

Data Insights on Antisocial Behaviour in Scotland

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Data Landscape – Rich, High Volume – but Messy!

- Even in legislation – the meaning of ‘antisocial behaviour’ is ambiguous and open to interpretation based on individual tolerance, experience and vulnerability.
- Blurred boundaries with criminality: drugs possession; speeding; vandalism and graffiti, fireraising.
- Focus is on what happens in public, physical spaces.
- Spectrum of what constitutes antisocial behaviour is arguably broader than what constitutes crime.
- Extends into undesirable behaviour, disrespectful behaviour, annoying behaviour, frightening/unsettling behaviour.
- Under-reporting (too minor; someone else probably reported it; too much hassle; pointless as action isn’t taken; fear of retribution).
- Over-counting (one incident triggering multiple calls/complaints e.g. off-road motorcycle).
- Recording / counting practices changeable over time.



Sources



Recorded Crimes/Offences
Intelligence System
Incident data / VPD
Community feedback



Public Polling



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey
Scottish Household Survey

Academic Research:
Cohort-Based Self-Report
Studies e.g. Edinburgh Study of
Youth Transitions and Crime or
Growing Up in Scotland

- Local Authorities
- Fire Service
- Health Service
- Education
- Housing Associations
- Residents' Associations
- Community Councils
- Community Groups
- Social Media



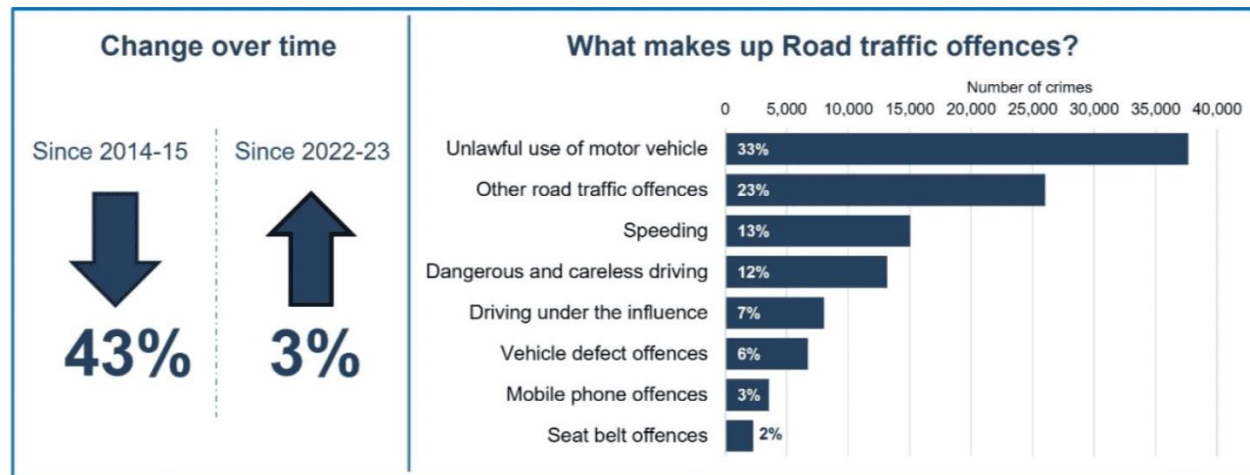
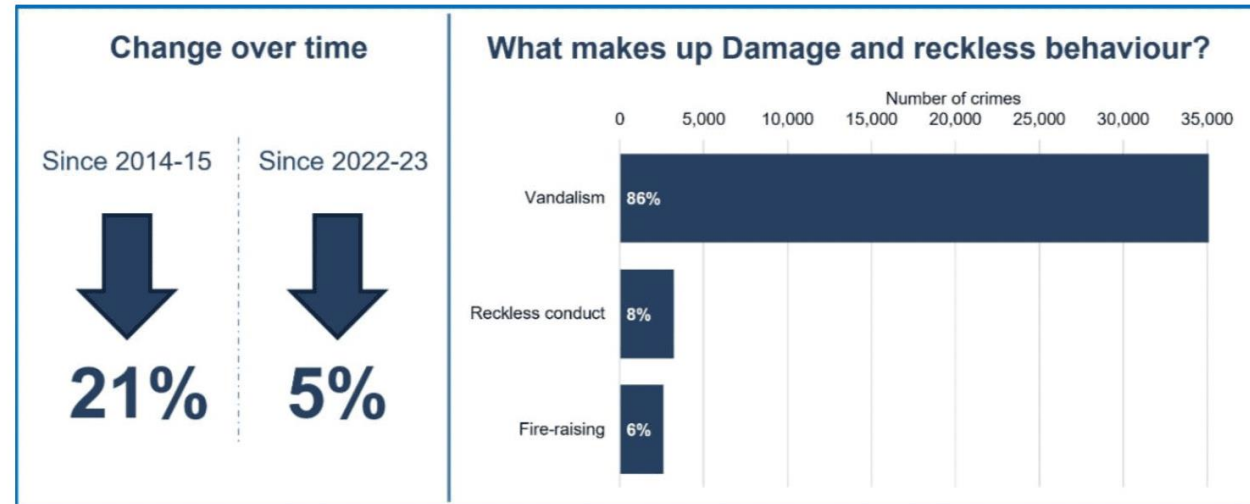
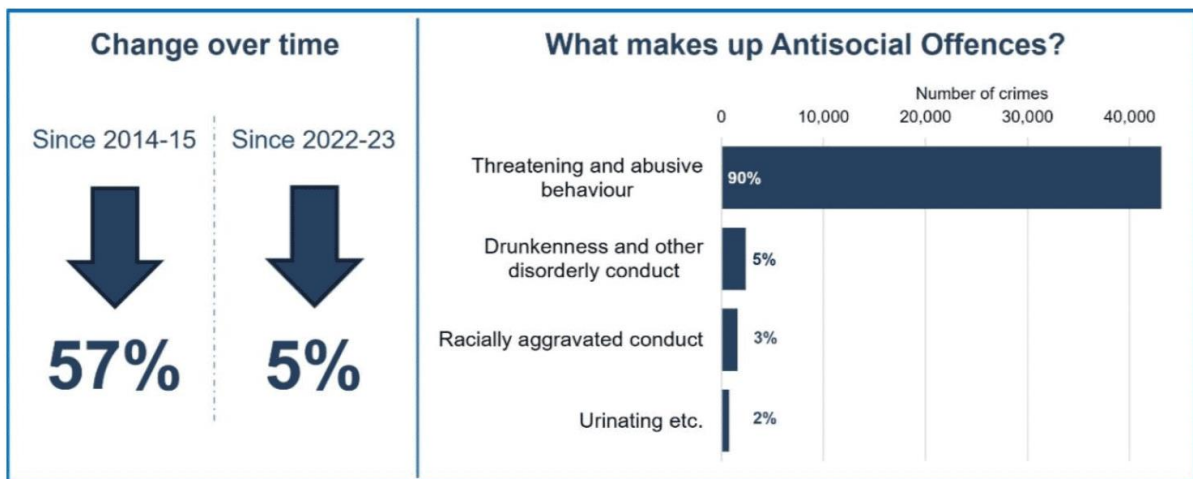


