# Serious Violence Duty

# Strategic Needs Assessment

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# Introduction to Violence Reduction

# The Serious Violence Duty

The Serious Violence Duty (SVD) was formally introduced at the end of January 2023 across all 43 Policing areas in England and Wales. The Duty requires the specified authorities to cooperate to address Serious Violence across South Yorkshire. The Police and Crime Commissioner has a responsibility to convene the partnership to meet the duty and the SVD funding comes down to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to administer.

The specified authorities for SVD are:

- South Yorkshire Police
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
- Youth Justice
- Probation Service
- Integrated Care Board
- Sheffield City Council
- Doncaster City Council
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

The Prison Service, Education and Youth Custody have a duty to cooperate as required.

By agreement with the South Yorkshire specified authorities the existing VRU Executive Board chaired by the Commissioner has become the Serious Violence Executive overseeing the work of the VRU and the delivery of the Serious Violence Strategy

# The Strategic Needs Assessment

It is important to understand where violence occurs in South Yorkshire, and perhaps more importantly where suspects of violence come from and what their environment is. We also need to understand how prevalent indicators of violence are in South Yorkshire. All of this needs a theoretical underpinning that uses the best evidence available to say what we should be targeting interventions at, to match up with the crime and other data that says where we should be targeting the interventions. Finally, we need to know what is already being done to avoid duplication of effort and identify gaps in provision. That is the purpose of this Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA).

This SNA is an evolving document. We will be refreshing the data in annual cycles, but we will also be adding new datasets and updating the narratives as they become available. Data sharing in South Yorkshire is constantly evolving, with data sharing agreements for Stronger Families and "Bristol Model" type interventions being developed as of time of writing.

The data presented in this SNA will also be used to model the most at risk areas in South Yorkshire for producing violence. As new datasets are brought into the model, it will become more accurate, and with more predictive capability, over time.

# What is Violence?

No formal suggestion of the definition of serious violence is made in Serious Violence Duty. Research evidence suggests that witnessing, experiencing or being involved in some sort of violence increases the likelihood of future involvement in violence[1][2][3], as well as other detrimental impacts, like lower educational attainment[4]. We have agreed in South Yorkshire to adopt the broader World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of violence, which is:

"*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.*"[5]

It is important to note the word power in the above definition, as this broadens the understanding of violence to include acts that result from a relationship of power.

The causes of violence are complex and multifaceted. It is important that work takes place across the breadth of the WHO ecological model, which includes individual, relational, societal and community factors; as well as across the whole spectrum of risk (primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, as well as criminal justice and enforcement and attitudinal change).

If we only focus on the individual factors (which very often happens), without focusing on the other areas, we have a high chance of failure. Most of our good research and evidence base is at the individual level. It is more challenging to demonstrate what works at the relationship, community and societal levels of the model. Our key challenge is that there is no one agency responsible for all levels, with many agencies that work across different parts of the system. This highlights the importance of working together, across all organisations and professions, to prevent and reduce violence. It is also important that we look more widely than South Yorkshire to work together with other areas of the United Kingdom and work to influence change on a national scale.

# Public Health Approach to Violence

To reduce violence we will need to take a public health approach, aiming to understand the system and work in partnership with all agencies working across it, so that we can target all levels of causation. We will use the available data and evidence base to work to prevent violence across the whole spectrum of risk. We will do this through:

- primary prevention (stopping violence before it starts),

- secondary prevention (halting the progression of violence once it has already occurred),

- tertiary prevention (providing a way out for those already entrenched in violence),

- criminal justice and enforcement (holding people accountable when they are criminally culpable),

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[1] https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/15%2034%20-%20The%20relationship%20between%20family%20violence%20and%20youth%20offending-V4_1.pdf
[2] https://www.unicef.org/protection/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf
[3] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3124247/
[4] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4575886/
[5] https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/chap1.pdf

- and attitudinal change (aiming to shift cultural norms in society).

Our public health approach shares five common elements with other public health approaches: using the available data and evidence base, working across the whole population, working in partnership, prevention and looking at the causes of the causes[6] (see Figure 1).

*Figure 1 - 5 Elements of a public health approach*



*Adapted from College of Policing 'Public Health Approaches to Policing', 2019*

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Figure 2 outlines the WHO public health approach to violence;

*Figure 2 - The WHO Public Health Approach*



**What is the problem?**

Define the violence problem through systematic data collection.

**SURVEILLANCE**

**IDENTIFY**

**What are the causes?**

Identify the risk and protective factors. Conduct research to find out why violence occurs and who it affects.

**How do we scale up & implement?**

Scale up and implement promising policy interventions and evaluate their impact and cost effectiveness.

**IMPLEMENT**

**EVALUATE**

**What works for whom?**

Design, develop and evaluate interventions to see what works.

*Adapted from 'WHO Public Health Approach to Violence' 2019*

This model is a commonly adopted model and one which is naturally used by most organisations in South Yorkshire. It is similar to the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment) model used by the Police force.

This Strategic Needs Assessment aims to identify and define the issues and the causes of violence in South Yorkshire (which is the first two stages of the WHO public health approach).

# Causes of Violence

The World Health Organisation (WHO) considers violence a result of multiple levels of influence on behaviour, and uses an ecological model to explore the relationship between individual and contextual factors (see Figure 3).

*Figure 3 – Levels of Influence*
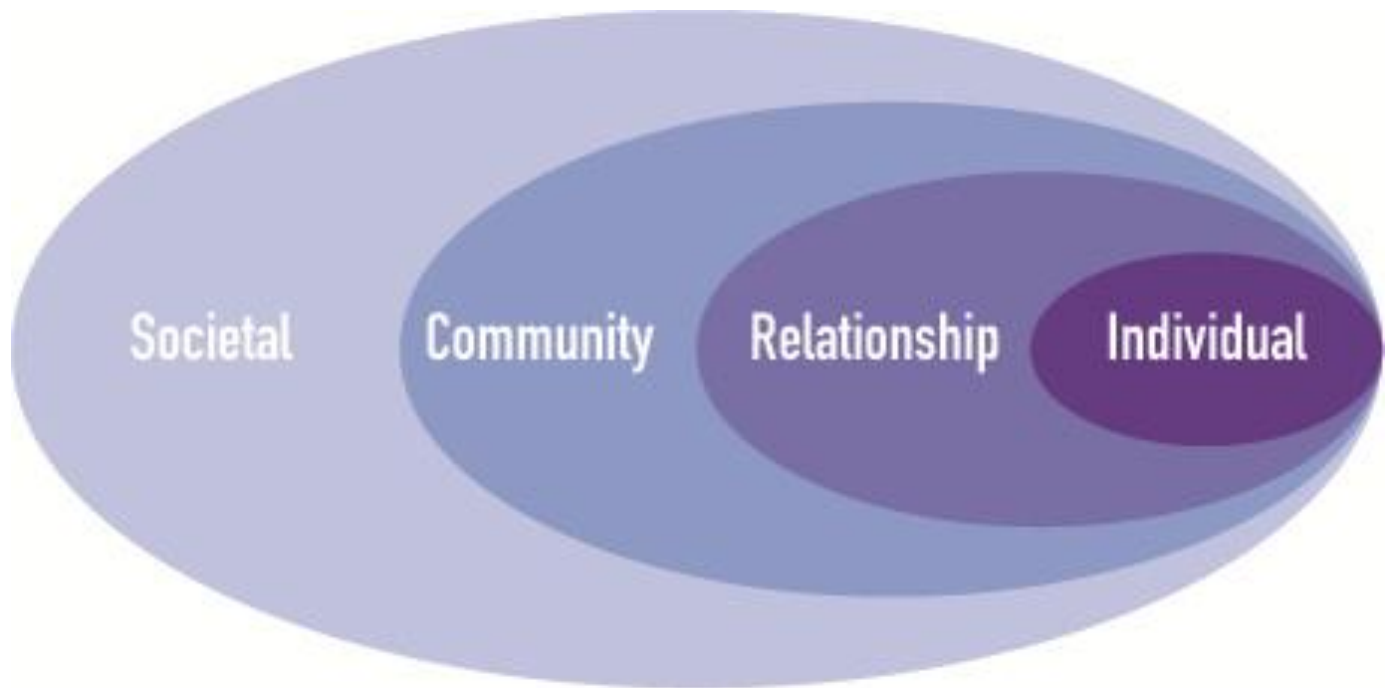


## Individual

The first level of the model aims to understand the individual factors that a person brings to their behaviour. These factors include:

- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and subsequent potential changes in biology
- Childhood trauma
- Impulsivity
- Low educational attainment
- Substance misuse
- Prior history of aggression

## Relationship

The second level of the model explores how relationships with peers, intimate partners and family members can impact on and validate violent behaviour. ACEs can have huge impacts on the mental and physical health of those who experience them, with the effects often far reaching into adulthood. Although experienced individually, ACEs often stem from our relationships with others, and include:

- Parental separation

- Parental incarceration

- Being the victim of physical, sexual or emotional abuse

- A parent with a mental health condition

- A parent with substance misuse issues

- Being the victim of neglect

- Experiencing domestic abuse, including coercive control

Victims of violence are often more likely to be further involved in violence either as victim or perpetrator[7][8][9].

# Community

Schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods all affect behaviour. Some of the community factors that influence violence are[10]:

- A high level of residential mobility (where people move frequently, often due to short tenancy agreements and instability of the rental market)

- Social isolation – sometimes rising out of heterogeneity (difference) in a community, where a highly diverse population has little social integration

- High population density

- High levels of unemployment

- Poverty

- Physical deterioration of an area

- Few institutional supports (for example, when services have moved out of local areas and have become centralised)

# Societal

Many societal factors create an acceptable climate for violence, reduce inhibitions, create and sustain division and gaps between different groups in society or create tensions between different cultures[11]. These factors include:

- Health, education and social policies that maintain high levels of inequality between groups in society

- The normalisation of violence as an acceptable way to resolve conflict (both at a global level through film and television, as well as within individual communities)

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[7] https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/15%2034%20-%20The%20relationship%20between%20family%20violence%20and%20youth%20offending-V4_1.pdf
[8] https://www.unicef.org/protection/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf
[9] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3124247/
[10] https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/chap1.pdf
[11] https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/chap1.pdf

- Attitudes that regard suicide as an individual choice rather than a preventable act of violence

- Priority given to parental rights rather than child welfare

- Entrenched male dominance over women and children

- Norms that support political conflict

# Risk and protective factors

Multiple reviews of risk factors for serious violence have been undertaken[12,13] and are highlighted in Figure 4. Protective factors can act as a buffer to risk factors, with a positive cumulative effect. A range of sources and evidence have been used to inform our understanding of protective factors[14].

*Figure 4 - Risk and Protective Factors*



There is a complex interplay between risk and protective factors. Maximising protective factors is integral to a strength or assets-based approach to violence reduction.

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[12] Roberts, S. (2019) *Approaches to prevent or reduce violence with a focus on youth, knife and gang-related violence. Literature Review.* London: Public Health England

[13] Home Office (2019) *An analysis of indicators of serious violence. Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study and the Environmental Risk (E-Risk) Longitudinal Twin Study.* London: HM Government

[14] Public Health England (2019) *Collaborative approaches to preventing offending and re-offending in children (CAPRICORN). A resource for local health & justice system leaders to support collaborative working for children and young people with complex needs.* London: PHE
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828228/CAPRICORN_resource.pdf

# Preventing Serious Violence

Reducing violence requires a public health prevention framework, which must include;

## Solid foundation

Reducing violence requires using and developing evidence, developing excellent relationships between partners, good governance, process and multiagency intelligence. All organisations and professions across South Yorkshire must work together to address the risk factors for violence, and enhance protective factors.

## Primary prevention

The greatest reduction in harm from violence comes from stopping violent behaviour from even starting. This means intervening early, and sometimes by investing in some areas of the population where need is greater, for example: to reduce poverty or increase community resilience.

## Secondary prevention

Where violent behaviour has begun, it is possible to stop the progression of violence as early through early detection and prompt, effective intervention, including providing positive alternatives. This means having options as soon as a challenging behaviour or issue becomes apparent, rather than when behaviours or issues are more entrenched.

## Tertiary prevention

For people with established violent behaviour, or those affected as a victim, a way out of violence is required. The research tells us that victims of violence are more likely to be further involved in violence as a victim or perpetrator in the future.

## Enforcement and criminal justice

Alongside prevention, violent behaviour needs a criminal justice response. Enforcement can deter individual acts of violence, and work to reduce the harms associated with Organised Crime Groups (OCGs). In South Yorkshire Police, OCGs are targeted by Operation Fortify.

## Attitudinal change

In some areas of the country, violence has become commonplace. It is therefore important to work to change attitudes to all types of violence at a societal, community and personal level. This will be challenging, as it is a national issue, but we will start small, making violence unacceptable and increasing community resilience to be able to challenge unacceptable behaviour.

# Evidence of What Works

The final two stages of the WHO public health approach to violence (using what works to prevent violence, and implement effective interventions) can be guided by available evidence. There have been a large number of reviews and suggestions about what works to reduce violence, including:

- Serious Violence Strategy[15] (Home Office)

- Serious and Organised Crime Strategy[16] (Home Office)

- Public Health Approaches to Reducing Violence"[17] (Local Government Association)

- A Whole System, Multi-Agency Approach to Serious Violence Prevention[18] (Public Health England)

- Protecting People, Promoting Health: A public health approach to violence prevention for England[19] (Department of Health)

- Violence Prevention: A public health priority[20] (Scottish Public Health Network)

- Violence Prevention Framework[21] (Scottish Public Health Network)

- Preventing gang and youth violence: a review of risk and protective factors[22] (Early Intervention Foundation)

- Keeping Kids Safe: Improving Safeguarding Responses to Gang Violence and Criminal Exploitation[23] (The Children's Commissioner for England)

- Collaborative Approaches to Preventing Offending and Re-offending In Children (CAPRICORN)[24] (Public Health England)

- School Based Violence Prevention: A practical handbook[25] (World Health Organisation)

- Preventing Violent Extremism in the UK: Public Health Solutions[26] (Faculty of Public Health)

- The World Health Organisation Violence Info website contains research evidence from 3,372 studies about violence around the world – including what is effective[27] (WHO)

- Violence Prevention: The Evidence[28] (World Health Organisation)

- Back to School? Breaking the link between school exclusions and knife crime[29] (All Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime)

- Knife crime evidence briefing[30] (College of Policing)

This list is not exhaustive. Reassuringly, all reports discuss similar themes and make similar conclusions.

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[15] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy
[16] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-and-organised-crime-strategy-2018
[17] https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/15.32%20-%20Reducing%20family%20violence_04_WEB.pdf
[18] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf
[19] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216977/Violence-prevention.pdf
[20] https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Report-Violence-Prevention-A-Public-Health-Priority-December-2014.pdf
[21] https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Violence-Prevention-Framework.pdf
[22] https://www.eif.org.uk/report/preventing-gang-and-youth-violence-a-review-of-risk-and-protective-factors
[23] https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/keeping-kids-safe/
[24] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828228/CAPRICORN_resource.pdf
[25] https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/324930/9789241515542-eng.pdf?ua=1
[26] https://www.fph.org.uk/media/2475/preventing-violent-extremism-in-the-uk_public-health-solutions-web.pdf
[27] http://apps.who.int/violence-info/
[28] https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77936/9789241500845_eng.pdf?sequence=1
[29] http://www.preventknifecrime.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/APPG-on-Knife-Crime-Back-to-School-exclusions-report-FINAL.pdf
[30] https://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Knife-crime.aspx

## What do we know? Current evidence of what works

The Early Intervention Foundation maintains an online guidebook that shows the evidence for current interventions[31]. The Youth Endowment Fund maintains a toolkit of what works[32].

The 2010 WHO publication, Violence Prevention: The Evidence[33] contains a number of priorities for preventing and reducing violence. These priorities are reinforced in a number of the publications listed above, and hold true today. They include:

- Developing safe, stable and nurturing relationships between children and their parents and caregivers.

- Developing life skills in children and adolescents.

- Reducing the availability and harmful use of alcohol.

- Guns, knives and pesticides: reducing access to lethal means.

- Promoting gender equality to prevent violence against women.

- Changing cultural and social norms that support violence.

- Victim identification, care and support programmes.

It is important to remember that: "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Measuring some of this work is hard. Demonstration is the highest form of proof." – Karen McClusky, Scottish VRU founder, LEPH2019.

## The Ecological Model

The causes of violence are complex and multifaceted. Work must take place across the breadth of the WHO ecological model (individual, relationship, community and), and across the whole spectrum of risk (primary, secondary and tertiary prevention).

If we only focus on the individual factors, without focusing on the other areas, we have a high chance of failure. Most of the well-evidenced or promising interventions are at the individual level. This is partly because it is more challenging to demonstrate scientifically what works at the relationship, community and societal levels of the model.

One of our key challenges is that there is no one agency responsible for all levels, with many agencies working across different parts of the system. We need to work together, across South Yorkshire in order to affect change at all stages of the ecological model, to prevent and reduce violence in the long-term.

Figure 5 shows the ways that we can intervene. It is important that we take a system wide approach both upstream and downstream. Some key elements include: ensuring that all the whole system in South Yorkshire is trauma informed, to an agreed standard; build on community assets; early identification of issues and support; strengthening core life skills.[34]

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[31] https://guidebook.eif.org.uk/
[32] Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit
[33] https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77936/9789241500845_eng.pdf?sequence=1
[34] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828228/CAPRICORN_resource.pdf

*Figure 5 - WHO Ecological Model*

Addressing the root causes

**Upstream prevention to prevent youth violence & offending**

Promote good mental health

Strengthen communities - building on community assets

Prevent drug & alcohol problems

Prioritise looked after children

Prevent violence & exploitation

Reduce poverty, deprivation & address wider determinants of health

*Communities & Society*

Promote inclusive schools & ensure exclusion is used as a last resort

- Give the best start in life
- Promote stable environments
- Support nurturing & responsive attachment relationships
- Reduce sources of stress
- Strengthen core life skills & build aspiration & resilience

Early identification & support for neurodisability

**INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES**

Trauma informed services

- Peer mentoring
- Family level interventions
- Building life skills

Access to housing

Nurturing environments

Employment support

**Downstream prevention to reduce youth re-offending**

Identify & support children at risk

*Communities & Society*

Liaison & diversion

Support identified health needs

Support to access the right education and training

*System wide approach*

Transforming Lives

*Adapted from Public Health England 'CAPRICORN Paper', 2019*

# Young People and Violence

A dominant theme in academic literature is that the structural exclusion and lack of opportunities faced by young people effectively block or affect their transition to adulthood and can lead to frustration, disillusionment and in some cases, their engagement in violence[35]. Funding for children's services has reduced dramatically since 2010, with a reduction of a third across Yorkshire and Humber[36]. This reduction in funding disproportionately affects those living in the

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[35] http://linkasea.pbworks.com/f/McLean+Kilker,+Lyndsay+&+Erika+Fraser+April+2009.pdf
[36] https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/childrens-services-funding-csfa-briefing_final.pdf

most deprived areas, with larger reductions in more deprived areas (-37%) and smaller reductions in least deprived areas (-21%) nationally.

Spending on early intervention by local authorities nationally has also reduced substantially, while spending on late intervention continues to rise[37]. Services for young people have seen spending reductions of 72%, whilst spending on safeguarding and looked after children has increased. In 2010/11, local authorities spent an estimated £1.36bn in real terms on youth services in England. In 2018/19, this has dropped by £959m in real terms, to an estimated £398m[38]. Since 2010, more than 4,500 youth work jobs have been cut, and 760 youth centres have closed across England and Wales[39].

# Adverse childhood experiences and childhood trauma

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and childhood trauma can have detrimental impact on the lives of those who experience them. ACEs include: caregiver incarceration, caregiver substance misuse, caregiver separation, witnessing or experiencing caregiver violence[40], caregiver mental illness, physical neglect and emotional neglect. Emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse are classified as both ACEs and trauma. The Figure 6 shows the overlap between trauma and ACEs[41].

*Figure 6 - Adverse Childhood Experiences*
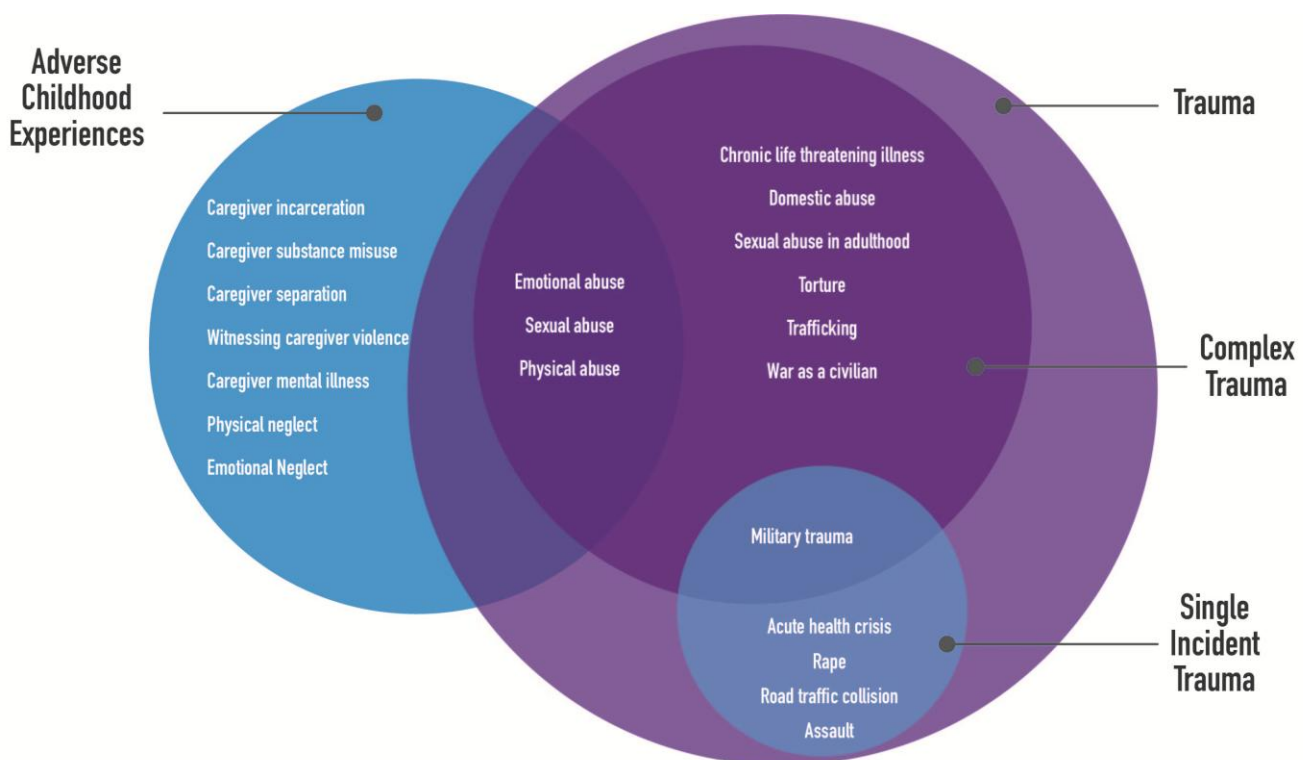


*Adapted from NHS Scotland 'Adverse Childhood Experiences Diagram', 2019*

[37] https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/childrens-services-funding-csfa-briefing_final.pdf
[38] https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/YMCA-Out-of-Service-report.pdf
[39] https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/YMCA-Out-of-Service-report.pdf
[40] https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/car.2422
[41] https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/4314115/Trauma%20Venn%20Diagram.pdf

In the first two years of life, a baby's brain grows from 25% to 80% of adult size. Critical restructuring continues through childhood for empathy, trust and community[42]. Learning how to cope with stress and adversity is an important part of development. When there is a threat, the body responds by increasing heart rate, blood pressure, and stress hormones (like cortisol). These responses are collectively known as allostatic load[43].

When a child is protected by supportive relationships with adults, they can learn to cope with everyday challenges. This allows their stress response system to return to baseline after the short-term increase in allostatic load. This short-term increase is known as 'positive 'stress, as it helps build resilience for future stress. 'Tolerable 'stress happens when more serious adversity, like the loss of a loved one, a natural disaster, or a frightening injury occurs, and is buffered by caring adults who help the child adapt. This support from adults can mitigate the potentially damaging effects of abnormal levels of stress hormones. When strong, frequent, or prolonged adverse experiences happen without adult support, stress becomes 'toxic', as excessive cortisol disrupts developing brain circuits and the allostatic load remains fixed at a higher level than baseline (see Figure 7). This can delay and alter brain development[44].

*Figure 7 - Maladapted Response to Stress*
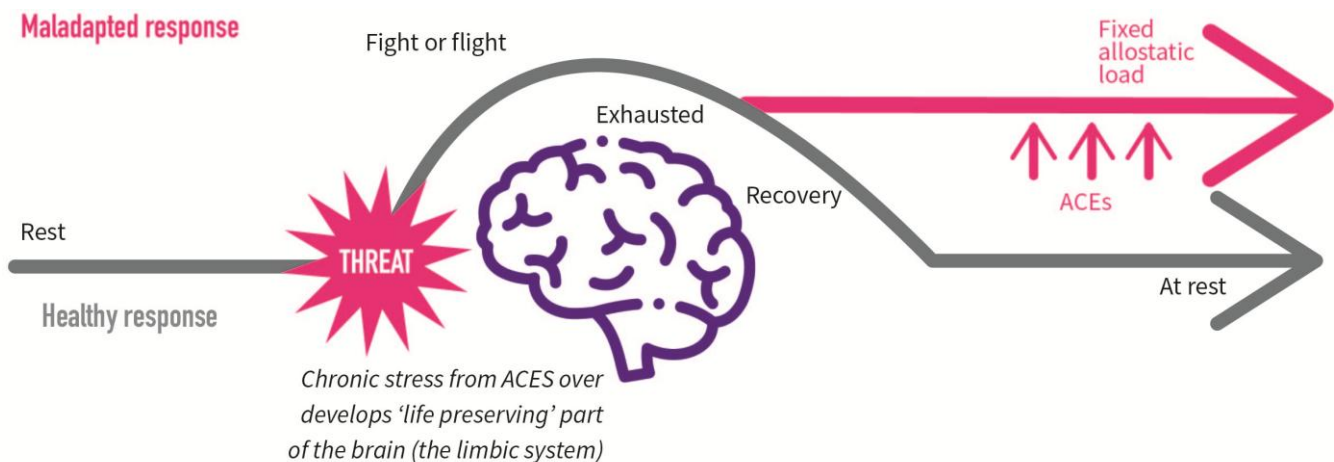


*Adapted from Centre of the Developing Child Policy Report, 2019*

It is important to note that the evidence around ACEs is still emerging. ACEs are not predictive of outcomes at the individual level and they do not cover the whole picture of risk and resilience. There is however a wealth of evidence (at population level) that people who have experienced four or more ACEs have a much greater risk of poor social and health outcomes than people who experienced no ACEs[45][46]. People with four or more ACEs are seven times more likely to have been involved in violence in the last year, and eleven times more likely to have used crack or heroin or been incarcerated[47]. This does not mean that ACEs are the only cause of social and health

[42] http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/Wales%20Public%20Health%20Conference%20MAB%20Draft%20%5BRe.pdf
[43] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828228/CAPRICORN_resource.pdf
[44] https://46y5eh11fhgw3ve3ytpwxt9r-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/inbrief-adversity-1.pdf
[45] https://bmcmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1741-7015-12-72
[46] https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1998-04002-001
[47] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23587573

problems[48]. Figure 8 shows how neurobiological, psychological and health harming behaviours are both drivers of ACEs in children and consequences of ACEs in adults[49].

*Figure 8 - Consequences of ACEs*



**Child maltreatment**
Verbal, physical or sexual abuse

**Child household included**
domestic abuse, parental sepration, mental illness, alcohol abuse, drug misuse, incarceration

Adverse childhood experiences

Impact on child development

**Neurobiological effects**
Brain abnormalities, stress hormone, dysregulation

**Psychological effects**
Poor attachment, socialisation and self efficacy

**Health Risk Behaviours**
Smoking, obesity, substance misuse, promiscuity

Health Harming Behaviours

Increased risk of inter-generational transmission of ACEs but not always inevitable

**Disease & Disability**
Major depression, suicide, PTSD, drug and alcohol misuse, heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, STIs, intergenerational transmission of disease

Long term consequences

**Social Problems**
Homelessness, prostitution, criminal behaviour, unemployment, parenting problems, high use of health and social services, shortened life span

*Adapted from Public Health England 'CAPRICORN Paper', 2019*

It is useful to consider ACEs in the wider context of tackling social inequalities[50]. The 'pair of ACEs', adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and adverse community environment, has been described, see Figure 9[51]. While ACEs and trauma happens across the population, there is more risk of people experiencing ACEs in areas of higher deprivation.

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[48] https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/uniformed-policing-faculty/Documents/Public%20Health%20Approaches.pdf
[49]
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828228/CAPRICORN_resource.pdf
[50] https://www.academicpedsjnl.net/article/S1876-2859(16)30552-6/fulltext
[51] https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/uniformed-policing-faculty/Documents/Public%20Health%20Approaches.pdf

*Figure 9 - "Pair of ACEs"*
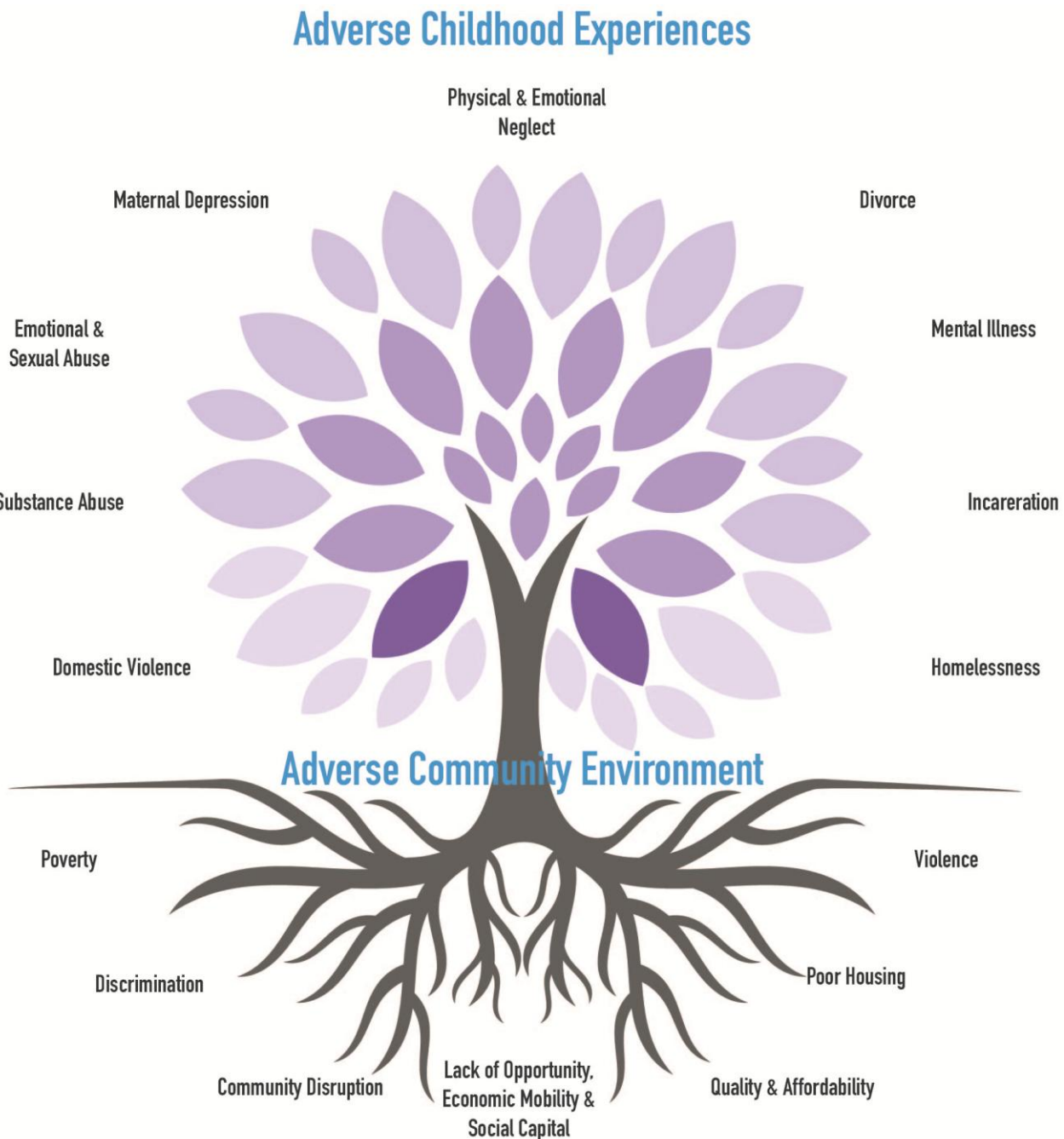


Preventing ACEs from occurring in the first place is the most effective way to protect children from the harms they can cause. Where this is not possible, the most important mitigating factor to prevent harm that results from experiencing ACEs is the protective effect of a supportive relationship with at least one trusted adult[52]. These relationships are particularly important at transition points in a child's life, for example: moves between schools, entering or leaving the care

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[52] https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/uniformed-policing-faculty/Documents/Public%20Health%20Approaches.pdf

or youth justice system, as well as transition from primary to secondary education and onwards to higher education.

It is important to bear in mind also our definition of a child, young person and adult. Legally, children become adults at age 18. Our definition of adolescence is 10-19. Some studies have shown that development of more mature affect regulation, social relationships and executive functioning continues into our twenties. This has resulted in a call for an expanded and more inclusive definition of adolescence, so that we can ensure developmentally appropriate framing of laws, social policies and service systems. A change has been proposed from age 10-19, to a definition of 10-24 years, which corresponds more closely to adolescent growth[53]. Ensuring supportive relationships from trusted adults well into our twenties is key.

## How common are ACEs?

There have been no prevalence studies in England, however, prevalence studies in Wales found that 47% of adults had experienced at least one ACE in their childhood, and 14% experienced four or more ACEs[54].

# Exploitation

All of the factors we have already discussed can make children, young people and vulnerable adults susceptible to exploitation: both sexual and criminal. It is important to remember that all children are vulnerable to exploitation. We should not assume that the most vulnerable children are the only vulnerable children[55].

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is defined as:

*"Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology."[56]*

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is defined as:

*"Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology."[57]*

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[53] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352464218300221
[54] https://academic.oup.com/eurpub/article/26/suppl_1/ckw167.009/2448496
[55] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756031/Protecting_children_from_criminal_exploitation_human_trafficking_modern_slavery_addendum_141118.pdf
[56] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591903/CSE_Guidance_Core_Document_13.02.2017.pdf
[57] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf

Criminal exploitation is broader than the sale of drugs and county lines, and includes instances where children are forced to work on cannabis farms or commit theft, assault or criminal damage.

You will see that both of these definitions of exploitation are similar. That is because the causes of it and mechanisms for it are the same. It must be a priority for us to reduce all forms of child exploitation.

A whole system approach is required to both protect and support children but also to prevent exploitation and disrupt criminal activity. It is important that we 'stay with 'children who do not want to engage. We need to change how we 'see 'and 'stay with 'vulnerable children, especially older children. Some exploited children do not present either as children, or as exploited[58], and we must acknowledge the challenge for professionals to 'see 'and 'stay with 'them.

# Belonging and shame

Research suggests that we all want to be part of something and we want it to be real – not conditional or fake or up for re-negotiation. Feelings of belonging and empathy are important in moving past shame and hatred. The absolute opposite of belonging is fitting in, yet it is our drive to belong and to feel connection with others that pushes us to try and fit in.[59]

When we are already vulnerable (for the reasons already discussed), it is reasonable to assume that offers from organised crime groups and others who would seek to exploit children and young people can seem attractive, especially when they appear to offer family, belonging and true connection. This could go some way to explaining the former assertion that all children are vulnerable to exploitation[60] and is an interesting avenue for future research.

# Looked after children

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is defined as looked after by a local authority if they are provided with accommodation for a continuous period for more than 24 hours; are subject to a care order; or are subject to a placement order[61]. A looked after child ceases to be looked when they turn 18 years old, when they are adopted or if they return home[62].

Children can be looked after for many reasons. The reasons that children enter care often cause complex emotional and mental health needs, which leave them vulnerable to further abuse[63][64]. They often involve ACEs or childhood trauma. Children in care often display behavioural problems and have attachment difficulties (problems forming secure relationships), which can affect their ability to develop positive peer relationships. This in turn leaves them vulnerable to peer violence and abuse[65]. Many children move repeatedly in and out of care, or between placements[66].

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[58] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756031/Protecting_children_from_criminal_exploitation_human_trafficking_modern_slavery_addendum_141118.pdf

[59] https://brenebrown.com/book/braving-the-wilderness/

[60] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756031/Protecting_children_from_criminal_exploitation_human_trafficking_modern_slavery_addendum_141118.pdf

[61] https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/indicator-list/view/DzLUDyTbE6#page/6/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000003/ati/102/are/E08000017/iid/92856/age/173/sex/4

[62] https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/children-and-families-at-risk/looked-after-children/

[63] https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2015/achieving-emotional-wellbeing-looked-after-children-whole-system-approach/

[64] https://cirqa.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/search2?searchTerm0=9780992907136

[65] https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/children-and-families-at-risk/looked-after-children/#heading-top

[66] https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/children-and-families-at-risk/looked-after-children/#heading-top

Placement breakdowns can have further impact on a child's emotional and mental health, as well as preventing them from forming trusted and stable relationships with an adult[67]. We know that a supportive relationship with a trusted adult is the best way to protect against the harmful effects of ACEs. Being looked after can disrupt this.

Looked after children are more likely to go missing than their peers, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and physical abuse[68]. Children run away for lots of reasons, including: wanting to return home to their family, being unhappy or bored in their placement, or feeling like they don't have enough control over their lives.

Research suggests that looked after children have worse outcomes than children in the general population, including in educational attainment, mental and physical health[69]. Closing the gap between the educational attainment of looked after children and all young people is a high priority.

32% of children and young people taken into custody in England between April 2014 and March 2016 were looked after[70]. Improving the lives of looked after children, tailoring support to their needs and ensuring supportive relationships with trusted adults is key to preventing and reducing violence and future criminality.

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[67] https://cirqa.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/search2?searchTerm0=C5275

[68] https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u32/joint_appg_inquiry_-_report...pdf

[69] https://cirqa.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/search2?searchTerm0=C5275

[70] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828228/CAPRICORN_resource.pdf

# South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit

# Introduction of Violence Reduction Units

On 19th June 2019, the Home Secretary announced that £35m would be made available to establish Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in 18 Force areas, including South Yorkshire, were invited to apply for an amount proposed by the Home Office. The Chief Executives of each local authority in South Yorkshire, as well as the Chief Officers of each Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and South Yorkshire Police came together to ensure a comprehensive bid was submitted.

Following a successful application, South Yorkshire secured £1.6m in August 2019 to establish the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (SYVRU). The funding supported delivery of the VRU function, which the Home Office defines as being, "to offer leadership and, working with all relevant agencies operating locally, strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence". The Violence Reduction Unit has been funded each year since.

# Purpose of the Violence Reduction Unit

The VRU is the primary organisation promoting a public health approach to reducing violence. The VRU works with other partners listed in the Serious Violence Duty to address the causes of the causes of violence, rather than simply responding to violence when it happens.

The mission of the VRU has always been to understand what drives violence in South Yorkshire and identify opportunities to reduce it. The vision of the VRU is to empower and enable people in the communities of South Yorkshire to work together and embrace opportunities for preventing and reducing violence.

As South Yorkshire had an established VRU, the VRU also took the lead in implementing the Serious Violence Duty and adapted the existing violence reduction executive board to the Violence Reduction Executive Board.

# Efficacy of Violence Reduction Units

The VRUs across the country champion an evidence based, public health approach to reducing violence. The VRUs themselves are subject to scrutiny and evaluation to ensure the approach is working. Each year, the VRUs are evaluated by an external evaluation company. The most recent evaluation report found that whilst there was no statistically significant reduction in homicides in VRU areas, the direction of results did indicate a reduction and that significant reductions would be hard to detect due to low numbers. There was a significant reduction in hospital admissions for any violent injury for VRU areas. This builds on reductions in previous years.

The evaluation also found VRUs are also effective at improving multi-agency working. VRUs can embed strong working relationships between partners, and provide a structure for effective and multi-agency working. The effectiveness of VRUs in improving multi-agency working is hindered by lack of buy-in from some partners, and uncertainty around VRU funding.

VRUs were less consistent in how far they had progressed with data sharing. It is worth noting that in South Yorkshire, South Yorkshire Police have taken the lead with data sharing with the Stronger Families dataset and other data sharing projects.

VRUs could demonstrate improved working with the community and young persons, although progress was varied across VRUs.

VRUs are effective at using data to identify areas, target groups and then commission interventions, but there is a challenge to then operationalise this into engaging with those most in need. The report also found that VRUs are making progress towards both a strategic and evidence based approach to commissioning and delivery of interventions.

# Local Area Violence Reduction Action Plans

The VRU works in partnership with Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for each district of South Yorkshire. Each district has a link officer, or Partnership Manager, who represents their district in the VRU but is also a core part of the VRU team. This ensures joint up working between the VRU and district CSPs.

Each CSP developed and maintains their own Violence Reduction Action Plan, which they use to plan activity and measure success.

## Barnsley

The Barnsley Violence Reduction Action plan is the responsibility of the Safer Barnsley Partnership. The Safer Barnsley Partnership also uses a number of boards to deliver on the plan;

- Safer Barnsley Partnership Performance and Delivery Group – Responsible for driving delivery.
- Safer Barnsley Partnership PVP, ASB and Crime Sub Groups – Responsible for delivery of specific actions.
- Barnsley Alcohol Alliance – Responsible for delivery of specific actions.
- Evening and Night Time Economy Group – Responsible for delivery of specific actions.
- Children and Young People's Partnership and YOT Board – Responsible for delivery of specific actions
- Area Councils and Ward Alliances – Responsible for delivery of specific local actions

As of 2022, the Barnsley Violence Reduction Action Plan has 6 main priorities;


**Place – Reduce violence in the streets and locations where it is most common.**

The Violence Reduction Unit assisted Barnsley in identifying the top 6 wards for violence. These wards were then targeted with at least two targeted interventions per calendar year, such as high visibility patrols, community engagement and disruption tactics.


**Alcohol- Reduce the impact of alcohol on violence in Barnsley.**

Barnsley seeks to improve responsible retail practice by increasing the number of retailers signed up to the Best Bar None scheme. They also aim to embed GP representation in their Alcohol Alliance boards and have embedded an Alcohol Care Team at Barnsley Hospital. To reduce the harm associated with certain premises, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council work with South

Yorkshire Police's licensing team to take prompt and robust action to close locations where violence is a repeated problem.

**Evening and Night time Economy – Reduce the instances of violence associated with the evening and night time economy in Barnsley.**

To reduce violence in the night time economy, Barnsley introduced Smart Tag, and issued door staff with Smart Water, for when violent incidents occur. There have been multiple campaigns concerned with violence linked to busy periods in the Night Time Economy. Barnsley also aim to have dedicated workshops, tactical briefings and training for door staff and others working in the night time economy.

**Address disproportionate levels violence (both victim and perpetrator) associated with young people between the ages of 15 and 30.**

Barnsley aims to embed "Risk of Violence" metrics into the assessment and screening tools of Early Help and Children and Family services. Barnsley also worked to align both the Safer Barnsley Partnership and Barnsley Youth Justice Violence Reduction Plan. Trauma informed training has been used in Barnsley to improve the service provision for young women and girls experiencing violence.

**Domestic Abuse - Work to end domestic abuse and create zero tolerance towards domestic abuse in Barnsley.**

Barnsley has a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse through campaigns, increasing reporting and supporting people to leave violent relationships.

**Weapon Enabled Crime – Prevent the escalation of the use of weapons in Barnsley and disrupt the activity of those for whom weapons are a feature of their criminal activity.**

Following an analysis of weapons enabled crime in Barnsley, the Custody Navigator programme run by the VRU was expanded into Barnsley to help detainees in custody move away from carrying weapons, as well as offering them support. The district also has an ongoing commitment to disrupting violence associated with organised crime through South Yorkshire Police's Operation Fortify. BMBC have also trained numerous works to deliver the "Wrong Look Wrong Place Wrong Time" education package, which educates young people on the risks of weapon carrying has been rolled out to selected Barnsley schools.

## Doncaster

Doncaster's Violence Reduction Action Plan is the responsibility of Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership (SSDP) and is managed by the Violence Reduction Thematic group (VRTG). This group is co-chaired by SYP Chief Inspector and the VRU Partnership Manager and reports directly to the SSDP Executive Board.

The action plan focusses on 5 key priorities and the actions within the plan link to at least one of the priorities with several linking across multiple priorities as well as the priorities within the

Serious Violence duty strategy. The priorities are also included in the wider SSDP Community Safety strategy The current strategy runs until the end of 2025 and will be reviewed and a new strategy will be implemented for 2026-2029.

Those priorities are:

**Priorities of the Doncaster Violence Reduction thematic group:**

1. Deliver through the partnership a reduction in the prevalence of violence in the nighttime economy.

2. Deliver through the partnership a reduction in the instances of MSV across Doncaster.

3. Deliver through the partnership a reduction in knife/sharp object crimes across Doncaster.

4. Deliver a meaningful multiagency dataset to better understand reporting issues and inform preventative action.

5. Develop an effective multi-agency response to tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

The SSDP acknowledges that Doncaster has a unique and busy Evening and Night-time Economy (ENTE) and in response to alcohol related violence the partnership continue to prioritise work to reduce this. This work includes supporting venues in the hot spot areas by providing training around welfare, vulnerability and engagement, deployment of taxi marshals on key dates and the development of the Safe Haven location to a static location utilising partner links with Street Pastors and the VAWG Community group to provide volunteers. The Best Bar None scheme has been relaunched with over 20 venues signed up and work continues to promote the benefits of the scheme across the City not just in the city centre. The Ask for Angela schema md anti spiking equipment continue to be delivered across the city.

Working alongside other thematic groups such as the domestic and sexual abuse theme group the VRTG continue to review and update the delivery plan to reduce Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The plan focuses on those areas of VAWG not currently being tackled in other strategics such as catcalling, spiking, up skirting, Non Domestic Abuse stalking and the fear of abuse (including
places where women and girls feel more vulnerable). Work is already underway on this plan and the VRTG have commissioned Victims Support to provide additional resources and one further day per week dedicated to Non domestic abuse stalking victims in Doncaster. In addition there has been the launch of the 'Walk Safe' App, additional support for sex workers and distribution of safety equipment and advice to vulnerable residents, students and victims of VAWG. Moving forward there are panned sessions in selected schools and Doncaster's main colleges around themes such as 'Sexual Harassment & Consent' and 'Misogyny & Homophobia'.

The partnership also champions a trauma informed approach in how services interact with their communities, young people, and vulnerable individuals. This crosscuts all priorities, as a trauma informed approach can help reduce future engagement in violence. Partners are encouraged to attend free training available through the VRU or Doncaster Council as well as compassionate leadership training for managers. In addition and linking to the VAWG theme work is ongoing to develop training sessions to upskill practitioners on dealing with sexual abuse disclosure to limit

revictimisation. There is the opportunity 10 people to benefit from Rewind project.  Rewind is for people who have been through abuse and have memories that are still in the 1st person and the memories have not been processed. This is part of trauma therapy.  It can significantly and quickly reduce flashbacks and the impact of trauma on the most vulnerable of victims. Finally, the development and recording of a podcast specifically for victims of sexual abuse focusing on understanding and processing of feelings after the event.

In response to retailers selling knives to children and young people, SSDP are working with Trading Standards and partners such as SYP to crack down on irresponsible retailers. Test purchases are conducted as part of Op Sceptre and in localities where data indicates a higher proportion of knife related incidents.

The VRTG are working with the localities teams and using the localities model to respond to violence and community tensions to maintain community cohesion. Partners work together to effectively monitor and respond to reported incidents of violent crime and community tensions to ensure community cohesion is maintained and response are timely and appropriate.

In addition to the proactive response to reducing the number of

The VRTG also work with young people to identify what matters to them and raise awareness to prevent violent crime. This is done by opening communication channels and ensuring young people are involved in decision making for example having a Youth Council representative as part of the VRTG and through youth diversionary activities. These activities are delivered by community groups and providers, as well as the centrally located EPIC team. Diversionary activities range from awareness sessions around such things as County Lines, 'One punch can kill' knife carrying and healthy relationships to physical activities and initiatives to promote healthy living and fitness. A Youth Council crime & safety film project is currently being developed with a focus on carrying weapons, being a bystander, ASB and planned/ arranged fights. These themes were identified as areas of concern by young people in a recent survey.

# Rotherham

The Safer Rotherham Partnership brings together partner organisations within the Borough to protect local communities and help people feel safer.

The mission of the Safter Rotherham Partnership is "Working together to make Rotherham safe, to keep Rotherham safe and to ensure the communities of Rotherham feel safe".

The Safer Rotherham Partnership is a multi-agency strategic partnership made up of senior leaders. Together, partners work out how to deal with crime and local community safety issues. They assess local crime priorities annually, consulting with partners and the local community about their priorities and monitor progress in achieving them.

Organisations represented at Safer Rotherham Partnership Board meetings are:
- NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Probation Service
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
- South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority
- South Yorkshire Police
- The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

- Victim Support
- Voluntary Action Rotherham

Whilst each of the above organisations has individual responsibilities and priorities to prevent crime and to keep people safe from harm, the Safer Rotherham Partnership is able to direct additional activities and achieve additional value through combining expertise, experience, and resources. Each priority is led by a senior leader drawn from our partner organisations.

The Safer Rotherham Partnership priorities for 2025-2028 are:

| Safer Neighbourhoods | Tackling Violence, Abuse and Exploitation | Preventing Offending – Building Resilience |
|---|---|---|
| • Anti-social behaviour<br>• Problem solving in neighbourhoods<br>• Hate crime<br>• Combating alcohol and substance misuse | • Child criminal and sexual exploitation<br>• Domestic abuse<br>• Sexual abuse<br>• Violence against women and girls<br>• Serious violence<br>• Organised crime<br>• Modern slavery | • Preventing offending and reoffending<br>• Vulnerable adult risk management<br>• Counter terrorism |

The Safer Rotherham Partnership has overall governance responsibility for the Rotherham Violence Reduction Action Plan.  Tactical level coordination takes place at the multi-agency Organised and Violent Crime Silver Group.

The Rotherham Violence Reduction Action plan responds to the key priorities of the South Yorkshire Serious Violence Reduction Strategy 2024-2027 based on the strategic needs assessment.  Priorities within the plan are:

1. Promote gender equality to reduce and prevent Violence Against Women and Girls.
2. Work in partnership to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and substance misuse.
3. Tackle Domestic Abuse and work to ensure that survivors can access the support they need.
4. Reduce access to lethal weapons and knife crime.
5. Work to change the cultural and social attitudes that contribute to violence.
6. Work with partners to promote safe, nurturing and stable relationships between children and their parents and caregivers.
7. Encourage all professionals and organisations to become trauma-informed, to an approved standard for South Yorkshire.
8. Work in partnership to ensure that children and young people have equal opportunities to access education and that their different starting points and situations are taken into account.
9. Reduce violence in the Evening and Night-Time Economy.
10. Support effective rehabilitation for those who are already involved in violence

Safer Rotherham Partnership partners also have other strategies and plans in place which contribute to the above violence reduction priorities.  These include:

- Rotherham Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2027
- Child Exploitation Strategy
- Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-29
- The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT) Sexual Safety Charter
- Rotherham Combatting Drugs Partnership
- Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Rotherham Youth Justice Service Plan
- Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Neglect Strategy 2024-2026
- RMBC Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027
- Rotherham Early Years Education and Childcare Strategy 2024-27
- RMBC Licensing-Act-2003-Statement-of-Licensing-Policy

# Sheffield

Sheffield has had a violence reduction action plan owned by Safer Sheffield, the Sheffield Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in Sheffield, since 2019. This details how we work together as partners at a city or county level to action the 16 priorities of the County wide Violence Reduction Response Strategy. It has had 3 refreshes.

In 2024 Sheffield decided to rewrite their Serious Violence Action Plan to align with the 10 priorities of the new South Yorkshire Serious Violence Plan, a required product of the new Serious Violence Duty. This ensures all work related to the most serious violence is aligned and co-ordinated from national to city level.

In 2024/25 Sheffield agreed to focus on four of those priorities. These were chosen as they were high priority national issues, Sheffield did not currently have a lead theme group for these issues under the CSP, excellent work had been started on this issue, and/or gaps had been identified needing further work.

**Thematic Priorities for 24/25**

1. Promote Gender Equality to reduce and prevent violence against women and girls

Measure of success

***The prevention and reduction of Violence against women and girls is promoted, and actively addressed and supported through events, training, campaigns, safe spaces and new and existing project activity.***

2. Encourage all professionals and organisations to become trauma informed to an approved standard for South Yorkshire

Measure of success

*A growing number of Sheffield organisations across the sectors receive trauma training, and we see an increase in overall staff numbers completing free Trauma training on offer at level one or two during 24/25.*

3. Work to change the cultural and social attitudes which contribute to violence

Measure of success

*Attitudes are actively challenged where they contribute to violent behaviour. Positive activities, awareness and training is encouraged, supported and shared through training, awareness campaigns, projects and events*

4. Work to embed the public health approach in Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), and ensure that existing mechanisms for change are fully utilised

Measure of Success

*The public health approach is explained regularly in meetings and events and noted in meeting notes. The most recent data and evidence is used from a wide range of sources and is up to date, shared where possible and we encourage partnership working and whole community approaches.*

## How the Priorities Align to the Safer Sheffield Partnership

Sheffield is to create a new theme group for Serious Violence for the start of 25/26. This new partner group will sit as a dedicated theme group of the Community Safety Partnership and will be jointly chaired by South Yorkshire Police and the VRU. Their responsibility will be to develop, assess and report back on progress of all 10 priorities of the action plan. They will initially focus on the 4 priorities above. This group will also have quarterly performance data to analyse and discuss to inform future work.

We embed the public health approach in all work within the Community Safety Partnership by explaining the approach at the start of every VRU update or paper and also bringing real life examples from our projects to meetings to partners.

Starting in 2024/35 we now have quarterly Serious Violence performance data at the city level presented to the CSP through the VRU update.

The Safer Sheffield plan is currently being rewritten ready for the new plan in 2025/6.
There will be a new chapter on Serious Violence, this reflects the priorities and themes of the new serious violence theme group in the new Safer Sheffield plan and the current work happening to

address serious violence across the partnership. This dedicated chapter also ensures all work from County down to community level on Serious Violence is linked up, every partner is aware of the themes and priorities from a strategic county level down to a neighbourhood level and how they contribute and link in.

The other current Safer Sheffield theme groups are:
- protecting vulnerable people
- neighbourhood criminality and reducing offending
- addressing anti-social behaviour
- addressing the harm of drugs supply
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- hate crime


## Current Sheffield Projects

### 1. Work to Reduce and prevent Violence Against Women and Girls

**Sheffield Safe Square**

The Safe Space pilot started in Sheffield in December 2023 initially for one month over Christmas and new year last year. It has been extended 4 times during 2024 due to its success. A Community group called Sheffield Safe Square run the Medical and welfare tents every Friday and Saturday night in Barkers Pool, supporting those out on a night out in Sheffield City Centre. It has now seen over 500 different people, has seen a near equal mix of medical and welfare cases, seen slightly more males than females, and assisted mainly younger people under 30. The pilot ended at the end of September 2024. A council motion was proposed to have a permanent safe space and went to full council in November 2024, this getting approval.

Research has been undertaken during 2024 on time saved for health, police, Ambulance and charity services and a 9 month report has been completed. The project steering group has being widened and is led by Kayleigh Waine chair of the community group Sheffield Safe Space who run the current safe space. The Safer Sheffield Partnership are leading new discussions at the strategic level to look at future modes for a permanent safe space in Sheffield city centre.

**New Education Materials** professional educational materials free to all young person settings. Topics include healthy relationships, Positive attitudes, Domestic Abuse, sexual abuse, and online safety – available to schools and youth settings across South Yorkshire provided by Learn Sheffield. Developing new knife crime resources in 2025 This will be added to the existing healthy relationships resources online. https://learnsheffield.co.uk/Projects/Developing-Healthy-Attitudes/

**Citywide domestic perpetrator programme (provided by Cranstoun) Inspire to change)** This structured programme involved a series of 1-2-1 and group interventions aimed at changing the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic abuse. The feedback from participants has been excellent. 73% reduction in reoffending.

**Sheffield Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Forum** – meets monthly with a wide ranging membership of over 30 organisations. VRU is regular member and presents their work regularly, often bringing new projects to the table for comment and suggestions and using the group as a valuable engagement voice.

**Night time Economy licencing schemes** led by Sheffield City Council and Sheffield BID developing the voluntary licensing schemes of:
Pub Watch
Ask for Angela
Purple Flag
Best Bar None
Licence Savi

**Safety equipment for Sex Workers** for example mobile phone pouches and money purses, led by Sheffield Working Women's Opportunities Project.

2. **Encourage all professionals and organisations to become trauma informed to an approved standard for South Yorkshire**

**Sheffield Trauma Informed Group** – chaired by the snowdrop project and supported by the Public Health team of Sheffield City Council, this group has cross cutting members all supporting the formation of a Trauma informed city.

**Trauma Informed South Yorkshire** – continue our work in capacity building Trauma Informed Practice and understanding across South Yorkshire which includes free online level one and level two training for staff and volunteers. Is on the Sheffield Childrens Safeguarding partnership website to book.
https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/events/event/safeguarding-workshop-trauma-informed-practice-stage-1

3. **Work to change the cultural and social attitudes that contribute to violence**

**Plan B Custody Navigators** – intervening with those presenting in the Shepcote Lane custody suite on violence related offences. Contracted Service provided by Causeway, a local charity.

**Hospital Navigators Northern General A&E Sheffield** – offering interventions to people over 16 presenting with violence related injuries at the major trauma centre for South Yorkshire in Sheffield. Contracted service with the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust.

**Hospital Navigators: Sheffield Children's Hospital A&E** – identifying and offering interventions to young residents under 16 attending A&E with possible violence injuries. A new contract for the VRU expanding the Hospital Navigator programme to under 16s. Contracted service with the Childrens for 2 nurse navigators plus expansion of the Your Stance training programme of emergency first aid in schools and youth settings.

**Violence Reduction Fund** – grants round for projects targeting services for young people. 8 projects were Sheffield specific in and one county wide in 2024/25. Referral processes are now in place for 4 of the grant funded projects open to referrals for young people involved or at the cusp of involvement in violent crime. VRU worked with the DWP, youth groups and services, LACs, hotspot team, central serious violence police teams and Neighbourhood Policing Teams to ensure local young people can access these positive opportunities.

**Work in Schools Second Chance Programme (part of Aspire Boxing Gym) and Always an Alternative** offer conferences for front line workers and talks in schools during Operation

Duxford and Sceptre, and other times in the year according to need, tackling subjects such as knife crime, online exploitation and gangs.

## Youth Services Contextual safeguarding Project
Started in September 2024 this 6 month partnership project is working with the Contextual Safeguarding Team in the youth services team at the Council focusing on recording young people's views and parents views of risk and harm in their community and in Sheffield using the arts. This creative engagement project contributed to the new Contextual Community Safeguarding strategy being developed by the council.

## Darnall youth engagement project

Working with and through the Darnall Crime and Vulnerability meeting to hold educational sessions in Darnall. Working with a community rep and local groups on new ideas to engage young people on the dangers of carrying knives. Knife bin installation part of the educational work.

## Knife bins

4 more Knife bins installed with 2 engagement sessions per area in Gleadless Valley (Gaunt shops), Stradbroke (Stradbroke Drive), Tinsley (Tinsley Forum car park), relaunch of Devonshire Green tidy and relaunch and Abbeydale Rd move. Working with area safer neighbourhood co-ordinators and the local crime and vulnerability meetings to gain approval and support locally. Mobile Youth bus used as part of the educational part in Gleadless Valley.

## Youth Bus

Match fund South Local Area Committee to provide 6 sessions of a youth club bus provided by Always an Alternative in the Gleadless Valley Ward, an area not engaged in much before and needing help with youth engagement. The local community forum closed down 2 years ago, the methodist church running the food bank closed down, the pub has closed down. There is now very little community infrastructure around, especially on Gaunt shops.

## Effective Partnership working – some examples

The VRU is part of the new Sheffield Youth Alliance formed in early 2025. This new group brings together providers of services for young people across the sectors in Sheffield. It aims to better inform groups and listen to groups, share best practice and work on issues together.

The Violence Reduction Unit's Partnership Manager for Sheffield is a member of;
Sheffield Youth: Neighbourhoods and Communities (SYNC) Steering Group helping to develop the new lottery and Esme Fairburn youth project in Sheffield across three neighbourhoods looking to reduce exploitation.

The VRU is a member of the Premier League Kicks group where all football clubs in the city have come together with the council's Local Area Committees to jointly plan sporting activity in areas most in need of diversionary activity.

Young People and Families Consortium led by Sheffield Hallam University. This is a research led group of senior professionals from cultural and sporting organisations coming together to research and develop a joint approach to reducing violence in communities through sport and culture.

South Yorkshire Community Foundation's funding forum meetings, ensuring all funding from the VRU and potential funding from other funders in the city is not duplicated and goes to the areas and organisations and projects most in need.

# Community Response to Violence

# The Community Response to Violence

Violence prevention and reduction activity does not just come from statutory partners. Communities are affected by violence, and are often the source of some of the best interventions and attempts to reduce violence.

# Violence Reduction Fund

Each year, the Violence Reduction Unit has funded the Violence Reduction Fund. Community organisations can enter a bid into the fund if their intervention fits the focus of the fund. Some funds have had a general violence reduction focus, whilst others have focussed on domestic abuse or young people.

2019/20 was the first year of the Violence Reduction Fund, and brought in organisations from across South Yorkshire. Table 1 shows the organisations funded.

*Table 1 - 2019/20 Grant Recipients*

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
|---|---|
| Exodus | Barnsley |
| Clifton Learning Partnership | Rotherham |
| South and West Yorkshire Resettlement Consortium | South Yorkshire |
| Edlington Community Centre | Doncaster |
| Grimesthorpe Family Centre | Sheffield |
| Reach Up - Big Brother Burngreave | Sheffield |
| Rotherham United | Rotherham |
| Aspire PRU | Rotherham |
| Tapton School/Chaucer School | Sheffield |
| DMBC Smart Water for DA | Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield |
| RFEA - Project Nova | South Yorkshire |
| Fresh Woodhouse Youth Group | Sheffield |
| Greenacre School | Barnsley |
| Cathedral Archer Project | Sheffield |
| Haven/IDAS | Barnsley / Sheffield |
| Maan Somali Mental Health Assoc | Sheffield |
| Almond Boxing Academy | Doncaster |
| Mediation Sheffield (MESH) | Sheffield / Rotherham |
| Naturewood Outdoor Activities | Barnsley |
| Sport for Good | South Yorkshire |
| Unity Gym Project | Sheffield |
| Reach South Sheffield | Sheffield |
| DCSP Search Mitts for NTE | Doncaster |
| DCSP Domestic Violence/Abuse Equipment | Doncaster |
| Springwell Academy | Barnsley |

In 2020/21, there were two separate grants funding rounds; one with a focus on vulnerable children (Table 2), and one for domestic abuse reduction (Table 3)

*Table 2 - 2020/21 Vulnerable Children Grant Recipients*

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
|---|---|
| Sheffield Roma Network | Sheffield |
| Tinsley Forum | Sheffield |
| Winn Gardens TARA | Sheffield |
| The Link Stradbroke | Sheffield |
| Families Together Community Group | Rotherham |
| Bentley Town End Flood Action | Doncaster |
| Naturewood | Barnsley |
| Thurgoland Village Hall | Barnsley |
| Adwick Warriors JFC | Doncaster |
| De Paul Safe at Last | South Yorkshire |
| Barnsley Foodbank | Barnsley |
| Dearne and District FC | Barnsley |
| Love Life UK Outreach | Barnsley |
| Fight For Good Covid Response Project | Countywide |
| Steps To Freedom Programme | Countywide |
| Aspiring 2 CIC | Doncaster |
| Doncaster Foster Carers Association | Doncaster |
| Edlington Community Organisation – ECO | Doncaster |
| Highwoods Community Base - Mexborough | Doncaster |
| The Hygiene Bank Doncaster | Doncaster |
| Rotherham Foster Carer's Association | Rotherham |
| Rotherham Lions Club | Rotherham |
| Rotherham Samaritans | Rotherham |
| Treeton Community Centre | Rotherham |
| Always an Alternative | Sheffield |
| Angleton Youth Club | Sheffield |
| Aspire Boxing Club | Sheffield |
| Big Brother Burngreave | Sheffield |
| Darnall FA | Sheffield |
| De Hood | Sheffield |
| Double Six Youth Club | Sheffield |
| Galeed House | Sheffield |
| Grow UK | Sheffield |
| ISRAAC | Sheffield |
| Mums United | Sheffield |
| Park Centre | Sheffield |
| Unity Gym Project Violence Reduction Programme | Sheffield |
| Woodthorpe Youth Club | Sheffield |

Table 3 - 2020/21 Domestic Abuse Grant Recipients

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
|---|---|
| Crimestoppers | South Yorkshire |
| Red Everywhere | Doncaster |
| YWCA | Sheffield, Doncaster and Rotherham |
| Haven | Sheffield |
| Barnsley Sexual Abuse | Barnsley |
| Thinking Big | Barnsley |
| Sheffield Women's Aid | Sheffield |
| Rotherham Rise | Rotherham |
| Changing Lives | Doncaster |
| Together Women | Sheffield |
| Doncaster Children's Services Trust | Doncaster |
| De Hood | Sheffield |
| In2Change | Sheffield |

Because of the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Home Office released further funding to VRUs, resulting in the Winter Contingency / Emergency Fund of 2020/21 (see Table 4).

Table 4 - 2020/21 Winter Contingency Grant Recipients

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
|---|---|
| Nomad | Sheffield |
| Doncaster Foster Carers | Doncaster |
| We Can Grow | Doncaster |
| Sheffield Guides | Sheffield |
| Worth Unlimited | Doncaster |
| Rush House | Rotherham |
| Affinity 2020 | Rotherham |
| Element Society | Sheffield |
| YWCA | Sheffield |
| Rotherham Parent Carers Forum | Rotherham |
| Rite Trax | Sheffield |
| Sheffield Wednesday | Sheffield |
| Active Fusion | Doncaster |
| Sport for Good | Barnsley, Doncaster |
| Rotherham United | Rotherham |
| Club Doncaster | Doncaster |
| Israac | Sheffield |

In 2021/22, the Violence Reduction Unit put out a general violence reduction grants round, with the successful applicants shown in Table 5.

*Table 5 - 2021/22 Grant Recipients*

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
|---|---|
| Swinton Lock Activity Centre | Rotherham |
| The Youth Association | Barnsley |
| Doncaster Childrens Services Trust : EPIC | Doncaster |
| My Life Project CIC | Sheffield |
| In2Change South Yorkshire | South Yorkshire |
| Element Society | Sheffield |
| Worth Unlimited for Doncaster | Doncaster |
| StreetDoctors | South Yorkshire |
| Steel City Amateur Boxing Club | Sheffield |
| Hanover Tenants Assoc | Sheffield |
| The Hubb | Sheffield |
| Football Unites Racism Divides (FURD) | Sheffield |
| Unity Gym Project | Sheffield |

An underspend in 2021/22 allowed the VRU to put out another grants round in the same financial year, with the successful applicants in Table 6.

*Table 6 - 2021/22 Underspend Grant Recipients*

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
|---|---|
| Sport For Good CIC | Doncaster |
| Sheffield City Boxing Club | Sheffield |
| Sheffield Wednesday FC Community | Sheffield |
| Kickback Recovery | Sheffield |
| Reds in the Community | Barnsley |
| Diversify Now | Barnsley, Rotherham, Sheffield |
| Sharrow Community Forum | Sheffield |

In 2022/23, to align with the improved focus on Violence Against Women and Girls, the VRU had a young people's grants round (see Table 7Table 8) and a Violence Against Women and Girls grants round (see Table 8).

*Table 7 - 2022/23 Young People Grant Recipients*

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
| --- | --- |
| ReconnectEd (The Reconnect Education Project CIC) | Sheffield |
| Barnsley Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis Services (BSARCS) | Barnsley |
| Sheffield Music School | Sheffield |
| Sheffield Wednesday FC Community Programme | Sheffield |
| Worth Unlimited Doncaster | Doncaster |
| Twinning Project | Doncaster |
| Gleadless Valley TARA | Sheffield |
| Endeavour Training Ltd | Sheffield |
| Edlington Community Organisation | Doncaster |
| Centrepoint | Barnsley |
| Grow UK | Sheffield |
| Titans Community Foundation | Rotherham |
| Rotherham Foster Carers Association (RFCA) | Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield |
| Memo Fitness CIC | Rotherham |
| Club Doncaster Community Sports & Education Foundation | Doncaster |
| In2Change South Yorkshire | Sheffield |
| Allama Iqbal Cricket Club | Sheffield |
| The Youth Association (Youth Association) | Barnsley |
| Dinnington Community Boxing Group | Rotherham |
| Jamie McDonnell Fight For Good CIC | Doncaster |
| Fir vale Community Hub | Sheffield |

*Table 8 - 2022/23 Violence Against Women and Girls Grant Recipients*

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
|---|---|
| Rotherham Rise | Rotherham |
| Roshni Sheffield Asian Women's Resource Centre | Sheffield |
| Barnsley Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis Services (BSARCS) | Barnsley |
| Clifton Learning Partnership | Rotherham |
| The Youth Association (Youth Association) | Barnsley, Doncaster |
| APNA HAQ | Rotherham |
| Thinking BIG | Barnsley |
| Club Doncaster Community Sports & Education Foundation | Doncaster |
| Rotherham College / DVC | Rotherham |
| Sheffield Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (SRASAC) | Sheffield |
| Sheffield Women's Aid | Sheffield |
| Young Women's Housing Project | Sheffield |
| Edlington Hill Top Centre Associates | Doncaster |
| Adira / Sheffield Women's Aid | Sheffield |
| Hey! The Mental Health Charity (formerly known as TADS) | Barnsley |
| KRS Education and Training Ltd | Sheffield |
| Doncaster Childrens Services Trust | Doncaster, Sheffield |
| Game Changed Network (formerly Sport For Good) | Doncaster, Sheffield |

In 2023/24, the VRU focussed again on young people in its grant round (see Table 9).

