

CHAPTER 7—A SAFER STAFFORDSHIRE

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Included in this section

- Overall level of crime in Staffordshire
- Most serious violence and most serious acquisitive crime
- Domestic abuse
- Youth offending
- Road traffic collisions and casualties
- Offending under the influence of alcohol and illegal drugs

Further reading

Community Safety Strategic Assessments (2007).
Road Traffic Casualties in Staffordshire (Apr 2008).
Distraction Burglary in Staffordshire (Nov 2007)
Substance Misuse and Community Safety in Staffordshire (Sept 2007)

Future reading

Community Safety Strategic Assessments—updated October 2008

Key Findings

- BCS Comparator Crime has reduced by just over a fifth (21%) in Staffordshire over the last five years. Vehicle crime is down by over a third, and robbery and wounding are down by over a quarter.
- Less than one in every thousand residents of Staffordshire were a victim of a serious violent crime during 2007/08, compared with just over 11 in every thousand who were a victim of a serious acquisitive crime.
- Domestic abuse has been highlighted as a priority issue for all eight Community Safety Partnerships in Staffordshire.
- Male offenders committed 72% of offences committed by first time entrants to the Youth Justice System, and the majority were aged between 14 and 17 years. Male young offenders were most likely to commit offences of violence and criminal damage.
- 315 people were killed or seriously injured on Staffordshire's roads in 2007. 16% of all casualties of Road Traffic Collisions who were killed or seriously injured were male and aged between 16 and 20 years old.
- Drugs and alcohol are a key factor in offending behaviour in around two-thirds of adult offenders.

7.1 Overall Level of Crime in Staffordshire

Over the last five years (between 2003/04 and 2007/08) the level of crime recorded in Staffordshire has decreased by a total of 21%, which is equal to 25 fewer crimes recorded each day¹⁷. The 'basket' of crimes used to measure this performance is known as the BCS Comparator¹⁸ and is based on those crime types included within the British Crime Survey (BCS) to best represent volume crime within the community.

The category to record the largest reduction from the baseline year is vehicle crime, with thefts of motor vehicles and thefts from motor vehicles both decreasing by over a third. Robbery of personal property and offences of wounding (violent crimes involving a serious injury) have both decreased by 27%, and criminal damage has seen a reduction of 13%.

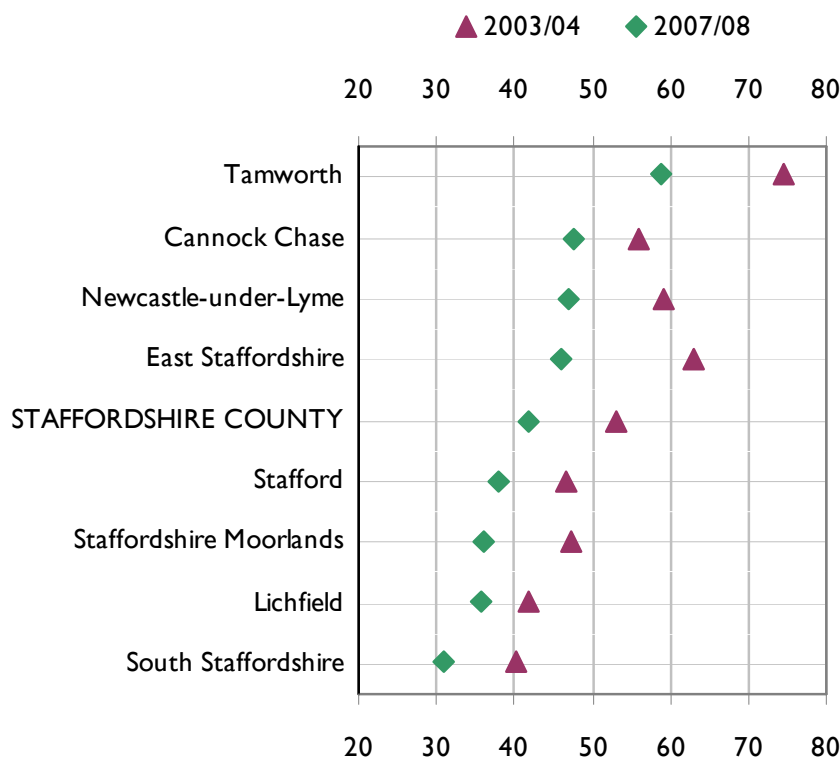
The only crime type to see an increase over the five year period is common assault, which has risen by 12%; this crime includes violent offences that result in only minor injuries. It is also a high volume crime, with common assault accounting for nearly one-fifth of all BCS Comparator Crimes recorded during 2007/08. The reduction in wounding offences and the slight increase in common assaults suggests that overall, the severity of injuries received (as a result of a violent crime) has reduced over the last 12 months.

