

Equalities Monitoring – Services

Appendix C – Community Safety

Annual Report - 2013-14



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1. Introduction

The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act set up Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) throughout England and Wales to make key agencies work together to reduce crime and disorder. These partner agencies are the local authority, police, fire service, the health service (Clinical Commissioning Group) and the probation service. The Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership has worked hard for the past ten years to make Bracknell Forest a safer place.

The purpose of equalities monitoring is to ensure the Council is providing a fair and equitable service to all residents. Although the Community Safety Team (CST), does not provide a service directly to the public, it has an impact in improving the health and wellbeing of the community by working with partners to eliminate victimisation, discrimination and harassment. These are crucial elements in terms of equalities.

To ensure the service is having an impact in terms of equalities, monitoring has been undertaken in terms of:

- Performance/Outcomes

The monitoring in this report is an assessment of how successful the team is in working with partners to reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in the following areas:

- Reducing hate crime
- Reducing racist incidents
- Reducing domestic violence
- Reducing repeat incidents of domestic violence
- Reducing homophobic incidents

The areas to be monitored above affect all residents but have particular relevance to the following groups:

- Race
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief
- Disability
- Those who have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment

The data below has been taken from:

- Thames Valley Police website – excluding non-recordable crime
- Thames Valley Police performance team

2. Outcomes/Performance

Hate crime is any criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by hostility towards someone based on their disability, race, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation. Hate crimes are taken to mean any crime where the perpetrator's hostility or prejudice against an identifiable group of people is a factor in determining who is victimised.

Hate Crime includes transphobic, homophobic, racist, disablist and faith related crimes. The table below shows the trend over the last three to five years (where available).

Trends in Hate Crime - 2009 to 2014					
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
April - March	73	74	46	33	54
<i>Source: Thames Valley Police website</i>					

The 2013/14 figure for Hate Crime is 54 (same source). Whilst the figures have risen since 2012/13 they are still low compared to the period 2009 – 2011. This recent increase could be because of increased awareness and reporting of hate crimes following a campaign to raise awareness in 2012/13.

During the year 2013/14 Bracknell Forest had the lowest number of reported hate crimes of the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities

Reports of Hate Crime from Berkshire Unitary Authorities 2013/14					
Bracknell Forest	West Berkshire	Reading	Wokingham	Windsor & Maidenhead	Slough
54	91	130	62	66	186

Racist Incidents (recorded crime) in Bracknell Forest 2009 to 2014					
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
April to March	65	64	39	28	46

The 2013/14 figure for racist incidents (recorded crime) is 46 which is a rise on the previous year but still better than the average for the years 2009 – 2012. It is also one of the lowest levels in the Thames Valley area. The recent increase could also be attributed to a positive campaign in 2012/13 to raise awareness.

Racist Incidents (non-recorded crime) in Bracknell Forest				
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
April to March	33	38	27	21

The above table shows the last 4 years data for non-recordable racist incidents (i.e. racist incidents where there was no crime committed). This figure has remained stable despite significant new communities in the Borough which includes Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities as well as housing developments.

Comments

The hate crimes in Bracknell Forest are predominantly racist incidents. Bracknell Forest has the second lowest number of racist incidents within the Thames Valley area despite a growing population and an increasingly diverse community.

Work continues to be done to reduce hate crime. Throughout the year the Council, Police and Voluntary Sector have supported the 'One Community: Stop hate crime now', campaign. This is the strap line for a variety of projects intended to raise awareness of all hate crime. The Community Cohesion & Engagement Partnership which is made up of representatives from partnership statutory organisations has regularly monitored hate crime incidents and has been consulted and involved in the delivery of the One Community: Stop Hate Crime Now campaign. In addition the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) led by Thames Valley Police and made up of community representatives has also carried out regular monitoring.

The Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership is also investing in a community publication which will go to every home in the Borough and a GPs Health Care Guide for users of health services to promote domestic abuse services in the Borough. Hate crime and domestic abuse can be reported anonymously via the Bracknell Forest Council website.

