

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

# Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment 2022-23

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# Introduction

The Strategic Assessment produced for the Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership (CSP) helps establish priority themes for the 2023/24 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 2022, 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 plan for *Making Kent Safer 2022-25*.

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

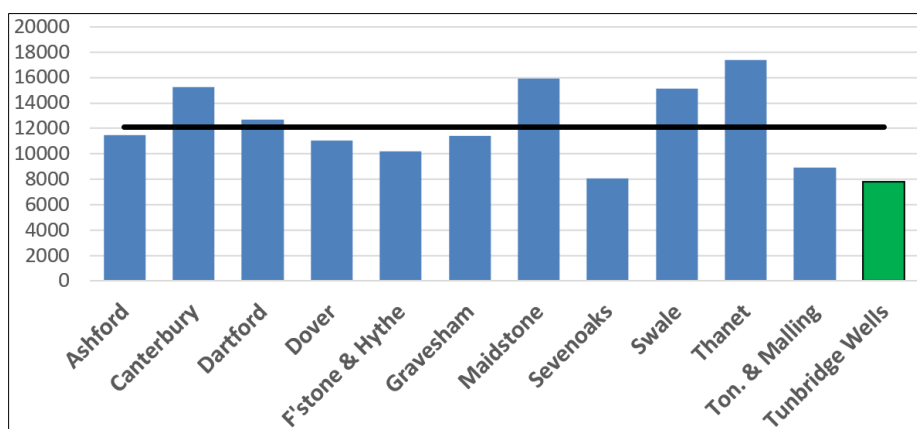
## All recorded crime

Current figures for the 12-month period January 2022 – December 2022, unless stated.

**Level of Crime:** 7,815 (previous period 7,679)

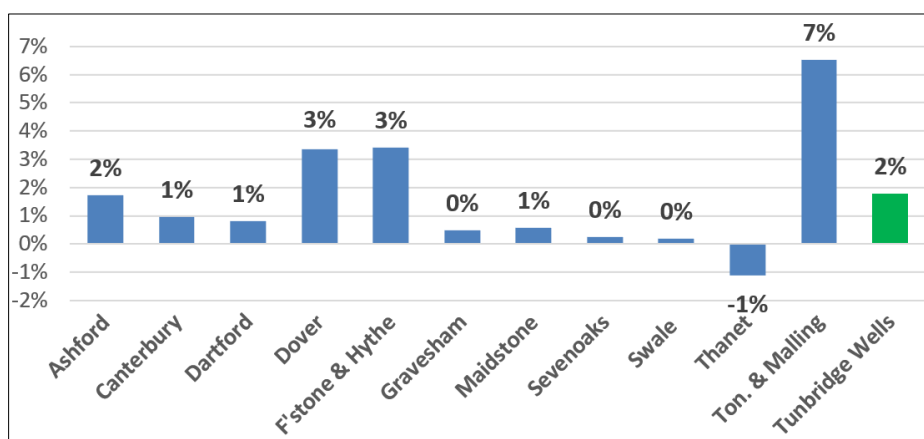
**Peer Comparison:** Best out of 12 Kent areas by population and volume

**Annual Change:** An increase of 136 crimes (+1.8%)



**Kent comparison, 2022**

Despite a 1.8% increase in 'all crime' Tunbridge Wells had the lowest overall crime rate in Kent during 2022.



**Percentage change in crime rates, 2021-2022**

While the margins are often small, from the metric of 'all crime' Tunbridge Wells is the safest local authority area in Kent.

The table below shows a breakdown of reported incidents, the increase or decrease since the last reporting period, and our county position for years 2021 and 2022. Subsequent pages provide further details on key crime types and a ward breakdown.

<b>Crime Type</b>	<b>This Year</b>	<b>Last Year</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Number change</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
All crime	7815	7679	1.8%	136	1	1
Victim-based crime	6736	6558	2.7%	178	1	1
Violence Against the Person	3277	3498	-6.3%	-221	2	2
Sexual offences	293	326	-10.1%	-33	2	2
Hate Crime	253	226	11.9%	27	5	6
ASB Incidents	1138	1554	-26.8%	-416	1	2
Burglary Residential	277	293	-5.5%	-16	4	4
Criminal damage	861	919	-6.3%	-58	1	1
Domestic abuse incidents	1460	1712	-14.7%	252	1	1
Drug offences	236	211	11.8%	25	4	3
(Drug Trafficking)	105	52	101.9%	53	5	7
(Drug Possession)	131	159	-17.6%	-28	3	3
Robbery	40	26	53.8%	14	1	2
Shoplifting	690	414	66.7%	276	5	6
Theft from a motor vehicle	202	179	12.8%	23	2	1
Theft of motor vehicle	173	134	29.1%	39	3	3

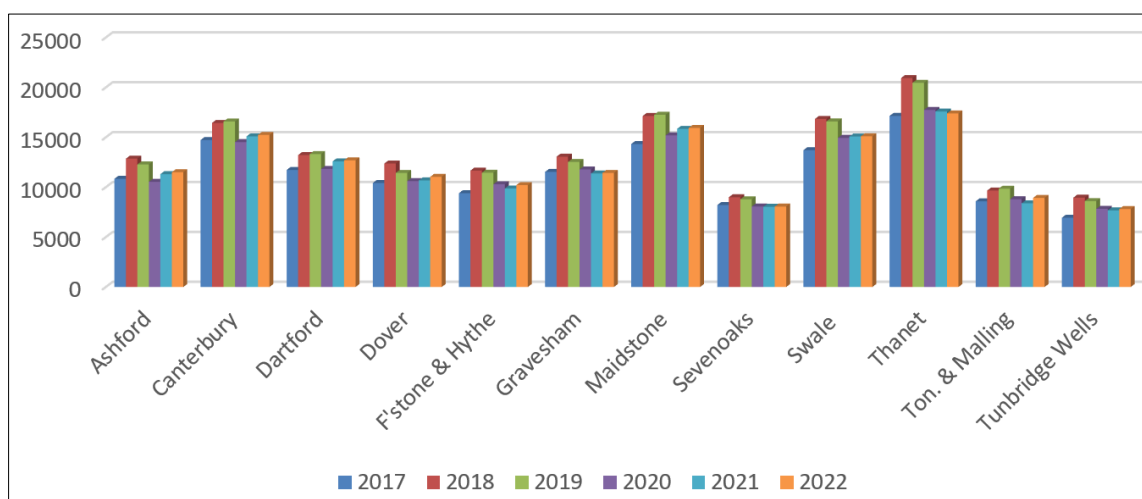
Noticeable in this data:

- A modest rise in overall crime rates maintaining our number one county position
- An expected post-covid era reduction in reports of anti-social behaviour
- A big jump in shoplifting offences and rises in vehicle related crime

Reports of anti-social behaviour saw a steep decline in 2022. Much of this reduction can be attributed to the lifting of COVID-19 regulations, the breaching of which was recorded under ASB. Violence Against the Person offences fell by over 6% meaning 221 fewer incidents. Drug trafficking offences doubled from 52 incident in 2021 to 105 incidents in 2022. There's more on this later in the report.

Elsewhere, despite a five percent reduction in residential burglaries we are still fourth countywide. There's a further breakdown in the ward data, below. Hate crime jumped by 12% but as with other crime types, double-figure percentage increases don't always mean a big rise in offences. There's more on Hate Crime later in the report.

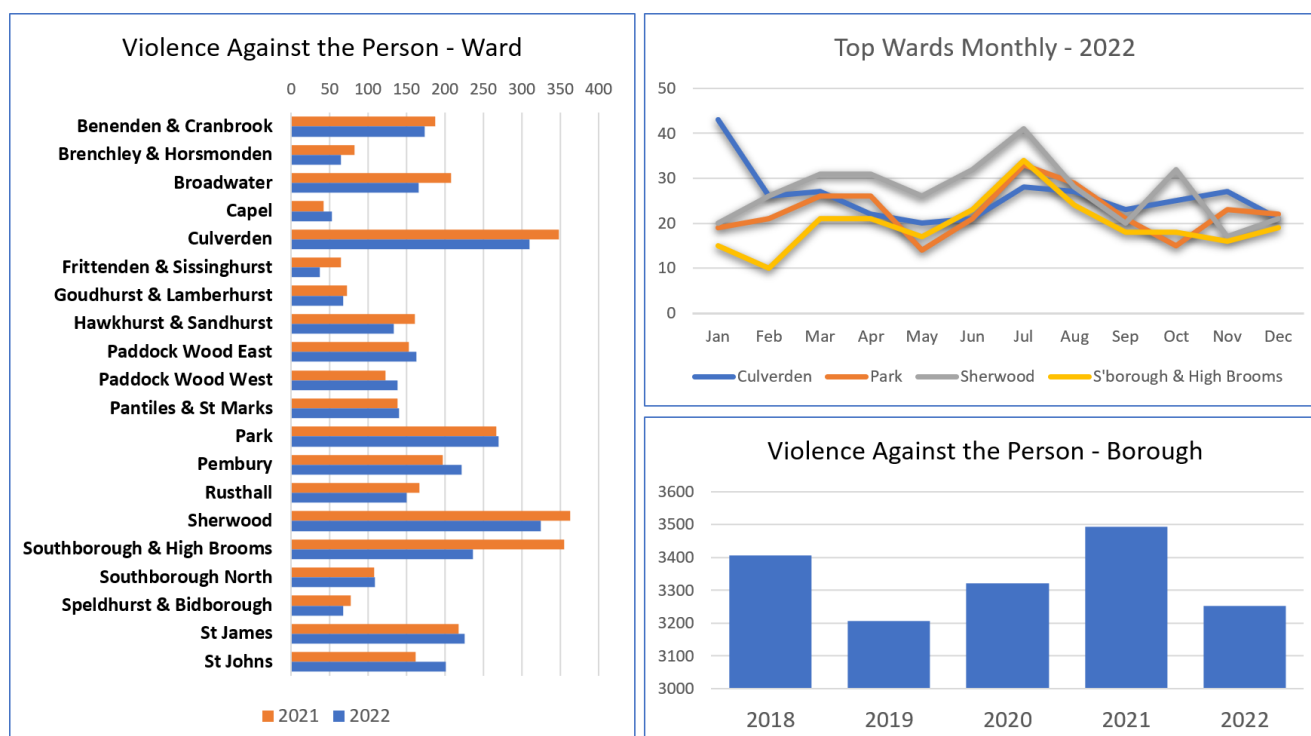
Given the unusual conditions we experienced in 2020 and 2021, I thought it might be helpful to present, where possible, data from 2019 alongside borough and ward data for our key crime types.



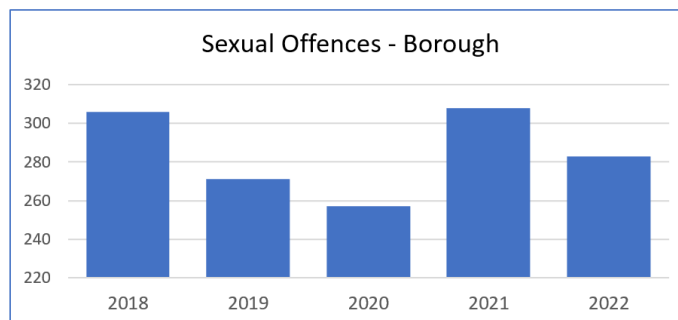
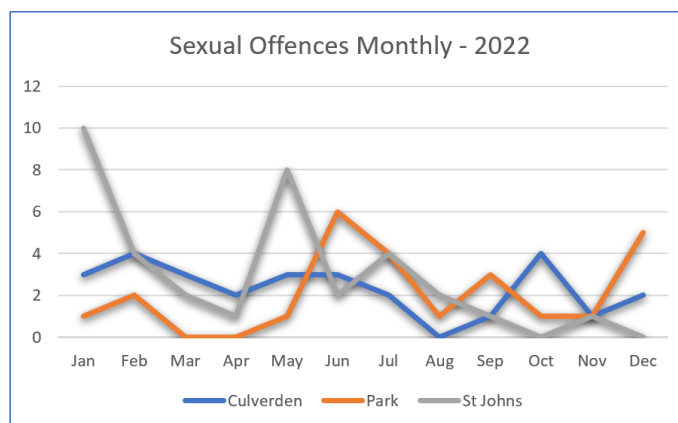
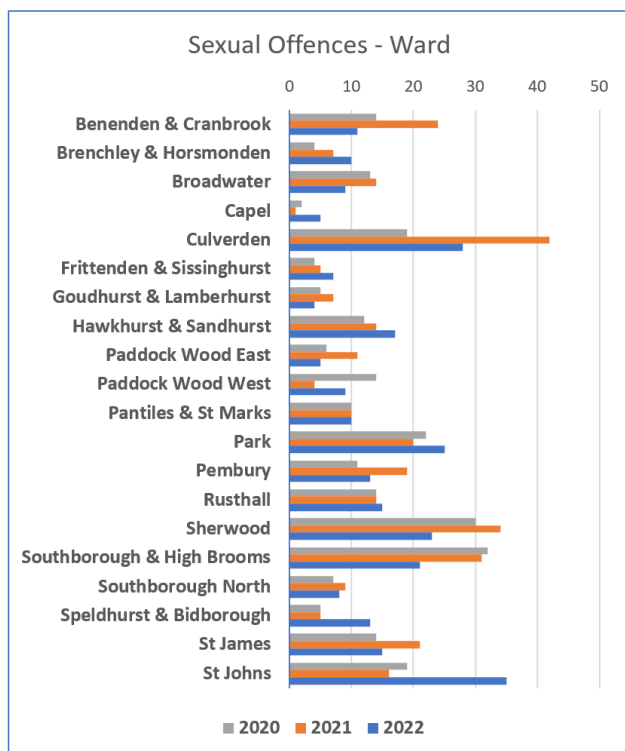
### Six-year trend showing pre- and post-Covid recorded crime rates

The above chart shows all crime reporting across Kent over a six-year period. The red and green columns (2018 and 2019) are the two years prior to the pandemic. The dark blue column of 2017 is not necessarily comparable as some crime recording changes came into effect in 2018. There's a clear reduction in 2022 over 2018 and 2019 crime rates and we may hope that 2022 has set a new baseline.

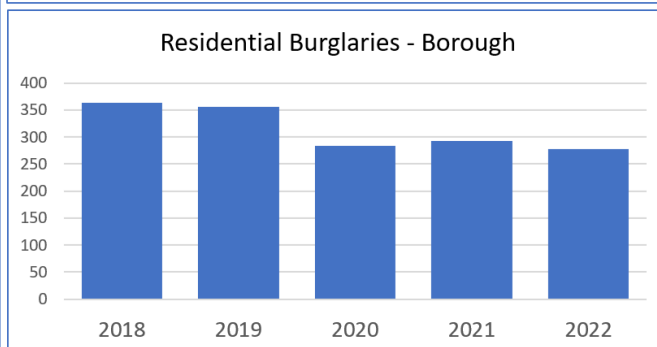
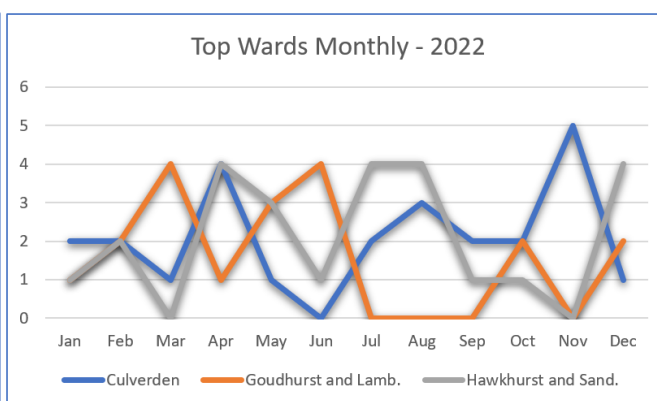
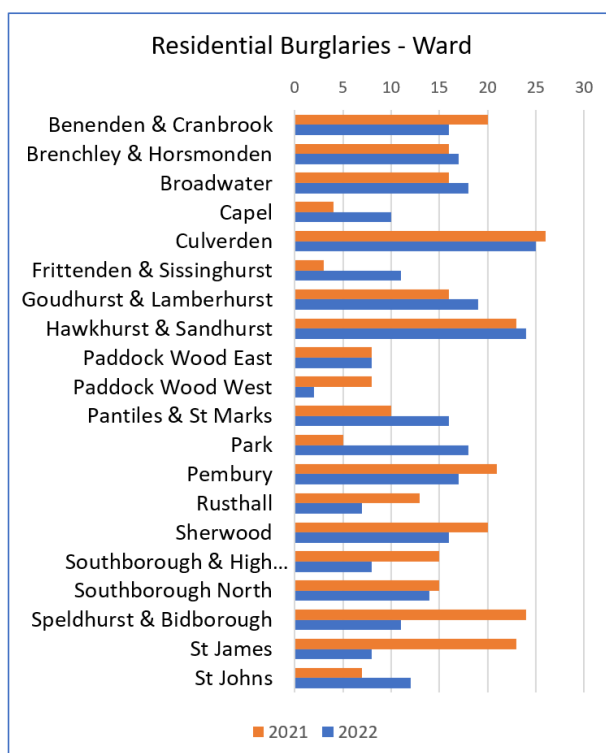
Movements in **Violence Against the Person** offences saw 11 wards experiencing an increase in incidents over 2021. Incidents in most wards peaked during the summer. It's worth noting that VAP includes common assault with no injury.



