



Cambridgeshire
County Council



Cambridgeshire
Research
Group

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership



2017/18

BRIEFING FOUR

VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON

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DOCUMENT OUTLINE

The purpose of this strategic assessment is to provide the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) with an understanding of the recent increase in police recorded violence (VAP) in the district with a particular focus on violence in the night time economy and the nature of the violence without injury offences. This will enable the partnership to take action that is driven by clear evidence.

This document and previous strategic assessments can be accessed on the Cambridgeshire Insight pages here <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/huntingdonshire/>

DOCUMENT SCHEDULE

The Partnership has a continuous assessment process that allows for strategic planning throughout the year. The aim of each document is to gain a better understanding of an agreed key issue in the district. The continuous assessment consists of 4 parts agreed by the Partnership:

Document	Key theme	Analysis & Writing	Presentation
1	Anti Social Behaviour	Jun & July	July 2017
2	Offenders	Aug & Sept	October 2017
3	End of Year Review	Dec & Jan	January 2018
4	Violence	Feb & Mar	April 2018

ADDITIONAL DATA

The interactive community safety map and report provides some of the main crime and disorder issues at ward level. The tools allows the user to review the data directly on the map or in a chart. It can be accessed here;

<https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/communitysafety/>

The Pyramid of Crime victim offender interactive profile is presented at district level and can be accessed here:

<https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/communitysafety/topics/offenders/vona-gender-and-age-pyramid/>

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KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

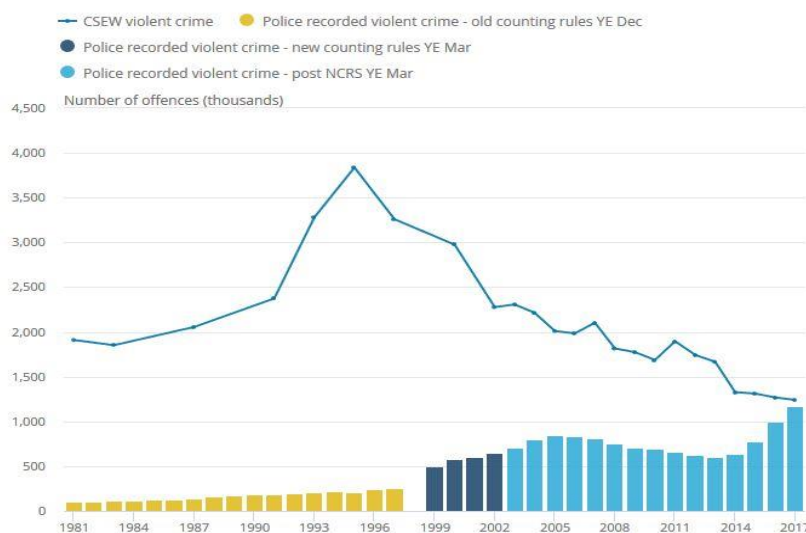
This report looks to update and develop the information available on historic and current issues affecting Huntingdonshire in relation to violence. A brief examination of what resource and interventions are currently focussed on tackling these issues was conducted, however a more thorough review might provide a fuller picture.

KEY FINDINGS

Is violence increasing?

There is a continued rise in police recorded VAP (violence against the person) offences both locally and nationally, this can be viewed in part as a positive with the continued shift in recording behaviour by officers due to changes to National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS also known as the Home Office Counting Rules¹) and the reclassification of certain crime types. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) however reports a long term decline in violence with little or no change in the last 3 years. However there has been an increase in police recorded violence against the person offences. Police recorded violence is not considered as accurate a measure as the CSEW but police recorded violence with injury increases are considered an accurate measure due to the likelihood of reporting from victims.

- Police recorded Violence against the person offences have increased significantly
- The majority of the increase is attributed to violence without injury offences
- The most frequent offence type is 'Common Assault'
- Huntingdon sector records the highest volume of violence without injury offences.



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office and Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Figure 1 National Violent Crime Trend

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime>

What is the nature of the violence?

The bulk of the increase in offences within violence without injury is made up of 'common assault' offences. In addition the reclassification of malicious communications within violence without injury has contributed to the rise. With regard to malicious electronic communications this is an offence type that is relatively new and so likely to grow in the foreseeable future. Harassment is another area where because of recent high profile cases of sexual harassment and the increased profile of crimes against women in general, more cases are likely to be reported which can be viewed as a positive step.

Violence within the night time economy was a key focus of this report. The results showed that despite the police recording the highest volumes of VAP at times commonly expected with alcohol related night time violence, it is not a worsening issue. This data highlighted that VAP is occurring at all periods throughout the day and not necessarily on weekends where alcohol related violence would be expected to be more prevalent, but on weekdays and throughout the day too. This indicates other drivers are at work, however the scope of this research was unable to delve further into all the primary causes of violence. It is possible that there is increased reporting of domestic violence in the form of common assault as well as harassment and malicious communications offences. Violence within the night time economy should not be ignored and the Partnership should remain vigilant but the issue appears not to be the main driver of the recent increases to VAP.

- The level of violent offences associated with the night time economy is **not** increasing in Huntingdonshire.
- A large majority of violent offences occur outside of known pub cluster areas, potentially indicating that Domestic Violence and other offences are being more frequently recorded.
- No assertion can be made that alcohol is not a cause of violent crime but it can be said that it is not a significant cause for concern in and around areas of pubs and clubs. Violent offences occur consistently throughout the week and at all times of the day.
- Judging whether there is a genuine rise in violence without injury offences is difficult due to the changes to recording practices and the willingness of victims to report offences.
- At least 16% of violence without injury offences have a domestic violence marker attributed to the offence.

What is being done to tackle violence locally?

There are various measures, task groups and organisations that are tasked with tackling the various forms of violence that are evident in Huntingdonshire. This can be task groups by geographical area such as Oxmoor, or thematic groups the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service) and Outreach services which looks to support victims of violence against women and girls as well as educate others. This includes harassment and stalking. In addition theatre productions have been commissioned for school children, focusing this year on County Lines. The purpose of which is to educate and dissuade people from venturing down a path that could lead to violence. Finally the most immediate and obvious interventions of licencing venues that sell alcohol and policing those areas that have a high concentration of pubs and clubs.

