



Neighbourhoods affected by violence

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Executive summary

This report builds on the work published in 2020 of the Behavioural Insight Team (BIT). It further develops their findings and approach by widening the analysis of violence and how it correlates across the whole of London and then focusing down on nine selected areas to examine violence and its impacts through the eyes of those who live and work there. We found many of the same issues that BIT had done but also some new areas, such as universities as attractors of violence, that the VRU will wish to examine in more detail. We also identified the need for greater integration of data across agencies and at a much more detailed level than is currently the case to enable better analysis of violence in communities and planning with them for change.

This report identifies some core key themes driving violence based on what participants told us through the interviews, focus groups, surveys and our social media analysis. These include some that are already recognised as correlates of violence, for example, economic and social deprivation, racism in all its forms, substance misuse, higher risk related to age with younger people at much more risk of both experiencing and/or perpetrating violence and the influence of gang cultures. We also identified areas that whilst recognised in some research and pilot projects around the country, have not received the co-ordinated attention they need in London. For example, the negative impact of social media as a focus for expression and organisation of violent behaviour, the need for a co-ordinated focus on improving the built environment, what were seen by many participants as irresponsible housing policies that moves individuals and families who have been involved with violence as victims without support or perpetrators who 'export' violence from one area to another.

Other themes related to the way key agencies such as the police, local authorities and health services work. For example, the history of short-term initiatives and pilot projects that have limited or no impact in reducing violence, funding only up-front cost of projects without any consideration of the associated service costs needed to make the project successful and sustainable. People emphasised the need for communities and young people to be equal partners and to be able to co-produce solutions to the problems in their own communities; something people did not always feel was happening or was being prioritised by London-wide agencies. Effective partnership working was also consistently highlighted as crucial to tackling violence, but often people felt the partnership working in their own areas was lacking or could be improved. The focus on place-based developments such as My Ends were seen by those involved as a positive way to address these issues. The MyEnds programme puts communities at the forefront of tackling violence. It does this through providing the support needed to deliver interventions (designed locally by local people) across London in areas affected by high and sustained levels of violence.

Two other broader themes that should focus on future spending and service development, were early intervention and the need for a trauma-informed approach in planning, commissioning and delivering services and community interventions. Exploitation of ever younger children was reported to us and the need to get ahead of this trend seen as essential and while there are some notable trauma-informed violence reduction initiatives, these were reported by those we spoke to as being available in some areas but not others.

While some of what we found was new there was a significant part that was not. An appeal that emerged through the research from individuals and communities was to act on what is known from existing evidence of what works, something that many felt simply has not happened. Rebuilding trust in areas that have seen unsuccessful initiatives, poor partnership working and lack of meaningful community involvement will be a continuing challenge but one that projects like My Ends should help to address. Strengthening the VRU's move to a focus on place-based working and service commissioning and delivery integration at that level is likely to be the way forward. The VRU has the leading role in setting the way forward and bringing partners along with them.

We make ten recommendations for the VRU to consider, they cover the following:

The VRU should:

1. Strengthen its approach in making investments in violence reduction initiatives
2. Strengthen its approach to investment and initiative selection based on co-production and not traditional community consultation
3. Continue to work with partners to invest in initiatives that support the development of the protective factors of community cohesion
4. Continue to work with partners to foster prevention and early intervention initiatives.
5. Shift the core data analytical focus more onto Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) to understand accurately and precisely the nature and extent of violence.
6. Continue (and extend) the culture of robust research and evaluation to develop a dynamic understanding of patterns of violence and related harm
7. Continue to explore ways in which they can work with police to focus positive police community support in those areas identified as vulnerable to violence and harm.
8. Explore (with partners). ways of integrating gathered intelligence and use the available advanced analytic processes to help identify vulnerabilities and micro-target resources.
9. Work with universities and their partners to improve their understanding of violence associated with campuses and community accommodation of students.
10. Work with employers and wider civic society to foster opportunities for young people in the most vulnerable areas

We recognise that some of the recommendations require elements of delivery by other agencies with the VRU exercising its unique leadership role to bring partners together in a co-ordinated and sustainable way with the equal involvement of communities they serve.

Section 1: The research

Background to the project and introduction

A key recommendation of the VRU Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA). was to consider the importance of place-based violence reduction interventions to support those neighbourhoods that have experienced sustained and high levels of violence.

In response the VRU launched the MyEnds programme in September 2020, allocating a total of £3.3 million (including an evaluation piece) to this programme, designed to provide support, capacity, and funding for locally designed interventions in neighbourhoods affected by high and sustained levels of violence.

Though it plays a vital part, the criminal justice system alone cannot prevent violence and its consequences. An approach that seeks to understand the underlying drivers of violence and can bring public sector agencies together with communities to address them is essential. Violence includes a broad and complex set of behaviours, which can be both difficult to measure and difficult to prevent. Partly as a result of this, the evidence on what works to prevent violence is sparse, but the VRU and its partners are faced with confronting the problems that exist now – making the best decisions they can with the available evidence – while at the same time building the evidence base to inform future decisions. This report aims to add to that evidence base building on the findings of the 2020 Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) work.

The approach

Our approach builds on that deployed by BIT who were commissioned by the VRU in 2019, to develop a Strategic Needs Assessment to inform the VRU approach to violence prevention in London. The BIT report concluded that violence in London is highly geographically concentrated. Considering a London-wide picture of violence masks significant variation. Many forms of violent crime are clustered in a small number of geographical units (circa 3,000 residents) – Lower Super Output Areas {LSOAs}). Deprivation appears to be a critical variable with income deprivation being the strongest predictor of violence but there are highly deprived areas that do not have high levels of violence and conversely a smaller number of high-violence neighbourhoods exist in areas that are not deprived.

Just over half of all the poorest neighbourhoods in London were also the poorest over a hundred years ago, and gang territories identified today map on well to streets identified as poor in 1900. However, levels of community cohesion and social trust have a protective impact against violence. It is not certain what explains the resilience against violence of some London neighbourhoods, but community cohesion and social trust seem to be

protective factors. It is suggested that when neighbours know and trust each other, and share common expectations for their neighbourhood, they are more likely to take greater collective responsibility over public safety in their area. In addition, neighbourhoods with greater community cohesion may be more likely to organise themselves to work with the police and other agencies to prevent violence¹.

Our research builds significantly upon the BIT work by providing a whole London LSOA analysis of violence and its co-relates. Whilst the BIT report was developed through interviews with a limited number of key individuals and researchers, we interacted with and collected data from a wide range of local stakeholders and community members through interviews, focus groups, social media analysis and surveys. Some of what we found confirms the findings of BIT, but we have identified some important new areas for the VRUs attention.

How focus areas were chosen and brief summaries of each area

Our approach to this research was a mixed-methods one done in four stages and was largely carried out during varying levels of Covid-19 restrictions.

Stage 1: Scoping and Design

As a starting point for the identification of the target LSOAs for the research we used Sutherland's definition of neighbourhoods vulnerable to violence i.e., neighbourhoods that have levels of violence significantly above average, specifically those in the 75th percentile or higher compared to the rest of London in a given year². However, we also looked at a mix of areas identified to include LSOAs with a high and increasing violent crime trajectory but also other LSOAs with lower but still relatively high rates of violent crime to ensure a comprehensive and representative sample for the research. We agreed the final research sample of LSOAs with the VRU team.

Stage 2: Data collection

In this stage we analysed, and where appropriate integrated, a range of datasets that are used to measure vulnerability to violence. These include deprivation and other societal and economic data, health (hospital, ambulance and PHE), education data including Schools Health Education Unit survey (includes pupils, parents, perceptions, lifestyle), Crime Survey of England and Wales, Police Recorded Crime, community infrastructure investment, alcohol

¹ Violence in London: What we know and how to respond: Behavioural Insights Team 2020

² . Sutherland, A., Brunton-Smith, I., Hutt, O. & Bradford, B. (2019) Violent crime in London: trends, trajectories and neighbourhoods. College of Policing. <https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BIT-London-Violence-Reduction.pdf>

use, transport, accommodation patterns, night-time economy activity and alcohol licensing patterns and density.

We collated and analysed these data and presented their distributions on maps of London (using Excel 3d maps) and their trends. We examined the correlations between individual or combinations of factors that appear to be linked to high and/or rising levels of violence in the selected LSOAs. This allowed us to complete cluster analyses to identify LSOAs that appeared similarly vulnerable to violence, from which 9 focus area areas were selected. Please see Appendix A for the full methodology. The 9 focus area areas are:

- Beaver Estate, Hounslow
- Brixton Hill
- Clapham North
- Edmonton
- Forest Gate
- Harlesden
- New Cross
- Putney Bridge
- Tottenham

Once the target LSOAs were agreed, we identified a sample for the qualitative data collection. This included:

- Active community groups including youth, faith and local advocacy
- Community leaders/spokespersons
- Housing providers
- Local policing teams (response, neighbourhood and specialist)
- Local authority staff
- Local political representatives
- Locally focused volunteer workers
- Locally focused workers from statutory and third sector organisations.

We used a mix of semi-structured interviews and focus groups as well as a 'community in-box survey' where people from inside the selected LSOAs as well as non-selected areas could respond to a structured survey, and an analysis of local social media in each focus area. We carried out 70 interviews and four focus groups, with 27 people attending in all.

Stage 3: Feedback to LVRU

In this stage we drew together the emerging findings and presented these to the LVRU for sense-checking and discussion of the key messages and the potential for action recommendations. We did this in a workshop format based on an initial presentation by the research team, so that the findings could be examined, challenged and a consensus on the critical areas that need to be reflected in the final report reached.

Stage 4: Final Report development

Limitations to the research

There were some limitations to the research. The sample size was limited to nine LSOA areas selected by consensus between the research and VRU teams. While drawn from a long list of LSOAs identified by the methods described above as experiencing the highest levels of violence, the final choice also sought to ensure a geographical balance across London and include areas with differing economic and social profiles. We also agreed not to focus on areas where the violence appeared related principally to the night-time economy. These sample selection choices effectively excluded some areas with equally high levels of violence. The research was almost exclusively carried out during Covid19 restrictions which precluded almost all face-to-face contact with participants. This may have excluded some individuals and groups who were either unable or unwilling to participate online, which may have impacted the reach.

The selection of LSOA focus areas used data from a wide range of sources. This meant that the data referred to different time periods and geographies (i.e., LSOAs, wards and local authorities). The analysis used the most recently available data and the smallest geography available. The methods section and Appendix A describe in more detail how the analysis cleaned and amended the data.

Section 2: Findings

Context of London Violence

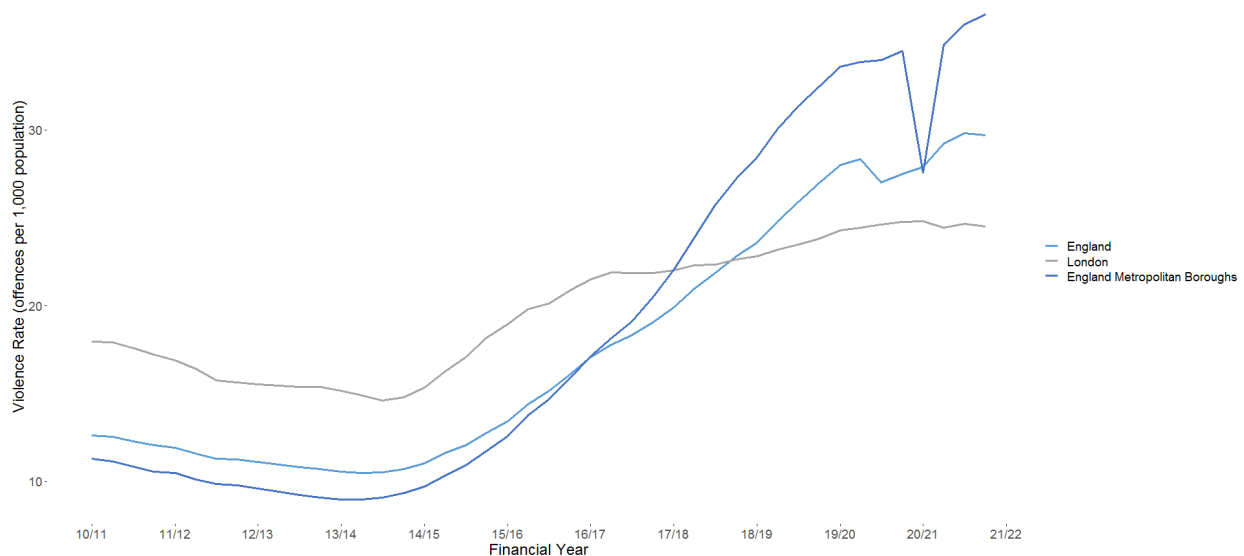
This section describes violence and its related factors in London. First it presents the violence rate in London over time, and secondly, the 9 focus area contexts.

(a full breakdown of the data we used and our approach to analysis is provided at Appendices A&B).

Violence in London

Figure 1 depicts the violence against the person³ offence rate per 1,000 population from 2010 Q1 to 2020 Q4 for London, England, and the mean of all English metropolitan boroughs.

Figure 1: Violence offences per 1,000 population from 2010 Q1 (12 months ending) to 2020 Q4 (12 months ending) in England



Source: Local Government Association - Violence against the person offences recorded in London

After the first quarter of 2010 the violence rate for London decreased from approximately 18 incidents per 1,000 population to 16 by quarter 3 2013. The rate, then substantially increased until early 2016 when it levelled at approximately 23 per 1,000 population and then slowly increased to approximately 25 incidents per 1,000 population. The LVRU investigated how sound this trend was in its strategic needs assessment.⁴ This found that the increase in violent crime was partly due to better crime recording but other data, such as hospital admissions due to assaults with a sharp object, verified that an increase had occurred.⁵

Before 2016, London had a higher violence rate than England as a whole, as well as English metropolitan boroughs. From late 2016, the rate in other metropolitan boroughs overtook London and by September 2017, the violence rate in England was higher than in London. London's increased rate slowed down causing metropolitan England to have a higher rate of violence in 2017 Q1 and England to have a higher rate in 2017 Q4. In fact, when comparing

³ Violence against the person includes crimes with and with injury. For a full list of crime types please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime>

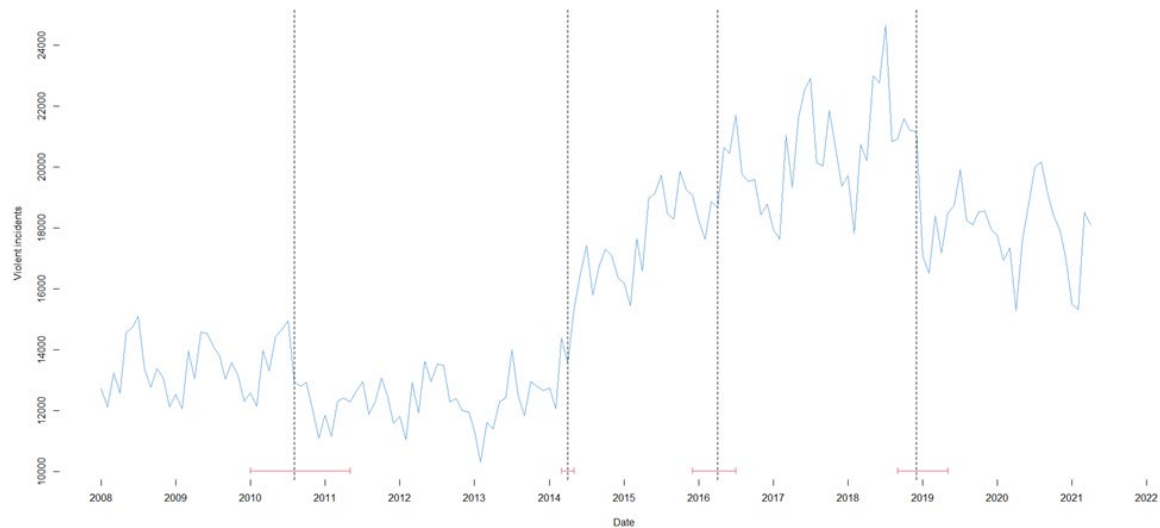
⁴ Available at: <https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BIT-London-Violence-Reduction.pdf>

⁵ ibid

2020 with 2010, there was a 37% increase in the violence rate in London, whereas there was a 135% and 208% increase in England and Urban England, respectively.

Figure 2 describes the number of violent incidences in London between January 2008 and April 2021. It also partitions the trend into distinct periods.⁶

Figure 2: Identification of structural breaks in the number of violent incidents from January 2008 to April 2021



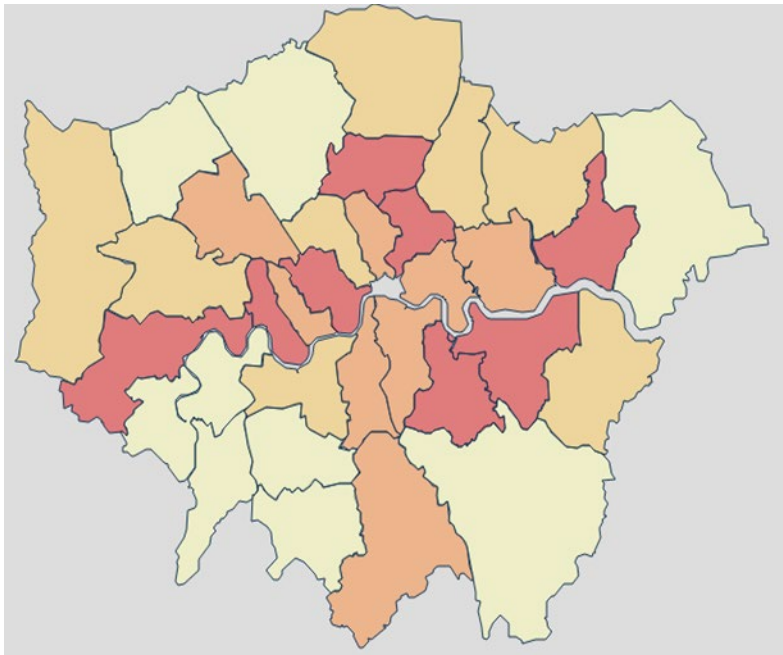
Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

In addition to the fact violence is, unsurprisingly, seasonal in London, Figure 2 shows 5 periods for violence in London between January 2010 and April 2021. Of most note are the periods between April 2014 and December 2018 when the number of violent incidents rose from around 12,000 per month to around 21,000 per month. From January 2019, the number of violent incidents decreased to around 17,000 a month until April 2021.

For this last period, January 2019 to April 2021, Figure 3 describes the violence rate per 1,000 residents in each London borough.

⁶ These were identified using a structural break analysis. Structural breaks are when there are unexpected rates of change violence rate time series. Bai & Perron (2003) provided the mathematical framework for the structural change model implemented.

Figure 3: Violence rate in London LAs Jan 2019 – Apr 2021 (Light yellow indicates lower rates below the 25th percentile, Red indicates higher rates above the 75th percentile)



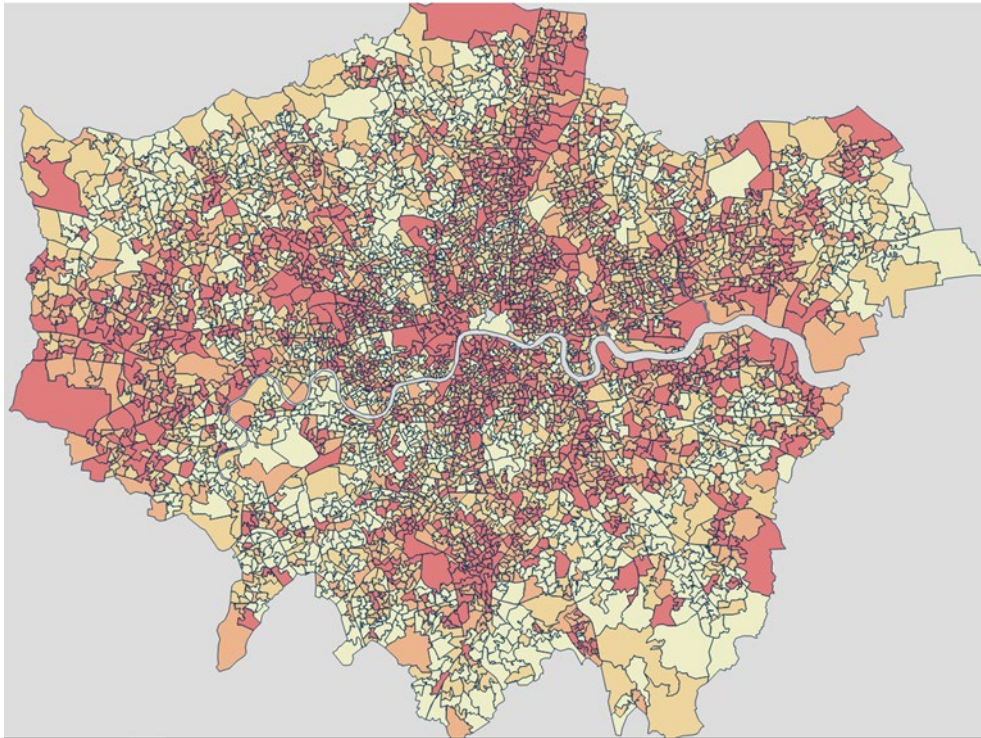
Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

How violence differs across neighbourhoods in London

The London boroughs with the highest violence rates were spread throughout London, though they were generally located towards inner London (except Hounslow). The borough with the highest rate was Westminster and other boroughs with high rates were Hackney and Haringey to the north, Barking and Dagenham to the east, Greenwich and Lewisham to the south, and Hammersmith and Fulham to the west. The lowest rates of violence were generally found in boroughs that were on the outskirts of London, such as Bromley, Havering, Barnet and Kingston upon Thames.