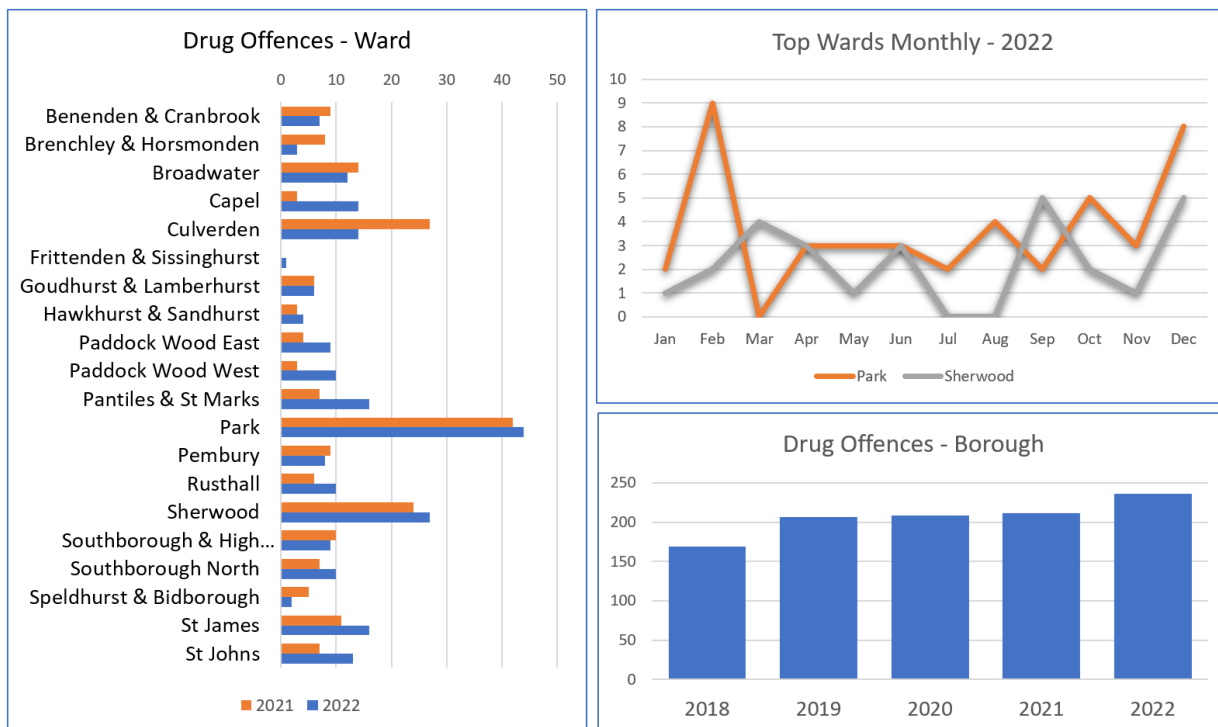
There were 33 fewer **Sexual Offences** in the borough in 2022 over 2021. Culverden and Benenden and Cranbrook accounted for much of the reduction while St John's saw an unusual spike in January.



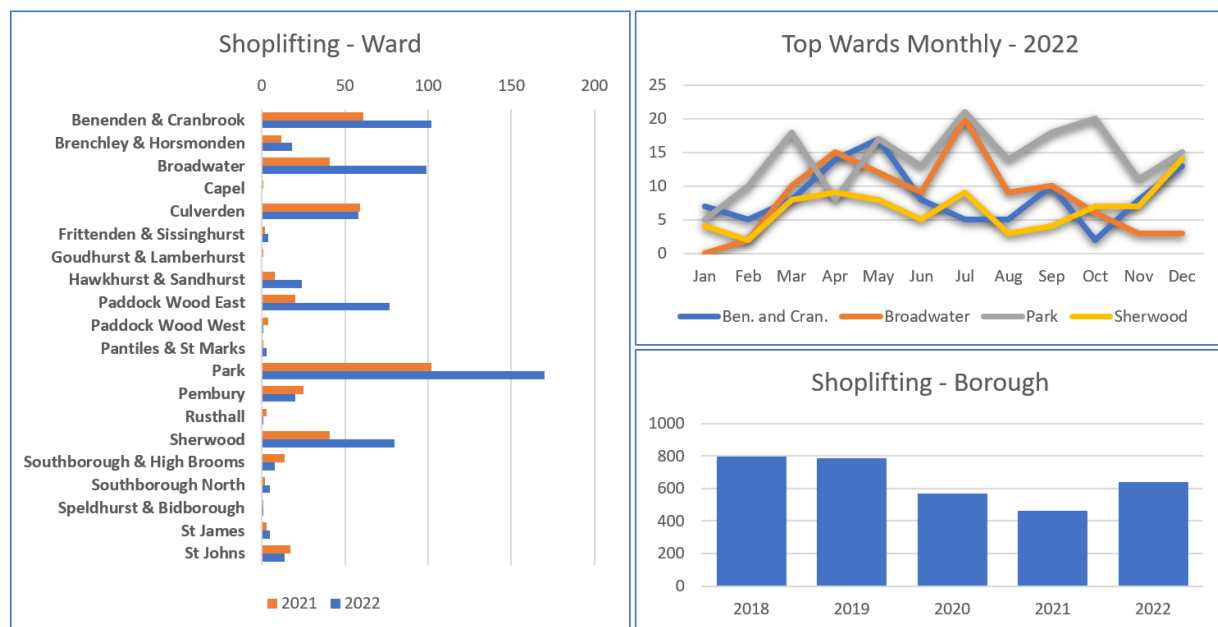
Rural areas continue to attract house-breaking criminals with **Residential Burglaries** in 2022 reduced over 2021, but still high.



**Drug Offences**, which includes *possession* and *possession with intent to supply* have continued to steadily increase across the borough and across the county but seemed to level off during the pandemic.

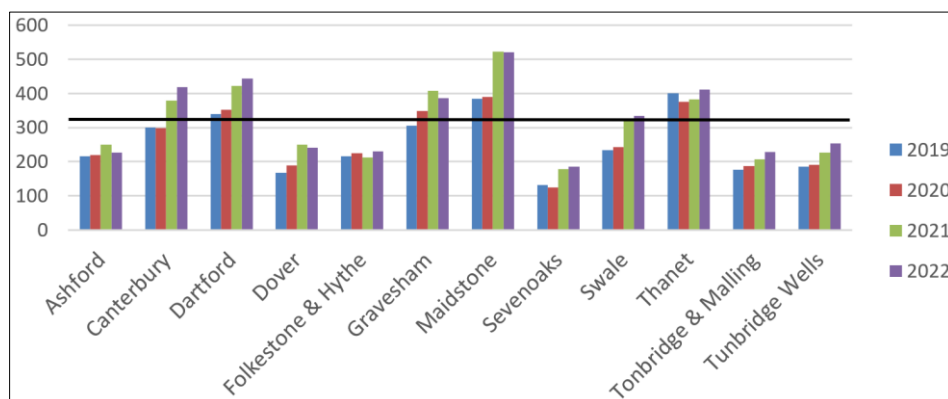


**Shoplifting** offences increased substantially over the pandemic years but is currently below 2018 and 2019 rates. Members of the Safe Town Partnership are signposting offenders who shoplift small value items and are suspected of stealing for reasons of subsistence.



# Hate Crime

The chart below shows the level of hate crime reporting countywide across four calendar years. The black horizontal line is the county average for 2022.

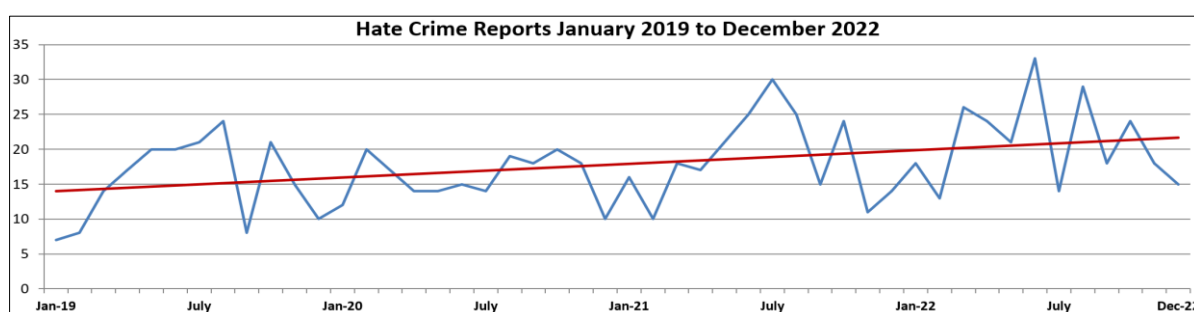


The table below breaks down hate crime offences into its various strands. Race remains predominant factor in hate crime reports. Disability and sexual orientation are also significant factors, followed by religion/faith. In addition to the characteristics shown below a smaller number of reports involve multiple motivations.

Calendar Year	Race	Disability	Religion/faith/belief	Transgender	Gender	Sexual orientation
2018	132	24	12	0	9	26
2019	128	32	10	1	0	29
2020	140	35	12	1	0	35
2021	170	39	14	2	5	38
<b>2022</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>

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

In respect of the transgender incidents, which increased significantly. Three reports were generated in response to a single incident and two others relate to one victim. All incidents involved school-aged children, both victim and perpetrator, but happened outside of the school setting on the way to and from school. There are four named suspects.





Amongst issues local to Tunbridge Wells, the CLO continues to engage with resettled Afghan families as well as more recent arrivals from Ukraine.

Other local issues, such as the cost of living crisis, high energy prices, high-profile immigration news reports, and community views on British policing – the cause and effect of which can increase community tensions – are also raised and discussed at morning briefings.

The Hong Kong diaspora is also on the CLO's radar. She has a community contact in Southborough who will feed back any issues of note.

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

### **January**

State of emergency declared in Kazakhstan.  
Worldwide Covid cases exceed 300 million.

### **February**

ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashimi Al-Qurashi is killed by US forces in Syria.  
Putin begins full scale invasion of Ukraine.  
European Nations ban Russian flights in their airspace.  
FIFA & UEFA suspend Russian clubs and National teams from all competitions.  
Export controls and an assets freeze imposed on Russia by South Korea, Switzerland, Monaco and Singapore.

### **March**

World Athletics ban both Russia and Belarus from competing in championships.  
Refugees flee from Ukraine to other countries.  
Six million covid deaths is surpassed.  
United Kingdom and United States bans on Russian oil.

### **April**

Global food prices increase to highest levels since 1990 following the Ukraine invasion.  
Worldwide Covid cases exceed 500 million.

### **May**

Hosts England win the UEFA European Women's Championship.  
European heatwaves cause major wildfires (including Dartford Heath), travel disruption and deaths.  
The European Central bank raises its key interest rate for first time in more than 11 years.  
Monkeypox infections start to be reported worldwide.

### **August**

Israel launches airstrike in Gaza strip killing Islamic Jihad military leader.  
Pakistan floods – world's deadliest since 2017.

### **September**

G7 economies agree to impose a price cap on Russian petroleum exports.  
Liz Truss is appointed PM.  
Queen Elizabeth II death and funeral.

## **October**

Rishi Sunak becomes PM.

## **November**

The month-long FIFA World Cup Championship is held in Qatar raising concern over LGBTQ+ issues.

## **December**

G7 and Australia join the EU in imposing a cap on Russian oil prices.  
China eases its covid restrictions after substantial internal protests against their zero covid policies.

While most of these incidents had little local impact, they would have increased tensions within certain communities. Partners are kept informed of these issues can feed into relevant community impact assessments.

In respect of local reports, a good proportion have been offences against shop workers and neighbours. There's also a noticeable increase in youths being victims and offenders of hate crime.

During the two years of the pandemic much support to victims of Hate Crime was provided by telephone and video conferencing. Opportunities for face-to-face engagements have now returned, and we secured some funding in February from the PCC for more public engagements in Tunbridge Wells (and T&M). The convenience of voice and video calls remains an option for quick and effective interventions for victims.

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

# Priority 1: Domestic Abuse

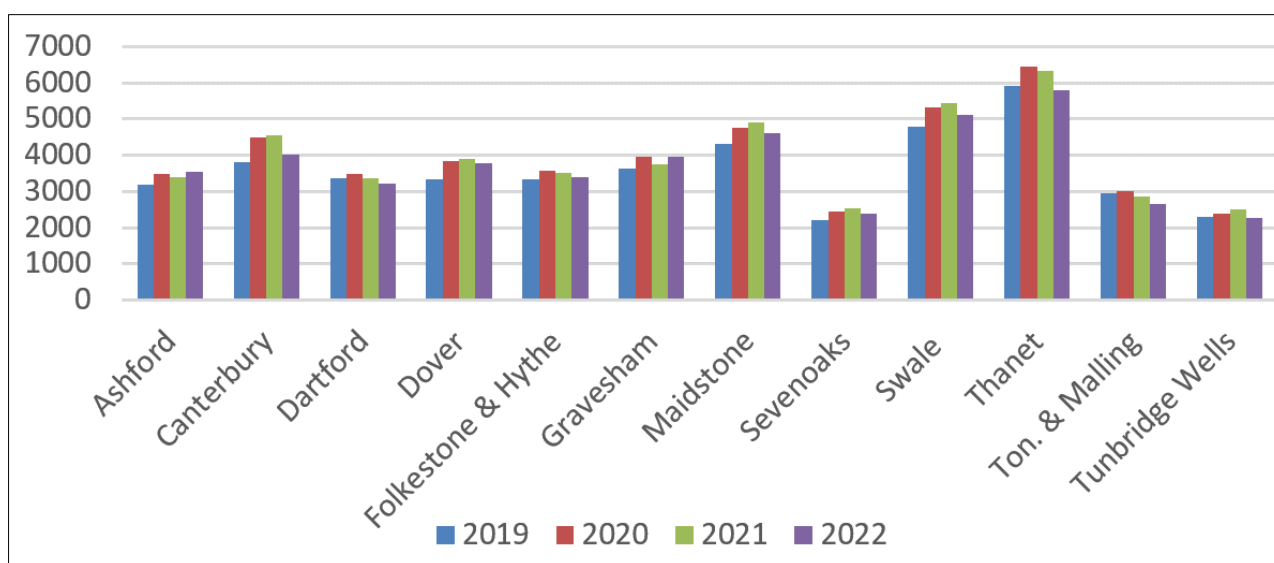
Current figures refer to the 12-month period from January 2022 – December 2022

