

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment 2022-23

Produced by Terry Hughes, Community Safety Manager

Please contact terry.hughes@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Community Safety Partnership sign-off: 17 February 2022



Introduction

The Strategic Assessment produced for the Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership (CSP) helps establish priority themes for the 2022/23 Partnership Plan.

Legislation

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gave statutory responsibility to local authorities, the police, and key partners to reduce crime and disorder in their communities. Under this, and subsequent legislation, Community Safety Partnerships are required to carry out annual audits and to implement crime reduction strategies.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced scrutiny arrangements in the form of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, as well as introducing several amendments to the 1998 Act including the addition of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and substance misuse within the remit of the CSP strategies. Reducing reoffending was subsequently added by the Policing and Crime Act 2009. The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007 set out further revisions to the 1998 Act.

The aim of the Strategic Assessment

The analysis of data provided by partners enables the partnership to set clear priorities for the coming year.

Part 1 analyses police and partner data for last year's priorities covering the period January to December 2021, unless otherwise specified.

Funding for these priorities is provided, in large part, by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner in accordance with the priorities set out in his *Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan*.

Part 2 draws some conclusions from the data and recommends the priorities for the partnership for the forthcoming financial year.

It should be noted that some of the data provided in this document is provisional and may undergo further revision.

Part 1 – Analysis

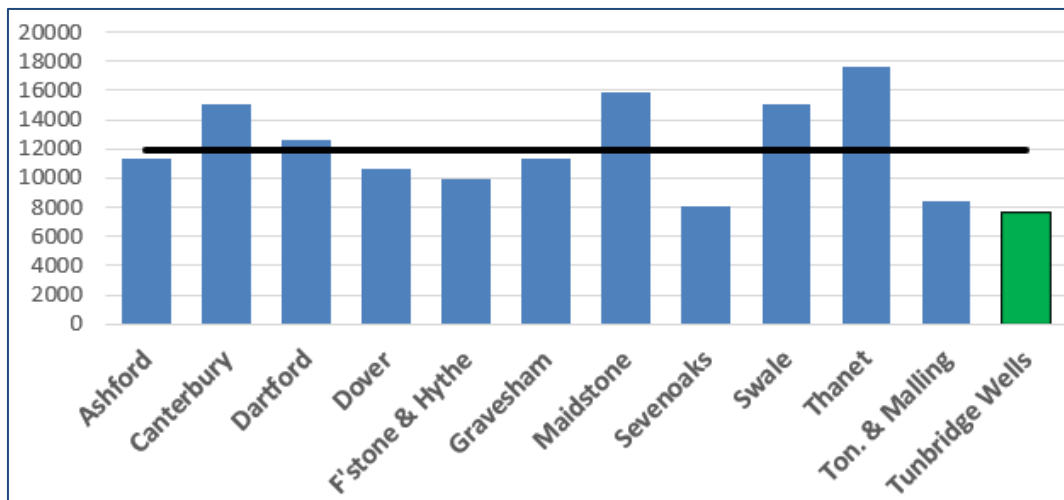
All recorded crime

Current figures for the 12-month period January 2021 – December 2021, unless stated.

Level of Crime: 7,679 (previous period 7,830)

Peer Comparison: Best out of 12 Kent areas by population and volume

Annual Change: A reduction of 151 crimes (-2%)

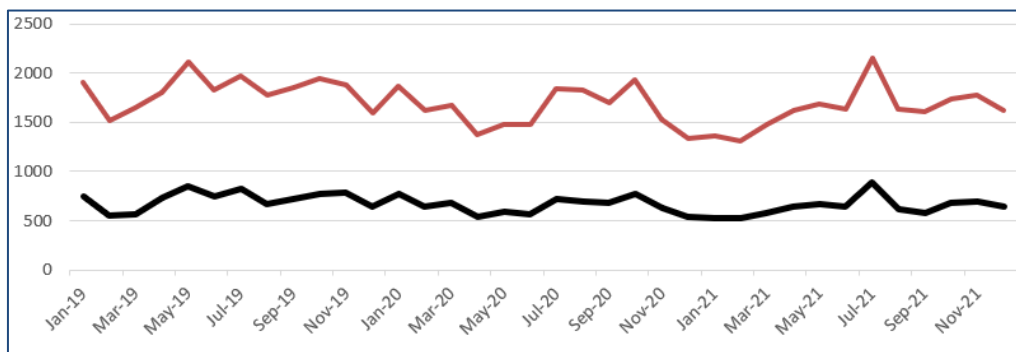


Kent comparison

Tunbridge Wells had the lowest overall crime rate in Kent for the given period, marginally ahead of our West Kent neighbours Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Malling.

A reduction of 778 crimes builds on the reduction of 345 crimes during the previous calendar year (2019).

From the metric of 'all crime' Tunbridge Wells is the safest local authority area in Kent.



Three-year trend - black line Tunbridge Wells, red line county average

The table below shows a breakdown of reported incidents, the increase or decrease since the last reporting period, and our county position for years 2020 and 2021. Subsequent pages provide further details on key crime types and a ward breakdown.

Crime Type	This Year	Last Year	% Change	Number change	2020	2021
All crime	7,679	7,830	-1.9%	-151	1	1
Victim-based crime	6,558	6,652	-1.4%	-94	1	1
Violence (VAP)	3,498	3,351	4.4%	147	2	2
Sexual offences	326	272	19.9%	54	2	3
Hate Crime	226	191	18.3%	35	6	4
ASB Incidents	1,554	2,354	-34.0%	-800	1	1
Burglary Residential	293	281	4.3%	12	3	3
Criminal damage	919	948	-3.1%	-29	1	1
Domestic abuse incidents	2,504	2,391	4.7%	113	2	2
Drug offences	211	219	-3.7%	-8	2	2
(Drug Trafficking)	52	66	-21.2%	-14	--	=3
(Drug Possession)	159	153	3.9%	6	--	2
Robbery	26	39	-33.3%	-13	=1	=1
Shoplifting	414	564	-26.6%	-150	4	1
Theft from a motor vehicle	179	229	-21.8%	-50	3	3
Theft of motor vehicle	134	123	8.9%	11	3	=2

*VAP = Violence against the Person

Noticeable in this data:

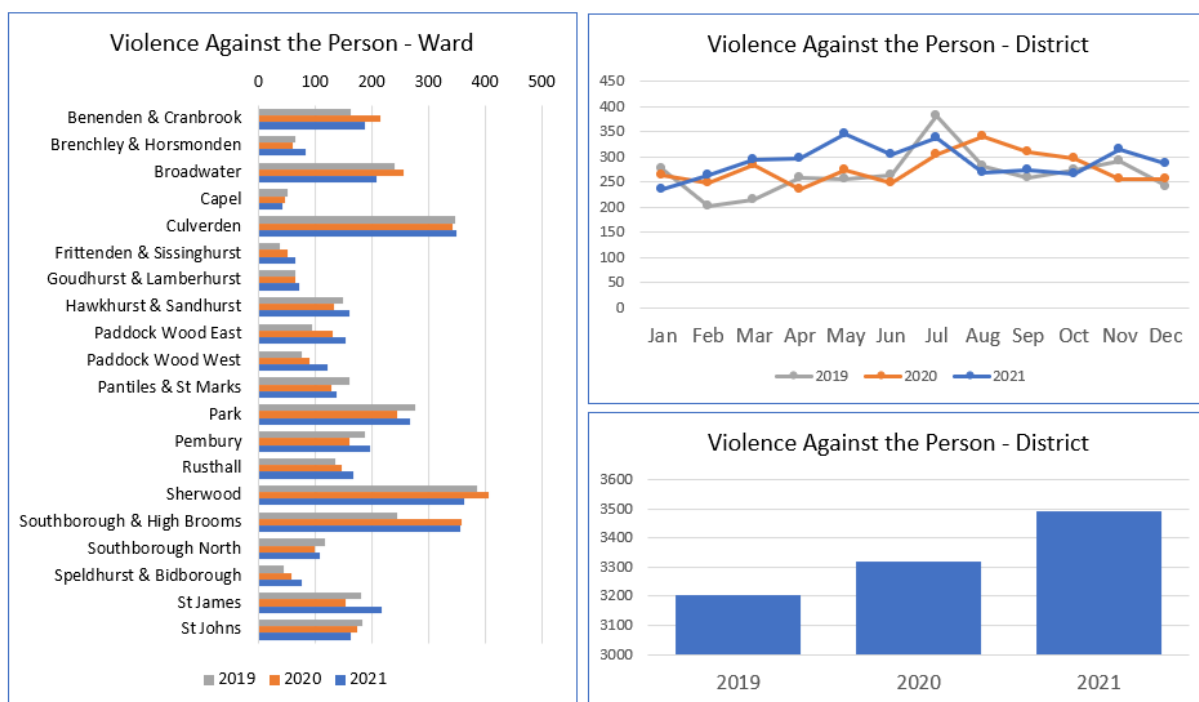
- A near five percent rise in domestic abuse and VAP offences
- An improvement in our county position for Hate Crime despite an overall increase
- A sizeable reduction in reports of anti-social behaviour

Data for this period (less so than last year), is clearly influenced by the consequences of lockdowns and other restrictions associated with the pandemic. To this end, where possible throughout this report I have included data from 2019 as a further comparison.

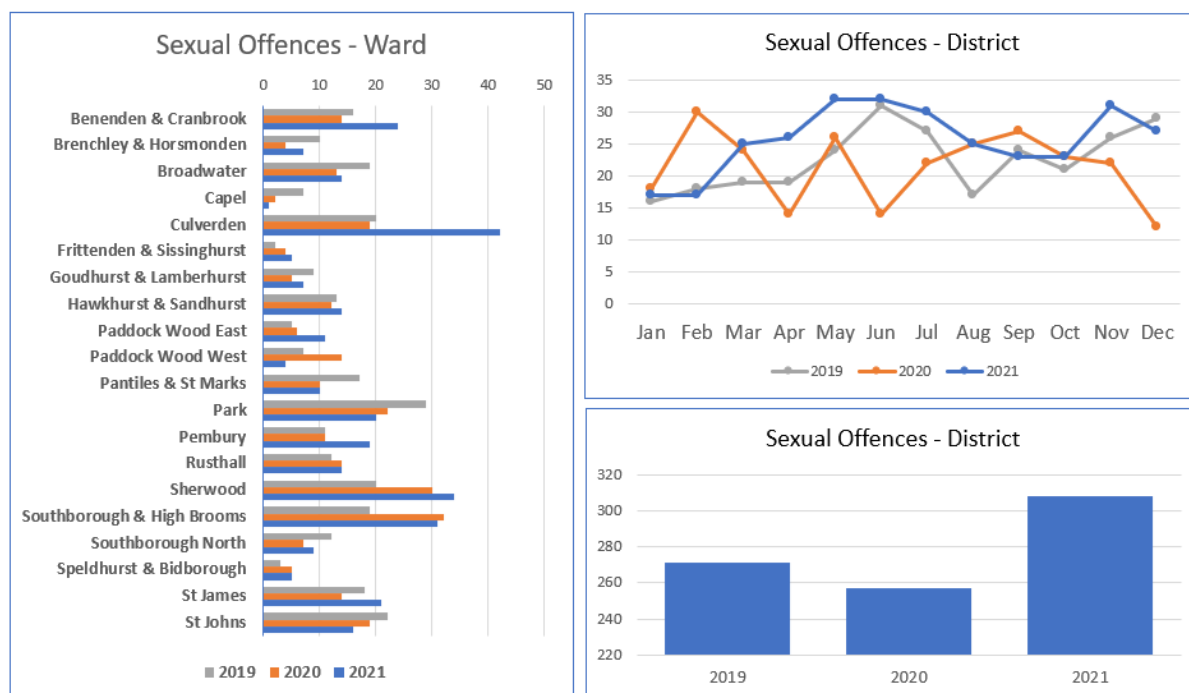
Reports of anti-social behaviour, in particular, saw steep monthly climbs and falls over the past two years with much of the change associated with real or perceived breaches of COVID-19 regulations. Violent crime increased by ~7% over the past two years following a reduction of 7.5% in 2019. Domestic abuse reports increased by 4.7% in 2021 and 4.1% in 2020. By comparison incidents increased by around nine percent in 2019.

Given the unusual conditions we experienced in 2020 and to a lesser degree, 2021, I thought it might be helpful to present monthly data from 2019 alongside district and ward data for key crime types in 2020 and 2021.

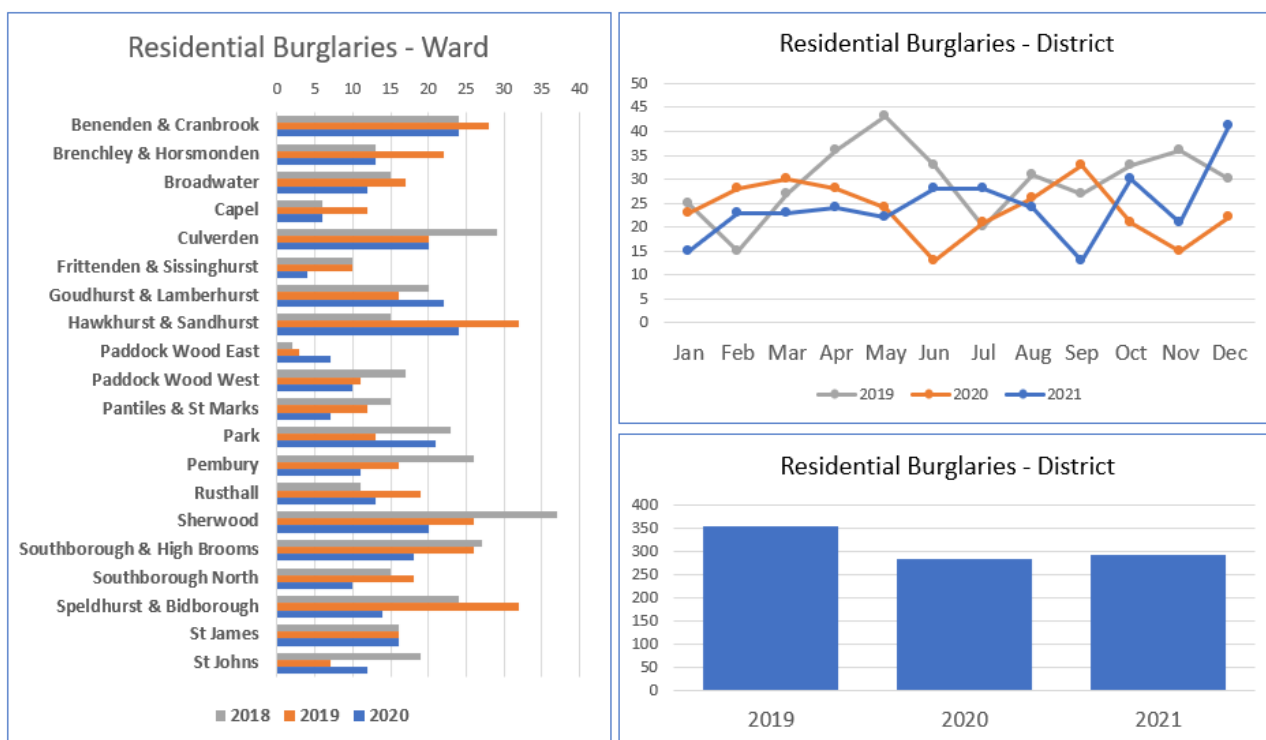
Small changes in **Violence Against the Person** offences in most wards, with some areas seeing a reduction over 2019 levels. A noticeable increase in Southborough & High Brooms persisted through 2020 and into 2021. It's worth noting that VAP includes common assault with no injury.



