

East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership



2016/17 BRIEFING TWO THE RISE IN VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON

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OVERVIEW OF TRENDS IN VIOLENT CRIMES

Over the longer-term, levels of violent crime measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) have shown substantial falls (35% since 2005/06). **CSEW** findings for the latest survey year (2015/16), however, show **no significant change** in levels of violence compared with the previous survey year¹.

Conversely, **police recorded violent crime is rising** both nationally and at the local County level, with a 24% and 20% increase, respectively, in the financial year to 2015/16. Nationally these rises are the highest recorded in a 12 month period since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002.

CSEW reported violent crime = long term-falls, short-term stable

Police recorded violent crime = rising substantially



Ultimately, the rise observed in police recorded crime has been attributed to the change in recording practise brought about by the 2014 HMIC inspection and subsequent report “Crime recording: making the victim count”. Given the lack of comparable rises in the CSEW reported violent crime it is reasonable to assume that the HMIC inspection has indeed had a large impact on police recorded crime. However, recording practises can vary between force areas and thus the proximate cause of rises at the local level local are less well understood. Thus the purpose of this briefing paper is to investigate rises in violent crime in East Cambridgeshire to ensure they are understood, and that any actual rises in violent crime are not being masked by the change in recording practises.

Definition: violent offences

Violent offences in police recorded crimes are referred to as ‘violence against the person’ and include homicide, violence with injury, and violence without injury².

Violence with injury - includes all incidents of wounding and assault with injury. Homicide is only included for police recorded crime. Police recorded crime also includes attempts at inflicting injury, although the CSEW would not include these if no actual injury occurred.

Violence without injury - includes all incidents of assault without injury and, from the CSEW only, attempted assaults. From July 2013, police recorded crime no longer includes under this sub-category, possession of weapons offences and public order offences.³

DIFFERENTIATING VIOLENCE WITH AND WITHOUT INJURY

There have been marked rises in both the violence subcategories of ‘violence with injury’ and ‘violence without injury’; however these have not been equivalent. There has been a **sharp rise in violence without injury** shown across the whole County⁴. This time period shows the full impact of changes resulting from

¹ The apparent 4% increase was not statistically significant.

² It should be noted that the categories of ‘violence with injury’ and ‘violence without injury’ are not directly comparable between the CSEW and police recorded crime; and attempts to cause injury are categorised differently.

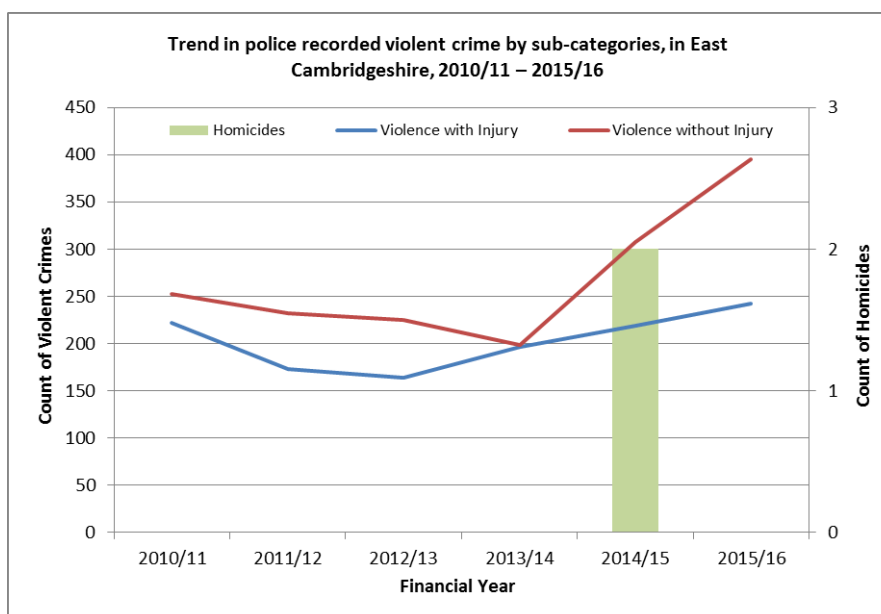
³ These offences are now included in new sub-categories within ‘Other crimes against society’ named ‘Possession of weapons offences’ and ‘Public order offences’. In order to produce a consistent time series, the year to March 2013 quarterly publication (and all subsequent publications) retrospectively applied the agreed changes to the police recorded crime classification to all data from 2002/03.

⁴ Excluding Peterborough.

changes to crime recording practices, with 2013/14 being the financial year prior to the change and 2015/16 being the year immediately following.