¹⁷ Source: Staffordshire Police, Corporate Services.

¹⁸ Crimes included within the BCS Comparator: Burglary Dwelling, Theft of Motor Vehicle, Theft from Motor Vehicle, Vehicle Interference, Wounding, Common Assault, Personal Robbery, Criminal Damage, Theft of Pedal Cycle, Theft from the Person.

The level of BCS Comparator Crime recorded during 2007/08 varies greatly by district, with the highest number of crimes recorded in the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme (5,803 crimes) and the lowest recorded in South Staffordshire (3,273 crimes). Obviously each district within Staffordshire varies in size and population and in order to make more meaningful comparisons, this data can also be shown as a rate per 1,000 residents as shown in Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1—Crime rates in Staffordshire: BCS Comparator Crime (per 1,000 residents) by Local Authority District Area



When measured relative to the size of the population, the highest crime rate recorded during 2007/08 was in Tamworth (58.8 per 1,000 residents), followed by Cannock Chase (47.5) and Newcastle (46.9). However, it is also clear from the dot-plot that Tamworth has recorded one of the largest reductions in the rate of crime since the baseline year.

South Staffordshire, Lichfield, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stafford all recorded a rate of offences below the county average of 41.9 offences per 1,000 residents during 2007/08.

Source: Staffordshire Police, Corporate Services. Data for 2003/04 and 2007/08, ranked by Local Authority District according to 2007/08—highest to lowest.

7.2 Most serious violence and most serious acquisitive crime

The level of serious violent crime¹⁹ in Staffordshire is relatively low when compared with other crime types, with just 0.72 victims for every 1,000 residents recorded during 2007/08. However, these crimes represent the most serious forms of violence and can greatly impact on the quality of life of both the victims and the local community.

During 2007/08, the highest levels of serious violence occurred in Cannock Chase (1 crime per 1,000 population), Tamworth (0.94), Newcastle-under-Lyme (0.86) and East Staffordshire (0.85); each of these districts recorded a rate of offences above the Staffordshire average. Serious violent crimes recorded in these four districts account for 61% of the county total. The lowest rate of offences was recorded in South Staffordshire, with just 0.38 crimes per 1,000 population.

The top six 'high risk' police Neighbourhood Management Areas for serious violence, (based on rates per 1,000 population and percentage of the county total) are all town centres. This suggests strong links with the night-time economy and alcohol fuelled offences.

¹⁹ Serious violent crime includes: murder and attempted murder, wounding, death by dangerous driving, death by aggravated vehicle taking.

Whilst it is acknowledged that reductions have been achieved over recent years, 11.05 people per 1,000 population within Staffordshire became a victim of acquisitive crime²⁰ during 2007/08. This is a much higher figure than for serious violent crime and is therefore more likely to directly impact the lives of Staffordshire's residents.

During 2007/08, the highest levels of serious acquisitive crime occurred in Tamworth (16.14 crimes per 1,000 population), Newcastle-under-Lyme (12.09), East Staffordshire (11.51) and Lichfield (11.37); each of these districts recorded a rate of offences above the Staffordshire average. Serious acquisitive crimes recorded in these four districts account for 56% of the county total.

Serious acquisitive crime, has a significantly detrimental effect on businesses' profitability if they become a victim or suffer repeat victimisation; and can impact on the economic prosperity of an area if unchecked. There remains a very strong association between drugs misuse by offenders and the committal of serious acquisitive crime and other forms of crime to fund their addiction. This is particularly true of the relatively small number of prolific and priority offenders who have been proven to commit a disproportionately high volume of acquisitive crime. Many of these individuals have grown up in environments of pro-criminal friends and family; if there is no intervention to change this cycle of offending behaviour then it is likely to continue with future generations.