Gaps

The gaps evident are services or leadership to tackle violence as a whole. The services and interventions mentioned above are specific functions to tackle specific issues but do not formulate a wider strategy of tackling violent crime.

As violence without injury offences could be deemed an area of lesser importance when compared to more serious issues such as organised crime / county lines or domestic violence against women and girls it could continue to rise for the foreseeable future.

The analysis has also found an increase in violence with injury as previously mentioned, but as this was not part of the original scope of the report, further analysis is required to fully understand this aspect of violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report has highlighted that traditional forms of violence such as night time economy violence in and around pubs and clubs are not responsible for the increases in VAP in recent years. Therefore, there are other elements of VAP that are still unclear to the partnership. In particular common assault in residential areas, harassment and malicious communications are three offence types that are continually be recorded more frequently.

- Remain vigilant to violence within the night time economy but no need at this time to implement further resources.
- Continue to focus on Domestic Violence awareness raising and prevention strategies through the county wide strategies
- Focus on preventative measures relating to harassment and malicious communications - potentially through education in schools and local communities.
- Conduct further research into the primary causes of violence

With the rise of social media and its use by younger and younger children it is recommended that the partnership work closely with schools to educate and inform children of the dangers of their online participation and the consequences of online bullying. A potential option is the further use of the theatre group Alter Ego and the implementation of its Tough Love production in schools that focuses on health relationships. Another alternative is a production that focus on online bullying.

When analysed, 45% of the violent offences outside of the pub clusters showed signs of being a domestic violence incident in St Neots so supporting the county wide White Ribbon campaign should remain a priority while also aiming to protect other vulnerable people at risk of violent offences in their home.²

White Ribbon Campaign

The White Ribbon campaign sets out to end all male violence against women. It seeks to engage men in calling out bullying, harassment and violent behaviour against women. They provide training and outreach to local authorities and other organisations.

² 19 of 42 incidents

OVERVIEW IN TRENDS

In the long term both nationally and locally, the level of violent crime has decreased substantially. The CSEW (Crime Survey for England and Wales) shows a long term reduction from the mid-90s to today with little or **no significant change** in the level of violence seen in year ending 2016/17 nationally. This long term trend is also reflected locally.³

Conversely, Police recorded violent crime levels in recent years have been rising significantly. Locally, in the latest calendar year (2017) there was a 23.7% increase from the previous year. This is also reflected nationally with a 20% increase.

The nature of these increases in police recorded crime in recent years are primarily attributed to the change in recording standards brought about by the national recording standards and the 2014 HMIC inspection. Given the lack of a rise of violent crime within the CSEW it is likely that the increase can be explained by changes in recording practices but the nature of offending remains unclear.

Differentiating between violence with and without injury

Violent offences in police recorded crimes are referred to as 'violence against the person' or VAP offences and include homicide, violence with injury, and violence without injury.

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 included possession of weapons offences and public order offences. Violence without injury also includes malicious communications offences as well as harassment.

Both violence with and without injury offences have increased in volume from 2016 to 2017, with the significant proportion of the increase (89%) in violent offences attributable to violence without injury offences.

The table below highlights the increases from 2016 to 2017 in Huntingdonshire.

Table 1: Huntingdonshire District police recorded crime⁴

	2016	2017	Change in volume	% change
Violence with injury	723	791	68	+ 9.4%
Violence without injury	1,264	1,814	550	+ 43.5%
Total Violent offences	1987	2605	618	+ 23.7%

³ A 11% reduction was not deemed statistically significant.

⁴ All figures and tables are taken from CADET and run to the end of December 2017

Across the County the picture is similar with a rise of 24.6% in violent offences from 13,234 to 16,489 offences from 2016 to 2017.⁵

National Context⁶

Violence against the person (VAP) offences recorded by the police in England & Wales increased by 18% in the year ending March 2017 (1.17 million), compared to the year ending March 2016 (990,000). The main driver of this rise, both locally and nationally, is believed to be improvements in crime recording processes. Whereas, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)⁷ showed no statistically significant change in the number of incidents in the year ending March 2017 (1.2 million), compared to the previous year. Therefore, it indicates that violence levels may not be increasing at the rate of recorded levels.

In terms of the categories behind the increase in recorded violence offences, harassment accounted for 37% of the overall increase. The number of stalking and harassment offences has more than doubled in the last two years, which has been put down mainly to recording improvements. Also, the expansion of harassment to include two new offences⁸ has been a factor in the rise in this crime.

In the year ending March 2017 there were just 724 homicides recorded, which accounts for 0.1% of total VAP offences. This was a 26% increase compared to the previous year, however it did include the 96 cases of manslaughter that results from the events in Hillsborough in 1989. Excluding these cases, the number of homicides increased by 9% - with a 24% increase in cases of manslaughter and a 7% increase in cases of murder.

The longer term trend of police recorded VAP has seen an increase of 94% between the year ending March 2013 and the year ending March 2017. This increase followed a period of gradual decrease in recorded offences between the year ending March 2005 and year ending March 2013. Within this recent increase, violence with injury has seen an 8% increase from the previous year, which follows a fluctuating trend since the year ending March 2003. It peaked in the year ending March 2006 before gradually declining, but has risen again from the year ending March 2014.

It should be noted that the CSEW has seen a statistically significant decrease of 68% in the number of offences from the peak in 1995. This includes a decrease of 41% between the year ending March 2007 and the year ending March 2017, although it has remained relatively flat since the year ending March 2014. The CSEW shows that more than half of victims (57%) do not report their experiences to the police. This is a major explanation of the difference between the figures in the CSEW and the police recorded figures. Therefore, caution should be taken if focussing solely on the police recorded violence figures.

⁵ iBid

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/thenatureofviolentcrimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017>

⁷ Which is unaffected by changes in recording processes

⁸ "Disclosure of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause distress or anxiety" and "Sending letters with intent to cause distress or anxiety"

Violence without injury breakdown

- Huntingdon sector continues to record the largest volumes of violence without injury
- St Neots sector is the sector showing the steepest increase (over 2 years) and continued increase (over the last 21 months)
- Common Assault remains the subcategory of violence without injury with the largest volume across the district
- The largest volume and percentage rise is evident with common assault offences.

Offence type

The sub category of violence without injury is made up of various offences which do not result in the injury to a person but are deemed violent offences. These are displayed in the table below.

