

West Midlands

Violence Reduction Unit

STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT

APRIL 2021

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**WEST MIDLANDS
VIOLENCE
REDUCTION UNIT**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence has been rising in the West Midlands for several years, a trend - sadly - that has been seen across much of England & Wales.

Serious violence, such as knife crime, has a disproportionately adverse impact on some of our most vulnerable people and communities. All too often, it causes great trauma and costs lives, too often young ones.

In the space of five years, knife crime has more than doubled in the West Midlands, from 1,558 incidents in the year to March 2015, to more than 3,400 in the year to March 2020, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Violence Reduction Units were set up to help prevent this rise in serious violence from continuing. In the West Midlands, the VRU has built on the early work of the Violence Prevention Alliance, with a longstanding commitment to work in partnership, to understand the risks and to intervene early to prevent the violence from happening in the first place.

Working together at the earliest possible opportunity presents the best chance of success. We also have a better chance of success if we understand the risks and inequalities that mean that some of our people and our communities are more at risk of serious violence.

The Strategic Needs Assessment seeks to set out our current understanding the data and the evidence from a range of sources that reveals patterns, trends and hotspots in the extent and the risk of violence in the West Midlands. It is a developing document, which we will work with partners to refine further over the coming year.

This version of the report includes a substantive section on criminal exploitation through the county lines drugs distribution model. It introduces the Risk Index, which allows us to focus attention on the people and the neighbourhoods that are most at risk of violence.

The assessment makes a series of proposals for the VRU and its partners to consider as areas of future focus and delivery, including recommendations on “Place”, “People”, and work in custodial and education settings.

While data is undoubtedly important and provides a useful starting point to identify potential action, it does have limitations and does not perfectly describe reality. The annexes and references describe some of these caveats in more detail and provide feedback from the professionals who live and work in those communities.

The place-based chapters reveal not just the statistics about the people and the places of the West Midlands but offer a glimpse into what life is like for the people and families that live there with images and quotes – voices of the community.

It is a long and quite detailed document and runs the risk of becoming static, a moment captured in time. To complement this needs assessment, the VRU is working on a web-based platform which will be more dynamic and will allow users with a specific or local interest to find and to filter relevant information more easily.

2. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Violence is a scourge on individuals, families and communities. From coercive domestic abuse to fights outside pubs on Saturday nights to the criminal exploitation of young people through county lines drug operations, it causes immeasurable pain, suffering and in the worst cases costs lives.

In contrast to other crime types (such as theft) violence has been rising in recent years. This is a worrying trend. It is important to turn the tide.

This is possible. Violence is not inevitable. The frequency of violent incidents and the prevalence of risk factors that can be associated with violence will be explored and analysed in more detail in the following pages.

For the best chance of reducing violence, a joined-up approach is needed. No single agency is well placed to resolve the challenge alone. A challenge of this complexity requires statutory agencies to work alongside a wide range of voluntary organisations and communities to first understand, and then to tackle the risks together. A people-first, and place-based approach gives the opportunity to prevent violence.

This is typically referred to as a public health approach. A public health approach is also led by the evidence and the data. With a human problem as multi-dimensional as violence, no one agency's data can provide a rounded perspective on patterns and trends.



One of the ways in which the Violence Reduction Unit can add value to the partnerships efforts to end violence in the West Midlands is to gather in one place those different perspectives, to provide a multiagency lens on violence data and the risk of violence in the region.

This Strategic Needs Assessment aims to assess the different available data, highlighting the importance and relevance of key information, to strengthen the evidence base that partners and communities can access.

In doing so, the hope and expectation is to provide valuable evidence and direction for the VRU and its partners to commission with confidence, to support the people and the places that would benefit the most.

There is information missing in this assessment. There

is data, not in the public realm and not yet shared with the partnership, that we would like to have included. There is more detail about what this is later in the document. One of the key objectives for the VRU is to secure the sharing agreements needed to include this important additional insight in future assessments.

However, it would be unlikely if this missing data painted a completely different picture to the one that emerges over the following pages.

One that reveals a striking relationship between the extent of violence, the risk of violence and the structural social, economic and health inequalities and deprivation that are commonly found in parts of the West Midlands.

Interactive Web-Based Strategic Needs Assessment: www.wmvru-sna.org

To complement this SNA, the West Midlands VRU has developed a dynamic, web-based version which allows people to select specific areas of interest and discover data and information on violence, crime and risk in the West Midlands in an intuitive, interactive way. There is also information on schools and the place-based pilots, including links to 'place-based story maps' that show the data in an engaging way, alongside the views and voices of the residents, and describe the work of the VRU and its network of partners in those places in more detail.

3. SCOPE AND APPROACH

The World Health Organisation definition of violence - "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation", encompasses a wide spectrum of harm.

In line with the Home Office Serious Violence Strategy published in 2018ⁱⁱ, and conscious of the dramatic increase in the volume and rate of knife crime in the West Midlands in recent years, this Strategic Needs Assessment will focus on serious youth violence, violence against the person and knife crime.

The geographical focus will mirror the area covered by West Midlands Police and West Midlands Combined Authority and includes the seven local authority areas of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

The analysis will consider the extent of violence, including volumes and rates and compare areas within and outside the West Midlands and over time.

But true to the core principles of a public health approach to reducing violence, it will also consider the risk factors associated with violence at both a population-centred and place-based level.

It will shine a light on some of the people, neighbourhoods and communities in the West Midlands in a series of "Place-Based chapters", which include qualitative as well as quantitative data and highlight some of the work that the West Midlands VRU is doing with partners to support the people and communities most affected by, and suffering from the costs of, violence.

With an enduring commitment to data and evidence from a variety of sources, including the criminal justice sector, health, education and local authorities, this assessment, perhaps most crucially, will make a series of recommendations for future focus for the VRU, its stakeholders and partners.



4. THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

The West Midlands is a combined authority area with a population of three million living across seven metropolitan boroughs - the cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton and the boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull and Walsall.

Strategically positioned in central England, the West Midlands grew rapidly during the Industrial Revolution with Birmingham and the Black Country developing into important centres of industry.

Birmingham emerged from a humble market town into the fastest-growing city of the 19th century, fuelled by a combination of civic investment, scientific achievement, commercial innovation and a steady influx of migrant workers into the region.

Home to a wide variety of manufactured goods, from buttons to nails, from jewellery to guns, toys and locks, Birmingham became known as the “City of a Thousand Trades”. Coventry became the world’s leading centre of bicycle and car manufacture. By the 20th century, the West Midlands was the hub of the UK manufacturing and automotive industries.

Under the Liberal mayor Joseph Chamberlain, Birmingham’s worst slums were cleared, the Council House and Victoria Law Courts were built and numerous public parks and libraries were created along with the city’s Museum and Art Gallery in 1885.

Frank Whittle, the inventor of the jet engine, was born in Coventry and the factory in Castle Bromwich on the border of Birmingham and Solihull became famous for the manufacture of the Spitfire aircraft.



Spaghetti Junction (Image by West Midlands Police) Image licenced CC BY-SA 2.0

In the post-war years, the city was substantially rebuilt with Victorian back-to-back housing replaced by high-rise blocks of flats. Castle Bromwich was developed in Solihull in the 1960s and Castle Vale became Britain’s largest post-war housing estate with 34 tower blocks.

Immigration from Ireland gave the region a strong Irish tradition. Following World War II, immigrants from the Commonwealth changed the face of the West Midlands further, with large communities from Asia and the Caribbean turning the West Midlands into one of the UK’s leading multicultural regions.

The developments were not welcomed by everyone. The right-wing Wolverhampton MP Enoch Powell delivered his famous Rivers of Blood speech in the city in 1968.

Tensions between ethnic groups and the authorities led to the Handsworth riots in 1981 and 1985. The city and country were shocked in January 2003 by the murder of Letisha Shakespeare and Charlene Ellis. That year saw 27 gang-related murders in Birmingham alone. In 2005, Lozells and Handsworth saw riots and street battles.

As a result of this surge in violence, a multi-agency partnership was set up with the police and local authority leading a renewed effort to tackle the issue. The coherent approach led to real successes in reducing the level of harm, but austerity and public sector cuts meant the break-up of the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence Partnership. What followed was a rise in the incidence of gang violence and knife crime in the region.

In 2015, the West Midlands Violence Prevention Alliance (WMVPA) was established. Funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner it saw Public Health England work with West Midlands Police and others to tackle the causes of violent behaviour. An acknowledgement that simply making more arrests on the streets would not solve the problem, a commitment to use evidence-based interventions to reduce harm.

The Commission on Gangs and Violence reportⁱⁱⁱ in November 2017 implored enduring leadership, direction and commitment in tackling the scourge of gangs and violence, stressing the need for genuine power-sharing and for communities to be effectively involved in partnerships and decision making.

In October 2019, the WMVPA was incorporated into the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (WMVRU). The collaborative approach has been expanded with a vision to support the development of cohesive and inclusive communities living safe and fulfilling lives. The mission is the prevention and reduction of violence so that people, families and communities are safe, healthy, free from harm and exploitation.

The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 has to some extent restricted the efforts and ambitions of the VRU partnership. The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has yet to be really felt, but analysis^{iv} by West Midlands VRU suggests the region may be especially hard hit due to its young population, economic reliance on the hospitality and retail sectors and pockets of deep deprivation.

There is, however, reason to be optimistic. As this report is written, two Covid-19 vaccines have been approved in the UK. The new year offers fresh hope.

The West Midlands has a habit of bouncing back and reinventing itself in the face of adversity. Coventry looks forward to being the City of Culture in 2021 and Birmingham is preparing to host the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

Sentinel Spitfire Statue, Castle Bromwich, by Oosoom at English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0



5. THE NATIONAL PICTURE – RISING VIOLENCE

This section considers the extent and volume of violence, the rates and trends over time, comparing the West Midlands to other police force areas in England and Wales.

5.1 Police Recorded Crime – Violence Definitions

Only a proportion of violent crime is reported to the police.

That which is reported, is categorised into a number of different types – from assaults that result in no physical harm to murder. Published police statistics define two high-level categories - violence without injury and violence with injury.

About 30% of police recorded violence against the person results in injury^v. Violence with injury includes wounding, assault with injury, homicide and attempts at inflicting injury.

Comparing areas by volume of crime alone forces attention towards the most heavily populated areas. To give a more accurate description of the risk to an individual, the following tables compare the rate of violent crime reports per 1,000 or 100,000 of the population in different police force areas in England and Wales.

5.2 Violence against the Person^{vi}

Violence against the person combines both violence with injury and violence without injury. It includes less serious offences, such as those where no injury was sustained. This category is important to consider because the outcome of a violent act cannot always be predicted: a range of circumstantial factors may cause an injury to be less severe.

For the year ending June 2020, the West Midlands rate was 32.3 per 1,000 of the population, according to the latest available data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This rate is higher than the England and Wales average but is noticeably lower than other densely populated urban areas, such as West Yorkshire and Merseyside.

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) uses Most Similar Groups (MSGs) for police force areas that are most like each other based on demographic, social and economic characteristics relating to crime^{vii}.

West Midlands Police MSGs are Greater Manchester, Merseyside and West Yorkshire. Along with the national figure, these are highlighted in the tables.

5.3 Violence with Injury and Knife Crime^{viii}

The following tables focus on the more serious offences of Violence with Injury and Knife Crime.

“Knife Crime” includes police recorded offences of homicide, attempted murder, threats to kill, assault with injury, robbery, rape and sexual assault, where a knife was involved. It does not include possession of knife or bladed article offences.

The total volume of recorded knife crime^x within each police force is shown on the map overleaf.

The Metropolitan Police Service has been removed from the table. The volume within MPS is four times higher than any other police force area, but it also has a much larger population. At almost nine million, the Metropolitan Police Force Area serves three times the number of people as in the West Midlands. The total number of offences involving a knife in London in the year to June 2020 was 14,167 - four and a half times the number in the West Midlands (3,157) in the same time period. This equates to a rate of 158 knife offences per 100,000 in London, as shown in the above table.

Only force areas with above median volumes (more than 608 selected offences involving a knife in the year from July 2019 to June 2020) are shown and the big, denser populated city regions therefore dominate the map.

The inset map overleaf shows the distribution of Knife Crime in the West Midlands.

Violence Against the Person

Police Force Area	Population (mid-2019 estimates)	Violence against the person
West Yorkshire	2,332,500	45.6
Cleveland	569,100	41.6
Durham	636,900	40.7
Kent	1,860,100	40.0
Lancashire	1,508,900	36.5
North Wales	699,600	36.4
Cheshire	1,066,600	36.2
Humberside	932,800	35.9
Essex	1,846,700	34.8
Merseyside	1,429,900	34.0
South Yorkshire	1,409,000	34.0
Gwent	594,200	33.4
West Midlands	2,928,600	32.3
Northamptonshire	753,300	32.0
Northumbria	1,463,900	30.8
Cumbria	500,000	30.8
Greater Manchester	2,835,700	30.1
Derbyshire	1,060,000	29.8
Hampshire	1,991,700	29.7
England & Wales	59,439,800	29.5
Suffolk	761,400	28.6
Leicestershire	1,100,300	28.5
Norfolk	907,800	28.4

Violence with Injury

Police Force Area	Population (mid-2019 estimates)	Violence against the person
West Midlands	2,928,600	11.2
Humberside	932,800	11.1
West Yorkshire	2,332,500	11.0
Hampshire	1,991,700	10.0
Lancashire	1,508,900	10.0
South Yorkshire	1,409,000	9.9
Merseyside	1,429,900	9.9
Northamptonshire	753,300	9.9
Kent	1,860,100	9.8
Kent	1,860,100	9.6
Cleveland	569,100	9.6
Derbyshire	1,060,000	9.4
Cheshire	1,066,600	9.3
Gwent	594,200	9.2
North Wales	699,600	9.1
Northumbria	1,463,900	9.0
Cumbria	500,000	8.8
Gloucestershire	637,100	8.7
England & Wales	59,439,800	8.6
South Wales	1,339,400	8.6
Durham	636,900	8.5
Leicestershire	1,100,300	8.5
Greater Manchester	2,835,700	8.4
Sussex	1,712,100	8.3

Key

West Midlands Police Force
Most Similar Group
England & Wales

Source: Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables (Year Ending June 2020 - Office of National Statistics)^x

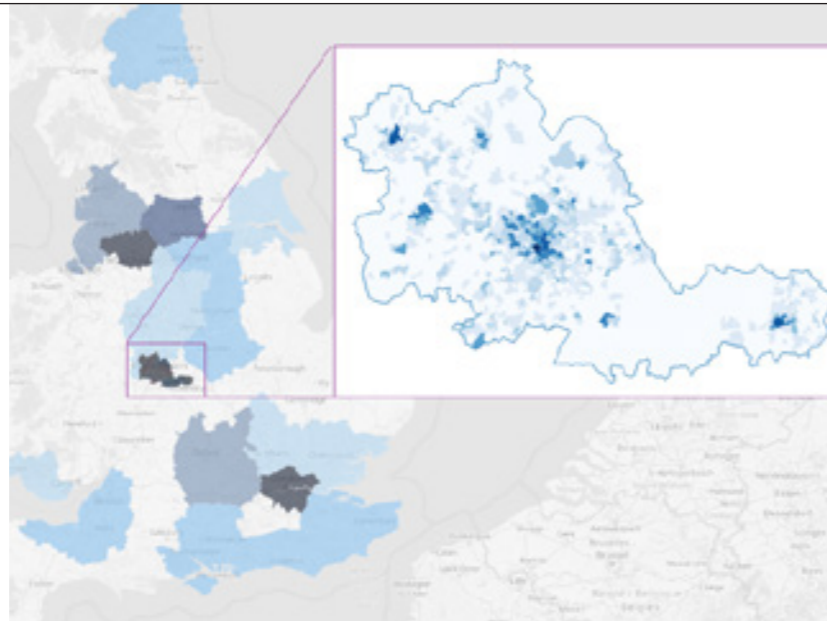
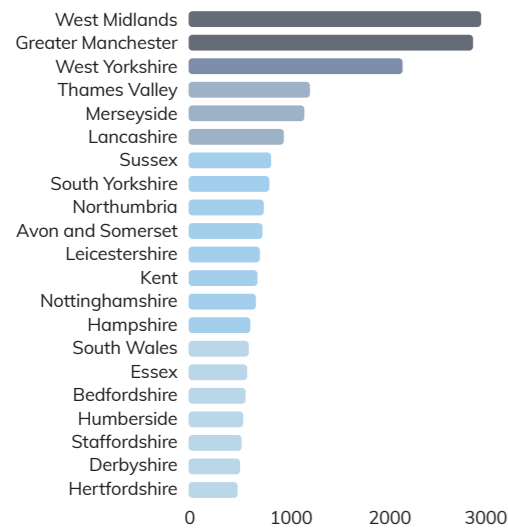
Knife Crime (rate per 100,000)

Police Force Area	Population (mid-2019 estimates)	Violence against the person
West Midlands	2,928,600	11.2
Humberside	932,800	11.1
West Yorkshire	2,332,500	11.0
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Leicestershire	1,100,300	8.5
Greater Manchester	2,835,700	8.4
Sussex	1,712,100	8.3

Key Findings

- + The West Midlands has the highest rates of Violence with Injury in England and Wales, with 11.2 reports per 1,000 population
- + It has the third highest rate of Knife Crime in England and Wales, with 108 reports per 100,000 population.

Knife Crime by Police Force Area

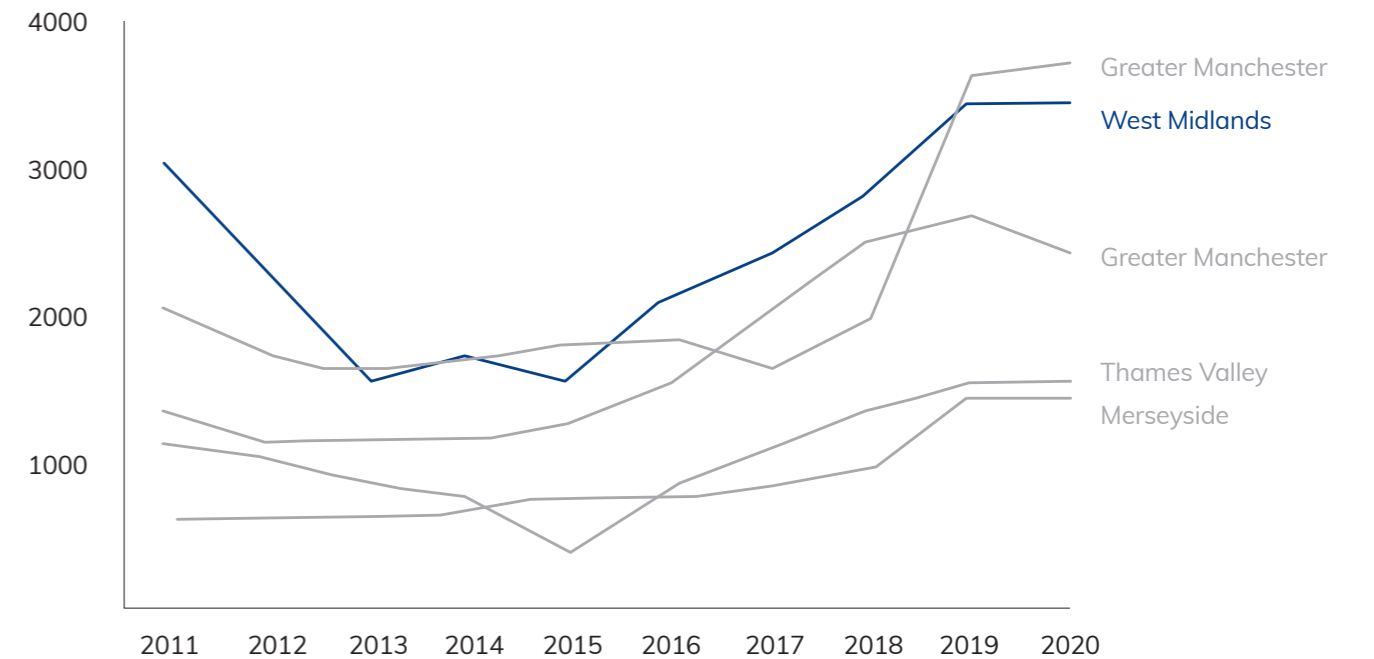


Key Findings

- + Excluding London, the West Midlands has the highest volume of knife crime, followed by Greater Manchester, and West Yorkshire
- + The inset box shows the granular breakdown of knife crime in the West Midlands, highlighting the urban centres of Birmingham, Coventry, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Dudley as the most common hotspots, but also revealing clusters of knife crime in west and inner-city Birmingham, particularly around Aston, Handsworth and Lozells.

The chart opposite shows the trends in the volume of knife crime^{xi} reported by the top five police force areas (excluding London) over the past decade. Only selected Police Force areas are shown, which include the West Midlands and its Most Similar Group.

Knife Crime Trends - Total Volume of Knife Crime by selected Police Force Areas, 2011 to 2020



Key Findings

- + All five areas have seen a rise in knife crime since 2015, but with some clear differences in the patterns and rate of increase.
- + In the West Midlands, this steep rise after 2015 followed a dramatic fall from 2011
- + Most recently, there is some indication of a slowing down, which may be due to the impact of the lockdowns and Covid-19 pandemic
- + A change in crime reporting practices within Greater Manchester Police may explain the significant increase in 2018.

What do we mean by neighbourhood?

- + To compare official statistics at a meaningful local level the VRU is using a geographical unit called a Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOAs) to define a neighbourhood.
- + MSOAs are areas that have a comparable number of people living within them, with an average population of around 8,000.
- + Within the West Midlands VRU area, there are 356 MSOAs. These are listed and named by the House of Commons library^{xii}; examples of which are below.



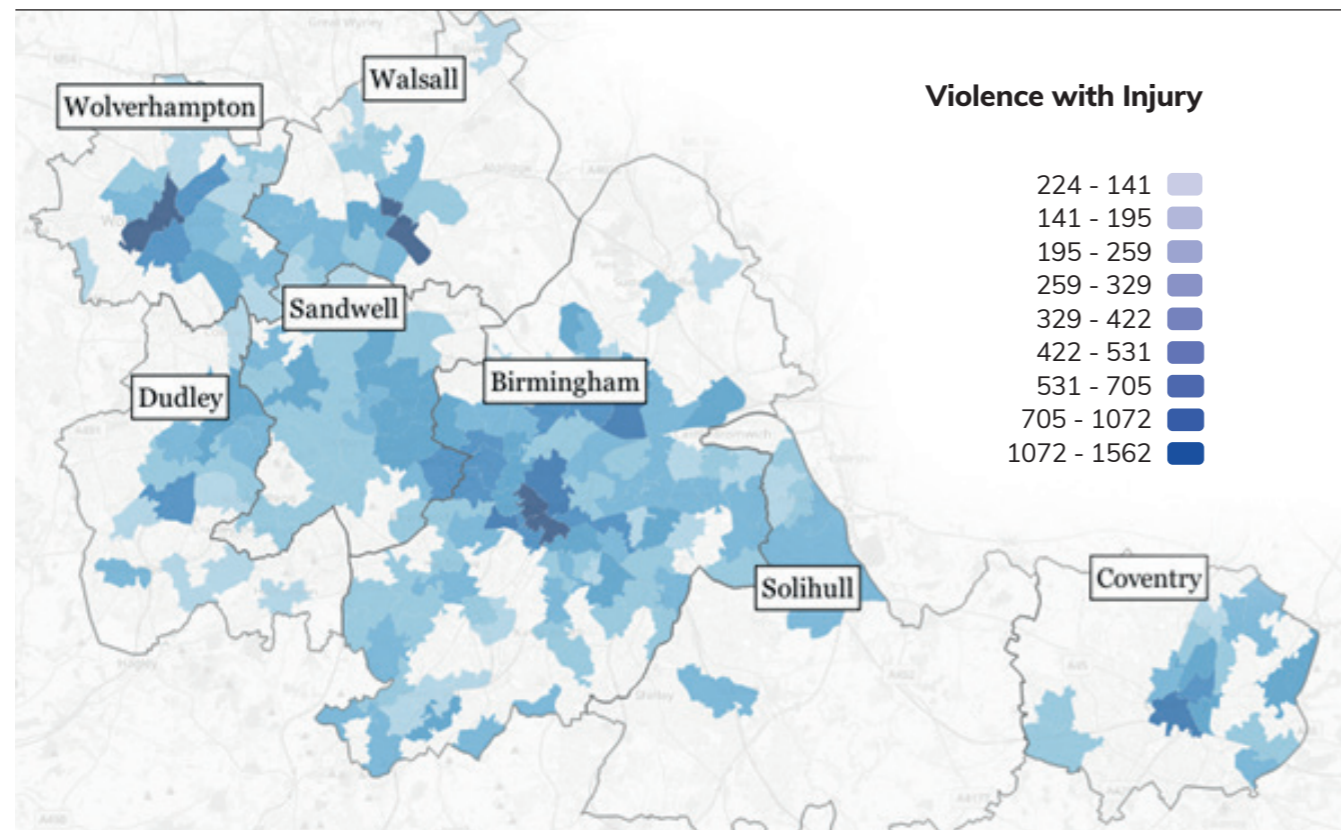
Map of MSOAs (neighbourhoods) in Birmingham (House of Commons Library)

- + The VRU will continue to work with local people to identify areas to focus on the ground – the geographic boundaries for our place based work may well cover more than one MSOA.

6. PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

6.1 Violence Against the Person

The following map shows West Midlands Police recorded incidents of violence against the person November 2017 to November 2020^{xiii} aggregated to neighbourhood level. The median number of incidents per neighbourhood is 224. Neighbourhoods with fewer than 224 incidents are not shaded in. All the other neighbourhoods are shaded in blue with darker blue indicating a higher number. The key shows the number of incidents recorded in each neighbourhood over this three-year period.



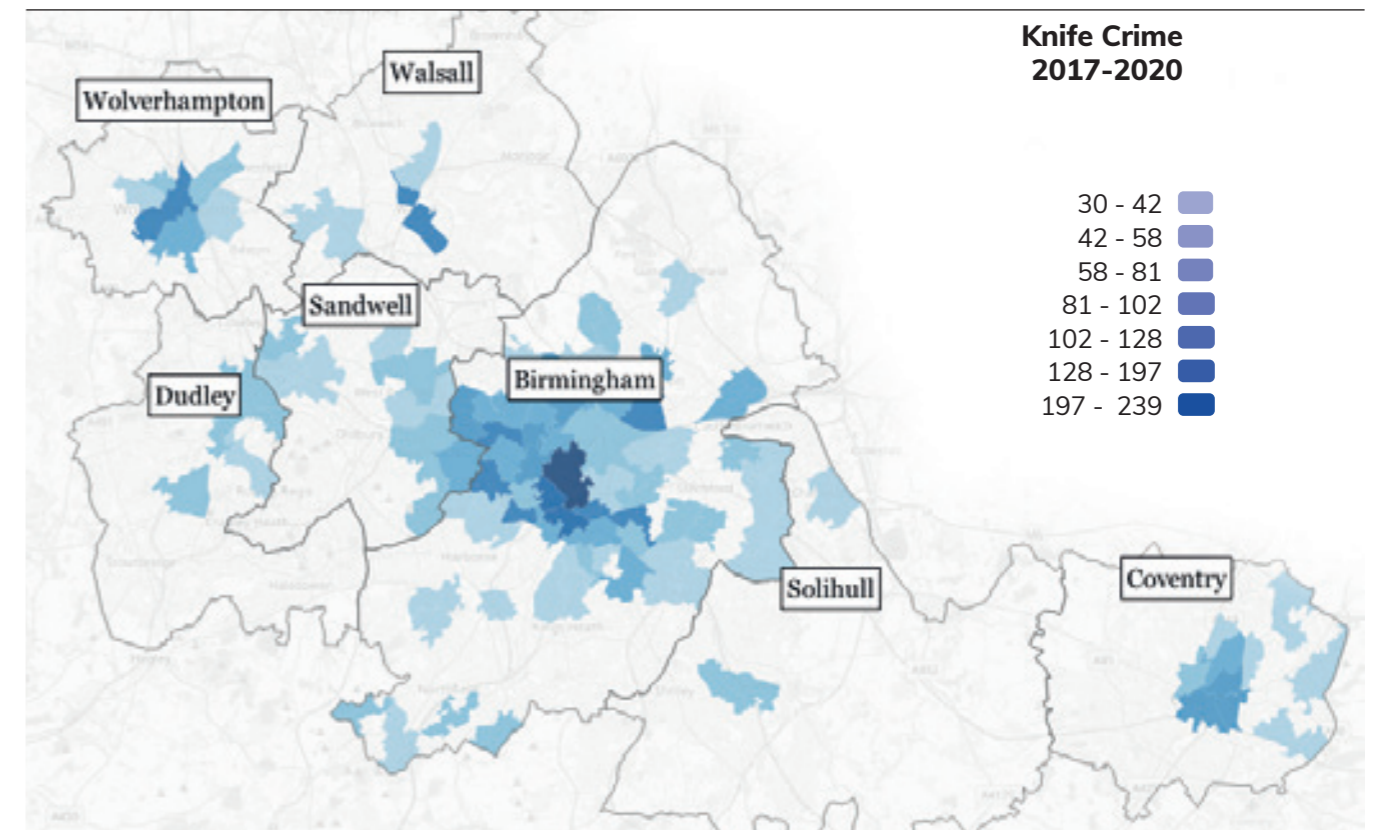
Key Findings

- + The town centres feature prominently as hotspots for violence against the person, which is shown by the darker blue areas in the city centres of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton, but also in Dudley and Walsall town centres
- + Sandwell has more incidents in the east of the local authority (especially Smethwick) but also stands out as having above median levels of Violence Against the Person offences in most of the local authority area
- + The three most common offence types are “Assault Occasion ABH” which accounts for 64% of incidents, “Malicious Wounding (15%) and “GBH With Intent (7.5%)
- + 9% of victims were under 16; 23% were aged between 16 to 24; 27% were 25 to 34 and 27% aged between 35 to 49
- + In 13% of the incidents, the ethnicity of the victim was not stated. Where it was, 60% of victims were White, 16% were Asian and 8% were Black

6.2 Knife Crime

The following map shows West Midlands Police recorded incidents of knife crime from January 2018 to November 2020^{xiv} aggregated to neighbourhood level. The key shows the number of incidents recorded in each neighbourhood over this thirty four month period.

Only neighbourhoods with 30 or more incidents during this time period are shown, with darker blue indicating higher volume. The maximum number of incidents in one neighbourhood is 239 – this was in central Birmingham.



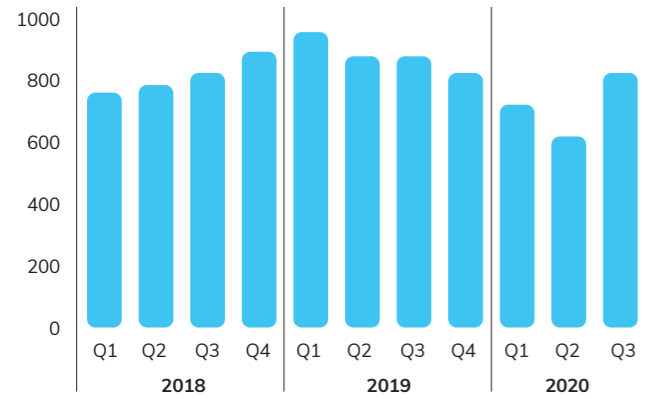
Key Findings

- + The main town centres are typically hotspots for knife crime and violence against the person, which is shown clearly by the darker blue areas in the three main city centres of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton
- + However, these are not the only areas affected by violence and knife crime
- + Outside the town centres there is a correlation between the areas most affected by knife crime and deprivation, such as inner-city Birmingham, the southern and eastern edges of Birmingham, north and central Coventry, Smethwick (east Sandwell) and large parts of Wolverhampton and Walsall

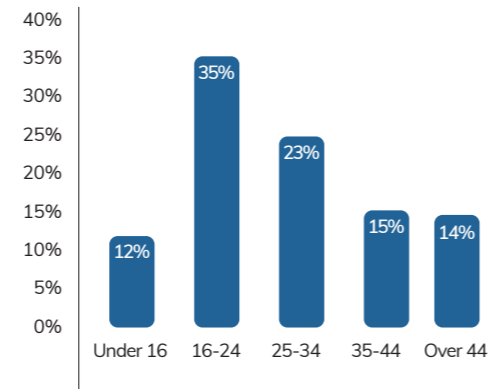
West Midlands Police data corresponds to the annual statistics from the Office for National Statistics shown above. Breaking this down into quarterly data reveals more information about local trends.

The data shows only the number of reported crimes involving knife crime, not the total number of people involved. There may be more than one perpetrator and / or more than one victim involved in each recorded crime.

Knife Crime Volume by Quarter



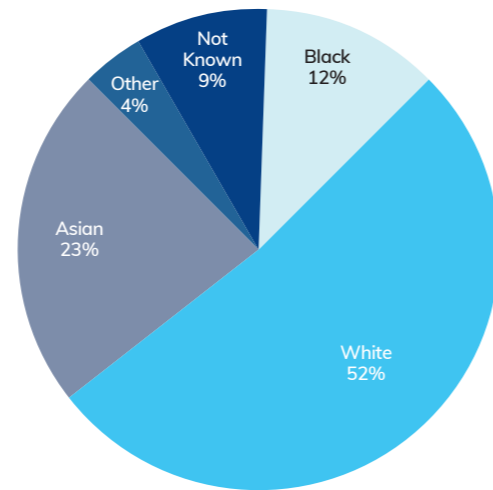
Knife Crime - Age of Victim



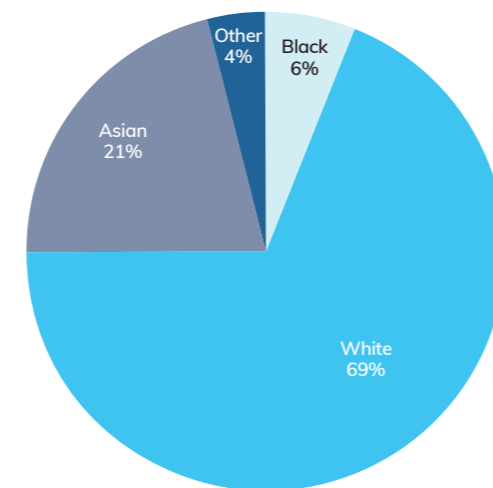
Key Findings

- + Knife crime in the West Midlands was rising steadily until April 2019 but then started to fall
- + By Q1 2020 the number of incidents had fallen to 762, compared to the equivalent quarter in 2019 when the number of incidents had reached a high point of 933
- + Lockdown almost certainly had an impact on Q2 2020 figures, which fell to 616
- + There has been a noticeable and concerning rise in Q3 2020 (July to September) with 849 recorded incidents in the three-month period
- + Between January 2018 and the end of November 2020, West Midlands Police recorded more than 9,000 incidents of knife crime
- + A third of victims of reported Knife crime in the West Midlands are aged between 16 and 24. More than two thirds are under 34 years old
- + 12% of victims of knife crime - approximately one in eight of all victims – are under the age of 16
- + People with Black ethnicity make up 12% of all victims of knife crime. This is double the rate of Black ethnicity in the West Midlands.