3. Local Views

General Fear of Crime

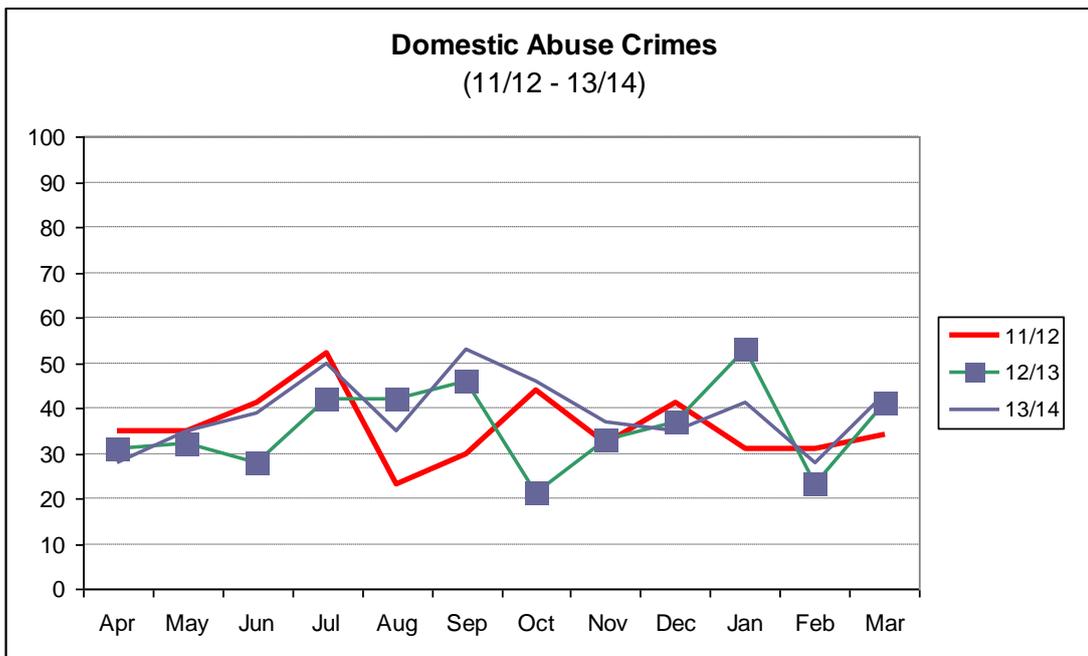
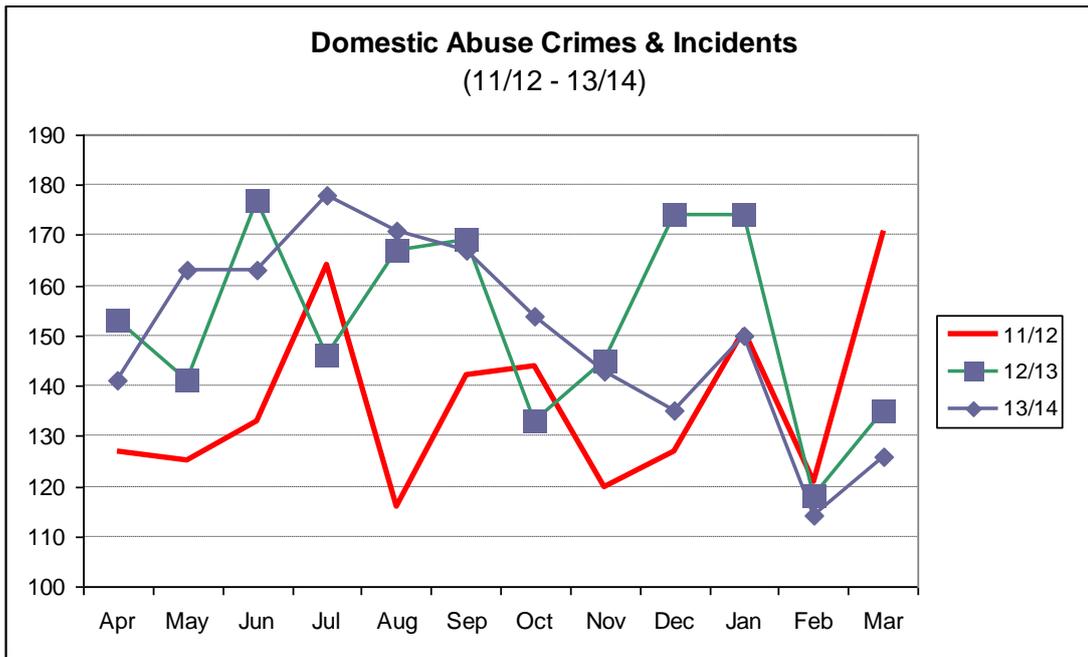
The Bracknell Forest Residents Survey was last undertaken in 2012 and is due to be repeated in 2014. When asked what the best thing was about living in Bracknell Forest, the low level of crime came third after access to nature and parks and green spaces. Every opportunity is taken to inform the community of the low level of crime and disorder within the Borough and various media outlets are used to convey falling numbers of recorded crime throughout the year. There is no reason to presume that perceptions of crime and disorder within the Borough have been adversely affected by events locally.