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What might we conclude about prevalence?



Police Recorded Data



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2021-22

Table 8.2: The perceived prevalence of various crime types is lower than it was in 2008/09, however few changes have been detected from the most recent year.

Perceived prevalence of various crime types in the local area.

Percentage of adults who thought issue was very or fairly common in their local area	2021/22	Change since 2008/09	Change since 2019/20
Drug dealing and drug abuse	45%	No change	No change
People behaving in an anti-social manner in public	32%	Down from 46%	No change
People having things stolen from their car or other vehicles	12%	Down from 20%	No change
People being physically assaulted or attacked in the street or other public places	5%	Down from 7%	No change
Violence between groups of individuals or gangs	13%	Down from 26%	No change
People having their car or other vehicles stolen	9%	Down from 15%	No change
People being sexually assaulted	6%	Up from 3%	No change
People being mugged or robbed	6%	Down from 10%	No change
People being physically attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion	5%	Down from 7%	No change



Scottish Household Survey

Table 2: Personal experience of some neighbourhood problems, such as rubbish/litter, have worsened since 2022

Percentage point change in agreement that a problem is very/fairly common in the neighbourhood, and personal experience of neighbourhood problems in the past 12 months, that has significantly increased or decreased, 2022-2023, Scotland

Statements	2022	2023	Change
Improved			
Abandoned or burned out vehicles as a common neighbourhood problem	2%	2%	-1 p.p
Experience of seeing abandoned or burned out vehicles	2%	2%	-1 p.p
Worsened			
Personal experience of 'any' listed neighbourhood problems in past 12 months	55%	57%	2 p.p
Experience of vandalism or graffiti or other deliberate damage to property	7%	8%	1 p.p
Experience of rubbish or litter lying around	35%	37%	3 p.p
Seeing drug misuse or dealing	10%	11%	1 p.p
Personal experience of none of the listed neighbourhood problems in past 12 months	45%	43%	2 p.p



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What might we conclude about experience and perception?



SPA Public Polling Work

Routine and thematic polling of the Scottish population aged 16+ using the **ScotPulse** panel.