**Level of Crime:** 2,263 crimes (last year 2,504)

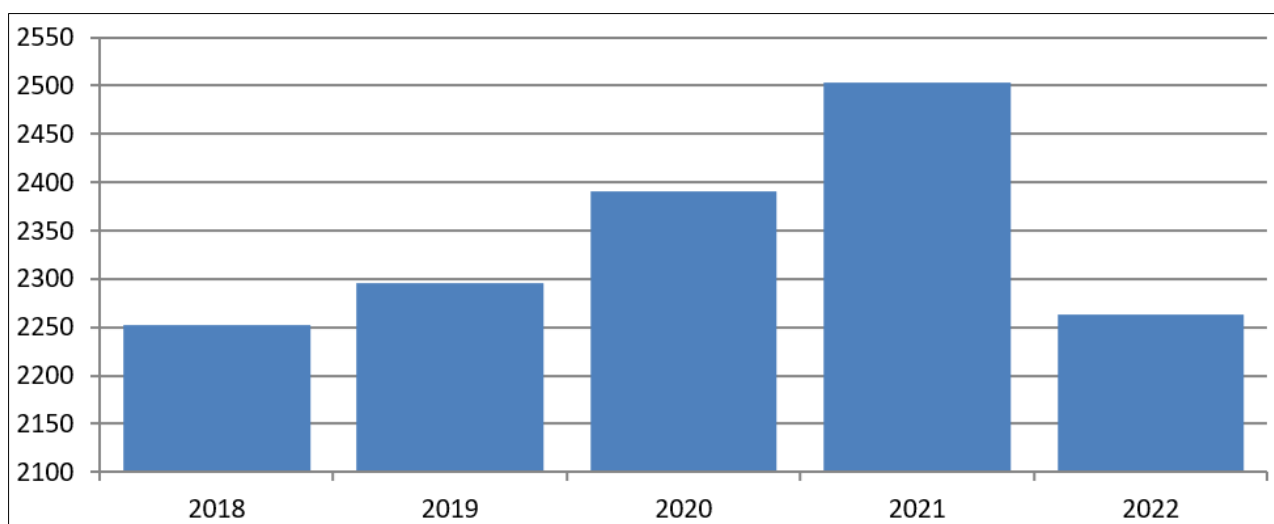
**Peer Comparison:** Second Lowest in 12 Kent areas

**Annual Change:** Decrease of 241 reported incidents (-9.6%)

During the year 2,263 incidents of domestic abuse in Tunbridge Wells were reported to Kent Police. This was a reduction of 241 incidents over the twelve months and the first decrease since 2018 when recording changes were implemented that make earlier comparisons less reliable. Reductions here are mirrored across other areas of Kent.



**Kent Comparison 2019-2022**



**Tunbridge Wells, 2018-2022**

Domestic abuse reports to Kent Police returned to the lower levels of 2019 after three successive annual increases. DAVSS also experienced a reduction in referrals but continue to receive complex cases requiring crisis intervention safety planning.

The proportion of DA reports to Kent Police that are repeat victims was 22.1% in 2022 against 24.1% in 2021 and 22.2% in 2020.

The repeat victimisation rate for DAVSS clients in West Kent was 5.5% across 2022, against the 7.25% of the two previous years.

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:

#### Q1

Referrals to DAVSS remained high during Q1 but with partner support they continued to provide high quality wraparound support for clients at all levels of risk including those with multiple complex needs.

Their accredited training course for volunteer Domestic Abuse Advisors concluded with six new volunteers ready to commence their mentoring period having already shadowed colleagues on the helpline and at face-to-face meetings.

Personal development and refresher training is ongoing and made available to all volunteers.

Well-being Surveys carried out before and after volunteer support show that 93% of clients report feeling safer, 84% more empowered and informed, 91 % an improved quality of life for them and their children, and 91% improved mental health.

The following West Kent programmes were run in the first quarter:

Children Freedom: 12 attendees

Adult Freedom: 8 attendees

Presentations: DA Youth sessions delivered to two schools in West Kent with 415 attendees.

#### Q2

Referrals to DAVSS decreased slightly (50 fewer clients) in the second quarter but there continues to be a significant number of complex cases requiring crisis intervention and immediate tailored safety plans.

Clients presented with issues stemming from the current cost of living crisis which may also have exacerbated the domestic abuse in some cases. The need for long-term support for clients and their children continues to be a vital tool in aiding their recovery and improving their overall quality of life.

DAVSS Transforming Lives project continues to be a success with the provision of long-term wraparound support for as long as needed. The peer support group is ongoing and well received by clients. DAVSS survivor recovery courses (Freedom, Own my Life, Adverse Childhood Experiences Recovery Tool Kit, and are all ongoing and well attended; with the addition of the DAY (Domestic Abuse Youth) Programme being run at schools.

The following West Kent programmes were run in the second quarter:

ACE Recovery Toolkit: 14 attendees (5 adults, 9 children)

Adult Freedom: 11 attendees

Own My Life: 11 attendees

### Q3

Referrals to DAVSS decreased again in the third quarter but there was an increase in Support To Court assistance. Non-molestation orders, civil court support (McKenzie Friend) and pro bono solicitor referrals being highest since 2021.

DAVSS continues to provide extended helpline hours (10am - 4pm Monday to Friday) which was doubled from three to six hours during the early days of the pandemic.

The following West Kent programmes were run in the third quarter:

ACE Recovery Toolkit: 3 attendees

Adult Freedom: 11 attendees

Own My Life: 11 attendees

Support to Court figures (West Kent, Q1-Q3):

Support Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals
Legal options advice (hrs)	540	415			955
Pro bono Solicitor appointments	15	15	22		52
Civil court cases	13	22	31		66
Criminal court cases	1	2	3		6
McKenzie Friend Support			26		26
Non-Molestation Orders	20	20	32		72
Prohibitive Steps Order	3	2	1		6
Occupation Order			1		1
Child Arrangement Orders	5	22	0		27
Restraining Orders	1	5	4		10
Witness Care Contacts			14		14
Other punitive measures	1	8			9

Client quote: *“DAVSS has been amazing, helping me sort out my economic, housing problem, guiding me through charities that can help me arrange my life in the right direction. My case worker is such an amazing and supportive advisor, who makes me feel warm and safe. She has been next to me through the darkest moments in my life and helped me stand on my feet. I will always be grateful for everything DAVSS has helped me and how it has empowered me”*

Client Quote: *“I now feel confident and have started working part-time and enrolled in a course. I also feel it is important to build friendships and make more friends as I have been feeling isolated for quite some time. I feel I have been empowered to make changes to my life and feel a lot happier”*

Well-being Surveys carried out before and after volunteer support show that 88% of clients report feeling safer, 92% more empowered and informed, 89% an improved quality of life for them and their children, and 85% improved mental health.

## **Volunteers**

DAVSS currently had around 38 volunteers at the end of Q3. Across the three quarters DAVSS volunteers contributed around 23,870 hours of service at a value of £361,869 (Kent average earning rate). A volunteer drive will take place in 2023.

**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:** Ten men were active on the programme (3 Sevenoaks, 0 T&M, 1 Tunbridge Wells) and six 'out of area' (five self-funded and one funded by Ashford BC). Of the 10, seven joined during this quarter, (two of whom left the programme, and one went to prison). One male completed the programme and one remained on programme from the previous year.

Three men who completed the programme in the previous quarter, returned to take part in a drop-in session where their progress is reviewed and experiences of life beyond the weekly sessions are shared with the group.

**Q2:** Ten men remained active in the programme (2 Sevenoaks, 2 T&M, 1 Tunbridge Wells) and five 'out of area' (four self-funded and one funded by Ashford BC). Of the 10, three joined, two completed the course, two remained on it and three dropped out.

**Q3:** Six men remained active on the programme (1 Sevenoaks, 2 T&M, 1 Tunbridge Wells) and two self-funded from Erith and Bexhill).

CDAP's main platform continues via Zoom for four of the group, however a further two are attending 1:1 face-to-face sessions. One male who completed the CDAP programme

attended the West Kent DA Conference on White Ribbon Day 2022, to courageously share with the audience what CDAP has done for him, his wife and their children. It was a compelling session.

Peter Williams, a CDAP facilitator, flew the White Ribbon flag at the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, proudly supporting the goal to end to violence against women and girls.

CDAP's two-hour weekly group sessions continue via Zoom or via face-to-face.

CDAP and Interventions Alliance, a service provider funded directly by the PCC, have begun quarterly meetings to ensure clients receive the best advice and are directed to the most appropriate perpetrators course.

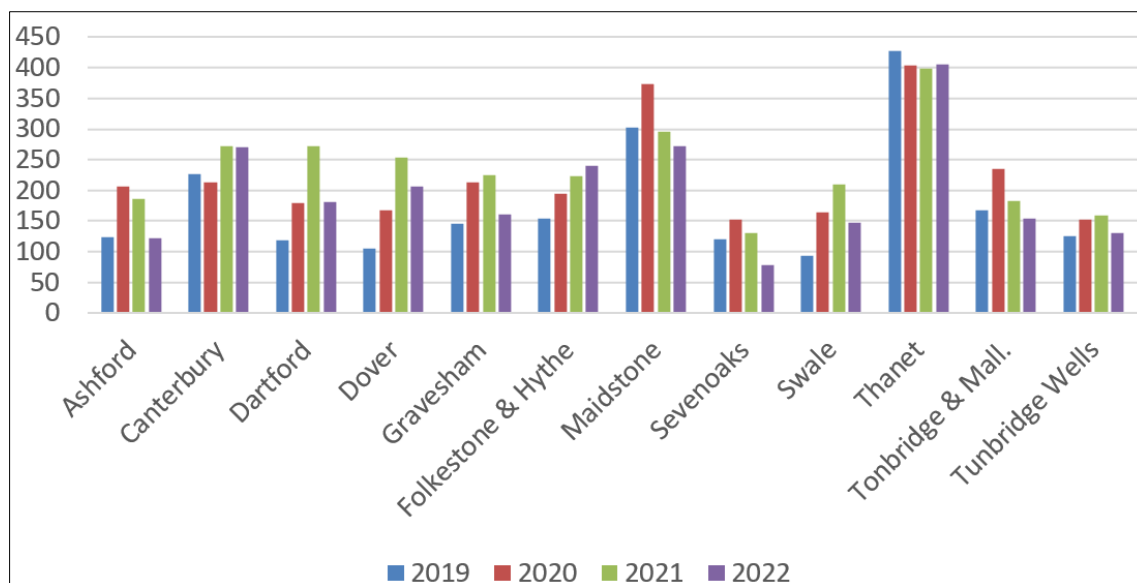
# Priority 2: Substance Misuse and Alcohol Abuse

Current figures refer to the 12-month period from January 2022 – December 2022

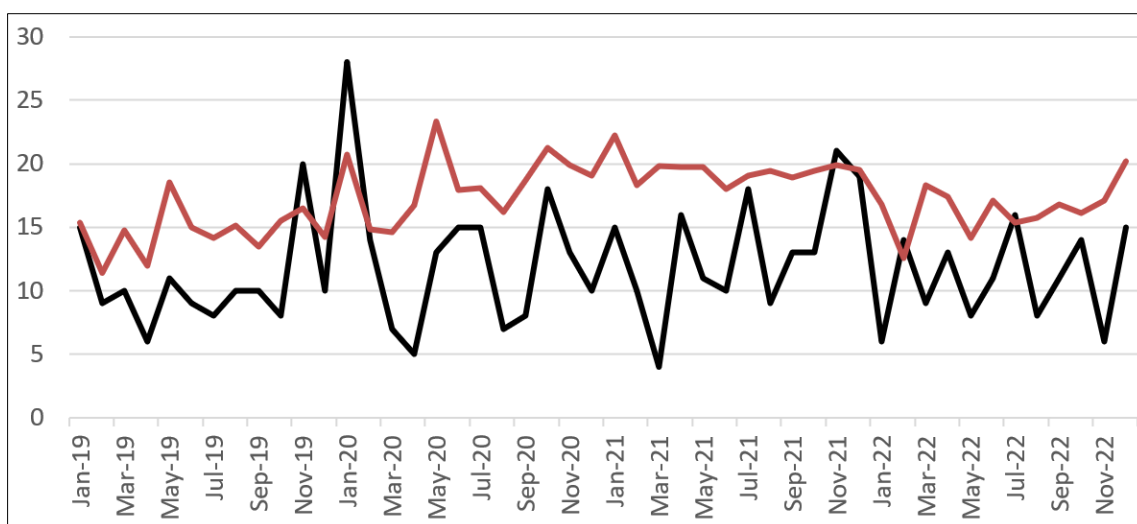
**Drug Possession:** 131 incidents (last year 159)

**Peer Comparison:** Third (by volume), same as 2021

**Annual Change:** Down 28 (18%)



**Four-year trend – Possession offences**



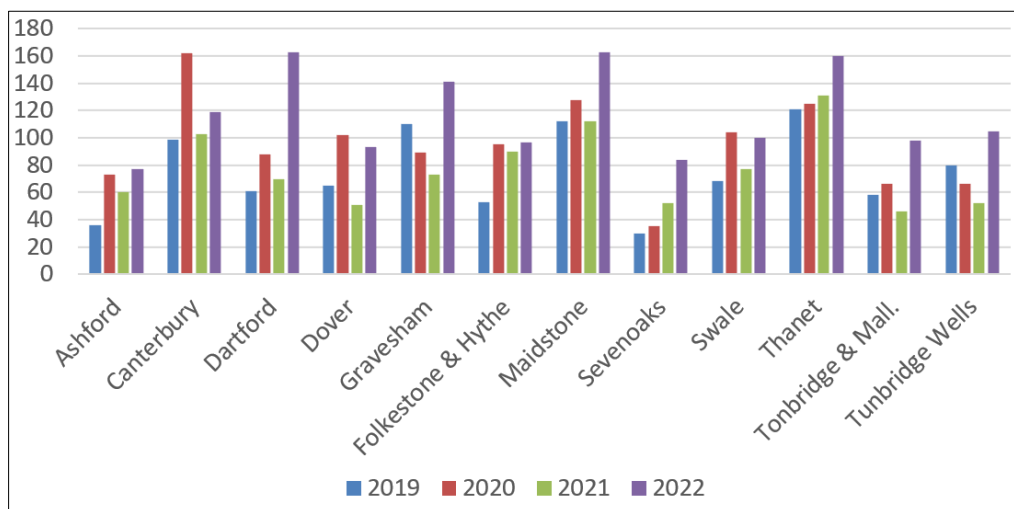
**Tunbridge Wells, four-year monthly trend – Red line county average**



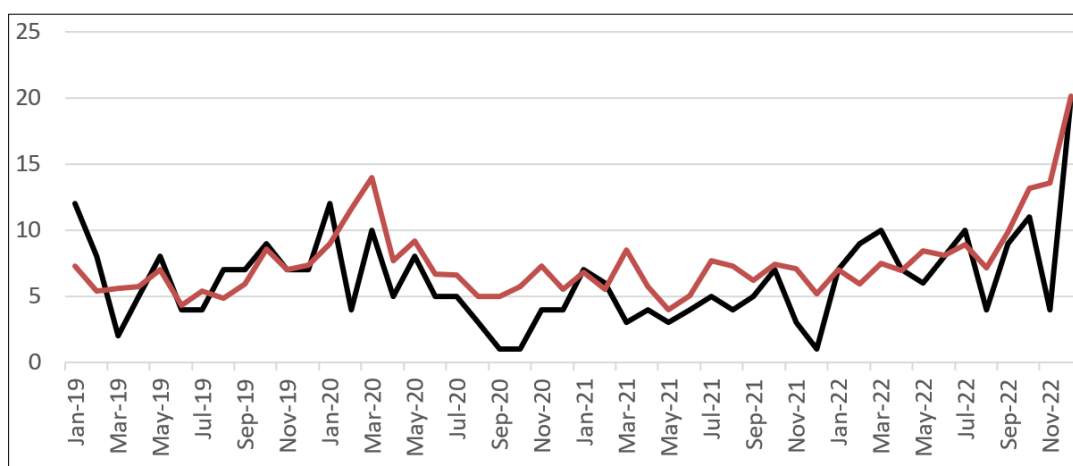
**Drug Trafficking:** 105 incidents (last year 52)

**Peer Comparison:** Seventh by volume, fifth in 2021

**Annual Change:** Up 52 (102%)



**Four-year trend – Trafficking offences**



**Four-year monthly comparison, red line county average**

Between January 2022 and December 2022, there were 2.0 recorded drug offences (combined possession and trafficking offences) per 1,000 population in Tunbridge Wells (up from 1.8), placing us joint second lowest in Kent. The Kent district average for the same period is 2.4 (no change from 2020 and 2021).

