



Community
Foundation

Tyne & Wear's Vital Issues 2017

Safety

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1.1 Overview

Overall the situation with regard to crime and community safety remains good in Tyne & Wear. There has been a marked increase in recorded crime, but it is not at all clear whether this reflects a reversal of the downward trend since 2003 or simply a result of more reporting and better recording. Although public satisfaction with how this issue is being handled also remains relatively high, we should be mindful that for some individuals and communities crime and anti-social behaviour are major issues affecting quality of life.

1.2 Crime rates

The tables below summarise the situation in relation to major areas of crime in Tyne & Wear. The relatively high figures for total crime, and for Sexual, Violent and Weapons offences are notable.

Table 11 – Offences per 1000 populationⁱ

Area Name	Burglaries	Drugs	Robbery	Sexual	Vehicle (per 000 vehicles)	Violent	Weapons	Total	Long term change (2003 - 2017)	Short term change (2016-2017)
Gateshead	2.36	1.96	0.66	2.17	13.61	22.36	0.7	88.32	-28.37	39.08
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	3.48	3.44	1.08	3.33	19.87	27.53	0.84	113.05	-28.1	24.46
North Tyneside	2.16	1.42	0.26	2.14	9.4	22.2	0.62	79.35	-18.62	54.03
South Tyneside	2.03	1.99	0.46	2.2	10.99	25.3	0.84	83.95	-31.53	29.36
Sunderland	2.57	2.01	0.45	2.53	11.75	23.99	0.68	90.01	-33.67	28.59
England & Wales	3.37	2.19	0.98	1.9	14.18	18.58	0.49	68.85	-38.22	10.41

As always care has to be taken in interpreting these statistics. In 2016 Northumbria Police stated that improvements in crime reporting and recording accounted for the sharp recent rise in crime figuresⁱⁱ. The report of the Police and Crime Commissioner also painted a positive picture, stating that:

- The increase in reporting of incidents has not been accompanied by their designation as potential crimes: the number of these continues to fall;
- the number of local people who think crime is a problem in their area has fallen;
- the number of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents reduced by 13% (over 10,000 fewer incidents) compared to 2015 with reductions in both youth and non-youth ASB;
- the percentage of respondents to CSEW who agree that Northumbria Police can be relied on to be there when needed is the highest in England and Walesⁱⁱⁱ.

On balance we may need to wait for evidence of a sustained increase before concluding that the downward trend in crime is coming to an end.

Newcastle has the greatest problem with crime in Tyne & Wear. Its status as the regional capital may be partly responsible, with drugs and sexual crime in part the flip side of its thriving night life. The Indices of Multiple deprivation cast light on the differing experiences of crime within the sub-region. The table below shows the proportion of LSOAs within each local authority that fall in the most deprived 10% of all LSOAs nationally on the Crime Deprivation score.

Newcastle and Sunderland emerge as the areas with the highest concentrations of crime-related deprivation.

Table 12 – Wards worse and better than the national average for crime deprivation (England = 0.14)^{iv}

District (incl. 2009 Unitaries)	Rate	Nat. Rank	Decile
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	0.08	111	4
Sunderland	0.04	152	5
South Tyneside	0.01	214	7
Gateshead	0.01	218	7
North Tyneside	0	220	7

It should be noted that there is clearly a greater awareness of crime related to the sexual exploitation of vulnerable young people as a result of Operation Sanctuary, and most recently the conviction of seventeen men and one woman in Newcastle for crimes including rape, human trafficking, conspiracy to incite prostitution and drug supply. The extent to which this type of organised criminal activity exists across Tyne & Wear remains unclear.

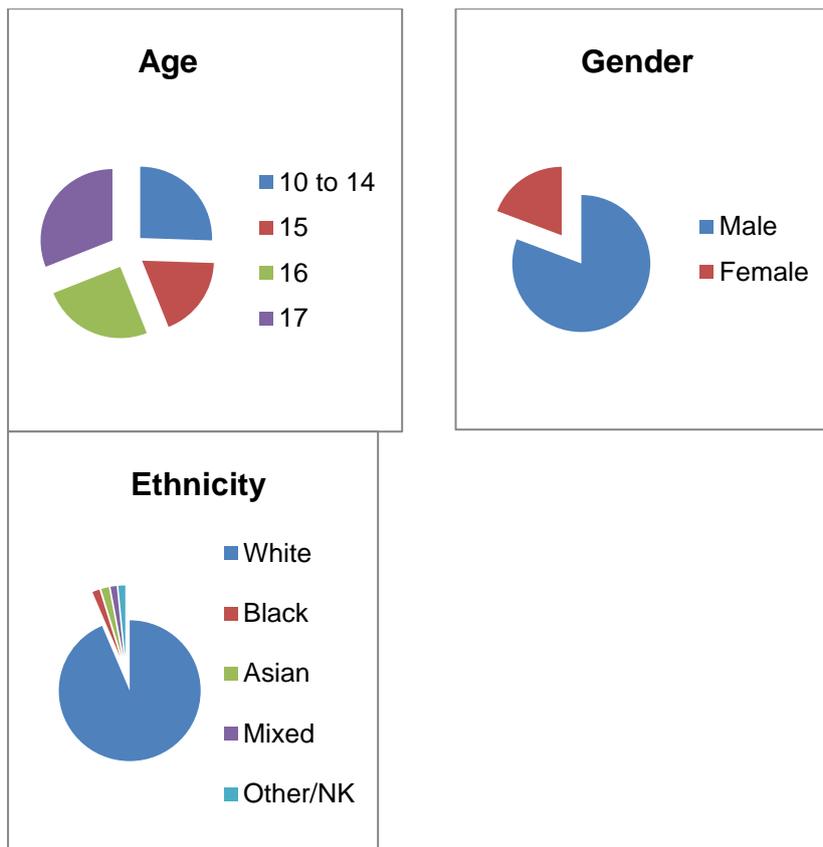
Hate crime statistics are compiled by Northumbria Police in five categories - race, faith, sexual orientation, disability and transsexual - covering Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. They show an increase of 202% from 2014 – 2016 that, whilst it may partly reflect the greater willingness of victims to come forward, is nonetheless disturbing. These figures pre-date Brexit which triggered a spike in recorded hate crime in the Northumbria Police area. The voluntary sector is well placed to support the victims of hate crime.