*Table 9 – 2023/24 Grant Recipients*

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
|---|---|
| Dinnington Community Boxing Group | Rotherham |
| Roundabout | Sheffield |
| Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Services (BSARCS) | Barnsley |
| ReconnectEd | Sheffield |
| Redfearns Junior Football Club | Barnsley |
| The Edlington Hill Top Centre Associates | Doncaster |
| Always an Alternative | South Yorkshire |
| People Focused Group | Doncaster |
| Roshni Sheffield Asian Women's Resource Centre | Sheffield |
| Football Unites Racism Divides Educational Trust (FURD) | Sheffield |
| Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) | Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield |
| Rotherham Foster Carers Association | Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield |
| High Green Development Trust | Sheffield |
| Ad Astra Barnsley | Barnsley |
| Educational Learning Support Hub (ELSH) | Barnsley |
| Rotherham United Community Trust | Rotherham |
| Worth Unlimited | Doncaster |
| Together Women | Sheffield |
| Young Women's Housing Project (YWHP) | Sheffield |
| Rush House | Rotherham |

Finally, in 2024/25, the VRU again focussed on young people in its grant round (see Table 10 - 2024/25 Grant Recipients

*Table 10 - 2024/25 Grant Recipients*

| Grant Funded Partner | Region |
|---|---|
| Jade Youth | Rotherham |
| Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Services (BSARCS) | Barnsley |
| Family Works | Rotherham, Sheffield, South Yorkshire wide |
| Doncaster Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service (DRASACS) | Doncaster |
| Sheffield Wednesday Football Club Community Programme | Sheffield |
| Worth Unlimited | Doncaster |
| Dinnington Community Boxing Club | Rotherham |
| ReConnected | Sheffield |
| The Youth Association | Barnsley |
| Barnsley FC Community Trust | Barnsley |
| The Sheffield Music School | Sheffield |
| Doncaster Mind | Doncaster |
| Mums United Limited | Sheffield |
| Olympia Wellbeing | Sheffield |
| Cricket Arena | Sheffield |
| Our Community Matters | Rotherham |
| Grow Gardeners | Sheffield |
| Premier League Kicks | Doncaster |
| Young Women's Housing Project | Sheffield |

# Community Activity

The community response to violence is not limited to organisations the VRU, or other partners, have funded. There are countless organisations, and individuals, working to reduce violence and improve their communities. We cannot capture them all, but we have attempted to summarise them here.

## Barnsley

The people and communities of Barnsley maintain multiple schemes that work to combat violence by tackling the causes of the causes of violence.

**Voluntary, Community Social Enterprise Schemes and projects**.

- BSARCS
- IDAS Barnsley
- My Body Is My Body (MBIMB)
- Berneslai Homes
- Victim Support Humberside and South Yorkshire
- The Snowdrop Project
- Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service

- Upton United Juniors Community Club
- Royston Watch Group Crime and Safety Group
- The Youth Association (Ward Green, Kendray, Stairfoot and cross local authority border)
- Resolute Women Barnsley
- Reds in the Community (Barnsley FC)

**South Yorkshire VRU Funded Schemes in the Community**

- Early Learning Support Hub (Town centre)
- Redfearn's FC (Monk Bretton)
- BSARCS (County wide and Barnsley)
- Yorkshire Mentoring -Advice for Parents and Care Givers (County Lines and Organised Crime) what to look for. Wrong Look Wrong Time Wrong Place. (24 hours in Police Custody) Athersley North and South and Darton and Thurnscoe
- Ad Astra (New Lodge)
- Outreach work (Targeted Youth Support, Early Intervention and Prevention Service)with young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training. (The Dearne)
- Trauma informed Practice
- 

**Uniformed groups** –

- Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Guides, Brownies, Rainbows (Multiple Locations)
- Cadets - Sea, Army, Navy Town Centre and Wakefield Road, Barnsley)

**Barnsley Living Well** (Barnsley MBC website)

This website lists numerous options and organisations that help to reduce violence and support people of all ages. https://www.livewellbarnsley.co.uk/

# Doncaster

Whilst there is a significant number of charities, community groups and initiatives being delivered across Doncaster most do not focus directly on reducing violence. There is a wide selection of delivery that is linked to attitudinal change, creating and fostering healthy relationships, the impact of crime and disorder on young people and other broad ranging themes. Most of these groups are supported by Voluntary Action Doncaster (VAD) who provide support and leadership to the voluntary, community and faith sector in Doncaster. VAD are a key partner within the statutory structure of the Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership (SSDP) and representatives attend thematic meetings. Communities in Doncaster can also access to an on-line directory, www.yourlifedoncaster.co.uk, where they can access information on a vast array of topics including support.

Below is a small overview of some of the groups working in Doncaster with an aim to reduce violence either through diversionary activities or working directly with victims, families and survivors of violence to reduce repeat incidents.
EPIC (Encouraging Potential and Inspiring Change) team delivers a range of programmes for young people.

**Black and Minority Ethnic United Doncaster (BMEUD**) is a non-for-profit organisation who were established as a platform for advocating the rights and welfare of blacks and minority ethnic residents in Doncaster.

**Phoenix WoMans Aid** is a charity Supporting victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Their services include advice, counselling, advocacy, training, office-based and out in the community 7 days a week.

**Changing Lives** is a nationwide charity with a base in Doncaster helping people facing challenging times to make positive change - for good. They offer various services available to all residents and partners including employment services, support with recovery and wellbeing, services dedicated to women and children's as well as housing and homelessness services.

**Club Doncaster Foundation** work with a wide range of partners to provide sport and physical activity opportunities to anyone within the Doncaster community and surrounding areas. They utilise the social reach of the professional sports clubs and community stadium to challenge lifelong habits, inspire positive change and motivate sustained participation in sport, physical activity, training and education.

**People Focused** group delivery pioneering peer support focused to deliver community support service across Doncaster with a focus on supporting those experiencing mental health issues, poor health, disability or just going through difficult times.

# Rotherham

**Violence Reduction Fund – grants round for projects targeting services for young people – Rotherham**

### JADE Youth and Community

JADE provide a wide range of support for disadvantaged children, young people, and families, that supports them to overcome the challenges they face and grow to reach their full potential. Providing a diverse offer of positive activities that children and families enjoy, alongside targeted support that addresses the issues they face. Offering a wide range of open access provisions that bring our community together encompassing juniors, seniors, girls' group, LGBTQ group, SEND families group, Adults SEND group. They also provide an accredited alternative education provision supporting some of the most at risk and disengaged young people from across the borough: and provide mental health support and 1:1 counselling, and whole family counselling and support.

### DC Boxing

Dinnington Community boxing Group is a charity organisation and Amateur boxing club, dedicated to improving the mental and physical wellbeing of our communities through our tailored boxing and fitness sessions.

The aim is to improve the lives of young people 6 -16 who are being left behind, those who are not given any opportunities and those who feel excluded from their communities, through the sport of boxing, in a safe environment with qualified England boxing certified coaches.

### Community Minded

Project aims to support parents understanding around early developmental trauma, attachment, and the impact of trauma on children through to adulthood. Raise parents/ carers awareness and understanding as to how traumatic experiences impacts a child's mental, behavioural, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. Deliver Therapy and Therapeutic services to children and their families; covering a wide range of referral concerns such as bereavement, abuse, domestic violence and offer a wide range of creative therapies such as but not exclusive to Counselling, Play Therapy, and Neurofeedback.

**Other VRU/SRP Funded projects**

**Town Centre Outreach Project 6-month Pilot.**

The aim of the specialist services is to contribute to the prevention and reduction of Anti-social behaviour and serious violence through the presence of Outreach Workers in hotspots in and around Rotherham Town Centre.

Outreach Workers will contribute to the prevention and reduction of anti-social behaviour and serious violence by**:**

Using the reachable space that hotspots provide to help prevent anti-social behaviour in hotspots by acting as non-police 'capable guardians' thorough their presence and ability to mediate and defuse situations to prevent escalation.

Offering immediate practical and emotional support to young people/adults in hotspots including those with substance misuse needs.

Seeking to quickly connect people with existing diversionary and treatment or support services that can reduce their future risk of being a victim or offender of anti-social behaviour or violence.

**Liberty Church- Reckless Youth Club Ferham**

The aim of the project is to provide children and young people aged 10 – 18 years within one of the highest areas of deprivation within Rotherham with a safe and secure open access to a 3-hour youth club delivered within their local community. Within the safe space consistent mentors aim to provide children and young people with both diversionary activities and education to build their knowledge to make informed decisions with the overarching aim to have the confidence to say no to peer pressure. (and the associated risks of violence, knives, and weapons).

**Youth Work Works – Detached Youth Work Thurcroft**

Youth Workers delivering 1 evening a week using detached as a style of youth work to engage with young people who may be involved or at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

**Effective Partnership working – some examples**

**Safeguarding event for businesses within the nighttime economy**

Working in Partnership with RMBC licencing team, community safety team, SYP and the town Centre Coordinator the VRU Partnership manager facilitated 2 safeguarding events. Participants were invited to take part in workshops and share their experiences as well as learn about tools such as the WalkSafe app, and the 'Ask for Angela' initiative. As a result of the session licensees were invited to sign up to the WalkSafe app. In doing so their business will show on the app as a safe venue. Further to this a presentation was delivered by RMBC's Evolve Team, explaining Child Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation, how to spot the signs and how to report concerns to the police.

**Operation Oak Apple Exercise**

Working in partnership with SYP and RMBC educational safeguarding lead the Partnership Manager co facilitated 2 interactive tabletop exercises (Operation Oak Apple) the exercise is designed to support education providers to consider their lock down protocol, and how to mitigate some of the potential risks by encouraging search of the facilities grounds. The feedback from each session was positive with some providers revising the protocol that was in place.

# Sheffield

## Current Sheffield Projects

### 1. Work to Reduce and prevent Violence Against Women and Girls

**Sheffield Safe Square**

The Safe Space pilot started in Sheffield in December 2023 initially for one month over Christmas and new year last year. It has been extended 4 times during 2024 due to its success. A Community group called Sheffield Safe Square run the Medical and welfare tents every Friday and Saturday night in Barkers Pool, supporting those out on a night out in Sheffield City Centre. It has now seen over 500 different people, has seen a near equal mix of medical and welfare cases, seen slightly more males than females, and assisted mainly younger people under 30. The pilot ended at the end of September 2024. A council motion was proposed to have a permanent safe space and went to full council in November 2024, this getting approval.

Research has been undertaken during 2024 on time saved for health, police, Ambulance and charity services and a 9 month report has been completed. The project steering group has being widened and is led by Kayleigh Waine chair of the community group Sheffield Safe Space who run the current safe space. The Safer Sheffield Partnership are leading new discussions at the strategic level to look at future modes for a permanent safe space in Sheffield city centre.

**New Education Materials** professional educational materials free to all young person settings. Topics include healthy relationships, Positive attitudes, Domestic Abuse, sexual abuse, and online safety – available to schools and youth settings across South Yorkshire provided by Learn Sheffield. Developing new knife crime resources in 2025 This will be added to the existing healthy relationships resources online. https://learnsheffield.co.uk/Projects/Developing-Healthy-Attitudes/

**Citywide domestic perpetrator programme (provided by Cranstoun) Inspire to change)** This structured programme involved a series of 1-2-1 and group interventions aimed at changing the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic abuse. The feedback from participants has been excellent. 73% reduction in reoffending.

**Sheffield Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Forum** – meets monthly with a wide ranging membership of over 30 organisations. VRU is regular member and presents their work regularly, often bringing new projects to the table for comment and suggestions and using the group as a valuable engagement voice.

**Night time Economy licencing schemes** led by Sheffield City Council and Sheffield BID developing the voluntary licensing schemes of:
Pub Watch
Ask for Angela
Purple Flag
Best Bar None
Licence Savi

**Safety equipment for Sex Workers** for example mobile phone pouches and money purses, led by Sheffield Working Women's Opportunities Project.

### 2. Encourage all professionals and organisations to become trauma informed to an approved standard for South Yorkshire

**Sheffield Trauma Informed Group** – chaired by the snowdrop project and supported by the Public Health team of Sheffield City Council, this group has cross cutting members all supporting the formation of a Trauma informed city.

**Trauma Informed South Yorkshire** – continue our work in capacity building Trauma Informed Practice and understanding across South Yorkshire which includes free online level one and level two training for staff and volunteers. Is on the Sheffield Childrens Safeguarding partnership website to book.
https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/events/event/safeguarding-workshop-trauma-informed-practice-stage-1

3. **Work to change the cultural and social attitudes that contribute to violence**

**Plan B Custody Navigators** – intervening with those presenting in the Shepcote Lane custody suite on violence related offences. Contracted Service provided by Causeway, a local charity.

**Hospital Navigators Northern General A&E Sheffield** – offering interventions to people over 16 presenting with violence related injuries at the major trauma centre for South Yorkshire in Sheffield. Contracted service with the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust.

**Hospital Navigators: Sheffield Children's Hospital A&E** – identifying and offering interventions to young residents under 16 attending A&E with possible violence injuries. A new contract for the VRU expanding the Hospital Navigator programme to under 16s. Contracted service with the Childrens for 2 nurse navigators plus expansion of the Your Stance training programme of emergency first aid in schools and youth settings.

**Violence Reduction Fund** – grants round for projects targeting services for young people. 8 projects were Sheffield specific in and one county wide in 2024/25. Referral processes are now in place for 4 of the grant funded projects open to referrals for young people involved or at the cusp of involvement in violent crime. VRU worked with the DWP, youth groups and services, LACs, hotspot team, central serious violence police teams and Neighbourhood Policing Teams to ensure local young people can access these positive opportunities.

**Work in Schools Second Chance Programme (part of Aspire Boxing Gym) and Always an Alternative** offer conferences for front line workers and talks in schools during Operation Duxford and Sceptre, and other times in the year according to need, tackling subjects such as knife crime, online exploitation and gangs.

**Youth Services Contextual safeguarding Project**
Started in September 2024 this 6 month partnership project is working with the Contextual Safeguarding Team in the youth services team at the Council focusing on recording young people's views and parents views of risk and harm in their community and in Sheffield using the arts. This creative engagement project contributed to the new Contextual Community Safeguarding strategy being developed by the council.

**Darnall youth engagement project**

Working with and through the Darnall Crime and Vulnerability meeting to hold educational sessions in Darnall. Working with a community rep and local groups on new ideas to engage young people on the dangers of carrying knives. Knife bin installation part of the educational work.

**Knife bins**

4 more Knife bins installed with 2 engagement sessions per area in Gleadless Valley (Gaunt shops), Stradbroke (Stradbroke Drive), Tinsley (Tinsley Forum car park), relaunch of Devonshire Green tidy and relaunch and Abbeydale Rd move. Working with area safer neighbourhood co-ordinators and the local crime and vulnerability meetings to gain approval and support locally. Mobile Youth bus used as part of the educational part in Gleadless Valley.

**Youth Bus**

Match fund South Local Area Committee to provide 6 sessions of a youth club bus provided by Always an Alternative in the Gleadless Valley Ward, an area not engaged in much before and needing help with youth engagement. The local community forum closed down 2 years ago, the methodist church running the food bank closed down, the pub has closed down. There is now very little community infrastructure around, especially on Gaunt shops.


**Effective Partnership working – some examples**

The VRU is part of the new Sheffield Youth Alliance formed in early 2025. This new group brings together providers of services for young people across the sectors in Sheffield. It aims to better inform groups and listen to groups, share best practice and work on issues together.

The Violence Reduction Unit's Partnership Manager for Sheffield is a member of;
Sheffield Youth: Neighbourhoods and Communities (SYNC) Steering Group helping to develop the new lottery and Esme Fairburn youth project in Sheffield across three neighbourhoods looking to reduce exploitation.

The VRU is a member of the Premier League Kicks group where all football clubs in the city have come together with the council's Local Area Committees to jointly plan sporting activity in areas most in need of diversionary activity.

Young People and Families Consortium led by Sheffield Hallam University. This is a research led group of senior professionals from cultural and sporting organisations coming together to research and develop a joint approach to reducing violence in communities through sport and culture.

South Yorkshire Community Foundation's funding forum meetings, ensuring all funding from the VRU and potential funding from other funders in the city is not duplicated and goes to the areas and organisations and projects most in need.

# Healthcare and Violence

# Healthcare and Violence

Violence has a cost to the healthcare sector. Violence results in injuries, including serious injuries, that need to be assessed and treated by healthcare staff. While we do not have an exact cost for the cost of violence in South Yorkshire, Liverpool John Moores University calculated that violence costs Lancashire £23.1 million a year[71], and South Yorkshire is of a similar size.

There is also violence against hospital staff, which has physical and emotional consequences for healthcare staff. This too has a cost; an estimated £82 million in 5 years for the NHS as a whole.

Violence can also interfere with a patient's life, making them less likely to attend appointments or maintain a healthy life[72]. This has subsequent costs to healthcare which will not necessarily be recorded as directly violence related.

# Responding to Violence: Health

## Barnsley

Barnsley has many initiatives that contribute the reducing violence agenda.

**Barnsley Hospital**

- Direct referrals to the young people substance misuse service - help to reduce use of drugs and alcohol which potentially will also address violence reduction.

- Hospital staff frequently make DASH referrals or signpost clients into support via IDAS.

- The all-age mental health team and alcohol team sit within the Emergency Dept and again potentially support violence reduction.

- Staff make safeguarding referrals for vulnerable adults and children as appropriate.

- Staff training around safeguarding, violence, abuse, exploitation.

- Head of Safeguarding and the Head of Quality have completed a course regarding Violence Reduction Protection Work with Pubic Health – and are looking to roll out across the trust, working with Public Health

- Health and Safety inspection - looking at violence and aggression in the work place with health and safety

- Training around the mechanism and matrix for conflict resolution.

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[71] https://lancsvrn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Costs-of-Violence-to-the-Healthcare-System-Lancashire.pdf
[72] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK396490/

## Primary Care

- GP's and primary care staff complete the HARK to identify domestic abuse and refer into IDAS. These referrals are low in number and work is currently underway to roll out training to practices to promote staff to ask about abuse.

- Staff training around safeguarding, violence, abuse, exploitation.

- Staff make safeguarding referrals for adults and children and signpost into early help.

- Primary care identifies issues around substance misuse and mental health and refer into appropriate services.

## 0-19

- Staff make safeguarding referrals for adults and children and signpost into early help.

- Practitioners make DASH referrals or signpost clients into support via IDAS

- Staff identify families and young people where violence is an issue and make appropriate referrals into safeguarding.

- Staff undertake and lead early help for families and young people

- Staff are well versed on looking for signs of involvement in violence and exploitation and making appropriate referrals.

## South West Yorkshire Foundation Trust

- Staff provide support to families, adults and young people around their mental health which in turn will help to reduce violence in many circumstances.

- Staff are trained to recognise abuse, exploitation and make appropriate referrals or signpost.

## Sexual Health Services

- Staff are trained to look for signs of abuse, exploitation and violence and make appropriate referrals or signpost into services.

## Continuing Health Care

- As above staff are trained to look for signs of abuse, exploitation and violence and make appropriate referrals or signpost into services.

- Staff undertake early help assessments as required.

A health IDVA would also help to support staff to identify and make appropriate referrals into services as well as supporting clients in a health setting where it is often easier to see them alone. This role could also help provide additional training to health staff.

Such a service would also be a benefit for the adult population, building on the current work on frequent attenders.

## Doncaster

In Doncaster, the health services do not directly intervene with violence. However, there are a number of commissioned services which indirectly influence violence. Public Health also have some commissioning responsibility. As the services are commissioned, the Integrated Care Board only have a measure of oversight of the schemes either through networking in our child health safeguarding forums, or through their relationships and attendance to the assurance meetings of the providers.

An area of development is the organising, chairing, and coordinating of SEMH, which Doncaster ICB consider a key intervention and a public health intervention approach to reducing violence. Social Emotional and Mental Health Proactive Monitoring and Support is a process in place where a multi-agency panel discusses children and young people who present to the ED with social and / or emotional health needs who are at risk of hospitalisation or placement breakdown. This process supports professionals involved in risk management and care planning or helps facilitate referrals needed to agencies. A major root cause found in these young people is often trauma, and there are associated behaviours that these young people exhibit which can make them more vulnerable to involvement in serious violence. Doncaster health services often consider safeguarding issues, missing episodes, and exploitation.

The ICB also have representation in the myriad of discussions around Sexual and Domestic Abuse, representation is drawn from both Children and Adult Safeguarding, which allows multi-dimensional approach to be adopted in this area.

## Rotherham

Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust is currently implementing a Hospital Navigator Service in Rotherham General Hospital.

## Sheffield

Northern General Hospital in Sheffield has a Hospital Navigator Service, run by hospital staff. This is in line with the evidence based A&E Navigators approach supported by the Youth Endowment Fund toolkit for what works for reducing violence. The Navigators approach patients of violent incidents and offer them support, and signposting to relevant services.

# Admissions due to Sharps Injuries

The NHS records admissions due to sharps injuries, which can be used as a proxy for knife crimes (see Figure 10). Please note the data is also suppressed and rounded to the nearest multiple of 5.

*Figure 10 - Count of admissions due to sharps injuries*
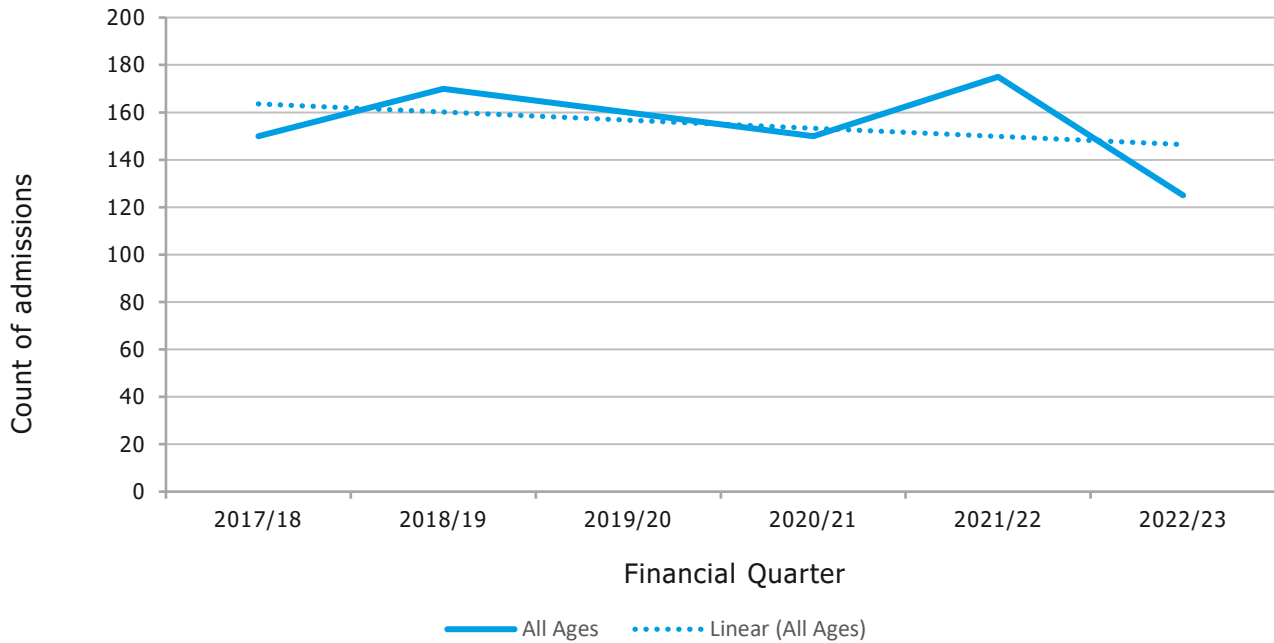


Admissions due to sharp objects have been decreasing over the 6 financial years covered in the data. There was a spike in admissions in 2021/22, possibly coinciding with the post-lockdown increase in violence seen in crime data. In the most recent financial year, admissions due to sharps injuries have decreased.

Admissions due to sharp objects for under 25s has seen a larger decrease, and even in 2021/22 did not seen an increase in admissions (see Figure 11). Since 2017/18, admissions due to sharps injuries have almost halved in South Yorkshire, from 65 to 35 in 2022/23 (allowing for some error due to suppression of data).

*Figure 11 - Admissions due to sharps injuries (Under 25s)*
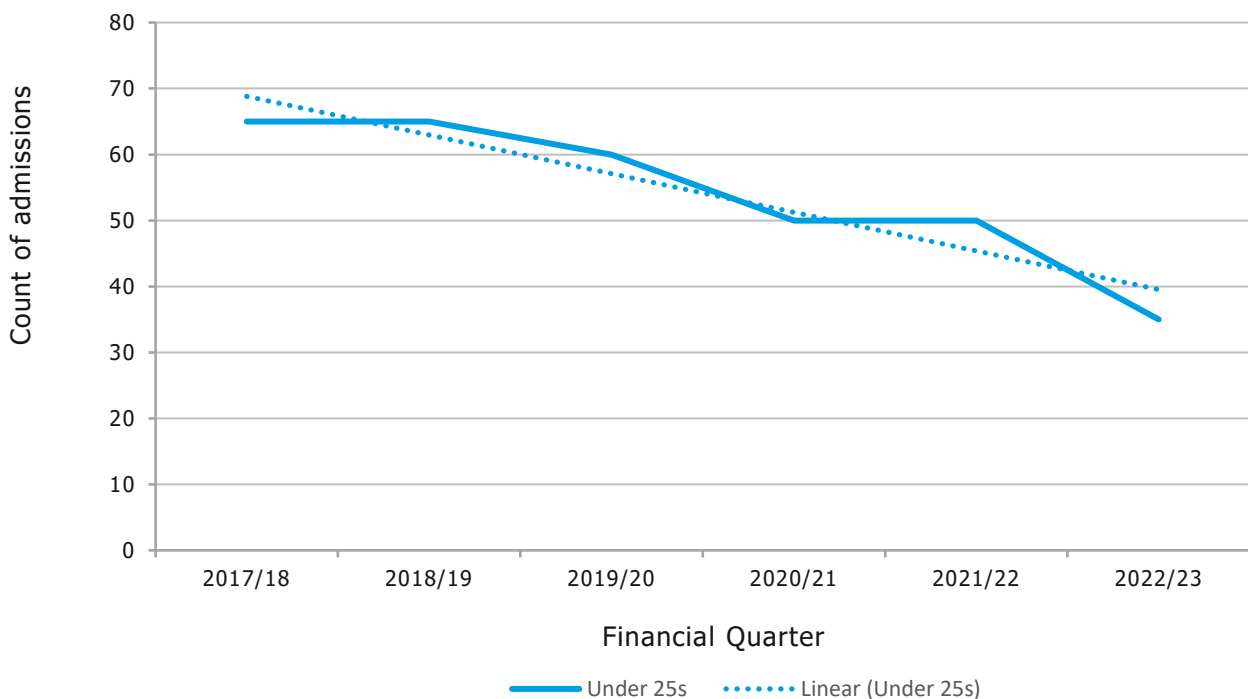
# Tracking Violence with Ambulance Data

Analysing place based data from the ambulance service allows us to see violence that may not have been reported to the police. We can also see the demand that weapons-based violence places on the ambulance service.

## Data Source

Ambulance call data is received from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) once a month, and we have data to the beginning of 2018/19. We have analysed 6 years of data. The data is extracted from C3 CAD. Location data of where the ambulance is dispatched to is provided.

We exclude self-inflicted wounds and hoax calls.

## Limitations

All recorded data is subject to data recording errors.

We have limited this analysis to calls with the Chief Complaint of "Stab/Gunshot Wound".

It is not possible in this data to disaggregate between "public place" violence and violence in the home or prisons. This dataset therefore will contain all Stab/Gunshot Wounds, regardless of where they took place.

# Rate of Ambulance calls for Stab / Gunshot Wounds

The number of calls received by the ambulance service for stab / gunshot wounds is variable, with a minimum of 68 calls in 2018/19 Q4, and a maximum of 135 in 2020/21 Q2 (Figure 12).

*Figure 12 - Rate of ambulance calls for stab / gunshot wounds*
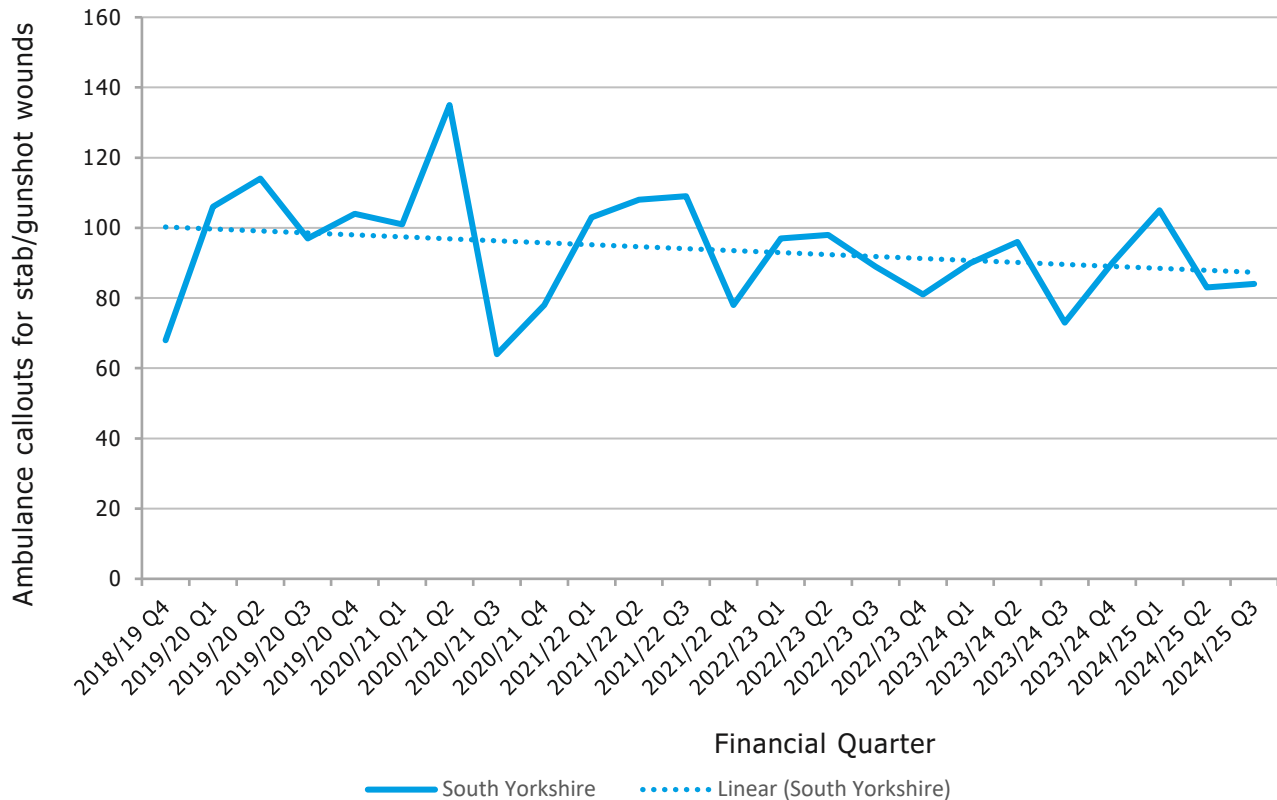


Figure 12 does show a small decrease in calls for stab/gunshot wounds over the 6 years covered. The peaks Q1 2020/21 has not been repeated. We can further divide this data to look at stab / gunshot wounds when the patient is 0 to 24, and 25 and over in Figure 13.

*Figure 13 - Rate of ambulance calls for stab / gunshot wounds by age*
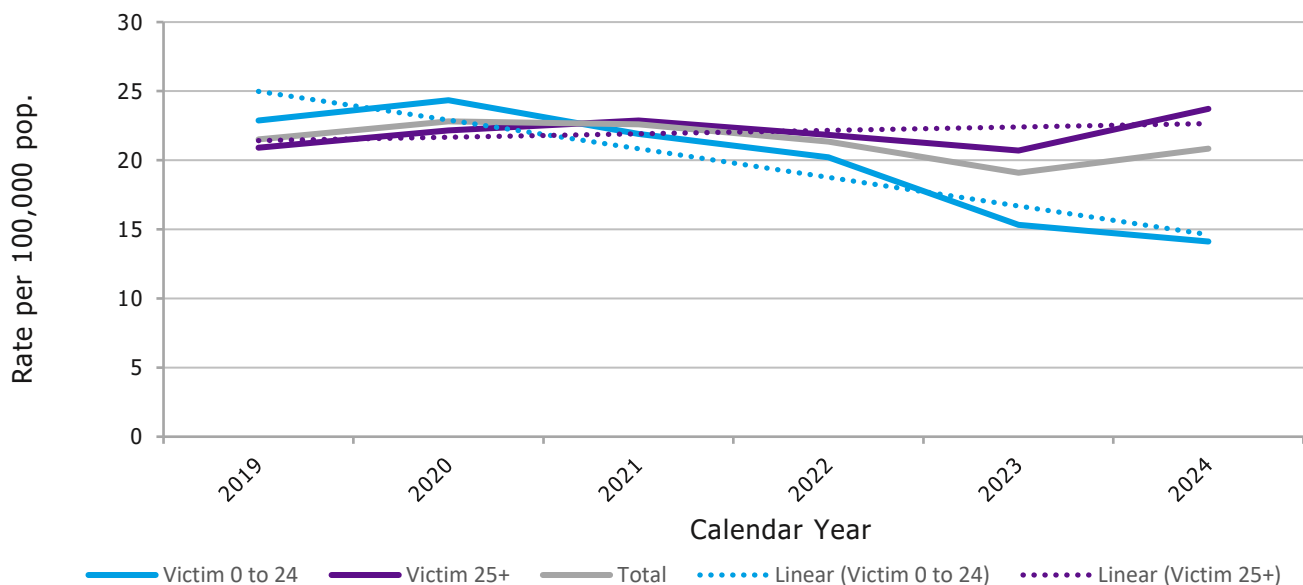
The rate of ambulance callouts stab/gunshot wounds where the victim is aged 0 to 24 has been decreasing year on year, which is in contrast to the hospital admissions due to knife or sharp object which decreased for most of 2023 before returning to baseline. This is a discrepancy between datasets which is hard to account for, as stabbings account for the large majority of stab / gunshot wounds (95%). It is possible that more individuals who have been injured are conveying themselves, or have other people convey them, to hospital.

# Stab / Gunshot Wounds by District

As would be expected, stab / gunshot Wounds are concentrated at city and town centres, and in areas of high deprivation. Because it has the largest city centre and nighttime economy, Sheffield has the highest rate of stab / gunshot Wounds of all districts (see Figure 14).

*Figure 14 - Ambulance calls for stab / gunshot wounds by district*
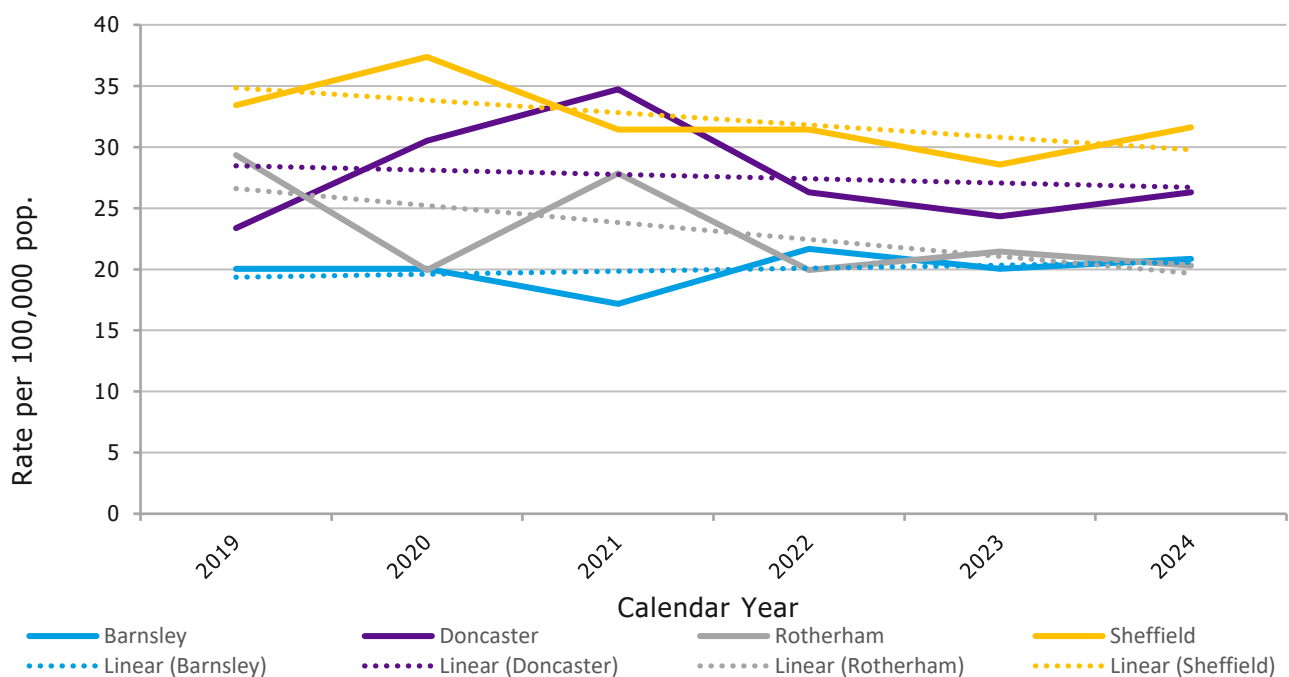


The rate for all districts has shown a decrease over the 6 years covered. However, 2024 did show some increases from 2023 which need to be monitored, except in Rotherham.

# Stab / Gunshot Wounds by Time

Callouts for stab / gunshot wounds are most common in the evening (see Figure 15), again relating incidents of stab / gunshot wounds to the night-time economy. However it is worth noting that stab / gunshot wound callouts can happen at any time of the day.

*Figure 15 - Ambulance calls for stab / gunshot wounds by hour of the day*
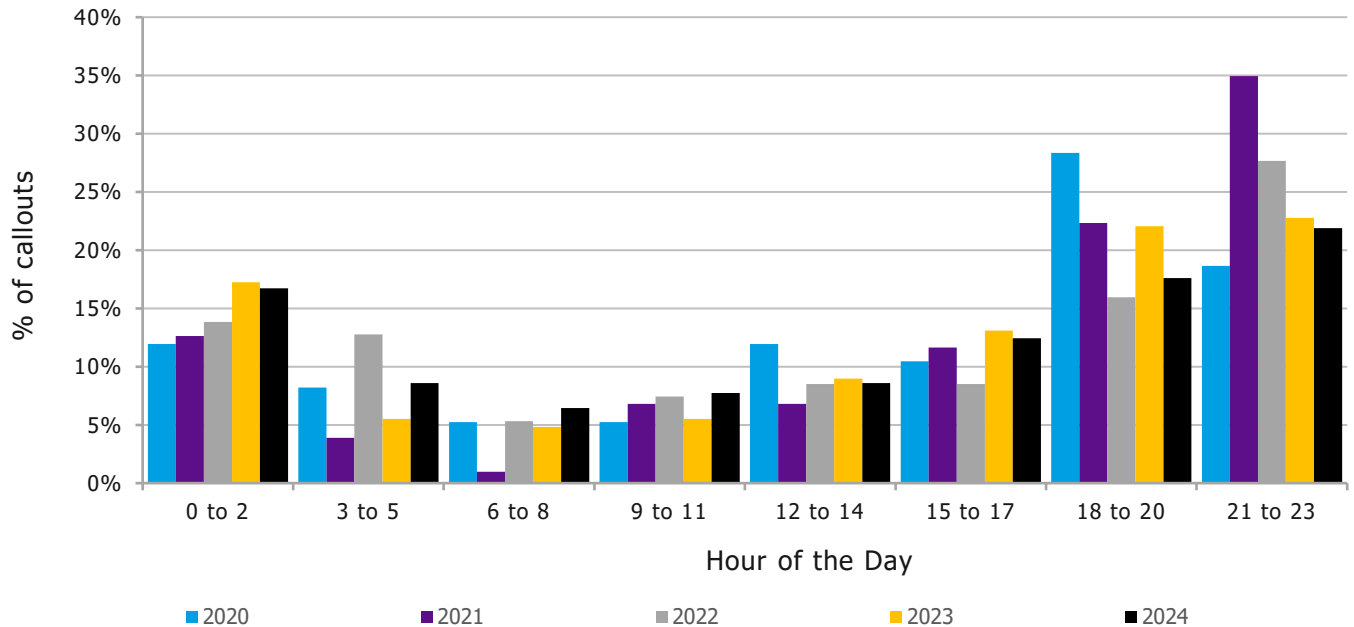


Callouts for stab / gunshot wounds occur on all days of the week, but there is a slight bias in most years towards Friday or Saturday (see Figure 16). Unlike with crime data the day with the most callouts is not consistent across all years.

*Figure 16 - Ambulance calls for stab / gunshot wounds by day of the week*
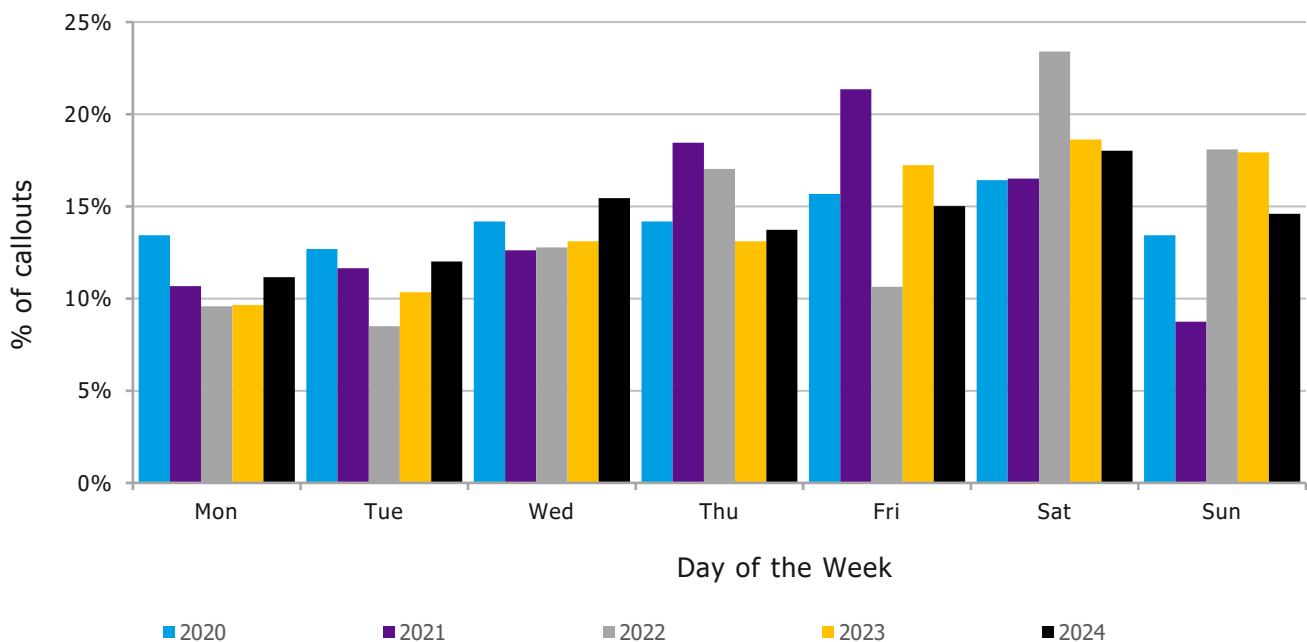
We can also combine the hour and day data to get a picture of calls for stab/gunshot wounds across the week in 3 hour segments. We have combined all 5 years for Figure 17.

*Figure 17 - Ambulance calls for stab / gunshot wounds by hour and day of the week*
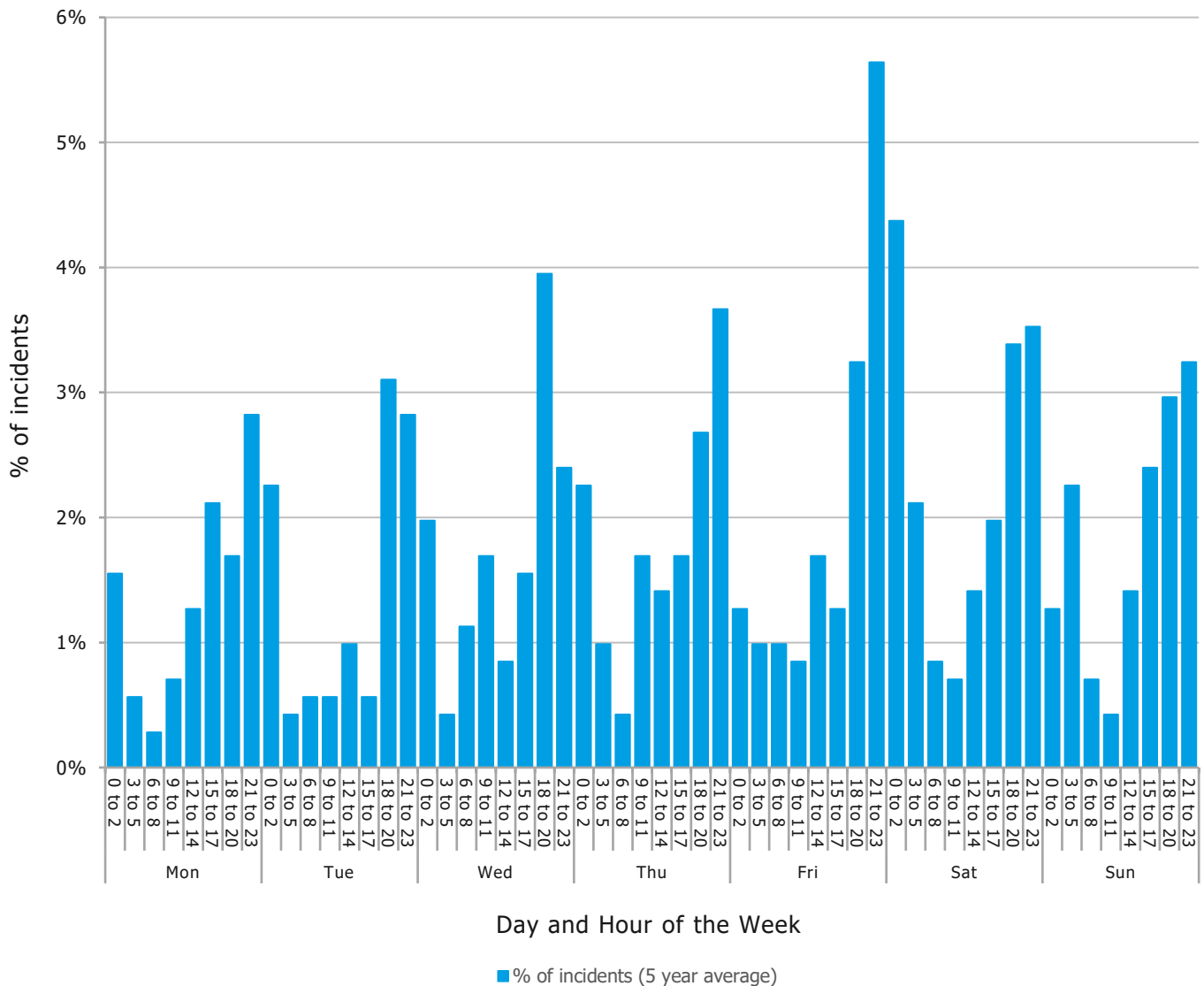


As we can see, Friday and Saturday night are the times of highest calls for stab/gunshot wounds. We can also see that some Saturday calls and Sunday calls can be best considered a continuation of Friday and Saturday nights' activity. Averaging 5 years of data, Friday evening appears to the be the time with the highest risk of ambulance callouts for stab / gunshot wounds.

## Stab / Gunshot Wounds by Deprivation

Callouts for stab / gunshot wounds are most likely to happen in the most deprived areas, with the 1st decile for deprivation having notably more callouts than even the 5th or 6th deciles (see Figure 18). This emphasises the link between deprivation and violence.

*Figure 18 - Stab / gunshot wounds by deprivation of location of callout*
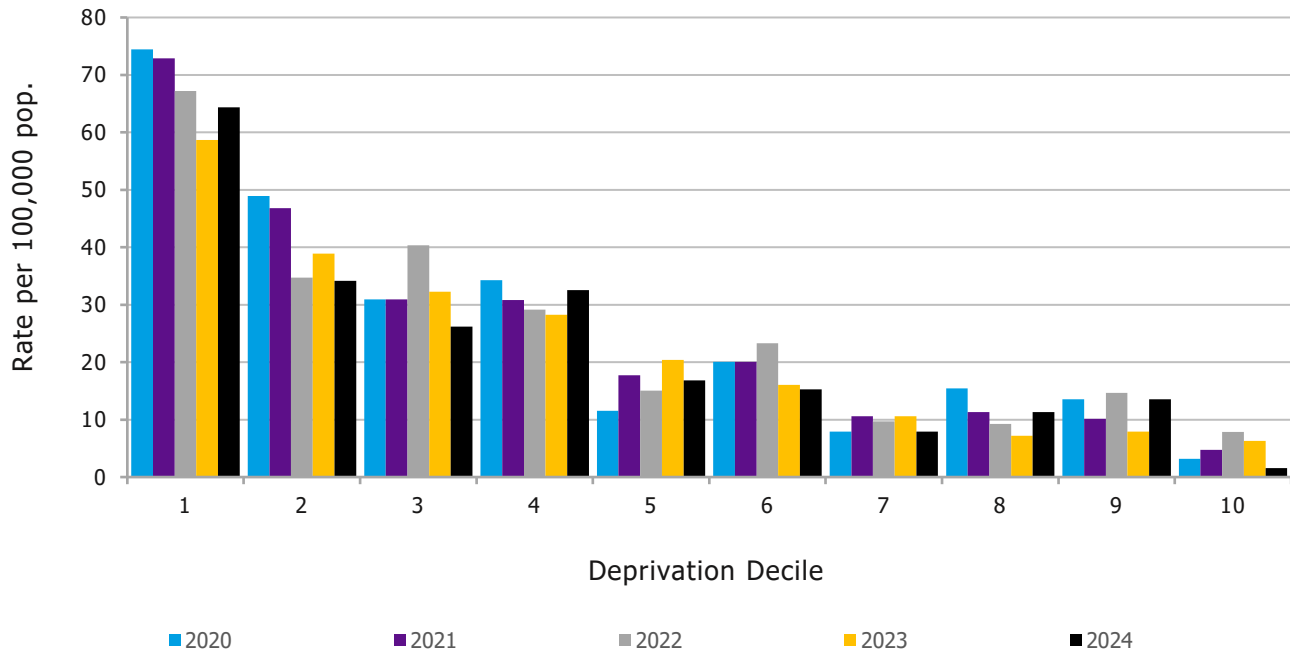


## Stab / Gunshot Wound by Gender of Patient

The gender profile of Stab / Gunshot Wound patients is what we would expect from other measures of violence; the rate is much higher for males than females (see Figure 19).

*Figure 19 – Rate of ambulance calls for stab / gunshot wounds by gender of patient*
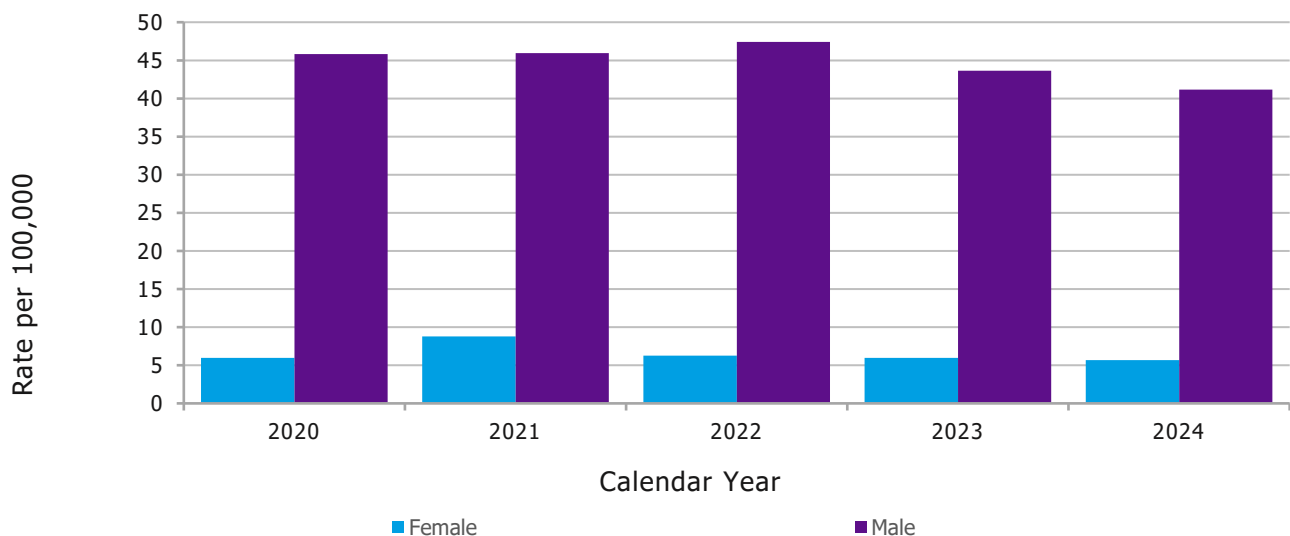
# Demand on Hospitals of Stab / Gunshot Wounds

*Figure 20 - Ambulance calls for stab / gunshot wounds by hospital*
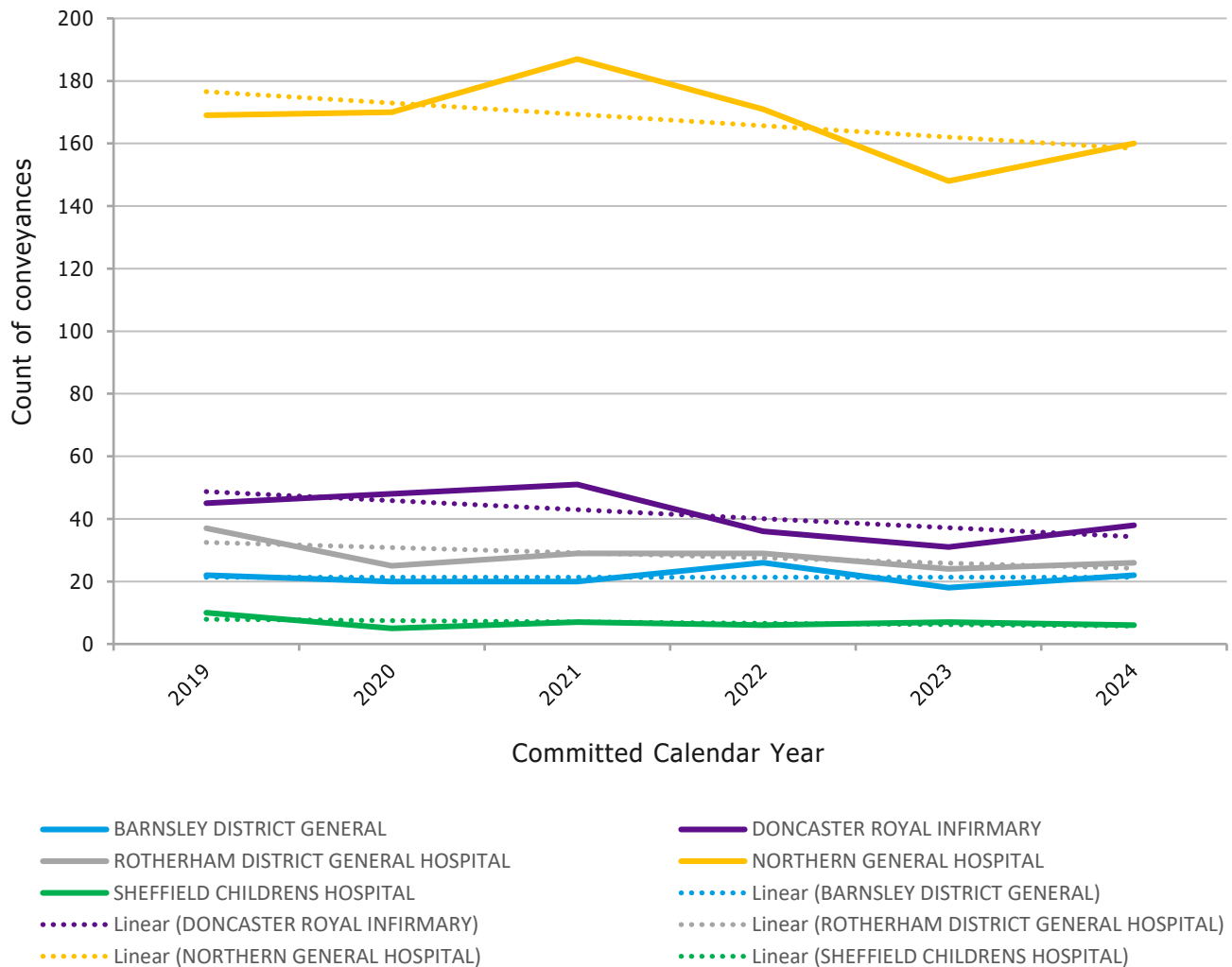


The majority of incidents are taken to Northern General Hospital, which accounted for 62.8% of conveyances to South Yorkshire Hospitals in the 5 years covered. This supports violence reduction work, such as the Hospital Navigators service, being focussed at Northern General. Doncaster Royal Infirmary received 15.6% of conveyances overall, followed by 10.6% for Rotherham District General Hospital and 8.0% for Barnsley District General. 2.6% were conveyed to Sheffield Children's Hospital. 3.1% were conveyed to other hospitals.

# Origin of Calls for Stab / Gunshot Wounds

We are interested in knowing how many ambulance calls to stab / gunshot wounds may not have been reported to police. Without exact data on every call, we cannot know this for sure. However, we can look at what calls originated from the police, and which did not. Calls from the police can be assumed to have also resulted in police documentation of the event. Calls from 999 may or may not result in police records as well.

As seen in Figure 21, calls were most commonly from 999 call. The count of calls from 999 calls decreased over time, although 2024 showed a recent increase.

*Figure 21 - Call source for ambulance calls for stab / gunshot wounds*
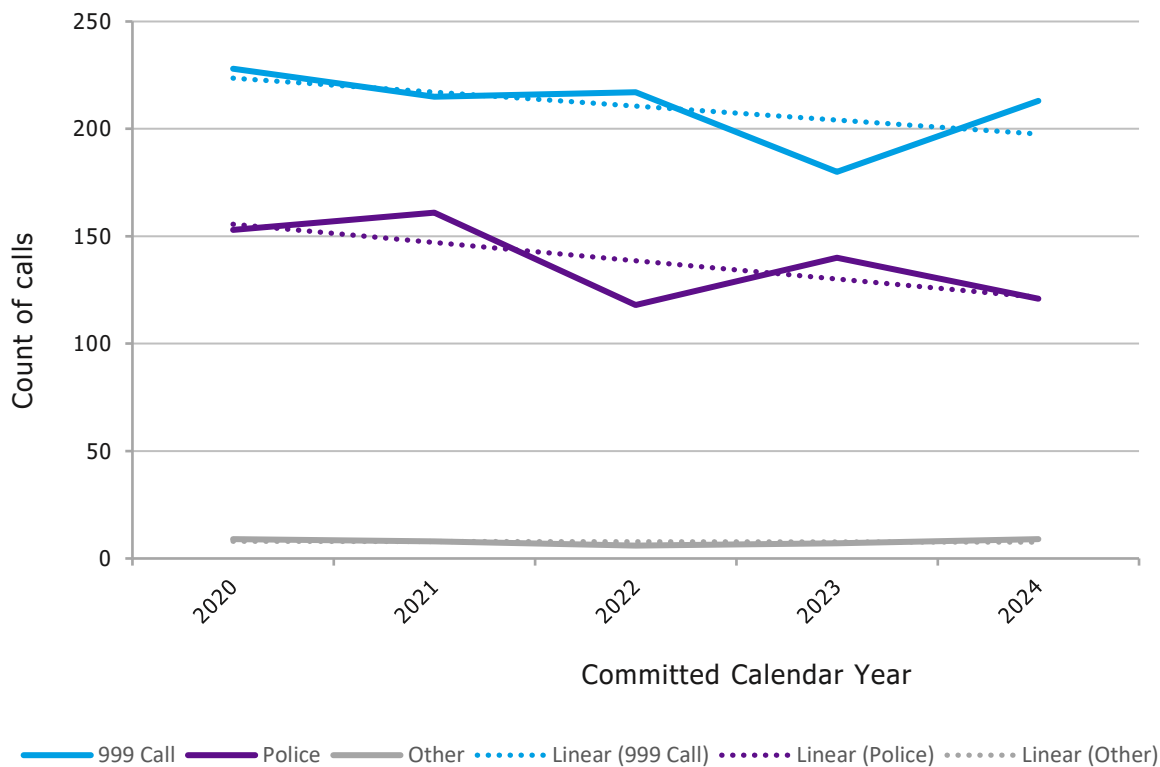
# Education and Violence

# Education's Response to Violence

## Barnsley

### Engaging Pupils in education, reducing exclusion, reducing violence.

Evidence and research inform us that pupils who are not effectively engaged in their education are more at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity which may include violence.

The Timpson review of exclusion 2019, informs us that as well as differences in how schools use exclusion, there are longstanding trends that show exclusion rates vary between pupils with different characteristics. Children with some types of SEN, boys, those who have been supported by social care or are disadvantaged are all consistently more likely to be excluded from school than those without these characteristics. The analysis produced for the Timpson review shows that 78% of permanent exclusions issued were to pupils who either had SEN, were classified as in need or were eligible for free school meals and 11% of permanent exclusions were to pupils who had all three characteristics.

The data in Barnsley informs us, that 110 permanent exclusions were issued from September 22-July 23 of this number, 47 included incidents of violence or threats to use violence to another person.

To prevent escalation to exclusion, Childrens Services and the Barnsley Schools Alliance are promoting engagement in education across the sector. Inclusion is a high priority agenda item for our service and political leaders driven by the implementation of the Education strategy and Access to education guidance. Half termly data regarding suspension and exclusions is gathered and presented to school leaders and partner agencies to provide opportunities for investigation, peer challenge and where appropriate the sharing of best practice.

Our local data informs us that there has been a year-on-year increase in the use of suspensions and exclusion since school attendance became statutory following the covid pandemic. This increase is witnessed nationally as well as locally placing increased demand on children's services and placing children and young people at risk. In Barnsley one academy trust accounted for 55% of the suspension across the borough in the academic year September 22- July 23. The implementation of their behaviour policy and the increase in suspensions is being challenged at the highest level within the trust. Early intervention and YJS services are deployed in the geographical area, the trust serves, to support pupils in their community and safeguard against the risks associated with not being engaged in education.

Education Welfare Service and Childrens Social Care have recently developed an Education Neglect strategy which will aim to support and safeguard those not effectively engaged in their education and link into the wider neglect strategy, which supports our wider thresholds for Intervention ensuring that children and young people are supported by the right services at the right time. This alongside the creation of the Education representative in the integrated front door enables us to ensure that engagement in education is factored into any assessment undertaken in respect of a young person's safeguarding needs.

Children services fully understand that suspensions and exclusions are driven from behaviour which is a form of communication and is often an identifier of unmet need, practitioners based in Education Welfare and SEND and Inclusion services work in close partnership with schools and

families to assess need, plan and review interventions to support young people and meet their needs to prevent the need for suspension and exclusion, whole family assessments and individual support plans are implemented for children in receipt of multiple suspensions in the aim to prevent suspensions escalating to exclusion.

# Doncaster

When considering how to reduce permanent exclusion several factors needs to be considered as to why the exclusion figures are nationally high and increasing.

Doncaster are currently following the national trend in terms of the increase in permanent exclusion and the factors to consider are both national and local. We saw a significant drop in numbers during Covid this was in part due to school closures and in part due to the decisions we took as a local authority. We took the decision to pay all of our alternative providers throughout covid regardless of pupil attendance, this meant they could remain open as a business and tailor their offer for those most complex pupils. Whilst some schools still used exclusion, most worked with us on a withdraw plan.

Since lock down we have a few national factors to consider. Many pupils who were already a concern in terms of attendance and behaviour have found it difficult to return to school and to conform to expectations. This is compounded with more complex attachment and parenting challenges.

Recruitment is nationally very challenging for schools/academies, pay is a factor but again there has been reflection on family, work/life balance and expectations following covid.

Guidance, the guidance makes exclusion easy for academies and schools and the criteria can be technically easily met. Academies no longer have to invite the LA in for the formal DCM and they can opt to manage their own appeals. This means most exclusions are upheld and parents feel deflated. There isn't any penalty when schools/academies use PEX as a sanction and it can be used as a threat or easy option for high tariff pupils.

Doncaster have worked hard to try and reduce exclusion and we have worked in partnership with schools. Whilst exclusion is still high, without the measures we have put in place, exclusion would be even higher. We have a Behaviour Outreach Support Service, BOSS. This is free to schools and includes direct support in schools for pupils, trauma informed practice, group work as well as whole staff training and development.

We have just completed a full review of the **Inclusion Panel** and through this process we offer short-term assessments and alternative provision. The purpose of this panel is to keep pupils in school and offer the right support and assessment to successfully reintegrate. This support has various specialisms and therapeutic placements This panel also has a full triage process where schools can refer cases that need additional support for PRU or medium/long-term provision as well as bespoke support from provision at Big Picture learning. Referrals are processed and directed to those provision, they are also logged and additional recommendations are given to schools. Are PRU provision is currently under review and support and this is an area of development for Doncaster. If we can offer that quality PRU support, this should reduce PEX and twice PEX pupils.

Parental advocacy, We have 5 officers who all include advocacy within their role, offering full support for 6th day provision following exclusion and takes the case for re-allocation to mainstream. This also includes assessment and panel presentation to ensure a destination is secured. The parental advocate supports the family through all legal processes. This helps parents have a voice and make a case to the excluding academy, this also ensures there are no gaps in education.

TOPS support, Case officers take referrals from the academy and links the school/pupil with all the quality assured providers. They ensure packages of support are put in place for pupils needing more than a mainstream offer. Thus reducing exclusion as the package meets those additional behavioural or therapeutic needs.

Support and guidance to schools for managed moves and part time timetables. This ensures that academies get appropriate guidance to use managed moves correctly to prevent exclusion or as an alternative to exclusion. In addition, this ensures schools follow national guidance around reduced offers and links to other support services giving a holistic approach with advice and guidance.

Support for schools to advise at the point of 15 days fixed term suspensions. When schools use suspensions as a sanction they need to ensure they are also offering support and including the appropriate services. The LA offer this advice when suspension has reached 15 days. This is an impartial service and guides governors thus trying to prevent further suspensions being used which could lead to exclusion.

Next steps include developing a medium to longer term offer of education for complex behaviour, publishing new recommendations for our Inclusion Panel to ensure consistent referrals and working with academies to ensure they are reducing suspension and exclusion as agreed in a memorandum of understanding.

# Rotherham

Serious youth violence has been decreasing since 2021, and from 2022 we have remained below the family average, Yorkshire region, South Yorkshire PCC area and England and Wales. In the year ending March 2021 there were 10 SYV offences, in March 2022 there were 6 SYV offences. In March 2023 there were 2 SYV offences – these were recorded as offences of Possess an imitation firearm with Intent to cause fear of violence, this was one incident and both children were sentenced to a Referral Order.

In Rotherham we are working with community safety partnerships and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), to improve partnership working, analyse the data and ensure that our strategy is based on emerging evidence of effective practice. We currently offer a range of preventive programmes to raise awareness and educate young people, professionals and families using a public health approach, based on the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) toolkit, which is an online summary of the best available research on approaches to keeping children safe from involvement in violence. In 2023 Rotherham YJS has invested in four evidenced based programmes to support children both from committing serious youth violence both in terms of first time offending and re-offending. We have YJS representatives at the Education inclusion panels which looks at children

excluded or at risk of exclusion. We are working closely with the PCC to look at a south Yorkshire approach in terms of SYV.

We have recently looked at exclusion data, to see if there was any correlation of children coming in the YJS. This resulted in the following analysis:

**From September 2022 – July 2023.**

There were no excluded/suspended Primary school children in the YJS caseload in academic year 2022/23.

44.4% of the total YJS suspensions in Secondary school were children who had either SEN Support or an EHCP. Of these children 31.7% are girls and 68.3% are boys.

The overall percentage of girls in the YJS cohort who were suspended is 2.6% and boys 2.7% compared to total Rotherham suspensions.


57.1% of the YJS exclusions in Secondary school were children who had either SEN Support or an EHCP. Of these children 62.5% are girls and 37.5% are boys.

The overall percentage of girls in the YJS cohort who were excluded is 19.5% and boys 11.8% compared to total Rotherham exclusions.

**1. Develop and strengthen the Youth Justice SEND offer to assist children overcome barriers and achieve their full potential.**

- 1.1 The Youth Justice Service and Partners will work towards the AYM SEND Quality Mark Award.
- 1.2 We have now recruited a Speech and Language Therapist, who is due to start working with the YJS in October 2023. The SALT Practitioner will support in reviewing the needs of children coming in the YJS, this may include those children who may have undiagnosed needs which the data above will not represent and may mean that the cohort is a lot higher as stated above. SALT will assist and support in reducing waiting times for assessment and YJS staff able to have face to face case discussions around how best to deliver interventions and the terminology used.

**2. Understand and respond to NEET children in the Youth Justice System and to develop support pathways into education, training, and employment.**

- 2.1 We will collate data from the YJS cohort to identify all NEET children, we will strengthen our relationship with the outreach and engagement team.
- 2.2 All NEET children coming into the Youth Justice System will be in ETE or have a placement identified before the end of YJS involvement, this will be done as part of the young person's initial plan and as part of the exit strategy.


**3. Develop a YJS pathway for escalation when Children are not in Education who might be missing/excluded or non-attendance.**

- 3.1 Work in collaboration with the Inclusion Team to develop a protocol to enable immediate escalation to support those Children not in Education. However further work to look at those children at risk of exclusions via the Inclusion panels.

## 4. To review the KPIs and the current offer to the YJS to ensure that the Education needs are met for children entering the YJS as well as strengthening the working relationship between key partners. This includes PX, missing from school safeguarding etc.

- 4.1 To monitor the YJS Cohort data on quarterly basis to ensure that there is clear evidence that NEET school age children have a school placement or there is a placement identified and a SMART plan in place.