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**

#### **March 2022**

Police seized £50,000 and designer clothes and shoes worth thousands of pounds at a property in the Knights Wood area.

Two people were arrested following the seizure which was part of an investigation linked to money laundering offences.

Plain clothes officers from the Tunbridge Wells Community Policing Team approached a suspicious vehicle parked in the Knights Wood area. The 20-year-old driver was detained and searched which led to the seizure of some cannabis and two mobile phones.

A nearby address linked to the man was then searched and multiple bags of cash were discovered and seized along with several pairs of designer trainers and coats.

A 22-year-old woman was later arrested and both suspects were taken into custody in connection with the supply of drugs and money laundering.

## **July 2022**

Plain clothes officers in Tunbridge Wells seized almost 30 grams of cocaine after spotting suspicious activity near the town centre.

The officers were travelling in an unmarked police car when their attention was drawn to a stationary vehicle in Warwick Park. A man who approached the car was then seen walking away and into a nearby business premises.

The Tunbridge Wells Community Policing Team officers followed him and carried out a search of the building. They located a block of white powder in a toilet area, as well as several suspected deal bags.

The 25-year-old male, known for offences in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge was arrested and charged with possession with intent to supply cocaine. He appeared before Medway Magistrates' Court on and was remanded in custody.

His next hearing will be at Maidstone Crown Court, at a later date.

## **July 2022**

Cash and class A drugs were seized by plain clothes officers during a proactive operation in Tunbridge Wells. Constables from the town's Community Safety Team were on patrol when they saw a man acting suspiciously near an alleyway in Grosvenor Road. The officers approached and detained the male for a drug search. A mobile phone, 25 wraps of cocaine and £500 were seized.

The 21-year-old male, of no fixed abode, was arrested and later charged with possession of cocaine with intent to supply.

## **December 2022**

In January 2022, officers stopped a vehicle suspected of being used during a previous drug deal. The 31-year-old driver claimed it was his first visit to the town and that he was trying to find somewhere to stay.

He was searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act and officers found a bag containing cocaine in his pocket as well as a door card for a nearby hotel. The male was arrested and his room was searched. A further 58 bags of cocaine were seized from a sock inside a suitcase.

The cocaine was estimated to have a street value of £2,280 and the male, from Newcastle, was charged with possessing class A drugs with intent to supply.

He pleaded guilty at Maidstone Crown Court and was sentenced to two years and six months' imprisonment.

## **December 2022**

A 19-year-old Tunbridge Wells man who used a Range Rover to ram a police vehicle and damage two others during a failed escape, was jailed.

The male had been wanted in connection with several drugs supply offences, after his DNA was matched to packages of cannabis and cocaine seized in Tunbridge Wells. He was initially arrested in September 2021, when a phone was also seized which showed evidence of a criminal network.

The teenager, wanted in connection with a number of offences, was bailed as officers sought to build a successful case. However, he went on to breach bail conditions.

In December, information linked him to an location in Flimwell, Sussex where a Range Rover was parked. The male was at the wheel when he saw patrols approach and he tried to escape, causing damage to three police cars and causing a bystander to run to safety after being narrowly missed.

The male pleaded guilty at Maidstone Crown Court to two counts of being concerned in the supply of drugs (cocaine and cannabis), as well as a further four charges for possession with intent to supply drugs.

He also admitted dangerous driving, three counts of assault on emergency workers, three counts of criminal damage, and possessing a knife in a public place.

He was sentenced to three years and six months' imprisonment at a young offender institution.

## **December 2022**

A drug dealer appeared in court after giving a false name to avoid arrest after police pulled over a vehicle on Longfield Road, Tunbridge Wells.

Officers grew suspicious of the driver when he tried to give a false name and was soon detained for a drug search. A total of eight wraps of cocaine were found inside as well as £95 cash and a phone - all of which were seized.

The phone was later found to contain text messages arranging the sale of drugs.

The male, of Barnetts Close, Tunbridge Wells was arrested and later charged with possession of cocaine with intent to supply, possession of criminal property and driving without insurance. He appeared before Medway Magistrates' Court where he pleaded guilty to all the charges.

The 20-year-old was remanded in custody and will be sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court on a later date.

## January 2023

A drug dealer from Sandhurst Road who attempted in 2021 to set fire to a house in Liptraps Lane, Tunbridge Wells was sentenced to three years and seven months' and made subject of a five-year restraining order.

Investigations by officers included enquiries into a previous incident when the male was a passenger in a car stopped by patrols from the Tunbridge Wells Community Policing Team.

The vehicle had been linked to drugs offences and when the male was searched quantities of heroin and crack cocaine were discovered, as well as a customer 'tick list'.

The male appeared before Maidstone Crown Court in January 2023 and pleaded guilty to a charge of arson with intent to endanger life as well as two counts of possessing Class A drugs with intent to supply.

## January 2023

A drug dealer living on Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells pleaded guilty to counts of possessing cocaine with intent to supply and possession of criminal property (cash) at Maidstone Crown Court and was sentenced to two years and eleven months' imprisonment.

The male was stopped by police while driving in Tonbridge in 2022. Police searched the vehicle after suspecting the 24-year-old was involved in the supply of drugs. They found a magnetic box under the driver's side door which had nine bags of cocaine in it. When searching his home, police found another bag of cocaine.

The male was arrested in April 2022 and officers seized £320 in cash and two mobile phones, which contained text messages relating to drug deals in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.

# Outcomes

**Provider:** Kenward Trust

**Funding:** £7,020 (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 Trust continues to engage with young people in open spaces delivering positive life-choice messages and information on substances misuse. During Q2 their outreach team undertook 269 engagements with young people in open spaces in and around Tunbridge Wells. In addition, 24 young people were engaged on 1:1 basis for more structured support.

In addition to St John's Park, Outreach Workers also spend time in Calverley Grounds and Grosvenor & Hilbert Park, where issues of anti-social behaviour and cannabis use have also been reported. Paddock Wood received additional focus in Q3 following reports of persistent ASB and harassment from a small group of youths.

In support of Early Help Youth Work, Kenward's Andy Watson delivered some intervention workshops at Bewl Water for a group of 19 young people from Tunbridge Wells.

The Outreach Team reported high levels of "negative behaviour" in the young people they engage with, including a group in the age range of 12-14, whose general disaffection is "really evident". There's a suspicion amongst some stakeholders that, given their age, issues related to transitioning from primary to secondary school during covid may be a factor.

There's also an older group (15 to early 20s) who vape, smoke cannabis and consume nitrous oxide. These three substances are seen more and more amongst young people, alongside caffeine (cigarettes), energy drinks and alcohol. Young people are becoming bolder in the belief – which is often stated – that there will be no consequences if caught. This is also often expressed during school sessions.

Vaping has become a big issue among young people with devices sold on the black market made adaptable for other substances. Nitrous oxide use seems to be prevalent amongst late teens to early 20s who often drive to a remote location to take it and dump dozens of canisters there, or back in the car park if they return.

Kenward are out and about between 3:30pm and 8:30pm, varying their times as often as they can. They link in with KCC Early Help Youth Workers to ensure they are getting the best coverage for the issues reported.

The Kenward team have been stretched during 2022 but they are engaging with a lot of young people to reinforce messages on substance misuse, positive choices and consequences. Kenward, who work also in Sevenoaks and Tonbridge state the types of persistent and concerning anti-social behaviour from small groups of youths, such as that seen in St John's Park, is a trend in areas across all three districts and beyond.

**Provider:** Tunbridge Wells Churches Together Street Pastors

**Funding:** £2,500 (PCC)

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

**Outcomes:** The Tunbridge Wells Churches Together Street Pastors provide a late-night presence in the NTE in support of CSP priorities focused on providing a safe environment for residents and visitors enjoying town centre restaurants, pubs and clubs. They are also a useful link to emergency services and carry a Safe Town Partnership radio to maintain contact with CCTV Operators and premises door staff.

Pastors committed over 300 volunteer hours to the first three quarters of 2022 engaging with 240+ men and 190+ women. There were no calls for police or medical assistance during this period but they did engage with CCTV operators on half a dozen occasions while safeguarding individuals assessed as vulnerable.

**Other outcomes:** **We Are With You**, a charity providing free and confidential support to young people experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health issues continues to deliver specialist treatment to Tunbridge Wells residents. As reported last year, alcohol,

cocaine and ecstasy use among young people in Kent remains higher than the national average, but the service continues to achieve positive outcomes for their clients.

Adult drug and alcohol treatment service **Change. Grow. Live. (CGL)** has returning to normal service having steadily increased face-to-face interventions and groupwork throughout the early part of 2022.

Tunbridge Wells has seen a 144% rise in referrals from last year and an increase in treatment starts for all drug groups (alcohol, alcohol & non-opiate, opiate and non-opiate).

There has been a rise in the number of people accessing treatment in Tunbridge Wells during the last 12 months (rolling) from 620 (the previous year) to 674.

New referrals and numbers in treatment increased across all areas of West Kent over the past year.

All appointments are provided face-to-face including medical assessments, one-to-one key working and groupwork interventions. The service is working toward providing better accessibility through more outreach surgeries as well as using telephone appointments to offer a hybrid approach that offers people who use the service more flexibility than was available pre-pandemic.

The service continues to liaise with partner agencies and other professionals and holds multi-disciplinary team meetings to ensure all aspects of a client's recovery are supported while they are in treatment. As with many other services, hybrid delivery now helps provide a more robust provision and is implemented according to service users' needs or preferences.

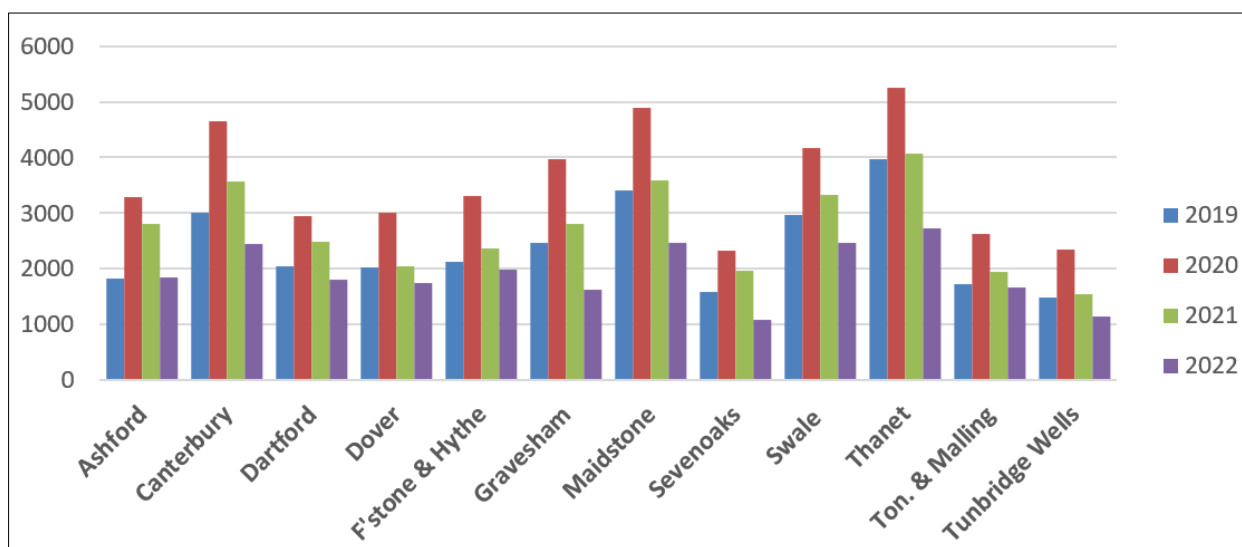
# Priority 3: Anti-social Behaviour

Current figures refer to the 12-month period from January 2022 – December 2022

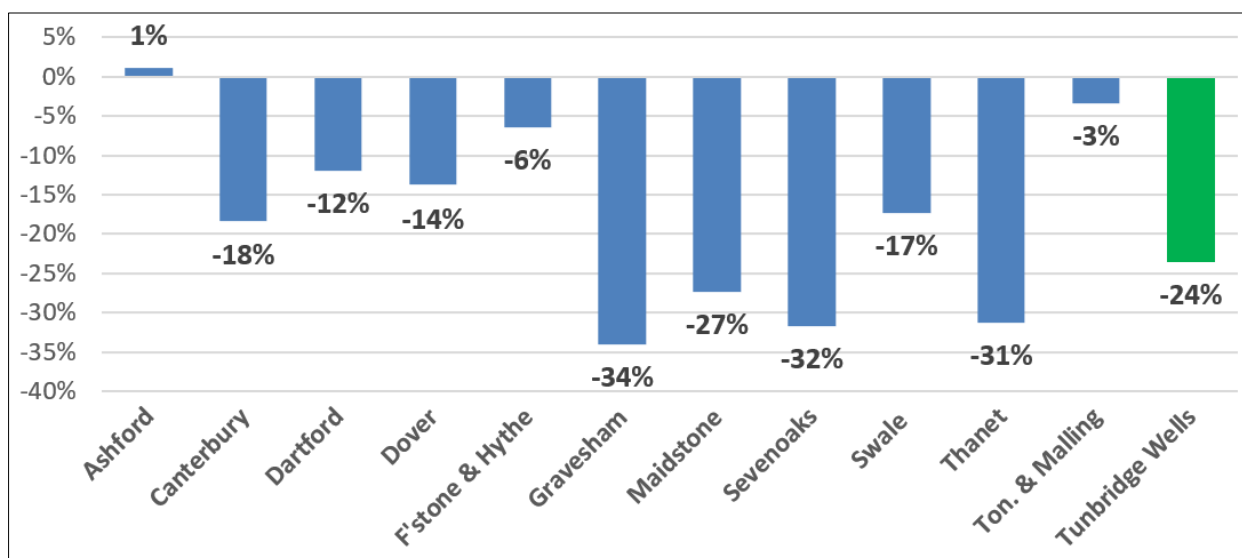
**Reporting levels:** 1,138 (previous period 1,554)

**Peer comparison:** Second out of 12 Kent areas

**Annual change:** Decrease of 416 reports (-27%)



**All ASB graded incidents 2019-2022**



**Percentage change 2019 to 2022 calendar year**

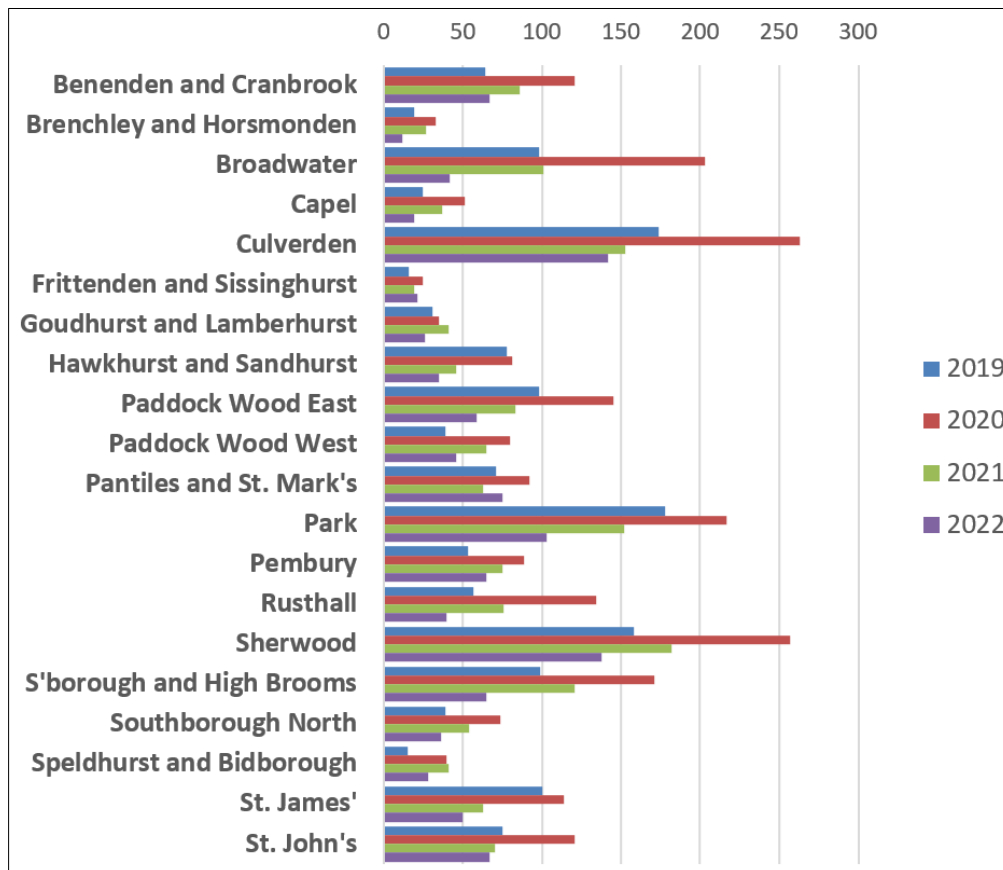
In 2022, Tunbridge Wells welcomed a 27% reduction in reports of anti-social behaviour over 2021, and a 24% reduction over 2019, the last pre-covid calendar year.