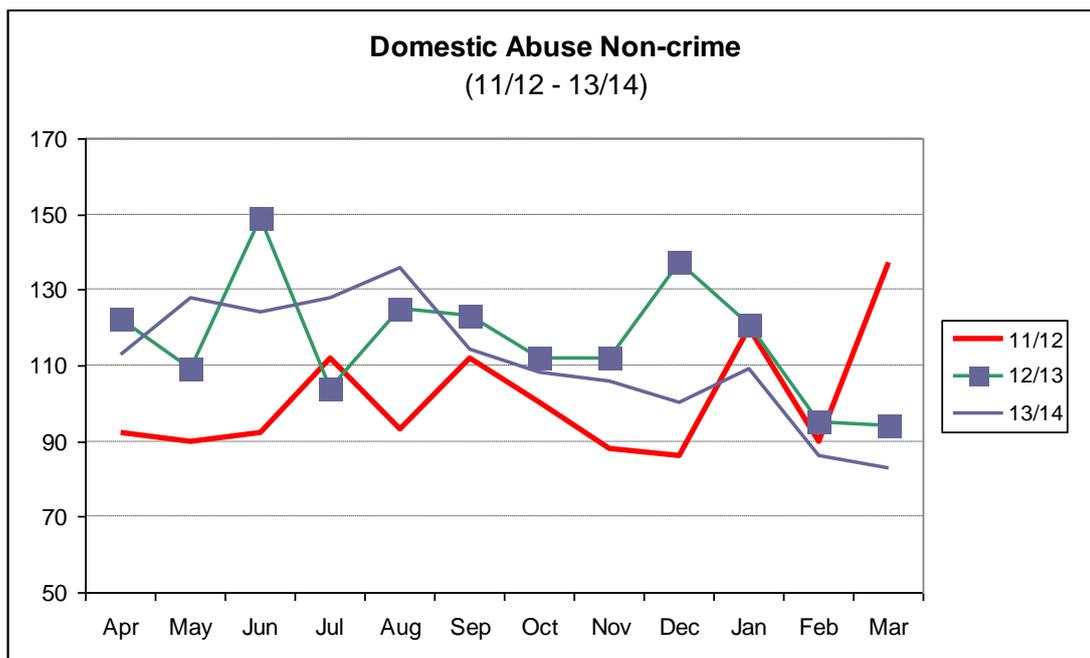
4. Actions from last year's equalities monitoring

- £100k was made available to address domestic abuse in 2013/14. The intention was to achieve 3 targets agreed by the Bracknell Forest Domestic Abuse Forum (DAF):
 - Reduce the number of reported criminal offences committed by the Domestic Abuse Service Co-ordination (DASC) cohorts
 - Reduce the number of children on Child Protection Plans (CPPs) where domestic abuse (DA) is a factor and the perpetrator has participated in the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Service (DAPS) programme
 - Achieve the detection rate for domestic abuse assaults with injury
- Following consultation, it was decided by the Community Safety Partnership that the targets should reflect the cohorts that we are working directly with, as opposed to aiming to achieve widespread overall reductions. This approach to reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse is the subject of an evaluation by Cambridge University who are due to report back by late 2014.

5. Domestic Abuse

The graphs below show the trend in reporting both DA crimes and non-crimes (incidents e.g. verbal assault) between 2012 and 2014. As the graphs show, the levels of crime and non-crime incidents have risen but have reduced towards the end of 2013-14. The increase in the number of non-crime domestic abuse incidents is believed to be due, in part, to increased confidence on the part of victims to report and increased awareness on the part of professionals. The graphs below compares the numbers of crime and non-crime incidents recorded by Thames Valley Police during the years 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14. There are no clear trends but it would appear reporting is highest in the summer months and lowest each February. The majority of the reports of DA show women as victims. Where men are recorded as victims these cases can involve mutual abuse. DA can also involve same sex relationships. The last domestic homicide in Bracknell Forest (Sept 2012) was between two men.





The table below shows the repeat rate for reported domestic abuse incidents in Bracknell Forest. The repeat rate has increased from 2012-13 to 2013-14. Reasons for this remain unclear but are believed to be due in part to an increase in the confidence to report domestic abuse following intensive media activity throughout the year. One particular campaign; 'It's Never OK' received considerable local media coverage in 2013/14.

Bracknell Forest - April 2013 to March 2014
(2012-13 shown in brackets)

	Number of Domestic Incidents	Repeats	Repeat Rate
Valid Crime	475 (425)	232 (196)	48.8% (46.1%)
Non crime incident and non-recordable crime	1334 (1404)	639 (623)	47.9% (44.4%)
TOT	1809 (1829)	871 (819)	48.1% (44.8)%

Annual DA Action Plans for 2012/13 and 2013/14 are available which show the projects funded by the 100K and the year-end progress in each area. This is available on request from community.safety@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

The Domestic Abuse Service Co-ordination (DASC) project is currently being evaluated by Cambridge University who have requested that a cohort of 90 couples be identified to receive enhanced interventions while another cohort of 90 couples receive the standard level of service. The University will report back with their findings in 2014.

6. Conclusion

Crime continues to fall in Bracknell Forest and despite local campaigns to raise awareness of hate crime and domestic abuse in particular; the number of reports remains low compared with other CSPs and local authority areas within the Thames Valley. The annual strategic assessment of the CSP has not found any evidence to contradict the low numbers of reported incidents. The report this year does not contain any recommendations since the findings did not support any.