## 5. In addition to the above work and following the exclusion data, we will look at preventative work to address the female exclusions, this includes work collaborative working with Early Help and Evidenced Based Hub.

- 5.1 Group work around Crime and Consequences (assaults) to be undertaken to all participating schools. This will be as part of the prevention work.
- 5.2 Explore the use of Boxing clubs for females across Rotherham, this may provide an outlet for anger as well as developing coping tools for dealing with stressful situations. Boxing can teach you how to control your anger and stay focused.  It teaches impulse control and channels emotions in a constructive way.
- 5.3 Explore Evidence based programmes for females, - explore what other areas are undertaking as well as explore mentoring opportunities.

Figure 22 shows the results up to Q1 2023/24 for Serious Youth Violence in Rotherham and its comparators.

*Figure 22. Serious Youth Violence in Rotherham and comparators*



| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rotherham | 3.9 | 2.3 | 0.8 |
| YJS family | 2.9 | 3.7 | 2.3 |
| Yorkshire Region | 4.6 | 4.9 | 4.5 |
| South Yorkshire PCC Area | 2.4 | 6.1 | 4.0 |
| England and Wales | 4.7 | 5.1 | 5.2 |
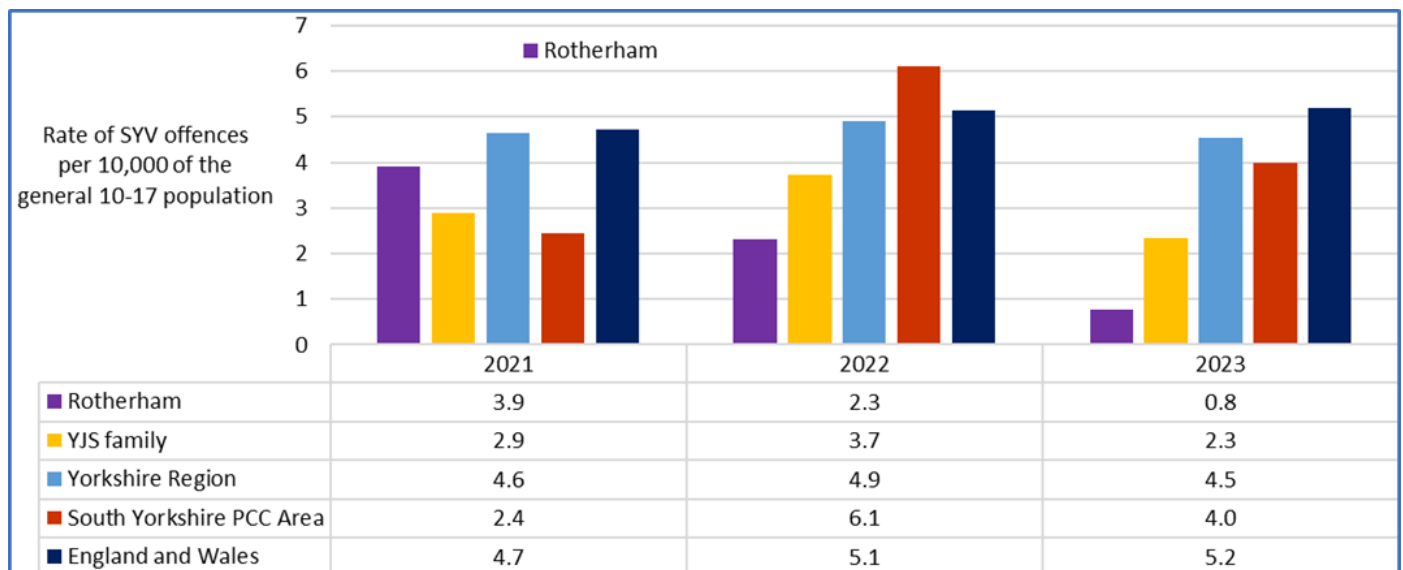
# Sheffield

Sheffield contains a large number of Trust schools and therefore a variety of approaches to reducing violence. Overall, the work falls into three main strands.

## 1. Inclusion:

Sheffield City Council actively champion an ethos of inclusion and more importantly belonging, fostering an environment where every student feels a sense of belonging. Initiatives include:

- **Diverse and Inclusive Curricula:** Schools are revising curricula to reflect diverse perspectives, histories, and cultures, ensuring that students from all backgrounds feel represented and valued.
- **Inclusive Policies:** Implementation of inclusive policies that accommodate diverse learning needs, celebrate differences, and create a supportive environment for all students.

## 2. Exclusion Reduction:

Recognising the correlation between exclusion and violence, many Sheffield schools are actively working to minimise exclusion rates through:

- **Early Intervention Programs:** Identification of at-risk students through early intervention programs, enabling timely and targeted support to address underlying issues before they escalate.
- **Collaboration with Support Services:** Partnerships with external support services, including mental health professionals and community organizations, to provide comprehensive support for students facing behavioural challenges.

## 3. Tackling Violence in Schools:

Sheffield schools are committed to creating safe and nurturing environments, employing a range of strategies:

- **Anti-Bullying Programs:** Implementation of robust anti-bullying programs that educate students on the impact of bullying, encourage reporting, and foster a culture of kindness and respect.
- **Conflict Resolution Education:** Integration of conflict resolution education into the curriculum, equipping students with essential skills to navigate disagreements peacefully and develop empathy.
- **Partnerships with Law Enforcement and Community Organisations:** Collaboration with local police and community organisations to address violence-related concerns, ensuring a unified and holistic approach to creating safe school environments.

# Exclusions from South Yorkshire Schools

Exclusions are a point of elevated risk for violence. An excluded pupil loses structure to their day, guardianship from the school, and is more open to exploitation. For the purposes of violence reduction, we would want to see exclusions as low as possible.

This needs to be balanced with the need to protect the safety of other students and maintain discipline in schools.

As can be seen from Figure 23, all districts except Sheffield have seen an increase in exclusions over since 2016/17 in secondary schools. From a violence reduction perspective this is concerning, as these young people are at greater risk of involvement, or an increase involvement, in violence.

*Figure 23 - Rate of exclusions in secondary schools*
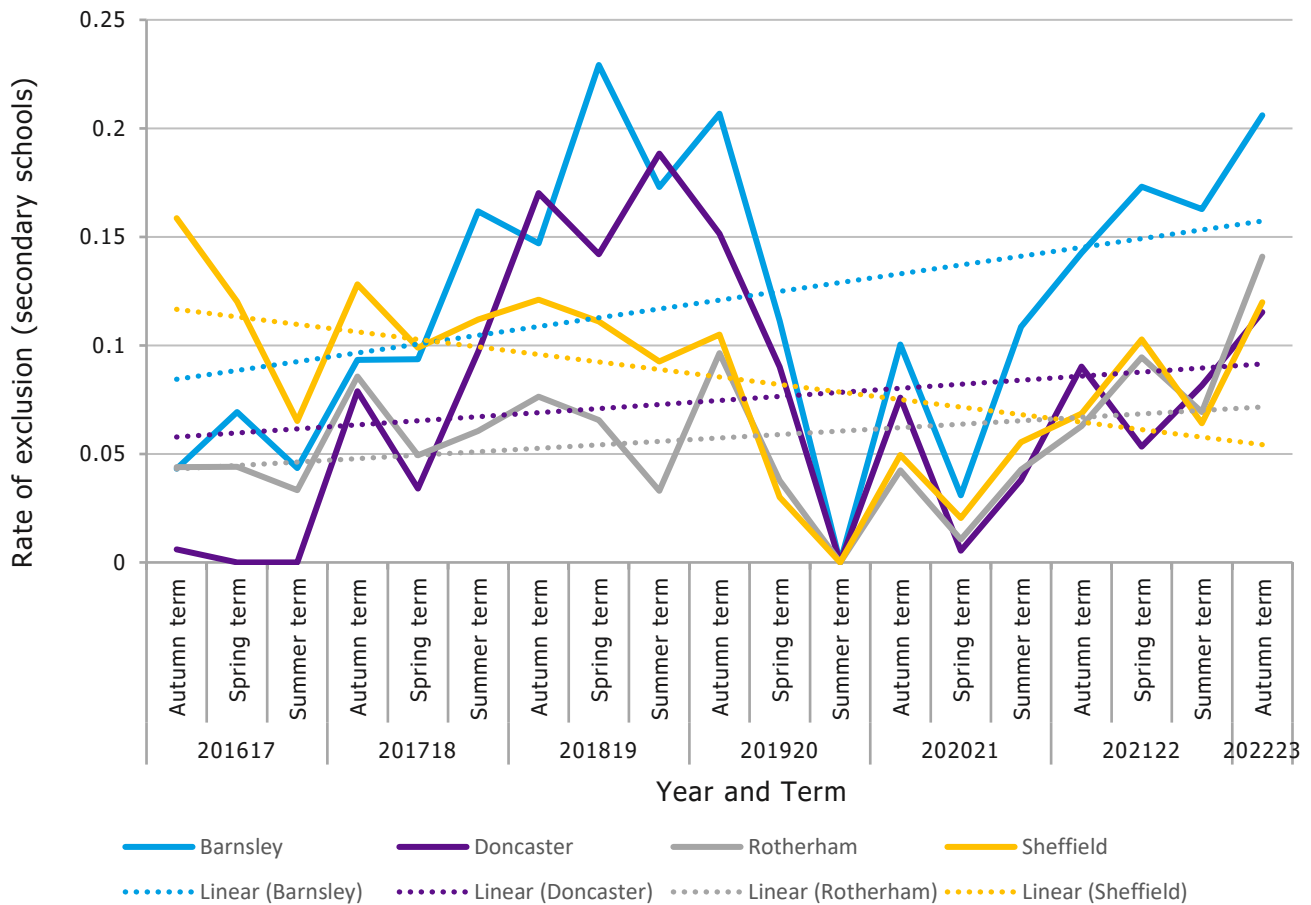
# Fire Service and Violence

# South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue

The Serious Violence Duty (SVD) came into being on the 31st January 2023. The Duty requires Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), police, justice agencies, health, education, and local authorities to collaborate and plan together to reduce and prevent serious violence in their local areas. The Duty applies to FRS that operate across England and Wales. The Duty now makes up part of FRS statutory provision.

# What is the role of the SYFR?

The primary role for SYFR in the Duty centres on well-established work that FRS have undertaken with Children and Young People (CYP) to support Intervening early to keep young people safe and away from violence. However, FRS also work with at risk adults and occupy a position on trust in many local communities. Fire plays a big role here and is probably better established than most agencies, increased trust of FRSs should be used more widely through local partnerships.

The key challenge for FRS will be how the service respond to the Duty whilst linking its input to core FRS functions. The contribution section set out below draws upon the sectors existing and emerging good practice which should help all FRS develop their local responses.

## Children and Young People – Early Intervention.

Early Intervention is a broad term representing a public policy approach to supporting Children and Young People (CYP) to prevent problems from developing in later life. There are several ways SYFR will contribute to this. NFCC Early Intervention specifically refers to short term programmes such as Ignite which we run in South Yorkshire. This is an intervention that blend personal development, FRS practical activities and safety education for groups of targeted CYP but are not Cadets, Fire Safety Intervention (Firesetting) or Princes Trust.

As stated in the Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance Document (Page 99 Para 307) 'Fire and Rescue Services should be supported to deliver trauma informed interventions, engagement activities and safety education to targeted children and young people which supports the personal development and social and emotional learning of the child to reduce their vulnerability and increase their resilience in line with current practice and evidence of what works to reduce serious violence'.

## Fire Safety Interventions (formally called Firesetters)

Fire Safety Intervention (FSI) is specialised fire safety education delivered by fire and rescue service's (FRS) to children and young people (CYP) who have shown firesetting behaviours or display a fascination with fire. FRS may use different delivery structures however the aim will remain the same; to educate, reduce fire risk and support the CYP to change their behaviour. Within SYFR we call our programme "Think Family".

SYFR have a dedicated focus in this area of prevention work due to the understanding that CYP who carry out firesetting behaviours (misuse fire) do so for a variety of different reasons, ranging from natural curiosity to criminality or even exploitation. CYP who misuse fire are one of the highest risk groups of individuals when it comes to building or outside destruction, antisocial behaviour, criminality, gang related activities, severe injuries and death. It is also recognised that without the correct education and support the CYP involved are likely to continue to demonstrate this behaviour leading to more significant and serious consequences.

# Fire Cadets

SYFR deliver Fire Cadets as part of their youth engagement activities at seven locations across the county. In line with the aims and objectives of the Serious Violence Duty (SVD), Fire Cadets supports young people to improve their physical and emotional well-being and support them in making better life choices through physical activity, education, and by embodying the core values of the Fire & Rescue Services.

SYFR try to meet the requirements of the SVD through directives such as targeted recruitment into the Cadets programme that consider disadvantaged, under represented young people and left behind communities. Prevention education as part of the Fire Cadet Award One and Two and through partnership work tackles issues such as county lines, discrimination, and the impacts of knife crime and by partaking in community social action projects.

# Staywise

StayWise is a national online platform that supports the aims of the SVD through the provision of quality assured resources and educational activities with an emphasis on early intervention, educating young people to prevent them from becoming either a victim or perpetrator of serious violence.

StayWise hosts engaging activities created and curated by the emergency services for consistent delivery of key safety information to children and young people in your communities. The library of interventions can be used to address the problems associated with serious violence in your local area, supplementing local delivery plans and avoiding the need to create new resources. All resources are linked to the national curriculum for ease of use in schools. Lesson plans and bundles of activities provide a steer for delivery teams where longitudinal or multiple interventions are deemed necessary and save Fire and Rescue Services time and money in developing their own prevention education provision.

The activities and resources can be used as part of your evidence informed local approach to tackling serious violence, targeting activity to the people and places most at risk. StayWise is a tool for use by Fire and Rescue Services that allows authorities and agencies to meet the objectives in your area strategy, effectively preventing and reducing serious violence and make communities safer, saving lives through education.

# Princess Trust

SYFR delivers the Princes Trust Team programme, a twelve week programme to support the development of young people between the ages 16 – 25. Through the Princess Trust Programme SYFR can and target the recruitment of young offenders and ex-offenders. SYFR Princess Trust staff have used the Probation Service, Youth Offending Team and the police – out of court disposals etc - and other as trusted referral partners to support the recruitment onto the team programme. SYFR have previously had South Yorkshire Police PCSO's seconded to the local team to support the delivery and breakdown barriers, this partnership was particularly strong.

# Fire Setting and Anti-Social Behaviour

SYFR works with SYP and the four Local Authority's to reduce Arson and Deliberate Fires across the county. This work that is delivered across the four districts is supported through the Joint Community Safety Department. Both the reduction of arson/deliberate fire setting and compliance

with the Duty rely on regular coordinated communications with stakeholders to share information and take coordinated actions in their local areas.

## Safeguarding

There is a clear expectation that SYFR develop partnerships to support risk reduction services to those identified as vulnerable and at risk from exploitation or abuse. Safeguarding within the fire sector is one that is wholly immersed in collaborative approaches with SYFR represented at Local Authority Safeguarding Children and Local Authority Safeguarding Adult Boards.

The SYFR Safeguarding Leads within SYFR are trained to a minimum of level 4 which enables efficient and effective threshold assessments enabling referral to local authority social care providers.

FRS employees exercise statutory powers and will often collaborate with other emergency services in the conduct of their activities. FRS employees conduct their work from a highly trusted position within society and partnership working can clearly evidence the significance of this trusted position as Social Care, Police and Health will in turn make safeguarding referrals to their local fire and rescue service to gain access to the hardest to reach vulnerable members of communities.

## Protection/ Building Fire Safety

Through Fire safety Order (FSO) a regime of building inspections that can act as intelligence gathering to inform key safeguarding issues including:

• Modern Day Slavery / Cuckooing

• Human Trafficking

• Drug related crime

• PREVENT

## Prevention / Community Safety

The cornerstone of all Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) prevention work has been how services can prevent fire, fire fatalities and serious injuries in the home setting. The Person Centred Framework (PCF) sets out the background of the sector's prevention work in the home and introduces the PCF for the Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV). It aims to support FRSs to deliver a standardised and evidence-based approach to a person centred HFSV.

At the core of this work is the recognition that FRS need to work with those individuals and communities that are most at risk from fire and as a consequence of this work FRS cross the thresholds of vulnerable households on a daily basis and thereby support FRS specific work linked to the delivery of the Duty, incorporating safeguarding, early intervention, arson and fire setting.

# Probation and Probationer Need

# Response to Violence: Probation

The probation service offers many services for individuals on probation. The intent of these services is to reduce the drivers to re-offending, including in violent crime.

## Substance Misuse

Substance Misuse is a key issue for People on Probation. We work with a number of partners to identify and manage these cases. We assess people at Court using a Screening Tool and try and identify appropriate cases to propose Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) cases, and Alcohol Treatment Requirement (ATR) cases.

We also use Likewise (a treatment provider) and an organisation called Change Grow Live to support people on probation with these issues. Detailed information is held on the numbers of cases working with each of these services.

We also drug test people in the community on some court orders, our probation staff do that as part of compliance with court orders.

## Accredited Programmes

Probation Service South Yorkshire currently runs the following Programmes. These are evidentially proven to reduce reoffending rates.

## Building Better Relationships (BBR)

BBR is for adult male perpetrators convicted of an Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) related offence against a female partner, who present with a moderate or high risk of committing future IPV offences.

BBR has a strong skills focus and participants are provided with a range of cognitive and behavioural skills and tools to support and promote the use of positive behaviours in their intimate relationships. BBR makes use of a range of treatment approaches and techniques.

## Thinking Skills Programme (TSP)

TSP reduces recidivism by focusing on developing people's ability to manage their emotions, make decisions, solve problems, achieve their goals, manage the influence of anti-social relationships and use pro-social interpersonal skills in their interactions with others.

By having and increasing these skills participants are then able to apply these to the way they live and manage their everyday lives. This in itself reduces the chances of offending reoccurring and helps participants set up and maintain a pro-social and constructive lifestyle.

**Partner Organisations**

We have partner Organisations, commissioned by HMPPS and the Probation Service to help and support people on probation with the following needs -

- **Accommodation.**

- **Substance Misuse – dependency and recovery. (Drugs and Alcohol).**

- **Holistic service for Women.**

- **Finance, Benefit and Debt.**

- **Education, Training and Employment.**

- **Personal Wellbeing.**

We monitor use of these services in line with what we know about our caseloads, and monitor outcomes through Contract Managers. These appointments support our ongoing supervision of the court order, and are enforceable.

**Structured Interventions and Toolkits**

Probation practitioners also have a range of structured interventions and Toolkits we use with people on probation during our regular appointments. Some examples are;

- **Skills for Relationships.**
- **Choices and Changes.**
- **Maps for Change.**
- **Stepping Stones.**
- **Pathways to Change.**
- **HMPPS Activity Hubs**

These help people on probation with a range of rehabilitative needs, such as money management, ID and bank accounts, finances, employment, training and education (ETE), health and physical activity, thinking skills, personal wellbeing and English and Maths proficiency.

Further to the above, Sex offenders either do 'Horizon' (an accredited programme) or 'Maps for Change' with the probation practitioners (a toolkit).

Domestic Violence offenders would do 'Building Better Relationships' programme, or 'Skills for relationship' toolkit.

There are also programmes at the Activity Hub in Sheffield that we refer to, such Caring Dads.

There are similar courses for women at the Together Women Project we use for women on probation in Sheffield.

# Probationer Needs

The probation service collects data on OASys on the needs of probationers for violent crimes. The needs of probationers does not necessarily reflect their needs before their crime, and we cannot draw cause and effect from the needs described to the offending. However, the needs of probationers are indicative of what South Yorkshire needs to address to reduce re-offending. In

addition, there may be other individuals with similar offending patterns who have not been charged or incarcerated for their crimes, and it is possible that their needs may be similar.

Needs are presented as a percentage of the needs of the age band. The base for the percentage was how many custodial or non-custodial sentences were given out to that age group. As a probationer may have more than one need, the percentages will total more than 100%.

# Needs of Probationers

Table 11 shows the needs of probationers who were sentenced for violent offences, by the proportion of probationers who presented that need, from financial year 2021/22 to Q2 of 2023/24. ETE stands for Education, Training and Employment.

*Table 11 - Needs of probationers for violent crime*

| Age Band | Accommodation | Alcohol | Attitudes | Drugs | ETE | Lifestyle | Relationships | Thinking & Behaviour |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16-19 | 36% | 12% | 64% | 39% | 55% | 61% | 67% | 73% |
| 20-29 | 48% | 26% | 71% | 46% | 60% | 74% | 73% | 73% |
| 30-39 | 50% | 38% | 69% | 45% | 56% | 69% | 79% | 76% |
| 40-49 | 44% | 39% | 70% | 39% | 52% | 66% | 77% | 72% |
| 50-59 | 43% | 41% | 64% | 29% | 48% | 60% | 75% | 71% |
| 60-69 | 43% | 34% | 60% | 24% | 32% | 57% | 81% | 68% |
| 70+ | 31% | 15% | 46% | 0% | 8% | 27% | 65% | 42% |
| Total | 47% | 35% | 69% | 41% | 54% | 68% | 77% | 73% |

It is clear from table 11 that "thinking and behaviour" and "relationships" are very common needs amongst probationers. It is also common amongst all age groups, with the exception of thinking and behaviour for those aged 70+. "Attitudes" is also a need in many cases, suggesting a need for targeted work to change attitudes as well as the Violence Reduction Unit's general approach to changing social attitudes towards violence.

Less common needs still tend to account for a third to half of probationers in most age groups. For instance, drugs were a need in almost half of 20 to 29 years old.

We can also compare the needs of probationers from violent offences from those of non-violent offences.

*Table 12 - Needs of probationers of non-violent crimes*

| Age Band | Accommodation | Alcohol | Attitudes | Drugs | ETE | Lifestyle | Relationships | Thinking & Behaviour |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16-19 | 28% | 10% | 70% | 45% | 60% | 73% | 65% | 60% |
| 20-29 | 35% | 13% | 60% | 40% | 54% | 71% | 57% | 60% |
| 30-39 | 42% | 24% | 66% | 42% | 47% | 72% | 66% | 61% |
| 40-49 | 41% | 24% | 66% | 42% | 51% | 71% | 63% | 62% |
| 50-59 | 35% | 26% | 64% | 23% | 39% | 66% | 62% | 60% |
| 60-69 | 31% | 20% | 66% | 12% | 31% | 65% | 59% | 61% |
| 70+ | 29% | 7% | 63% | 4% | 7% | 58% | 67% | 67% |
| Total | 39% | 21% | 64% | 38% | 48% | 70% | 62% | 61% |

"Thinking and behaviour" was a less common need, in most age groups, for non-violent offenders compared to violent offenders. "Accommodation" was also a more prevalent need for violent offenders aged 20 to 29 than non-violent offenders.

# Need of Probationers by District

With all ages combined, Figure 24 shows that there are not large differences between districts when it comes to the needs of probationers of violent crime. Consistent, countywide approaches will still be appropriate for probationers.

*Figure 24 - Needs of probationers of violent crime by district*
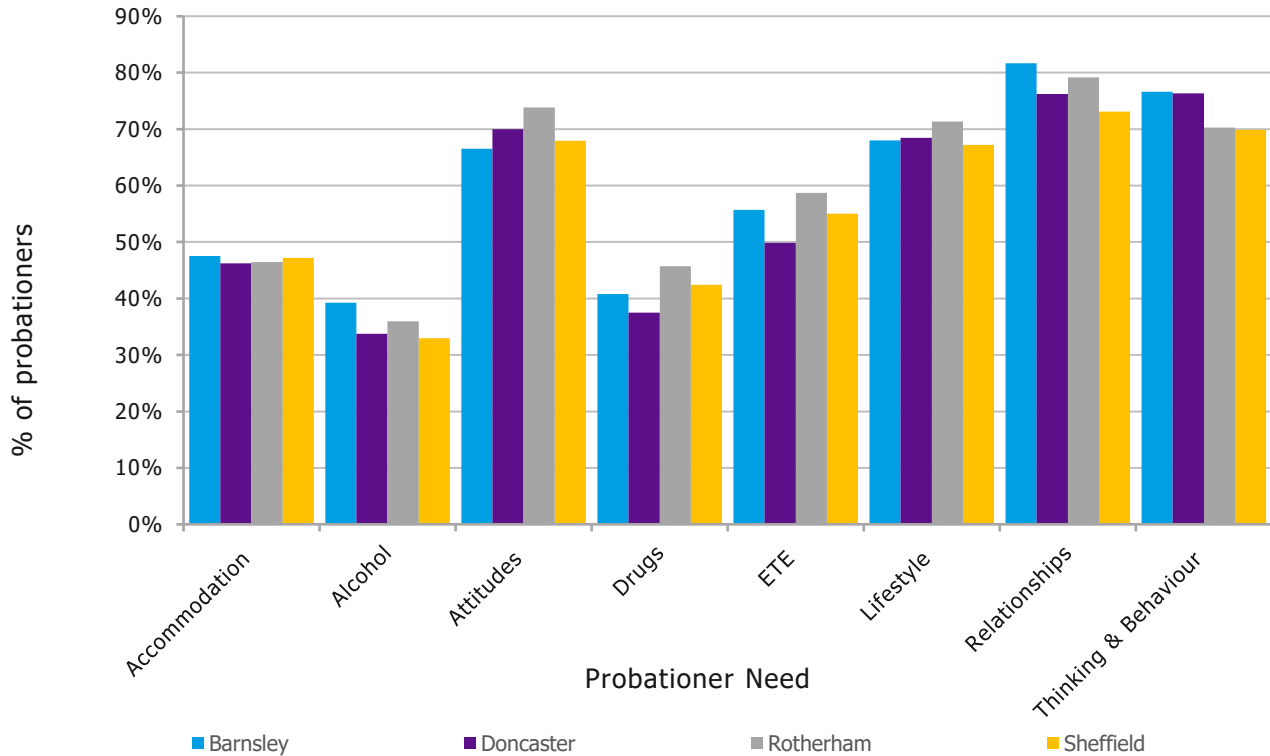
# Needs of Probationers over time

Over time, we can see the needs of probationers overall have increased, with each need showing increases. We cannot rule out that this is not due to better identification of need, rather than an increase in the needs of probationers (see Figure 25).

*Figure 25 - Needs of probationers over time*
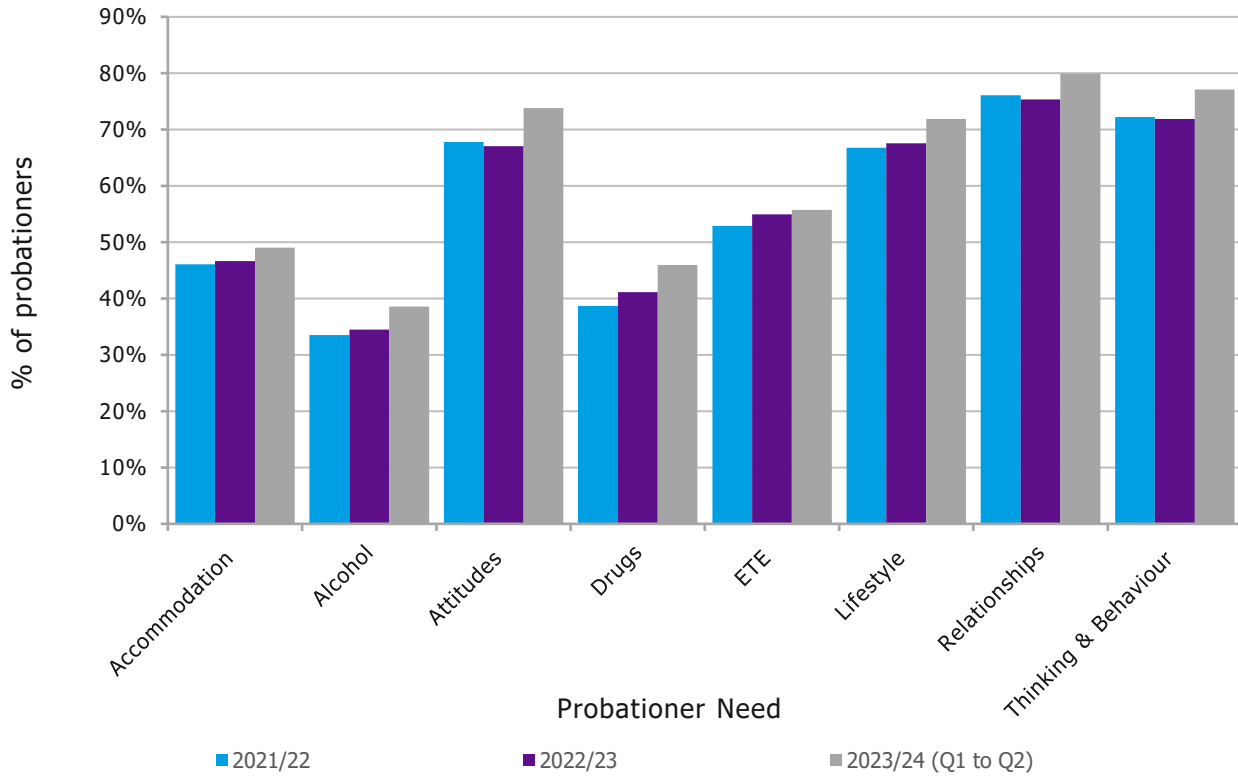
# Crime Data and Methodology

# Crime Data

The remainder of this Strategic Needs Assessment looks predominately at crime data. When analysing data on violence, we must inevitably use crime data from South Yorkshire Police. Crime data has limitations, which are discussed in this section, but is also easily accessible, detailed and open to many different types of analysis. It is therefore a valuable resource when looking at the incidence of violence across South Yorkshire.

# Time Period

The data in this SNA is usually presented in calendar years or financial quarters. Data were available from 2019, although for readability we limit most graphs to 2020 to 2024.

# Calculating Rates

Throughout this report, many figures are expressed as rates. This is a method of taking the size of a population into account, by normalising the raw numbers of incidences to the population of the areas being studied, to enable comparison across areas. Otherwise, larger areas will have "more" crime simply because there are more people and therefore more opportunities for crime to occur.

The most common rate used in the crime data is the average rate of reported crimes per 100,000 or 10,000 population, by Time Period or Quarter. This is calculated by;

- Extracting a count of a crime or event from the database
- Dividing this result by the population of the Middle Super Output Area (MSOA), district or county, depending on the area being studied.
- Multiplying the result by 10,000 or 100,000, to get the rate per 10,000 or 100,00 population.

The population was derived from the 2021 census for most analyses. The exception is the MSOA level analyses which used data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Some rates are age-standardised. The European Standard Population was used for this, and the count of population for each age group was taken from the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019. This dataset was used as currently it is the best population data available at the MSOA level.

# Police Data

Police data was extracted from South Yorkshire Police's CONNECT database. The incidents extracted were committed between 1st January 2019 and 30th December 2024.

Data underwent only limited cleansing to control for known issues. As such, data should be considered **unaudited**.

Certain limitations and caveats apply to all crime data in this report. They are stated here to avoid repetition. When unique data quality issues or limitations arise, they will be noted in the report.

- This profile can only cover incidents that are known to South Yorkshire Police. Not all incidents of violence are reported to South Yorkshire Police. Inevitably, this profile will underestimate the levels of violence in South Yorkshire by an unknown amount.

- Not all reports to the police are accurate.

- Not all reported violent crimes are recorded. The last Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection in 2018 found that South Yorkshire Police recorded 86.4% of violent crimes. However, this may vary across crime types and based on whether the incident was a domestic incident or not.

- Police records are reliant on the accurate reporting by the officers and staff involved in the incident, with further auditing occurring in some cases. The data in this report can only be as good as the data in CONNECT, South Yorkshire Police's crime recording system.

- Not all crimes have known victims or suspects. When we do have known victims or suspects, we may not have full or accurate details on victims and suspects. Any analysis that concerns victims or suspects will have a degree of error.

- Date of birth can be inaccurately reported. Whenever the date of birth was absent, or matched either the crime committed date or incident created date, the age of the suspect was discounted from the analysis.

- The time an incident occurred can be inaccurately reported, usually defaulting to midnight of that day. Any incidents which were reported as occurring on exactly 00:00:00 were removed from any time based analyses.

# Public Place Homicide

# Homicide Prevention Board

The Home Office Beating Crime Plan set a target to reduce homicides in England and Wales by 20%. As part of that work forces are encouraged to take a holistic approach to preventing serious violent crime and homicide. The Home Office, HMICFRS and College of Policing worked together to produce a Homicide Prevention Framework and this was followed by a HMICFRS thematic Homicide Prevention Inspection in January 2023. South Yorkshire Police has produced a Homicide and 'near miss' problem profile to analyse the force problem so that we can focus our efforts on the key causation factors. For the 3 years analysed, key causation factors behind SYP's homicides and 'near miss' incidents were Domestic Abuse, Drugs and Organised Crime, Knife Crime and the Night-Time Economy.

South Yorkshire Police has responded by establishing a bi monthly Homicide Prevention board chaired by ACC Sarah Poolman to coordinate our response to homicide prevention and focussing on a new Homicide Prevention Strategy. A Detective Superintendent has also been appointed as Homicide Prevention lead for the force. All key police teams are represented Including:

- Major Crime
- Armed Crime Team / SOCU and OP Fortify
- District SCT Violent Crime Leads
- PVP Performance and Governance DA risk Assessment Team including MARAC and MATAC and Serious Case Review
- GRIP Team
- The Night-Time Economy thematic lead
- The RASSO thematic lead
- The VRU

Work coordinated through this board so far includes a Most Serious Violence Performance Dashboard, Grip problem solving in the Night-Time Economy, Operation Sceptre and the development of a Habitual Knife Carriers Index and a Homicide and 'near miss' rapid review process. The board also links in with the public health partnership approach coordinated by the VRU. The new Serious Violence Duty will be key to this going forward.

# Public Place Homicide

Homicide represents the most serious of violence and the most significant of harms. All the work of violence reduction is ultimately a work to reduce homicide. However, homicide itself is hard to measure reductions in. Whilst we would want the number of homicides to be 0, the statistically low count of homicides means detecting trends and carrying out meaningful analysis is difficult.

Due to the sensitivity of homicide data, in this section we use data that has been returned to the Home Office for improved data quality. This does restrict some of the analyses, such as restricting suspect analysis to principal suspect only.

# Number of Homicides

We have covered 6 calendar years of data in this analysis, from 2019 to 2024. Over this time, the proportion of homicides which have occurred in a public place versus a residential setting has varied considerably, with no location being consistently more likely (see Figure 26). The number of homicides in a public place has increased over time, but this is mostly due to a high number in 2022 that was not repeated in 2023 and 2024.

*Figure 26 - Count of homicides by location*



# Public Place Homicide by Victim Age

The count of public place homicides in both the 0 to 24 has increased over the 6 years covered, but the data is highly variable. In 2019 and 2020, there was 1 homicide in each year. In 2021, this increased to 5, but this high number of homicides has not been repeated for this age group. For victims aged 25+, the number of homicides is even more variable, with a high of 12 (in 2022) and a low of 2 (in 2024).

*Figure 27 - Count of public place homicides by age*
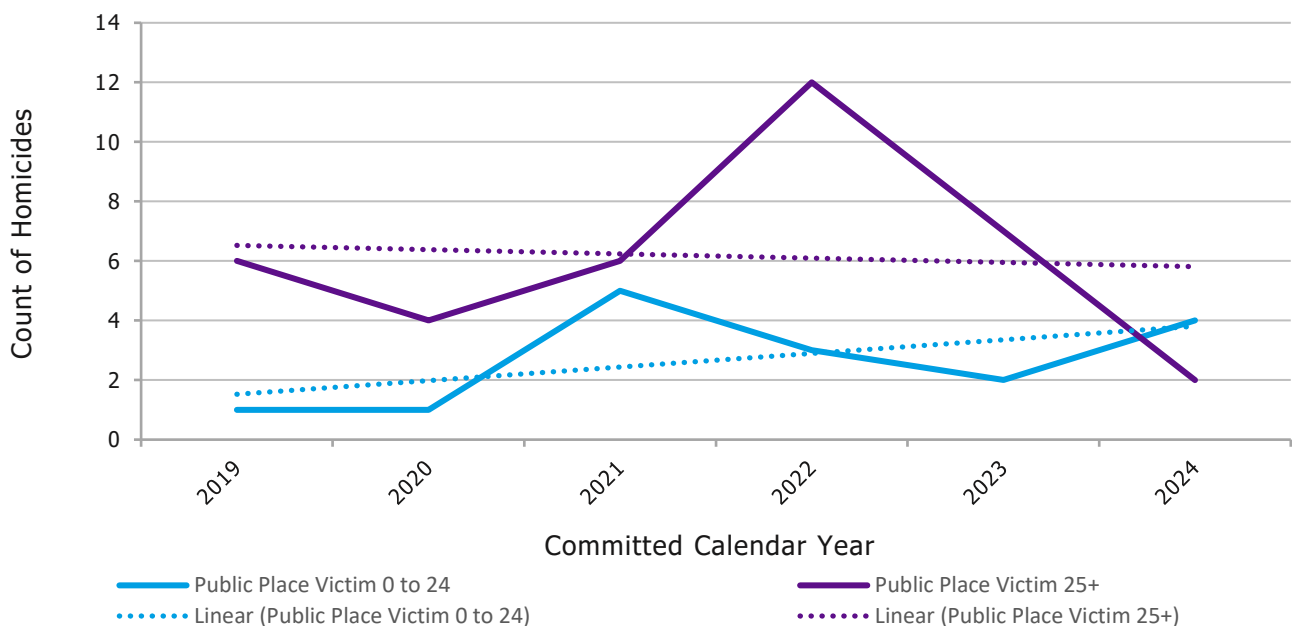
# Public Place Homicide by Principal Suspect Age

Unlike other crime types, where we look at all suspects of the crime, for homicide we look only at the primary suspect. Not all homicides have a suspect.

The count of suspects of public place homicides aged 0 to 24 has increased over the 6 years covered, although 2024 saw a notable decrease. This may partly be due to a suspect not being detected when the data was generated. For suspects aged 25+, the data is highly variable, ranging from 8 (in 2022) to 2 (in 2024).

*Figure 28 - Count of public place homicides by suspect age*

# Public Place Homicides by Victim Gender

The majority of victims of public place homicides are male. In the 6 years covered, 49 victims were male and 4 were female.

*Figure 29 - Public place homicide victims by gender*
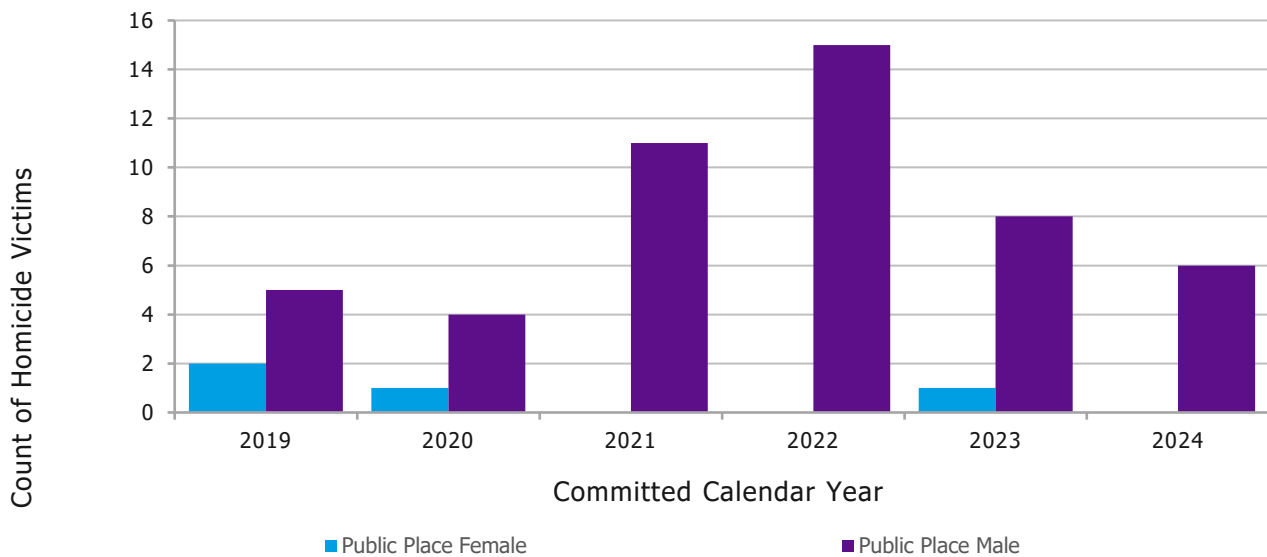


In 3 of the years covered, all victims of public place homicide were male.

# Public Place Homicide by Principle Suspect Gender

In the 6 years covered, all but one of the principal suspects of public place homicide were male (see Figure 30).

*Figure 30 - Public place homicides by suspect gender*



Public place homicide mostly concerns males, both as victims and suspects.

# Public Place Most Serious Violence

# Public Place Most Serious Violence

We define public place most serious violence as violence of a wounding level or above (including murder and attempted murder) which is not part of a domestic incident or occurring in a prison. This crime grouping represents the violence with the greatest threat to the victims and public safety.

We use data that can be matched with knife crime data extracted from a data quality algorithm for this dataset. For this reason, data is only taken from 2019/20 onwards, and we only cover 4 12 month time periods not 5.

# GRIP Team

A new 'hotspot' policing initiative tackling location-based most violent crime was rolled out across South Yorkshire, after funding was secured from the Home Office's 'Grip' Programme for 2021/22 to 2024/25. South Yorkshire Police was one of 20 forces to receive a share of £30million 'Grip' funding from the Home Office for 'hotspot policing' and other problem-solving initiatives in areas impacted by violent crime.

Research findings suggest that by delivering intensive, high-visibility police foot patrols for short periods of time within specific areas where data analysis shows there is a risk of serious violence, the police can reduce crime and the public's demand for policing services. This tactic, known as 'hotspot policing,' involves police forces operating regular short and sharp foot patrols in micro-locations. Whilst on patrol, the uniformed officers speak to the public and act as a deterrent against the crimes that had been identified in those specific areas.

When first piloted in Southend-on-Sea in 2020, the tactic resulted in a 73% drop in violent crime and 31% per cent fall in street crime in the 20 highest crime hotspots on days when patrols visited, compared with days they did not.

South Yorkshire Police have a proven record of delivering a high level of integrity of patrol treatment across the 60 hotspots identified within year 2 of Grip - 2022/23. Across South Yorkshire, based on data analysis for 2023/24, 24 hotspots have been identified as areas where risk of serious violence is prevalent. This was not just based on crime counts, but also from utilising the Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CCHI) to analysis whet the largest proportion of our crime harm was situated.

The hotspot locations have continued to use a 'cross-over design' randomisation that will see 12 treatment and 12 control hotspots on any given day – totalling 24 overall crime hotspots. This randomisation occurs daily so every hotspot receives patrolling, just not every day. The reduction in the number of hotspots for 2023/24 has been decided from feedback arising from results analysis conducted by the Home Office, which identified that although we have seen good reductions across our hotspot areas. Therefore, there was a recommendation for larger hexagons to be created where more crime would be captured. Conversely, larger hotspots mean that there are fewer hotspots are identified as been appropriate patrol areas.

A team working on overtime works daily to provide a minimum of 20 minutes daily visibility in each hotspot location. In response to the increase in violence over Friday, and Saturday, officers will patrol later duties to incorporate peak violence times within the hotspots. Each hotspot will be visited at least twice in a day.

SYP led the Home Office funded National Problem Solving and Demand Reduction Programme that concluded in 2020 and still coordinates the Tilley Awards and National Problem-Solving Conference.

As such SYP has a strong problem-solving culture. Reflecting on the lessons learned from last years' problem-solving, the SYP Grip team have drawn the conclusion that their problem-solving activity will focus on the Night-Time Economy (NTE).

A significant proportion of harm sits within the NTE. As well as this highly concentrated volume and harm, the legislation and previously tested responses provide a suite of tactics to implement once the suitable analysis has taken place. The first tranche of analysis has focussed on hotspot identification followed by risky facilities analysis. This will provide an understanding of both violence that takes place in public spaces and violence that takes place in licenced premises. Within the NTE these are intrinsically linked, and our initial scanning shows a direct corelation between premises with high levels of violence and violence outside those premises.

The Grip team have also provided funding and direction for bespoke operations, which are not only innovative, but have had great success previously in targeting violent crime and firearm related offending within our region. Examples being:

The force has seen considerable success in the past two financial years under the remit of an open land search operation with the National Search Centre recognising the work of offensive open land searches within South Yorkshire as National best practice. It is a continual program of open land searches and was set up initially as part of the forces Serious Violent Crime Task Force (SVCTF) arising from Home Office Surge Funding.

It has been noted that serious violence and firearms offences have been prevalent within the force area over the last year. This level of specific criminal activity has had a notable effect on recorded crime figures, the wider community, and South Yorkshire Police's reputation. Firearms and ammunition from here and domestic burglaries have been found across this force and surrounding force areas.

The main aim of this operation is to gain evidence for prosecution, gather and develop intelligence and to deprive criminal groups and their nominals of resources. This is carried out through offensive open land-based searches, intending to find and seize outstanding firearms, bladed articles, component parts, ammunition, telephones, drugs, and items used in the supply of drugs and firearms across the Force. This will disrupt firearms enabled organised crime groups and associated nominals. Ultimately reducing murders, firearm discharges and serious violence offences. This provides an opportunity to increase trust and confidence in the communities where these offences have taken.

The Grip team have also planned multi-departmental periods of action, working together across specified areas within South Yorkshire, to prevent, disrupt and tackle serious violent crime.

The operation usually covers a two-day period in areas that are subject to an increased threat with firearms discharges, serious violent crimes, and recent/current intelligence; with a wider area that has a rise in knife crime, highly organised drug distribution, continued presence of street crime and an increase in fail to stop pursuits, linked to violence and the drugs market.

In respects to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), an operation that has been developed to reduce vulnerability related violence in the NTE by the intensive use of CCTV coverage in a specific area. The offences include, but are not limited to, those looking to perpetrate VAWG, robberies or "hugger mugging."

Staff are trained in behavioural analysis to spot avoidance behaviour in offenders. Officers are briefed with known VISOR/violent nominals likely to be in the area or those highlighted to be of

concern from previous Sentinel deployments. The operation also aims to develop intelligence and gather evidence to use against potential perpetrators.

The initiative uses a combination of uniformed and plain clothes officers to carry out patrols to identify people who may be displaying signs of predatory behaviour such as inappropriate touching and loitering. Uniformed officers then intervene and take positive action to discourage this behaviour, which may include arrest. Additionally, those that appear vulnerable in the NTE will also be safeguarded and directed to support services.

# Rate of Public Place Most Serious Violence

The rate of public place most serious violence has been decreasing in South Yorkshire, although most recent quarters show a precipitous decrease (see Figure 31). We know there have been some attempts in South Yorkshire to improve recording practices for most serious violence, but we do not believe this accounts for the entire decrease.

*Figure 31 - Rate of public place most serious violence*
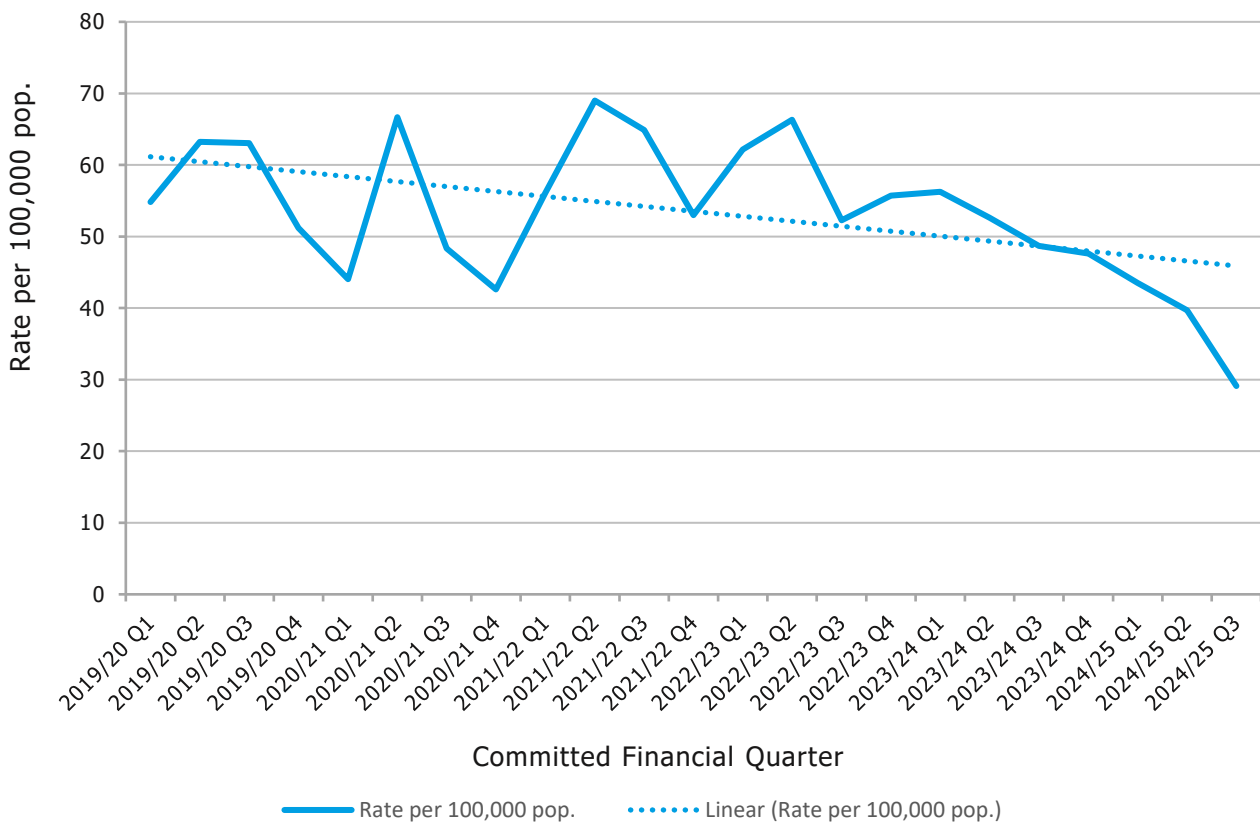


# Public Place Most Serious Violence by District

Rates in districts are highly variably, partly due to public place most serious violence being a low volume crime grouping. Recent sustained decreases means the overall trend is down for all districts (see Figure 32).

*Figure 32 - Rate of public place most serious violence by district*
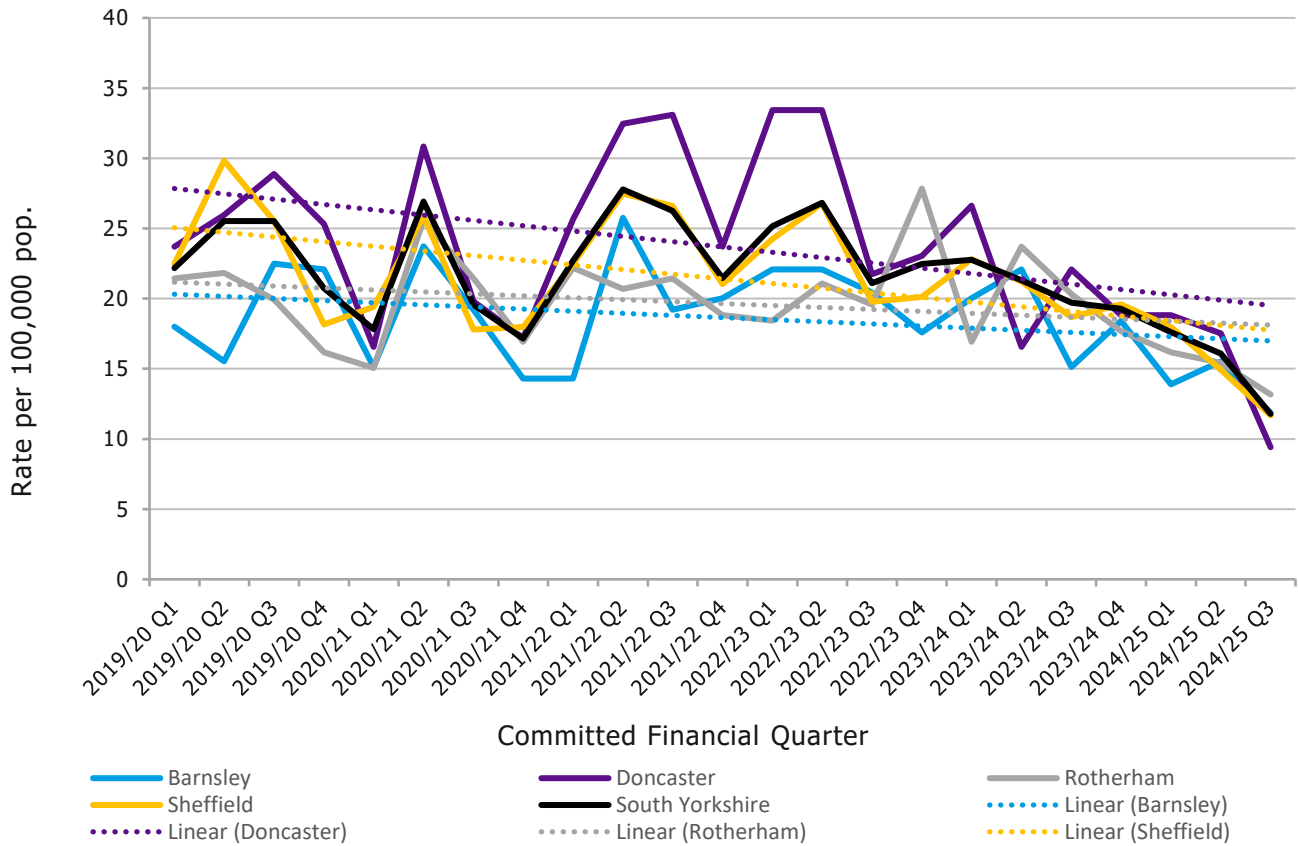


## Public Place Most Serious Violence Over Time

Public place most serious violence can happen at any time of the day, but predominately occurs in evenings. In 2024, a similar proportion of crimes occurred from the hours of 3pm to 5pm and 6pm to 8pm, in contrast to previous years when 6pm to 8pm had the highest proportion of crimes.

*Figure 33 - Public place most serious violence by hour of the day*
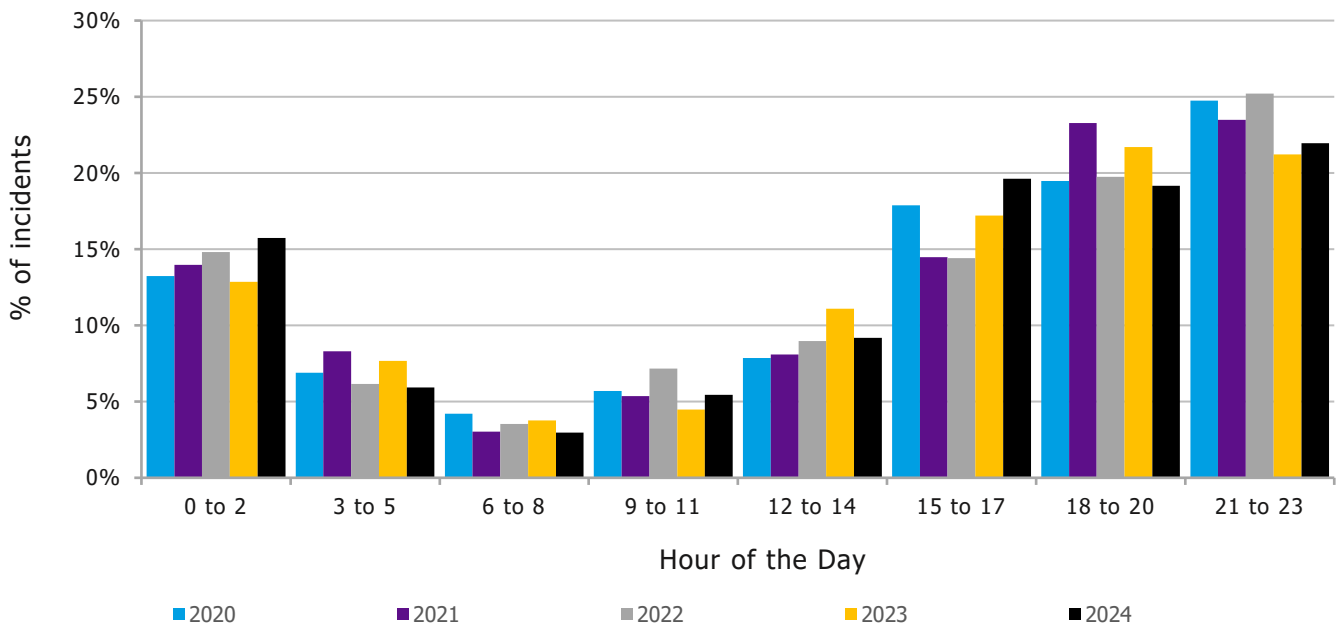


Public place most serious violence is most likely to occur on weekends. This effect was less notable in recent years, but Saturday was still the day with the highest percentage of crimes (see Figure 34).

*Figure 34 - Public place most serious violence by day of the week*
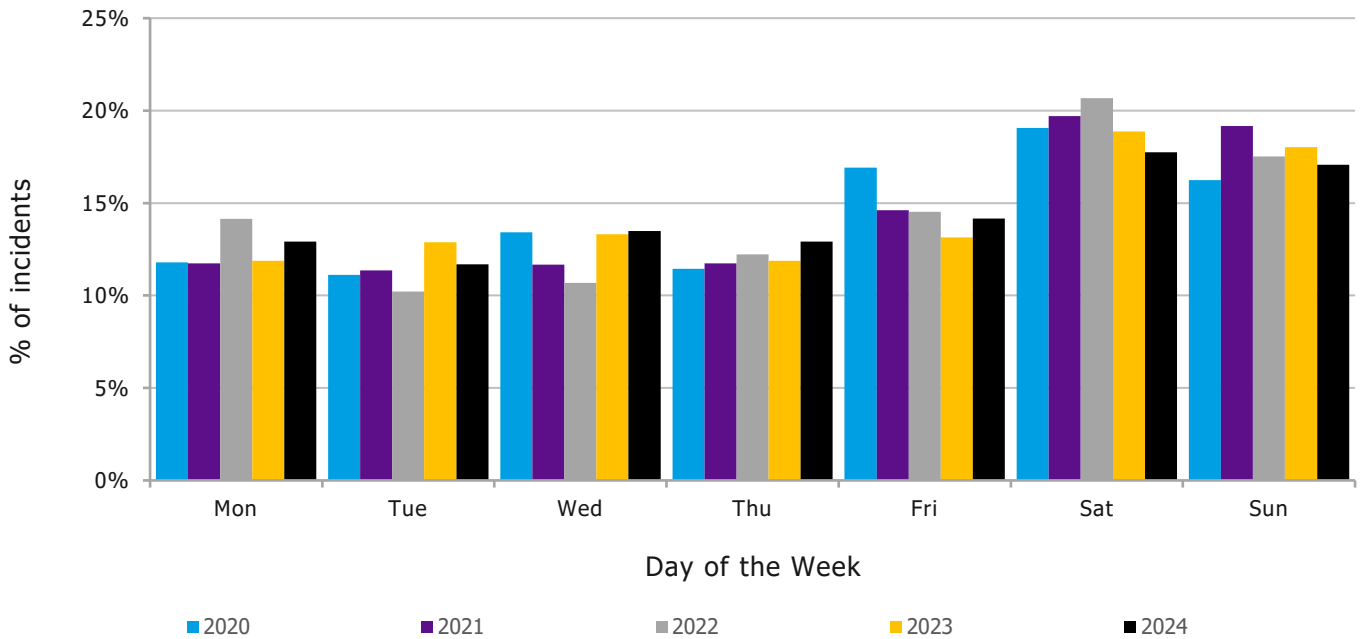


We can combine the hourly and daily statistics to form a picture of public place most serious violence over each 3 hour time frame of the week. From Figure 35 we can see that Friday and Saturday evenings are the most common time for public place most serious violent crimes. Crimes on Saturday and Sunday morning are better understood as continuations of Friday and Saturday night.

*Figure 35 - Public place most serious violence by hour and day of the week*
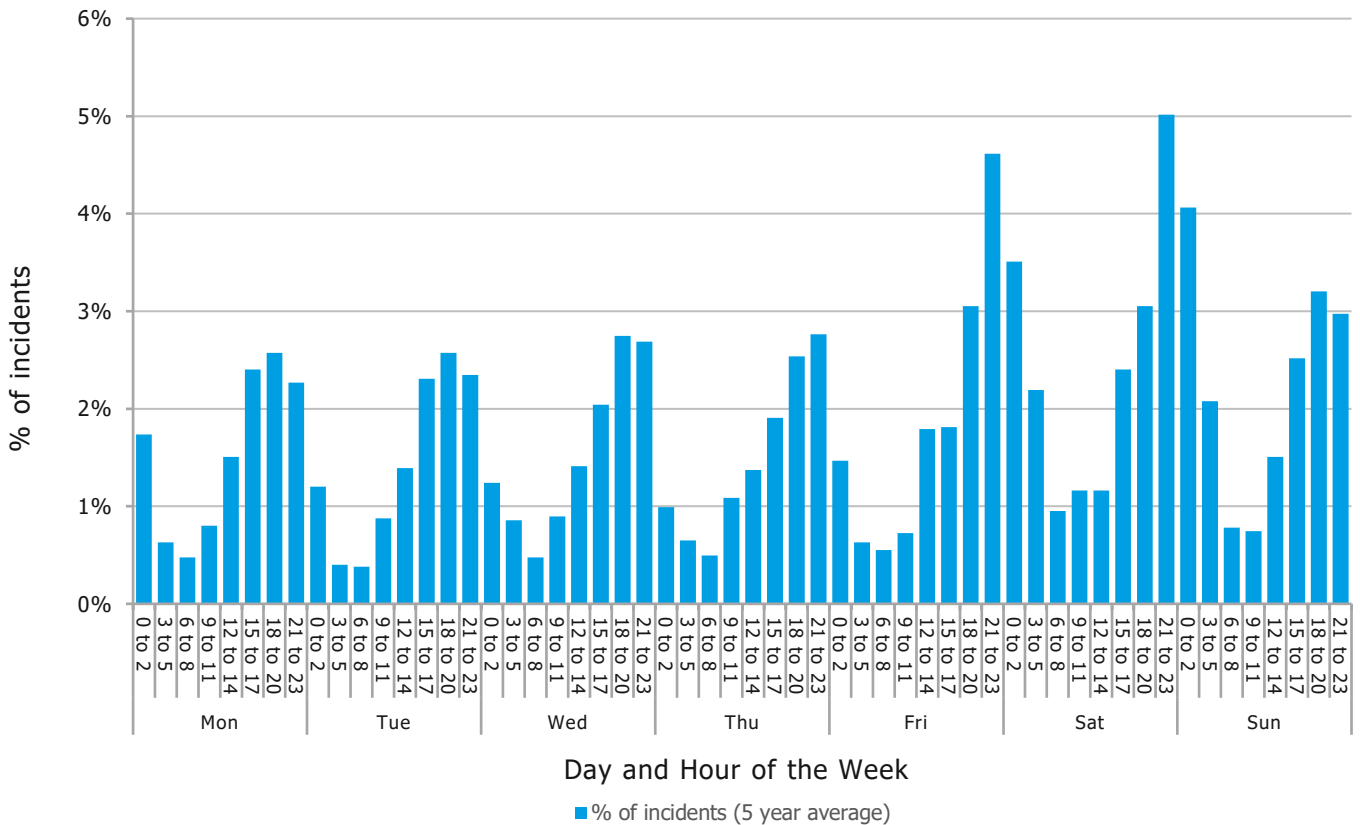
# Public Place Most Serious Violence by Deprivation

Areas of high deprivation experience more public place most serious violence. The overall decrease in public place most serious violence has occurred across all deprivation deciles except the 10th, where low numbers mean the rate is variable, but as the decile with the highest rate the reduction has mostly effected the most deprived areas.

Figure 36. Public place most serious violence by deprivation of location of crime
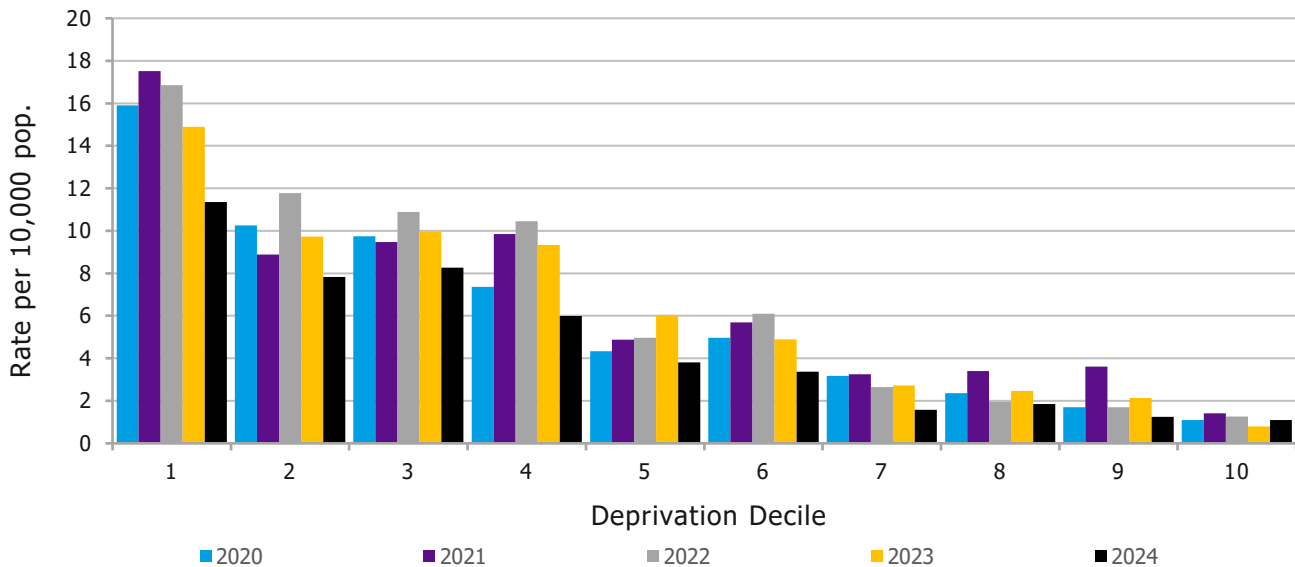


# Public Place Most Serious Violence Victims by Age

Generally speaking, a crime has a known victim and police data tends to contain details of the victim. However, this is not the case for all crimes.

From Figure 37 we can see that the rate of reported victimisation has decreased notably for those aged 15 to 19 and 20 to 24, although decreases have been seen across all age groups.

Figure 37 - Public place most serious violence by victim age
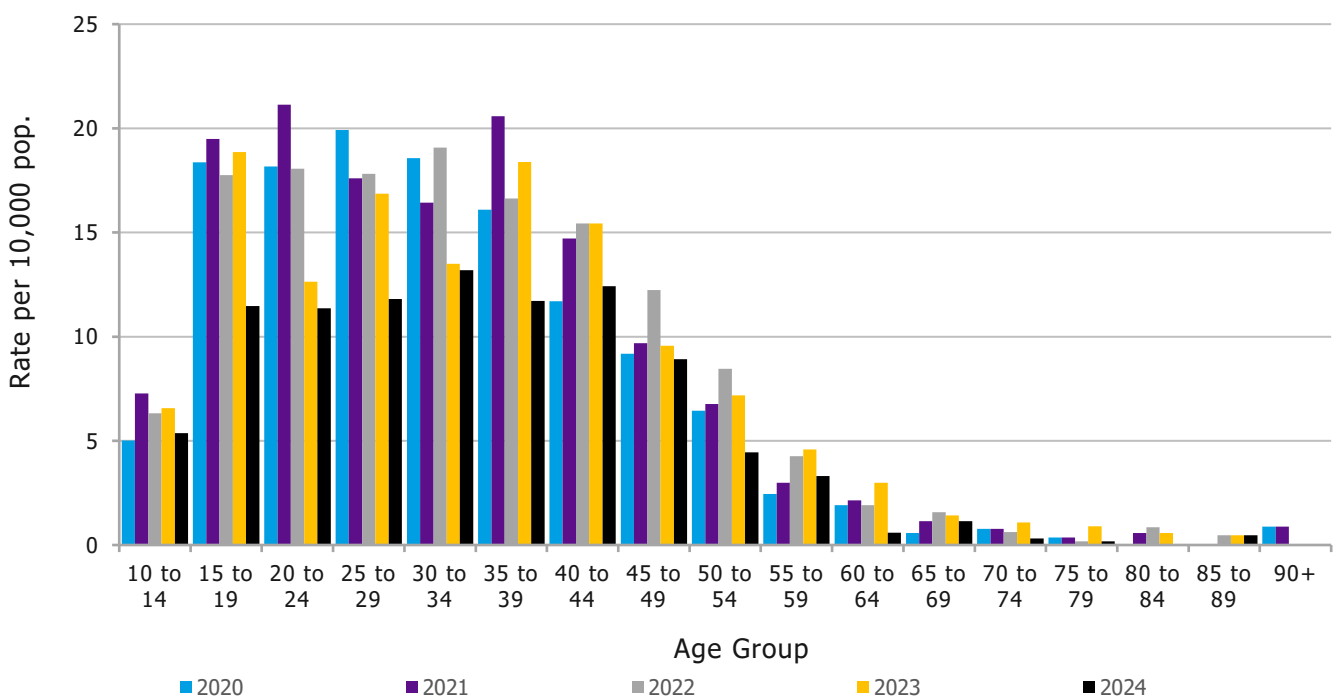
# Public Place Most Serious Violence Suspects by Age

Not all crimes have an identified suspect, and we do not have full details for all suspects.

In Figure 38 we can see that the rate of suspected offending has decreased notably for the 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 age groups, although a decrease has been seen across almost all age groups.