Most other Kent local authority areas also reporting double-figure reductions over 2019 rates.

# Ward reports

ASB covers a broad range of behaviours from nuisance neighbours and noisy parties to nuisance parking and noisy vehicles.

This is how the overall category is broken down by ward:



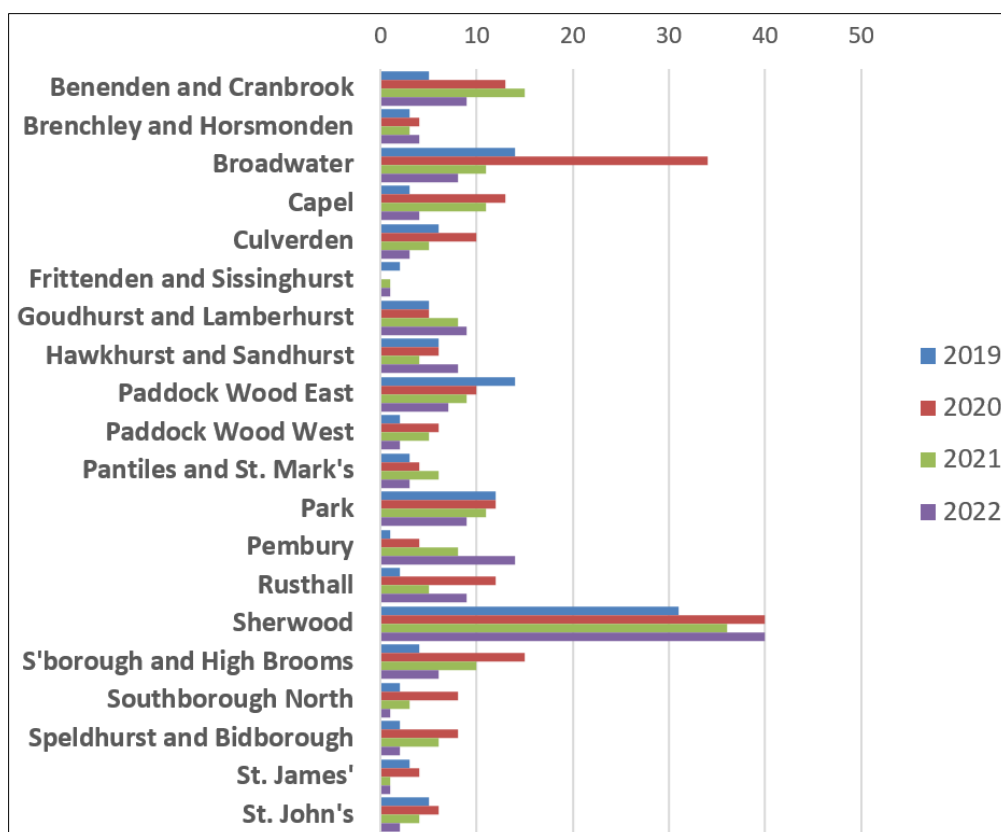
**Ward comparison - calendar year breakdown**

There is an obvious spike in 2020 as residents reported breaches of covid regulations in open spaces and other settings, such as pubs and residential gardens and properties. This continued into 2021 during various lockdowns, though to a much lesser degree in most places.



A significant number of reports related to **nuisance/noisy vehicles** were “covid-tagged” in 2020 and 2021 with residents seemingly meeting up in public car parks and other open spaces. Reports were down in 2022 in many neighbourhoods, lower even than 2019 levels, but there has been an increase in some wards.

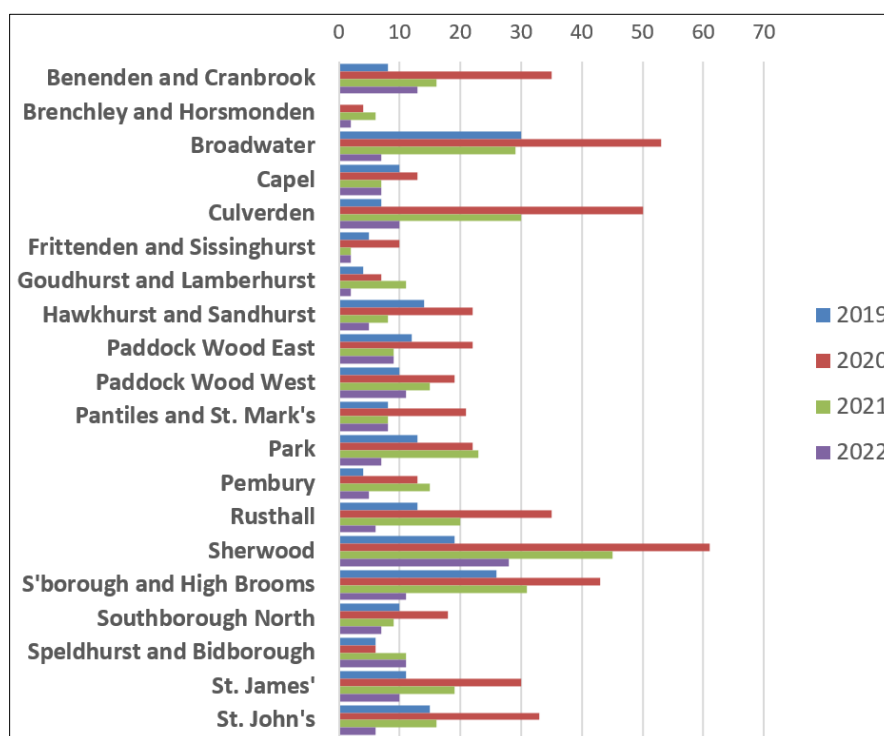
The chart below shows the bulk of reporting coming from the Sherwood ward across all four years. Sherwood includes North Farm and Knights Park. Issues of vehicle nuisance appear to have reduced at Fountains retail park and Knights Park but there is still an issue of young drivers using the A21 to race their modified vehicles and they do still pull into the North Farm area causing disturbances to residents .



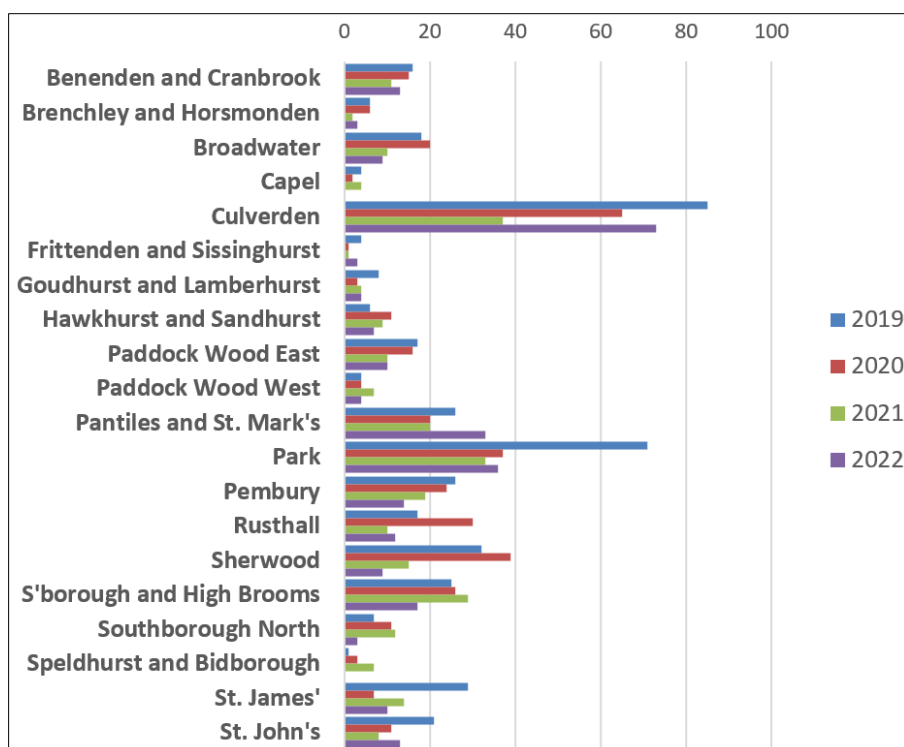
**Motor vehicle nuisance on road, including noise**

The **neighbour nuisance** chart below shows just how many residents were affected by issues related to lockdowns and limits on gatherings during the pandemic years of 2020-21.

Also below, **drunken or rowdy behaviour**, which offers a much more mixed picture, though in some key locations numbers are down against 2019 levels.

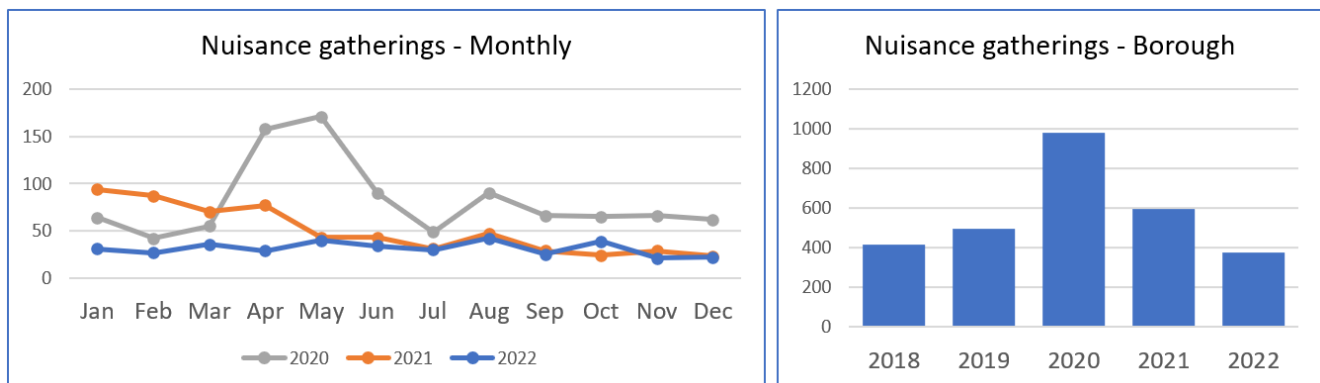


### Neighbours - disputes / nuisance incl. noise (not noisy parties)



### Drunken or rowdy behaviour

Clearly, there was a huge increase in reports of **rowdy or nuisance gatherings in public** in 2020, with a high proportion of calls related to breaches of COVID-19 rules, less so in 2021. The chart below shows a welcome reduction in 2022 against 2019 levels.



Other actions and activities of note undertaken during the year:

- Served seven Community Protection Warnings (CPW), several Acceptable Behaviour Agreement for issues related to anti-social behaviour or neighbour nuisance, principally cannabis fumes penetrating a neighbouring property.
- Some coordinated patrols were undertaken during half-term holidays, exam results weeks and during other annual events.
- Additional outreach and police patrols were directed towards the Southborough (hub), Paddock Wood and Cranbrook to tackle persistent anti-social behaviour.
- Safe Town Partnership ran a self-funded Christmas operation to deter shoplifters and to support efforts to tackle town centre anti-social behaviour. They also ran a World Cup operation partly funded by the PCC.
- Installed a deployable CCTV camera to resolve issues related to anti-social behaviour on a railway footbridge close to residential properties in Paddock Wood. Police attended on several occasions and seized a small amount of cannabis. The issue seems now to be resolved.
- Managed four unauthorised encampments between April and September. Lower than average but two encampments caused significant and costly damage, despite the locations being substantially defended against incursions. There is just no legislating for brazenness.
- The Council's Community Safety Officer shared locking up duties in St John's Park with local residents and councillors to address late night anti-social behaviour.
- 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