Table 2: Violence without injury sub-category count of crimes

Offence	2016	2017	Volume	%
ASSAULT ON CONSTABLE	26	25	-1	-4%
CHILD ABDUCTION	1	1	0	
COMMON ASSAULT	896	1109	213	19%
CONSPIRACY TO MURDER	0	1	1	
CRUELTY TO CHILDREN/YOUNG PERSONS	12	7	-5	
HARASSMENT	258	296	38	13%
KIDNAPPING	11	14	3	
MALICIOUS COMMUNICATIONS	0	140	140	
MODERN SLAVERY	1	6	5	
RACIALLY OR RELIGIOUSLY AGGRAVATED COMMON ASSAULT	5	12	7	
RACIALLY OR RELIGIOUSLY AGGRAVATED HARASSMENT	1	0	-1	
STALKING	6	7	1	
THREATS TO KILL	60	123	63	51%

Source: Police Crime File 2018

Notably, common assault (which is defined as an assault where there is **no injury or injuries which are not serious**⁹) is the most prevalent offence and has also seen the largest increase year on year, from 896 to 1109 offences. Other offences that have increased significantly are harassment, from 258 to 296 offences (13% increase) and threats to kill, from 60 to 123 offences (an increase of 51%).

The reorganisation of the offence of 'malicious communications' into the violence without injury category has contributed 25% (140 offences) of the total increase in violence without injury offences in 2017. Malicious communications can be defined as sending any indecent, threatening or offensive communication via letter or electronics means.¹⁰

Harassment –was re-classified in recent years to include two new sub-categories under this offence type that were not previously notifiable (disclosure of private sexual photographs with intent to cause distress; and, sending letters etc with intent to cause distress or anxiety).

⁹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/offences-against-person-incorporating-charging-standard>

¹⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/27/introduction>

Detailed Sample Analysis

Due to the wide range of crimes within violence without injury, further exploration of individual offences was necessary to explore the exact nature of these offences. To do this a dip sample was undertaken. This consisted of selecting 10% of violence without injury offences (160) at random and analysing the key information contained within the offence description that the police record. To do this a keyword search was done using select words such as 'alcohol', 'drink', 'drugs', 'domestic violence', and 'sexual abuse' among others. The purpose of this exercise is to gain a greater understanding of the individual offences but it should be noted that because of the limited sample size the results should be taken as an indication of the nature of crime only.

The findings revealed that only a small proportion (around 7%) of offences seem to have included alcohol/drugs or be near a licenced premise. As well as this, around 16% of all violence without injury offences contained a domestic violence (DV) element. Nationally police recorded crime figures showed that violence against the person (VAP) offences were the most likely to be flagged as being domestic-abuse related, followed by sexual offences (13%)¹¹. According to CADET data, 13% (1,185 of 9,183) of all crime recorded by police in Huntingdonshire in the year 2017-18 so far had a DV marker attached. This is up slightly from the 12% (1,069 of 8,855) of offences seen in the year 2016-17. Around a third of all assaults recorded in the sample involved the victim being punched/hit, with a third of victims of assault also being pushed/grabbed.

Geographical breakdown

Huntingdonshire is broken down into three sectors, Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots within police figures. Huntingdon sector expectedly showed the highest volume of police recorded violence without injury offences. The trend has been upward in all three sectors over the past three years with consistent rises across all areas of Huntingdonshire. This trend supports the theory that the reason behind the rise is consistent with the change in recording practices in 2014. The trends for each sector within Huntingdonshire can be seen on the following page.

Table 3 VAP in Huntingdonshire by Sector

	Huntingdon Sector		St Ives Sector		St Neots Sector	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
VAP	936	1255	565	676	488	676
With injury	324	348	205	217	194	226
Without Injury	612	907	359	457	293	450

Source: Cadet Feb 2018

¹¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingseptember2017#latest-violent-crime-figures-continue-to-present-a-complex-picture>

