2020. Of the drug poisoning deaths registered in 2021, 63% were identified as drug misuse.

Despite being slightly dated, [estimates](#) suggest the percentage of children in West Yorkshire at age 15 who have ever tried cannabis was broadly consistent with the national average of 10.7%, though percentages were slightly higher in Calderdale (13.2%) and Leeds (12.7%), with Wakefield and Kirklees being lower at 8.6% and 9.3%.

Drug misuse is a challenge faced by prisons with an estimated [14% failure rate](#) for random drug tests. The problems are greatest in male local and category C prisons and have been closely linked to the amount of purposeful activity available to prisoners ([HMPPS, 2019](#)). Following release, in the period 2020/2021, all districts, apart from Bradford, saw higher than average numbers of adults prison leavers with substance misuse treatment needs, successfully engaging with community-based treatment ([PHE, 2021](#)).

The recent survey exploring national trends of [Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England](#) (2021) found that:

- 17% of boys and 19% of girls reported having taken drugs, a 5% decrease from the previous year. Prevalence for boys fell from 25% in 2018.

- Pupils were almost twice as likely to have been offered cannabis than any other individual drug, with 17% of pupils having been offered cannabis, then volatile substances (glue, gas, aerosols, or solvents) (9%) and cocaine (8%).
- Pupils who took class A drugs in the last year were most likely to have taken drugs on more than 10 occasions, with 55% having done so.
- On the first occasion they tried drugs, 49% said they had got the drugs from a friend, most of these being from a friend of the same age.
- Drugs taken on the most recent occasion were most obtained from friends; 51% from any friend, including 34% from friends of their own age. 26% of pupils said they got drugs from a dealer.
- 19% said they took drugs alone on the most recent occasion
- 26% of pupils perceived it to be easy to get illegal drugs, down from 31% in 2018.
- Pupils who took drugs on the first occasion were most likely to say they took them 'to see what it was like' (52%), whilst on the most recent occasion they were most likely to say 'to get high or feel good' (50%).

Treatment

The below tables show the number of those in treatment and new presentations for the year 2019/20. All of West Yorkshire's districts have a higher percentage of parents living with children whilst in treatment than the national average.

TABLE 4 - TREATMENT AND PRESENTATIONS INFORMATION

Family category	All in Treatment					
	England	Bradford	Calderdale	Kirklees	Leeds	Wakefield
Parent living with children	18%	22%	21%	21%	20%	22%
Other child contact - living with children	6%	9%	7%	6%	7%	3%
Parent not living with children	30%	33%	28%	30%	37%	29%
Not a parent and not in contact with children	46%	36%	43%	43%	37%	47%

New presentations						
Family category	England	Bradford	Calderdale	Kirklees	Leeds	Wakefield
Parent living with children	16%	17%	19%	18%	18%	18%
Other child contact - living with children	5%	7%	6%	9%	5%	2%
Parent not living with children	31%	36%	30%	30%	41%	30%
Not a parent and not in contact with children	48%	39%	44%	43%	36%	50%

Similarly, the following graph shows the proportions of those in treatment in each district. The percentages represent the proportion for the district only. For example, of the total number of adults in treatment in Bradford, 63% are in treatment for opiate use, 10% non-opiate, 19% alcohol and 7% for non-opiate and alcohol. As shown, most adults in treatment are for opiate use, followed by alcohol use.

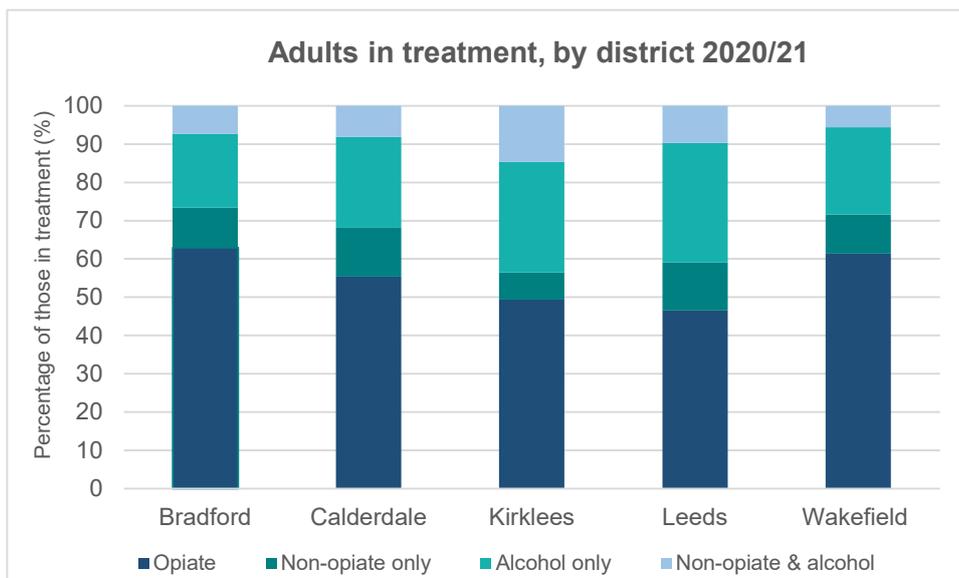


FIGURE 18 - ADULTS IN SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT, BY DISTRICT 2020/21.

Nationally, cannabis remains the most common substance (89%) that young people seek treatment for. Young people also report problems with alcohol, ecstasy and powder cocaine. The proportion of young people with codeine problems has doubled from 2018 to 2019 (0.6% compared to 1.2% this year). Early onset of substance use, and poly drug use are common vulnerabilities of young people starting treatment. Vulnerabilities can also differ depending on gender, as girls report more self-harming behaviours and sexual exploitation than boys ([OHID, 2022](#)).

Building the evidence base: commissioned research

Research commissioned by the VRU examined the [links between drugs, alcohol, and serious violence](#)

An evidence review explored the disparity known as the 'Alcohol Harm Paradox', whereby, despite having the lowest number of high-risk drinkers, the most deprived quintile of the UK population has 5.5x the mortality than the most affluent one. This is a consequence of a combination of material, psychological and cultural-behavioural factors that cluster in lower socio-economic (SES) communities, decreasing their resilience to alcohol-related harm. The alcohol harm paradox is a useful case study in understanding the multivariate landscape which contributes to persistent negative health outcomes for disadvantaged populations across the UK.

Despite being low risk of the most serious COVID-19-related illnesses, the country wide measures put in place had a disproportionately negative impact on young people. It was found that although substance use generally fell among this demographic during this period, successive lockdowns have impacted young people's mental health, increased their chances to be witnesses and/or victims of domestic abuse and increased their risk of exploitation by criminal gangs. Consequently, those from low SES backgrounds who live in poor accommodation have been unable to recover at the same rate as young people from more affluent backgrounds.

Building on the themes identified in the evidence reviews, primary research pointed to substance related violence being largely localised in the home environment. In terms of perpetration, domestic violence and family extortion were highlighted when a child was unable to obtain drugs. Many cases seen by the Family Plus team had been through Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) or Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) proceedings, indicating their clients may have also been victims of violence.

It was identified that young women known to the interviewed services, who were using substances, had a strong association with an undisclosed history of sexual abuse or violence. A theme of self-medicating through difficult emotions and frustrations as well as untreated mental health issues were common reasons for substance use in young people.

Regarding co-current conditions, mental health and substance use were identified as issues that often bar young people from accessing appropriate mental health support. Consequently, self-medication traps young people in a vicious cycle of degrading mental health and increased reliance on substances.

Service teams felt unable to discharge clients out of their service for fear of leaving them unsupported, and teams believe that they have become a de facto "*holding service*" for young people unable to access more appropriate support. Schools were repeatedly mentioned as both an avenue for building resilience in young people and a source of frustration due to repeat inappropriate referral to already stretched services.

Building the evidence base: ongoing research

Following on from the successful research undertaken in the drug and alcohol workstream in 2021/22, the VRU seek to continue and expand the drugs and alcohol research that Humankind completed in the last financial year using the recommendations outlined in the research report.

In support of the previous research, this subsequent research will include:

- A detailed examination of the demographics and characteristics of service users to include:
 - those with responsibility of children
 - understand how to support service users
 - understand how to support families.
- An exploration of specific and complex treatment pathways for individuals who are dealing with co-occurring mental health and substance use issues, so they are not barred from specialist support.

In addition, providing insights and recommendation for action, this research will utilise the existing findings and will continue to include the voices of diverse young people and service users in our community. This understanding will inform and support our response to supporting vulnerable people with dual diagnosis and complex needs as recommended by the 2022 VRU Response Strategy.

Mental Health

The relationship between mental health and violence is complex. According to [Public Health England](#), people with mental health problems are four times more likely to be victims of violence than those not experiencing mental health difficulties.

For the year ending March 2021, the CSEW found that being a victim of any crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse) was associated with an increased risk of reporting symptoms of anxiety and depression. In addition, being a victim of crime was associated with lower levels of personal well-being; life satisfaction, feeling that the things you do are worthwhile, and happiness

Findings from the Annual Population Survey show a decline in life satisfaction and an increase in anxiety across all



FIGURE 19 - ILLUSTRATION BY JULIET YOUNG, @CREATIVE.CLINICAL.PSYCHOLOGIST

districts from 2019/2020 to 2020/21. COVID-19 restrictions will have likely been a causal factor for this shift in wellbeing.

TABLE 5 - OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS - ANNUAL POPULATION SURVEY (SCORE OUT OF 10)

Local Authority	Life Satisfaction		Anxiety	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Bradford	7.68	7.28	3.03	3.35
Calderdale	7.57	7.4	3.1	3.32
Kirklees	7.48	7.2	3.19	3.51
Leeds	7.55	7.28	3.14	3.7
Wakefield	7.49	7.28	3.05	3.42

Hospital admissions for self-harm in West Yorkshire are noticeably higher for those aged 15 to 19 years compared to other years, this is consistent with national trends. For ages 15-19 and 20-24, Wakefield has the highest rate of hospital admissions in the region and is above the national average. Bradford has the highest regional rate for self-harm admissions for individuals aged 10-14 years ([OHID, 2022](#)).

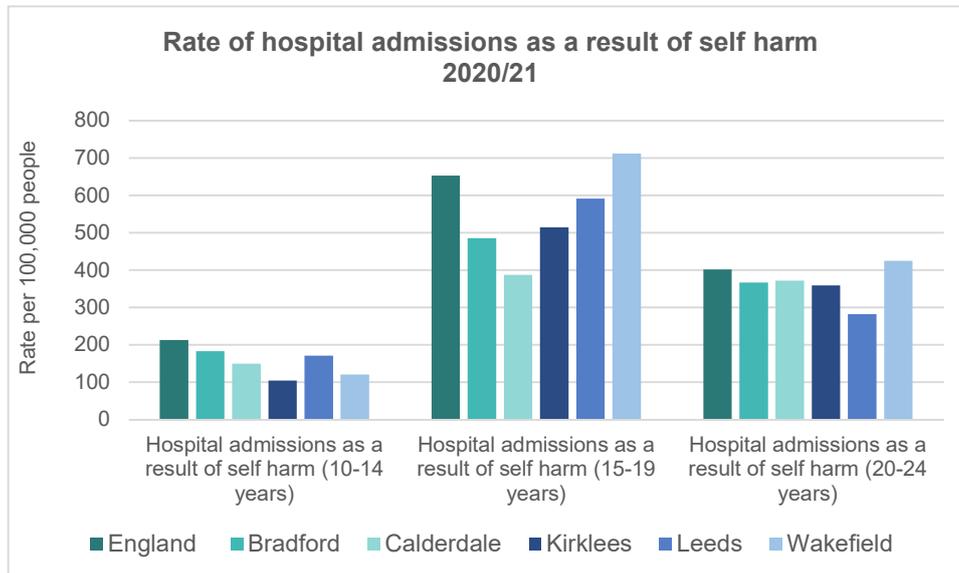


FIGURE 20 - RATE OF HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS AS A RESULT OF SELF-HARM 2020/21

The [Royal College of Psychiatrists' Mental Health Watch](#) for West Yorkshire suggest in the quarter to June 2022:

- 4.63% of those with common mental health conditions accessed Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) treatment in West Yorkshire, this can be compared to 4.94% across England for the same period.
- There were 3,345 inappropriate out of area placement days across West Yorkshire compared to 3,690 in the corresponding period in 2021.

In [West Yorkshire](#), the actual spending on mental health services per person for 2021/22 is £204.61, compared to £210.86 across England overall (3.0% lower). This represents increases of 4.6% on the actual ICS investment per head in 2020/21 (£195.68) and 11.3% on actual spend per head in 2019/20 (£183.78).

In the quarter to June 2022, the IAPT recovery rate overall for West Yorkshire was 49%, which is below the national target threshold of 50% and the recovery rate for Black and Minority Ethnic patients was also below the target level at 43%. Both of these West Yorkshire figures are lower than the average for England ([Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2022](#)).

Suicide

The WY HCP have recently published their [West Yorkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy for 2022-27](#). The strategy and action plan aims to make suicide prevention everyone's business and is based on a long-term vision for zero suicides in West Yorkshire. Over the next five years, the WY HCP aims to achieve a minimum 10% reduction in the suicide rate across the region.

The West Yorkshire Suicide Bereavement Service provides peer support and advocacy as people bereaved by suicide are more likely to suffer from severe depression or post-traumatic stress disorder, or even adopt suicidal behaviours ([WY HCP, 2022](#)).

Suicide is the largest cause of death for people aged 35 and under in the UK. As described by [Papyrus](#), a UK charity dedicated to preventing suicide, mental health, grief and loss, money worries, addiction, abuse and assault can lead to feeling suicidal. These are also risk factors for violence perpetration or victimisation.

ONS data shows that suicide is more common in West Yorkshire than in England as a whole, and rates have been increasing over the last few years. As shown in the graph below, only Bradford has a lower suicide rate than the national average. The suicide rate peaks in Calderdale and Wakefield with more than a 50% increase than Bradford.

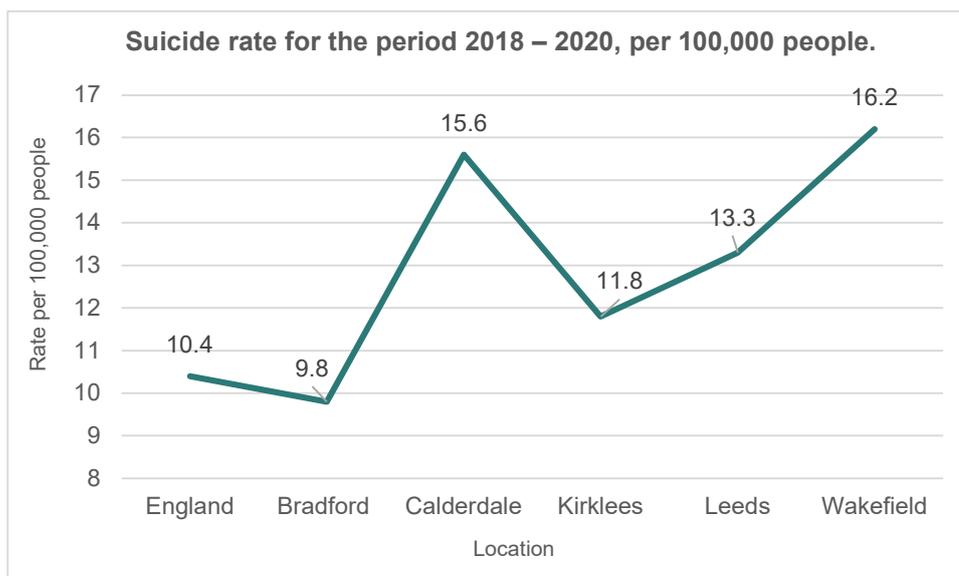


FIGURE 21 - SUICIDE RATE FOR THE PERIOD 2018 – 2020, PER 100,000 PEOPLE

It has been suggested that fewer than 1 in 3 of those who die by suicide were in contact with mental health services in the year before their death and many had been in contact with primary healthcare ([Stene-Larson & Reneflot, 2019](#)). Additionally, [John et al \(2020\)](#) found that almost four out of five of those who died by suicide, in their Welsh-based study, had contact with healthcare services in the month before their death. A week prior, almost one in three had a contact with healthcare services, a rate twice that for the general population.

Building the evidence base: commissioned research

Research commissioned by the VRU explored the potential links between low-level mental health issues and violence amongst young people. Mental health issues are a growing issue among young people, with data showing that they particularly affect girls in their teens.

Unsurprisingly, there have been increased reports of poor mental health over the past years due to COVID-19. With drivers being the loss of routine, external pressures, lack of school structure, social media, social isolation, and prolonged uncertainty are identified as being key factors impacting young people’s mental health.

Presentation and interpretation of mental health issues differs between boys and girls, likewise their experiences of violence are likely to be different. Reports of mental health issues, and of involvement in violence, are more common in teens than younger children.

Risk and protective factors are broadly similar for both mental health and for violence and include family situation, lack of engagement with school, Adverse Childhood Experiences, special educational needs and being NEET. For instance, low-level mental health issues

can lead to violent outbursts or misbehaviour through a frustration response and poor emotional regulation skills.

In the case of serious mental health challenges, a reputation for violence can make it harder for these young people to access support services. Almost all the young people being referred to support services are girls; boys are facing the same challenges of social isolation and loss of routine, but don't seem to be reporting problems or accessing services. For specific mental health services (such as children and adolescent mental health services - CAMHS), waiting lists and limited sessions were cited as problems for access, and many low-level issues are below the threshold for referral to CAMHS.

Schools can often offer mental health and wellbeing support, but their time and resources are stretched. In response, some schools have recruited staff specifically for wellbeing and pastoral care, as it is too much to expect teaching staff to do this in addition to their educational roles.

Training for practitioners working with young people, including teachers, does offer specific content on supporting young people's mental health; there is little standardisation of training required beyond the need for safeguarding. Senior leadership teams have a big influence on the ethos of a school and its treatment of mental health and violence; most schools and staff are supportive of CPD and training on mental health and supporting young people, though levels of interest vary and capacity between individual teachers.

Sport is a big source of support for young people, but available sports were usually football and rugby; this focus on sport may reduce opportunities to access support for girls. Correspondingly, young people, their parents and youth workers would like more activities to be available, particularly sports and activities that can help support wellbeing and prevent or reduce exposure to negative peer influences. Access to activities and support is inconsistent across West Yorkshire; availability, transport and cost of activities were the main barriers to taking part.

Promising interventions and best practice

[West Yorkshire Night OWLS](#) is a confidential support line for children, young people, their parents and carers who live in Bradford, Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield. The pilot scheme has now been extended to March 2023. The service was designed in collaboration with young people and parent/carer groups across West Yorkshire. The groups involved represent a variety of interests, including neurodiverse needs, SEND, Mental Health, Looked After and adoption which brings a richness of involvement in the shaping of the service, a wide representation of families' voice and understanding of needs ([NHS Leeds and York Partnership, 2022](#)).

Neurodiversity and SEN

West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership aims to achieve a 10% reduction in the gap in life expectancy between people with mental ill-health, learning disabilities and autism/neurodiversity, and the general population by 2024. Achieving this ambition will make life better for more than 200,000 people living in West Yorkshire. ([HCP, 2022](#))

Neurodiversity is a complex area; there are a broad range of conditions falling under the banner of neurodiversity and their effects are wide-ranging. Comorbidity is recognised as adding further complexity. In 2019, the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health Care Partnership estimated that:

- ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder - is likely to affect up to 4% of the general population. This roughly equates to 100,000 people across West Yorkshire and Harrogate
- Conditions such as autism, Asperger syndrome and pervasive development disorders, known as Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASCs) are estimated to affect at least 1.1% of the population. This can be cautiously interpreted as 29,000 people across West Yorkshire and Harrogate.

[Public health data](#) indicates the number of children and young people with autism known to schools is on the rise both nationally and locally. Across England the value has increased from 13.7 per 1000 in 2018 to 18.0 per 1000 in 2020. A similar pattern was observed in West Yorkshire with the value increasing from 9.1 per 1000 to 12.3 per 1000 in the same period.

As indicated in the graph below, Wakefield has the highest proportion of children with autism known to schools (21.3 per 1000 compared to the national level of 18 per 1000). However, from the data it is unclear why this spike is observed. Further research is required to understand if it is due to higher numbers of children with autism in the Wakefield area, a more effective screening and diagnosis process or other factors.

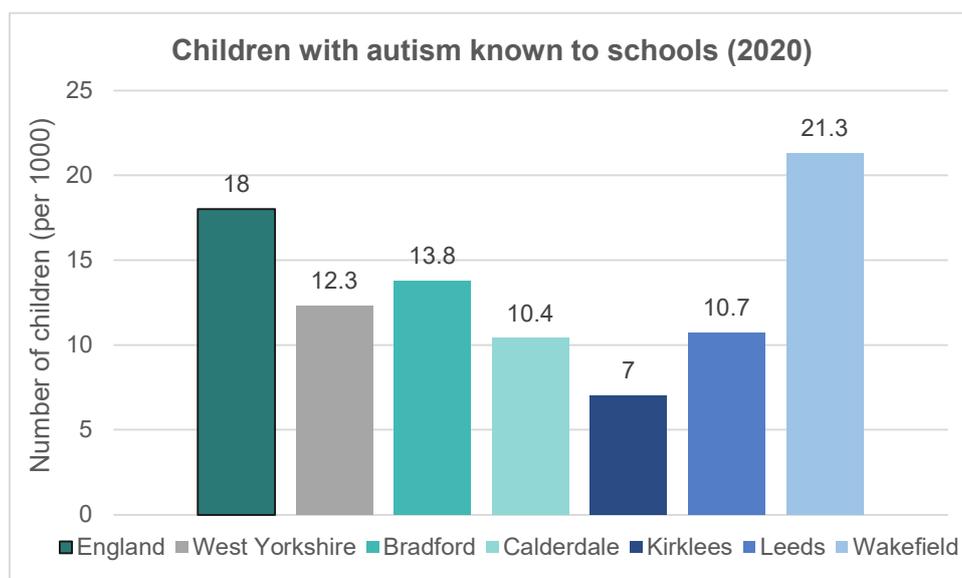


FIGURE 22 - NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM KNOWN TO SCHOOLS 2020

In July 2021, a [Criminal Justice Joint Inspection \(CJJI\) report](#) suggests that neurodivergence is more prevalent in the CJS than in the wider community and individuals with neurodiversity can be disadvantaged when they come into contact with the Criminal Justice System. The CJJI call for evidence suggested:

- 5–7% of those referred to liaison and diversion services have an autistic spectrum condition (ASC).
- 47% of male prisoners had a history of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) ([The Disabilities Trust Foundation](#), 2018).
- Within prisons the prevalence of autistic ‘traits’ or ‘indicators’ are thought to be around 16% to 19% and around 25% of prisoners are thought to meet the ADHD diagnostic criteria ([Young et al. 2018](#)).
- 29% of the offender population had a learning disability or challenge and in custody the rates were 36% for men and 39% for women ([NOMIS, 2019](#)).

[User Voice \(2021\)](#) spoke to people with lived experience of criminal justice and neurodiversity and found that:

- 70% did not have adjustments made during the criminal justice process to support their needs.
- 76% felt criminal justice staff did not understand their needs.
- Only 5% had been involved in a programme or intervention that had been adapted for their needs.

Building the evidence base: commissioned research

In December 2021 the VRU commissioned Rocket Science to conduct a piece of research looking at [neurodiverse young people’s experience of violence](#). The approach involved a review of existing evidence and interventions, along with interviews with neurodiverse young people and practitioners who work with them.

Interviews with neurodiverse young people indicated that they have experiences of violence as both a victim, through cases of bullying, and as a perpetrator. This was described as instances where young people would ‘lash out’ when they were struggling to communicate their needs. They also expressed concerns around the police and other authority figures who lacked understanding of neurodiversity in young people, and consequently did not recognise or respond to their needs effectively. Aggression from these authority figures towards the young people was also noted to rapidly escalate a situation.

Interviews with practitioners mirrored the concerns and experiences raised by young people. In terms of neurodiverse young people’s experiences of violence as a victim, practitioners noted this occurred through physical restraint, self-harm, bullying and exploitation. Exploitation includes criminal exploitation and ‘[cuckooing](#)’, when a drug dealer or gang takes over a vulnerable adult’s address for criminal purposes, and can lead to criminal charges if they are not identified as a victim.

Themes relating to neurodiverse young peoples' experiences as perpetrators of violence were identified, although it was noted this is less common than becoming a victim of violence. These are outlined below:

- Violence against parents and carers as a way of communicating need, expressing frustration or due to a lack of emotional regulation and communication skills
- Carrying knives to impress peers without understanding of the potential consequences
- Sexual offences due to a lack of understanding of consent and social norms. (This can also increase a neurodiverse young person's chances of becoming a victim of sexual offences themselves)
- Radicalisation, particularly through online groups

Eleven practitioners were interviewed as part of this research, including speech and language therapists, youth justice workers, charity staff and community group coordinators working with neurodiverse children and young people. They also highlighted the need for more support for young people to help prevent them entering situations with potentially violent outcomes along with increased awareness of neurodiverse needs and behaviours for professional to prevent situations escalating.

Best practice was said to involve a whole family, trauma informed approach. The practitioners interviewed also called for specific support for neurodiverse children and young people in contact with the criminal justice system, with the need for this support to be available at all contact points.

The report also investigated support services available for children, young people and families, and whilst there was a variety of options available for this, there was little focus on experiencing violence.

Building the evidence base: ongoing research

Following on from the successful research undertaken in the neurodiversity workstream in 2021/22, the VRU seek to continue and expand the neurodiversity research that Rocket Science completed in the last financial year using the recommendations outlined in the research report. The research will be based on three overarching focus areas:

- Potential links between exclusions, persistent absenteeism, neurodiverse conditions, and SEN in schools.
- Inclusive policies and procedures for schools as well as enhanced monitoring of bullying related to neurodiversity.
- Feasible and cost-effective opportunities for training and/or support for young people to build resilience and communication skills to express emotion and explain their diversity.

Promising interventions and best practice

[Leeds AIM and West Yorkshire Police](#) have recently launched an Autism Alert Card to help people communicate their needs in a stressful situation. The card includes details such as name, pronouns, emergency contact and statements around how autism affects them. This card can be shown to someone to indicate their autism and let them know how they are likely to be affected, allowing them to communicate their needs. The hope is that this card will help neurotypical people make reasonable adjustments to help neurodiverse people feel more comfortable, and prevent their behaviours being misinterpreted.

Disability

Findings from the [Family Resources Survey](#) published in March 2022 show that 14.6 million people in the UK had a disability in the 2020/21, roughly 22% of the total population. In terms of age, 9% of children in the UK were disabled, compared to 21% of working age adults and 42% of adults over State Pension age in 2020/21. Disability prevalence estimates are higher for female respondents compared to male respondents (24% vs 20%). For all age groups, except aged 15 and under, more females reported having a disability than males.