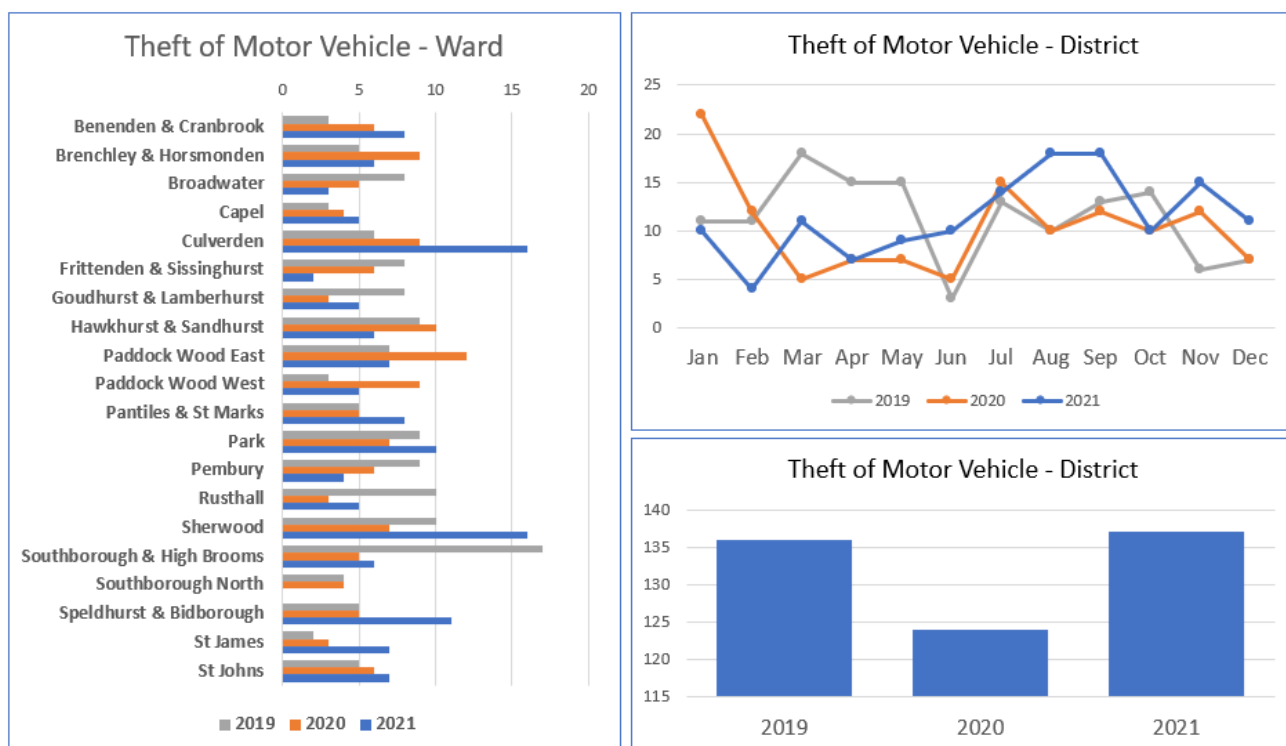
There were 37 more **Sexual Offences** in the borough in 2021 over 2019 with Culverden, Sherwood and Southborough and High Brooms experiencing increases of 22, 14 and 12 respectively.



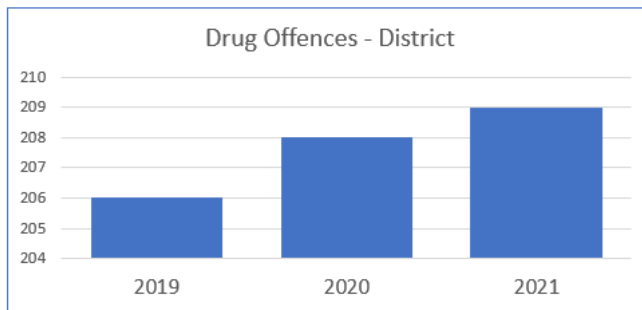
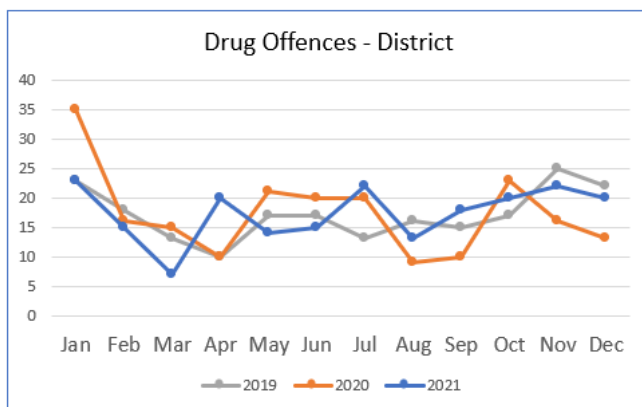
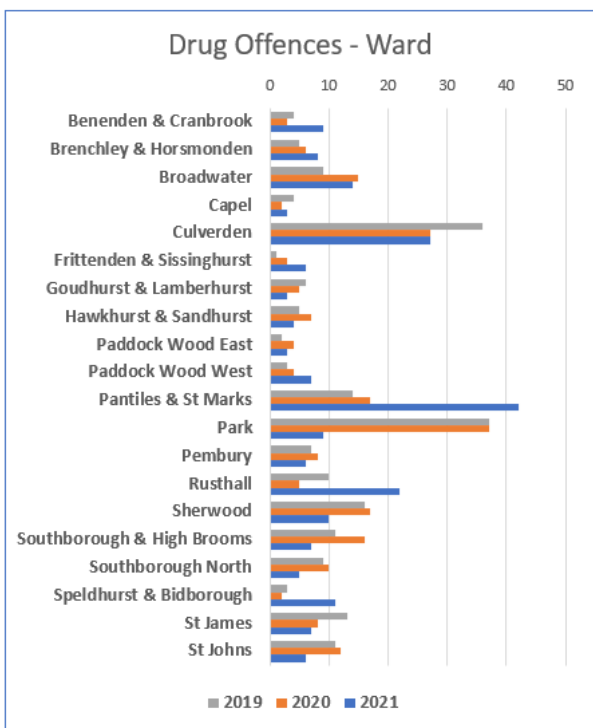
Most wards experienced reductions in **Residential Burglaries** in 2020 over 2019 and this remained steady in 2021 (over 2019).



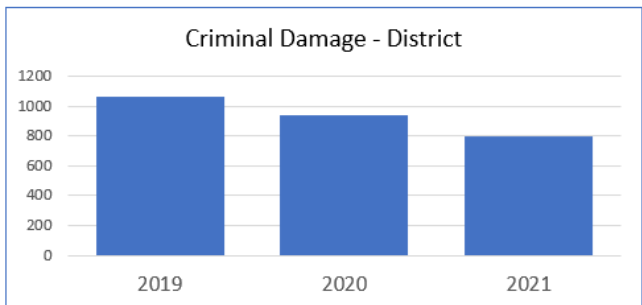
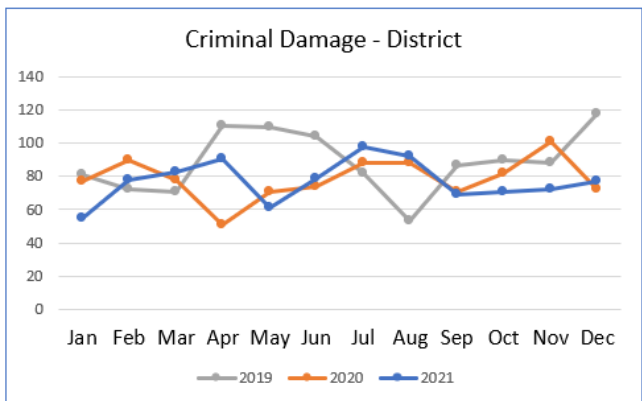
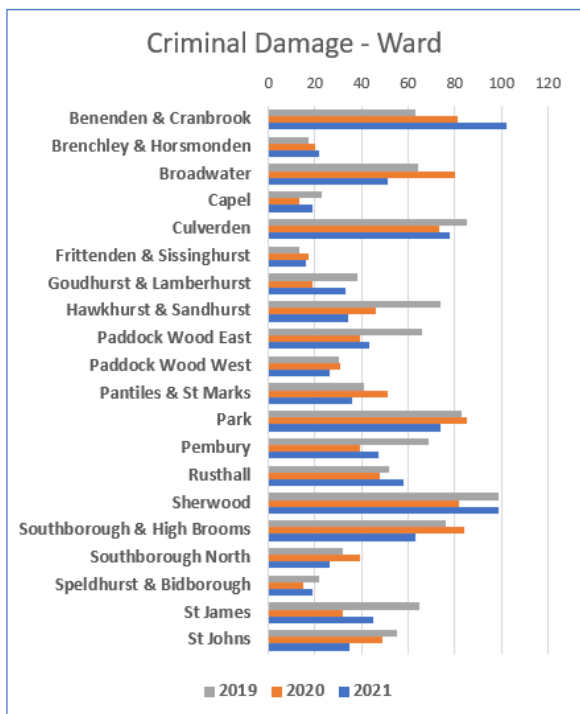
Small movements in **Theft of a Motor Vehicle**, offences when compared to the previous two years, with Sherwood and Culverden seeing the biggest increases.



Drug Offences, which includes *possession* and *possession with intent to supply* again fell away during the early months of the year (as in 2020) when some level of lockdown was imposed across the country. While most wards have seen either reductions or small increases, both Pantiles & St Marks and Rusthall saw double-figure increases.

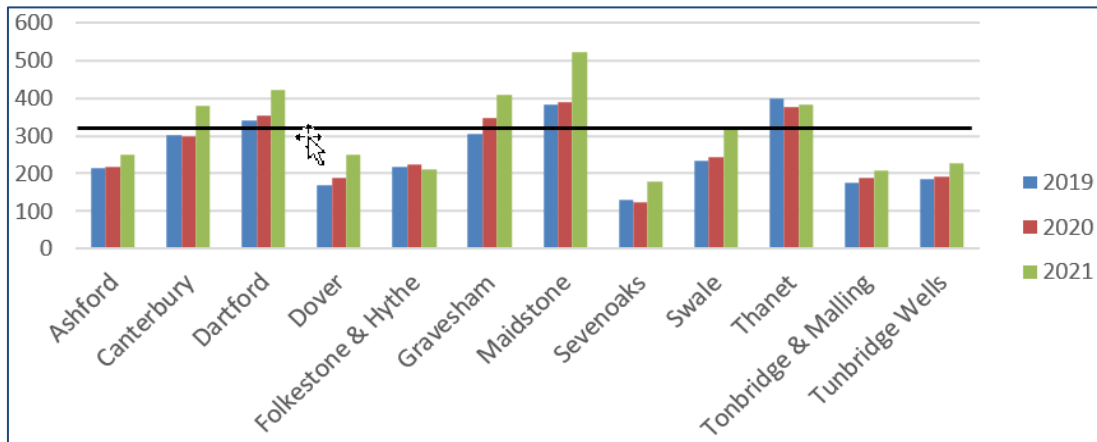


Criminal Damage offences fell by half in 2020 (over 2019) as the first lockdowns came into play. The trend continued into 2021, to some degree, with reductions seen in many wards. That's not the case across the board with increases seen in Sherwood and Cranbrook.



Hate Crime

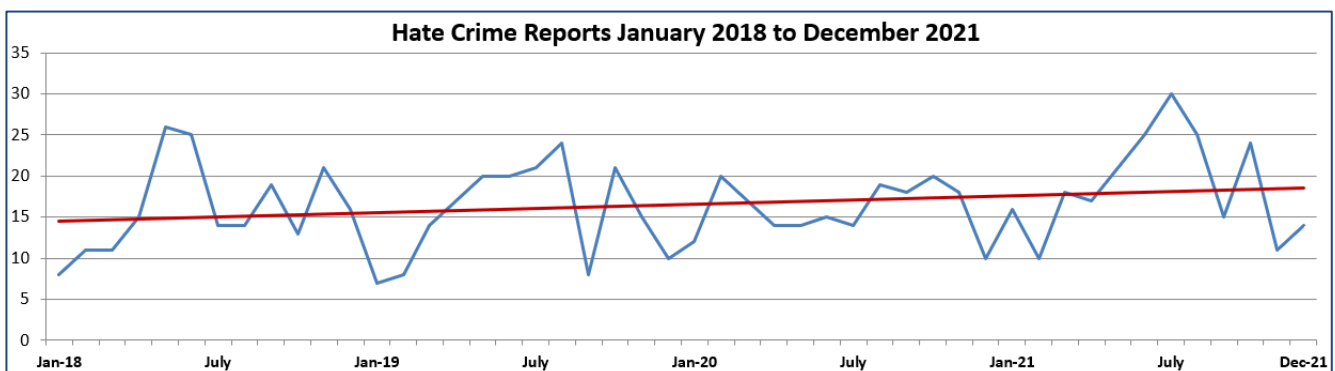
The chart below shows the level of hate crime countywide across three calendar years. The black horizontal line is the county average (313) for 2021.



The table below shows race to be the most consistent predominant factor in hate crime reports. Disability and sexual orientation are also significant factors, followed by religion/faith. In addition to the characteristics shown below a smaller number of reports involve multiple motivations.

Calendar Year	Race	Disability	Religion/faith/belief	Transgender	Gender	Sexual orientation	Age
2021	170	39	14	2	5	38	0
2020	140	35	12	1	0	35	0
2019	128	32	10	1	0	29	1
2018	132	24	12	0	9	26	6

Hate crimes are reviewed by Kent Police's Community Liaison Officer (CLO), who is part of the CSU team. The CLO makes contacts with victims in pursuit of suitable interventions, signposting and safeguarding to prevent further occurrence.



Hate crimes are always unacceptable and efforts are always made to support victims.

Much of this support has been provided by telephone and video conferencing over the past two years.

Amongst issues local to Tunbridge Wells, the CLO has engaged with resettled Afghan families following reports of abuse. Community Impact Assessments have also been drawn up following protests for causes such as Black Lives Matters and Violence Against Women and Girls.

Other local incidents of note for 2021 included the death of PCSO Julia James by a suspect unknown to her, David Fuller incidents, anti-vax protests and verbal abuse towards people of Indian/Asian descent; and anyone else they think caused the Covid pandemic.

International and nationally significant incidents were tracked locally to ensure we were prepared for any knock-on effects. Some examples below:

January

First Astra Zeneca Covid vaccine jab.
Announces of further national lockdowns as Covid variant spreads rapidly.
Joe Biden wins US General Election.