Knife Crime - Victim Ethnicity



West Midlands Population by Ethnicity



7. VIOLENCE AND THE PRISON SYSTEM

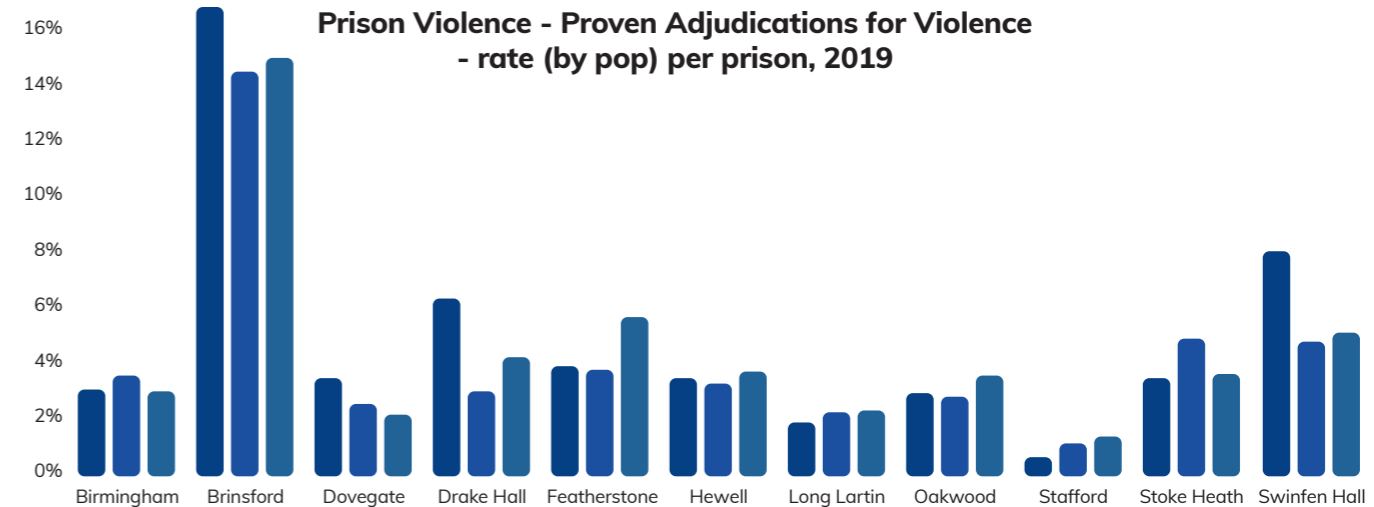
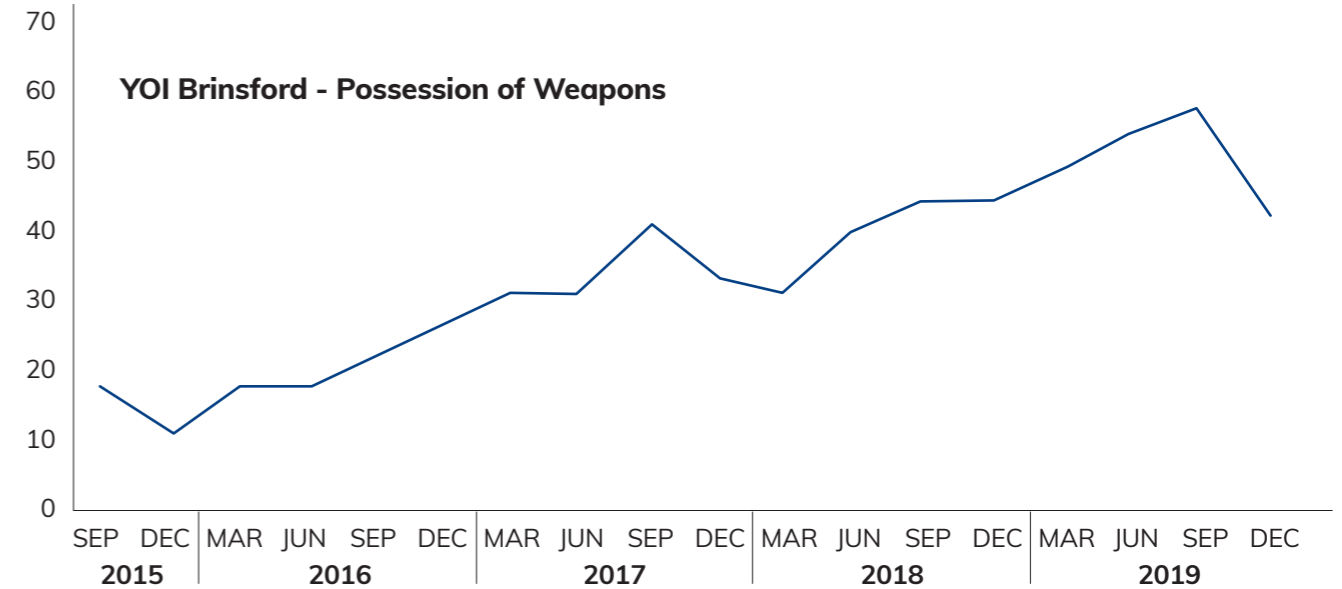
There are 11 prisons in the wider West Midlands region. This section focuses on data related to the Young Offender Institution (YOI) Brinsford as a case study.

HMYOI Brinsford is a Young Offenders' Institution near Wolverhampton for male prisoners aged between 18 and 21, with a total population of 475 in September 2020, according to the quarterly prison population statistics published by the Ministry of Justice^{xv}. Since 2015, there has been a rise in the number of young people imprisoned for possession of weapon offences.

Since 2015, Brinsford has seen significant increases in the number of people imprisoned for possession of weapons offences. It stands out as the prison with the highest proportion of adjudications for violence* in the West Midlands region.

Following a poor inspection in 2013, Brinsford benefited from new leadership and significant investment. In 2017 the institution was reported to have "managed to avoid the enormous increases in violence that have afflicted so much of the prison estate in recent years".

A further inspection in 2018^{xviii} found a "severe increase in self-harm". In 2019, Brinsford became a Category B/C prison due to increases in violence, self-harm and drug abuse. In December 2020, a man was assaulted and died at YOI Brinsford.



*Proven adjudications are cases in which an independent adjudicator, appointed by the Chief Magistrate, may award additional days to the prisoner's custodial time left to serve for offences committed within the prison.

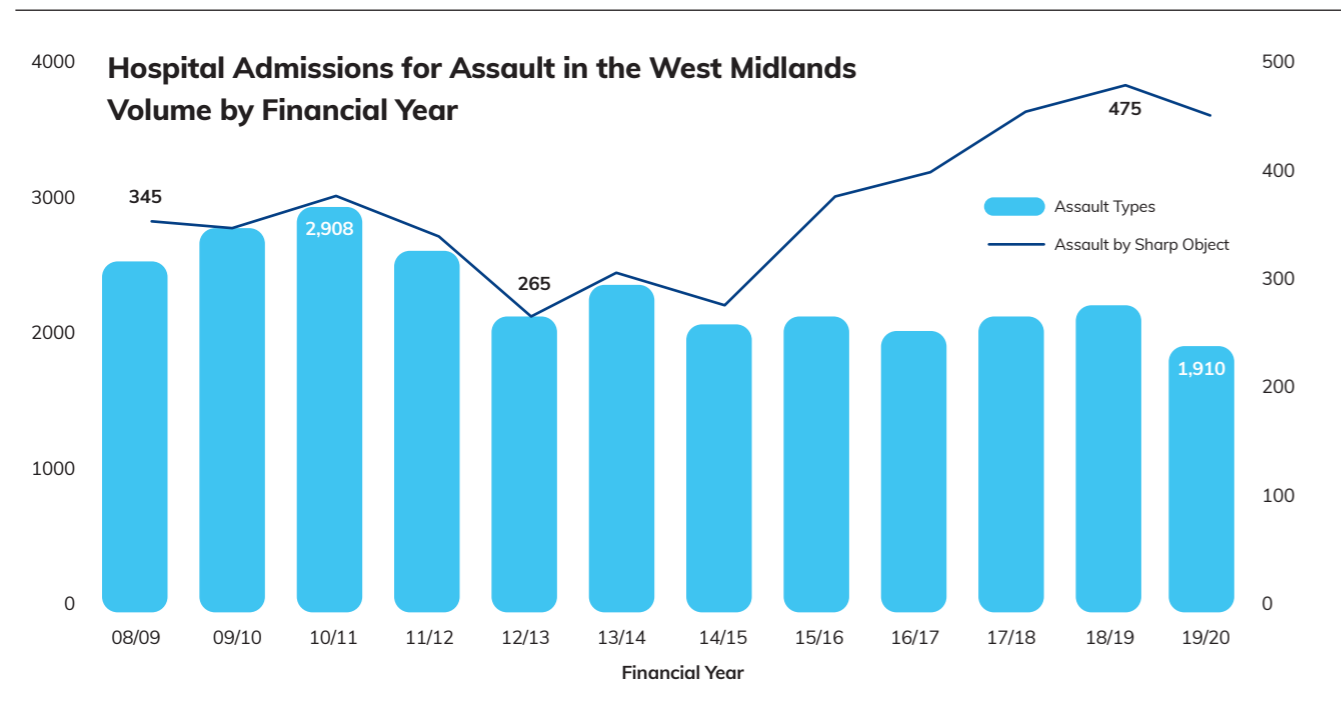
8. HEALTH SYSTEM DATA

Many violent incidents are likely to go unreported to the police. In some cases, these will be serious enough for victims to seek help from health agencies – GPs, drop-in centres or accident and emergency departments. In some cases, an ambulance may be called.

By studying data held within the health system and cross-referencing with data from the criminal justice system, we can begin to get a clearer picture of the extent of serious violence in the region. We will be able to corroborate the criminal justice data where we uncover consistent patterns and trends and may reveal hotspots or trends that were otherwise hidden.

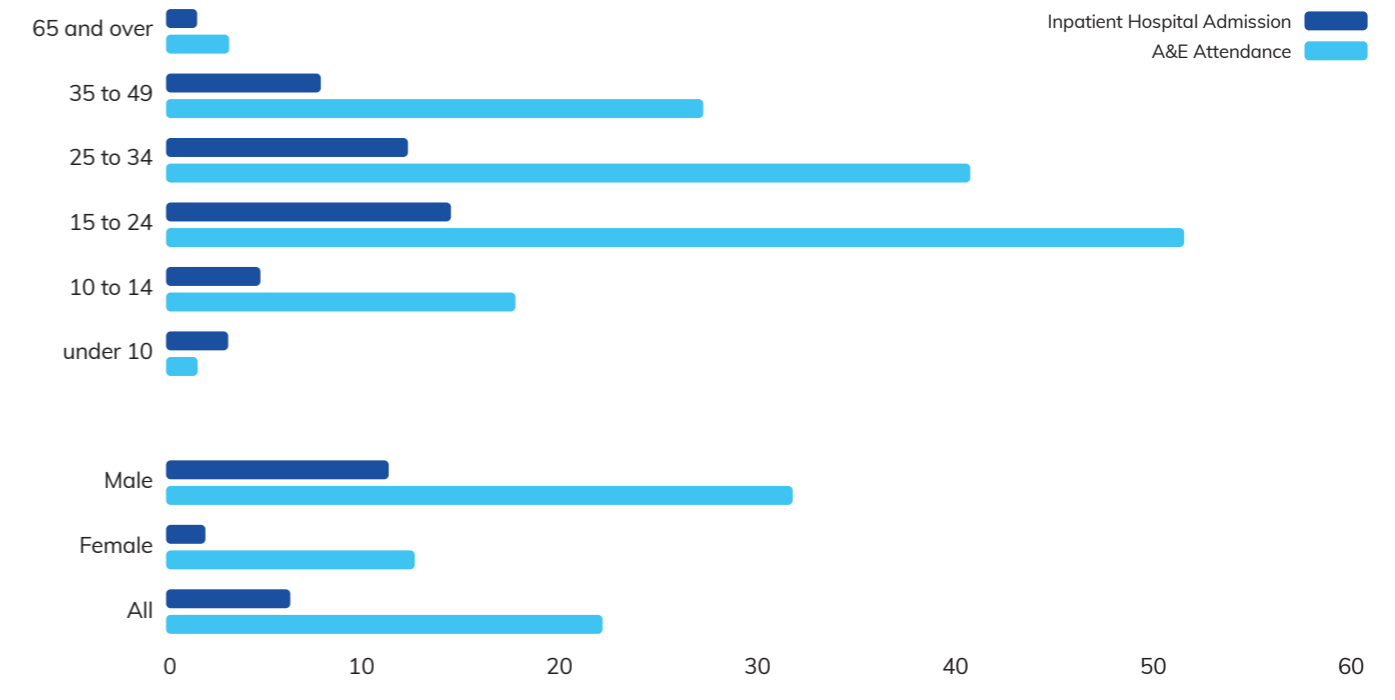
8.1 The profile of people seeking urgent medical treatment after assault

The following chart shows the volume of people admitted to hospital for violence, from 2008-09 to 2019-20 in the West Midlands. All assault types are shown as green bars with the volume on the left-hand y axis. Assault by sharp object (a subset of all assault types) is shown as a dark green line with the volume on the right-hand y axis.



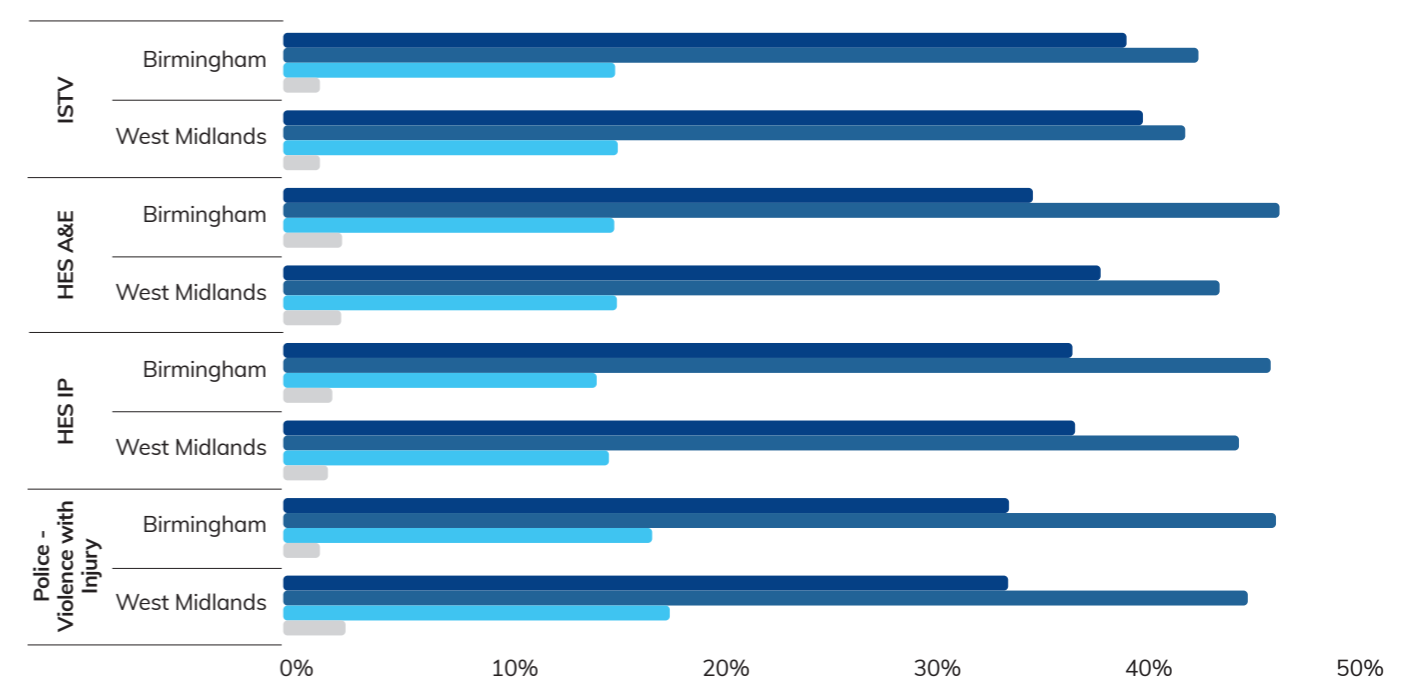
The chart opposite shows the rate of both Accident & Emergency (A&E) attendance and inpatient hospital admissions following assault, grouped by age band and by gender. Inpatient hospital admissions are indicative of more serious injuries.

Hospital Admissions for Assault by Age Band and gender - 2015 to 2020 (rate per 10,000 population)



8.2 A comparison of age profiles of victims of violence, using different health datasets and police information.

We see strong similarities in police and health data the proportion of assault-related injuries and violence split by age group. The age group most affected by violence is 25-44, but also under 25s. This is true of Hospital Statistics, Injury Surveillance and Police data. In the West Midlands, up to 80% of assaults and violence incidents involve a victim under 44 years of age.



Key Findings

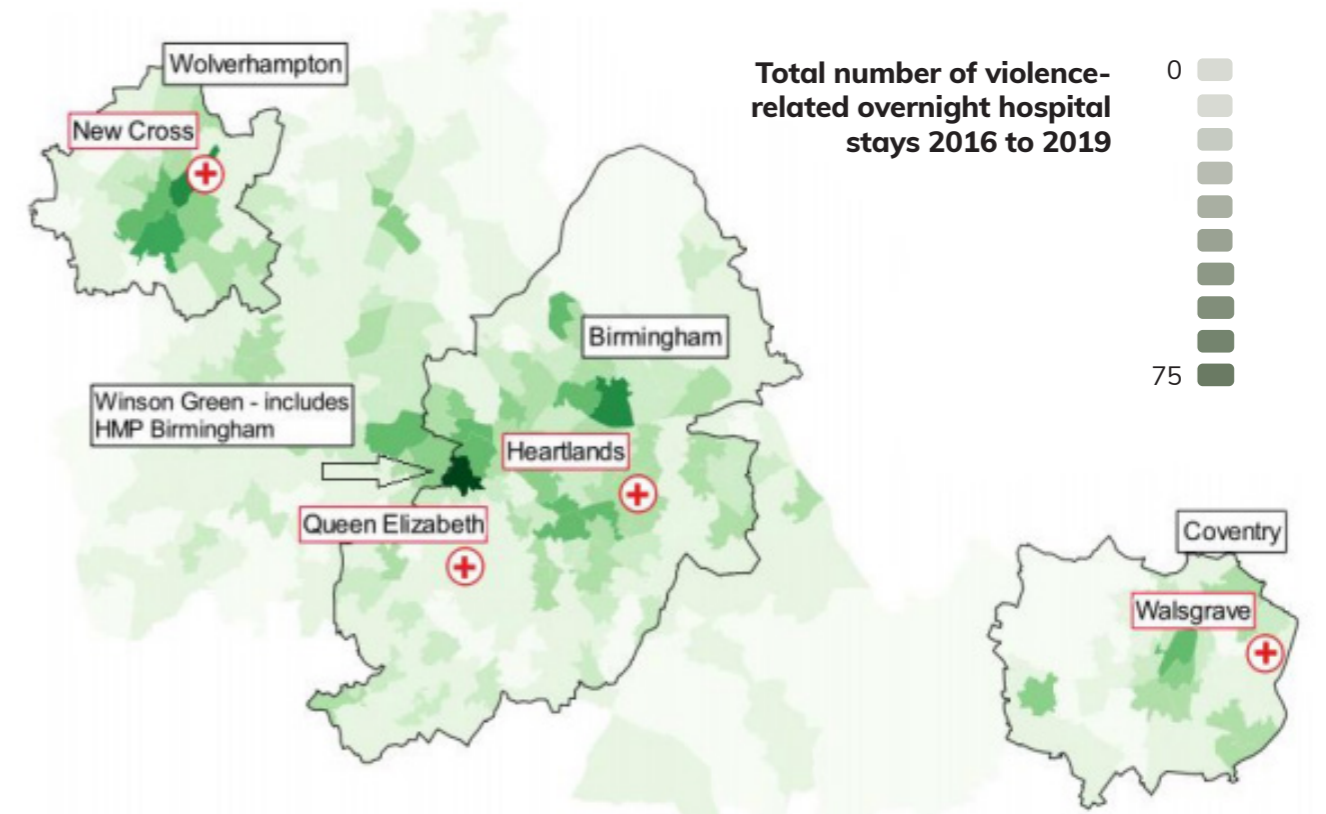
- + Trends in the rate of hospital admissions for assault in the West Midlands mirror the trends in police recorded knife crime. Both datasets show a gradual decline until 2013, followed by a short plateau and a significant increase between 2015 and 2019
- + The most recent data from both sectors suggests a slowing down of the increase in 2020, which may be due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the lockdowns and the impacts on the night-time economy and violence in the public place, but further analysis is required
- + There is a key distinction to be found in the hospital admissions data, which is that admissions for all assault types have fallen from a high of almost 3,000 per 100,000 of the population in 2011 to less than 2,000 per 100,000 of the population in 2020
- + However, for assault by a sharp object, which is typically a knife or broken bottle, the rate increased from 345 per 100,000 of the population in 2013 to 475 per 100,000 of the population in 2019, although a slight decrease in the number has been observed in 2020, possibly as a result of the lockdown closing parts of the night-time economy for part of the year
- + In common with Police data, health data shows young people to be disproportionately impacted by violent assaults
- + The age group most affected by violence is 25-44, but also under 25s. This is true of Hospital Admission and A&E attendance, Injury Surveillance and Police data
- + In the West Midlands, up to 80% of assaults and violence incidents involve a victim under 44 years of age
- + 15 to 24 year olds attend A&E following an assault at a rate of 53 per 10,000 of the population, which is higher than any other age group
- + 15 to 24 year olds also have the highest rate of inpatient hospital admissions for assault (an indicator of more serious injuries having occurred)
- + 25 to 34 year olds attend A&E following an assault at a rate of 42 per 10,000 of the population. The rate for the same age group being admitted to hospital after an assault is also high, at 13 per 10,000
- + Children (aged ten to 14) attended A&E following an assault at a rate of 18 per 10,000 of the population
- + When not grouped by age, but by gender: Males attend A&E following assaults at about 2.5 times the rate of females. The rate of hospital admissions for men is four times higher than for women.

8.3 Geographical patterns.

Understanding where people who are admitted to hospital for assault related injury live can help us prioritise where to target prevention activity.

The map shows three years of hospital admissions data for assault with a sharp object, based on patient location and aggregated to neighbourhood level. Darker green means higher numbers of people from that neighbourhood being admitted to hospital for assault with a sharp object during the three-year period.

Three local authorities are outlined - Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry



Key Findings

- + The dark green neighbourhood of Winson Green, in west Birmingham includes the prison, HMP Birmingham, which accounts for a large proportion of hospital admissions from that area
- + Other notable hotspots include swathes of inner-city Birmingham neighbourhoods including Gravelly Hill & Erdington (just north of Heartlands hospital); Smethwick in Sandwell (west of Birmingham); Heath Town in Wolverhampton and Foleshill in Coventry.

8.4 Information Sharing to Tackle Violence

Information Sharing to Tackle Violence (ISTV) is an NHS data standard, comprising anonymised data collected by Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments and shared with Community Safety Partnerships and Violence Reduction Units to support local decision making. The data covers A&E attendances and hospital admissions resulting from violent incidents and includes time and date of incident, time and date of arrival at A&E, use of weapon and location of incident.

In the West Midlands, data from the nine Tier 1 A&E Departments is brought together alongside other data from the police and ambulance services as part of the West Midlands Injury Surveillance System (WMISS). The system is administered by Public Health England who collate and analyse the data before distributing to partners.

Why is this important?

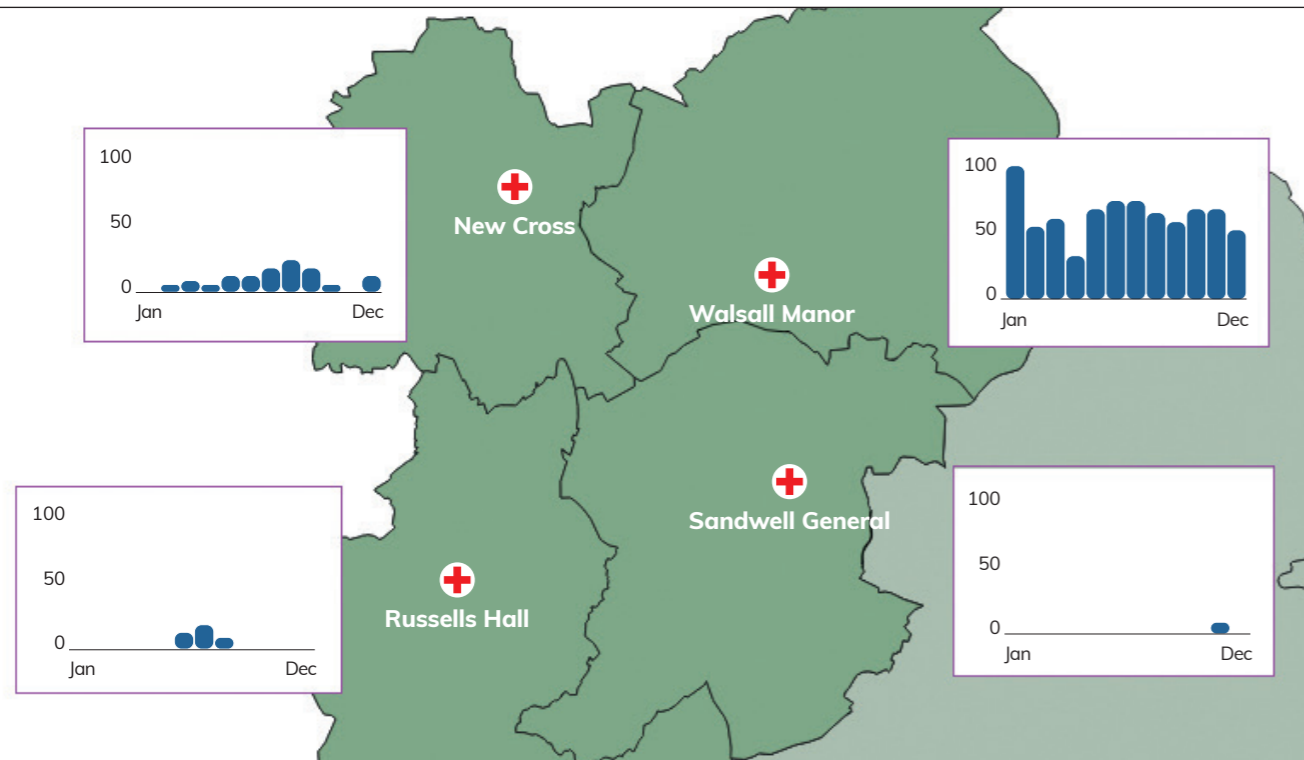
ISTV data is valuable in understanding the patterns, trends and demographics of violence in the West Midlands. It reveals parallels but also some differences with recorded police data.

What do we know from the data we do have?

We see strong similarities in police and health data the proportion of assault-related injuries and violence split by age group. The age group most affected by violence is 25-44, but also under 25s. This is true of Hospital Statistics, Injury Surveillance and Police data. In the West Midlands, up to 80% of assaults and violence incidents involve a victim under 44 years of age.

What are the ISTV data issues in the West Midlands?

Data quality across the West Midlands is variable, with many A&E Departments not providing reliable data.



- + The above map shows the four principal emergency departments in the Black Country with bar charts indicating the number of people attending each one with a cause code of violent injury or assault by month in 2019
- + Only one emergency department has regularly provided meaningful data.
- + Data has not been provided from several of the key A&E departments in the West Midlands, at least one of which (Sandwell General) serves an area with high levels of deprivation, and therefore high levels of risk.
- + The Black Country is not exceptional in the West Midlands but is shown as an example of the data quality issues that exist across the region

Ambulance Callouts

Ambulance callout data is essential to fully understand the picture of violence in the West Midlands. In March 2020, a data-sharing agreement between West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) and Public Health England (PHE) was close to being formally agreed.

The value of ambulance data to inform the VRU's understanding of violence in the West Midlands was articulated in a report by RAND Europe in 2017.

Key findings from the RAND report

"The study found that ambulance records contain substantial new information on violence, with between 66% and 90% of ambulance incidents not found in police data." This clearly demonstrates the additional value of ambulance data. Relying on police data alone risks ignoring a substantial proportion of violent incidents. "The volume of ambulance callouts for public violence averages 16 per day in the West Midlands, meaning that ambulance data can offer high volume data that is not typically recorded by the police or emergency department."

Evaluation of WMISS and Next Steps

In 2020, an evaluation of the West Midlands Injury Surveillance System was undertaken, aiming to ensure that the system was meeting its objectives and making recommendations for future development. The evaluation demonstrated that while partners agree on the importance of WMISS, it is not yet fully functional and is not delivering on the key elements of a good enough surveillance system.

The evaluation made a list of recommendations, including the establishment of a dedicated team to provide support for A&E departments to collect and provide good quality data. This team will also need to engage with West Midlands Ambulance Service and ensure that ambulance data is incorporated into WMISS.

9. EXPLOITATION AS A DRIVER OF VIOLENCE

Violence, including serious violence, happens within every form of exploitation: much of which will go unreported to the police until the exploitation is over. Understanding the typology of exploitation that occurs within the West Midlands is a priority for the Violence Reduction Unit, in order to better support partners to design preventative intervention.

The VRU is supporting four multi-agency boards which focus on Domestic Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Modern Slavery and Criminal Exploitation and Missing. Amongst other actions, each of these boards is seeking to improve the exchange and development of data at operational and at strategic levels across the West Midlands.

This year the strategic needs assessment will focus on Criminal Exploitation through the county lines drugs distribution model. The expansion of this model has been closely linked by government strategies and by practitioners to the increase in serious violence, particularly knife crime^{xxii}.

Of all forms of exploitation, involvement in criminal exploitation through county lines is most closely linked to the age and gender profile seen within the serious youth violence data seen elsewhere in this assessment.

Having said that, we do not underestimate the associations and overlap with missing, human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Further information on the number of young people with high risk, and the number of occasions they go missing, can be found later in this section.

9.1 County Lines

County lines drug distribution sees organised criminals from the big urban centres, such as London, Liverpool and Birmingham, using children and vulnerable people as runners to transport drugs to smaller cities, towns and rural areas. Dealers use dedicated mobile phone lines to take orders from drug users, with heroin, cocaine and crack cocaine the most common drugs involved.

Children and vulnerable adults are often targeted to be used as couriers as they are less likely to be suspected. In some cases, dealers take over property, which typically belongs to a vulnerable person, to use as a base from which to deal drugs. This is known as cuckooing.

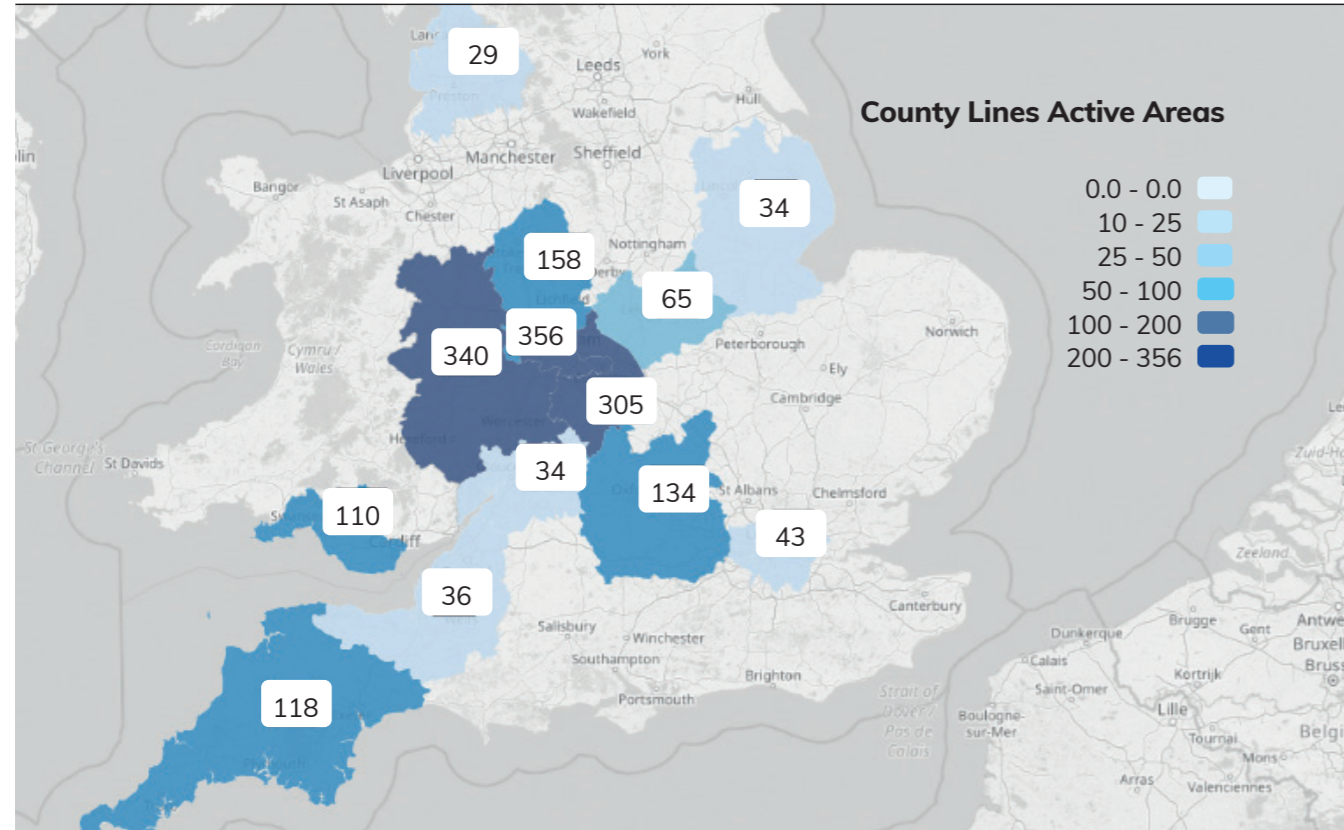
The children and adults involved and exploited for county lines can be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse and trafficked to areas a long way from home. County lines is a growing issue. In January 2019, the National Crime Agency published a report that suggested the estimated number of County Lines had more than doubled in a year from 720 in 2018 to more than 2,000 in 2019. This is likely to be a conservative estimate and to have increased since 2019.

The West Midlands, with its strategic position in the centre of the country, and good transport links to much of the rest of England and Wales presents additional challenges to those who are tackling and striving to prevent this insidious form of criminal exploitation.

9.2 County Lines - Active Areas

Police data includes markers for people assessed as being involved in County Lines as victims, perpetrators or suspects. This data - aggregated and anonymised - has been used to provide charts and maps in this section.

The following map shows the "Active Areas" identified by West Midlands Police in relation to County Lines activity. The date range April 2018 to November 2020. The numbers associated with each of the Police Force areas on the map represent the number of times that Force has been recorded as an active area in the list of incidents.