Yorkshire and the Humber had one per cent more people reporting a disability than the UK national average, with 24% of people within these regions reporting a disability in 2020/21. However, the picture of disability in West Yorkshire is difficult to precisely determine. Initial data on disability prevalence from the 2021 Census in England and Wales will be published in late 2022, with more detailed demographic data available in 2023 ([ONS, 2022](#)). This should provide additional understanding of disability in West Yorkshire.

Disability is considered to be a risk factor for becoming a victim of a violent crime ([Victim Support, 2016](#)). In the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales found that:

- Around 1 in 7 (14.3%) disabled adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse, compared with 1 in 20 (5.1%) non-disabled adults.
- Disabled women are over twice as likely to experience domestic abuse than non-disabled women (17.5% and 6.7%).
- Disabled women, aged 16 to 74, were more likely to have been victims of sexual assault than non-disabled women (5% and 2.8% respectively) ([ONS, 2021](#)).

Recent evidence regarding perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment shows disabled people were more likely to feel very or fairly unsafe when walking alone, than non-disabled people ([ONS 2022](#)). This was the same for walking during the day and at night.

The [Joseph Rountree Foundation \(2022\)](#) estimates that 14.9% of people in families where someone is disabled are in deep poverty and 2.1% are very food insecure. Up to 20.3% of single adult disabled families are in deep poverty and their risk of behind on their bills is roughly four times as high as for people in the non-disabled group. Correspondingly, an estimated 84% of mothers of disabled children do not work, compared with 39% of mothers

of non-disabled children and 3% of mothers of disabled children work full-time ([Papworth Trust 2018](#)).

Young carers

Providing informal care, also referred to as unpaid care, is the provision of care for a friend or relative who requires additional support because of an illness, disability, or advanced age ([Carers Trust, 2022](#)). The increasing need for informal care is driven by an aging population, rising age of parenthood, long-term illness and likely the COVID-19 pandemic.

As demand increases, the responsibility of informal care is increasingly shared by young people with the 2011 Census reporting almost 178 000 carers younger than 18 years ([Lacey, Xue & McMunn, 2022](#)). As part of their study, Lacey et al (2022) found associations between young caring and mental health, with young carers having poorer mental health, more symptoms of anxiety and depression, lower amounts of self-esteem, poorer health-related quality of life, and more antisocial behaviour than their peers.

Childhood is referred to as a protected phase of the life course and unlike adult carers, young people have lower social capital and financial disadvantage. This is coined the 'young carer penalty' ([Stamatopoulos, 2017](#)). Caring can place a young person under extreme pressure making them vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation.

It is estimated that up to 40% of young people caring for a relative with drug or alcohol problems miss school or experience educational difficulties. Episodic and inconsistent parental care, domestic abuse risk, addiction stigma and fear can disrupt children's routines and relationships, leading to behavioural and emotional problems ([The Children's Society, 2018](#)). All of which are known risk factors for violence perpetration and/or victimisation.

Education

Engagement in full time, quality education is a strong protective factor against the risk of a young person becoming involved in serious violence ([Crest, 2021](#)). Numerous national reports ([MoJ, 2018](#); [Timpson, 2019](#); [Crest, 2021](#);) cite exclusion from mainstream school as a trigger point for children becoming at risk of serious harm. In [research commissioned by the VRU](#) in 2020, three broad mechanisms connecting educational experiences with violence and exploitation were identified:

- Daily attendance provides structure and monitoring
- Providing a sense of achievement and inclusion
- Impacting real or perceived future prospects

This meaningful engagement with education must start and be maintained from an early age, with parents and care givers demonstrating an active interest in their child's education and social relationships and children feeling connected to their schools.

School Readiness

School readiness appears to have a significant impact on children’s educational experiences and potential future experiences with violence and exploitation. School readiness may directly impact children’s engagement, achievement and consequently their real or perceived prospects.

Whilst further research is needed in this area, it may be that the children starting their school careers with deficits in communication skills go on to be same children who become engaged with youth justice services as they become teenagers. As such, it follows that the earlier identification of communication issues is an area that could benefit from both further research and intervention design to improve outcomes.

The necessity to address ‘School Readiness’ was emphasised by the pandemic, which caused new reception pupils to be the ‘least school-ready’ for generations. Analysis from [Nesta](#) has revealed that the average pupil in England missed more than a quarter of their early years education due to the pandemic.

Educational Attainment

Attainment 8 Scores

Further along the educational journey of a child, schools are awarded an Attainment 8 score. This is based on how well pupils at Key Stage 4 (years 10-11, ages 14-16) have performed in eight core subject areas, including English, maths and sciences. Again, most of West Yorkshire performs poorly on this measure, with only Calderdale recording a score slightly above the average for England. This metric suggests that having started their school career at a disadvantage, children in West Yorkshire do not make up this disadvantage, but instead continue to achieve lower levels of attainment compared to their peers in the rest of England as they progress.

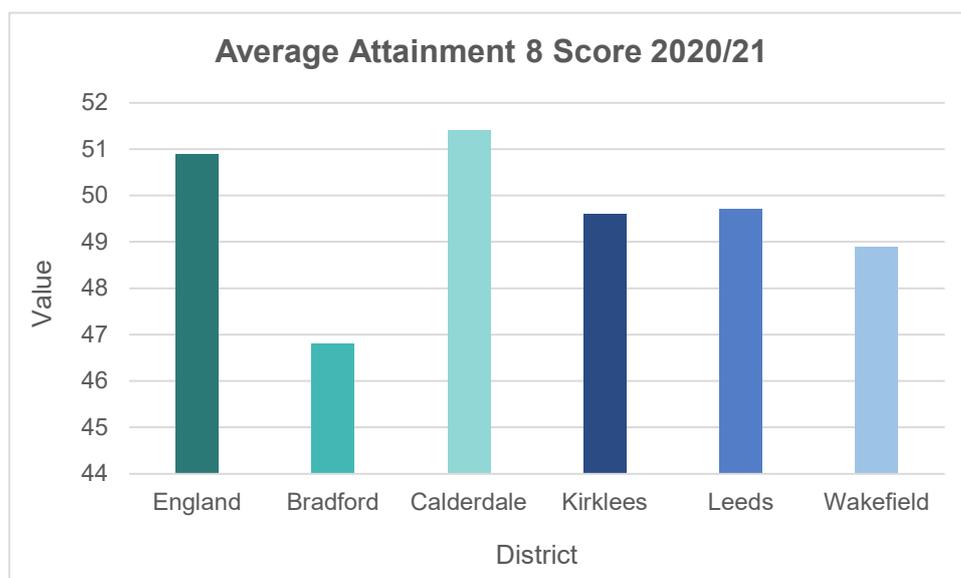


FIGURE 23 - AVERAGE ATTAINMENT 8 SCORE 2020/21

Not in Education, Employment or Training

Data on the number of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) is collected in several ways, including for those aged 16-24 years old through the Labour Force Survey on a quarterly basis and for 16- to 18-year-olds using various post-16 data sources, such as administrative data from schools, further education, apprenticeships, and higher education. In addition, local authority data is only collected for 16–17-year-olds. The decline in the rate of 16–17-year-olds classified as NEET in recent years can be attributed to 2013 legislation that requires them to remain in education.

Recent [ONS data](#) shows a small increase in the number of young people aged 16-24 years and NEET in April to June 2022 with the total estimated to be 711,000 (10.4% of all young people). An estimated 11% of men and 9.8% of women were NEET in this time period. Although, this is slightly higher than the previous quarter and the same point in 2021, it is still 0.6% down on pre-coronavirus levels.

Government [data](#) for 2021 highlighted that nearly a quarter of 16-24 year olds were inactive due to being 'long term or temporarily sick', and the main reason for inactivity was 'other' which can include those waiting for employment or education to begin or not wanting to participate. In 2011, young people classed as NEET were almost twice as likely to have a health problem than the overall 16-24 population (46.7% and 24.5% respectively).

Those experiencing a mental health condition has almost tripled from 7.7% in 2012 to 21.3% in 2021, and conditions reported include depression, anxiety, or phobias. As discussed earlier, the relationship between mental health and violence is complex, with some evidence suggesting that those with mental health problems are four times more likely to be victims of violence than those not experiencing mental health difficulties.

Local authority [data](#) shows the proportion of 16-17 year olds not in education, employment, or training, or whose activity is not known in a 3-month period at the end of 2021. The table below shows that the NEET rate is slightly higher in Yorkshire and The Humber (6.3%) than England as a whole (5.5%). Across West Yorkshire, Bradford has the highest NEET rate (3.8%) and Leeds the lowest (2.3%), despite having the highest of NEET and unknown combined. The NEET rate has risen for all districts apart from Wakefield compared to the end of 2020. For all districts, the NEET rate is higher for men than women.

TABLE 6 - LOCAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE FIGURES SHOWING THE PROPORTIONS OF 16-17 YEARS OLDS NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, OR TRAINING

	% of 16-17 year olds either NEET or unknown	Of which % known to be NEET
England	5.5	2.8
Yorkshire & the Humber	6.3	3
Bradford	6.6	3.8
Calderdale	3.9	3.1
Kirklees	4.1	2.6
Leeds	7.9	2.3
Wakefield	4.4	3

The protective nature of employment or education has been well evidenced with the Public Health Approach to reducing violence identifying high unemployment as a risk factor.

Research shows that the path to being NEET is “*often complex and formed of multiple personal and social issues*” ([Welsh Local Government Association, 2008](#)) and many of these overlap with the risk factors for violence, including poor housing, drug and alcohol dependency, caring responsibilities, domestic abuse, and gang culture. For example, by the age of 21, those who spend time NEET are more likely to be unemployed, receive lower wages, have a criminal record, report lower levels of life satisfaction, and suffer health problems ([Richmond & Regan, 2022](#)). In addition, [research](#) by SafeLives found that 59% of young people who misused substances were not in education, employment, or training.

Whilst causality is difficult to establish, evidence indicates that a lack of employment or education increases the chance of becoming involved in criminal activity. Public Health England [data](#) shows that young men who are NEET are five times more likely to have a criminal record than their peers.

VRU-funded [research](#) investigating the root causes of serious violence in West Yorkshire discussed the potential impact of NEET for young people. The research showed that feeling inadequate at school could be the beginning of people becoming involved in violent crime. There is also a [relationship](#) between school exclusions (which is discussed below) and NEET with 35% of excluded students who finish education in alternative provision go on to become NEET. The importance of providing alternative routes to success and raising aspirations of those at risk of becoming NEET to provide them with opportunities other than crime was highlighted.

Exclusions

There is strong evidence nationally that suggests young people who are permanently excluded from mainstream education are more vulnerable to being exploited by criminal gangs and exposed to drugs, serious violence, and knife crime. Research commissioned by the VRU on this subject has significantly added to our understanding of this issue locally.

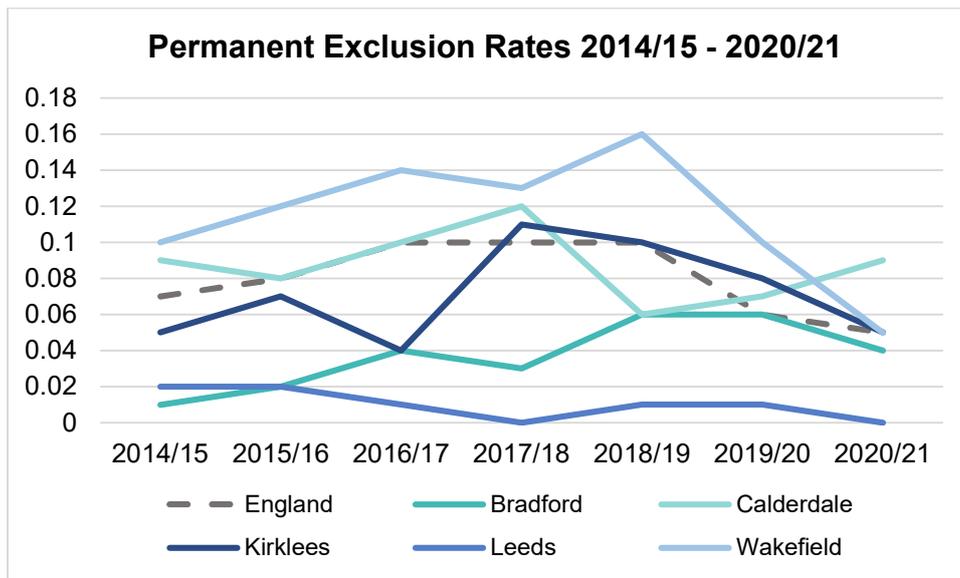


FIGURE 24 - PERMANENT EXCLUSION RATES (BY DISTRICT) FROM 2014/15 TO 2020/21

The above graph shows the rate of permanent exclusions in West Yorkshire, which broadly follows the trend for England.

Looking at the most recently available data (2020/21), we have seen a decrease in permanent exclusions in Bradford, Wakefield and Kirklees, however Calderdale has again seen an increase during the last school year. Like the previous year, the 2020/21 academic year was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, so it is difficult to ascertain how much of an influence the pandemic has had on the decline of these rates, or whether it could be attributed to other factors, such as policy changes etc. Access to 2021/22 data, which was unobstructed by COVID-19 restrictions, will help us to understand this further.

Looking at suspension rates, West Yorkshire has higher rates of suspensions than nationally, but this is driven by high levels in Wakefield. When considering the data without Wakefield, West Yorkshire rates are similar to England as a whole. As anticipated due to less COVID-19 related disruption in schools, we have started to see an incline in suspensions across West Yorkshire in 2020/21, as per the following graph.

Recently published data for 2021/22 Autumn Term shows suspension rates are higher in each Local Authority Area in West Yorkshire compared to the 2020/21 Autumn Term. They are also higher than the 2019/20 Autumn Term, which was unimpeded by COVID-19, with the exception of Wakefield.

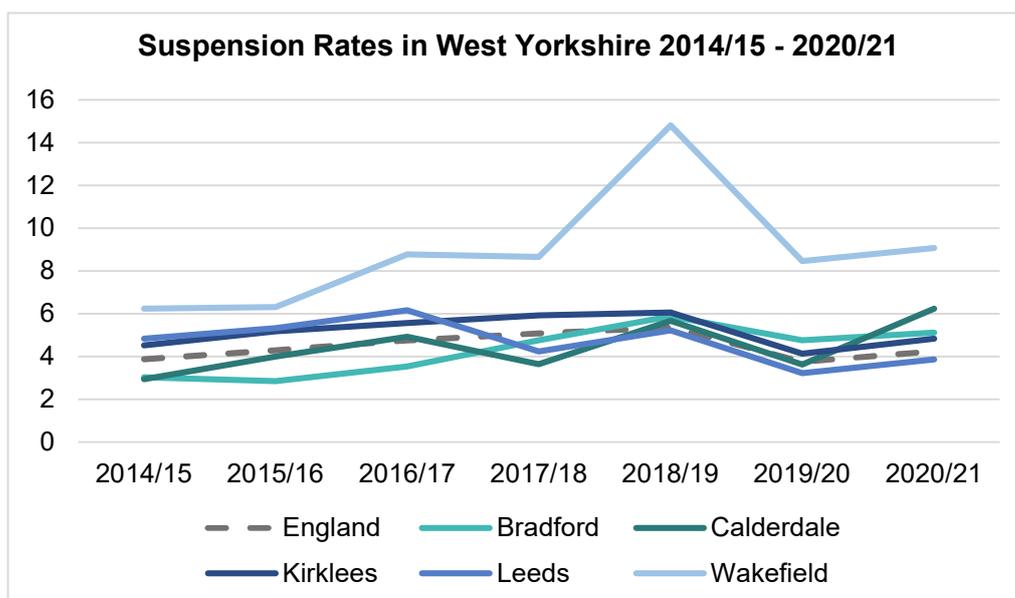


FIGURE 25 - SUSPENSION RATES (BY DISTRICT) FROM 2014/15 TO 2020/21

New guidance published by the [Department for Education in August 2020](#) included amendments to the recording process for school exclusions and suspensions. This included increasing the number of reasons given for the exclusion from one to three, removing the use of ‘other’ as a justification, and adding additional categories. These categories were:

- Use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item
- Abuse against sexual orientation or gender identity
- Abuse relating to disability
- Inappropriate use of social media or online technology
- Wilful and repeated transgression of protective measures in place to protect public health – this justification was put in place as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic

This alteration was put in place to improve the quality of data held on school exclusions and suspensions by giving more detail around justification. However, it is not clear from the dataset how many individual instances have occurred, for instance Leeds only recorded two permanent exclusions but four justifications.

Persistent disruptive behaviour remains the most common reason for both suspensions and permanent exclusion across West Yorkshire in all but two areas ([ONS, 2022](#)). In Bradford, the most common reason for permanent exclusion was *use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item* at 27.12%. In Kirklees, the most common reason for a suspension was *physical assault against a pupil* at 35.62%.

When looking at the second most likely reason for exclusion and suspension the most frequent was *physical assault against an adult* followed by *verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult and physical assault against a pupil*.

Due to the addition of the new recording categories, it is unclear whether these instances are on the rise or if they were previously recorded as *other*. For instance, in 2019/20 Kirklees

recorded 22% of exclusions as *other* and nationally, this category was used to record 15.7% of all permanent exclusions and 16.47% of all suspensions.

It is worth noting that Wakefield have recorded far fewer permanent exclusions for persistent disruptive behaviour than in previous years. In 2020/21 they recorded 27.2% compared to 52.94% the previous year.

A detailed breakdown of the most common reason for both suspensions and permanent exclusion across West Yorkshire can be found in the following table.

“Instead of continually punishing those who struggle to engage in mainstream education, entrenching the cyclical prophecy of their bad reputations and low self-esteem, their disruptive behaviour should be taken more seriously as an indication of unmet needs.”

Ciaran Thapar, Cut Short

TABLE 7 - MOST COMMON REASON(S) FOR SUSPENSIONS/EXCLUSIONS

Location	Most common reason(s) for suspensions/exclusions			
	Suspensions		Permanent Exclusions	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
England	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 33.55%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 36.16%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 34.49%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 29.65%
	Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult 15.83%	Physical Assault Against an Adult 36.16%	Physical Assault Against a Pupil 12.64%	Physical Assault Against a Pupil 17.06%
Bradford	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 29.94%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 30.8%	Physical Assault Against an Adult 29.09%	Use or threat of use of offensive weapon or prohibited item 27.12%
	Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult 20.46%	Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult 16.49%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 27.27%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 20.34%
Calderdale	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 26.73%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 34.31%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 37.04%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 39.02%
	Other – 22%	Physical Assault Against a Pupil 14.69%	Physical Assault Against an Adult 22.22%, Other – 22.22%	Physical Assault Against an Adult 19.51%
Kirklees	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 30.14%	Physical Assault Against a Pupil 35.62%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 24.07%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 25.64%
	Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult 20.58%	Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult 19.03%	Physical Assault Against an Adult 22.22%	Physical Assault Against an Adult 15.38%, Physical Assault Against a Pupil 15.38%
Leeds	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 43.55%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 43.16%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 40%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 25%
Wakefield	Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult 19.56%	Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult 19.37%	Physical Assault Against a Pupil 30%	Physical Assault Against an Adult 25%, Use or threat of use of offensive weapon or prohibited item 25%, Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult 25%
	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 56.47%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 48.38%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 52.94%	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour 27.2%
	Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult 14.0%	Verbal Abuse or Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult 15.91%	Physical Assault Against an Adult 11.76%, Damage 11.76%	Physical Assault Against an Adult 18.18%

We engaged with over 800 young people in secondary schools through our 2022 VRU Schools Survey, in which we captured their thoughts and perceptions on suspensions and exclusions. Many young people felt that people should be suspended from school for verbally threatening pupils (70%) and teachers (75%), bullying another student because of their race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or faith (90%), any other bullying (66%) and if they are repeatedly truant (59%). Most young people who responded didn't feel like suspensions should be issued for being repeatedly late (80%), having very poor attendance (77%) or wearing the wrong uniform (72%).

When asked about the last time when someone in their school was suspended in their school: 49% did not feel it changed the behaviour of the student who was suspended as opposed to 29% who said it did. 50% felt it didn't change how safe they felt at school, with 24% saying it did make them feel safer. 44% said it did not make it easier to learn, with 30% saying it made it easier to learn at school.

We also asked what one thing pupils would want to change about how their school issues suspensions or permanent exclusions, with the most common suggestion provided being around making them less strict. Some respondents also noted the importance of trying to understand the reason behind the behaviour, instead of just issuing exclusions and suspensions.

Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners

Analysis of open-source data has helped the VRU to understand the wider context of school exclusions and vulnerable learners and how this impacts serious violence.

In West Yorkshire, as nationally, pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and those with Special Education Needs (SEN) are disproportionately excluded, in terms of both permanent and fixed term.

The following figure show that students with SEN provisioning make up 15% of the 2020/21 headcount in West Yorkshire, but they account for 48% of permanent exclusions and 45% of fixed-term exclusions. SEN are disproportionately found in young offenders and, increasingly, among those groomed into criminal exploitation.

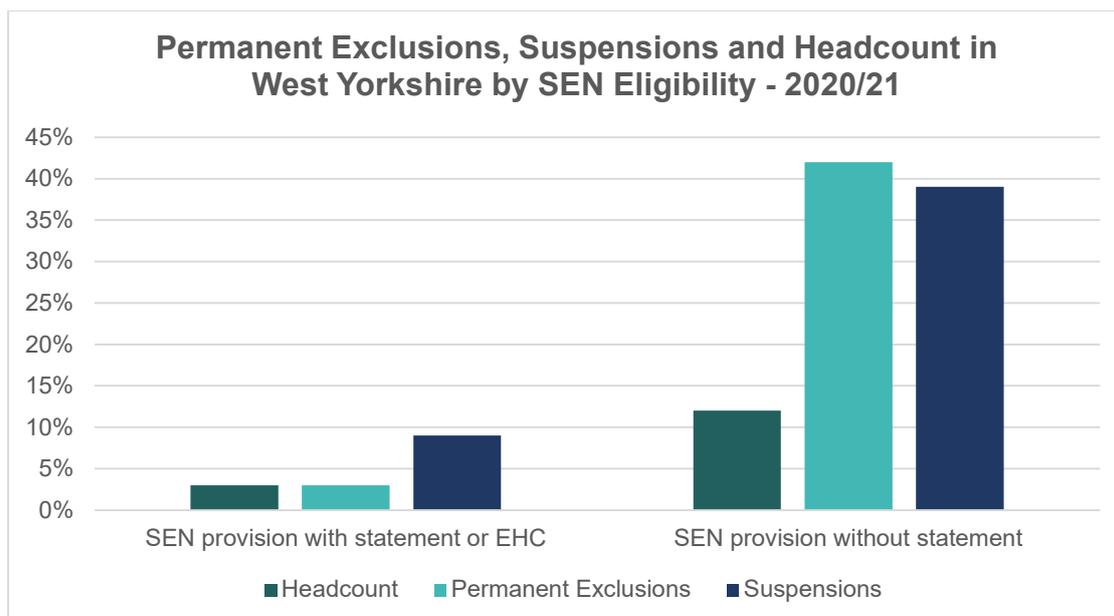


FIGURE 26 - PERMANENT AND SUSPENSIONS FOR SEN PUPILS

Students eligible for free school meals only make up 24% of the 2020/21 headcount in West Yorkshire, but they account for 52% of permanent exclusions and 50% of suspensions. We know this disproportionality is mirrored amongst those committed and cautioned for violence offences nationally.

When looking at permanent exclusions by ethnic background, we know nationally that those from mixed ethnicity and Black backgrounds have historically excluded more than those from White, minority ethnic and Asian backgrounds. Notably, since 2018/19 this disproportionately in permanent exclusion rates has narrowed for both groups, with the latest national figures (2020/21), showing that Black pupils are now excluded at the same rate as White pupils and those from a mixed ethnicity background are excluded only at a marginally higher rate. To explain this change nationally, [YEF analysis](#) suggested that changing demographics and regional differences in the use of exclusion might have played a very small part in closing the gap, but it is still unclear whether the trend is to do with the way schools address issues of race and racism, factors related to the pandemic or something else.

The following graph visualises how permanent exclusion rates differ in West Yorkshire compared to nationally. Although the numbers are small, we can see those from mixed ethnicity backgrounds have consistently been the highest excluded ethnic group in the region and that a similar 'closing of the gap' has occurred in 2020/21, as seen nationally.

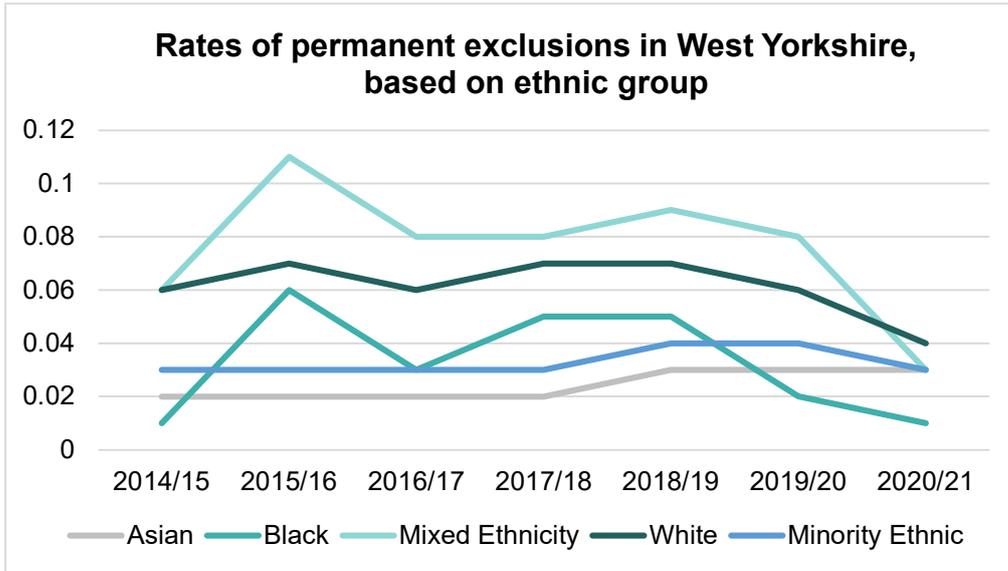


FIGURE 27 - RATES OF PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS IN WEST YORKSHIRE, BASED ON ETHNIC GROUP

Similar to the above, rates of suspensions in West Yorkshire have consistently been highest for those from mixed ethnicity backgrounds and White pupils. The below figure shows how suspension rates differ by ethnic group at a local authority level.