A map of local authorities, however, conceals neighbourhoods with high violence when they are surrounded by areas with generally low levels of violence. Figure 4, therefore, describes the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) with the highest rates of violence.

Figure 4: Violence rate in London LSOAs 2019-2021 (Light yellow indicates lower rates below the 25th percentile, Red indicates higher rates above the 75th percentile)



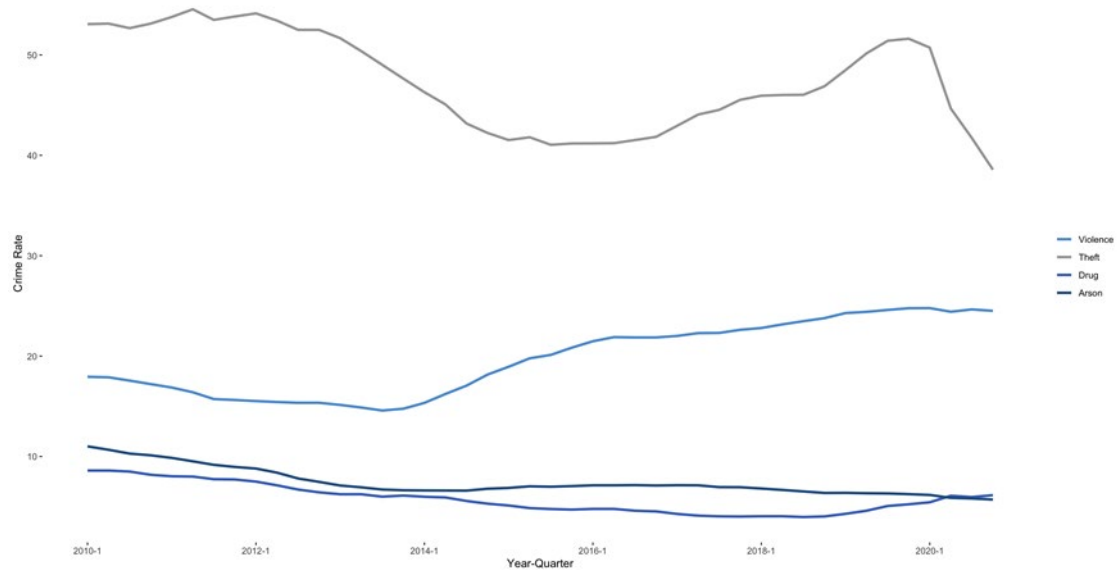
Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Figure 4 shows that neighbourhoods with high rates of violence were found through London and are present in all London boroughs. Clusters of neighbourhoods with higher violence rates were found in Westminster, along the A10 in north London (through Haringey and Enfield), east along the river Thames through Greenwich, Bexley, Newham, Barking and Dagenham, in the west there were separate clusters in Hounslow, Hillingdon and Ealing, and in the south, there were separate clusters in Croydon, Lewisham and Southwark. Haringey has the highest proportion of LSOAs that are in the top 75% of all for violence (39%). It is followed by Barking and Dagenham (also with 39%) and Hackney (38%). Richmond upon Thames has the lowest proportion of LSOA neighbourhoods in the top 75% for violence (7%).

What Figure 4 confirms is that violence in London should be viewed from a neighbourhood perspective, and that a Borough perspective would both mask locations with high violence rates and miss the neighbourhood solutions required to reduce incidents.

Figure 5 shows the rate per 1,000 population of the four most common crimes in London from 2010 Q1 to 2020 Q4.

Figure 5: Offences per 1,000 population of the most common crimes in London from 2010 Q1 (12 months ending) to 2020 Q4 (12 months ending)



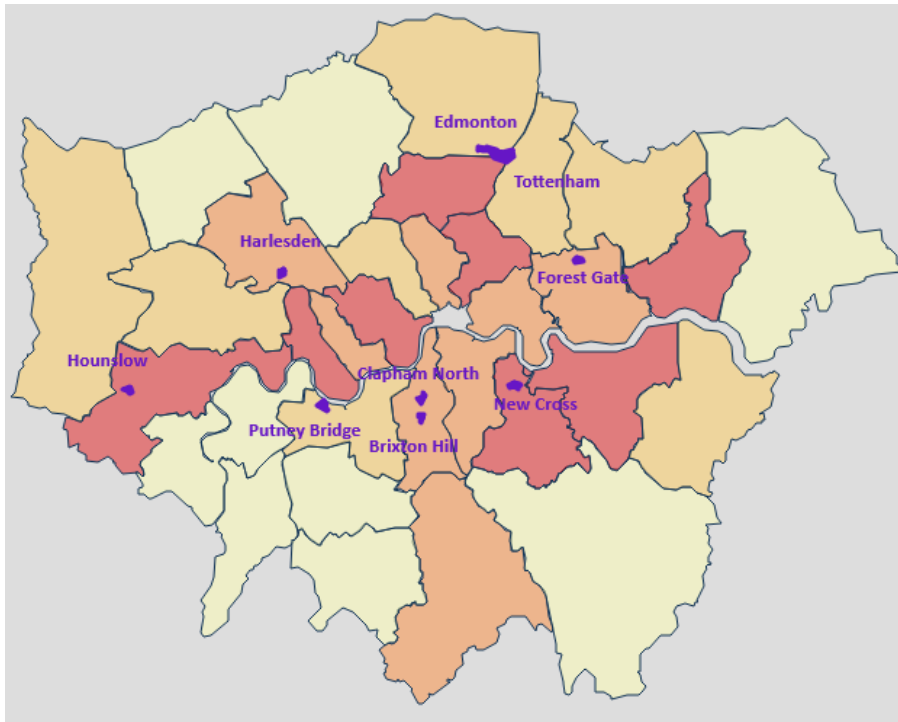
Out of violence, theft, drug, and arson crimes, only violence saw an increase in the recorded crime statistics since 2010. For drug and criminal damage crimes, there has been a steady decrease in the London rate since 2010. Theft, the most common crime, also saw an overall decrease since 2010, although, the rate of theft did increase for a period between 2015 and 2020.

The London violence context is explained in more depth in Appendix B.

The focus areas

The method section described which LSOAs were chosen to be focus areas. Figure 6 locates each focus area in London and describes the Boroughs;’ violence rates.

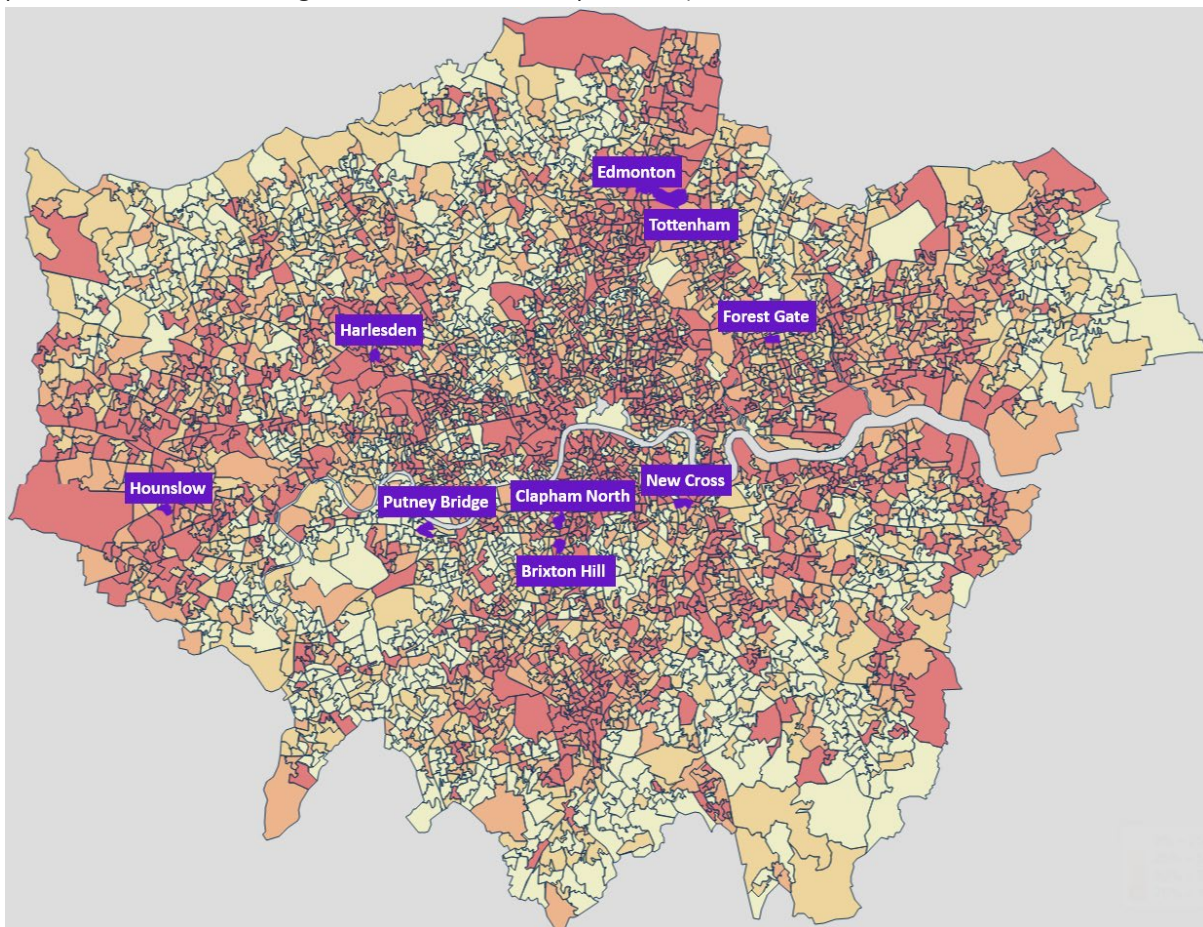
Figure 6: Violence rate in London LAs Jan 2019 – Apr 2021 (Light yellow indicates lower rates below the 25th percentile, Red indicates higher rates above the 75th percentile) with focus area locations marked



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

All the focus areas were in the 90th percentile of LSOA violence rates, but only the New Cross and Hounslow (Beaver Estate) areas were in one of the London boroughs with the highest overall rate. As such, Figure 7 describes the violence rates of the neighbourhoods around each focus area.

Figure 7: Violence rate in London LSOAs 2019-2021 (Light yellow indicates lower rates below the 25th percentile, Red indicates higher rates above the 75th percentile) – focus area locations marked

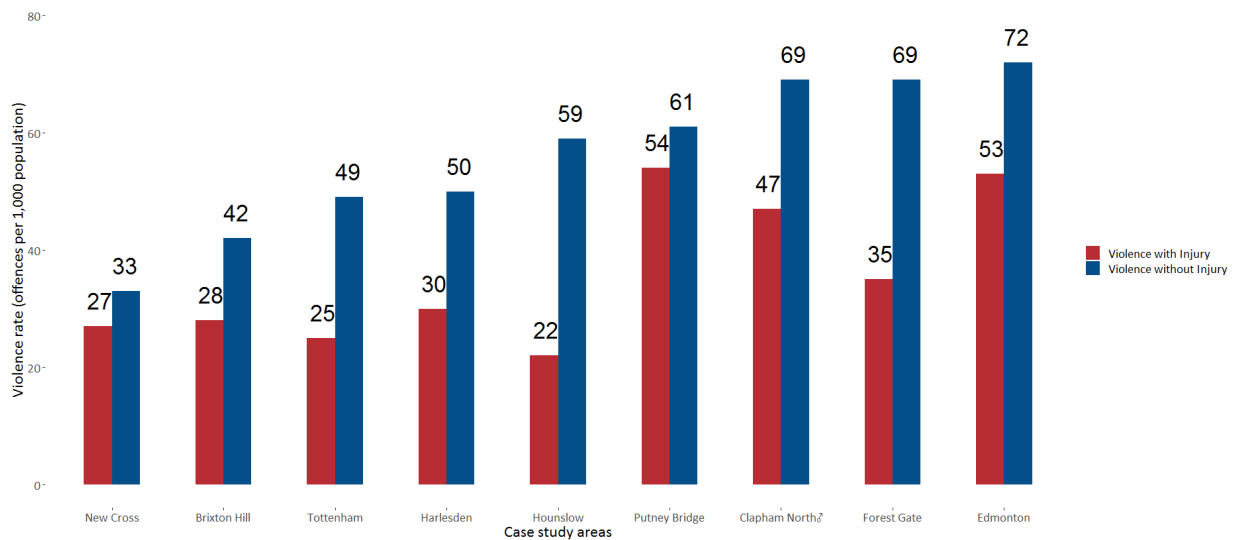


Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Most of the focus areas sit in clusters of neighbourhoods that are in the 75% percentile for violence rate. The exceptions appear to be Putney Bridge which is surrounded by neighbourhoods with low violence rates and the Forest Gate focus area, which to the north and east has neighbourhoods with lower rates of violence. There are, however, neighbourhoods with high violence rates to the east and south of this focus area.

Even though the focus areas are all in the 90th percental for violence rates, the actual rates vary, and the crime types vary. Figure 8 describes the with and without injury yearly violence rate per 1,000 population in each focus area LSOA between October 2018 and September 2020). The Edmonton focus aera had the highest rate of violence without injury (72) and Putney Bridge had the highest with injury rate (54), though closely followed by Edmonton with a rate of 53. The lowest rate of with injury violence was in Hounslow (22) though it had a relatively high without injury violence rate (59). Overall, New Cross had the lowest violence rate of 60 (27 with injury, 33 without injury).

Figure 8: Yearly violence rate with and without injury for the focus LSOAs (October 2018- September 2020)



Source: Metropolitan police LSOA crime data

The social media analysis unpicked the violent crime types of concern in each focus area. Common crime types discussed were gang activity and knife crime. These were frequently mentioned in relation to New Cross, Brixton Hill, Clapham North, Edmonton, Harlesden, and Tottenham. In Putney Bridge, assault and gun crime were violent crimes discussed, but also non-violent anti-social behaviour and moped crime were reported. Robbery, knife crime and murder were discussed in relations to Hounslow while knife crime related to football matches, gun crime and murder were commonly referred to for Forest Gate.

The general feedback from the social media analysis was:

- lack of police presence featured in many conversations about violent crime;
- social media commentators viewed harsher prison sentences as a crime deterrent;
- perpetrators of violent crime are mainly viewed as young people;
- according to social media commentators, in some areas, witnesses are reluctant to step forward regarding gang related violence;
- many stated that support services for vulnerable people needed to improve to reduce crime; and
- the perception of violent crime increasing and becoming more serious in nature was a frequent topic amongst social media conversations.

The online survey explored these results further and found:

- alcohol and/or drug-related violence is the most frequently reported violent crime;

- a greater proportion of respondents in the focus areas rated levels of violence as above average compared to those in other areas in London;
- a higher proportion of respondents in the focus areas felt that violent crime affected their daily lives “a bit” or “a lot” compared to those in other areas in London;
- respondents in the focus areas were more likely to think that the likelihood of becoming a victim was high or very high, compared to other areas in London;
- over 80% of those in the focus areas quoted drug dealing as encouraging violence in their local area – a smaller proportion of those in other areas in London agreed;
- respondents across all areas felt that increased policing as well as providing job opportunities and support for vulnerable people could be effective in tackling violence; and
- around 1/3 reported ineffective local policing across all areas.

Detailed survey and social media findings, broken down by focus area, are available in Appendix C.

Core thematic areas from qualitative research

This section of the report describes the key themes that emerged from the interviews and focus groups. These included professionals familiar with a particular LSOA, and residents / street level people living in the areas of interest. Several of those we interviewed had knowledge of more than one of the LSOAs and represented a larger group and range of opinions, such as those from organisations like St Giles Trust, United Borders and the NHS commissioners and providers. The purpose of our interviews was help understand why some communities experience more violence than others and particularly from a perspective of those with current knowledge due to their connection with one or more of the LSOAs in question, through living and or working in the locality.

It was apparent during the interviews that some of the areas we focussed on, although all having high levels of violence (i.e., in London’s top 10%), were not necessarily focus areas within their borough for those leading on community safety nor necessarily considered unsafe by those living and or working in those areas. This was true to some extent in interviews concerning the LSOAs in Hounslow, Lewisham and Wandsworth.

In most cases the violence described by our participants was violence perpetrated by young people (and upon young people), and often that perpetrated by and on teenagers.

Each interview was guided by a topic guide which is provided in appendix D. Interviews typically took between 30 and 60 minutes. Where quotes are given, these have been anonymised and are sometimes amalgams of what several participants stated. We have

agreed with participants not to attribute any of the quotes, and they are there purely as exemplars.

The themes

The themes that have emerged from our interview cover some issues that are already well understood. For example, crime and violence are more prevalent in areas with high deprivation than more affluent ones⁷ and poor design of housing, particularly social housing and high-rise accommodation, and communities can be associated with isolation, fear, higher incidents of crime and poorer mental health⁸. Initiatives targeting housing, such as Secured by Design⁹ have been shown to significantly reduce crime¹⁰. However, some of the themes that were raised by our participants are less well understood, for example that of locations that attract crime and violence, such as universities. There is data to show marked variation in crime and violence in the immediate vicinity of different universities with a range of 17.3 to 76.3 incidents per 1000 students¹¹.

Poverty and social deprivation

“...obviously violence is a complex issue but, in most cases, and certainly here, there is an underlying context and that is social deprivation...”

Virtually all of those we spoke to attribute a significant role to poverty and social deprivation in explaining why some areas were more violent than others. Poverty was seen as a driver for crime and perhaps the most common example given was illicit drug trading, and this was often associated with violence. Many of the young people involved in violence had limited education and skills, having under-attained and often ended their time in education early. Job opportunities were limited, low paid, zero-hours and/or temporary in nature. Employment for many young people was hard to attain and was insecure when

⁷ Higgins N, Rob P & Briton A (2010) Geographic Patterns of Crime. Chapter 7 in Crime in England and Wales 2009/10. Editors: Flatley J, Kershaw C, Smith K, Chaplin R & Moo D. London. Home Office. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-in-england-and-wales-2009-to-2010-findings-from-the-british-crime-survey-and-police-recorded-crime>

⁸ Larcombe D, van Etten E, Logan A, Prescott S, & Horwitz P (2019) High-Rise Apartments and Urban Mental Health—Historical and Contemporary Views. *Challenges*, 10, 34; doi:10.3390/challe10020034

⁹ Armitage R (2004) Secured by design - an investigation of its history, development and future role in crime reduction. Doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield. Available at: eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/6912/1/411895.pdf

¹⁰ Secured by Design (2009) Secured By Design Case study – Nottingham City Homes. Available at: <https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/research-case-studies-guidance/nottingham-city-homes-case-study/viewdocument/211>

¹¹ Wood J (2020) Crime rates in university cities and towns. The Complete Universities Guide. Available at <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/student-advice/where-to-study/crime-rates-in-university-cities-and-towns>

attained. Trading in drugs provided what was perceived by many of our participants as relatively secure form of income, and we were given examples, in our interviews concerning Brent, Enfield, Haringey, Lambeth and Newham of young people continuing to trade in drugs even when in work, due to their concerns over job insecurity. In these examples, young people were significant household income providers.

In the interviews in Brent and Haringey with My Ends project representatives there was a particular emphasis on the need to develop career pathways and not just job opportunities for young people. It was noted in several of our conversations that in socially deprived areas outcomes for young people from different groups and communities were not the same; for example, in several areas (e.g., Haringey & Newham) young people from white UK backgrounds were perceived by our participants as having different outcomes than young black people and being more likely to enter secure employment.

Violence affecting young people was not the only source of violence discussed and in some socially deprived areas, domestic violence was also significant factor (e.g., Newham), where families were under stress and with alcohol abuse often a significant factor. Diversity and transience were discussed by many participants, for example in Brent it was pointed out that over 140 languages were spoken in the locality we were interested in. In the area of interest in Enfield, a significant proportion of the community was seen as transient, i.e., often relatively new to the area and likely to be there temporarily. These along with other factors could challenge the sense of community and made solutions more complex.

Most of areas we were interested in had long histories of social deprivation and of violence and were seen as having entrenched histories of crime and violence with some having several generations of a family involved in similar gang, peer group and postcode rivalries; but this was not always the case. Some areas had seen significant changes in the population and yet remained areas of concern, affected by high levels of crime and violence. Austerity and service cuts were seen as having impacted socially deprived communities significantly and were seen in most our interviews as having had a major role in increasing violence. Cuts to youth services, early intervention and those supporting families were seen as the most critical.

