

A photograph showing a person in a red hoodie, their face obscured by a black mask. They are holding a broken green glass bottle of Beck's beer. The bottle is shattered, with sharp edges and a jagged top. The label on the bottle is partially visible, showing the word 'BECK'S' and 'GERMANY'. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting with trees and a clear sky.

# VIOLENT CRIME

Violent Crime currently accounts for approx 25% of all crime and 40% of BCS crime. Violent crime has been falling over the past year (10% lower than in 2005/6.) There is an average of 257 incidents per month and we expect to miss our PSA1 target by 11%. The estimated annual cost to Plymouth is £35M (half the cost of all crime and therefore the biggest cost to Plymouth annually).

Violent crime has been increasing outside of the main evening and night time economy (ENTE) areas of City centre and Mutley, particularly Robbery. Robbery numbers are small but are rising and have shown the biggest % increase of all violent crimes.

There is a likely link between robbery and prolific and priority offenders (PPO's) suggesting robbery is becoming a new 'acquisitive' type of crime because of mobile technology people now carry around with them. "Other Assault (Other Wounding)"<sup>1</sup> is the most expensive violent crime with 3334 offences in 2006/07 costing Plymouth over **£28.5M**. There is a strong association with young people and alcohol and PPO's.

The cost of sexual assault offences based on 2006/07 was estimated at £31,438 per offence (The cost per offence is second only to Homicide at £1.458M per offence).

The total number of offences in 2006/07 was 312 costing **£10.409M**: the second highest cost to the City after "Other Assault". This crime type has a very high impact on victims\*.

A small proportion of violent crime concerns hate crime (e.g. racial and homophobic motivated), but clearly this has a significance for minority communities well beyond the small volume within overall crime.

### **Cell Based Intervention**

In excess of 10,000 arrestees per annum are detained at Charles Cross Police Station. The probability is that at least 40% of these have been detained as a result of intoxication (alcohol misuse). A large number of these will be young people aged under-25 years who are involved in criminal activity linked to violence/assault, affray or anti-social behaviour. The detention provides an opportunity to assess (screen) alcohol consumption and deliver an initial brief intervention with a view to raising awareness and in the longer-term changing behaviours.

At a national level there has been a fall in violent crime over the past decade, with the number of offences where the offender is believed to be under the influence of alcohol dropping a third since 1995 (HM Government 2007).

Recent findings from the British Crime Survey for England indicate that the South West region has higher than average results for the percentage of adults stating, when questioned, that alcohol is a major cause of crime and that alcohol was the main cause of crime.

The Cell Based Intervention programme contributes to:

- reduction of alcohol related harm to individuals and communities
- reduction of demands on criminal justice agencies related to alcohol misuse
- reduction of demands on health services related to alcohol misuse

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<sup>1</sup> the definition of this crime type is "all woundings which are not in the serious category" – serious woundings defined as "woundings or another act that endangers life"

The programme contributes to this by screening 80% of detainees approached, providing a short term intervention (STI) to 90% of those screened referring 95% of those assessed as needing and wanting treatment to relevant services.

This initiative has been the subject of national acclaim as a model of excellent practice and the ambition is to mainstream the programme, which up until now has been funded by the CDRP and Health.

### **CCTV**

The City's CCTV coverage provides an effective response to violent crime and allows Police to be called in quickly to prevent these occurring. The CCTV Team now receive details from the Police Briefing System to make the most of their 24/7 role. They are permanently connected by radio to the Police Control Room, Pub and Club Door Staff, Taxi's and to the City Centre Shops.

### **Sexual Assault Referral Centre**

The prevention and investigation of sexual offences are a major challenge for the City. In response to this, in 2007/08 a building was identified and fully re-furbished with Home Office and Partner funding to develop a Sexual Assault Referral Centre. This Centre, currently only open to Police Referrals, provides professional care to victims. The SARC will open its doors to self-referrals in 2009 and a future ambition is to lower the age range of victims to 13 years and over in the longer-term.

This has been a multi-agency project overseen by the SARC Management Board and will be at the heart of delivering an improved service on all aspects of support to victims of sexual offences. The SARC has already been subject of a recent Home Office Visit where they reported that "...*The Team considers the SARC an excellent model service and the forensic provision to be a beacon of good practice...*" The SARC is aiming towards achieving a 'Charter Mark' standard.

The Police are considering the creation of a "Sex Crime Delivery Group".

\*(A separate summary of the Estimated Cost of Crime in Plymouth 2006/07 is available.)