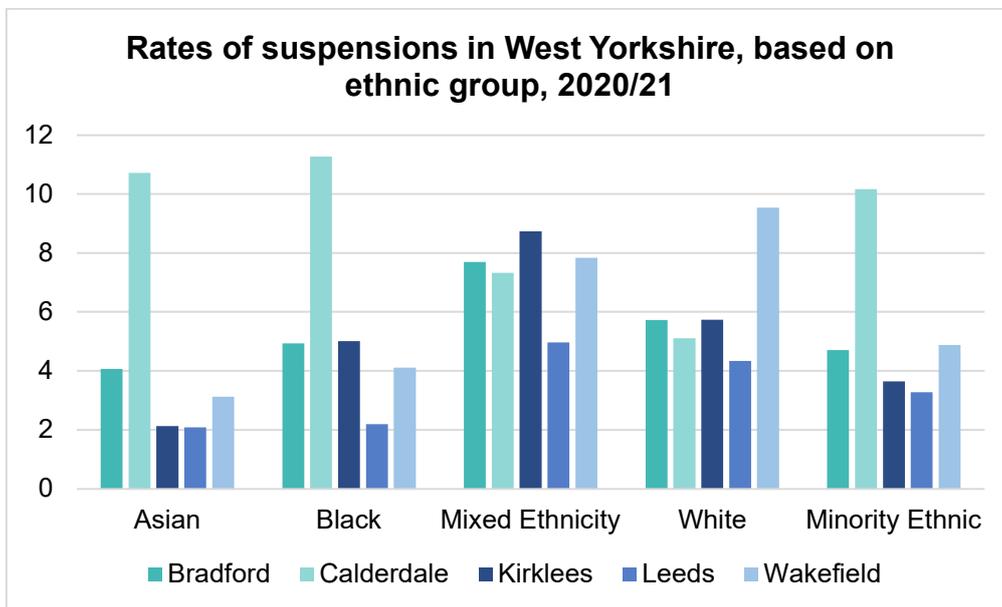


FIGURE 28 - THE SUSPENSION RATE BASED ON ETHNIC GROUP = THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS IN EACH ETHNIC GROUP, DIVIDED BY THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS IN THAT ETHNIC GROUP (X100) (EXCLUDING 'UNCLASSIFIED')

Gypsy Roma pupils continue to have some of the highest rates of suspensions in the region.

TABLE 8 - SUSPENSION RATES FOR GYPSY ROMA PUPILS

Suspension (rate)	Bradford		Calderdale		Kirklees		Leeds		Wakefield	
	19/20	20/21	19/20	20/21	19/20	20/21	19/20	20/21	19/20	20/21
	24.05	18.18	24.82	43.20	22.03	14.29	13.51	20.50	26.67	30.43

Looking at the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged pupils, [Teach First research](#) has shed light on the sizeable impact the pandemic has potentially had on disadvantaged pupils, finding that these young people may be twice as likely as their wealthier counterparts to have fallen behind because of the pandemic. The survey found that 30% of teachers at schools with the poorest pupils believe most of their pupils are behind in their attainment compared to this point in a normal year, compared to just 15% of teachers at schools with the most affluent pupils.

When asked what would make the most difference to support students in the future, the most popular choice from teachers was **funding for and access to social and mental health services** (61%). In addition, four in ten (42%) said all households to have access to Wi-Fi and digital devices, a similar figure (39%) said teacher and leader development, while 52% said funding to reduce teachers timetabled hours.

Through their routine inspections and speaking to school leaders, Ofsted [research](#) identified pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils as being hardest hit by the pandemic. They did note broadly, however, that pupils' gaps in knowledge and skills were closing or had closed in some subjects, and that pupils were 'where they should be'.

Their analysis has also drawn out some of the challenges special schools have raised. It was highlighted that attendance was a challenge for them, particularly among pupils with complex mental health needs. In addition, schools have faced external barriers, such as delays accessing external services, particularly in relation to mental health. This has been particularly impactful on special schools who rely on a lot of services from external agencies.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Children in home education have reduced access to services available via school as well as safeguarding support provided by teachers and staff. Their environment is unregulated and, in some cases, unstructured and notably there is no duty to ensure the quality of their education. Although the numbers of EHE children remain small, there is evidence they have been rising in England and West Yorkshire, and the true figure is likely to be even higher given that parents have no requirement to register their home educated child with the local authority.

Looking at West Yorkshire figures we have received from 2015/16 – 2020/21, we saw a **continued increase** year by year in the number of children leaving mainstream education to be home educated. The figures have more than doubled in this timeframe.

However, through analysis of two local authority areas who have shared 2021/22 EHE figures, it appears that the increase has halted this year. While we cannot confirm changes across the entirety of West Yorkshire, in Leeds there have been fewer notifications this year (falling from 652 in 2020/21 to 459 in 2021/22).

Looking then at the figures of people currently registered as EHE during the 2021/22 academic year in Kirklees, there has been very minimal change in numbers within EHE, with very few (7%) being in EHE due to COVID-19 anxiety, which further suggests that the increases we had seen of numbers in EHE during 2020/21 may have been accelerated by COVID-19. Of those who do register as EHE at the start of the academic year, just under a third (31%) of those cease EHE during the academic year.

There are sizeable concerns around EHE relating to the lack of data of children in home education and lack of support which were emphasised by the [Education Committee](#). We understand numbers are likely to be underreported as parents do not have to register their children with the local authority as home educated and the DFE does not collect any national figures on EHE.

The Education Committee also highlighted concerns around the lack of powers for local authorities and clarity on 'suitable' education and a shortage of data on outcomes. A recommendation made to establish a 'statutory register' for children outside of school has been accepted by the Government, which will see the collation, analysis and publication of anonymised annual data on the number of children out of school, which will allow stakeholders to better understand trends and create effective policy in response to them.

The proposed register would ask for reasoning behind the decision on a voluntary basis; based on the responses we have seen locally; it is not likely this will assist in shedding light on what is motivating people to electively home educate their children. The VRU would welcome opportunity to engage in consultation around the design for the new register.

The [findings](#) of a public consultation on the introduction of the compulsory EHE register were published in February 2022. Local Authorities (96%) and schools and teachers (26%) who responded to the consultation were in agreement with the proposal for a register. The main reasons provided were to help safeguard the children concerned and to ensure they have suitable education. On the other hand, 82% of parents and young people disagreed with the proposal, citing the register as unneeded and ineffective and stating that parents are responsible for education, not LAs.

Attendance and Absence

Attendance rates in West Yorkshire appear to have stabilised following the pandemic. Looking at weekly attendance rate data in state-funded schools for the majority of the 21/22 school year (09/09/21 - 31/03/22).

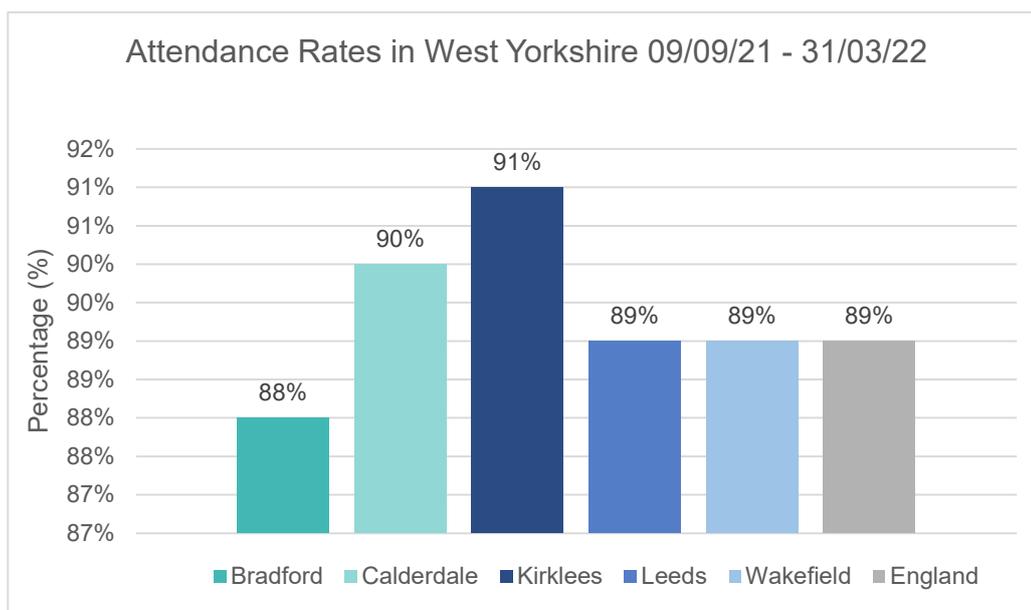


FIGURE 29 - ATTENDANCE RATES IN WEST YORKSHIRE 2020/21

Looking at absence rates, there appears to have been a substantial rise in absence rates when looking at the most recently available data. It should be noted, data from the 2019/20 academic year was not available. In addition, the overall absence rate for the Autumn Term 2020/21 does not include sessions where pupils were not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (of which 7% were recorded nationally).

TABLE 9 - OVERALL ABSENCE RATE AND PERCENTAGE OF PERSISTENT ABSENTEESISM IN WEST YORKSHIRE

	Overall absence rate			Percentage of persistent absentees - 10% or more sessions missed		
	2018/19 Autumn and Spring Term	2020/21 Autumn and Spring Term	2021/22 Autumn and Spring Term	2018/19 Autumn and Spring Term	2020/21 Autumn and Spring Term	2021/22 Autumn and Spring Term
Bradford	5.2%	5.4%	8.6%	13.7%	15.2%	26.4%
Calderdale	4.3%	3.8%	7.1%	9.7%	10.2%	21.1%
Kirklees	4.4%	3.8%	7.1%	10.5%	10.4%	21.8%
Leeds	4.6%	3.9%	7.1%	10.9%	10.3%	20.6%
Wakefield	5.0%	4.0%	7.4%	12.5%	10.7%	22.5%
England	4.5%	4.0%	7.4%	10.5%	10.4%	22.3%

The previous table shows that absence rates have almost doubled from 2020/21 Autumn and Spring Term to 2021/22 Autumn and Spring Term and the percentage of persistent absentees has significantly increased over the same period, with every local authority area in West Yorkshire, aside from Bradford, at least doubling. The data provided clearly attributes this increase to an increase in illness related absence, but further investigation is required to understand why this has increased so much.

As is the case with most of the open-source data available for education used within this document, there is a significant time lag between the publication date and the date of the data itself. Looking ahead, in order to improve our understanding and the value of the analysis provided around education going forward, we will be seeking more contemporary, timely feeds of some of these key markers of education inclusion. Further to this, school level data, alongside adequate qualitative understanding, would allow us to be more strategic in our delivery of provision and support in schools within the region.

Technology, Social Media and Online Trauma

The topic of social media and youth violence has attracted increasing academic and professional interest in recent years, with increasing evidence further strengthening the relationship that exists between the two.

Locally, research conducted in 2020 by the University of Huddersfield and the five Youth Offending Teams of West Yorkshire found strong evidence that some young people's problematic social media activity – such as displaying and provoking hostility and violence – acts as a driver for some 'in real life' violent offending in West Yorkshire. The researchers found that nearly 1 in 4 (23.44%) cases in the study were directly related to a young person's prior social media use. Of the cases identified as related to social media use, the majority were related to acts of violence. Typically, disputes online were found to escalate to the point where physical fights would occur. The findings from our [collaboration](#) with the School of Law at the University of Leeds add to this, noting that:

- Social media can help facilitate collective action.
- Social media facilitates the organisation of crime through features such as encrypted messages, location sharing and anonymity.
- Social media is utilised by gangs for the purposes of recruitment and promotion

The University of Huddersfield also found that the most popular social media apps have intrinsic design features that act to drive online hostility and aggression. This has been corroborated by [international research](#), which identified comments, livestreaming, picture/video sharing and tagging as four features that can escalate conflicts. Catch22's 2017 report also highlighted additional ways in which social media can act as a catalyst and trigger for youth violence. These include:

- **Threats and provocation in music videos** – Young people and professionals reported concerns around what they referred to as drill music videos, which threaten and provoke individuals and groups from rival areas

- **Exposure to Online Violence** – Young people are exposed daily to social media content that displays or incites serious violence in real life. These include uploads of photos and videos of individuals and groups trespassing into areas associated with rival groups, and serious incidents of theft and violence perpetrated against young people.
- **Social Pressures** – Online material can threaten to undermine young people’s status and reputation, generating social pressures to retaliate in real life. Moreover, when young people witness displays of real-life violence involving their friends and family, this can trigger significant levels of anxiety and trauma.
- **Negative implications for education and employment** – Tens of thousands of young people follow the social media accounts of people self-identified as “gang members”. This continuous lens into a seemingly lucrative lifestyle can undermine the commitment of some young people to education and legitimate forms of employment.

More contemporary research has helped demonstrate just how much the national lockdowns exacerbated concerns about social media and online trauma. [Research published in 2021](#) showed that 97% of Catch22’s child sexual exploitation referrals have an online or social media element, with substantial increases related to online grooming and abuse. The research also involved consultation with young people, which showed that more than 70% of young people had seen content that included videos of suicide, nudity and extreme violence during the national lockdowns in 2020 and 2021. They also described social media as toxic, citing the damaging impact it can have on mental health and wellbeing.

Our recently produced VRU schools survey, targeted at secondary school students, has also provided some further insights around social media. Of the 30% of the respondents who said their mental health had been impacted by social media, bullying and concerns around body image, primarily by female respondents, were mentioned the most frequently.

Social media sites TikTok (75%), Snapchat (73%) and YouTube (71%) were regularly used by respondents to the survey. Additional insight from our consultation with young people within the YJS in the region noted Snapchat was ‘incredibly big’ and highlighted how embedded social media can be in crime, with people showing off their illegal activity on social media as ‘content’.

When asked about the main causes of fights at school, the most commonly provided reason from the survey was ‘comments made on social media’ (70%). We also asked young people about the current support in place when you have had a negative experience on social media. 65% felt there was adequate support at home, with only 33% and 26% feeling there was adequate support at school and online respectively.

Building the evidence base: commissioned research

To respond and advance our understanding of this increasingly important vector of violence in West Yorkshire, the VRU commissioned a research partner to explore the links between social media and violence & vicarious online trauma. Published in April 2022, this report provided several key insights:

More than 2/3 of the young people surveyed in West Yorkshire (70%) view upsetting content on social media, reinforcing research from the national research by Catch22.

- The likelihood of young people saying that they had seen upsetting content on social media **increased with age** among our survey respondents.
- The types of upsetting content seen by young people on social media can be split into targeted abuse, such as cyberbullying, hate and harassment, and non-targeted upsetting content, such as depictions of violence, gore, self-harm and suicide.
- **Girls and young women** were more likely to have **seen or experienced targeted abuse on social media**, and **boys and young men** were more likely to have seen **non-targeted upsetting content**.

The research identified the damaging effect social media can have on young people's mental health, with most young people experiencing poorer mental health as a result of distressing content on social media.

- This can be experienced as a **result of vicarious trauma**, and/or as a result of **harassment and abuse** directed at the young person.
- The **anonymity of social media** was identified by young people as a key factor that increases the level of harassment and abuse online compared to offline.
- Mental health impacts may be further exacerbated by **disrupted sleep** associated with high social media use.

In some cases, harassment and abuse on social media can lead to low level violence and conflict, such as school fights.

- Almost **half of young people** surveyed were aware of **physical and/or verbal fights** that had happened following something on social media. In most of these cases, young people reported that the fights were **triggered by comments and messages on social media**
- The main mechanism by which social media leads to low-level violence such as school fights seems to be a **need to 'save face'**, which is exacerbated by the **wide reach and speed** of social media.

To address the potential harms caused by social media, options include **harm prevention**, such as banning social media use or banning content from platforms, **harm reduction**, such as increasing access restrictions on platforms, and **harm mitigation**, such as improving education and support for young people and the adults around them.

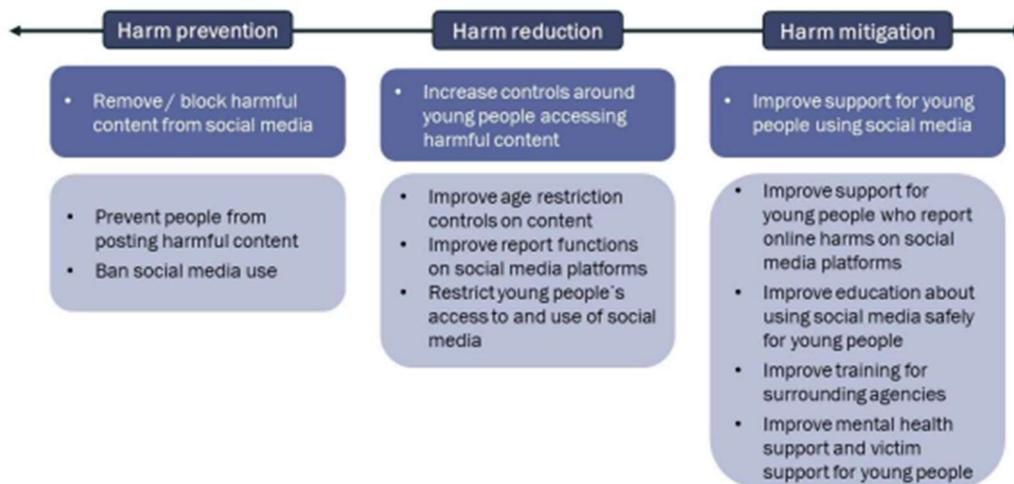


FIGURE 30 - THREE MAIN APPROACHES TO REDUCE HARM CAUSES BY SOCIAL MEDIA

It was recommended that the VRU focus on harm mitigation strategies; having extra education, training and support was the second most popular suggestion as to what would make social media safer for young people among our survey respondents, after adding extra restrictions into the social media platforms themselves. Specifically, it was recommended that West Yorkshire commissions further research and looks into education-based, trauma-informed interventions for young people, practitioners and parents and carers to increase safe use of social media and reduce vicarious online trauma and low-level violence.

Building the evidence base: ongoing research

Responding directly to the findings and recommendations of this previous research, we have commissioned research to support the identification and design of trauma informed education-based support to reduce the negative effects of social media on young people.

By co-producing this work with young people, we will be able to clearly define and establish the exact requirements of this intervention to ensure our work is as appropriate and targeted as possible. Furthermore, bringing parents, carers and practitioners into this coproduction work will allow us to explore further how and when these adults can respond and provide support and will ensure that this intervention builds trusting relationships between adults and young people.

The Metaverse

What is the Metaverse?

There is no single agreed definition of the metaverse. As it stands, it could be described as the convergence of physical, augmented, and virtual reality in a shared online space. It is a “virtual world” experience that simulates human emotions and gestures. In [simpler terms](#):

- The Metaverse is a virtual reality in which individuals can communicate and transact with each other and with digital 3D items.
- It relates to collaborative virtual worlds where currency can be used to buy and sell land, buildings, avatars, and even identities.
- Individuals can walk around with their friends, visit places, buy things, and attend events in such environments.
- Musicians, for example, can perform virtual gigs, and fashion companies can create virtual apparel for people’s avatars to wear in metaverse surroundings.
- It’s worth noting that Roblox, a popular children’s game, touts itself as a metaverse corporation. Fortnite is also considered to be an integral part of the metaverse.

Currently, it exists as a series of distinct virtual worlds and experiences. In the future, however, the metaverse could expand into an interconnected and limitless world where our digital and physical lives fully converge.

It will not be long until the Metaverse is deemed mainstream, with some predicting it to achieve this status within a few years and contemporary [research](#) suggesting that it may already be ‘mainstream’. With this in mind, it’s important we develop our understanding of the risks and threats that the metaverse already poses, and how we can expect these to escalate as it grows in popularity.

What risks does the Metaverse pose?

While the metaverse does have advantages and significant potential as it continues to grow, it’s important to acknowledge the harms associated with it.

[Research](#) undertaken by SumOfUs referenced instances of sexual violence and sexual harassment that occurs in popular Virtual Reality applications. One [researcher](#) reported their experiences of being verbally and sexually harassed (details of which are discussed in the linked blog post) within 60 seconds of logging on to ‘Horizon Worlds’ by a group of 3-4 male-appearing avatars. Looking through a psychological lens, there are clear consequences to this. [Katherine Cross](#), who researches online harassment at the University of Washington, explains that the intention of VR is to ultimately ‘trick’ the human nervous system into experiencing perceptual and bodily reactions within this different 3D space. Therefore, in a ‘virtual assault’, a person’s physical body might remain untouched, but the psychological, neurological and emotional experience can be very similar because the nervous system can’t tell the difference.

The [Center for Countering Digital Hate](#) undertook research which showed the magnitude of the influence “VR Chat” can have, which is the most reviewed social app in Facebook’s VR

Metaverse. They found that users, including minors, are exposed to abusive behaviour every seven minutes, such as:

- Minors being exposed to graphic sexual content.
- Bullying, sexual harassment and abuse of users, including minors.
- Minors being groomed to repeat racist slurs and extremist talking points
- Threats of violence.

We learnt from our own [research](#) that many young people experience poorer mental health as a result of distressing content on social media, such as harassment, abuse and vicarious trauma. It can be expected that these findings will also ring true for the metaverse, with the risk arguably heightened due to the increased perception of 'reality' that is associated with the metaverse. In addition to this, the overuse of digital technology is associated with many mental health issues, such as somatic symptoms (6%), depression (4%), psychoticism (0.5%), paranoid ideation (0.5%), and serious mental illness (2%).

A note on the Online Safety Bill

When discussing the harms associated with social media, it is important to acknowledge the potential impact of the Online Safety Bill, which could significantly impact on the online landscape and the experiences of children and young people.

The draft Bill is a set of new laws designed to protect against risks and harms online by holding tech platforms to account, with particular focus on the safeguarding of children and young people.

Platforms likely to be accessed by children will also have a duty to protect young people using their services from legal but harmful material such as self-harm or eating disorder content. Additionally, providers who publish or place pornographic content on their services will be required to prevent children from accessing that content. If a child does encounter harmful content or activity, the bill intends to make it easier for parents and children to report it easily and platforms will be required to take appropriate action in response.

The largest, highest-risk platforms will have to address named categories of legal but harmful material accessed by adults, likely to include issues such as abuse, harassment, or exposure to content encouraging self-harm or eating disorders. They will need to make clear in their terms and conditions what is and is not acceptable on their site and enforce this.

The Bill also includes 'cyber-flashing' as a new criminal offence, with perpetrators to face a maximum sentence of two years in prison. The practice typically involves offenders sending an unsolicited sexual image to people via social media or dating apps but can also be over data sharing services such as Bluetooth and Airdrop. In some instances, a preview of the photo can appear on a person's device – meaning that even if the transfer is rejected victims are forced into seeing the image. [Research](#) by Professor Jessica Ringrose from 2020 found that 76 percent of girls aged 12-18 had been sent unsolicited nude images of boys or men.

The Bill is still subject to further amendments and changes, with no date set for the Bill to receive Royal Assent.

Gambling

The UK has one of the biggest gambling markets in the world, generating a profit of £14.2 billion in 2020. In recent years, concern around the harms associated with gambling has been increasing in the UK. In response to these growing concerns, PHE conducted an [evidence review](#) of the health aspects of gambling-related harm, in order to inform action on prevention and treatment as part of a public health approach.

Prevalence of Gambling

Through their analysis using [2018 data](#), PHE estimated that 0.5% of the population reached the threshold to be considered problem gamblers, and this proportion has remained relatively consistent since 2012. [Gambling Commission data](#) found that in the year to September 2022, the in-person gambling participation rate (measured in the last four weeks) has significantly increased to 27%, as has the online gambling participation rate compared to a year to September 2021. 3.8% of the population are considered to be at risk gamblers, meaning they may experience some level of negative consequences due to their gambling. The highest rates of gambling participation are among those who are employed, have higher academic qualifications and are among relatively less deprived groups. The socio-demographic profile of a gambler appears to change as gambling risk increases, with harmful gambling associated with people who are unemployed and among people living in more deprived areas, which suggests a relationship between harmful gambling and health inequalities.

By combining and reviewing the data provided by the Health Survey for England (HSE) for the years 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2018, we are able to establish a broad picture of gambling in the region. Calderdale (70.7%) and Wakefield (70.2%) have the highest reported overall gambling participation rates in West Yorkshire.

As per the below table, which uses data from the HSE, the people who are classified as at-risk and problem gamblers are typically in the younger age groups, with those aged 16 – 24 holding the highest Problem Gambling Severity Index Score (PGSI).

TABLE 10 - PROBLEM GAMBLING ACCORDING TO PGSI BY AGE, ENGLAND 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018.

	Age Group							Total (%)
	16-24 (%)	25-34 (%)	35-44 (%)	45-54 (%)	55-64 (%)	65-74 (%)	75+ (%)	
Non-Problem (Including those not participating in any gambling activity) (score less than 1)	91.7	92.9	95.8	96.5	97.4	98.6	99.1	95.7
At-risk (score 1 to 7)	7.5	6.3	3.8	3.0	2.2	1.3	0.9	3.8
Problem gambler (score 8 or more)	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.3	-	-	0.4
Mean PGSI score	0.26	0.23	0.15	0.12	0.09	0.05	0.02	0.14
Base	3727	4547	4459	4726	3913	3186	2520	27078

In addition to this, a [large contemporary UK cohort study](#) was used to investigate gambling behaviour and to explore the antecedents of regular gambling in the 17-24 year age group. Through the administration of gambling surveys, the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children was able to reach 3566 at age 17 years, 3940 at 20 years, and 3841 at 24 years, with 1672 completing all three surveys. The study found that although more than half the sample of young people participated in gambling, most engaged in occasional activity with lottery or scratch cards, and there was little overall change in gambling behaviour between these ages, however one activity showing a large increase over this age range was online gambling and betting. Regular gamblers were predominantly males, who were increasingly gambling online, with clear associations with smoking cigarettes, alcohol consumption and high social media usage.

Looking at a lower age, the Gambling Commission's '[Young People and Gambling Survey](#)' for 2022 shows that 7% of 11-16 year olds in England and Scotland spent their own money on gambling activities in the seven days prior to taking part in the survey, which has been decreasing since 2011 (21%) and 31% of 11-16 year olds in England and Scotland had gambled in the last 12 months. In addition, 0.9% were identified to be problem gamblers and 2.4% were at risk gamblers (as defined by the DSM-IV-MR-J problem gambling screen). There is also evidence that indicates the prevalence of problem gambling in prison populations, despite not being permitted ([HMPPS, 2020](#)). A [2019 systematic review](#) of the prevalence of gambling disorder among prisoners illustrated that rates of problem gambling among prison inmates in the UK are between 12 and 24 times greater than those recorded in the general population. Research from the [Forward Trust](#) also found that a fifth of survey respondents (22%) had spent money or bet something they own on gambling whilst in prison in the last 12 months.