Regeneration, architecture, design, geography, isolation and fear

“...I think that if you are not sure you are going to be there in a few years...if there is going to be room for you...you are less likely to be invested in the change...I think most people in the community feel excluded

from the process and powerless and worry there will not be a place for them here...”

Our participants frequently raised the issues of regeneration and sometimes gentrification. Significant regeneration is underway in the LSOAs of interest in both boroughs and in this process will continue for years to come. Interviewees saw the process of regeneration as posing a challenge to the sense of community and the consultation process associated with it, or at least how local communities perceived it as nominal and alienating communities from local government and statutory services and in feeling a lack of ownership in the developments in their area.

It was recognised by most of our participants that there were a range of factors concerning how living spaces and the physical aspects of community living contributed to the sense of fear and/or isolation in a community and indirectly to violence. Interviews in Wandsworth and Hounslow made mention of several of these; for example, poor lighting near the University of Roehampton was described as promoting fear of, but also the opportunity for crime.

Social housing estate design was similarly cited as a factor, once again in Wandsworth, and also in Brent. In the former, the Alton Estate, one of the largest social housing estates in the UK, was seen as having insularity designed in, and not feeling particularly integrated with neighbouring areas. The Alton Estate, like the area of interest in Brent features high-rise accommodation. In Brent, the high-rise accommodation was seen as reinforcing separation and fear. One's 'community' in a high-rise could be limited to those on the same floor or landing. Shared stairwells and lifts were often experienced as unsafe. In Brent, the lack of green communal spaces was cited as influencing a sense of isolation in the community. Fear and isolation were seen as factors that promote gang or antisocial peer group affiliation.

Transport hubs and the lack of them were seen as contextual factors influencing violence. The lack of access to public transport can reinforce isolation and this was cited in the case of the Alton Estate, where there is bus access, but rail and underground stations are much more distant.

Racism

The topic of racism featured in many of the interviews and perhaps most prominently in those in Brent, Enfield, Haringey, Lambeth, Newham and Wandsworth. It was commonly seen as contextual factor much as social deprivation and seen as manifesting in different ways, such as:

- Different ethnic/racial groups in the same communities having different outcomes and, in the examples given, those of white UK backgrounds being perceived as less likely to “...remain entrenched...” when compared to those from black and in some areas, Asian backgrounds, and there being some structural differences that brought these differences.
- Policing and particularly ‘front line’ policing. Perceptions of unfair targeting of policing tactics such as ‘stop and search’ were seen as further alienating young people and their communities. These communities often had long histories of mistrust in the police.
- Service provision and relationships with statutory sector. We were told the communities felt that services were not for them or designed around their needs (e.g., health and local government provided services) and this was felt all the more so, after austerity cuts and in areas experiencing regeneration. Therefore, it is important that marginalised groups are encouraged to take part in consultations and the development of programmes.

Crime attractors

Some features of the LSOA’s we were exploring were seen as attracting crime and violence and those perpetrating this were not necessarily from the LSOAs in question but were drawn in by those features. Transport hubs featured in many such accounts given in our interviews. Areas immediately around these may experience more violence because of the volume of people using the hubs and the opportunity for crime this provides. Transport hubs can be located at an intersection between rival peer groups and thereby pose a risk for, particularly young people, in those groups. Some violence at transport hubs will overlap with that of areas with nighttime economies and relate to alcohol consumption and/or places where young people congregate (e.g., fast food outlets). One of the possible explanations for the heightened level of violence in the area of Hounslow was the proximity to such a transport hub.

Universities featured in several of our interviews and especially those in Wandsworth (University of Roehampton) and Lewisham (Goldsmiths, University of London). Thousands of young people attend universities with sizable proportions living in student accommodation on or near campus. Universities provide opportunities for crime and cited most often by our participants were illicit drug trading and robbery. Some violence in and around universities was attributed by our participants to rivalries between gangs regarding drug trading. From a rapid literature review we found that there is a patchy recent literature describing sexual violence and drug related crime on university campuses. However high-quality research that develops an in-depth understanding of the areas of violence our participants raised is

lacking. There are some reported initiatives that appear to have a preventive impact in areas such as sexual violence but most are confined to US and Canadian examples and would not provide a 'plug and play' approach to prevention. This is an area that the VRU may wish to consider for further exploration given the number of higher education sites in London.

Another example of a location that might be associated with violence was the former Cavalry barracks in Hounslow. This closed in June 2021 and was cited as a possible explanation for the heightened level of violence in the LSOA. Military barracks can consist of a range of accommodation including family homes but will often consist of accommodation for primarily single young males. In the case of the Cavalry barracks in Hounslow, this accommodated, up until recently, of nearly 400 soldiers, mainly of junior ranks. Schools, and secondary schools, are another location that several of our participants identified as potential attracters of crime and associated violence. Some of the most active members of a violence involved peer group are of secondary school age. The schools will often be attended by members of rival peer groups, and this alone can be the source of incidents in and around a school, but also, as with universities, they can draw crime and violence simply because they offer the opportunity for criminal exploitation (e.g., drug trading and robbery, and commonly mobile phone theft). Routes to and from school, especially those involving foot traffic only (alleyways) and routes between split school campus's pose the most risk according to some of our interview participants.

Re-housing policy

Some of our interview participants described incidents of rehousing and what they saw specifically as irresponsible rehousing policy, i.e., specifically rehousing families without adequate wrap around support. Typically, the incidents described were of a particular family being rehoused out of their borough of origin. One or more members of the family had been associated with violence and were 'gang-associated' in the area they were moved out of, and the move will often have been associated with trying to break the connection with violence. This was seen as irresponsible where little or no support was provided to the family and where communication on the issues to the new local authority were negligible or limited.

"...we have had incidents where young lads have been rehoused, they see our area as a soft touch... they make contact with old friends... they start [drug trading] again... only to find it there are other young people dealing locally... then trouble follows..."

Risk and age

According to our participants risk of violence is not evenly spread. Age, and specifically being young and male, was the most commonly cited by our participants as risk factor, and that included both risk of being a victim of violence and risk of perpetrating violence. Race may also be a significant factor, for example, being young male and Black, but this was not stressed by our participants. Risk seemingly lowered once someone reached their late 20's from our accounts and seemed to be at its highest for mid-teenagers to early 20's. Being young and unknown whilst passing through an area might be enough to trigger violence and all the more so if wearing clothing associated with so-called 'roadman' culture we were told.

Gangs and violence affecting young people

Most of our interviewees saw violence perpetrated by young people as being their primary concern. Several areas had very recent incidence of serious injuries and even fatalities of young people by/or suspected perpetrated by other young people. In most cases there was some association between peer group / gang rivalry. What was also clear from our interviews was the perception that the nature of gang/group affiliation was constantly evolving.

County Lines, itself described as a constantly evolving 'business model', had a significant impact on affiliation, with groups from towns outside London having strong links to particular gangs in London. This was described in Enfield and Haringey where gangs had affiliates in Hertfordshire and beyond. In recent times, county lines have involved the exploitation of both females and young teenagers, with very young people from London being arrested far outside London, such as in Lincolnshire and further afield.

Social media was also seen as changing the nature of affiliation. Drill artists associated with particular peer groups and postcodes often have large followings on social media platforms such as YouTube. The number of subscribers and 'likes' on a YouTube Channel are seen as significant. We were told of connections being made through comments sections and personal messages, with possibly moving conversations to other more private media platforms such as WhatsApp after a connection is made. Social media was also described by some of our interviewees as playing an active role in maintaining rivalries, through being disrespectful of rival groups and issuing challenges. In addition, it was felt that social media provides a new opportunity for grooming and exploitation.

Drug trading was described as major part of many gangs in London, though so-called gang related violence was not always related to this, and often concerned geographical and postcode rivalries and was described as 'tit for tat' in nature. It was pointed out by several

of our participants that there were loose hierarchical tiers associated with gangs and that over all of these was a tier of organised crime providing the illicit drugs for trading at the street level.

It would appear from the several of the interviews concerning hierarchies that those gang associated people not associated with the street level (generally those in late 20s and older) are often less involved in the street level rivalries.

“...I think talking about hierarchies can be misleading...these guys [older ‘members’] will be listened to and respected but they won’t necessarily have any real control of what happens on the streets and the violence, that is the domain of younger people and often very young teenagers...”

Whilst some postcode rivalries seem fairly fixed over time; this clearly was not always the case. We were given accounts of gang mergers where previously there had been rivalries. Newham was one example given of this. In more recent times the A13 has become a dividing line with mergers and closer affiliations between peer groups north of this, and a similar pattern south of this.

Several interviewees, whilst stressing that girls were typically victims of violence and exploitation, reported that incidence of female perpetrated violence was increasing.

Initiatives

Several of the areas we explored reported as having significant histories of short-term initiatives and pilot projects, with limited and at best short-lived affects. The evidence from our interviews in the My Ends projects was that they were attempting to co-produce solutions with targeted communities and involved grassroots organisations from those communities. These attempts were felt to be a contrast with many previous initiatives.

Previous initiative funding was often limited to set-up costs and did not often extend to ‘supplementary’ but important costs, such as the funding of ongoing support beyond the immediate central intervention. Funding such supplementary elements were seen a significant in embedding lasting change. The short-term nature of ‘initiative’ funding is seen as potentially harmful, for example building trust with communities and young people can

take considerable time, only for a project to end when this has been developed. This may mean communities are less likely to engage in future such exercises.

Challenges of partnership working

Different organisations will have different scopes, culture and language and considerable effort and time is often needed to bridge these differences. This is particularly so with statutory organisations. Some of our participants revealed that even within an organisation there can be difficulties of working together. We were given examples from local authorities and even within the police. There was a desire for better partnership working and structure that support it. The authors of this report have seen examples of effective cross organisation partnerships, which may have lessons for London, the ‘place-based working’ taking place in Wigan, Greater Manchester being one example. A London based example, focused on a particular community is that of Project Future in Tottenham (specifically Northumberland Park) in Hackney, where the local NHS mental health trust, NHS England/Improvement (who provide funding) the local authority, the charity Hackney Mind and the police collaborate closely in an initiative focused primarily on young black men in the areas.

Early intervention

“... it’s sad to say but interventions targeted at secondary school children are often coming too late, behaviour and outlooks can be very entrenched by then...you need to get in much much earlier...”

Another feature of the My Ends projects we spoke to, was a focus on intervention with young and particularly primary school aged children. Exploitation of children was described by many of our interview participants as targeting ever young children, and so intervening with very young children and their families was seen as critical.

As mentioned above, cuts because of austerity policies had resulted in reduction of youth service but also parenting support and early intervention generally. It was the perception of most of our participants that as statutory services had ‘retreated’ in recent times, voluntary and community sector services, and often local grassroots organisations had been left to bear the brunt.

Trauma and mental health

The impact of violence and particularly youth violence was consistently associated with psychological trauma in young people exposed to it. There was a concern amongst participants that there was little in the way of provision for this and that current mental health services are not set-up to meet this need. Young people were described as unlikely to voluntarily attend mental health services due to stigma which further complicated the issue. There are some examples of services meeting this need and even co-produced ones (e.g., Project Future in Haringey) and some police custody-based projects (e.g., Gateway, also in Haringey and a pan-London project involving St Giles Trust and NHS Liaison and Diversion services). However, such initiatives are often short-term funded and limited in scope and coverage.

Section 3: What next?

Lessons from the research

There are a number of lessons from the research:

- The place-based focus first emphasised in the BIT 2020 report was clearly endorsed by our research and should continue to underpin future investment and intervention by the VRU and its partners
- The need to further develop and maintain an integrated violence related database focused at LSOA level is clear and without it the place-based focus will be difficult to develop and maintain
- The essential need to develop further the involvement of individuals and communities in deciding what is needed to reduce violence
- The gap between what has happened in terms of intervention and investment and what communities want was evident. The My Ends programme approach was seen by those we interviewed to be a practical way of addressing these issues and should be explored further the model for place-based working
- The need for the VRU and its partners to widen the focus into some new areas in particular University campuses and related accommodation in the neighbouring communities. There is growing evidence of these being attractors for an increasing range of violence and exploitation and this needs further structured research to understand and counteract
- The pattern of some past investments in London by a range of agencies was seen as not well thought through with promising schemes being either run as short-term pilots that did not lead to any meaningful change or ongoing development. Others were funded only for up-front set up costs lacking any funding for downstream support infrastructure needed to underpin the project and make it sustainable over time. Short-term and partial investment in violence reduction schemes was seen as a key issue to be addressed by the VRU and partners.

Conclusions and next steps

Violence in London is highly geographically concentrated and starting from a London-wide picture of violence masks significant variation. Many forms of violent crime are clustered in a small number of geographical units (circa 3,000 residents) – Lower Super Output Areas {LSOAs}. While deprivation appears to be a critical variable with income deprivation being the strongest predictor of violence, there are highly deprived areas that do not have high levels of violence and conversely a smaller number of high-violence neighbourhoods exist in areas that are not deprived. Developing a granular and dynamic understanding of these patterns should form the basis of the VRUs investment and intervention efforts.

Our research identified universities as a new area of focus for VRU attention. They were identified in the LSOAs we worked with as attractors of violence and exploitation. Given the number of university campuses and their related community accommodation across London, an urgent review of the patterns of violence and exploitation taking place is needed. There is a developing research literature around the links between university campuses and violent and property crime that will help in framing the VRU approach.

A theme that emerged through the research was the perception that there was a need to work much more closely and in a more open way with the communities affected by violence. Key to this is working together to identify the actual nature and impact of violence on individuals and to listen and act on what they think the issues are and what they think will help change things. This co-production model was clearly what the research participants wanted and what they thought was lacking in some of the initiatives there have been where they felt they had had things done to them rather than with them. Some patterns of investment in violence reduction measures needs to be re-thought and be driven more by the My Ends model. People we spoke to had experiences of very short-term pilot investments that did little if anything to reduce violence nor did they feel that they had had any say in the decisions run the pilots. They also had experiences of projects being funded for set up and immediate running costs but with no funding for downstream infrastructure and service support costs.

The VRU should work even more closely with partners to influence some of the key community cohesion initiatives that have been identified in the 2020 BIT report, this current research and a wide range of other related literature. For example, improving housing stock and occupation stability, reducing the movement of tenants between areas because of difficulties they have presented, which in some cases has resulted in an increase in violence in the area they have moved to, improving the built environment including street lighting, play areas and other community facilities.

Prevention and early intervention were high on the agenda of many participants with some feeling that these areas had been neglected and opportunities missed. The VRU is in a unique leadership position to influence partners such as education, social-care and health to focus effort and investment aimed at tackling the root causes of violence at the earliest age. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are closely linked to future violence and exploitation and a clear focus on reducing ACEs has been demonstrated, in other large metropolitan areas, to have a measurable impact on violence reduction.

It is clear, that social media is a driver of violence and related criminality for some groups and our research has reinforced this. The VRU commissioned Online Harms report documenting the experiences of children and young people makes it clear how important a focus on this area is. The report set out seven key recommendations which highlight actions that the VRU can take a lead on with their partners in all sectors to begin to make changes where they have control or advocate for changes where other agencies and organisations have responsibility. Better analysis and use of social media data as a tool in identifying and understanding emerging patterns of violence, is a key area that the VRU could encourage and take a lead on.

The VRU has already fostered violence reduction research and this needs to continue. We identified a number of areas from database development to intervention design that would benefit from further targeted research. There also areas where there is existing good quality research that needs translation and adaptation into the context of communities in London and a mapping and quality grading of this literature would be step forward. We are aware that the Youth Endowment Foundation are updating their 'what works' evidence maps and may offer a useful partnership.

Recommendations

Investment in violence reduction initiatives

1. The VRU should strengthen its approach in making investments in violence reduction initiatives that not only fund initial intervention start-up costs but that also allows for ongoing support infrastructure to help those involved develop realistic and deliverable sustainability plans and funding sources. Without this type of investment potentially important initiatives will fail and community confidence in future programmes will be damaged.
2. The VRU should strengthen its approach to investment and initiative selection based on co-production and not traditional community consultation which our participants felt rarely captured their views, concerns or solutions but rather reflected the voices of only a few often out-of-touch individuals and interest groups.

3. VRU should continue to work with partners to invest in initiatives that support the development of the protective factors of community cohesion such as improving access to facilities and services and improvements to the local built environment and housing, these are the most likely to be successful in building resilience against violence.
4. LVRU should continue to work with partners to foster prevention and early intervention initiatives. These were identified by our participants a key part in changing patterns of violence – these types of services were also seen as having been most badly hit during the period of austerity.

Making data more useful

5. Shift the core data analytical focus more onto Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) to understand accurately and precisely the nature and extent of violence. This street and neighbourhood analysis is critical to identifying violence vulnerability and related harm and driving investment in a targeted and effective way. Make the case for and negotiate better integration and quality of data across key agencies involved in violence reduction and encourage the addition of more granular non-open-source local data. Curate, extend and improve the database this research has created to facilitate this LSOA/neighbourhood-based approach and ensure that not only violence, but harm is being measured and monitored. Making this database freely and publicly accessible should also be explored.

Understanding what works

6. Continue and extend the culture of robust research and evaluation to develop a dynamic understanding of patterns of violence and related harm and what works for whom and where, working with local communities to understand how to adapt approaches to suit local differences across London.

Working with other agencies

Many of the areas identified by our participants lie outside of the direct control of the VRU. However, the VRU's leadership role in violence reduction makes it well placed to influence other key agencies and enable partnerships by marshalling key evidence of the changes that are needed to foster better inter and intra-agency co-operation. In some the VRU could be instrumental in making the case for place-based service integration to tackle specific areas of concern – there are examples in other parts of the UK of this type of place-based working

and where this approach has made a fundamental difference to violence rates and related harm.

7. Lack of police presence and positive interaction within the most vulnerable areas was a theme that emerged throughout the research. VRU should continue to explore ways in which they can work with police to focus positive police community support in those areas identified as vulnerable to violence and harm.
8. Social media was identified by our participants as an increasingly critical driver underpinning activity that leads to violence and related exploitation. Social media itself is a rich source of largely unanalysed data relating to violence. VRU and its partners should explore ways of integrating gathered intelligence and use the available advanced analytic processes to help identify vulnerabilities and micro-target resources. The VRU's online harms report provides a starting point for this approach.
9. The VRU should work with universities and their partners to improve their understanding of violence associated with campuses and community accommodation of students. Universities are attractors of violence and exploitation and to date have largely been ignored as targets for coordinated violence reduction investment and intervention.
10. The development of real career pathways and not simply job opportunities and zero-hour contracts were identified by our participants as fundamental to moving, particularly young people, out of drug dealing and its related violence. VRU should work with employers and wider civic society to foster opportunities for young people in the most vulnerable areas that give them a real stake in their own future that many said they do not feel they've had.

Appendices

Appendix A: Method for focus area selection

This appendix describes how the study team located potential focus area neighbourhoods for the project. To select the neighbourhoods, we described the patterns of violence in London and the potential drivers of violence in London. The study's focus was on the ONS defined lower super output areas and we aimed to identify 25 potential cases study areas from which 6 or more focus areas could be chosen.

Data source

The study team identified open data sources for the project.

Violence

The data source was monthly violence against the person reported crimes published by the Metropolitan police. Three years of data were sampled (October 2017 to September 2020) to reduce the influence of outlier counts and a standardised statistic – average yearly rate per 1,000 residents – was calculated for each LSOA.

Factors associated with violence

The study team identified a variety of factors that the evidence base suggested would be associated with violence rate. Table 1 describes the factors and whether open data were identified to measure each.

Table 1: Data sources identified

Factor	Variable	Geography
Deprivation	IMD domain scores	LSOA
Health services and treatment	Admissions to hospital alcohol related	LA
	Substance misuse admissions to hospital (15-24 years old)	LA
	Number in treatment for alcohol	LA
	Average number of ambulance response (2012-2014)	Ward
	Average number of ambulance response for alcohol (2012-2014) ¹²	Ward
	Average number of ambulance response for assault (2012-2014) ¹³	Ward
	Average number of ambulance response for weapon injuries (2012-2014)	Ward
	A&E admissions	Hospital trust (HES data request required for LSOA)
	Emergency admissions	Hospital trust (HES data request required for LSOA)
Public health	Overcrowding	Ward
	Density of food outlets	Ward
	Access to healthy assets and hazards	LSOA
	Volume of alcohol sold	LSOA
	Percentage dependent drinkers	Ward
Education (not open data)	Absence rate	LSOA (NPD request required)
	Exclusion rate	LSOA (NPD request required)
Community	Number of community resources	No data source identified yet
Transport	Time taken to travel to key resources	LSOA
	Travel time to Bank station	LSOA
Accommodation	Fuel poverty	LSOA
Night time economy	Number of public houses, clubs restaurants and takeaways	MSOA
	Employment size of NTE	MSOA
Alcohol licensing	Number of public houses and bars	MSOA
Population	ONS LSOA population estimates	LSOA

Open-source data were unavailable for two factors – hospital admissions at LSOA level and absence and exclusion rates. It was outside of the scope of the project to pay for those

¹² Data were missing for approximately 400 LSOAs. They were excluded from the analysis.