*Figure 38 - Public place most serious violence by suspect age*
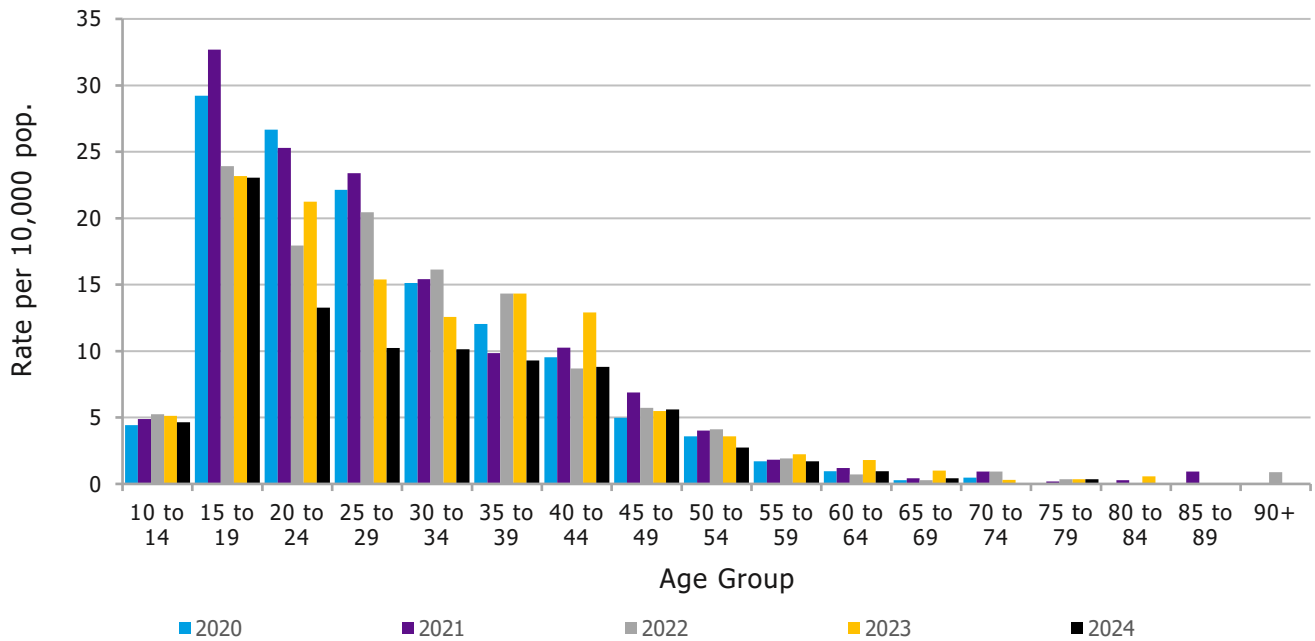


# Public Place Most Serious Violence Suspect and Victim Age Difference

The majority of suspects in public place most serious violence incidents are younger than the victims (see Figure 39).

*Figure 39. Direction of age difference between suspects and victims in public place most serious violence*
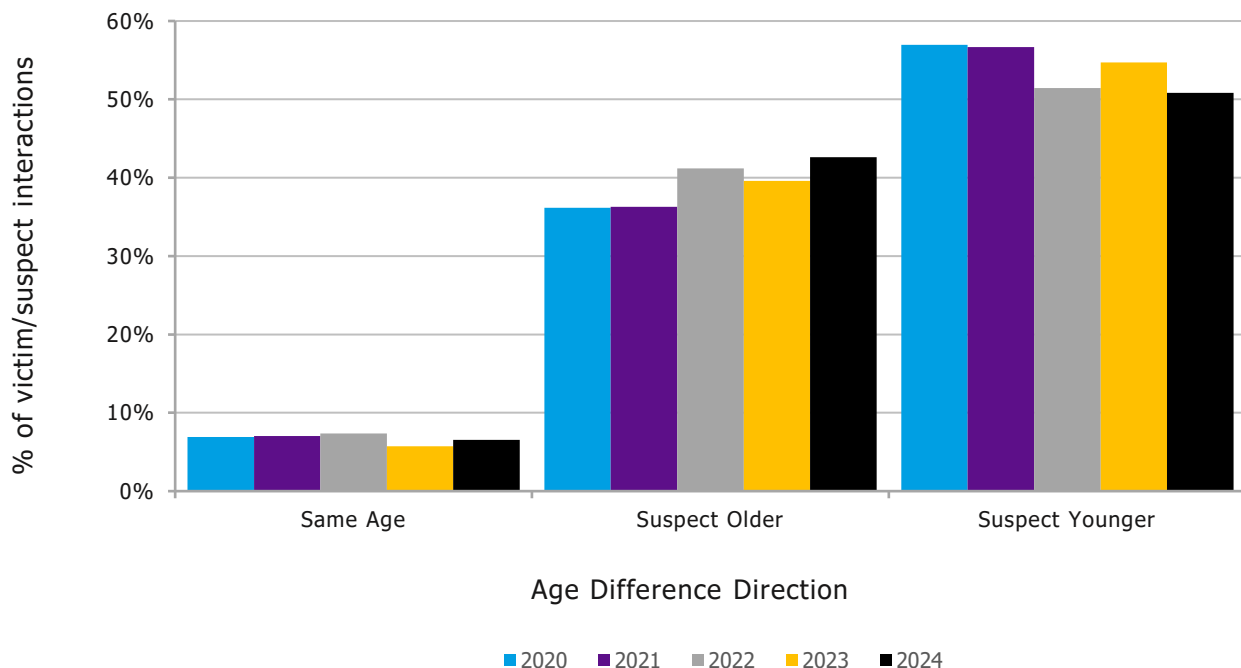
However, the actual age difference is relatively small, with 39.2% of suspects and victims aged within 0 to 4 years of each other (see Figure 40).

*Figure 40. Age difference between suspects and victims of public place most serious violence*
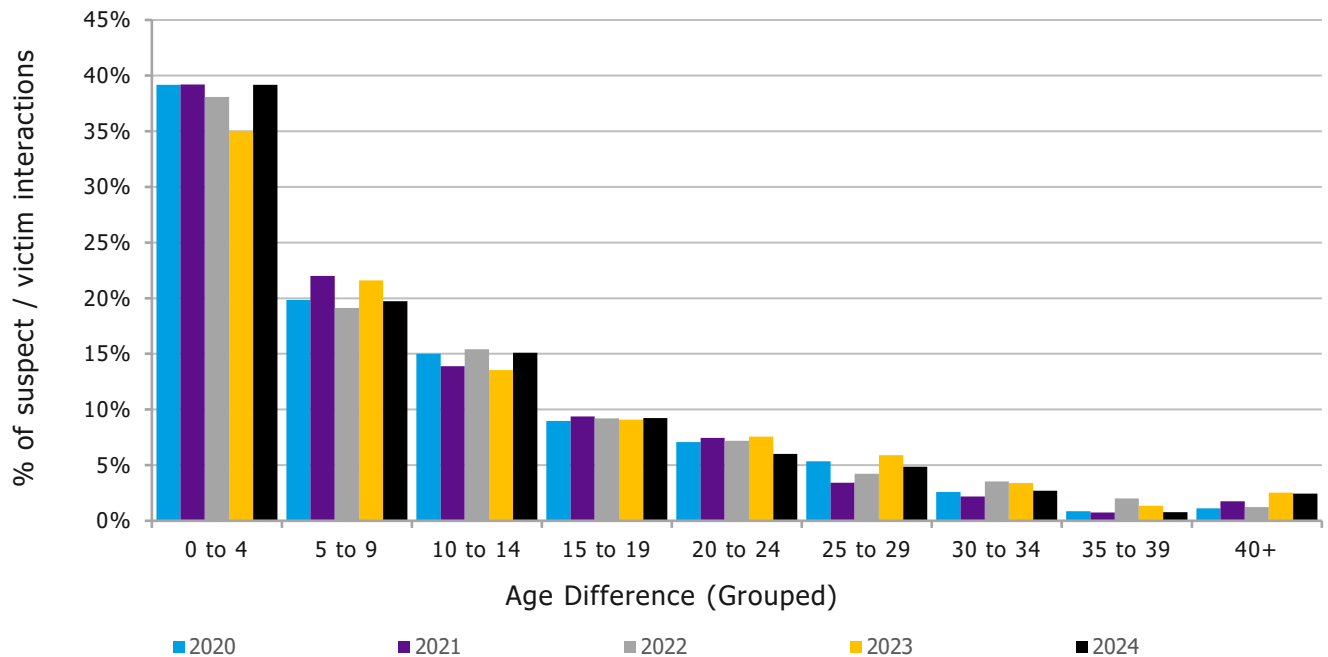


# Public Place Most Serious Violence Victim Gender

The majority of victims of public place most serious violence are male (see Figure 41). There has been an overall decrease in male victims from 2022 to 2024, concurrent with the overall decrease in public place most serious violence.

*Figure 41 - Public place most serious violence by gender of victims*
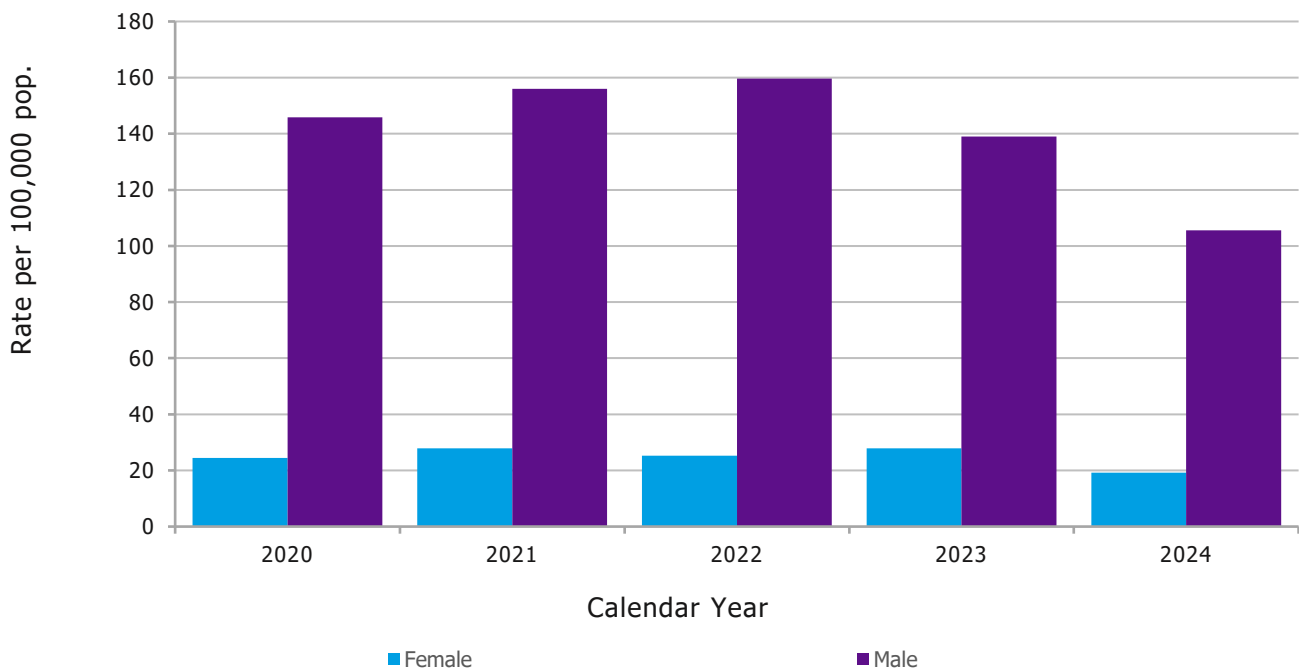
# Public Place Most Serious Violence Suspect Gender

Males remain the majority of offenders for public place most serious violence (see Figure 42). However, the decrease in public place most serious violence has been driven primarily by a decrease in male offending.

*Figure 42 - Public place most serious violence by suspect gender*
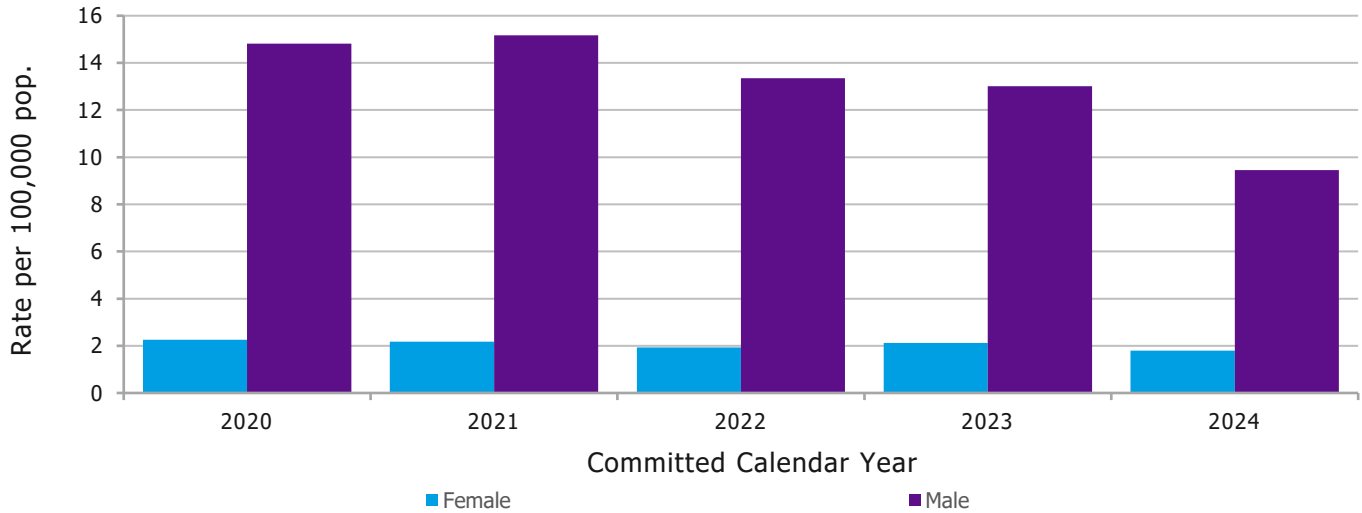


In 2024, 75.3% of public place most serious violence crimes were male on male. 8.9% had a male suspect and female victim, 6.4% had a female suspect and a female victim, and 9.4% had female suspect and a male victim.

# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence

# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence

South Yorkshire has set a goal of reducing public place, knife enabled most serious violence in our county. We will refer to this as knife enabled most serious violence, but as with public place most serious violence we are removing domestic incidents and incidents in prisons.

Except for firearms offences, knife enabled most serious violence is the crime grouping with the most capacity for harm. The difference between a serious wounding, attempted murder and a completed murder with a knife can be just a small change in position or angle, or entirely down to the work of emergency services.

# Rate of Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence

The rate of knife enabled most serious violence has been slowly decreasing over the 6 years covered, although there is great variability between quarters (see Figure 43). This suggests the actions of South Yorkshire's Violence Reduction Unit, partners in violence reduction, and our communities are contributing to reducing knife enabled most serious violence.

*Figure 43 - Rate of knife enabled most serious violence*
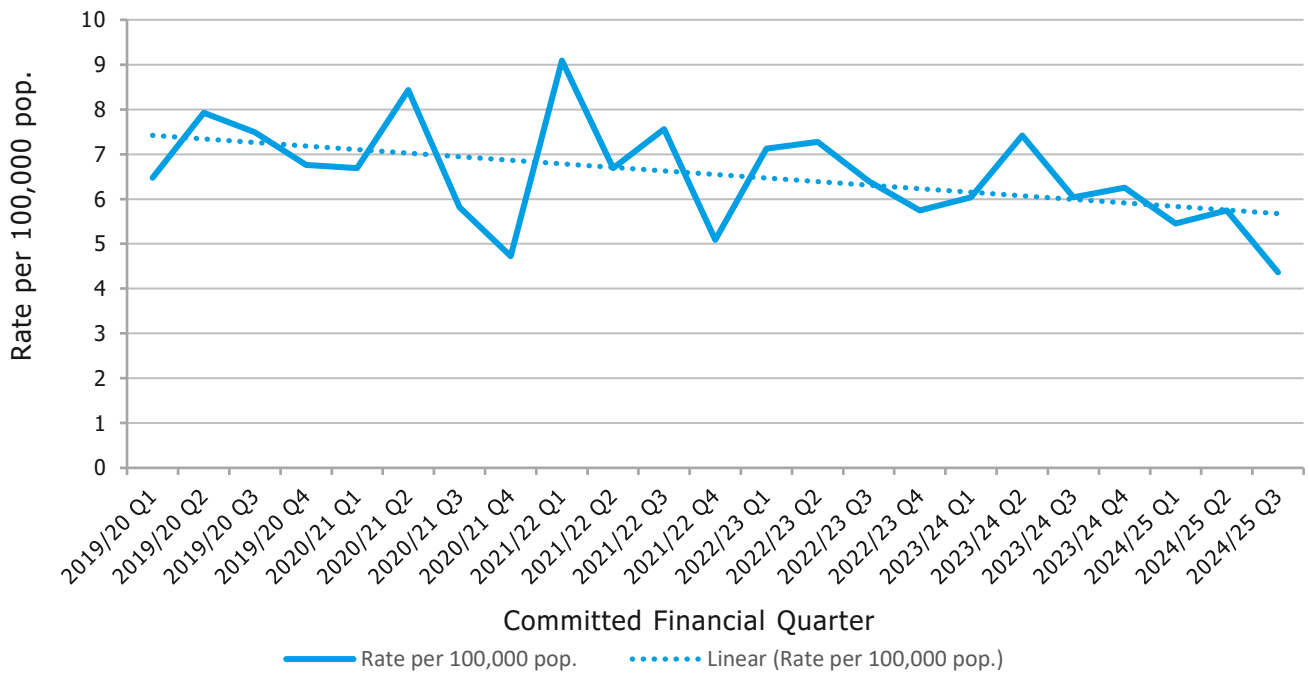
# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence by District

The decrease in knife enabled most serious violence has positively benefitted all districts, although the decrease in Doncaster is the most pronounced. The VRU will be investigating what good work, outside of our own, has been occurring in Doncaster to cause this decrease.

*Figure 44 - Rate of knife enabled most serious violence by district*
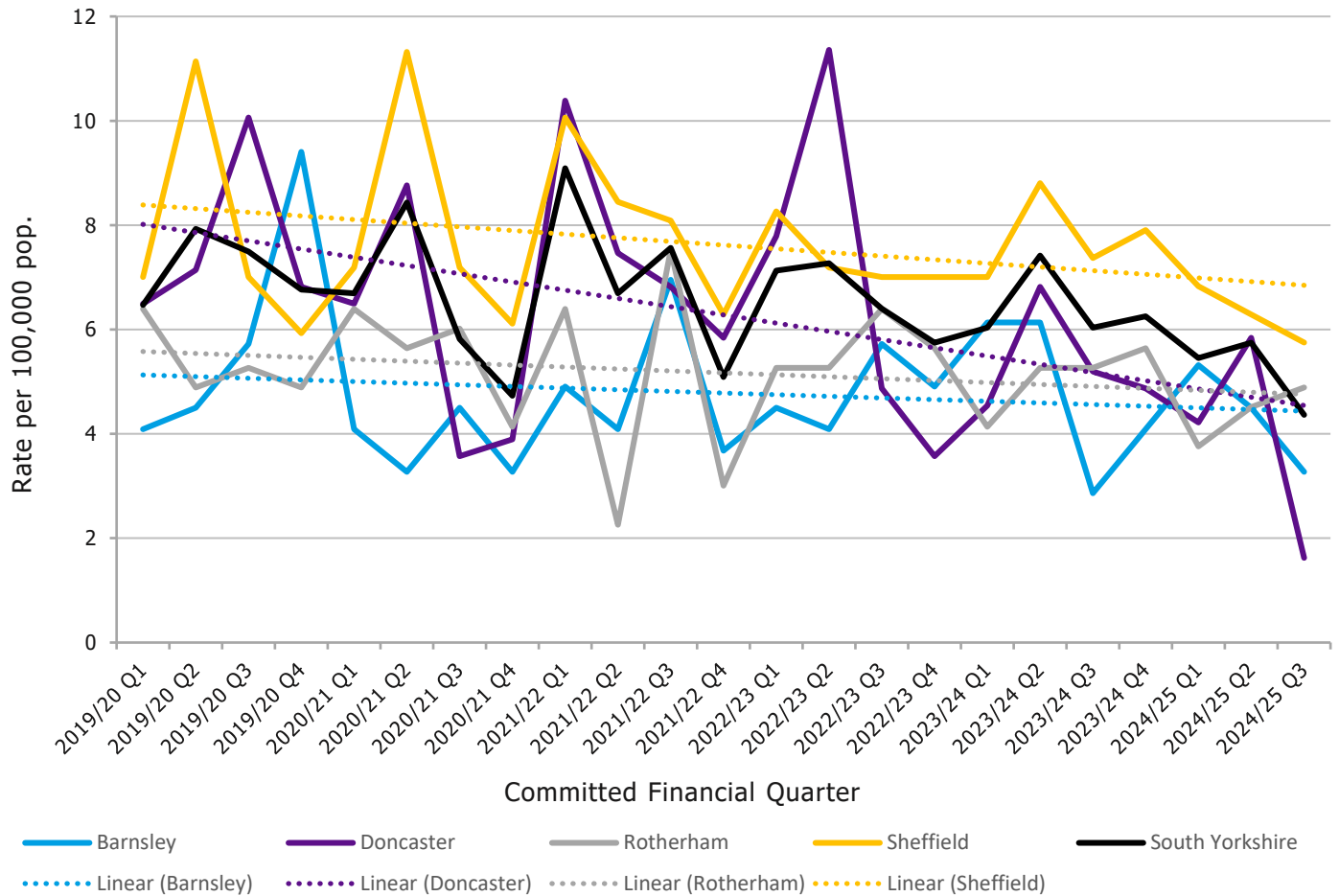


Inevitably, some of this decrease will be due to reclassifying work at South Yorkshire, but this does not fully explain the decrease.

# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence by Time

Knife enabled most serious violence can occur at any time of the day but is most common in the evening (see Figure 45). Interestingly, in the most recent time period, the early evening (the hours of 6pm to 8pm) was a common a time for knife enabled most serious violence to occur as the late evening (the hours of 9pm to 11pm).

*Figure 45 - Knife enabled most serious violence by hour of the day*
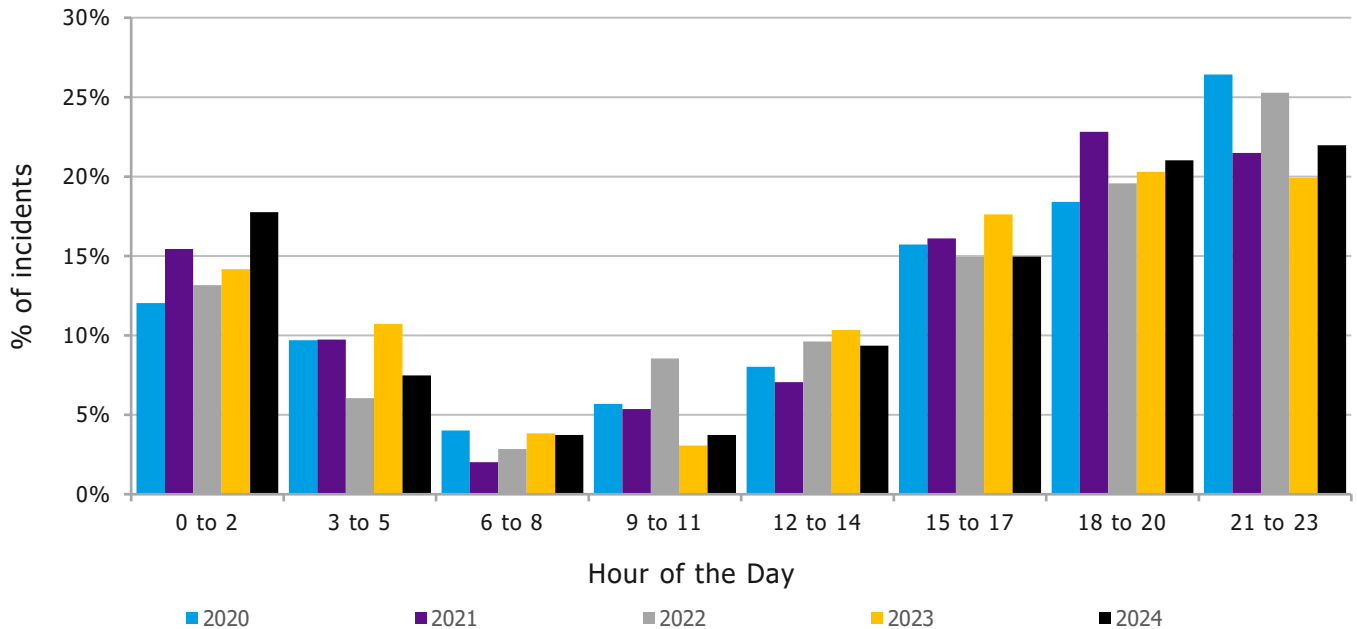


Knife enabled most serious violence can occur on any day of the week, but is more likely to occur on Saturdays (see Figure 46).

*Figure 46 - Knife enabled most serious violence by day of the week*
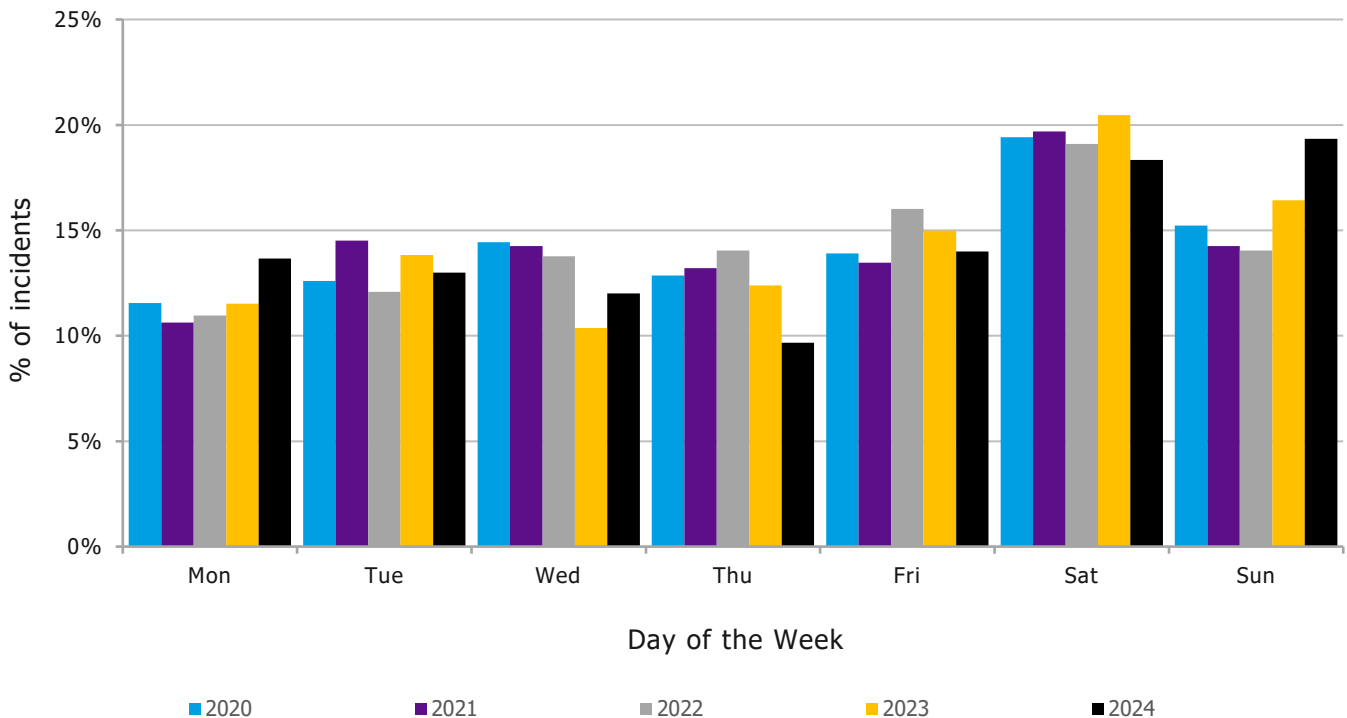


We can combine the hour and day data to create a picture of knife enabled most serious violence across an average week. All 5 years of data have been combined for figure 50, as at this granular level of detail the data is highly variable.

From Figure 47 we can see that Friday and Saturday nights are the most common time for knife enabled most serious violence to occur.

*Figure 47 - Knife enabled most serious violence by hour and day of the week*
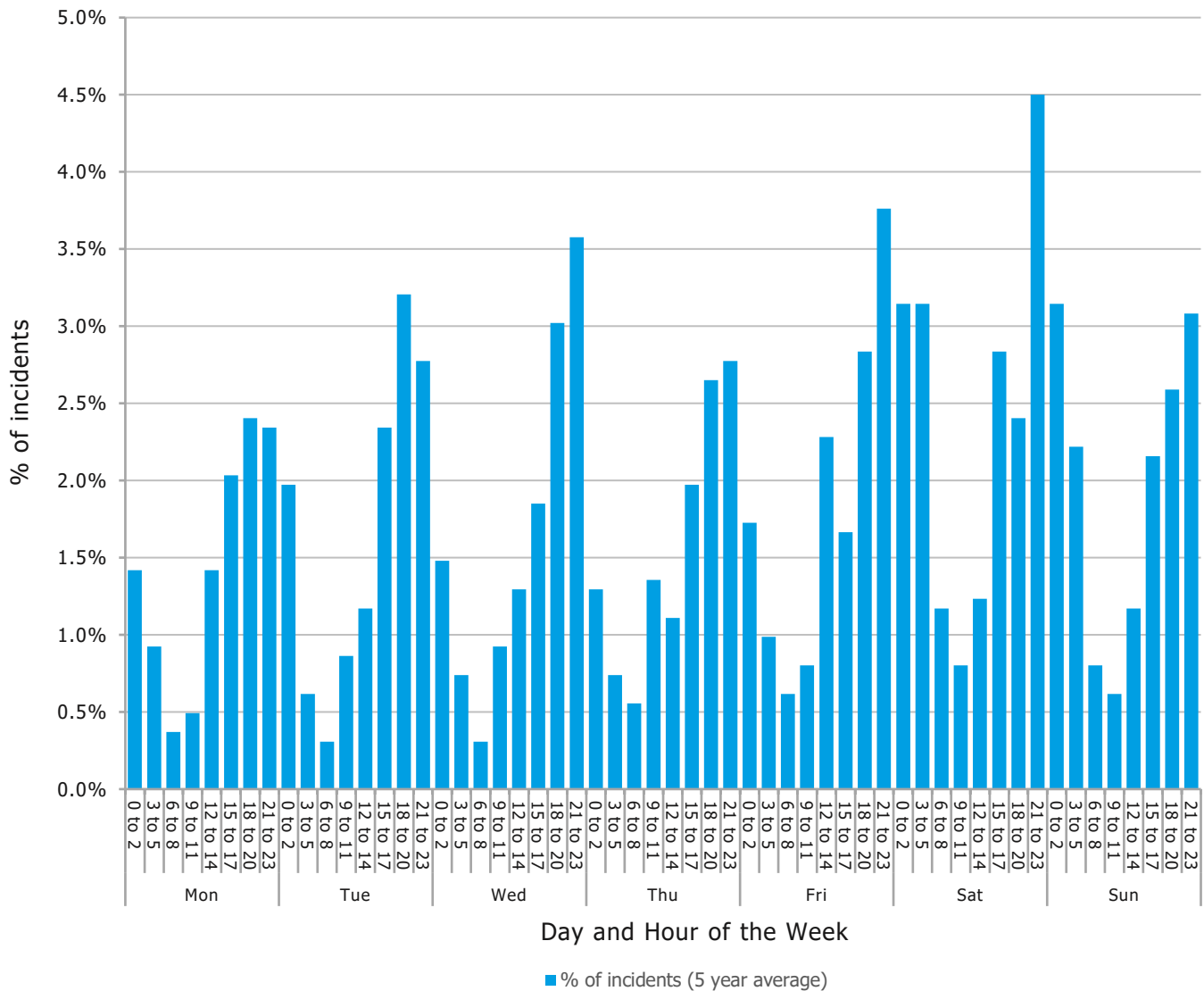
# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence by Deprivation

Knife enabled most serious violence is most prevalent in areas with a higher level of deprivation. The low rates in the least deprived deciles often indicate 1 to 2 events in a year. The overall decrease in knife enabled most serious violence has benefitted the most deprived areas more, as they were starting from a higher baseline.

*Figure 48. Knife enabled most serious violence by deprivation of crime location*
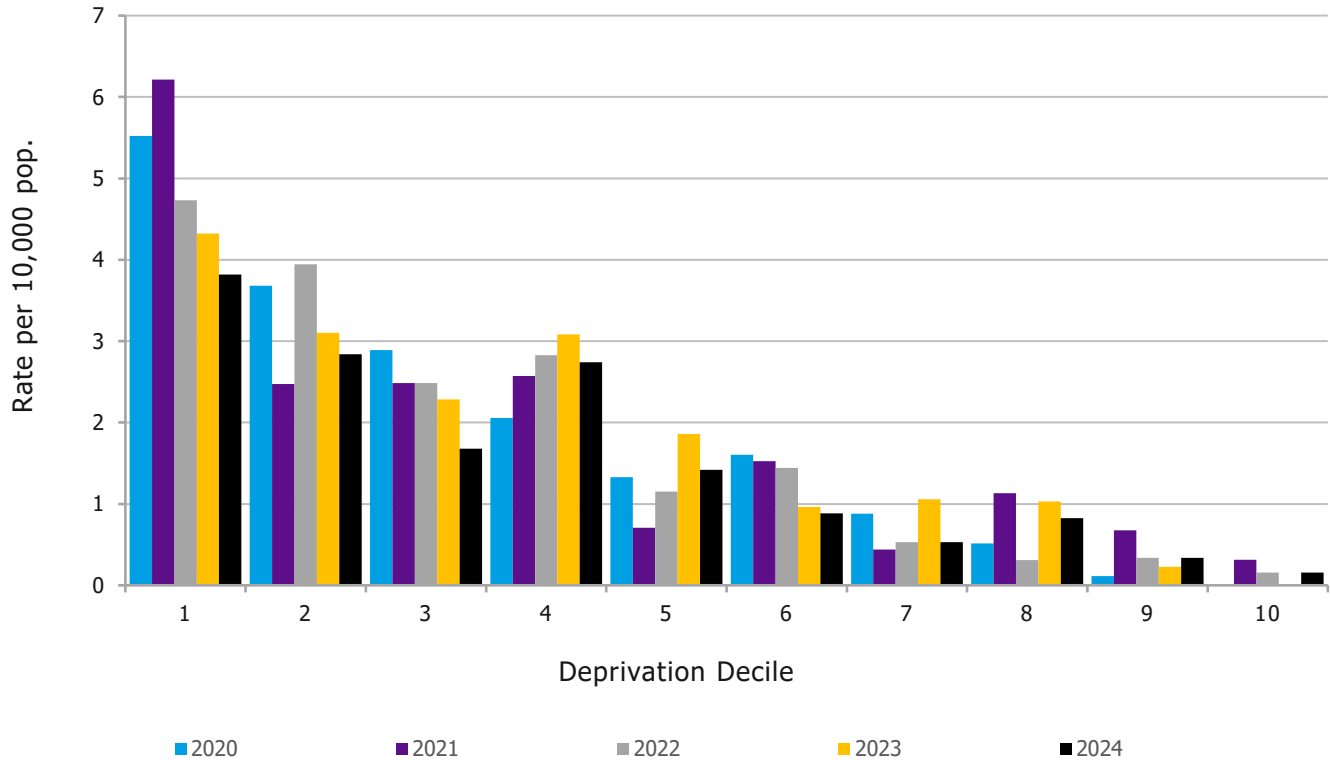
# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence Victim Age

The decrease in knife enabled most serious violence is larger for the 0 to 24 age group than 25 and over, but both age groups have decreased over the 60 months covered (see Figure 49).

*Figure 49 - Knife enabled most serious violence by victim age*
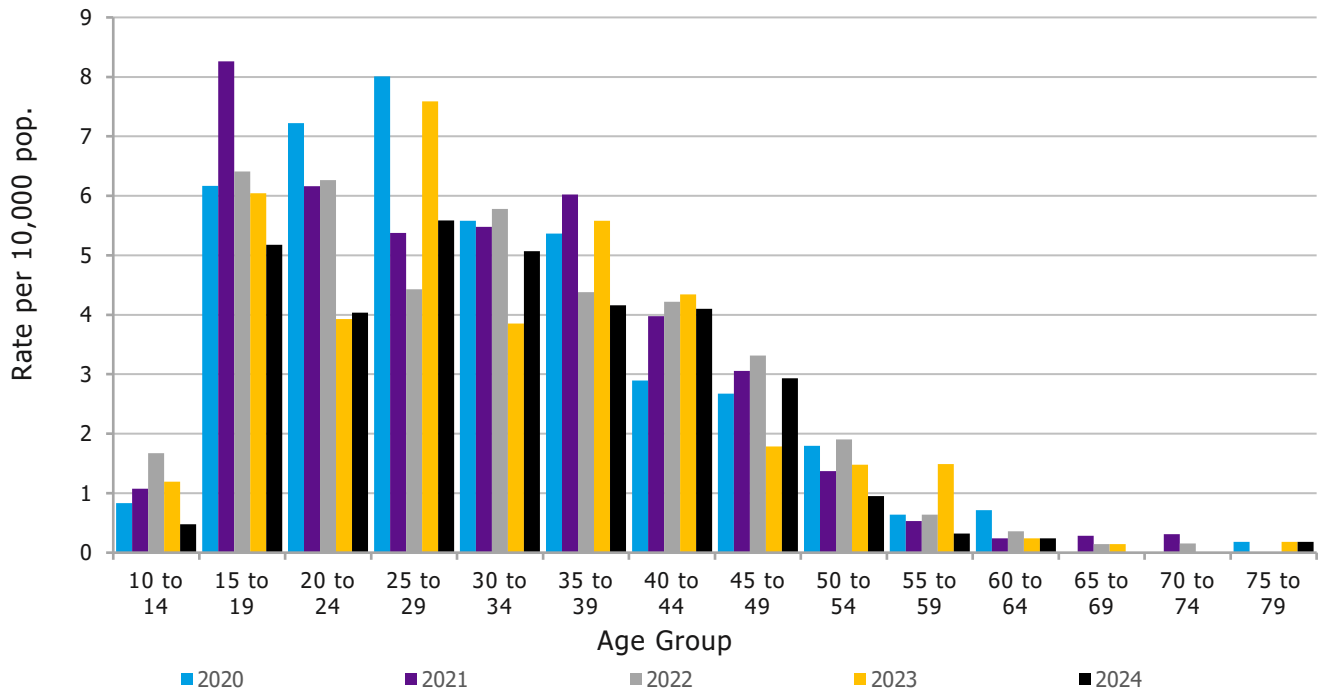


# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence Suspect Age

We do not have a suspect for every crime, and do not have the full details of every suspect when we do have a suspect. In general, we can say that the overall decrease in knife enabled most serious violence has benefitted the younger age groups, (15 to 19, 20 to 24, and 25 to 29) more than older age groups.

*Figure 50 - Knife enabled most serious violence by suspect age*



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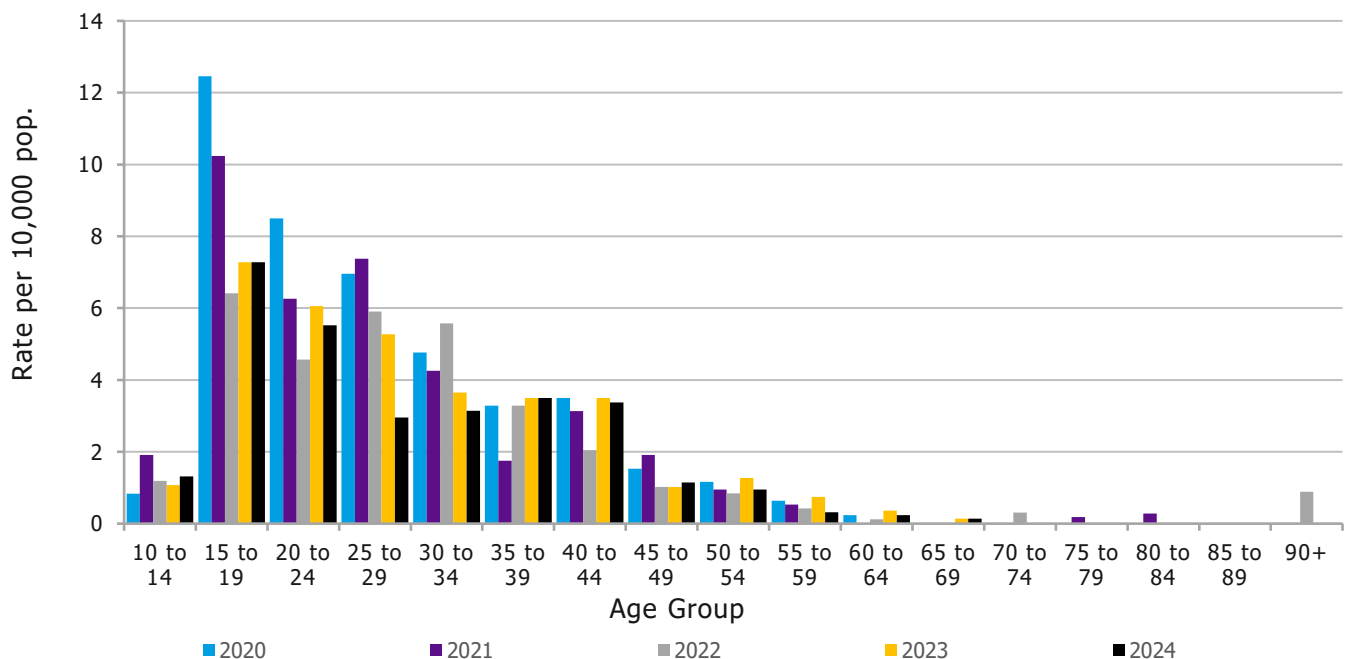
# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence Suspect and Victim Age Difference

More suspects of knife enabled most serious violence are younger than their victims compared to older or the same age. In 2024, this was 50.8% of suspect/victim interactions, compared to 42.6% of interactions where the suspect was older and 6.5% when both suspect and victim were the same age.

*Figure 51 - Age difference between victims and suspects of knife enabled most serious violence*
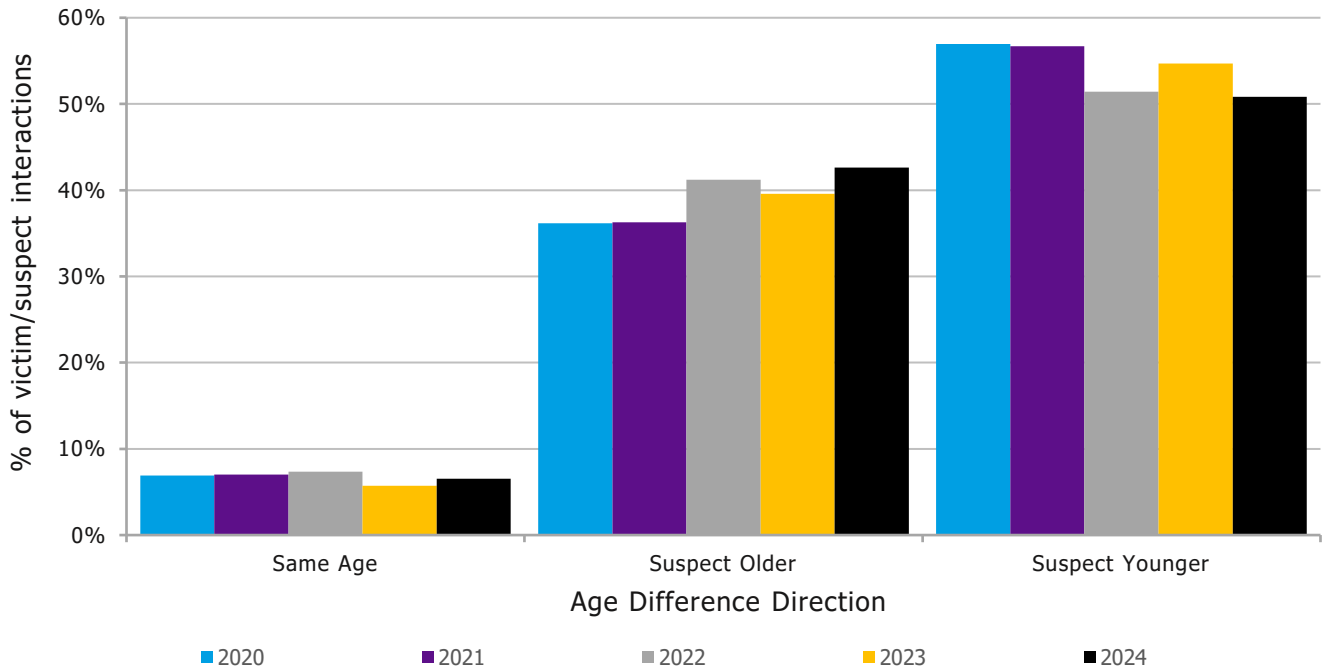


Despite this difference, the actual age gap is usually quite small. In 2024, 39.2% of suspect / victim interactions were between a suspect and victim aged within 0 to 4 years of each other. Peer violence therefore accounts for a large number of crimes.

*Figure 52. Age difference between suspects and victims in knife enabled most serious violence*
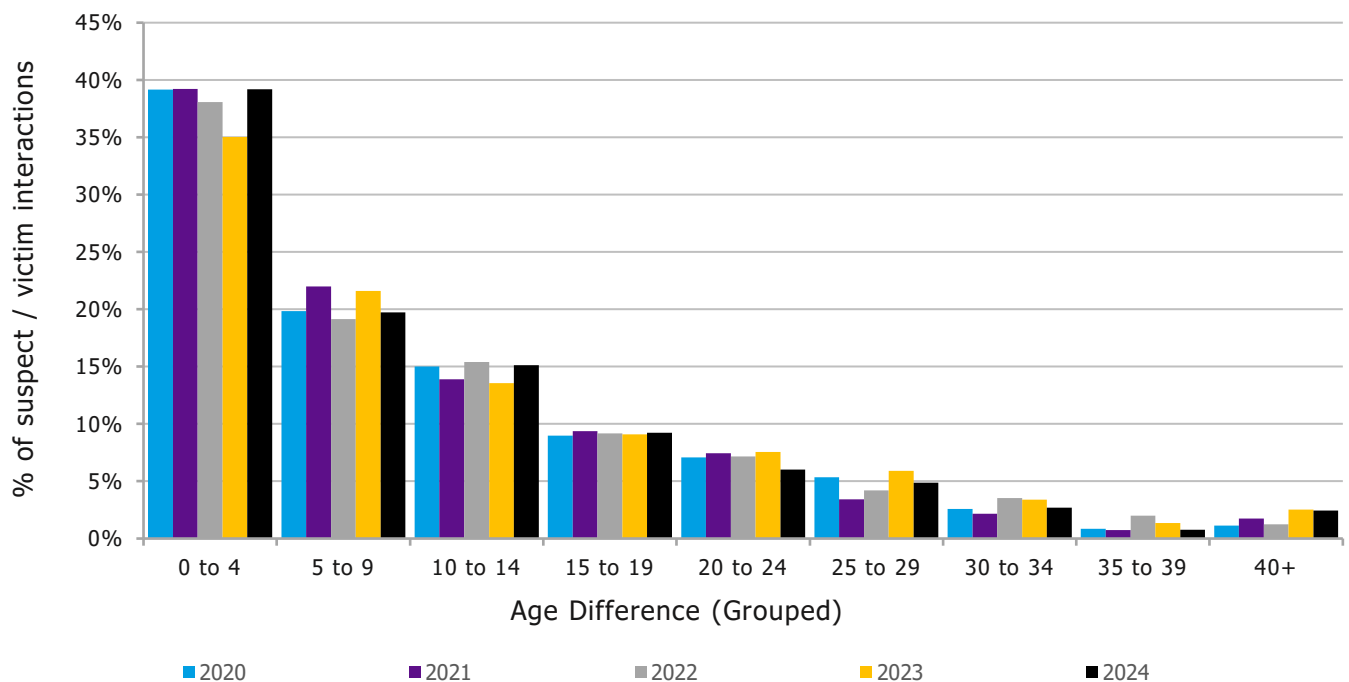
# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence Victim Gender

We do not have a victim for all crimes, or full detail for all victims. Victims of knife enabled most serious violence tend to be male. As this data is also for public place knife enabled most serious violence we remove domestic incidents, where the victim is more likely to be female (see Figure 53). The decrease in the overall rate appears to have benefitted males more than females, with the rate decreasing for males over the time periods covered but not for females.

*Figure 53 - Knife enabled most serious violence by victim gender*
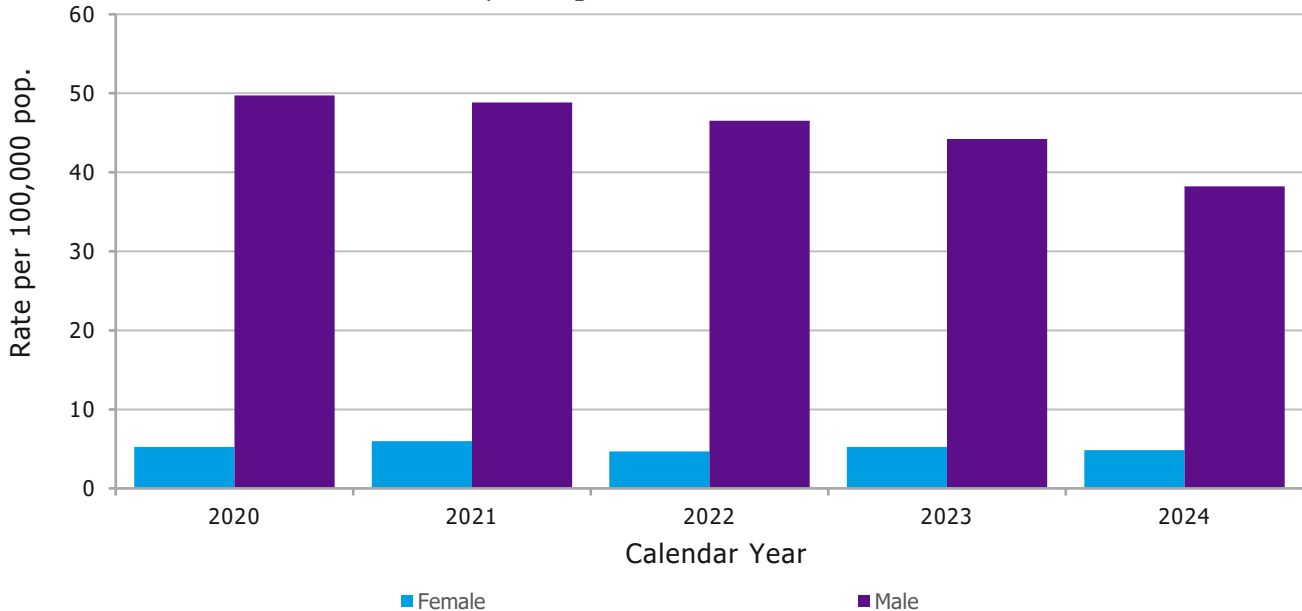


# Knife Enabled Most Serious Violence Suspect Gender

We do not have a suspect for every crime, or full details on all known suspects. Suspects of knife enabled most serious violence are also predominately male (see Figure 54). The decrease in the rate of knife enabled violence with injury is driven by decreased suspected offending by males.

*Figure 54 - Knife enabled most serious violence by suspect gender*



The majority of knife enabled most serious violence is between males, at 81.3% in the most recent time period. The next most common interaction was a male suspect and a female victim, at 8.5% of crimes in the most recent time period. 5.8% of crimes were female on male, and 4.4% were female on female.

# Knife Enabled Crime

# Knife Enabled Crime

Knife enabled crime is a broader category than knife enabled most serious violence, and therefore represents a range of harms. However any incident involving knives is potentially very dangerous, and also contributes to the public fear of knives.

# Rate of Knife Enabled Crime

In contrast to knife enabled most serious violence, the rate of knife crime has not decreased over the 6 years covered. In fact, it has shown a slight increase, although partly this is due to lockdown suppressing crime at the beginning of Figure 55. Recent quarters also show a slight decrease in knife enabled crime.

*Figure 55. Rate of knife enabled crime over financial quarter*
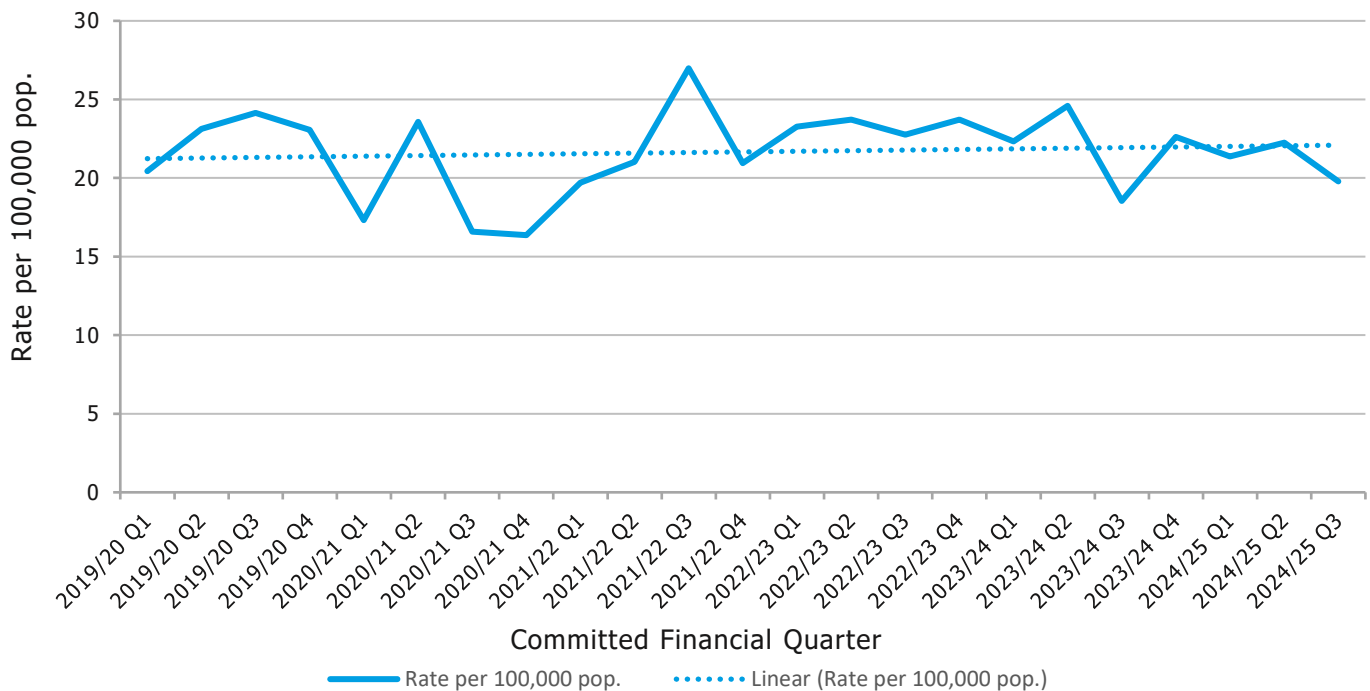
# Knife Enabled Crime by District

The rate of knife crime has slightly increased in most districts except Rotherham, where it has remained stable (see Figure 56). None of these increases are large, and the beginning of is weighted by the lockdown period that had an inhibitory effect on crime.

*Figure 56. Rate of knife enabled crime by district over financial quarter*
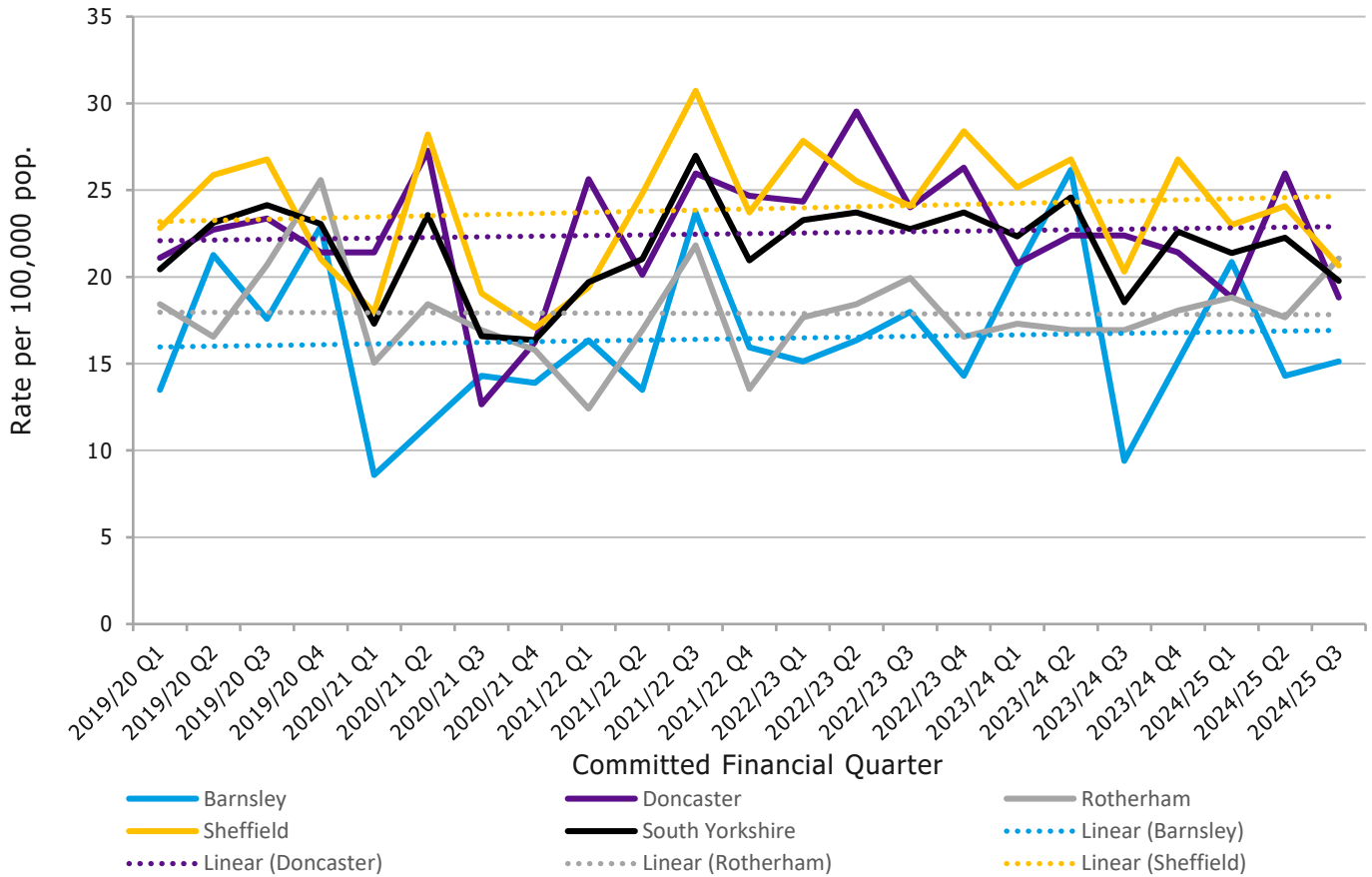
# Knife Enabled Crime by Time

Knife enabled crimes can occur at any time during the day. However, across all years they are largely concentrated in the evening, from 6pm onwards (see Figure 57).

*Figure 57. Knife enabled by crime by hour of the day*
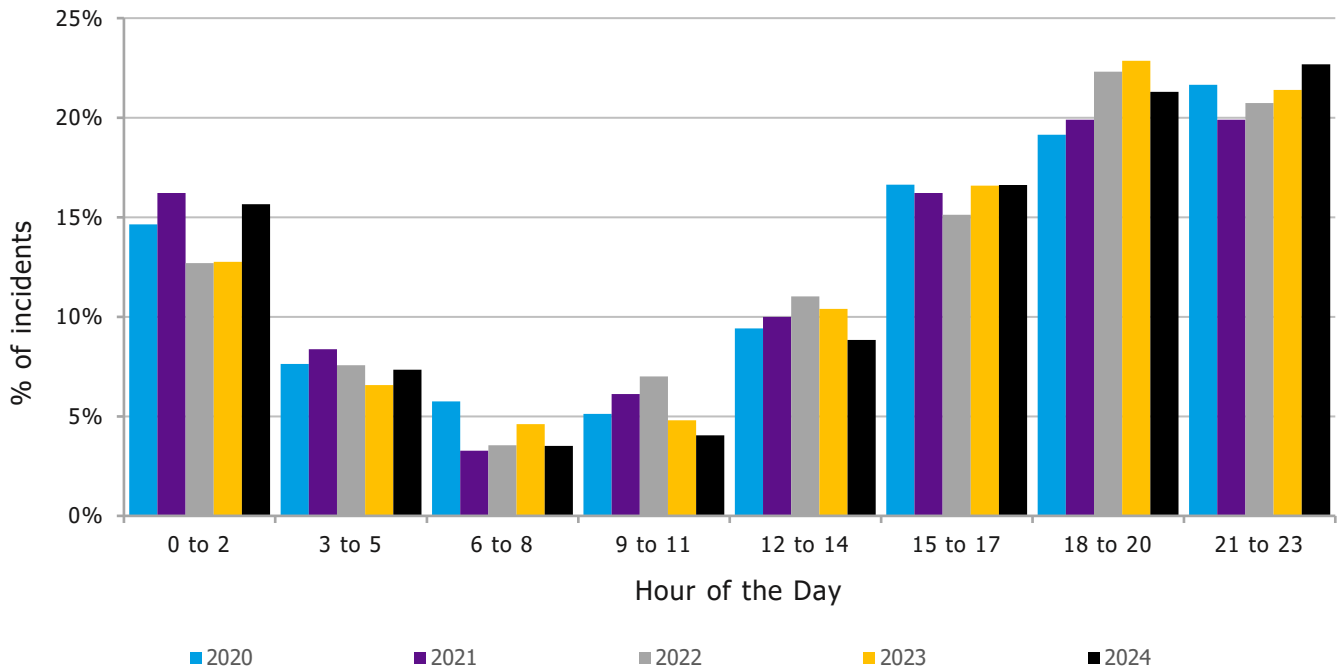


Knife enabled crime, consistently across all years, shows only a slight bias towards Saturday as a day where the most offences occur. Apart from this slight increase on Saturday, knife enabled crime is remarkably consistently distributed across the week in most years (see Figure 58).

*Figure 58. Knife enabled crime by day of the week*
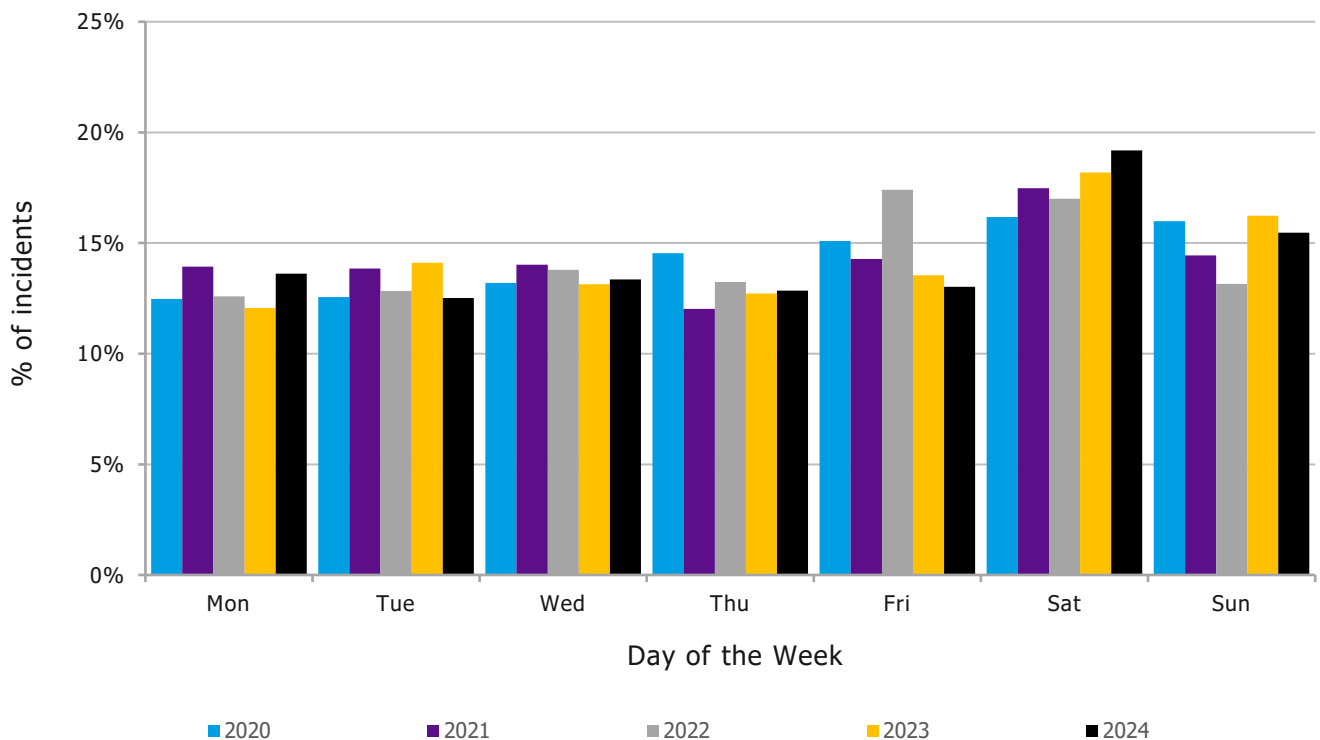


We can combine the hour and day data to gain a picture of offending across the week, as seen in Figure 59.

Figure 59. Knife enabled crime by day and hour of the week
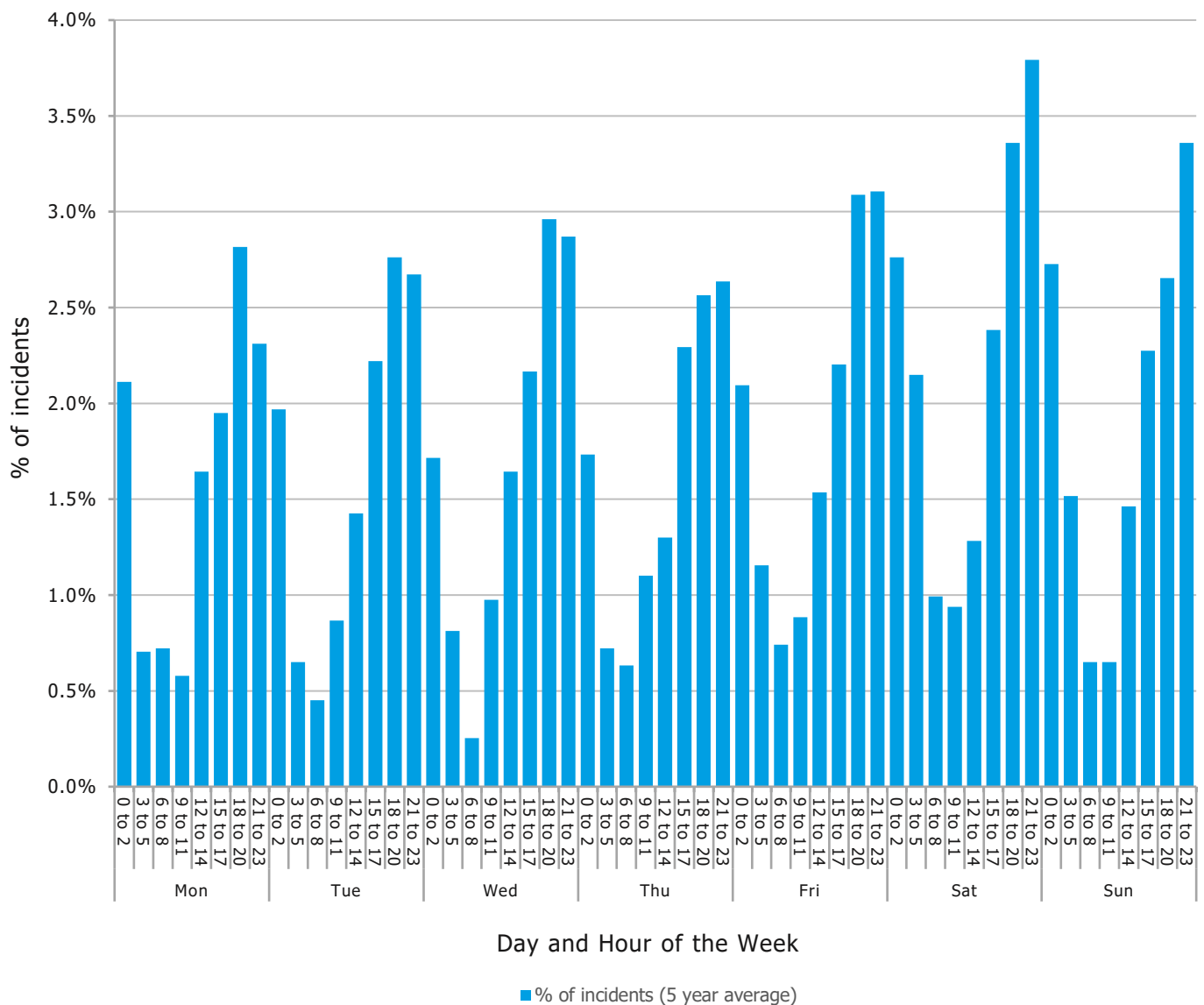


By combining this data and taking the average results across 5 years, we can put together a picture of offending across time and day of the week. As we have noted in previous years and other crime types, it is better to consider Saturday morning as a continuation of Friday night, and Sunday morning a continuation of Saturday night. However it should be noted that although there is some bias towards offending on Saturday night, the night time of all days of the week show an increase in knife enabled offending.

# Knife Enabled Crime by Deprivation

Knife enabled crimes disproportionality affect the most deprived areas in South Yorkshire (seeFigure 60). The step down in the rate of crime from the 1st decile to the 2nd is notable, even though this is only a small shift in deprivation. This shows the outsized effect deprivation can have on where knife crimes occur.