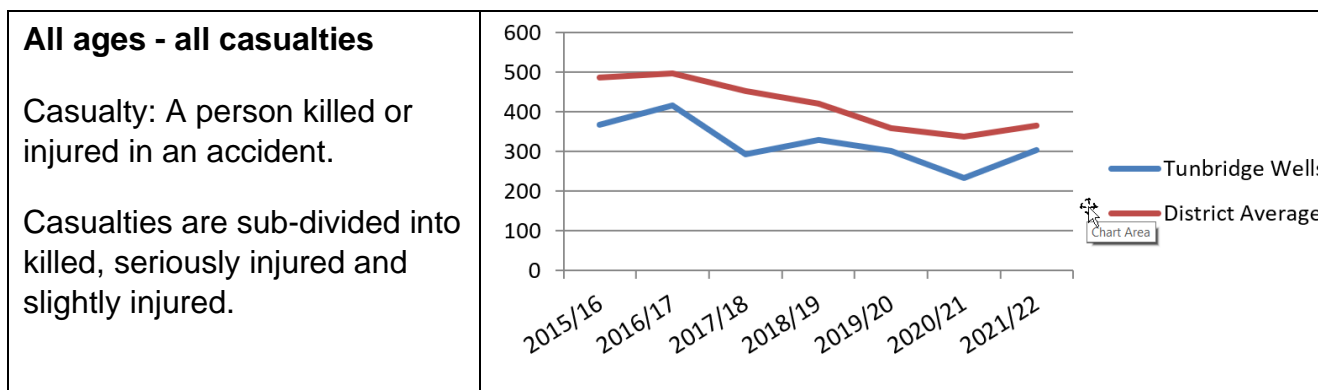
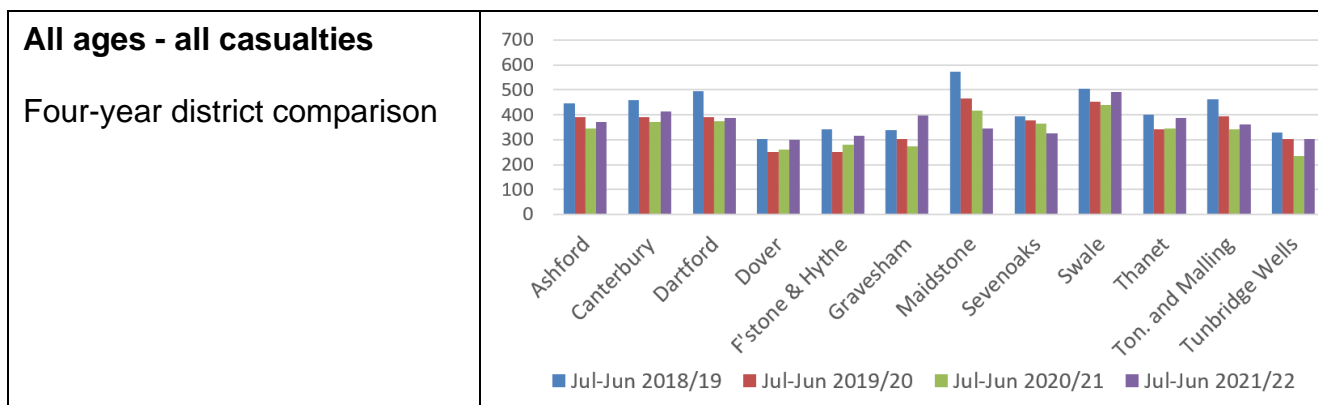
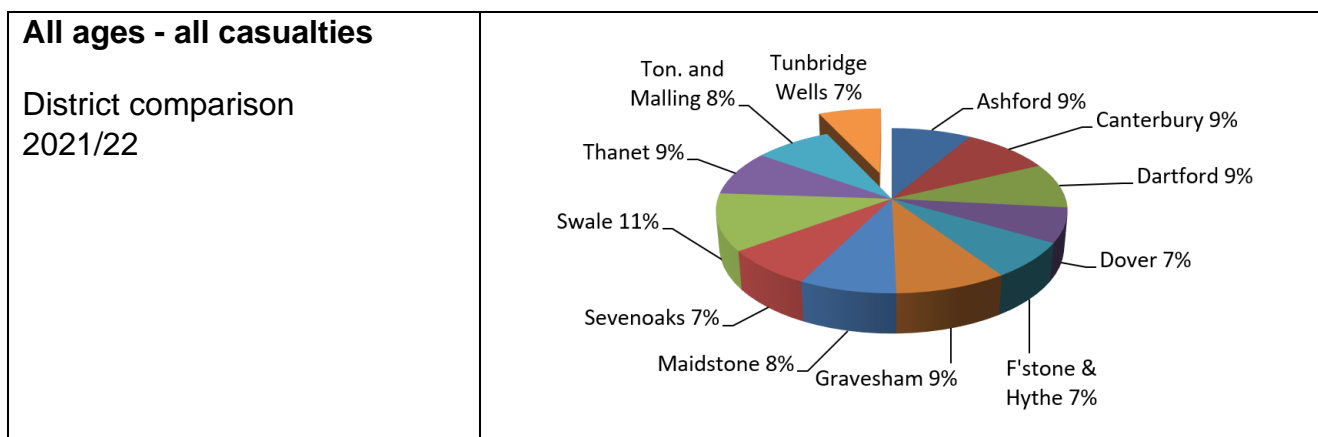
Current figures refer to the 12-month period from July 2021 – June 2022 unless stated.

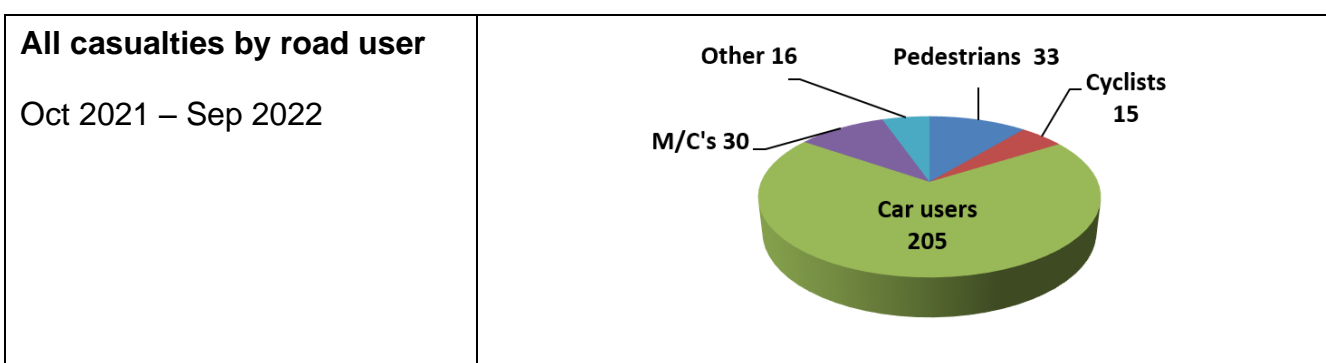
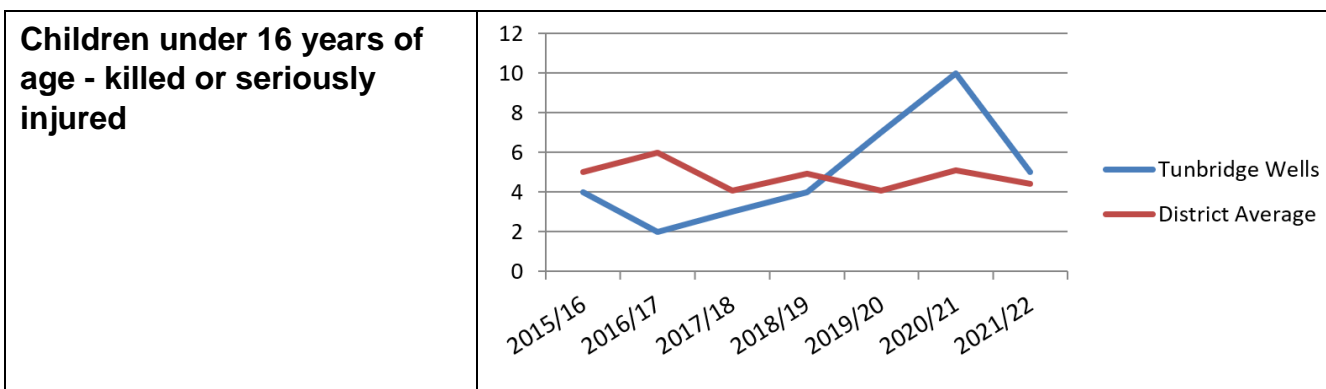
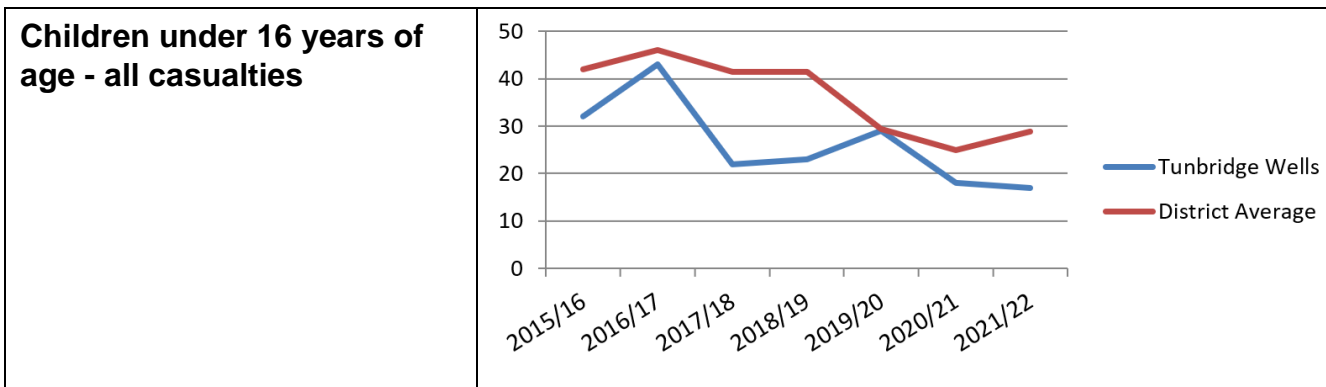
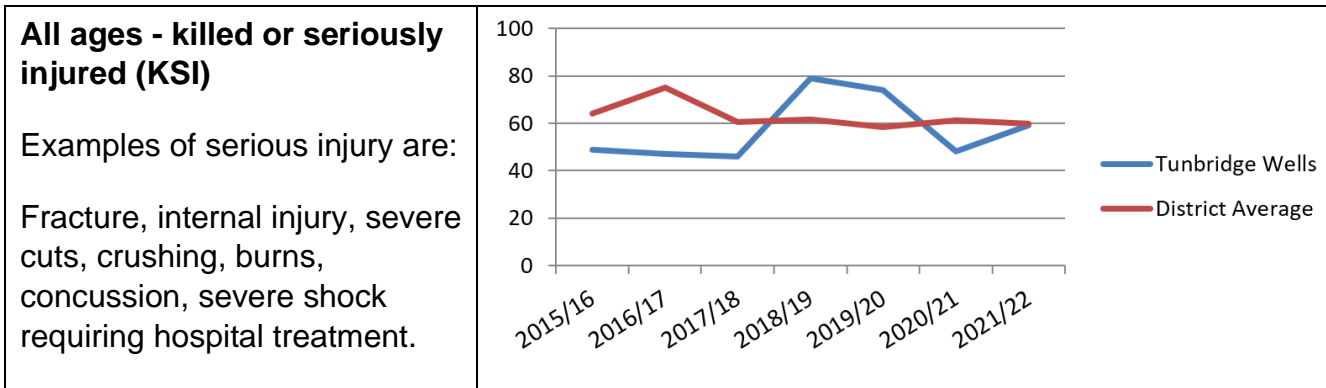
**Level of Concern:** 301 Casualties (previous period 232)

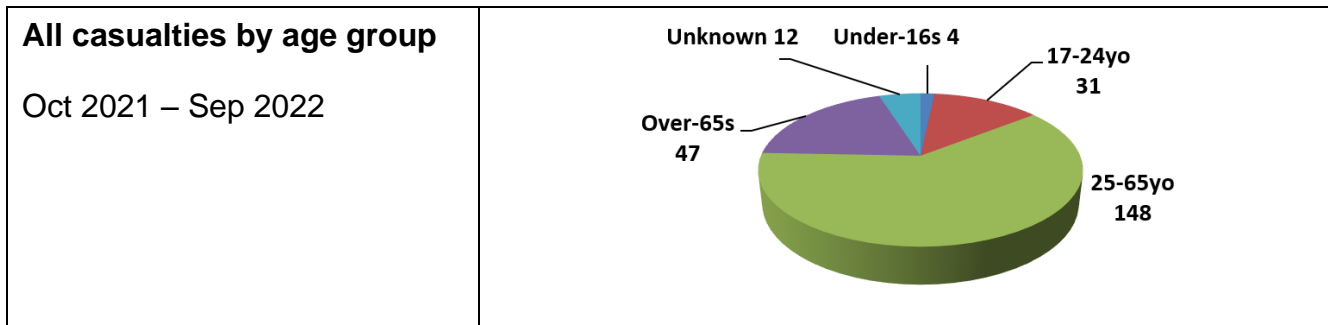
**Peer Comparison:** Best in Kent (same as 2020-21)

**Annual Change:** 69 more casualties (30%)

When calculated against population Tunbridge Wells saw 2.01 casualties per 1000 residents. The Kent average is 2.56.







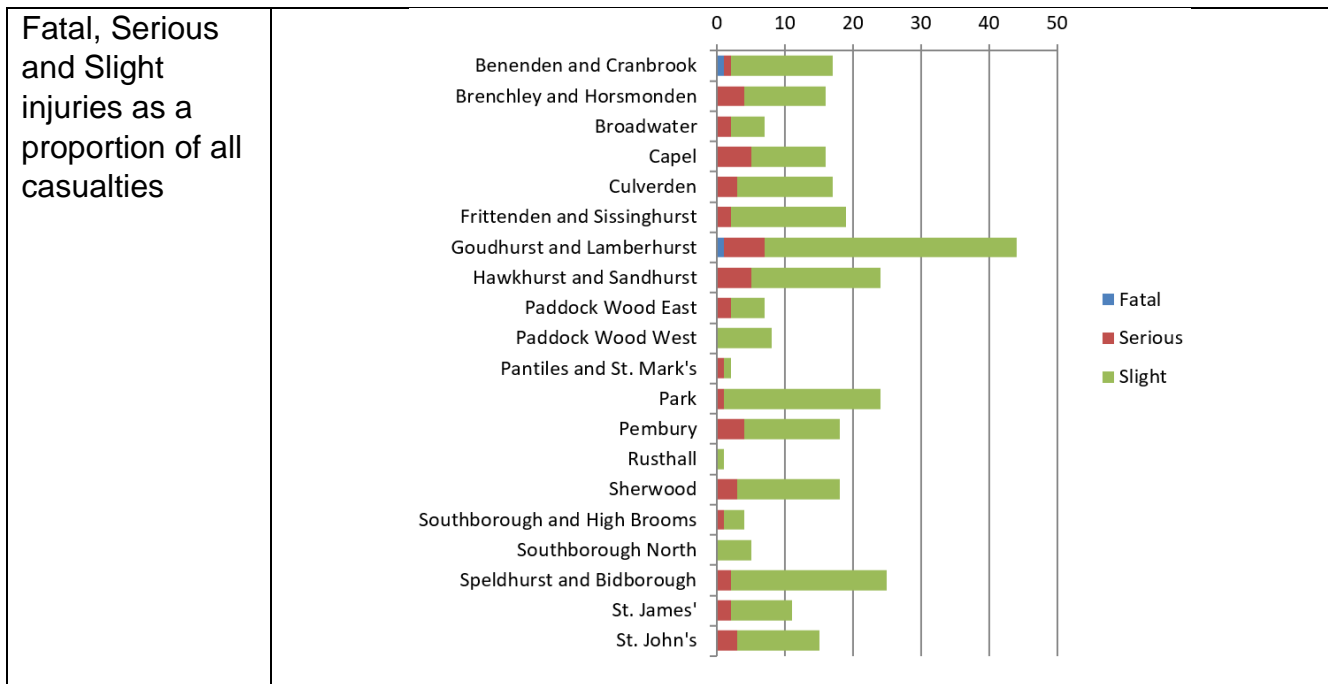
Despite a 30% increase in casualties over the previous period (July-June) Tunbridge Wells still had fewer incidents per 1000 residents than any other area in Kent, with only two local authority areas experiencing a reduction in casualties this period. Likely this was helped by a reduction of 23% last year, which was by far the biggest reduction in Kent.