7.3 Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse seriously affects the lives of victims and can mentally scar children who may themselves grow up to replicate this type of offending behaviour within their own relationships. It is accepted that there is a higher risk of a person being murdered or seriously injured through domestic abuse than any other form of violent offending behaviour.

During 2007/08 there were 12,593 incidents of domestic abuse²¹ reported to the police in Staffordshire County, which is equal to a rate of 15.3 per 1,000 population. National research indicates that in reality this figure is likely to be much higher as many offences go unreported; on average there will have been 35 assaults before a victim calls the police²².

Initiatives to target domestic abuse are strongly linked to plans produced to reduce repeat victimisation through Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). The aim of MARAC is to jointly construct and implement a risk management plan that provides professional support for those at risk. This in turn reduces the risk of harm, and consequently repeat victimisation.

Almost 17% of domestic violent crimes recorded in Staffordshire during 2007/08 were repeat offences, meaning that the injured party had previously been a victim of a domestic offence during the previous 12 months. Advice from CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse), the national lead agency for MARAC states that police figures for all repeat domestic abuse incidents should be reduced when MARACs are fully implemented.

MARACs and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) have been highlighted as the central focus for action to address domestic abuse in the coming years, along with the continued development of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVC). The National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan 2006/07²³ published by the Home Office states that in Cardiff, where the MARAC has been evaluated by Cardiff University, the level of reported repeat victimisation has dropped from 32% to below 10%.

²⁰ Serious acquisitive crime includes: domestic burglary, theft of motor vehicle, theft from motor vehicle and personal robbery.

²¹ Domestic Abuse recorded by Staffordshire Police includes all crimes and incidents that are identified as being of a domestic nature (between partners or ex-partners and family members above the age of 18 years).

²² Crime in England & Wales 2006/07: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/crimeew0607.html>

²³ National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan 2006/07: <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence066.pdf>

Through the 2007 Strategic Assessment process, domestic and/or sexual abuse has been identified as a priority for all eight Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) within Staffordshire as it is seen as affecting all communities and is a cross-cutting issue.

7.4 Youth Offending

The number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System (YJS) has seen a reduction of 6% between 2004/05 (baseline year) and 2007/08. Almost half (44.3%) of the first time entrants recorded during 2007/08 lived in Cannock Chase, Stafford Borough or East Staffordshire. When measured relative to the number of young people within each district, Cannock Chase recorded the highest rate with 19.4 first time entrants per 1,000 residents aged between 10 and 17 years, compared with a county average of 14.4. The lowest rates were recorded in South Staffordshire (10.8) and Staffordshire Moorlands (10.9).

During 2007/08 there were 1,524 offences committed by first time entrants to the YJS, which is equal to approximately 1.2 crimes per offender. Almost 72% of these offences were committed by males, the majority of which (three quarters) were aged between 14 and 17 years. The peak age for female offenders was slightly younger, with half aged either 14 or 15 years.

The majority of offences committed by male offenders were either violent crimes (23.3% of the total) or criminal damage (21.6% of the total), whereas the highest category of crime committed by female offenders was theft and handling (44% of the total). In total, over two-thirds of offences committed by all first time entrants to the YJS were violence, criminal damage or theft and handling.

Table 7.1—Top 10 offences recorded by First Time Entrants to the YJS

Offence Group Description	Offences committed by:		Total Offences
	Females	Males	
Violence Against the Person	30.4%	23.3%	25.3%
Theft and Handling	44.0%	16.8%	24.5%
Criminal Damage	10.1%	21.6%	18.3%
Public Order	5.8%	9.3%	8.3%
Motoring Offences	2.3%	10.6%	8.2%
Drug Offences	3.0%	3.7%	3.5%
Other	2.3%	2.8%	2.6%
Non Domestic Burglary	0.5%	3.2%	2.4%
Sexual Offences		2.9%	2.1%
Racially Aggravated	0.2%	1.7%	1.2%

Source: Staffordshire Youth Offending Service. Data for 2007/08 as a percentage of all offences recorded, split by gender.

Although the largest offence category is violence, the majority of offences committed were common assaults which do not involve serious injuries. Within the category of theft and handling, just over two-thirds were shoplifting offences.