*Figure 60. Knife enabled crime by deprivation of the location of the crime*
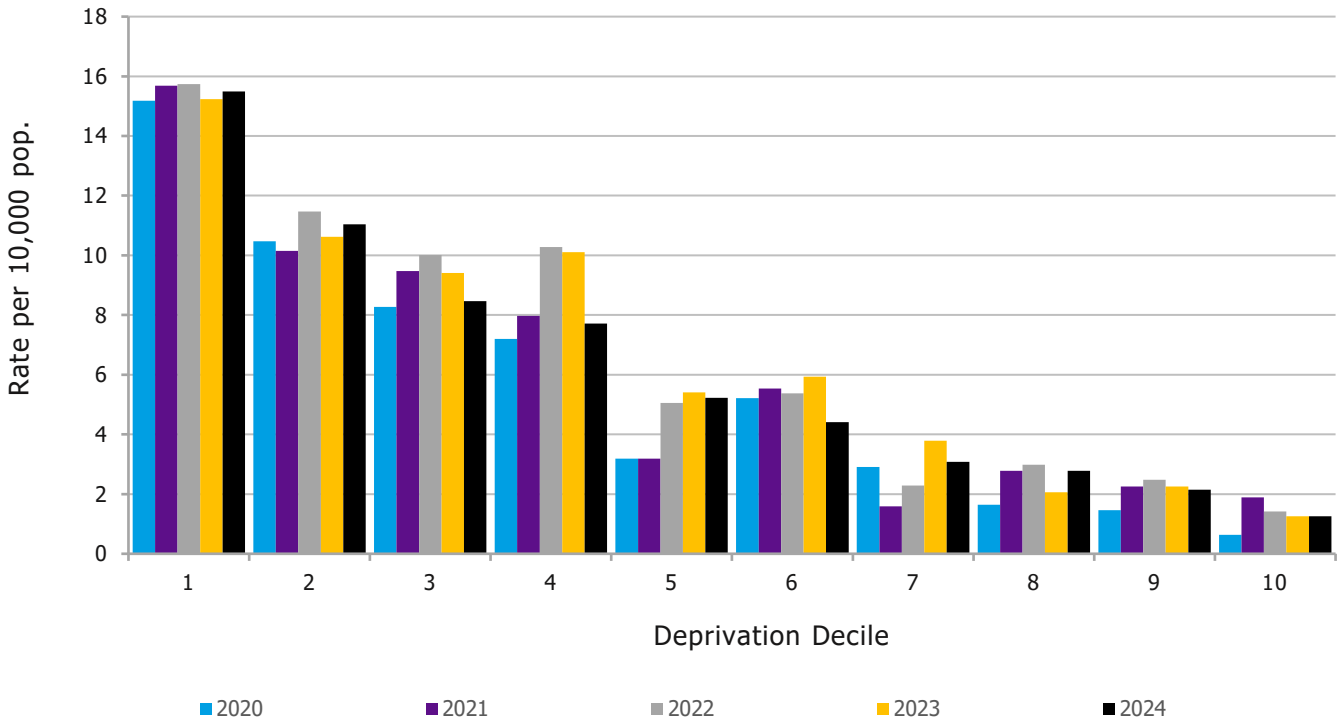


# Knife Enabled Crime by Victim Age

Knife crime victims can be of any age, although there is increased risk associated with being 15 to 19 in all years covered (see Figure 61). The older age groups, from 70 onwards, are generally safer from knife enabled crime. An increase has been seen in the 40 to 44 age group over the 5 years covered.

*Figure 61. Knife enabled crime by victim age*
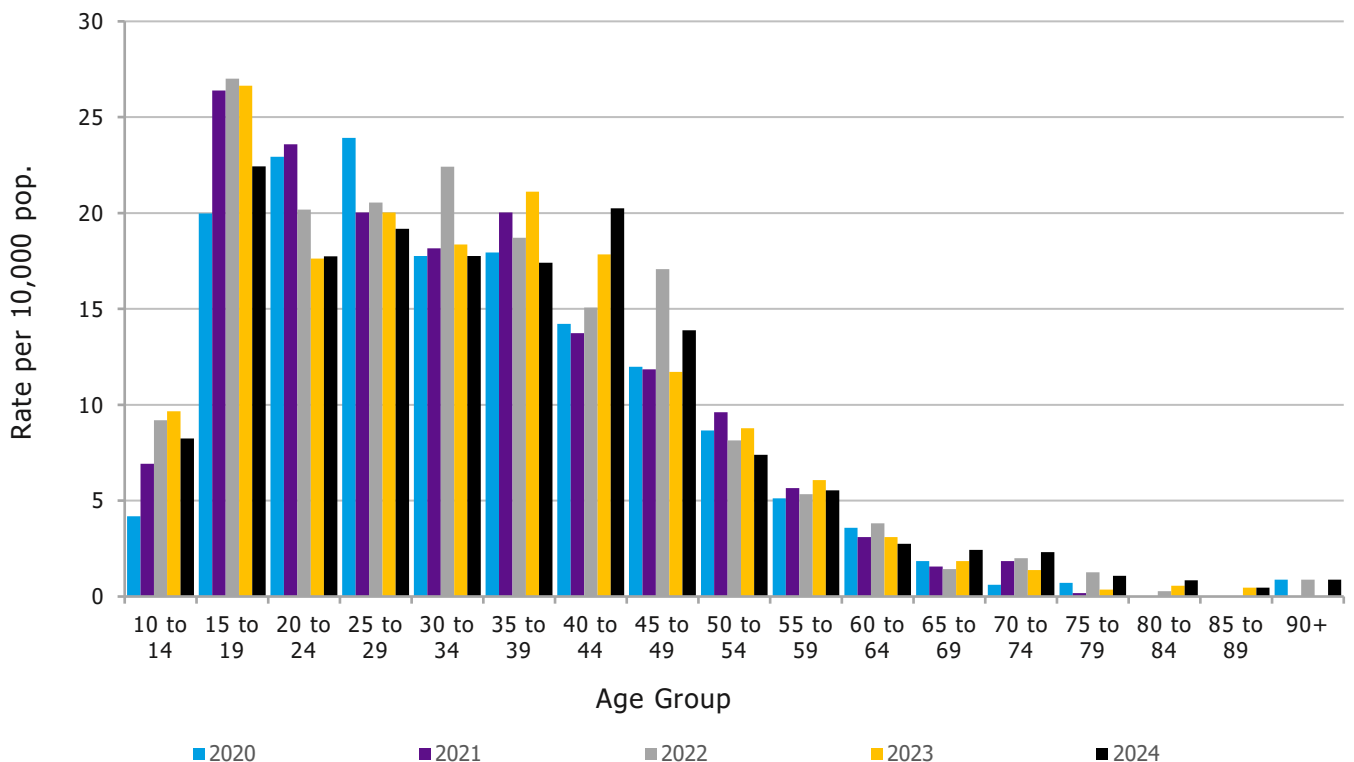
# Knife Enabled Crime by Suspect Age

Suspects of knife enabled crime are generally aged from 15 to 34, although some suspects are older. Very old suspects of knife crime are very rare, and some of these crimes may be misinterpretations by the algorithm used to detect knife crime. The 15 to 19 age group saw some decrease from 2020 to 2021, but has since remained stable.

*Figure 62. Knife enabled crime by suspect age*
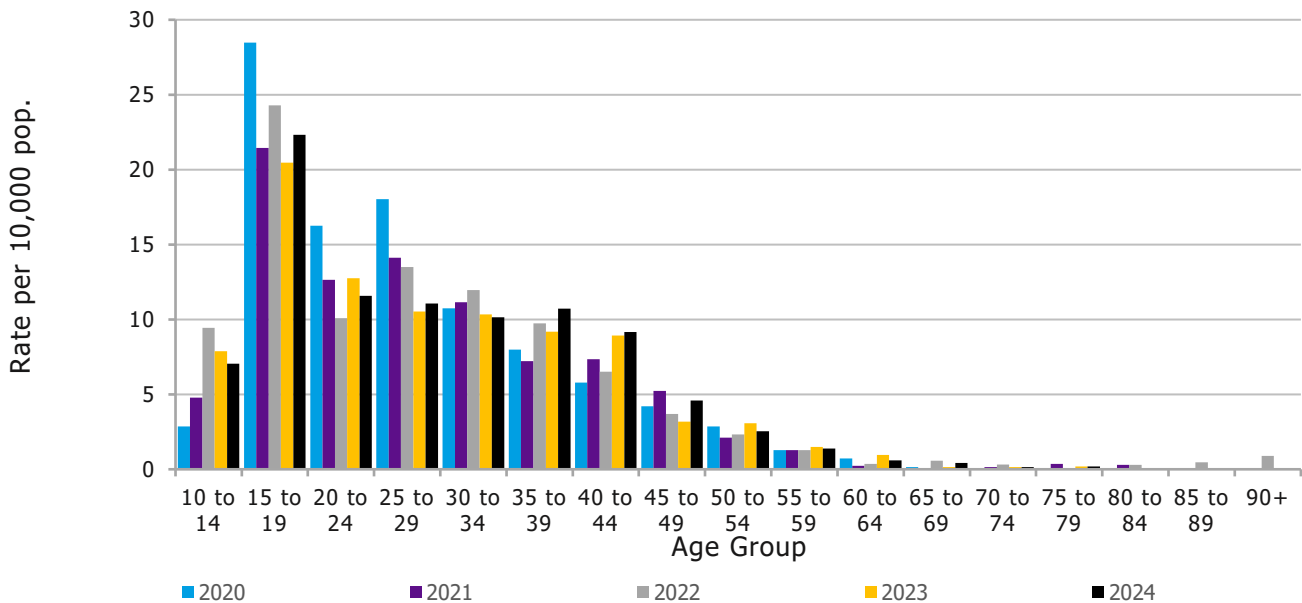


# Knife Enabled Crime by Suspect and Victim Age Difference

Suspects of knife enabled crime tend to be younger than their victims, with 54.5% of victim/suspect interactions having a younger suspect in 2024.

*Figure 63. Age difference direction between suspect and victim in knife enabled crime*
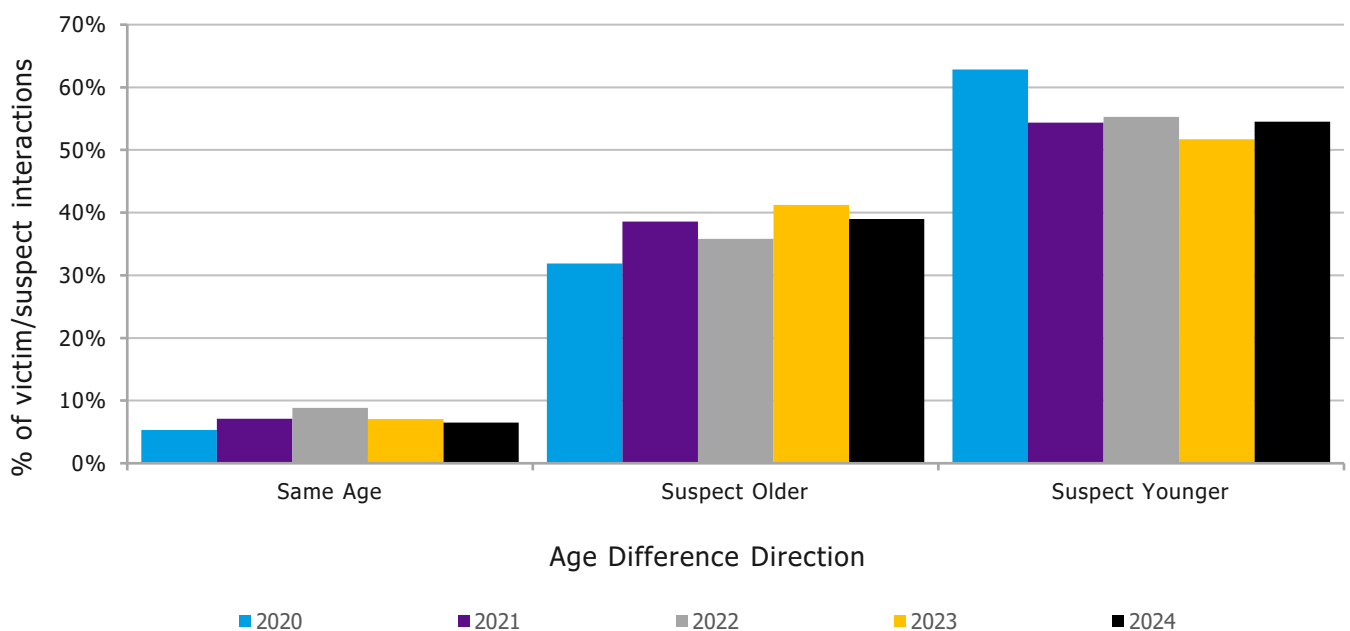


However, the actual age difference is often small. In 2024, 38.4% of suspect/victim interactions were between suspects and victims aged within 0 to 4 years of each other.

*Figure 64. Age difference between suspects and victims in knife enabled crime*
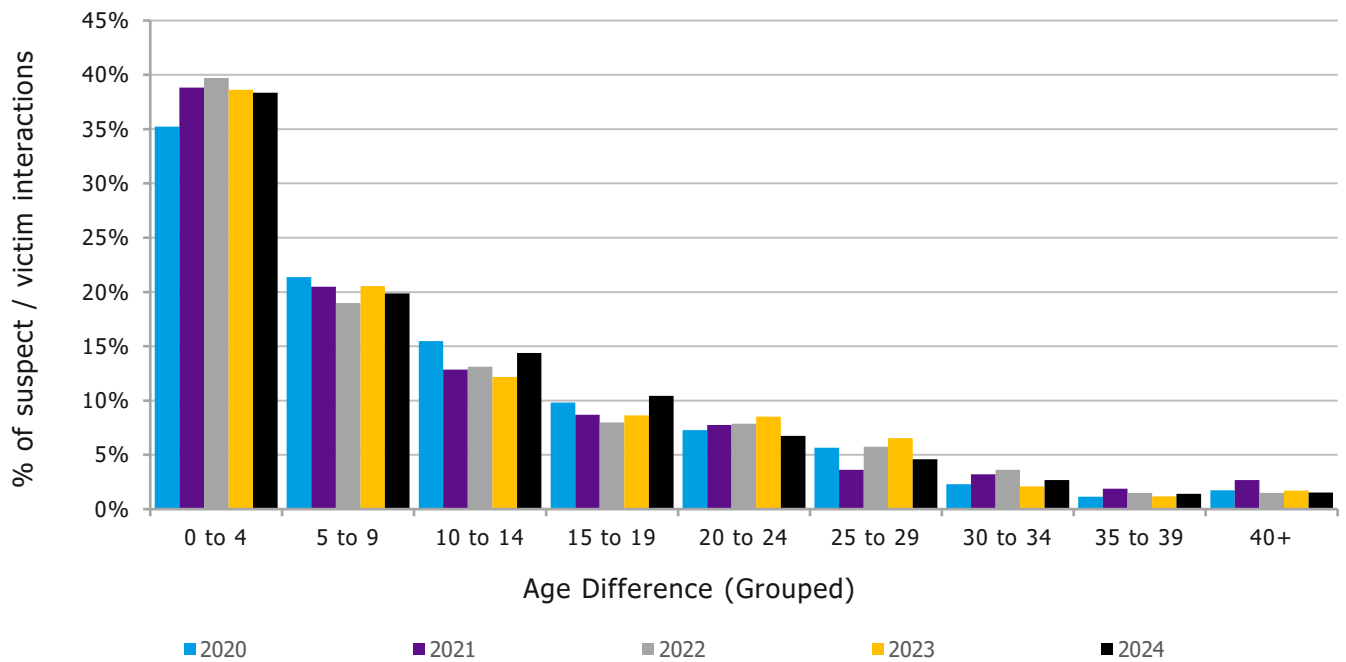


# Knife Enabled Crime by Victim Gender

The number of recorded victims and their genders for 2024 was lower than expected given the only modest decrease in crimes. The cause of this is currently unknown. The proportions, with considerably more male victims than female victims, are still consistent with previous years' results.

*Figure 65. Knife enabled crime by victim gender*

# Knife Enabled Crime by Suspect Gender

The majority of suspects of knife enabled crime are male, and this is consistent across all years covered.

*Figure 66. Knife enabled crime by suspect gender*
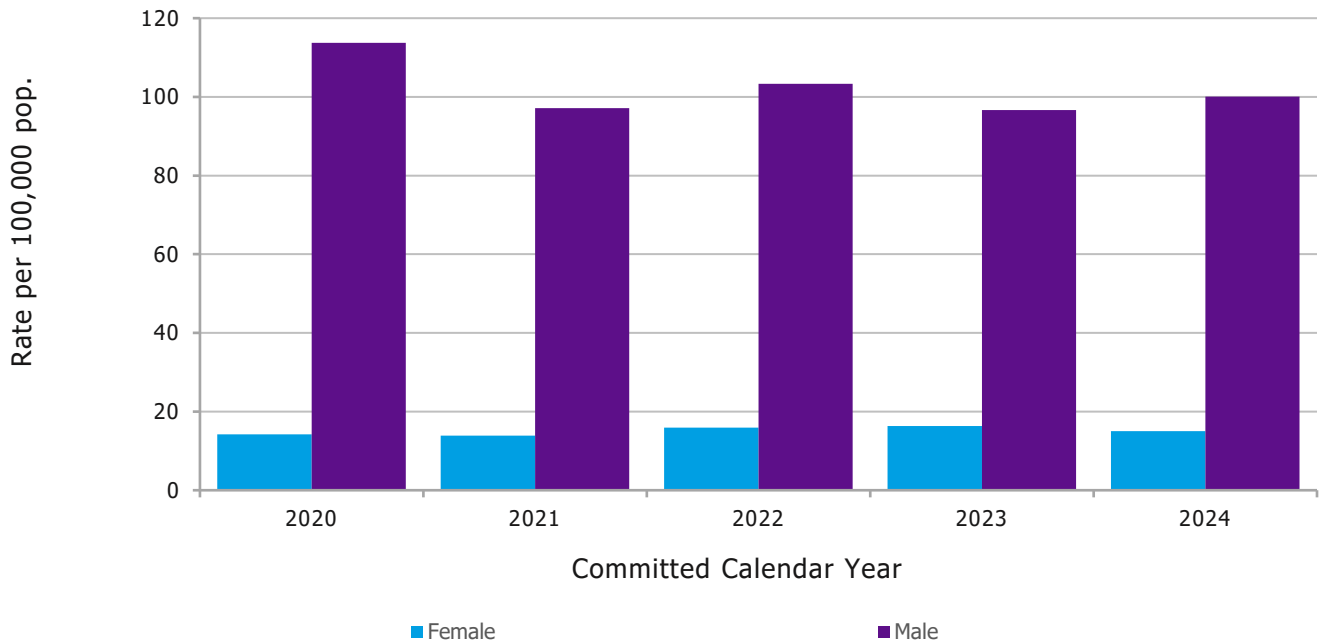


In 2024, 71.6% of suspect / victim interactions were between a male suspect and a male victim. 15.4% had a male suspect and a female victim, 8.1% a female suspect and a male victim, and 4.9% a female suspect and victim.

# Knife Enabled Crime by Suspect Ethnicity

The rate of suspected offending of knife enabled crime is higher for black individuals than for Asian, Mixed, Other or White ethnic groupings.

*Figure 67. Knife enabled crime by suspect ethnicity*
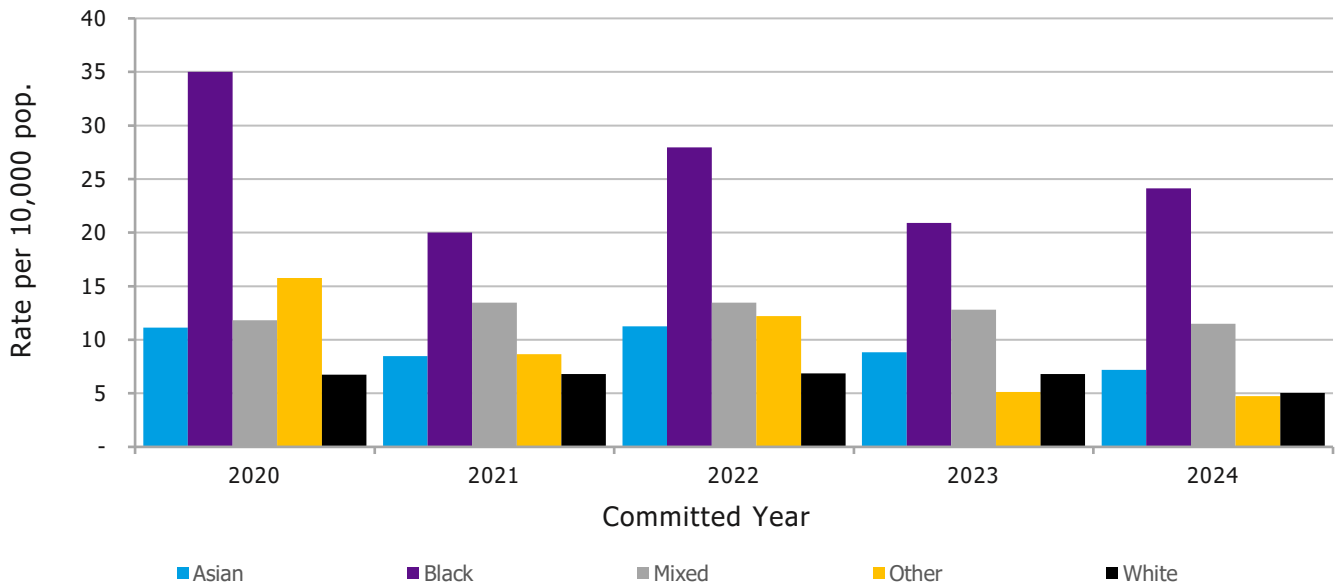


This effect was sustained when we limited the analysis to only suspects from the 1st deprivation decile.

*Figure 68. Suspect ethnicity for knife enabled crime for suspects from 1st deprivation decile*
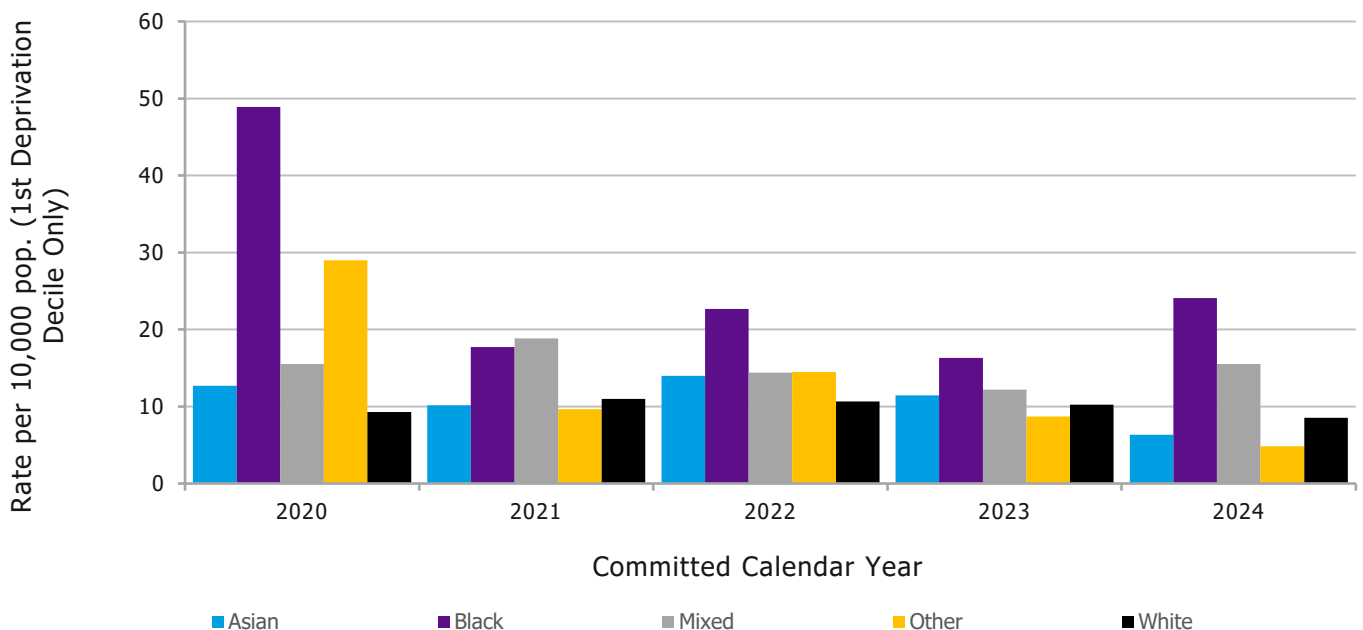


The black population of South Yorkshire is overall younger than the white population, with 40.2% of the black population under 25 compared to 27.2% of the white population. This explains some of the difference between these population groups, as young individuals tend to offend more than older individuals. However, the Asian population is also younger, at 42.1% under 25, and whilst the rate of suspected offending is higher for this ethnicity grouping it is not as large a difference.

This suggests that specific interventions for black individuals in South Yorkshire may be merited.

# Knife Enabled Robbery

# Knife Enabled Robbery

Knife enabled robbery is a subset of knife enabled crime, where a knife or sharp instrument is used in the conduct of a robbery. Knife enabled robbery represents the use of the knife as a means to gain property, rather than necessarily an intent to only commit violence. This means the underlying motivations of the offender might be different to those who use a knife in violent encounters without motivation to gain.

# Rate of Knife Enabled Robbery

The rate of knife enabled robbery has slightly increased over the 6 years covered, although it should be noted there was a considerable suppression effect of lockdown on this particular crime type, meaning the beginning of Figure 69. Rate of knife enabled robbery over financial quarters is weighted downwards. There has been some progress in reducing the rate of knife enabled robbery over the past year.

*Figure 69. Rate of knife enabled robbery over financial quarters*
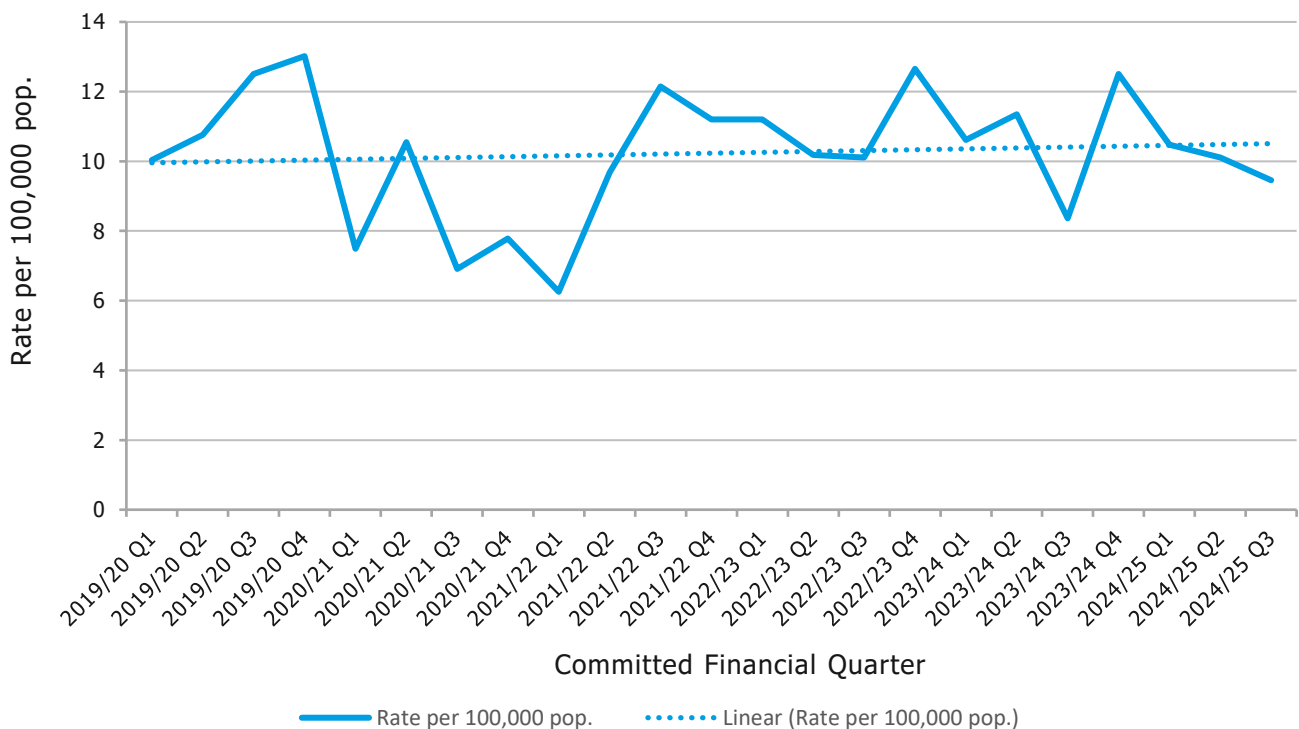
# Knife Enabled Robbery by District

When comparing districts, it appears that Rotherham and Sheffield are experiencing a decrease in knife enabled robberies, whilst Barnsley and especially Doncaster are experiencing an increase over the 6 years covered. Doncaster experienced a peak of knife enabled robbery in Q4 of 2022/23 that has not been repeated, but has a large effect on the trend line for Doncaster.

*Figure 70. Rate of knife enabled robbery per district by financial quarter*
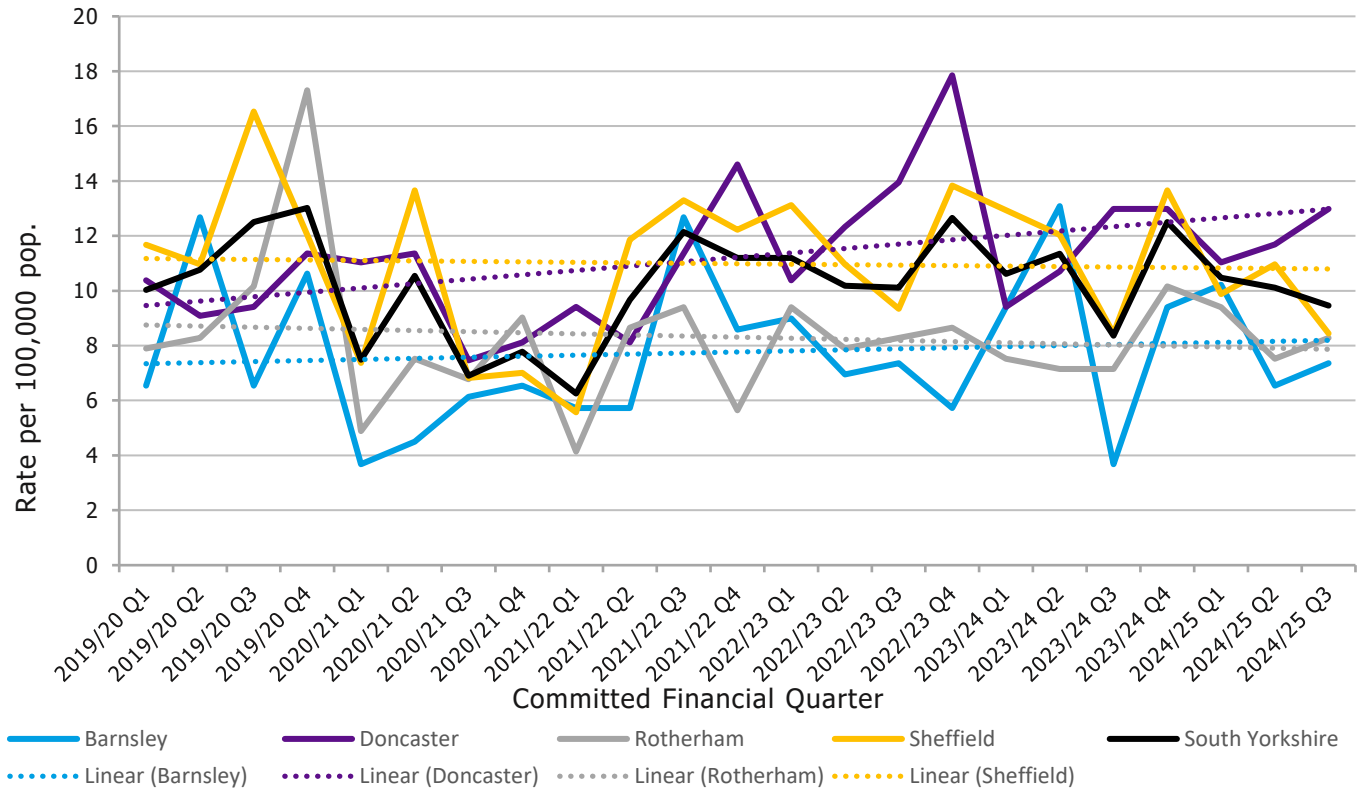
# Knife Enabled Robbery by Time

Knife enabled robberies can occur at any time of the day, but are most likely to occur from the hours of 6pm to 11pm (see Figure 71. Knife enabled robbery over hour of the day).

*Figure 71. Knife enabled robbery over hour of the day*
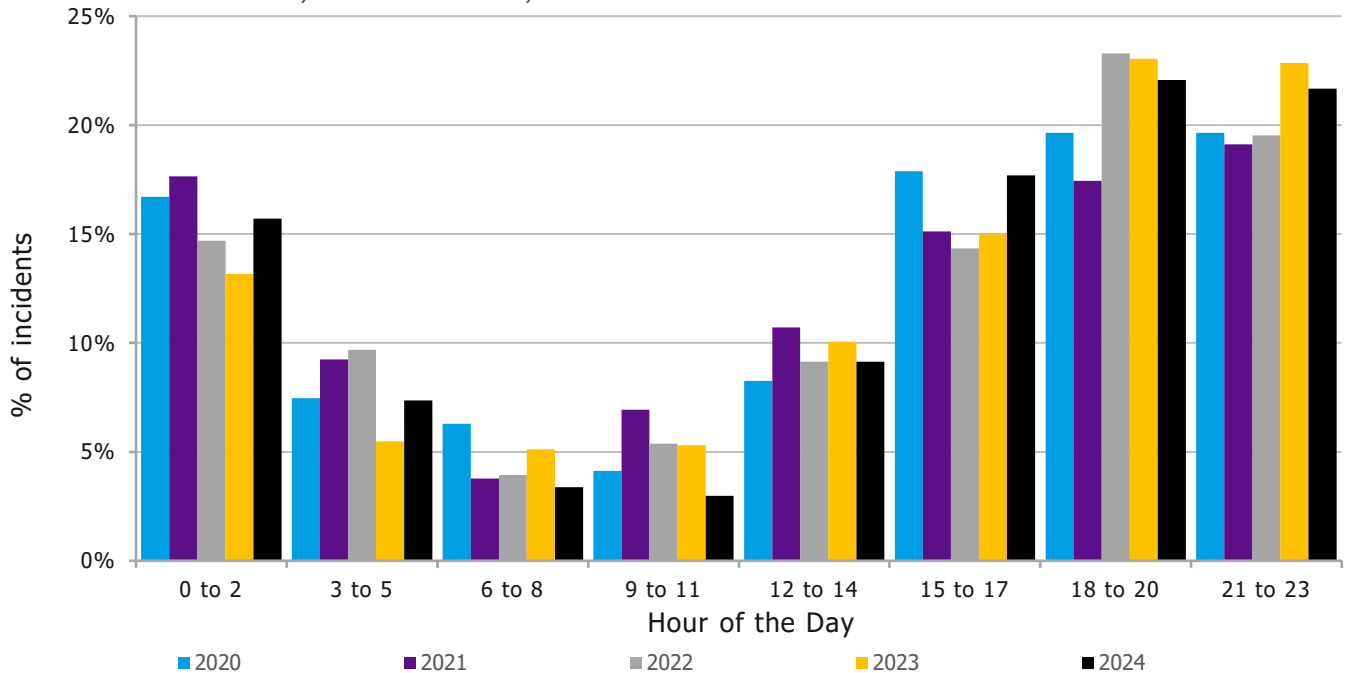


Knife enabled robbery can also occur on any day, and does not show a notable bias towards the weekend that is present in most other crimes.
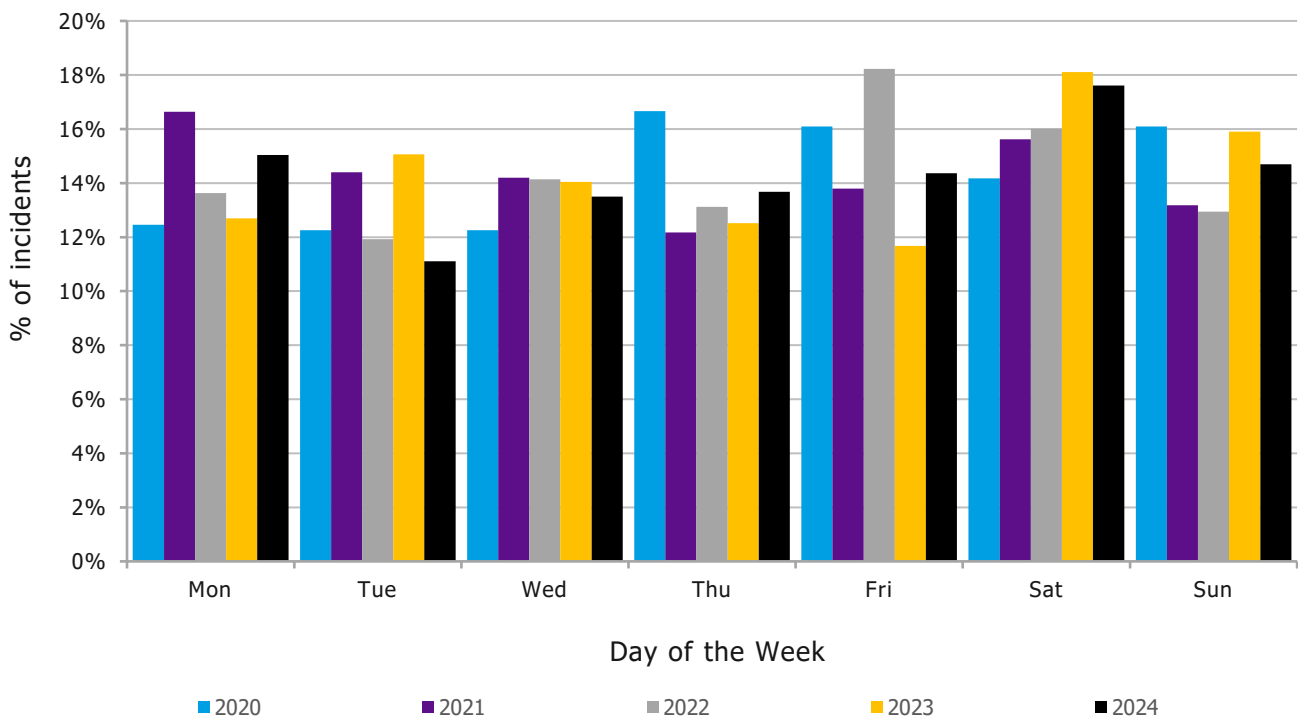


We can combine the hour and day graphs to provide a picture of knife enabled robbery across the week in 3 hour increments (see Figure 72). Saturday evening appears to be the highest risk time for knife enabled robbery. Knife enabled robbery during the week are more evenly distributed throughout the day compared to the weekends, where they are more focused on the late evening.

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*Figure 72. Knife enabled robbery by hour and day of the week*
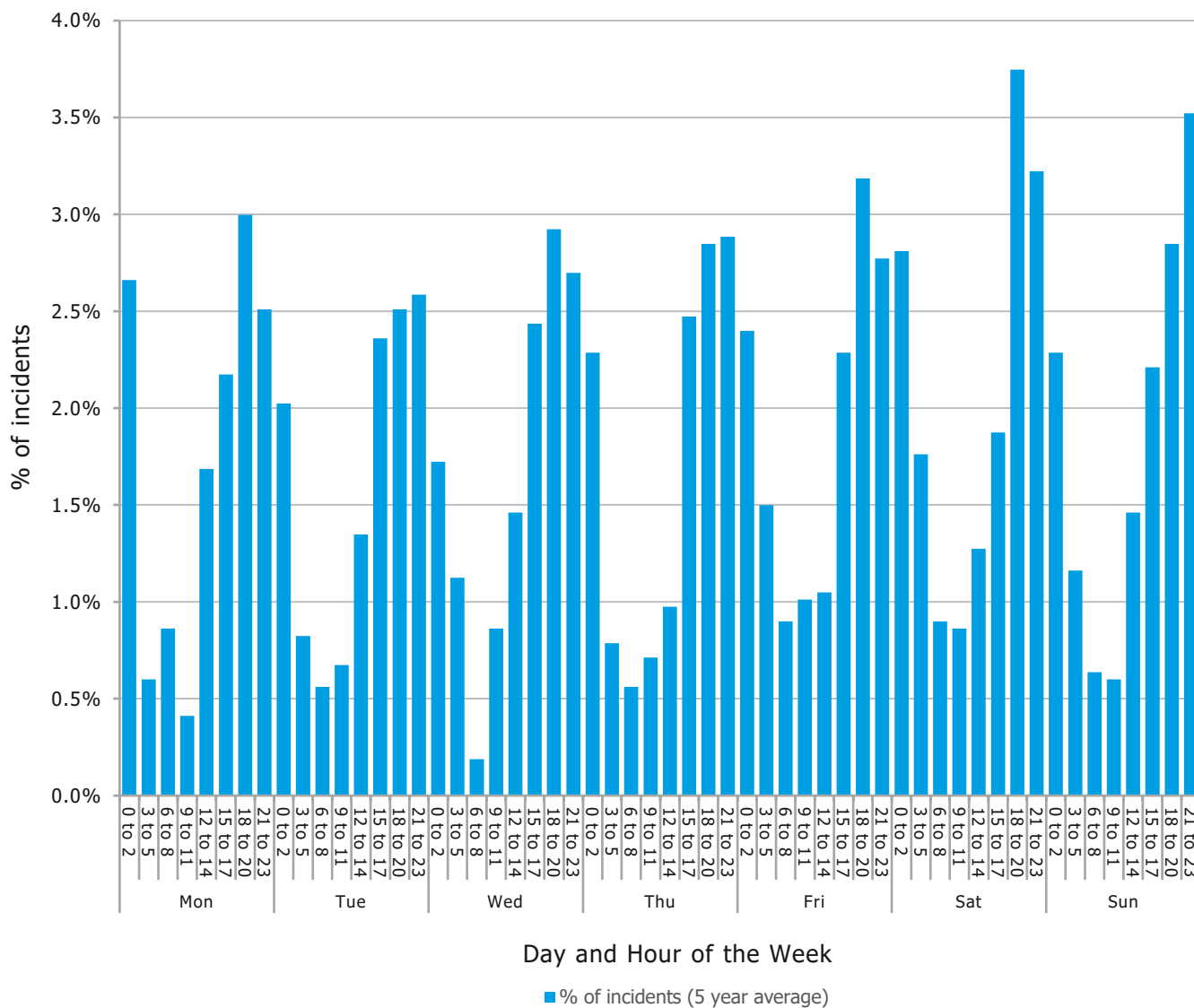
# Knife Enabled Robbery by Deprivation

Knife enabled robbery tends to occur in areas of high deprivation rather than areas of low deprivation. The 1st decile of deprivation consistently had the highest rate of knife enabled robbery across all years covered.

*Figure 73. Knife enabled robbery by deprivation of location of crime*
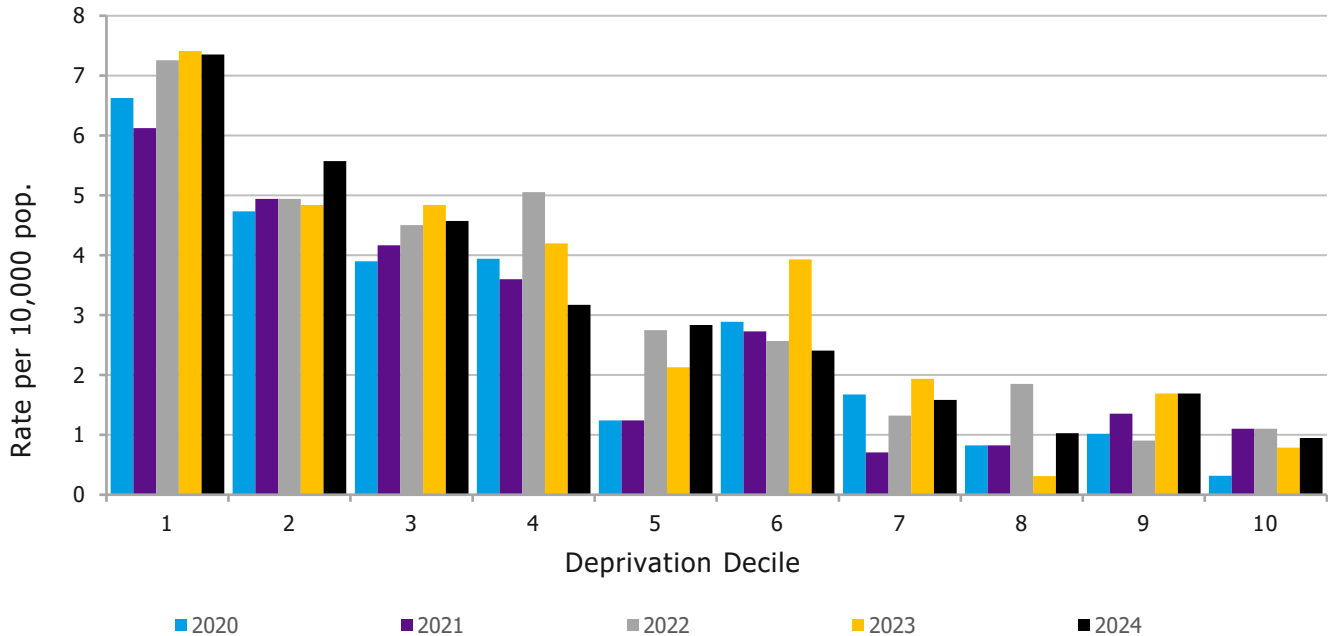


# Knife Enabled Robbery by Victim Age

The decrease in identified victims of knife crimes means that there has been a decrease in victims of knife enabled robbery across most age groups. Figure 74 may therefore not be an accurate reflection of a decrease in actual victimisation by age group.

*Figure 74. Knife enabled robbery by victim age*
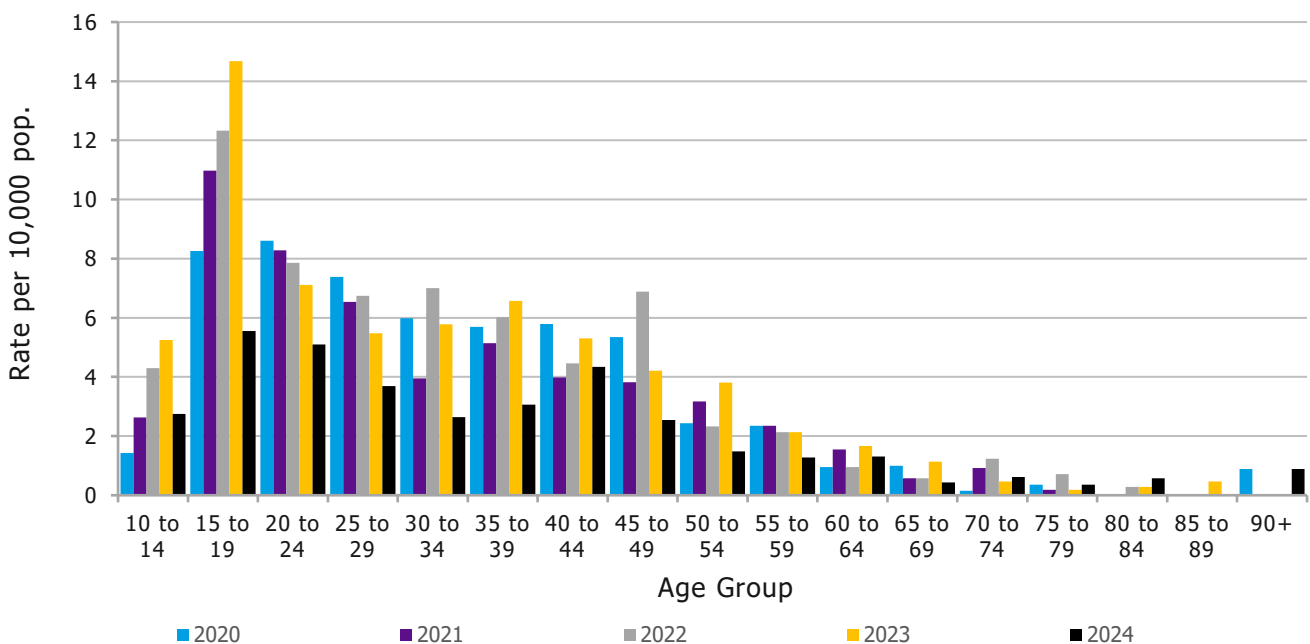
# Knife Enabled Robbery by Suspect Age

Suspects of knife enabled robbery tend to be younger, with a notable bias to the 15 to 19 age group (see Figure 75).

*Figure 75. Knife enabled robbery by suspect age*
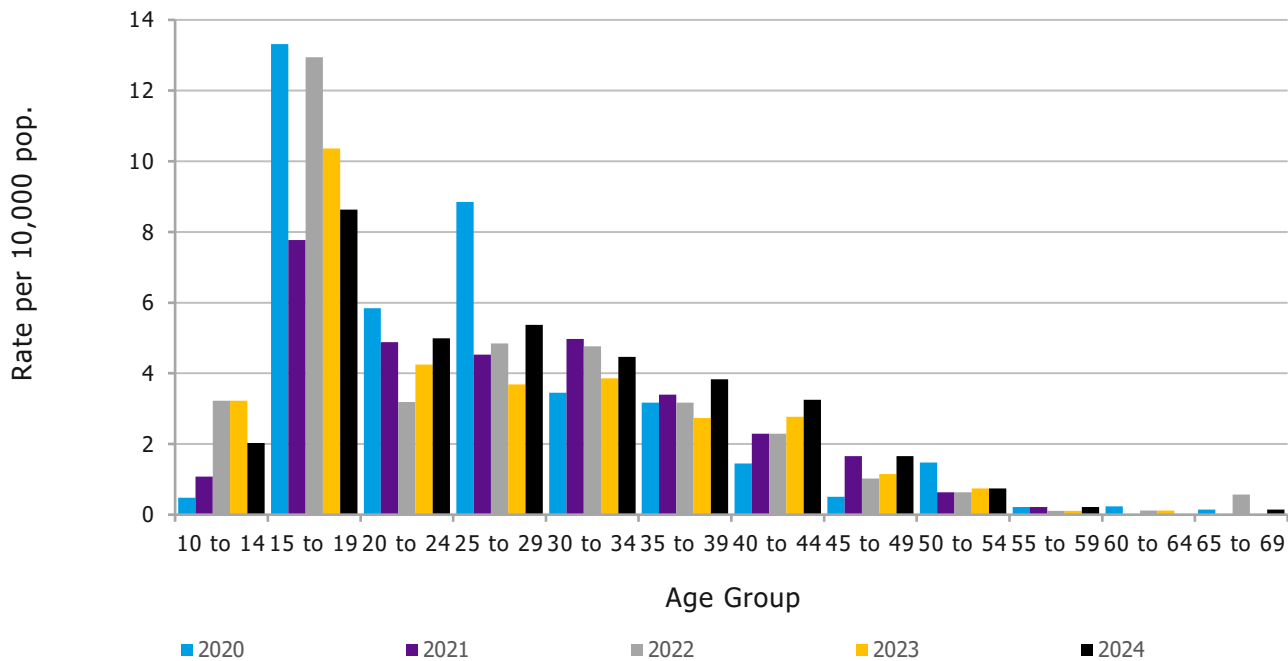


# Knife Enabled Robbery by Suspect and Victim Age Difference

Suspects in knife enabled robbery tend to be younger than the victims, with 59.7% of suspects in 2024 younger than the victim.

*Figure 76. Age difference direction in knife enabled robberies*
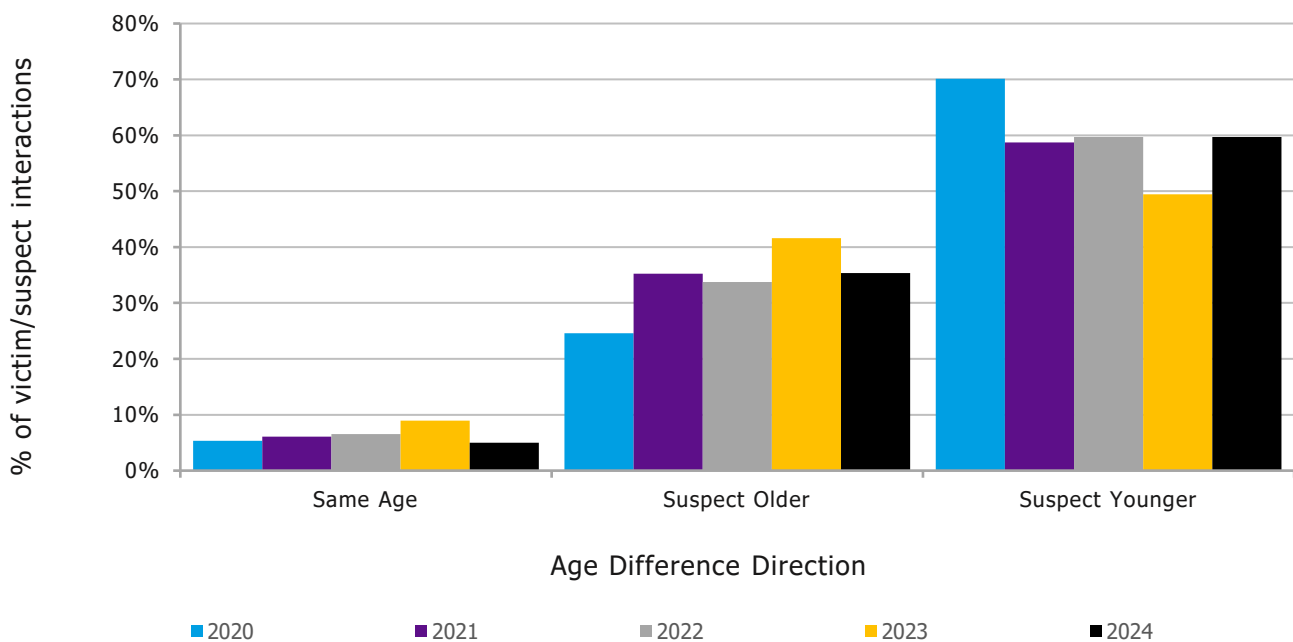


The age difference is often small, with 33.7% of suspect / victim interactions in 2024 being between a suspect and victim aged within 0 to 4 years of each other.

*Figure 77. Age difference in knife enabled robbery*
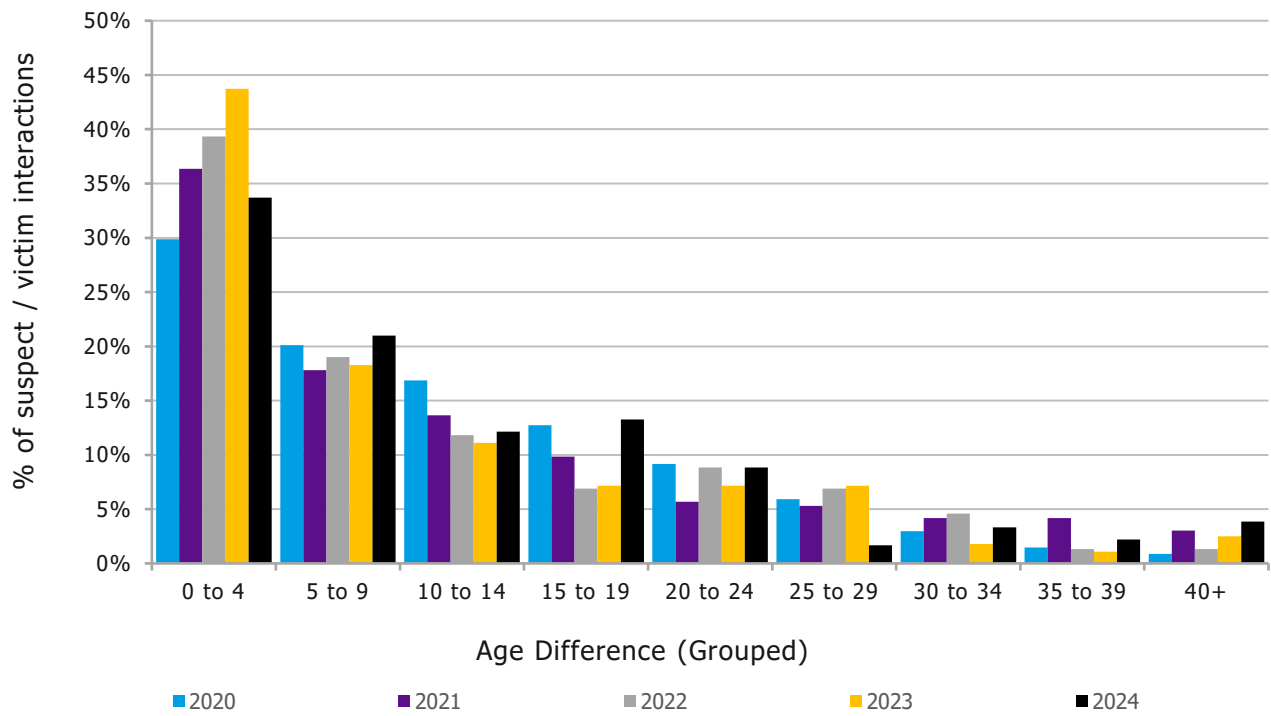
# Knife Enabled Robbery by Victim Gender

The overall decrease in reported victims and their gender, despite no large decrease in knife enabled robbery, means that Figure 78 shows a notable decrease in male offending which is probably not representative of an actual decrease.

*Figure 78. Knife enabled robbery by victim gender*
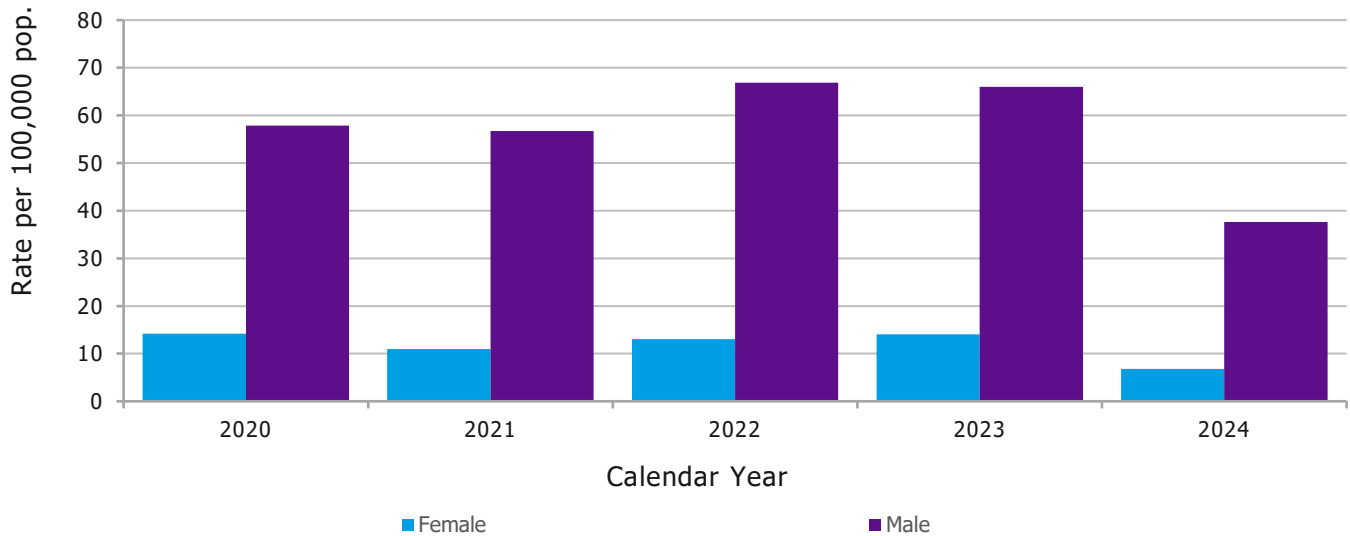


# Knife Enabled Robbery by Suspect Gender

Suspects of knife enabled robbery are usually male, and this is consistent across all years.

*Figure 79. Knife enabled robbery by suspect gender*
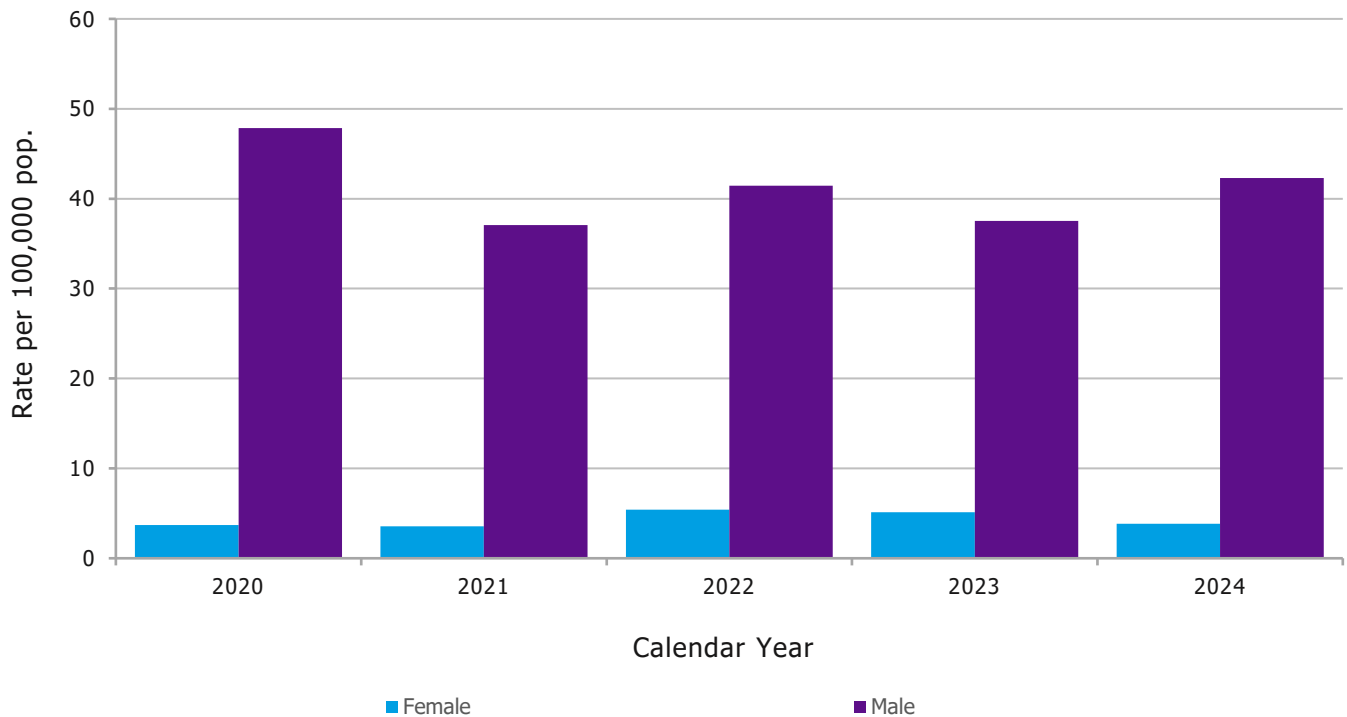
# Firearms Incidents

# South Yorkshire Police's Armed Crime Team

*Please note that the charts in this section have been extracted from the Armed Crime Team's sources, not the VRU's sources. There will therefore be a discrepancy in presentation, numbering and some statistics, as we use different parameters.*

## Introduction/history

In 2020, a significant increase in firearms discharges across the county prompted the creation of the South Yorkshire Police Armed Crime team. This team has both proactive and reactive investigative capability in response to viable firearm discharges and was initially focused on offences across Sheffield and Rotherham linked to organised crime.

Since October 2022, the team has expanded its operational reach to serve all four South Yorkshire policing districts. The team aims to deliver an enhanced force-wide intelligence, investigative, and disruption capability and to work effectively with partner agencies to effectively tackle the firearms-enabled organised crime groups that pose the greatest threat of harm to the communities of South Yorkshire.

In late 2024, the team further increased its remit to include ownership of investigative matters related to any burglaries involving firearms, recoveries of prohibited firearms, and all criminal firearm discharges, not just those linked to known organised crime groups.

In previous years, the force has seen a significantly higher number of viable firearm discharges than its most similar group (MSG) and is one of the six current Key Gun Crime Forces, along with West Yorkshire Police, Greater Manchester Police, Merseyside Police, West Midlands Police, and the Metropolitan Police Service. In 2024 this position has altered significantly and now SYP has the lowest number of viable discharges in the MSG.

Since 2020, there has been a significant downward trend in the numbers of discharges, largely because of the work of the armed crime team in collaboration with district Fortify teams responsible for managing and disrupting organised crime groups. In 2024 there were no fatalities as a result of firearms discharges in South Yorkshire.

*Figure 80. Annual volume of viable firearms discharges force wide (SYP)*
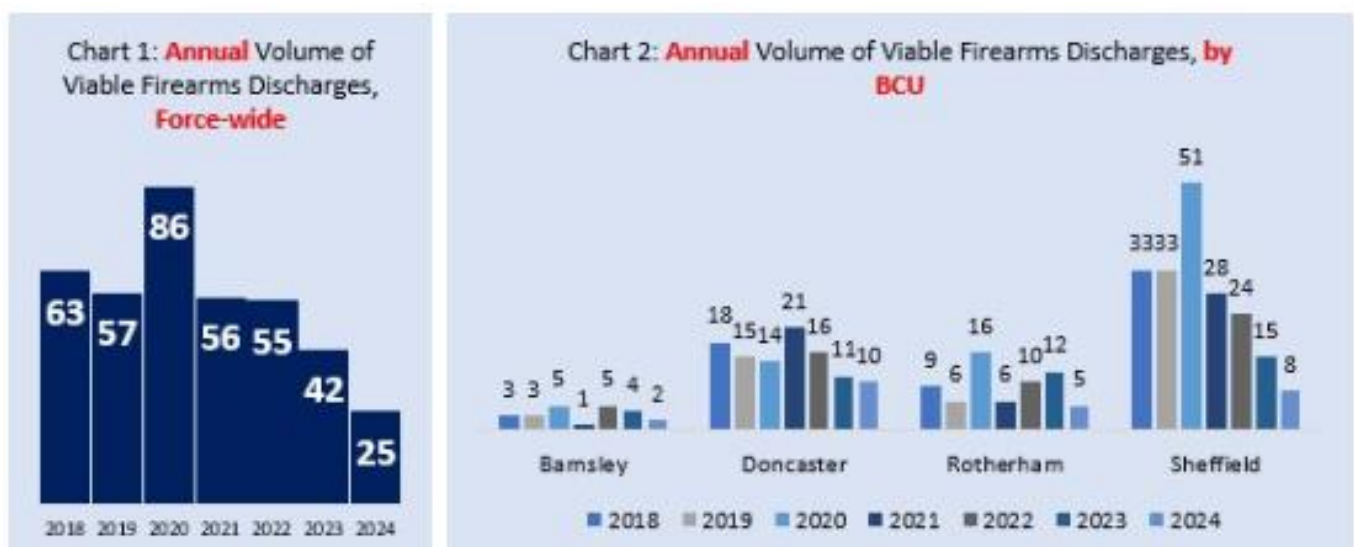
This shows the clear reductions in armed criminality in South Yorkshire over the last 4 years. In 2024 there were 24 firearms discharges, down from a high of 86 in 2020.

Sheffield tends to experience the highest volume of discharges. However, has also seen year on year reductions; from 51 in 2020 to 8 in 2024.

*Figure 81. Annual volume of viable discharges force wide (SYP) resulting in damage, injury or fatality*
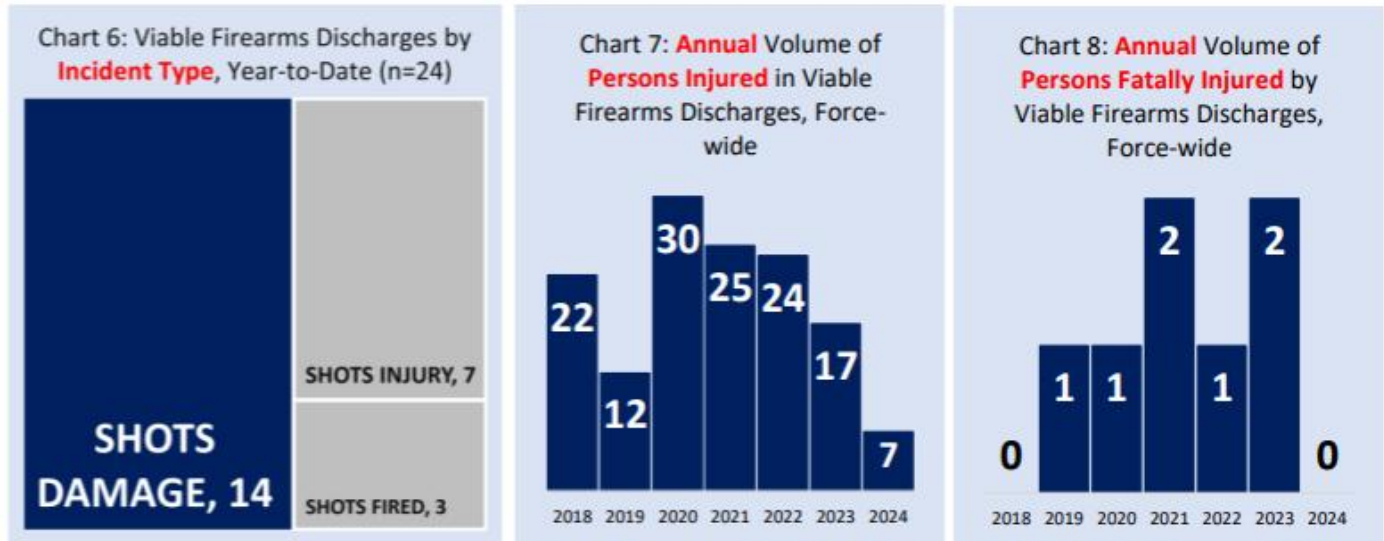


The above charts show not only the significant reductions in firearms discharges, but also large reductions in number of persons injured by firearms in South Yorkshire, and no fatalities.

## Viable firearms recoveries

The armed crime team works hard to identify information and develop this to lead to activity to recover illegally held firearms and, due to this, has over the past four years successfully recovered a large number of firearms from the hands of criminals in South Yorkshire.

Blank-firing pistols have been legal to buy in the UK, and nationally there has been a rise in the conversion of them into Section 5 firearms. Dependent on use, an unconverted blank firing pistol can be considered imitation firearms under the Violent Crime Reduction Act (2007).

In 2023, South Yorkshire Police recovered 97 converted blank-firing pistols (CBFs) used by organised crime groups to further their criminal activity. Operation Treat Mike is an ongoing SYP operation into multi-operation CBF factories. Two trials have already concluded, with 6 convictions. A further trial is currently underway in January 2025.

With 56 further recoveries that year, 2023 saw a total of 153 viable firearms recovered. 26 viable firearms have been recovered during 2024.

While this is lower than in previous years, it is believed to be a clear indication that the robust response and proactive approach are having the desired effect of reducing the availability of illegal firearms in South Yorkshire.