Harms associated with gambling

By undertaking a [comprehensive examination](#) of 53 studies in 2021, Public Health England were able to identify and establish some of the key harms associated with gambling. Some of these are covered below which correlate with other risk and protective factors for involvement in violence, in addition to a specific focus on the relationship between violence and gambling.

The below table, sourced from [PHE's evidence review](#), provides an estimation of the economic and social costs of gambling in England.

TABLE 11 - ESTIMATED EXCESS COST OF HARM ASSOCIATED WITH GAMBLING, BY TYPE OF HARM AND TYPE OF COST (£MILLIONS, 2019 TO 2020 PRICES)

Type of Harm			Central Estimates		
			Government Costs	Wider societal costs	All costs
Domain	Sub Domain	Cohort	Direct costs (£ Millions)	Intangible costs (£ Millions)	(£ Millions)
Financial	Statutory homelessness	Adults	62.8	N/A	62.8
Health	Total health harms		342.2	619.2	961.3
	Deaths from suicide	Adults	N/A	619.2	619.2
	Depression	Adults	335.5	N/A	335.5
	Alcohol dependence	Adults	4.7	N/A	2
	Illicit drug use	17 to 24 years	2	N/A	2
Employment and Education	Unemployment benefits	Adults	79.5	N/A	79.5
Criminal Activity	Imprisonment	Adults	162.5	N/A	162.5
Excess Cost (£ millions)			647	619.2	1,266.10

Violence and Crime

The relationship between problem gambling and criminal behaviour has been examined extensively. Research shows problem gambling is positively related to a range of criminal behaviours. ([Clark and Walker 2009](#), [Grinols 2017](#)). Studies have shown that problem gamblers had significantly higher odds of receiving violence charges than non-problem gamblers ([Laursen et al. 2016](#)). A study undertaken by the University of Lincoln found that gambling in any capacity (pathological, problem or casual gambler) related to significantly increased risk of violence. 53% of pathological gamblers, 44% of problem gamblers and 28% of casual gamblers reported some form of physical fight in the past five years, as opposed to 19% for non-gamblers. Furthermore, gambling was associated with an increased likelihood of weapons being used in acts of violence, with more than a quarter (28%) in the

pathological category, 18% of problem gamblers, and 7% of non-problem gamblers reporting weapon usage ([Roberts et al. 2016](#))

A recent review offers evidence that problem gamblers may commit violent crimes at a higher rate than expected, the prevalence of which may have been disguised by under-reporting of gambling-related crimes in other research. The causal relationship, however, between problem gambling and violent crime remains uncertain, and this is potentially something that could be explored further. ([Adolphe 2019](#)). Research has identified that financial hardship caused by gambling could lead to involvement in crimes, such as property crimes and to a lesser extent violent crime, such as assault. In terms of causality, it was suggested that problem gambling-related violent crime appears to result from the social pressure set by the financial trouble. For example, accusations of being a gambling addict could lead to physical violence, however these causal mechanisms would require testing further ([Lind, 2015](#)).

Gambling problems can also exacerbate incidences of intimate partner violence (IPV). Research suggests that gambling can reinforce the gendered drivers of violence, citing that where you already have rigid gender roles, men's control of decision-making, limits placed on women's independence, and men condoning violence towards women, then a gambling problem greatly intensifies the frequency and severity of IPV ([Hing et al. 2020](#)).

Other harms

Considerable evidence from the studies examined showed that gambling directly causes financial harms to gamblers and their close associates, particularly intimate partners. Gambling related debt is a crucial harm that can lead to other harms, such as relationship problems, physical and mental health problems and crime.

Several studies reported that gambling led to bankruptcy and housing problems, including homelessness. Gambling debts also result in harm for the gamblers' children, which can include them taking money from their children, or being unable to provide essentials such as clothing and food.

Problematic gambling causes relationship difficulties, which affect the gambler and close associates, including children. Examples of harms included arguments, relationship strain or domestic abuse. The impact of gambling on relationships ripples outwards, thus negatively impacting wider family and friendship networks. For example, this can include having to lie to families and friends.

Two quantitative studies reported that deaths from suicide were significantly higher among adults with gambling disorder or problems compared to the general adult population. ([Karlsson and Hakansson 2018](#), [Sundqvist and Rosendahl 2019](#)) Gambling was shown to come before and after suicide attempts, which may suggest evidence of a reciprocal relationship. The link between gambling, suicide and self-harm was supported in the qualitative studies examined by PHE, with a [treatment provider](#) stating "*We get very high suicide ideation with gambling. It's higher than alcohol and other drugs.*" (pg.55)

The qualitative studies they examined reported that gambling was the cause of emotional, psychological or health harms to adult gamblers or close associates. For gamblers, these include feelings of guilt, anxiety, stress, desperation and experiencing depression, which was often associated with financial difficulties. Close associates reported feelings of anxiety, depression and sleep problems.

On employment, research has shown gamblers to have lost jobs, were demoted, or resigned due to gambling. Gambling was also associated with loss of focus and concentration, showing up late or not turning up, showing up to work after no sleep and conflict with employers ([PHE, 2021](#)).

Violence Against Women and Girls

The term Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) incapsulates a wide range of abuses which disproportionately affect women and girls of all ages, abilities, sexualities and backgrounds. As a VRU, we recognise that anyone can be affected by violence and become victims and survivors, however the nature offences included in the [VAWG definition](#) disproportionately affects [women and girls](#).

Within West Yorkshire, women and girls represent over 50% of each district's population meaning West Yorkshire is home to over 1.2 million women and girls. In recognition of this, there have been recent advances to improve the safety and equality of women and girls in the region. As part of the first elected female Metro Mayor, Tracy Brabin's [policing and crime plan for 2021 – 2024](#), the safety of women and girls is at the heart and has led to the creation of a [separate strategy](#).

Women experience higher rates of domestic and sexual violence victimisation and are much more likely to be coerced and experience fear, than men. For the year ending March 2021, police crime data shows 82% of sexual grooming victims were women and girls, 81% of sexual activity with children younger than 16 was against girls; and 80% of victims of stalking, voyeurism and exposure were women ([HMICFRS, 2021](#)).

For the year ending March 2022, nationally, the police recorded 910,980 domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales. This is a 7.7% increase from the previous year. In the same period, the police made 31.3 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes down from 32.6 in the year ending March 2021 ([ONS, 2022](#)). This decrease in arrests mirrors the decrease in the number of referrals of suspects of domestic abuse-flagged cases from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a charging decision in England and Wales.

Of the 124 [Domestic homicide reviews \(DHRs\)](#), for the 12 months from October 2019, 80% of victims were female and 83% of perpetrators were male. DHR's are multi-agency reviews, commissioned by community safety partnerships, into the deaths of adults which may have resulted from violence, abuse, or neglect; by a person they were related to or had an intimate relationship with, or where they were a member of the same household.

June 2022 saw the commencement of the new criminal offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation as part of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This codifies that individuals cannot consent to serious harm and death. The introduction of the offences was campaigned for by [We Can't Consent to This](#) and the [Centre for Women's Justice](#) (CWJ), to support prosecutions and ensure accountability reflects the serious consequences and experience suffered by the victim. [CWJ](#) describes non-fatal strangulation as a common feature of domestic abuse to instil power and fear and is a well-known risk indicator. Strangulation commonly leaves minimal or no visible signs of injury. However, recent evidence suggests that the onset of symptoms is sometimes delayed by days or weeks. Harms can include stroke, cardiac arrest, miscarriage, incontinence, seizures, paralysis, speech disorders, and other forms of long-term brain injury ([Richard, Byrne, Saville & Coetzer, 2020](#)). Details of non-fatal strangulation offences are detailed in the Violence with Injury section of this document.

In the year ending March 2021, 33,954 reports of coercive and controlling behaviour were reported to the police, an increase of 36% from the previous year ([ONS, 2021](#)). Whilst increases are worrisome and require attention, the rise in coercive control reports may be partially attributed to inclusion of coercive control in the domestic abuse definition and improved police recognition.

Using domestic abuse data from 2016/17, [estimates suggest](#) the social and economic cost for victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales to be approximately £66 billion with the average unit cost of a domestic abuse victim is calculated at £34,015. Of the costs, the physical and emotional harm suffered by the victim's accounts for 71%, followed by the lost output relating to time lost at work and reduced productivity afterwards. We appreciate this is slightly dated but these estimates provide an understanding of the costs associated with domestic abuse.

Women experiencing domestic abuse are more likely to experience mental health problems. Whilst women with existing mental health problems are more likely to experience domestic abuse with 30-60% of women with a mental health problem having experienced domestic abuse ([Howard et al, 2010](#); [Mental Health Foundation, 2016](#)). A [recent publication](#) sets out how the national government will invest over £230 million to deliver many of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provisions to bring about a response from all parts of society, to overcome domestic abuse.

[Women's Aid \(2022\)](#) reported that 66% of domestic abuse survivors disclosed their abusers had used the cost-of-living crisis and financial hardship to increase their control and as a justification for them reducing access to finances. A [survey](#) conducted with female survivors of domestic abuse found that the cost-of-living crisis caused them financial worries with:

- 73.7% concerned about being able to pay their energy bills,
- 61.3% concerned about paying for food, and
- 53.3% concerned about paying for their rent or mortgage

Women are almost three times as likely to experience sexual assault, including attempts, than men. Despite only making up 5.7% of the population, girls aged 10 to 14 years

accounted for 24.1% of police recorded sexual offences where the victim was female ([ONS, 2021](#)).

Alongside physical violence and coercive control, VAWG includes hidden abuses such as [Female Genital Mutilation](#) (FGM), [Forced Marriage](#) and [Honour Based Abuse \(HBA\)](#). Between April and June 2022, there were 1,735 individual women and girls who had an attendance where FGM was identified, these accounted for 2,820 attendances reported at NHS trusts and GP practices where FGM was identified. Most attendances are in Midwifery and Obstetric services. During the period, the average age was 32 and there were 745 newly recorded women and girls.

In West Yorkshire, the female custody population is estimated to be 33 per 100,000 ([Prison Reform Trust, 2019](#)). Women in custody are more likely to self-harm than men, with women making up 22% of all self-harm incidents despite representing only 4% of the custody population. They are also more likely to present with complex needs ([Prison Reform Trust, 2022](#)). [HMIP \(2020\)](#) found that women were more likely to self-report mental and physical health needs, substance misuse and had experienced financial and housing worries. [The prison reform trust \(2022\)](#) went on to find that 50% of women in custody had suffered from domestic violence and 53% had experienced emotional, physical, or sexual abuse as a child.

Attitudes towards women

Misogyny, defined as a hatred, dislike, or mistrust of women, is prevalent throughout society. [Research](#) found that 93.7% of women had experienced street harassment with the most common behaviours experienced being whistling, leering, and sexually explicit language. Experiencing misogyny has long-term impacts on victims with many altering their future behaviour, for example avoiding the area or only going out with others as a consequence. Misogynistic attitudes are related to stereotypical views of gender roles and those who hold these are more tolerant of the impact of domestic abuse ([Women's Aid, 2022](#)).

Nationally there have been calls for “misogyny hate crime” to be recognised and to particularly focus on sexual harassment experienced by women and girls in public spaces and their feelings of unsafety. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire have both been supportive of misogyny becoming a hate crime, and as part of their commitment to reducing Violence Against Women and Girls. West Yorkshire Police, since December 2021, have started to record misogyny and misandry related crimes ([WYCA, 2021](#)). Many feel that recognising misogyny as a hate crime would reflect the seriousness of these crimes and the additional harm they cause to women, individually and as a group, and society more broadly. However, in February 2022, a proposal to include misogyny as a hate crime was rejected due to concern this would be counter-productive by making it more difficult to prosecute serious violent crimes against women.

Misogynistic attitudes are becoming increasingly prevalent online with the rise of social media and online forums. These attitudes are displayed by involuntary celibacy “incel” communities, the ideology of incel communities contributes to a sense of isolation resulting in increased frustration and jealousy of others ([Van Brunt & Taylor, 2021](#)). This sub-culture

is perpetuated by online anti-woman communities described as the “manosphere”, where incels exhibit extremely violent and hostile views towards women. Forums include the use of derogatory terms intended to dehumanise women as well as the creation of new slurs that portray women as less than human ([Brace, 2021](#)). A [study](#) by the Centre for Countering Digital Hate found that on a major incel forum a post about rape was published every 29 minutes.

Offline violence has been demonstrated by a small number of incels, the most publicised being the 2014 Isla Vista killings and the 2021 Plymouth Shooting, both of which were committed by perpetrators who had expressed misogynistic views online or specifically identified as an incel. The threat of incel-related offline violence needs to be better understood, and it has been [suggested](#) that only a small percentage of incels will turn to violence, but that the influence of the online communities incels is at risk of radicalising frustrated young men.

Incels on online forums who rated themselves as highly dangerous were also more likely to say the forum made them feel more violent, and those who rate themselves as highly misogynistic were more likely to say that the forum made them feel more misogynistic ([Speckhard et al, 2021](#)). This links to the potential negative impacts of social media, but also suggests that this is a space in which to implement interventions and practices to combat the misogynistic discourse taking place.

Building the evidence base: consultations

From February 2022, the VRU conducted focus groups and consultations with women and girls from Bradford, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield. We spoke with women from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities to address the gap in knowledge which was highlighted as part of the [VAWG Literature Review](#). Below is an overview of themes raised:

- Support required for women and girls to navigate through the criminal justice system and legal systems including support with orders (non-molestation, restraining for example).
- Culturally bespoke services are required due to a lack of knowledge around so called, honour-based abuse.
- Recommendation for the Home Office that any persons in the UK on a spousal visa who has perpetrated domestic abuse (or any other crime) should have their visa revoked.
- Recommendations for health and maternity services around promoting a secure and consistent approach to asking about domestic abuse; ensuring there are opportunities to provide the person with 1 to 1 care. Including increased training and confidence of staff to challenge partners or family members when necessary.
- Consistency across services regarding the use of neutral interpreters to ensure women’s views are appropriately and properly interpreted

- Promote and increase independence amongst women, including English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) classes and financial independence which would in turn allow for access to housing or other ways to flee
- Education on all forms of domestic abuse (not just physical) from a young age
- School environments were not deemed the most welcome environment for young women's safety messages
- Awareness raising and promotion of the services which exist in West Yorkshire
- Recommendations for police to promote privacy and confidentiality for victims and to interpret situations carefully when correct terminology may not be used, and for the police to use language sensitively as to not victim blame
- Awareness of professional bias (i.e., police reporting) and the confidence of professionals to confront and challenge unacceptable behaviour
- Awareness of the barriers for women who are deemed 'professionals' to access support services, and for other professionals or services not to assume 'they'll know what to do'.

Building the evidence base: ongoing research

The VRU has appointed an experienced partner to complete a detailed service mapping exercise for domestic abuse services in West Yorkshire. The exercise will include regional services and those in all five districts. It is important we obtain accurate and contemporary coverage of the domestic abuse services available within West Yorkshire. Through this exercise the VRU will also be able to better establish:

- What service provision is currently available for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse?
- Are there resources or services currently available to support practitioners in challenging domestic abuse behaviours?
- What are the current referral routes for domestic abuse services in West Yorkshire?
- To what extent do domestic abuse services in West Yorkshire deliver holistic and multiagency support?

Sexual violence

Estimates from the CSEW for the year ending March 2022 reported up to 2.7% of adults aged 16 to 59 years had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences). Since the last publication of this data (year ending March 2020), there has been no significant change (2.2%). Nationally, sexual offences recorded by the police were at the highest level recorded within a 12-month period (194,683 offences) in the year ending March 2022, a 32% increase from 2021.

The number of recorded sexual offences were lower during periods of lockdown but there have been substantial increases since April 2021. Of all sexual offences recorded by the

police in the year ending March 2022, 36% were rape offences, an increase of 26% from the previous year. In that same time period, charges were brought in just 1.1% (2,223) of rape cases ([CPS, 2022](#)). Other sexual offences increased by 35% compared with the year ending March 2021 ([ONS, 2022](#)).

Research conducted by the [University of Leeds](#) describe sexual assault as a traumatic experience which can leave lasting physical and psychological effects including the triggering or exacerbation of serious mental health and substance use issues. Almost two thirds of victims reported experiencing mental or emotional problems as a result according to CSEW data and 1 in 10 victims attempted suicide as a result ([Hughes et al, 2019](#)). Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was noted as the most common mental health sequelae in an Australian study as up to 50% of people who have experienced rape will experience PTSD at some point during their life ([Creamer et al., 2001](#)). Higher prevalence of depression, suicidality, and substance use problems also arise from sexual assault ([Kilpatrick et al., 1997](#)). Other psychological problems including relationship problems, low self-esteem, sexual problems, self-harm and emotional problems such as anxiety, guilt and shame are associated with sexual assault victimisation ([Hughes et al, 2019](#)).

The group, [We Can't Consent To This](#) (WCCTT), is a response to the increasing numbers of women and girls killed and injured in violence that is claimed to be consensual. As described by WCCTT, the increasing use of “rough sex” defences perpetuates a culture of normalisation of violence against women as there are at least 60 UK women killed and many more injured. [Research supported](#) by WCCTT estimates up to 2 million women in the UK have experienced unwanted “choking” or strangulation in then consensual sex, 3.5 million experiencing these and also slapping, spitting or gagging.

Spiking, defined as putting drugs or alcohol into a person’s drink without their knowledge or consent, itself is not a criminal offence, and can instead be prosecuted under the Sexual Offences Act and Offences Against the Person Act. We have included spiking within the sexual violence section of this SNA as there is evidence that sexual assault is a common motive behind incidents of spiking ([Home Office, 2022](#)). It is difficult to get a true picture of the prevalence of spiking across the UK but data from 15 police forces across the UK estimated that 3,625 spiking related incidents were reported between 2018 and 2021, rising 54% in these three years.

Police data ([Home Office, 2022](#)) shows the majority of spiking victims are females in their early 20s. Incidents of spiking can have long-term impacts on victims, including anxiety in drinking environments, being extra cautious when drinking, and taking more preventative measures against being spiked. Victim blaming is also frequently applied to incidents of spiking and as such people feel hesitant to report their experience on the belief that authorities will assume they are just drunk ([Venture, 2022](#)). A snap poll by the Alcohol Education Trust ([2021](#)) found that 92% of individuals who had had their drink spiked did not report it. Further research is required to understand the extent of spiking within West Yorkshire and the perception of spiking amongst young people.

West Yorkshire specific sexual violence data and analysis can be found further in this document.

Building the evidence base: ongoing research

To expand our understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence perpetrator programmes, we have commissioned a research partner to complete an evaluative review and service mapping exercise. This knowledge of best practice and available services will support the evidence-led delivery of perpetrator interventions by the VRU and partners in West Yorkshire. The project will:

- Summarise theory and evaluate best practice interventions for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence
- Suggest appropriate, feasible and cost-effective perpetrator interventions for potential delivery in West Yorkshire.
- Complete a service mapping exercise to identify and map existing perpetrator provision in West Yorkshire to ensure gaps or duplication in provision are known and understood.

Promising interventions and best practice

- i) Bystander intervention: Evaluation of the Good Night Out campaign: a sexual violence bystander training programme for nightlife workers in England ([Quigg et al., 2022](#)):
- An exploratory study evaluating the potential effectiveness of the Good Night Out Campaign, a sexual violence bystander programme for nightlife workers.
 - Sexual violence myth acceptance and readiness and confidence to intervene in sexual violence were measured at baseline and post-intervention.
 - Compared to pre-training, post-training participants were significantly ($p < 0.001$) less likely to agree with sexual violence myths, and more likely to be confident and ready to intervene in sexual violence or incidents of vulnerability. Effect sizes were small–medium.
 - Emergent evidence suggests that sexual violence bystander programmes may be promising in decreasing sexual violence myths and barriers to bystander intervention and increasing willingness to intervene amongst nightlife workers. Findings can support the emergence of sexual violence prevention activities implemented in nightlife spaces.
 - Further programme implementation and evaluation using experimental designs is needed to explore outcomes in greater depth, considering the complexity of the nightlife environment

ii) Altered not Defined

The Altered not Defined project seeks to engage journalists and PR experts in efforts to signpost victims to help and support, and to create communications which respect the trauma that victims of sexual offences are likely to experience due to the crimes committed against them. There are two sets of guidance, developed by Victoria Coe and Dominique Martin, one aimed at [journalists](#) and another at [public sector communications](#) professionals.

The project commissioned by [Devon and Cornwall's PCC](#) supports public sector organisations to develop and deliver communications and campaigns that make a genuine and positive difference to the lives of individuals who have experienced sexual offences. For example, using language which affords dignity to those who have experienced sexual harm and giving a voice to those who may not be heard.

Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA)

Estimates indicate that globally between 5% and 21% of families will experience child to parent violence (CPV), depending on how CPV is operationalised ([Simmons et al., 2018](#)). Due to underreporting, there are difficulties in asserting the prevalence of and measuring CAPVA using police data. Of the CAPVA victims identified in the CSEW, 40% did not report the offence to the police ([London VRU, 2022](#)).

There is a limited evidence base exploring CAPVA offender characteristics, including learning difficulties ([Nowakowski & Mattern, 2014](#)). ADHD has been identified through current research as the most common diagnosis in CAPVA offender populations ([Contreros and Cano, 2015](#)). CAPVA can be referred to as a reaction to discipline administered by a parent with violence ([Gershof, 2016](#)).

Holt (2011) suggests that child to parent abuse constitutes a 'double stigma' as it combines the stigma of being a victim of domestic/family violence with the stigma of being the parent of a 'difficult' or 'troublesome' child. This can mean parents are reluctant to disclose their experiences of child to parent abuse due to accompanying shame. Alongside this, fear of retribution, wider consequences and being disbelieved have been attributed to disclosure reluctance.

As summarised in [Holt \(2022\)](#) mothers and female carers appear to be much more likely to be targeted than fathers or male carers, at a ratio of approximately 8:2 ([Simmons et al., 2018](#)). Mothers are also more likely to be fearful of their child following a violent incident ([Boxall and Sabol, 2021](#)). The gender of a child may have varying effects, whereby 81% of reported incidents to the Metropolitan Police Service involved sons and CSEW found that sons instigated 71 per cent of the incidents ([Brennan et al., 2022](#)).

Nonetheless, it has been found that daughters are as likely as sons to disclose violence towards their parents. It can be inferred that sons are more likely to be reported to the police girls are more likely to engage in psychological and verbal abuse, with boys more likely to engage in physical violence ([O'Toole, 2022](#); [Holt and Lewis, 2021](#)).).

Stalking and harassment

The number of stalking and harassment reports are likely to be underestimates, as on average victim will suffer 100 incidents before they report it to the police ([College of Policing, 2021](#)). Consequently, there are disparities between official and self-reported statistics. Limited understanding of what constitutes stalking and intrusive behaviours alongside what is acceptable can distort a victim's perception of seriousness and can be attributed to underreporting ([Sheridan et al, 2019](#)). Female victims will often not report their stalking or harassment experiences unless they thought it could escalate into physical abuse ([Haslop, 2021](#)).

Online spaces are new venues for stalking and harassment behaviours. These online behaviours can be considered as a relational or indirect form of aggression, which has been associated with females ([Barlett, 2014](#)). However, female perpetration is often deemed less threatening by male victims, therefore does not receive the equitable attention or scrutiny ([Brooks, 2021](#); [Logan 2020](#)). Individuals' personal characteristics including psychopathological factors are associated with cyberbullying. Namely, for young female cyberbullies, [Balta et al \(2020\)](#) associates body image dissatisfaction and depression with their perpetration. For victims, the specific characteristics of online activity, such as the far reach and permanency of statements and images, can often facilitate and exacerbate online harassment and its adverse effects.

Studies which have examined those charged with stalking demonstrate that up to 56% of stalking offenders go on to reoffend ([Eke and Hilton, 2011](#); [Rosenfield, 2003](#)). A link between unchecked stalking and harassment behaviours and escalation to sexual assault and domestic homicides was also noted by these studies. Similar findings were evident in [Monckton-Smith et al \(2017\)](#) as the study revealed stalking behaviour was an antecedent in 94% of female homicide cases.

West Yorkshire specific stalking and harassment data and analysis can be found further in this document.

Building the evidence base: ongoing research

The [Secure Societies Institute](#), at the University of Huddersfield, have been awarded a grant from [the Economic and Social Research Council](#) program 'Partner with the police to tackle violence against women' to carry out a research project entitled '[Ten years on: stalking in Kirklees, policing and support for victims](#)'. The VRU have committed resources to this project and will be directly involved throughout.

Stalking offences were introduced into law in England and Wales [10 years ago in 2012](#), and there has been [a large increase in reports of stalking across West Yorkshire](#) in the last two years, including in the Kirklees district, but convictions for stalking offences are low. There is no recent research on stalking in West Yorkshire nor any specialist support provision for victims.

Developed with a range of partners who will continue to be involved throughout the project, one of which is the VRU and West Yorkshire Police, the project will bring the issue of stalking from the margins to the centre in policy and practice addressing violence against women and girls in Kirklees by:

- Setting up a new stalking knowledge and research hub linked to the Secure Societies Institute.
- Reviewing police data on stalking and investigative decision making in stalking.
- Identify current support for victims of stalking and reviewing best practice for stalking victims/survivors.
- Consulting women who have been victims of stalking about their experiences of support and get their views on improving support.
- Producing a model for a stalking support provision, produced with victims of stalking, their advocates, domestic and sexual abuse services, women's and girls' services and other organisations.

Practice and academic learning from the project will be shared across West Yorkshire and beyond the hub. The project will establish a clearer picture of stalking in Kirklees, including how West Yorkshire Police are currently policing stalking and gaps in support for survivors. This will help them get the protection and support they need, as early as possible to ensure their safety and reduce trauma.

Community Voice

Community engagement events have been organised by the VRU over the course of the year, alongside community meetings, community advisory groups (CAG) and consultation events. We have used these forums, in addition to several surveys, as opportunities to capture local insight and understand key thematic areas ensuring our ambitions remain grounded with the needs of the community.

Causes and risk factor consultation

Over the past quarter, the Knowledge Hub and the VRU's Engagement Lead have consulted with various groups and organisations to develop a community-based understanding of causes, risk factors and barriers of serious violence. The conversations were structured around three questions and we have summarised the responses.

Several causes emerged from these questions. Answers, where possible, have been grouped into appropriate themes and under each theme a series of shortened answers have been included. Please note, this list is not exhaustive.

Question 1: As an organisation, what are your communities saying are the causes of violence and what effect do those causes have on their community?