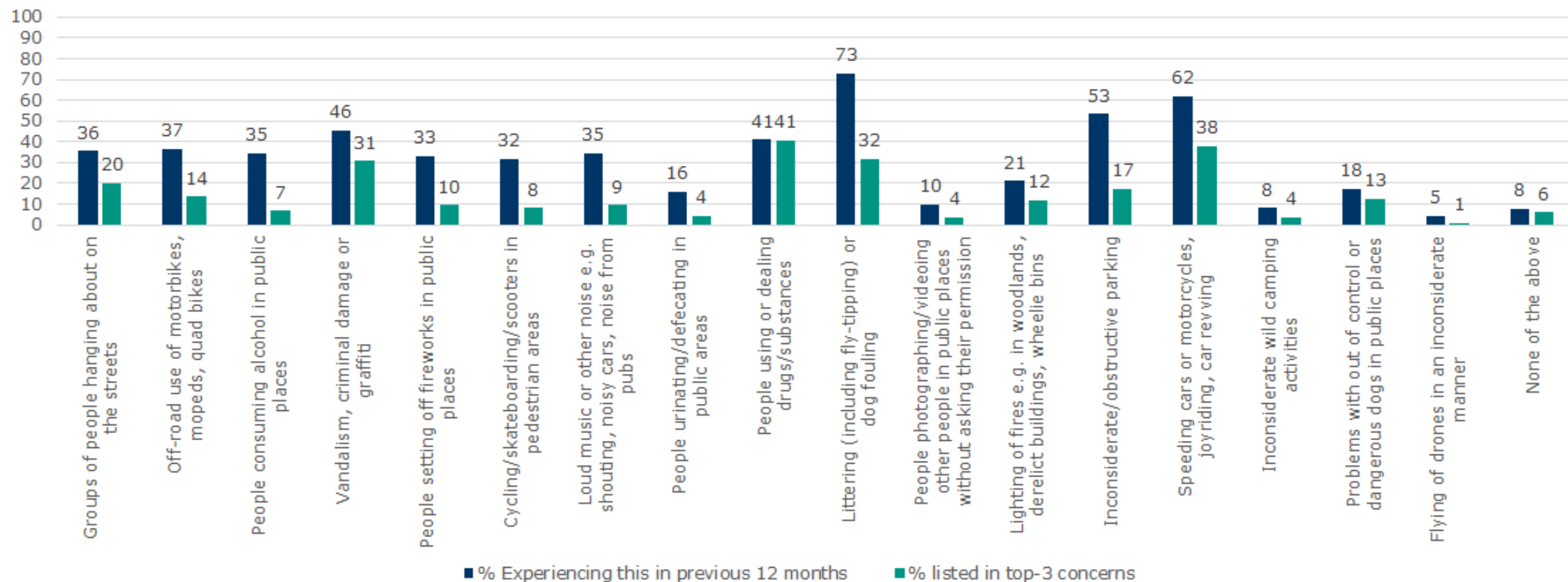
Carried out every six months between 2022-2025. Each sample around 2,500 people.

- Core questions on trust, confidence and views on police performance, including tackling antisocial behaviour.
- Specific questions asked about antisocial behaviour in July 2023, some of which were repeated in August 2024 for comparison purposes.





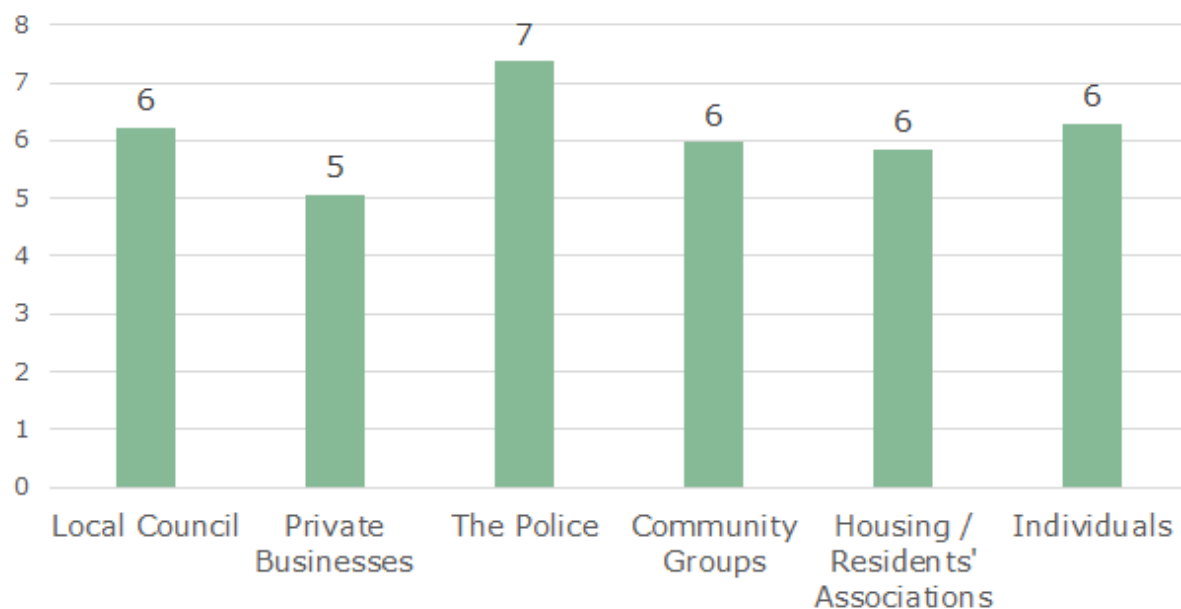
Experience of Antisocial Behaviour and Main Concerns