Domestic violence is a major area of potentially “hidden crime”. A public information request to Northumbria Police led to the disclosure of over 7000 such offences in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland in 2014.

More Tyne & Wear offenders are predicted to go on to offend again, with the Tyne & Wear rate nearly 15% compared to just under 10% nationally.^v

1.3 Young offenders

Statistics published by the Ministry of Justice/Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, and show the extent of the problem of youth offending in Tyne & Wear^{vi}. These show that in the year ending March 2015 the number of young people aged 10-17 receiving a “substantive outcome” (which includes anything from reprimand and final warning to going directly to Court) was 1144. The charts below show their ages, gender and ethnicity:



A review has recently been published by the Prison Reform Trust^{vii} lead by Lord Laming. The review found that children in care are 6 times more likely to be cautioned or convicted of a crime than other young people, and that half the children in youth custody came from foster or residential care despite only being 1% of the children in England. Lord Laming found that police were sometimes involved in situations that would normally be dealt with by parents. He said, for example, that the police had been called when a child “stole” food from the kitchen of his care home. This certainly suggests the need for care providers to develop better practise, but also underpins the case for advocacy and support for this type of ex-offender.

There is patchy data on youth reoffending from HM Inspectorate of probation reports undertaken in 2015-2016. These show rates of reoffending varying from the national figure in Sunderland (-1%); Gateshead (-5%); South Tyneside (+7%); North Tyneside (+4%). Concerns were expressed about work on this issue in Newcastle, but a figure was not given.^{viii}

1.4 Anti-social behaviour

The proportion of adults over 16 reporting experience of anti-social behaviour in the Northumbria police area is high. 30% of respondents in the most recent Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (December 2013) had witnessed some form of anti-social behaviour: one of the highest figures in England and Wales. 13% had witnessed drink-related behaviour and 11% had experience of groups hanging around on the streets^{ix}.

1.5 Perceptions of crime and policing

The CSEW suggests a high degree of confidence in the Northumbria police area. Data released in May 2014 showed that in the Northumbria police area, which includes Tyne & Wear, there is a high degree of confidence in the police with 67% agreeing that the police do an excellent/good job (compared to 62% for England) and 65% agreeing that they deal with local concerns (compared to 61% for England). More recent data released in 2015 showed that confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole in the Northumbria police area was about average for the UK – with 50% of respondents very or fairly confident it was effective and 65% that it was fair.

It should be noted that confidence in the police and the criminal justice system varies markedly, depending on factors such as age (being lower amongst those in the mid-20s to 30s), levels of deprivation in the community (being lower in the most deprived areas) and whether the respondent has personal experience of crime and anti-social behaviour (being lower amongst those with personal experience).

Potential roles for philanthropy

- Northumbria Police enjoy public confidence. The community and voluntary sector, with philanthropic support, can add value to their work either through working in partnership or providing complementary services.
- There is a case for philanthropic action to support voluntary organisations providing street-based services, particularly in Newcastle and other urban centres, on evenings and weekends.
- Targeted activity in those areas across the sub-region where crime is relatively high. This can include everything from youth work that diverts young people at risk from getting involved in crime and anti-social behaviour to support for the victims of these problems.
- Recent events in Newcastle have highlighted the issue of hidden abuse and victimisation of vulnerable people. Community groups have played a key role in supporting victims at an early stage, and ensuring that action is taken. Charitable funding can support them to reach out to those at risk.
- Charitable funding could be directed towards supporting work with those who have previous convictions, enabling them to integrate back into the local community and break the cycle of reoffending.

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- ⁱ **Grant Thornton Place Analytics.** The figures are from the Home Office
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pub>
- ⁱⁱ **Evening Chronicle (July 2016)** <http://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/recorded-crime-rates-soar-across-11648139>
- ⁱⁱⁱ **2015-2016 Annual Report, Vera Baird, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumberland** at <http://www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk/v2/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Northumbria-PCC-Annual-Report-2015-16.pdf>
- ^{iv} **Grant Thornton Place Analytics.** The figures are from ONS
- ^v <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-adult-reoffending-january-2013-december-2013>
- ^{vi} <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2015-to-2016>
- ^{vii} www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk
- ^{viii} <https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk>
- ^{ix} **Crime Survey for England & Wales** at <http://www.crimesurvey.co.uk/>