Inequality (structural and societal)

discrimination
'cost of living crisis'
poverty
fast cash for families
employment opportunities
racism
stigma
deprivation

Substance Use

holistic support needed
prevalence of alcohol
alcohol
wider needs
inability to recover
drugs
illegality of drugs
not fit for purpose
unaddressed trauma
legality of alcohol
organised crime

Lack of youth provision

alternatives to education
youth mentoring
peer pressure
not enough options
limited youth offer
lack of positive choices
make own entertainment
lack of role models
low aspirations
lack of belonging
boredom
transport

Mental health

adverse experiences
low aspirations
no sense of belonging
disempowerment
vulnerability
lack of self-worth
no role models
long waiting lists
unaddressed trauma
negative mindset
identity

Family experiences and dynamics

parenting approach
family breakdown
situational violence
cultural beliefs
violence in the home
adverse experiences
intergenerational trauma
relationship breakdown
parental support needed
young parents
lack of love
instability
immaturity
neglect

Safe spaces and safe people (Community level)

run down areas
collective conversations
fall into habits
no positive role models
accustomed to violence
fear to speak out
safer community spaces
no community hubs
views of young people
community diversity
location disparities
community alliances
disconnect from police
anti-social behaviour

Existing services and funding

no deterrents
start-stop
short term funding
no exit strategies
lack of coordination
'putting a plaster on'
unsustainable
need youth workers

Social Media

accessible 24/7
national issues
power and influence
manipulated online
justification of actions
inappropriate content
support for parents
normalisation of violence
exposure at young age
no online safety training

Question 2: What do you think should be done locally to tackle violence?

Community level

use local champions
 have collective conversat
 empower communities
 base on community demand
 localised approach sense of community
 not a one size approach co-production
 neighbourhood space need safe spaces
 community alliances
 upskilling and training
 build on relationships

Education

relationships matter
 parents and carers focus
 wrap around support
 transparent and accepting
 safe spaces standardisation needs focused
 consistency signs and links
 revise curriculum not just school-based
 training and awareness
 open conversations

Youth Work

vocational opportunities
 improve aspirations give validation
 best interest
 upskilling young people raise self confidence
 safe engagement spaces
 active engagement self-control training
 role models
 make own change
 lived experience raise self awareness
 improve expectations
 develop practical skills

Specialist support

working with perpetrators
 being trauma-informed
 get upstream younger age
 use restorative justice
 pre-birth support
 more pre-charge support
 whole family approaches
 accountability address trauma
 targeted work
 more early intervention

Improve connectivity

- Communication and resources

share best practice
 direct people to services
 information sharing high hitting
 quality communications
 use counter narratives
 support for 3rd sector positivity
 reinforce messages share social value
 police supported campaign
 use data more effectively

- Services and commissioning

improve coordination
 joint commissioning early conversations
 connect services
 professional arrogance flexibility
 strategic thinking funding awareness
 respond locally
 audit good practice
 multi-agency prevention

What might be the barriers and challenges to your suggested approaches?

“Can’t just throw money at a problem – it needs commitment, time, effective leadership”

Current approaches

shortage of workers
gaps in service provision
hesitancy to be creative
too reactive no safe spaces
unaddressed trauma
age restrictions
lack of opportunities
resolving aggression

Services and commissioning

capacity and headspace
duplicated efforts
bureaucracy
lack of holistic approach
one off opportunities
service availability
short term funding cycles
unconnected provision
focus on quick wins
detached services
limited communication
information sharing

gatekeeping
competition
tick boxes

Trust and relationships

parental involvement
limited relationships
professional bias
no community
distrust of police
peer pressure
community trust
community perceptions
denial of services
no sense of belonging

hostility

Systemic barriers

running costs
social work depletion
education curriculum
previous austerity
cost of living
funding conditions

strategic need
time constraints
politics

Whole family approach

no support for parents
family dynamics
intergenerational
exposure to criminality

Uncertainty

limited consistency
impacts trust
not sustainable
fear of the system
unable to access support
information sharing
one off opportunities

no continuity
not relatable
lack of trust

Youth Justice Service Engagement

The VRU had the opportunity to consult with young people within the Calderdale Youth Justice Service, who were able to provide invaluable insights into the causes, effects and prevention of violence.

What do you think causes violence?

- It was mentioned that violence doesn't occur as much in 'posh' areas, with poverty and unemployment given as causal reasons.
- Bad support was discussed, with wait times for CAMHS considered too long. The impact of social media was also raised. Snapchat, amongst other apps, are used to talk about and show off content around their illegal activity and financial gains.
- Aspirations for wealth and moving up the food chain were also reasons provided, in addition to some people being easily influenced.

What do you think could prevent violence?

- Training for young people was suggested, specifically around boxing and the need for projects to provide travel and equipment to reduce barriers to attendance. Rugby and other contact sports can release aggression and sports can teach a lot of discipline.
- Using lived experience was thought to be a good approach.
- Obtaining diagnosis and the ECHP process is currently too long.
- Girls' groups for drug abuse or violence and resilience groups to increase confidence and self-esteem.
- Young people learn better from other young people.

What would you change?

- More support and education around finances for care leavers.
- Cannabis use for young people with neurodiverse conditions.
- Everyone is different, so there should be tailored support for different services.

Your Views survey

Our colleagues in the West Yorkshire Policing and Crime team, have kindly provided a summary of their first Your Views survey of 2022. For this SNA, we have only included responses which align with the VRU's ambitions and priorities, the full results are held by the Policing and Crime team.

Results are based on the online survey method which was trialled in 2021. This wave of research achieved 2,757 responses during July (6.7% fewer than 2021's survey).

In summary, this wave of research has recorded a lower degree of satisfaction with policing and neighbourhood safety amongst residents than we have been accustomed to seeing through Your Views surveys. With the survey now online, having an understanding who takes the survey becomes part of understanding the results.

Comparing results between the 2021 and 2022 surveys, the proportion of respondents who live in wards which are most affected by crime increased this year, from 19.2% of respondents in 2021, to 27.3% in 2022. These respondents are more inclined to give negative responses on local crime and safety issues and this is seen in the results described in this report.

Although findings denote changes in the results between 2021 and this year's survey, it is advised not to place too much emphasis on these differences because of this change in the composition of the sample of respondents replying to each years' survey. The infographic below provides a summary of some findings from the latest iteration of the survey.

Your Views 2022 - Summary

How safe do you feel in your local area?

- 68.5% felt 'safe or very safe' in their neighbourhood, down from 76.3% in our 2021 survey.
- This scoring may have been influenced by the increased number of responses received from areas impacted by high levels of crime.

Do you think there is a problem in your local area with?

- There was a notable fall in respondents identifying issues with drugs (54.6%).
- ASB (60.7%) and Hate Crime (9%) remained at a similar level to last year.
- 19.7% were concerned for the safety of women and girls in their local areas and 19.0% recorded concerns about harassment or intimidation.

What is the key community safety issue that concerns you most in your local area?

- The three leading concerns for residents were dangerous driving (29.8%), the lack of visible police presence (14.9%), and ASB (11.7%).
- Only 4% of respondents were concerned about burglary this year, compared to 9% last year.

How good a job do you think the police are doing in your local area?

- 63.6% recorded some satisfaction with the work of the police (23.4% describing it as 'good or excellent'), compared to 77.9% in 2021
- People who were dissatisfied with the job the police were doing in their neighbourhoods raised concerns about ASB, drugs, and dangerous driving.

How satisfied are you with the level of police presence in your local community?

- 60.8% of respondents recorded that they were dissatisfied with the degree of police presence within their neighbourhood.
- The survey found a link between people's sense of safety in their local area and their satisfaction with the police presence.

ASB & Drugs

- Amongst those who were concerned about ASB, 82.2% cited anti-social vehicle use as an aspect of ASB that troubled them, 66.2% cited youth nuisance, 48.8% cited vandalism and damage, and 43.0% cited problem parking.
- Amongst those who were concerned about drugs, 76.0% were concerned about drug use, 70.2% were concerned about drug dealing, and 13.8% were concerned about drugs gangs.

Police Effectiveness

- 58.9% of respondents felt that their local police would treat them fairly with 71.7% reporting they would treat them with respect. Both of these have fallen since 2021.
- 26.8% of respondents felt that the police would tackle the problems that matter to them (a drop from 36.7% in 2021).

Victims of Crime

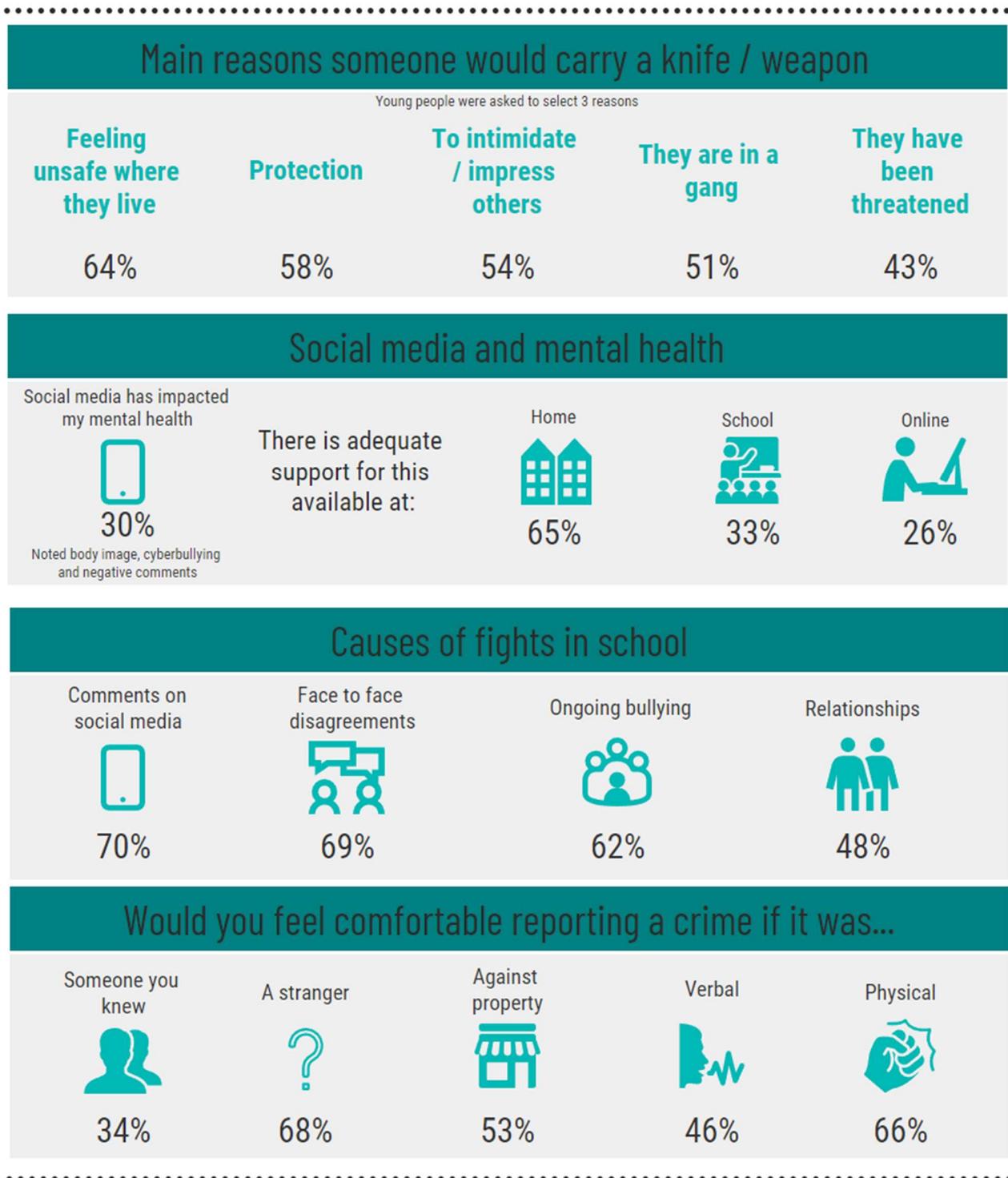
- 14.8% of respondents described themselves as being victims of crime during the past year.
- These were primarily victims of ASB, followed by victims of a crime against their household, and then a personal crime.

Demographic Groups

- 60.9% of Black/minority group members described themselves as feeling safe in their neighbourhood, compared to 74.2% of White respondents.
- Satisfaction with local policing was lower amongst Black/minority ethnic groups (59.0% compared to 72.9% amongst White groups).

Schools survey

As a Knowledge Hub, we produce an annual VRU School Survey to ensure we continually refresh and build our knowledge of young people's perceptions on various important topics, including community safety, available support, violence and social media. The latest iteration of the VRU Schools Survey, which closed in November 2022, received just over 850 responses and we have produced an infographic to highlight some of the key findings.



We are also able to draw on findings from other surveys across the region to attain valuable insight from children and young people. Calderdale's electronic Health Needs Assessment pupil survey offers insight on health, happiness and safety from primary and secondary school students. Some notable findings from their 2022 survey include:

- 55% of primary school students don't feel safe online "all the time" and 56% of secondary school students don't always feel safe online, which is an increase (10% and 8% respectively), from the 2019 survey. The higher percentage of responses to these questions came from females.
- Of those secondary school students involved in sexting (14%), 53% received images without asking. 26% did not know whether sexting was illegal.
- 15% of primary school students and 41% of secondary students have drunk alcohol (more than a few sips).
- 23% of secondary school students have smoked a cigarette or e-cigarette, with the majority (65%) having smoked e-cigarettes and 34% had smoked both.
- When asked about wellbeing, 22% of primary school students and 32% secondary students have low satisfaction with their appearance, with females more likely to have low satisfaction, which aligns with our own survey findings.

Wakefield Council's School Health Survey 2022, which reached pupils across Year 5, Year 7 and Year 9, provides further detail about their health behaviours and lifestyle choices of these children and young people. Some of the headline findings include:

- 30% of Year 7s and 34% of Year 9s haven't done any type of gambling in the last year.
- Respondents from every year group surveyed are more worried about the way they look when compared to the 2020 survey.
- The percentage of pupils feeling lonely some or all of the time increased with age (53% in Year 5, 54% in Year 7 and 57% in Year 9)

Bradford Safe Task Force's community voice survey (2022) provides further insights from parents and carers to help identify what factors are most affecting young people within each school community. They found that ASB, followed by verbal abuse and issues caused by social media were the serious issues that most affect young people in their community. When asked what their community needs in order to be a safe place for all, the overwhelming response was increased police presence, followed then by more opportunities for young people and activities/clubs for them to get involved in within the community.

Having a good education, good mental health and having positive role models were identified as the top three things young people need in order to have a good life. The survey also asked what stops young people in Bradford achieving what they want to achieve, with the areas identified as having the most influence being a lack of positive role models, lack of aspiration, lack of opportunities and behaviour issues.

Children, violence and vulnerability

Combining a survey of 2,025 children and young people with a review of national statistics, the [Children, violence and vulnerability report](#) explores the ways in which violence – and fear of violence – is shaping children’s lives. A summary of their survey findings can be viewed below.

What children told us: a summary of our survey findings

Real-world experiences of violence

A minority of teenage children have experienced violence, but some groups are significantly overrepresented

Based on the definition of violence we’ve set out above, which includes sexual violence, 14% of children have been victims in the past 12 months. 39% were either a victim or witness.

Children who were supported by a social worker (60%), regularly missing classes (55%), receiving free school meals (46%), or not from a two-parent household (42%), were more likely to have been a victim or witness compared to children who weren’t from one of these backgrounds (31%).

19% of those who answered the question said they’d committed an act of violence, based on the broad definition set out above including sexual violence, in the last 12 months.

2% reported being a member of a gang and 2% said they’d carried a weapon.

Violence online

More than half of children have seen violence online

55% had seen real-life acts of violence on social media in the last 12 months, increasing to three in four for witnesses of violence and 85% for victims of violence.

The most common violence seen online was fighting (44%) and threats of physical assault (33%). A small but worrying proportion (13%) had seen sexual assaults.

Perceptions and drivers of violence

Children felt less safe in places without adult supervision

66% thought gangs² were a major factor in driving teenage violence – 79% for those living in London. Two thirds also identified drug use.

Over 90% felt safe at home or at friends’ houses and 83% felt safe at school. Children felt less safe in places where there’s less adult supervision including parks (43%) and in the streets (45%). They felt significantly less safe near pubs and nightclubs (18%).

To address violence, 26% said they wanted to see more police. 15% wanted more activities for young people.

Impact on behaviours

A majority of children changed their behaviour out of a fear of violence

65% had changed their behaviour, appearance or where they go due to fears of violence.

14% had been absent from school in the last 12 months because they felt they would be unsafe. 14% also said they struggled to concentrate.

18% changed their appearance, increasing to 43% for victims, 30% for children living in London, and more than one in four for children receiving free school meals.³

Our next steps

Future directions for research

- To further understand the vulnerability and risk associated with **young carers**.
 - To what extent are they at a heightened risk of exploitation or perpetration?
 - What does the West Yorkshire picture of young carers look like and the reasons behind their situations?
 - What are the realities for young carers?
 - To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic have on prevalence and what about the current cost of living crisis?
- Expand our understanding of **Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse**.
 - What forms does this take?
 - What does the evidence base look like?
 - What is the scale of CAPVA in West Yorkshire?
 - Are there promising interventions or services showcasing best practice?
- To explore **Care Leaver's** experiences of violence & exploitation, and to understand the risk and protective factors associated with this
 - How, and to what extent, do young people experience care after leaving care?
 - What risk and protective factors to violence are associated with transitioning out of care?
 - What support is available to care leavers to mitigate the risk of experiencing violence, and what is best practice going forward?
- To increase our knowledge of the targeted support available to children and young people at risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence
- To assess feasibility and effectiveness of evidence-based interventions for **employment and vocational opportunities** for young people.
 - A resource supporting awareness of services (career service/website directory with requirements).
 - Building an evidence base (moving beyond anecdotal).
- To understand the extent and implications of **football or sporting violence** for serious violence offences.
 - Is there a link between sporting violence and serious violence offences?
- Work with partners who are subject matter experts, such as the ESRC Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre, to understand the role **Organised Crime** plays in serious violence perpetration or victimisation.
- To support the VAWG agenda, further exploration of **sexual violence and exploitation** is required for West Yorkshire.
- To complete a scoping exercise to understand the risks of the metaverse and explore the potential of using the **Metaverse**, an emergent aspect of social media, to support protective factors.

- To understand the changing reasons for **school exclusions** with physical assault being more commonly cited. The 'other' category has been removed which may have contributed to this, but further examination should be considered.
- To deepen our understanding of **risk**, escalation risk, catalysis factors.
 - Are some factors catalysts for others?
 - Are some risk factors consequential?
 - Which risk factors are causal / in which combinations?
- To expand our understanding **deprivation** as a risk factor.
 - To develop an engagement piece to consult with partners and understand what research is needed.
- To utilise the recommendations made in our commissioned to support future research and delivery (**housing, neurodiversity/SEN, drugs and alcohol, social media and whole family approach**).
 - Use the findings to deliver tangible products
 - Develop pilots and interventions from the findings
- Community **perceptions of violence**, moving beyond professional understanding and bias to get a more realistic understanding.
 - To understand reporting structures, barriers to reporting and such.
 - To compliment the place-based microanalysis.
- To explore young people's perception of **cost-of-living crisis**.
 - What does it mean for them long-term and does this influence their plans.
 - An understanding of how current **employment and vocational opportunity** routes may be impacted (requirements for jobs, cancelling misunderstanding).
- Work with the Leaders Unlocked to understand the **gaps in youth provision**, what would young people want/benefit from, equally what would they not want.
- To explore young people's perception of **spiking** and the value of anti-spiking merchandise

Violent Crime

Overview

In West Yorkshire over the year October 2021 to September 2022, overall violent crime increased by 16% compared with the previous 12 months. The impact of COVID-19 restrictions on recorded crime can still be seen for some offence types. Most serious violence has remained at similar levels to the previous year.

TABLE 12 - VIOLENT CRIME IN WEST YORKSHIRE SHOWN BY OFFENCE CATEGORY

Offence Category	2020/21	2021/22	Increase	
Arson	1,490	1,586	96	6%
Homicide	24	27	3	13%
Other sexual offences	5,017	5,809	792	16%
Possession of weapons	2,218	2,724	506	23%
Rape	3,335	3,680	345	10%
Robbery	2,296	2,873	577	25%
Violence with injury	24,898	29,432	4,534	18%
Violence without injury	88,968	102,146	13,178	15%
Grand Total	165,399	192,481	27,082	16%

Some offences such as possession of weapons and robbery have seen more significant changes year on year which are likely to reflect a true increase. When excluding non-recent (historic) offences - those reported more than a year after they occurred, there are notable changes such as the reduction in homicide and an increase in other sexual offences. In the same period, knife crime has increased by 5% and gun crime by 10%.

TABLE 13 - RECENT ONLY VIOLENT CRIME IN WEST YORKSHIRE SHOWN BY OFFENCE CATEGORY

Offence Category (recent only)	2020/21	2021/22	Increase	
Arson	1,486	1,582	96	6%
Homicide	24	26	2	8%
Other sexual offences	3,864	4,693	829	21%
Possession of weapons	2,193	2,704	511	23%
Rape	1,947	2,273	326	17%
Robbery	2,281	2,870	589	26%
Violence with injury	23,888	28,368	4,480	19%
Violence without injury	83,662	96,089	12,427	15%
Grand Total	156,146	182,362	26,216	17%

Violence with injury is at lower levels than it was prior to the pandemic, showing a 12% decrease. **Violence without injury is higher** with an increase of 20%, this increase may partially be attributed to changes in recording and reporting practices. It is, however, difficult to say how much is process related and how much represents a real increase in violent behaviour.

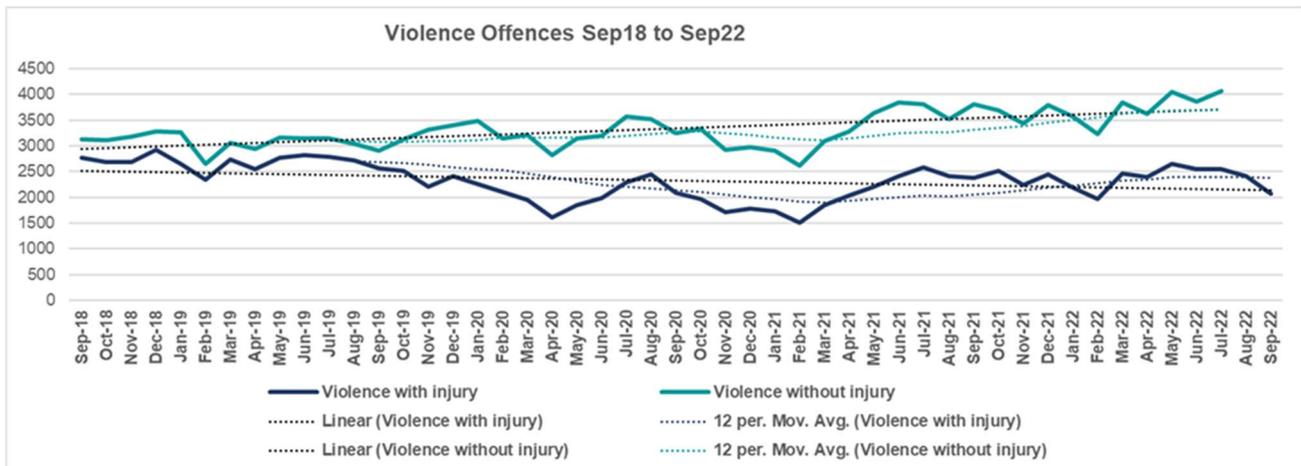


FIGURE 31 - VIOLENCE OFFENCES IN WEST YORKSHIRE FROM SEPTEMBER 2018 - SEPTEMBER 2022

Violence with Injury

Not all offences are equal in terms of harm to victims so counting crime numbers does not always reflect the true scale and nature of the harm caused. In response to this, the Office for National Statistics developed the [Crime Severity Score](#) (CSS) which is intended to complement police recorded crime data. By using the CSS allocated to an offence it can provide a more accurate picture of the scale of harm and the severity of violent crime.

Except for Assault with intent to cause serious harm and Assault with injury on emergency workers, all violence with injury offence numbers increased in the last year.

TABLE 14 - VIOLENCE WITH INJURY OFFENCES IN WEST YORKSHIRE WITH CSS SCORE

Violence with Injury	2020/21		2021/22		+/- offences	
	Offences	Total CSS	Offences	Total CSS		
Attempted murder	30	139,884	43	200,500	13	43%
Causing death or injury by driving offences	39	40,123	49	51,657	10	26%
Assault with intent to cause serious harm	1,817	3,571,019	1,794	3,525,816	-23	-1%
Endangering life	60	79,549	137	181,638	77	128%
Assault with injury	21,243	3,910,724	25,626	4,717,611	4383	21%
Racially or religiously aggravated assault with injury	181	51,662	220	62,793	39	22%
Assault with injury on emergency workers	518	176,048	499	174,425	-19	-4%
Grand Total	23,888	7,969,009	28,368	8,914,440	4480	19%

There has been a marked increase in the number of 'Endangering life' offences this year—this was largely made up from the number of spiking offences reported. 'Non-fatal

strangulation' offences are also included as this came into force on 7th June 2022. There were 14 of these offences recorded between June and September. All except one are domestic related and have female victims; the majority involve partners or ex-partners.

Most Serious Violence

Most serious violence (MSV) includes homicide, attempted murder, and assault with intent to cause serious harm. Levels of MSV overall have remained at similar levels to the previous year. The majority of MSV was made up of assault with intent to cause serious harm offences (S18 wounding), which accounts for 97% of all MSV across both years albeit, numbers have reduced slightly on last year.

TABLE 15 - MOST SERIOUS VIOLENCE OFFENCES

Most Serious Violence	2020/21	2021/22	Difference	
Homicide	22	26	4	18%
Attempted Murder	30	43	13	43%
Assault with intent to cause harm	1817	1794	-23	-1%
Total	1869	1863	-6	0%

Homicide

Although homicide offences have shown an 18% increase on last year, the small numbers of crimes have a large impact on percentage change.

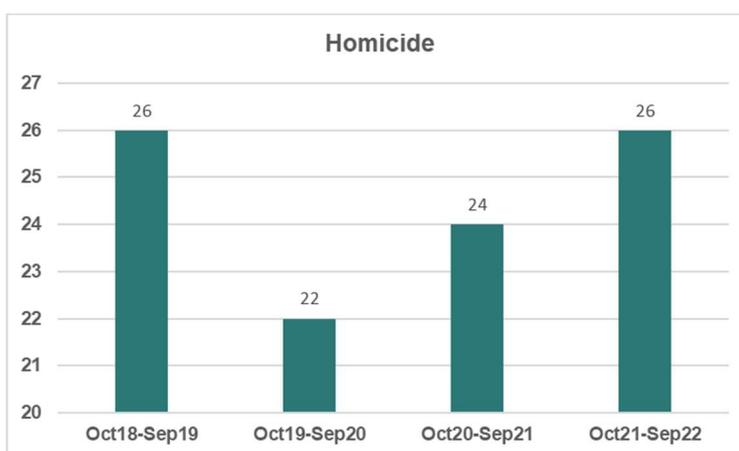


FIGURE 32 - HOMICIDE OFFENCES IN WEST YORKSHIRE FROM 2018 TO 2022

Homicide offences

In the 12 months ending September 2022, there were 26 homicides in West Yorkshire; 92% were murders. 42% of the offences were domestic related homicides and 27% involved the use of a knife or bladed instrument.