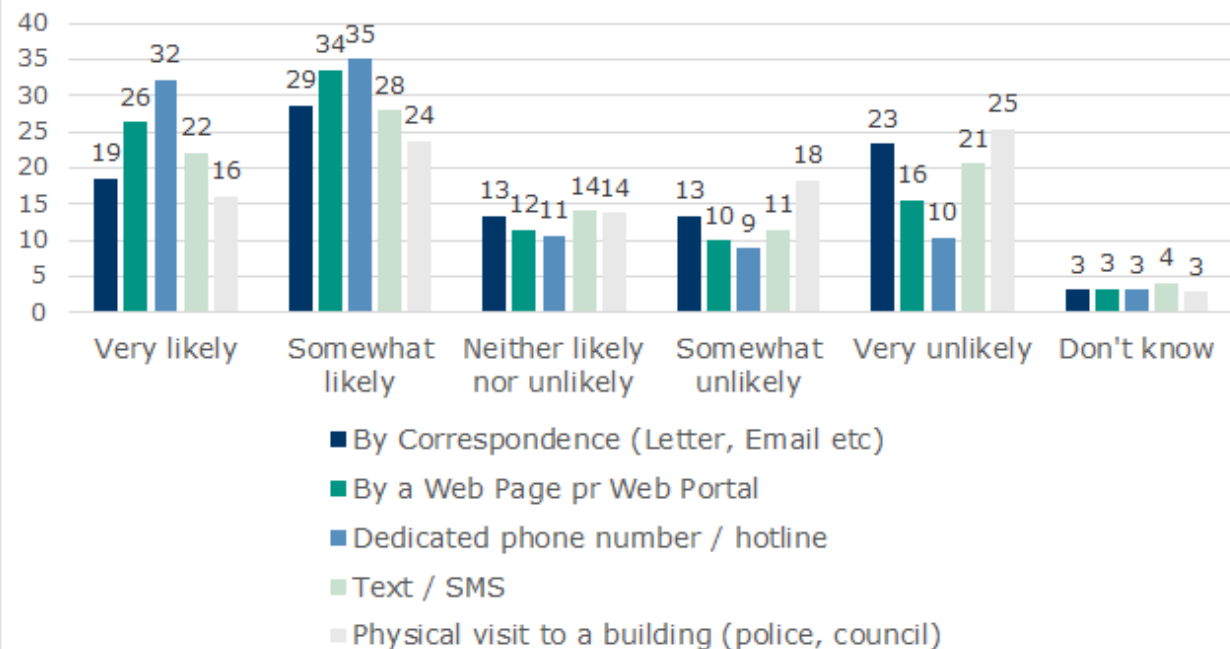


How responsible do you think each agency is for tackling antisocial behaviour in your local area?