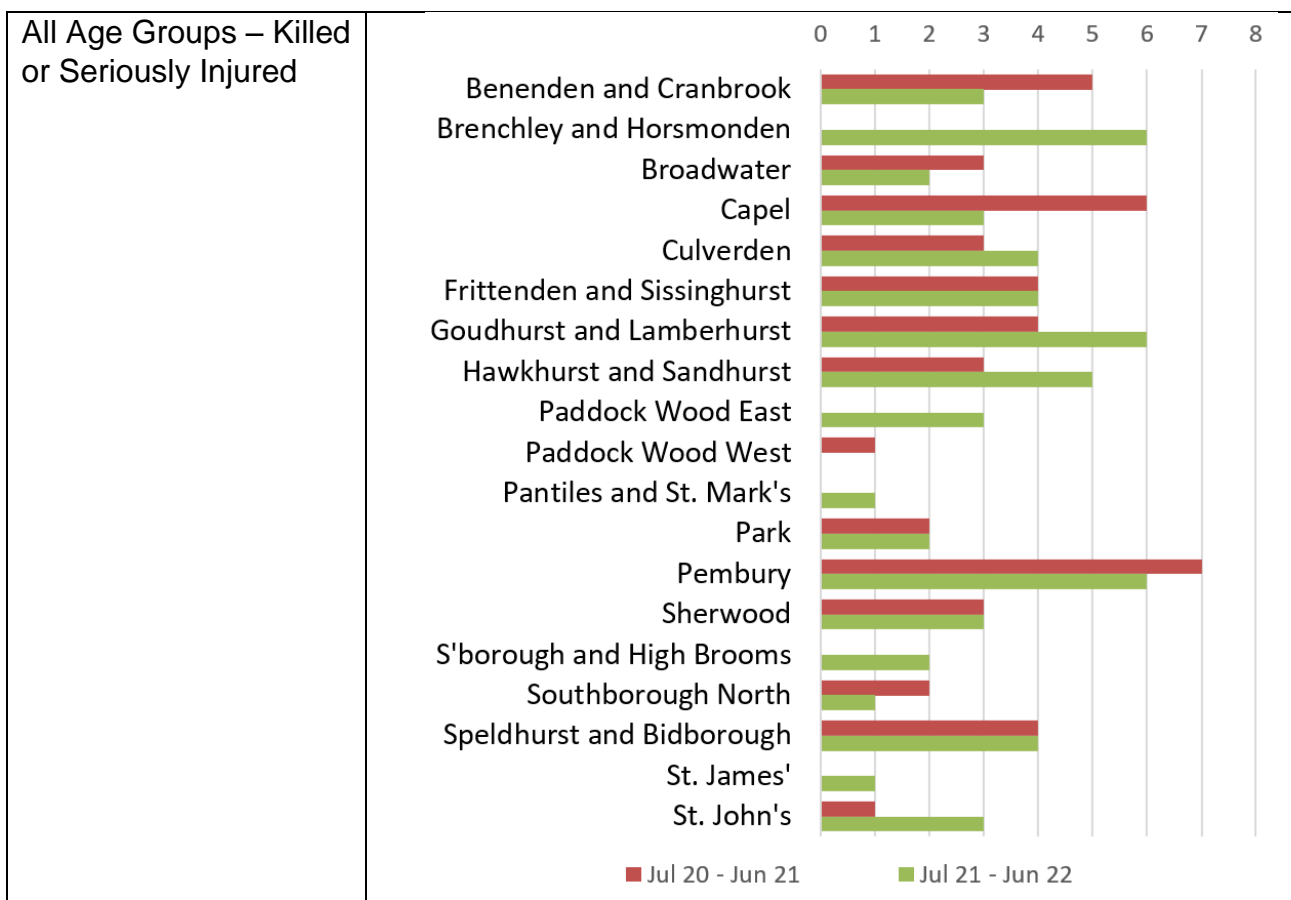
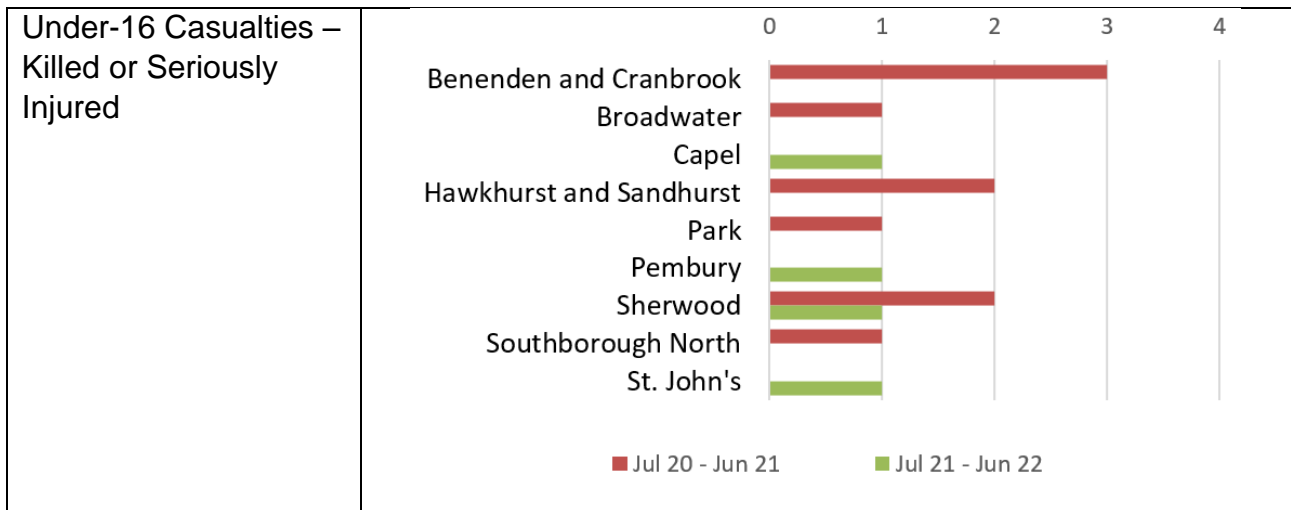
One noticeable reduction is in the u16 KSI grouping. During the previous period (2021) there were 11 casualties, which was later reduced to 10, upon review, by the KCC Crash Team.

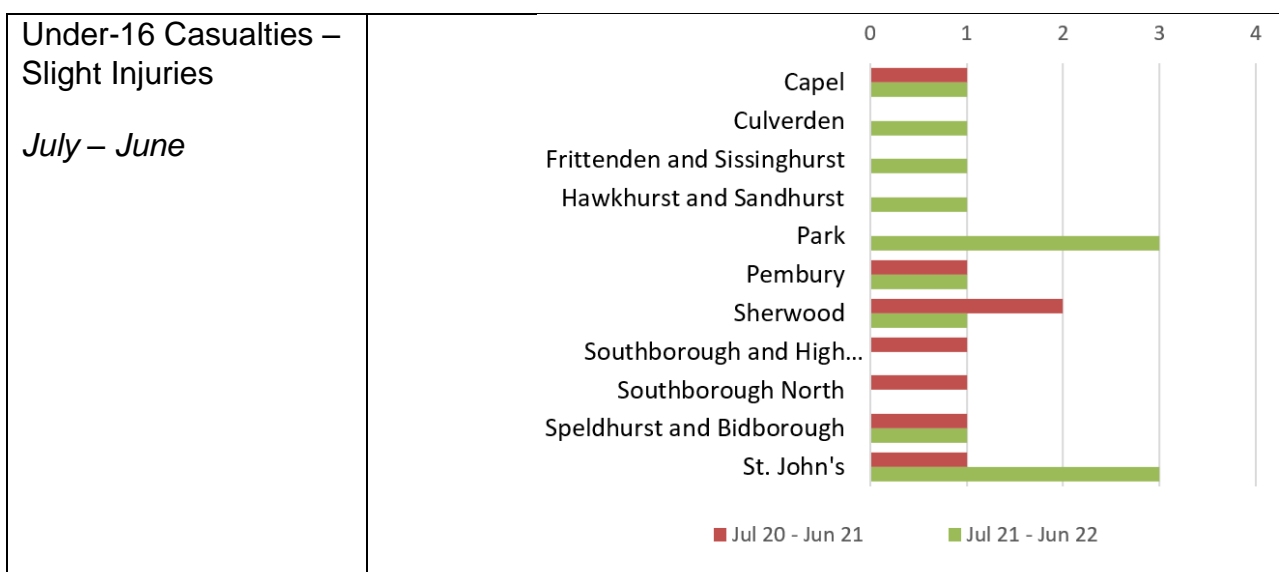
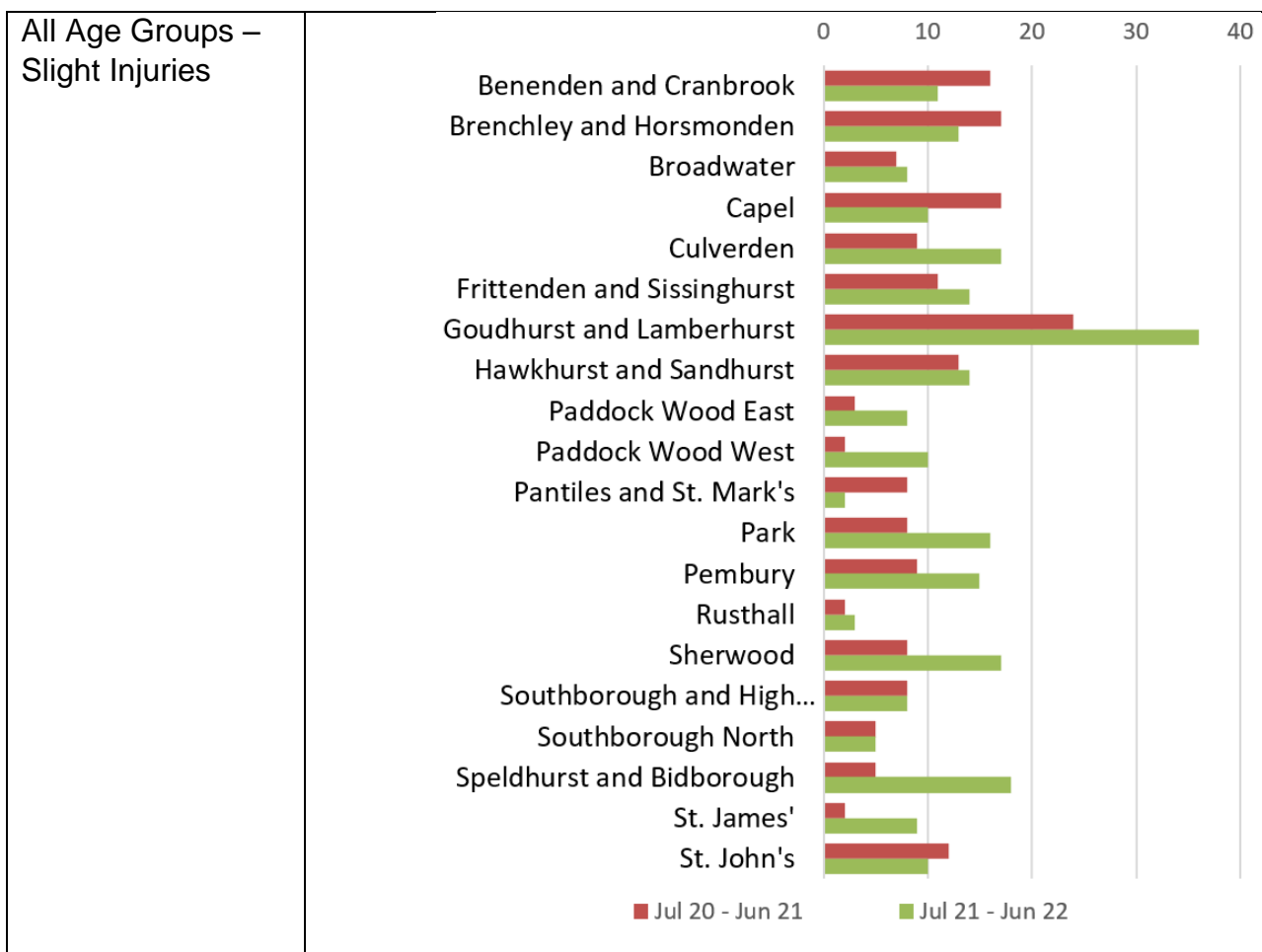
On the back of a request by relevant ward councillors the KCC Crash Team looked into the 10 incidents but found no pattern of behaviour of note, aside from a lack of attention, and no repeat location to focus on. Thankfully none of the incidents were fatal but details were passed to the KFRS team tasked with visiting schools to deliver road safety input. Some details were also shared with Safety in Action, which the CSP funds to deliver information to children transitioning from primary to secondary school.

## Ward reports

The charts below show the proportion of Fatal, Killed or Seriously Injured, and Slight Injuries across the borough in 2021-22.









# Outcomes

In April, officers attended Warrington Road, Paddock Wood on several occasions following complaints of speeding. Some local residents were spoken to and they provided officers with other locations where speeding occurs. The humps on Warrington Road are quite shallow and a 4x4 or SUV can travel over them at speed with limited chance of damage but “normal cars” would still risk damage to the front of the vehicle. Speed checks on the actual humps showed an average speed of about 13 mph but it was clear to officers that vehicles slow for the humps then speed up and repeat.

In October, speed checks were carried out on the A229 at Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. A number of vehicles were stopped and the drivers given words of advice. A Special Constable’s probationer issuing two TOR’s (Traffic Offence Reports) for speeding.

The Kent Community Warden Service supports PCSOs in local speed watch initiatives in rural communities, and Wardens look for opportunities to offer road safety advice to community groups and schools, and to individuals if necessary while patrolling their communities.

In November, officers returned to Warrington Road to investigate lorries breaching width restrictions following complaints from at least four frustrated residents. The officer contacted the Town Council to take the lead and contact the General Manager of the nearby development to reinforce the message that wide loads need to use an alternative route. Appropriate signs were supposedly in place but one complainant stated some signs had been taken down. The attending primary officer scheduled return visits and no further complaints were received.

Salus’s Safety in Action event took place in April 2022 at Fosse Bank School, Hildenborough. In total 530 Year 6 students attended from 15 Tunbridge Wells schools for inputs on a variety of subjects key to students transitioning to secondary school.

# Violence Against Women and Girls

Below I have extracted some data from the Home's office's Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls report of July 2021. This report contains meaningful national data captured by a number of surveys, including the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

Local data on offences that comprise VAWG are also presented below.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the best available estimate of prevalence for a number of violence against women and girls crimes, namely: domestic abuse, stalking, rape, indecent exposure and unwanted touching. Data shows that the prevalence of these crimes has remained broadly the same since 2008/09.

Police data provides us with some understanding of these wider crime types. However, it only captures crimes which have been reported and recorded and so does not give us a measure of prevalence. The police have made significant improvements to the way they record crimes, and we are encouraged that more victims and survivors have had the confidence to come forward.

## Rape and sexual violence

Sexual assaults measured by the CSEW combine rape (including attempts), assault by penetration (including attempts), indecent exposure and unwanted sexual touching experienced by people aged over 16. 1.8% of adults aged 16 to 74 (equivalent to 773,000 people) had been a victim of sexual assault in the last year; 2.9% of women and 0.7% of men. In the same year, there were 139,000 victims of rape (including attempts), 132,000 of whom were women. This is equivalent to a prevalence rate of 0.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 (0.8% of women and 0.01% of men). Over the past 15 years, the prevalence of sexual assault in the last year among the adult population aged 16 to 59 years has fluctuated between 1.5% and 3.0%, with a decrease in the latest year, however, the prevalence of rape or assault by penetration has remained stable over this time.

Police recorded crime includes a broader range of sexual offences than measured in the CSEW and includes offences against both adults and children. In 2020, the police recorded 151,059 sexual offences, of which 55,632 were rape offences. Sexual offences recorded by the police have seen substantial increases since 2011/12 with numbers of offences recorded tripling.

Despite prevalence estimates remaining stable and police recorded crime numbers increasing in recent years, some stakeholders perceive sexual violence to still be vastly underreported, in particular amongst men, older victims and victims from different ethnic backgrounds, with many victims fearing disbelief.

## Sexual and other forms of harassment

There is no reliable national data on the specific context, location or type of harassment that occurs. A nationally representative survey commissioned by the Government Equalities Office found that in the last 12 months 20% of women had experienced unwanted sexual comments. Furthermore, 6% had experienced being followed or threatened, and 14% had experienced unwanted non-sexual touching.

Respondents to all aspects of the Home Office's Call for Evidence believed that physical and sexual, verbal, emotional and online harassment were particularly prevalent, with 44% of respondents thinking it was more common now than five years ago (35% thought it was about the same). Some participants in the focus groups said they felt sexual harassment needs to be taken more seriously.

## **Stalking**

Data from the CSEW shows that 4% of adults aged 16-59 experienced stalking in the last year – equivalent to 1.3 million victims - 892,000 women and 443,000 men. Prevalence of stalking has increased slightly in recent years; however, it is significantly lower than in 2004/05 when an estimated 7.8% of adults aged 16 to 59 (equivalent to 2.4 million victims) had experienced stalking in the last year.

In 2020, 81,955 stalking offences were recorded by the police. Unlike some other forms of violence against women and girls, the number of defendants prosecuted and convicted for stalking offences has increased in recent years.