¹³ *ibid*

sources. Most data sources were not available at the LSOA level. For data sources with standardised rates or percentages, the data were applied to the LSOAs within an area, e.g., the LSOAs received their Local Authority's figure. For data sources with counts, data were applied proportionally to the LSOAs size – for example if an LSOAs population represented 20% of the larger area's population, then 20% of the large area's figure was allocated to this LSOA.

Analysis

On the face of it, many factors are correlated with violence and could explain its manifestation in communities. To identify the important factors, a multiple regression analysis was performed. This regressed the data collected against the violence rate in each LSOA and a backwards stepwise procedure was used to reduce the number of independent variables. The final list of factors in the regression model, after being sense checked by the team to prevent duplication and to remove factors that are more likely to be caused by violence, were:

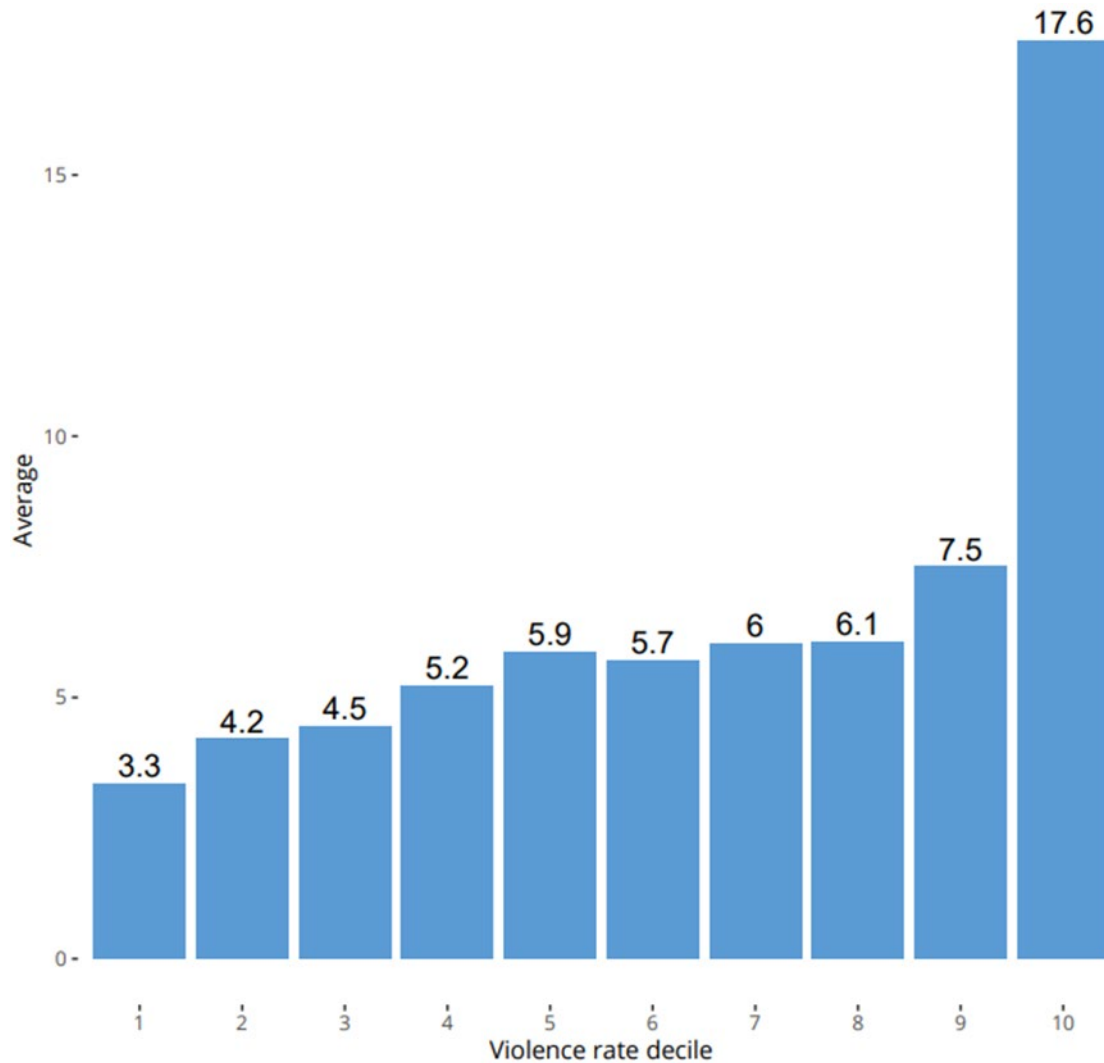
- Employment rate (IMD domain)^a
- Health deprivation and disability (IMD domain)
- Barriers to housing and services score (IMD domain)^a
- Living environment score (IMD domain)
- Rate of fast food outlets per 1,000 population
- Percentage of adults binge drinking
- Accessibility to a leisure facilities
- Accessibility to an off license
- Time to reach food shops by public transport^b
- Time to reach town centre by public transport^b
- Rate of ambulance incidents
- Rate of ambulance incidents for alcohol^a
- Emergency admissions to hospital^b

^a highly correlated

^b negatively correlated

The rate of ambulance incidents is likely to be caused by the number of violent incidents. We, however, kept it as an independent variable as it would likely help us to identify night-time economy areas and allow us to distinguish between locations for our focus area selections. This is exemplified in Figure 9, which describes the average number of ambulances responses for alcohol between 2012-2014 for the LSOAs in London grouped by the violence rate decile they fall into.

Figure 9: Average number of ambulance responses for alcohol 2012-2014 by violence rate decile

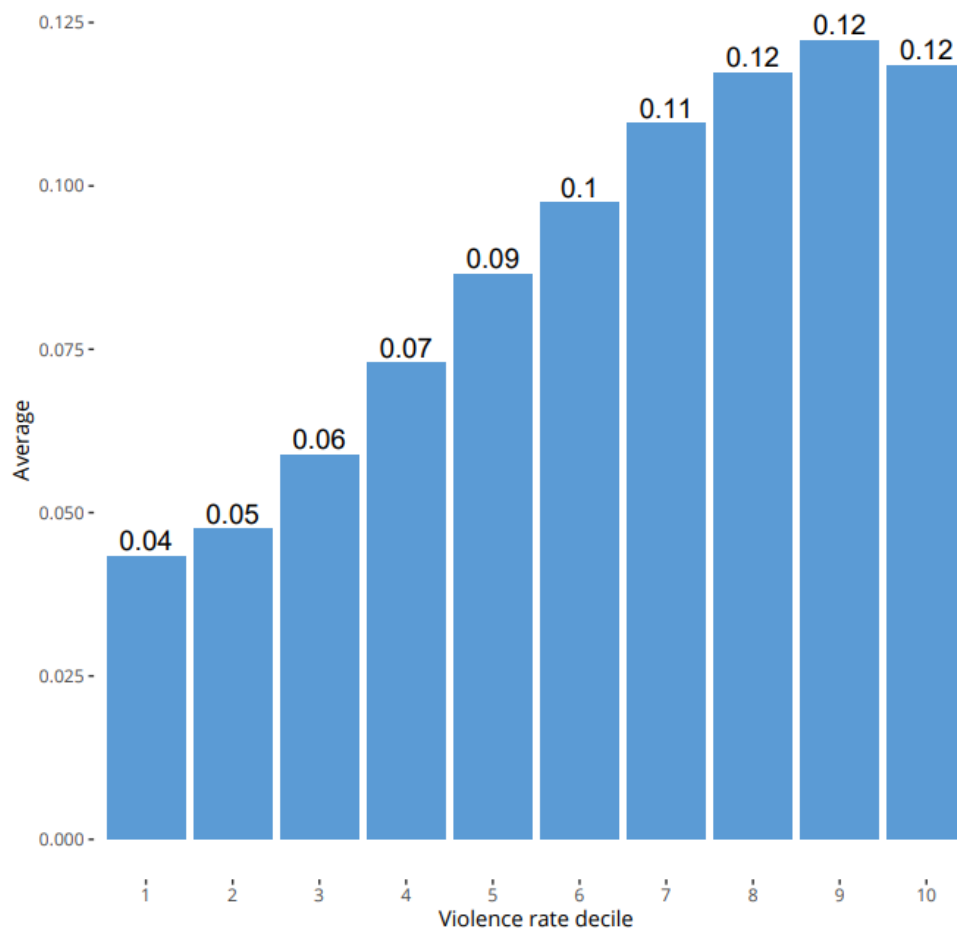


Source: GLA Ward Profiles and Atlas

The call out rate is substantially higher in the highest decile (number 10) than it is in the second highest decile (number 9).

The employment deprivation rate in an LSOA was also highly correlated with the violence rate. Employment deprivation is defined as the “proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market”. Figure 10 describes the average employment deprivation rate in an LSOA by the violence rate decile.

Figure 10: Average employment deprivation score by violence rate decile

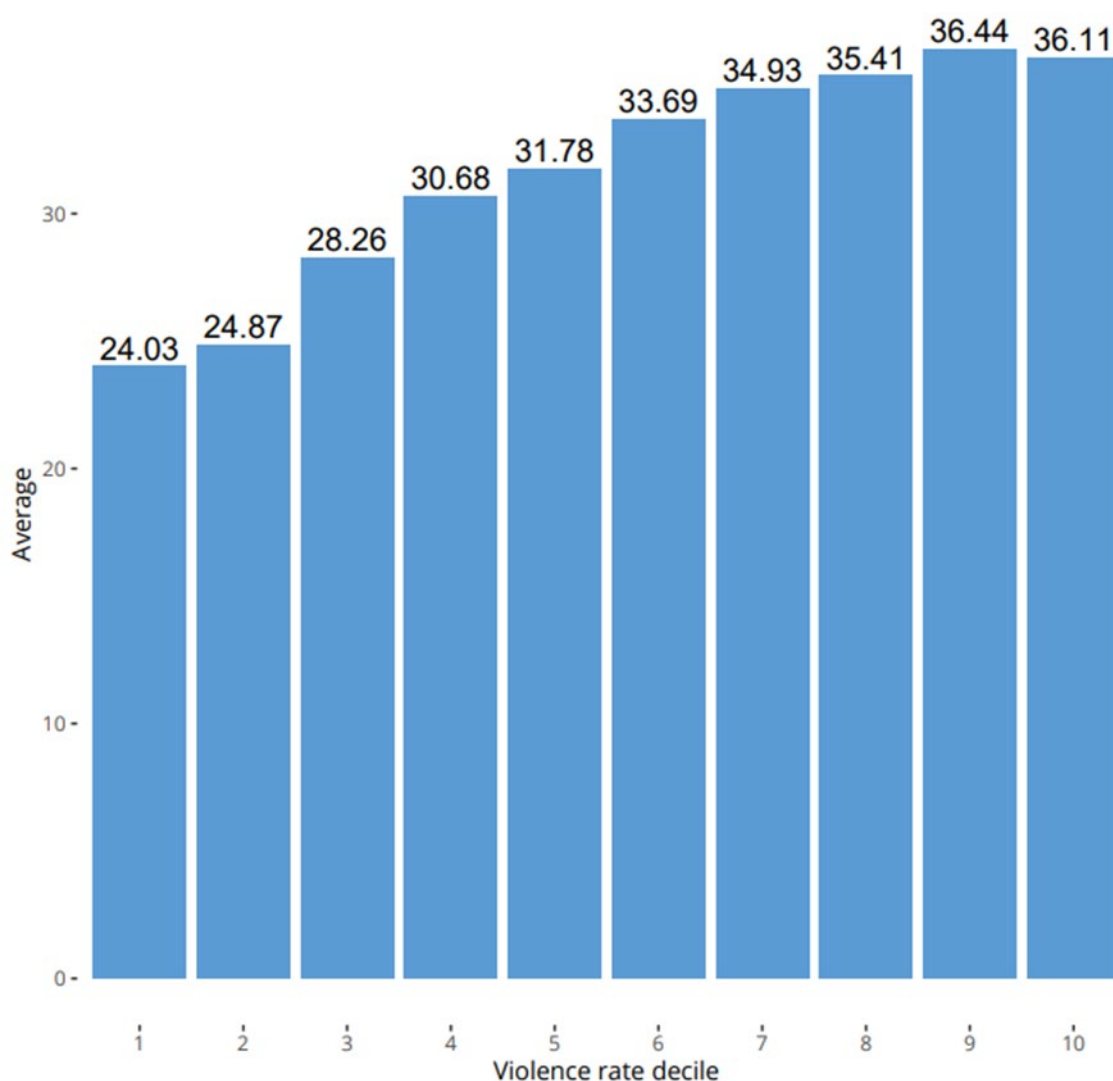


Source: ONS IMD 2016

There is a clear relationship between increasing violence and increases in employment deprivation. The rate in 4% in the lowest violence decile and 12% in the three highest violence rate deciles.

The third factor highly correlated with the violence rate in LSOAs was the barriers to housing and services deprivation score. Figure 11 describes the average barriers to housing and services score in an LSOA by violence rate decile.

Figure 11: Average barriers to housing and services deprivation score by violence rate decile



Source: ONS IMD 2016

The chart clearly shows that the barriers score increased with the violence rate.

Longlist of LSOAs

The study team used a cluster analysis to group similar LSOAs together. The factors that were significant in the regression analysis plus violence rate were entered into a k-means cluster analysis to create 5 groupings.¹⁴ The results help us to categorise LSOAs and then sample different types of LSOAs for the focus areas. The longlist of LSOAs was created by filtering the LSOAs by two criteria:

1. Within the top 10% violence rate LSOAs – to ensure we focused on high violence communities.
2. Within top 50% of population size – to ensure areas with responsibly large resident populations were included.

¹⁴ Tests suggested five groups was an optimal representation of the data.

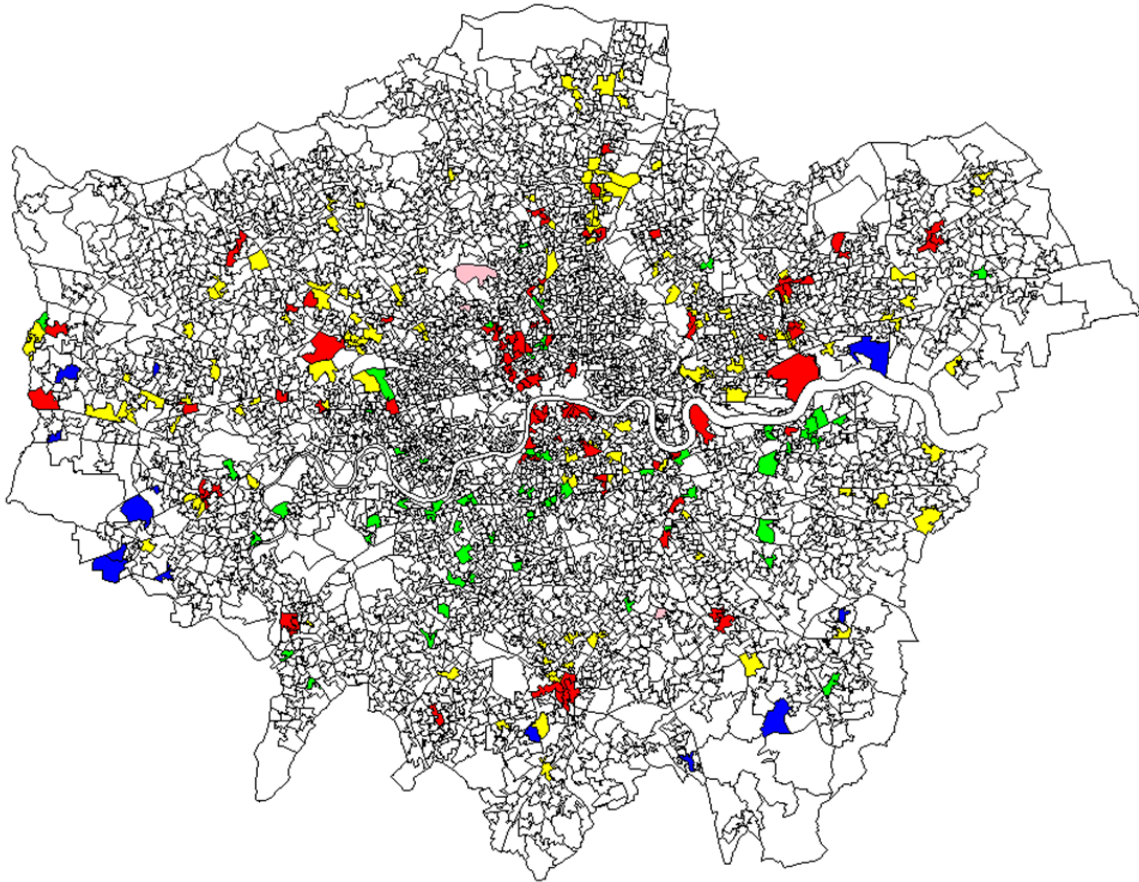
This produced a list of 294 LSOAs (from 4,815) that were potential focus area areas. Table 2 below describes the cluster that these LSOAs were categorised into.

Table 2: Longlist LSOAs' clusters and number of LSOAs in each.

Cluster	Description	Number of LSOAs
1	Medium levels of deprivation, very high rates of violence, fast food outlets and ambulance callouts. Likely to be NTE areas	89
2	High levels of deprivation, medium fast-food rates and low binge drinking. Facilities can be accessed more easily.	130
3	Medium levels of deprivation and very high adult binge drinking rates. Likely to be more urban.	59
4	Medium to high deprivation but with a better living environment. Poor access to services. Likely to be suburban areas.	13
5	Low deprivation, few fast-food outlets and good access to services.	3

Figure 12 describes the location of each LSOA in the longlist.

Figure 12: Location of each longlist LSOA (red = cluster 1; yellow = cluster 2; green = cluster 3; blue = cluster 4; pink = cluster 5)



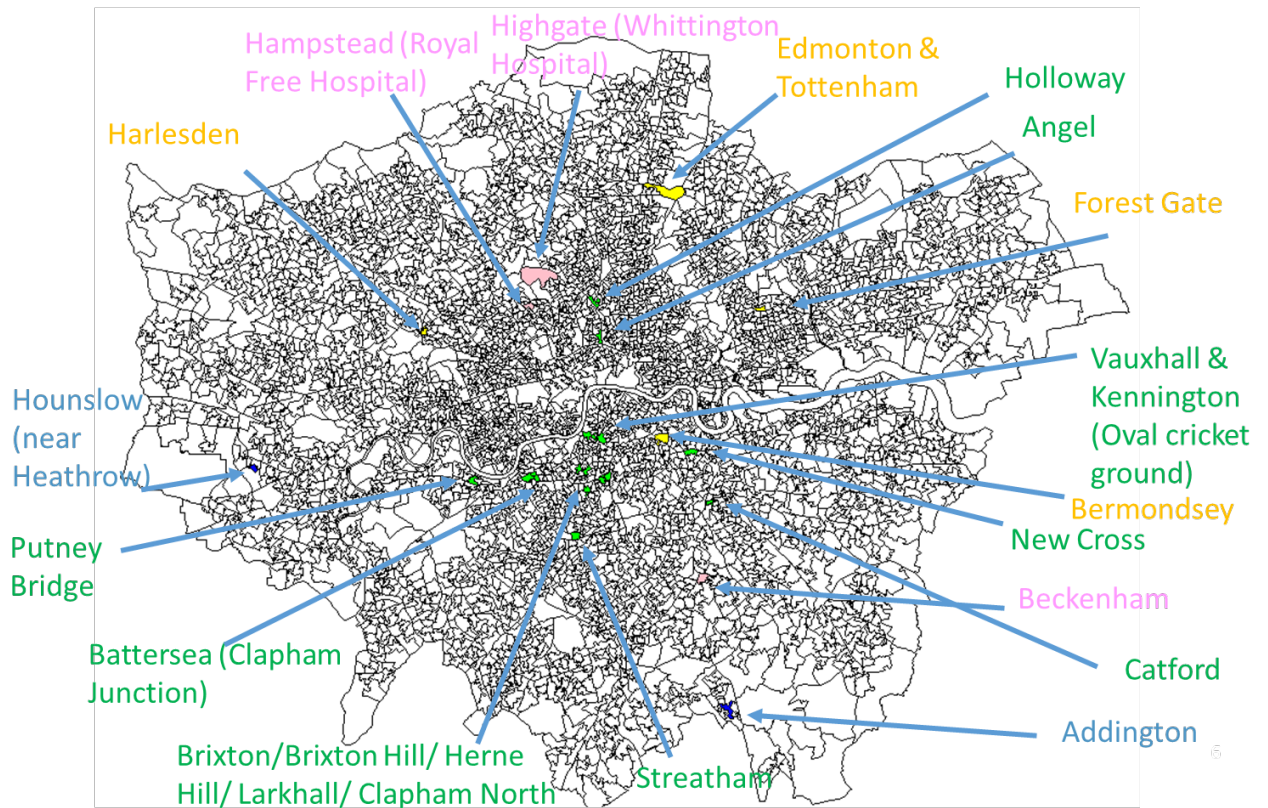
Shortlist of LSOAs

The cluster description that cluster 1 might be night time economy areas was confirmed by Figure 12. Cluster 1 was excluded therefore as the study wanted to avoid areas that had a prominent night time economy. The following actions were taken to create a shortlist of LSOAs:

1. All three cluster 5 LSOAs were entered into the shortlist because there was only a small number of them.
2. 'Typical' LSOAs that represented the description of the cluster were selected. For example, if the average deprivation was high in a cluster, then those that were in the top 25% of all LSOAs were sampled for the shortlist. Fewer rules were used for cluster 4 because the initial sample, 13, was small.