Figure 2: Huntingdon - Violence without injury recorded crimes

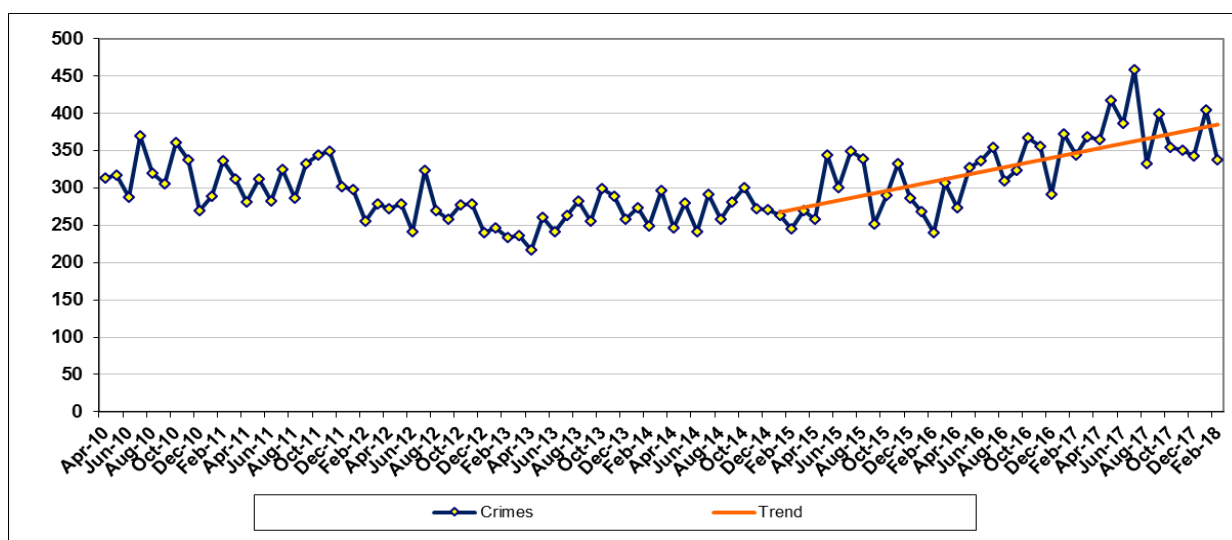


Figure 3: St. Ives - Violence without injury recorded crimes

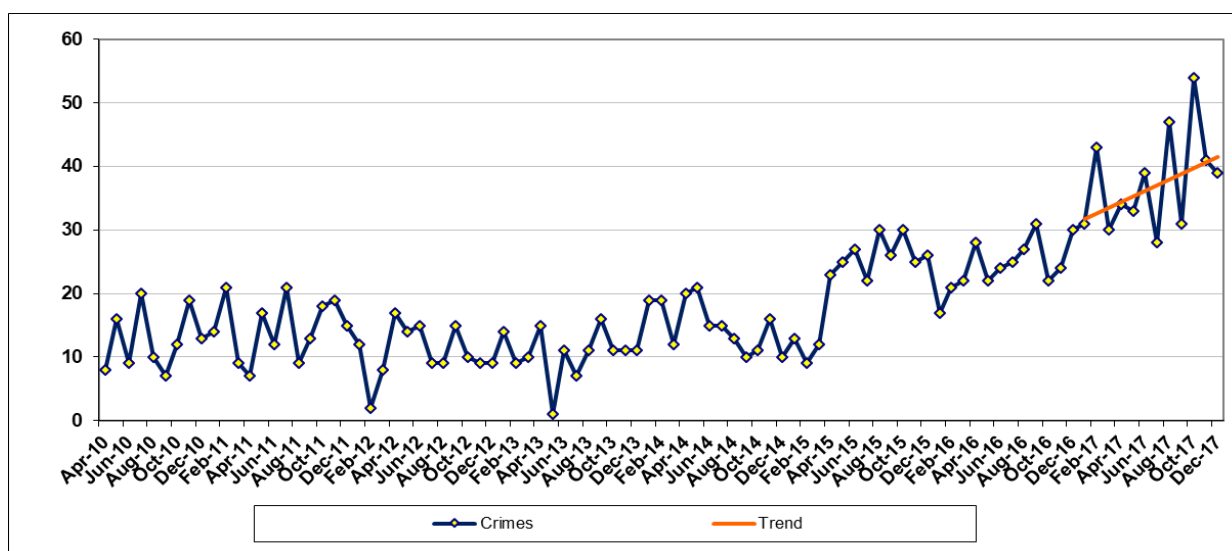
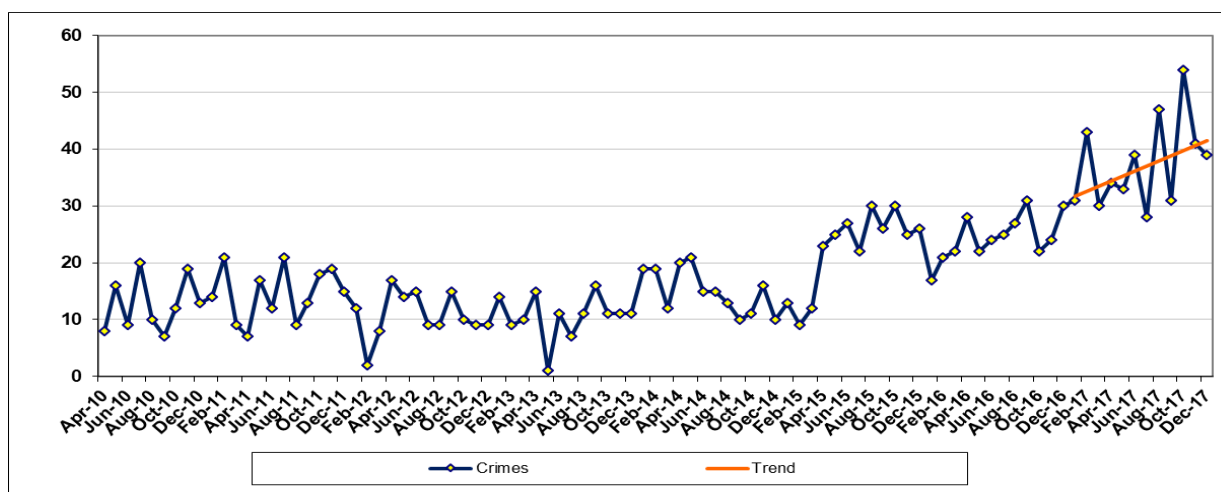


Figure 4: St. Neots - Violence without injury recorded crimes



Common assault is the most prevalent offence and has increased significantly in the past year. The following graph shows the breakdown of common assault by each ward in Huntingdonshire.