Most homicides involving a knife or bladed instrument were non-domestic (86%). Most homicide offences occurred in Leeds and Bradford in the last 12 months.

Victims and Offenders of Homicide

Homicide victims were male and female in equal number; however, 77% of female victims died as a result of domestic homicide whereas 92% of male victims died as a result of non-domestic homicide.

96% of homicide perpetrators identified were male, and 50% self-defined as White ethnicity. The remaining 50% self-defined as Asian and Mixed ethnicities.

Over half homicide perpetrators were reported as being unemployed. Further research is required to understand the recording of offender employment to further our understanding of the root causes of violence.

For homicide offences involving a knife or bladed instrument, over half the identified offenders were under 25 (62%) and half the victims in these crimes were in the same age group.

Grievous Bodily Harm

Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) also referred to as section 18 assault were slightly lower in number this year than for the same period last year. The reduction was entirely in domestic related offending which was 12% lower; whilst non domestic assaults increased by 2%. It is well documented that domestic offending increased during periods of lockdown and social contact restrictions and many family working routines changed as a result of the pandemic, with some people likely to work from home

TABLE 16 - SECTION 18 OFFENCES IN WEST YORKSHIRE

Section 18 Wounding	2020/21	2021/22	Difference	Total
Non domestic	1360	1391	31	2751
Domestic	457	402	-55	859
Total	1817	1793	-24	3610

The following table provides a breakdown of S18 offences by district, it is of interest that whilst 9% of the West Yorkshire population live in Calderdale, they account for 15% of the section 18 wounding offences, conversely 35% of the population reside in Leeds where there are 25% of the wounding offences.

TABLE 17 - BREAKDOWN OF SECTION 18 OFFENCES BY DISTRICT

Section 18 Wounding	Total	Percentage of which were domestic
Bradford	383	27%
Calderdale	186	15%
Kirklees	264	19%
Leeds	652	25%
Wakefield	238	20%
Unknown location	71	15%
Total	1794	22%

The following map shows the hotspot location of S18 offences in West Yorkshire.

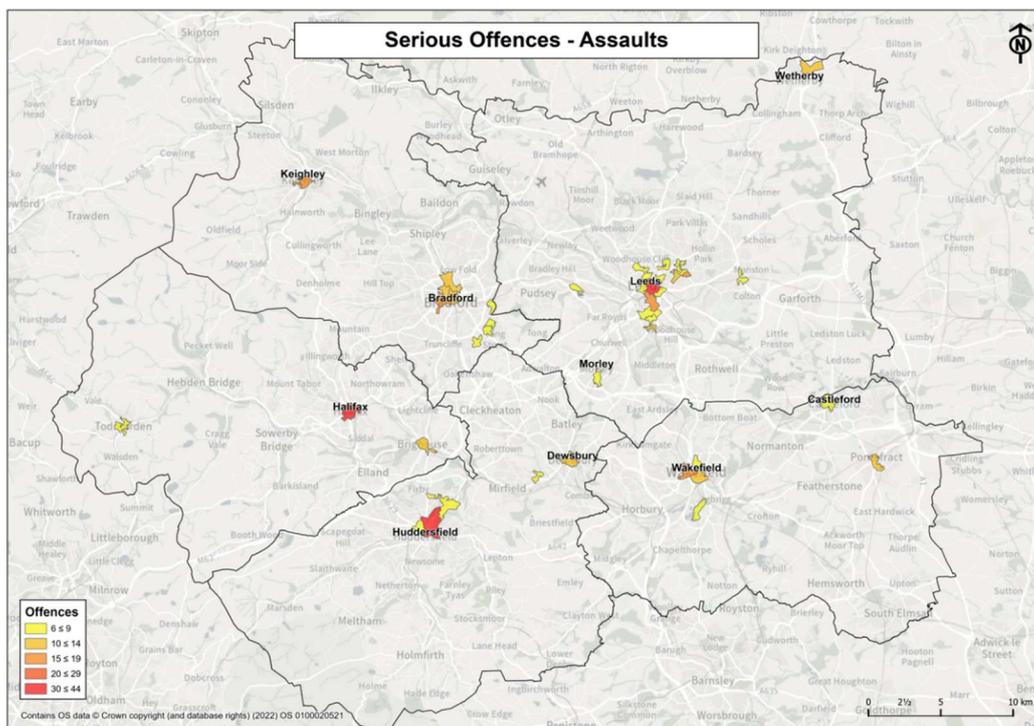


FIGURE 33 - HOTSPOT LOCATION OF SECTION 18 OFFENCES IN WEST YORKSHIRE.

For offences with a location type in the data (which is only half), 59% of the most serious non-domestic assaults occurred in the street or other open spaces, 21% occurred in residential property and 10% in licensed premises.

The most common time for offences to occur was at weekends between midnight and 1am in all districts, with assaults continuing into the early hours of the morning suggesting a link to the NTE.

Victims of Grievous Bodily Harm

There were 1,746 identified victims in 2021/22. Almost three quarters of all victims were male (74%) and 69% of all victims were aged 25 and over.

Of the 26% of victims who were female, 57% of those were domestic offences. This fell to 12% when looking at the percentage of male victims.

Most serious assaults victims who were young men and boys under 25 (94%) were non-domestic related.

Almost a quarter of data for victims of these offences had no home address location (NL in the table below). Where data was available, most victims lived in Leeds.

When looking at victim age, the number of adult (over 25) male victims in Bradford and Leeds were slightly higher than the population size, potentially due to both being larger cities attracting both resident and visitor footfall.

Grievous Bodily Harm Offenders

Most offenders were male (87%), and 70% were aged 25 and over. 9% of offenders were aged under 18.

The majority of offenders self-defined as White, with 65% of those aged 25 or over. The next largest group of offenders self-described as Asian, and they accounted for 11%.

There were a higher proportion of younger offenders in the assaults committed between midnight and 4am, and 4pm to 8pm where around half the offenders were under 25. In offences committed between 8pm and midnight young offenders made up only 16%.

Half of the offenders for Section 18 offences were reported to be unemployed – this is consistent with the proportion classed as unemployed for offenders in all violent crime.

British Transport Police

British Transport Police (BTP) reported an overall increase of 68% in violent crime in West Yorkshire over the last year. This increase is all attributed to common assault and actual bodily harm. Numbers of other offences are very small.

Most violent crime recorded by BTP occurs at railway stations, with 73% recorded at stations over the past year, 23% occurring on trains and the remainder occurring on railway lines or other rail network owned property.

53% of violent crime reported by BTP, in West Yorkshire, occurred at Leeds Railway Station. [BTP reported](#) that at this station the number of violence and sexual offences per 100,000 passengers has increased from 0.57 to 1.06 in the year ending September 2022.

Health impact of violent assaults

Although police recorded violence with injury offences have shown a reduction on pre-COVID-19 levels, attendances at Emergency Departments (ED) with violence related injuries are telling a slightly different story. Numbers of people attending hospital were above pre-COVID-19 levels in the year ending September 2022, showing an increase of 6% on the monthly average compared with the year ending September 2019. Attendances at hospital have been showing an upward trend since spring 2021, averaging 467 attendances per month.

It is to be noted that the following graphs only cover assault attendances at hospitals within Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust, Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust and Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. There are also recording stipulations meaning these graphs are not representative of the entirety of West Yorkshire.

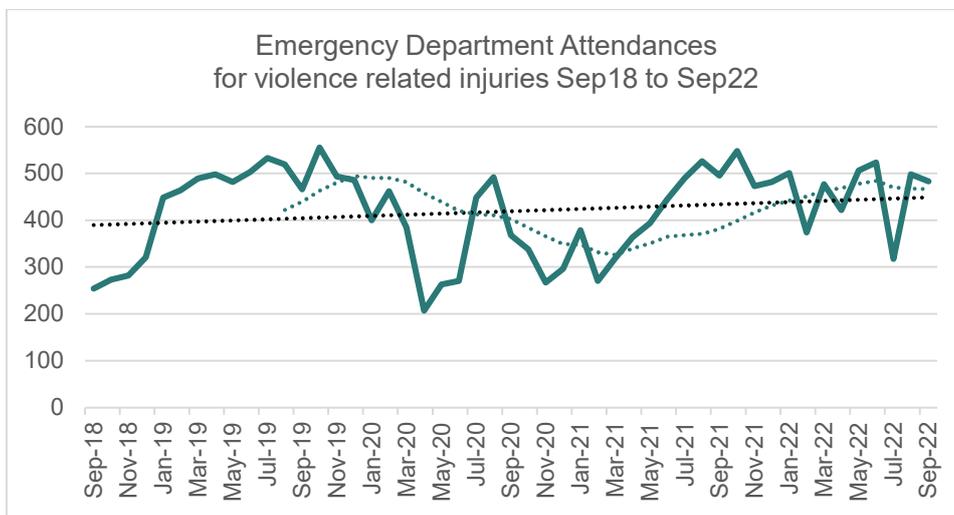


FIGURE 34 - EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ATTENDANCES FOR VIOLENCE RELATED INJURIES

The increased numbers in hospital attendance were in the youngest age group (0-18 years) with the monthly average more than doubling in the year ending September 2022 compared with the year ending September 2019.

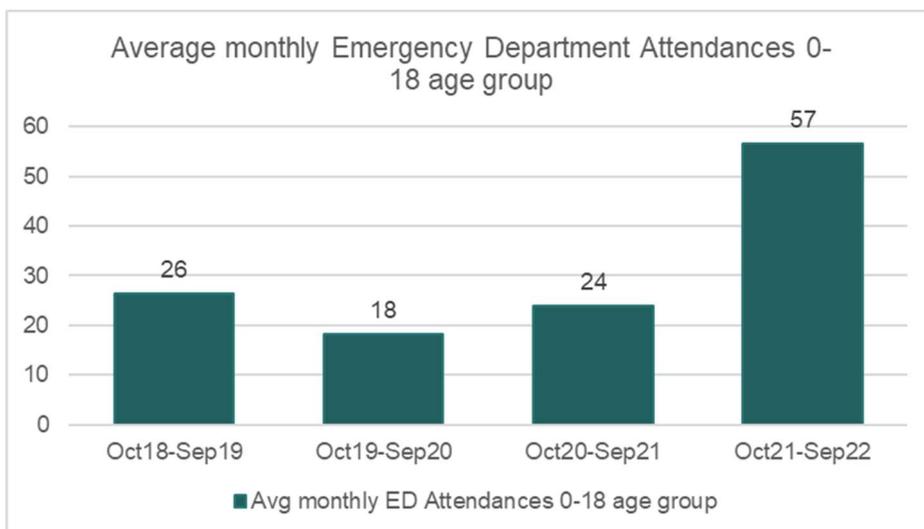


FIGURE 35 - AVERAGE MONTHLY EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ATTENDANCES (0-18 YEARS)

Other age groups have shown a reduction in numbers of hospital attendances compared to pre-pandemic times. For the year ending September 2022, there were on average 26 fewer people a month attending hospital in the age group 19-29 years when compared to the year ending September 2019. There is a caveat here; 42% of hospital attendance records had no age details in the data so results should be viewed with caution.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities reported that hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object in West Yorkshire in 2021/22 increased on the previous year by 28% ([Hospital Episode Statistics \(HES\) NHS Digital](#)). However, 2020/21 was significantly impacted by restrictions on movement and social contact as well as there being restricted access to hospitals during the height of the pandemic. Compared to the pre-pandemic year 2018/19, hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object have fallen by 13%. Provisional data for the first six months of 2022/23 suggest numbers of admissions could be considerably lower than 2021/22.

TABLE 18 - HOSPITAL EPISODE STATISTICS (HES) NHS DIGITAL

Local Authority of residence	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	April 22 – Sept 22 (provisional)
Bradford	55	35	40	45	60	35	50	20
Calderdale	10	15	15	20	10	10	*	*
Kirklees	35	55	55	60	40	30	45	20
Leeds	85	75	105	110	105	85	95	45
Wakefield	20	20	25	30	30	30	40	10

Numbers of ambulance callouts for assaults have not returned to pre-pandemic levels, and this is across all age groups. There were on average 126 fewer callouts for assaults per month in the year ending September 2022 than there were in the pre-pandemic year ending September 2019. This represents a reduction of 35% and has been seen across all age groups.

Possession of Weapons

Possession of weapons offences have shown a more significant increase than crime generally; however, these offences are directly linked to police activity and are as likely to reflect a change in policing practices as an actual increase in people carrying weapons.

[Operation Jemlock](#) was launched by WYP in 2019 to combat serious violence and knife crime in West Yorkshire, supporting and complementing the work of the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit. In April 2022 WYP reported that over 500 weapons had been taken off the streets of West Yorkshire in 12 months during Operation Jemlock activity.

In the period being examined there have also been [two new notifiable offences](#) relating to possessing weapons and threatening with a weapon in a private place.

- 008/76 Threaten a person with an offensive weapon/article/substance in a private place
- 197/21 Possess an offensive weapon in private place

There were 227 of these new offences recorded in the 2-year period, but most of these were in the second year (93%) and these accounted for almost half of the increase year on year.

Knife Crime

Knife Crime over the last year remains lower than pre-COVID-19 levels. Offences increased by 5% on last year but are 9% lower than the year ending September 2019.

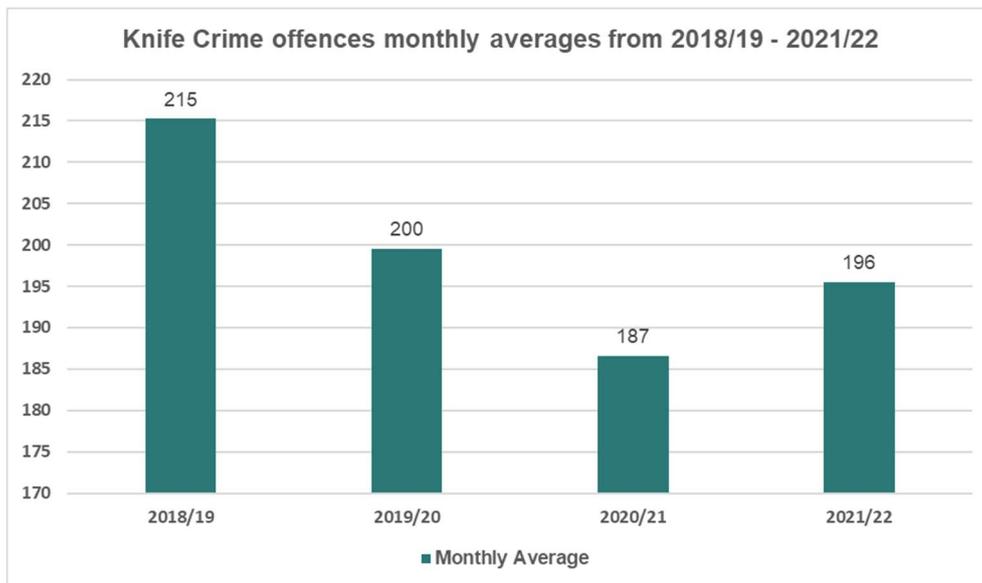


FIGURE 36 - KNIFE CRIME OFFENCES MONTHLY AVERAGES FROM 2018/19 - 2021/22

There have been 2326 knife crime offences recorded in the year ending September 2022, of which almost half were violence with injury (48%), with robbery making up almost another third (31%). Most of the violence without injury offences (18%) were threats to kill and almost all were domestic related.

Over a quarter of all recorded knife crime in the year was domestic related.

Where offenders were known for domestic knife crime, 68% were a partner or ex-partner of the victim. In 13% of cases the victim was a parent or grandparent to the offender – in the majority of these cases the offenders were adult males and not children.

The increase in knife crime in West Yorkshire has not been experienced across all districts. Bradford has seen a decrease of 11% in knife crime offences on the same period last year; Wakefield is showing a larger increase of 26%.

TABLE 19 - KNIFE CRIME OFFENCES BY DISTRICT

Knife Crime	2020/21	2021/22	Difference	
Bradford	565	502	-63	-11%
Calderdale	150	163	13	9%
Kirklees	366	364	-2	-1%
Leeds	908	999	91	10%
Wakefield	236	297	61	26%
Total	2225	2325	100	5%

The following map shows hotspot locations for knife crime at MSOA level.

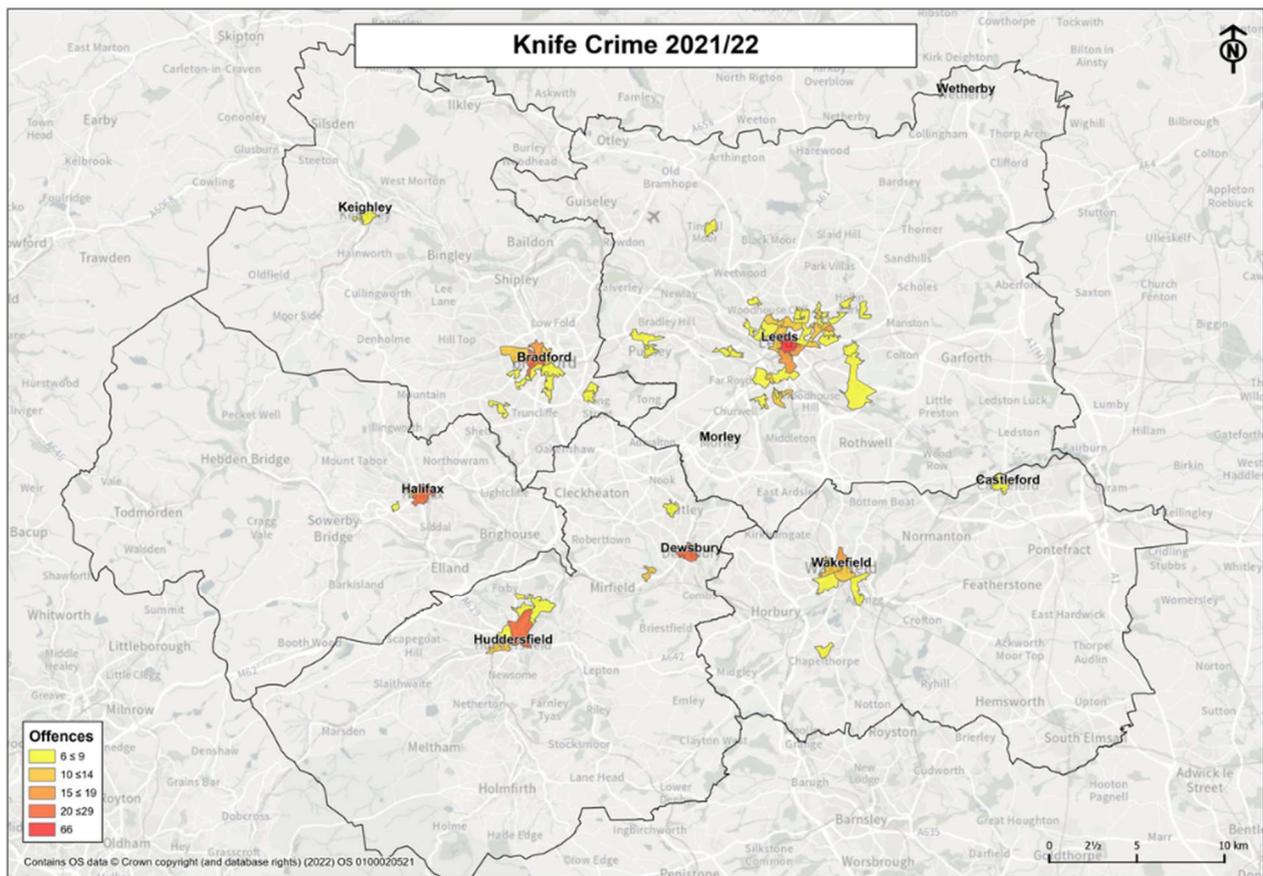


FIGURE 37 - HOTSPOT LOCATIONS FOR KNIFE CRIME ACROSS WEST YORKSHIRE IN THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 2022.

Knife Crime Offenders

Where offenders were known, 90% of offences were committed by male offenders; 55% by males aged 25 and over. The majority of all knife crime offenders are aged 25 and over (63%), 18% are under 18, and 19% aged between 19 and 25.

Two thirds of all knife crime offenders self-defined as White, with the next largest ethnic group defining as Asian-Pakistani (10%), and the Black-Caribbean (6%).

When looking at the total, where offenders live is representative of the population spread. However, there is some disproportionality when looking at different age groups. In Leeds the proportion of young offenders of knife crime is higher than age group population, the same is true in Calderdale but by a less significant proportion. In Wakefield there is a disproportionate amount in the older age group when compared to the population.

Victims of Knife Crime

Most victims of knife crime are male (66%) with 41% of the total being males aged 25 and over. For all victims 63% are in the older age group.

For knife crime that has a female victim over half is domestic related; this is only 18% for knife crime with a male victim.

A self-defined ethnicity has been recorded for just over half of all knife crime victims (58%). The majority of victims where ethnicity information is available are self-defined as White (72%).

The next largest group of victims self-define as Asian-Pakistani who make up 12% of the total; there are more of this ethnic group in older victims. In the age group 45 to 64 16% of knife crime victims self-define as Asian-Pakistani.

In non-domestic knife crime 45% of victims and offenders are acquaintances.

Gun Crime

Gun crime increased by 10% over the last 12 months and has experienced an increasing trend since February 2022. Firearms discharge incidents increased by only 3% in the same period. Most recorded gun crime in the last 2 years involved Ball Bearing (BB) guns (53%). During the last year, for this type of weapon 27% of all victims were children under 18; 17% were aged under 12.

There were fewer serious injuries sustained by victims in the last year although more discharges resulted in injury to a person, and the number of threats involving a firearm increased.

TABLE 20 - GUN CRIME VICTIMS AND BB GUN VICTIMS BY AGE GROUP

Gun Crime - Victim Age Group	2021/22		Gun Crime - BB Guns Victim Age Group	2021/22	
0-12	89	10%	0-12	79	17%
13-17	78	9%	13-17	46	10%
18-24	115	13%	18-24	34	7%
25-34	152	17%	25-34	54	11%
35-44	158	18%	35-44	78	17%
45-54	91	10%	45-54	53	11%
55-64	71	8%	55-64	47	10%
65+	39	4%	65+	32	7%
No age data	99	11%	No age data	49	10%
Total	892		Total	472	

Of known offenders, 35% were known to the victim; the rest were either strangers or not seen.

A large proportion of recorded gun crimes involved a weapon being fired (61%) but the majority of these incidents did not cause injury to a person. Where an injury was caused, almost all were slight, and a large proportion involved BB guns (62%) or air weapons (28%).

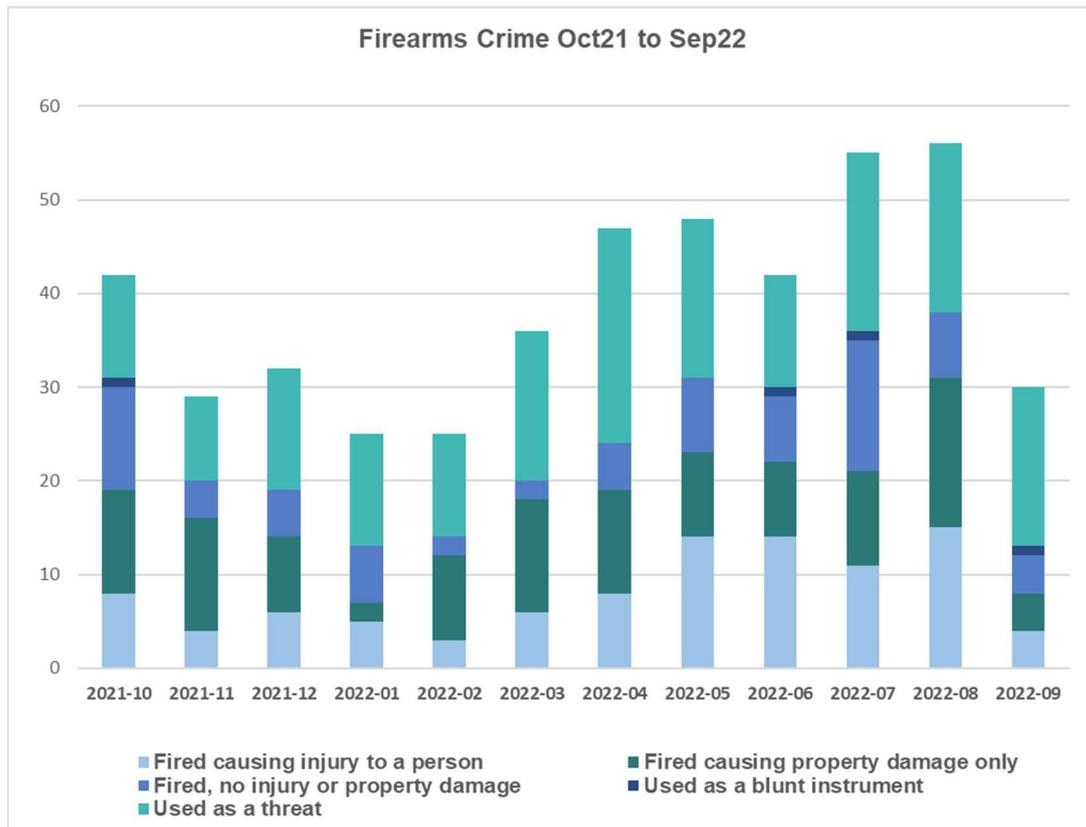


FIGURE 38 - FIREARMS CRIME FROM OCTOBER 2021 - SEPTEMBER 2022

Of the offences where firearms were fired, 71% involved BB guns and 12% involved air weapons.

Most gun crime involving Section 1 weapons (those illegal to own without a licence) were possession offences, robbery and violence with injury; in other non-S1 offences the most common offences were violence with injury and criminal damage.

A disproportionate amount of gun related weapons possession, violence and robbery offences have been recorded in Leeds, over half of which were actual bodily harm assaults.

Where a location was known, there was a higher proportion of gun crime – weapons, possession, violence and robbery offences in Leeds.

Gun Crime Offenders

Where an offender was known, (for violent crime categories only), the majority lived in Leeds. However, numbers are very small and there is a proportion with no home address inputted.

Where the crime was against property (e.g. discharging a firearm at a door) offender details were not captured for the purposes of the SNA.

All offenders were male; the majority were aged 25 and over (62%) with the largest group aged between 25 to 34 (32%).