SCALE 0-10

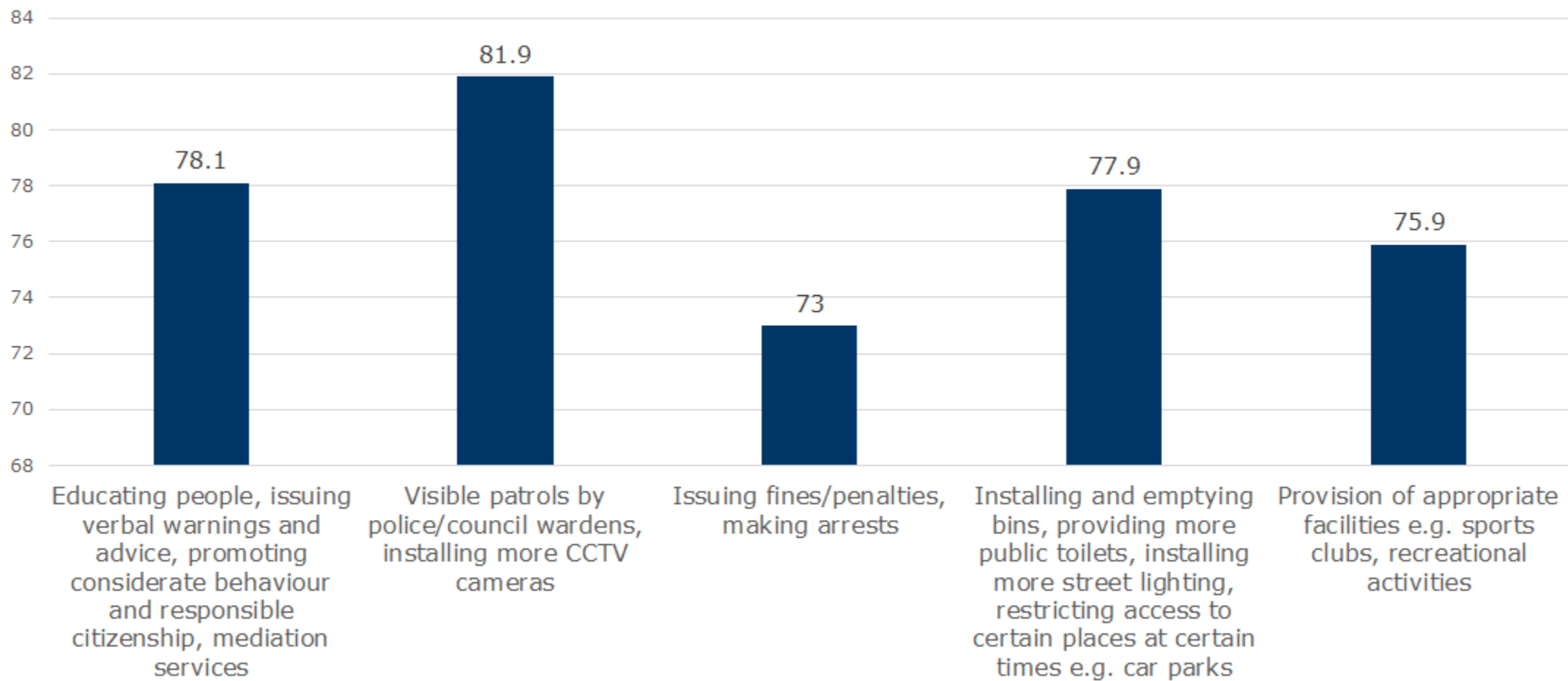


Preferred method for making authorities aware of antisocial behaviour - % of respondents





What would you like to see more of? %



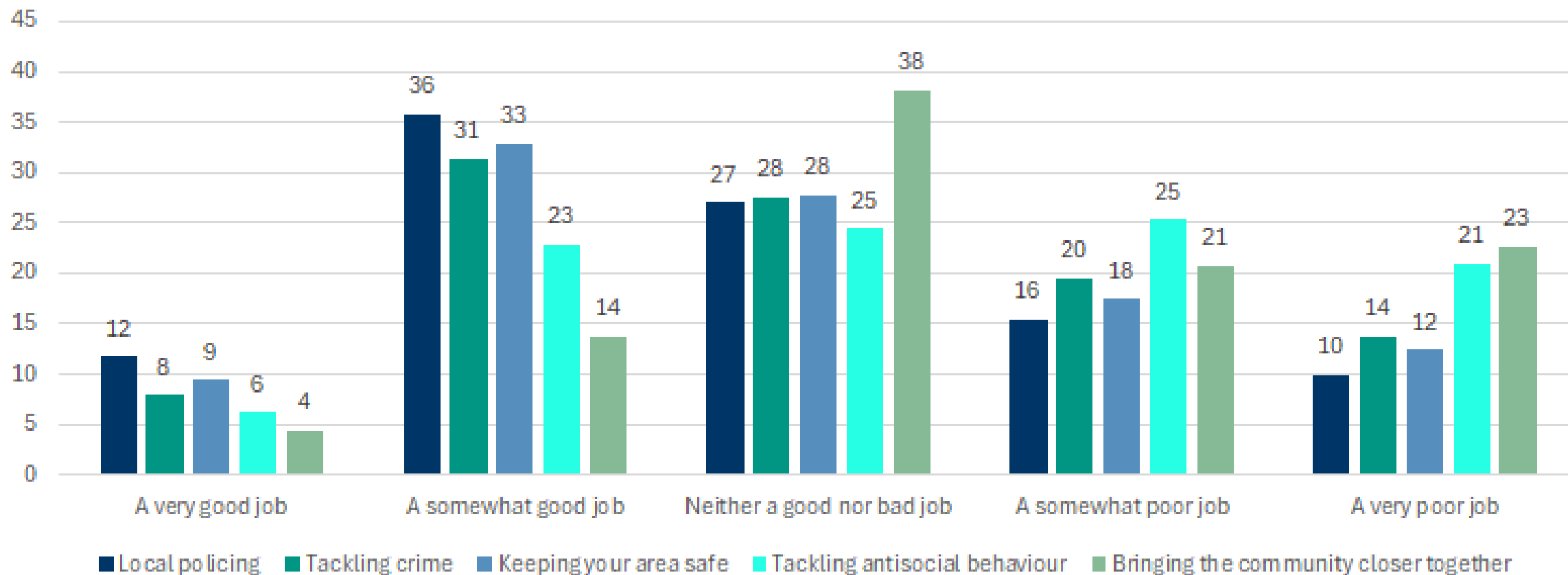
Public Confidence Angle

- On the whole there is a high or, at least, moderate level of confidence and trust in the police in Scotland.
- We know from SCJS data, and through SPA's own polling work, that confidence varies by gender; SIMD, geography, urban-rural-remote status and age.
- Across all factors there is less confidence in the police regarding the tackling of antisocial behaviour.