February

Kent Covid strain – Alpha sweeps through 50 Countries.
People from Covid hotspots require travellers to isolate in quarantine hotels.

March

Sarah Everard tragedy grips the country.
Oprah Winfrey interviews Harry and Meghan (suicidal risks and allegations of racist behaviour).
PC Couzens charged with death of Sarah Everard whose death sparked debates/protests about Violence Against Women and Girls.
Vatican says Priests cannot bless same-sex unions.
US House Committee hearing begins on rise of violence and discrimination against Asian-Americans citing 3,800 hate incidents recorded during a 12-month period.
Trial of former PC Derek Chauvin for murder of George Floyd begins.
Joe Biden overturns Trumps restrictions on transgender people serving in armed forces.

April

20-year-old Daunte Wright shot and killed at a traffic stop by a police officer in Minnesota, mistaking her gun for a taser. Officer subsequently charged and convicted.
UK loosens covid restrictions opening pubs and shops after 175 days.
President Biden decision to withdraw all US troops from Afghanistan by September.
Police officer convicted of the murder of George Floyd.

May

Violence between Palestine and Israel escalates.
Delta variant sweeps the country and causing global concern.

June

Supreme court declines to hear schools appeal in transgender bathroom case.
UK PM announces end of all covid restrictions from 19/07/2021.
Bomb attack on market in Baghdad ahead of Eid festival kills 25.

August

Taliban forces capture three regional Afghan cities.
A bomb at Kabul airport kills hundreds amid international efforts to evacuate citizens out of the country.
Last military evacuation plane leaves Kabul.

September

Taliban says women must study in gender-segregated classrooms in Afghanistan.
Panic buying at the petrol pumps.
PC Couzens given rare life sentence for rape and murder of Sarah Everard.

October

Bow and arrow terrorist attack kills five and injures two in Norway.
MP Sir David Amess stabbed to death in probable terrorist attack.

November

27 migrants drown after boat capsizes in English Channel trying to reach the UK.
Covid variant Omicron a “variant of concern”.

December

Chile becomes 31st nation to legalise same sex marriage.
UK PM announces emergency covid booster program to protect NHS and stem wave of Omicron.
First Omicron death in UK reported.

Hate crime is a standing agenda item at the monthly multi-agency Vulnerability Board meeting and some incidents are discussed at thrice-weekly morning briefings.

While the vast majority of these incidents had little impact in Tunbridge Wells they would have increased local tensions within certain communities. Partners are kept abreast of these issues and invited to feed into local community impact assessments to ensure we are sighted on what otherwise may be hidden motivations for verbal and physical abuse.

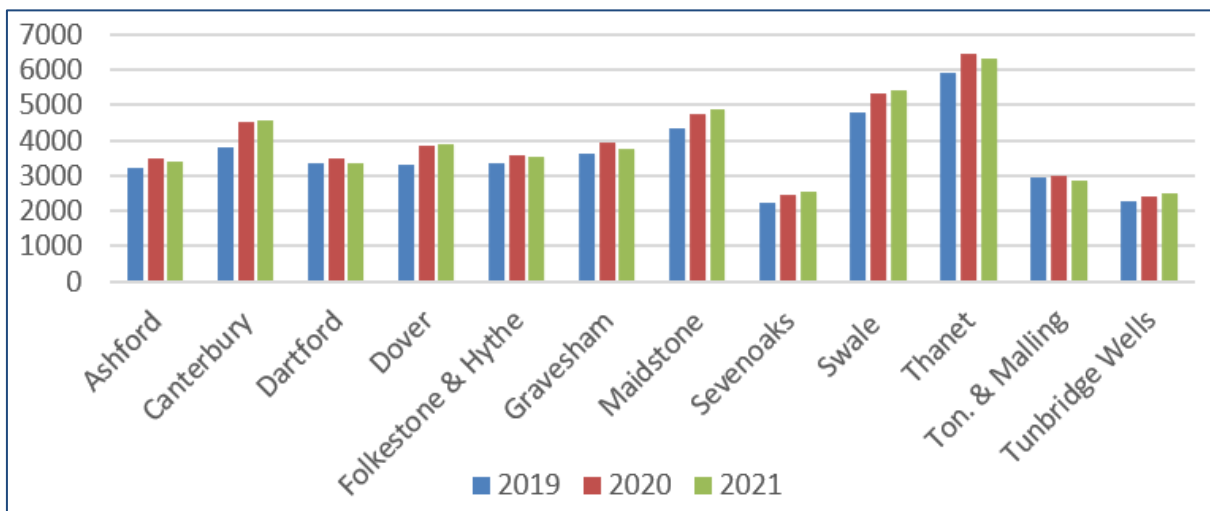
Priority 1: Domestic Abuse

Current figures refer to the 12-month period from January 2021 – December 2021

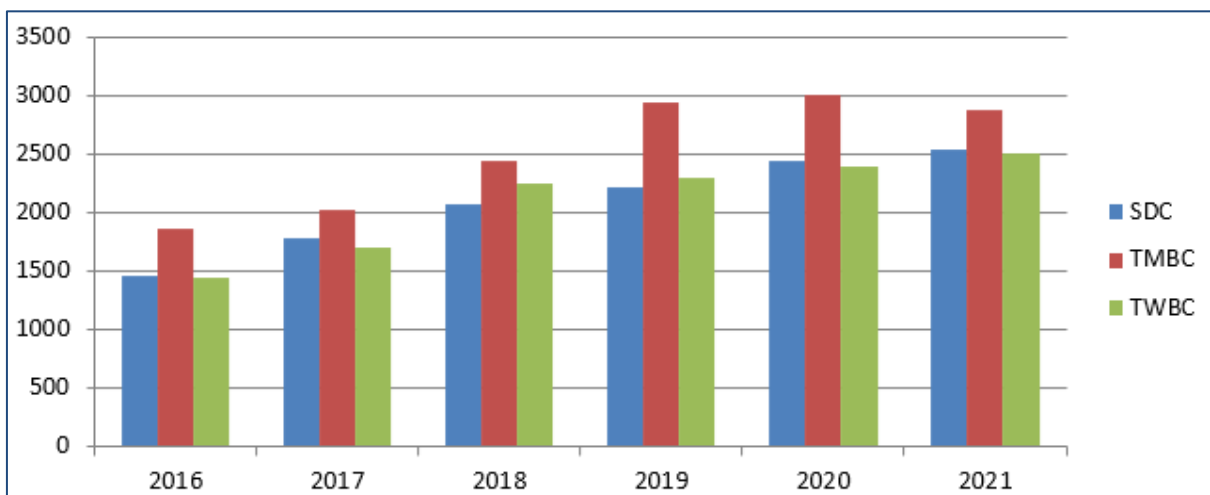
Level of Crime: 2,504 crimes (last year 2,391)

Peer Comparison: Second Lowest in 12 Kent areas

Annual Change: Increase of 113 reported incidents (+4.7%)



Kent Comparison 2019-2021



West Kent Comparison – Six-year trend

During the 12 months from January 2021 to December 2021, there were 2,391 recorded incidents of domestic abuse in Tunbridge Wells reported to Kent Police. This is an increase of 4.7%, against increases of 4% in 2020 and 9% in 2019.

The impact of the pandemic cannot be underestimated here. While DA reports to Kent Police remained steady DAVSS experienced a significant increase in cases requiring emergency

intervention and immediate complex personal/safety plans. Additionally, the impact of COVID emerged as a new tool for controlling and coercive behaviour.

The proportion of DA reports to Kent Police that are repeat victims was 24.1% in 2021 (22.1% in 2020).

The repeat victimisation rate for DAVSS clients in West Kent was 7% in Q1, 4% in Q2 and 8% in Q3.

The low repeat rate reported by DAVSS reinforces the known benefits of long-term wraparound support for clients and their children.

Outcomes

Provider: Domestic Abuse Volunteers and Support Service (DAVSS)

Funding: £18,000 (PCC, TWBC)

Service: Provide domestic abuse support services to men and women at all levels of risk. Encourage early reporting by promoting the helpline and available services. Provide workshops and training to raise awareness and promote prevention.

Outcomes: During 2021 DAVSS continued to receive a high volume of self-referrals, referrals from clients and external agencies and others accessing their domestic abuse services.

Still of significance is the level of crisis in which clients found themselves, resulting in multiple immediate interventions to prevent further escalation. Additionally, over half of new clients also presented with issues relating to COVID-19 restrictions (even as those restrictions began to be relaxed) such as anxiety, depression, poor mental health and suicidal ideations. As part of a whole family approach DAVSS, with the support of appropriate partners, provided the necessary wrap-around support for victims and their children.

As DAVSS put it “*We continue to see an increase in clients who have been subjected to significant violence, and an increase in the number of prolific perpetrators who have multiple victims often at the same time and committing a higher degree of violence*”.

Repeat victimisation for DAVSS clients continues to be very low demonstrating the hugely positive impact of DAVSS tailored wrap-around support for as long as needed by the client.

DAVSS continues to provide extended helpline hours (10am - 4pm Monday to Friday) which was doubled from three to six hours in response to the emerging pandemic in 2020. Helpline calls increased hugely during the past 18-months with a high proportion of referrals graded as high risk or high need.

Also, during 2021:

Freedom Programme

DAVSS worked to accommodate both virtual and face-to-face courses for all participants based on participant preference. As a result one online Freedom Programme and two face-to-face courses were run, with good attendance.

Children's Freedom

Delivered two face-to-face Children's Freedom courses with 10 attendees. Further programmes have been scheduled.

Own My Life course

10 victims completed the Own My Life course (a more modern version of the Freedom Programme)

Volunteers

DAVSS currently has around 44 volunteers, contributing around 20,788 hours during Q1-Q2 at a value of £315,146 (Kent average earning rate). A further cohort of volunteers will be recruited for the 2022 training course.

Client quote: *"I have been supported by DAVSS for the best part of 2021. It took an enormous amount of courage to make that first call. I thought I was being so dramatic. Being told I was a victim of domestic abuse was and still is one of the hardest, if not the hardest things I have ever had to face and acknowledge. My battle is daily. DAVSS have been my rock. My guidance, strength, knowledge, friend and without doubt people whom I could trust and depend on. To hear validation that I'm not crazy and not to blame helped to relieve my fears. Their support has not faltered and is ongoing. I honestly would never ever have had the courage to keep fighting back and to believe I was going to take control of my own life if it hadn't been for DAVSS and the support they have given and continue to give me. I hope that one day I can really help others in the same way as they have helped me and continue to do so. I can never thank them enough. I will forever be grateful. Thank you."*

Some numbers from the DAVSS Support to Court scheme:

Activity	Q1-Q3
Legal options advice	2127
Pro bono Solicitor appts	74
Civil court cases	32
Criminal court cases	16
McKenzie Friend Support	77
Non-Molestation Orders	109
Prohibitive Steps Order	8
Occupation Order	13
Residence Order	1
Child Arrangement Orders	38
Undertakings Agreement	13
Restraining Orders	10
Witness Care Contacts	12
Other punitive measures	4

Provider: Community Domestic Abuse Programme (CDAP)

Funding: £3,000 (PCC)

Service: Provide support to male perpetrators of domestic abuse to change their behaviour through the Community Domestic Abuse Programme (CDAP)

Outcomes:

Q1: CDAP has 13 men active on the programme, five from Tunbridge Wells.

COVID-19 restrictions saw CDAP's two-hour weekly group sessions continue via Zoom. Additional 45-minute 1-1 phone sessions were provided for those men who felt unable to participate in online sessions.

Q2: CDAP remains at high capacity with 17 men active on the 27-week programme with five being from Tunbridge Wells. Of the 17, one joined during Q2 with a further two completing the course. CDAP's 2-hour weekly group sessions continue via Zoom with some men receiving 1-1 inputs.

Q3: Eleven men were active in the programme during Q3. Four remained from Tunbridge Wells, with two from Tonbridge and Malling and one from Sevenoaks. Four others were from other Kent areas with three of those being self-funded.

CDAP's 2-hour weekly group sessions continue via Zoom with two men receiving alternative 1-1 inputs – one due to mental health issues and the other due to English not being his first language. Both men completed the course during this quarter.

CDAP also delivered 'Healthy Relationship' input to 200 students at Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School.

Data shows that since 2014, 75% of the 112 men who remain on the programme beyond week 6, go onto complete the entire course.

Look Ahead / KIDAS

Look Ahead provide domestic abuse support in Tunbridge Wells as part of the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) contract. Here is a snapshot, taken from their Q3 report, of the services they provide.

Innovation Funding

A standard move-on package for clients in refuges is now available in-house equal to the support previously available through the Kent Support and Assistance Service (KSAS). All customers can expect to receive furniture, furnishings and equipment to assist the ease of transition into independent housing depending on their individual circumstances/belongings.

Police Visits

Look Ahead's IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) team have been working very closely with the Kent Police Hidden Harms team, going out on patrol and visiting repeat victims and non-engagers on a weekly visiting schedule. This work has resulted in some excellent outcomes.

Perpetrator Programme

Look Ahead are involved in the Perpetrator Programme alongside Kent Police and Interventions Alliance providing the Victim Link Worker service within the project. This followed a funding application from the PCC to the Home Office to deliver perpetrator programmes on a one-to-one and group work basis. Look Ahead will manage the risk to associated victims.

Partnership Working

Look Ahead are to continue funding for a further year the Cyber Clinics project through Protection Against Stalking and the Cyber Helpline. The clinics now take place twice a month (previously monthly) following feedback from clients that twice a month with a morning and afternoon/evening clinic works better.

Look Ahead have also commissioned Protection Against Stalking to deliver six Learn Over Lunch "Stalking in the Workplace" sessions for local businesses.

Pets in Refuge

Look Ahead, in partnership with Clarion, are working on a project with landlords to allow pets in refuges. They met with several landlords who said they would consider such a proposal. A working group will be set up and Look Ahead met with the Dog Trust and Cat Protection League who have offered to extend the time a pet can be fostered through them and an offer of support with injections and other pet treatments.

Refuge

As well as curry nights and local nature walks, some recent festive activities for residents have included:

- Christmas party for children – including a Santa visit
- A 'Princess' visit for children via Once Upon a Wish
- Santa's grotto visits
- Christmas presents – Toy boxes, Mayors' Toy Appeal, donations, gifting tree.
- Ice skating

Serenity Café

Look Ahead undertook some crowd funding to open a *survivor/thriver café* in Tunbridge Wells. A town centre venue (Manna Café) has been secured with an expectation to open during Q4 2021/22. This will be a peer led initiative with domestic abuse support workers in attendance.

Funding

Look Ahead received Reconnect funding for Equine Therapy delivered by TEAL (Therapeutic Equine Assisted Learning). Children have attended in groups from refuge, and children from the community have been accessing one-to-one sessions.

Look Ahead also received LCPG funding to run the Day Programme in schools in West Kent as well as top up funding to offer a therapeutic follow up visit. Fegans (local children's counselling service) have been contacted to provide this service on a sessional basis.