Offenders self-defined as White in 58% of cases, with the next largest group self-defining as Asian-Pakistani (16%).

Sexual Violence

West Yorkshire Police reported that for the year ending July 2022 rape and other sexual offences had exceeded the pre-pandemic year ending July 2019.

Both rape and other sexual offences showed increases in early spring 2021 as the last lockdown restrictions were easing and have continued to show an increasing trend in the last year with the increase greatest in the non-rape offences.

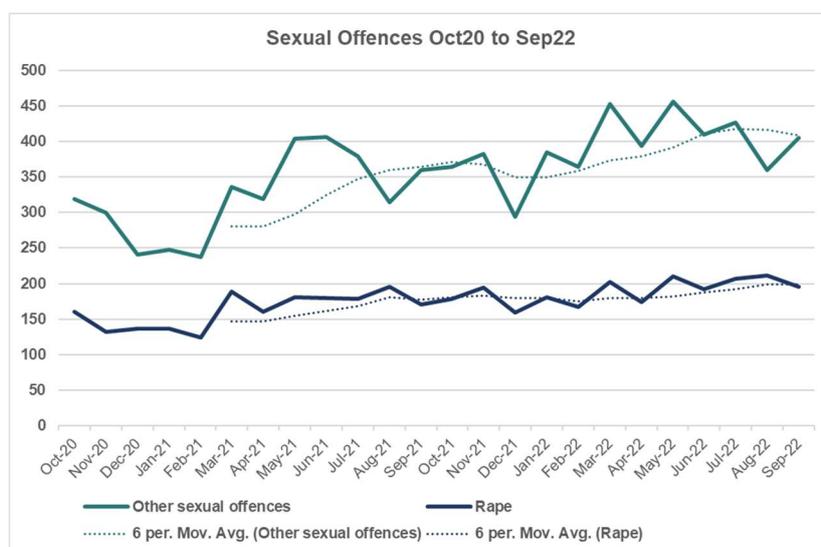


FIGURE 39 - SEXUAL OFFENCES FROM OCTOBER 2020 TO SEPTEMBER 2022

In the last year, recent rape offences (those reported within a year of being committed) have increased by 17% and other sexual offences by 21%. Although some of the increase will be due to crime returning to pre-COVID-19 levels, WYP are reporting that numbers of both rape and other sexual offences are now higher than the last pre-COVID-19 year.

In the year ending September 2022 there were 6521 recent Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) recorded. Across all offences, 18% were DA related. This proportion increased significantly for adult female rape where almost half was DA related. It should be noted that sexual offences are known to be under-reported by victims. In March 2021 the [ONS](#) reported that fewer than one in six (16%) rape victims reported it to the police, stating embarrassment, fear of humiliation and lack of belief that the police could help as reasons.

Rape offences accounted for 36% of all recent serious sexual crime – this is consistent with national figures reported by the ONS for June 2022. As shown in the following table, domestic abuse related sexual assault accounts for 18% of RASSO.

TABLE 21 - OTHER SEXUAL OFFENCES AND RAPE OFFENCES IN WEST YORKSHIRE

Rape and Serious Sexual Offences	Non-DA	DA	Total	DA%
Other sexual offences	3891	357	4248	8%
Rape	1464	809	2273	36%
Total	5355	1166	6521	18%

Other sexual offences includes sexual assault, sexual assault on an individual below the consent age and exposure and voyeurism.

In cases of adult female rape almost 18% were flagged as being committed by a stranger, this is broadly consistent with [ONS](#) statistics from the CSEW which reported 15% of female rape victims report being raped by a stranger¹ in the year ending March 2020.

Sexual offences that occurred across West Yorkshire were in line with the population proportions.

For adult female rapes where the offender is a stranger, offences were most likely to occur in the hour between midnight and 1am, and most frequently at weekends, suggesting a link to the NTE. Most offences happened in Leeds, but this is consistent with population numbers and concentration of NTE locations. There was also a slight peak at 9pm on all days of the week and in most districts.

Sexual Offences Offenders

There were 133 individual offenders linked to sexual crime for the year, representing 144 offences. This means there was an identified offender for only 2% of sexual offences based on data extraction criteria of positive outcomes. This is likely to be due to the length of time associated with sexual crime investigations and issues with victim engagement in some cases.

With such a small proportion of offender data it is difficult to conduct any meaningful offender analysis. What can be said is that almost all identified offenders were male (98%) and 73% of those male offenders were aged 25+ (note: the data does not include CSE offences which would be likely to have a younger offender profile).

Victims of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences

Most victims of rape and serious sexual offences were female – 82% across all offences over the last year. Half of all victims were females under 25 and over a third are females under 18.

¹ It should be noted that the term 'stranger' can have a broader definition in terms of police recorded crime than the common understanding. The Serious Crime Analysis Section of the National Crime Agency define stranger relationship for violent and sexual offences as "where the victim and offender have had no or limited previous legitimate contact (physical, verbal or electronic) prior to the offence". This definition allows for some limited previous contact between parties so stranger rape can include those offences where victim and offender have met prior to the offence.

42% of all victims were under 18 – there is a higher proportion of male victims in this age group as 51% of all male victims were under 18 (35% of male RASSO victims aged 12 or under).

There were 422 people who have been a victim of more than one sexual offence in the last year; 54 people have been a victim more than 3 times.

In most recent rape offences, the victims were adult females who make up 74% of the total; adult male victims make up an additional 5%.

For female victims 41% of rape offences were domestic abuse related; in the under 25 age group this proportion increased to 50%.

In adult male rape offences, there was a greater proportion of domestic abuse in those over 25 years (18% compared to 13% in under 25 age group). There was also a higher proportion of rape of a male child under 16 offences that are DA related than for female offences in the same age group.

In contrast to rape offences, there were more victims in the younger age group in other serious sexual offences; almost half are under 18. Female victims under 18 accounted for 38% of all victims of other serious sexual offences. In 68% of all other serious sexual offences victims were under 25.

10% of other serious sexual offences are domestic abuse related; the proportion was higher in sexual assaults on victims in the 25 and older age group for male and female victims.

Cyber enabled sexual crime

The number and the proportion of cyber enabled sexual crimes reduced over the last year. Cyber enabled sexual crime accounted for 15% of non-rape offences over the year and almost a third of all sexual activity involving a child under 13, where 71% of these victims were female. Further exploration of cyber crime is required to understand the extent to which the cyber enabled flag can be relied upon.

These offences involved sexual contact via online apps such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, TikTok, Instagram and Omegle, and online gaming platforms. The offences usually involved requesting or sending of explicit photographs and can also involve children as ‘offenders’.

Harassment and stalking

In the 12-month period from October 2021 to September 2022, 855 individuals were victims of both harassment and stalking offences – 661 of these were females (77%).

In the year ending September 2022, there were 21,522 harassment offences recorded by West Yorkshire Police (WYP); of these 586 were racially or religiously aggravated. There were 18,967 individual victims of harassment; 59% were female and 45% were females aged 25 and over.

There were 479 victims who were victims of harassment more than twice in the 12-month period; 79 were victims 5 times or more. Two thirds of all people who were repeat victims of harassment are female.

In harassment offences with an identified offender, 83% are male and 68% are males over the age of 25. Of the 467 individual identified offenders 40% are partners or ex-partners of the victim, and a further 15% are family members.

In the year ending September 2022, there were 6,579 stalking offences, with 6,236 individual victims. There is a much higher proportion of female victims in stalking offences compared to harassment, with females representing over three quarters of the total. The largest group were females over the age of 25 who account for 57% of the total.

In stalking offences an even larger proportion of offenders were male with 81% males over the age of 25. Almost all (82%) were classed as partners or ex-partners.

As with all violent crime data, ethnicity information was missing in 46% of all harassment victims and 43% of all stalking victims. Where ethnicity was available, 77% of harassment victims and 81% of stalking victims self-defined as White. For both harassment and stalking, 15% of harassment victims and 12% of stalking victims self-defined as Asian. Figures should be viewed with caution though due to the significant gap in ethnicity data.

70% of offenders in stalking offences and 72% in harassment offences self-defined from White ethnic groups. Offender ethnicity data is more accurate as there is less missing ethnicity information, although there is still 12% of harassment offenders without ethnicity in the data and 10% of stalking offenders.

Robbery

Robbery is defined as stealing aggravated by violence and is committed if the perpetrator uses force to steal from a person, or makes the victim believe that force will be used. The categories of robbery offences refer to what has been stolen, robbery of personal property and robbery of business property.

Robbery offences have not returned to pre-COVID-19 levels and are showing a 24% decrease on the same 12 months in 2018-19. This reflects the national picture; the latest [CSEW](#) reports a 23% decrease in robbery offences when compared to the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020.

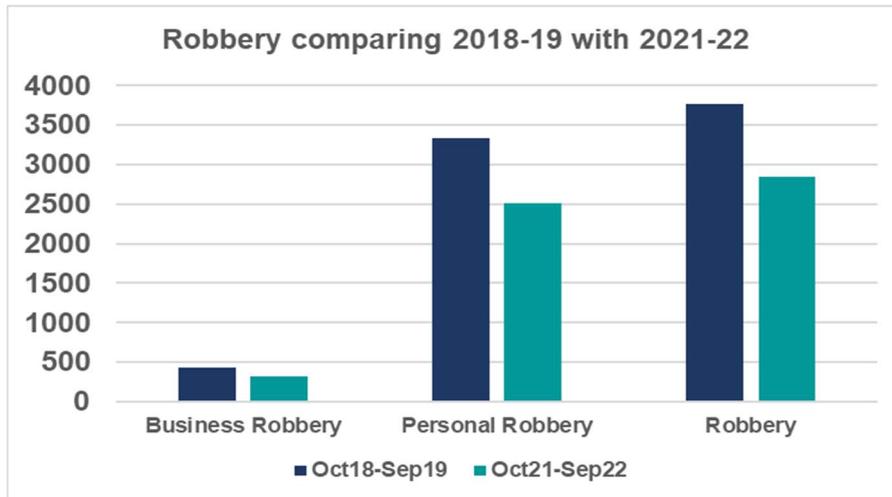


FIGURE 40 - ROBBERY IN WEST YORKSHIRE, COMPARING 2018/19 TO 2021/22

There has been an increase in robbery offences in recent months, however, offence numbers are still much lower than pre-pandemic times, for both personal and business robbery.

Almost 90% of all robbery offences were personal robbery. The increase year on year has been greater for business robbery, which has seen a 40% increase across West Yorkshire in the last year compared to an increase of 24% in personal robbery.

Robbery offences have increased across all districts in the last year but in some districts the increase has been more significant than others. Personal robberies in Wakefield have increased by more than half, and numbers of business robberies in Calderdale have almost doubled. For business robbery all districts except Bradford are showing significant increases.

Although Wakefield and Calderdale are showing the largest percentage increase year on year, numbers are consistent with population size. Almost half of all robberies occurred in Leeds and although Leeds is the largest population centre, these levels were disproportionate.

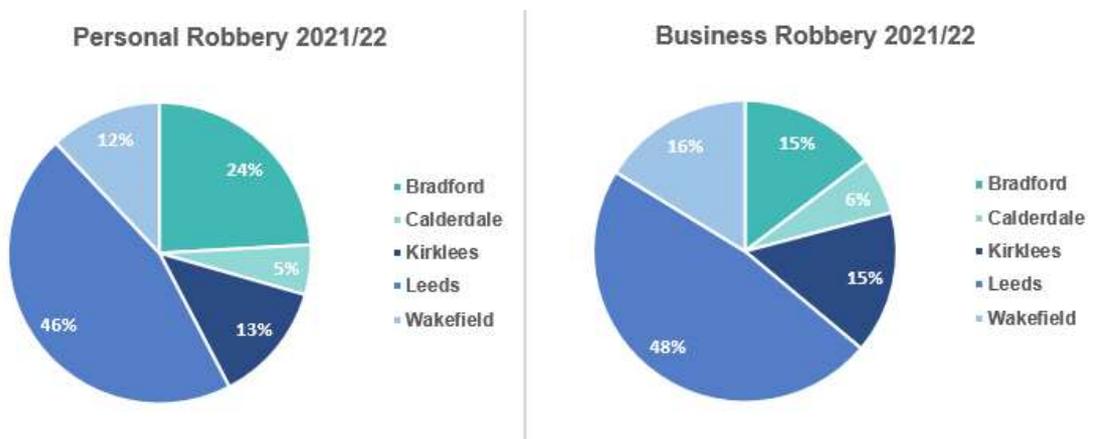


FIGURE 41 - PERSONAL ROBBERY AND BUSINESS ROBBERY BY DISTRICT

Most robbery of business property happens at supermarkets and convenience stores; however around 13% occurs in the street or houses where work vehicles or delivery drivers are the targets in many cases. Over a third of business robberies in 2021/22 involved the use of a knife or bladed weapon, a total of 113 offences.

The following map shows hotspots for personal robbery offences across West Yorkshire in the year ending September 2022. As well as the hotspot areas around the main cities and towns, there have also been clusters of personal robbery offences in some other areas.

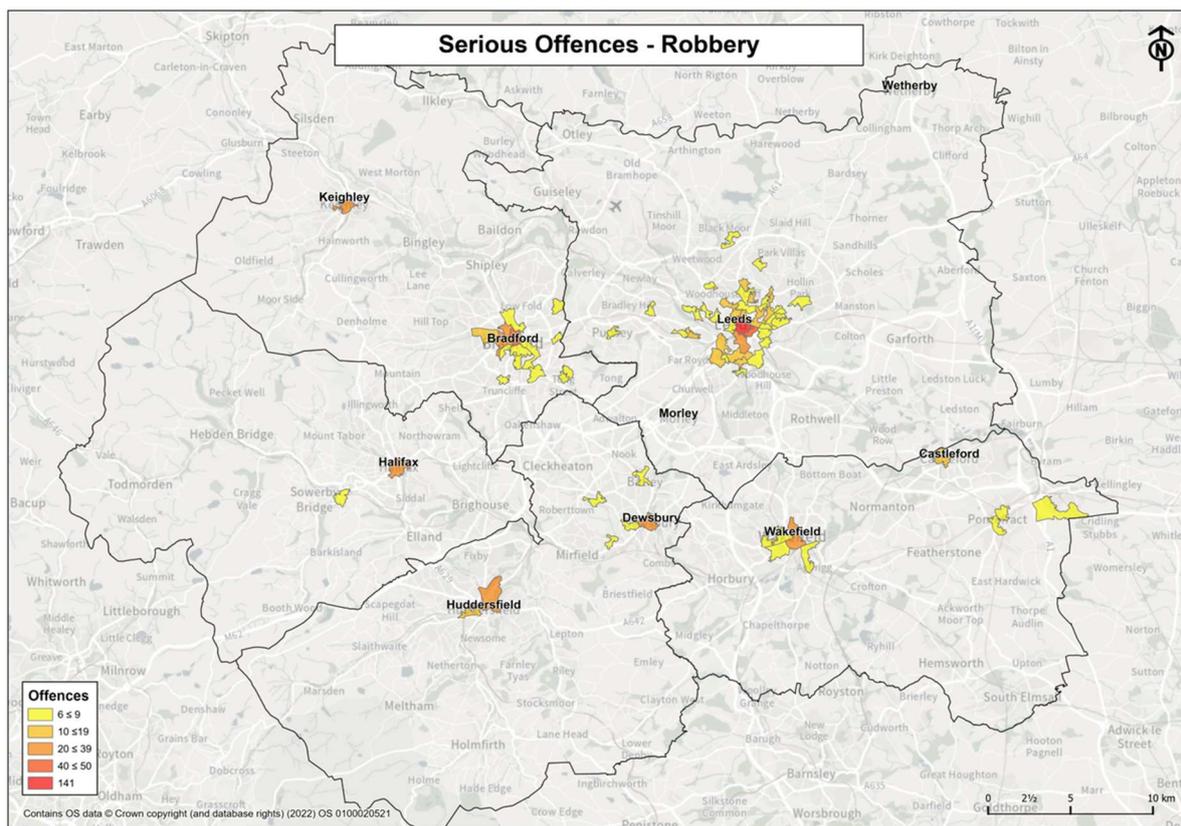


FIGURE 42 - HOTSPOTS FOR PERSONAL ROBBERY OFFENCES ACROSS WEST YORKSHIRE IN THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 2022.

Almost a quarter of personal robbery offences last year involved the use of a knife or bladed weapon which equates to almost 600 personal robbery offences where a knife was used.

Across all districts the peak time for robberies to be committed last year was in the hour between midnight and 1am, with offences occurring at similar numbers each day. There were other peaks seen around 6pm, 3pm and between 8pm and 9pm in some areas. There was also a small concentration around lunchtime. Leeds is still seeing higher levels of personal robberies going into the early morning hours which is likely to be linked to the NTE. The highest concentration of personal robbery offences is at weekends.

There were some differences in the pattern of peak times for robbery offences across the districts. The main differences are:

- In Bradford the peak day for personal robbery offences was Saturday. While there was a peak between midnight and 1am across the week, there were similar peaks between 6pm and 7pm, and 3pm and 4pm which occur on weekdays.
- The peak time for knife enabled robbery in Bradford last year was between 2pm and 4pm, although numbers are small across the year.
- Saturday was the peak day for Calderdale with most offences occurring at weekends.
- The peak was slightly earlier in the week for Kirklees, peaking Thursday, Friday, Saturday. There were also peaks between 6pm and 9pm on these days as well as the peak at midnight to 1am.
- In Leeds the peak days were very clearly Friday and Saturday, and while there was a peak at midnight continuing up until around 5am likely to be linked to the NTE, there was another significant peak between 6pm and 7pm across the week, with the exception of Sundays, and another between 9pm and 10pm across the week including Sundays.
- The peak for knife enabled personal robbery in Leeds was between 5pm and 10pm, with another peak between midnight and 2am. There was also a peak on Mondays between 5 and 7pm
- The peak days for robbery in Wakefield were Thursday, and Friday, although numbers are similar across all days. There was a concentration of offences early to late evening as well as the midnight to 1am peak which was mostly Thursday night/ Friday morning.

Robbery Offenders

Overall, 93% of identified robbery offenders were male. Where an offender was female, the offence was more likely personal robbery than business robbery. There was a higher proportion of the under 25's identified as offenders for personal robbery.

For Personal Robbery offences 48% of male offenders were reported as being unemployed and a further 20% were reported to be schoolboys. Almost all female offenders were classed as unemployed.

31% of all offenders in personal robbery and 23% for business robbery were under the age of 18.

Robberies committed by males under 25 are more likely to involve use of a knife than for the older age groups. 38% of all robberies with a young offender involve a knife, this reduces slightly to 34% in the over 25s.

There were 61 personal robbery offences with more than one offender - some with groups of up to 6 offenders involved. Group offending tends to be carried out by the youngest offenders, although in some of the groups there are older individuals involved as well. There may be links here to Urban Street Gangs or Child Criminal Exploitation which would be worth exploring further.

Where offenders were identified, the majority lived in Leeds which is consistent with offence locations.

Violence in prisons

Nationally, the [Ministry of Justice](#) reports that assault incidents in prisons have increased by 12% in the year ending June 2022, and assaults on prison staff rose by 4% in the same period.

In the year ending September 2022 there were 28 fewer violence offences recorded in West Yorkshire prisons and Young Offender Institutions than in the previous year. There was a slight increase in assaults without injury, but numbers of assaults on prison staff reduced from the previous year.

There were 19 serious assaults (S18 wounding) committed in prison locations, a reduction of three on the previous year. Almost half occurred at Wetherby Young Offender Institution. Five of these most serious assaults involved a knife or bladed weapon.

Violence without Injury

The following table provides an overview of recorded violent crime and offences that are linked to violence and how these have changed year on year both in terms of number and CSS. There have been significant increases in some crime types and whilst the removal of COVID-19 restrictions will account for some of the recent increase it cannot be attributed to all.

TABLE 22 - OVERVIEW OF RECORDED VIOLENT CRIME AND OFFENCES THAT ARE LINKED TO VIOLENCE

Crime Category	2020/21		2021/22		Increase offences		Increase CSS	
	Offences	Total CSS	Offences	Total CSS				
Arson	1,486	417,693	1,582	420,435	96	6%	2,742	1%
Homicide	24	191,491	26	207,449	2	8%	15,958	8%
Other sexual offences	3,864	2,193,232	4,693	2,698,646	829	21%	505,415	23%
Possession of weapons	2,193	334,290	2,704	406,917	511	23%	72,627	22%
Public order offences	36,801	668,879	43,757	749,207	6,956	19%	80,328	12%
Rape	1,947	5,890,274	2,273	6,931,773	326	17%	1,041,499	18%
Robbery	2,281	1,700,988	2,870	2,140,217	589	26%	439,229	26%
Violence with injury	23,888	7,969,009	28,368	8,914,440	4,480	19%	945,432	12%
Violence without injury	83,662	4,122,969	96,089	4,863,572	12,427	15%	740,603	18%
Grand Total	156,146	23,488,824	182,362	27,332,656	26,216	17%	3,843,832	16%

With violent crime categories containing a wide range of offences it is useful to break them down further – the following table shows that there has been a substantial increase in Cruelty to children/young persons offences as well as significant increases in Harassment.

TABLE 23 - VIOLENCE WITHOUT INJURY OFFENCES IN WEST YORKSHIRE

Violence without injury	2020/21	2021/22	Difference	
Assault without injury on a constable	1,650	1,635	-15	-1%
Assault without injury	31,268	35,760	4492	14%
Racially or religiously aggravated assault without injury	609	654	45	7%
Modern slavery	369	429	60	16%
Cruelty to children/young persons	995	2,168	1173	118%
Child abduction	44	40	-4	-9%
Kidnapping	343	396	53	15%
Threats to kill	4,285	4,646	361	8%
Harassment	16,538	20,950	4412	27%
Racially or religiously aggravated harassment	470	599	129	27%
Stalking	5,588	6,579	991	18%
Malicious communications	19,722	20,165	443	2%
Controlling or coercive behaviour	1,777	2,061	284	16%
Other	4	7	3	75%
Grand Total	83,662	96,089	12427	15%

Cruelty to children/young persons

There has been a significant increase in the number of cruelty to children and young persons offences, more than doubling in the last year. This is concerning both because of the harm being caused to children now, and the potential future impact this may have as an indicator of violence. This is a national trend with the [NSPCC](#) reporting that child cruelty and neglect offences increased by a quarter last year as the country emerged from the pandemic. Cruelty to children/young persons is a form of [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) as this impacts on a young person's safety, security, trust or bodily integrity.

The increase in cruelty to children offences in West Yorkshire is much higher than the national figures, however the increase is likely to be due in part to the roll out of Public Protection Notification (PPN). PPN improves the efficiency, consistency, and quality of referrals to social care partners, and this has led to an increase in the early identification of vulnerable children. WYP began a phased roll out at the end of 2020 with the final District going live in February 2022.

This is an opportunity to better understand this type of violent crime, and how it may be impacted further by the cost-of-living crisis and other indicators of violence such as unemployment, deprivation, and substance use.

Attacks on the Fire & Rescue Service

In the year ending September 2022, Fire & Rescue Service (F&RS) incidents increased by 24% across West Yorkshire, with the most significant increase seen in Leeds (53%). Attendance at a small number of incidents in both years resulted in attacks on F&RS crew and/or vehicles. The most common type of attacks are objects being thrown, and verbal abuse. Only 9 injuries have been recorded across both years and all injuries have been recorded as being minor.

Antisocial behaviour (ASB)

There is a drive to reduce ASB in West Yorkshire and this is having a visible impact on recorded crime in public order, harassment and criminal damage offences as more incidents are being ‘crimed’ ([Police and Crime Performance Monitoring Report October 2022](#)).

As ASB mostly involves children and young people we need to understand the impact this may be having as more young people are criminalised. We also need to understand how the response to young people as ASB perpetrators differs to the response to them as offenders of crime, and whether opportunities for early intervention are being lost.

The [Ministry of Justice](#) reports that numbers of first time juvenile entrants to the criminal justice system (FTE) have experienced a reducing trend over the last 10 years both nationally and in West Yorkshire. In the year ending June 2022, there were 489 juvenile FTE in West Yorkshire, compared with 543 the previous year. It will be interesting to monitor this figure alongside the reduction in ASB.

Harassment accounted for 22% of all violence without injury in the 12 months ending September 2022, it is likely that some of that increase is due to more ASB incidents resulting in recorded crime. Whilst overall violence without injury has increased by 15% on the previous year, **harassment offences have increased at almost double that rate, growing by 27%**. There is also a smaller proportion which have been flagged as Domestic Abuse (DA) related.

Youth Crime

According to the 2021 Census, 32% of the population in West Yorkshire is estimated to be under 25, and 25% are 19 and under.

For all violent crime with an identified offender in the last year, 30% was committed by people under 25; 14% was committed by those under 18. Over half robbery offences were committed by someone under 25. In robbery and arson offences over a third were committed by someone under 18.

TABLE 24 - YOUTH CRIME OFFENCES IN WEST YORKSHIRE FOR OFFENDERS UNDER 25 YEARS.

Offence Category	Under 25	Over 25	Total	%Under 25
Arson	41	41	82	50%
Homicide	12	13	25	48%
Possession of weapons	368	594	962	38%
Robbery	206	190	396	52%
Violence with injury	867	1763	2630	33%
Violence without injury	1170	3706	4876	24%
Total	2664	6307	8971	30%

TABLE 25 - TABLE 24 - YOUTH CRIME OFFENCES SHOWING PERCENTAGE FOR OFFENDERS UNDER 18 YEARS.

Offence Category	0 to 12	13 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+	Total	% under 18
Arson	7	22	12	17	13	9	2			82	35%
Homicide		5	7	5	6	2				25	20%
Possession of weapons	32	158	178	235	218	99	32	10		962	20%
Robbery	4	130	72	98	68	22	1	1		396	34%
Violence with injury	76	356	435	787	597	251	99	19	10	2630	16%
Violence without injury	77	415	678	1640	1288	550	191	29	8	4876	10%
Total	196	1086	1328	2782	2190	933	325	59	18	8971	14%

There were 1848 individual offenders responsible for 2664 crimes committed by the under 25 age group. 178 individuals committed 3 or more crimes and were responsible for 733 crimes. There were young offenders who committed more than 10 violent crimes in the last year.

Group offending is more common in the younger age groups. There were 75 violent crime and robbery offences with 3 or more offenders and in almost three quarters of group crimes the offenders were all aged under 25.

In the younger age group female offenders accounted for almost a quarter. Almost half (47%) of all young violent crime offenders were under 18 for both male and female offenders, however the largest group were males aged between 18 and 24 which accounted for 42% of the total.