How good or poor a job do think the police are doing regarding.....%



Key Variations

How good a job are the police doing at tackling antisocial behaviour?

% saying very poor or somewhat poor job

- **Demographic Contrasts**

- 50% Male
- 44% Female
- 47% 16-24 years
- 44% 65+ years

Socio-Economic Contrasts

- 52% in SIMD 1
- 41% in SIMD 5
- 48% in C2DE
- 45% in ABC1

Geographic Contrasts

- 51% in accessible small towns
- 32% in remote rural areas
- 49% in Glasgow, Central Scotland
- 38% in Highland and Islands

Next Steps on Polling

- SPA is putting public polling onto a quarterly footing with effect from this summer – three years of funding secured.
- Developing a mechanism to incorporate stakeholder suggestions for questions on topical, public interest matters connected to policing.
- Developing a means to publish and cascade polling data, including to the research community.
- Will repeat the focus on ASB to build a larger sample and permit more disaggregated analysis



Focus Group Findings

- In late 2024 the Diffley Partnership ran three focus groups with *ScotPulse* members who had scored the police between 0-3 out of 10 in terms of their confidence in policing. NOTE: 10 of the 11 participants aged 42-77 years of age (youngest 33).
- The main themes of the focus groups:
 1. Defining ASB, public perception of prevalence and direct experience
 2. Perceptions of Police Scotland and views on police priorities
 3. Community-based digital reporting tools

Scottish Police Authority – Policing in Scotland

Report by Diffley Partnership

February 2025

Key Findings - Definition

- ASB is a persistent concern but reporting it seen as ineffective as little to no action is seen.
- ASB defined as behaviour that affects peoples' quality of life and wellbeing, whether criminal or not.
- A view that younger people are largely responsible for the types of ASB they commonly see or hear about, with social media is encouraging it.



Key Findings – Reporting and Views of the Police

- Police viewed as the default preferred agency to report things to, however there is a sense of being passed between agencies, with agencies saying that the person should contact another agency.
- Support for the police focusing on more serious matters and councils stepping up for minor matters.
- Awareness of community interventions, community safety partnerships and local initiatives very low. People are not seeing the police contribution through partnership working as it does not appear as direct police intervention.



Key Findings – Reporting and Views of the Police

- Policing viewed as being less community-focused and no relationship with officers.
- Police seen as being reactive rather than proactive, firefighting rather than problem-solving.
- View of policing as being multi-tier: some groups “over-policed”, some groups “under-serviced” or “ignored”.
- Feeling that police working in schools and with young people , building relationships with one another, is key to prevention.
- Support for delivering policing services with councils e.g. community wardens.





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Diffley
Partnership

Key Findings – Citizen Technology

- Strong support for community-based reporting platforms (for reporting and intelligence purposes).
- A 'modern day' neighbourhood watch approach, building community cohesion and awareness.
- Some concern over potential for misuse (malicious) or complaining 'for the sake of it'.
- Not a substitute for face-to-face interaction with the police.



Community Confidence Action Research Project

Ran between 2021-2024 in four localities (Wick, Irvine, Perth and Levenmouth), exploring the drivers of confidence in policing in communities experiencing deprivation

Common themes across the localities:

- Visible drug-dealing in communities
- Repeat issues, repeat locations
- Deterioration/neglect regarding upkeep of common spaces
- ASB reported but not seeing, or aware of, action
- Insufficient local information /statistics about policing, crime and ASB
- Non-hyper-local social media/communications

Final Report

Community Confidence Action Research Project
December 2024





Other observations / conclusions

- We don't have a definitive, singularly reliable measure for ASB's prevalence.
- ASB is likely to be genuinely on the decline (at least public-physical space ASB) but it is still high in volume, and very visible to communities.
- ASB is reported as different things, in different ways, to different platforms and agencies. Having a choice of where and how to report matters to best get effective, quick resolution is important. However, without effective data sharing, system compatibility and cross-sector analysis, insights and strategic/tactical responses can be siloed or single-agency led.
- ASB issues tend to be highly concentrated and repetitious in nature, which supports their identification and management. However unless the mosaic of data held in different systems by multiple agencies and platforms is better joined up, people/communities can fall through the cracks.
- Even with perfect data, aggregate-statistical approaches can still mask acute cases – 'an averaging out effect'.



INDEPENDENT GROUP ON ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Lorraine Gillies
Professor Fiona Dyer

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OVERVIEW

Antisocial Behaviour
Whose responsibility?

Towards a more effective
response to antisocial
behaviour in Scotland



REMIT

“Consider the effectiveness of current approaches to understanding, preventing and tackling antisocial behaviour and if, and how, these could be improved to develop a holistic long term strategic approach which will help to improve the lives of communities across Scotland. This should include consideration of whether a preventative approach would be appropriate and how victims of antisocial behaviour are supported and whether this could be improved”.