By Ward

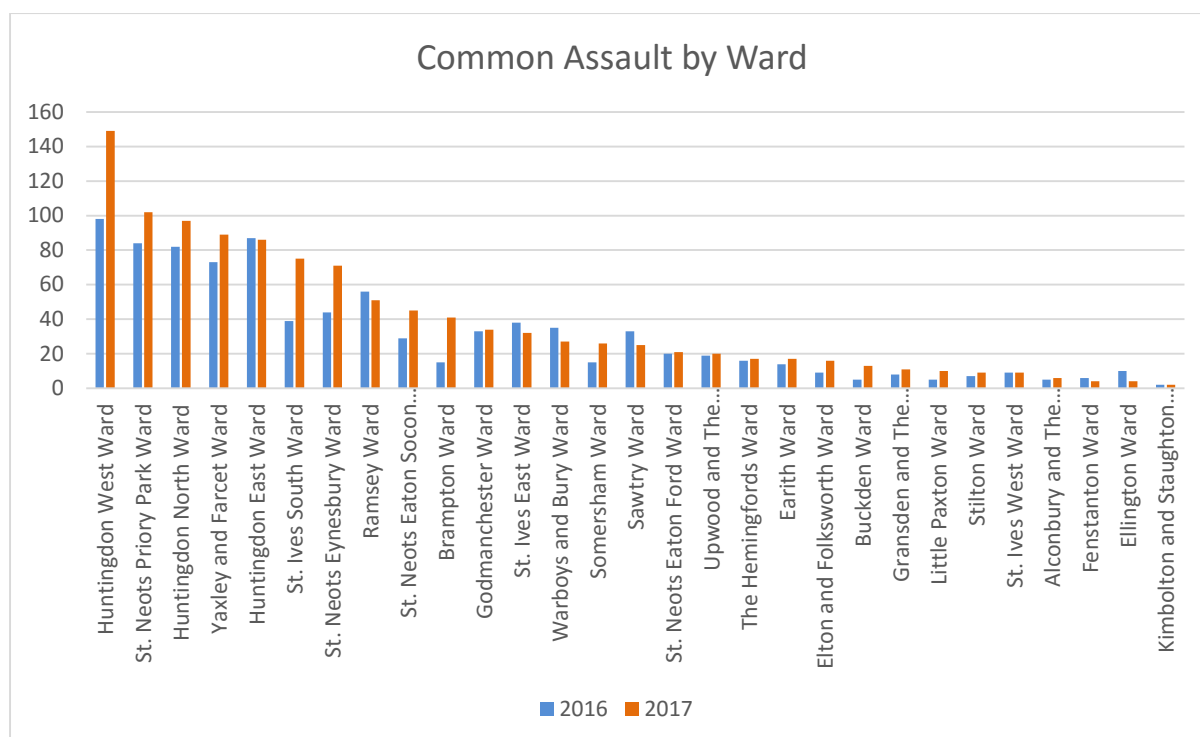


Figure 5: Number of common assault offences, by Ward, in 2016 and 2017

The majority of wards have seen a significant increase in the number of recorded offences in the past two years, compared to the figures from 2013-15. 8 out of the 10 wards with the largest recorded number of common assault offences in 2017 had seen an increase in the number of offences from 2016. Brampton Ward saw the largest percentage increase in offences, with a 63% increase, up from 15 offences in 2016 to 41 offences in 2017. Other notable wards include St Ives South, St Neots Eynesbury and St Neots Eaton Socon.

Huntingdon West ward had the largest amount of recorded common assault offences in 2017, continuing the trend of previous years. It saw the largest increase in the volume of recorded offences in 2017 (51), a 34% increase on 2016. Huntingdon West contains the majority of the town centre but also includes the residential area of the Stukeleys as well as Hinchingsbrooke and the surrounding area. The reason for the large increase in this area is unclear but as is shown later in the document it appears not be the result of alcohol induced behaviour in and around the pubs and clubs of Huntingdon. However, 7 out of all 29 wards saw a decrease in the number of recorded common assault offences in 2017 from 2016, most notably Sawtry, St Ives East and Ellington.

Oxmoor

Oxmoor & Hartford neighbourhood (part of Huntingdon West) saw a large increase in common assault in 2015 (up 106% from 2014) to 192 offences, but has since dropped to 183 offences in 2017. However, the number of harassment offences has been increasing over the past few years. The

figure has increased from 21 in 2015 to 70¹² in 2017 (a 233% rise). In total, the number of violence without injury offences has increased by 240% from 2013 to 2017.

VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

According to the crime survey for England & Wales (CSEW)¹³ in the year ending March 2017, more than half (55%) of violent incidents occur in the evening or during the night. This figure has been relatively stable over the recent years, but there has been a longer-term downward trend in the number of incidents occurring around these times. It also says that 43% of violent incidents occur during the weekend. This compares to 34.8% of all violent offences recorded during weekends in Huntingdonshire in the past 11 months.

The other key link to violent crime according to the CSEW is alcohol. In the year ending March 2017, 16% of violence against the person offences were flagged by the police as alcohol-related¹⁴ in England and Wales.

With the link between alcohol and violence long established, areas of high concentration of pubs and clubs where people can congregate (in evenings generally) are a potential hot spot for violent crime in Huntingdonshire. Effective licencing and policing in these areas can dramatically reduce violent crime in these areas as demonstrated by the Cardiff Model.¹⁵

Huntingdonshire has several clusters of pubs and clubs across the district. The three main areas of pubs / clubs are in the three main towns of Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots with a further small cluster in St Neots and Ramsey. These clusters occur where there are several pubs and clubs in close proximity. These clusters have the potential for large groups of potentially inebriated individuals coming into contact with each other in an evening.

As a result it is important to periodically review these areas to make sure they are properly managed. For the purpose of this report a list of all licenced premises in Huntingdonshire has been obtained from the Licencing team at Huntingdonshire District Council and then mapped. Where pubs and clubs are in close proximity (within 150 metres of each other) a pub cluster has been created. Plotted onto each map are all violence against the person offences that have occurred between the hours of 20.00 and 05.00.

Night-time violence (measured as having occurred from between the hours of 20:00 and 05:00) represents 38.4% of the total violence recorded in Huntingdonshire between April 2017 – February

¹² Including malicious communications

¹³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/thenatureofviolentcrimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017>

¹⁴ The nature of violent crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2017

¹⁵ <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/violence-research-group/research-projects/the-cardiff-model-for-violence-prevention-information-sharing-to-tackle-violence>

2018. Total night-time violence has seen a 97% increase since 2012/13¹⁶, which almost exactly mirrors the rise in all VAP recorded in Huntingdonshire since 2012/13.

Figure 5 below shows that the level of night time violent offences within the pub clusters of Huntingdonshire has not risen in the most recent year and has not since 2014/15.

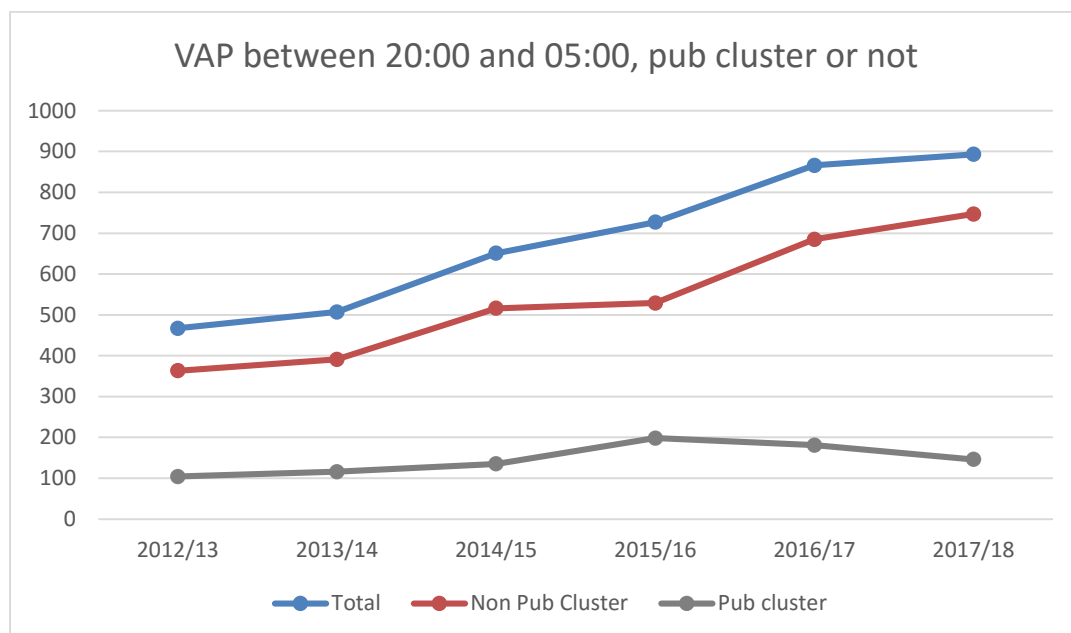


Figure 6: Night-time VAP, split according to whether violence occurred in pub cluster