The percentage of young people who re-offend within 24 months has also seen a reduction over the last 3 years, from 53% during the baseline year to 45.8% in 2007/08, a decrease of 7.2 percentage points.

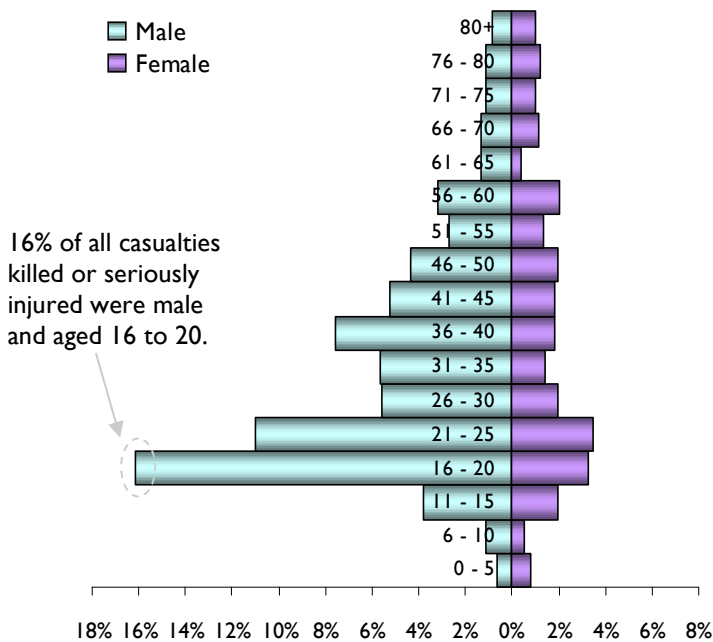
7.5 Road Traffic Casualties

During 2007, there were 4,351 individuals injured as a result of a Road Traffic Collision in Staffordshire and 315 of these casualties were either killed or seriously injured. This is equal to a severity ratio of 7.2%, which is considerably lower than the national figure of 14.7% (based on results obtained during 2006).

The total number of casualties killed or seriously injured (KSI) as a result of an RTC in Staffordshire has decreased by 4.3% (14 casualties) between 2005 and 2007, and the number of casualties slightly injured has seen an even greater reduction of 5.6% (238 casualties).

Nationally, traffic is the biggest killer of people aged 15 to 19, due mainly to young and inexperienced drivers taking horrendous risks on the road when behind the wheel, often killing their young passengers at the same time. Traffic is also the second biggest killer of children aged 10-16 (after cancer) due to children taking more risks when out walking and cycling on their own or with friends, as they start to become independent from their parents⁸.

Figure 7.2—Age and gender distribution of casualties killed or seriously injured



The number of casualties aged between 16 and 20 years is significantly higher than the other age bands, for all RTCs and especially those killed and seriously injured; 19% of all KSI casualties were aged 16 to 20 and 83% of this age group were male. Within the 16 to 20 age group, the peak age was 18 years and two-thirds of 18-year old casualties were the driver of a vehicle involved.

The districts to record the highest percentage of total casualties (both male and female) aged between 16 and 25 years are Staffordshire Moorlands (34.6%), East Staffordshire (34.1%) and Tamworth (32.9%).

Source: Staffordshire Police STATS19. Data for October 2004 to September 2007.

Nationally, riders of motorbikes account for one in five deaths, even though they represent just 3% of all licensed vehicles on the road, and bikers are 36 times more likely to die on the road than car drivers²⁴.

Just over 11% of all collisions and 26% of all KSI collisions recorded in Staffordshire over the last 3 years involved a motorcycle. East Staffordshire, South Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands each recorded an increase in the number of KSI collisions recorded involving a motorcycle over the last three years. The largest increase in motorcycle RTCs occurred in East Staffordshire, where the number of collisions recorded has increased by nearly half and the number of collisions recorded resulting in a KSI has more than doubled.

²⁴ Deaths and injuries on the road: the facts (Brake - The Road Safety Charity)
http://www.brake.org.uk/resources/downloads/Road_deaths_and_injuries_fact_sheet.pdf

7.6 Offending under the Influence of Alcohol & Illegal Drugs

In Staffordshire during 2005/06 there were just over 5,000 crimes committed where the offender was under the influence of alcohol. Around two-thirds of these offences took place at the weekend and around three-quarters of all these offences were for violent crime.