*Figure 82. Viable firearms recovered 2020 to 2024, viable firearms recovered monthly in 2024*
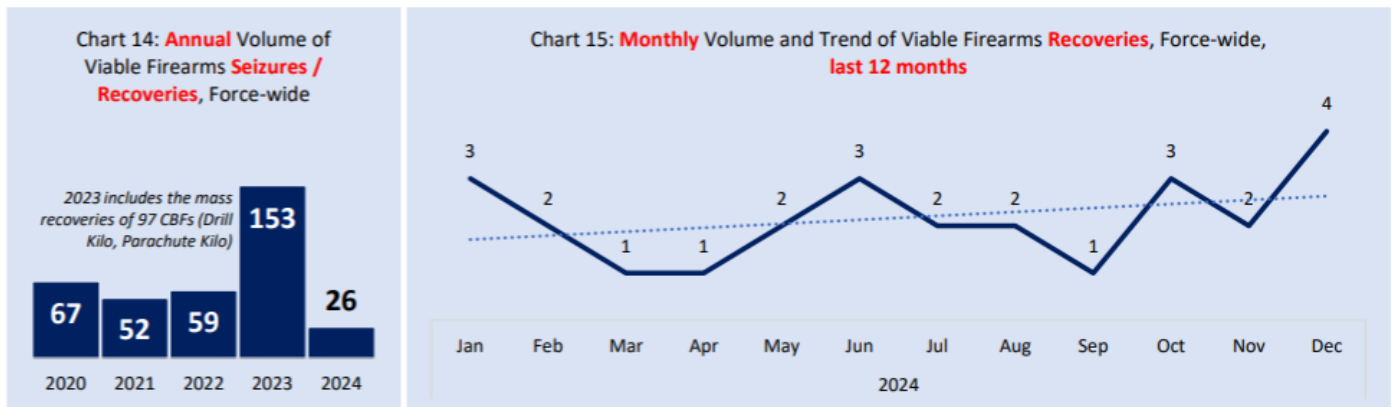


## How has this been achieved

Throughout the past four years, the Armed Crime team has spearheaded a number of processes and initiatives that, when brought together, have clearly had a dramatic positive impact on the criminal use of firearms in South Yorkshire.

Our overall aims for the armed crime team are to:

- Keep the public of South Yorkshire safe
- Identify the key gun crime nominals
- Take robust positive action against all gun crime nominals and maximise evidential opportunities
- Improve public trust and confidence in police
- Offer support to gun crime nominals who want to disengage from criminality

With the intended outcomes being:

- A reduction in firearms discharges
- A reduction in persons injured or killed due to the criminal use of firearms
- An increase in arrests and successful prosecutions of individuals linked to illegally held firearms
- An increase in intelligence gathered about gun crime related nominals

A summary of these initiatives and the approach adopted by the force is detailed below:

## Operation Relentless

As a result of the increased number of discharges in 2023, SYP introduced a new approach to tackling gun-enabled crime, dubbed **Operation Relentless**. Operation Relentless intends to make South Yorkshire a hostile place for those committing armed crime and demonstrate SYP will not tolerate gun crime in our communities.

The intent of Operation Relentless is to:

- Provide a suitable Policing response to the incident
- Provide public reassurance to the incident and improve public confidence in the Police
- Provide a resolution to the incident and aim to achieve sustained public protection

As part of this, SYP operational support unit resources flood an area following a discharge in a bid to increase intelligence gathering. In addition, each viable discharge is initially declared a critical

incident with a Gold meeting structure in place to ensure all possible resources are utilised and the investigative response is as effective as possible.

## Armed Crime Team Daily Management Meeting and Intelligence Review

All firearm-related intelligence is reviewed by the armed crime team detective inspector in conjunction with district intelligence units daily to identify linked information and cross-reference with ongoing investigations, identify development and disruption opportunities, and ensure ownership and progression of further enquiries.

## Tactical Firearms Commander Intelligence Assessments.

Firearms-related intelligence is reviewed, and risk is assessed by experienced and qualified tactical firearms commanders; investigative objectives are set, and operational plans are developed to mitigate any identified risk, gather evidence of criminality, and ultimately recover any criminally held firearms, prosecute related individuals, and disrupt and prevent associated criminality.

## Gun Crime Disruption notices

In July 2023, the force implemented a cease-and-desist process previously used successfully by the Merseyside Police. This process aims to identify the top gun crime nominals in South Yorkshire and disrupt firearms-enabled organised crime groups.

A nominal is a person listed in the Police National Computer database as having been:

- Convicted
- Cautioned
- Recently arrested for a firearms offence

Once a nominal is added to the list, a cease-and-desist notice is hand delivered to them by an armed officer. The notice clearly informs the individual that South Yorkshire Police has identified them as a gun crime nominal due to intelligence which links them or their associates to firearms.

It is made clear that they will be visited by police officers on a regular (weekly) basis to check on their safety and that of their family and to dissuade them from being involved in criminality involving firearms. The individual is also informed of the partnership work South Yorkshire Police are currently undertaking to make them aware of all available tactics and legislation the force is using to reduce firearm activity.

It is also made clear that we work in partnership to tackle armed criminality and that we will use all available tactics and legislation to reduce gun crime in South Yorkshire; this may include:

- Surveillance of them and, where appropriate, those they associate with where it has been authorised.
- The use of care proceedings to protect children and young persons who may be at risk if people in their family are involved with guns.
- Anti-social behaviour orders to prevent individuals from frequenting certain areas or associating with other named individuals.
- Eviction from homes if they disrupt their neighbourhood.

These notices and visits conclude with an offer: should the individual wish to change their lifestyle and move away from crime and firearms, there are partner agencies that can assist them in doing so, and we will connect them with agencies that can provide them with training, education, and employment.

Once the initial notices have been successfully served, we will then continue with regular assertive management visits so that we continue to touch base with the individual and ensure that they know we are relentless in our efforts to tackle gun-enabled criminality.

There are currently 19 active and 16 archived gun crime disruption notices in South Yorkshire.

## Operation Hawk Mike

Operation Hawk Mike, introduced in October 2023, is an initiative to execute disruption warrants carried out by the Armed Crime Team with liaison and assistance from district intelligence units, fortify teams, and the SYP tactical support unit.

It is a process by which the Armed Crime Team, in conjunction with district intelligence units, identifies enforcement opportunities relating to Individuals that have a link to armed criminality; the enforcement opportunities can, and often do, relate to non-firearm-related information.

Search warrants are then obtained and executed as a means of ongoing disruption of criminal activity, and they also often lead to the discovery and seizure of illegally held firearms and drugs, and the prosecution of these individuals for this.

*Figure 83. Warrant executed or ongoing from Oct 2023*



Chart 21: Operation Hawk Mike Warrants, by BCU and Result (n=111)
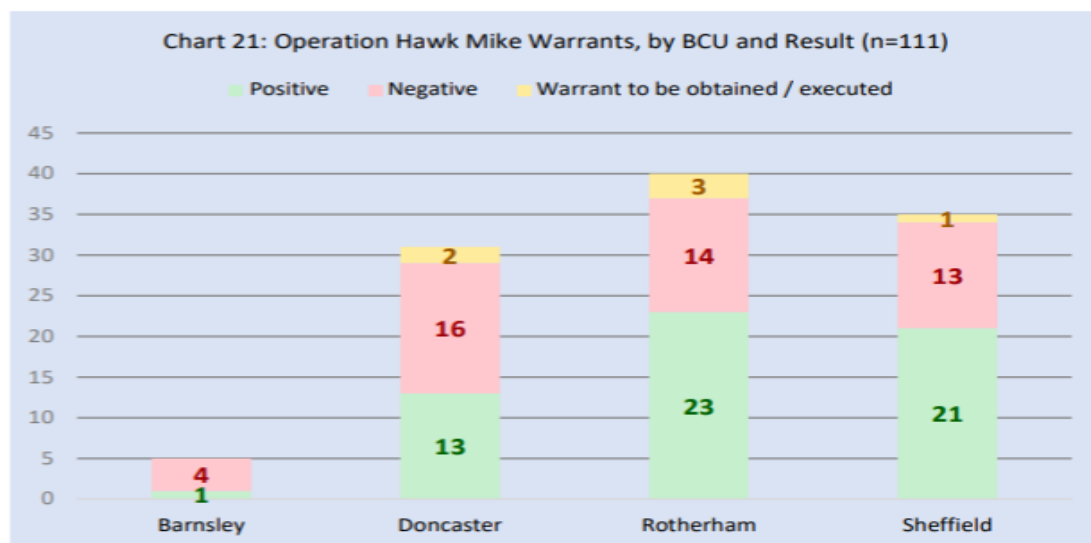
## Continued aspirations

The Armed Crime Team provides South Yorkshire Police with a coordinated and proactive investigative capability that links the different policing specialisms and capabilities of the organisation.

The work of the armed crime seeks to develop an understanding of current and emerging threats posed by firearms-enabled organised criminals and to identify the underlying factors driving firearms-enabled organised crime to proactively tackle this, as well as providing a robust, professional, and highly effective reactive response when a crime involving firearms takes place.

The Armed Crime Team acts as a point of contact, reference, and support in relation to all armed criminality and seeks to raise awareness through the provision of training and supportive guidance

material across the organisation to ensure all staff have sufficient knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to reduce the risk posed by armed criminality.

The approaches and initiatives described above are clearly proving highly effective at this time, and the continued drive and aspiration of South Yorkshire Police is to maintain our success in this area and further drive down the possession and use of criminally held firearms in South Yorkshire.

# Public Place Firearms Offences in South Yorkshire

To keep to public place firearms offences, we have removed offences flagged as domestic abuse, or flagged as being located in a prison. This means there will be some difference between the ACT data and our data.

# Weapon Used

Crimes involving firearms are termed as firearms crimes. The type of firearm used can vary, from imitation firearms to rifles. The most common firearm used is a handgun, which accounted for 29.7% of firearms used in 2024. Air weapons account for 24.7% of weapons used.

*Figure 84 - Weapons used in firearms offences*
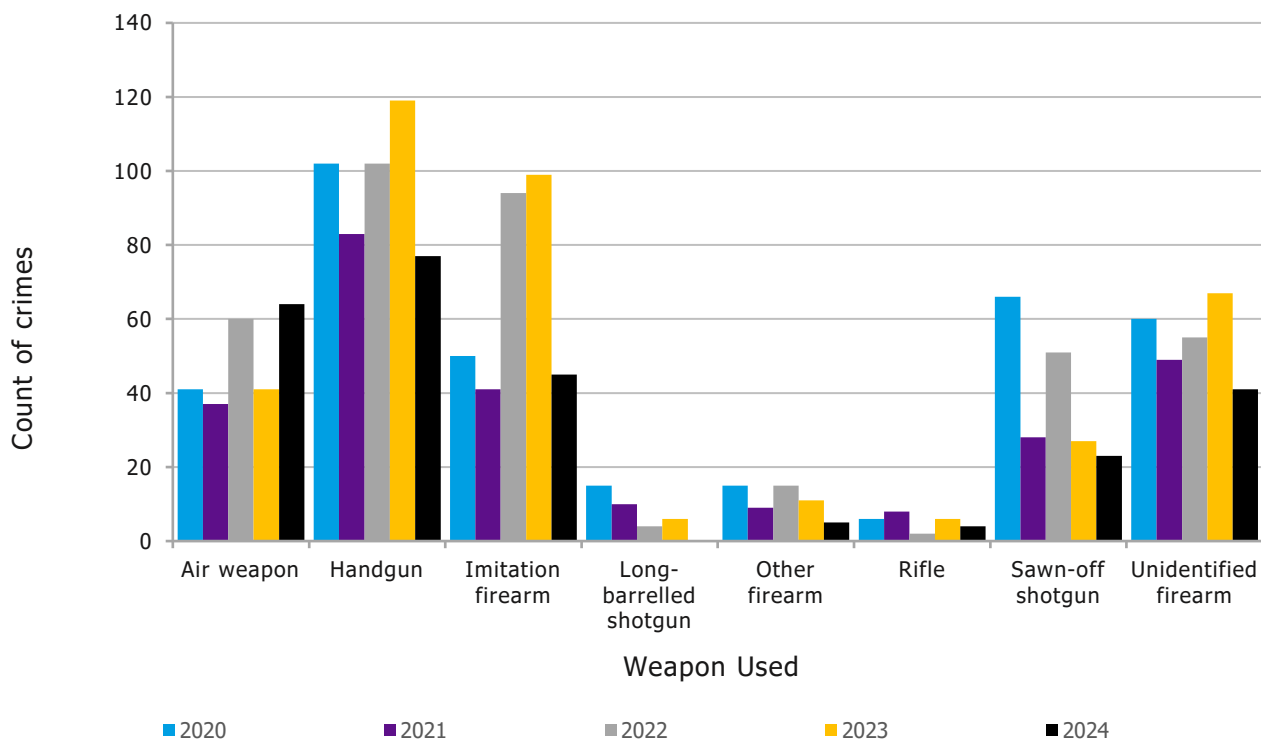


## Usage of firearms

It is important to know how a firearm was used. Not all firearms crimes involved the weapon being discharged, and when the weapon is discharged not all firearms crimes result in an injury (see Figure 85). In fact, in most firearms incident the weapon is used as a threat only.

Figure 85 - Firearms offences by usage
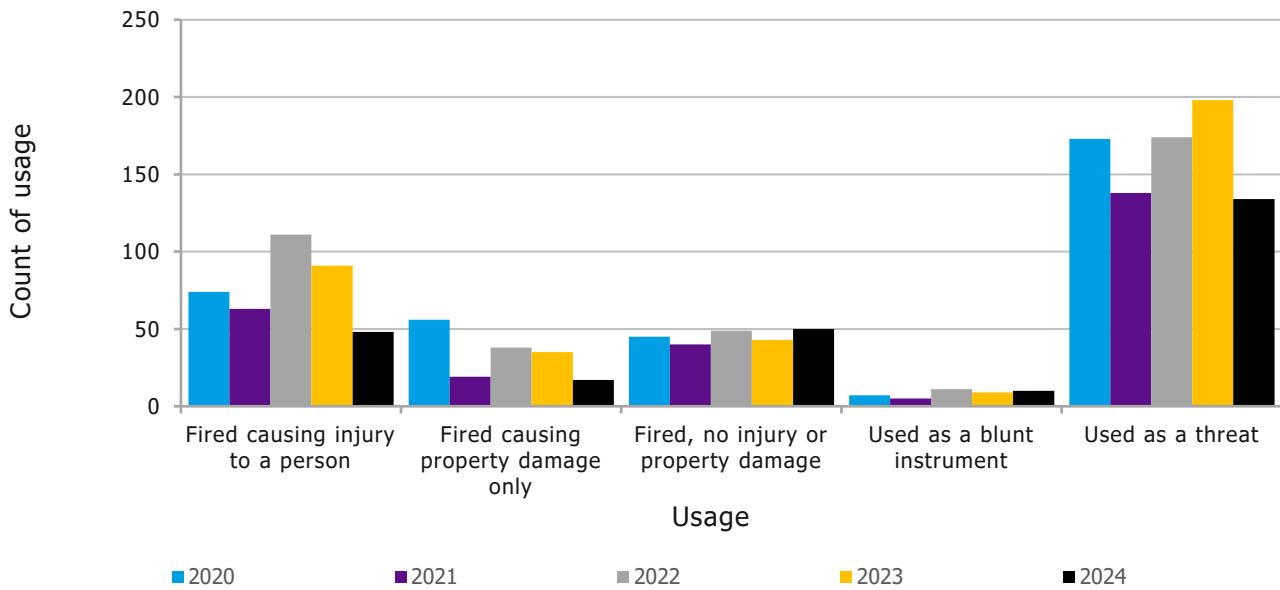


Consistently, across all time periods, the most common use of a firearm is as a threat. In the time period Q3 2022/3 to Q2 2023/24, the firearm was used as a threat in 42.9% of cases. However, this time period also saw a large increase in the number of times a firearms was fired causing injury to a person. 31.7% of crimes in Q3 2022/23 to Q2 2023/24 involved the firearm being fired, causing injury to a person, up 6.6% percentage points from 25.1% in Q3 2021/22 to Q2 2022/23.

# Rate of Firearms Offences

With the context of how firearms are used in mind, we will now look at the rate of firearms offences in the 5 years covered (see Figure 86).

Figure 86 - Rate of firearms offences
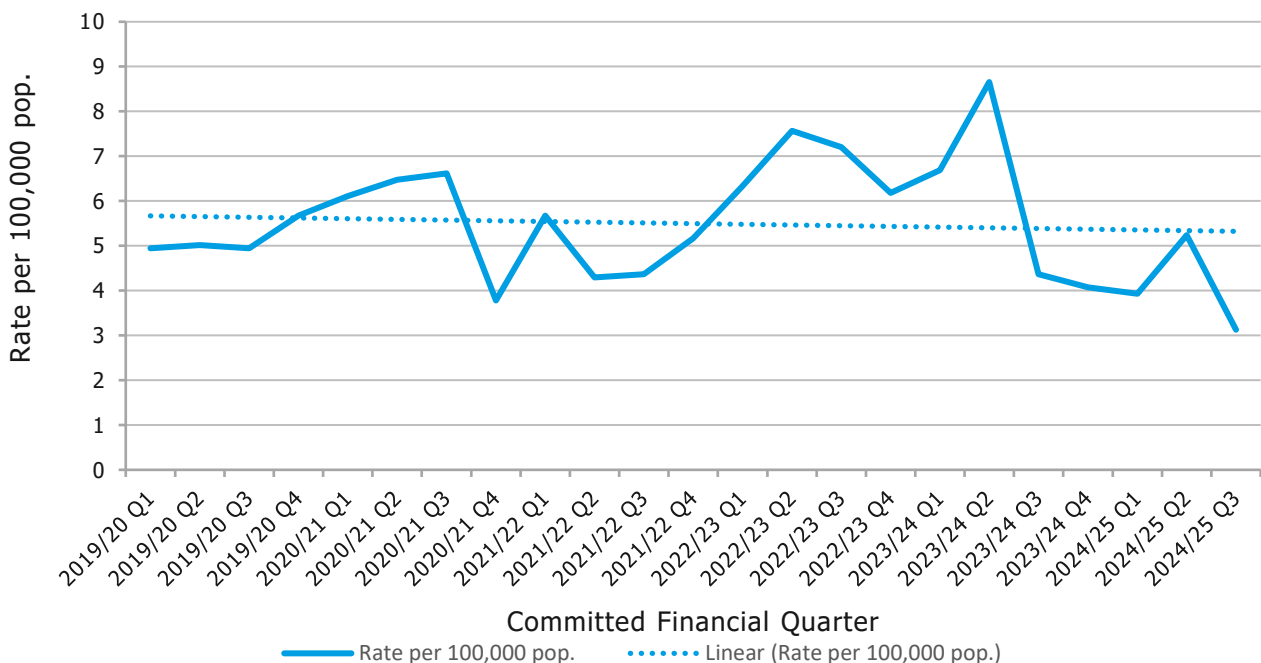


After a generally increasing trend from 2022 to 2023, the overall rate of firearms offences saw a sharp decrease in 2024, bringing the rate back in line with what was seen during lockdown.

# Rate of Firearms Offences by district

The decrease in the rate of firearms offences appears to be driven mostly by decreases in Rotherham and Sheffield (see Figure 87). Barnsley, although the district with the lowest rate overall, has shown some increase over the 5 years covered that has not been reversed like in Rotherham and Sheffield. Doncaster did not show a decrease over the time period covered, but did show a decrease in the most recent financial quarters.

*Figure 87 - Rate of firearms offences by district*
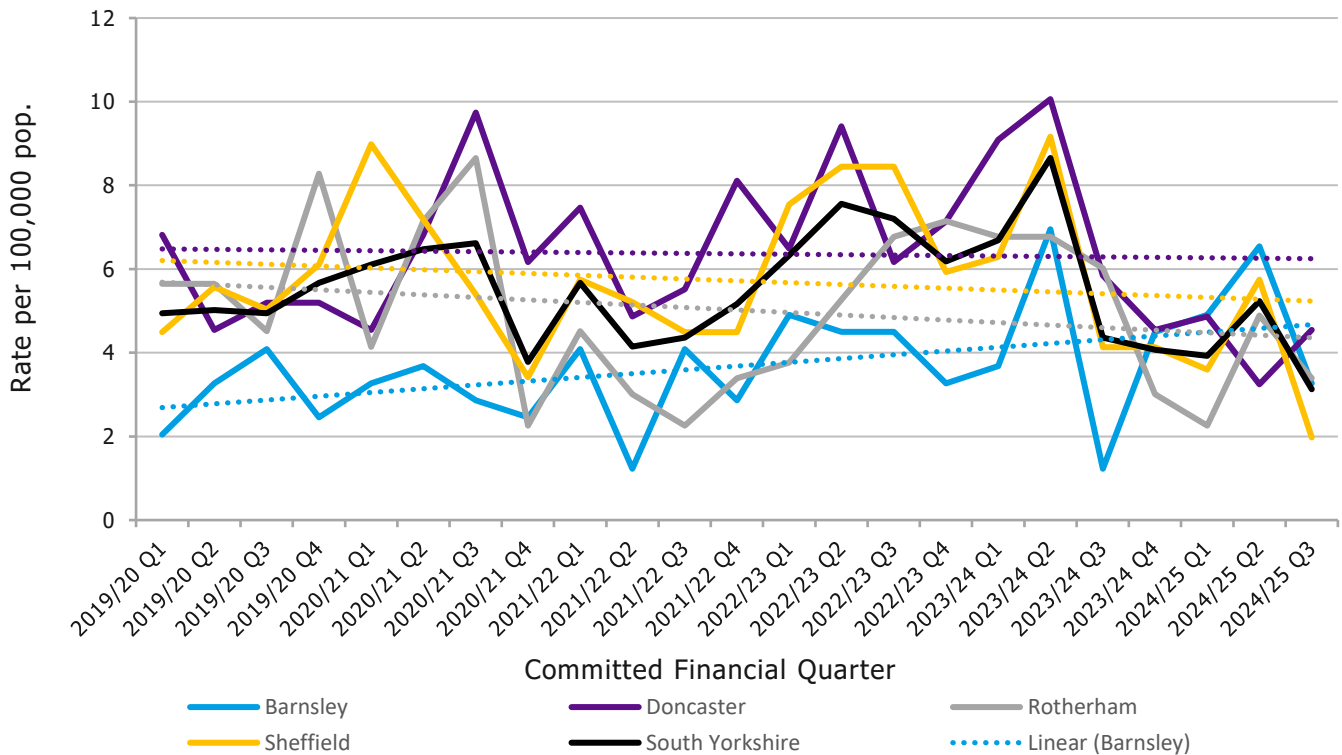
# Firearms Offences by Time

The time of the day firearms offences occur is more variable than other crime types due to lower numbers (see Figure 88). There is still a general trend towards crimes occurring in the late afternoon to evening, with the hours of 9pm to 11pm being the most common times for firearms incidents to occur in 2024.

*Figure 88 - Firearms offences by hour of the day*
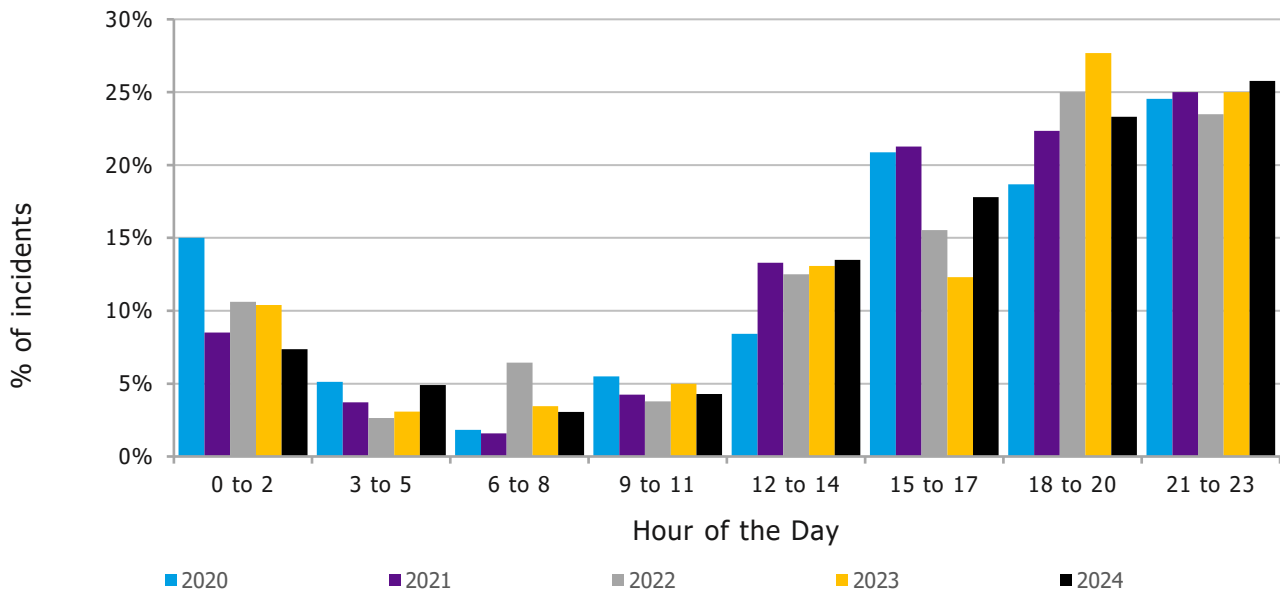


Firearms offences can occur any day of the week, and there is not a notable bias towards the weekends that we see in other violent crimes (see Figure 89). The low numbers of firearms incidents means there is notable variability in this data.

*Figure 89 - Firearms offences by day of the week*
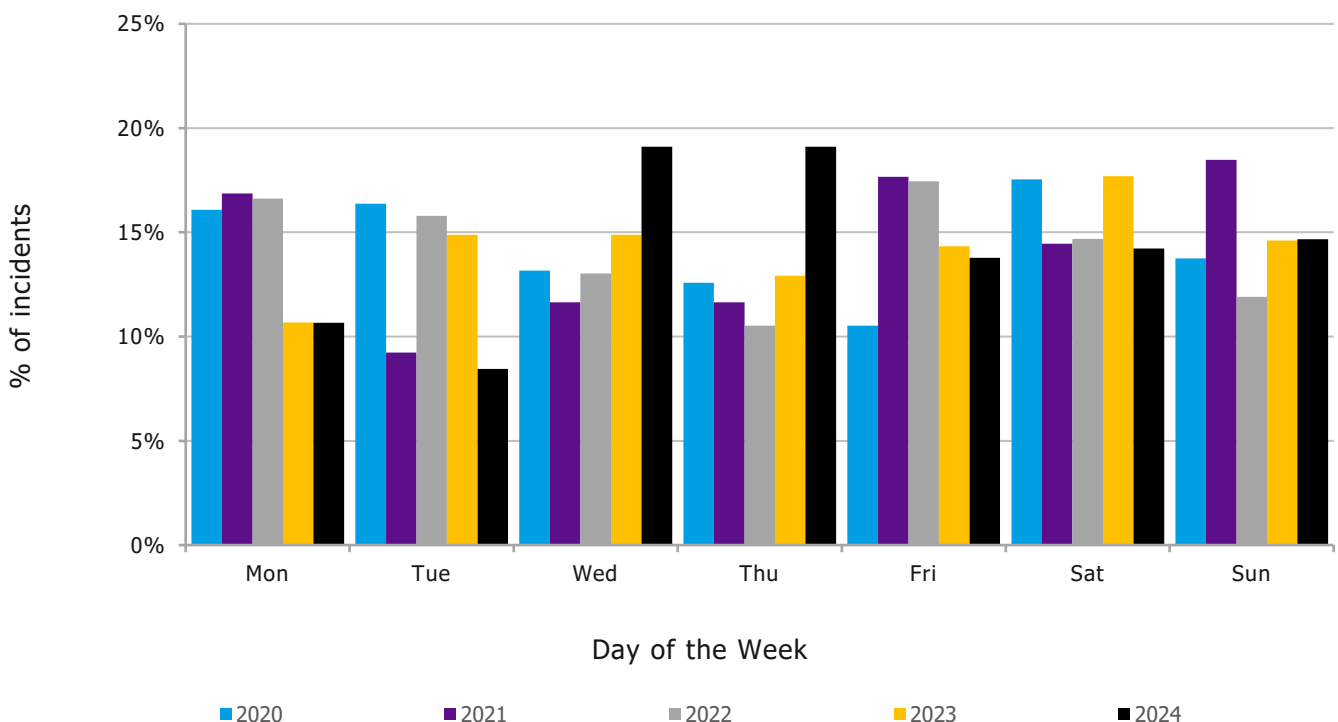
We can combine the hour and day to data to get a picture of firearms offences across the week (see Figure 90).

*Figure 90 - Firearms offences by hour and day of the week*
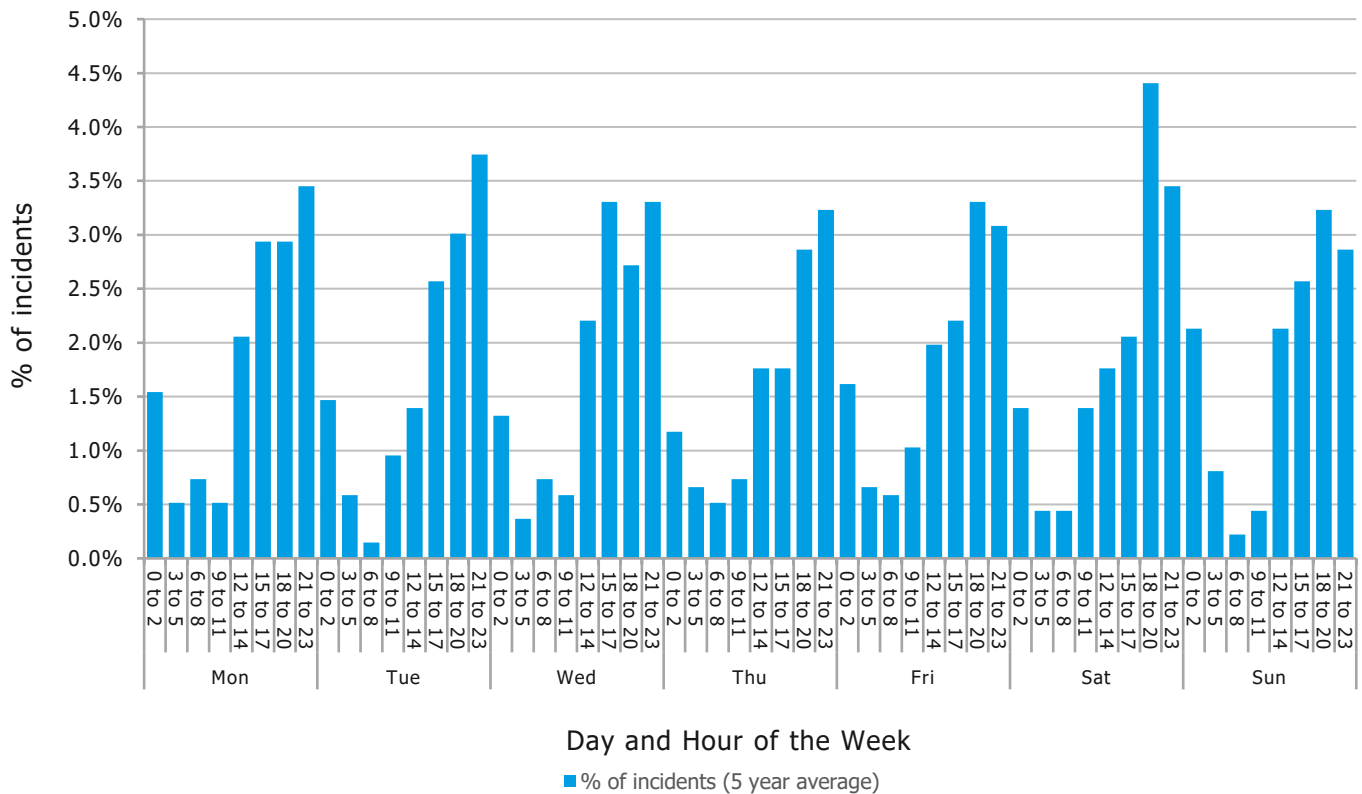


There remains no clear bias towards the usual times of concern, such as Friday and Saturday evening. Firearms offences are more common in evenings, but this seems to apply to all days of the week.

# Firearms Offences by Deprivation

Firearms offences occur more often in areas of high deprivation compared to low, although low numbers mean the data is highly variable (see Figure 91). The decrease in firearms offences has benefited areas of high deprivation the most.

*Figure 91. Firearms offences by deprivation of location of crime*
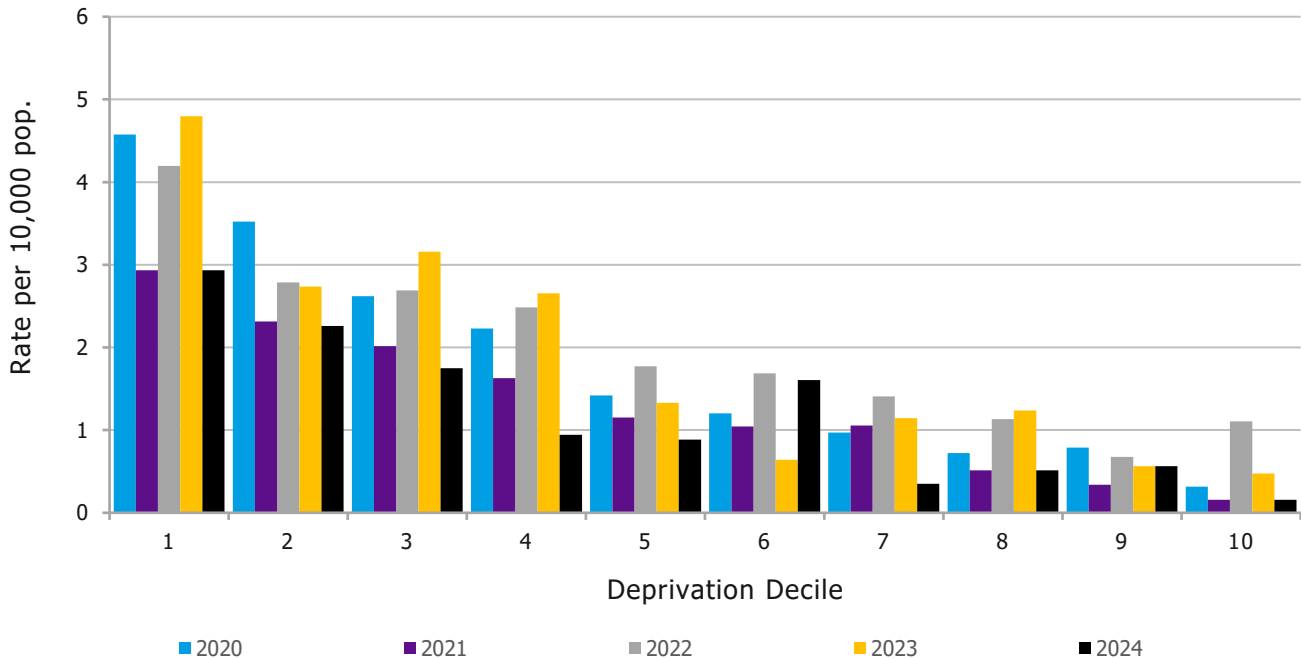


# Firearms Offences by Age of Victims

The rate of reported victimisation by firearms offences decreased considerably for victims aged 15 to 19 in 2024. There were more modest decreases across most age groups.

*Figure 92 - Firearms offences by age of victims*



143
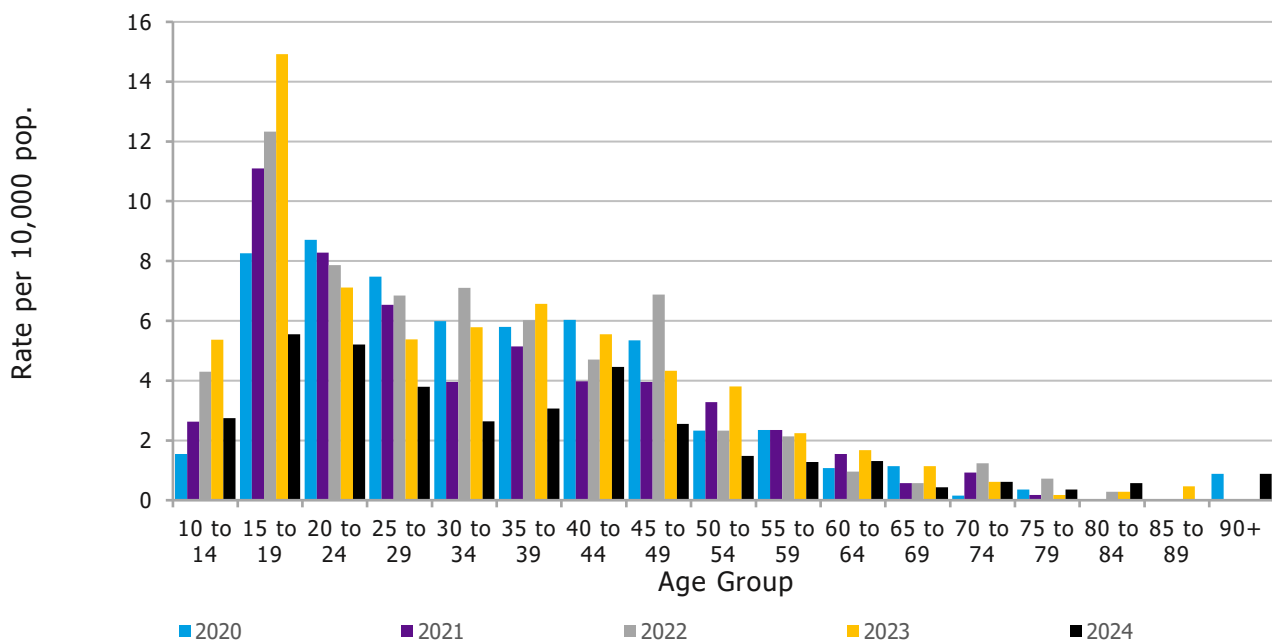
# Firearms Offences by Age of Suspect

Firearms suspects tend to be younger, with the highest risk age group being 15 to 19 years old. The decrease in offences in 2024 came from a decrease in offending from this age group.

*Figure 93. Firearms offences by age of suspects*
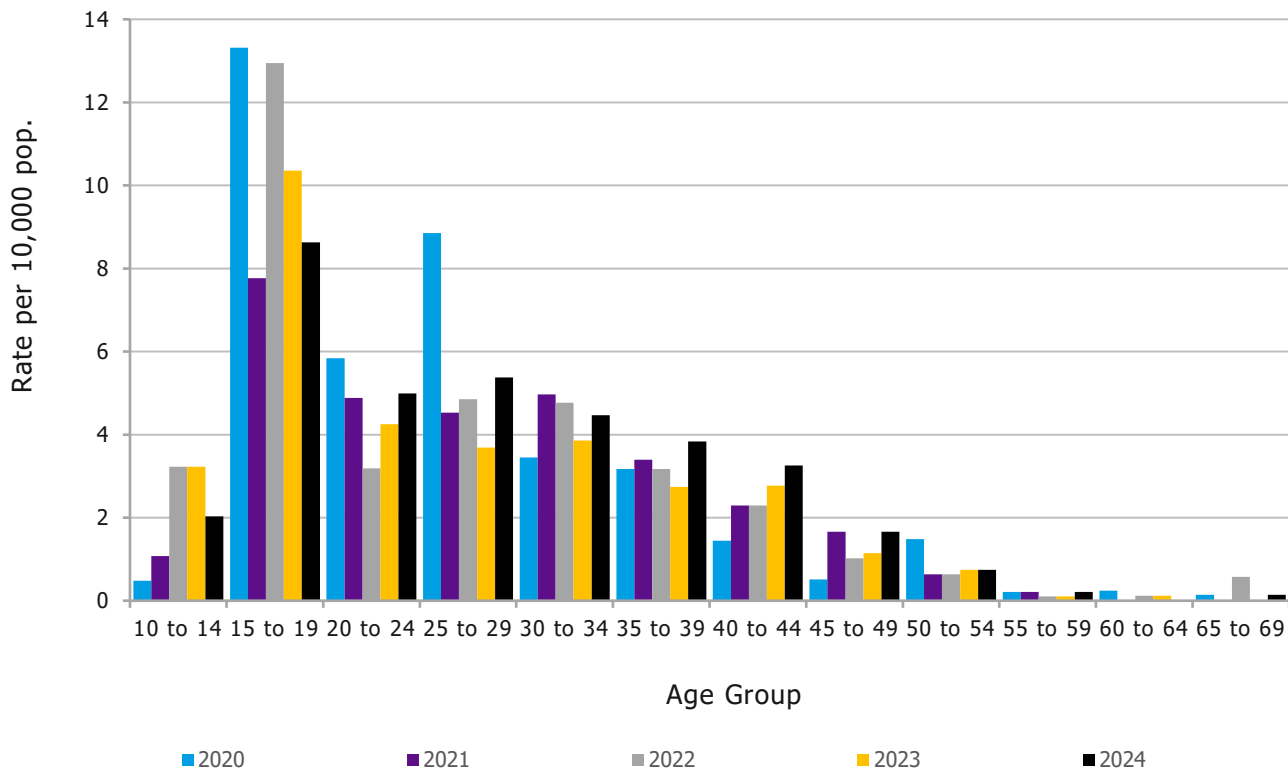


# Firearms Offences by Suspect and Victim Age Difference

Suspects in firearms offences tend to be younger than the victims, although this was a narrow majority of 50.0% in 2024.

*Figure 94 - Firearms offences by age difference between victim and suspect*
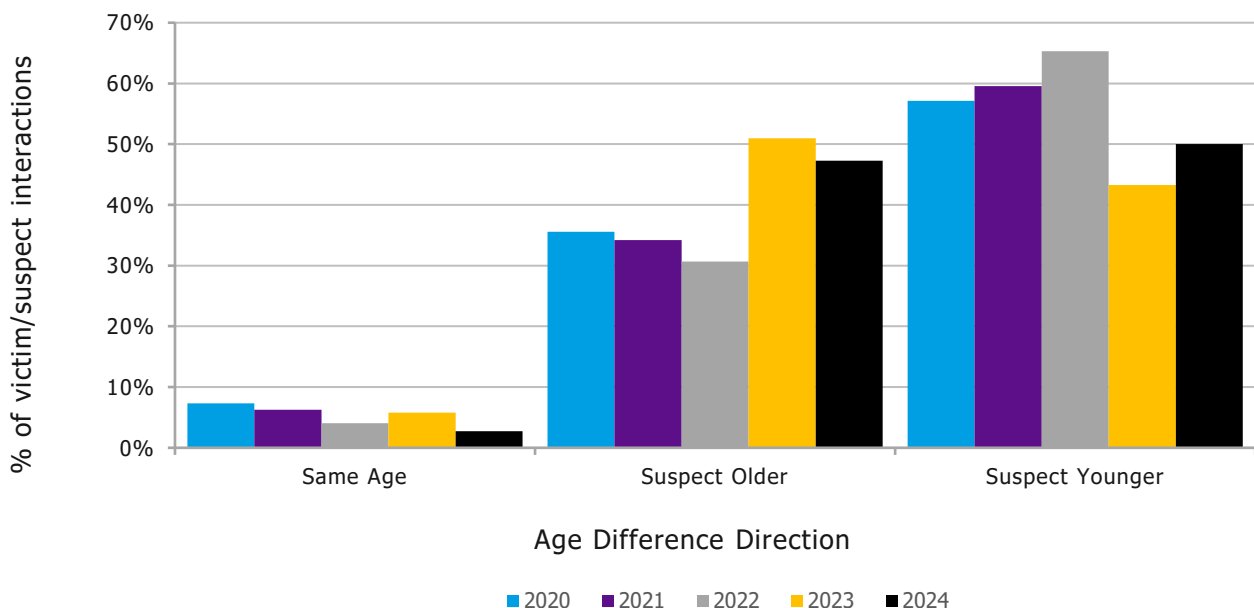
The actual age difference is often small, although again in 2024 we saw a somewhat different result with a high 27.5% of suspects and victims being aged within 5 to 9 years of each other. This is close to the 29.1% of suspects and victims who were aged within 0 to 4 years of each other, which is usually by far the largest category.

*Figure 95 - Age difference between suspects and victim in firearms offences*
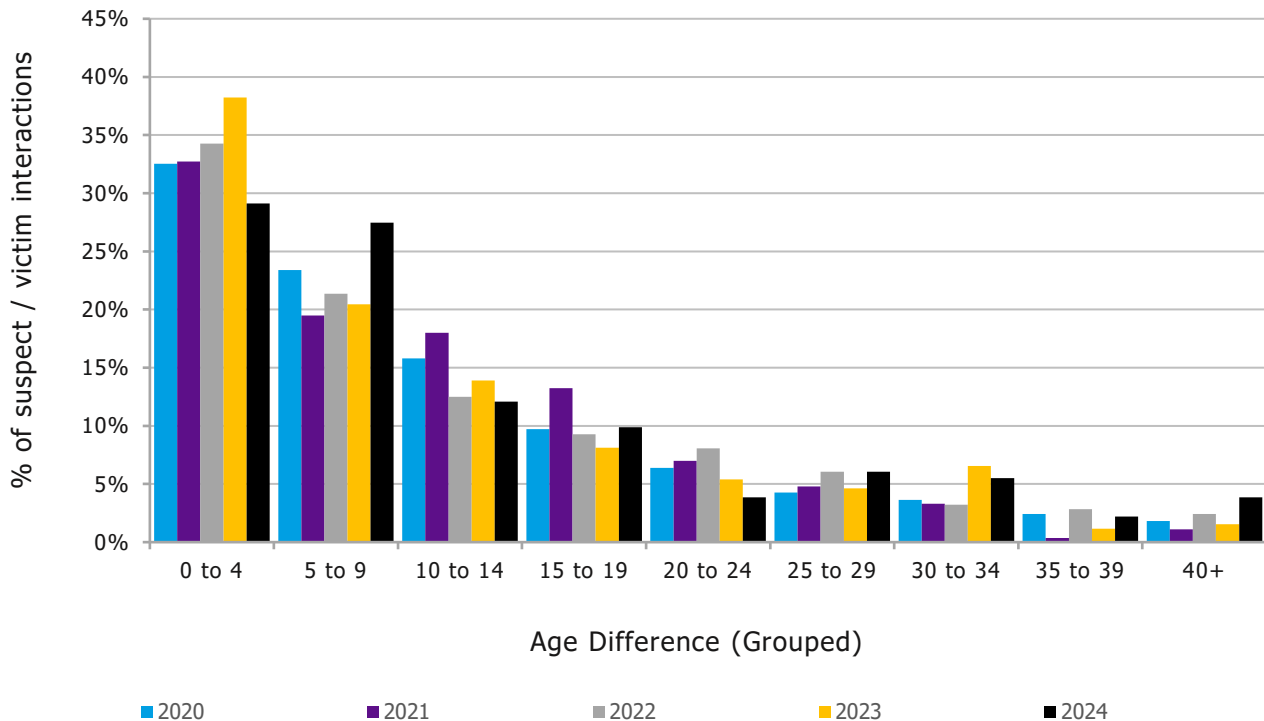


# Firearms Offences by Gender of Victims

The majority of victims of firearms offences are male (see Figure 96). The decrease in 2024 also positively affected males the most.

*Figure 96 - Firearms offences by victim gender*
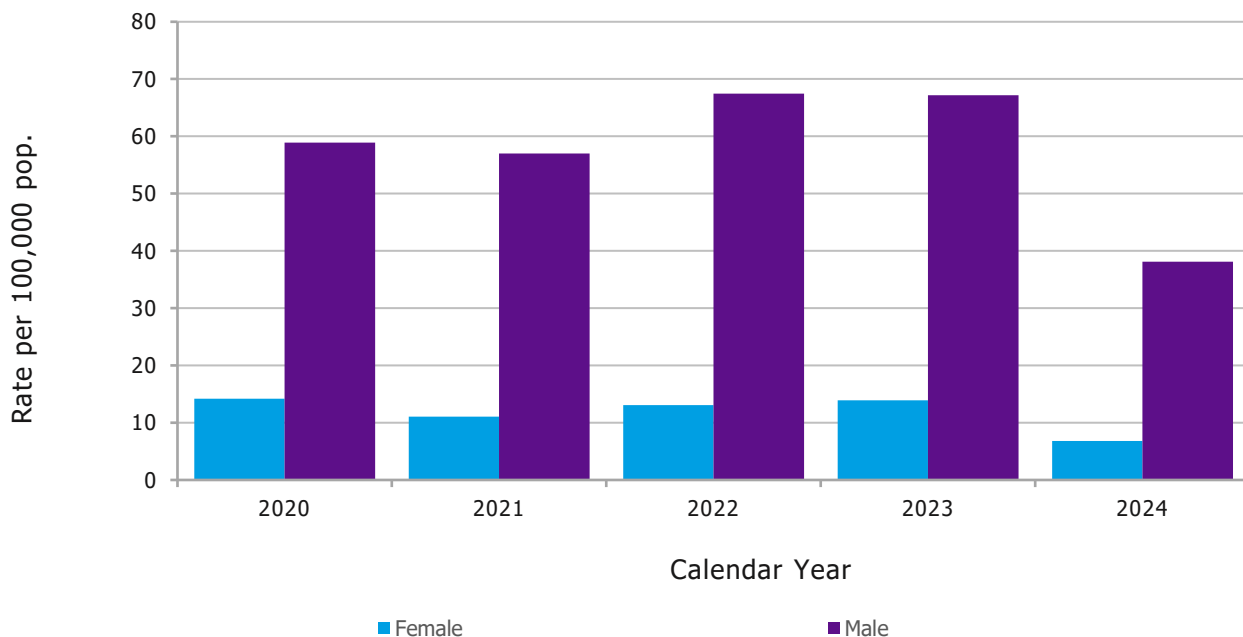
# Firearms Offences by Suspect Gender

The age of suspects is more difficult to assess as not all suspects are known. Although there was a decrease of firearms offences in 2024, an increase in detection and multiple suspect incidents means an increase in the number of suspects, particularly those who were male. We have also seen a reversal of the slight increase in female suspects, suggesting this was simply variation in the data.

*Figure 97 - Firearms offences by suspect gender*
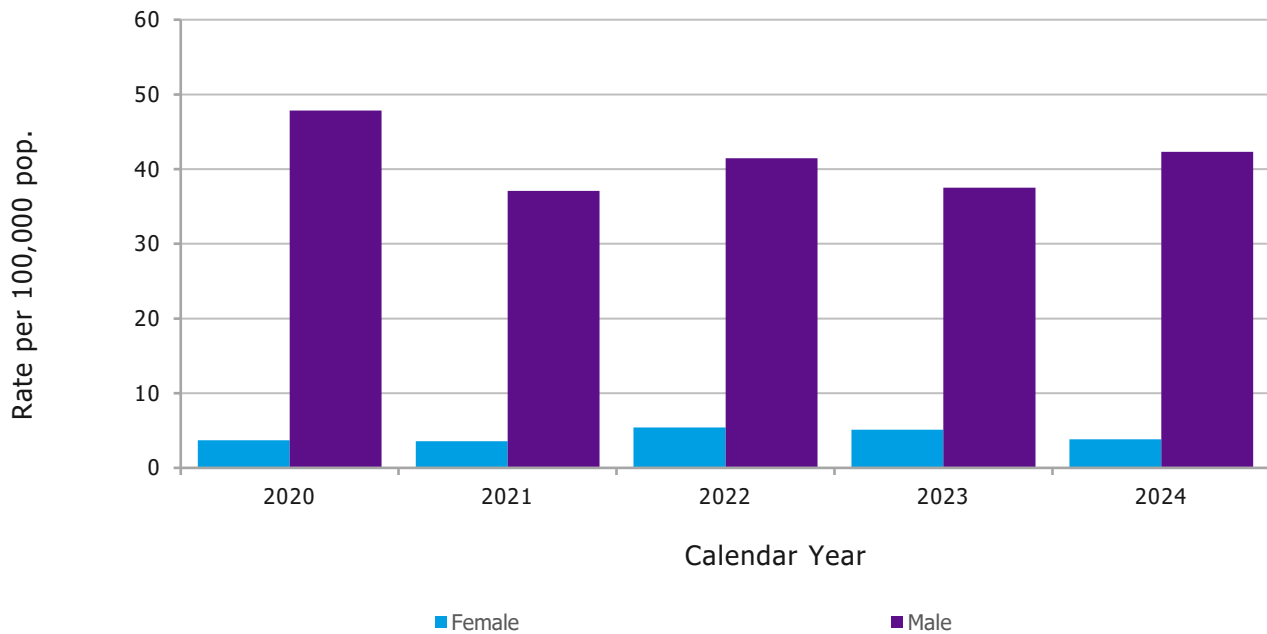
# Weapon Carrying

# Public Place Possession of Weapons

Another indicator of weapon carrying In South Yorkshire is the rate of possession of weapon offences. However, more so than any other crime in this Strategic Needs Assessment, the rate of possession of weapons offences is strongly influenced by police activity. There has been consistent police activity to detect carrying of weapons over the time covered.

We have defined "public place" as excluding domestic abuse incidents and prisons incidents.

# Rate of Public Place Possession of Weapons

The rate of possession of weapon offences has been increasing in South Yorkshire over the past 5 years (see Figure 98). As discussed above, we must remember that this rate can be influenced by police activity.

*Figure 98 - Rate of public place possession of weapons offences*
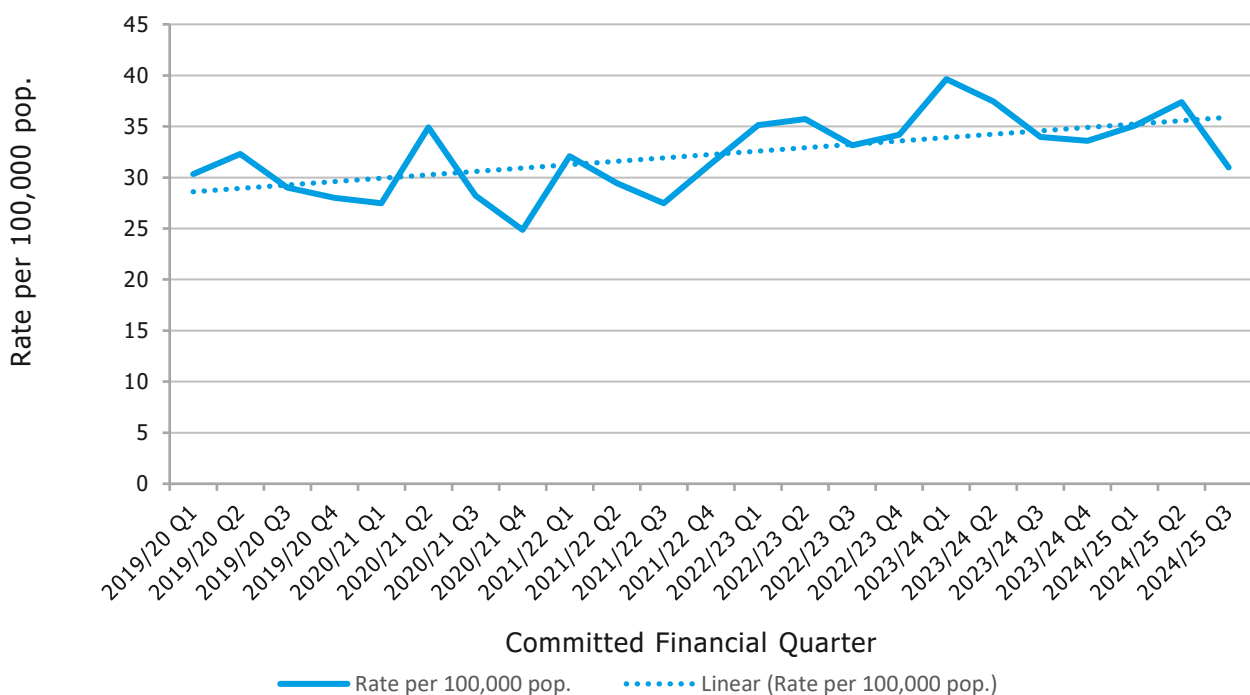


To investigate why the rate may be increasing, we divided the offences into;

- Possession, where the crime type covers possessing a weapon but not necessarily using it.
- Supply, where the crime type indicates the suspect was not intending to personally possess or use the weapon but provide it to another person.
- Possession / Supply, where the crime type covers both of the above possibilities.
- Threaten, where the crime type explicit states a threat was used.
- Intent, where the crime type confirms the suspected intended to use the weapon in a violent or threatening way.
- Attempted, where the crime was not completed.

Note that these distinctions have been made for the purpose of this SNA only. "Attempted" has removed from Figure 99 as there were few crimes in this category.

*Figure 99 - Count of possession of weapons offences by offence type*
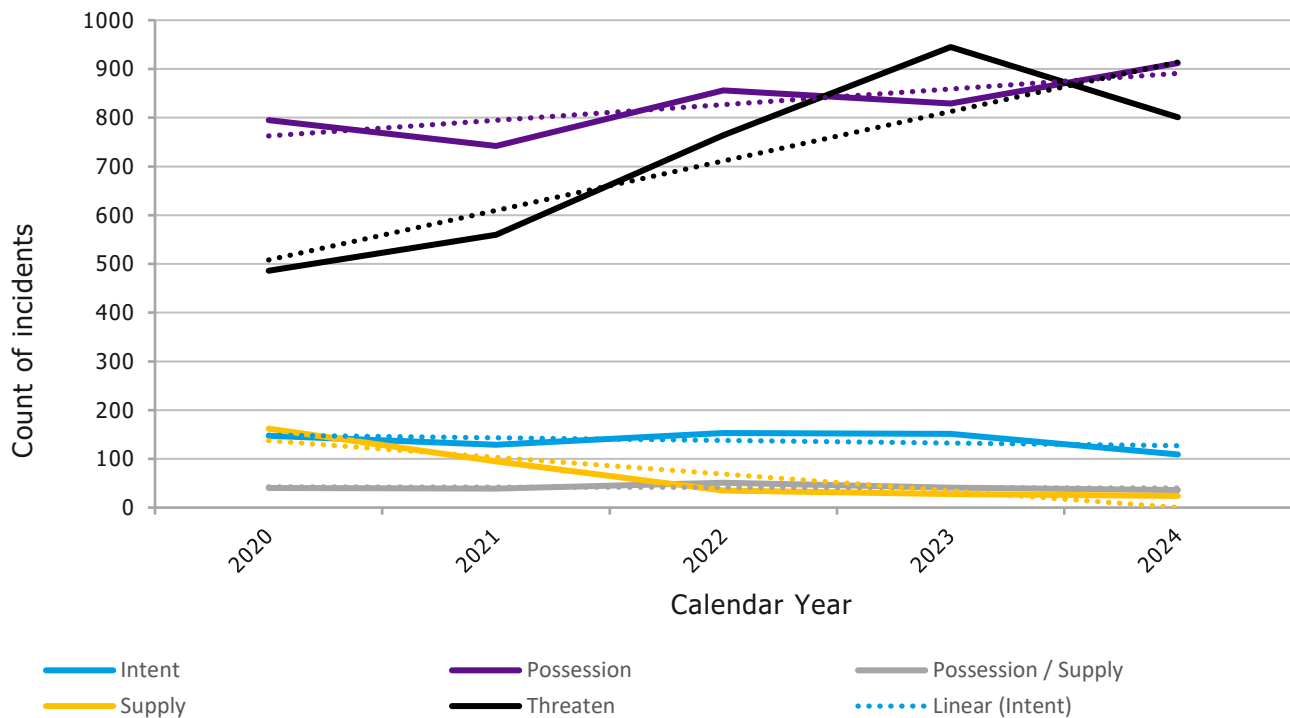


Figure 99 shows that possession, the crime type most influenced by police activity, has shown an increase. This may be down to more weapons being possessed by individuals, but may also be due to increased police activity since 2018.

The overall increase is being driven by an increase in the use of weapons as threats.

# Rate of Public Place Possession of Weapons by District

The rate of possession of weapons offences has been increasing in all districts, and at a similar gradient on Figure 100. This indicates that there is not one district that is responsible for the overall increase. Figure 100 also shows that, by district, the rate of possession of weapons can be highly variable by quarter.

*Figure 100 - Rate of public place possession of weapons offences by district*
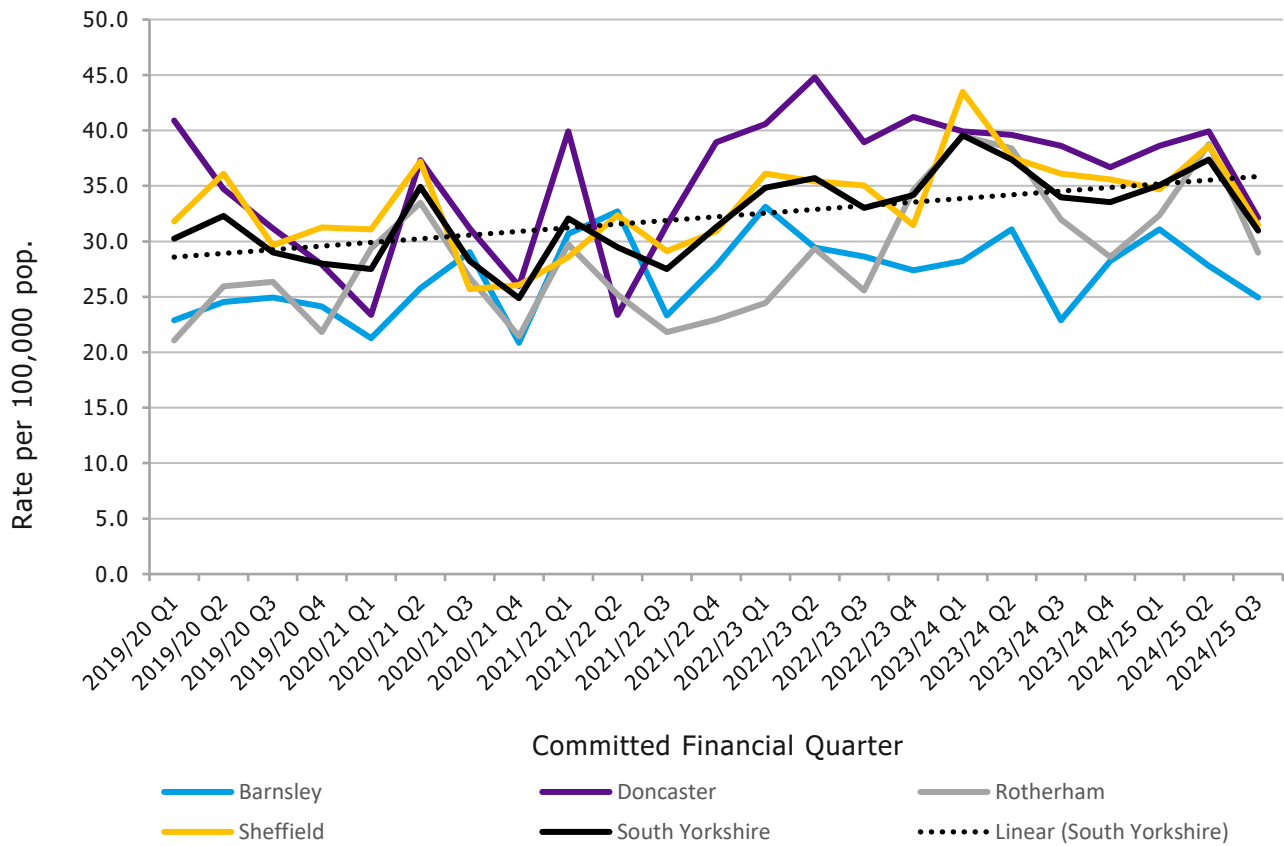
# Public Place Possession of Weapons by Time

Possession of weapon crimes are detected earlier than most other crime groupings, with the highest percentage of crimes between the hours of 3pm and 5pm (see Figure 101).

*Figure 101 - Public place possession of weapon offences by hour of the day*
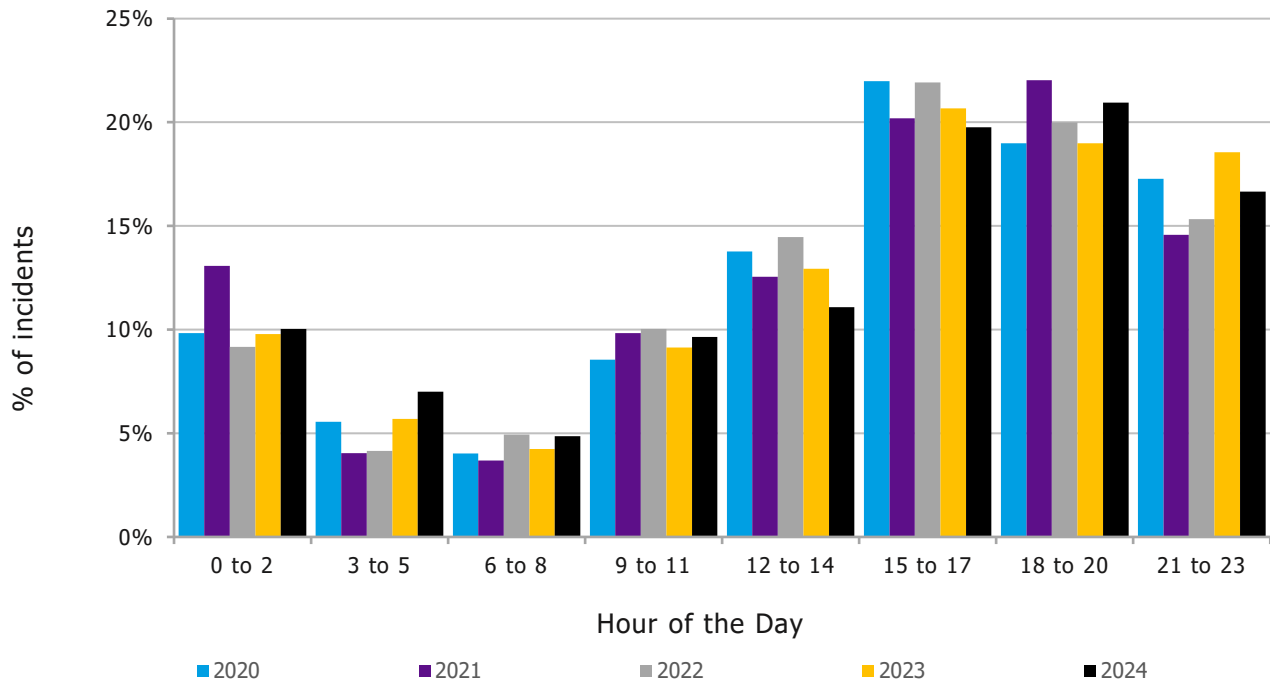


There is still some bias towards the evenings for public place possession of weapons crimes.

Unlike other crime groupings, there is no bias towards the weekend. In most time periods, crimes are evenly distributed across the week. In some calendar years, Sunday was even the least common day for a public place possession of weapon crime to be detected (see Figure 102).

*Figure 102 - Public place possession of weapons offences by day of the week*
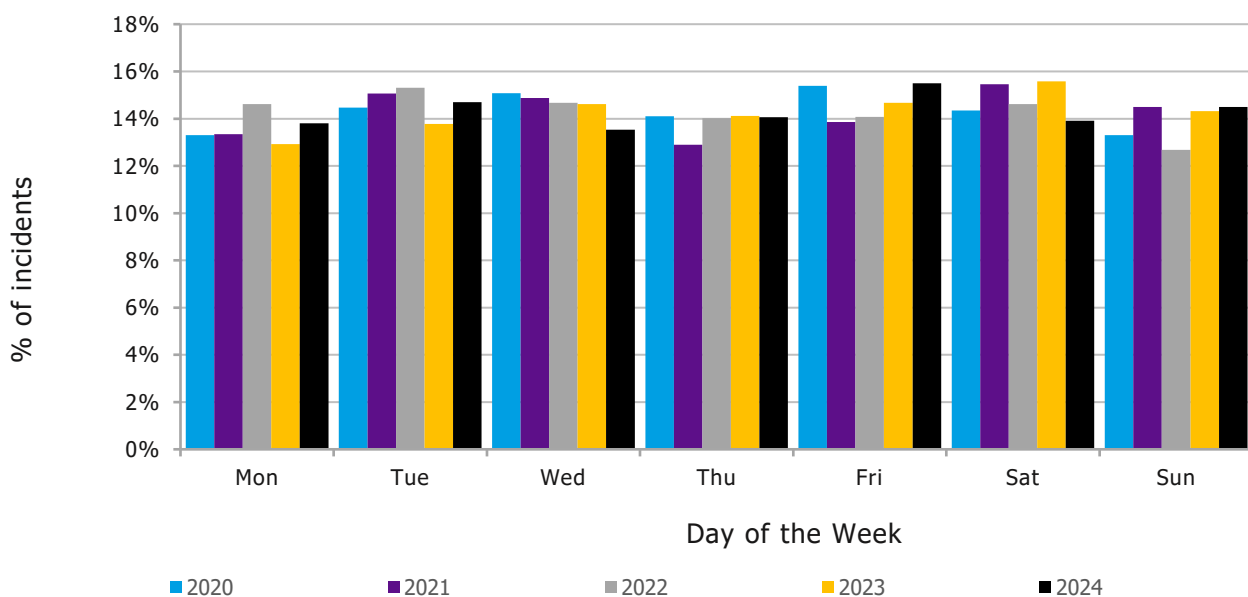


We can combine the hour and day of the week data for all 5 years to produce Figure 103, which gives us a picture of public place possession of weapons offences across the whole week.

*Figure 103 - Public place possession of weapons offences by hour and day of the week*



From Figure 103 we can see that the afternoon and early evening are the most common times for detection on all days, earlier than for most other crime groupings.
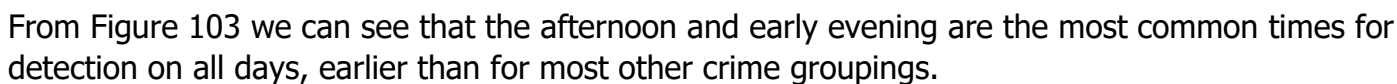
# Weapon Possessed

The type of weapon possessed has changed over time. Articles with a blade or point has seen a slight increase over the 5 years covered. Firearms saw a slight decrease (see Figure 104).