Look Ahead, through LCPG funding, are currently creating an animation for primary school children with assistance from Early Help and local schools, who will be trained in delivery by Look Ahead.

One Stop Shop

Look Ahead are leading on the One Stop Shop (OSS) programme. A face-to-face service has now resumed though there's a temporary virtual offer, via Zoom, during Q3 while the Tonbridge offices are refurbished by the property owner.

Three organisations are running the sessions on a rotational basis as the expert agency. These are Protection Against Stalking (PAS), Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS) and Look Ahead.

An OSS now runs in Cranbrook and a further provision in Tunbridge Wells is being explored.

Other

Look Ahead continue to work on a number of initiatives with KIDAS (Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service) partners to strengthen the offer and ensure consistency across Kent. This includes streamlining training so that partners will receive the same offer across the county.

A DA Champions Programme for partners, businesses and the community is also underway.

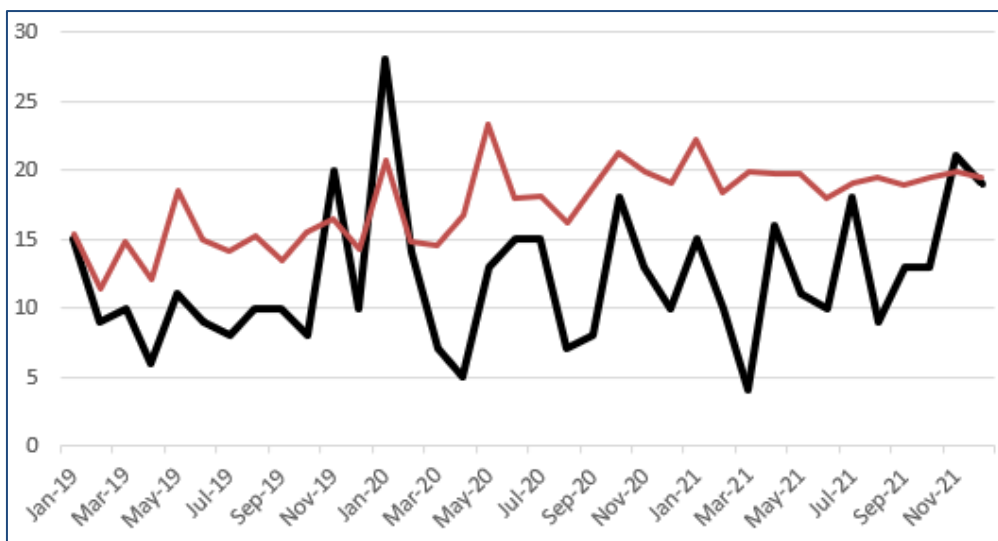
Priority 2: Substance Misuse and Alcohol Abuse

Current figures refer to the 12-month period from January 2021 – December 2021

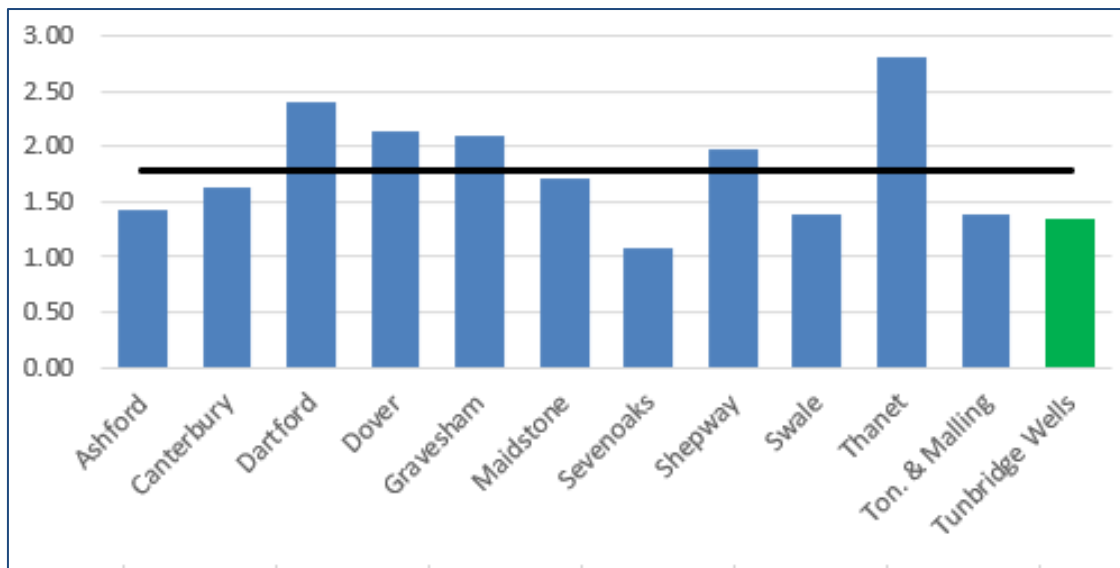
Drug Possession: 159 incidents (last year 153)

Peer Comparison: Second (by volume), same as 2020.

Annual Change: Up 6 (3.9%)



Three-year monthly trend – black line Tunbridge Wells, red line county average

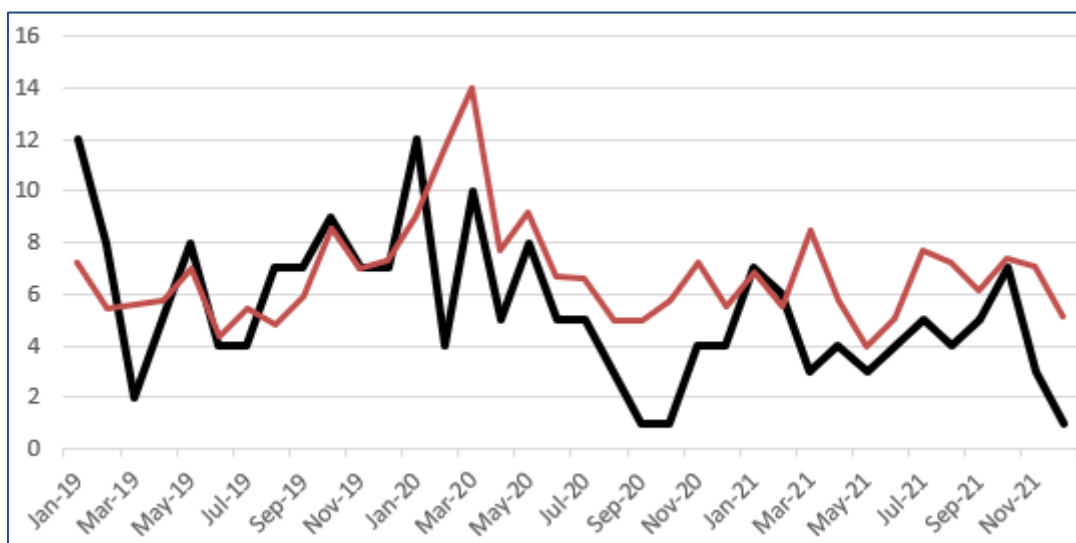


County comparison, black line county average

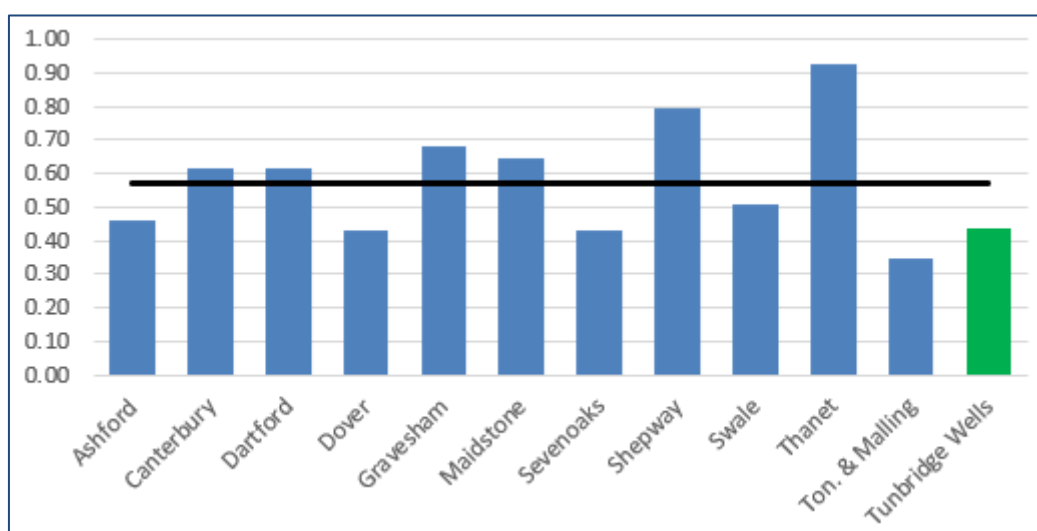
Drug Trafficking: 52 incidents (last year 66)

Peer Comparison: Third by volume, same as 2020.

Annual Change: Down 14 (21.2%)



Three-year trend – black line Tunbridge Wells, red line county average



County comparison, black line county average

Between January 2021 and December 2021, there were 1.8 recorded drug offences (combined possession and trafficking offences) per 1,000 population in Tunbridge Wells (down from 1.9), placing us joint second lowest in Kent. The Kent district average for the same period is 2.4 (no change from 2020).

Of the seven local authority areas in Kent which recorded an increase in possession offences during the calendar year, Tunbridge Wells saw the smallest rise overall.

Our Community Policing Team continues to target local drug dealers and growers, and county lines suppliers bringing, cannabis cocaine and heroin into the district.

Some successes of note

In May several young people trying to purchase alcohol were turned away from Noble Wines. They subsequently secured alcohol from an adult (a 'proxy' sale) at the Rose and Crown. Police attended the location, in good time, and alcohol and cannabis were seized from the young people. The male who undertook the proxy sale was attended to at a later time.

In August a south London drug dealer who helped orchestrate a cocaine supply network into Tunbridge Wells received a five-year prison sentence. The 25-year-old played a key role in directing multiple drug runners to users' homes. He was initially arrested in 2019 after being stopped by officers in Mountfield Gardens.

In September Chief Inspector Changizi and Detective Superintendent Shaun White briefed members on county lines activity. No identified county lines gangs were known to be active in Tunbridge Wells at the time (still the case in February 2022). They both stressed that the process of bringing organised criminal groups to justice was time-consuming but the policing team were dogged in their pursuit of such criminal activity and they were assisted by the vigilance of many other partners who were often the "eyes and ears" needed to support

There also appeared to be fewer issues related to cuckooing, whereby dealers from outside an area take over a resident's home and uses their property to supply drugs to local dealers and others. With fewer opportunities for risk-free travel during various lockdowns it would appear that drugs, specifically cannabis, were more often being grown locally. This is an issue the CSU is sighted on almost daily through local intelligence reports and morning briefings.

In January 2022, the Community Policing Team were on patrol in Mount Ephraim, when they spoke to the driver of a vehicle that had stopped outside a hotel. Suspecting he was involved in the supply of Class A drugs he was searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act and a quantity of cocaine deals and some cash were seized. The man, from Newcastle upon Tyne, was arrested and more cocaine was found in his hotel room. He was later charged with possession of Class A drugs with intent to supply.

Also in January 2022, two men, aged 27 and 24, were charged after a drugs raid on a property in Rowan Tree Road revealed nearly 250 cannabis plants. The men, both of no fixed address, were charged with being concerned in the production of a controlled drug.

Again in January, a stolen motorbike was recovered by officers searching an address in Five Oak Green. The Community Policing Team attended the property in Sychem Lane to execute a search warrant issued under the Misuse of Drugs Act. Once inside they located cannabis plants under cultivation and the bike, which had been reported stolen during a burglary in Tonbridge earlier in the month. A 33-year-old man from Crowborough was arrested.

In respect of risk reduction and awareness of the harm that can be caused by substance and alcohol abuse Kenward Trust and St Giles Trust were deployed throughout the year to offer advice to youths and young adults. They also provided a positive presence in key locations in Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook while linking in with important stakeholders at the monthly District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting.

Drug and alcohol treatment service Change Grow Live (CGL) experienced a steady flow of clients throughout the pandemic with 179 clients engaged in treatment during Q3 of 2021/22 (185 during the same period of 2020/21). CGL saw an increase in alcohol related

interventions across the West Kent area during the early days of the pandemic before settling back to 'normal' numbers. The use of digital engagement has been a huge benefit to the service especially in relation to professional discussions regarding the safeguarding of individuals and children.

During the early days of the pandemic CGL also experienced a loss of chemists being able to deliver a full service to prescribed patients forcing the service to change the way they provided medications.

CGL is returning to normal service and has been able to increase face-to-face interventions and a degree of face-to-face groupwork again. A hybrid service now helps provide a more robust provision.

Outcomes

Provider: Kenward Trust

Funding: £7,000 (PCC)

Service: To deploy substance misuse workers to hotspots within the borough to carry out 1:1 and group work with adults and young people.

Outcomes: Kenward Youth outreach continued to deliver substance misuse information and education. The team speak to the young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, "positive choices" and the issues of grooming and exploitation in respect of county lines.

In Q2 372 young people were seen and spoken to in five key areas: Calverley Grounds, Grosvenor and Hilbert Rec, St John's Park, Grove Park and Tunbridge Wells train station. The main issue is still cannabis use. Alcohol and energy drinks being the second biggest issue.

Mental health is another issue frequently discussed and Kenward are looking at how they can support young people displaying signs of adverse mental health. For this, they are considering bringing in an apprentice with some exposure to mental health services to learn the skills of intervention outreach and county lines in order to support young people.

A core group of the young people spoken with are known to partner agencies.

Main substances discussed:

- Cannabis
- Alcohol
- E-drinks
- Vaping and smoking

Schools work

All schools in Tunbridge wells are being offered awareness sessions; either Think Differently or Cascade.

Mascalls School

Twelve year-12 students completed a Cascade course and workers delivered substance misuse sessions to years seven and eight. Students who visited Kenward in Yalding for a certificate award ceremony were also rewarded with activities such as archery and disc golf, as well as a “meet and greet” with the alpacas!

Future plans

For outreach sessions Kenward would like to bring some activities, such as disc golf, to parks and open spaces, and would like to offer free taster days for young people to participate in similar activities at Kenward Trust in Yalding with the substance misuse workers. Kenward are seeking external funding to be able to do this.

Provider: Tunbridge Wells Churches Together Street Pastors

Funding: £2,500 (PCC)

Service: Provide a positive presence in the night-time economy.

Outcomes: Typically, the Tunbridge Wells Churches Together Street Pastors would provide dynamic safeguarding, a calming presence and suitable advice to late-night town centre revellers, as well as being a useful link to emergency services. However, with some restrictions still in place in 2021 and some venues reducing their hours due to lower footfall, opportunities for an effective late-night presence were somewhat stymied.

That said, Pastors were out on 26 evenings from July 2021 to February 2022 – mostly on Friday evenings with some Thursdays and Saturdays during the summer months. Here’s a snapshot of their duties one evening, followed by an Infographic-type summary.

Saturday 18 December 2021

22:10 Street Team out on street after prayers with the Prayer Pastors back at base.