However, night-time violence *outside* of the pub clusters¹⁷ has been following the upward trend of all night-time VAP, with increases in the volume of crimes seen in each year since 2012/13. Whereas the number of recorded offences within the pub clusters has been falling since 2015/16, with decreases seen in all five pub clusters in 2017/18 from 2016/17¹⁸.

The maps on the following page display all VAP offences with red indicating violence with injury and blue indicating violence without injury offences. The spherical shapes are the pub clusters, the dotted lined square areas highlight high concentrations of VAP that are not occurring within pub clusters. Larger versions of the maps can be found in the appendices.

¹⁶ Note that the current year only includes 11 months of data at the moment

¹⁷ Occurring within 150m radius of licenced pub/club

¹⁸ May be due to only having 11 months of data – still predicted to have fallen in four pub clusters

Night Time Violence Against the Person in St Neots between 20.00 and 05.00



Time and day of offence

Breaking down the Police recorded violence against the person (VAP) further by time and day of the week we can see that most offences are more likely to occur at the weekend, with 17.9% of offences recorded as having occurred first on a Saturday, and with 16.9% recorded as having occurred first on a Sunday. Only 13.7% of offences were recorded as having occurred on a Friday. This might be due to any alcohol-related violence being recorded as having occurred in the early hours of Saturday.

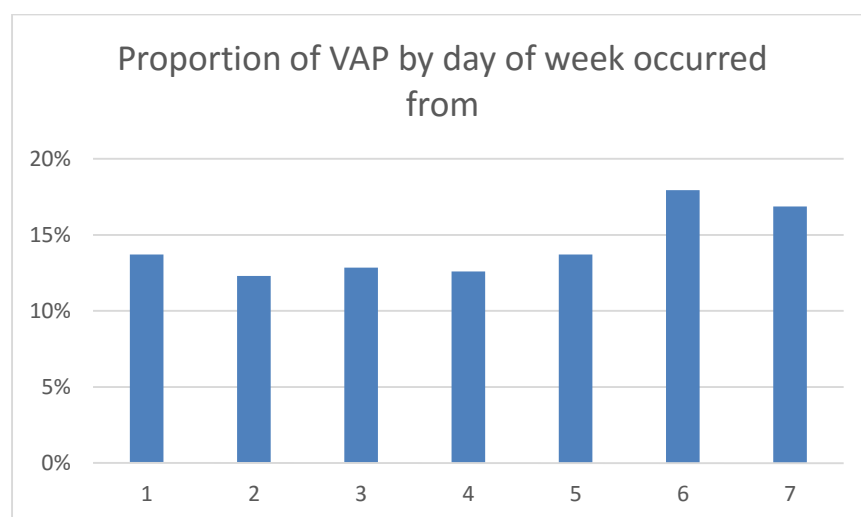


Figure 10: Proportion of Violence against the Person occurring from each day of the week

In terms of time occurred 13.4% of offences were recorded as having occurred from midnight (12am). However, a significant proportion of this total will be due to police recording. This may be due to the fact that when reporting to the police, people do not have a specific time the crime occurred, so it is entered into the system as having occurred from 12am. Figure 11 below shows that police recorded VAP commonly occurs between 3pm and 7pm, before decreasing in frequency later in the day.

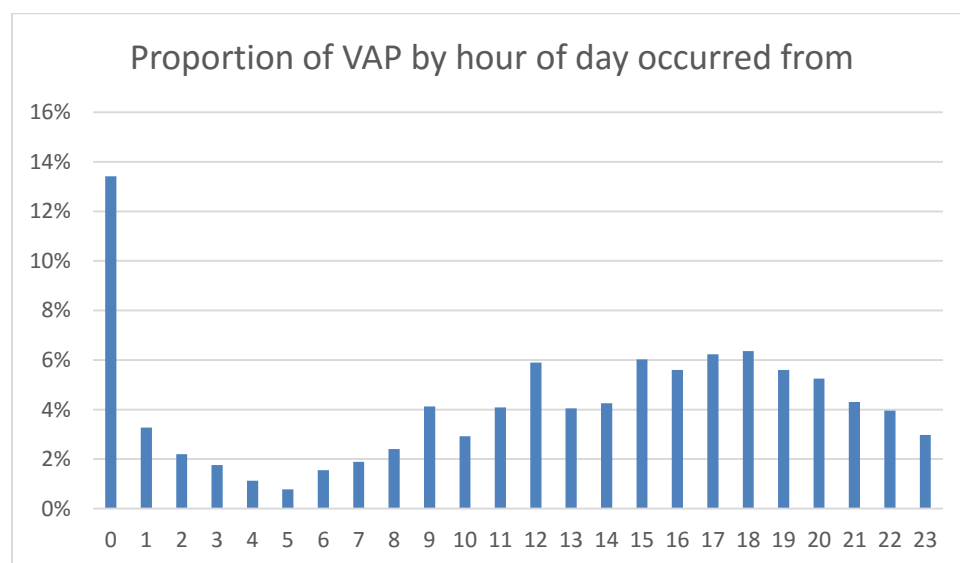


Figure 11: Proportion of Violence against the Person occurring from each hour of the day