*Figure 104 - Weapon possessed in public place possession of weapons offence*
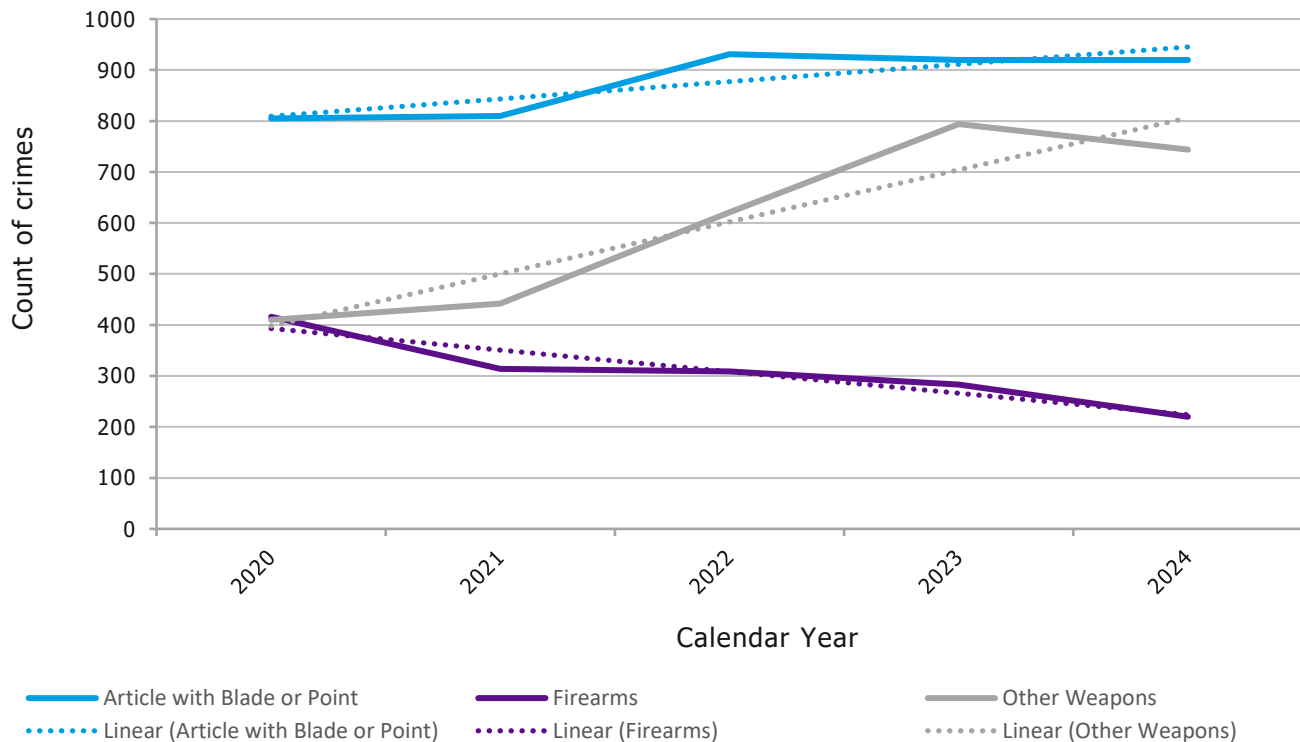


Of great interest, however, is that "other weapons" saw a large increase over the 5 years covered. This can be due to a change in recording practice, but could indicate a use of non-conventional weapons in these crimes.

# Public Place Possession of Weapons in Schools

There are specific crime types for when a weapon is possessed or threatened to be used in a school (or further education premises), allowing us to track the prevalence of detected weapon carrying in schools in Figure 105. There has been a slight increase in possession in schools over the past 5 years, although it should be noted that the current rate is a large decrease from 2019, and that previous years have also shown a decrease from the peak in 2022.

*Figure 105 - Count of possession / threat of weapons in schools*



Possession of Weapons Offences on School / Further Education Premises

Linear (Possession of Weapons Offences on School / Further Education Premises)
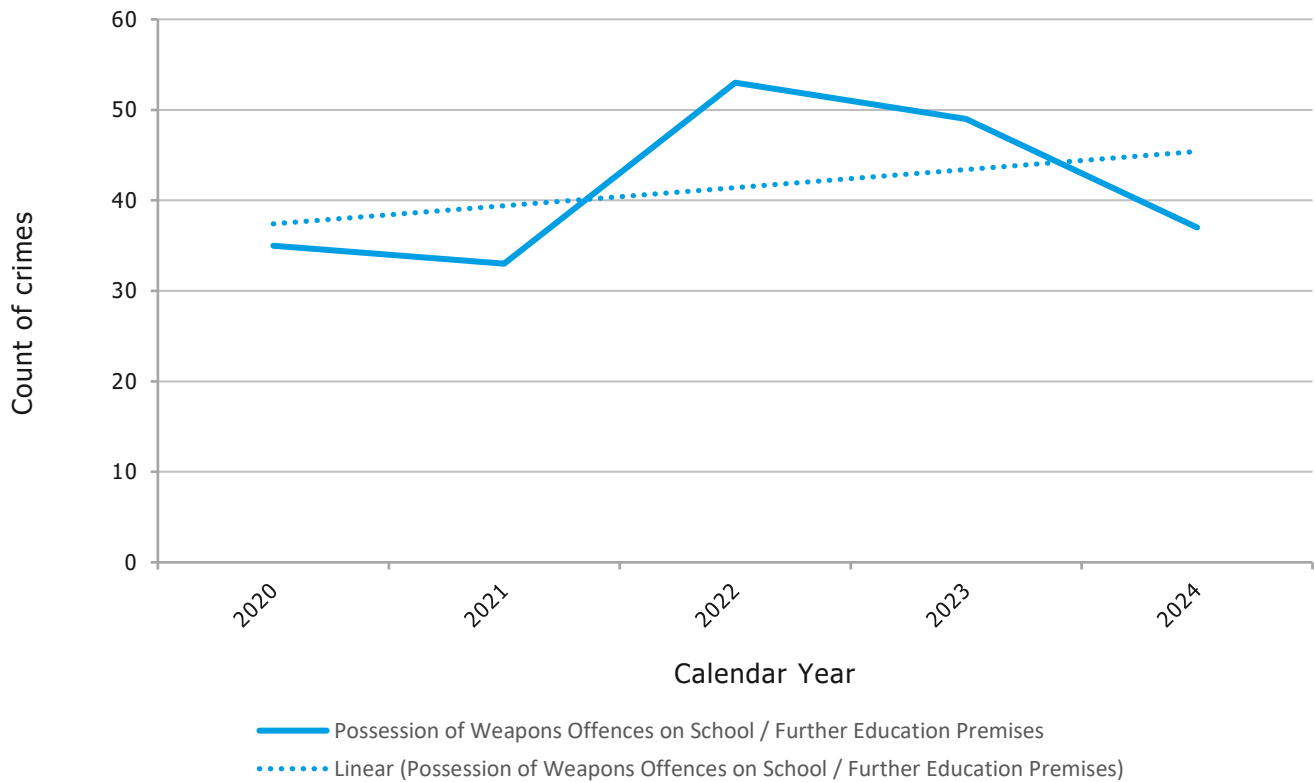
# Suspect Age in Public Place Possession of Weapons

According to Figure 106, the age group with the highest rate of suspected offending for public place possession of weapons is the 15 to 19 age group. This aligns with national studies of weapon carrying, which find it is more prevalent in younger age groups.

*Figure 106 - Public place possession of weapons by suspect age*
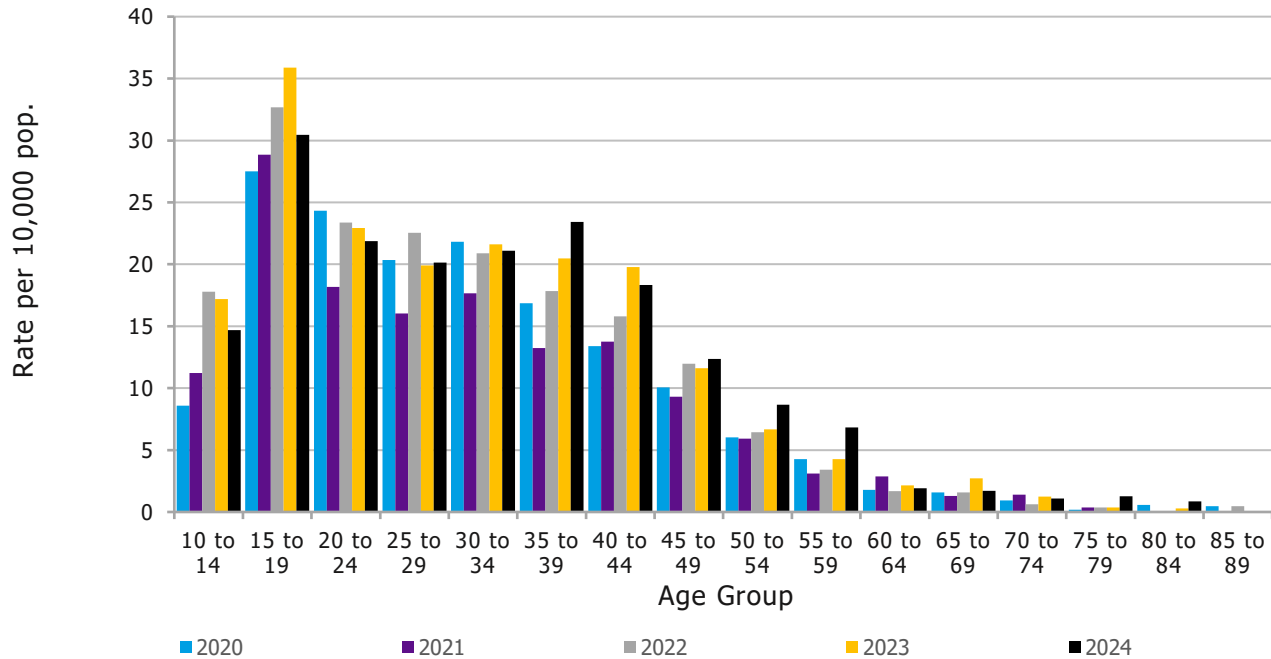


# Suspect Gender in Public Place Possession of Weapons

The majority of suspects for public place possession of weapons offences were male, and this is consistent across all time periods (see Figure 107). The rate for female suspects did increase in the most recent time period.

*Figure 107 - Public place possession of weapons offences by suspect gender*
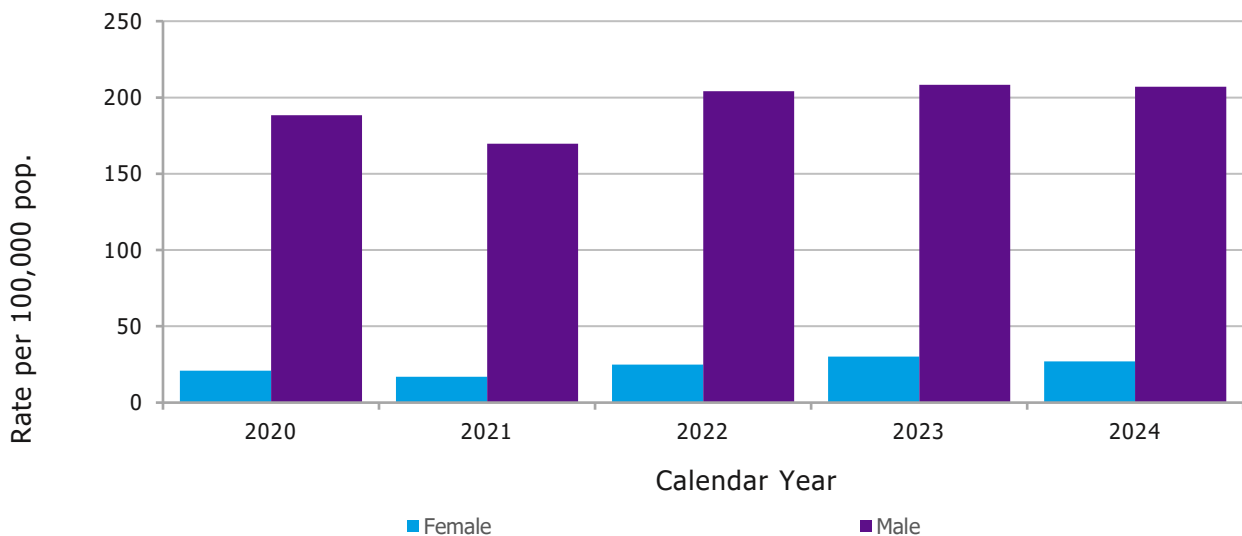
# Violence with Injury

# Public Place Violence with Injury

Violence with injury includes many crime types we would consider as "serious violence", but also lower level violence that results in some, but not life threatening, injury. In previous years the VRU found that the rate of violence with injury correlates with the rate of serious violence, indicating it was a useful predictor of the less numerous serious violence. However, recent years have shown a diverging trend between violence with injury more generally and serious violence in under 25s. As the rate of serious violence decreases in this age group, the rate of overall violence with injury is nonetheless increasing.

# Rate of Public Place Violence with Injury

The overall rate of public place violence with injury has continued to increase, although recent quarters show some decreases. In Figure 108, we have compared this to the rate of violence with injury flagged as domestic abuse, which is relatively flat over the 6 years covered. Domestic violence with injury rates were not suppressed by lockdown, in contrast to public place violence with injury.

*Figure 108 - Rate of public place violence with injury*
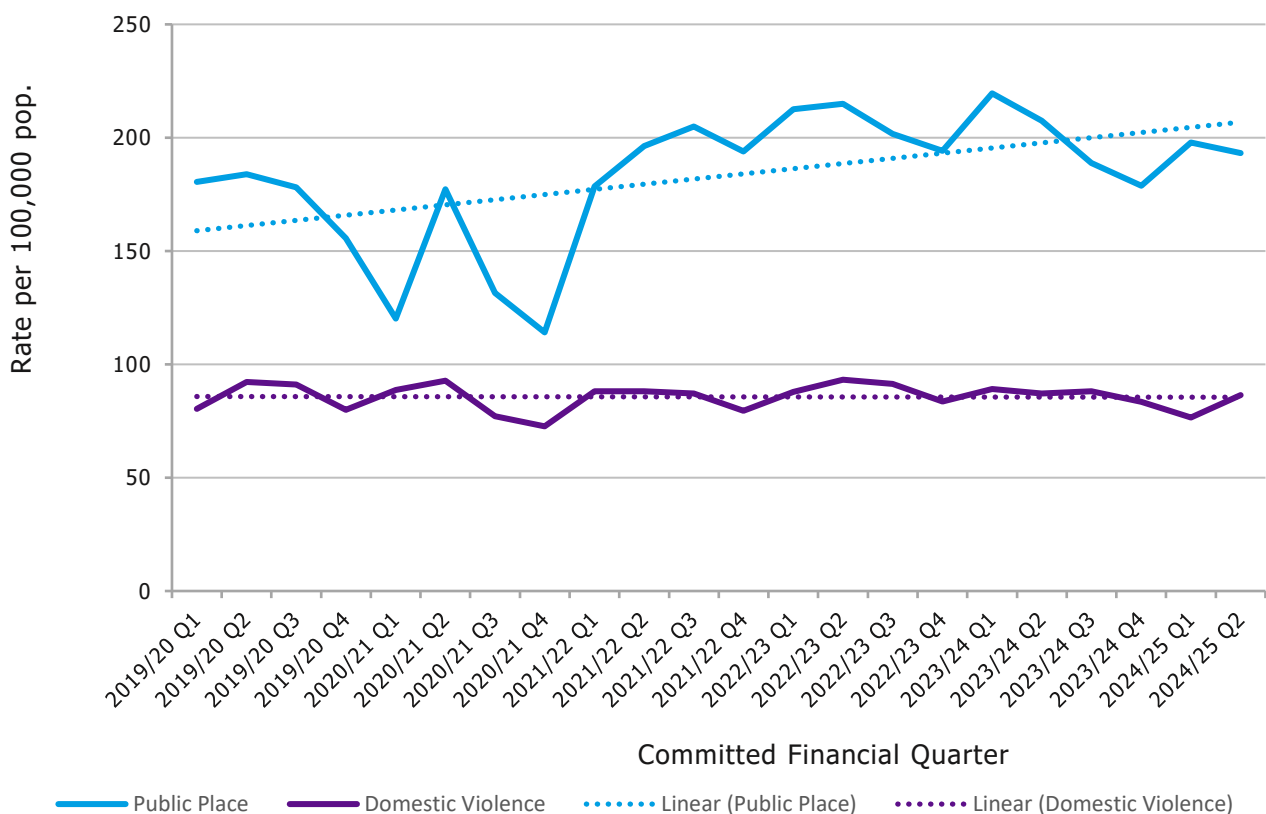
# Rate of Public Place Violence with Injury by District

The increase in the rate of public place violence with injury is not limited to one district; all districts in South Yorkshire showed an increase (see Figure 109). This suggests it is wider trends in violence, potentially even national influences on violence, which are leading to the increased rate.
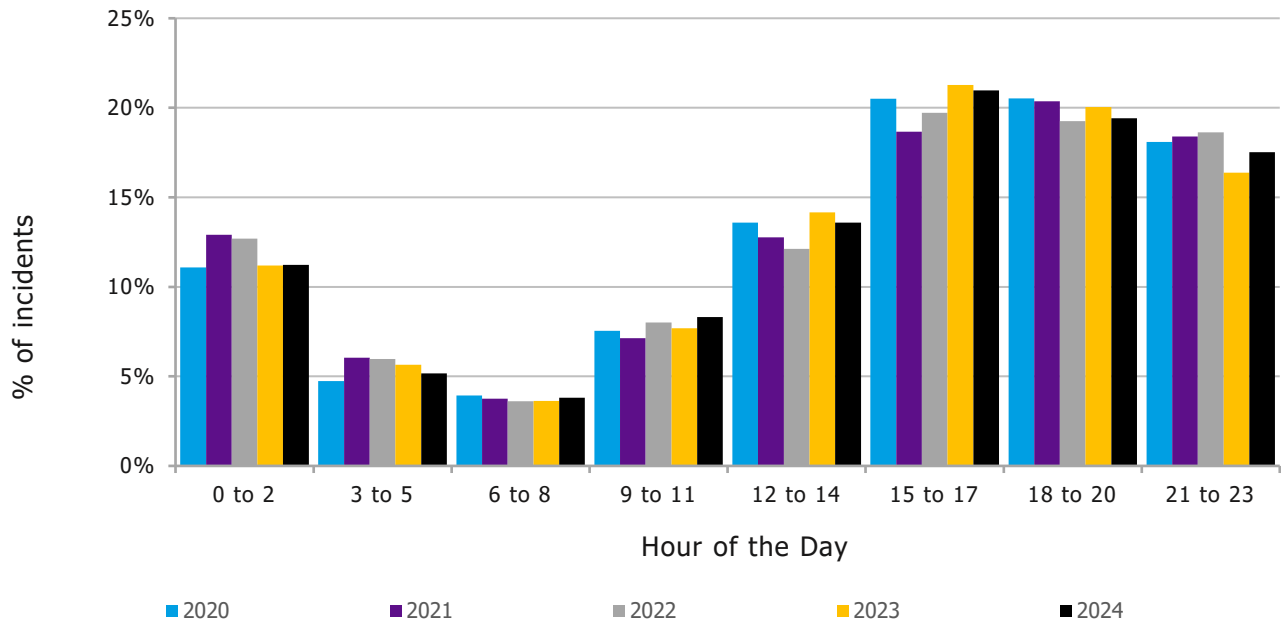
*Figure 109 - Rate of public place violence with injury by district*
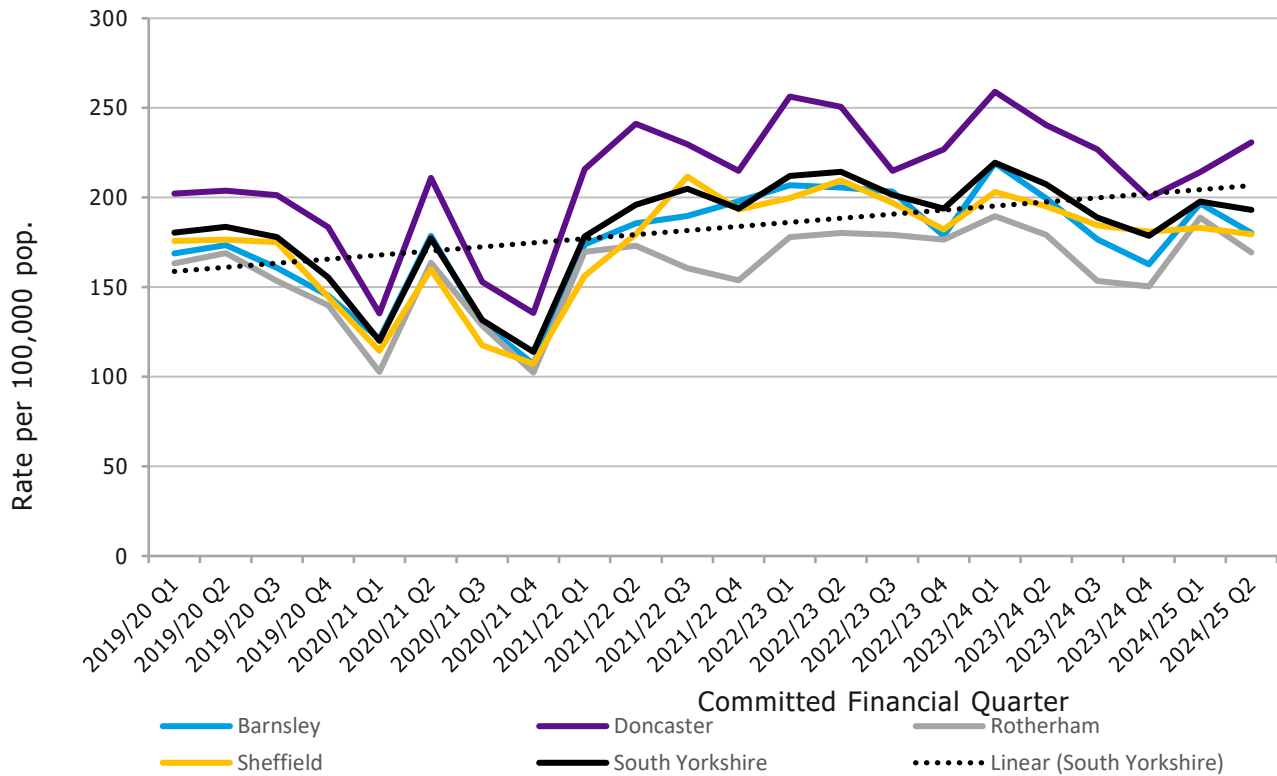
# Public Place Violence with Injury by Time

Public place violence with injury can occur at any time of the day, but is concentrated towards afternoons and evenings. This has been consistent across all years covered (see Figure 110). It is interesting that the peak for violence with injury is NOT necessarily late night, but actually mid-afternoon.

*Figure 110 - Public place violence with injury by hour of the day*



Public place violence with injury is also more likely to take place on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays than other times of the week (see Figure 111).

*Figure 111 - Public place violence with injury by day of the week*
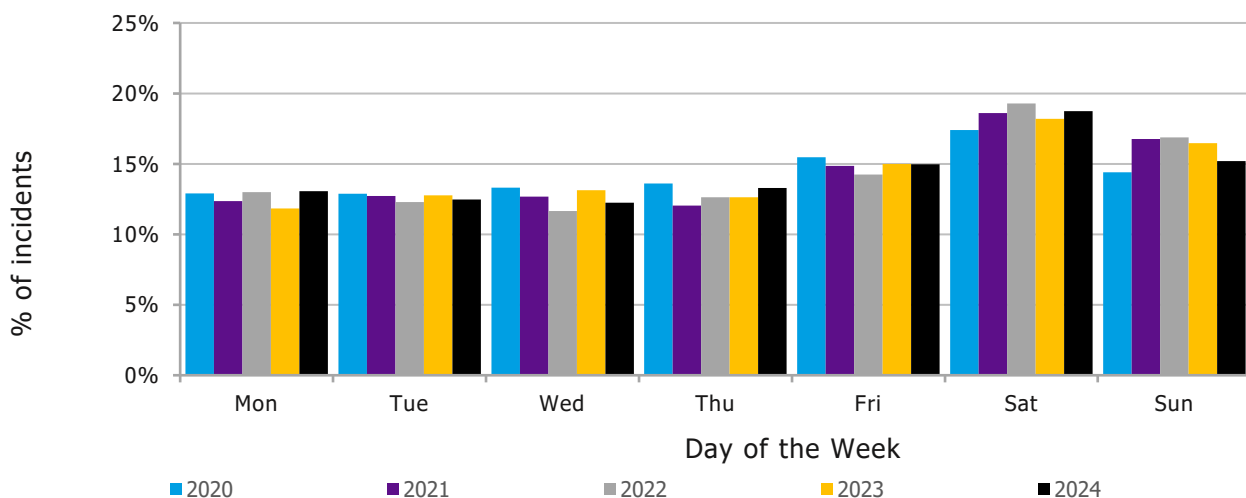


By combining all the data over 5 years, and expressing it in Figure 112 as the % of crimes committed by both day and hour, we can see the full picture of offending. The peak seen in Figure 113 for afternoon crimes is because, for most days of the week, public place violence with injury occurs more in the afternoon than in the evenings. But on Friday and Saturday, and early Sunday morning, rates of public place violence with injury are at their highest. This suggests

violence is most related to both the night-time economy violence and violence occurring after school times.
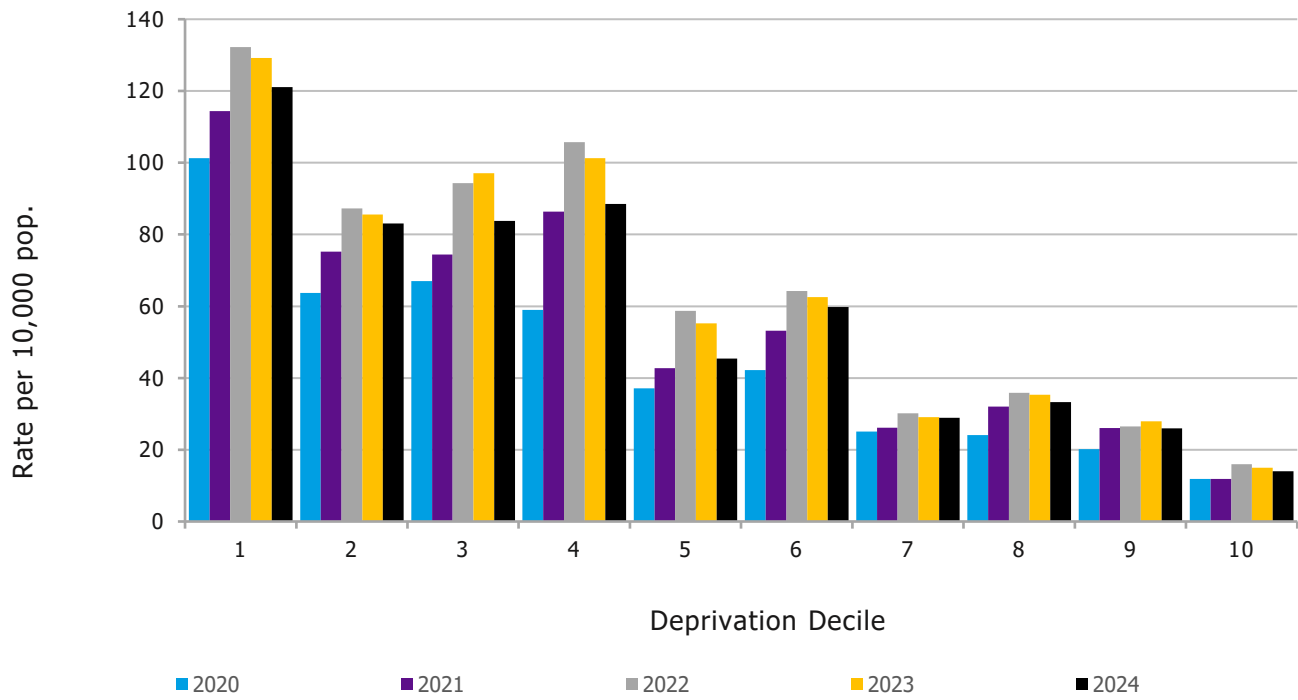
*Figure 112 - Public place violence with injury by hour and day of the week*
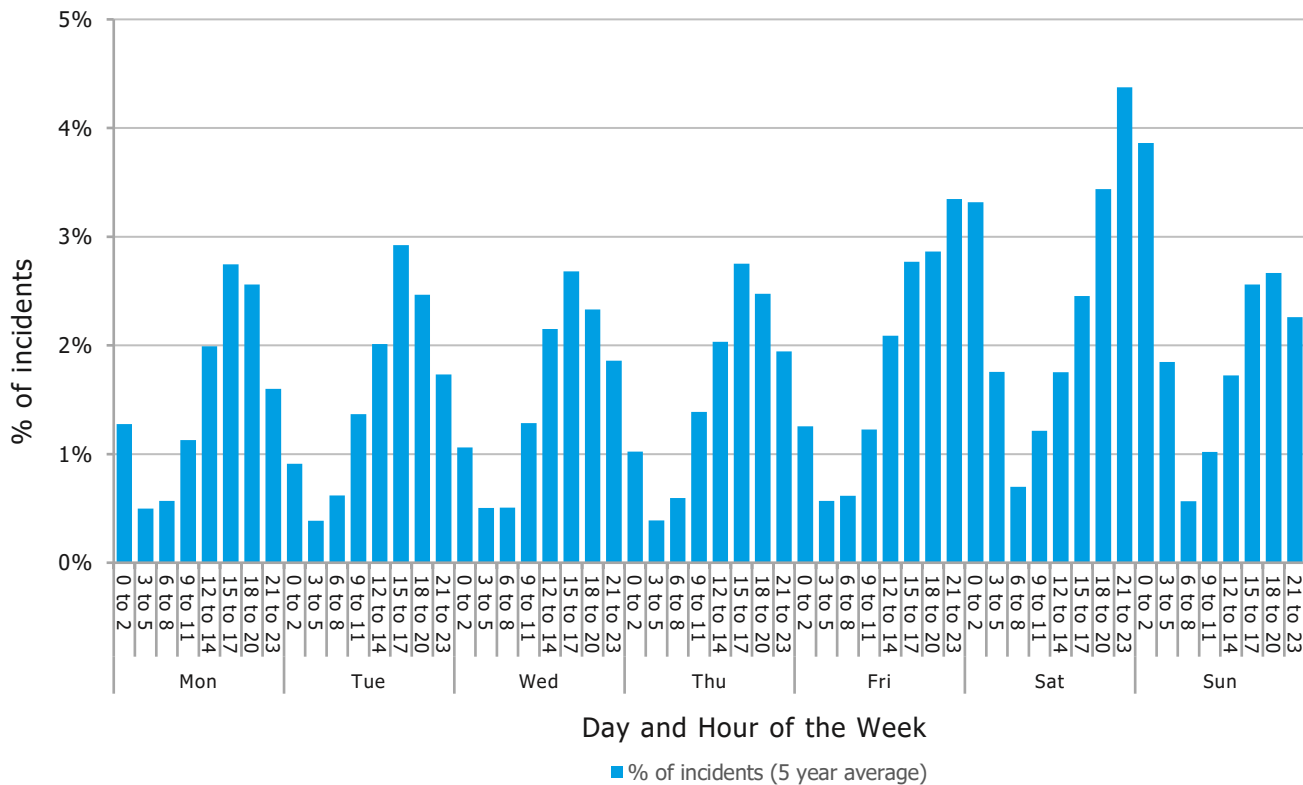


# Public Place Violence with Injury by Deprivation

Public Place Violence with Injury occurs most often in areas with higher deprivation than lower (see Figure 113). There are some exceptions to this general trend however, as often town centres attract the most violent offending but are0 not necessarily the most deprived areas.

*Figure 113 - Public place violence with injury by deprivation of location of crime*

# Public Place Violence with Injury Suspects by Age

Suspects of public place violence with injury tend to be younger than for other crime types (see Figure 114). The rate of suspected offending for those aged 10 to 14 had been increasing from 2020 to 2023, but saw a slight decrease in 2024. Suspected offending for those aged 15 to 19, however, remained high.
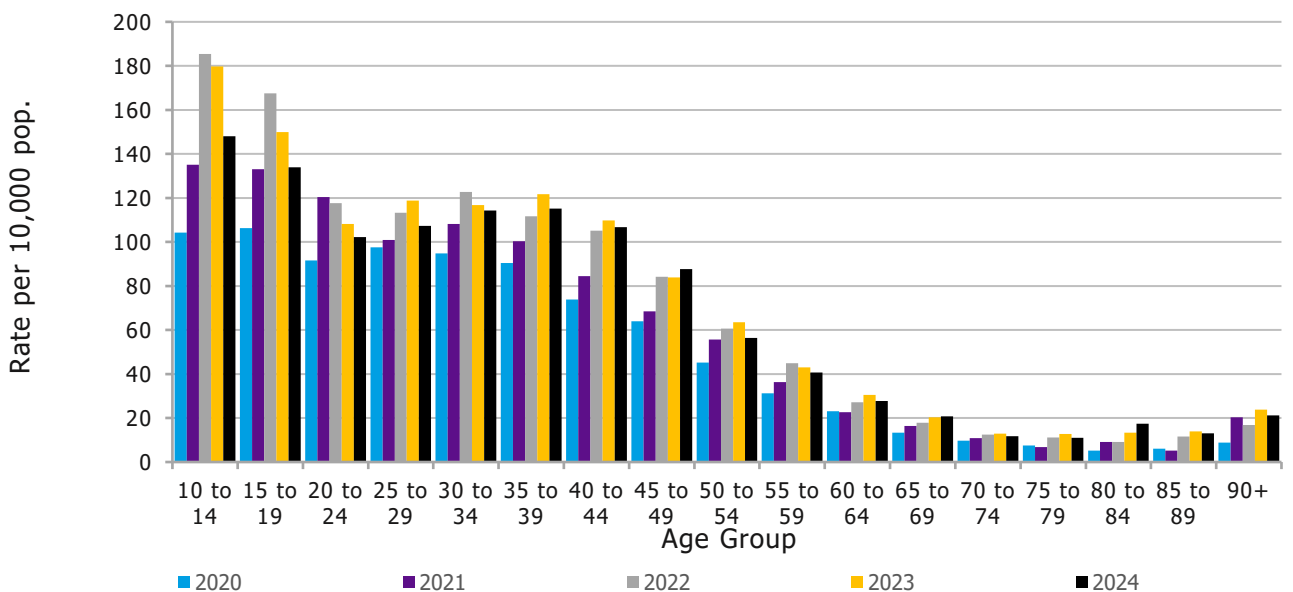
*Figure 114 - Public place violence with injury by suspect age*
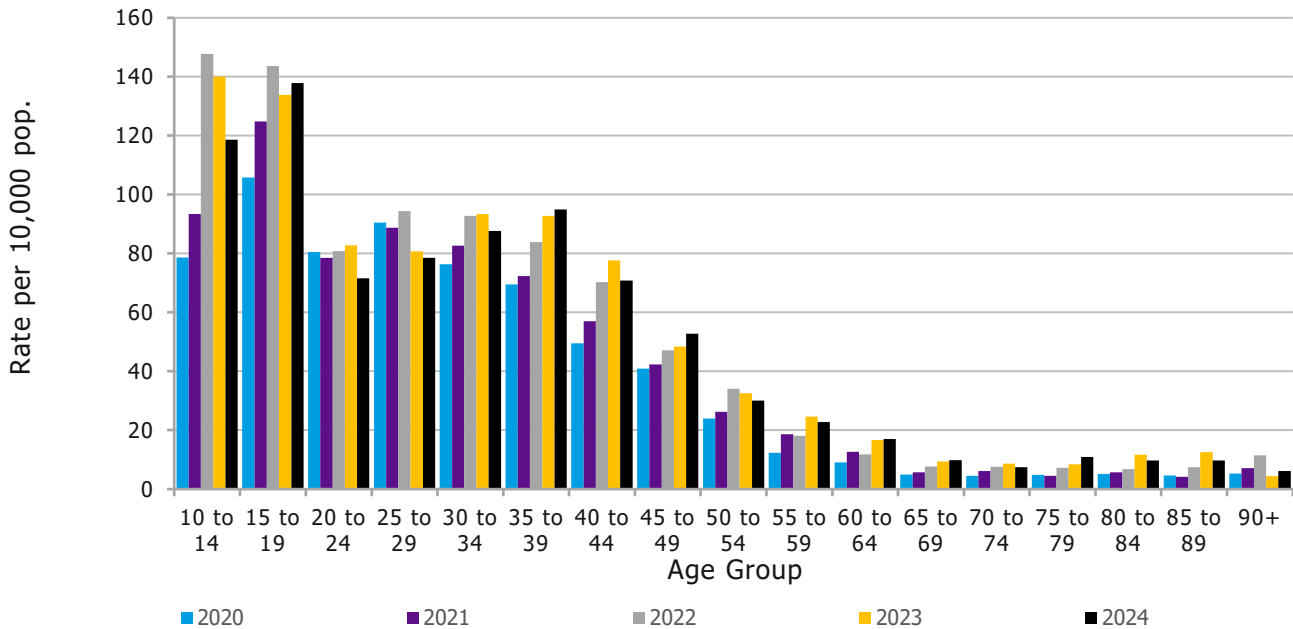


# Public Place Violence with Injury Victims by Age

Victims of public place violence with injury can be of all ages, but similar to the suspects they tend to be younger. There has however been a decrease in the rate of victims aged 10 to 14 and 15 to 19 in 2024 (see Figure 115).

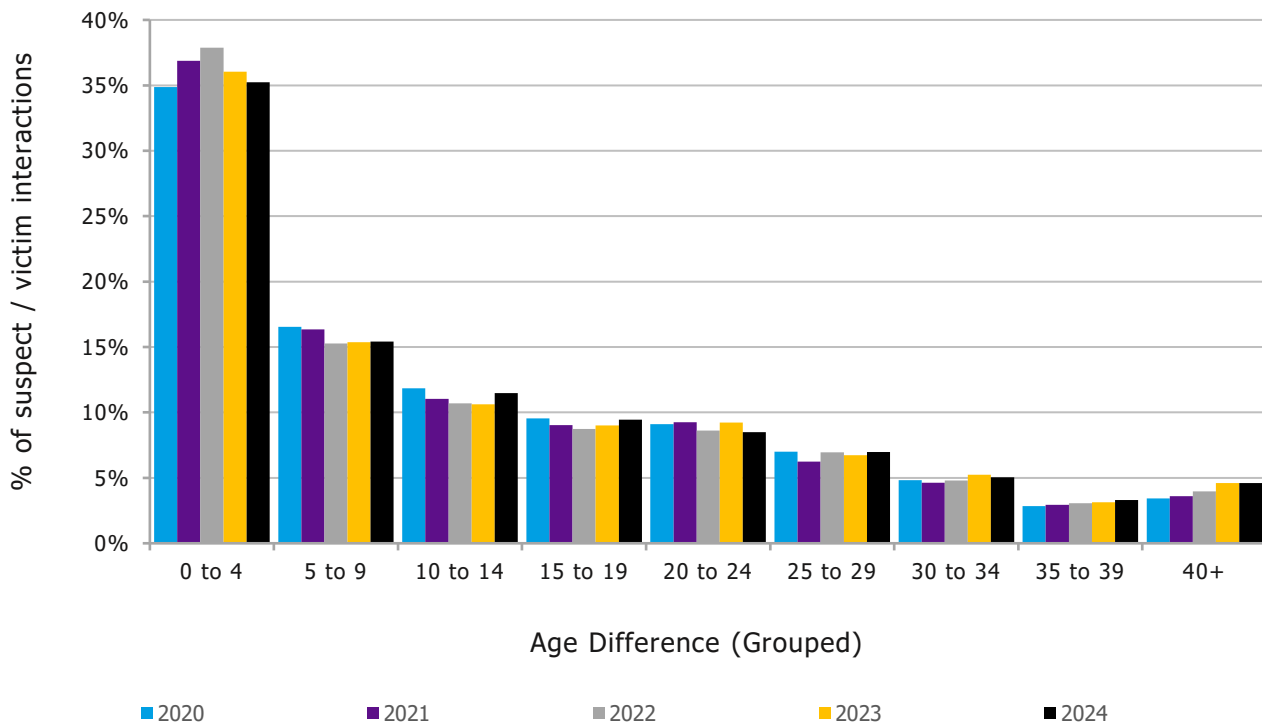*Figure 115 - Public place violence with injury by victim age*

# Public Place Violence with Injury Suspect and Victim Age Difference

*Figure 116 - Direction of age difference in public place violence with injury*
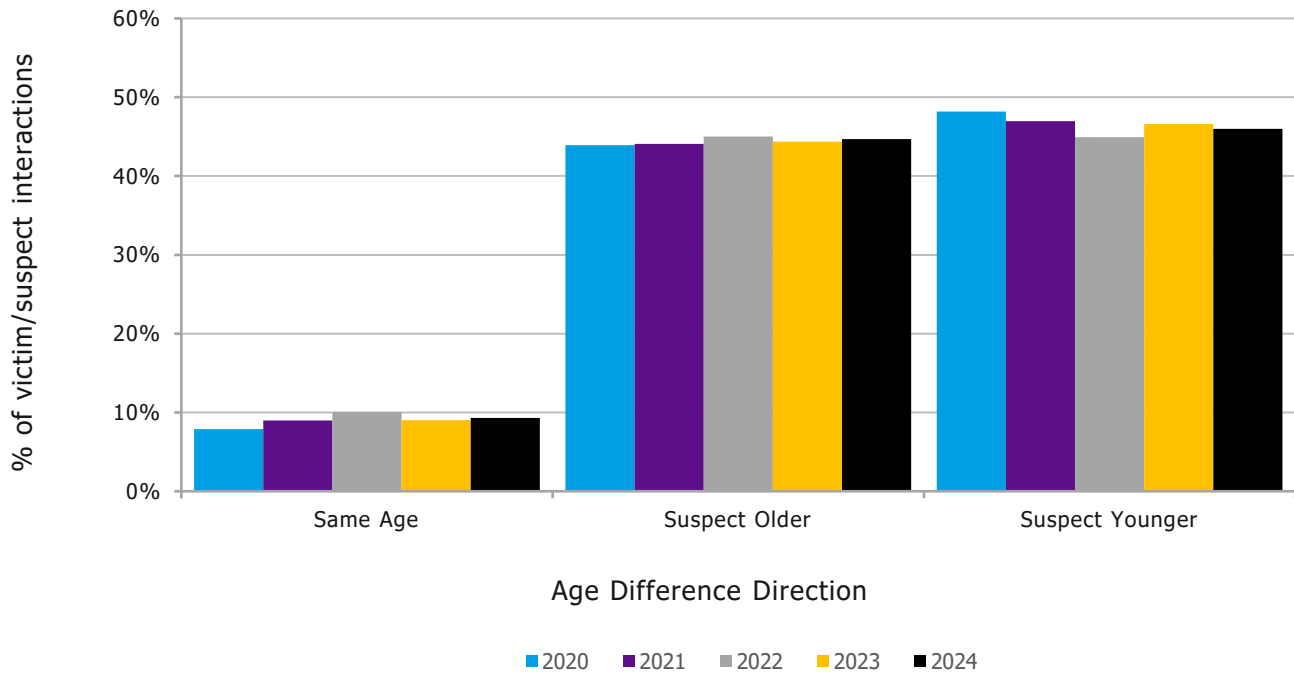


As seen in Figure 116, there was an equal split between suspects being older, and suspects being younger, than the victim in public place violence with injury crimes.

*Figure 117 - Age difference between suspects and victims of violence with injury*



A plurality of suspects and victims were aged within 0 to 4 years of each other for public place violence with injury crimes (see Figure 117).

# Public Place Violence with Injury by Suspect Gender

The majority of suspects of public place violence with injury were male (see Figure 118). This is consistent across the 5 years covered. However, the rate of suspected and detected female offending has increased slightly over the 5 years covered, and the rate of suspected and detected male offending has slightly decreased.
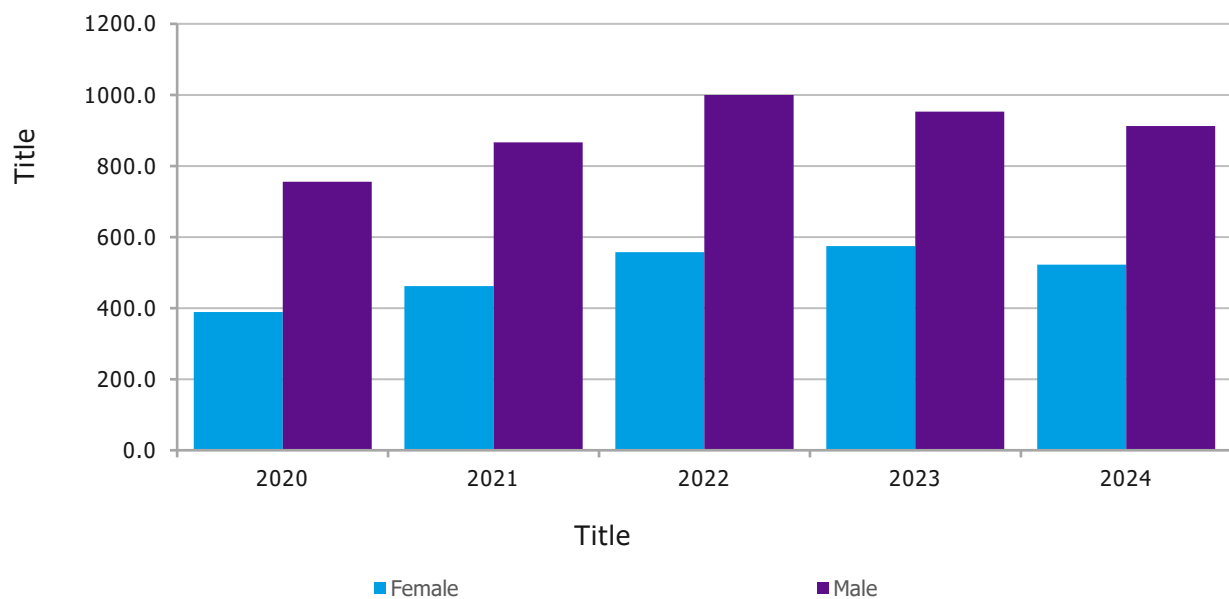
*Figure 118 - Public place violence with injury by suspect gender*
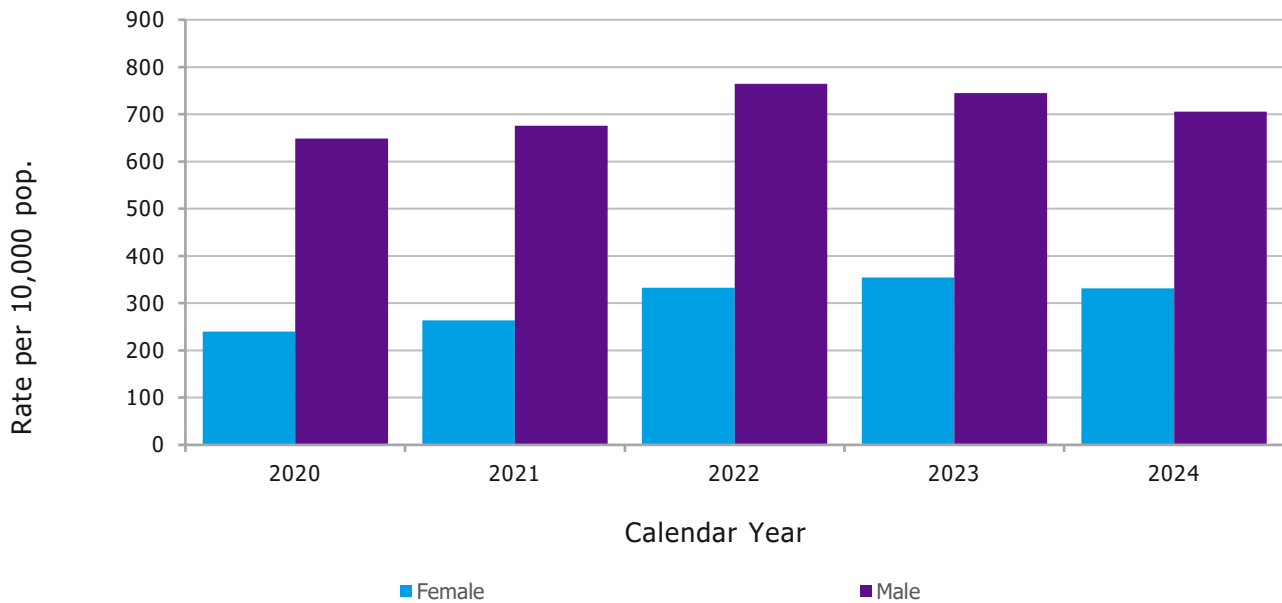


# Public Place Violence with Injury by Victim Gender

Victims of public place violence with injury tend to be male, with the rate of victimisation for males consistently higher than for females (see Figure 119). However, over the 5 years covered, the rate of females has increased either in line with, or occasionally more, than the rate for males.

*Figure 119 - Public place violence with injury by victim gender*

# Public Place Violence with Injury Interaction Between Suspect and Victim Gender

In 2024, 49% of public place violence with injury crimes occurred between two males. 22% occurred between two females. 18.2% were male on female, and 10.4% were female on male. These percentages are broadly similar over the years.

# Public Place Violence with Injury Interaction Between Suspect and Victim Gender

# Violence Against Women and Girls

# Response to Violence Against Women and Girls

The breadth, prevalence and cross cutting nature of Violence against Women and Girls means that reducing it relies heavily on an evidence-based primary prevention approach. We need to get upstream of the violence at every opportunity and where this is not possible, we need to work collectively to stop it progressing both in terms of the level of violence used and the frequency. We know Violence against Women and Girls is not linear in nature or in the impact it has on victims. Sadly, victims of these offences can experience repeat episodes of violence that can also increase in severity both in terms of the type of violence used but also the impact it has on victims and those closest to them. It can leave victims with lasting trauma and both victims and those supporting them with the difficult task of recognising how such trauma is manifesting and how they might access support.

This year we are anticipating the launch of a new Government strategy focused on tackling Violence against Women and Girls, due in spring 2025. [73]The recent report by the National Audit Office published in January 2025 which examines the 2021 "Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls" (VAWG) Strategy and the 2022 "Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan" will need careful consideration in the development of a national and local strategies focused on tackling Violence against Women and Girls. **The report describes the need for a 'coordinated whole-system approach that addresses the causes of VAWG'.** It also talks to the need for a common definition and a plan which is evidence based, placing a greater emphasis on prevention. The work of the Violence Reduction Unit working collaboratively with partners using a public health approach in tackling VAWG has an important role to play here.

**Education around healthy relationships is a key in driving a change in the cultural and societal norms that support violence against women and girls that remains predominantly perpetrated by men. We have seen some positive examples of VRU initiatives in this space that can play a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting healthy social relationships.** The Sheffield Wednesday FC Community Programmes One Goal Scheme is one example of how VRU funding has been used to teach and engage children about Violence against Women and Girls. Initiatives like this play an important role in helping children to recognise from a young age what 'is' and 'is not' a healthy and safe relationship. This education piece must not remain static and there is more to do to improve our understanding of cultural differences and barriers facing ethnic minority women and girls, and under-represented groups. We need to work in allyship with men and boys to change what are often long established and harmful, attitudes and behaviours around gender norms and masculinity. This is critical given we are seeing these harmful attitudes compounded by online influencers providing a narrative to a wide-reaching audience that restricts inequality and engenders violence. However, it is important to highlight, that the education piece extends beyond children, we have to work cohesively across our communities with adults, children and families and seek to provide interventions where we are seeing behaviour that is showing signs of escalating into violence. It has been positive to see a number of partner organisations gaining or working towards White Ribbon Accreditation including Sheffield City Council, Barnsley Local Authority and South Yorkshire Police. White Ribbon UK is the leading charity engaging with men and boys to end violence against women. This demonstrates a commitment to ending men's violence against women and through allyship with men and boys and highlights that we can all make a difference, and organisations can help to drive this change

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[73] Tackling violence against women and girls - NAO report

through leadership, staff, values, policies, day-to-day work; as well as their role within the communities in which they are based.

We have seen partners across the county progressing many of the recommendations contained within the South Yorkshire VAWG scoping report [74]published in 2023 through their delivery plans focused on reducing violence.  This includes continued efforts to improve the safety of women and girls including in the evening and nighttime economy where we have seen funding used to support initiatives such as Night Angels, street pastors, taxi marshals, safe spaces and Ask for Angela[75] which is a national scheme that helps people who may be feeling vulnerable or in need of help when on a night out seek help.  In recent months, South Yorkshire has been piloting a safety App. The App can be downloaded onto phones and has a number of features designed to help people feel safe including in a number of settings across the county that have been trained in Ask for Angela, Best Bar None, or Active Bystander (to name a few) focused on helping people feel safe when out with friends and family. Work is ongoing to understand how the App has been utilised and any associated learning and opportunities improve safety.


The National Audit Office Report on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls published in January 2025 references that over one in four women are estimated to be victims of sexual assault or attempted assault in their lifetime, and one in 12 women are victims of VAWG each year (although the actual number is likely to be much higher). The estimated prevalence of sexual assault against women aged 16-59 in England and Wales has grown from 3.4% in 2009/10 to 4.3% in 2023/24. In February 2025, practitioners across a number of organisations in South Yorkshire came together South Yorkshire Sexual Violence Conference where a range of subject matter experts presented on a number of key areas including childhood sexual abuse, multi-dimensional trauma, misogyny, the rise in influencers and the importance of genuine positive role models and early education as well as sex working and Independent Sexual Violence Support Services. This coming together of partner agencies focused on listening and engaging with practitioners not only helps to deepen and further inform our understanding of sexual violence but also presents an opportunity for us to learn about what more we can and need to do going forward. Some good examples of this have been seen in SY including work focused on understanding and raising awareness of sex work through a public health lens. We now have a much-improved picture of what appears to be working well in this area which includes an increased knowledge and understanding around health inequalities. In addition, we can see that the lived experience of sex workers is now being used to improve people's knowledge and understanding of sex work and the services supporting sex workers through products such as the 'See me for me' training developed by co-produced by sex workers and partners in Doncaster. Despite this raised awareness around sex working there remain lots of unknowns. This is particularly acute in the online space where we see tech enabled Violence Against Women and Girls. The work of services such as Netreach[76] who as well as raising awareness and supporting victims of online harms and tech abuse including Intimate Image Abuse, 'Revenge Porn' and 'Sextortion' will assist in research and intelligence gathering in this space to help identify local and national trends and need in this growing area.

The threat, risk and harm associated with Violence Against Women and Girls will require a focused lens using a whole system approach for many years to come in order stop it happening in the first place. We know that a proportion of VAWG offenders are also involved in non-VAWG criminality and so a primary prevention approach can have a positive impact that is wider in its reach than violent offences. The introduction of Young Futures Hubs and Youth Future Prevention Panels

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[74] https://southyorkshireviolencereductionunit.com/news/violence-against-women-and-girls-scoping-and-mapping-exercise
[75] Home - Ask for Angela
[76] National Netreach Programme | Changing Lives

presents a real opportunity for partner agencies to work collaboratively in this space. It provides partner agencies with the opportunity to acknowledge and understand where children and young adults at risk of committing violence might have themselves experienced Violence against Women and Girls. For example, as child victims of domestic abuse in their own right. This opportunity should be seized and acted upon, particularly given that there is still significant under-reporting of offences such as child sexual abuse. This joined up approach should enable us to be better placed to start and address the any harm and trauma experienced, in order to focus on preventing future harm and violence.

# Defining Violence Against Women and Girls

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls is a key priority in South Yorkshire. It refers to those crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls including offences of violence, stalking, harassment, rape, other sexual offences, honour-based abuse and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) including offences committed online. These crimes can have a devastating and lasting effect on women and girls and also their loved ones. The majority of this preventable Violence Against Women and Girls is perpetrated by younger men and as a result, the violence reduction measures reflect this necessary focus.

We have defined Violence Against Women and Girls as any violent crime against a female, of any age, including honour based violence and FGM. Domestic abuse cases are excluded from this analysis.

# Crimes of Violence Against Women and Girls

The crime grouping of "Violence Against Women and Girls" consists of many different crime categories. Categories that exceeded 2% of crimes in 2024 are listed in Table 13 - Crimes of violence against women and girls.

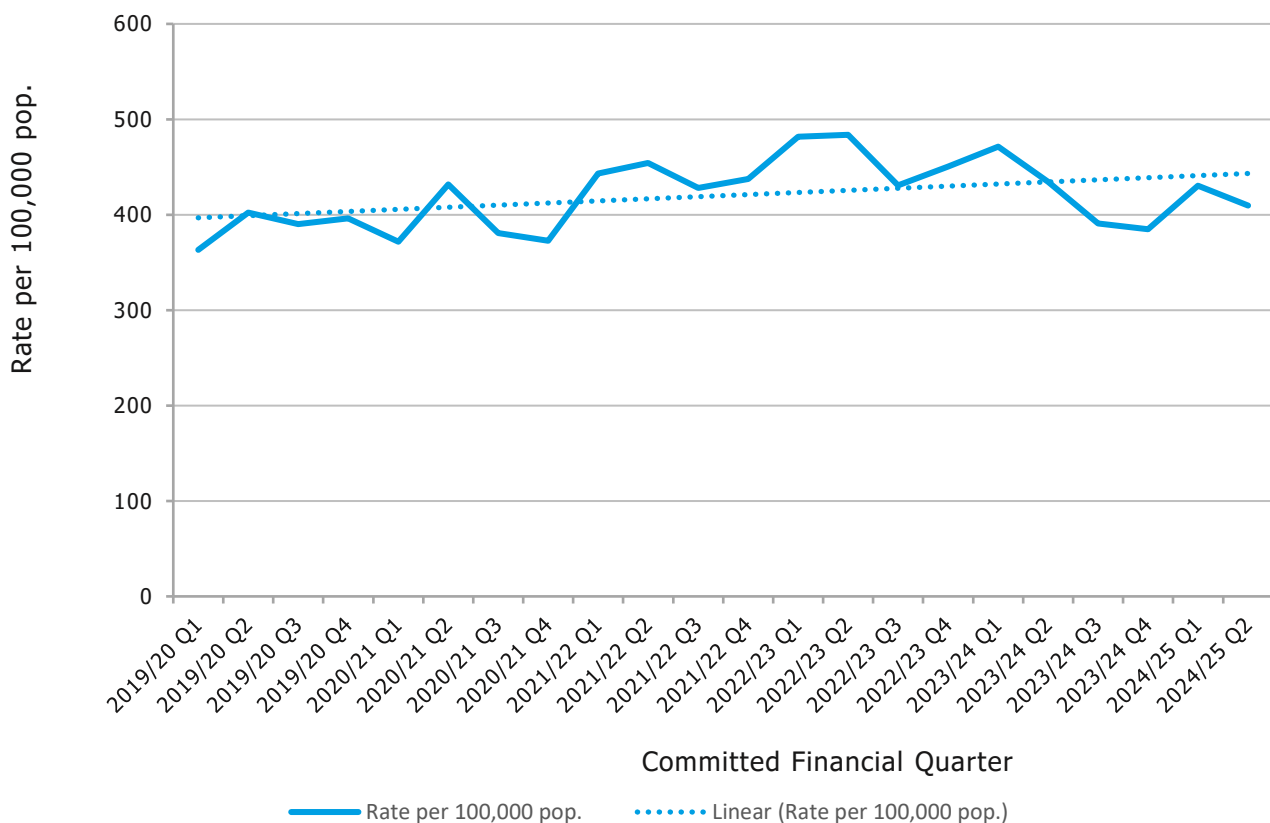*Table 13 - Crimes of violence against women and girls*

| | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stalking and harassment | 33.5% | 29.0% | 28.6% | 28.9% | 26.9% |
| Public fear, alarm or distress | 18.3% | 22.2% | 22.3% | 21.6% | 24.0% |
| Violence without injury | 24.5% | 23.3% | 22.8% | 21.5% | 19.7% |
| Violence with injury | 12.5% | 13.8% | 15.5% | 16.8% | 16.9% |
| Other sexual offences | 6.9% | 7.0% | 6.6% | 6.8% | 7.7% |
| Rape | 2.5% | 2.7% | 2.3% | 2.6% | 2.7% |
| Race of Religious Aggravated Public Fear | 1.9% | 2.0% | 1.8% | 1.6% | 2.1% |

The most common crime type reported as Violence Against Women and Girls, across all time periods, was stalking, harassment, public fear, alarm or distress. This can lead to a feeling of threat in an environment without direct physical contact between the perpetrator and the victim.

# Rate of Violence Against Women and Girls

The reported rate of Violence Against Women and Girls has been increasing over the time covered (see Figure 120 - Rate of violence against women and girls). As with all crime rates, we do not know if this is an increase in reporting or an increase in crimes. Previous quarters have shown some decreases from the overall trend.
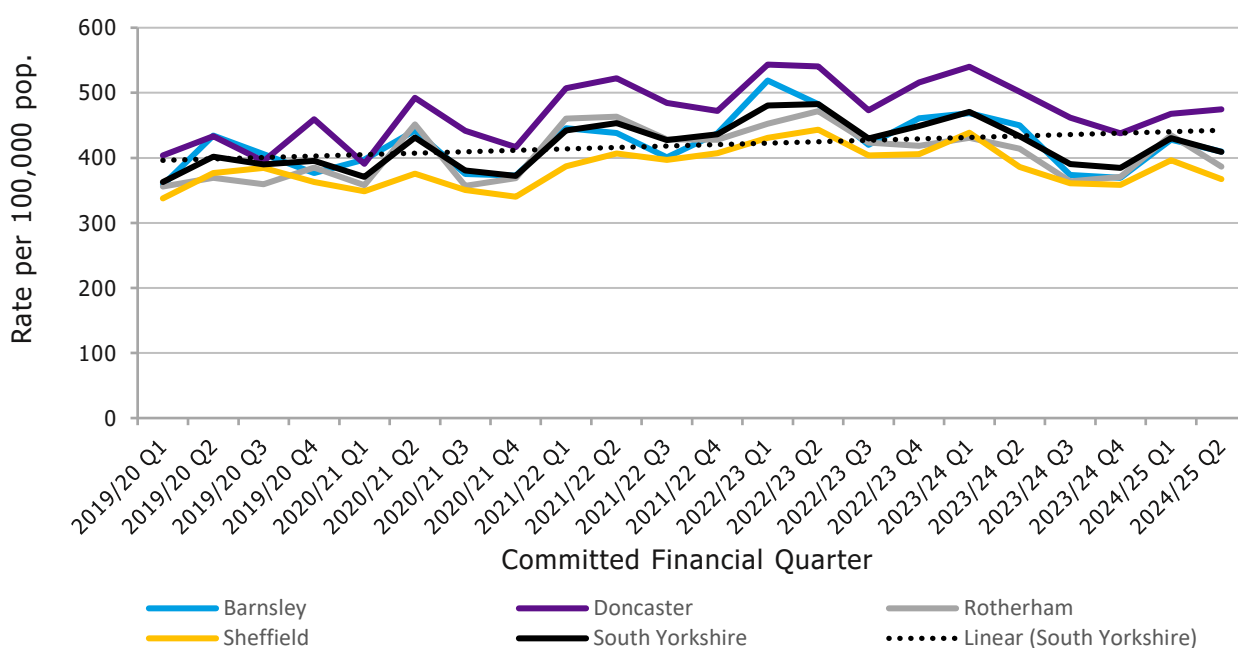
*Figure 120 - Rate of violence against women and girls*



*Figure 120 - Rate of violence against women and girls*

# Violence Against Women and Girls by District

All districts have experienced an increase in reported rates of Violence Against Women and Girls. Doncaster has consistently had the highest reported rate, and Sheffield the lowest, but all districts are following a similar trajectory (see Figure 121).
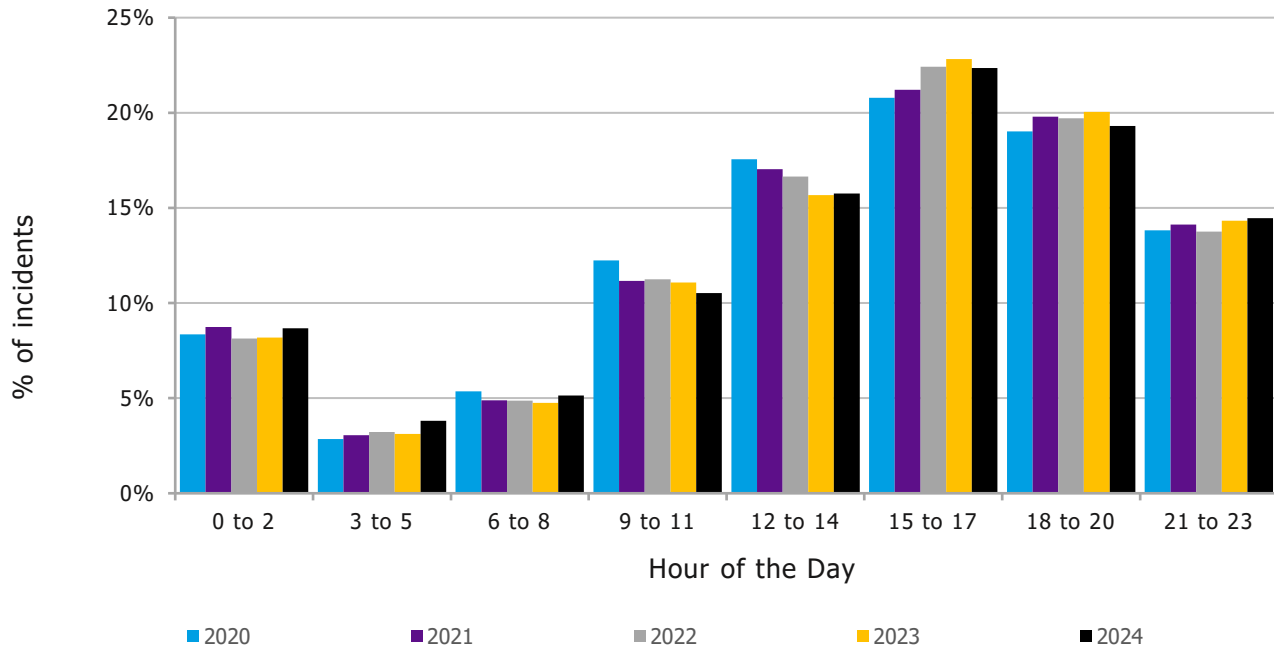
*Figure 121 - Rate of violence against women and girls by district*



*Figure 121 - Rate of violence against women and girls by district*

# Violence Against Women and Girls by Time

Violence Against Women and Girls is most likely to occur between the hours of 3pm to 5pm (see Figure 122). As with violence with injury (which also includes female victims), this would suggest that leaving school or work is a time of increased risk for girls and women.

*Figure 122 - Violence against women and girls by hour of the day*



Violence Against Women and Girls occurs on all days of the week, and no bias towards any particular day is seen in Figure 123.

*Figure 123 - Violence against women and girls by day of the week*
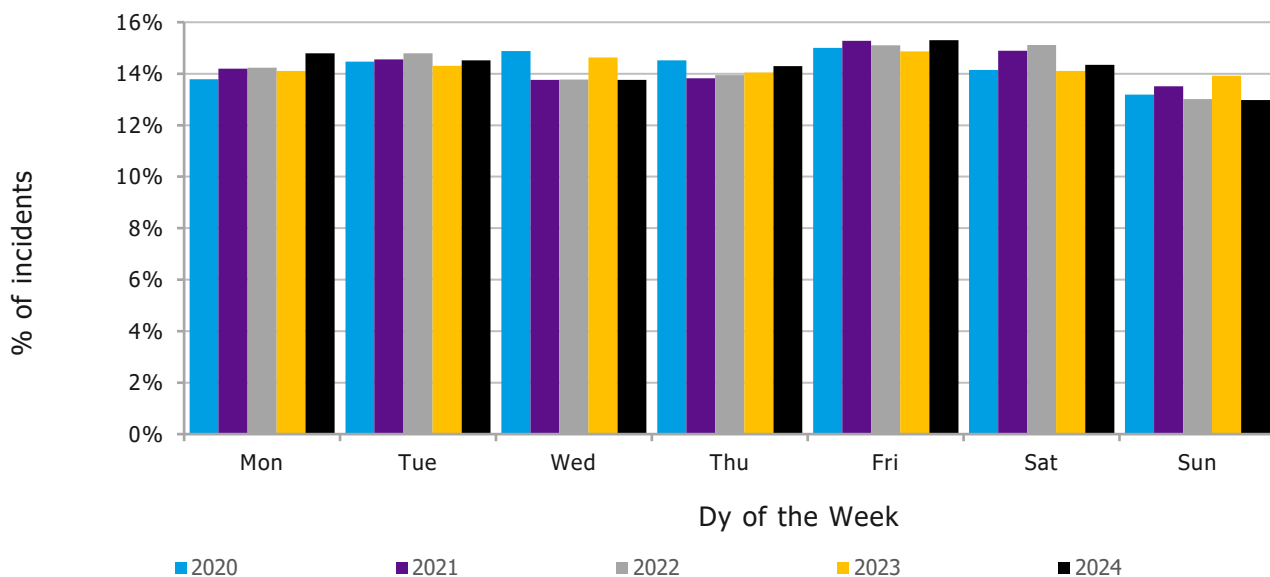


The distribution shown in Figure 124, which combines both hour and day data, shows a consistent pattern across the weekdays. The weekends do show less of a bias towards the hours of 3pm to 5pm, with Saturday showing a slight bias towards the evenings.