Key Findings

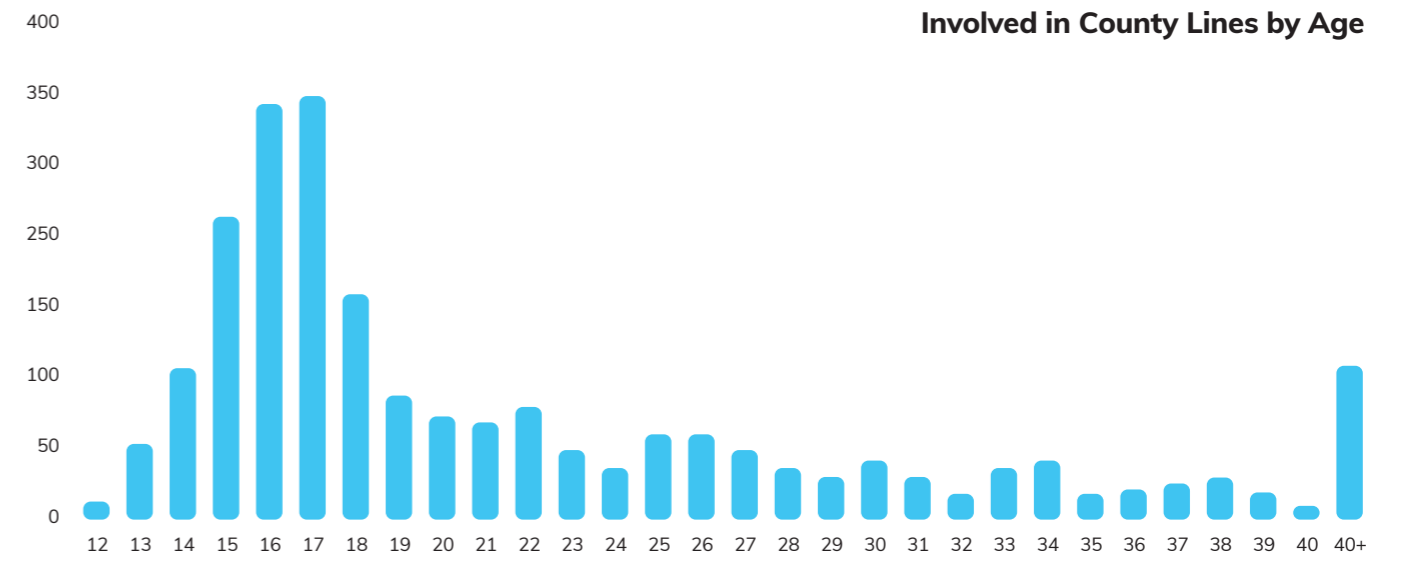
- + Unsurprisingly, neighbouring police force areas feature prominently in the WMP data, including relatively high numbers in West Mercia (340) and Warwickshire (305)
- + Staffordshire (158), Thames Valley (134), South Wales (110) and Devon & Cornwall (118) are all recorded more than 100 times in the data, highlighting the spread and scale of County Lines operations from the West Midlands.

Key Findings

- + The insert box shows the areas with the greatest concentration of people identified within this dataset. This includes Smethwick (in Sandwell) and much of inner-city and central Birmingham, including Aston, Lozells, Handsworth, Small Heath and Sparkbrook
- + Other areas of concern outside of Birmingham include Blakenhall, Heath Town and central Wolverhampton (Wolverhampton) and Bell Green, Henley Green and Wood End (Coventry)
- + Many of these neighbourhoods also experience high incidence of violence and are higher in rates of risk factors linked to violence (see section X)
- + West Midlands VRU is focussing its programme of place-based pilots on areas with high rates of violence and high risk. This includes neighbourhoods with higher numbers of people involved in County Lines activity, such as Lozells, Smethwick and Heath Town.

9.4 County Lines – Who is involved?

The next chart shows a breakdown of people involved (as victims, perpetrators or suspects) in County Lines drugs distribution activity by age. The breakdown is by individual age rather than age band and is a record of age at the time of their involvement. It is both revealing and quite shocking.

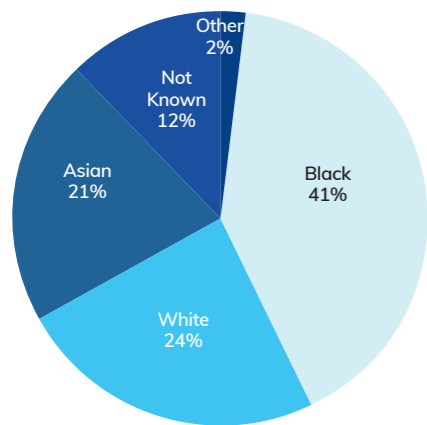


West Midlands VRU takes a victim-first approach. Many young people do not disclose what has happened to them for fear of being treated as perpetrators.

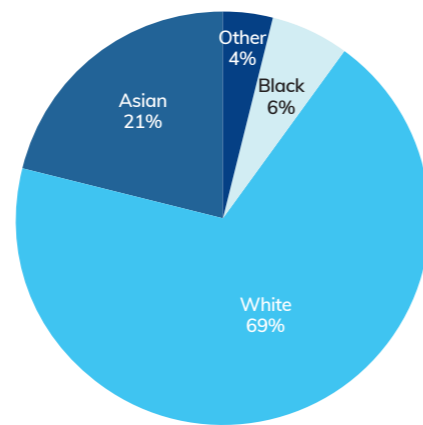
Ethnicity and Gender

The pie charts overleaf show a breakdown by ethnicity. The chart on the left shows the people identified by police information as involved County Lines by recorded ethnicity. The chart on the right shows the population in the West Midlands^{xxiii} for comparison.

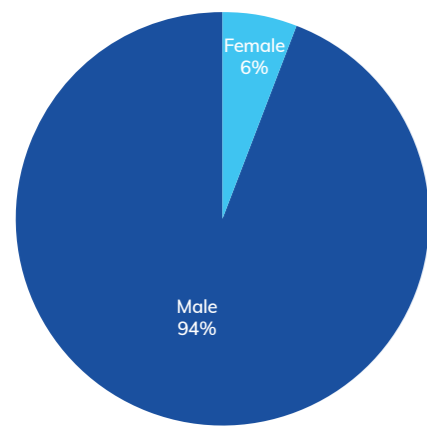
Involved in County Lines by Ethnicity



West Midlands Population by Ethnicity



Involved in County Lines by Ethnicity



Multi-agency groups of practitioners have identified concerns that there are low levels of recognition and identification across the sector of the way in which women and girls are exploited through county lines drugs distribution. There are ongoing projects to explore ways of improving the response. The current police data reinforces the existing picture but should be treated with caution when designing services.

The West Midlands regional criminal exploitation and missing board has identified the under-representation of young women in terms of exploitation and are looking to further understand this.

Professionals may stereotype females as victims of sexual exploitation and there is a risk of unknown numbers of females involved in County Lines and other forms of exploitation as victims and perpetrators that will not be apparent in the data.

Key Findings

- + 73% of all the people linked to county lines activity between April 2018 and November 2020 were young people aged 25 or under
- + 52% of all the people linked to county lines activity between April 2018 and November 2020 were young people aged 18 or under
- + 31% of all the people linked to county lines activity between April 2018 and November 2020 were young people aged 16 or under
- + Ten children aged 12 were recorded by West Midlands Police as being linked to county lines activity between April 2018 and November 2020
- + 41 % of the people identified through this data as involved in county lines activity – as a victim, perpetrator, or suspect – were recorded as of black ethnicity. This is significantly higher than the data for the wider West Midlands population, which has a 6% black population
- + 24% of the people identified through this data as involved in county lines linked activity – as a victim, perpetrator or suspect were white. This compares to 69% of the wider population of the West Midlands are white

- + 21% of the people identified through this data as involved in county lines linked activity – as a victim, perpetrator or suspect – were identified as of Asian ethnicity; this is in line with the wider population data
- + The overwhelming conclusion is that young males with Black ethnicity, most often from the most deprived parts of the West Midlands, are hugely over-represented in police information about County Lines activity
- + There is a need for further work in the region to understand how far young Black people and their over-representation in the data may be partly down to the result of police activity, such as stop and search.

9.5 County Lines during Lockdown

West Midlands Police and West Midlands VRU produced a briefing paper on County Lines, exploitation and lockdown due to the COvid-19 pandemic in late 2020. Some of the key highlights from that report are listed below. The information was collated from third sector partners, provider networks, multi-agency forums and local authorities across the West Midlands.

Key Findings

- + 73% of all the people linked to county lines activity between April 2018 and November 2020 Research in the West Midlands found that County Lines drug networks adapted to the restrictions of the first lockdown in the Spring of 2020
- + Initially, with the closure of the night-time economy and low usage of public transport, it was easier for authorities to spot children away from home carrying cash and drugs, with exploited young people often using false Covid-related excuses for their presence on the rail network
- + British Transport Police reported early disruption of County Lines activity
- + Children continued to be identified far from home and carrying large quantities of cash or drugs but county lines were also being run more locally
- + There was subsequently a preference to use private hired vehicles, with bulk deliveries to provincial areas in the region
- + Methods of payment adapted, as dealers refused to accept cash and used local children as runners rather than children from outside the area
- + To avoid detection, gangs shifted to using busy public areas, such as supermarket car parks, rather than from residential addresses
- + Perpetrators used online platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok in the early stages of grooming for the purposes of criminal exploitation
- + Lockdown inhibited opportunities for face-to-face safeguarding, creating challenges for child protection services and other frontline services
- + Young people were often less comfortable making disclosures over the phone
- + Court and school closures, and delays to CPS processes, further exacerbated the risk to vulnerable young people.

10. CHILDREN IN CARE

There is evidence that children in care - particularly those in unregulated settings - are at greater risk of going missing.

“Unregulated provision is a type of accommodation used for children in care, usually aged 16 or 17. The number of children aged 16 or 17 placed in unregulated settings has more than doubled from 2,900 in 2009 to 6,100 children in 2019. Unlike children’s homes, Ofsted does not inspect these settings.”

National Youth Advocacy Service

A report by Crest Advisory crime and justice consultancy^{xxv} in November 2020 found that “in North Wales 31% of missing incidents were reported from care and in Merseyside, 41% of incidents were reported missing from residential care and unregulated settings”.

“When looked after children are placed in settings at distance from their home area, or in unregulated settings, their vulnerability to exploitation is amplified. Looked after children are at particular risk of exploitation in county lines drugs networks.”

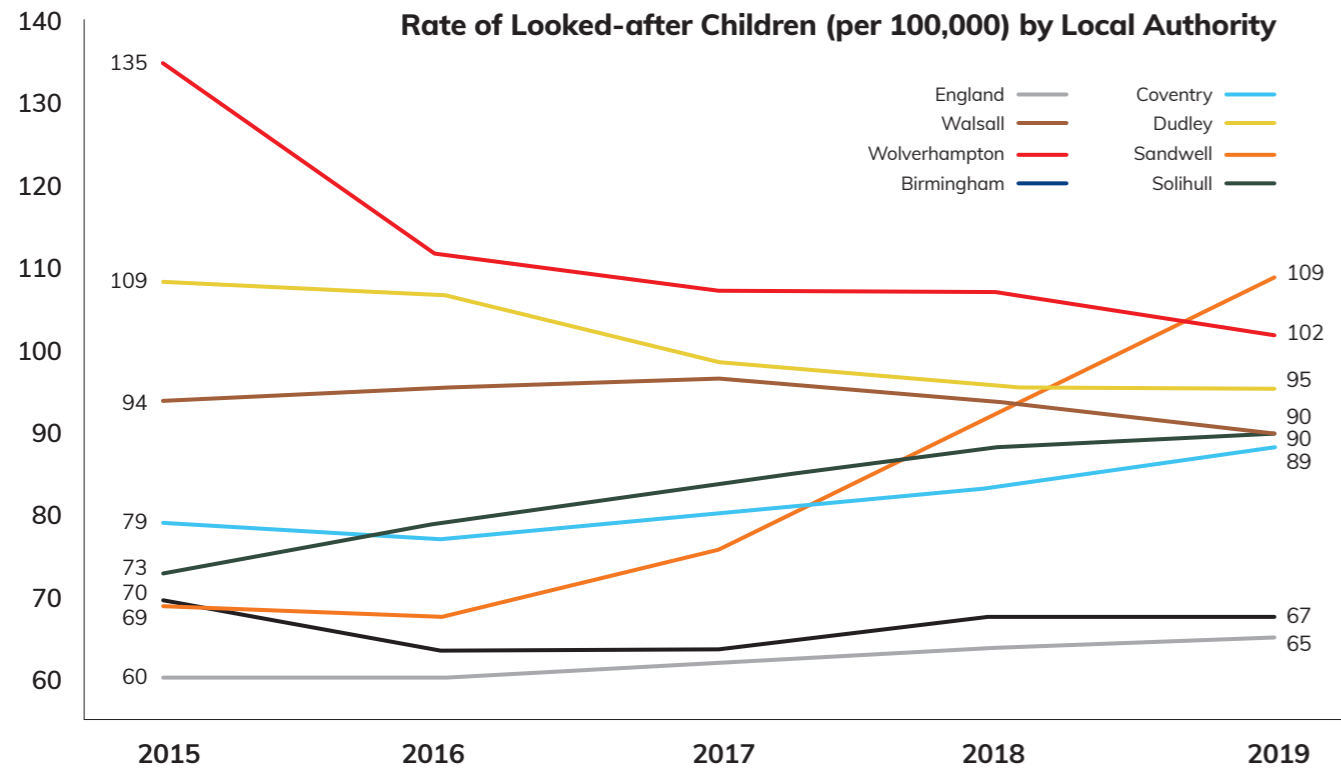
10.1 Children in Care in England and the West Midlands

Nationally, the number of children in local authority care has been increasing for 25 years, from 50,000 in 1996 to 60,000 in 2010 and more than 80,000 in 2020, according to the latest statistics published by the Department for Education.

The total number of Children in Care in England has gone up from 69,470 in 2015 to 78,150 in 2019 - a rise of 12%. In the West Midlands, the number has increased from 9,360 in 2015 to 10,560 in 2019 - a rise of just under 13%.

The chart below shows the rate of Children in Care per 100,000 of the population. This takes account of changes in population over time and differences in population size between local authorities.

10.2 Children in Care – trends in the West Midlands



Key Findings

- + All local authorities in the West Midlands have care responsibilities for a higher rate of children than the national average
- + The profile of changes in the rate of Children in Care varies considerably between the different local authorities in the West Midlands
- + While some areas, such as Wolverhampton and Dudley, have seen the rate of looked after children reduce in recent years, others have seen increases
- + The most dramatic increase in the rate and number of Children in Care has been in Sandwell, from 70 per 100,000 of the population in 2016 up to 109 per 100,000 in 2019.

10.3 Young People at risk of going missing

The Crest Advisory report finds that up to 40% of children reported as missing are from residential care, particularly from unregulated – and in some cases unregistered – settings.

A research report by the Department for Education (Feb 2020) on the use of unregulated and unregistered provision for children in care^{xxvii} found that “unregulated provision is used ... to cater for young people with reportedly ‘complex needs’, often in the context of a placement breakdown”.

The report suggests that the increasing use of unregulated and unregistered provision for children with complex needs and challenging behaviour is being driven by two factors - the first being that demand for registered places is outstripping supply. There has been a decline in the number of children’s homes at the same time as an increase in demand for placements.

The second factor identified in the report is that “registered children’s homes are increasingly reluctant to accept children with highly complex needs and challenging behaviours due to concerns about the possibility of their Ofsted rating being negatively affected if they are unable to secure positive outcomes”.

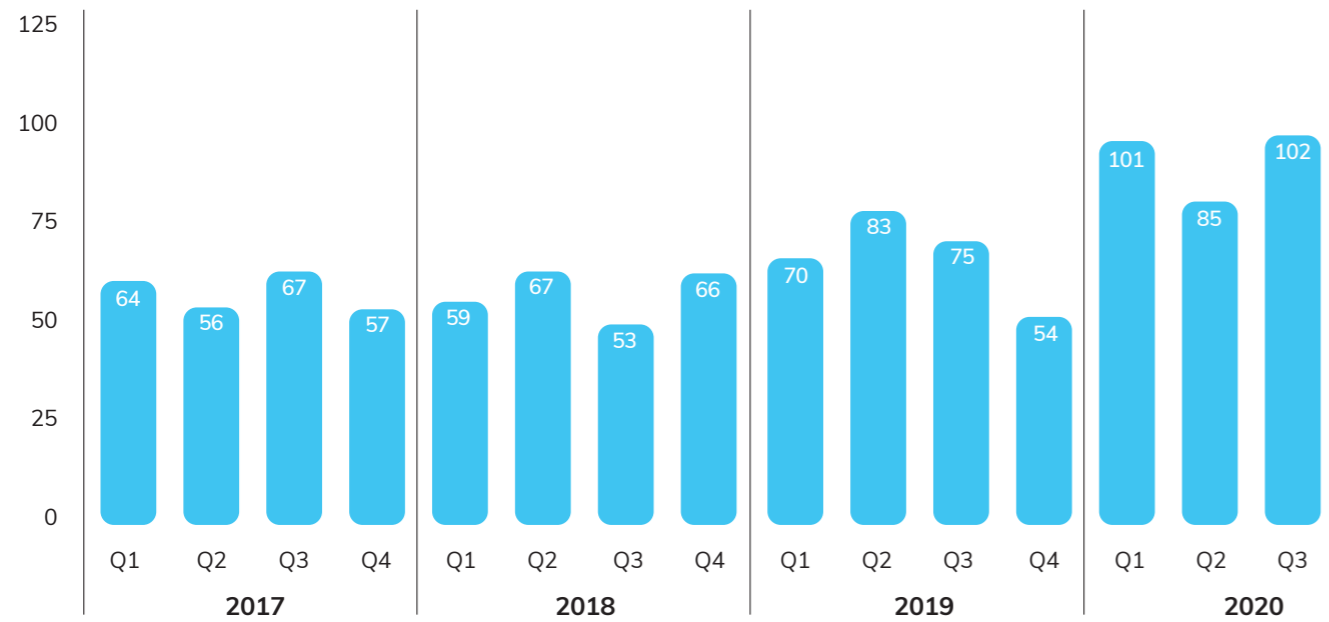
The result may be some of the most vulnerable children being in unregulated, unregistered settings and going missing with greater frequency which puts them at much higher risk of exploitation.



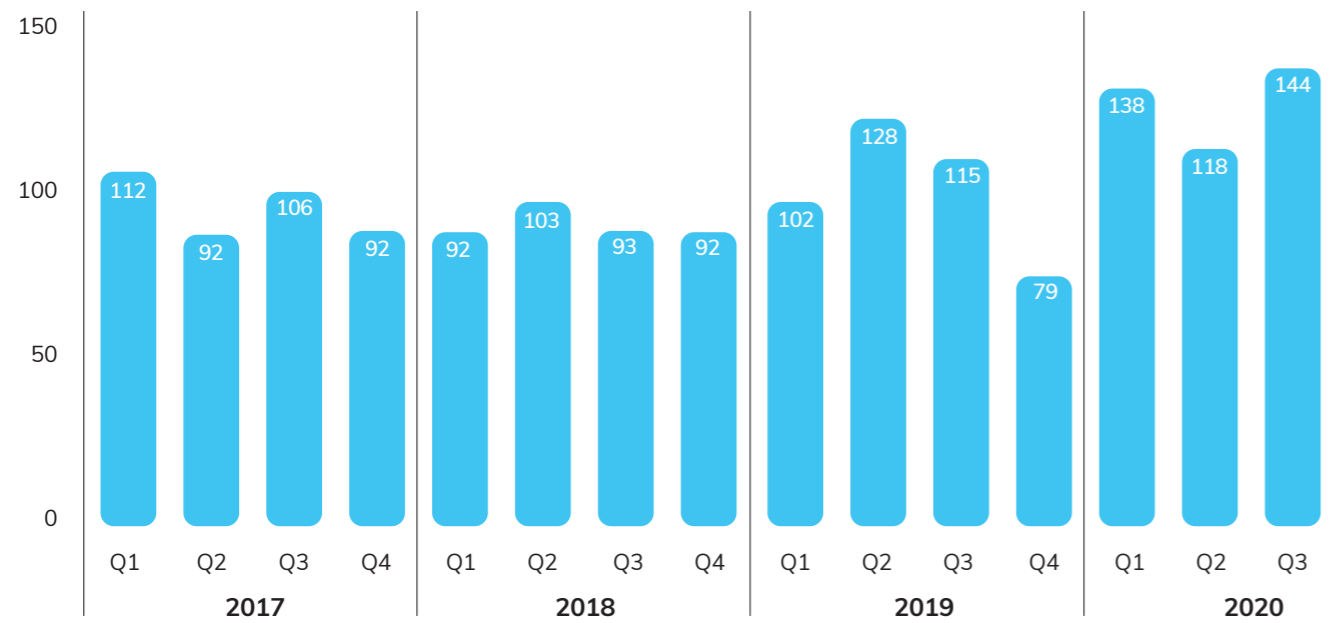
10.4 Vulnerable young people - Going Missing

The following two charts show firstly the trend in recent years in the number of individual young people (under 18) with a high risk marker reported missing to West Midlands Police and, secondly, the trend in the total number of missing episodes, which includes people more than once if they go missing on more than one occasion.

Number of Under 18s with a High Risk Marker Reported Missing to West Midlands Police by Quarter



Number of Missing Episodes Reported Missing to West Midlands Police by Quarter - Under 18s with a High Risk Marker



Key Findings

- + Police data from January 2017 until the end of September 2020 shows an increase in both the total number of individual young people with high risk markers reported missing to police and in the number of missing episodes
- + Despite a drop in Quarter 4 (2019), the numbers of both individuals and episodes have climbed alarmingly in 2020, reaching a four-year high point in Quarter 3 (July to September)
- + The total number of missing episodes in 2017, 2018 and 2019 was about 400 per calendar year, but this number has been reached in the first three quarters of 2020. This is despite the restrictions and lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



11. RISK FACTORS AND RISK INDEX

Accepted research has identified a number of factors which correlate with the risks of violence increasing. By understanding the profile of these risk factors across the region, the VRU can focus its preventative work more effectively. We are working not just with communities who are already experiencing high levels of violence, but also with those who are most likely to become affected by violence in the future.

Research carried out by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Policing & Crime (MOPAC) in 2018 reveals a strong statistical association between rates of serious youth violence and social, economic and health inequalities.

Poverty and deprivation feature prominently in the analysis and may well be the single biggest determining factor in explaining the prevalence and risk of violence in populations and communities.

"More than any demographic characteristic, area-level deprivation is a key risk factor for violent victimisation."

Victims of Serious Violence in England and Wales, 2011–2017, University of Hull

11.1 Deprivation and Inequalities

The West Midlands is one of the most deprived parts of England, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation statistics of 2019.

In the last 15 years, Birmingham has become more deprived, moving from the 16th most deprived local authority in 2004 to the sixth most deprived in 2019 and overtaking Sandwell in 2015 as the most deprived authority in the West Midlands.

Deprivation is not the same as low income; it relates more to how people live. Perhaps it is better described as a consequence of a low income as well as having limited access to other resources.

For the purposes of this report, we have used the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. It is a subset of the Income Deprivation Domain which measures the proportion of the population in an area experiencing deprivation relating to low income.

11.2 Child poverty in the West Midlands

The following map shows the most deprived neighbourhoods in the West Midlands according to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index. Only the top 100 most deprived neighbourhoods (of the 356 neighbourhoods in the West Midlands) are highlighted on the map. The 50 most deprived are shown in darker blue and those ranked 51 to 100 lighter blue.

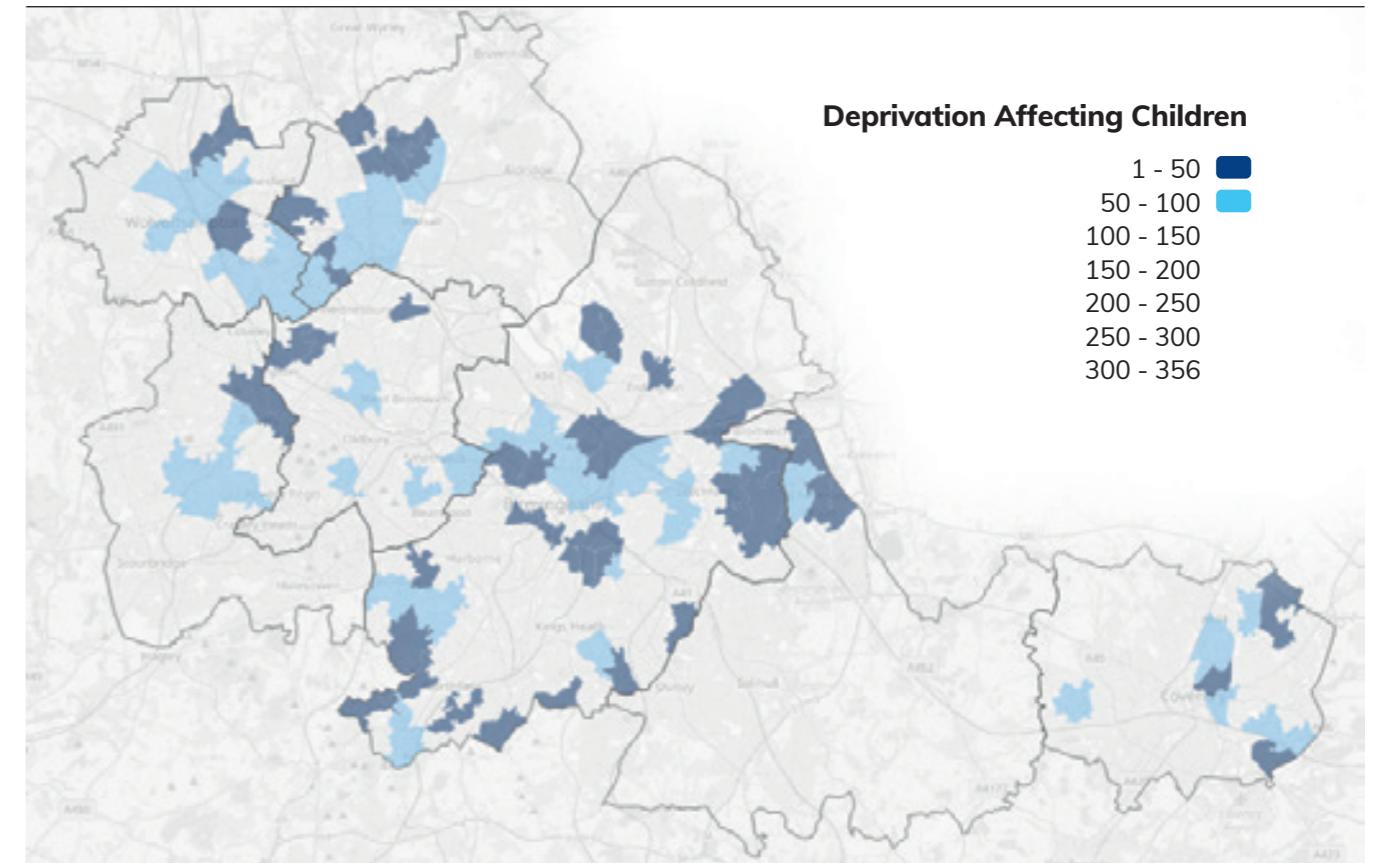
11.3 West Midlands VRU Risk Index

West Midlands VRU have designed a risk index based on three factors with the strongest correlations towards violence:

- + Deprivation affecting children
- + Rates of mental health
- + Lack of educational development in early years.

It should be reinforced that no causation between these factors can be implied in terms of violence.

Within the index, the three factors are equally weighted and the resulting position in the table is based on the overall score.



Summary

- + The top 50 most deprived neighbourhoods for child deprivation (14% of the total in the West Midlands) are shown as dark blue, with the next 50 shown as lighter blue
- + The remaining 256 neighbourhoods are not shaded in on the map
- + There are noticeable overlaps between the most deprived areas and the areas with the highest prevalence of violence identified in the previous section.

This index is based on established research and draws on data highlighted by the London based GLA/MOPAC report^{xxxiii} from 2018 referred to at the start of section 4. More information on the selection criteria, provenance and sources can be found in the references and annexes at the end of the report

All the data that has been used is publicly available, anonymised and aggregated and the index is intended solely as an indication of potential risk at neighbourhood level. No individual or personal data has been used.

The index can help us to begin to understand how combinations of the risk factors vary across our geography, at a local level. The index is intended as a broad indication of place and population-based risk at neighbourhood level, in order to help prioritise the partnerships work.

The neighbourhoods referred to here are MSOAs^{xxxiv}, described further on page 14. These are small areas with broadly similar population sizes that can be compared within local authority areas and nationally. There are 356 MSOAs in the West Midlands police force area.

11.4 Risk Factors Index – Table with top 30 neighbourhoods

Those neighbourhoods that are highlighted in blue are the areas where the West Midlands VRU are already working with the community to deliver place-based working.

Overall Rank		Rank by Individual factor				
West Midlands	Local Authority	Neighbourhood	Local Authority	Income Deprivation Affecting Young People	Mental Health Index	Pupils NOT Achieving Good Development in Early Years
1	1	Frankley	Birmingham	3	1	37
2	1	Blakenhall North	Walsall	30	16	10
3	2	Bloxwich South	Walsall	31	27	3
4	2	Druids Heath	Birmingham	1	4	64
5	3	Castle Vale	Birmingham	40	3	29
6	1	Ocker Hill	Sandwell	13	39	21
7	1	Low Hill	Wolverhampton	20	50	20
8	1	Chelmsley Wood East	Solihull	41	6	44
9	2	Chelmsley Wood West	Solihull	43	9	39
10	3	Bloxwich North West	Walsall	21	43	43
11	4	Bartley Green & Shenley Fields	Birmingham	24	13	72
12	2	Friar Park	Sandwell	11	47	54
13	5	Allens Cross	Birmingham	9	30	74
14	6	Hawkesley	Birmingham	6	2	108
15	1	Brockmoor & Woodside	Dudley	55	25	36
16	3	Smith's Wood North	Solihull	17	63	40
17	2	Bilston Lunt & Loxdale	Wolverhampton	58	21	50
18	7	Perry Common - College Road	Birmingham	26	28	80
19	2	Brierly Hill	Dudley	84	34	16
20	1	Henley Green & Wood End	Coventry	8	15	112
21	8	Kent's Moat	Birmingham	22	111	2
22	9	Glebe Farm	Birmingham	14	82	41
23	4	Walsall Ryecroft	Walsall	60	61	23
24	10	Turves Green	Birmingham	15	5	25
25	11	Sheldon North	Birmingham	35	46	70
26	4	Smith's Wood South	Solihull	42	35	76
27	12	Lozells West	Birmingham	67	75	15
28	13	Sparkbrook North	Birmingham	10	41	110
29	14	Shard End & Kingfisher	Birmingham	50	17	94
30	3	Kates Hill	Dudley	39	80	47

Interpreting this table

- + The three right hand columns shaded in light green show the neighbourhood's individual ranking for each category.
- + For example, Frankley in south Birmingham ranks third for Income Deprivation Affecting Young People, which means it is the third most deprived neighbourhood in the West Midlands in that category. It is the most deprived neighbourhood according to the mental health index and 37th most deprived for pupils not achieving good educational development in Early Years.
- + With an equal weighting applied to all three categories, Frankley emerges as the highest priority neighbourhood in the West Midlands in terms of risk factors linked to violence.

Key Findings

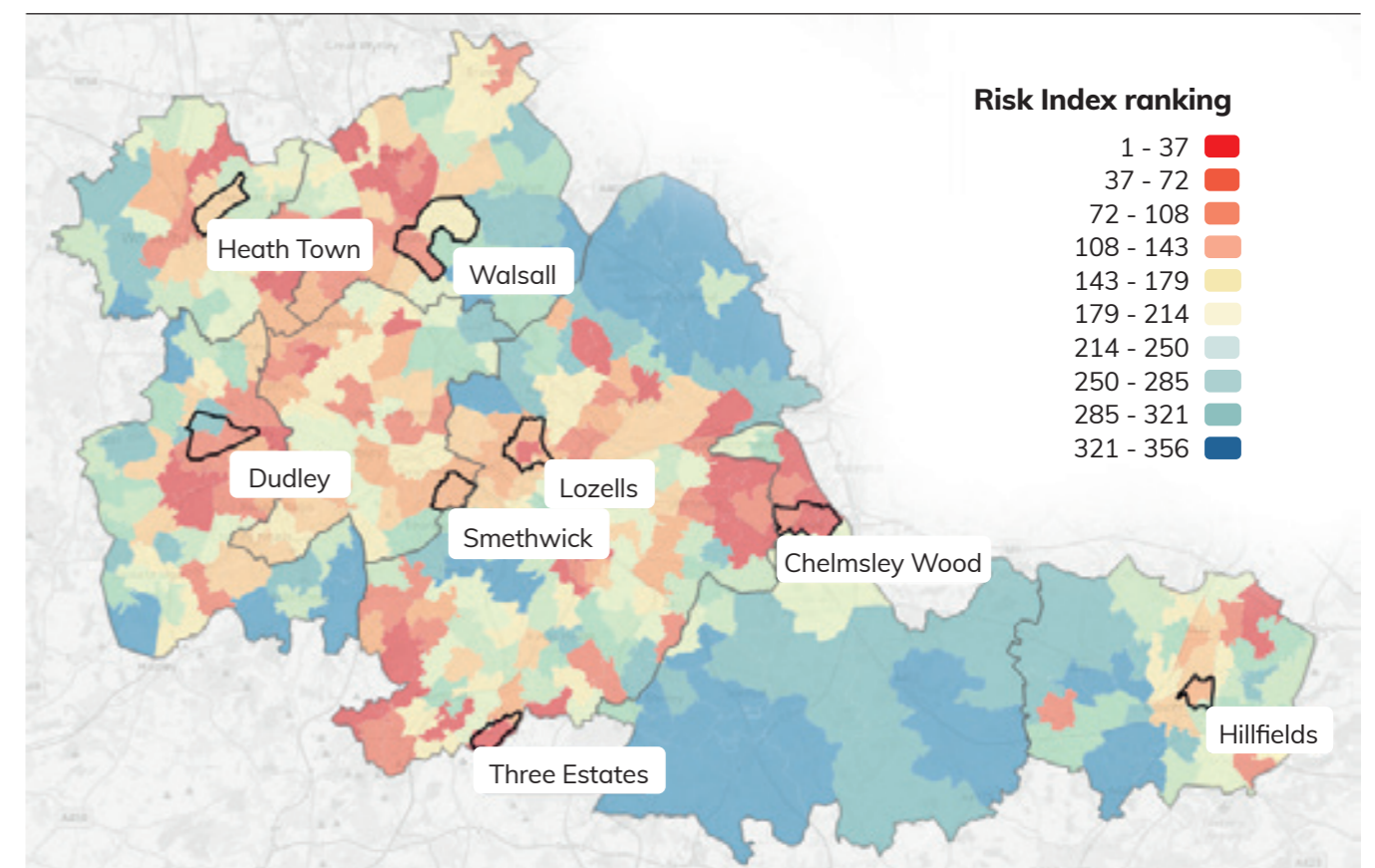
- + The profile of the areas identified by the risk factors as the priority for prevention differs in places from the profile of the areas where current recorded violence rates are highest
- + In terms of the risk factors linked to violence, Frankley in south Birmingham ranks the highest of 356 neighbourhoods in the West Midlands
- + Some neighbourhoods, such as Blakenall North in Walsall (2nd in the list) have relatively high, and broadly similar scores, in all three categories
- + Others, such as Druids Heath in Birmingham (4th in the list) have very high scores in two of the categories and a relatively low score in another.

11.5 Map of West Midlands showing neighbourhoods by VRU risk index ranking

The map below shows the 356 neighbourhoods in the risk index colour-coded according to their position in the table.

The top 10% of neighbourhoods with the highest risk index ranking are shaded red. The lowest risk neighbourhoods (321 to 356) are shaded blue.

The West Midlands VRU Place-Based pilot areas for 20/21 are also labelled on the map with black outlines.