The level of alcohol related crime has remained fairly stable across Staffordshire over the last three years although this has varied by district, with decreases in some areas (such as East Staffordshire) and increases in others. The biggest increase and the highest rates were recorded in the districts of Newcastle and Tamworth, where the alcohol related crime rate per 1,000 population was 12.7 and 8.0 respectively, compared to a county figure of 6.2 per 1,000 population.

During the same 12-month period there were just under 500 offences recorded where the offender was thought to be under the influence of drugs, a decrease of a third over the last three years. The largest proportion of offences were predictably offences of supply or possession of drugs, accounting for 38% of the total (187 offences), followed by violence at 37% (181 offences).

The boroughs of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Tamworth recorded the highest rates of crime where the offender was under the influence of either alcohol or drugs and South Staffordshire recorded the lowest rates.

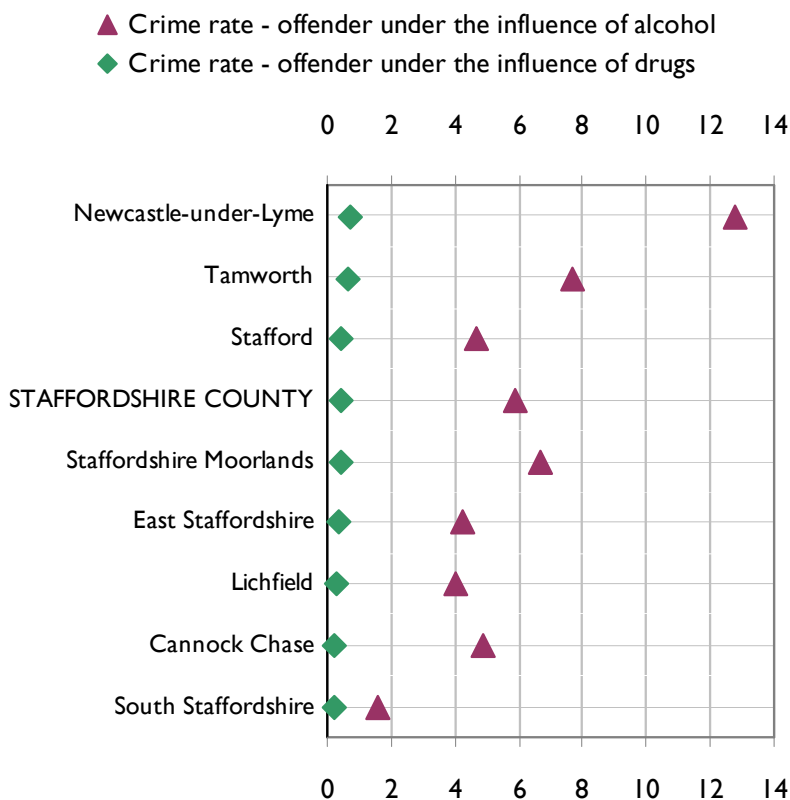
Staffordshire Moorlands was the only district to be above the county average for alcohol related crime but below average for the level of drug related crimes recorded.

In Staffordshire, the majority of alcohol-related offences are committed by young people. Nine-out-of-ten (92%) alcohol related offences are committed by people aged under 45 years old and almost half (48%) are committed by people aged between 16 and 24 years, which is in line with national findings. Young people are also the most likely to be victims of alcohol related offences.

Drugs and alcohol are a key factor in offending behaviour in around two-thirds of adult offenders in Staffordshire. Staffordshire Youth Offending Service Users had substance misuse flagged as a potential problem in around a quarter of cases (263 out of 1,040).

Unfortunately we can not accurately measure the true extent of drug related crime, as it is not possible to identify those crimes which have been committed in order to fund drug addictions, such as shoplifting for example.

Figure 7.3—Crimes recorded where the offender was under the influence of alcohol or drugs



Source: Staffordshire Police, Corporate Services. Data for 2006/07, ranked by Local Authority District according to crime rate of offenders under the influence of drugs—highest to lowest.