*Figure 124 - Violence against women and girls by hour and day of the week*
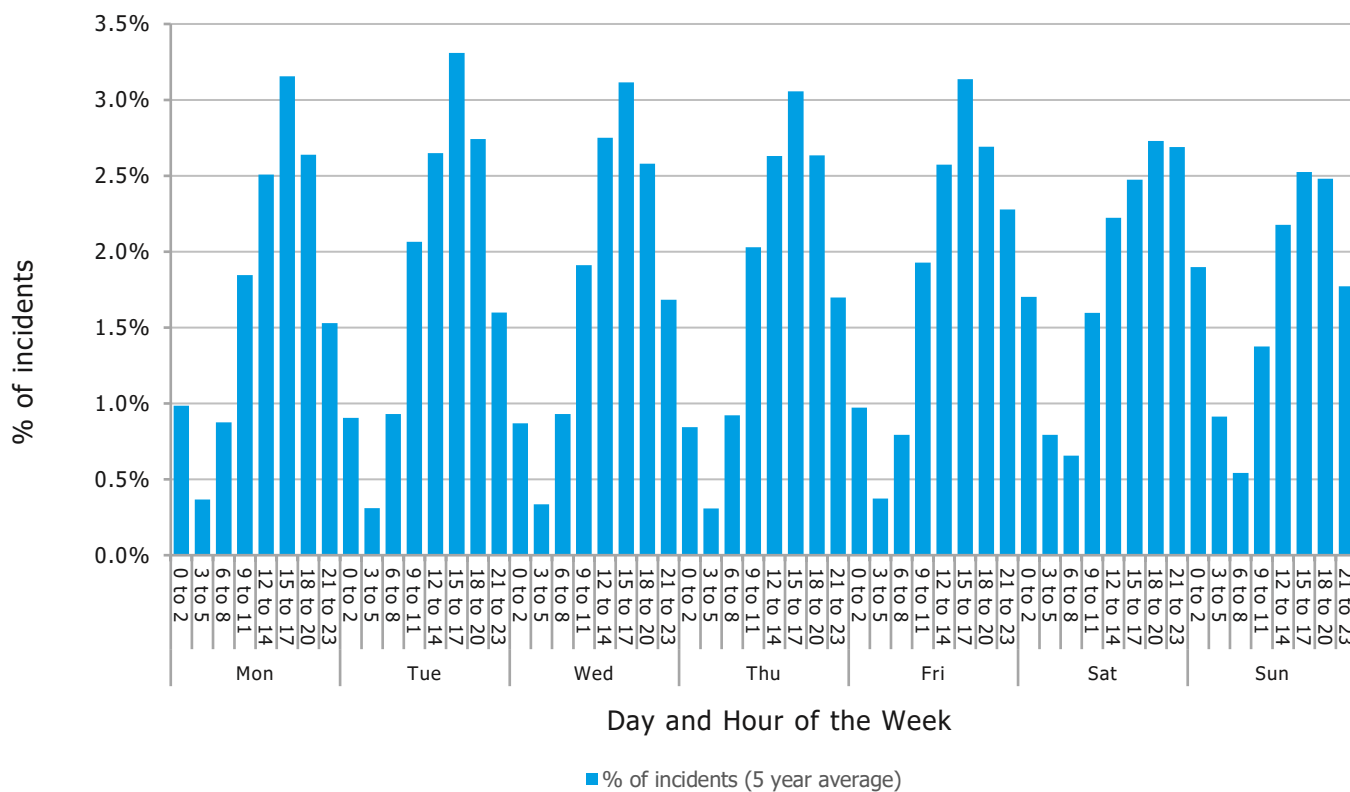
# Violence Against Women and Girls by Victim Age

Girls aged 10 to 14 have a high rate of victimisation from violence against women and girls. This may be due to increased guardianship of this age group, although there have been some decreases in 2024 (see Figure 125). Overall, violence against women and girls effects all age groups, but older women appear to be more protected.
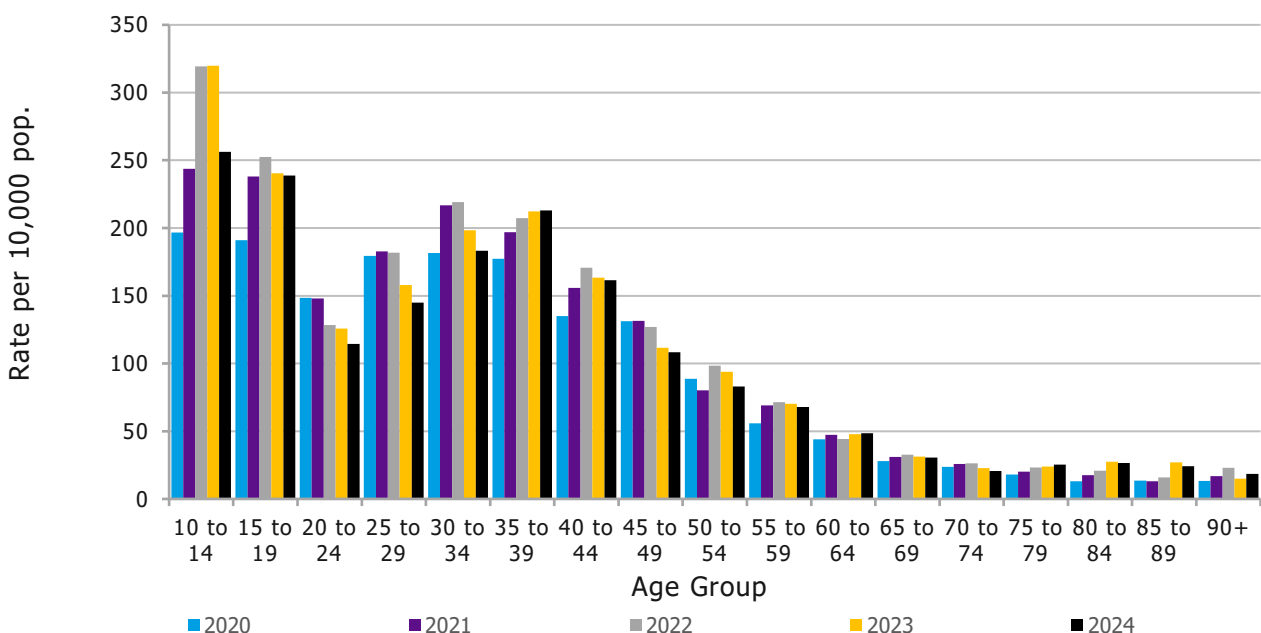
*Figure 125 - Violence against women and girls by victim age*
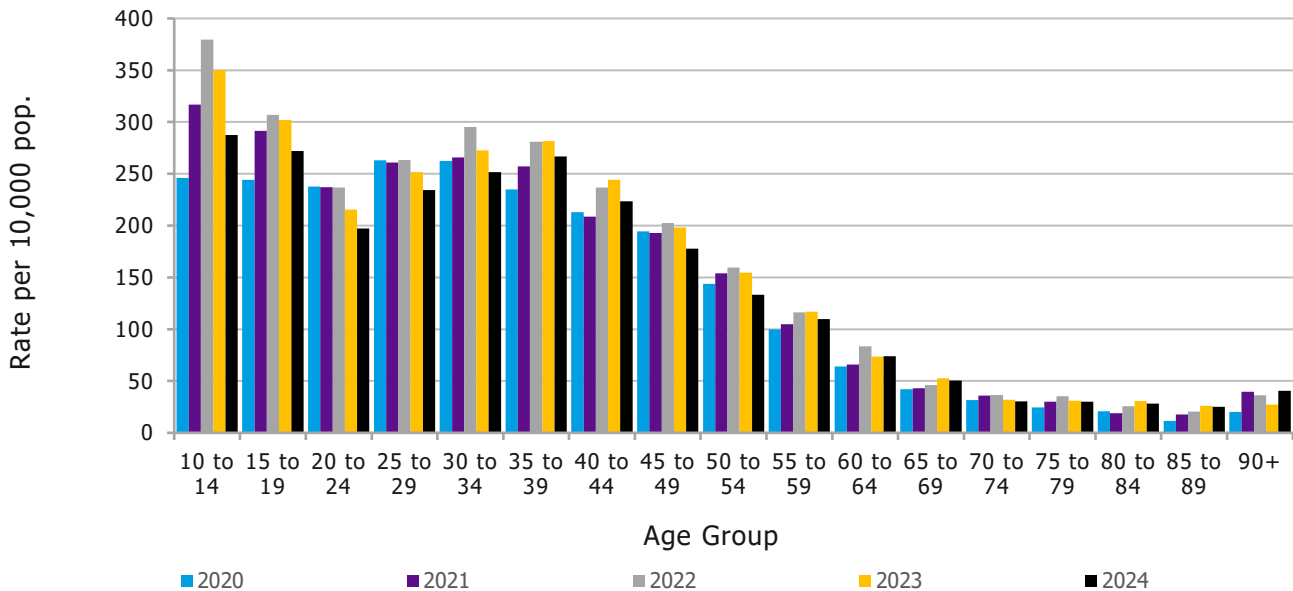


# Violence Against Women and Girls by Suspect Age

We do not have a suspect for every crime, and we do not have an age for every suspect. Suspects are often aged 10 to 14, although this may be due to greater guardianship of this age group (see Figure 126). In addition, apart from a dip for the 20 to 24 age group, suspected offending is fairly stable until suspects reach the 40 to 44 age group.
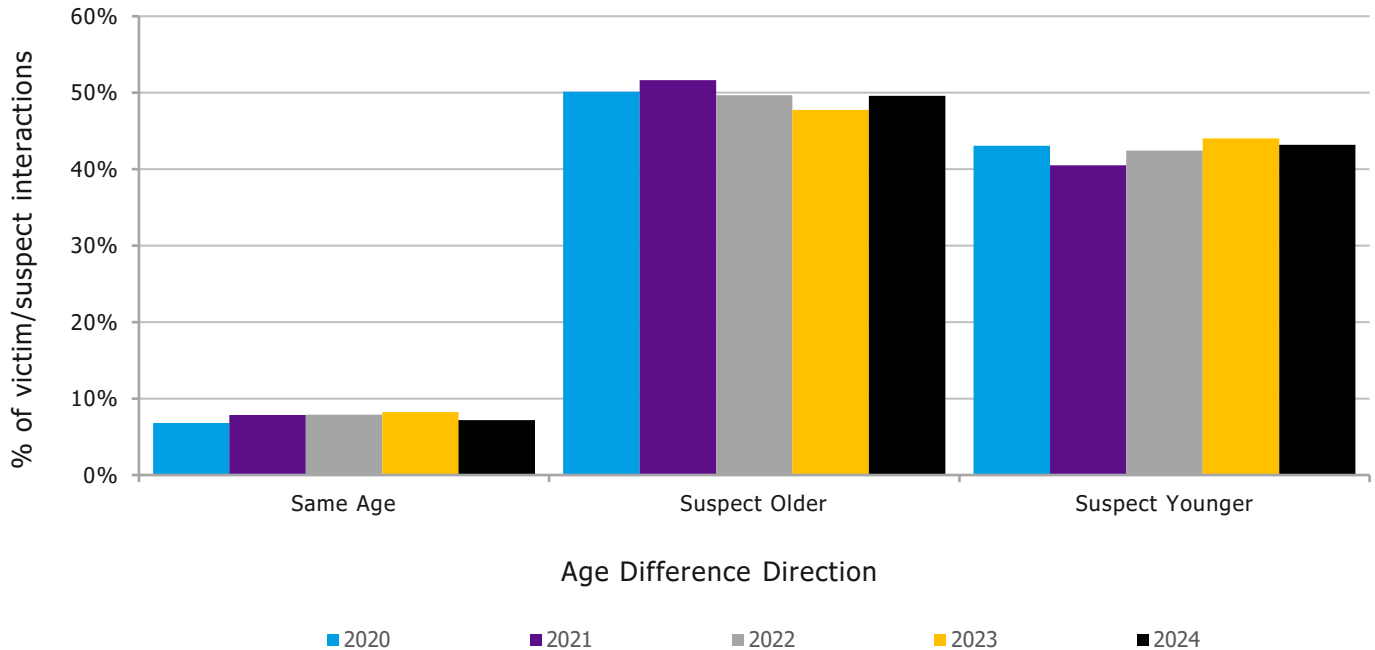
*Figure 126 - Violence against women and girls by suspect age*

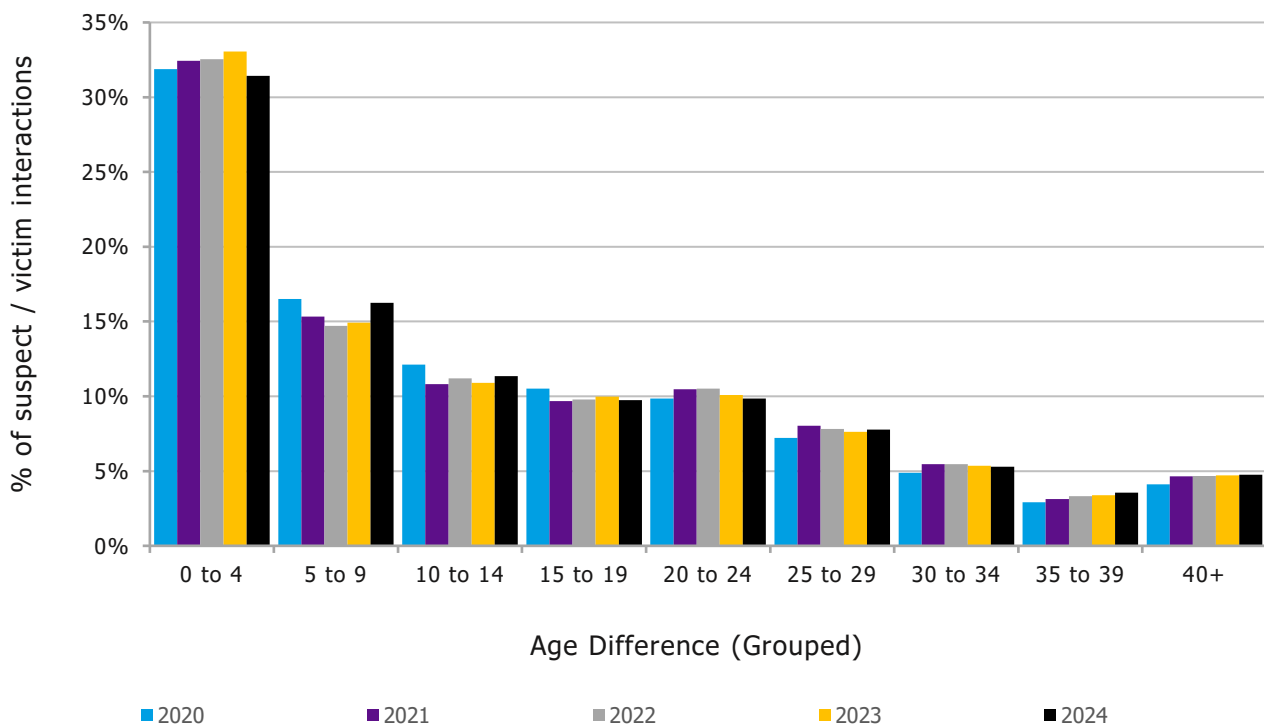# Violence Against Women and Girls Suspect and Victim Age Difference

In contrast to other crime groupings, there is a slight bias towards suspects being older than victims in violence against women and girls (see Figure 127).

*Figure 127 - Age difference direction between suspect and victims of violence against women and girls*



However the age difference is often minor, between 0 and 4 years between victims and suspects (see Figure 128).

*Figure 128 - Age difference between suspects and victims of violence against women and girls*



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# Violence Against Women and Girls by Suspect Gender

Suspects of Violence Against Women and Girls were predominately male, but the difference in rate between female and male offending was not as large as when we are looking at all, or male, victims (see Figure 129). This suggests that intragender violence should receive some focus for reducing violence against women and girls.

*Figure 129 – Violence against women and girls by suspect gender*

# Index of Multiple Deprivation

# Methodology

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a measure produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and are National Statistics.[77] The indices consist of seven domains of deprivation, which are weighted and combined to give each small area in England (a Lower-layer Super Output Area, or LSOA) a score. These scores are then used to rank each LSOA in the country.

The seven domains of deprivation, and their respective weights, are:

- Income (22.5%)
- Employment (22.5%)
- Education (13.5%)
- Health (13.5%)
- Crime (9.3%)
- Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%)
- Living Environment (9.3%)

The IMD gives as a broad picture of the challenges facing an area. Combined, the IMD gives a top level picture of the total factors affecting a population. Broken down into its individual domains, the IMD gives a middle level picture of the factors affecting a population. What the IMD does not tell us is who is being affected more by the deprivation factors in an area, and why those deprivation factors are emerging. We must also be cautious not to commit the ecological fallacy; assuming that relationships between factors on a population level are the same as the relationships between those same factors on an individual level. As an example, a lack of employment opportunities in an area is correlated with violence, but that does not necessarily mean that an individual in that area who commits violence did so due to a lack of employment opportunities.

Because crime is covered in other sections of this SNA, the crime domain was removed as per established methodology[78]. The remaining weights remain the same, meaning the IMD scores used in this profile are slightly lower than the released statistics.

In this section we will be comparing scores on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The descriptions of the domains of deprivation are taken verbatim from the English Indices of Deprivation Technical Report 2019[79], as it is important to remain accurate.

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[77] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019
[78] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833947/IoD2019_Research_Report.pdf
[79] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d8b387740f0b609909b5908/IoD2019_Technical_Report.pdf

# Index of Multiple Deprivation – Overall

With Crime removed, we can see the overall picture of deprivation in South Yorkshire (see Figure 130) All districts in South Yorkshire are above the England average score for total Index of Multiple Deprivation (No Crime).

*Figure 130 - Index of Multiple Deprivation (No Crime)*
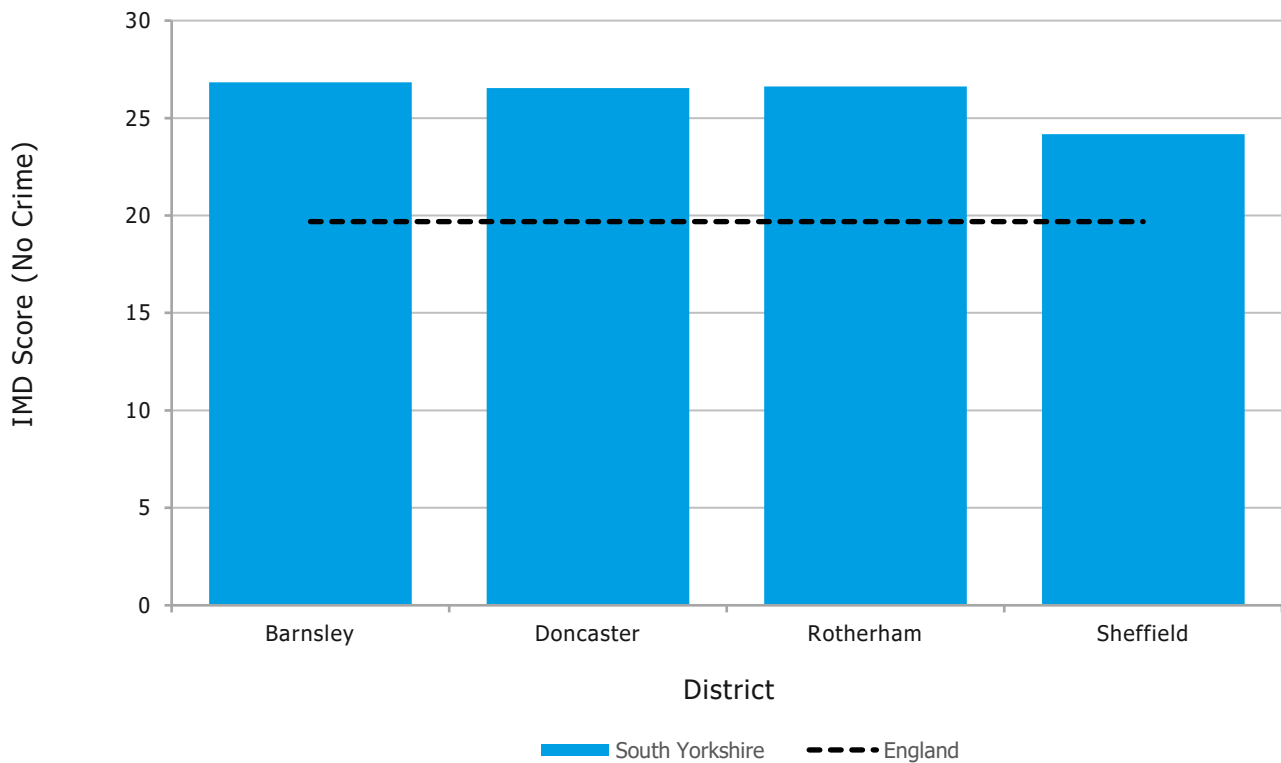


From the theory presented at the beginning of this SNA, we would predict that South Yorkshire would have a higher rate of violence than the England average simply because of this higher level of deprivation. As national comparators show, this assumption would be correct.

There is high variability within districts. Some areas of Barnsley, which has a higher overall IMD score than Sheffield, might score very low on the IMD score, whilst others will score much higher.

We can regress the index of multiple deprivation data for a middle super output area (MSOA) with the rate of suspects for most serious violence that come from an MSOA (per 100,000 population), taking an average of the 4 years of data covered (see Figure 131). This allows us to test the relationship between known predictors of violence (in the literature) in South Yorkshire to actual statistics of violence in the county.

*Figure 131 - Index of Multiple Deprivation (No Crime) vs rate of most serious violence*
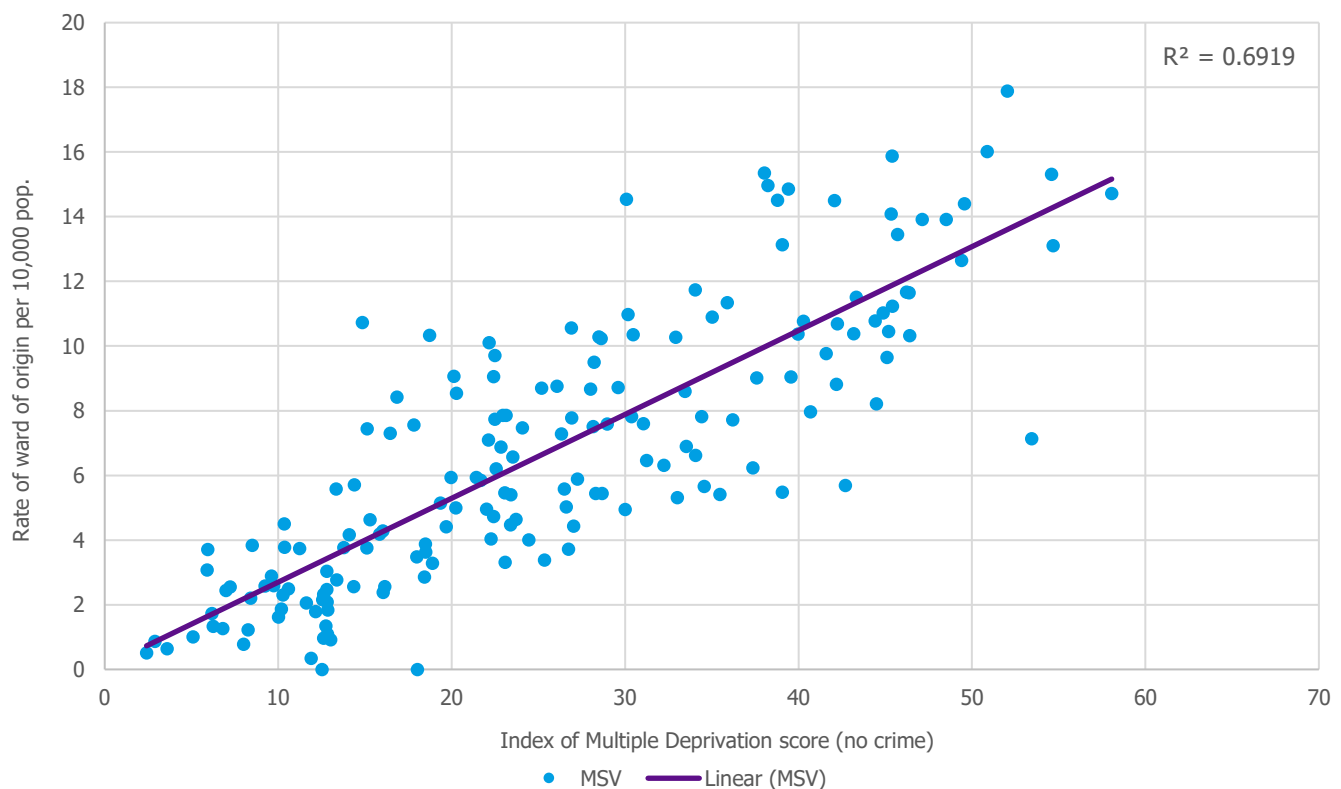


From Figure 131 we can see that as the IMD score for an MSOA increases, so to does the rate of suspects of MSV per 100,000 (5 year average). This association is significant, $R^2 = 0.69$, $p < .001$. The data shows heteroskedasticity; the variability of the data increases as the income deprivation score increases. This can be seen on the graph as the cone like distribution of points.

In practical terms, this heteroskedasticity means that although low deprivation is quite uniformly protective against involvement in violence, at higher levels of deprivation the relationship is less direct. There are other factors involved that influence involvement in violence in communities with higher levels of deprivation.

# Income Deprivation

The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population in an area experiencing deprivation relating to low income. The definition of low income used includes both those people that are out-of-work, and those that are in work but who have low earnings (and who satisfy the respective means tests).

Income deprivation is calculated from the following indicators;

- Adults and children in Income Support families
- Adults and children in income-based Jobseeker's Allowance families
- Adults and children in income-based Employment and Support Allowance families
- Adults and children in Pension Credit (Guarantee) families
- Adults and children in Universal Credit families where no adult is classed within the 'Working - no requirements' conditionality group
- Adults and children in Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit families not already counted, that is those who are not in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit (Guarantee),

and whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefit) is below 60 per cent of the median before housing costs

- Asylum seekers in England in receipt of subsistence support, accommodation support, or both.

All districts score above the England average for income deprivation (see Figure 132).

*Figure 132 - Income deprivation in South Yorkshire*
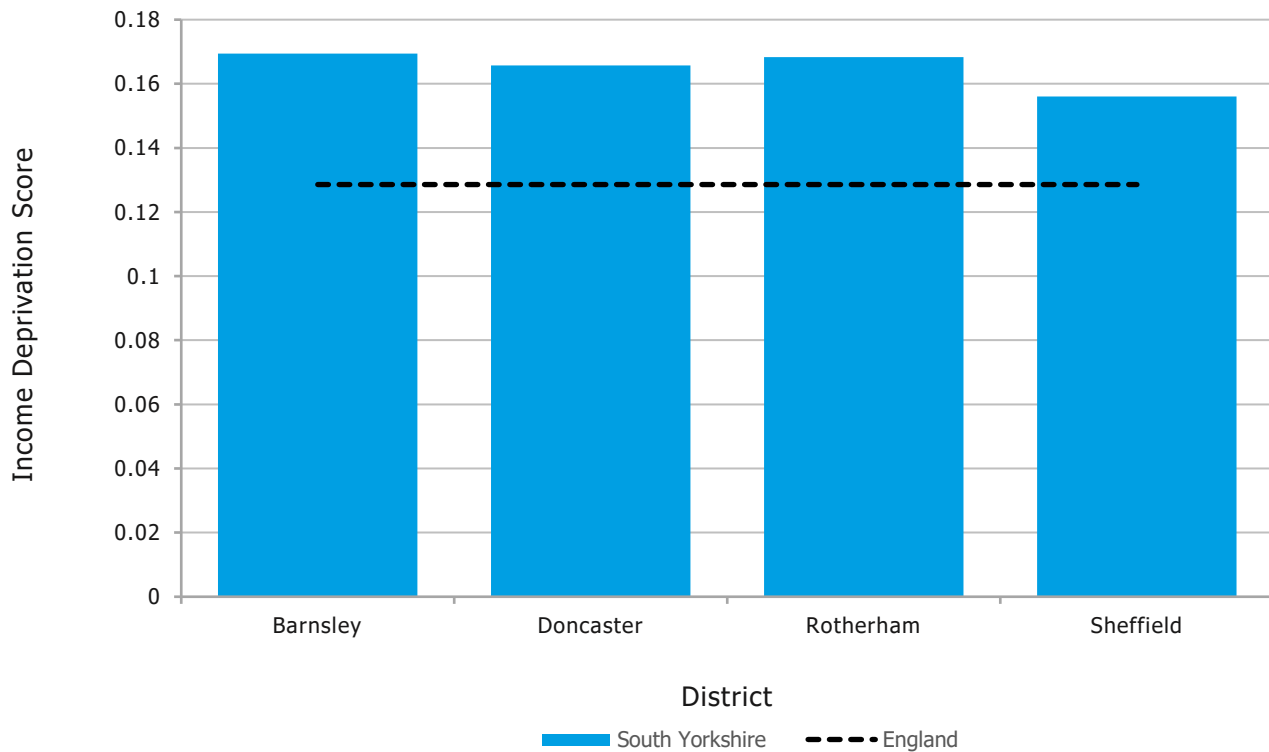


There is large variability in smaller level areas in South Yorkshire for income deprivation. Figure 133 shows this variability.

We can regress the income deprivation data for an MSOA with the rate of suspects for most serious violence that come from an MSOA (per 100,000 population), taking an average of the 5 years of data covered (see Figure 133). This allows us to test the relationship between known predictors of violence (in the literature) in South Yorkshire to actual statistics of violence in the county.

Figure 133 - Income Deprivation vs most serious violence
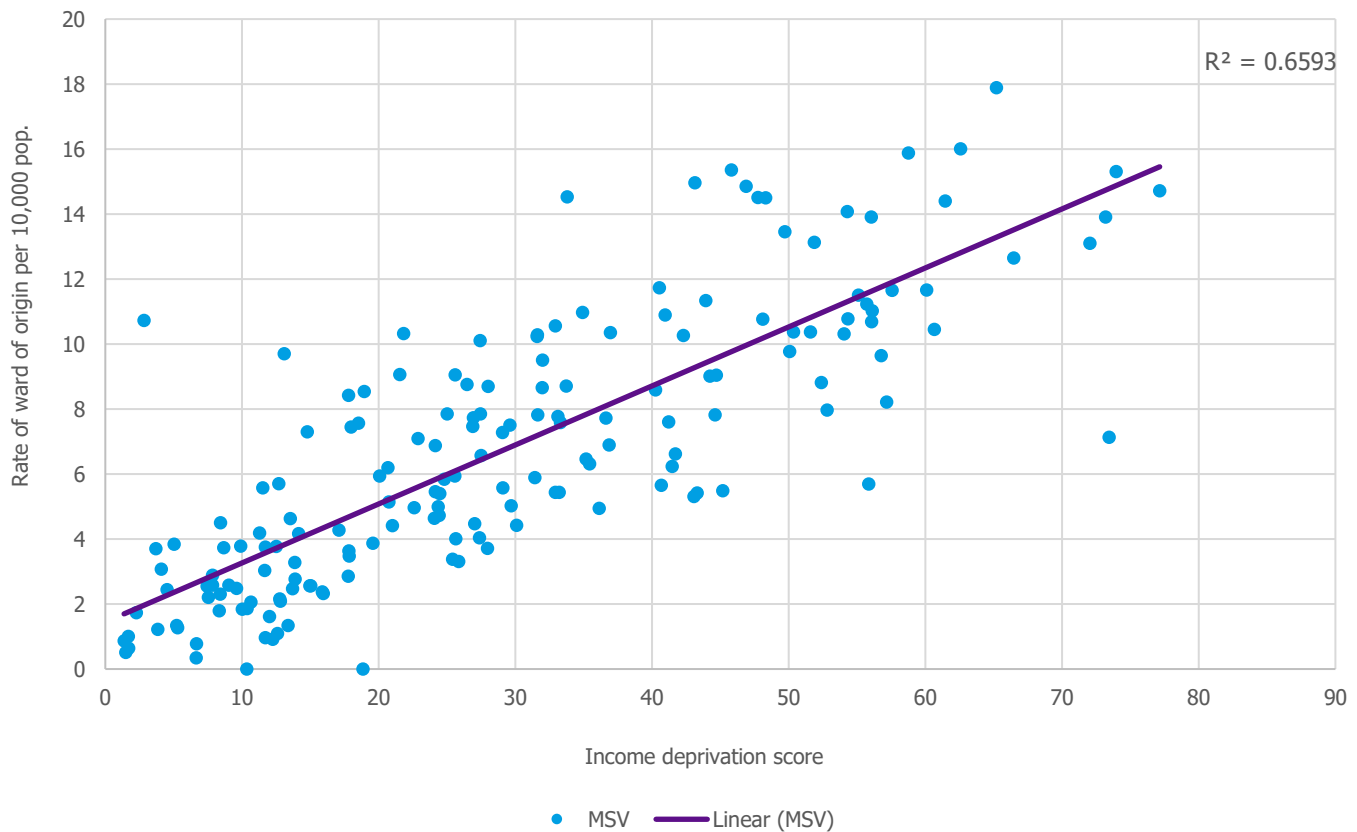


There is a significant association between income deprivation and the rate of suspects for MSV per 100,000 population (4 year average), $R^2 = 0.66$, $p < .001$. The data shows heteroskedasticity again, indicating a more complicated relationship between income and MSV at higher levels of income deprivation.
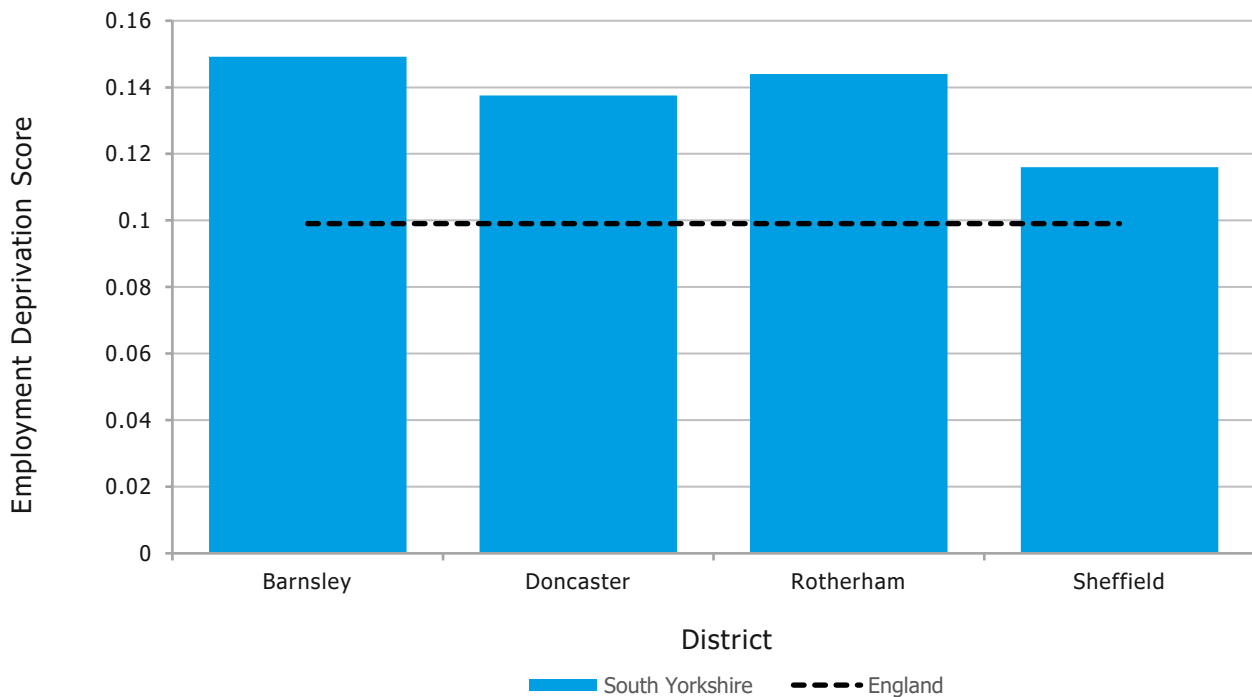
# Employment Deprivation

The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market. This includes people who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.

The indicators

- Claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance (both contribution-based and income-based), women aged 18 to 59 and men aged 18 to 64
- Claimants of Employment and Support Allowance (both contribution-based and income-based), women aged 18 to 59 and men aged 18 to 64
- Claimants of Incapacity Benefit, women aged 18 to 59 and men aged 18 to 64.
- Claimants of Severe Disablement Allowance, women aged 18 to 59 and men aged 18 to 64.
- Claimants of Carer's Allowance, women aged 18 to 59 and men aged 18 to 64.
- Claimants of Universal Credit in the 'Searching for work' and 'No work requirements' conditionality groups.

All districts in South Yorkshire are above the England average for employment deprivation. Employment deprivation is higher in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham than in Sheffield (see Figure 134).

*Figure 134 - Employment Deprivation in South Yorkshire*



We can regress the employment deprivation data for an MSOA with the rate of suspects for most serious violence that come from an MSOA (per 100,000 population), taking an average of the 5 years of data covered. This allows us to test the relationship between known predictors of violence (in the literature) in South Yorkshire to actual statistics of violence in the county (see Figure 135).

*Figure 135 - Employment Deprivation vs most serious violence*
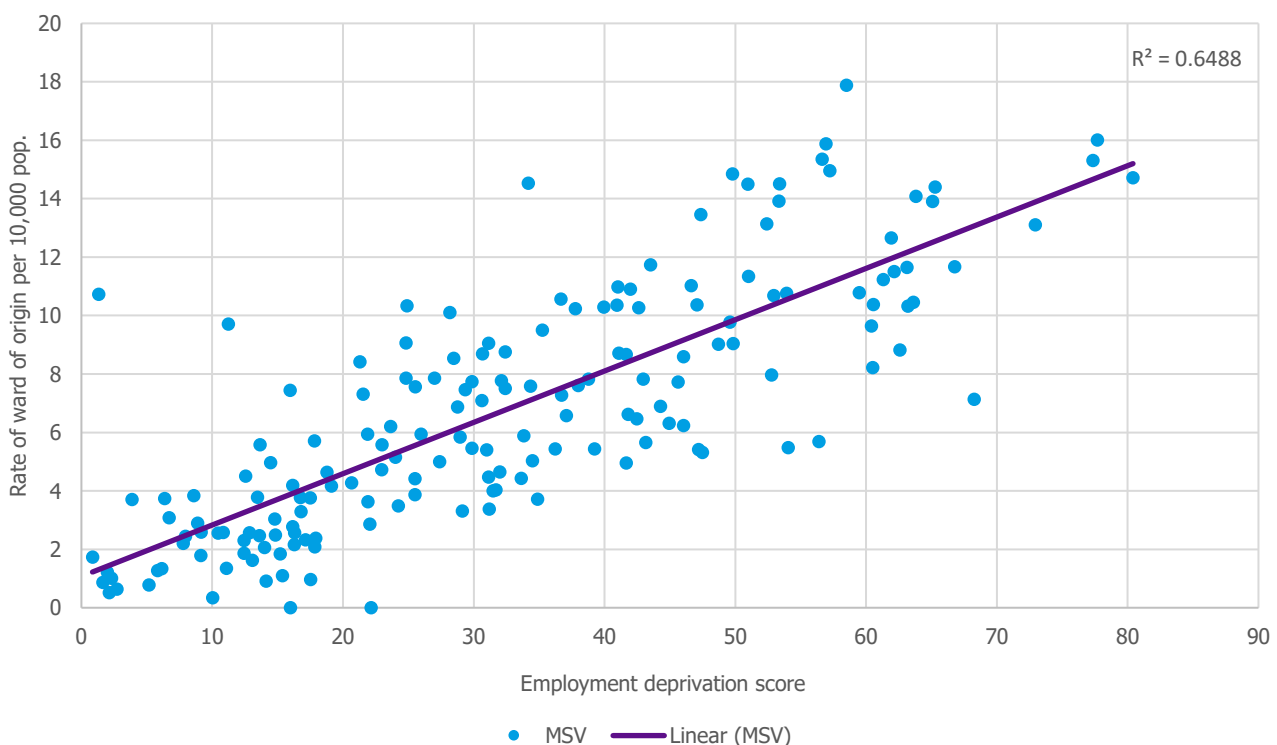
There is a significant association between employment deprivation and the rate of suspects of MSV per 100,000 population (5 year average), $R^2 = 0.65$, $p < .001$. As before, the data is heteroskedastic, with the variability increasing as the employment deprivation score increases. This indicates that low employment deprivation is protective against violence, but that the relationship is more complex with higher levels of employment deprivation.
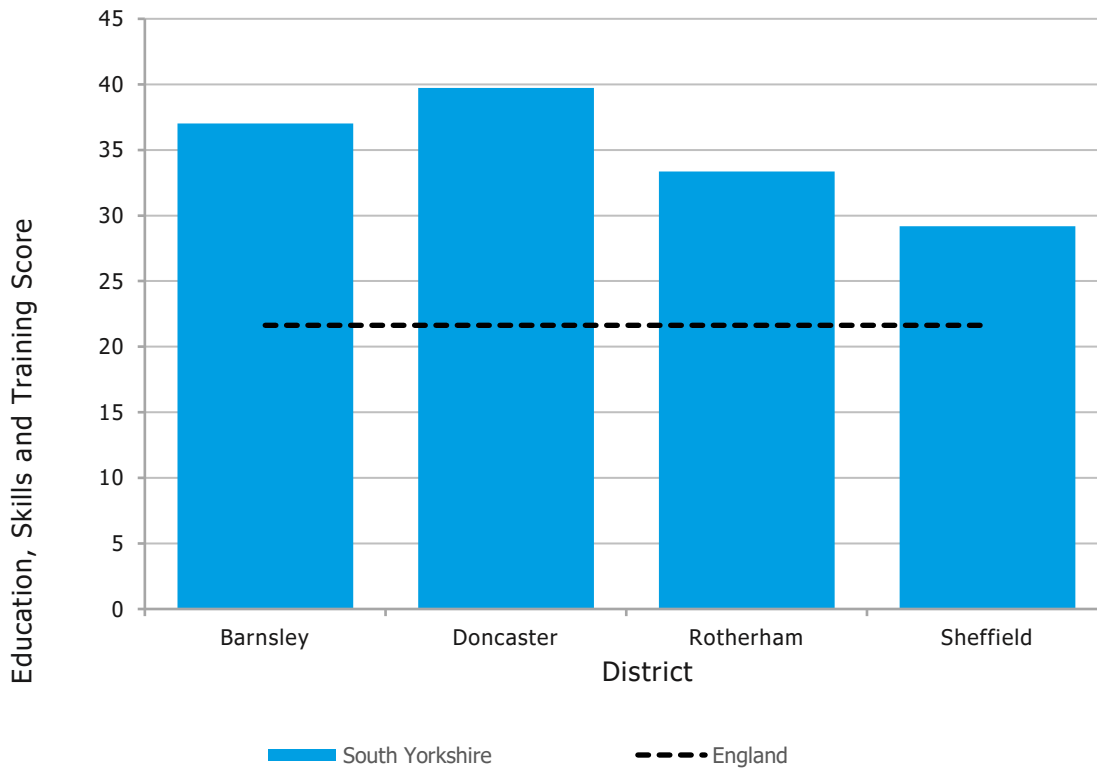
# Education, Skills and Training Deprivation

The Education, Skills and Training Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: one relating to children and young people and one relating to adult skills. These two sub-domains are designed to reflect the 'flow' and 'stock' of educational disadvantage within an area respectively. That is, the 'children and young people' sub-domain measures the attainment of qualifications and associated measures ('flow'), while the 'skills' sub-domain measures the lack of qualifications in the resident working-age adult population ('stock').

The indicators Children and Young People sub-domain

- Key Stage 2 attainment: The scaled score of pupils taking Mathematics, English reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling Key Stage 2 exams
- Key Stage 4 attainment: The average capped points score of pupils taking Key Stage 4 (GCSE or equivalent) exams
- Secondary school absence: The proportion of authorised and unauthorised absences from secondary school
- Staying on in education post 16: The proportion of young people not staying on in school or non-advanced education above age 16
- Entry to higher education: A measure of young people aged under 21 not entering higher education Adult Skills sub-domain
- Adult skills: The proportion of working-age adults with no or low qualifications, women aged 25 to 59 and men aged 25 to 64
- English language proficiency: The proportion of working-age adults who cannot speak English or cannot speak English well, women aged 25 to 59 and men aged 25 to 64

All districts were above the England average for Education, Skills and Training deprivation, with Doncaster being the district with the highest score (see Figure 136).

*Figure 136 - Employment, Skills and Training Deprivation vs most serious violence*



We can regress the education, skills and training deprivation data for an MSOA with the rate of suspects for most serious violence that come from an MSOA (per 100,000 population), taking an average of the 5 years of data covered. This allows us to test the relationship between known predictors of violence (in the literature) in South Yorkshire to actual statistics of violence in the county (see Figure 137).

*Figure 137 - Education, Skills and Training Deprivation vs most serious violence*
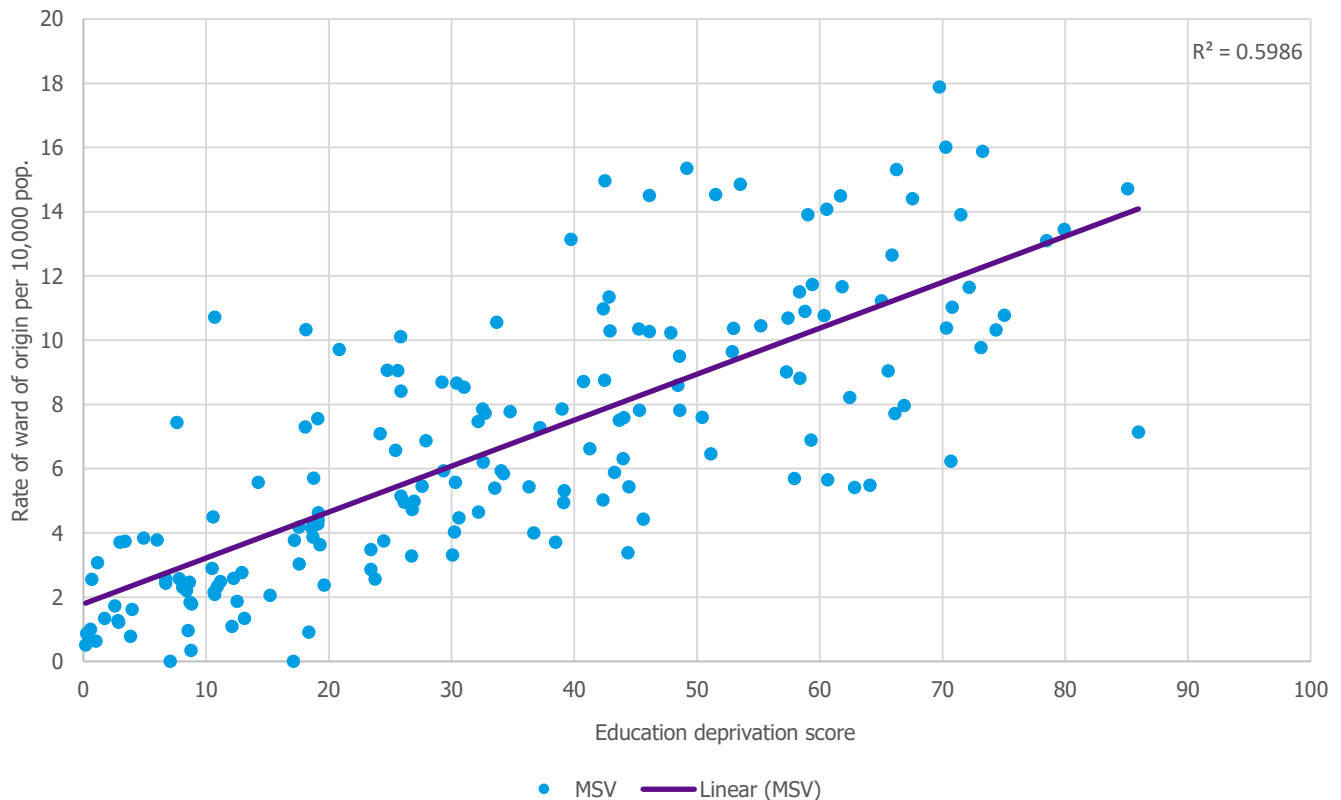


There was a significant association between education, skills and training deprivation and the rate of MSV suspects per 100,000 population (5 year average) $R^2$ = 0.60, $p$ <.001. As before, the data is heteroskedastic, with the variability increasing as the employment deprivation score increases. This indicates that low employment deprivation is protective against violence, but that the relationship is more complex with higher levels of employment deprivation.

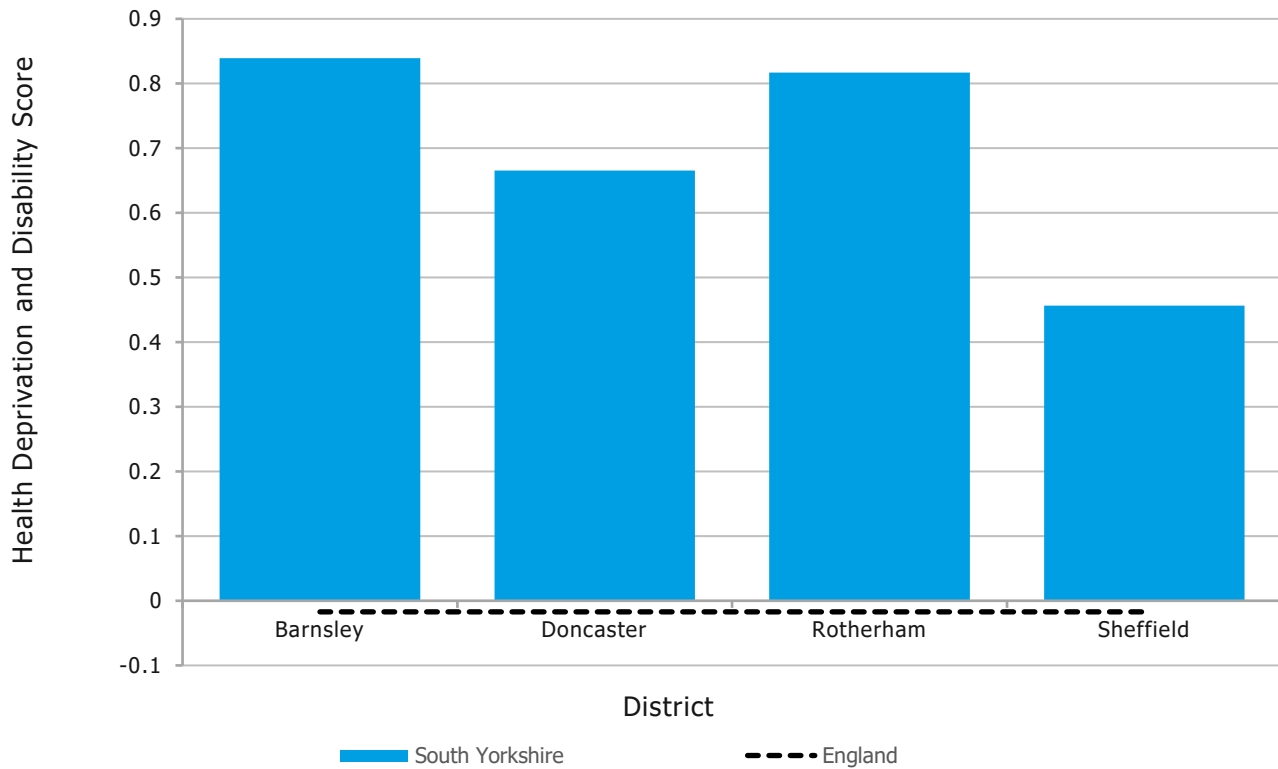# Health Deprivation and Disability

The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.

The indicators

- Years of potential life lost: An age and sex standardised measure of premature death
- Comparative illness and disability ratio: An age and sex standardised morbidity/disability ratio
- Acute morbidity: An age and sex standardised rate of emergency admission to hospital
- Mood and anxiety disorders: A composite based on the rate of adults suffering from mood and anxiety disorders, derived from hospital episodes data, prescribing data and suicide mortality data.

Due to the way it is calculated, the health deprivation and disability score can enter negative numbers, and the England average is -0.02 (see Figure 138).
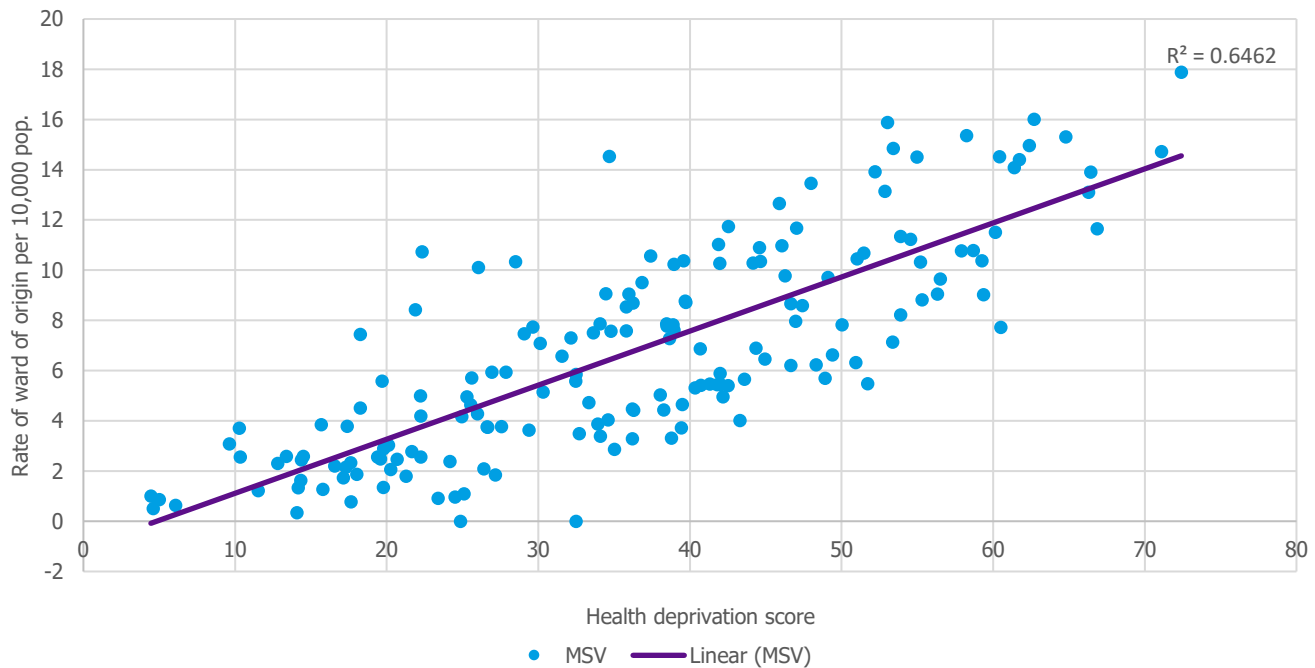
*Figure 138 - Health Deprivation and Disability in South Yorkshire*



All districts in South Yorkshire are above the England average for health deprivation and disabilities score. This indicates increased morbidity in the county.

We can regress the health deprivation and disability score data for an MSOA with the rate of suspects for most serious violence that come from an MSOA (per 100,000 population), taking an average of the 5 years of data covered. This allows us to test the relationship between known predictors of violence (in the literature) in South Yorkshire to actual statistics of violence in the county (see Figure 139).

*Figure 139 - Health Deprivation and Disability vs most serious violence*



There is a significant association between the health deprivation and disability score, $R^2 = 0.65$, $p < .001$. It should be noted that the relationship between ill health and violence is not as established in the literature we have reviewed. It is therefore possible that both indicators are affected by a third factor, such as other measures of deprivation. Ill health can also be caused by violence, meaning the relationship between the two indicators on this measure is not as clearly directed as for other measures of deprivation.

# Barriers to Housing and Services

The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing, such as affordability.

The indicators Geographical Barriers sub-domain

- Road distance to a post office: A measure of the mean road distance to the closest post office for people living in the Lower-layer Super Output Area
- Road distance to a primary school: A measure of the mean road distance to the closest primary school for people living in the Lower-layer Super Output Area
- Road distance to a general store or supermarket: A measure of the mean road distance to the closest supermarket or general store for people living in the Lower-layer Super Output Area
- Road distance to a GP surgery: A measure of the mean road distance to the closest GP surgery for people living in the Lower-layer Super Output Area.

Wider Barriers sub-domain

- Household overcrowding: The proportion of all households in a Lower-layer Super Output Area which are judged to have insufficient space to meet the household's needs

- Homelessness: Local Authority District level rate of acceptances for housing assistance under the homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act, assigned to the constituent Lower-layer Super Output Areas
- Housing affordability: Difficulty of access to owner-occupation or the private rental market, expressed as the inability to afford to enter owner-occupation or the private rental market.

All districts in South Yorkshire are below the England average for this domain. The relatively high population density in two cities and two metropolitan boroughs, as well as lower price housing stock compared to particularly southern counties, means South Yorkshire is low on this measure (see Figure 140).

*Figure 140 - Barriers to Housing and Services in South Yorkshire*
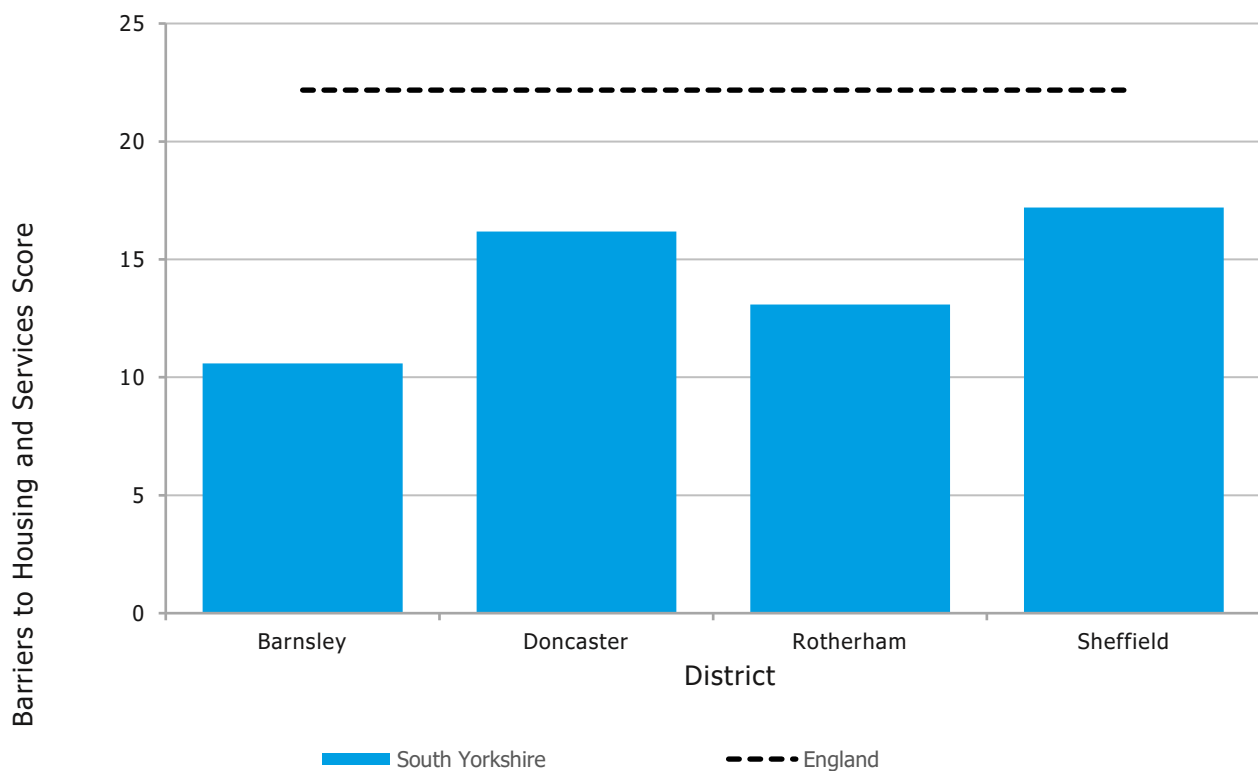


We can regress the barriers to housing and services score data for an MSOA with the rate of suspects for most serious violence that come from an MSOA (per 100,000 population), taking an average of the 5 years of data covered. This allows us to test the relationship between known predictors of violence (in the literature) in South Yorkshire to actual statistics of violence in the county (see Figure 141).

*Figure 141 - Barriers to Housing and Services vs most serious violence*
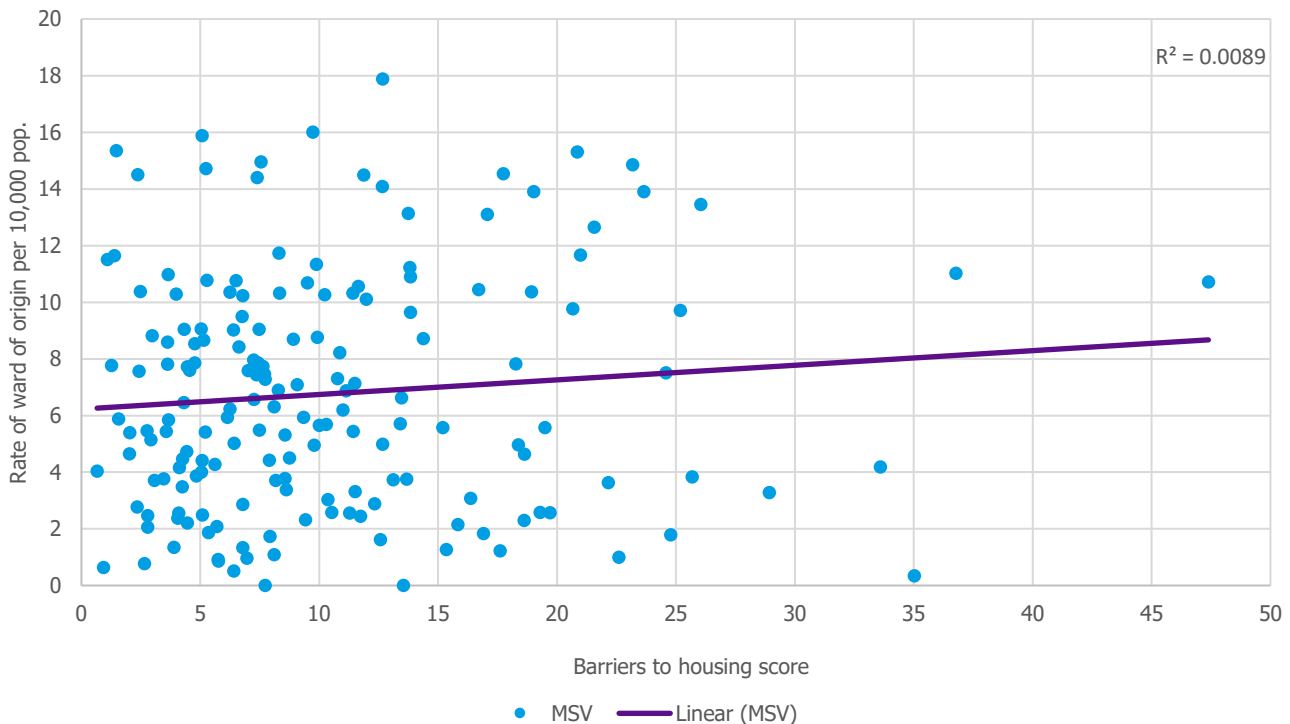


There is no significant association between the barriers to housing and services score in South Yorkshire and the rate of suspects of MSV per 100,000 population (5 year average), $R^2 < .001$, $p = 0.22$. This does not mean that individuals are not affected by housing concerns; to assume this would be to fall into the ecological fallacy. Evidence from interventions such as the Plan B Custody Navigator service and the Hospital Navigator service commissioned by the VRU, as well as evidence from the literature, would suggest that we still need to address housing concerns for individuals.

# Living Environment Deprivation

The Living Environment Deprivation Domain measures the quality of the local environment. The indicators fall into two sub-domains. The 'indoors' living environment measures the quality of housing; while the 'outdoors' living environment contains measures of air quality and road traffic accidents.

The indicators Indoors sub-domain

- Houses without central heating: The proportion of houses that do not have central heating.
- Housing in poor condition: The proportion of social and private homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes standard.

Outdoors sub-domain

- Air quality: A measure of air quality based on emissions rates for four pollutants.
- Road traffic accidents involving injury to pedestrians and cyclists.

All four districts in South Yorkshire are below the England average for this domain, although Sheffield is close (see Figure 142). There are many possible factors; the rural environment

surrounding South Yorkshire's cities, the lower cost of housing stock allowing for more ownership and investment, or other factors we have not considered.

*Figure 142 - Living Environment Deprivation in South Yorkshire*
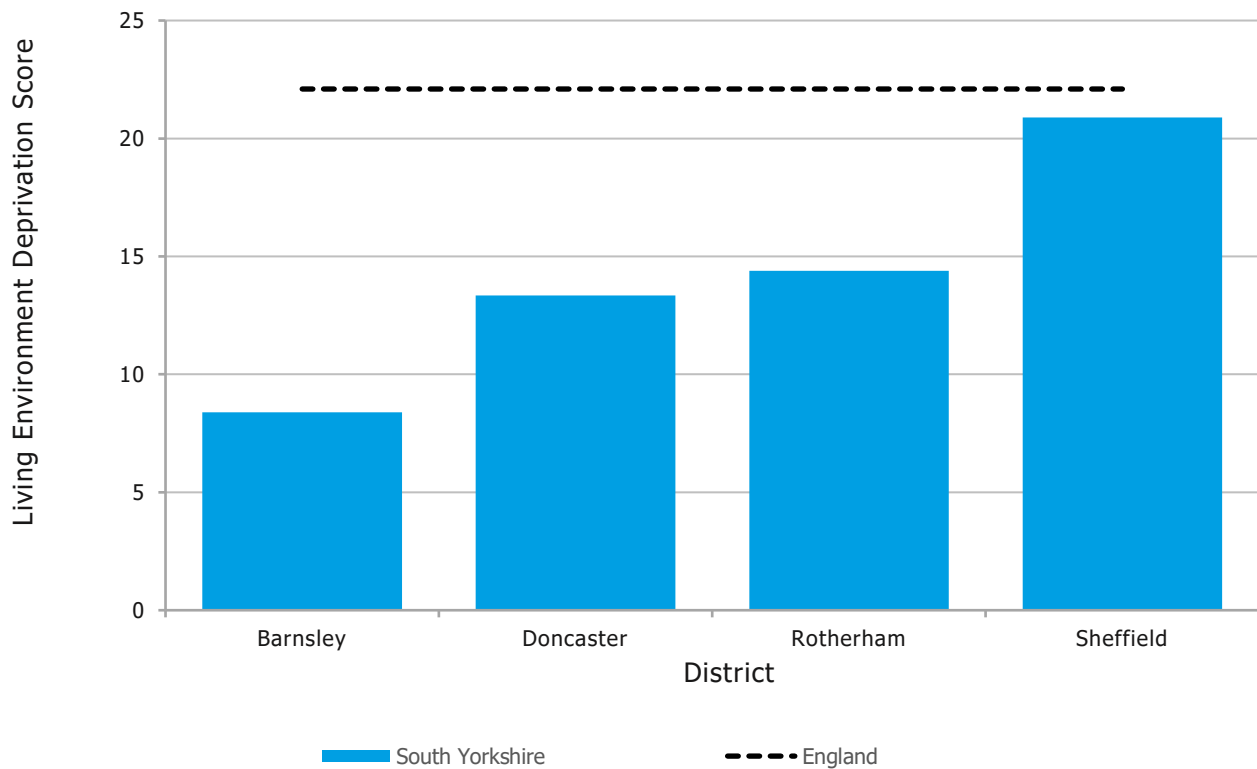


We can regress the living environment data for an MSOA with the rate of suspects for most serious violence that come from an MSOA (per 100,000 population), taking an average of the 4 years of data covered. This allows us to test the relationship between known predictors of violence (in the literature) in South Yorkshire to actual statistics of violence in the county (see Figure 143).

*Figure 143 - Living Environment Deprivation vs most serious violence*
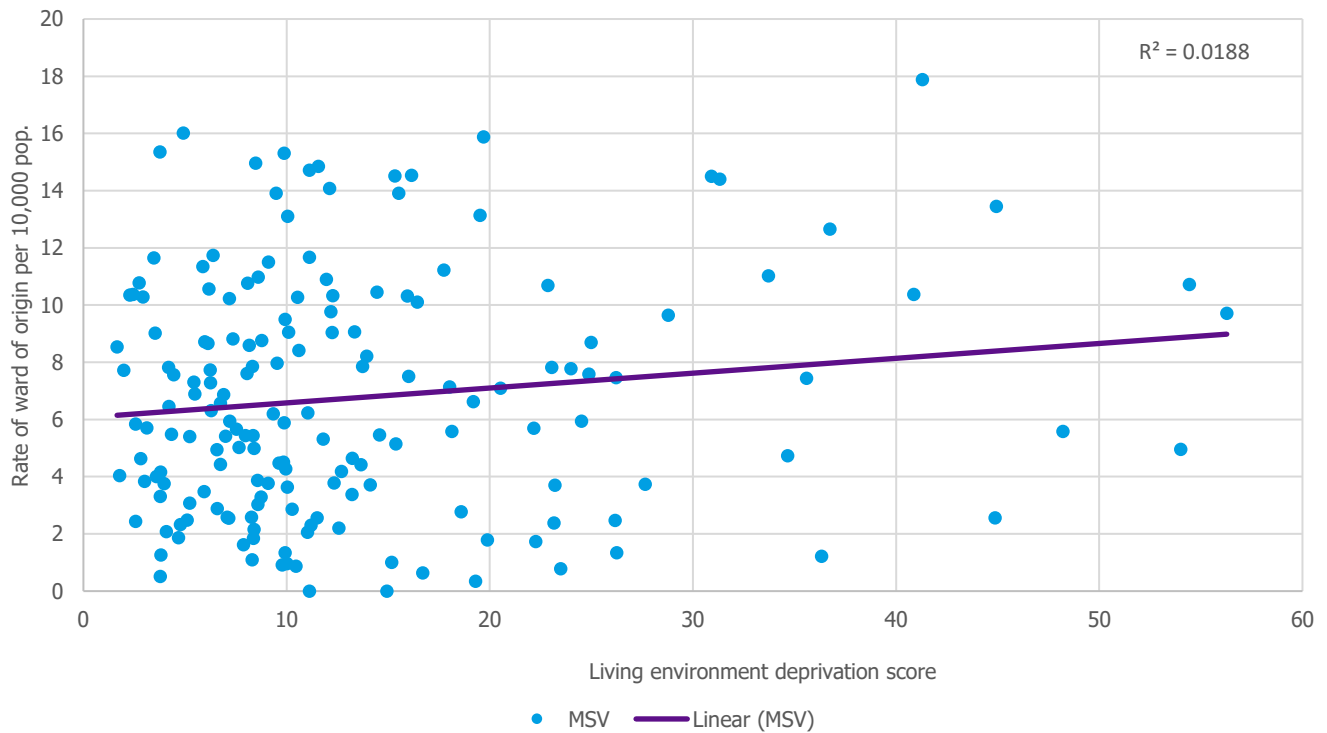


There was no significant association between the living environment deprivation score and the rate of suspects of MSV per 100,000 population (5 year average). As with barriers to housing and services, this does not mean that this is not a factor for an individual's involvement in violence, just that on a population level these factors do not seem related.