Key Findings

- + All the VRU Place-Based pilot areas are in neighbourhoods with very high or high risk, but it is clear that there are also other neighbourhoods with high risk
- + Some of these – such as Blakenall and Bloxwich (Walsall), Henley and Wood End (Coventry), central Dudley and parts of south and east Birmingham, are strongly suggested as future areas for the VRU and partners to explore.

11.6 Developing the risk index further

The West Midlands VRU Risk Index is an indicative tool and is not intended to be a definitive prediction of the incidence of violence in the future at place or population-based level.

The unit is keen to build on the wealth of existing academic research and evidence to assess and refine its understanding of risk and use that effectively, proportionately and sensitively going forward.



12. EDUCATION

Why are risk factors linked to education important?

There is a significant body of research linking poor pupil attainment, absenteeism, special educational needs and deprivation to an increased risk of being excluded from school.^{xxxv}

There is no evidence that permanent school exclusion directly causes violent behaviour or involvement in crime, but there are strong correlations.

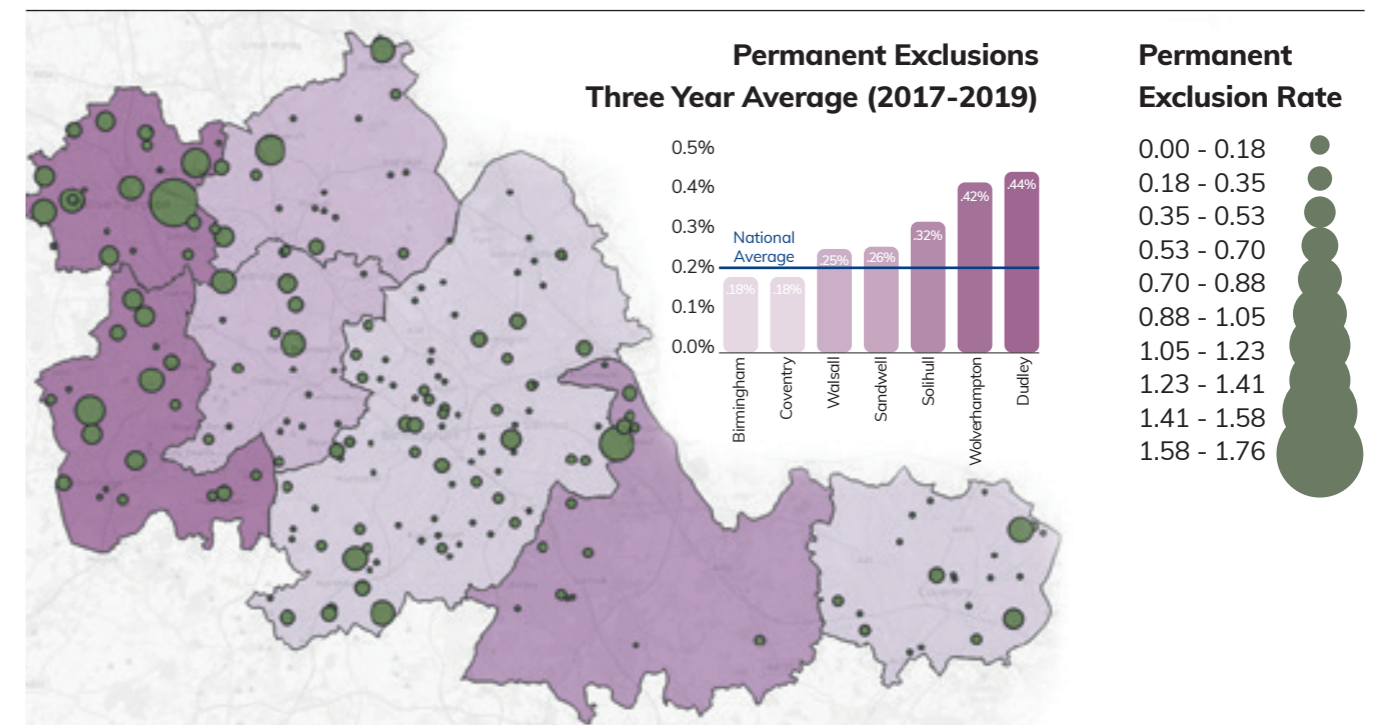
The Timpson Review (2019)^{xxxvi} highlighted that “23% of young offenders sentenced to less than 12 months in custody (in 2014) had been permanently excluded from school”. That is one in four young people in custody that have been permanently excluded from school, which compares to one in 1,000 of the whole secondary school population who become excluded.

There are widespread concerns that being excluded from school puts young people at greater risk of being involved in violence, as a victim or perpetrator.

School is important for education but can also provide an additional protective factor – fewer safeguarding measures and support mechanisms are available for those who have been excluded. Permanent exclusion, for some young people, may represent the removal of one of the last protections against exploitation, criminality and violence.

12.1 School exclusions in the West Midlands

The map below shows permanent secondary school exclusions in the West Midlands at local authority and individual school level. Individual schools are shown as green bubbles and bigger bubbles indicate higher permanent exclusion rates. Local authorities are shaded purple with darker purple indicating higher overall rates.

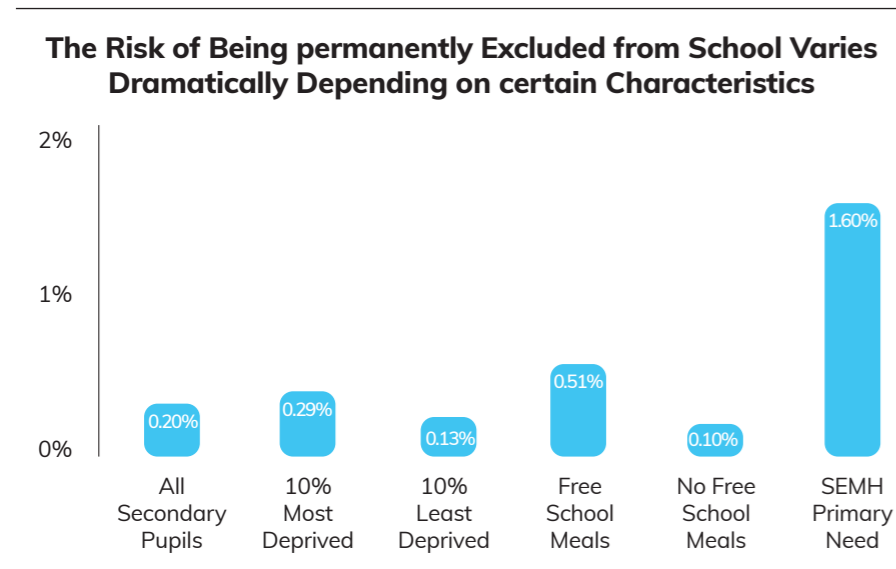


Key Findings

- + At a regional level, permanent school exclusion rates for the period 2017-19 in the West Midlands were higher than the national average in the West Midlands. They have been rising steadily since 2012.^{xxxvii}
- + For the same period, the rate of permanent exclusions within Birmingham and Coventry were just under the national average at 0.18%
- + There are areas of concentrated complexity: 80% of permanent exclusions within the West Midlands were generated by 12% of all schools in the West Midlands.

12.2 Who is most at risk of school exclusion?

This chart shows the permanent exclusion rates by different categories. The bar on the far left shows the average rate for all secondary school pupils, which is 0.2%.



Key Findings

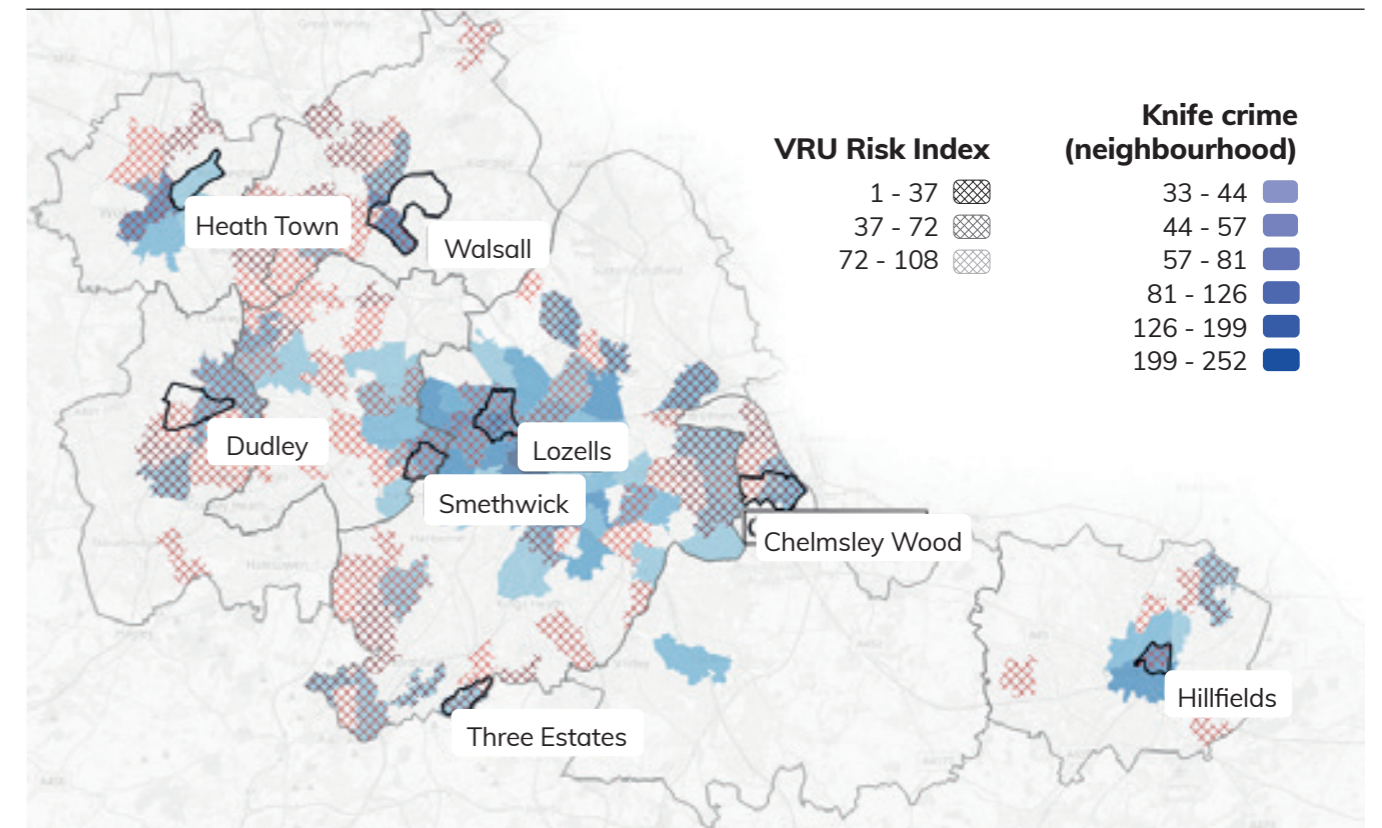
- + The bar chart shows the average permanent exclusion rates in England and Wales so the 0.20% rate for “all Secondary School pupils” on the far left refers to the national rate
- + This rate is also represented as a green horizontal line in the key on the map on page 42 where it can be seen in the context of the average rates in the West Midlands and its constituent authorities
- + The permanent exclusion rate for pupils on free school meals is 0.5% - five times higher than the rate for those pupils who are not eligible for free school meals
- + The highest rate, however, is found in pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health needs – this is eight times higher than the average at 1.6%.

13. CONCLUSIONS

13.1 Extent of Violence and Risk of Violence - Overlaps

The focus of this report has been on the extent of serious violence and knife crime and the risk factors associated with serious violence in the West Midlands. This section will bring the two together and look at the neighbourhoods and the populations that we would consider the highest priority in both areas. The following map shows higher risk neighbourhoods with a red cross-hatch pattern and high volume knife crime as blue shading. The 20/21 Place-Based Pilot areas are also shown on the map and labelled accordingly.

Map of Reported Knife Crime and Risk of Violence Index with Place-Based Pilots



Summary and Conclusions

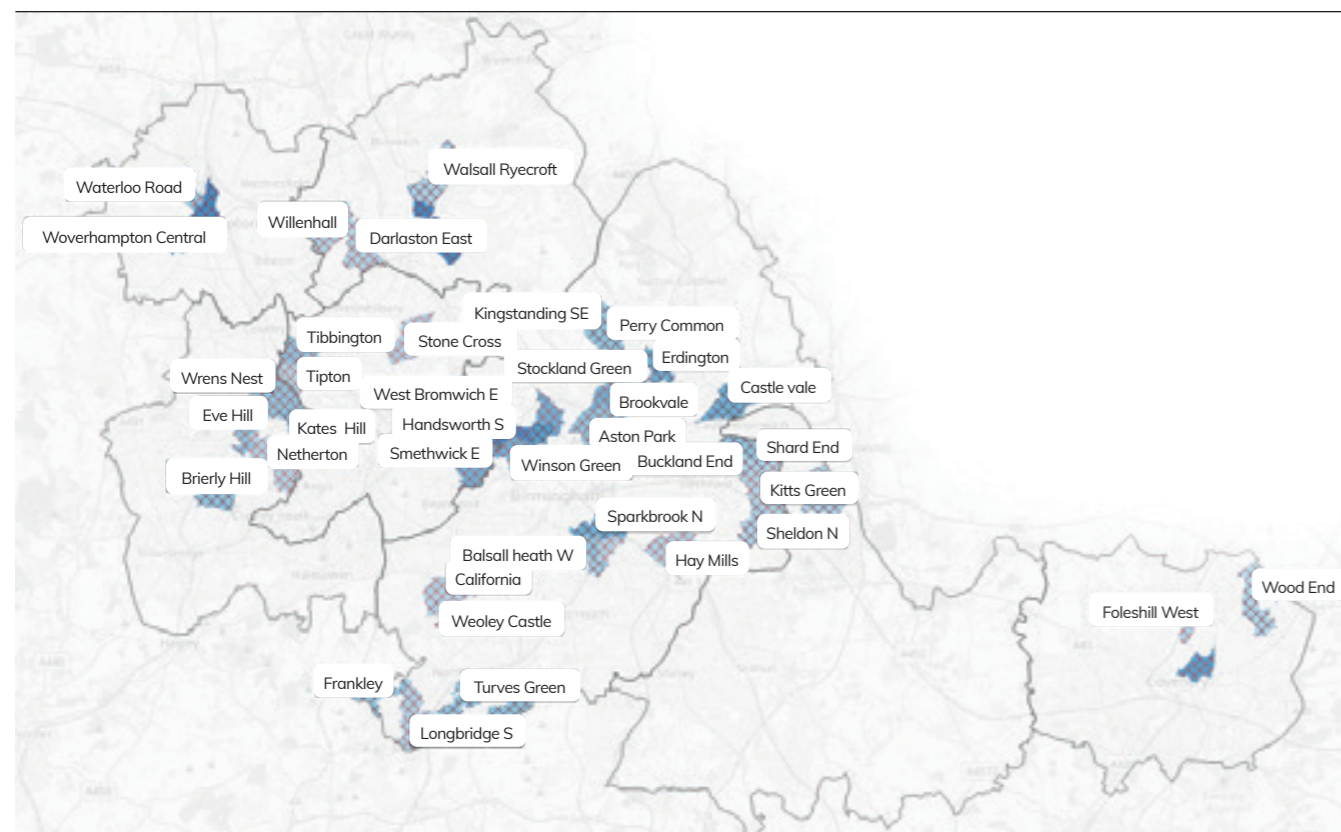
- + The West Midlands VRU Place-Based Pilot areas are in areas that are typically high risk and have high rates of knife crime and public place violence
- + Other areas with high risk and serious violence are revealed on the map as the neighbourhoods with both darker red cross-hatch pattern and blue shading
- + It is suggested that these neighbourhoods would also benefit from support and intervention from the VRU. More information is outlined in the recommendations below.

13.2 High Priority Neighbourhoods

The top 100 neighbourhoods for volume of knife crime (January 2018 to November 2020) were overlaid with the top 100 neighbourhoods for risk of violence and 47 neighbourhoods were found in both lists. These 47 neighbourhoods include all the place-based pilot areas where WM VRU is already engaging in violence prevention activity.

The following map shows the remaining 41 neighbourhoods which are considered priority areas for VRU activity and focus if future resourcing allows.

Priority Areas for future VRU place-based activity



Summary

- + The neighbourhoods highlighted in the above map are not necessarily the poorest or most deprived parts of the West Midlands
- + It is likely however, that many of them have high levels of child deprivation
- + They all have in common relatively high levels of knife crime and of risk according to the index described earlier in this report.

Priority Neighbourhoods for VRU focus based on risk and volume of knife crime

The table below lists the 41 priority neighbourhoods identified on the map. A priority for the VRU in 21/22 should be working with communities and partners to identify the preventative work that may already be taking place in these areas; and considering any gaps that emerge as a high priority for future place-based focus.

Neighbourhoods highlighted yellow are the focus of existing Place-Based Pilot activity

Priority	Risk Priority (West Midlands)	Risk Priority (Local Authority)	Neighbourhood	Local Authority	Knife Crime Priority (West Midlands)	Knife Crime (Volume)
1	5	3	Castle Vale	Birmingham	28	63
2	27	12	Lozells West	Birmingham	15	96
3	1	1	Frankley	Birmingham	43	51
4	28	13	Sparkbrook North	Birmingham	21	76
5	18	7	Perry Common - College Road	Birmingham	33	57
6	34	17	Erdington Town	Birmingham	24	67
7	53	9	Walsall Central	Walsall	6	119
8	51	4	Wolverhampton Central	Wolverhampton	10	109
9	14	6	Hawkesley	Birmingham	51	46
10	8	1	Chelmsley Wood East	Solihull	64	41
11	19	2	Brierley Hill	Dudley	56	45
12	9	2	Chelmsley Wood West	Solihull	69	39
13	31	15	Kingstanding South East	Birmingham	49	47
14	24	10	Turves Green	Birmingham	58	44
15	30	3	Kates Hill	Dudley	55	45
16	23	4	Walsall Ryecroft	Walsall	65	41
17	32	16	Buckland End	Birmingham	57	44
18	89	36	Handsworth South	Birmingham	4	128
19	40	5	Dudley Priory & Wrens Nest	Dudley	54	45
20	84	6	Hillfields	Coventry	16	94
21	29	14	Shard End & Kingfisher	Birmingham	72	38
22	69	32	Stockland Green - Marsh Hill	Birmingham	32	58
23	67	30	Aston Park	Birmingham	35	54
24	80	34	Winson Green & Gib Heath	Birmingham	22	75
25	83	11	Smethwick East	Sandwell	19	79
26	25	11	Sheldon North	Birmingham	78	37
27	66	29	Balsall Heath East	Birmingham	39	52
28	20	1	Henley Green & Wood End	Coventry	90	35
29	63	7	New Dock & Eve Hill	Dudley	47	50
30	45	6	Darlaston East	Walsall	66	41
31	54	5	Tibbington	Sandwell	60	44
32	93	38	Brookvale	Birmingham	26	65
33	79	6	Waterloo Road	Wolverhampton	41	52
34	97	40	Birchfield West	Birmingham	27	65
35	41	19	Kitts Green	Birmingham	84	36
36	46	21	Weoley Castle	Birmingham	80	37
37	47	3	West Bromwich East & Kenrick Park	Sandwell	81	37
38	36	18	Balsall Heath West & Kingswood Road	Birmingham	95	33
39	57	24	Longbridge South	Birmingham	74	38
40	73	33	California	Birmingham	61	42
41	76	7	Tipton	Sandwell	91	35
42	70	12	Willenhall Town	Walsall	99	31
43	77	5	Foleshill West	Coventry	93	34
44	99	41	Hay Mills & Tyseley	Birmingham	73	38
45	86	13	Stone Cross & Hateley Heath	Sandwell	89	35
46	91	37	Sparkbrook South	Birmingham	94	33
47	100	10	Netherton	Dudley	96	33

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list of recommendations is based on the findings and conclusions within this Strategic Needs Assessment.

As set out in Section 3 (Scope and Approach) on page 8, and in line with the Home Office Serious Violence Strategy, this Needs Assessment has focussed on serious youth violence, violence against the person and knife crime.

While this is a significant and serious issue, one that has grown in severity and prevalence over the last few years, particularly in the West Midlands, it is clearly not the only manifestation of violence. There are other forms of violence, such as domestic abuse, that cause individuals, families and communities great harm.

West Midlands VRU is committed to reducing all forms of violence and supports projects, interventions, partners and stakeholders in a variety of ways, across all seven local authorities in the West Midlands, to do so.

With that in mind, the following recommendations are not a definitive or exhaustive list of violence reduction and prevention activity, nor are they intended to be. They are a set of evidence-based suggestions to inform the region's violence reduction strategy, with a specific and deliberate focus on serious youth violence, knife crime and the risk factors that we know to be associated with that.

Recommendation 1 – Place

The high-priority neighbourhoods identified in section 13.2 and listed in the table on page 47 are recommended as areas for partners to consider as priority for potential future focus within the regional violence reduction and prevention strategy and activity.

These have been selected based on a combination of existing levels of serious violence and knife crime and a high risk index score.

It is acknowledged that partners and stakeholders will have a presence and be active and engaged in many of these areas already. For example, there are overlaps with West Midlands Police Impact Areas such as Sparkbrook and Erdington in Birmingham.

The VRU is committed to working across all seven local authorities and there are high-priority neighbourhoods in all seven. A map of these areas may be found on page 46 and a list on page 47, but examples include:

- + Birmingham - Castle Vale, Frankley, Sparkbrook, Small Heath, Erdington
- + Coventry – Henley Green & Wood End, Foleshill
- + Dudley - Brierley Hill, Kates Hill
- + Sandwell – Tibbington, Stone Cross & Hateley Heath
- + Solihull – Smiths Wood
- + Walsall – Walsall Ryecroft, Darlaston, Bloxwich and Blakenall
- + Wolverhampton – Wolverhampton Central and Waterloo Road

Recommendation 2 – Person

This recommendation suggests prioritising support for activity and interventions that seek to work with the following groups of people:

- + Young people (particularly under 18)
- + Young men
- + Young men with Black ethnicity
- + Young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs
- + Young people in the care system
- + Young people in unregulated or unregistered care settings

Focussing on serious youth violence and knife crime highlights a number of demographic characteristics that are over-represented in the people who are involved in violence, as perpetrators but particularly also as victims.

In Section 9 (page 29), more information can be found on the demographic breakdown of people involved in County Lines:

- + 50% are Under 18
- + 95% are Male
- + 41% are Black

We also know from extensive research that young people at risk of school exclusion (especially young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs - for more detail see section 12 (Education) on page 42, Children in Care settings (especially unregulated settings) who are more likely to go missing and put at risk of criminal exploitation.

West Midlands VRU recognises that data is only as good as what is collected and how rigorous and careful that collection is. It goes without question that there is useful data that is not routinely collected and even the good quality data that is collected is not a perfect representation of the real world. The map is not the territory.

However, this recommendation is made on the basis of the most up-to-date, reliable and local data available and with the best of intentions. We believe it is good enough to make this recommendation. For more detail on the data used in this report, the metadata, source references and as assessment of quality and gaps in knowledge, see section 16 on page 110.

Recommendation 3 – Exploring opportunities to reduce risks linked to children in care, missing, school exclusion and county lines.

This recommendation is for West Midlands VRU to investigate the opportunity to work in partnership with a cross-section of stakeholders - including a local authority – to explore the risks and links between children in care, missing, school exclusion and county lines.

Based on the evidence of risk from this assessment and outlined below, the recommendation is to work with Sandwell Local Authority.

- + Smethwick and east Sandwell high rates of hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object (Section 8, page 23)
- + Police recorded involvement in County Lines from Smethwick and east Sandwell - (Section 9.3, page 29)
- + Increase in the rate of Children in Care from 70 per 100,000 in 2016 to 109 per 100,000 in 2019 (Section 10.2, page 33)
- + Much of the local authority area showing relatively high in the Risk Index (see map in Section 11.5, page 40)
- + Schools with high three-year permanent exclusion rates (Section 12, page 42)

As well as demonstrating a relatively high risk and need from the data in this assessment, West Midlands VRU understands that Sandwell have significant previous experience in working with young people affected by adverse childhood experiences (ACES), have recently recruited a number of Public Health registrars and consultants to engage with Birmingham University in violence reduction work and have good existing links to West Midlands VRU with their Youth Offending Team.



Recommendation 4 – Work in a custodial setting

Explore how the VRU could offer support in a custodial setting, perhaps through a place-based pilot in a custodial setting, working with staff teams in custody.

This recommendation is made in view of the fact that the VRU has already scoped out how it might support rehabilitative interventions in custody but the suggestion is that this work is now explored with HMP Young Offenders Institution in Brinsford.

The rationale for this location is explored in more detail in Section 7 (page 19) but summarised by a number of factors outlined below:

- + Young population (aged 18 to 21)
- + West Midlands region location
- + Size of population (approx. 400 prisoners)
- + Increase in prisoners sentenced for violence and possession offences
- + Increase and scale of violence and self-harm in the prison

Austerity and changes and cuts to probation services has reduced the level of rehabilitative support available to prisoners inside and immediately on release from custody. Resettlement Teams working with the VRU have raised the importance of access to services and support for young people in custody. We are aware that being in custody during the pandemic will have had a significant impact on young people. NHS Midlands and Public Health England's Health & Justice team are also focused on YOI Brinsford. There may be an opportunity for the VRU to support and extend the offer, transferring learning across contexts.

Recommendation 5 – Develop and Extend support in Education settings

Although no causal link has been proven between exclusion from school and being involved in violence, there is a strong correlation. Section 12 (page 42) highlights the increased likelihood of children on free school meals (five times more likely) and children with social, emotional and mental health needs (eight times more likely) of being permanently removed from school.

In the West Midlands five of the seven local authorities have higher permanent exclusion rates than the average in England and Wales. In Dudley and Wolverhampton rates are more than double the national average.

West Midlands VRU currently education settings through its newly established team of education intervention advisors.

This recommendation is to continue to support this work and to increase our support for Pupil Referral Units, where young people have already been removed from mainstream education and are at increased risk.

Recommendation 6 - Use the VRU's network and reach to focus attention on the impact of inequality and disproportionately on the safety and life outcomes of our community

Throughout this report, issues of inequality and disproportionality are repeatedly highlighted as drivers that increase risk factors and decrease protective factors for the most vulnerable people in our community. The report also highlights that often, communities and cohorts are disproportionately impacted by multiple different risk factors.

Efforts to mitigate these risks are too often being managed by separate organisations - sometimes even by separate departments of the same organisation - or by separate policies that may pull against each other. The VRU should play a key role in highlighting opportunities to collaborate in order to achieve a more impactful change.

The VRU should also lead efforts to identify and correct bias within official or partner datasets, recognising, for example, that accessibility to services may affect measures that are driven by service-user cohorts; that biases linked to the identification and recognition of risks may cause some communities to be artificially ranked higher or lower in some datasets. There is a clear danger of perpetuating misunderstood information about, for example, the typology of exploitation, unless hypotheses presented by the data are robustly tested.

Recommendation 7 - Assess and Refine VRU understanding of risk

The Risk Index methodology has been explained in full in Section 11 (page 36) and is based on extensive research. The VRU has confidence that it is a good representation of risk at neighbourhood level in the West Midlands.

However, work to understand the nuances and inter-relationships between risk factors and how they might influence someone's likelihood to become involved in violence is an ongoing process of review and refinement.

This recommendation proposes that the VRU working closely with Public Health colleagues, continues to develop relationships and opportunities for collaboration with partners such as West Midlands Police Data Lab, local authorities, networks of stakeholders and communities to ensure that the data and evidence that is informing the VRU's assessment of risk in the region is the best it can be.

Recommendation 8 – Securing appropriate and meaningful data exchange between key organisations

Our understanding of violence and the risk of violence in the West Midlands would be improved by a wider pool of data and evidence.

This recommendation is for the VRU and Executive Board to strive in 2021/22 to secure the necessary formal agreements to share data that would enable future analytical products to be improved by the inclusion of important constituent datasets that would help to describe the patterns and trends of violence in the West Midlands, particularly from West Midlands Ambulance Service, the NHS, local authorities and children's services and safeguarding teams.

Recommendation 9 - Widening the evidence base

Our understanding of violence and the risk of violence in the West Midlands would be improved by a wider pool of data and evidence, including qualitative information.

This recommendation is for the VRU to explore ways to ensure that it takes steps to test hypothesis with a broad range of practitioners and communities. It also recommends that the VRU explores ways to consolidate lessons learnt processes in order to ensure that as much learning as possible is harvested from serious incidents, including serious injuries and fatalities for those who are harmed when they are over the age of 18 and not by a family member.

Recommendation 10 – Improve and Maintain links between Insight, Analysis and Evaluation

West Midlands VRU has commissioned an evaluation of the VRU and some of the interventions it supports. Some of the findings should become available in 2021/22.

This recommendation is for the VRU and its partners to use the findings from these qualitative and quantitative evaluations, such as in the place-based pilot areas, to inform future needs assessments and create a circular relationship between strategic analysis, commissioning and evaluation.

We also hope to understand impact and attribution, recognising that many external factors – such as the Covid-19 pandemic for example – may affect what happens in a place and how that informs and affects the regional violence reduction and prevention strategy and direction.

15. PLACE-BASED CHAPTERS

This section of the report examines the context behind four of the VRU's eight place based pilots, focussing on those which were established earliest in the programme and have therefore been underway for several months already.





THE THREE ESTATES

Introduction

The Three Estates of Hawkesley, Pool Farm and Primrose Hill on the southern edge of Birmingham consist largely of high and low-rise council housing built in the 1970s.

Situated in the Birmingham ward of Kings Norton South and the parliamentary constituency of Birmingham Northfield, it is one of the poorest parts of the city and has suffered particularly in the last decade from significant deprivation.

Three Estates from the air



Community Voices

On one hand:

"The Three Estates have been profoundly affected by cuts in budgets and lack of investment."

"There are empty homes ready to be demolished which add an air of dilapidation to the estate."

On the other hand:

"Parts of the estate feel almost like countryside and - as the estate is on high ground - in certain parts the views across Birmingham are amazing."

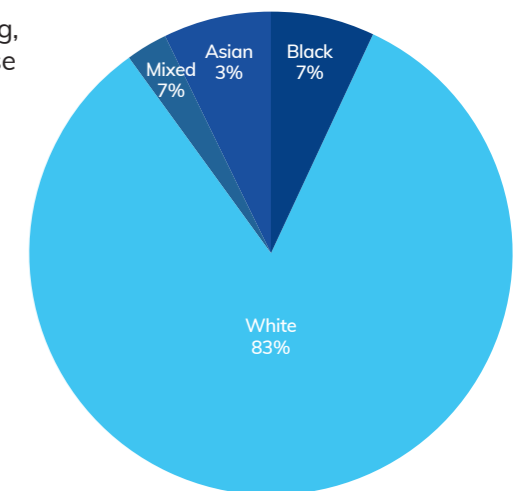
"The strengths and positives of the estate are that everyone knows each other and there is a sense of community."

The People of the Three Estates

Birmingham, the biggest city in the UK outside London, has a growing, young population. 25% of its residents are under 16^{xxxxix}. Many of those young people live in low-income families. The Three Estates has a similar profile. 28% of its residents are under the age of 18.

Birmingham is a diverse, multicultural city. More than half its one million population identified as non-white British in the 2011 census and that figure is likely to be higher in 2020. Kings Norton South, by contrast, is 83% White British.

More information on the population, economy and diversity of Three Estates can be found in Birmingham City Council's Ward Profile.



Serious Violence in the Three Estates

The following map shows West Midlands Police recorded incidents of knife crime from January 2018 to November 2020^{xii} aggregated to show hotspots.

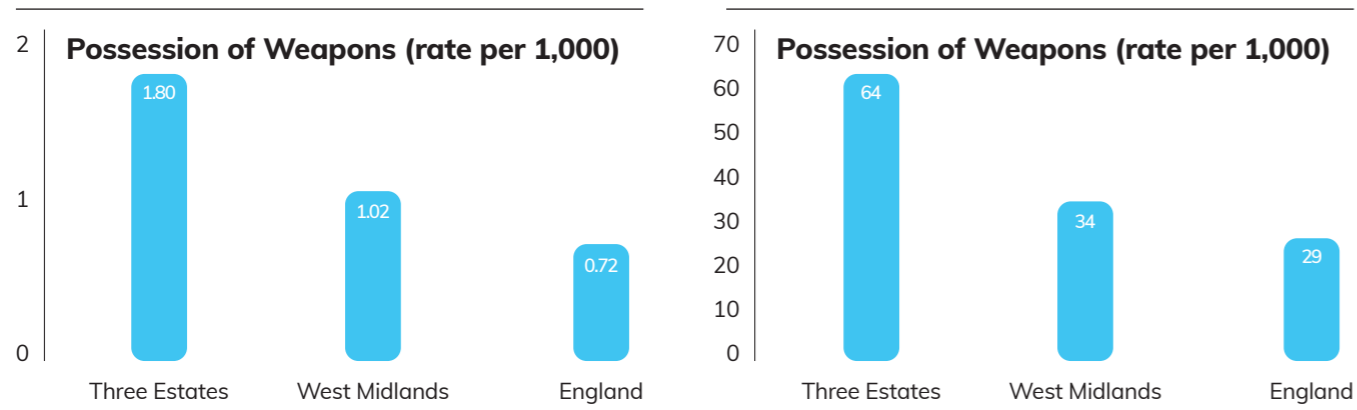


Key Findings

- + In the Three Estates the main hotspot for knife crime in recent years is near the junction of Shannon Road and Primrose Hill
- + Knife crime has more than doubled in the West Midlands since 2015 and a third of victims are children and young people aged 10-24.

Violent Crime and Possession of Weapons in the Three Estates

The Three Estates experiences higher rates of violent crime, possession of weapon offences and antisocial behaviour^{xiii} than the West Midlands or England in general.