- There was a total of 4,391 police recorded crimes recorded during 2015/16⁵ in Cambridgeshire; a rise of 90% in the three years from 2013/14-2015/16
- The national rise for violence without injury between 2014/15-2015/16 was 81%
- Between 2013/14- 2015/16, national⁶ and County **rises in police recorded violence with injury were far lower than those observed for violence without injury** although were also substantial at 34% nationally and 18% for the County
- **East Cambridgeshire has reported a rise in violence without injury of 98%, and violence with injury of 23%, from 2013/14 to 2015/16.** (Note: This rise in violence without injury is higher than the county and the national level, but figures should be compared with caution as low overall crime levels in East Cambridgeshire means that rises have a greater impact on percentage change and may not be statistically representative of higher levels of increase)

Figure 1: Trend in police recorded violent crime by sub-categories, in East Cambridgeshire, 2010/11 – 2015/16



Source: CRG, 2016

NATIONAL EXPLANATIONS

Apparent increases in specific crime types

The CSEW 2016 describes the increases in police recorded violent crimes as a complex picture because there are a number of factors that have had significant impacts on the recorded crimes; unfortunately the impact each of these is confounded by other factors so it is difficult to isolate the specific impact of a single factor.

Changes to recording practices has seen the inclusion of sub-categories within violence without injury that were not included previously, the change to recording protocols for specific crime types. Additionally, the recognition and recording of new and emerging crime types have also had an impact. This is the case for:

⁵ Cambridgeshire Constabulary 2016.

⁶ CSEW June 2016

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingjune2016#latest-violent-crime-figures-present-a-complex-picture>.

- **Harassment** – where there are now two new sub-categories under this offence type that were not previously notifiable (Disclose private sexual photographs with intent to cause distress; and, sending letters etc with intent to cause distress or anxiety). Nationally these categories contributed a 36% rise in all violence against the person offences to June 2016⁷. **In East Cambridgeshire there has been an increase in Harassment between 2013/2016 of 200%, amounting to an extra 38 crimes in the district. Excluding these offences from the violence without injury category in the same time period still sees a rise of 88%, so these crimes are not responsible for the sharp rise observed in the district.**
- **Modern slavery** – recent efforts to disrupt modern slavery activities have resulted in more crimes being detected. The data used in this paper only includes one count of modern slavery, so this explanation is not relevant to East Cambridgeshire.
- **Attempted murder** – National increases in this crime type were not recorded locally in East Cambridgeshire
- **School-based crime recording** – the imperative to involve the police in crimes that occur within schools (see below this page: Further changes in how police record and deal with crimes) should amount to increased recording of crimes from these locations. This is not detectable in the data we have used in this paper, but a watching brief should be kept on this to identify emerging areas of concern.

Increased confidence to report and to record crimes

In recent years there has been greater professional awareness of violent crimes, in particular domestic abuse. Positive work, both local and nationally, has helped to promote awareness and this work should continue. Police recording and more incidents being reported to the police have both increased rather than an increase in actual levels of this abuse. The HMIC report Crime recording: making the victim count aimed to further increase these effects by highlighting that crime recording should reflect the experiences of victims not the convenience.

Rise in historic reporting

Alongside increased trust to report is an increase in reports of historic abuse. In particular the impact of national attention of sexual offences, via the publicity of Operation Yewtree for instance, has greatly impacted on the reporting of sexual violence.

Further changes in how police record and deal with crimes

In 2016, the Home Office released new crime recording standards⁸. These standards follow the principles outlined by the 2014 HMIC report, Crime Recording: making the victim count⁹, and set-out the Home Office vision to improve police recording with the aim to:

- a) To promote accurate and consistent crime recording between police forces; and
- b) To take a victim oriented approach to crime recording.

This includes changes in recording of incidents on school premises; *It is expected that the impact of this change in recording practice, if any, would not be picked up in recording figures for another few years.*

⁷ CSEW 2016 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingjune2016#latest-violent-crime-figures-present-a-complex-picture>

⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/566188/count-general-nov-2016.pdf.

⁹ <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count/>

LOCAL EXPLANATION

Increase in police recording of data with no victim support

“Historically an officer may have asked whether they wish to record/report an incident, they now say they ARE recording a crime and then ask what the victim wants to happen.” DCI Donna Wass

There have been a number of consequences of the HMIC report ‘Crime recording: making the victim count’. One of the most substantial imperatives of the report has been to reduce the number of reasons allowable to not record a crime. Different crime types have been more susceptible than others to the impact of changes. Violence without injury crimes, in particular, are thought to be one of the crime types, specifically because victims may not always wish to officially report the crime, or may change their mind after they have initially spoken with police: referred to as disengagement by the victim. Disengagement by the victim with the crime recording process was reported to be responsible for over a quarter of under-recorded crime. Where previously, lack of victim engagement was a reason for not recording a crime, the HMIC report has made it implicit that if a crime occurs and is known about, it should be recorded.

Key findings of analysis

Violence against the person crimes have been disproportionately affected by the change in recording practices resulting from the 2014 HMIC inspection report, with a larger proportion of crimes in this category showing ‘no victim support’ to record. Specifically, the increases have been greatest for violence without injury crimes – especially those with a domestic abuse marker.