This resulted in a shortlist of 25 LSOAs., described in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Location and description of the 25 shortlisted LSOAs (yellow = cluster 2; green = cluster 3; blue = cluster 4; pink = cluster 5)



Final focus area list

In consultation with the LVRU, the following focus areas were selected from the list of 25:

- Beaver Estate, Hounslow
- Brixton Hill
- Clapham North
- Edmonton
- Forest Gate
- Harlesden
- New Cross
- Putney Bridge
- Tottenham

Appendix B: London Violence in Context

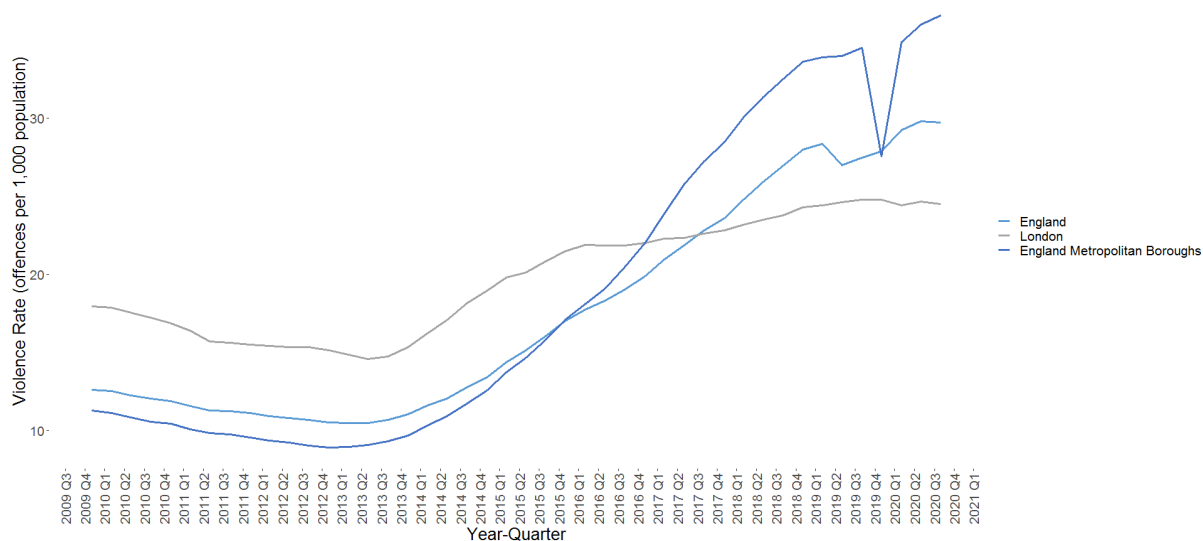
This chapter describes violence and related factors in London. First it presents the violence rate in London over time, and then describes the factors thought to be associated with violence.

Violence in London

Figure 14 depicts the violence against the person offence rate per 1,000 population from 2010 Q1 to 2020 Q4 for London, England, and all English metropolitan boroughs. Between the first quarter of 2010 and the first quarter of 2016, the violence rate for London, England and metropolitan England had a similar trend; there was an initial decrease until 2013 Q3 before substantially increasing until 2016 Q1. During this period, London also had the largest violence rate, however after 2016 Q1, London's increase rate slowed down and metropolitan England had a higher rate of violence by 2017 Q1 and England by 2017 Q4. All three areas recorded a dip in their violence rate at various times after 2019: 2019 Q3 for England, 2020 Q1 for Metropolitan England and 2020 Q2 for London.

However, for England and metropolitan England, the rate of violence increased to higher levels than before the dip, whereas for London, the rate of violence remained at a constant level. This indicates that violence in London is part of a national problem in England and its metropolitan areas. Comparing 2020 with 2010, there was a 37% increase in the violence rate in London, whereas, there was a 135% and 208% increase in England and Urban England, respectively.

Figure 14: Violence offences per 1,000 population from 2010 Q1 (12 months ending) to 2020 Q4 (12 months ending) in England

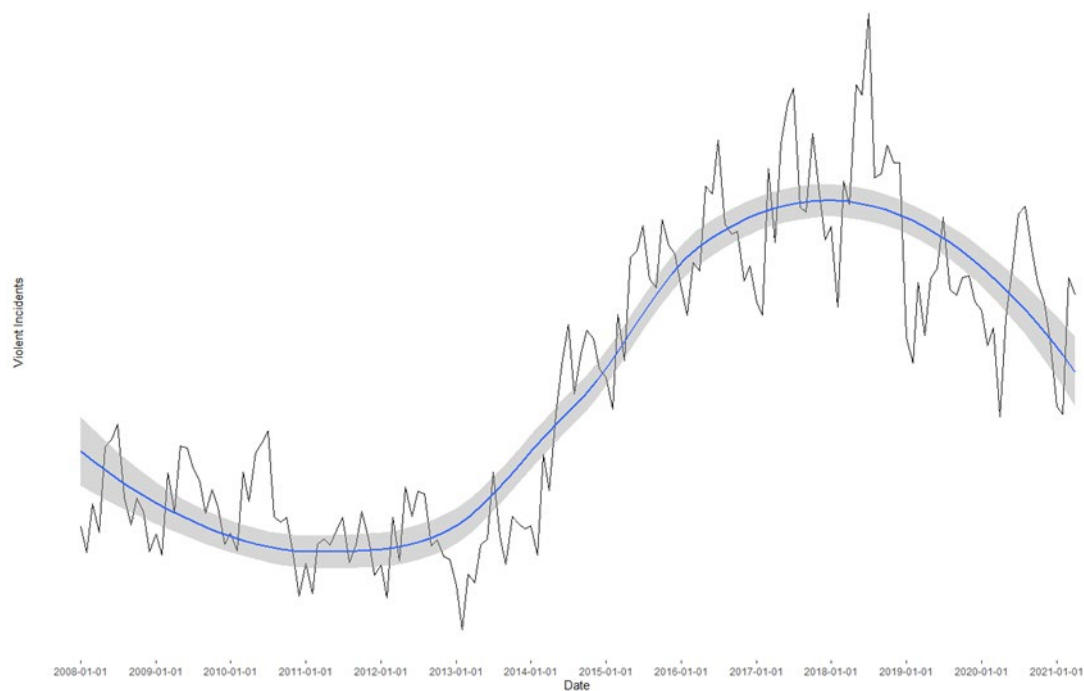


Source: Local Government Association - Violence against the person offences recorded in London

describes the monthly number of violent incidents in London between January 2018 and April 2021 and uses loess regression to generalise the moving average of incidents over this period. Three main trends occurred:

1. Between January 2018 and late 2010 there was an initial decrease in violent incidents.
2. Between 2013 and 2018, there was a substantial increase in violent incidents.
3. After January 2019, there was a reduction in violent incidents.

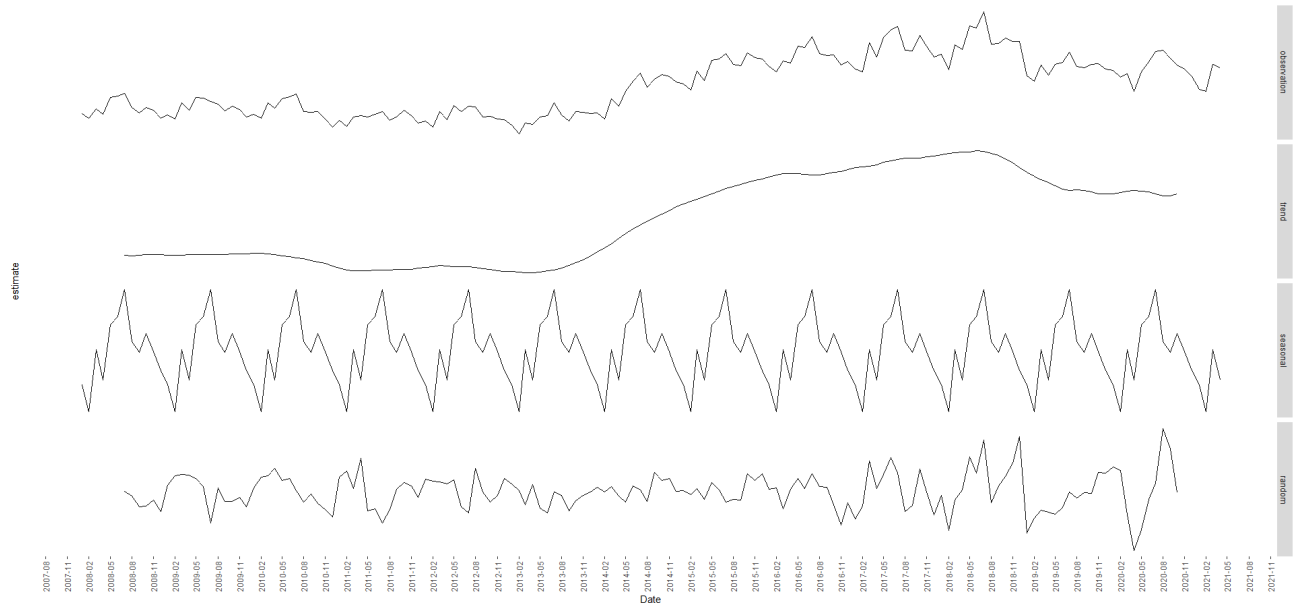
Figure 15: Violent incidents in London from January 2018 to April 2021. Loess regression used to fit a smooth curve through the observations.



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

This also revealed a seasonal pattern to the violent incidents over the period and this was investigated using a decomposition model, which calculates the different components of the time series through independent estimations of trend and seasonal effects and is described in Figure 16. The estimate of the trend aligned with the model in Figure 15 and the seasonal pattern provided context into how violence incidents change over time. The peaks in the seasonal estimate occurred during summer months while the troughs appear in the winter months of the year.

Figure 16: Decomposition of violent incidents in London from January 2008 to April 2021 to estimate trend and seasonality.



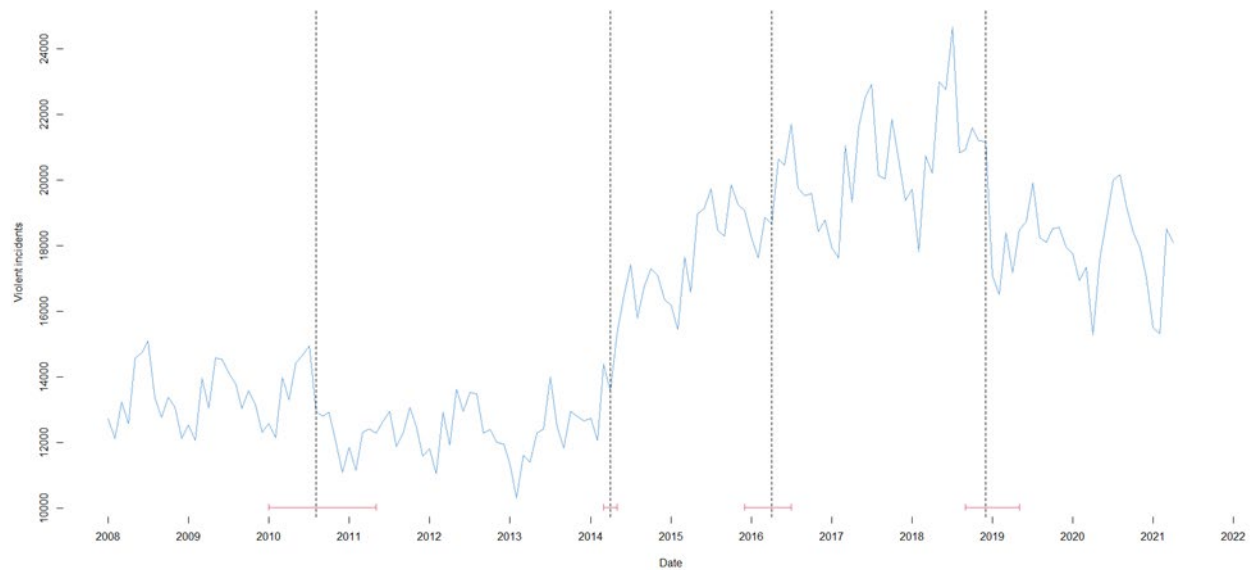
Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Structural breaks in the number of violent incidents over time represent the date of an unexpected change in the underlying determinants of the time series. Through their calculation, context is obtained on the dates where changes to the determinants of violence may have occurred. Bai & Perron (2003)¹⁵ provided the mathematical framework for the structural change model implemented in . The model shows that there were 4 significant changes in the trend of violence incidents between January 2018 and April 2021:

1. August 2010 – this break point has the largest confidence interval which indicates that the date of the initial decrease in violence could have occurred at various points until mid-2011.
2. April 2014 – this break point has the smallest confidence interval which gives assurance into the sudden increase in violent incidents occurring after April 2014.
3. April 2016 – the computation of this breakpoint expands on the trend analysis by indicating that the substantial rise in violent incidents between 2013 and 2018 could be defined as two separate increases.
4. December 2018 - this breakpoint signifies the first drop in violence in London since the substantial increases.

¹⁵ Bai, Jushan; Perron, Pierre (January 2003). "Computation and analysis of multiple structural change models". *Journal of Applied Econometrics*. 18 (1): 1–22. doi:10.1002/jae.659. hdl:10.1002/jae.659

Figure 17: Identification of structural breaks in the number of violent incidents from January 2008 to April 2021

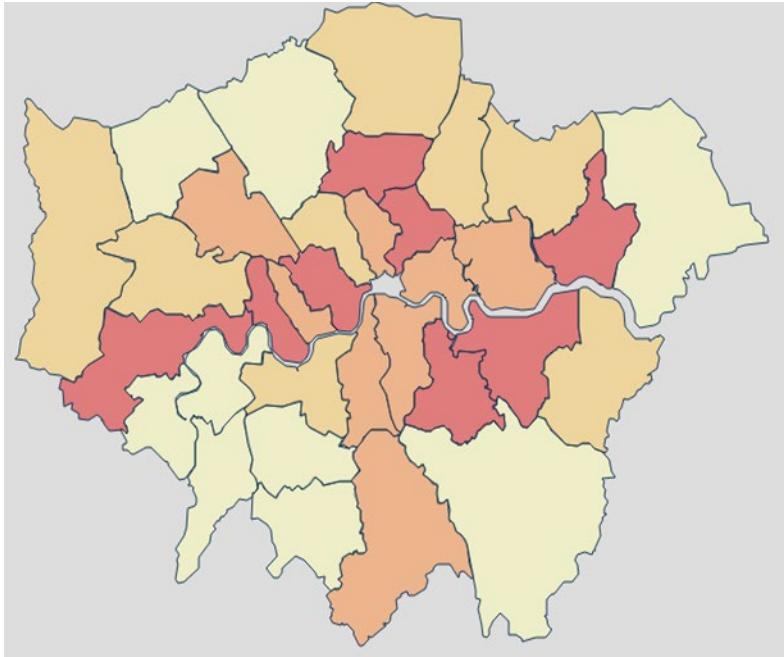


Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Using the last breakpoint shown in , the latest period of London violence was defined as from January 2019 to April 2021. The subsequent analysis focuses on this period. Figure 18 describes the violence rate per 1,000 residents in each London borough for the latest period, while Figure 19 shows the violence rate in each LSOA. Observing the violence rate for the different geographical types allows the identification of areas with high rates of violence and to determine the extent that violence is geographically concentrated. The highest rates of violence were found in Westminster (2.95 violent incidents per week per 1,000 population), Barking and Dagenham (2.36), Hounslow (2.32), and Greenwich (2.31).

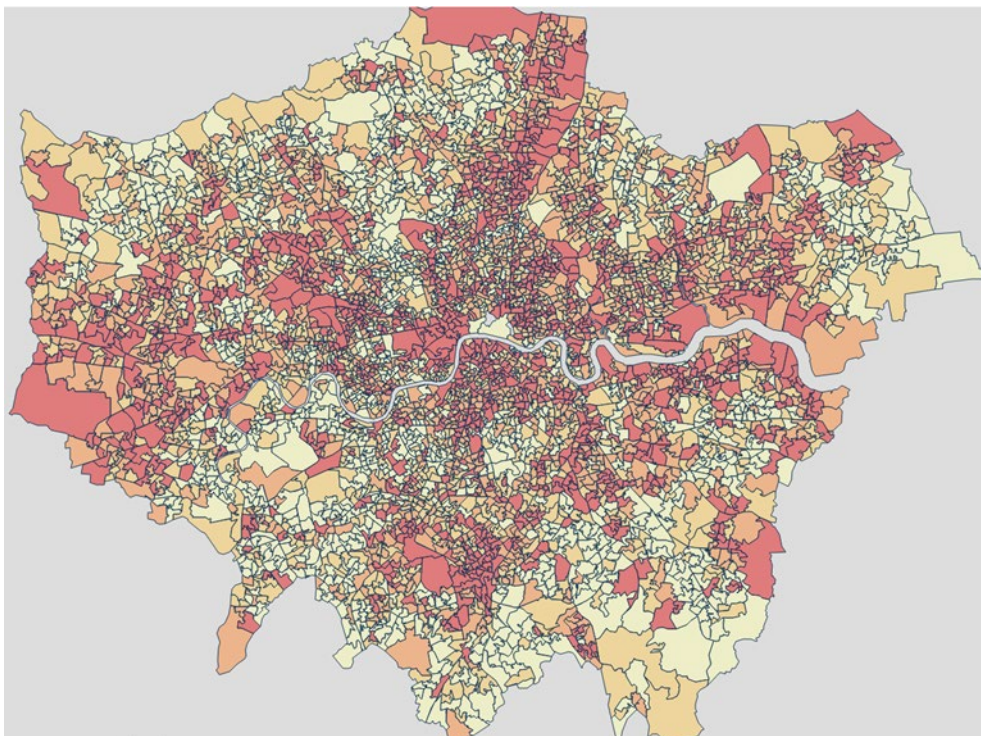
Figure 19 shows the formation of distinct clusters and lines of LSOAs with high violence rates; one line emerges from Westminster and follows the A10 (through Haringey and Enfield) out of London and another follows both sides of the river east from inner London (through Greenwich, Bexley, Newham, Barking and Dagenham). Clusters of LSOAs with high violence can also be seen in west London (Hounslow, Hillingdon and Ealing) and south London (Croydon, Lewisham and Southwark). The lowest rates of violence were found in Richmond upon Thames (1.25 violent incidents per week per 1,000 population), Harrow (1.49) and Kingston upon Thames (1.49). Figure 20 shows the percentage of LSOAs within each borough that are in the upper quartile of the LSOAs' violence rate. This emphasises that violence in London is concentrated within minority portions of the boroughs and that analysis into the violence trends should be completed at a neighbourhood level.

Figure 18: Violence rate in London LAs 2019-2021 (Light yellow indicates lower rates below the 25th percentile, Red indicates higher rates above the 75th percentile)



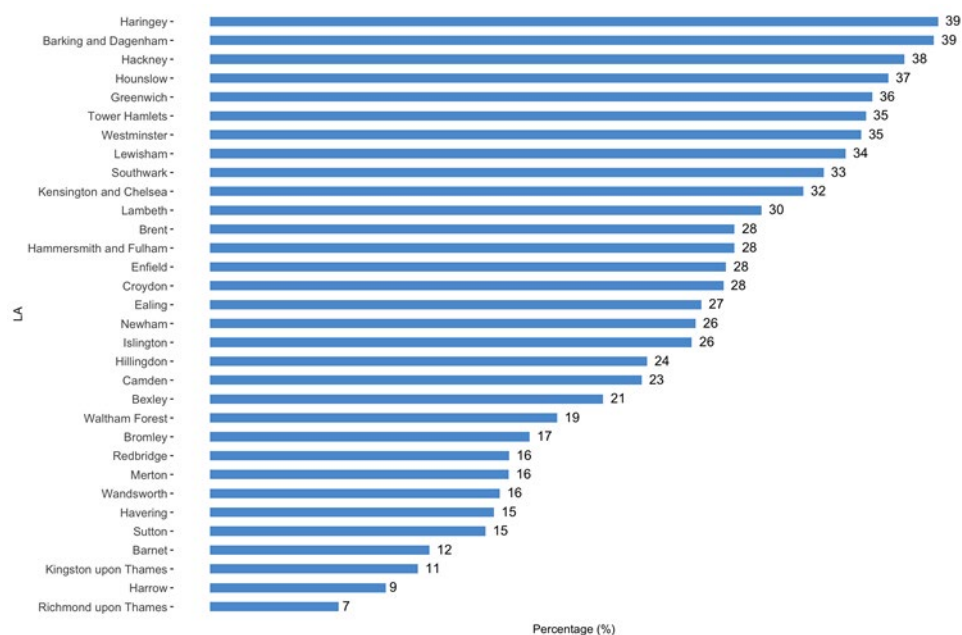
Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Figure 19: Violence rate in London LSOAs 2019-2021 (Light yellow indicates lower rates below the 25th percentile, Red indicates higher rates above the 75th percentile)



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Figure 20: Proportion of LSOAs within the London Local Authorities that are in the upper quartile of violence rate.