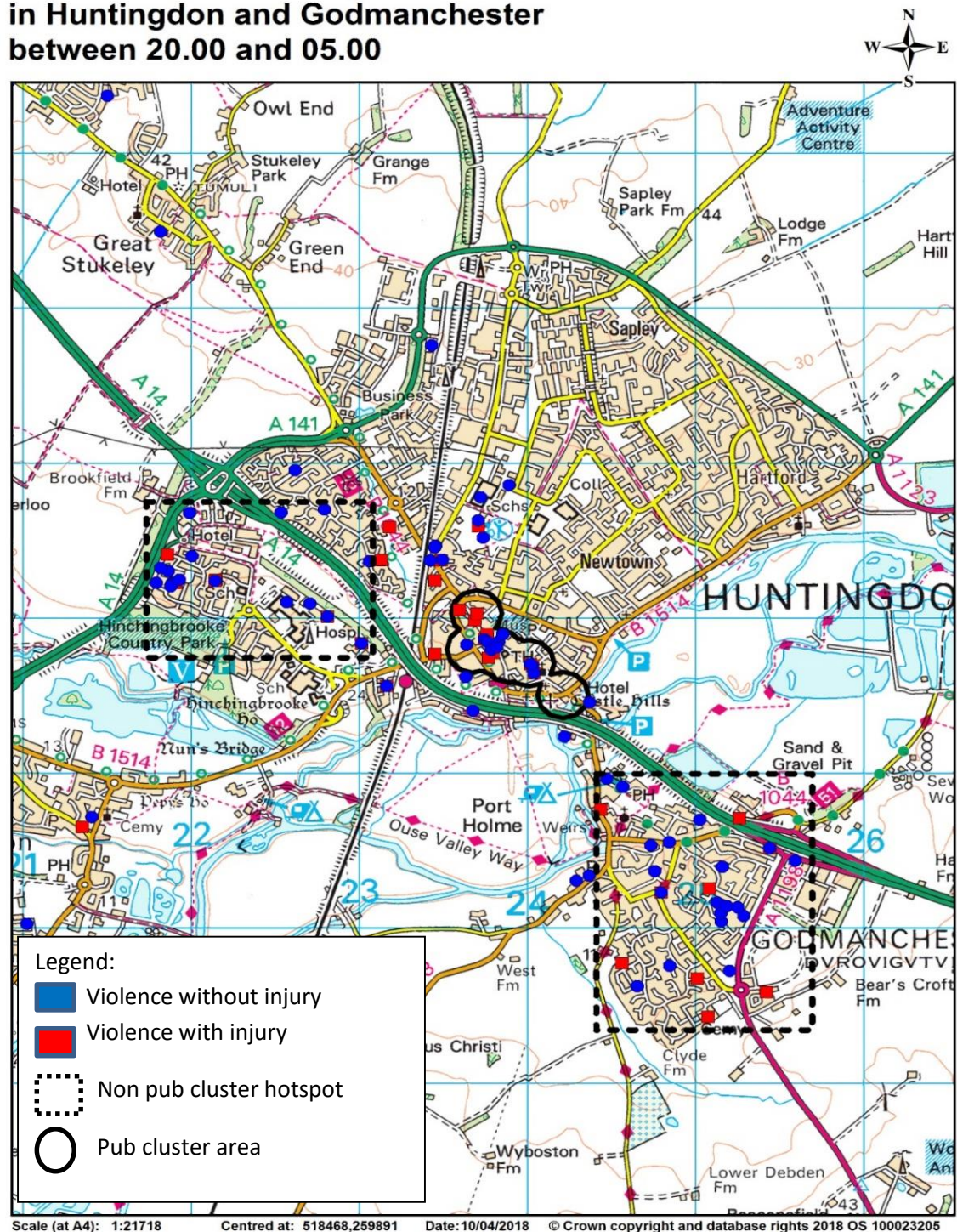
By looking at the data according to both the day of the week and the time that it first occurred, the data shows that the most commonly recorded time of VAP is 12am on a Saturday. 3.1% of all VAP is recorded as having occurred from this time of the week. However, as mentioned above, this may be due to the fact that when reporting to the police, people do not have a specific time the crime occurred, so it is entered into the system as having occurred from 12am. Monday afternoons (2pm – 5pm) and Saturday afternoons (3pm – 7pm) also have large recorded levels of VAP. Unsurprisingly, Friday night/Saturday early morning also have large levels of recorded VAP, which is likely to be alcohol-related.

It should be noted that there is a significant difference in the proportion of violent offences occurring during the weekend for violence against children aged 10 to 15, with the CSEW recording that only 6% of such incidents occur at the weekend. This reflects the large proportion of violent incidents against children (72%) that occur in and around a school during the week.