Analysis of police recorded crime from East Cambridgeshire (see Table 1) shows the summary of violent crimes that were recorded with a classification of ‘no victim support’¹⁰, which represents lack of engagement by the victim. The comparison shows that in 2014 (the year preceding the HMIC report) there were far fewer violent crimes recorded as having ‘no victim support’ than in 2015 (after the HMIC report). The increase in the volume violent crimes between 2014 and 2015 (100 crimes) is also roughly equivalent to the increase in the crimes with a category of ‘no victim support’ applied (90 crimes).

- **All crime** – From 2014 to 2015 there has been a **slight increase** in all types of police recorded crimes within East Cambridgeshire that indicated that there was no support from the victim from 6.4% to 9.0%, a 41% increase.
- **Violence against the person** – From 2014 to 2015, the **proportion of violence against the person crimes categorised as ‘no support victim support’ rose substantially** from 11.7% to 25.3%, an increase of 161%.
- **Violence without injury**
 - **Increases in no victim support have been greatest for the violence without injury crimes**, with an increase of 69 crimes (256%) from 2014 to 2015. Of these 69, 39 had a marker indicating domestic abuse.

The increases seen in the violence with and without injury crimes are largely explained by increases in crimes recorded with ‘no victim support’. The proportion of the increase count in

¹⁰ this data was collected from the police field ‘disposal’

crimes recorded as 'no victim support' amounts to: Violence with injury = 92% ; Violence without injury = 72%

- **Domestic abuse**

- The recording of domestic abuse related crimes was anticipated to have been effected by the changes in recording practises set out by the HMIC. In 2014 and 2015, around 40% of all VAP recorded has a descriptor category (marker) that includes domestic abuse. Between 2014 and 2015 there was an increase of 49 crimes (245%) that also had 'no victim support'.
- Unsurprisingly crimes with a domestic abuse marker increases to 47% of all violence against the person crimes with no victim support. Clearly the change in the recording practises has resulted in greater recording of domestic abuse by officers.

Table 1: Crimes recorded by police as 'no victim support', comparing all crimes and sub-groups of violence against the person crimes, and change between years, East Cambridgeshire 2014 – 2015

	Year	2014	2015	Count change year to year	% change year to year	
		All Violence Against the Person	<i>Crimes</i>	478	578	100
	<i>'No victim support'</i>	56	146	90	161%	
	<i>% 'no victim support'</i>	11.7%	25.3%		116%	
Violence against the person	Violence without injury	<i>Crimes</i>	265	361	96	36%
		<i>'No victim support'</i>	27	96	69	256%
		<i>% 'no victim support'</i>	10.2%	26.6%		161%
		<i>Crimes</i>	212	216	4	2%
		<i>'No victim support'</i>	29	53	24	83%
		<i>% 'no victim support'</i>	13.7%	24.5%		79%
	VAP with domestic abuse marker	<i>Crimes</i>	204	227	23	11%
		<i>'No victim support'</i>	20	69	49	245%
		<i>% 'no victim support'</i>	9.8%	30.4%		210%
	Harassment	<i>Crimes</i>	34	34	0	0%
		<i>'No victim support'</i>	5	5	0	0%
		<i>% 'no victim support'</i>	14.7%	14.7%		0%
All crime		<i>Crimes</i>	2,456	2,514	58	2%
		<i>'No victim support'</i>	157	227	70	45%
		<i>% 'no victim support'</i>	6.4%	9.0%		41%

Source: CRG 2016.

SUMMARY

- The HMIC inspection report Crime recording: making the victim count was published in 2014 and has made imperative changes to the way police record crimes, notably insisting that crimes are recorded irrespective of if a victim engages with the recording process or not.
- Since 2014, police recorded violent crime is rising both nationally and locally at the District and county level.
- Specifically there has been steep rise in violence without injury.

- The CSEW does not reflect these rises, implying that the increases in police recorded crime result from changes to recording practises and are not reflecting rises in the number of crimes occurring.
- Violence against the person crimes have been disproportionately affected by the change in recording practices resulting from the 2014 HMIC inspection report, with the largest proportion of recorded crimes with no victim support.
- Increases have been greatest for violence without injury crimes – especially those with a domestic abuse marker.
- Impacts from changes to In 2016, the Home Office crime recording standards are yet to be measurable

RECOMMENDATIONS

The rise in violent crime statistics in East Cambridgeshire is a positive outcome, with the shift in recording behaviour by Officers opening up more opportunities to identify and manage risks, engage with, and therefore support victims. Efforts to increase public confidence in the criminal justice system and successfully engage victims should now to be the focus to ensure these opportunities are maximised.

Future review of the impacts of latest Home Office Recording Standards should occur at a later date; especially changes to the reporting protocol now in place for schools as this may highlight areas of concern for the CSP. This is particularly the case as the change in reporting crimes in schools should be kept in perspective to ensure that it is not seen as an opportunity to criminalise young people. However, the outcomes of the changes may provide opportunities to engage positively with young people and provide insights into where education and awareness raising would best be targeted.