MEMBERSHIP

- Professor Fiona Dyer, Director, Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (Co-chair)
- Lorraine Gillies, Independent (Co-chair)
- Tom Halpin, QPM, Independent
- Lorraine Meek, Antisocial Behaviour Officers' Forum
- Professor Lesley McAra, CBE FRSE, Edinburgh Law School, University of Edinburgh
- Kirsten Urquhart, CEO, Young Scot
- Kate Wallace, CEO, Victim Support Scotland

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ENGAGEMENT

- 8 working Group meetings; 5 report writing
- Contextual Safeguarding, CYCJ, SPA, Police Scotland, Winning Scotland, Cashback, Behaviour in schools, the Promise Scotland
- 2 visits to local authority ASB teams
- Midnight football
- Ride along with Police Scotland
- Over 250 stakeholders
- Themes – Young People, Justice, Housing, Health, Transport, Retail, Protected Characteristics
- Victim Support Scotland – case studies
- Scottish Community Safety network – engagement sessions
- Commissioned data survey & literature review from CYCJ

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OUTCOME OF OUR REVIEW

- 5 overarching recommendations; 45 actions
- Many actions under the themes
- Situation response
- Prevention
- Contextual safeguarding approach
- Ensuring responses and support for victims
- Responses and support for those causing ASB to address and stop such behaviour

COMMON THEMES

- ASB is preventable
- Disinvestment in services
- Disinvestment in youth work
- Money in the system
- Free bus pass is the cause of all ASB
- Not just young people
- Impact of poverty; feeling of hopelessness
- Mental Health; addiction

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Creation of an oversight board
- Review of the Legislation
- Systematic review of data and legislation
- Creating a preventative framework
- Review of antisocial behaviour strategies

A 3D illustration of several interlocking puzzle pieces in shades of blue and grey, arranged in a circular pattern. The pieces are rendered with soft shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. A large, semi-transparent purple rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title text.

CREATION OF AN OVERSIGHT BOARD

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LEGISLATION

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DATA AND INFORMATION

100

A close-up photograph of a hand with the index finger extended, stopping a wooden domino from falling. A row of dominoes is visible on a light-colored wooden surface. The background is blurred, showing a person's arm and torso. The image is framed by purple and white geometric shapes on the left and right sides.

PREVENTION

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SITUATIONAL ACTION

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ACTIONS

- Victims: A requirement for enhanced support and legislative tools to ensure victims are protected without being further disadvantaged.
- Protected Characteristics: Targeted responses to address hate crimes and discrimination against marginalised groups.
- Housing/Environment: Enhanced tools for housing providers, tailored support services, and investment in community spaces and diversionary projects.
- Transport: Improved data collection and collaboration to address antisocial behaviour on public transport, with any measures co-designed with stakeholder input.
- Retail: Promote preventative strategies, share best practices, and differentiate antisocial behaviour from criminal activities.
- Health: Investments in mental health and substance misuse services and public health approaches to prevention.
- Justice: Expand access to mediation and restorative justice services.
- Young People: Address stereotypes, provide safe spaces, and invest in reliable youth services and developmental interventions.

KEY MESSAGES

- These interconnected recommendations and actions aim to tackle the systemic drivers of antisocial behaviour while addressing its immediate impacts. Through a coordinated, funded, evidence-based approach, Scotland can foster a strong and collective response to antisocial behaviour.
- A more focused approach to prevention is required. Prevention means many different things to many people but almost all those we consulted called for an 'upstream approach, one that lifts everyone above the water line.
- **That antisocial behaviour is preventable**

Q&A

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THANK YOU

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SAFER SHORES – AYRSHIRE DIVISION

Superintendent Jim McMillan

MEDIA HEADLINES

- Five teenagers arrested after huge drink-fuelled brawl breaks out in front of young families at Ayrshire beach.
- Shocking Troon beach pictures show cops tackling louts to the ground, booze searches and mobbed shoreline as rowdy teens spark mayhem.
- Ten arrests and alcohol seized after Troon beach disorder.
- Troon beach is invaded by 6,000 'boozed-up teen yobs in swimsuits who pelt cops with bottles and cause chaos at Facebook party'.
- 'It's like this every year' - Thousands of drunk teens fight Police in beach party chaos









Ayrshire beach fight: Shocking footage shows teenagers
brawling in front of horrified families - leaving two boys
hospitalised | The Scottish Sun













Background

- The SafeAyr Shore campaign began 2007.
- Initially set up to have a direct impact on antisocial behaviour in the shore and esplanade areas of Ayr.
- The campaign was extended to cover the South Ayrshire coastline and later concentrated on Ayr and Troon beach and esplanade areas, and rebranded 'Safer Shores'.
- Given the robust partnership arrangements in South Ayrshire, associated issues were displaced to North Ayrshire, in particular Largs and Irvine.
- Expansion of Safer Shores initiative into North Ayrshire.