22:40 The Pantiles is quiet, people around but venues are not very busy.

23:10 Castle Street (Cassidy’s) quiet, there are people around but little conversation. Outside the Bedford the team meet a young lady, P, whose father died the week previous, his funeral is on Christmas eve. Police are around the town, they have spoken to the street team. Pastors pray for P and her family at this difficult time.

23:35 Pastors outside Pitcher and Piano. Several small groups waiting to go in, they are having their Covid passes checked. All well behaved.

00:02 Street team outside Weatherspoons. A number of people around, a little loud but all good natured.

00:25 Street team made aware of a man, D, being a bit aggressive down Mount Pleasant Road. Contact made with CCTV Ops. No immediate concerns. Team wander down to have a look.

00:50 Team down the bottom end of town, lots of people about. No sign of D, they are working their way back to the Church.

01:00 Street Team back.



Provider: We Are With You

Funding: N/A

Service: We Are With You is a charity providing free, confidential support to people experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or adverse mental health

Outcomes: We Are With You has been working in line with government guidance, resuming face-to-face delivery and returning to schools and the community. To keep our staff and young people safe we have developed and continued to review additional precautions including risk assessments, PPE and covid-specific group-work consent forms and agreements with schools. We have continued to face challenges, particularly around access to schools due to breakouts of Covid 19.

Our Early Intervention and RiskIt group delivery has been particularly affected by the pandemic as our access to schools has been significantly reduced. As we ease out of restrictions this is becoming easier. However, we are still struggling with schools as they are restricting access to visitors. We are keen to secure bookings for the remainder of 2022 to ensure that we are reaching as many young people with early intervention.

We continue to deliver Specialist Treatment, taking a blended approach of face-to-face and remote delivery, guided by the young person's preference and availability. Research into our outcome data from pre and during covid showed that young people continued to make good progress and achieve positive outcomes, despite the remote delivery model. We have maintained a steady flow of referrals throughout the pandemic and we will be looking to increase our referrals from April to enable us to meet our annual targets. Themes around specific substances, patterns of use and amounts taken remain stable. The pattern of alcohol, cocaine and ecstasy use among young people in Kent remains higher than the national average, but they continue to achieve positive outcomes.

Tunbridge Wells clients from Jan 2020 to Jan 2022:

- First pandemic lockdown (2020): 28
- Second pandemic lockdown (2021): 20
- Third (financial) year (2021): 10

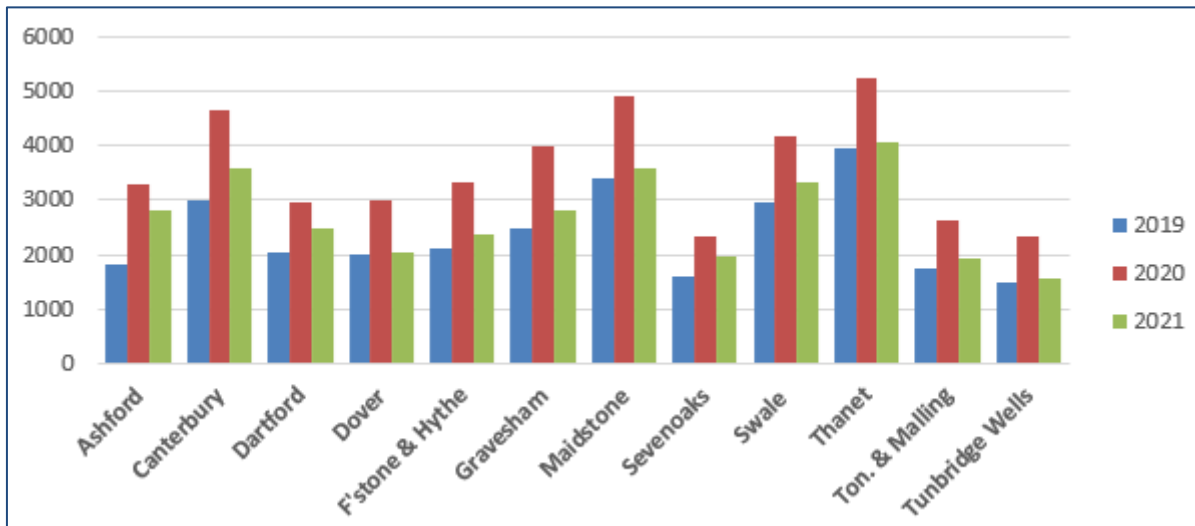
Priority 3: Anti-social Behaviour

Current figures refer to the 12-month period from January 2021 – December 2021

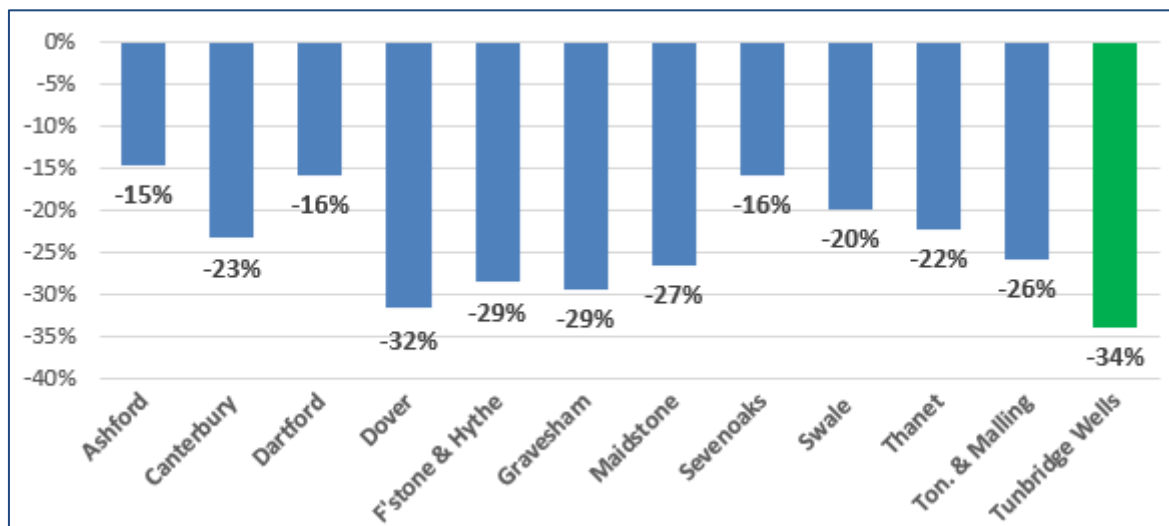
Reporting levels: 1,554 (previous period 2,354)

Peer comparison: Best out of 12 Kent areas

Annual change: Decrease of 800 reports (-34%)



All ASB graded incidents 2019-2021



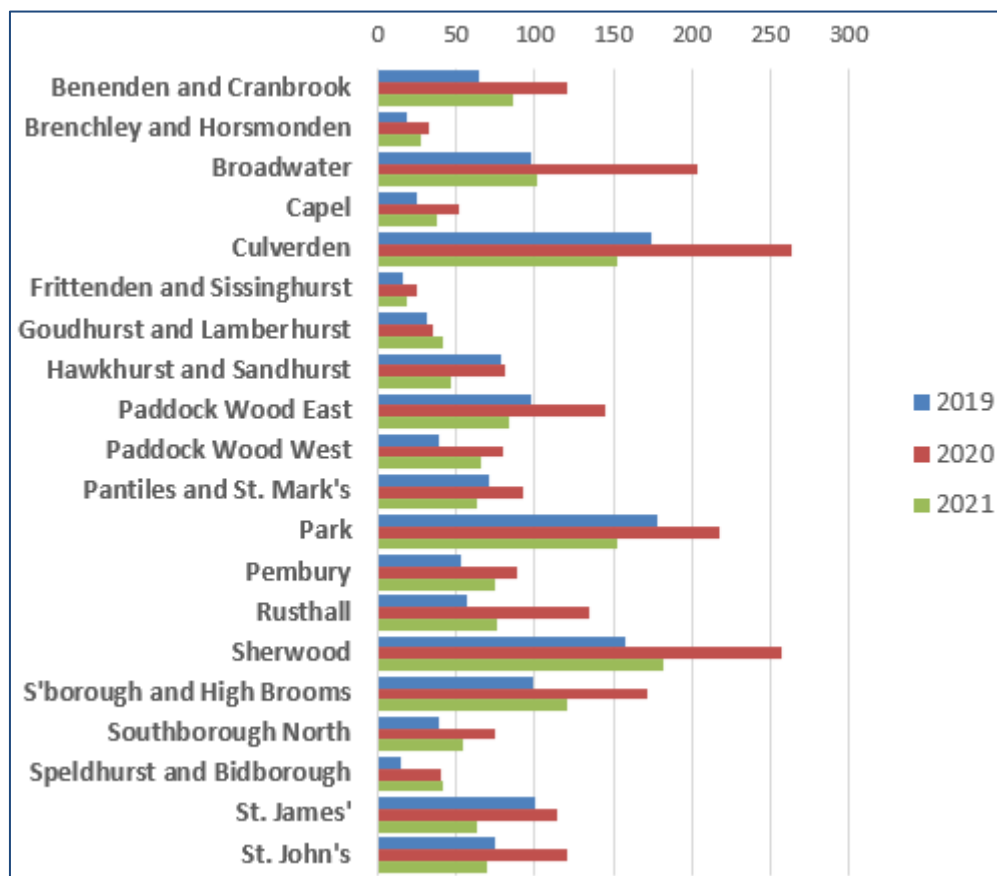
Percentage change over 2020 calendar year

In 2020, Tunbridge Wells experienced a 58% increase in anti-social behaviour over 2019 with much of the increase attributed to residents reporting breaches of COVID-19 regulations. It's clear from the graph above that rates in most districts have fallen to levels that might be expected in a normal year – compare 2019 to 2021 in the above chart.

Ward reports

ASB covers a broad range of behaviours, from nuisance neighbours and noisy parties to nuisance parking and noisy vehicles. For the overall category of anti-social behaviour Tunbridge Wells recorded the lowest levels in Kent in 2021.

This is how the headline figure is broken down by ward:

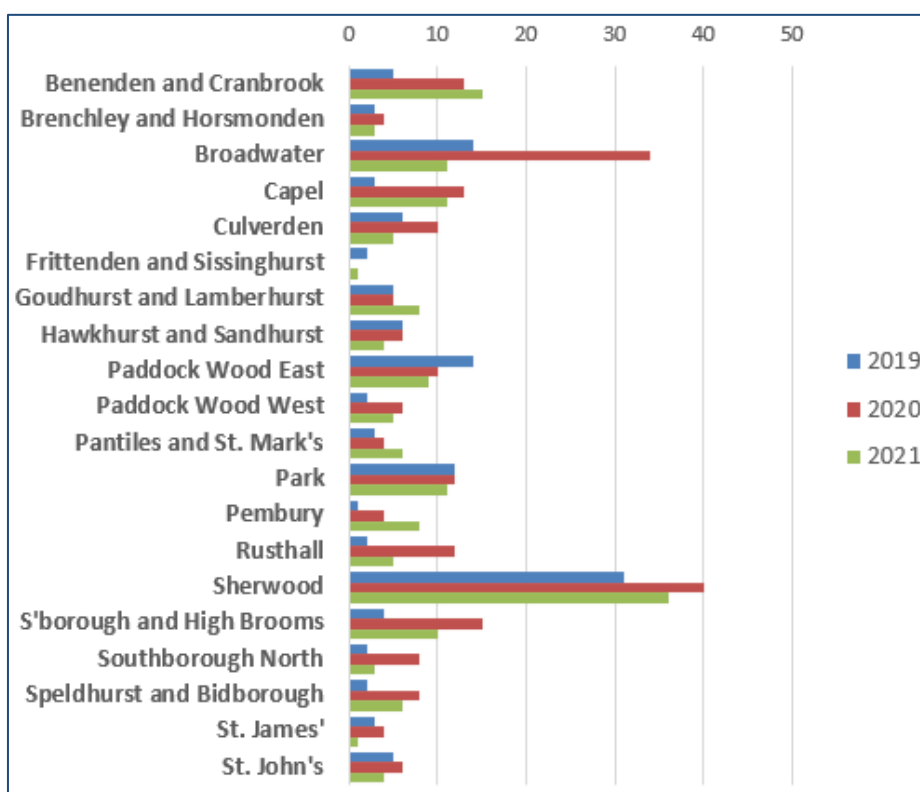


Ward comparison - calendar year breakdown

Setting aside the spike in reporting in 2020, the town centre wards show a decrease in ASB over 2019 rates, perhaps demonstrating the reduced opportunities for people to gather and socialise in shared open spaces, and pubs and clubs. On the other hand, some residential areas, such as Southborough, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook saw an increase in incidents, matching the reports we received almost daily through councillors, residents, professionals and at our multi-agency morning briefings

A number of **nuisance/noisy vehicle** reports were tagged as 'COVID-19 related' in 2020 and a deepish dive into the numbers suggested people were likely meeting up in car parks and other open spaces. Reports were down in 2021 in most neighbourhoods but there has been an increase in some wards over 2019 levels.

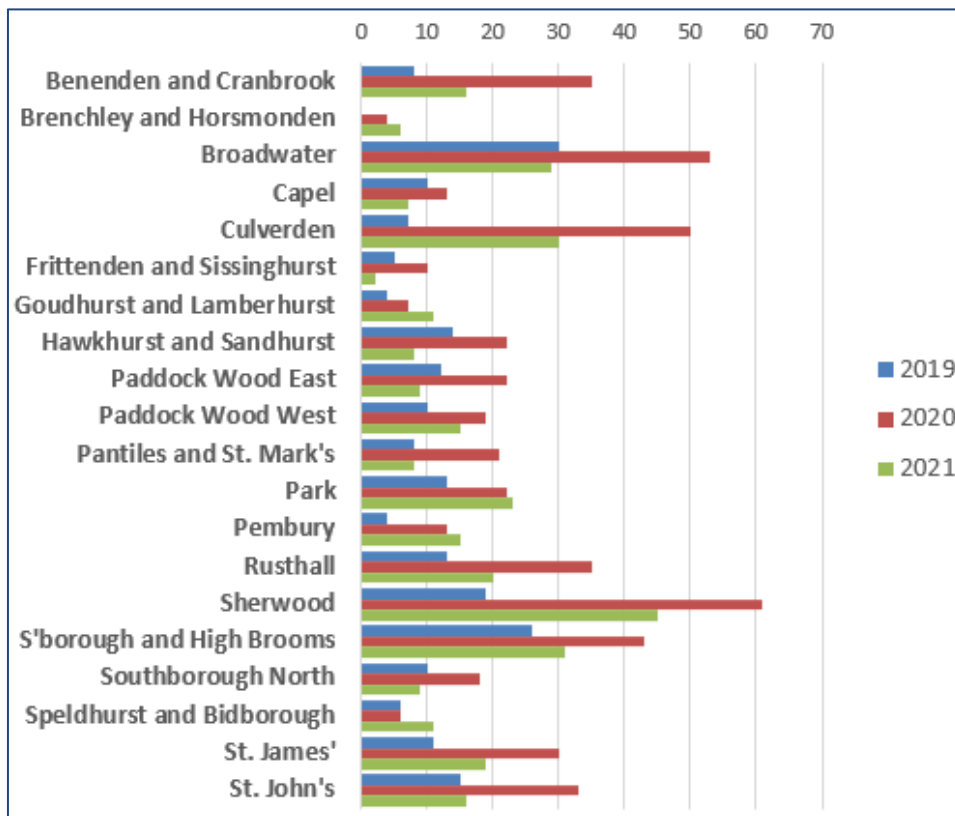
The chart below shows some modest increases in some wards with the bulk of reporting coming from the Sherwood ward, which includes North Farm and Knights Park. This area received a significant amount of attention from partners and was 'red routed' for a time, which would ensure police officers diverted to the area at random times to disrupt the habits of those who might make repeat visits in 'souped-up' vehicles and to provide reassurance to residents. One local motorist was visited by police after we received good evidence about the driver's anti-social behaviour, which he may not have realised was disturbing residents beyond the tree line that surrounds the car park. The landowner has committed to installing more signage, in more visible locations.