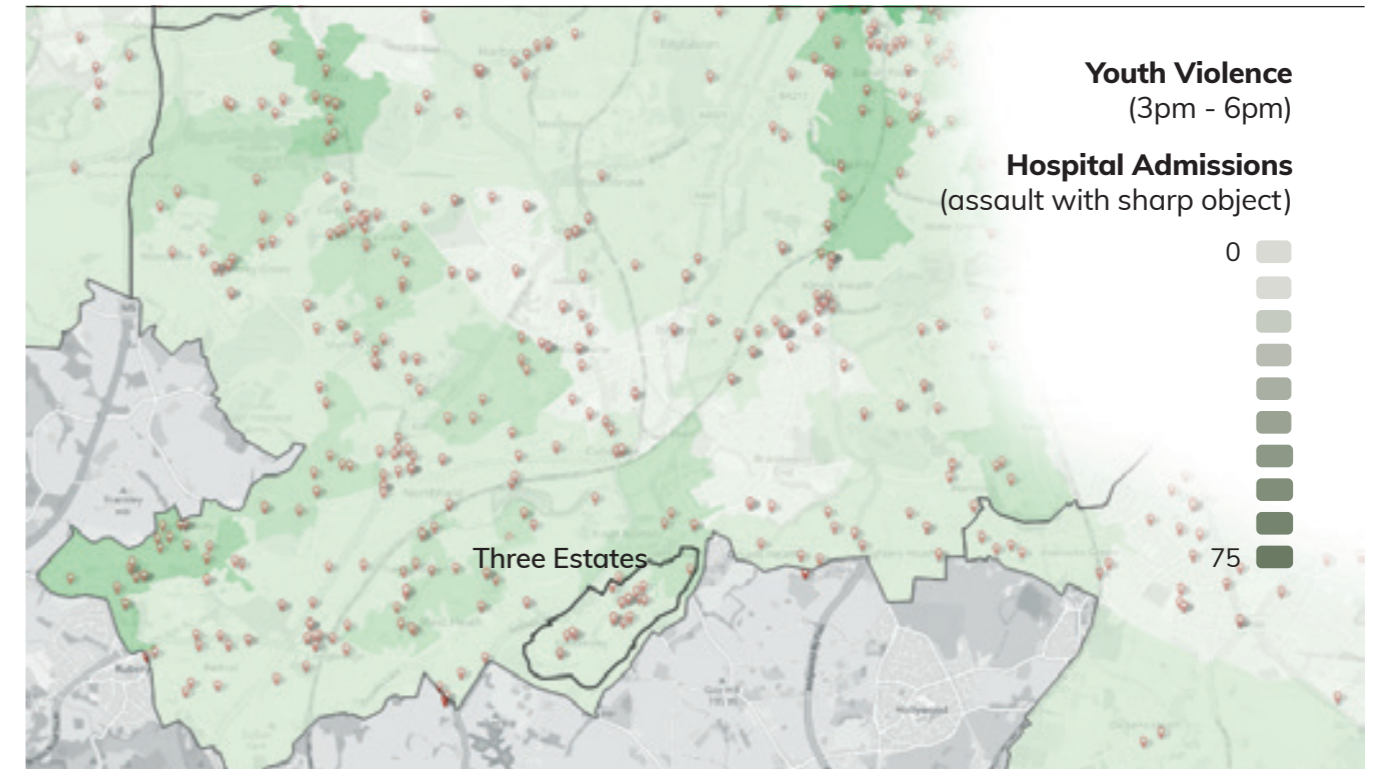


Hospital admissions for Assault with a sharp object and Youth Violence

The map shows three years of hospital admissions data for assault with a sharp object, based on where the patient lives and aggregated to neighbourhood level. Darker green means higher numbers of people from that neighbourhood being admitted to hospital for assault with a sharp object during the three-year period.

Youth violence increases between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm.

The red pins illustrate approximate locations of police recorded violence between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm where the age of victim or suspect was 18 or less.



Key Findings

- + The 12-month total of incidents of violent crime recorded by police in Three Estates is 64 per 1,000 residents. The average in England is 29
- + The average number of "Possession of Weapon" offences in the Three Estates is 1.8 per 1,000 residents, which is two and a half times higher than the national average
- + It is important to note that these are rates per 1,000 of the resident population and incidents of serious violence are rare.

Risk Factors

By identifying the factors which correlate with the risks of violence increasing and understanding the profile of these risk factors across the region, the VRU can focus its preventative work more effectively.

Research by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Policing & Crime (MOPAC) in 2018 reveals a strong statistical association between rates of serious youth violence and social, economic and health inequalities.

Poverty features prominently in the analysis and may be the single biggest factor in explaining the prevalence and risk of violence in populations and communities.

Deprivation and Inequalities

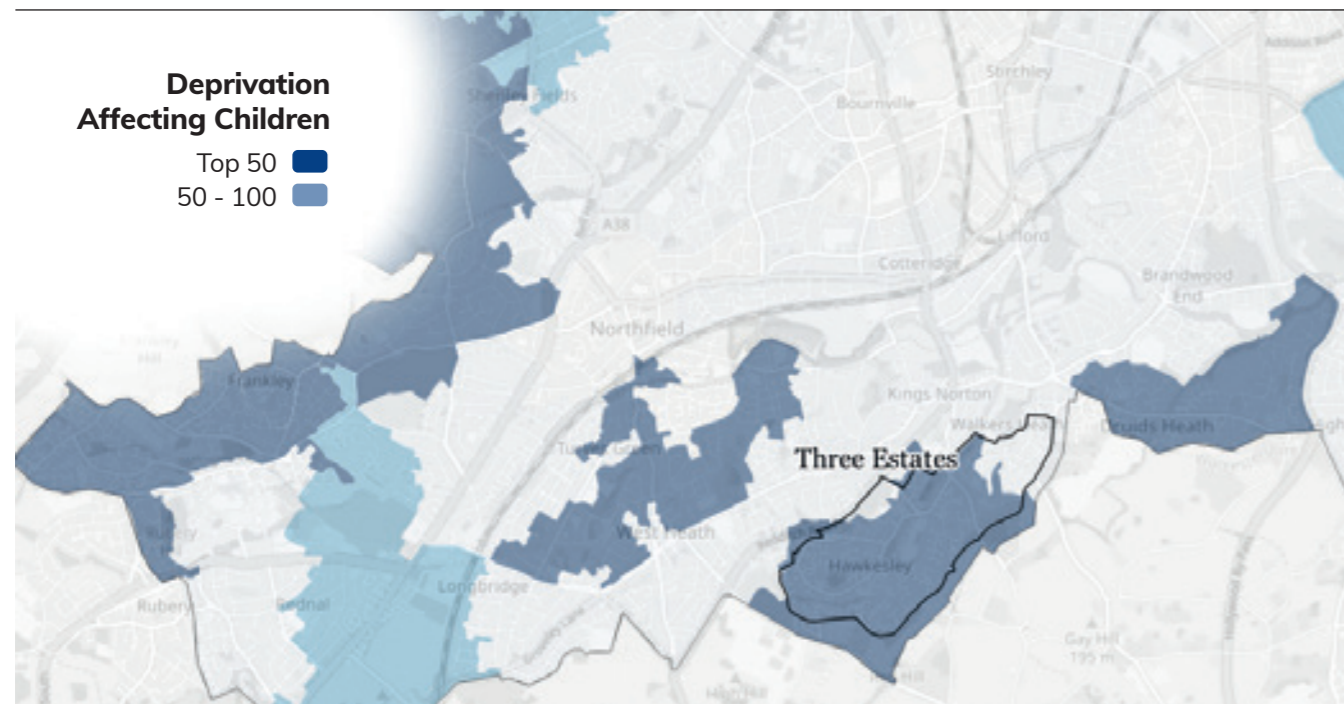
Birmingham is one of the most deprived local authorities in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation statistics from 2019.



In the last 15 years, Birmingham has become more deprived, moving from the 16th most deprived local authority in 2004 to sixth in 2019 and overtaking Sandwell in 2015 as the most deprived authority in the West Midlands.

Deprivation Affecting Children in the Three Estates

Some parts of Birmingham are more deprived than others and this includes the Three Estates. The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index shows how deprivation affects young people growing up in this part of the city.



Key Findings

- + The most deprived neighbourhoods are shaded blue, with dark blue neighbourhoods in the 14% most deprived in the West Midlands
- + The Three Estates is one of the most deprived parts of the country for the children who are growing up there
- + The End Child Poverty (ECP) coalition published new research in 2020xlix which estimates the degree of child poverty after taking housing costs into consideration
- + According to this research, 37% of children living in Birmingham Northfield constituency, which includes the Three Estates, are living in poverty – almost 9,000 children.

Community Voices

“The residents’ main concern is that there is nothing for young people who live on the Three Estates to do.”

“They end up hanging around in the streets, sometimes participating in antisocial behaviour.”

West Midlands VRU Risk Index

West Midlands VRU have designed a risk index based on three factors with the strongest correlations towards violence:

- + Deprivation affecting children;
- + Rates of mental health;
- + Lack of educational development in early years.

No causation between these factors can be implied in terms of violence, but the data can help us to understand risk at neighbourhood level.

The neighbourhoods referred to here are MSOAsli - small areas with broadly similar population sizes that can be compared within local authority areas and nationally.

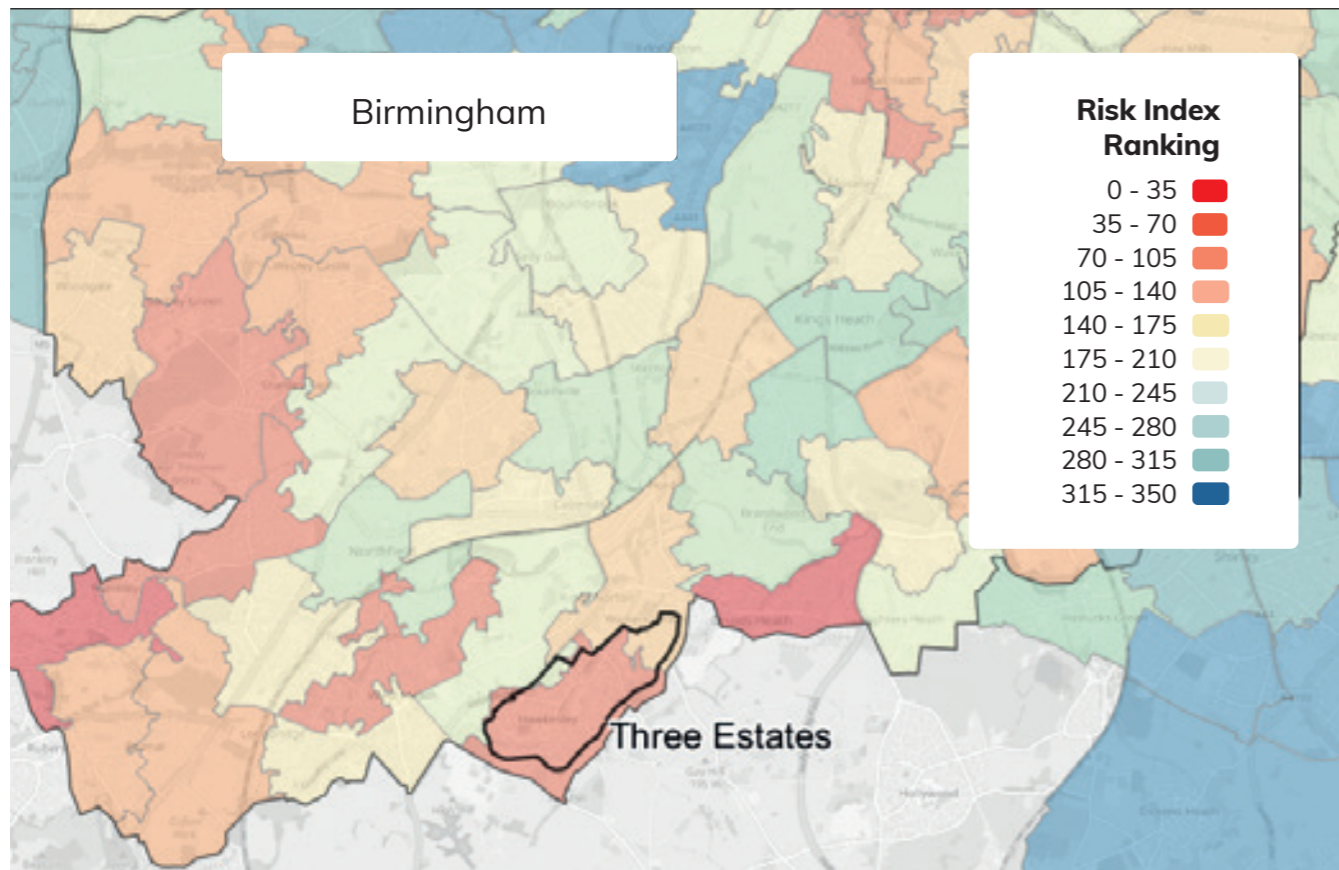
There are 132 in Birmingham and the one that corresponds most closely to the Three Estates is Hawkesley. In terms of risk, Hawkesley ranks sixth out of 132 neighbourhoods in Birmingham and 14th out of 356 in the West Midlands.

Neighbourhoods in Birmingham ordered by risk index ranking

Overall Rank				Rank by Individual factor (West Midlands)		
West Midlands	Local Authority	Neighbourhood	Local Authority	Income Deprivation Affecting Young People	Mental Health Index	Pupils NOT Achieving Good Development in Early Years
1	1	Frankley	Birmingham	3	1	37
4	2	Druids Heath	Birmingham	1	4	64
5	3	Castle Vale	Birmingham	40	3	29
11	4	Bartley Green & Shenley Fields	Birmingham	24	13	72
13	5	Allens Cross	Birmingham	9	30	74
14	6	Hawkesley	Birmingham	6	2	108
18	7	Perry Common - College Road	Birmingham	26	28	80
21	8	Kent's Moat	Birmingham	22	111	2
22	9	Glebe Farm	Birmingham	14	82	41
24	10	Turves Green	Birmingham	15	5	125
25	11	Sheldon North	Birmingham	35	46	70
27	12	Lozells West	Birmingham	67	75	15
28	13	Sparkbrook North	Birmingham	10	41	110
29	14	Shard End & Kingfisher	Birmingham	50	17	94
31	15	Kingstanding South East	Birmingham	16	22	133
32	16	Buckland End	Birmingham	51	24	96
34	17	Erdington Town	Birmingham	18	70	87
36	18	Balsall Heath W & Kingswood Rd	Birmingham	33	89	67
41	19	Kitts Green	Birmingham	47	19	146
43	20	Yardley Wood West	Birmingham	48	18	149
46	21	Weoley Castle	Birmingham	65	33	123
55	22	Rubery East	Birmingham	144	8	85

Key Findings

- + Hawkesley ranks sixth in income deprivation affecting children out of 356 neighbourhoods in the West Midlands and two of the only five areas rated poorer for children (Frankley and Druids Heath) are nearby in south Birmingham
- + Hawkesley is the second-highest ranking neighbourhood in the West Midlands for mental health issues
- + Many neighbouring communities and areas have high risk ranking, including Frankley, Druids Heath, Bartley Green and Turves Green
- + For more information on the measures included in the Risk Index, including a detailed explanation of the source data, please see the references in the appendix.ⁱⁱⁱ



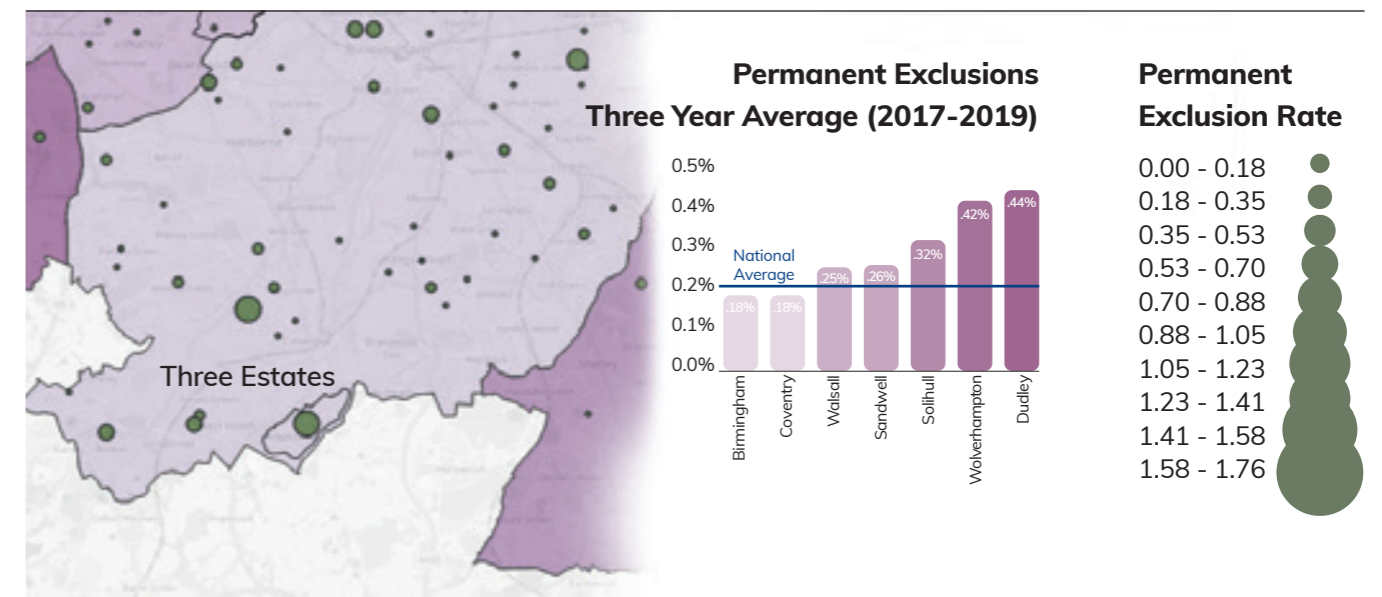
Education

Research links poor pupil attainment, absenteeism, special educational needs and deprivation to an increased risk of being excluded from school.

There is no evidence that permanent school exclusion directly causes violent behaviour or involvement in crime, but there are strong correlations.

One in four young people in custody that have been excluded from school, compared to one in 1,000 of the whole secondary school population.

School Exclusions in the Three Estates and south Birmingham



Key Findings

- + The permanent school exclusion rate in state-funded secondary schools in and around the Three Estates is high in comparison to the rest of Birmingham and the national picture
- + The following table shows some of the state-funded secondary schools in and around the Three Estates, with pupil characteristics and exclusion rates

School	Head Count	Sex	Type of Establishment	Rate of Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals	Social, Emotional & Mental health Needs	Permanent Exclusion rate (3-year Average)
Ark Kings Academy	827	Mixed	Academy Sponsor Led	61.80%	6.70%	0.72%
King Edward VI Balaam Wood	369	Mixed	Academy Sponsor Led	54.50%	8.40%	0.60%
Turves Green School	649	Girls	Foundation School	35.00%	2.00%	0.23%
St Thomas Aquinas	1147	Mixed	Academy Converter	30.30%	1.90%	0.43%
Colmers School and VI Form	1129	Mixed	Foundation School	28.80%	3.00%	0.43%
Turves Green Boys	648	Boys	Community School	29.80%	1.10%	0.42%

- + More than half of the pupils at Ark Kings in the Three Estates, and at King Edward VI Balaam Wood in Frankley, are eligible for free school meals
- + Both schools have high rates of pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health needs and permanent exclusion rates that are more than three times higher than the national average
- + All the state-funded secondary schools in and around the Three Estates, apart from Turves Green Girls school, have three-year average permanent exclusion rates more than double the Birmingham average
- + School is important for education but can also provide an additional protective factor for young people already at risk of being involved in violence
- + Permanent exclusion, for some young people, may represent the removal of one of the last protections against exploitation, criminality and violence.

Who is most at risk of school exclusion?

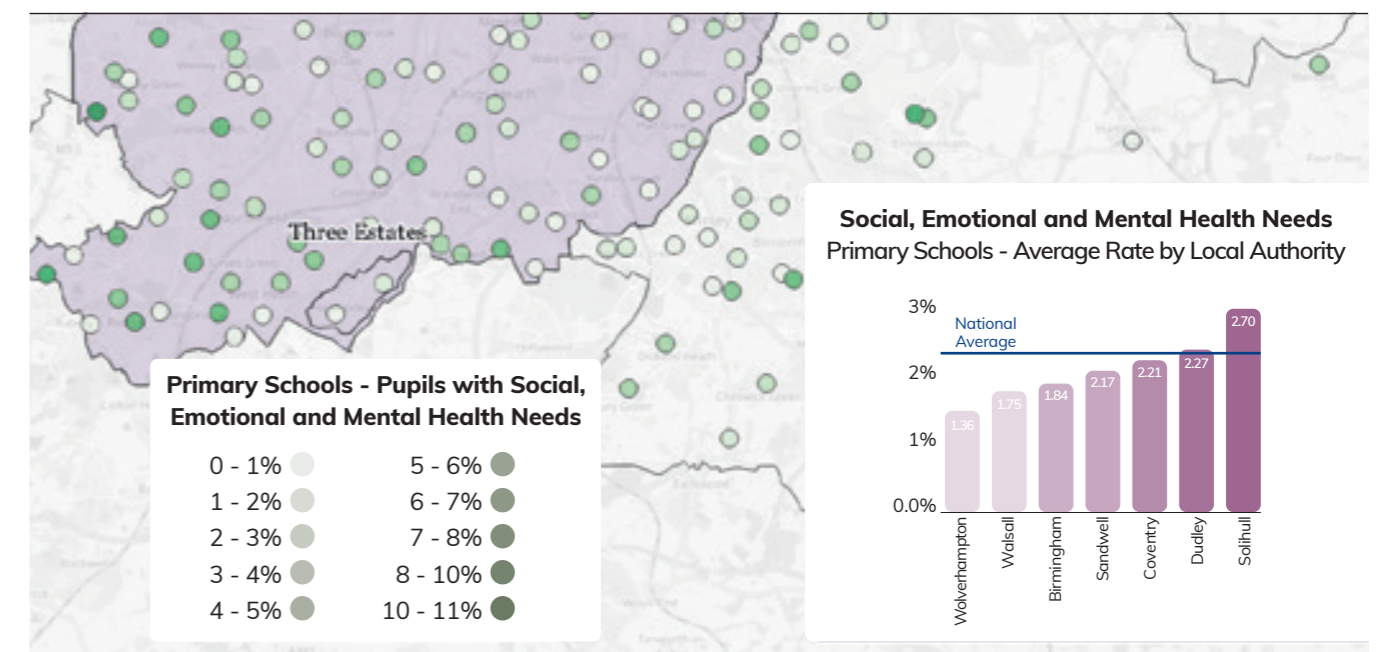
- + The average permanent exclusion rate for pupils in state-funded secondary schools in England is 0.2%
- + The rate for pupils on free school meals is 0.5% - five times higher than those NOT on free school meals
- + For pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health needs the rate is eight times higher at 1.6%.



Broken windows and fly-tipping in the Three Estates

Primary Schools in the Three Estates

Pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are permanently excluded at an eight times higher rate than average at 1.6%. The following map shows primary schools in and around the Three Estates with rates of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, according to School Pupil characteristics from the most recent School Census published by the Department for Education in January 2020.^{liv}



Summary

- + State-funded primary schools record details of the numbers and rates of pupils with special educational needs and SEMH rates are shown by primary school on the above map
- + This may indicate higher risk of exclusion later if support is not provided.

West Midlands VRU and the Place-Based approach

- + The place based pilot in the Three Estates is focused on increasing resilience and community cohesion post lockdown to reduce and prevent violence
- + As restrictions imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic are lifted in the area, there will be a need to increase the support offered to families in response to the impact of lockdown to prevent and reduce the likelihood of violence
- + Partners are working together to:
 - Develop an effective place based stakeholder network that maximises resources in the area; Deliver additional specialist youth provision and parent peer support; Offer therapeutic intervention to young people
 - Offer targeted support (therapeutic or mentoring) to young people at risk, deliver trauma-informed practice training and deliver specialist employability support to young people.

Community Voices

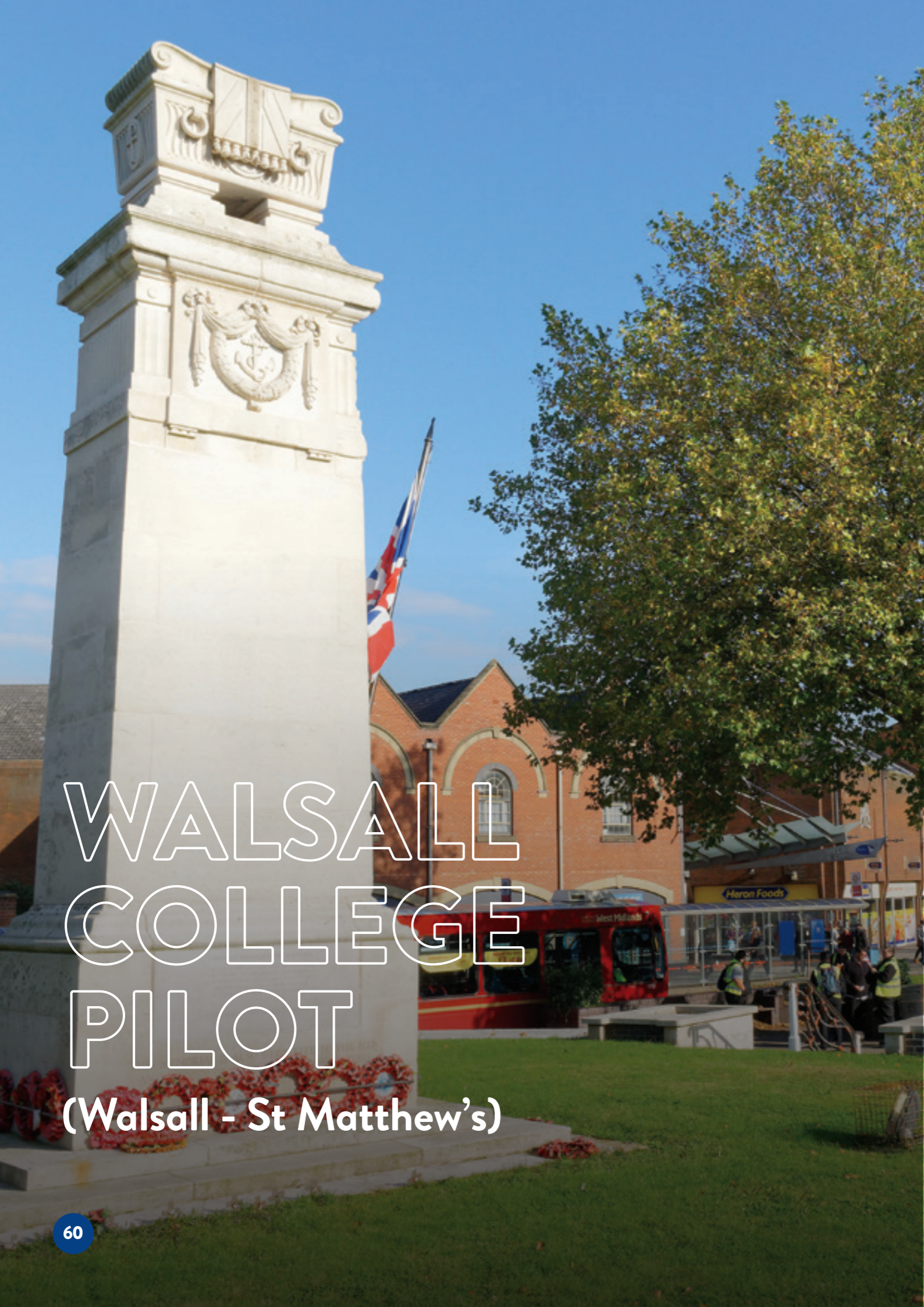
"Many kids don't want to go home..."

"We could do movie nights for local kids at Greaves Hall build up our community again."

"We must start engaging the youths now ... without them there is no community. They must be involved."

"If we engage young people in Greaves Hall – planting up the pots, graffiti art walls with them – they'll see it as their space and they'll protect it."





WALSALL COLLEGE PILOT (Walsall - St Matthew's)

Introduction

The West Midlands is a geographically small, but densely populated region, home to three million people. It has a young and ethnically diverse population but is a region with deep pockets of poverty.

Walsall is a metropolitan borough and market town ten miles to the northwest of Birmingham and one of four local authorities (with Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley) that make up the Black Country.

Like much of the West Midlands, Walsall is culturally diverse with people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi background making up the largest minority ethnic groups. Its population is 285,000.

Walsall from the air



St Matthew's Ward and Walsall College

St Matthew's Ward is situated in and around Walsall town centre and has an estimated population of about 17,000, 32% of whom are Black or Asian ethnicity. Half of the residents of St Matthew's live in rented property, 35% are in social rented housing.

West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit works closely with Walsall College, whose 11,000 students come from across Walsall and its surrounding areas and from a range of backgrounds. Walsall College has several campus sites in Walsall including the main Wisemore site near the town centre.

Walsall College and West Midlands VRU are taking a "whole college approach" to preventing and reducing violence in Walsall. This large further education institution can lead the way for the local community, businesses and organisations.



Violence in Town centres

Walsall has the third lowest crime rate in the West Midlands after Solihull and Dudley, but in common with many urban areas in the West Midlands and across the country, it has experienced a recent rise in recorded crime, which is up 3.8% in two years since 2018 - higher than the West Midlands average.^{lvii}

The town centre experiences the highest levels of recorded crime in Walsall with antisocial behaviour the largest proportion of the total, followed by violent and sexual offences.

West Midlands VRU, Project Guardian and West Midlands Police are working together to address violent crime, but the VRU's Walsall College-based pilot seeks to address the risks associated with violence and focuses on reaching young people who are most at risk and supporting them with early, upstream interventions.

More information on the population and diversity can be found in Walsall Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The Safer Walsall Partnership Plan 2020 can be found here.

"Working together to create inclusive communities where every voice is heard, listened to and valued, ensuring people feel safe, secure, happy and proud in Walsall"

Safer Walsall Partnership – 2020 Vision

Serious Violence in Walsall

Knife Crime

The following map shows West Midlands Police recorded incidents of knife crime from January 2018 to November 2020 aggregated to show hotspots.

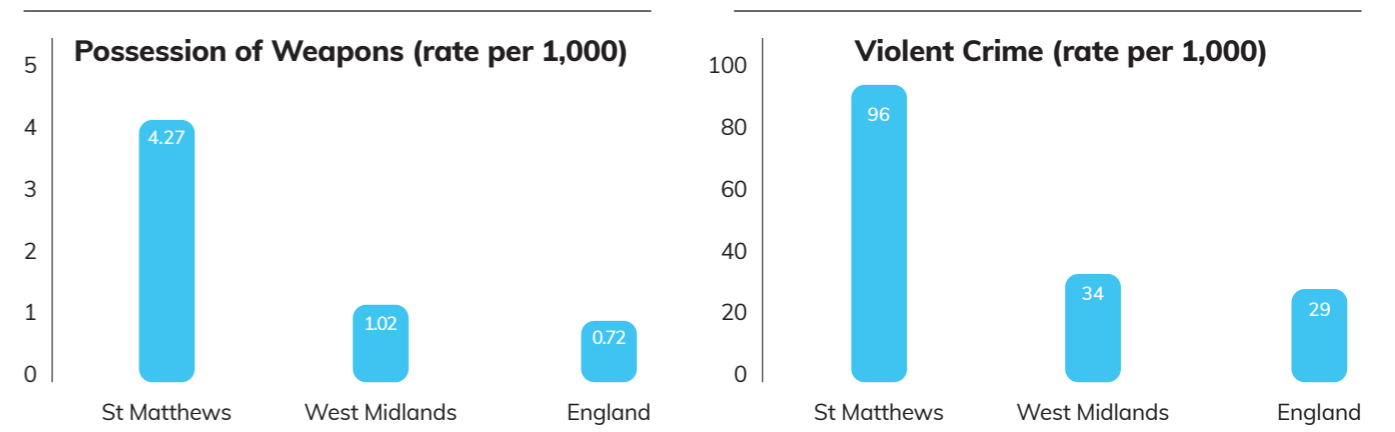


Key Findings

- + There is a clear hotspot just to the south of the main college building which is in the town centre
- + Knife crime has more than doubled in the West Midlands since 2015 and a third of victims are children and young people aged 10-24
- + Violent offences make up approximately a third of all total recorded crime in Walsall and St Matthew's Ward has the highest rate of total recorded crime.

Possession of Weapons and Violent Crime in Walsall

Walsall (St Matthews Ward) experiences higher rates of violent crime and possession of weapon offences than the West Midlands or England in general.

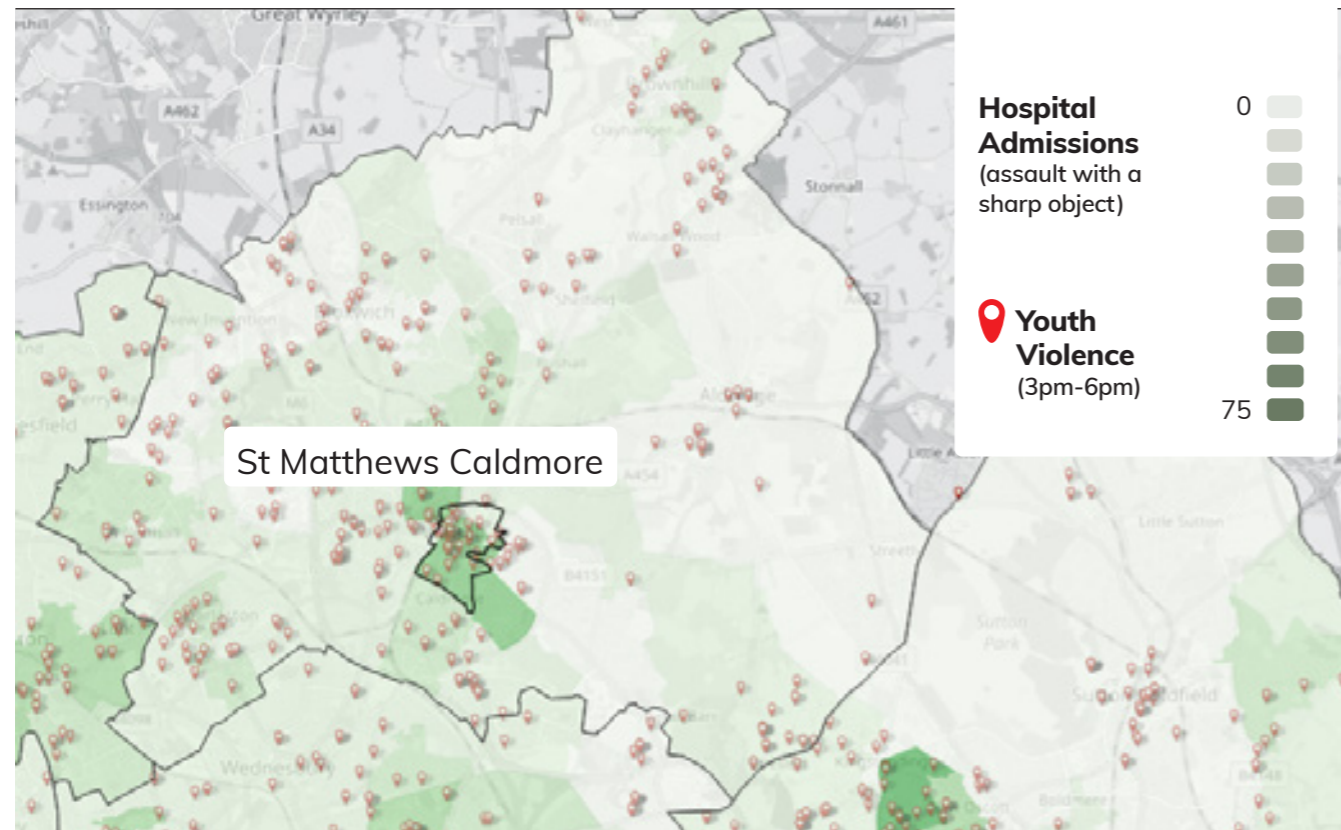


Hospital admissions for Assault with a sharp object and Youth Violence^{lx}

The map shows three years of hospital admissions data for assault with a sharp object, based on where the patient lives and aggregated to neighbourhood level. Darker green means higher numbers of people from that neighbourhood being admitted to hospital for assault with a sharp object during the three-year period.

Youth violence increases between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm.

The red pins illustrate approximate locations of police recorded violence between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm where the age of victim or suspect was 18 or less.