7.7 Deprivation measured by crime

The Indices of Deprivation 2007 includes a domain which focuses specifically on crime. Although more update data is available locally than that which is used to create this domain, it is still a useful measure as it ranks small geographical areas based on crime across the whole of the country.

This domain measures the rate of recorded crime for four major crime themes – burglary, theft, criminal damage and violence - representing the risk of personal and material victimisation at a small area level. It is important to remember that crime is more likely to occur in town centres due to high concentrations of people, thus creating bias towards higher levels of crime and disorder in these areas.

In Staffordshire 10 SOAs (15,649 people; 7,171 households) fall into the 10% most deprived nationally, and a further 24 SOAs (36,551 people; 15,317 households) fall into the 10%-20% most deprived nationally. This represents 6.5% of the population of Staffordshire County living in the 20% deprived nationally for the crime domain.

The top ten most deprived LSOAs in Staffordshire County for the Crime domain can be seen in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2—Top ten most deprived LSOAs in Staffordshire measured through the crime domain

District	Ward	LSOA	Population ¹	Households ¹
Newcastle-under-Lyme	Town	E01029602	1,501	785
Tamworth	Glascote	E01029843	1,511	529
Tamworth	Glascote	E01029845	1,105	475
Tamworth	Castle	E01029838	1,529	679
Newcastle-under-Lyme	Town	E01029604	1,470	813
Tamworth	Glascote	E01029840	1,383	481
Tamworth	Castle	E01029835	1,399	916
Tamworth	Amington	E01029824	1,817	679
East Staffordshire	Burton	E01029421	2,080	1,088
Tamworth	Stonydelph	E01029859	1,854	726

Source: The English Indices of Deprivation 2007, Communities and Local Government
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/indicesdeprivation07>

Implications for service delivery

- Considerable reductions in the prevalence of crime in Staffordshire have been made, particularly with regards to vehicle crime. Domestic abuse is now much more prevalent than acquisitive crime, despite the known level of under-reporting, and addressing this should be a priority.
- Young men are most likely to be perpetrators of, and victims of, crime and involved in other forms of harm. Around three-quarters of young offenders are male and aged between 14 and 17 years old. Young men are most likely to be involved in road traffic collisions. Around half of all offences committed under the influence of alcohol are by people aged between 16 and 24 years. Young people, and particularly young men, should be the focus of interventions to reduce harm caused to people in Staffordshire.
- Offences committed under the influence of alcohol are far more numerous than those committed under the influence of illegal drugs. There needs to be a continued focus on reducing offending under the influence of alcohol, particularly on a weekend and in the evenings. This would also impact on peoples' perceptions of anti-social behaviour and the criminal justice system as a whole. In addition to initiatives based around models of situational crime prevention, there should also be a focus on helping those people with a substance misuse problem to reduce the harm caused to themselves and others and enable them to fulfil a normal life. This would also have a positive impact on health related priorities (reduce hospital admissions) and economic development (reduce worklessness).

Government Priorities

2007 Pre-Budget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review: Public Service Agreements (PSAs). New PSAs set out the key priority outcomes the Government wants to achieve in the next spending period (2008-2011). For further details see:
http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pbr_csr/psa/pbr_csr07_psaindex.cfm

Stronger communities and a better quality of life (PSAs 18 - 26):

PSA Delivery Agreement 23: **Make Communities Safer**

Indicators that will be used to measure progress towards this PSA:

1. The level of most serious violent crimes.
2. The level of serious acquisitive crimes.
3. Public confidence in local agencies involved in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB).
4. The percentage of people perceiving ASB as a problem.
5. The level of proven re-offending by young and adult offenders
6. The level of serious re-offending.

PSA Delivery Agreement 25: **Reduce the Harm Caused by Alcohol & Drugs**

1. The number of drug users recorded as being in effective treatment.
2. The rate of alcohol related hospital admissions.
3. The rate of drug related offending.
4. The percentage of the public who perceive drug use/dealing or drinking and rowdy behaviour to be a problem in their area.

Indicators in the Staffordshire LAA relevant to this area

- NI 15: Serious violent crime rate.
 - NI 16: Serious acquisitive crime rate .
 - NI 32: Repeat incidents of domestic violence.
 - NI 45: Young offenders engagement in suitable education, employment or training.
 - NI 111: First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17.
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