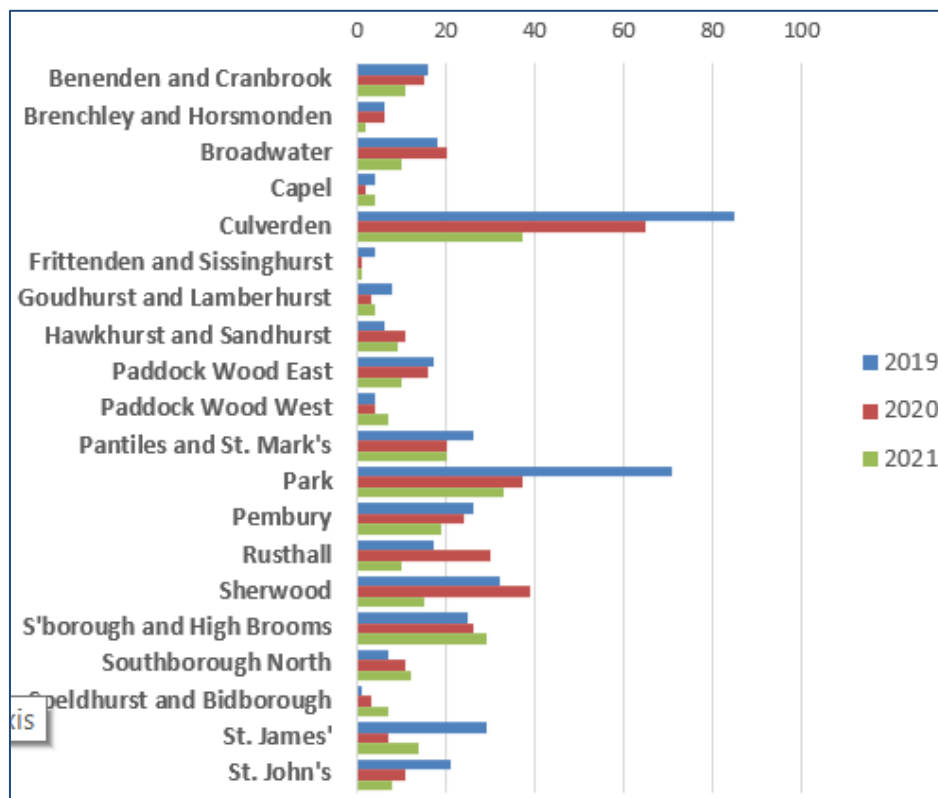
Motor vehicle nuisance on road, including noise

As shown on the chart on the next page, some wards saw an increase in neighbour nuisance over and above the 2019 and 2020 levels. Neighbour disputes can be quite complex and time-consuming to resolve with lasting solutions often requiring extensive close working between partner agencies. It's also rare to find both parties happy with any specific outcome.

Also on the next page, drunken or rowdy behaviour saw a drop in numbers, over both 2020 and 2019 levels, in some areas.

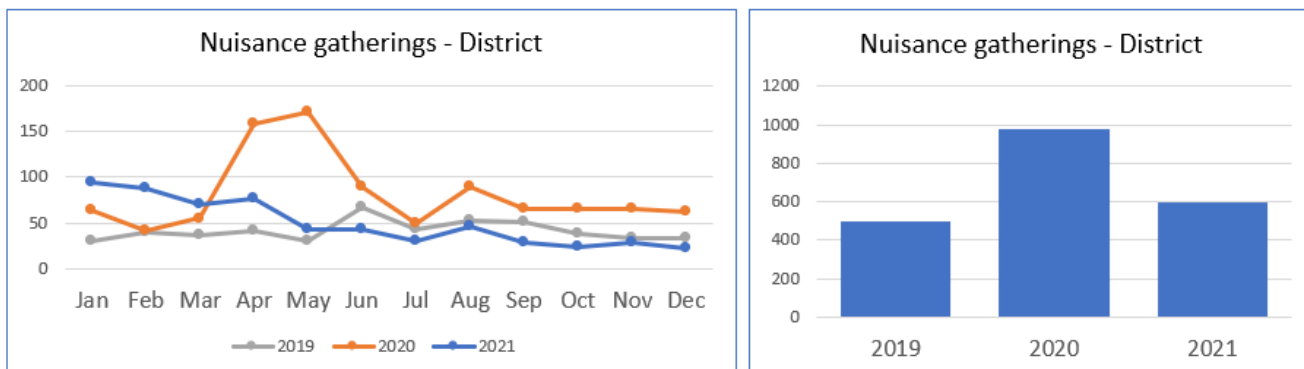


Neighbours - disputes / nuisance incl. noise (not noisy parties)



Drunken or rowdy behaviour

Clearly, there was a huge increase in reports of **rowdy or nuisance gatherings in public** in 2020 with calls relating to breaches of COVID-19 rules – peaking in the early months of the pandemic – making up the bulk of the increase. Expected reductions arrived in 2021 which, by May, were trending just below 2019 levels.



With some limited restrictions in place at various times throughout 2021 the Community Safety Team and the wider partnership were mostly able to engage with residents, sometimes on the doorstep, to address the issues they were experiencing.

Other actions and activities of note undertaken during the year:

- Served seven warning letters, 21 Community Protection Warnings (CPW), six Community Protection Notices (an escalation following breach of a CPW) and one Acceptable Behaviour Agreement for issues related to anti-social behaviour or neighbour nuisance. One Community Protection Notice was challenged in court but the complaint was withdrawn on the day.
- In June, there was a day of action in and around Tunbridge Wells town centre, specifically aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour among young people.
- In July, during ASB awareness week, police and partners held a special youth engagement event Calverley Park before spreading further afield to engage with youths and young adults in known hotspots. Three people were also arrested for drug-related offences.
- Other coordinated activities during half-term holidays and exam results weeks also helped to more effectively prevent and respond to issues caused by groups of young people gathering in town.
- A closure order was granted on a Southborough property associated with persistent anti-social behaviour.
- Additional outreach and police patrols were directed towards the Southborough hub following significant issues of criminal damage, trespassing, verbal abuse and threats from a small group of children; one of whom received a conditional caution on conviction of related offences.
- Safe Town Partnership ran a self-funded Christmas operation to deter shoplifters and to support efforts to tackle town centre anti-social behaviour.

- Secured KCC members grant funding to install a deployable CCTV camera to resolve issues related to anti-social behaviour on a railway footbridge close to residential properties in Paddock Wood. Some early successes were achieved.
- Moved a deployable CCTV camera from one area of Showfields (where cannabis related vehicle nuisance had been mitigated) to another nearby location associated with low-level criminal damage and harassment.
- We used a deployable camera in Five Oak Green to tackle persistent anti-social behaviour and secure details of vehicles associated with criminal activity. A related arrest of a young adult linked to catalytic converter thefts was also secure.
- Managed 12 unauthorised encampments between March and August. Two groups were responsible for most encampments as they moved between private and public land in Paddock Wood and North Farm. One encampment of 12 vehicles set up on Rusthall Cricket Pitch and then Yew Tree Road car park. A further encampment of seven vehicles occupied the cricket area of Hawkenbury Rec for five days.
- One limited 'all out' multi-agency event in Tunbridge Wells and Paddock Wood.
- The Civil Injunction served on a known female in 2020 by Kent Police with support from partners has continued to reduce the impact this person was having in our public spaces.
- The Council's Community Safety Officer frequently locked up St John's Park Beltring Road gates at 9pm during the summer months, with assistance from locals and councillors, to address late night anti-social behaviour.
- Partners provided multiple locations for the Kent Police dedicated ASB car to repeatedly visit during key days and times of the week.
- One vehicle associated with noise and driving nuisance at Knights Park was visited by Kent Police officers and given words of advice.
- St Giles Trust and Kenward Trust outreach workers were directed to areas associated with substance related anti-social behaviour through the District Contextual Safeguarding meeting.

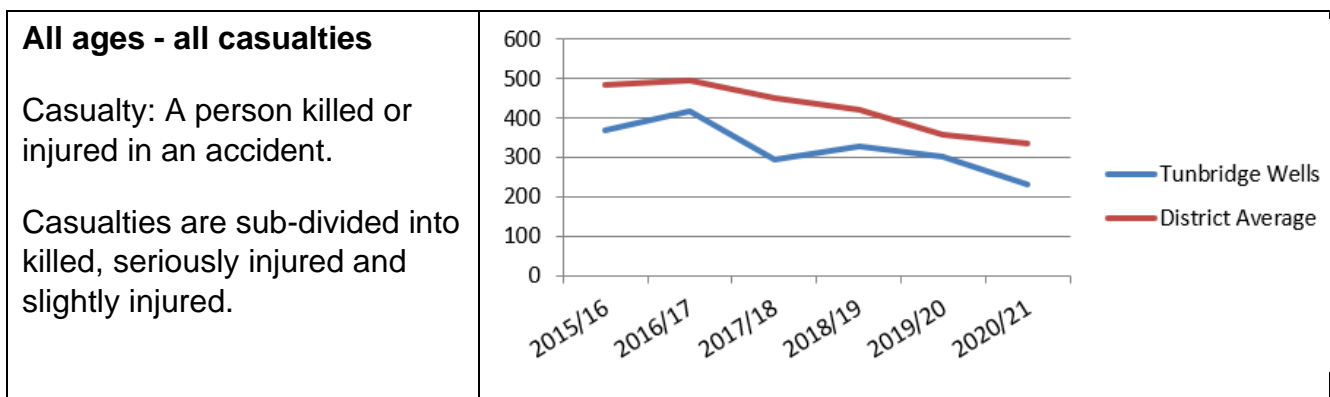
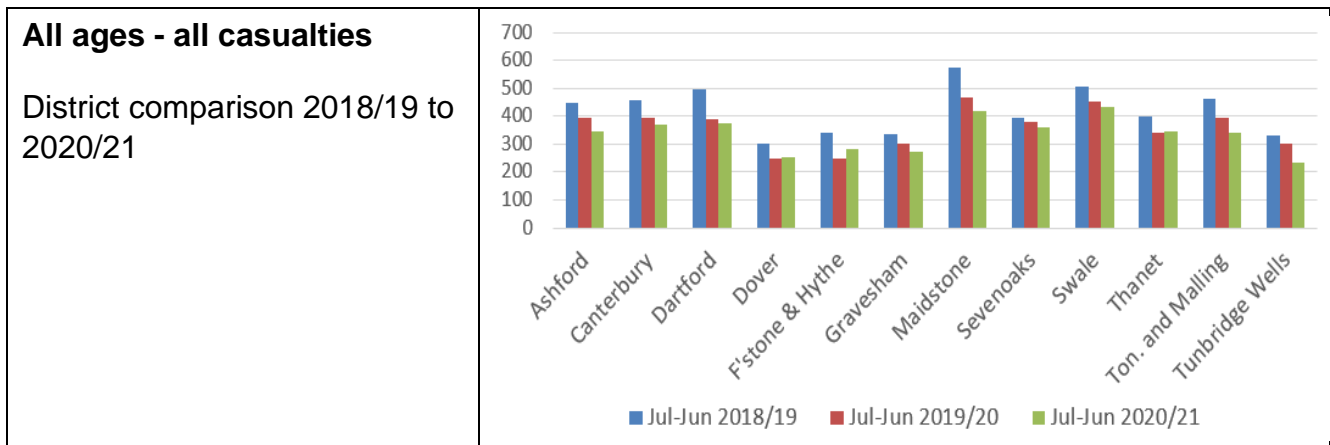
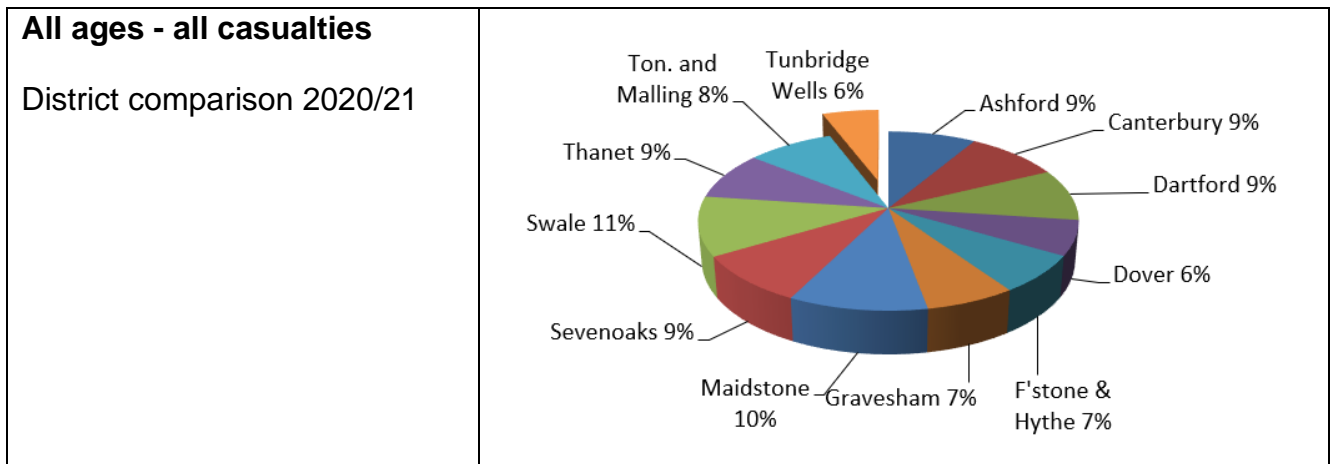
Priority 4: Road Safety