Key Findings

- + Hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object are shown aggregated to neighbourhood level - dark green indicates high rates
- + Youth (under 18) violence increases across the West Midlands between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm. The red pins show approximate locations
- + The rate of recorded possession of weapons offences is more than four times the West Midlands average which itself is 50% higher than the national rate
- + The rate in Walsall is 0.75 per 1,000 of the population, which is similar to the national picture
- + Violent crime in St Matthew's is also higher, though it is important to note these rates are per 1,000 of the resident population and incidents of serious violence are rare
- + The average rate in Walsall for violent crime is 31 per 1,000 of the population - slightly less than the West Midlands but higher than England
- + Walsall College report an increase in incidents relating to alcohol/drugs and weapon use from 40 in 2017 to almost 80 incidents in 2019.

Voices from the Community

"You told us that antisocial behaviour, youths with knives, street robberies and assaults are your primary concerns."

Safer Walsall Partnership Plan

"If [knife crime] just dropped by 5% it would make such a difference, because you know that it's stopping and more people are going to be safe."

Young Walsall Resident

Risk Factors

By identifying the factors which correlate with the risks of violence increasing and understanding the profile of these risk factors across the region, the VRU can focus its preventative work more effectively.

Research by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Policing & Crime (MOPAC) in 2018 reveals a strong statistical association between rates of serious youth violence and social, economic and health inequalities.

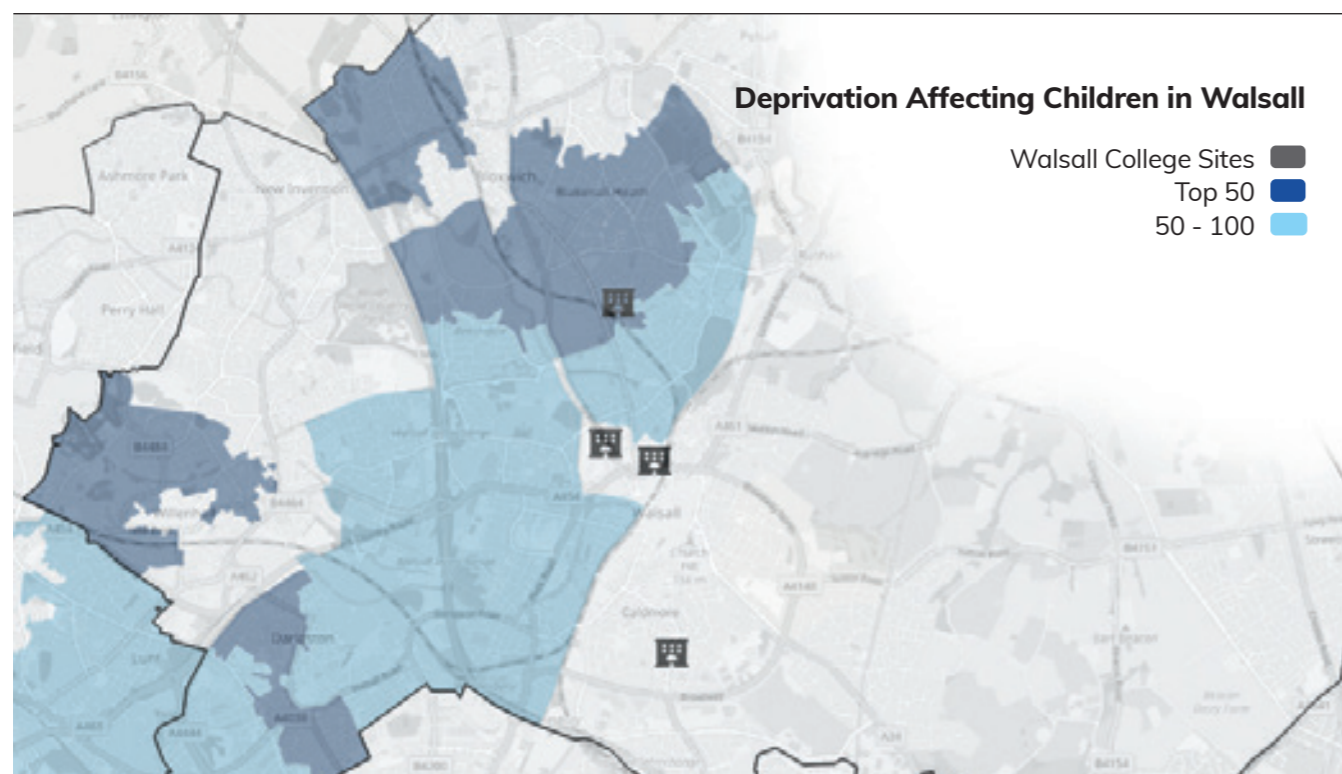
Poverty features prominently in the analysis and may well be the single biggest determining factor in explaining the prevalence and risk of violence in populations and communities.^{lxii}

Deprivation and Inequalities

Walsall is in the top 10% most deprived local authorities in England, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation statistics from 2019.

Some parts of Walsall are more deprived than others and this includes many of the neighbourhoods to the west and to immediately to the north of St Matthew's. The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index^{lxiv} shows how deprivation adversely affects young people.





Summary

- + The most deprived neighbourhoods are shaded blue, with the dark blue neighbourhoods amongst the 14% most deprived in the West Midlands
- + St Matthew’s, in central Walsall, has pockets of deprivation and 30% of its working-age residents are economically inactive
- + Several neighbourhoods to the north and northwest of the centre, which include large parts of Bloxwich and Blakenall, are among the most deprived in the West Midlands
- + End Child Poverty (ECP) research from 2020lxv estimates that 47% of children in Walsall South constituency, which includes St Matthew’s, are living in poverty, which amounts to almost 12,000 children.

“41% of children in Walsall are living in poverty and the number of people having to use food banks has increased with over 3 million food parcels handed out in 2018/19.”

Walsall Council Notice – January 2020

West Midlands VRU Risk Index

West Midlands VRU have designed a risk index based on three factors with the strongest correlations towards violence:

- + Deprivation affecting children;
- + Rates of mental health;
- + Lack of educational development in early years.

No causation between these factors can be implied in terms of violence, but the data can help us to understand risk at neighbourhood level.

The neighbourhoods referred to here are MSOAs - small areas with broadly similar population sizes that can be compared within local authority areas and nationally.

In terms of risk, St Matthew’s Ward (Walsall Central) is ninth of 39 neighbourhoods in Walsall and 53rd out of 356 in the West Midlands.

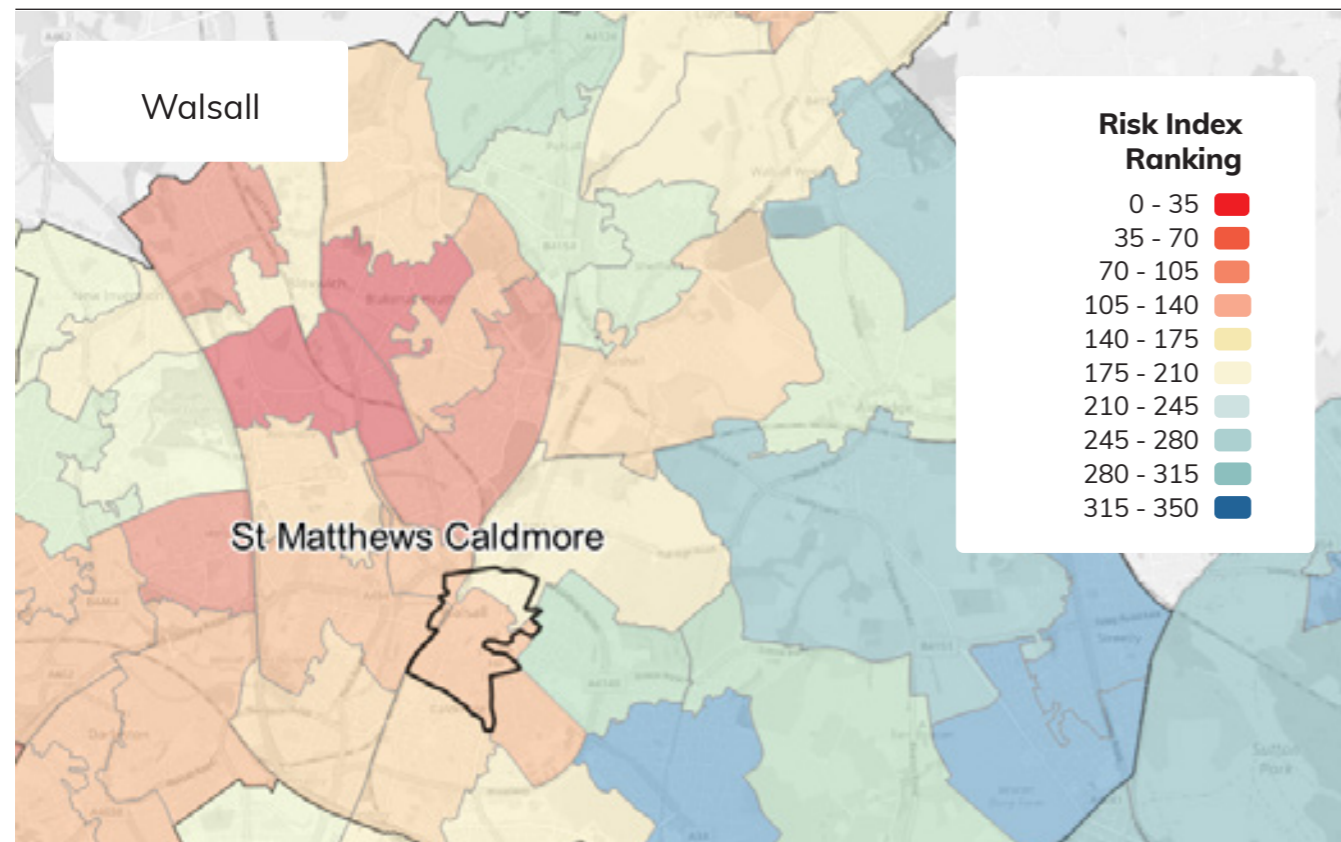
Neighbourhoods in Walsall ordered by Risk Index ranking

Overall Rank		Rank by Individual factor (West Midlands)				
West Midlands	Local Authority	Neighbourhood	Local Authority	Income Deprivation Affecting Young People	Mental Health Index	Pupils NOT Achieving Good Development in Early Years
2	1	Blakenhall North	Walsall	30	16	10
3	2	Bloxwich South	Walsall	31	27	3
10	3	Bloxwich North West	Walsall	21	43	43
23	4	Walsall Ryecroft	Walsall	60	61	23
35	5	Bentley	Walsall	68	97	14
45	6	Darlaston East	Walsall	95	99	22
48	7	Blakenhall South	Walsall	2	26	197
49	8	Willenhall Park	Walsall	28	59	138
53	9	Walsall Central	Walsall	113	55	62
58	10	Brownhills	Walsall	104	36	106
60	11	Darlaston Central	Walsall	36	112	100
70	12	Willenhall Town	Walsall	147	92	32
72	13	Walsall West	Walsall	82	134	63
87	14	Darlaston West	Walsall	74	152	88
96	15	Pleck	Walsall	64	138	129
110	16	Leamore	Walsall	91	174	95
113	17	Palfrey	Walsall	140	196	25
127	18	Little Bloxwich	Walsall	152	52	189
130	19	Rushall	Walsall	170	48	182
144	20	Bloxwich Central & North	Walsall	231	74	126

Key Findings

- + Walsall Central is 55th out of 356 neighbourhoods in the West Midlands in the Mental Health Index
- + It ranks 62nd for the number of pupils not achieving good development in Early Years
- + There are other neighbourhoods in Walsall with equivalent or higher risk, and notably, Blakenall South ranks second in the West Midlands for child poverty and Bloxwich South ranks third for pupils not achieving good development in early years.

Map showing St Matthew's risk relative to other neighbourhoods in Walsall



Summary

- + From the map it is clear St Matthew's Ward, which is in central Walsall, although showing indications of medium-to-high risk index rating, is nevertheless overshadowed by several neighbourhoods to the north and northwest of the centre
- + These neighbourhoods, which include large parts of Bloxwich and Blakenall, are some of the most deprived in the West Midlands
- + Rates of violent crime (per 1,000 of the population) ASB and stop and search are typically higher in town and city centres, where people tend to congregate, and police activity may be more concentrated.

Education

"I think it's good that we are able to come back to get our education."

"I do find it easier to learn things when I am at school."

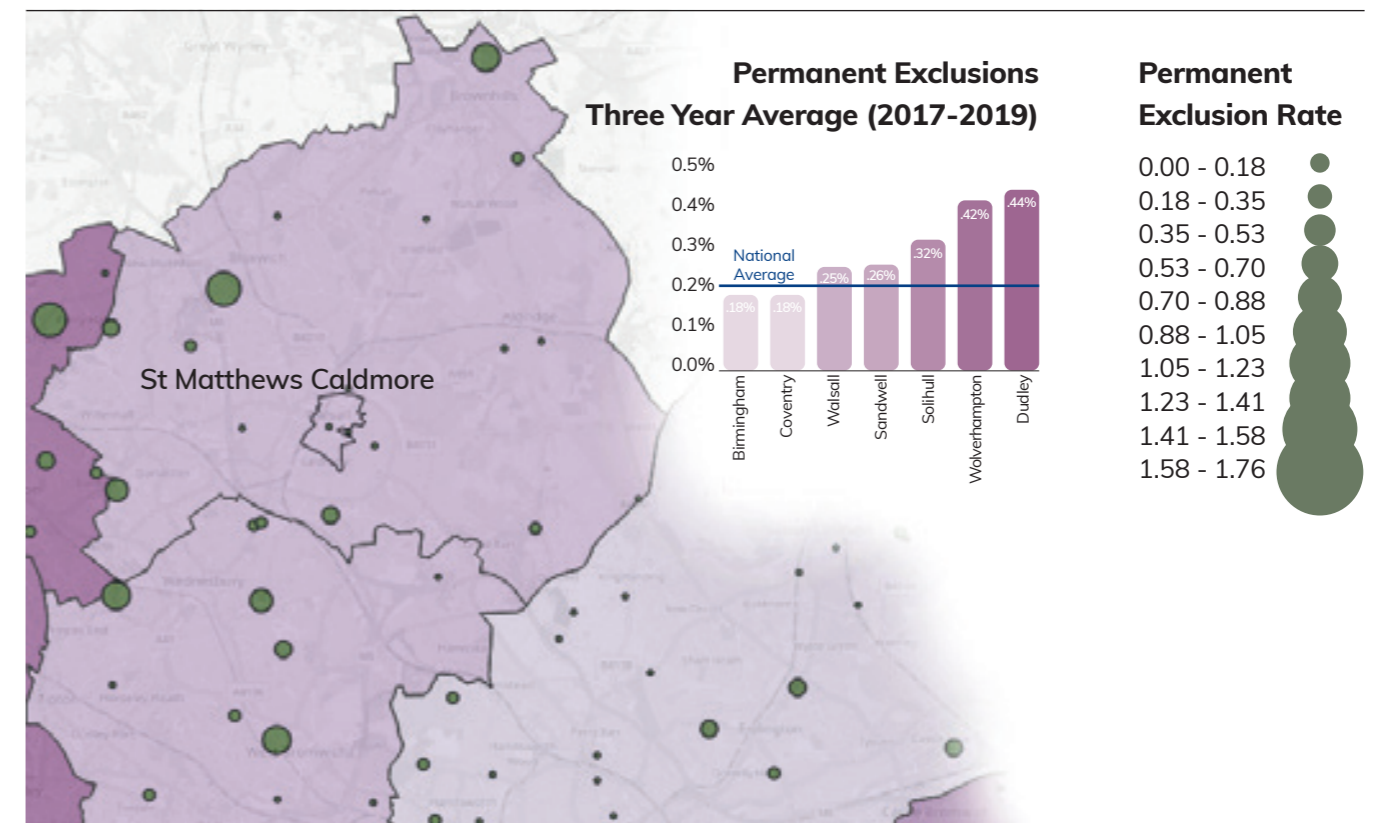
Walsall's Young Voices

Research links poor pupil attainment, absenteeism, special educational needs and deprivation to an increased risk of being excluded from school.

There is no evidence that permanent school exclusion directly causes violent behaviour or involvement in crime, but there are strong correlations.

One in four young people in custody that have been excluded from school, compared to one in 1,000 of the whole secondary school population.

School Exclusions in Walsall



Summary

- + The permanent school exclusion rate in secondary schools in and around St Matthew's is low in comparison to the rest of the West Midlands
- + The following table shows some of the state-funded secondary schools in St Matthew's Ward and nearby, with pupil characteristics and exclusion rates

School	Head Count	Sex	Type of Establishment	Rate of Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals	Social, Emotional & Mental health Needs	Permanent Exclusion rate (3-year Average)
Bloxwich Academy	1203	Mixed	Academy Sponsor Led	50%	1.6%	0.05%
West Walsall E-ACT Academy	997	Mixed	Academy Sponsor Led	38%	2.1%	0.00%
Blue coat CoFE Academy	890	Mixed	Academy Sponsor Led	32%	2.2%	0.17%
Joseph Leckie Academy	1416	Mixed	Academy Converter	30%	1.0%	0.44%
Walsall Studio School	265	Mixed	Studio Schools	22%	8.3%	0.00%
Queen Mary's High School	775	Girls	Academy Converter	9%	0.5%	0.00%

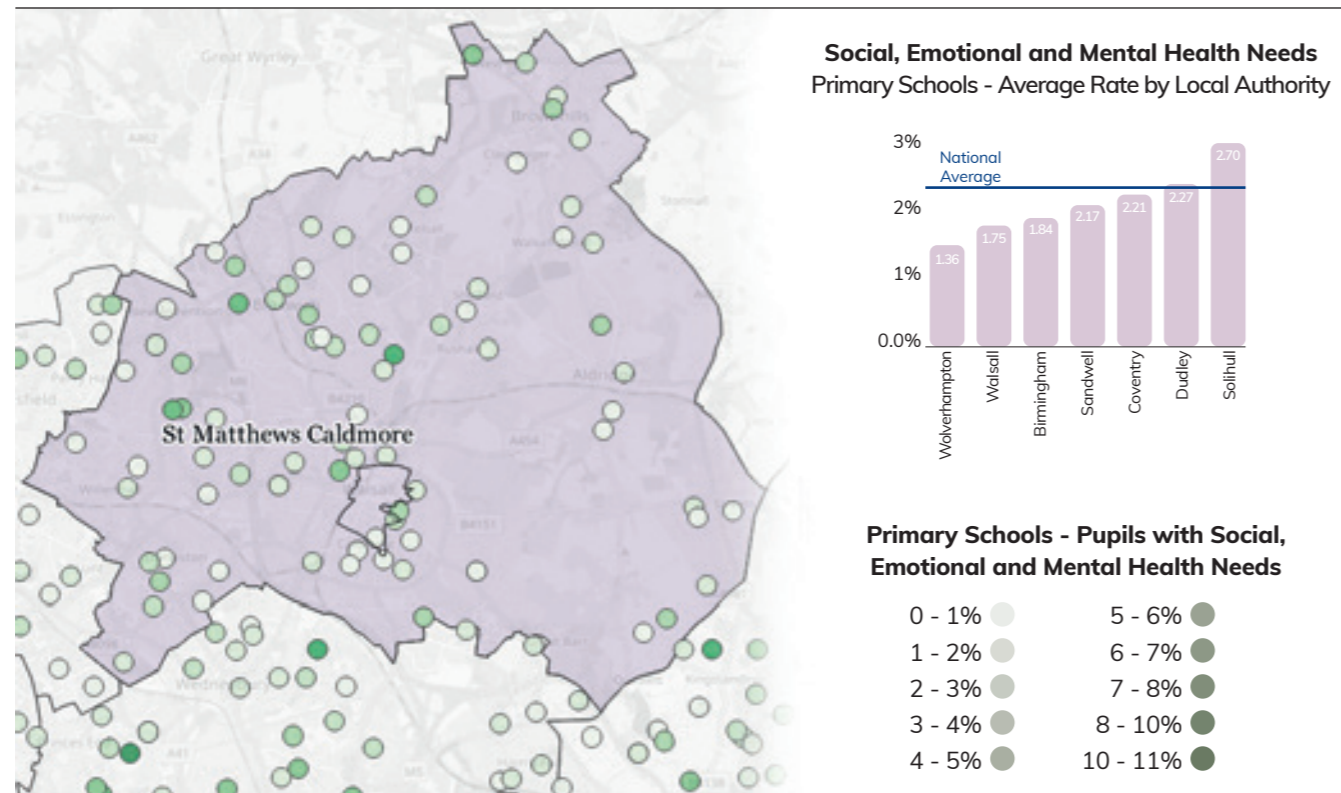
- + Bloxwich and Joseph Leckie have the highest permanent exclusion rates
- + Walsall Studio school, in the heart of St Matthew's Ward, had no permanent exclusions from 2017 to 2019 despite the highest rates of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Who is most at risk of school exclusion?

- + The average permanent exclusion rate for pupils in state-funded secondary schools in England is 0.2%
- + The rate for pupils on free school meals is 0.5%, which is five times higher than those NOT on free school meals
- + For pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health needs the rate is eight times higher at 1.6%
- + Walsall Public Health team led a piece of research into school exclusions in 2019 that found strong correlations between pupils with special educational needs and a much higher likelihood of permanent exclusion, which mirrored national research - more information can be found in the appendices.^{lxix}

Primary Schools in Walsall

Pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are permanently excluded at an eight times higher rate than average at 1.6%. The following map shows primary schools in Walsall with rates of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, according to School Pupil characteristics from the most recent School Census published by the Department for Education in 2020.^{lxx}



Summary

- + Walsall has lower rates of pupils in primary school with social, emotional and mental health needs, but some schools have relatively high rates and these are typically found in more deprived parts of the town
- + The focus of the place-based pilot is in the College which is in the town centre. Although levels of violent crime are quite high in the town centre, there is a smaller residential population and fewer primary schools.

West Midlands VRU and the Place-Based approach

- + A whole college place based pilot project focused on preventing and reducing violence commenced activity in December 2019
- + The pilot works with the college to introduce a trauma informed approach across its provision to support inclusivity in education
- + The approach entailed a whole college training and awareness raising program around trauma informed practice and then specialist support services placed onsite to respond to trauma
- + We anticipated that a college wide trauma informed approach would support a reduction in conduct issues (including violence) on campus as well as incidents of self-directed violence
- + The College was the first education setting for the pilot to be rolled out in Walsall, and once the approach was embedded further roll out to schools has taken place. The first school is Blue Coat CE Academy.



Walsall Arboretum, in St Matthew's Ward



Coventry

Introduction

The West Midlands is a geographically small, but densely populated region, home to three million people. It has a young and ethnically diverse population but is a region with deep pockets of poverty.

Coventry is the eleventh biggest city in the UK, with a growing, young population. 20% of its residents are under 16. A quarter live in low-income families.

Hillfields, a residential suburb in St Michael's Ward, is situated just north of the city centre.

Once a thriving industrial area, it suffered extensive damage during the Blitz and many of its factories, typically involved in manufacturing and the motor trade, have since been turned into housing.

Coventry City football club played their home matches at Highfield Road in Hillfields before the club relocated to the Ricoh Arena in 2005.

Hillfields from the air



Community Voices

"It's a good mix of people."

"I don't want to live anywhere else."

The People of Hillfields

Hillfields itself is densely populated and home to lots of students. Hillfields has a high proportion of people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

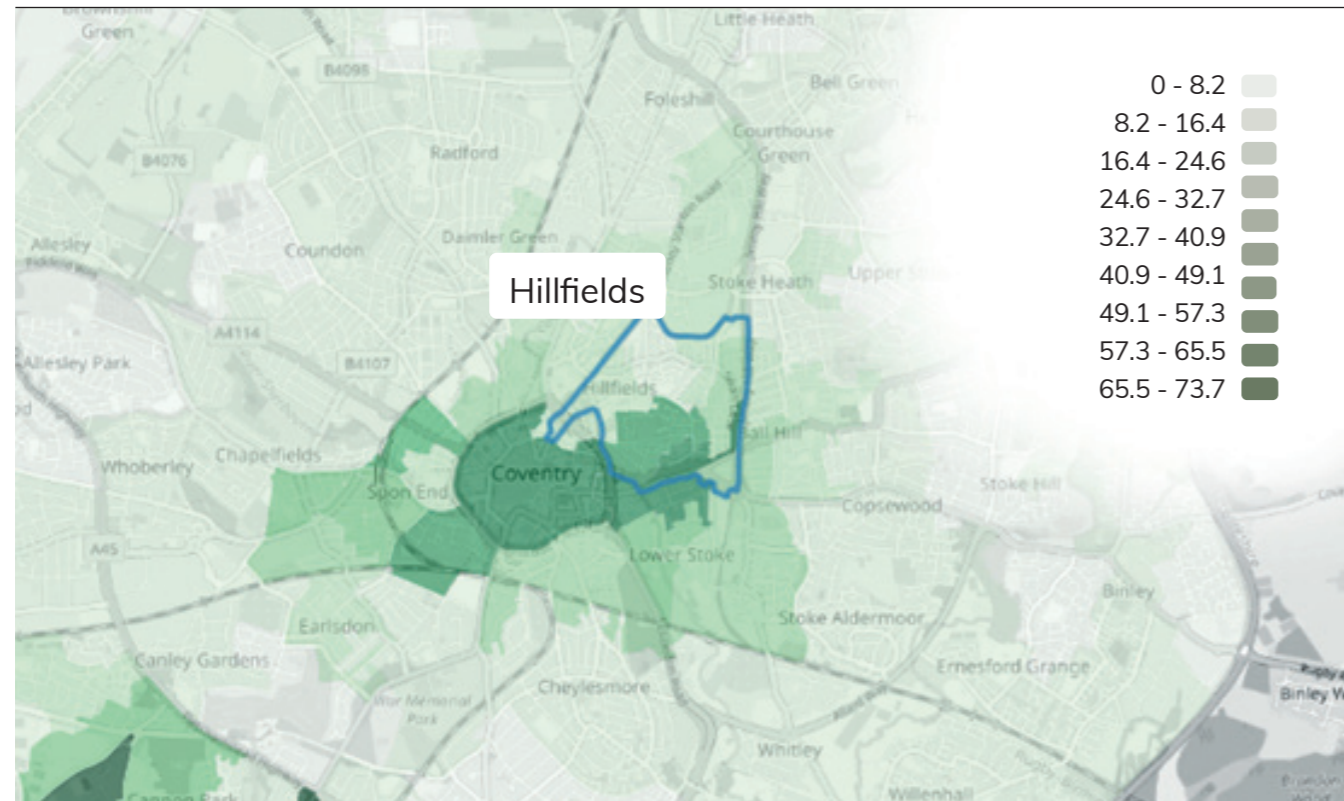
Hillfields has a tradition of welcoming immigrants of all nationalities, from the Irish communities settling in the 19th century to the multicultural immigration from South Asia and West Indies in the 20th century and - more recently - from Iraq, Africa and Eastern Europe.

Community Voices

"Very multicultural which is good."

"A hive of activity which is good to see."

Migration in Coventry and Hillfields^{lxix}



Summary

- + Central Coventry and Hillfields have a high proportion of migrants, with over half the population having had a different address the year before
- + 25% of households have no members with English as a first language.

Hillfields is a vibrant and lively neighbourhood with a diverse range of independent shops and restaurants, but although immigration brings cultural diversity it can also present challenges around economic opportunities and jobs, language and integration.

It is an area with high levels of deprivation. 25% of households have no members with English as a first language. 12% live in overcrowded housing.

Community Voices

"It can be a hard area to live in as different people have different ideas about hygiene, rubbish and fly-tipping."

"Sometimes it can be due to language barriers"

More information on the history, population and diversity of Hillfields can be found in Coventry City Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Serious Violence in Hillfields

Community Voices

"Terrible because of knife crime!"

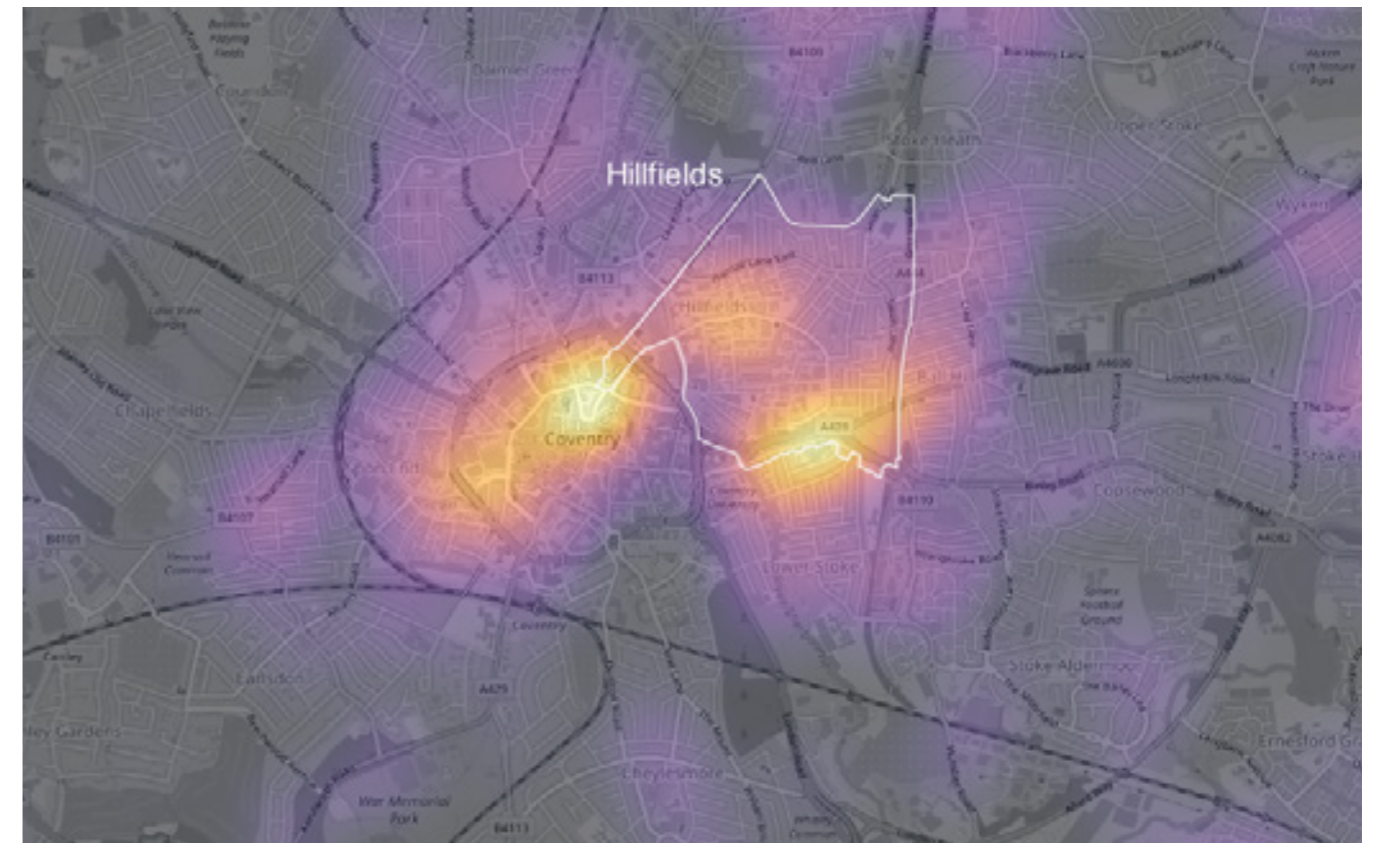
"I don't think it is a bad place, it is good, many friendly people. "Just the people selling drugs not good"



Hillfields. Image courtesy of Google Streetview

Knife Crime

The following map shows West Midlands Police recorded incidents of knife crime from January 2018 to November 2020^{lxxiii} aggregated to show hotspots.

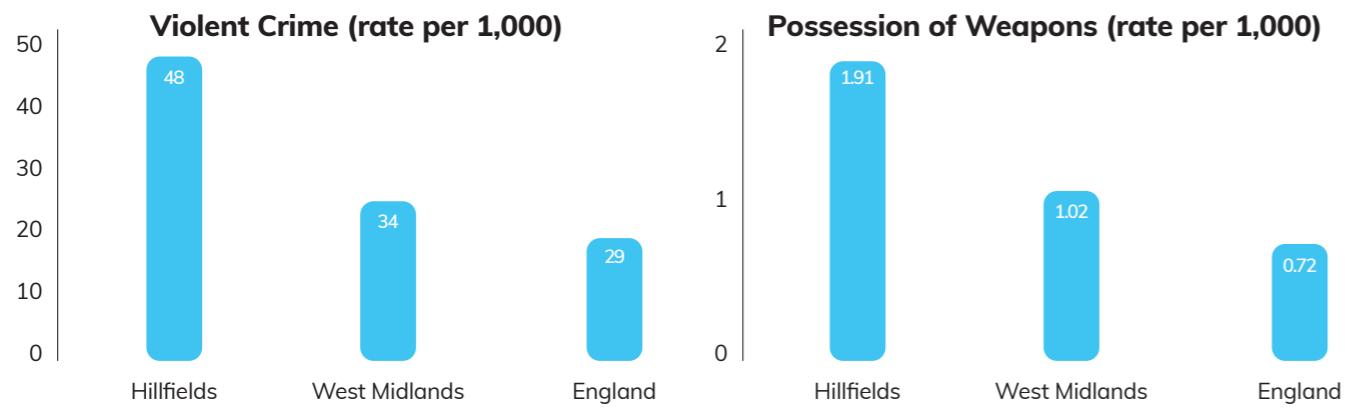


Key Findings

- + The heat map shows clear hotspots of knife crime in and around Hillfields
- + Perhaps the biggest concentration is within the ring road in the main part of the city centre, but there is another hotspot to the east on Far Gosford St
- + Knife crime more than doubled in the West Midlands between 2015 and 2019 and a third of victims of violent crime are young people aged 10-24
- + Violence perpetrated by urban street gangs in Coventry has become particularly acute over the past two years and has resulted in loss of life.

Violent Crime and Possession of Weapons in Hillfields

Hillfields experiences higher rates of violent crime, possession of weapon offences and antisocial behaviour than other parts of Coventry, the West Midlands or England in general.