Evolution

- Negative feedback - Community / Elected Members / Officers
- Table-top exercises
- Zoning and multi-agency colocation
- Mapping
- Queuing plan
- JESIP principles
- Categorisation of risk
- Formalised campaigns and associated toolkit
- Messaging across social media platforms, from schools, charities - #AyrshireSaferShores
- Messaging themes – alcohol, health, Antisocial behaviour, litter, travel, water safety
- Quad Bikes – Local Authority Funding

Purpose

Partners work together to respond effectively to mass gatherings on Ayrshire's beaches and

- To safeguard members of the public
- To ensure people can travel safely
- People are safe from crime and disorder
- People have a positive visitor experience
- That Ayrshire continues to be a leading visitor destination
- To enhance collaborations between partners

Partnerships

- ScotRail
- British Red Cross
- British Transport Police
- Coastguard
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- North & South Ayrshire Councils
- Scottish Ambulance service
- Scottish Fire & Rescue
- Charities – CoastWatch / Fearless

Activation Process

- The Safer Shores multi-agency plan takes in to account multiple factors to determine the activation level including weather forecast, social media intelligence, partner information:
- **GREEN:** No particular concerns or risks identified. Partners in a state of readiness should the response level escalate.
- **AMBER:** Hot weather of 18 + degrees is forecast, social media warnings. Partners deploy enhanced resources, where available, to beaches and transport hubs.
- **RED:** Based on direct intelligence, social media, volume of people travelling / arriving on beaches. Multiagency Command and Control Operation set up.

Partnership / Transport Reporting

- Cat 1: Mainly families/ adults with children appropriately prepared for the beach (low threat)
- Cat 2: Small amount of youths - engaging well with staff/police and a mix of adults appropriately prepared for the beach (low threat)
- Cat 3: Mainly youths/ groups of youths attending beach with backpacks (medium threat)
- Cat 4: Large number of youths, hostile/ under the influence high risk of ASB. (increased threat)

Challenges

- Unpredictable weather
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Balancing Rights and Criminalising
- Reliant on information as soon as possible
- Transport Hubs
- Youths – police powers of arrest
- Alcohol – Licensed Premises
- Violence against Girls
- Resources
- Youth Workers
- Business as Usual
- Trust and Confidence



SAFER SHORES ENJOY OUR BEACHES RESPONSIBLY

#AYRSHIRESAFERSHORES



POLICE SCOTLAND | POILEAS ALBA

Questions?



POLICE SCOTLAND | POILEAS ALBA



Operation Respect SPA – Anti-Social Behaviour Webinar



Highlands and Islands Division / Inspector Emma Wright/29 May 2025

Session

This session aims to;

- Outline Operation Respect
- Discuss some of the drivers for the operation
- Highlight the partnership working
- Explore the expansion of the operation in relation to mental health and vulnerability

What is Operation Respect?

- Multi-agency operation across the festive period
- Inverness and wider Highland area
- Acts to maximise the opportunity for co-ordinated, effective and efficient use of all available resources
- To enhance public safety and minimise risk to the public during a busy period in the year.
- The co-ordination of activities and response reduces the risk of service duplication and improves communication.

Aims

- Promote a positive and safe experience for those enjoying the festivities and
- Support those who may be vulnerable, ensuring appropriate and timely interventions as required.
- Early intervention work targeted to address;
 - anti-social behaviour,
 - crimes of dishonesty and
 - alcohol related crimeby ensuring a robust response to those who commit crime and impact upon the enjoyment of others
- public reassurance and maintain community confidence by ensuring the engagement and provision of education in relation to drinking alcohol in public and drug use.

The Partnership



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**
Keeping people safe

The Wider Partnership



Changing childhoods.
Changing lives.



The Expanding Remit

- People becoming vulnerable to harm through loneliness and isolation
- People becoming vulnerable through uncontrolled drug or alcohol consumption in private space
- Fire caused by cooking in the home
- Violence inside private space where weapons are readily available
- Lone Females

Spotlight on Partners



Safe Zone

- Offers a safe, warm place for the vulnerable
- Supported by Street Pastors and MERT
- Previously used Café 1668
- 2024 – used police Incident Support Vehicle
- Anchor/Cashback for Communities – YP
- The future – Mikeysline vehicle – YP/MH?



Mental Health Vehicle



- Community psychiatric professional
- Paramedic
- Police Officer

Operation Respect Launch 2024



How it works in practice

- Operation Respect Planning Group
- Common Good Funding
- Dial ins during the Operation
- 12 Days of Christmas Media Strategy
- Links to 16 Days of Violence
- Shopsafe Radios
- Op Respect – Youth

Developing areas

- Developing supporting media strategy for coordinated and thematic messaging
- Explore options for further Third Sector Involvement
- Widening the time period of the initiative

Thank you and Questions

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Highlands and Islands Division

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Partnerships:

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