TABLE 26 - YOUNG OFFENDERS BY GENDER AND AGE

Young Offenders	0 to 12	13 to 17	18 to 24	Total	Percentage
Female	31	183	202	416	23%
Male	115	517	778	1410	76%
Unknown	8	10	4	22	
Total	154	710	984	1848	
Percentage	8%	38%	53%		

In all age groups, young offenders self-defined predominantly as White which accounted for 61% of the total; the next largest self-defined ethnicity was Asian.

28% were classed as unemployed in the under 18 age group and a large proportion are still in full time education.

The following map shows the location of youth crime offenders across West Yorkshire.

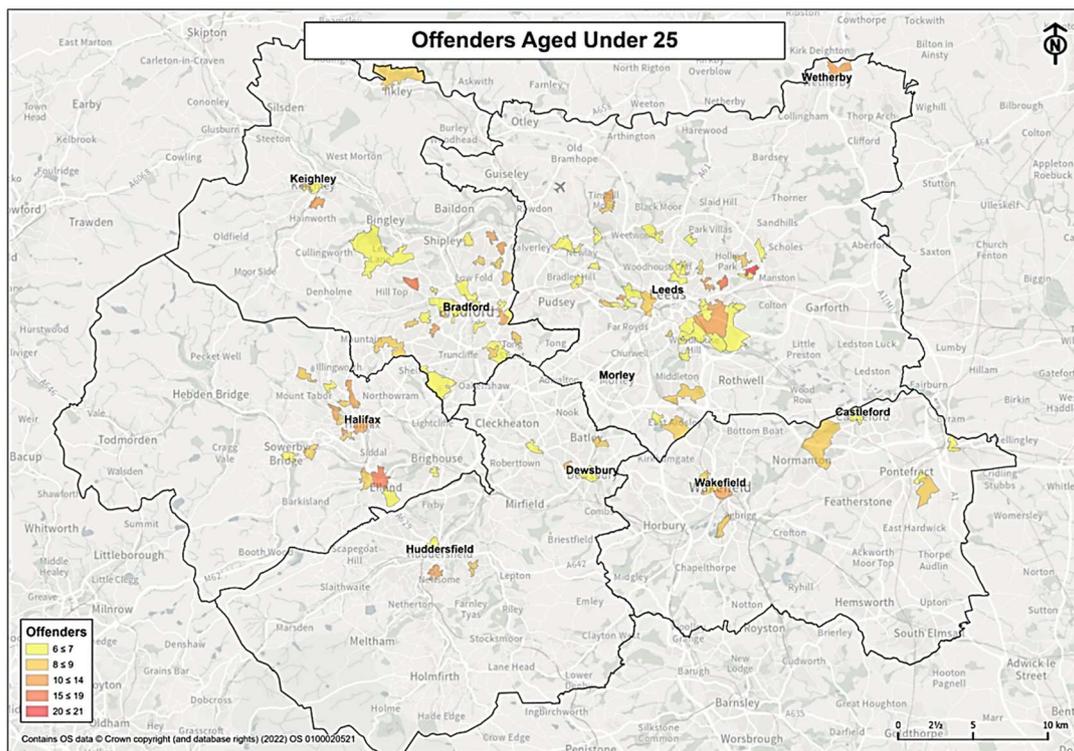


FIGURE 43 - LOCATION OF YOUTH CRIME OFFENDERS ACROSS WEST YORKSHIRE.

Youth offenders of Knife Crime

In 38% of knife crime the offender is under 25 and offenders aged under 18 are responsible for 18% of knife crime. Only 7% of youth knife crime (under 25) is committed by females.

Youth offenders under 25 are reported to be strangers to the victim in 45% of cases, 16% are family members or partners and in a quarter of youth knife crime the offender and victim are acquaintances.

Over half of young knife crime offenders are self-defined as White (53%). The next largest group self-define as Asian-Pakistani offenders who account for 11% of the under 18 age group, and 13% of the under 25s.

Young offenders of the Most Serious Violence

Only 30% of all MSV offences were committed by young offenders under 25. There were also fewer people in the youngest age groups committing the most serious violent crime. In 60% of all youth MSV offenders were males aged between 18 and 24. There were also much fewer female offenders of MSV.

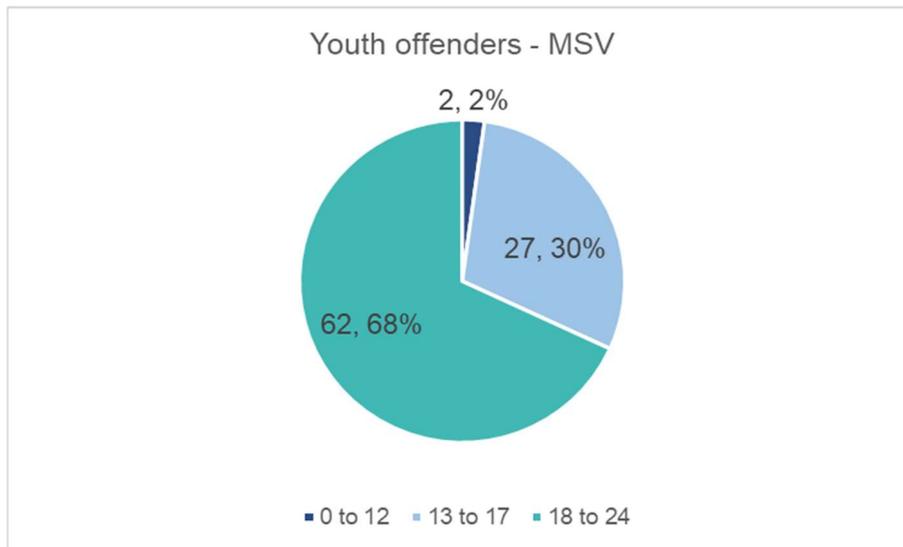


FIGURE 44 - YOUTH OFFENDERS OF MOST SERIOUS VIOLENCE IN WEST YORKSHIRE

Weapons Possession amongst young people

Possession of weapons offences are directly linked to police activity, with weapons discovered during arrests and searches.

Over the past 12 months 44% of possession of a knife offences had an offender aged under 25 - in a quarter of all offences the offender was under 18. While possession of weapons offences saw an increasing trend, this was not evident in the younger age group.

The following chart shows possession of an article with a blade or point by month.

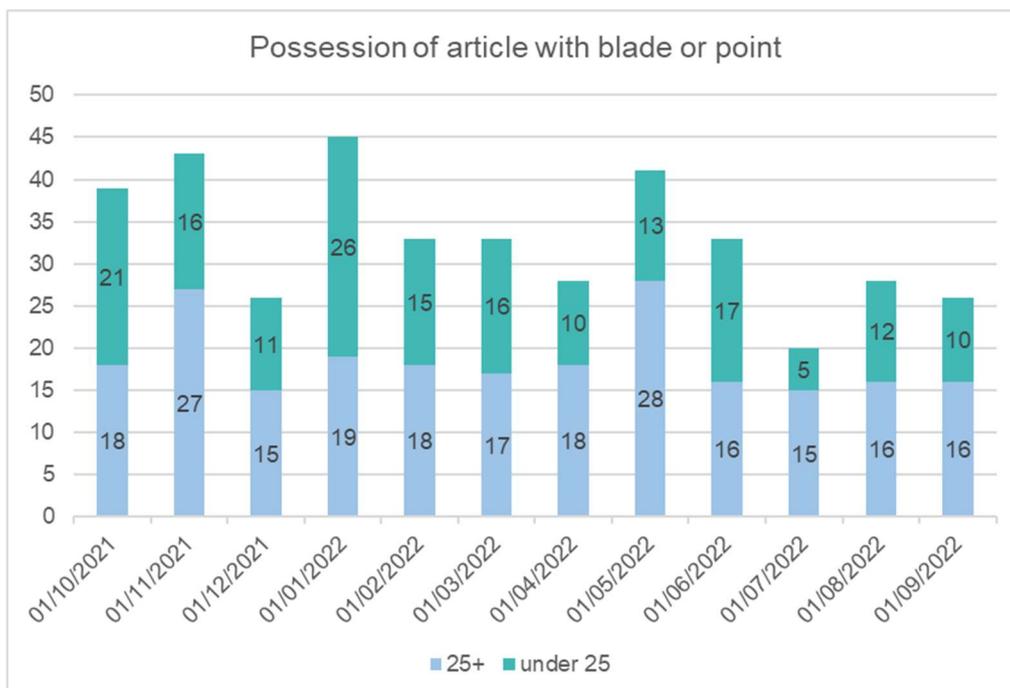


FIGURE 45 - POSSESSION OF AN ARTICLE WITH A BLADE OR POINT BY MONTH

The graph below provides a further breakdown for those under 25.

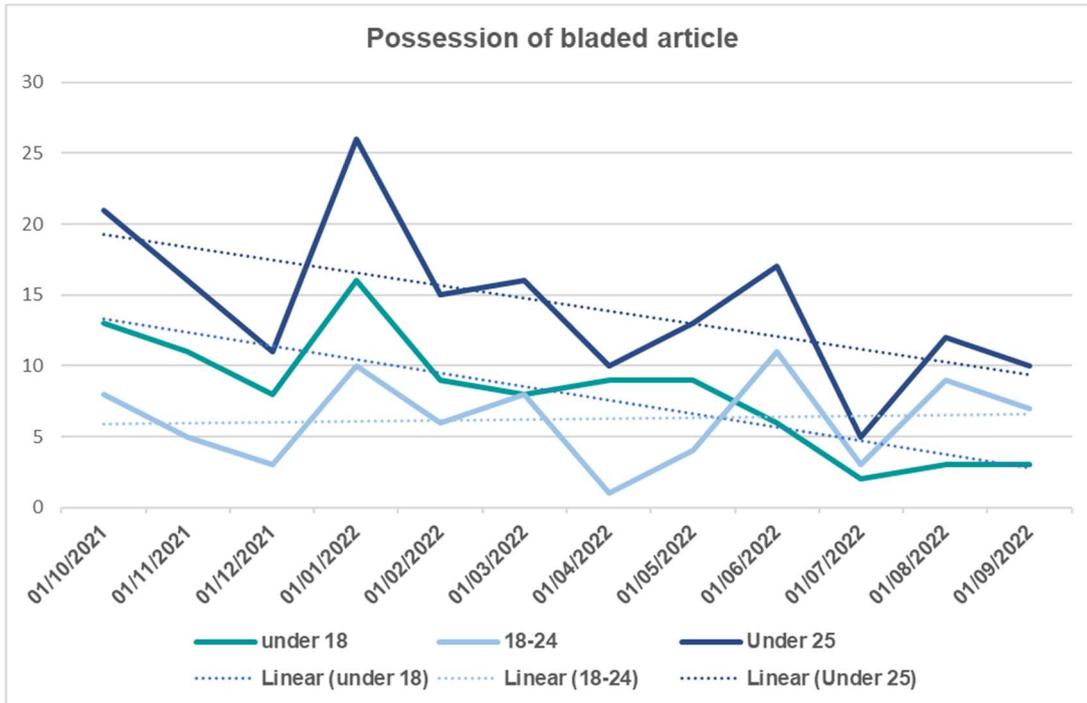


FIGURE 46 - POSSESSION OF AN ARTICLE WITH A BLADE OR POINT BY MONTH AND AGE

Hate crime

West Yorkshire Police reported that in the year ending October 2022 hate incidents increased by 10% on the previous 12-month period. The largest increases being seen in Disability related incidents (32%) and Transphobic incidents (24%). Racial hate crime incidents increased at the lowest rate (3.4%) but account for the majority of hate incidents in West Yorkshire.

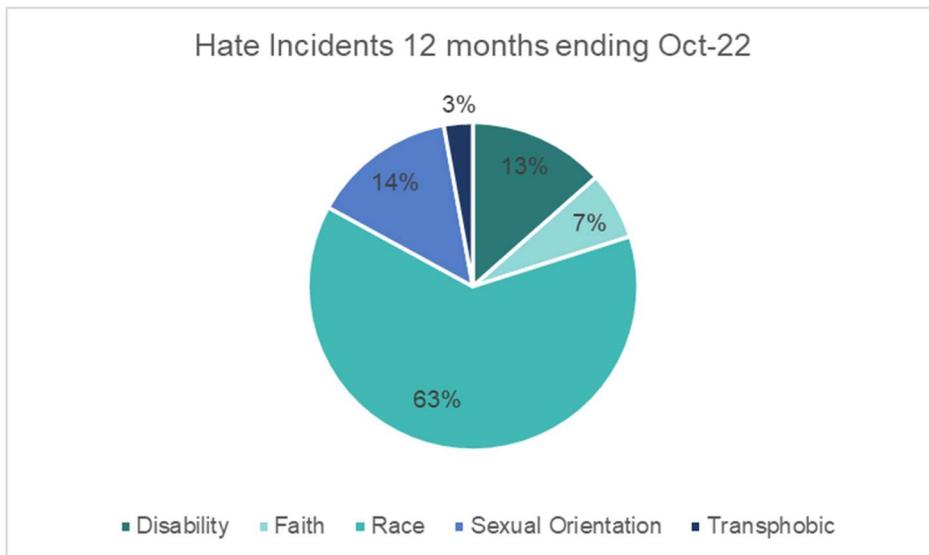


FIGURE 47 - TYPE OF HATE CRIME INCIDENTS IN 12 MONTHS ENDING OCTOBER 2022

Over half the victims of hate incidents in West Yorkshire were males (55%).

Despite a large majority of hate incidents in West Yorkshire being linked to racial abuse, there is no ethnicity data available for almost half (45%) of all hate victims. For all hate incidents where ethnicity was available, the largest proportion of victims self-defined as White, followed by Asian. With such incomplete data though these numbers should be viewed with caution.

The largest age group amongst hate victims were the 30–39 year-olds, however when taking in to account population sizes there are a higher proportion of victims in the 40-49 group.

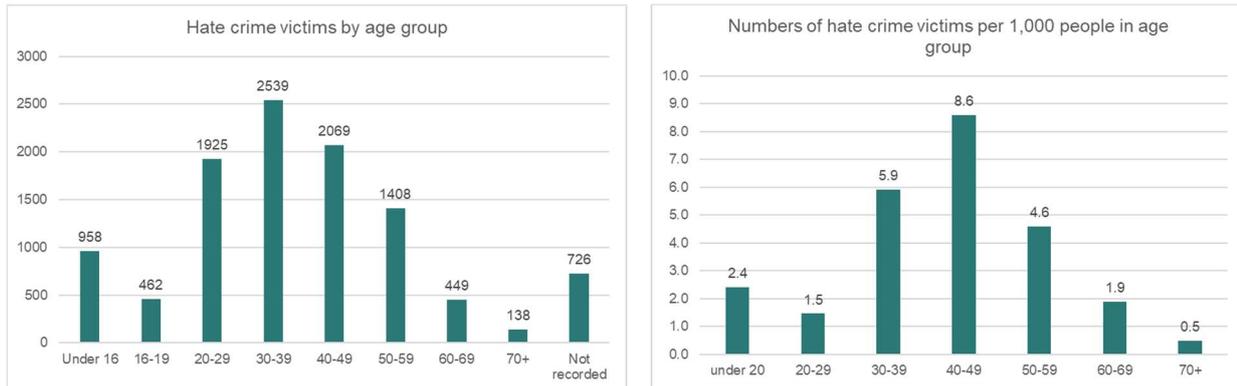


FIGURE 48 - HATE CRIME VICTIMS BY AGE AND 1,000 OF POPULATION

Hate crime offenders were predominantly male (64%) and self-defined as White (51%). There was also a gap in ethnicity data for offenders (35%) however even taking this in to account White offenders still made up the largest ethnicity.

The largest age group for offenders was 30-39, and this age group also had the highest proportion of suspects for its population size.

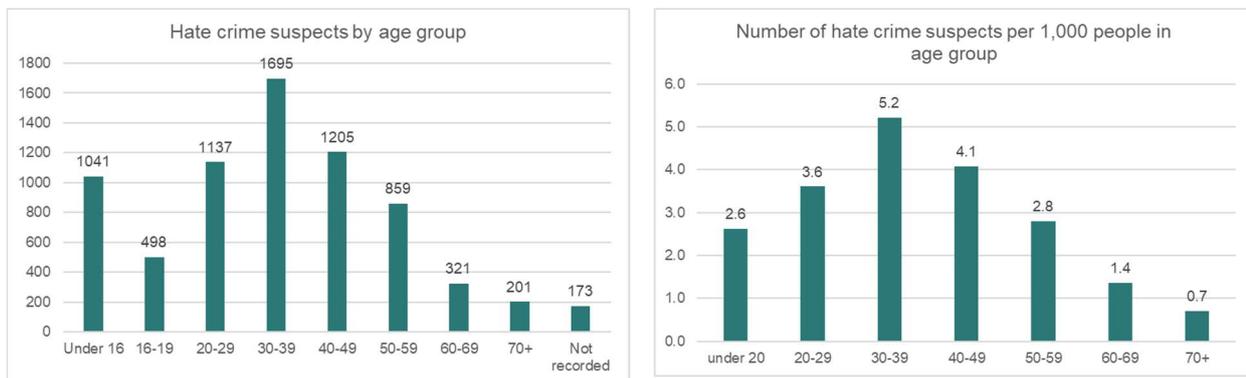


FIGURE 49 - HATE CRIME SUSPECTS BY AGE AND 1,000 OF POPULATION

Appendix 1: Previous research recommendations

In our previous iteration, we outlined several research recommendations for 21/22. The table below details how we responded to the recommendations and the actions we have taken.

TABLE 27 - PREVIOUS RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

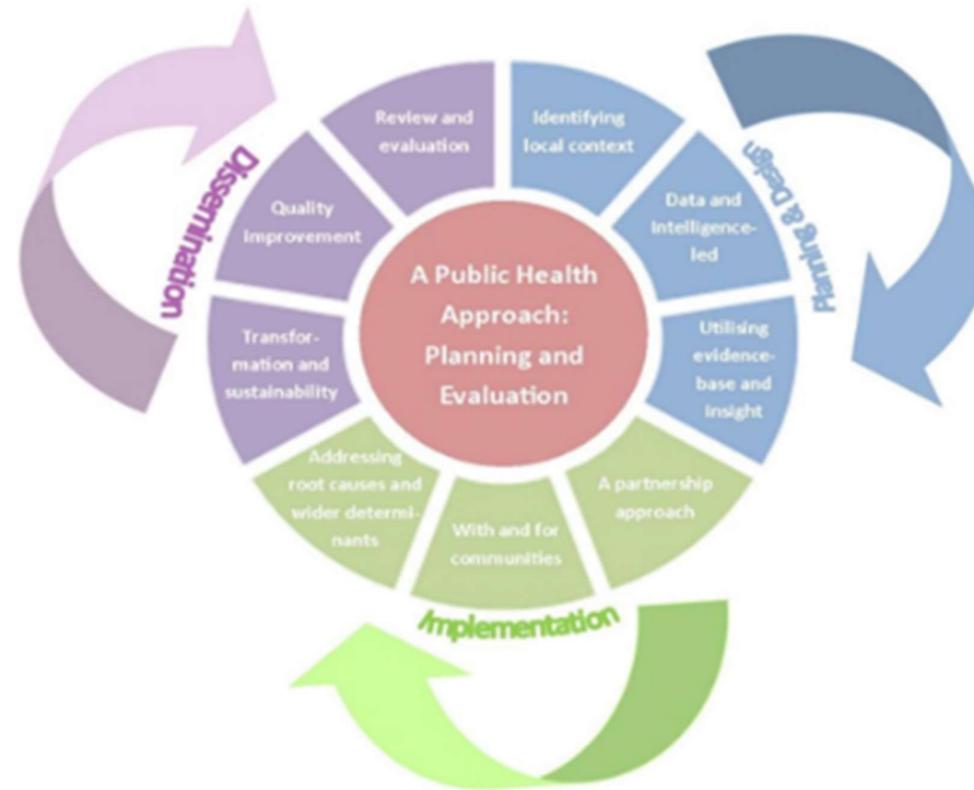
Previous recommendation	Action taken
To expand our current understanding of housing as both a risk and protective factor. Research should include the role of housing for women and girls, prison leavers and Black and Minority Ethnic communities.	We have commissioned Humankind to explore housing as a risk and protective factor for serious violence.
To develop our current knowledge of sexual violence across West Yorkshire with a focus on supporting victims.	In addition to supporting victims, we have commissioned research to examine perpetrator programmes for sexual violence offenders.
Local research is required to better understand the nuances of the impacts of unemployment, particularly on young people	We are commissioning a place-based micro analysis to advance our understanding of violence at a micro 'street' level, a specific area within West Yorkshire will be identified where levels of violence are highest. The intention of the proposed research is to conduct a deep dive on this identified locality, developing a 'thick description' of the hyperlocal factors that influence violence.
Current research reaffirms the prominence of recreational drug use and emphasises the importance of identifying effective approaches. Local research is required to understand recreational drugs use and identify good practice.	We have expanded the scope of our drugs and alcohol research to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed examination of the demographics and characteristics of service users to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - those with responsibility of children - understand how to support service users understand drug users who are not in treatment - understand how to support and families. • An exploration of specific and complex treatment pathways for individuals who are dealing with co-occurring mental health and substance use issues, so they are not barred from specialist support.
Disability and poverty appear to be relational, further examination of this intersection should be considered.	We have commissioned expansion research which is exploring the links between exclusions, neurodiverse conditions and SEN in schools and considers how findings can inform inclusive policies and procedures for schools as well as enhanced monitoring of bullying related to neurodiversity.
Further research which examines the intersectionality of women in West Yorkshire's local communities. This should include women from the LGBTQIA+ community and women from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.	From February 2022, the VRU conducted 6 focus groups and consultations with women and girls from across West Yorkshire. We spoke to 51 women and girls from Bradford, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield. We tried to target Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to address the gap in knowledge which was

	highlighted as part of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Literature Review.
To explore the recent increase in spiking and the impact these events may have had on perceptions of safety , especially occurrences involving injectables. Exploration of this theme would support existing NTE and VAWG workstreams.	We have commissioned a well experienced organisation to support the production of a Night-Time Economy Toolkit in West Yorkshire. Developing resources for managing and enhancing a safe and prosperous night-time economy will aid us to develop sustainable, healthy and safe night-time economies across West Yorkshire.
Further understanding of stalking and harassment is required, especially to support the safety planning and risk management of victim.	In March 2022, we worked alongside the University of Huddersfield to develop a research proposal for the ESRC's 'Partner with the police to tackle violence against women and girls' funding opportunity. The research will bring stalking from the margins to the centre in policy, practice and public awareness in the West Yorkshire region. In August 2022, the ESRC announced that the University of Huddersfield had been successful in their funding bid. From September, the VRU have been working with the University on data collection.
To capture much more data around the key markers of education inclusion , which will then be collated and stored centrally in a West Yorkshire 'dashboard' for educational inclusion and be accessible to all relevant partners.	We undertook a scoping exercise which assisted our understanding of what data is captured, at what regularity and at what level. We found that each local authority has a minimum toolkit of an education dashboard. We are due to collaborate with Kirklees College to explore the extent to which young peoples' educational and life chances are impacted by their experiences throughout college.

Across West Yorkshire, we will work together to prevent violence and to reduce its harmful impact. We will do this by strengthening our partnerships, working with our communities, developing our understanding of the causes of violence, and delivering interventions that make a lasting difference.

Impact

1. The VRU will ensure system leadership and sustainability across West Yorkshire
2. Ensure WY&H is a trauma informed and responsive system, working to prevent vulnerability and exploitation.
3. West Yorkshire will have a skilled and knowledgeable workforce to support the system around serious violence, exploitation and will be trauma informed
4. We will prevent young people from entering the criminal justice system and reduce reoffending.
5. All young people affected by domestic violence and abuse will be supported.
6. All A&E departments will provide navigator support for young people.
7. Specialist support will be provided to promote educational inclusion and attainment.
8. Our night time economy will be a safe, healthy and prosperous environment
9. All victims of serious violence will be able to access appropriate support and advice.
10. We will address the determinants and root causes of serious violence and contribute to reducing inequalities



Outcomes we will contribute to

- Reducing adversity and trauma
- Trauma informed organisations and workforce
- Trauma informed schools
- Educational attainment
- Reduction in school absences and exclusions
- Reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object
- Reduction in non-domestic homicides, particularly amongst those victims aged under 25 involving knives
- Reduction in first time offenders
- Reduction in reoffending
- Reduction in weapon related crime, particularly amongst those victims aged under 25
- Reduction in domestic violence and abuse
- Empowered, engaged communities
- Victims who feel supported

Inputs

- Funding** - Fourth year funding of £5.8m from the Home Office
Additional funding opportunities as and when they become available (e.g. Safer Streets Fund)
Match funding where applicable
- Capacity** - Central VRU staffing,
Op Jemlock (Grip) team
OPCC support
WY Integrated Care Partnership support
- Products** - 22/23 Needs Assessment & Response Strategy
Research & Evaluation knowledge products
Existing Data Agreements
Online partnership data hub
Engagement reports
OPCC Community survey reports
- Partnerships** - Statutory partners
Serious Violence Duty Partners
Existing multi agency partnerships
Public Health RSV Network
Third sector and community networks
- Delivery** - Existing interventions programme
- Support** - Guidance from Home Office
VRU Directors network / Learning & evaluation network

Activities

- Commissioning of specific interventions as test beds to explore promising practice/innovation
- Commissioning of specific high impact interventions
- Supporting local initiatives and priorities through partnership working
- Increasing system leadership and embedding sustainability
- Supporting implementation of Serious Violence Duty
- Identify collaborative and match funding to support sustainability
- Developing the Task and finish groups as necessary
- Workforce development and training
- Data sharing, collection and analysis – to support VRU products and research programme, Jemlock (Grip), partnership data portal development and evaluation work
- Research and evaluation – Research programme to fill knowledge gaps, and evaluation work to build the evidence base for what works (or otherwise) from our funded delivery programme.
- Young People and Community involvement, engagement, and coproduction
- Supporting Jemlock (Grip) prevention and enforcement activities
- Development of a communications strategy and plan

Outputs

- Continuously refreshed interactive Response Strategy and Strategic Needs Assessment
- Locality based Needs Assessments that support partners with the Serious Violence Duty
- Annual report & Health check
- Online partnership data hub
- A programme of research projects with published outcomes
- A rolling evaluation programme
- A repository of evidence for ‘what works’ and best practice
- Sustainability plan
- Risk profile for each place
- Community engagement and coproduction plan
- Community perception report
- Local evaluation framework and dashboard aligned to project level Theory of Change
- Framework for the reopening of the night time economy
- Communications Strategy & plan

The logo consists of a stylized 'W' shape formed by two overlapping triangles. The left triangle is dark blue and the right triangle is teal. To the right of this graphic, the text 'West Yorkshire' is in teal, 'Violence' is in dark blue, and 'Reduction Unit' is in dark blue.

West Yorkshire
**Violence
Reduction Unit**