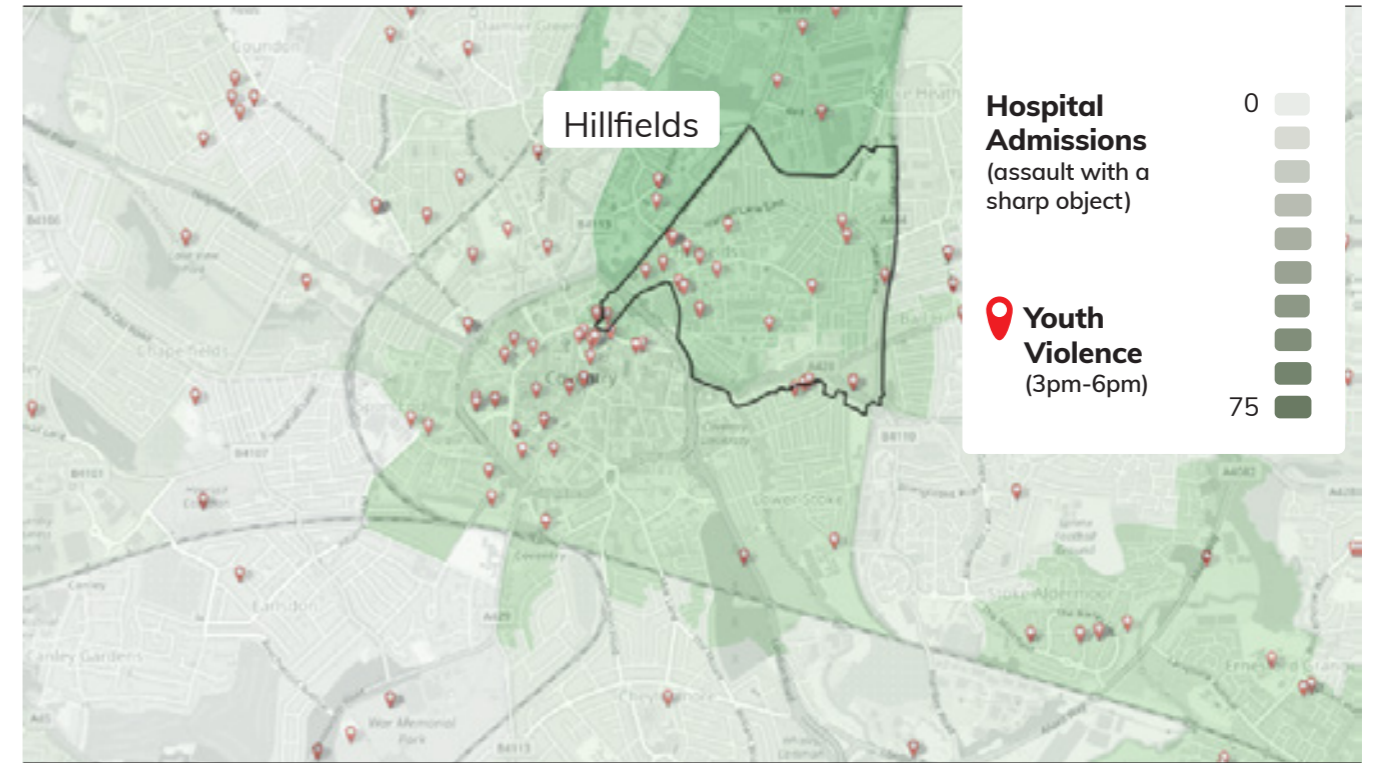


Hospital admissions for Assault^{lxxv} with a sharp object and Youth Violence^{lxxvi}

The map shows three years of hospital admissions data for assault with a sharp object, based on where the patient lives and aggregated to neighbourhood level. Darker green means higher numbers of people from that neighbourhood being admitted to hospital for assault with a sharp object during the three-year period.

Youth violence increases between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm.

The red pins illustrate approximate locations of police recorded violence between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm where the age of victim or suspect was 18 or less.



Key Findings

- + The rate of recorded possession of weapons offences in Hillfields is almost double the West Midlands average which itself is 50% higher than the national rate
- + Violent crime in Hillfields is also higher, though it is important to note these rates are per 1,000 of the resident population and incidents of serious violence are rare
- + Hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object between 2016 and 2019 are shown at neighbourhood level - dark green indicates high rates
- + Youth (under 18) violence increases across the West Midlands between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm. The red pins show approximate locations
- + Hillfields and the city centre experience the highest level of recorded crime in Coventry and the rate has increased in recent years. It is five times higher than the Coventry average
- + Antisocial behaviour is the largest proportion of the total followed by violent and sexual offences. The Household Survey (2018) found that 39% of residents felt unsafe at night compared to the Coventry average of 26%.

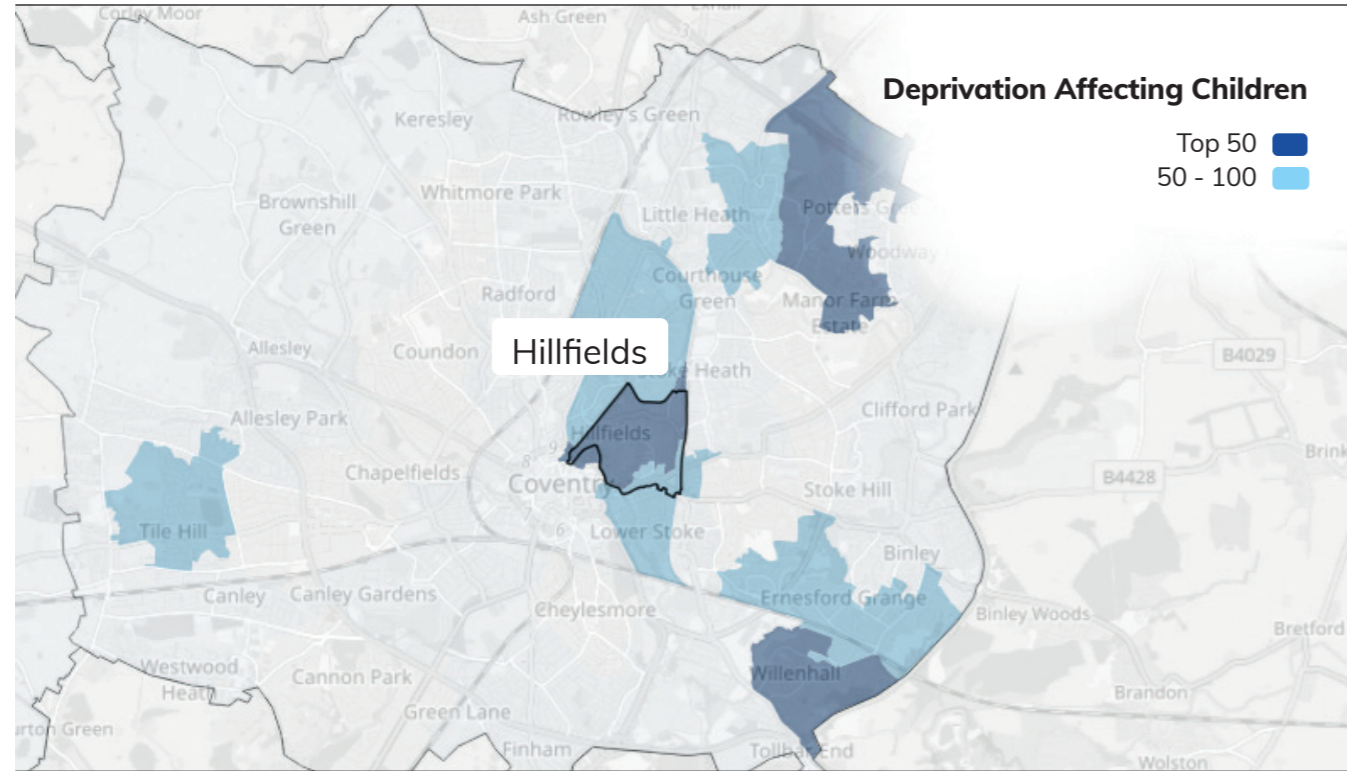
Risk Factors

By identifying the factors which correlate with the risks of violence increasing and understanding the profile of these risk factors across the region, the VRU can focus its preventative work more effectively.

Research by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Policing & Crime (MOPAC) in 2018 reveals a strong statistical association between rates of serious youth violence and social, economic and health inequalities.

Poverty features prominently in the analysis and may well be the single biggest determining factor in explaining the prevalence and risk of violence in populations and communities.^{lxxviii}

Deprivation and Inequalities In 2015, Coventry was ranked the 38th most deprived local authority but improved to 66th in 2019, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation statistics from 2019. Nonetheless, some parts of Coventry are more deprived than others and this includes Hillfields. The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index shows clearly how deprivation adversely affects the young people who are growing up in this part of the city.



Summary

- + The most deprived neighbourhoods are shaded blue, with the top 50 darker blue neighbourhoods among the 14% most deprived in the West Midlands
- + Hillfields is one of the most deprived parts of the country for the children who are growing up there
- + The End Child Poverty (ECP) coalition published new research in 2020^{lxxxii} which estimates the degree of child poverty after taking housing costs into consideration
- + 41% of children in Coventry North East constituency, which borders Hillfields, are living in poverty according to this measure, which amounts to 12,000 children.

West Midlands VRU Risk Index

West Midlands VRU have designed a risk index based on three factors with the strongest correlations towards violence:

- + Deprivation affecting children;
- + Rates of mental health;
- + Lack of educational development in early years.

No causation between these factors can be implied in terms of violence, but the data can help us to understand risk at neighbourhood level.

The neighbourhoods referred to here are MSOAs - small areas with broadly similar population sizes that can be compared within local authority areas and nationally.

In terms of risk, Hillfields ranks sixth out of 42 neighbourhoods in Coventry and 84th out of 356 in the West Midlands.

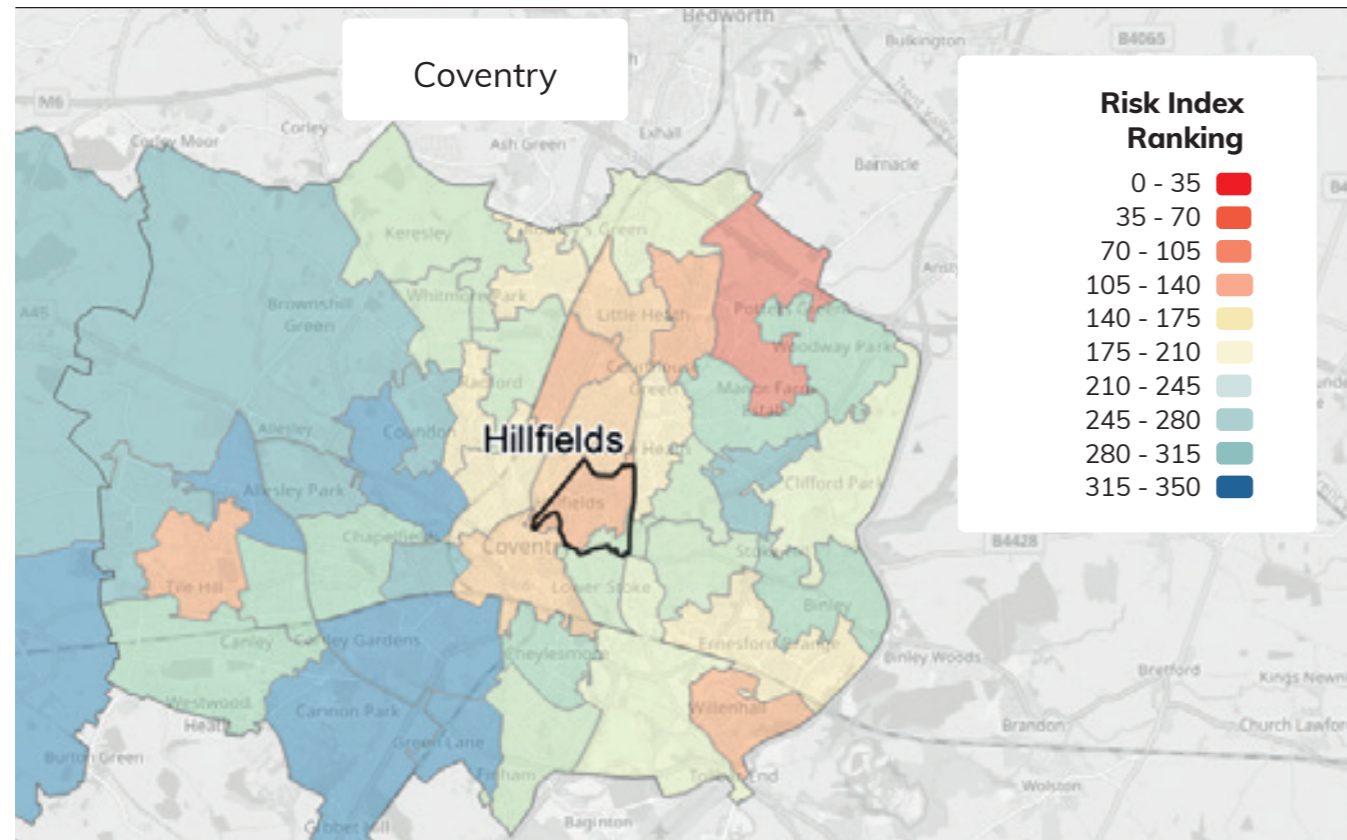
Neighbourhoods in Coventry ordered by risk index ranking

Overall Rank		Rank by Individual factor (West Midlands)				
West Midlands	Local Authority	Neighbourhood	Local Authority	Income Deprivation Affecting Young People	Mental Health Index	Pupils NOT Achieving Good Development in Early Years
20	1	Henley Green & Wood End	Coventry	8	15	112
42	2	Willenhall	Coventry	4	10	199
44	3	Bell Green	Coventry	52	44	119
71	4	Tile Hill	Coventry	100	54	124
77	5	Foleshill West	Coventry	99	190	5
84	6	Hillfields	Coventry	37	217	56
124	7	Foleshill East	Coventry	80	66	238
126	8	Little Heath	Coventry	112	180	98
133	9	Central Coventry	Coventry	186	195	27
149	10	Naul's Mill & Bishopsgate Green	Coventry	131	122	193
150	11	Holbrooks	Coventry	151	184	116
162	12	Stoke Heath	Coventry	135	162	175
164	13	Ernesford Grange & Stoke Aldermoor	Coventry	66	135	274
165	14	Radford West	Coventry	172	117	188
186	15	Longford	Coventry	185	148	198
206	16	Whitley & Tollbar End	Coventry	235	237	114
219	17	Clifford Park	Coventry	238	110	260
229	18	Lower Stoke & Gosford Park	Coventry	93	334	219
234	19	Stivichall & Finham	Coventry	320	307	28
240	20	Whitmore Park	Coventry	272	215	184
243	21	Barras Heath	Coventry	248	287	141

Key Findings

- + Hillfields is 37th out of 356 neighbourhoods in the West Midlands in the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
- + It ranks 56th for the number of pupils not achieving good development in Early Years
- + It is important to note that there are neighbourhoods with equivalent or higher risk in Coventry, such as Wood End and Willenhall
- + For more information on the measures included in the Risk Index, including a detailed explanation and source, see references in the appendix.^{lxxxiv}

Map showing Hillfields risk relative to neighbouring communities



Community Voices – Views from Young Coventry Residents^{lxxxv}

- + Nearly a third of young people feel unsafe in the city
- + People appreciate the parks and open spaces, yet some do not feel safe and do not use them as often as they would like
- + Young people voiced concerns about knife crime, and some alluded to postcode gangs, citing fear about stepping on another gang’s turf
- + Perception of safety is important, as people who said they felt safe also tended to be more satisfied with their neighbourhood, with the city centre, and feel they could influence their local area.

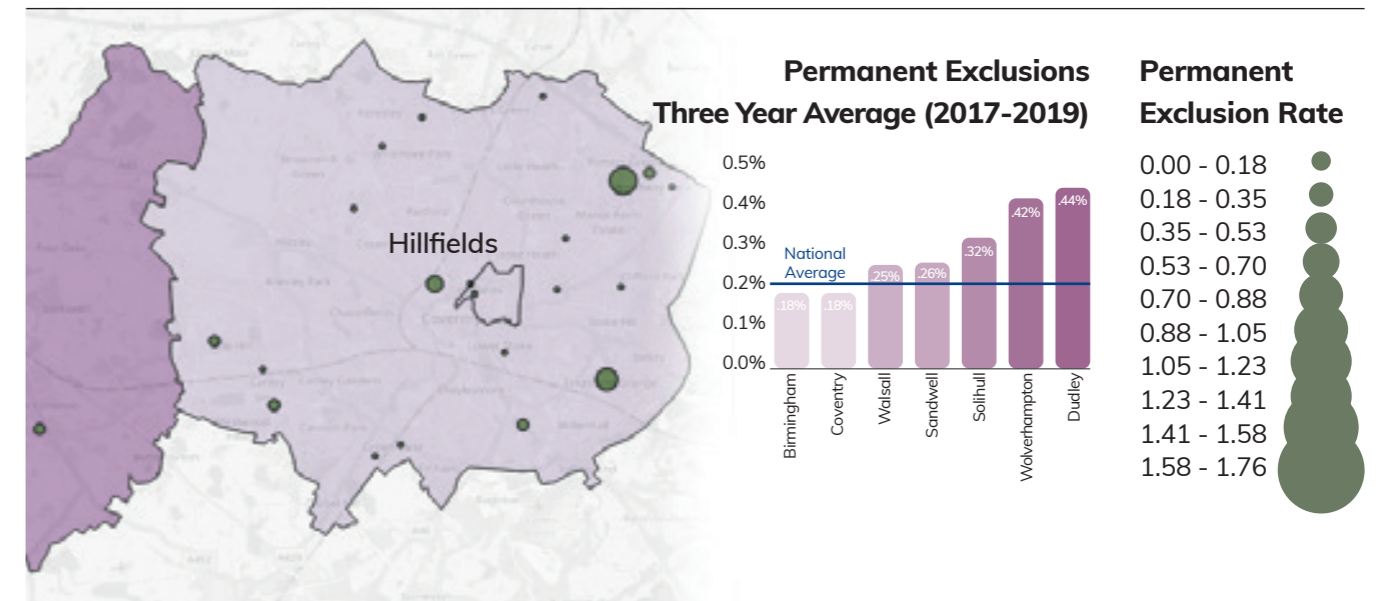
Education

Research links poor pupil attainment, absenteeism, special educational needs and deprivation to an increased risk of being excluded from school.

There is no evidence that permanent school exclusion directly causes violent behaviour or involvement in crime, but there are strong correlations.

One in four young people in custody that have been excluded from school, compared to one in 1,000 of the whole secondary school population.

School Exclusions in Coventry and Hillfields



Summary

- + The permanent school exclusion rate in secondary schools in and around Hillfields is typically lower than the average in the West Midlands and the national average of 0.2%
- + This is despite high rates of deprivation, free school meal eligibility and special needs
- + The following table shows some of the state-funded secondary schools in Hillfields and nearby, with pupil characteristics and exclusion rates

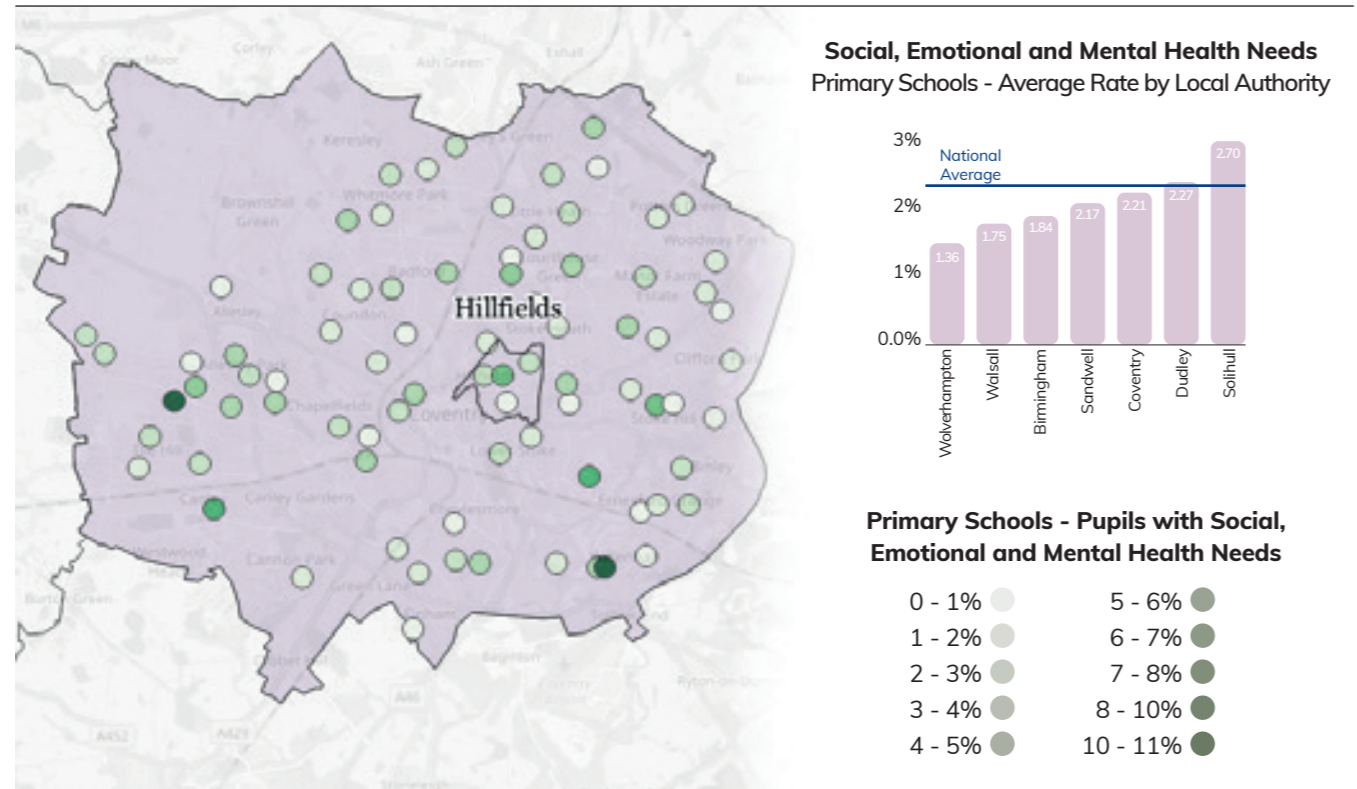
School	Head Count	Sex	Type of Establishment	Rate of Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals	Social, Emotional & Mental health Needs	Permanent Exclusion rate (3-year Average)
Sidney Stringer	1452	Mixed	Academy Sponsor Led	30%	5.9%	0.15%
Barr’s Hill	709	Mixed	Academy Converter	28%	2.5%	0.39%
Eden Girls’ School	578	Girls	Free Schools	27%	0.2%	0.00%
Stoke Park	1028	Mixed	Academy Sponsor Led	22%	2.3%	0.14%
Blue Coat CofE	1634	Mixed	Academy Converter	13%	1.1%	0.11%

- + Sidney Stringer, a large mixed state-funded secondary in Hillfields, has more than 400 pupils eligible for free school meals and more than 200 with identified special educational needs, of which 80 were social, emotional and mental health needs
- + 93% of its pupils are non-White and more than three quarters live in households where English is not the first language
- + Its most recent Ofsted inspection rated the school “Outstanding”^{lxxxvii} and its three-year average permanent exclusion rate is less than the national average.

Who is most at risk of school exclusion?

Pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are permanently excluded at an eight times higher rate than average at 1.6%. The following map shows primary schools in and around Hillfields with rates of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, according to School Pupil characteristics from the most recent School Census published by the Department for Education in January 2020.^{lxxxviii}

Primary Schools in Hillfields with Social, Emotional & Mental Health Rates



Harmony Hub. Image courtesy of Google Streetview

Summary

- + State-funded primary schools record details of the numbers and rates of pupils with special educational needs and SEMH rates are shown by primary school on the above map
- + This may indicate higher risk of exclusion later if support is not provided
- + The pilot project based at Harmony Family Hub in Hillfields takes a public health approach to preventing and reducing violence through the whole life course and launched in January 2020
- + Through co-produced and coordinated primary, secondary and tertiary preventative interventions we aim to develop a sustainable whole-system, place-based approach that mitigates the complex risk factors that make violence more likely and increases the protective factors
- + Some examples of the activity taking place within the pilot include an Early Years protective behaviours program (primary prevention), Saturday activity sessions and workshops for families (secondary prevention) and mentoring schemes for vulnerable, high-risk young people (tertiary prevention)
- + A local stakeholder network focused on violence prevention and reduction is well established locally and meets on a fortnightly basis
- + There are also a range of other commissioned projects which seek to engage and empower local residents and young people, including a Youth Panel, community consultations, a Community Champions scheme, media campaigns, and youth-led counter-narrative work.

LOZELLS

Birmingham



Introduction

Lozells is a multicultural inner-city area to the northwest of Birmingham city centre, in Lozells & East Handsworth ward. It sits between the neighbourhoods of Aston and Handsworth.

Lozells from the air



Lozells is a vibrant community with a diverse range of independent shops and restaurants.

Immigration has brought great cultural diversity to the area, but Lozells has also faced challenges with unemployment and stark economic inequalities. Lozells is an area with high levels of deprivation.

Community Voices

"If I had to sum up Lozells in a few words, it would be diversity and trust."

"A place of no judgement. We are a strong community."

The People of Lozells

Birmingham, the biggest city in the UK outside London, has a young population. 25% of its residents are under 16. Many young people live in low-income families.

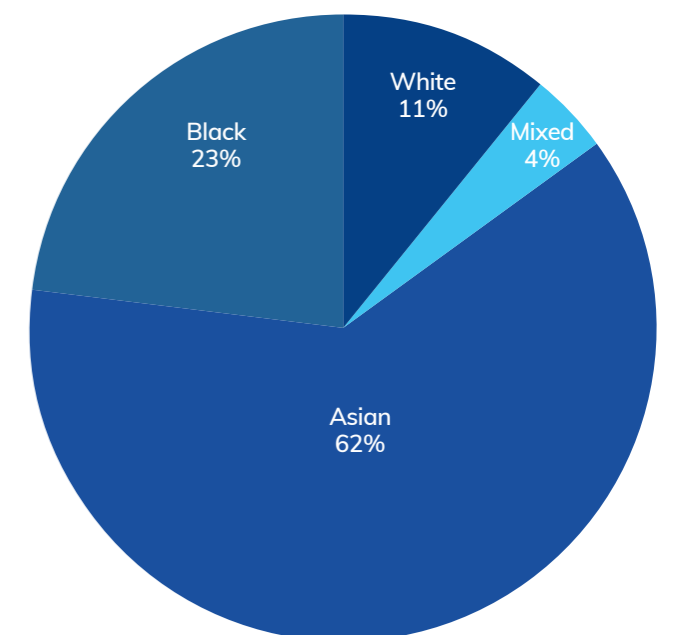
47% of Birmingham's population identified as non-white British in the 2011 census. In Lozells this is almost 90% (see chart below).

More information on the history, population and diversity of Lozells, information on schools, key facts and contact details for stakeholders such as councillors can be found in Birmingham City Council's Ward Profile and the Lozells Ward Plan.



Serious Violence in Lozells

Lozells and its neighbouring communities of Handsworth and Aston experience above average rates of serious violence compared the rest of the city and the West Midlands more generally. Lozells also experienced rioting in the 1980s and in 2005.



Knife Crime

The following map shows West Midlands Police recorded incidents of knife crime from January 2018 to November 2020 aggregated to show hotspots.

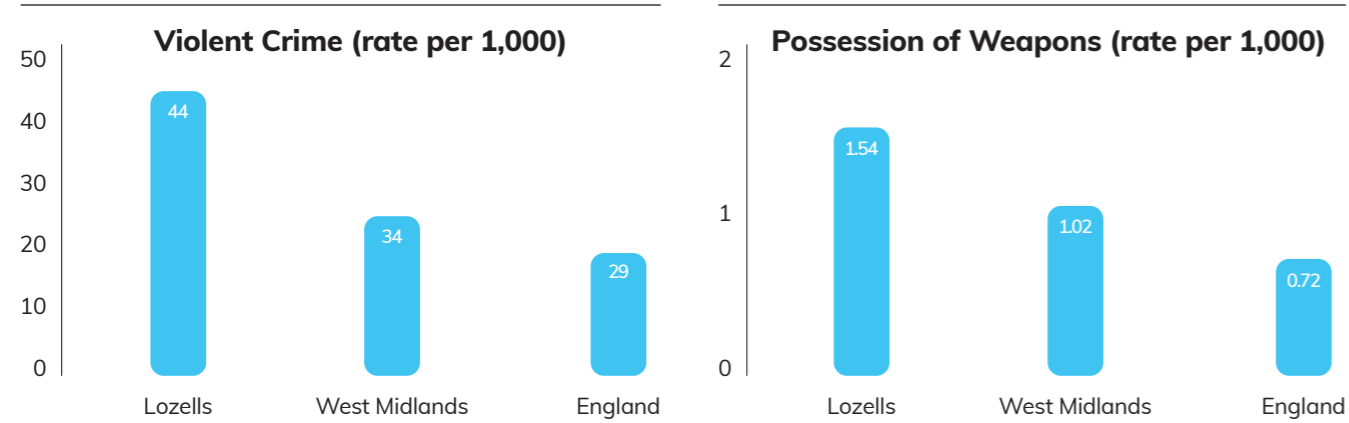


Key Findings

- + Knife crime more than doubled in the West Midlands between 2015 and 2019 and Lozells has experienced a similar rise in incidents
- + There are numerous patches of heat on the map but a particular hotspot just to the west of Lozells along the Soho Road (A41) stands out
- + Knife crime more than doubled in the West Midlands between 2015 and 2019 and a third of victims of violent crime are young people aged 10-24.

Violent Crime and Possession of Weapons in Lozells

Lozells experiences higher rates of violent crime, possession of weapon offences and antisocial behaviourxc than Birmingham or the West Midlands in general.

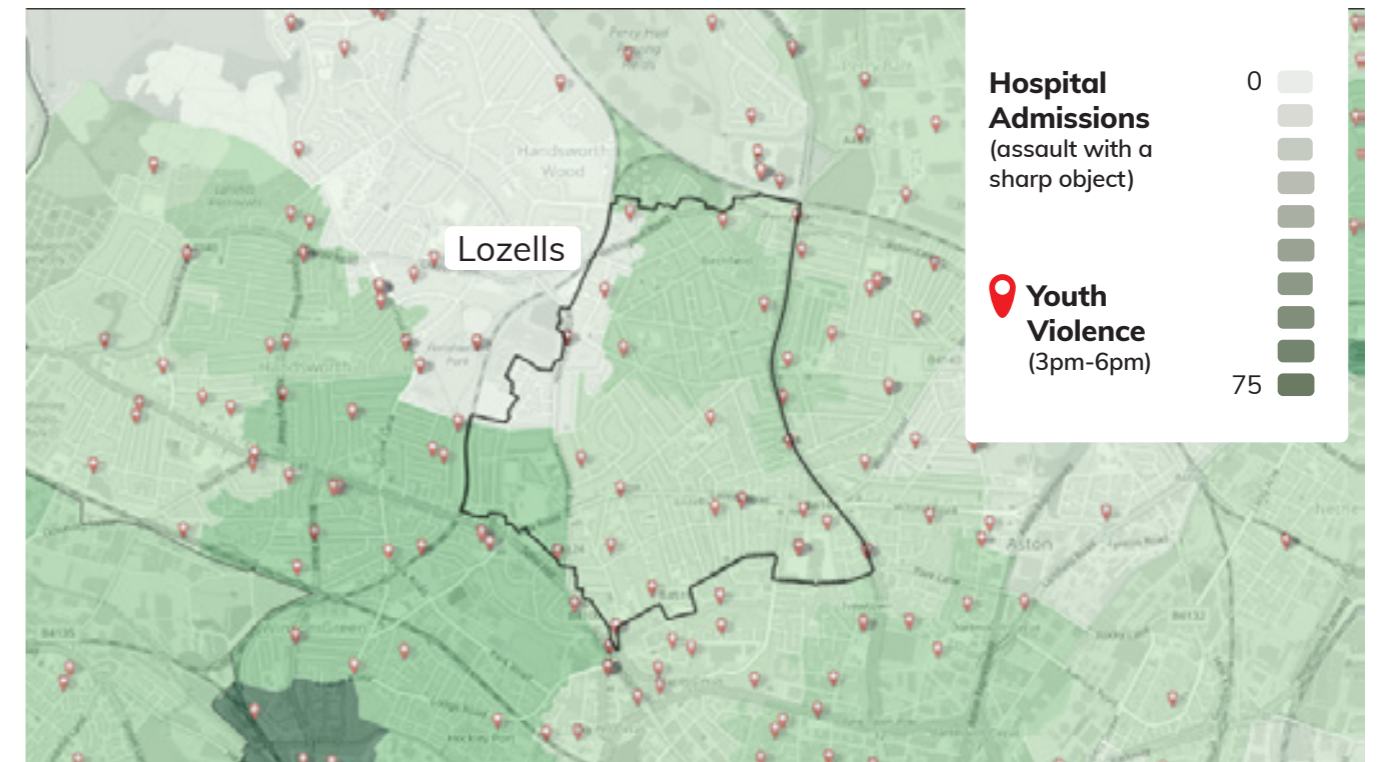


Hospital admissions for Assault^{xcii} with a sharp object and Youth Violence^{xciii}

The map shows three years of hospital admissions data for assault with a sharp object, based on where the patient lives and aggregated to neighbourhood level. Darker green means higher numbers of people from that neighbourhood being admitted to hospital for assault with a sharp object during the three-year period.

Youth violence increases between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm.

The red pins illustrate approximate locations of police recorded violence between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm where the age of victim or suspect was 18 or less.



Key Findings

- + Lozells experiences higher than average levels of violent crime, possession of weapon offences and antisocial behaviour^{xciii}
- + The violent crime rate in Lozells is 44 per 1,000 population – ten higher than the rate in the West Midlands and 15 higher than the rate in England, though it is important to note these rates are per 1,000 of the resident population and incidents of serious violence are rare
- + The rate of “Possession of Weapons” offences in Lozells is more than double the national average and 50% higher than in the West Midlands
- + Hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object between 2016 and 2019 are shown aggregated to neighbourhood level as green shading, with darker green areas indicating higher rates
- + Youth (under 18) violence increases across the West Midlands between the hours of 3.00pm and 6.00pm. The red pins show approximate locations



Risk Factors

By identifying the factors which correlate with the risks of violence increasing and understanding the profile of these risk factors across the region, the VRU can focus its preventative work more effectively.

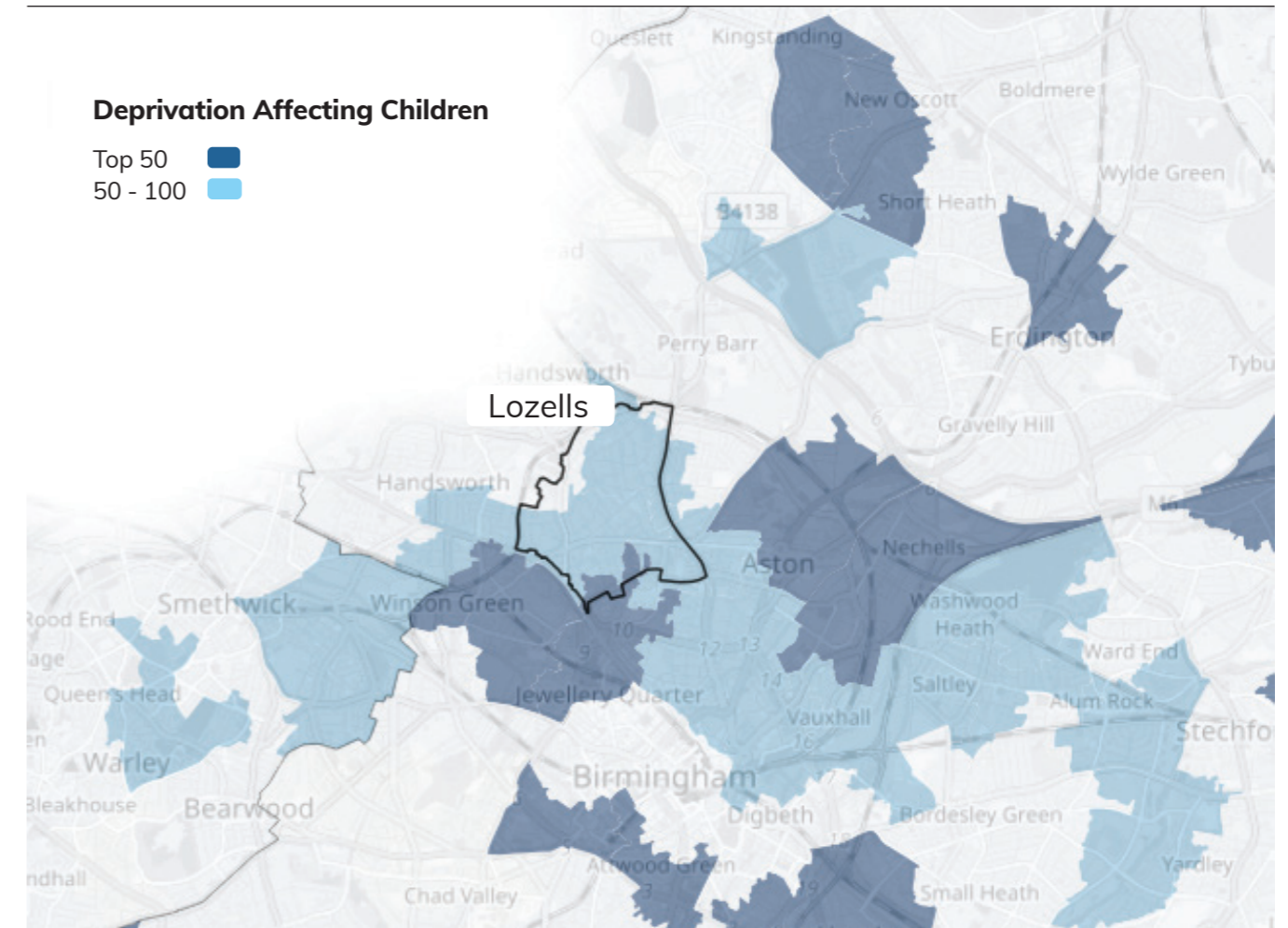
Research by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Policing & Crime (MOPAC) in 2018 reveals a strong statistical association between rates of serious youth violence and social, economic and health inequalities.