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

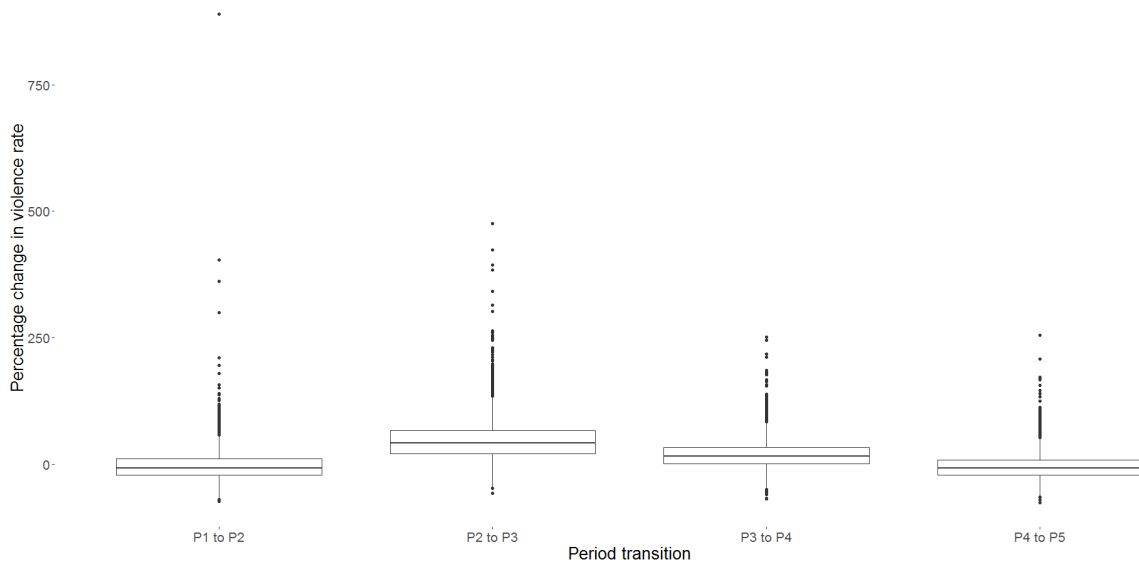
The structural breaks in Figure 17 allow us to segment the time between January 2008 and April 2021 so that we can observe the areas that had the largest contribution to the change in violence seen in London. The time periods are defined as:

1. Period 1 – January 2008 to August 2010
2. Period 2 – September 2010 to April 2014
3. Period 3 - May 2014 to April 2016
4. Period 4 - May 2016 to December 2018
5. Period 5 – January 2019 to April 2021

Figure 21 describes the distribution of the change in violence rate for the London LSOAs between the defined periods and signifies that many LSOAs differ from the overall trend seen in London.¹⁶ The figure shows that the greatest change in the rate of violence occurred between period 2 and 3 where the violence rate increased for the majority of LSOAs.

¹⁶ Change is the percentage increase or decrease in the number of reported crimes, adjusted for seasonality and the length of the time period.

Figure 21: Distribution of change in violence rate for the LSOAs between each defined period of violence



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

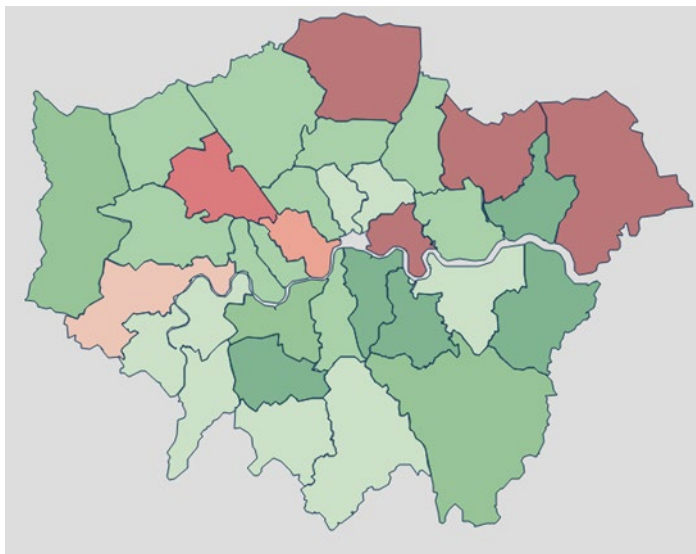
Change Between Period 1 and Period 2

Figure 17 showed that there was an initial decrease in violence incidents, after August 2010, between period 1 and period 2. Figure 22 and Figure 23 show the percentage change in violence rate for London boroughs and LSOAs, respectively, and reveal that most boroughs (78%) and LSOAs (62%) registered a decrease in violence rate. The largest decrease occurred in the southwest borough of Merton while the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Southwark, Bexley, and Lewisham, which are usually associated with high violence, also registered a large decrease. The larger increases in violence between period 1 and period 2 occurred mainly in Outer London (Havering, Enfield, Redbridge) with the greatest LSOA increase occurring in Sutton.

Table 3: Greatest changes in violence rate for London LAs and LSAOS between period 1 and period 2

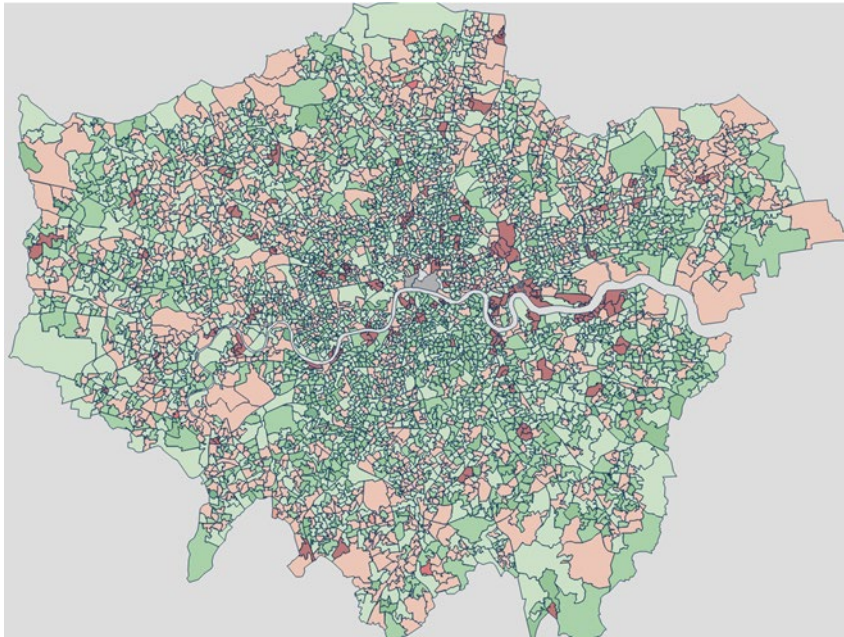
Largest Local Authority Change	Largest LSOA Change
Havering – increase of 8%	Sutton 022D – increase of 890%
Enfield – increase of 7%	Richmond upon Thames 018A – increase of 403%
Tower Hamlets – increase of 7%	Croydon 035B - increase of 362%
Redbridge – increase of 6%	Enfield 022C- increase of 211%
Brent – increase of 5%	Richmond upon Thames 004F– increase of 196%
Merton – decrease of 24%	Merton 009E – decrease of 74%
Barking and Dagenham – decrease of 20%	Merton 001C – decrease of 71%
Southwark – decrease of 19%	Hillingdon 011D– decrease of 70%
Bexley – decrease of 19%	Merton 010b – decrease of 69%
Lewisham – decrease of 18%	Havering 024E – decrease of 66%

Figure 22: Percentage change in violence rate in the London Boroughs between period 1 and period 2 (Red increase, green decrease)



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Figure 23: Percentage change in violence rate in the London LSOAs between period 1 and period 2 (Red increase, green decrease)



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

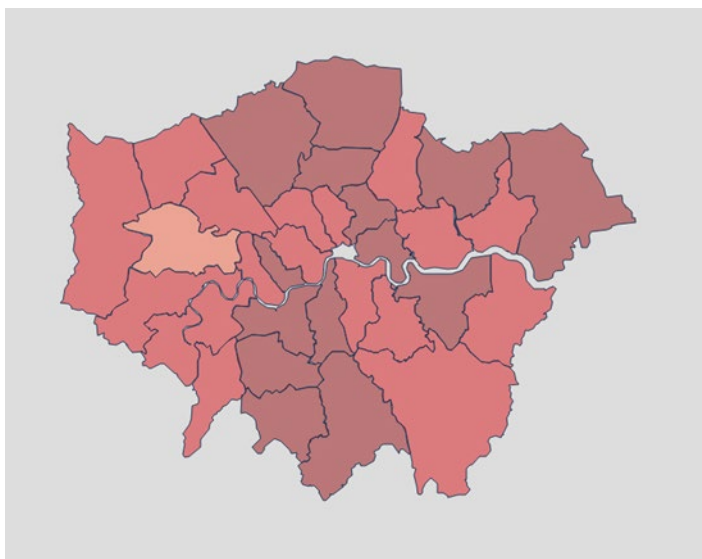
Change Between Period 2 and Period 3

Figure 17 showed that the first distinct increase in violent incidents occurred after period 2 (April 2014) and Figure 25 shows that the vast majority (92%) of LSOAs had an increase in violence rate between periods 2 and 3. Additionally, as depicted in Figure 24, all boroughs registered an overall increase in violence. The inner west London boroughs of Wandsworth and Kensington and Chelsea recorded the greatest increase in violence rate, with the north London local authorities of Haringey, Barnet and Enfield not far behind. Enfield also registered an overall increase between period 1 and period 2.

Table 4: Greatest changes in violence rate for London LAs and LSAOS between period 2 and period 3

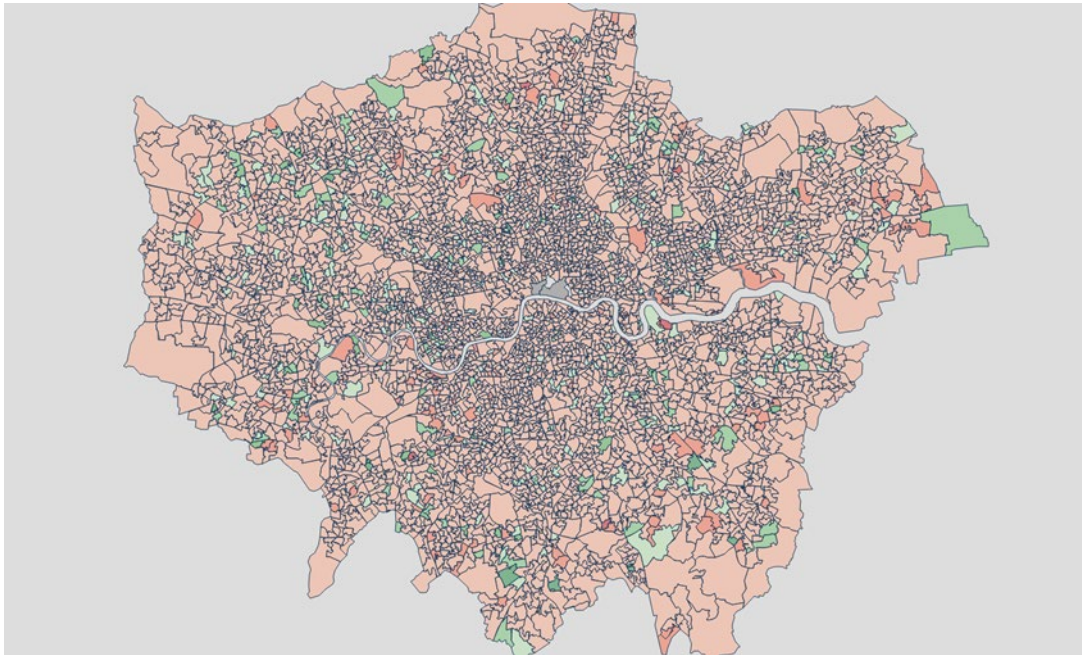
Largest Local Authority Change	Largest LSOA Change
Kensington and Chelsea – increase of 58%	Wandsworth 010G – increase of 633%
Wandsworth – increase of 58%	Greenwich 035C – increase of 572%
Haringey – increase of 57%	Croydon 026D - increase of 416%
Barnet – increase of 57%	Greenwich 036E – increase of 415%
Enfield – increase of 53%	Enfield 019E – increase of 393%
	Bromley 007A – decrease of 57%
	Brent 004A – decrease of 47%
	Kingston upon Thames 006C – decrease of 46%
	Bromley 035B – decrease of 46%
	Camden 009C – decrease of 45%

Figure 24: Percentage change in violence rate in the London boroughs between period 2 and period 3 (Red increase, green decrease)



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Figure 25: Percentage change in violence rate in the London LSOAs between period 2 and period 3 (Red increase, green decrease)



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

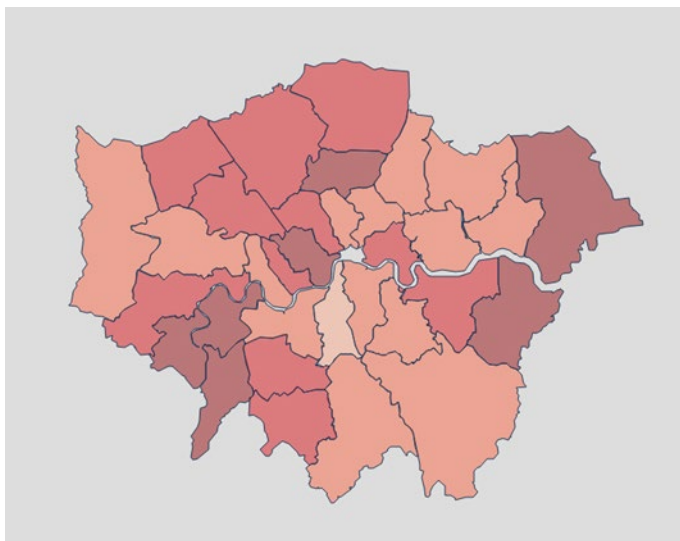
Change Between Period 3 and Period 4

The height of violence in London occurred during Period 4, between April 2016 and December 2018. Figure 26 shows that all boroughs in London recorded an overall percentage increase in violence rate after period 3, with the greatest increase in Westminster, Bexley, and Havering. However, observing violence on a smaller scale, in Figure 27, a larger percentage of LSOAs (25%) had a decrease in violence compared to the change between period 2 and period 3 (8%). This suggests that although the overall violence rate continued to rise to its peak in period 4, the overall decrease in violence in period 5 started earlier in many local areas.

Table 5: Greatest changes in violence rate for London LAs and LSAOS between period 3 and period 4

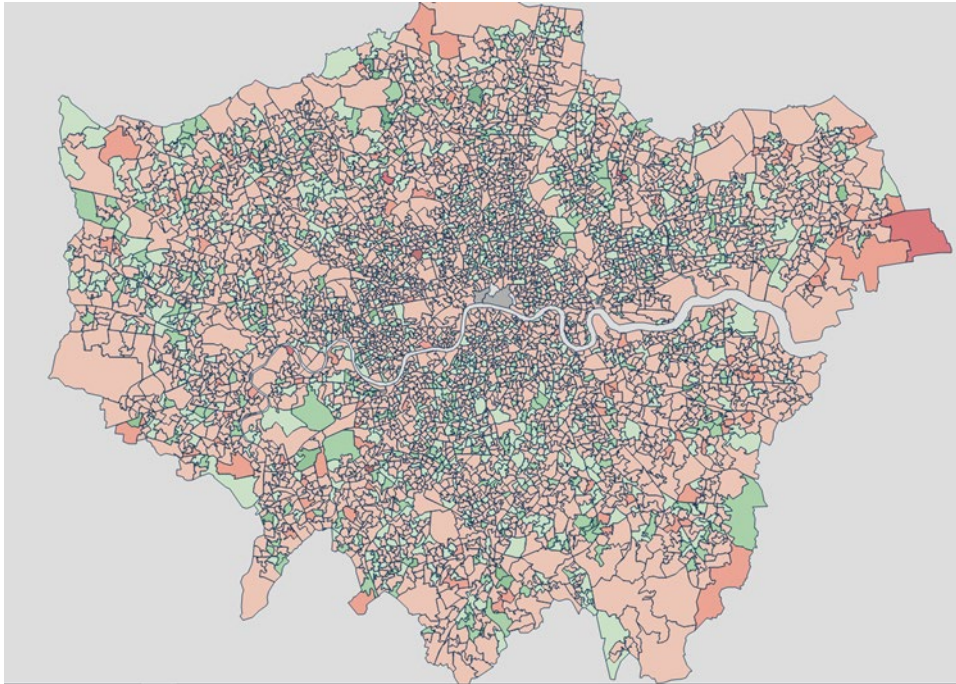
Largest Local Authority Change	Largest LSOA Change
Westminster– increase of 27%	Havering 018E - increase of 250%
Bexley– increase of 27%	Camden 017D – increase of 245%
Havering– increase of 25%	Barnet 035B – increase of 218%
Haringey– increase of 23%	Wandsworth 024D – increase of 211%
Kingston upon Thames– increase of 23%	Kingston upon Thames 003B – increase of 211%
	Barnet 004F – decrease of 68%
	Bromley 027E – decrease of 67%
	Enfield 022D – decrease of 60%
	Barnet 020A – decrease of 57%
	Bexley 018C – decrease of 55%

Figure 26: Percentage change in violence rate in the London boroughs between period 3 and period 4 (Red increase, green decrease)



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Figure 27: Percentage change in violence rate in the London LSOAs between period 3 and period 4 (Red increase, green decrease)



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

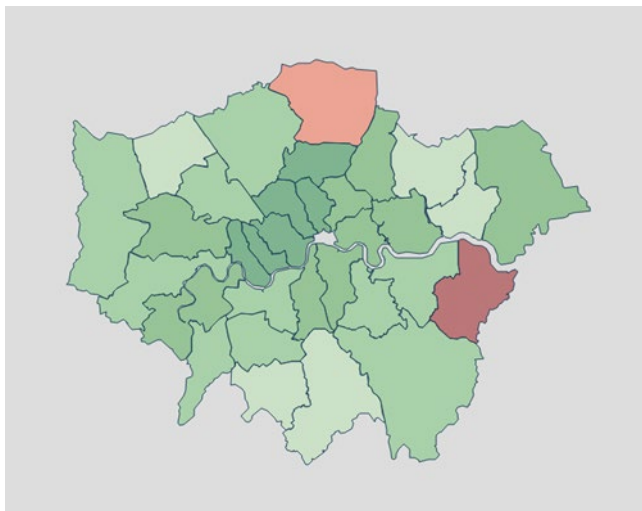
Change between period 4 and period 5

After December 2018, between period 4 and 5, all but two of the London boroughs (Bexley and Enfield) registered a decrease in overall violence while 63% of LSOAs registered a decrease. The inner London boroughs of Westminster, Camden, Islington and Kensington recorded the greatest decrease in Violence rate. The local authorities and LSOAs that registered an increase were areas identified in Figure 19 to be Outer London areas that have the highest rates in London.