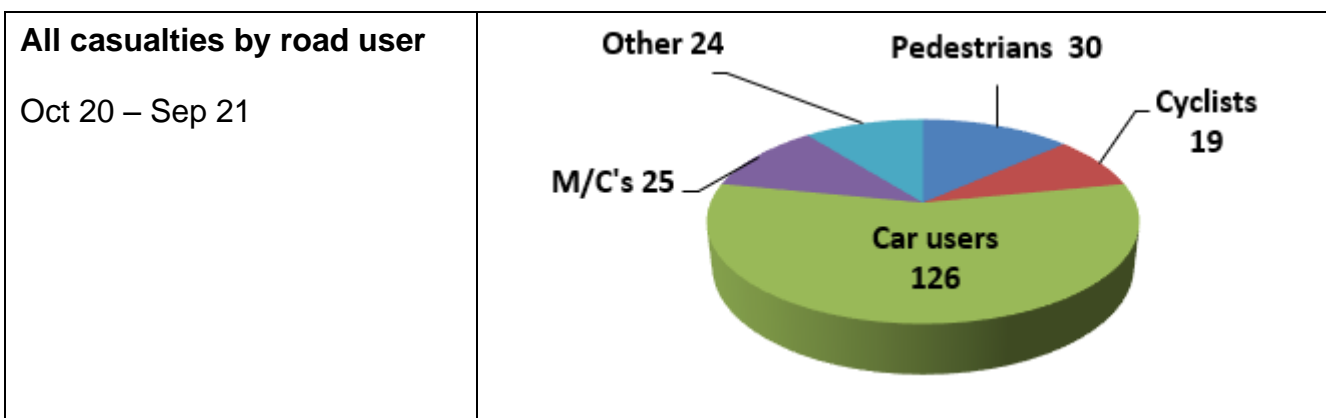
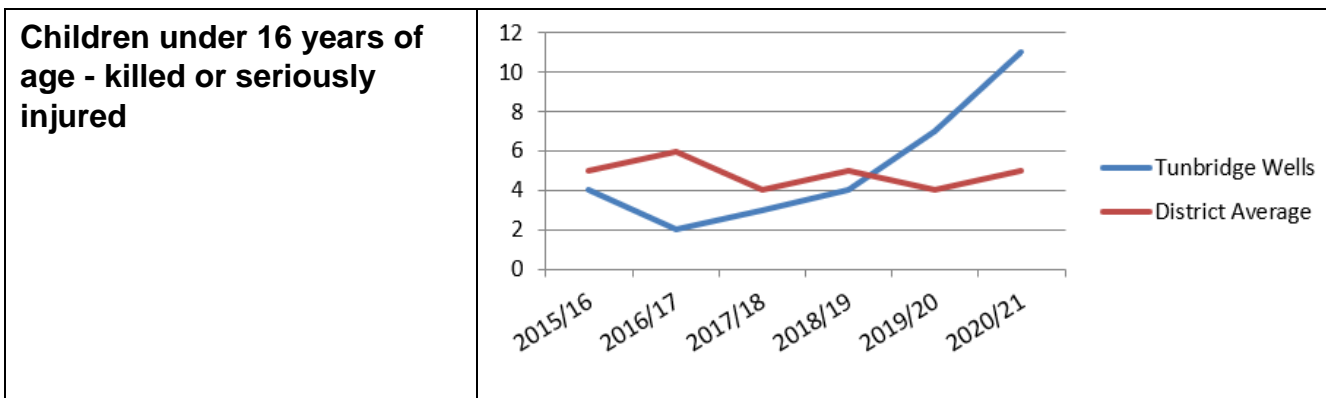
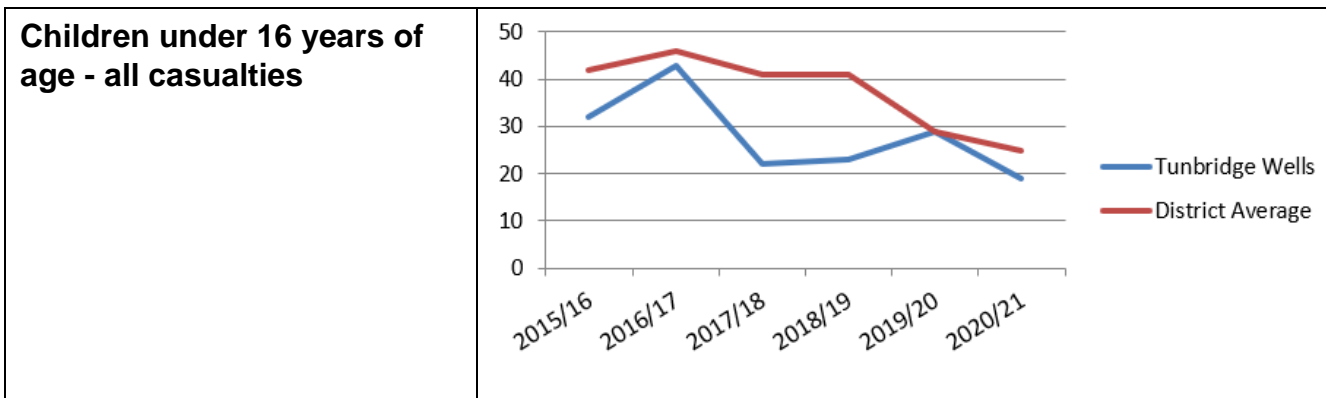
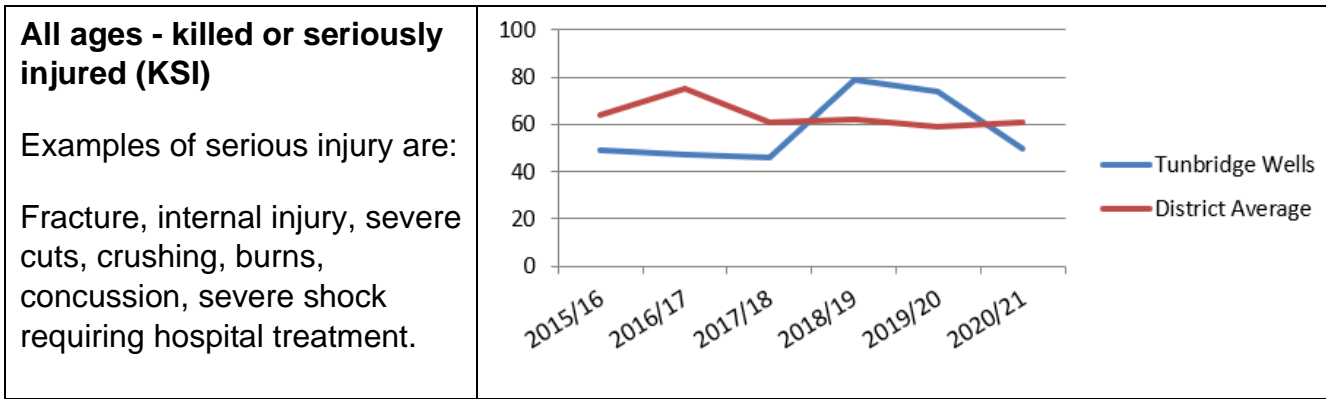
Current figures refer to the 12-month period from July 2020 – June 2021 unless stated.

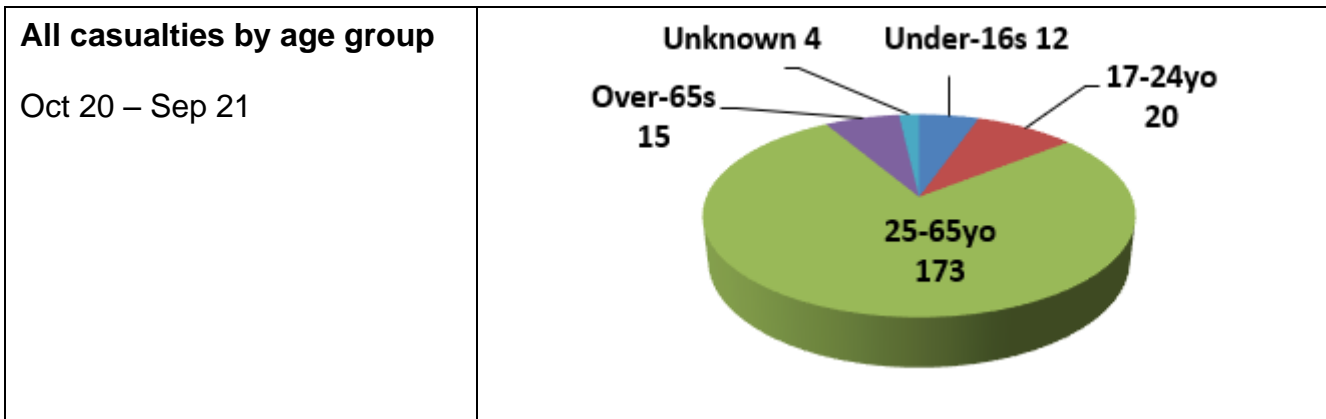
Level of Concern: 232 Casualties (previous period 301)

Peer Comparison: Best in Kent (previously third) by volume and population

Annual Change: 69 fewer casualties (-23%)







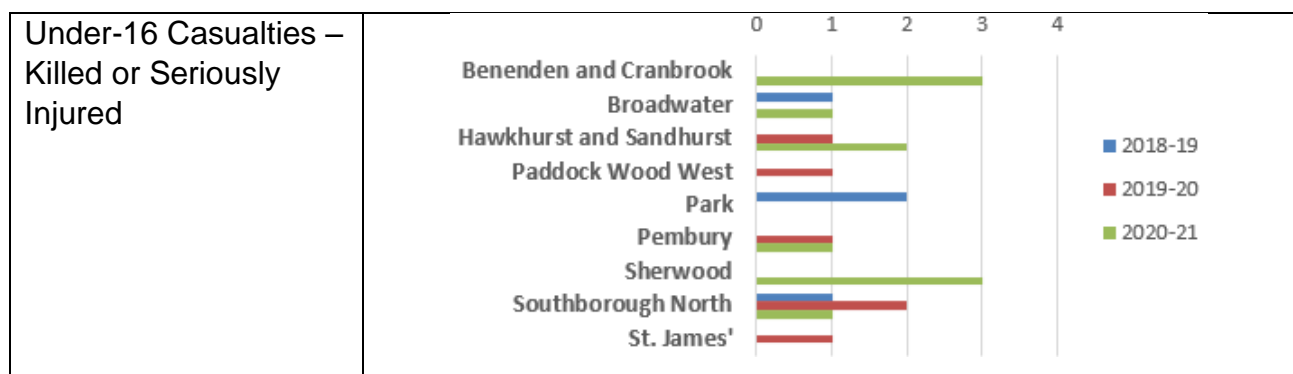
All Kent districts saw a reduction in casualties during the period July 2019 – June 2020 with the first strict lockdown likely contributing significantly to the reduction. With just two exceptions, the period July 2020 – June 2021 also saw a reduction in casualty numbers across Kent local authorities. The biggest reduction by far being seen in Tunbridge Wells.

When calculated against population Tunbridge Wells saw 2.0 casualties per 1000 residents (previously, 2.6). The Kent average is 2.68.

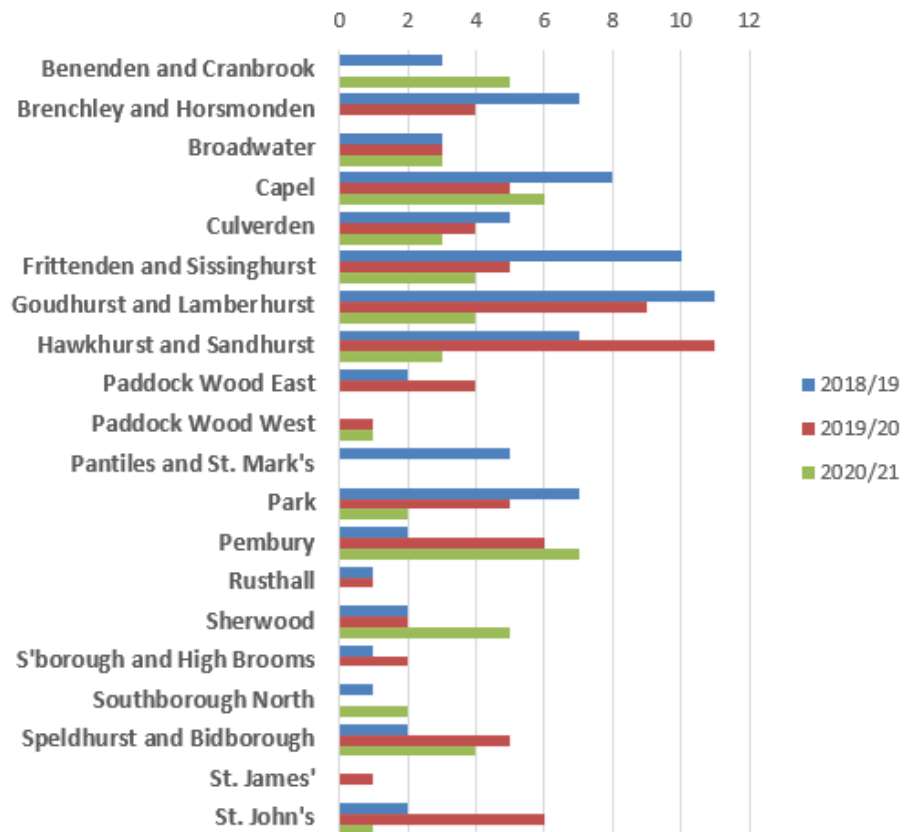
One noticeable exception to this positive reporting is in the Killed or Seriously Injured category (KSI) for children under the age of 16. For the period Jul 2020 to June 2021 there were 11 incidents, up from seven during the same period 2019/20 and up from four in 2018/19. Thankfully, none of these incidents were fatalities and the number are low, but 11 seriously injured children is of concern and worthy of further attention. A request has been made to Kent Highways for further information about these incidents to look at what preventative work might be done to avoid further occurrences. The locations will also be crosschecked against the reports received to the near-miss register.

Ward reports

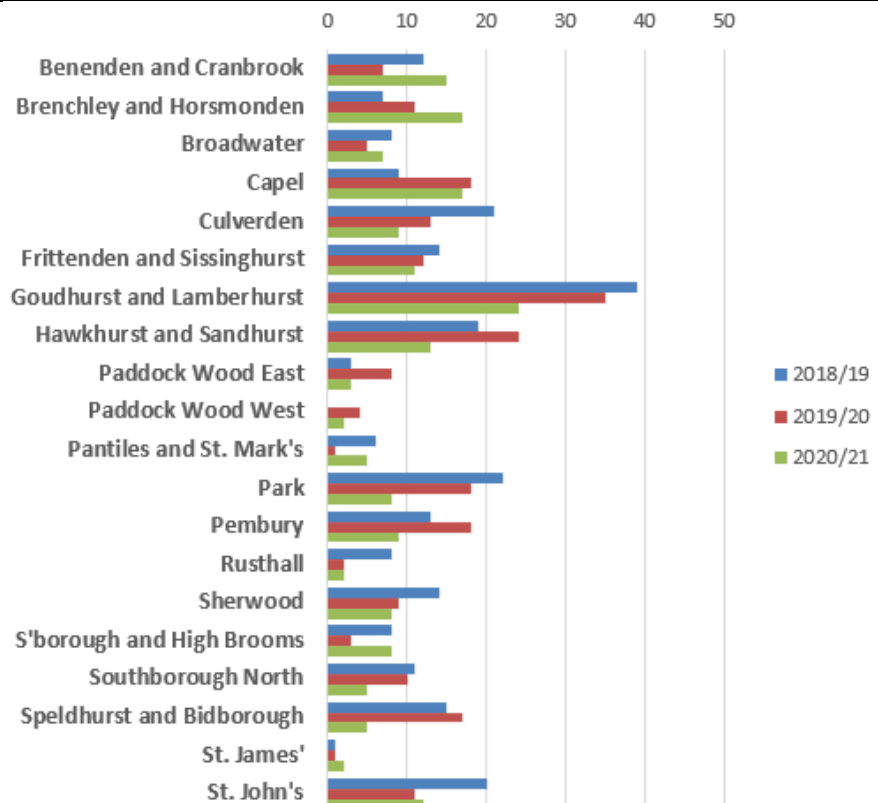
The charts below show the distribution of Killed or Seriously Injured and Slight Injuries across the borough over a three-year period. Where a count for a particular year is missing or where a ward does not exist the count was zero.