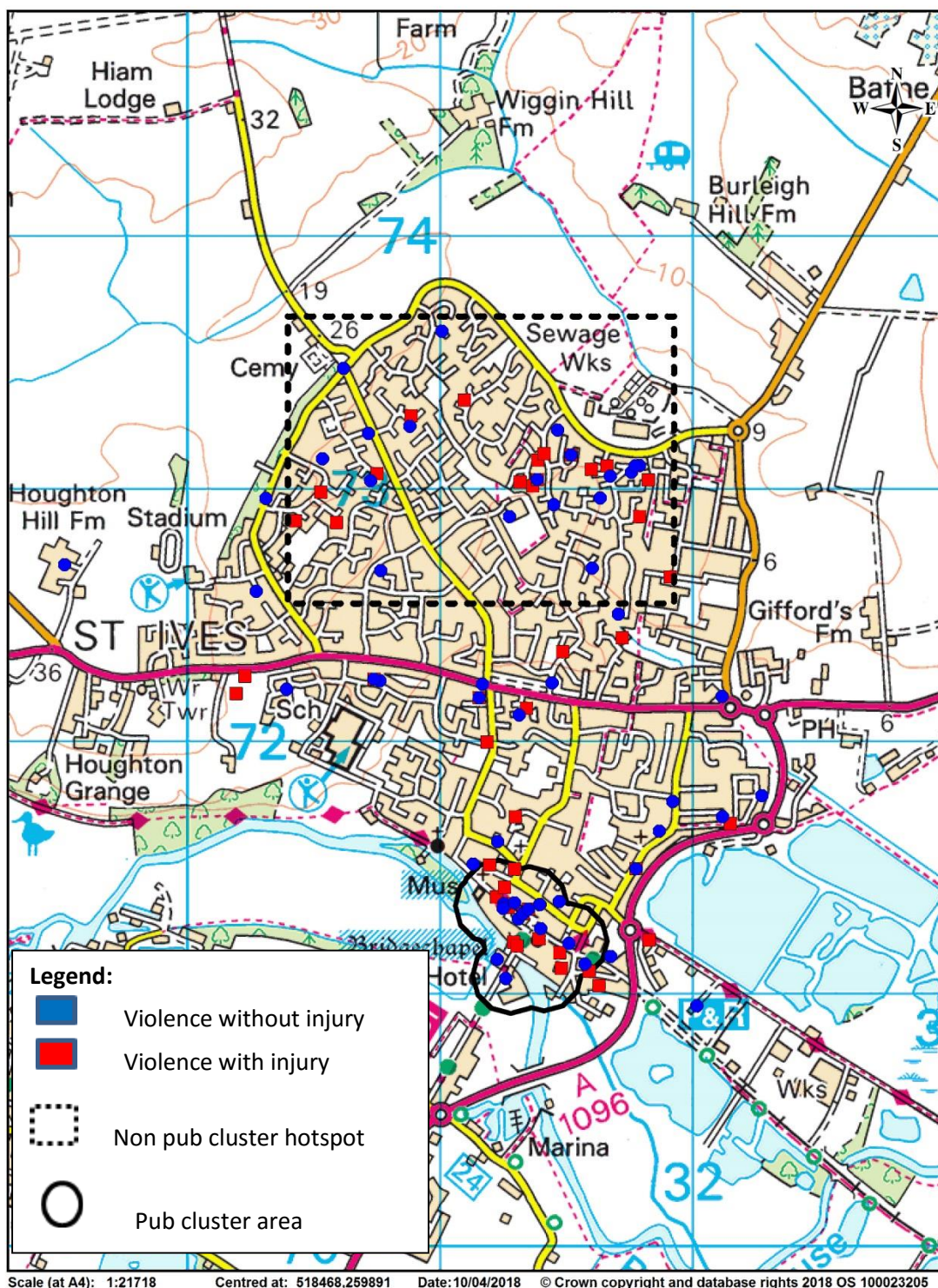
Appendix A

Night Time Violence Against the Person in Huntingdon and Godmanchester between 20.00 and 05.00

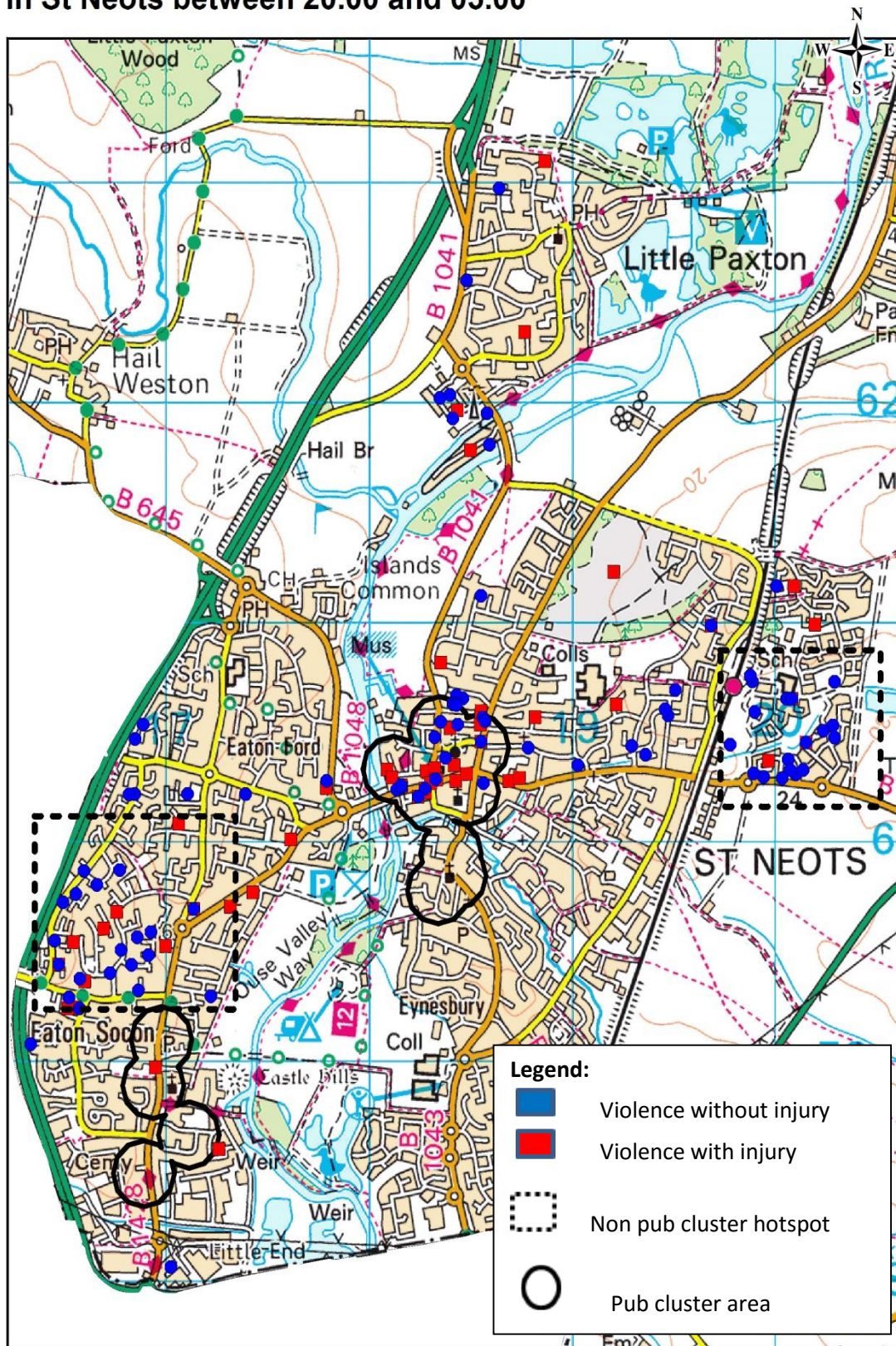
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County Council



Night Time Violence Against the Person in St Ives between 20.00 and 05.00



Night Time Violence Against the Person in St Neots between 20.00 and 05.00



Scale (at A4): 1:21718 Centred at: 518468,259891 Date:10/04/2018 © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100023205