Table 6: Greatest changes in violence rate for London LAs and LSAOS between period 4 and period 5

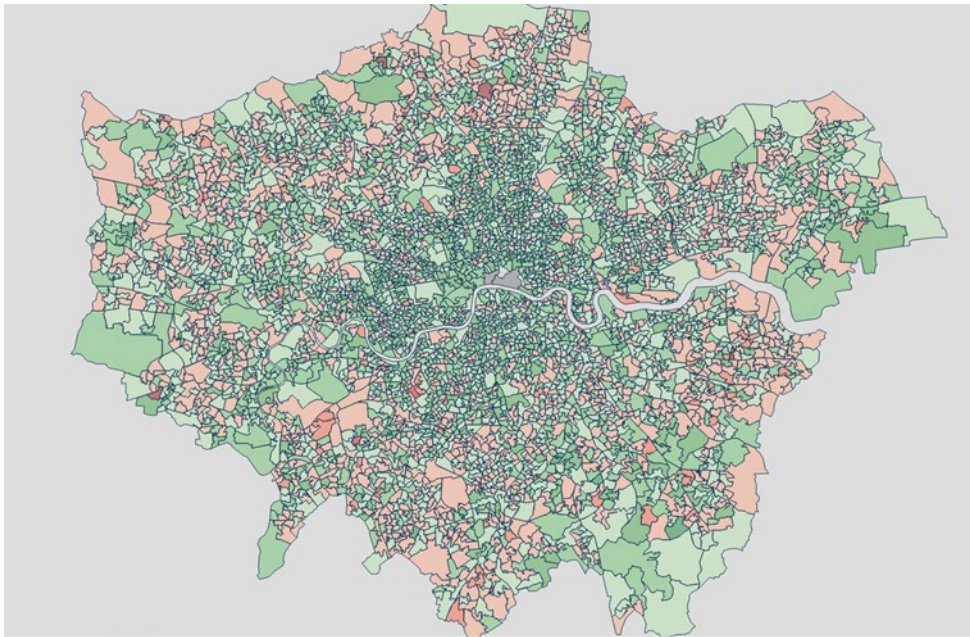
Largest Local Authority Change	Largest LSOA Change
Bexley – increase of 6%	Barnet 004F – increase of 255%
Enfield – increase of 5%	Hounslow 027A - increase of 207%
	Enfield 022D – increase of 172%
	Hackney 019A – increase of 168%
	Wandsworth 024E - increase of 166%
Westminster – decrease of 23%	Wandsworth 020C – decrease of 76%
Camden – decrease of 22%	Hillingdon 013E – decrease of 70%
Islington – decrease of 22%	Barnet 029C – decrease of 67%
Kensington and Chelsea – decrease of 17%	Hackney 031F – decrease of 65%
Hammersmith and Fulham – decrease of 17%	Tower Hamlets 004A – decrease of 65%

Figure 28: Percentage change in violence rate in the London boroughs between period 4 and period 5 (Red increase, green decrease)



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Figure 29: Percentage change in violence rate in the London LSOAs between period 4 and period 5 (Red increase, green decrease)



Source: Metropolitan police (City of London excluded)

Factors Associated with Violence

This section reviews the following factors associated with violence described in Appendix A:

- Deprivation
- Ambulance Callouts, Emergency Admissions and Alcohol
- Accessibility to Stores and Facilities

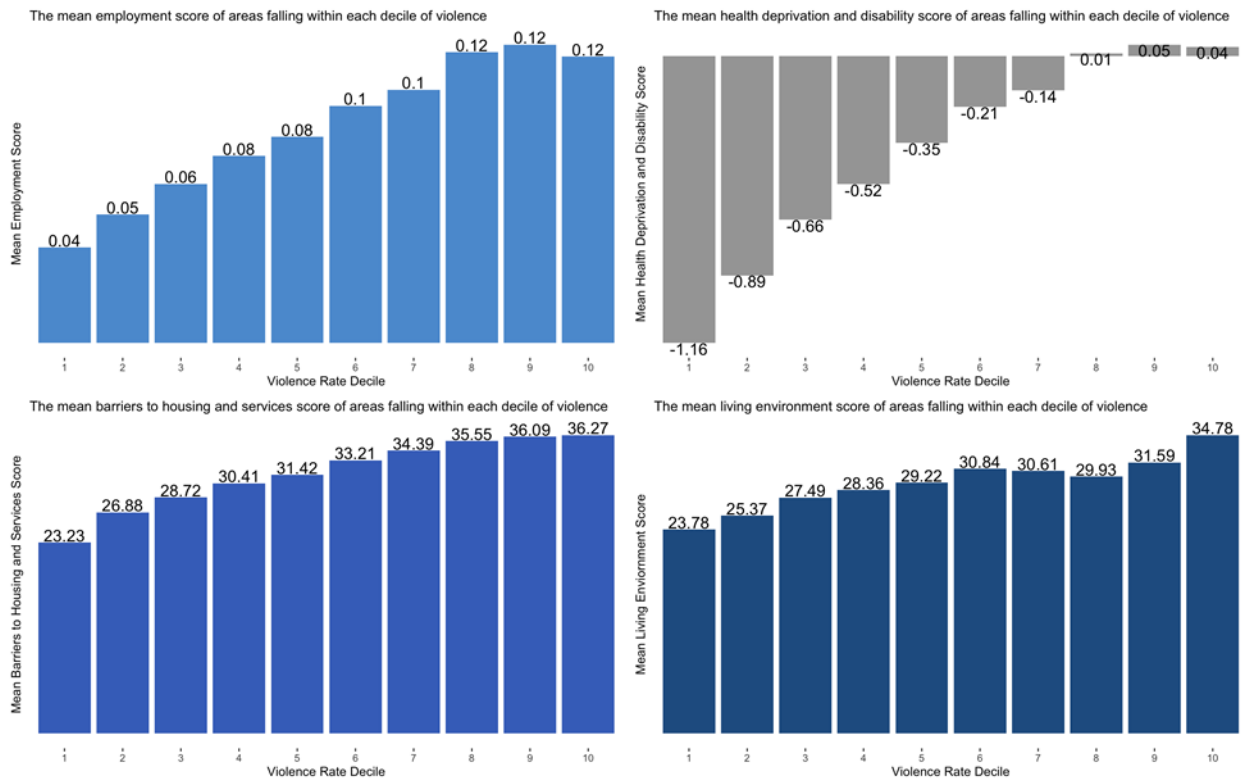
Each section describes the factors' relationship with increases in violence, maps the factor across all local authorities, and summaries the highest and lowest scoring local authorities in a table.

Deprivation

The study used the 2019 indices of deprivation to describe deprivation in London and its association with violent crime. Of the seven domains of deprivation, four were found to be associated with violent crime rates in a neighbourhood: employment, health and disability, housing and services, and the living environment.

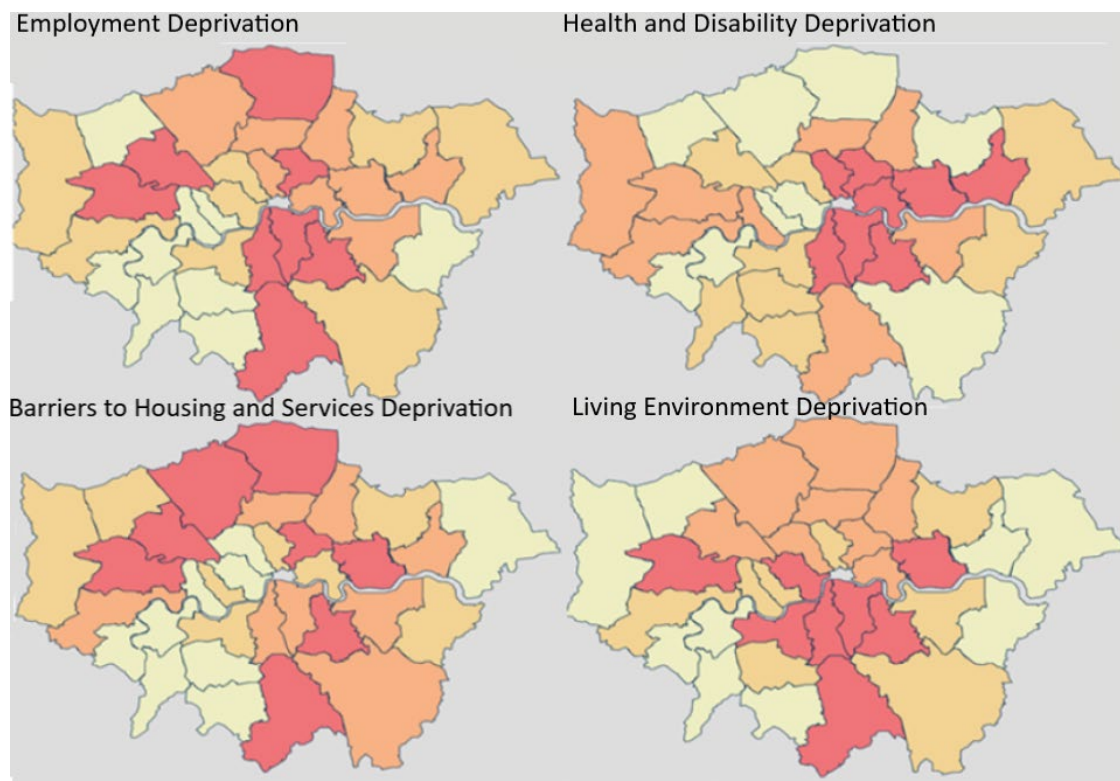
Figure 30 visualises the mean LSOA score for each of these factors grouped by the violence rate decile. The employment score and health deprivation and disability score were the factors most correlated with violence in an LSOA. Smaller correlations are present with the living environment and the barriers to housing and services scores.

Figure 30: Average score of each violence rate decile for the LSOA's indices of deprivation associated with violence. Violent incident data used from 2019.



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) - Indices of Deprivation 2019, Metropolitan Police – violent crime rate

Figure 32: Indices of Deprivation scores for London Boroughs in 2019. Employment Deprivation (top left), Health and Disability Deprivation (top right), Barriers to housing (bottom left), Living Environment (bottom right)



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) - Indices of Deprivation 2019

Figure 32 maps the indices of deprivation scores across the boroughs of London. For employment deprivation, there is a cluster of boroughs south of the river that experience the highest rates: Lambeth, Southwark, Croydon and Lewisham. Additionally, the inner London borough of Hackney and the outer London boroughs of Ealing, Brent and Enfield had high rates of employment deprivation.

The map of the barriers to housing domain is similar to the employment deprivation map but with the addition of Barnet and Newham to the Boroughs with the highest rate. Health and disability deprivation is predominantly a problem in East London and Lewisham, Suffolk and Lambeth. This echoes the violence rate shown in Figure 19 with LSOAS on both sides of the river, from inner east London to outer, being in the top quartile for violence. The highest rates for the living environment domain were in predominantly in South London. Across all four domains of deprivation, the boroughs with the lowest scores were the Outer London boroughs of Kingston upon Thames, Richmond upon Thames, Merton, and Sutton. These boroughs in southwest London were also below the 25th percentile for violence in London, shown in Figure 18.

Table 7: Highest and lowest scoring London boroughs for the IMD Domains associated with violence

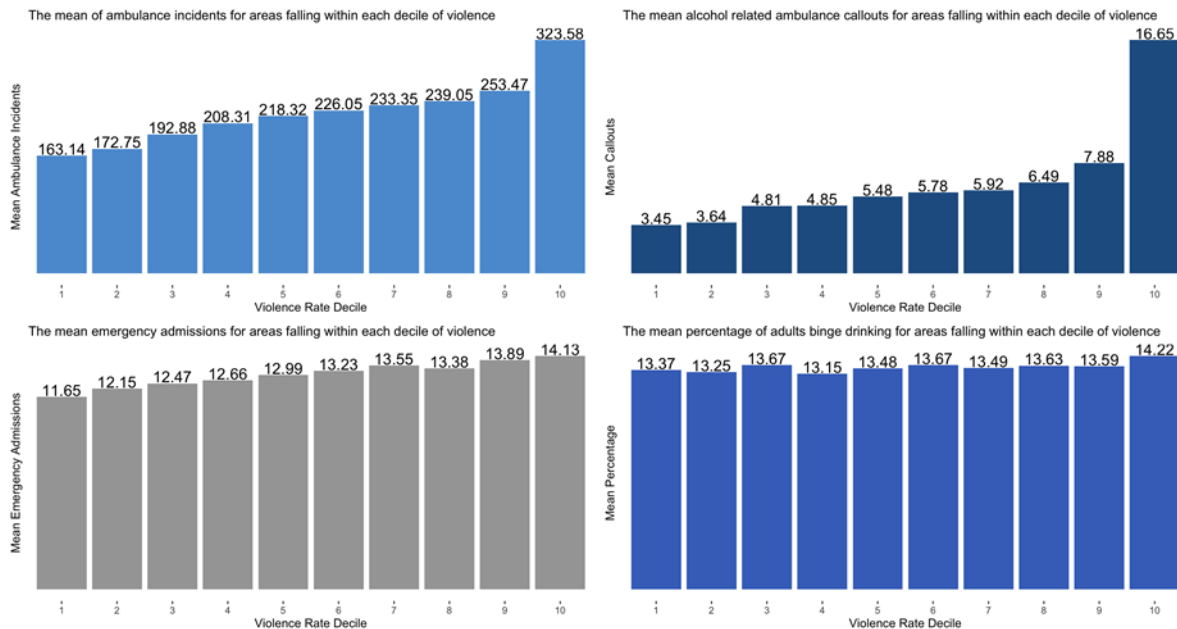
IMD Domain	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Employment Deprivation	Croydon, Enfield, Lewisham, Ealing, Lambeth	Kingston upon Thames, Richmond upon Thames, Merton, Sutton, Kensington and Chelsea
Health Deprivation and Disability	Hackney, Islington, Tower Hamlets, Lambeth, Barking and Dagenham	Barnet, Bromley, Richmond upon Thames, Harrow, Kensington and Chelsea
Barriers to Housing and Services	Newham, Croydon, Brent, Enfield, Ealing	Richmond upon Thames, Kingston upon Thames, Sutton, Merton, Camden
Living Environment	Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Ealing, Wandsworth	Sutton, Havering, Kingston upon Thames, Harrow, Bexley

Ambulance Callouts, Emergency Admissions and Alcohol

Figure 33 describes the mean LSOA score of ambulance callouts, alcohol related ambulance callouts, emergency admissions and the percentage of adults binge drinking on heaviest drinking day, for each violence rate decile. Intuitively, ambulance callouts and violent incidents have a strong relationship, with the latter a direct cause of the former. This relationship appears to be a stronger for alcohol related ambulance callouts and violence rate.

Though found to be important by the regression analysis (see focus area selection appendix), Figure 33 present no discernible correlation between percentage of adults binge drinking on the heaviest drinking day and the violence rate. Figure 33 does show a positive relationship between emergency admissions and the violence rate, with the mean number of admissions increasing for the LSOAs in the higher violence deciles.

Figure 33: Average LSOA score of each violence rate decile for the total ambulance callouts (2012-2014), alcohol related ambulance callouts (2012-2014), total emergency admissions (2018), percentage of adults binge drinking on heaviest drinking day (2018). The year of violence incidents used was the same as the factor's respective year/s.

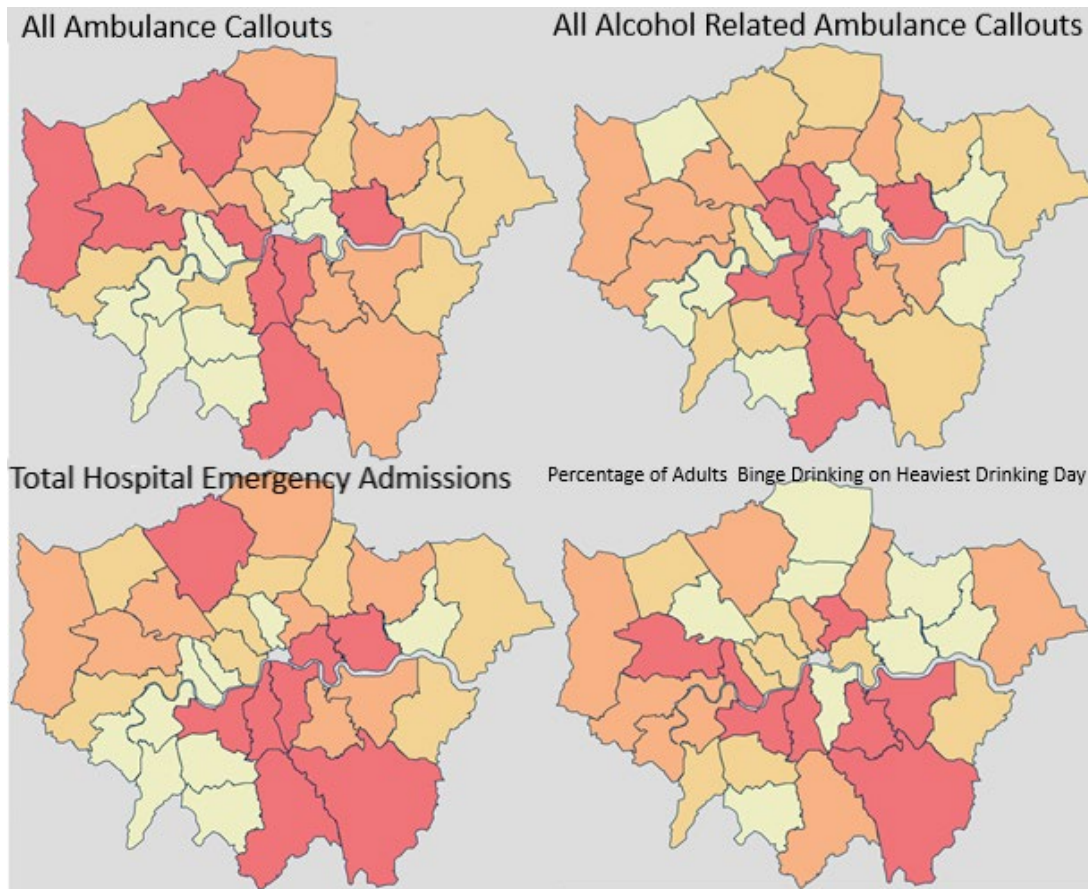


Source: Greater London Authority (GLA) – Ward Profiles and Atlas, NHS – Statistics on Alcohol 2020, Metropolitan Police

Figure 34 maps the measures of ambulance callouts, emergency admissions and alcohol usage the London Boroughs. Southwark, Lambeth, Croydon, Westminster, and Newham are boroughs with high rates for overall ambulance callouts and alcohol related ambulance callouts. These boroughs were shown in Figure 18 to be above the 50th percentile for violence and, excluding Westminster, were among the boroughs with the highest rates of deprivation in Figure 33.

The map in Figure 34 also reveals that most boroughs with high rates of alcohol related ambulance callouts are in inner London, and there are high rates of all ambulance callouts in many outer London Boroughs as well (Hillingdon, Ealing and Barnet). Additionally, there are only two boroughs with high rates for the percentage of adults binge drinking on heaviest drinking day and alcohol related ambulance callouts: Lambeth and Wandsworth. This implies the high rates of alcohol related callout in inner London are likely due to the night-time economy.

Figure 34: All ambulance callouts (top left), all alcohol related ambulance callouts (top right), total hospital emergency admissions (bottom left) and percentage of adults binge drinking on heaviest drinking day (bottom right) for the London Boroughs



Source: Greater London Authority (GLA) – Ward Profiles and Atlas, NHS – Statistics on Alcohol 2020

Table 8: Highest and lowest scoring London boroughs for ambulance callouts, ambulance callouts related to alcohol, emergency admissions to hospital, percentage of adults binge drinking.

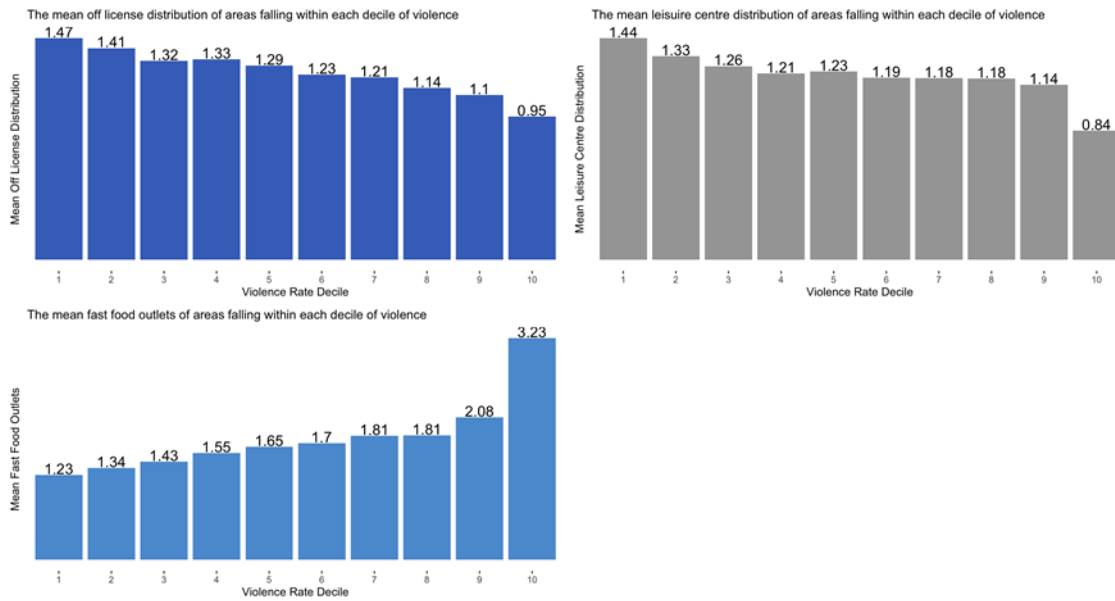
Domain	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Ambulance callouts	Croydon, Westminster, Lambeth, Hillingdon, Southwark	Richmond upon Thames, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Sutton, Hammersmith and Fulham
Ambulance callouts related to alcohol	Westminster, Camden, Lambeth, Southwark, Islington	Sutton, Bexley, Harrow, Richmond upon Thames, Barking and Dagenham
Emergency admissions to hospital	Croydon, Newham, Barnet, Bromley, Tower Hamlets	Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston upon Thames, Hammersmith and Fulham, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton
Percentage of adults binge drinking	Greenwich, Wandsworth, Lambeth, Bromley, Hackney	Newham, Barking and Dagenham, Enfield, Redbridge

Accessibility to Stores and Facilities

Figure 35 displays the mean LSOA density off licenses, leisure centres and fast-food outlets, for each violence rate decile, and describes the following:

