



SCSN Briefing Paper No 04 – Personal Safety

1 Topics

- Domestic Violence
- Alcohol Misuse
- Fear of Crime
- Hate Crime
- Drug Misuse

2 Executive Summary

Between 2009/10 51,926 incidents of domestic violence were recorded, a decrease of 4% from 2008/09. In addition, 62% of incidents led to the recording of at least one crime or offence, an increase of 7% from 2008/09. Data has shown that the number of incidents where the woman is recorded as the perpetrator and the man as the victim has risen by 7% since 2001. Figures suggest that women aged between 22 and 25 years and males aged between 31 and 35 years are most at risk of becoming victims of domestic abuse. The trend is similar in cases of rape. Scotland has long been criticised for its extremely low conviction rate (3%). However, new figures show that there has been an increase in the number of cases that reach court and result in conviction. Between 2008/09 and 2009/10 there was an additional 15 convictions.

The number of recorded racist incidents fell by 2% between 2007/08 and 2009/10. Incidents of race related crime tend to be higher in urban areas with most incidents occurring in the street. In 2008/09, where ethnic origin was known, 48% of victims were of Asian origin and 76% of victims were male. With regards perpetrators, 96% were of white origin and 46% were aged 20 years or under. An Ipsos Mori study examined the perceptions of Muslims in Scotland and noted that the largest practical barrier to integration in Scotland was the dominance of alcohol in Scottish culture. Similarly, the involvement of alcohol is high in Religiously Aggravated Crime. Recent statistics show that the majority of incidents occurred in the Glasgow and Lanarkshire area with 95% relating to Catholic or Protestant religions. A third of these cases related to football and 12% related to marches or parades. Approximately half these incidents are reported to have involved alcohol.

According to research (Stonewall Scotland) approximately 6% of the Scottish population are LGBT. This research found that more than 1 in 3 had experienced a physical attack and more than 2 in 3 had experienced a verbal attack. 61% of the survey respondents never reported the incident to the Police. Furthermore, a third of people said they did not feel safe in their neighbourhood and 50% stated that they felt this was because they were LGBT. Those with a disability report a similar experience. Approximately 19% of the Scottish population has a disability and those with a learning disability or a mental health condition report a higher rate of victimisation than those without a disability. Research by Capability Scotland showed that 47% of people with a disability have experienced a form of hate crime. 73% of survey respondents reported that they had felt frightened, had been attacked, intimidated or verbally abused. In addition, 31% of those surveyed who had a disability and had been victims of hate crime had experienced attacks at least once a month. As with race related incidents, most hate crimes against a person with a disability occurred in public spaces.

Reported crime rates have fallen considerably but Fear of Crime has not seen a corresponding fall. As the SCJS reveals, people do not necessarily base this fear on officially reported levels of crime but rather as a result of their own experiences, for example their background, what happens in their neighbourhood and what is reported in the media. The relationship that exists between deprivation and fear of crime is strong. The risk of being a victim of crime is higher in the 15% most deprived areas. Overall, when asked how safe people felt walking alone in their local area after dark, the majority said they felt safe, 21% said they felt a bit unsafe and 12% said they felt very unsafe. Women and previous victims of crime report feeling more unsafe. Although women report feeling more unsafe than men, they are statistically less likely to be victims of crime. Those within the LGBT community and those with a disability also report a heightened fear of crime. The Gay British Crime survey reports

that one in ten lesbian or gay people say that being a victim of crime is their biggest worry. Results from the Scottish Household Survey show that 33% of those with a disability feel unsafe walking alone after dark, 34% with an illness or health problem feel unsafe and 42% who have both an illness and a disability feel unsafe.

Alcohol is identified as a factor across all areas of Community Safety. At present, Scotland has the highest death rate in the UK from alcohol misuse (1:20 Deaths attributed to alcohol). Sales and consumption of alcohol have significantly increased while the cost of alcohol misuse to the Scottish economy in 2006/07 was estimated to be £2.5 billion. With regards to young people and alcohol consumption, the number who reported that they drank with their parent's knowledge has increased. This coincides with the number of young people who obtained alcohol from friends and relatives increasing from 15% in 1998 to 32% in 2008. In addition, the 2009/10 SCJS noted that victims perceived their offender to be under the influence of alcohol in 62% of violent crime incidents. Furthermore, 77% of young offenders reported that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the offence.

Drug misuse also has strong ties to crime. The 2009 Scottish Prison Service survey noted that just under 45% of the prison population surveyed were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence and 41% stated that drug use was a problem for them outside prison. Statistics show that drug misuse is a significant issue with available data highlighting that Scotland has one of the highest opiate use rates in Western and Central Europe at 1.6% among the population aged 15-64. Scotland also has the highest prevalence of cocaine use, a rate which has remained stable since 2006. It is estimated that in 2006 there were approximately 55,328 problematic drug users with conservative estimates of the associated economic and social costs of drug misuse at £3.5 billion.

The overall number of drug related deaths has risen in seven of the last ten years and the trend shows that this number is increasing. Regarding young people and drug misuse, the SALSUS survey reveals that the prevalence of drug use and type in persons under 15 years has remained the same since 2006 with 7% of 13 year olds and 23% of 15 year olds reporting using drugs at some point in their lives with Cannabis remaining the most commonly used drug.

3 Key Statistics

- 51,926 recorded incidents of domestic violence in 2009/10, a decrease of 4% from 2008/09.
- Incidents with female perpetrator and male victim increased by 7% since 2000/01.
- More than 1 in 3 LGBT people have experienced a physical attack and more than 2 in 3 have experienced a verbal attack.
- 47% of people with a disability have experienced hate crime.
- Reported crime rates have fallen considerably in Scotland but Fear of crime has not seen a corresponding fall.
- 2009/10 SCJS 97% of respondents viewed alcohol as being a problem and 74% said they viewed it as a big problem.
- 545 drug related deaths in 2009 a decrease of 5% from 2008, however it is still the second highest figure ever recorded in Scotland.

4 Discussion Questions

- What are the challenges for personal safety in the next 5-10 years?
- Are there any examples of effective projects or initiatives that we should be promoting the roll out of?
- As regards preventative spending – what should our three priorities be, and who do we need to work in partnership/collaboratively with to achieve these?

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