Focus group participants thought there was a lack of understanding of stalking behaviours amongst victims and police resulting in an underestimation of its real prevalence. Online forms of stalking were perceived to be increasing, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **'Honour'-based abuse, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage**

Understanding the prevalence of 'honour'-based abuse, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, is challenging as there is limited information. However, a 2009 Government-commissioned study estimated the national prevalence of reported cases of forced marriage in England to be between 5,000 and 8,000 cases. Other Home Office-funded research conducted in 2015 estimated 137,000 women and girls with FGM, born in countries where it is practised, were permanently resident in England and Wales in 2011.

People working on violence against women and girls issues who participated in the focus groups thought there had been no significant changes in the prevalence of these offences in the last five years.

## **Domestic abuse**

The CSEW shows that 5.5% of adults aged 16-74 had been victims of domestic abuse in the last year (equivalent to 2.3 million victims). This equates to 7.3% of women and 3.6% of men. While there has been a decline in the prevalence of domestic abuse since 2011/12, this crime remains highly prevalent when compared to the prevalence of other crimes.

There were 758,941 domestic-abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in 2019/20, equating to 15% of all crimes recorded by the police that year. The vast majority (79%) of these offences were violence against the person-related crimes. The number of domestic-abuse-related crimes recorded by the police has increased year on year since 2015/16.

## **Public Places**

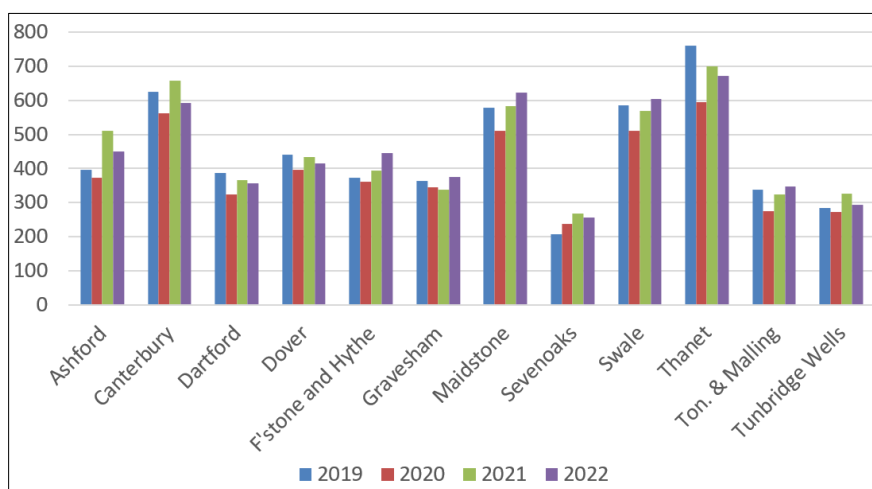
A large proportion of VAWG offences happen within the victim's or offender's home, in particular domestic abuse and rape. However, many victims also experience violence against

women and girls in public spaces - for example, 37% of rape offences were reported to be outside the victim or offender's home.

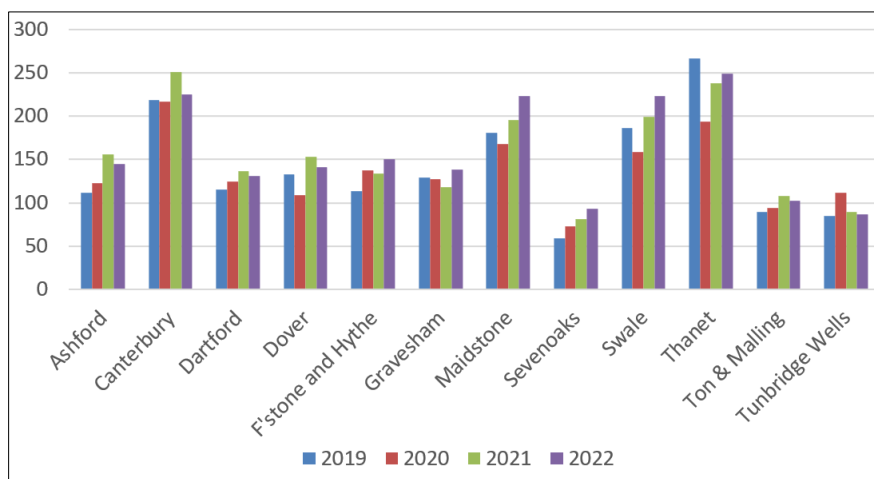
Responses to the Home Office survey highlighted concerns about women and girls' safety in public places in relation to public forms of harassment. Other evidence supports this. For example, a 2018 survey showed that as many as 38% of girls aged 14 to 21 have experienced verbal harassment, including sexual comments in public places, at least once a month. CSEW data shows that 31% of women felt unsafe walking alone after dark (in comparison to 13% of men).

The CSEW also shows that young people are more likely to experience serious sexual assault in a park or public space compared to their older counterparts.

Sexual offences across a four-year period, Kent:



Rape offences over a four-year period, Kent:



Other domestic abuse sub-categories and stalking:

Tunbridge Wells	2022	2021	% Change	No. Change
Coercion & Control	142	217	-34.6%	-75
Harassment	415	452	-8.2%	-37
Malicious Communications	357	376	-5.1%	-19
Stalking	190	247	-23.1%	-57

## Outcomes

The Tunbridge Wells Safe Town Partnership (STP) excludes individuals from members' premises upon conviction of violence offences. In Q2 of 2022 one exclusion was rescinded and one new exclusion was issued for possession of a bladed article. By the end of Q3 six exclusions were in force, four of which are for violent crime.

Radio use between Pubwatch members, door supervisors and CCTV Operators is of a high standard and much intelligence-sharing takes place between all parties, as well as local police (when on duty) and the Street Pastors. These calls often take place in order to share details of ejected persons or those refused entry for various reasons (such as proof of age anomalies). Door staff are also sighted on suspicious activity on or near their premises given the added importance of safeguarding females in light of the reports of sticking and spiking that became prevalent in 2021.

Kent Police secured funding for additional patrols in the NTE in December, with special constables also taking part. By way of example, on New Year's Eve a van with several officers was designated for Tunbridge Wells town centre. The officers had a Safe Town radio and were able to listen to communications between door staff and CCTV Operators. This enabled officers to attend venues to deal with an *issue* before it became an *incident*. Door staff noted and welcomed police visibility, as well as their engagement on the Safe Town radio system which they felt helped keep the evening trouble free. The last call of any importance came from a NTE venue at 23.30pm on 31 December. No fights or any other incidents were reported after that time.

In the first three quarters of 2022/23 CCTV Operators assisted in monitoring 85 assaults and 160+ alcohol related incidents. These can't be logged with victim gender as this is rarely clear at the time. Operators also logged 110 occasions when suspicious persons were monitored - time of day is not recorded on monthly monitoring data but details of some incidents are noted when footage is seized by police.

No staff training was undertaken in 2022 in respect of licensed premises responsibilities when serving/refusing alcohol and dealing with aggressive customers. However, training related to these issues was provided as part of the Best Bar None scheme which seven NTE venues have taken up. This project was very well organised by the Kent Police Licensing Officer with strong engagement from other partners (e.g. STP and TWBC Licensing). The training was funded by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, who also attended the launch event.

### VAWG engagement evenings (Op Heart)

VAWG engagement evenings were held on Friday, 14 October at Pitcher and Piano; Saturday, 22 October at Aura; and Saturday, 29 October at The Opera House. Evenings ran from 9pm – 1am. As well as undertaking the survey, safety aids such as personal alarms, *Spikeys*, *StopTops* and *Stay Safe cards* were given out. All were very well received, and several females asked that crime prevention nights be held more often. As well as completing surveys and issuing crime prevention aids, it was an opportunity to discuss feelings of safety and in some cases talking about crimes experienced by them.

72 surveys were completed, which is only a very small proportion of the average nightly footfall and is by no means a scientific analysis.

Age range:

18-21	33
22-25	22
25-35	10
Over 35	07

Five identified as students, while 61 were in employment.

As expected, the majority of respondents (54%) lived in Tunbridge Wells while 20 individuals came from other areas of Kent. Ten came in from Sussex.

How safe do you feel in Tunbridge Wells town centre at night?

Very Safe	19
Fairly Safe	33
A Bit Unsafe	09
Very Unsafe	11

Of those that reported feeling a bit unsafe or very unsafe, 12 had been a victim of crime and nearly all had seen an incident or a crime in the NTE. Sixteen felt door supervisors made them feel safer and 14 said they felt very safe in licensed premises.

On a positive note, many of the females said a lot of men now intervene and help them if they are being harassed or receiving unwanted attention both in premises and on the street. These men are often strangers who occasionally apologise for other men's behaviour even though they are strangers to them too.

Thirty-nine respondents were familiar with the Street Pastor service making comments such as "brilliant", "they help drunk or vulnerable people" and "I love the flip flops".

The Ask for Angela scheme (a request for assistance) is being promoted in pubs across the town and by partners further afield, including the Community Wardens. During the Safe Town Partnership's Q3 engagement nights 70% of women spoken to were aware of the scheme, while others were familiar with 'Angel Shots' which is the name of a drink that carries the same message to bar staff.

The Community Wardens are minded to carry positive violence-reduction messaging in places of learning & community settings.

# Part 2 - Conclusions

While it's disappointing to experience a rise in crime following two years of reductions totalling around 1100 incidents, the modest increase is perhaps in line with the rates of pre-covid years.

This strategic assessment sets out the priorities that the Community Safety Partnership should focus on in 2023/24 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 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.

The full Strategic Assessment document provides more detail.

## Domestic Abuse

While we experienced a reduction of incidents reported to police in 2022, over the three previous calendar years, domestic abuse remains a priority, in part due to the high and wide-ranging harm caused by offences and the associated costs to the public purse.

During the pandemic DAVSS saw a big increase in cases graded as 'high need' when complex cases were made more dangerous by the various lockdown conditions. These levels have also dropped but helpline calls have remained high. DAVSS have retained the longer helpline hours put in place during the pandemic.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a new burden on local authorities to provide better support and safe accommodation for victims. For this, local authorities have received DLUHC funding which we have pooled with Tonbridge and Malling BC to employ a DA Co-ordinator.

The Borough Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner are committed to ensuring victims of domestic abuse receive the support they need when they need it. We're also committed to addressing the behaviour of perpetrators to and promoting healthy relationships at all ages, especially in relation to violence and abuse directed towards women and girls.

**We recommend Domestic Abuse is retained as a priority for 2023/24**

## Drugs and Alcohol

A modest reduction in possession offences this year but slightly up on 2019 rates. Trafficking offences saw a steep rise, which more than doubled the offences of 2021. This appears to have been repeated across the county with some areas seeing substantial increases over the pandemic years and 2019.

We continued to deploy Kenward Trust outreach workers to engage with youths and young adults in areas of concern raised at the monthly District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting or through twice-weekly morning briefings. The goal here is to address anti-social behaviour associated with these locations but also to protect the young people, with the Crime Survey for England and Wales suggesting at least one in eight drug users purchase illicit drugs from strangers or dealers they don't know directly. Kenward also work in schools and deliver one-to-one sessions on alcohol and substance misuse.

During pandemic lockdowns we experienced an increase in reports of cannabis use at home, with fumes more frequently infiltrating neighbouring properties and garden. This continued into 2022. With police and council officers now able to undertake home visits once again, many were arranged for the gathering of further intelligence, to offer words of advice or to service Community Protection Warnings.

Change. Grow. Live. (CGL) and We Are With You (formerly Addaction) are commissioned centrally to address alcohol and substance addiction with local adults and young people, most of whom do not come to the attention of the CSU.

Kent Public Health Observatory's Strategic Assessment reports substance misuse hospital admissions increased in 2021/22 to the highest number in five years. Emergency hospital admissions for alcohol also increased over the same period.

Groups of young people are still misusing open spaces in and around the town centre and some surrounding towns or villages with paraphernalia related to cannabis use, alcohol, vaping and Nox left in place. Outreach workers continue to report back to other partners, and areas of concern are discussed at the monthly District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting.

There's also a concern for the safety of the young people using our open spaces. There's a plausible risk from county lines operatives or Class A dealers, though the risk is made smaller by the work done by Kenward and the CPT.

We continue to support a busy night-time economy and we're committed to making the town centre safe for everyone to enjoy.

**We recommend Substance Misuse and Supply, and Alcohol-related Behaviour is made a priority for 2023/24**

## Anti-social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour decreased substantially with respect to 2022 (-27%) and 2019 (-24%). As welcome as these figures are they will not align with high levels of persistent anti-social behaviour experienced in a number of areas across the borough.

During the year Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and areas around Tunbridge Wells town centre suffered significant and persistent disorder as between 12 and 20 young people had started to coalesce into what appear to be 'young street groups' but may not always meet the official definition. CSU police officers, the Council's Community Safety Officer and KCC Early Help Outreach Workers targeted numerous individuals instigating anti-



social behaviour, with threats of violence, and with links to several areas across the borough in order

In addition to the types of harmful anti-social behaviour we are all familiar with, we are also concerned by the proliferation of low-level disrespectful behaviour which seems to set the tone for these groups of youngsters and which can quickly escalate to verbal abuse of passers-by, wanton criminal damage, and thankfully less frequently, physical abuse.

While we're encouraged by the overall reduction in reporting of anti-social behaviour when compared to 2019, there are often a number of other factors at play, such as the ease or difficulty in reporting incidents.

**We recommend Anti-social Behaviour is retained as a priority for 2023/24**

## Road Safety

Tunbridge Wells has the lowest level of casualties across Kent and many of the subcategories are on a downward trend or appreciably lower than the county average.

The under-16 'Seriously Injured' category doubled to 10 in 2020-21 but this had reduced by half during the most recent data. 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.

Two fatalities occurred during the period Oct 2021 to Sept 2022. One was an elderly motorcyclist and the other a car driver between the ages of 17-24.

The near-miss reporting tool on the Council's website continues to receive submissions. Reports made during the first year of operation were collated and summarised and sent to KCC Highways who very generously spent some time overlaying the reports with their crash map. The results of this exercise were returned to us in November and will be analysed for further attention over the next 12-months.

**We recommend Road Safety is retained as a priority for 2023/24**

## Violence Against Women and Girls

Partners have done much to improve the safety of women and girls in the night-time economy. In addition to the work outlined in the VAWG section of the full Strategic Assessment document we have collated outcomes from the PCC's VAWG survey and the Home Office's StreetSafe Reporting Tool. The locations have been mapped and the CSU (principally, Kent Police, TWBC and STP) have committed to undertake visual audits of these locations to see what can be done to make them feel safer for residents. The Soroptimists have kindly offered to assist with this project.

There's still more to be done in terms of making people feel more safe more often, and we remain focused on the night-time economy as a source of violent or abusive behaviour towards women.

Further, specific authorities have been directed to work together to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty set out in part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. Guidance was released in December of 2022 and is currently being worked through. The Kent & Medway Violence Reduction Unit are running workshops to assist with the creation of a needs assessment and partnership arrangements under which work to tackle or prevent serious violence can take place.

While local authority areas in the west typically have lower rates of serious violence than other parts of the county we have a thriving night-time economy and small numbers of youths and young adults who carry weapons and use violence or the fear of violence to control public spaces.

At this time, young people gathering in locations around Tunbridge Wells don't meet the definition of a "young street group" but this can change quickly and repeat violence amongst some key individuals offers the opportunity for a focussed deterrence which, if effective, can break up a group of young people by removing the key player or players.

**We recommend Violent Behaviour (incl. Violence Against Women and Girls, NTE, knife crime) is made a priority for 2023/24**

## **Recommended Priorities for 2023/24**

1. Domestic Abuse
2. Substance Misuse and Supply, and Alcohol-related Behaviour
3. Anti-social Behaviour
4. Road Safety
5. Violent Behaviour (incl. Violence Against Women and Girls, NTE, knife crime)