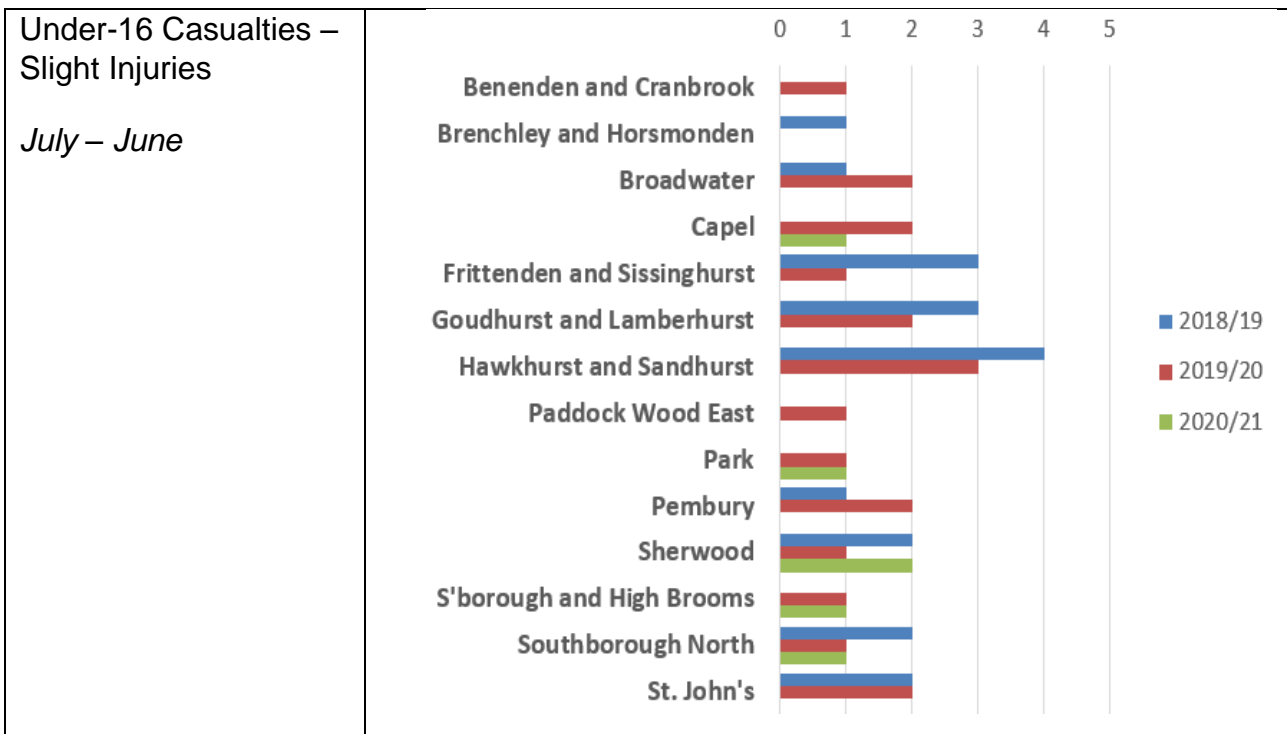


All Age Groups –
Killed or Seriously
Injured



All Age Groups –
Slight Injuries





Outcomes

Engagement opportunities were limited but Salus' Safety in Action event, which was cancelled in 2020 did go ahead in 2021 for 572 students from 17 Tunbridge Wells schools.

The annual Captain Safety theatre event for urban and rural students at KS2 did not go ahead for the second year running.

All Tunbridge Wells PCSOs were trained to use speed detection devices in 2020 and have undertaken speed watch operations, conditions and duties-permitting, on a number of occasions over the past two years, either with registered speed watch groups or during police-led road checks.

In April 2021, CSU police officers and TWBC Street Scene officers visited Paddock Wood for speed checks and to use available powers to examine driving documentation and waste carrying licences. Some identified 30mph roads in Paddock Wood were unsuitable to safely pull cars over (having close bends and bumper to bumper traffic). However, they were able to provide good visibility using the speed gun device during peak times, including near Mascalls Academy and further along Maidstone Road. After a period of time they relocated to Capel where one Traffic Offence Report (TOR) for speeding was issued. TORs are evaluated by the traffic summons team who then decide whether to issue a penalty notice, a summons or other action (e.g. send a driver on a speed awareness course).

In January 2022, officers attended Sandhurst Road, Sherwood for a speed enforcement session, for which local residents expressed gratitude on social media. This followed requests for additional hi-vis patrols from a local councillor who had been particularly active

with a Speedwatch Group in locations such as Knights Way, Birken Road, Greggs Wood Road and Sandhurst Road.

The following areas have active Speedwatch Groups: Ashurst, Benenden, Bidborough, Brenchley, Five Oak Green, Frittenden, Goudhurst, Groombridge, Hawkhurst, Horsmonden, Lamberhurst, Langton Green, Matfield, Pembury, Rusthall, Sandhurst, Sherwood, Sissinghurst, Southborough & High Brooms, Speldhurst, St John's.

An application to set up a new group in Broadwater has also been submitted by a local councillor.

Part 2 - Conclusion

This strategic assessment sets out the priorities that the Community Safety Partnership should focus on in 2022/23 and helps us to determine what services should be funded.

Crime figures are, as always, presented with a number of caveats, particularly with respect to long-term trends, and especially so for data related to 2020 and to a lesser degree 2021.

However, we are fortunate to live in an area where rates of crime and anti-social behaviour are relatively low crime area and we're pleased the data shows Tunbridge Wells to be the safest place in Kent; albeit by small margins over our West Kent neighbours.

Domestic Abuse

During the 2021 calendar year domestic abuse reports made to Kent Police increased by 4.7%, similar to the increase in 2020 and close to half the increase experienced in 2019.

The impact of the pandemic on the difficult choices people have had to make over the past two years cannot be underestimated. While domestic abuse reports to Kent Police remained steady over the past two years, with occasion increases when conditions were relaxed,

DAVSS, we know, received record levels of referrals, helpline calls and high need cases over the past 18-24 months resulting in a significant increase in emergency interventions and complex safety planning.

The proportion of repeat victims contacting Kent Police also remained steady at around 24% in 2021. It was 22% in 2020 when this metric was again made available following updates to police computer systems.

By contract, and although it's not a direct comparison, the repeat victimisation rate for DAVSS clients (across West Kent) was 7% in Q1, 4% in Q2 and 8% in Q3. The low repeat rate reported by DAVSS reinforces the known benefits of long-term wraparound support for clients and their children.

Last year, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 became law. This Act places a new burden on local authorities to provide better support and safe accommodation for victims needing to leave

their home. For this we have received DLUHC funding which we have pooled with Tonbridge and Malling to employ a DA Co-ordinator for FY 2022/23.

Given the focus on domestic abuse, the new Act, the continued rise in reporting (across the county, not just Tunbridge Wells), the increased levels of support required (and provided, by DAVSS and KIDAS) we propose to retain DA as a CSP priority.

We recommend Domestic Abuse is retained as a priority for 2022/23.

Drug Offences

A surprisingly modest rise over 2020 levels but we know from our Kenward partners that our town centre open spaces, from parks to car parks, are popular hangouts for smokers and drinkers, be they youths or young adults. We know this to be the case in other parts of the borough also.

We also have an issue, either real or perceived, with spiking and 'sticking' in the NTE. This is being addressed under the VAWG umbrella but the links to drugs and, possibly alcohol, is a factor beyond VAWG given that we've also had reports of males being 'stuck'.

We have also experienced an increase in reports of cannabis use in the home and garden – reports regularly coming our way at morning briefings – which we look to tackle in partnership with RSLs, where relevant, and through Community Protection Warnings.

In August, a 25yo South London drug dealer received a five-year prison sentence for orchestrating a cocaine supply network into Tunbridge Wells. In January 2022 the Community Policing Team stopped a driver on Mount Ephraim. He was searched and a quantity of cocaine deals and some cash were seized. The man is from Newcastle. He was arrested and more cocaine was found in his hotel room. He was charged with possession of Class A drugs with intent to supply.

However, no identified county lines gangs were known to be active in Tunbridge Wells at the time, as reported to members in September 2021 by Chief Inspector Changizi and Detective Superintendent Shaun White. That was still believed to be the case in February 2022 when this report was written.

There also appeared to be fewer issues related to cuckooing over the past 24-months or so, whereby dealers from outside an area take over a resident's home and use their property to supply drugs to local dealers and others. With fewer opportunities for risk-free travel during various lockdowns it would appear that drugs, specifically cannabis, were more often being grown locally. This is an issue the CSU is sighted on almost daily through local intelligence reports and morning briefings.

So, the issue of supply and demand has not gone away but perhaps the business model has changed.

Also in January 2022, two men in their mid-20s were charged after a drugs raid on a property in Rowan Tree Road where close to 250 cannabis plants were found. Both men were of no fixed address and were charged with being concerned in the production of a controlled drug.

Again in January, the Community Policing Team executed a search warrant under the Misuse of Drugs Act on a property in FOG. A motorbike reported stolen during a burglary in Tonbridge was recovered and A 33-year-old man from Crowborough was arrested on suspicion of cultivating cannabis, theft and handling stolen property.

As mentioned in a previous assessment, while the risk of being a victim of violence or knife crime in this borough is very low, incidents of violence are closely linked to drug supply and alcohol abuse.

We have continued to deploy outreach workers to our open spaces and other key locations in Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook while partner agencies CGL and We Are With You (formerly Addaction) are commissioned to address alcohol and substance addiction with adults and young people referred into their service.

I think these three strands: drug use in the public realm, in the NTE and increasingly emanating from residential properties (as well as the cultivation issue) is justification for retaining Substance and Alcohol Abuse as a priority for 2022/23.

We recommend Substance and Alcohol Abuse is retained as a priority for 2022/23.

Anti-social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour decreased significantly with respect to 2020 levels with 800 fewer reports. This was expected due to the high number of covid rule-breaking reports that came our way in 2020, and to a lesser degree in 2021. But Tunbridge Wells, along with all LAs, has seen a rise in ASB over 2019 levels.

Again, our popular open spaces and NTE attracts all ages, sometimes in high numbers, into town and we've also experienced a fair amount of public ASB in Paddock Wood and, to a lesser degree, in Cranbrook, as reported and recorded at morning briefings.

Anti-social behaviour in town centre areas is often linked to excess alcohol intake or drug use in parks, car parks and other open spaces. Coupled with sensible use of deployable CCTV, visible outreach resources such as Early Help, Salus and St Giles Trust play a key role in maintaining Tunbridge Wells as a safe place to be.

That said, we are looking to implement Public Spaces Protection Orders in St John's Park, town centre multi-storey car parks and Sherwood Lake to address a range of anti-social issues so it makes sense to retain anti-social behaviour as a priority for the coming year.

We have again included violence-related issues in this priority to ensure we are sighted on the risks to the public, and young people themselves, of anti-social behaviour escalating to more serious public disorder, or worse.

We recommend Anti-social Behaviour is retained as a priority for 2022/23.

Road Safety

Road Safety data can be difficult to quantify, especially when collision and casualty numbers are low – we have the lowest level of casualties across Kent and most of the subcategories are on a downward trend.

However, Under-16 KSIs (Killed or Seriously Injured) have been slowly creeping up, albeit in very small numbers but we are now into double figures. Thankfully, of the eleven KSIs that occurred from July to June none were fatal, so all were graded as seriously injured.

Of the two fatalities that occurred between Jan and Sep 2021, one was a motorcyclist and the other a car drivers, both were aged between 25-64.

We do have a near-miss reporting tool on the Council website, through which we have received 190+ reports since it was introduced in April 2021. We are working our way through the reports and categorising them in anticipation of further work. So far the categories identify are:

Dangerous driving, 49; Undue care – driver, 23; Obstruction by parking, 16; Dangerous junction, 13; Unclear, 12; Driving on Pavement, 12; Narrow road, 8; Obstruction by signage, 4; Inattentive child, 4; eScooter, 3; Cyclist danger, Item on pavement, Blind bend, 2 of each; Cycle path flooding, Carr's Corner, Blind junction, Blind corner, Dangerous bend, Inappropriate speed limit, Bend in the road, Lights favour vehicles, Zebra danger, Obstruction by parking – pedestrians, Obstruction by unknown, Obstruction by vegetation, Pavement – hazard, Poor paving, Poor road marking, Poor road surface, Salt bin damaged, Item in road, 1 of each.

While most appear to be closely related to dangerous driving we will look to narrow them down further and perhaps add a sub-category to ensure we're properly catching the issue being reported (for instance, dangerous driving on a narrow road or blind bend). We may also contact some of our informants for further info. We will also match the 11 Under-16 KSIs with reports made to the near-miss register. This will require a deeper dive into the KSI stats by Kent Highways. A request has been made.

Given that we may be able to generate a project or two from the near miss register I would propose we retain road safety as a priority.

We recommend Road Safety is retained as a priority for 2022/23.

Violence Against Women and Girls

While we don't have any specific offence data of note, we added VAWG as a priority in Q3 of 2021/22 because of significant concern for female safety in the public realm after high-profile tragedies caught the national interest. It would also allow us to capture the work already being done in the borough to address anti-social and violent issues in our public spaces and NTE venues.

We also received reports from the PCC VAWG survey and the Home Office's StreetSafe Reporting Tool. StreetSafe received 38 reports for Tunbridge Wells (27 submitted by females and 11 by males). Our mapping team have converted the report co-ordinates into map locations so that we may see if there's anything we can do to improve the locations that these reports would wish to bring to our attention.

The issues most frequently mentioned on the reports are

- Poor or no street lighting
- Restricted visibility
- Signs of drug or alcohol use
- Absence of CCTV

We're hopeful that another round of Safer Streets Funding will be made available this year and this data, along with the PCC's own survey results, may help to support any applications we might consider.

We propose we retain VAWG as a priority for 2022/23 as we have a solid action plan and there's still much work to do around the theme.

Recommended Priorities for 2022/23

1. Domestic Abuse
2. Substance Misuse and Supply, and Alcohol Abuse (inc. violence-related issues and knife crime)
3. Anti-social and High-risk Behaviour (including violence-related issues)
4. Road Safety
5. Violence Against Women and Girls