Poverty features prominently in the analysis and may well be the single biggest determining factor in explaining the prevalence and risk of violence in populations and communities.

Deprivation and Inequalities

Birmingham is one of the poorest parts of England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation statistics from 2019. In the last 15 years, Birmingham has become more deprived, moving from the 16th most deprived local authority in 2004 to sixth in 2019 and overtaking Sandwell in 2015 as the most deprived authority in the West Midlands.

Some parts of Birmingham are more deprived than others and this includes Lozells. The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index^{xvii} shows clearly how deprivation adversely affects the young people who are growing up in this part of the city.



Summary

- + The most deprived neighbourhoods are shaded blue, with the dark blue neighbourhoods among the 14% most deprived in the West Midlands
- + Lozells and nearby districts are among the poorest in Birmingham, according to some calculations the very poorest in the country
- + End Child Poverty (ECP) research from 2020^{xviii} estimated that Ladywood constituency, which includes parts of Lozells, has the second highest proportion of children living in poverty – more than half of all the children in the constituency at 54% and second only to Bethnal Green in London.

Community Voices

"Everyone comes from the same place with similar needs."

"Everyone helps each other out and doesn't think they are better than one another."

West Midlands VRU Risk Index

West Midlands VRU have designed a risk index based on three factors with the strongest correlations towards violence:

- + Deprivation affecting children;
- + Rates of mental health;
- + Lack of educational development in early years.

No causation between these factors can be implied in terms of violence, but the data can help us to understand risk at neighbourhood level.

The neighbourhoods referred to here are MSOAsc. These small areas with broadly similar population sizes can be compared within local authority areas and nationally.

In terms of the risk of violence, Lozells ranks 12th out of 132 neighbourhoods in Birmingham and 27th out of 356 in the West Midlands.

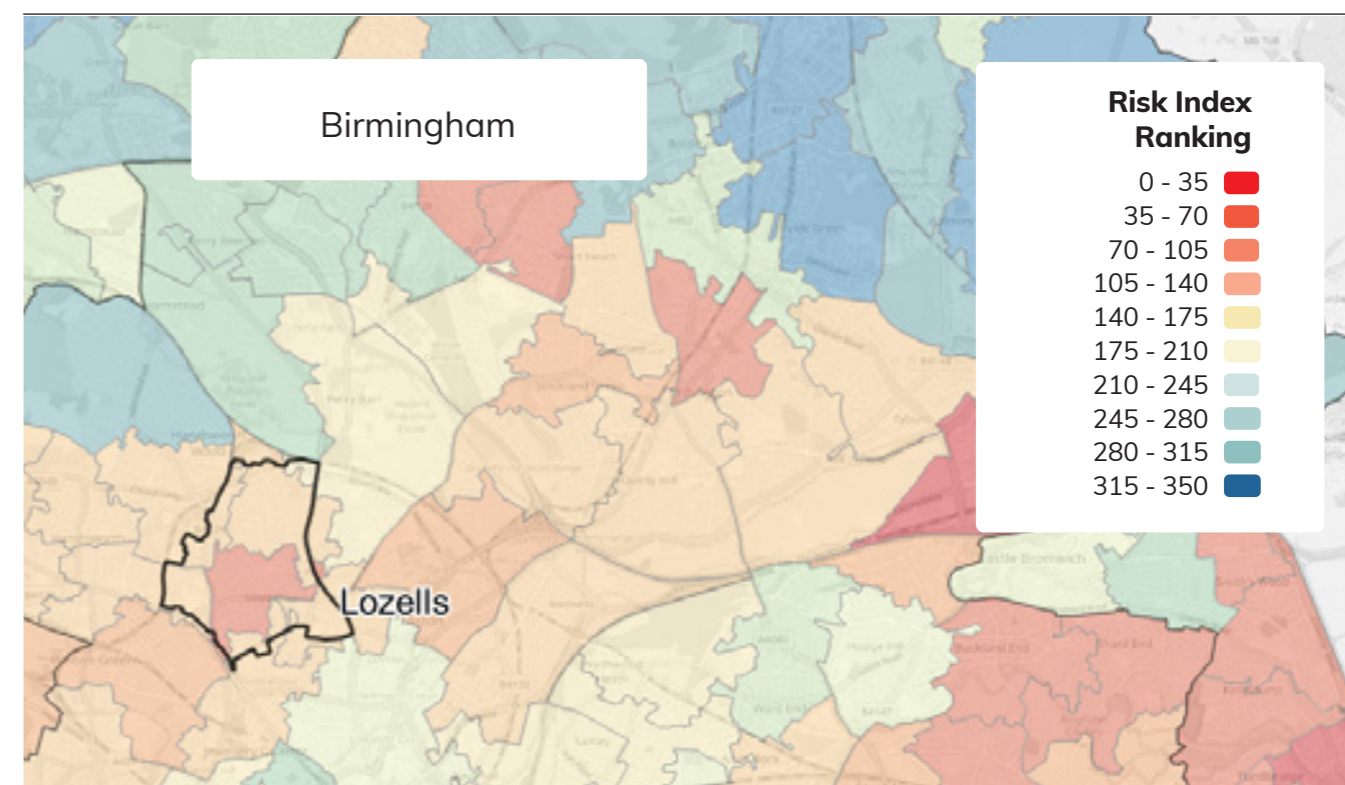
Neighbourhoods in Birmingham ordered by risk index ranking

Overall Rank		Neighbourhood	Local Authority	Rank by Individual factor (West Midlands)		
West Midlands	Local Authority			Income Deprivation Affecting Young People	Mental Health Index	Pupils NOT Achieving Good Development in Early Years
1	1	Frankley	Birmingham	3	1	37
4	2	Druids Heath	Birmingham	1	4	64
5	3	Castle vale	Birmingham	40	3	29
11	4	Bartley Green & Shenley Fields	Birmingham	24	13	72
13	5	Allens Cross	Birmingham	9	30	74
14	6	Hawkesley	Birmingham	6	2	108
18	7	Perry Common - College Road	Birmingham	26	28	80
21	8	Kent's Moat	Birmingham	22	111	2
22	9	Glebe Farm	Birmingham	14	82	41
24	10	Turves Green	Birmingham	15	5	125
25	11	Sheldon North	Birmingham	35	46	70
27	12	Lozells West	Birmingham	67	75	15
28	13	Sparkbrook North	Birmingham	10	41	110
29	14	Shard End & Kingfisher	Birmingham	50	17	94
31	15	Kingstanding South East	Birmingham	16	22	133
32	16	Buckland End	Birmingham	51	24	96
34	17	Erdington Town	Birmingham	18	70	87
36	18	Balsall Heath & Kingswood Road	Birmingham	33	89	67
41	19	Kitts Gree	Birmingham	47	19	146
43	20	Yardley Wood West	Birmingham	48	18	149
46	21	Weoley Castle	Birmingham	65	33	123
55	22	Barras Heath	Birmingham	144	8	85

Key Findings

- + Lozells ranks 67th out of 352 neighbourhoods for income deprivation affecting children and 15th for pupils NOT achieving good development in Early Years
- + For more information on the measures included in the Risk Index, including a detailed explanation and source, see references in the appendixci
- + Lozells is an area with high risk factors for young people becoming involved in violence, but also note several neighbourhoods in south Birmingham that feature high on the list
- + West Midlands VRU is also working in the Three Estates; more information on the Three Estates place-based pilot can be found in the Strategic Needs Assessment and Three Estates area profile chapter.

Map of Lozells Risk Index relative to neighbouring communities



Education

Voices from the Community

"I have four children and they are happy in school. This is important to me."

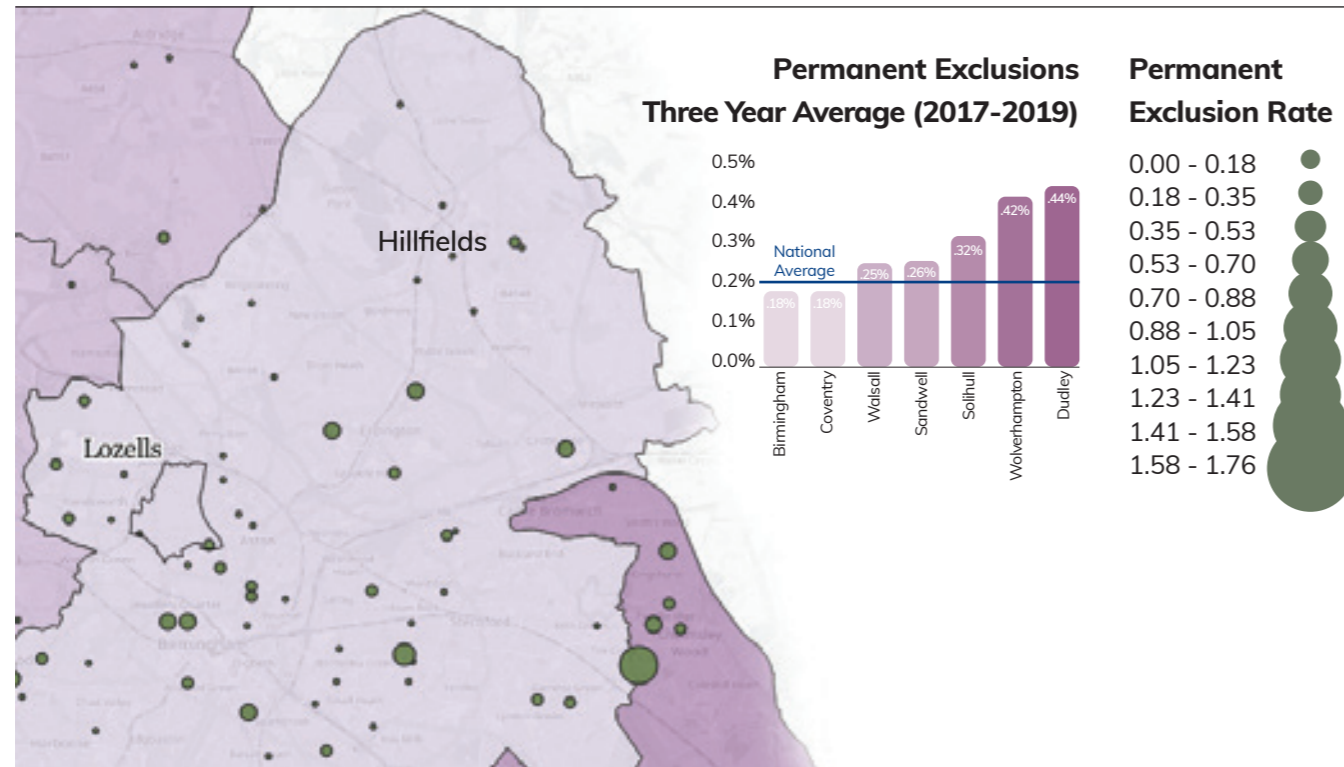
"There are three words I want you to never forget - those words are education, education, education."

Research links poor pupil attainment, absenteeism, special educational needs and deprivation to an increased risk of being excluded from school.^{ci}

There is no evidence that permanent school exclusion directly causes violent behaviour or involvement in crime, but there are strong correlations.

One in four young people in custody that have been excluded from school, compared to one in 1,000 of the whole secondary school population.

School Exclusions in Lozells and north Birmingham



Summary

- + The permanent school exclusion rate in secondary schools in and around Lozells is low in comparison to the West Midlands, and despite some high rates of deprivation, free school meal eligibility and special needs of pupils
- + This is a testament to the leadership and approach to inclusion in the education sector
- + The following table shows some of the state-funded secondary schools in Lozells and nearby, with pupil characteristics and exclusion rates.

School	Head Count	Sex	Type of Establishment	Rate of Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals	Social, Emotional & Mental health Needs	Permanent Exclusion rate (3-year Average)
Aston Manor	974	Mixed	Academy Sponsor Led	38%	7.9%	0.25%
Holte	1190	Mixed	Academy Converter	40%	1.7%	0.18%
Broadway	1208	Mixed	Free Schools	33%	2.3%	0.00%
Eden Boys	595	Boys	Academy Sponsor Led	23%	1.0%	0.09%
Nishkam High	660	Mixed	Academy Converter	17%	0.0%	0.05%
King Edward VI Handsworth	1110	Girls	Academy Converter	11%	0.3%	0.00%

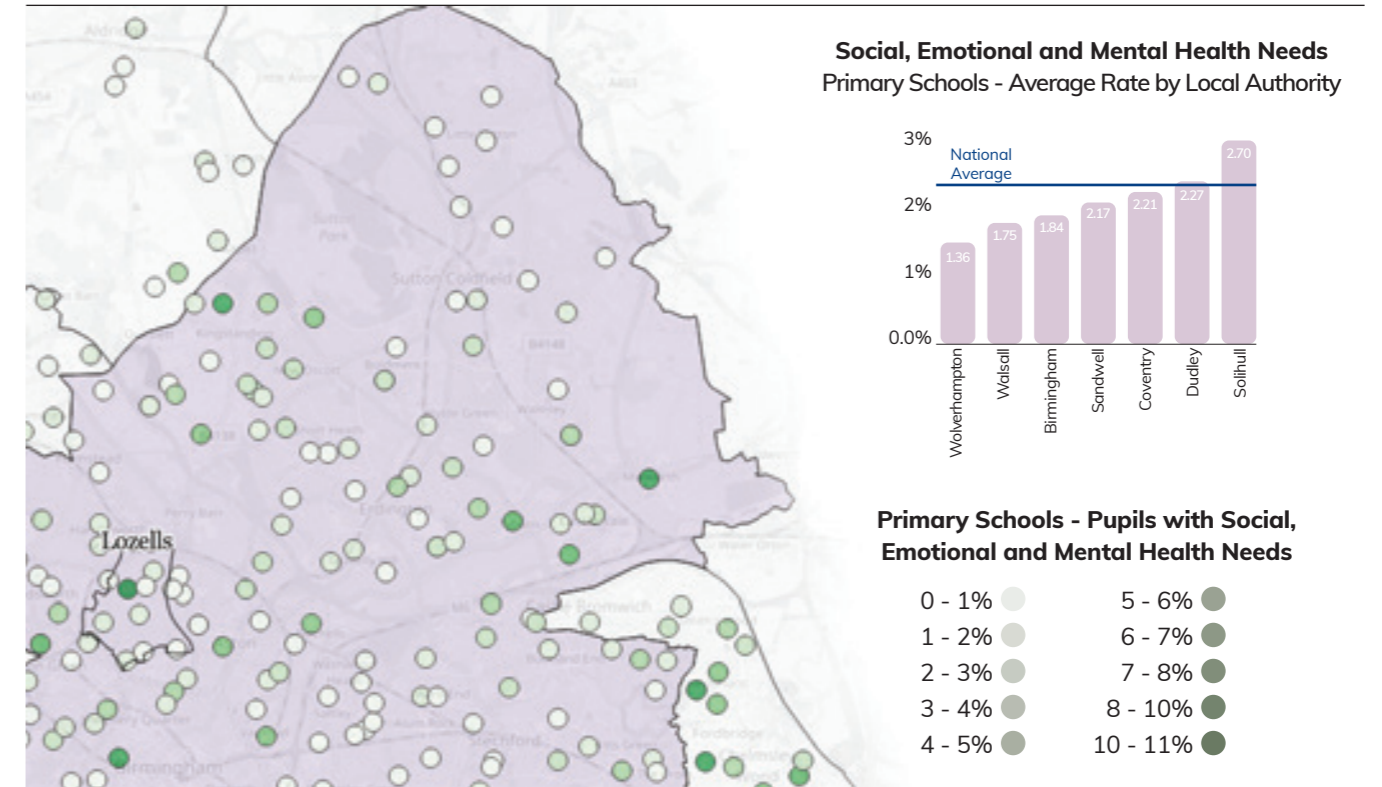
“The area has a considerable amount of social assets including local activists, faith groups and outstanding schools, all pulling together to improve the quality of life of those living and working in Lozells”

Lozells Councillor, Waseem Zaffar MBE

Who is most at risk of school exclusion?

Pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are permanently excluded at an eight times higher rate than average at 1.6%. The following map shows primary schools in and around Lozells and north Birmingham with rates of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, according to School Pupil characteristics from the most recent School Census published by the Department for Education in January 2020.

Primary Schools in Lozells with Social, Emotional & Mental Health Rates



Summary

- + State-funded primary schools record details of the numbers and rates of pupils with special educational needs and SEMH rates are shown by primary school on the above map
- + This may indicate higher risk of exclusion later if support is not provided.

West Midlands VRU and the Place-Based approach

- + In January 2020, a collaborative whole-system, place-based pilot was launched in Lozells focused on preventing and reducing serious and organised crime and violence
- + The project was funded jointly through West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit and West Midlands Police Serious and Organised Crime Community Coordinator, by the Home Office
- + The pilot project originally focused on providing more support, intervention and activity to local young people and their families through local youth centres managed by Birmingham City Council
- + This first phase of the project paused in March 2020 when the national lockdown commenced and relaunched in October 2020 with provision including:
 - Detached, centre based and online youth work to support local young people
 - Support for families to address risks around serious and organised crime and violence, through workshops and training for local safeguarding leads
 - Contextual safeguarding training for local frontline professionals
 - A virtual reality programme in schools supporting the whole family
 - Eyes Open Campaign to raise awareness of serious and organised crime within communities
 - Mentor programme in secondary schools for young females at risk of exploitation
 - Health and Wellbeing mentors in primary schools to support educational and emotional needs.



The Lighthouse Centre, a focal point for the community in Lozells

Conclusions

- + Violence and the risk of violence cannot be seen in isolation and there is a strong statistical correlation with poverty, deprivation and other inequalities
- + Birmingham has deep pockets of deprivation and some of these are in Lozells
- + Nevertheless, Lozells is a diverse, multicultural and vibrant neighbourhood with a strong sense of community pride and resilience, which is reflected through its residents' voices and the strength of its education provision and school system
- + However, serious youth violence is still an issue in Lozells and, as in many other parts of the West Midlands and the country, continues to rise
- + The VRU will continue to support violence reduction efforts and activity in Lozells, with a strong focus on whole-life, place-based, trauma-aware work and early prevention.



16. ANNEXES AND REFERENCES

16.1 Data tables (datasets used)

The following table is a list of the main datasets that have been used in this Strategic Needs Assessment, in the order that they appear. The References section below has more detail of each individual dataset, including links to the source data. The table is intended to give an overview of data availability, usefulness and how recent it is.

Name	Owner	Year	Availability	Usefulness
Crime Statistics	Office for National Statistics	2020	Open	9/10
Knife Crime	West Midlands Police	2020	Restricted	9/10
Offender Management Statistics	Ministry of Justice	2020	Open	7/10
Hospital Episode Statistics	Public Health England	2020	Restricted	9/10
Population Characteristics	Office for National Statistics	2019	Open	8/10
County Lines Incidents	West Midlands Police	2020	Restricted	9/10
Children Looked After in England	Department for Education	2020	Open	8/10
Deprivation Statistics	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government	2020	Open	9/10
Output Areas (Census Geography)	Office for National Statistics	2020	Open	9/10
School Exclusions	Department for Education	2020	Open	8/10
Police Recorded Crime	National Police Chiefs Council	2020	Open	8/10
Small Area Mental Health Index	National Institute for Health Research	2020	Open	8/10
Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Results	Department for Education	2020	Open	8/10
Pupil Characteristics	Department for Education	2020	Open	8/10

16.2 Data tables (datasets not used)

The following table is a list of important datasets that have NOT been used in this Strategic Needs Assessment. The table gives an overview of the data owner, availability and usefulness of the data.

The VRU recognises the importance of this additional data and the value it would add to the strategic analysis and assessments carried out by the unit.

In section 14 (Recommendations) on page 48, more information can be found on securing appropriate and meaningful data exchange between key organisations (recommendation 8) and widening the evidence base (recommendation 9).

Name	Owner	Availability	Usefulness
Injury Surveillance to Tackle Violence data	NHS	Restricted partially available	9/10
Ambulance Callouts	West Midlands Ambulance Service	Restricted unavailable	9/10
Safeguarding and children in care data	Children's Services and Local Authorities	Restricted unavailable	9/10

16.3 Caveats, biases and limitations of the data

Decisions about which data to include in this assessment, and what not to include, are important ones. The subsequent analysis and recommendations are made as a result of the data that is used and their robustness is only as good as the source data.

An assessment of the usefulness of each of the datasets that have been used can be found in the table in 16.2, but no dataset is ever a perfect representation - a mirror of the real world. At best, the data may be viewed as a map to guide users across the territory of the real world. Just as a map may be slightly out of date, or have some sections incomplete, the following is the VRU's best assessment of the caveats, the limitations and the biases inherent in the data that has been used in this SNA.

On police recorded crime statistics:

Police recorded crime data may be affected by certain factors which means caution may be required when making comparisons across geographical areas or over time.

These factors include changes in recording practices, perhaps as a result of revised crime definitions, or changes in public reporting of incidents due changes in policing activity and priorities. Where a police force or local unit is proactive in addressing antisocial behaviour, for example, this may lead to more of these crimes being brought to their attention and subsequently being recorded.

As far as this needs assessment is concerned, these specific risks are not considered as pertinent for the serious violence against the person and knife crime that informs the majority of the report, which has typically been a high priority for all police forces over a number of years, tends to be reliably recorded and has not been subject to any major revisions in definition or scope.

On the Small Area Mental Health Index:

The Small Area Mental Health Index (full source information in the references below) is an indexed measure of mental health that combines data from multiple sources including mental health-related hospital attendances, qualitative data from the GP Patient Survey, prescribing data for medication such as antidepressants and data from the Department of Work & Pensions on rates of Incapacity Benefit and Employment Support Allowance for mental illness.

It is noticeable that the Mental Health Index score varies quite significantly across certain neighbourhoods in the West Midlands. Professionals who work in some of these neighbourhoods have advised the VRU that caution should be applied in interpreting this index score in places they particularly feel may be experiencing higher rates of mental health needs than is indicated by the official data.

"The mental health statistic is interesting and surprising. I wonder if it might be higher in Hillfields, but is not reflected. Access relies on language skills and language barriers in Hillfields are likely reducing access to services?"

"Wood End where English is spoken more widely has higher recorded levels of mental health. Given the high levels of new arrivals in Hillfields, the stress that can result, coupled with poverty and violent crimes, it would be expected that mental health would be adversely affected for a high number of residents."

ChildhoodCounts CIC

It may also be true that some places have been more adversely affected by the provision and availability of mental health services and this may cause some of the underlying mental health needs in a community or neighbourhood to be hidden.

The VRU is keen to ensure the relevance and robustness of the risk index and will work closely with local communities and professionals to explore how best to do so

On school exclusion statistics:

The permanent exclusion statistics in this report are derived from data provided via schools to the Department of Education and presented in good faith.

There is a risk that some schools and academies, whose Ofsted ratings may be impacted by levels of exclusion, may be tempted to find ways to keep rates low.

Placing children on part-time timetables, managed moves to another school or suggesting that parents withdraw children and record as Electively Home Educated have all been alleged as potential ways in which some schools may try to do this.

The VRU is aware of this potential bias in the school exclusion statistics but has chosen nevertheless to use these statistics in its analysis and assessment.

On inequalities and the risk index methodology:

The University of Hull report that finds “more than any demographic characteristic, area-level deprivation is a key risk factor for violent victimisation” is referred to in section 11 on page 36.

The VRU risk index uses Income Deprivation Affecting Children (a subset of the Index of Multiple Deprivation) as its most relevant measure of inequalities in a place. As such, this measure informs the index and consequently the VRU’s understanding and measure of inequalities. IDACI, like the End Child Poverty analysis, measures deprivation mainly in an economic way, but does take account of housing costs.

However, deprivation is not solely a measure of financial difficulty or poverty and the Cambridge dictionary definition (“an absence of something important”) raises other issues such as the protective factors that may be missing from young people’s lives in their family, households, education or other social or cultural elements.

Partners in our place-based pilot areas have pledged to support the VRU in its efforts to understand which inequalities are the biggest drivers of violence, to help us discover which ones have the strongest correlation to rates and risk of violence?

Two areas that the VRU will explore in inner city Birmingham as part of its ongoing analysis and needs assessment work in the future are overcrowded housing and the relatively new Community Needs Index which has been developed by the Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI) who developed the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

16.4 References

- ⁱ World Health Organisation – Definition and Typology of Violence (<https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/>)
- ⁱⁱ Home Office Serious Violence Strategy 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy#:~:text=The%20strategy%20focuses%20on%20early,the%20risks%20of%20carrying%20knives.>)
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Gangs-and-Violence-Commission-Full-Report.pdf>
- ^{iv} A Future Generations Deal - <https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/pcc-publishes-report-calling-for-a-future-generations-deal-to-avoid-the-ticking-time-bomb-of-youth-unemployment-and-crime-in-the-west-midlands/>
- ^v <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/methodologies/userguidetocrimestatisticsforenglandandwales#offence-types>
- ^{vi} Office of National Statistics (Crime in England & Wales, year ending June 2020). <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables>
- ^{vii} <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/police-forces/data/>
- ^{viii} Office of National Statistics (Crime in England & Wales, year ending June 2020). <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables>
- ^{ix} Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables (Year Ending June 2020 - Office of National Statistics) - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables>
- ^x Office of National Statistics (Crime in England & Wales, year ending June 2020) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables>
- ^{xi} Office of National Statistics (Crime in England & Wales, year ending June 2020) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables>
- ^{xii} <https://visual.parliament.uk/msoanames>
- ^{xiii} West Midlands Police internal systems, includes all incidents from January 2017 to November 2020 inclusive where “Knife-related = Yes” and “Weapon Used = Knife”
- ^{xiv} West Midlands Police internal systems, includes all incidents from January 2017 to November 2020 inclusive where “Knife-related = Yes” and “Weapon Used = Knife”
- ^{xv} Offender management statistics quarterly: April to June 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2020>
- ^{xvi} <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/04/Brinsford-2013.pdf>
- ^{xvii} <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisonswp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/03/Brinsford-Web-2017.pdf>
- ^{xviii} <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisonswp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/03/Brinsford-Web-2017.pdf>
- ^{xix} Hospital Episode Statistics (Public Health England) - Data for financial years 2008-2009 to 2019-2020. Violence admissions (including sexual violence) are defined as: The number of first finished (elective and emergency inpatient admission episodes (episode number = 1, admission method starts with 2), where the cause of the admission was violence as classified by diagnosis code (X85 to Y09 occurring in any diagnosis position, primary or secondary) in financial year in which episode ended. Regular and day attenders have been excluded. Admissions are only included if they have a valid Local Authority code. Regions are the sum of the Local Authorities. England is the sum of all Local Authorities and admissions coded as U (England NOS). Admissions by cause are defined by: A number of cause codes may be recorded in a patient’s record, the CAUSE field extracts the first cause code in the episode and this field is used to define the top 10 causes summary sheet. Although all records in this dataset will have a violent cause code somewhere in their episode, this is not necessarily the first cause code in the series and therefore there may be top causes represented that are not related to violence.
- ^{xx} Hospital Episode Statistics (Public Health England) 2017 to 2019 based on patient disclosed home address and aggregated to MSOA
- ^{xxi} <https://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/ambulance-data-injury-surveillance.html>
- ^{xxii} “Knife Crime – Policy and Causes” – House of Lords briefing (July 2019) - <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/lln-2019-0061/>
- ^{xxiii} ONS population characteristics (2016) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationcharacteristicsresearchtables>
- ^{xxiv} Definition of “unregulated settings” from National Youth Advocacy Service
(<https://www.nyas.net/campaigns/ending-the-use-of-unregulated-accommodation/#:~:text=Unregulated%20provision%20is%20a%20type,does%20not%20inspect%20these%20settings.>)

^{xxv} County Lines and Looked After Children by Crest Advisory crime and justice consultancy - https://b9cf6cd4-6aad-4419-a368-724e7d1352b9.usfiles.com/ugd/b9cf6c_83c53411e21d4d40a79a6e0966ad7ea5.pdf

^{xxvi} <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2019-to-2020>

^{xxvii} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865184/Use_of_unregulated_and_unregistered_provision_for_children_in_care.pdf

^{xxviii} <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/a-public-health-approach-to-serious-youth-violence>

^{xxix} What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (College published research | What Works Centre for Crime Reduction)

^{xxx} <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation>

^{xxxi} <https://opendatacommunities.org/def/concept/general-concepts/imd/idaci#:~:text=The%20Income%20Deprivation%20Affecting%20Children,deprivation%20relating%20to%20low%20income>

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^{xxxiii} <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/a-public-health-approach-to-serious-youth-violence>

^{xxxiv} <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/censusgeography>

^{xxxv} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800028/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion_literature_review.pdf

^{xxxvi} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf

^{xxxvii} <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-exclusions>

^{xxxviii} Home Office Serious Violence Strategy 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy#:~:text=The%20strategy%20focuses%20on%20early,the%20risks%20of%20carrying%20knives.>)

^{xxxix} <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualsmallareapopulationestimates/mid2019>

^{xl} <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity>

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^{xlix} <https://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-in-your-area-201415-201819/>

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^{liii} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800028/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion_literature_review.pdf

^{liiii} <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2020>

^{liiii} <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

^{liiii} <https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/home/profiles/ward-profiles/>

^{liiii} <https://www.saferwalsallpartnership.co.uk/our-partnership-plan>

^{liiii} West Midlands Police internal systems, includes all incidents from January 2017 to November 2020 inclusive where “Knife-related = Yes” and “Weapon Used = Knife”

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- lxxvii https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800028/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion_literature_review.pdf
- lxxviii A Data Science Approach to Predicting Pupils at Risk of School Exclusion in Walsall (Walsall Public Health Service, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, Walsall Children's Services and Big Data Corridor, Birmingham City University)

Introduction: School exclusion is an increasingly important public health issue. Excluded children are more likely to experience poor educational outcomes, unemployment, criminal justice interventions and develop severe mental health problems. In Walsall, children as young as 5 years old have been excluded from school. Identification of the local factors that increase risk of exclusion would enable early and targeted interventions to potentially break the cycle of disadvantage.

Methods: We linked 3 datasets (school census, school exclusions logs and social care records) from the academic years 2015/16 - 2017/18 inclusive, using a sequence of methods. Initially, school census and exclusions records were linked using unique pupil number, which were then matched to social care records using a concatenation of surname, first name and date of birth. This rendered a linked dataset of 62,536 Walsall children. Data was interrogated using PowerBI and the CRISP-DM methodology.

Results: 244 pupils were permanently excluded and 2136 had fixed term exclusions. In the non-excluded group, 50.5% were male, median age is 10 years, 17.2% are known to social care, 17.2% benefit from free school meals (FSM), 12.3% have a special educational need/disability (SEND). In the excluded group, 76.9% are boys, median age is 14 years, 44.5% are known to social care, 39% benefit from FSM, 35% have a SEND need.

Conclusions: Data linkage and mining has enabled identification of significant differences in demographic, socioeconomic and educational indicators in children excluded from school. Work is ongoing to develop a robust predictive model to minimise exclusions in Walsall.

- lxxix <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2020>
- lxxx Migration within the UK (Office for National Statistics) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/migrationwithintheuk>

Background

- Exclusion from school is an increasingly important public health issue.
- Excluded children are more likely to experience poor educational outcomes, unemployment, criminal justice interventions and develop severe mental health problems.
- In Walsall, children as young as 5 years old have been excluded from school.
- Identification of the local factors that increase risk of exclusion would enable early and targeted interventions to potentially break the cycle of disadvantage.

Results

- Linkage of the 3 datasets rendered a master dataset of 62,536 individual Walsall children.
- The results of the linkage of education and social care records is summarised in figure 2.
- The descriptive and predictive analytical methods used in this study were in concordance.
- Analyses demonstrated that the demographic factors of sex, deprivation and ethnicity were predictive of school exclusion, in particular:
 - Boys ($\chi^2 = 581, p < 0.0005$)
 - Free School Meal eligibility ($\chi^2 = 671, p < 0.0005$)
 - White British ethnicity ($\chi^2 = 671, p < 0.0005$)

Methods

Figure 1. Scheme of data linkage process

Figure 2. Summary of Linked Master Dataset

Figure 3. Social Care Rates of Excluded Children in Walsall

Discussion

- A SEND diagnosis was strongly predictive of a school exclusion (Figure 5a).
- In particular, Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Needs were significantly associated with exclusion in children of all ages.
- Exclusion of children with SEND is particularly pronounced in younger children. Over 75% of excluded children excluded in Year 1 have SEND, and in particular SEMH needs. This proportion gradually declines across year groups (Figure 5b).
- These results are informing the development of a risk matrix to enable proactive identification of children at risk of exclusion, so that supportive interventions can be implemented.
- These data will be incorporated into routine monitoring processes by local children's social services to allow timely identification of children at risk. This study is being used to inform and drive the policy and actions of the Walsall Local Children's Strategic Solutions and Action Board.

- lxxxii Office for National Statistics ([https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/housing/housing-conditions/overcrowded-households/latest#:~:text=The%20data%20shows%20that%3A,needed%20to%20avoid%20undesirable%20sharing\)&text=2%25%20of%20White%20British%20households%20were%20overcrowded,-4.](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/housing/housing-conditions/overcrowded-households/latest#:~:text=The%20data%20shows%20that%3A,needed%20to%20avoid%20undesirable%20sharing)&text=2%25%20of%20White%20British%20households%20were%20overcrowded,-4.))
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^{bxxxv} https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/195/facts_about_coventry/1878/coventry_joint_strategic_needs_assessment_jsna/4

^{bxxxvi} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800028/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion_literature_review.pdf

^{bxxxvii} <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/23/136126>

^{bxxxviii} <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2020>

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West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit

Lloyd House

Colmore Circus Queensway

Birmingham B4 6NQ

Sat nav users please use B4 6AT

Email: vru@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

Telephone: 0121 626 6060

 westmidlands-vru.org

 @WestMidsVRU