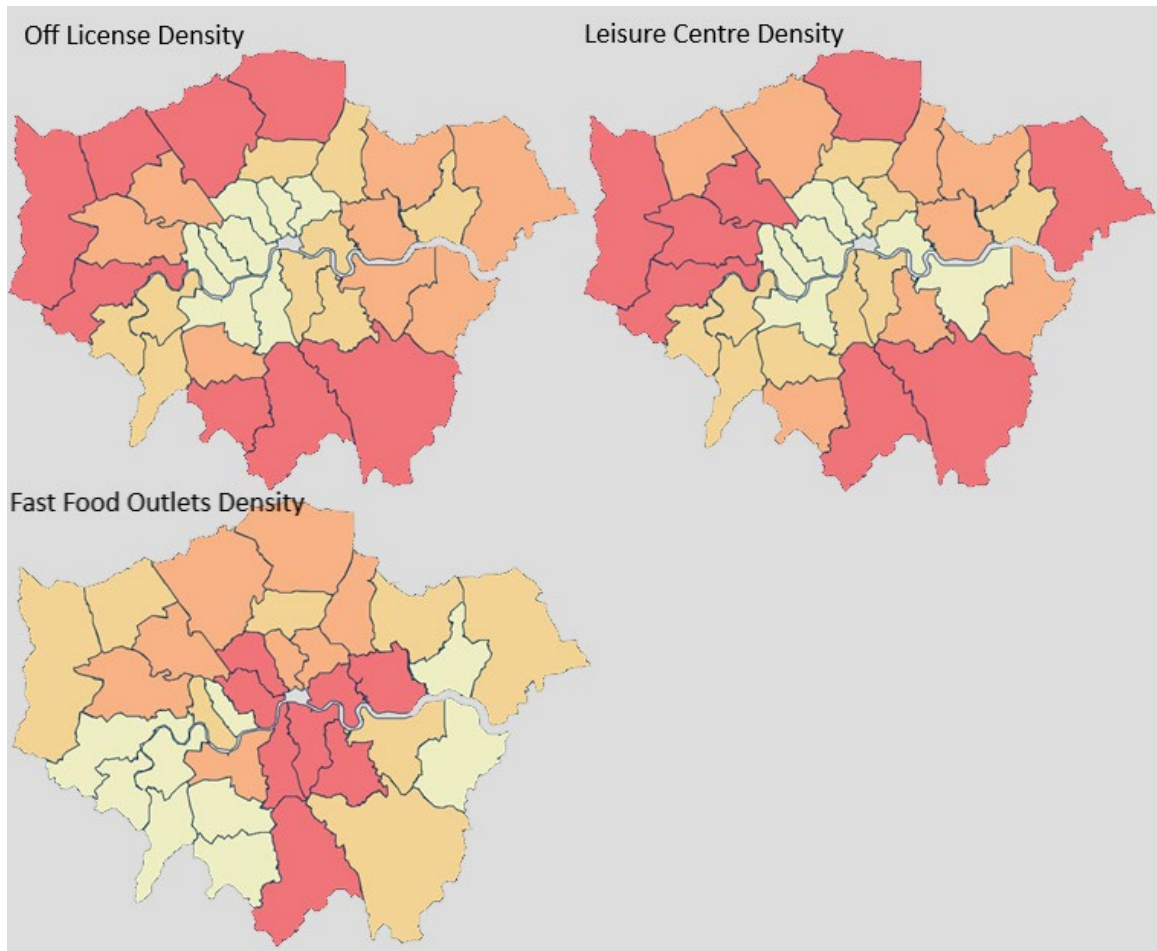
- Areas with fewer leisure centres and off licenses had higher violence rates.
- There is a positive correlation between the mean number of fast-food outlets within a LSOA and the violence rate. The 10th decile of violence has a 55% increase in mean fast-food outlets compared to the 9th decile.

Figure 35: Average LSOA score of each violence rate decile for the density of off licenses, leisure centres and fast-food outlets. The year of violence incidents used was the same as the factor's respective year (2014).



Source: Public Health England - Obesity and the environment briefing: regulating the growth of fast-food outlets, London Councils -Culture and leisure resources database, Metropolitan Police

Figure 36: Off license density (top left), leisure centre density (top right), fast food outlets density (bottom left) for the London boroughs



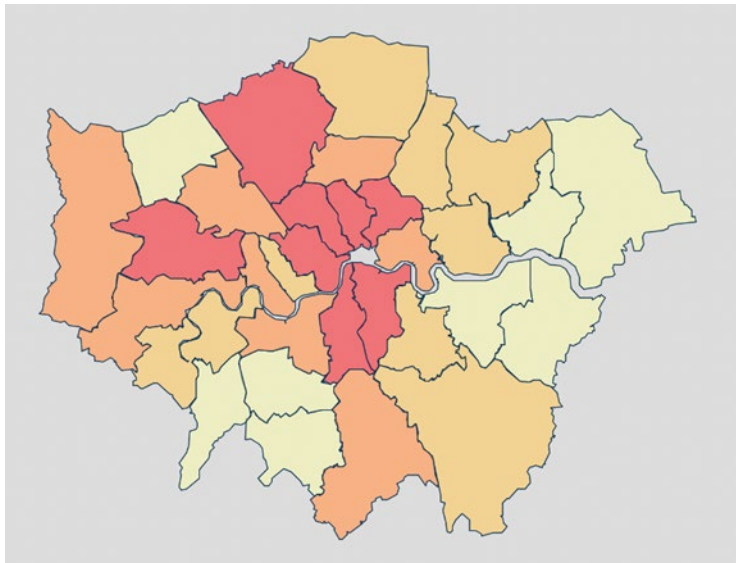
Source: Public Health England - Obesity and the environment briefing: regulating the growth of fast-food outlets, London Councils -Culture and leisure resources database

Figure 36 maps the density of off licenses, leisure centres and fast-food stores across the London Boroughs. The best access to leisure facilities and off licenses is found in outer London boroughs including Hillingdon, Croydon, Hounslow, and Barnet. The boroughs with the worst access are Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster, Islington, and Camden. These boroughs also have large night-time economies (see Figure 37). The inner London boroughs have the highest concentration of fast-food stores.

Table 9: Highest and lowest scoring London boroughs for accessibility to leisure facilities and off licenses, and rate of fast-food outlets

Domain	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Accessibility to a leisure facility	Croydon, Hillingdon, Havering, Bromley, Hounslow	Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Camden, Westminster
Accessibility to an off license	Sutton, Hillingdon, Croydon, Bromley, Barnet	Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster, Islington, Camden Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond upon Thames, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Sutton
Rate of fast-food outlets per 1,000 population	Westminster, Croydon, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Lewisham	

Figure 37: The density of night-time economy business mapped for each London borough

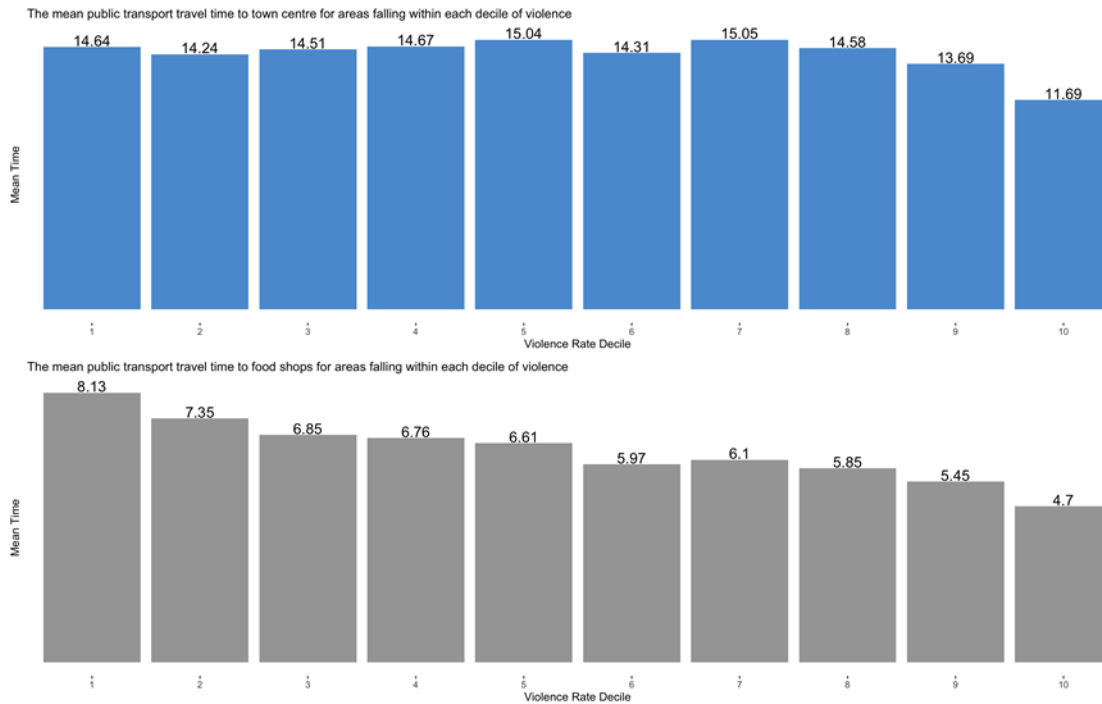


Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) - Number of public houses, licenced clubs, restaurants and takeaways by Borough

Figure 38 displays the mean LSOA public transport travel time to a town centre and food shops, for each violence rate decile. The chart shows a slight negative correlation between public transport travel time to town centre and the violence rate, with the noticeable difference in travel time occurring in the drop between the 9th and 10th violence decile. Conversely, Figure 38 shows a strong negative correlation between public transport travel

time to food shops and violence rate. There is a substantial decrease in travel time between the LSOAs in the high and low violence deciles.

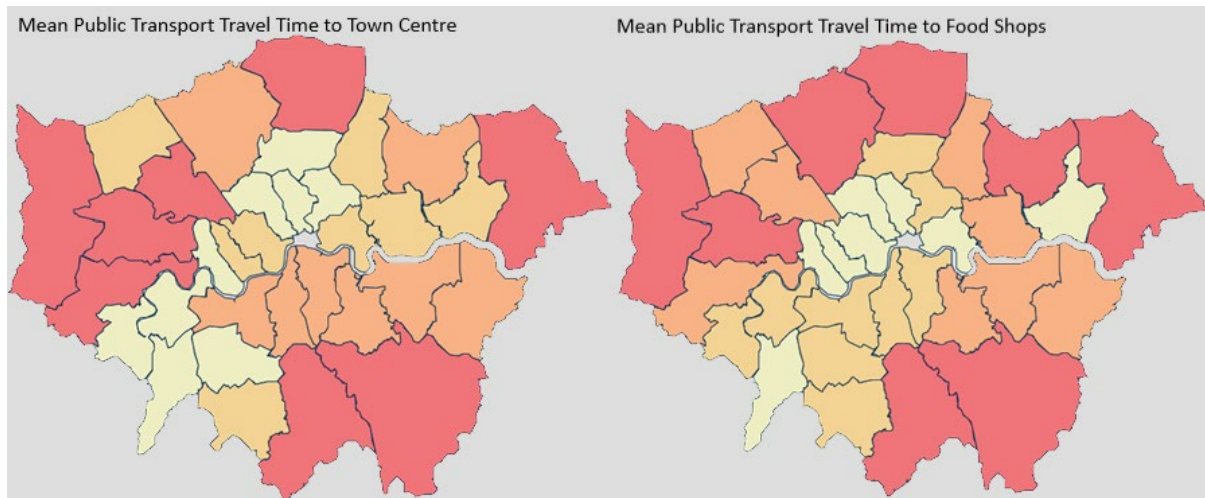
Figure 38: Average LSOA score of each violence rate decile for the mean public transport travel time to town centre and food shops. The year of violence incidents used was the same as the factor's respective year (2014).



Source: Department for Transport - Journey times to key services by lower super output area (JTS05), Metropolitan police

Figure 39 maps the mean public transport travel time to a town centre and food shops. As would be expected, the charts show that outer London boroughs have the longest respective travel durations.

Figure 39: Mean public transport travel time to town centre (right) and mean public transport travel time to food shops (left) for the London Boroughs



Source: Department for Transport - Journey times to key services by lower super output area (JTS05)

Table 10: Highest and lowest scoring London boroughs for time to reach town centre and food shops by public transport

Domain	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Time to reach town centre by public transport	Croydon, Bromley, Ealing Brent	Hammersmith and Fulham, Richmond upon Thames, Camden, Islington, Kingston upon Thames
Time to reach food shops by public transport	Barnet, Croydon, Bromley, Enfield, Ealing	Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Westminster, Camden

Surveying neighbourhoods affected by violence

Following the selection of the focus area areas we undertook two online data collection exercises – an analysis of local social media sources and an online survey/community inbox.

Social media analysis

To provide an overview of how violence is viewed and experienced in the focus areas, and to inform the development of the survey questions, a brief social media analysis was conducted of public posts and comments related to the areas and instances of crime/violence.

Comments and posts from the following (where references were made to the focus areas) were analysed manually:

- Facebook (local groups and newspapers)
- Instagram (hashtags related to focus areas)
- Twitter (hashtags related to focus areas)
- <http://nowcroydon.uk/news/croydon-advertiser>
- <https://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/>
- <https://www.mylondon.news/all-about/ealing>
- <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/feed/>
- <https://www.enfieldindependent.co.uk/news/>
- <https://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/>
- <https://www.newhamrecorder.co.uk/>
- <https://www.richmondandtwickenhamtimes.co.uk/>
- <https://www.romfordrecorder.co.uk/>
- <https://londonnewsonline.co.uk/>
- <https://www.southwarknews.co.uk/>
- <https://www.surreycomet.co.uk/>
- <https://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/>
- <https://www.hillingdontimes.co.uk/news/>
- <https://metro.co.uk/tag/london/>

Findings

Focus area: **New Cross**

Crime types frequently discussed: gang activity and knife crime.

Comments relating to:

- Lack of police presence and powers.
- Lack of deterrent in terms of lengthy prison sentences.
- Views relating to society and crime getting worse.
- Views relating to criminal activity being swept under the carpet.
- Informants/witnesses being negatively viewed by a few commentators.

“Why should we the taxpayers have to pay for people like this. Make prison like the old workhouses.”

Focus area: **Brixton Hill**

Crime types frequently discussed: gang activity and knife crime.

Comments relating to:

- Lack of police presence and powers.
- Lack of deterrent in terms of lengthy prison sentences.
- Gang activity being widespread in the area and particularly in housing estates.
- Lack of investment in young people leading to them joining gangs.
- Fairly positive views in relation to stop and search.
- Community reluctance to provide witness statements.
- Views relating to society and crime getting worse.

“I'm all for bigger sentences for knife carriers, but some kids need help like youth centres to get away from gang activities. Stop and search should be based on intelligence rather than unnecessary stop and search, which will alienate communities and create distrust.”

Focus area: **Clapham North**

Crime types frequently discussed: gang activity, knife crime and murder of women.

Comments relating to:

- Lack of police presence and powers.
- Lack of deterrent in terms of lengthy prison sentences.

- Views relating to society and crime getting worse.
- Male violence leading to lack of freedom of movement for women.
- Police viewed with more suspicion due to offender in the Sarah Everard murder being a police officer.
- Victim blaming when women are walking alone at night.
- Lack of CCTV/security in area.

“Women are not safe whilst out in our streets and that has to change AND tougher sentences MUST be pushed through the law courts.”

Focus area: **Putney Bridge**

Crime types frequently discussed: anti-social behaviour, theft, assault, gun crime, robberies using mopeds and organised crime.

Comments relating to:

- Lack of police powers to stop crime.
- Tougher sentences needed as deterrent.
- Young people loitering and causing trouble.
- People being reluctant to step forward as witnesses to gang related violence.

“Ten years inside should sort it out [assault]...but I bet he won’t even get a custodial.”

Focus area: **Harlesden**

Crime types frequently discussed: hate crime, assault, gun/knife crime, domestic violence and gang activity.

Comments relating to:

- Non-citizen offenders needing to be deported.
- Mistrust of the police.
- Longer prison sentences needed.
- Issues relating to racist social media comments in instances of crimes against ethnic minority groups.
- Difficulties of dealing with gang violence.

“This happens when youths are given no support or constructive input and are left to their own devices. Many youth clubs no longer exist, youth organisations are run on a shoestring with little support in communities that badly need them.”

Focus area: **Hounslow**

Crime types frequently discussed: anti-social behaviour, sexual violence, theft, robbery, knife crime and murder.

Comments relating to:

- Lack of security features in the built environment.
- Lack of support for vulnerable people.
- Limited police resources to deal with crime.

“There's always groups of young men hanging around late at night. The lighting in the area is terrible. Even as a middle-aged man walking around at 9pm I feel scared.”

Focus area: **Forest Gate**

Crime types frequently discussed: knife crime (linked to West Ham football events and local tube station), gun crime and murder.

Comments relating to:

- Lack of facilities for young people.
- Cuts to support services.
- Lack of police presence.
- Increase of violence.

“Innocent lives drastically lost whilst our government and decision makers cut vital services.”

Focus area: **Edmonton/Tottenham**

Crime types frequently discussed: gang violence and knife crime.

Comments relating to:

- Residents feeling unsafe.
- Lack of police presence.
- Further efforts to tackle crime needed from national and local government.
- Tougher sentences needed to knife crime.
- Offending was in some instances racialised within the locality (deportation needed etc).

"I've been in Tottenham for a year now and I've lost count how many people have been stabbed and killed around here, including someone I know."

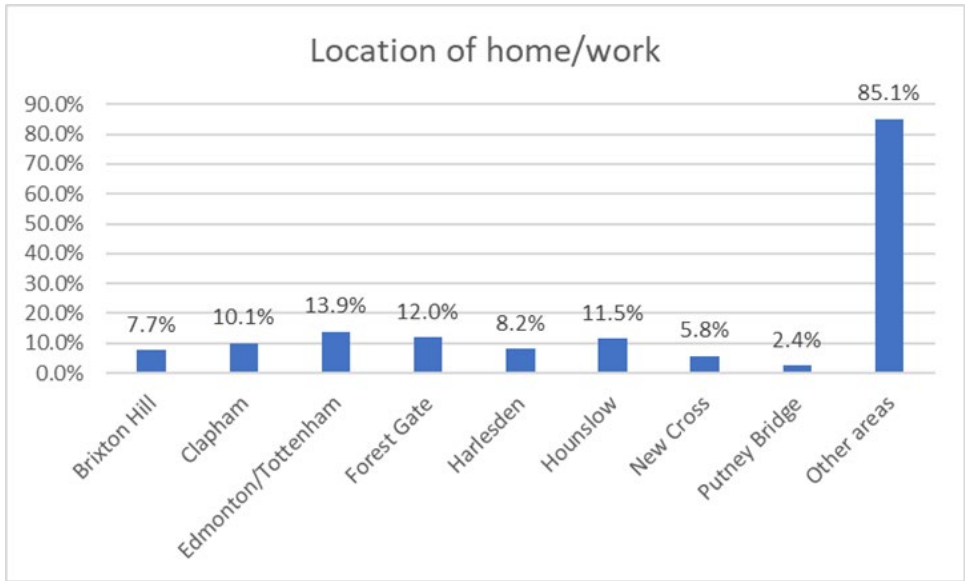
Summary

- Lack of police presence featured in many conversations about violent crime.
- Social media commentators viewed harsher prison sentences as a crime deterrent.
- Perpetrators of violent crime are mainly viewed as young people.
- According to social media commentators, in some areas, witnesses are reluctant to step forward regarding gang related violence.
- Many stated that support services for vulnerable people needed to improve to reduce crime.
- The perception of violent crime increasing and becoming more serious in nature was a frequent topic amongst social media conversations.

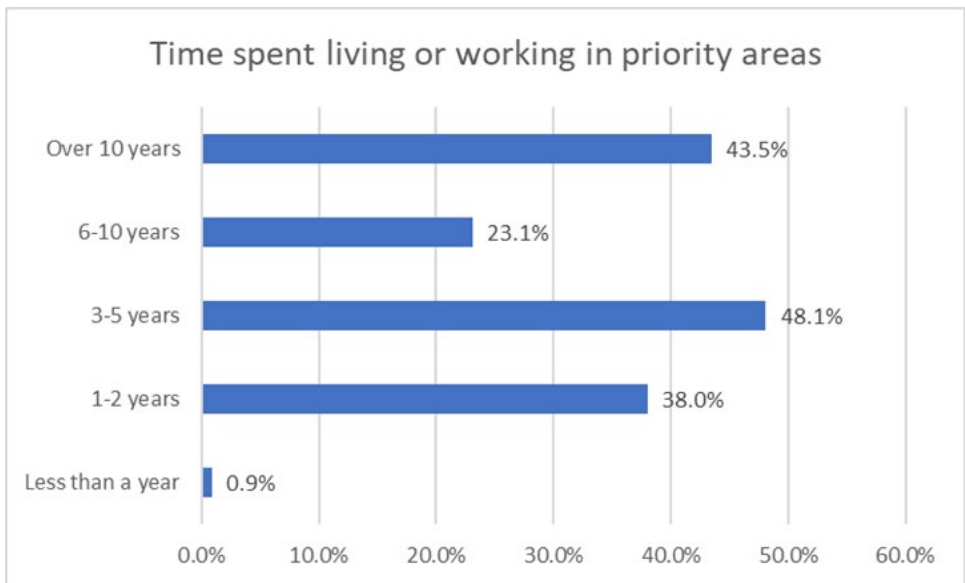
Survey / Community Inbox

To provide an opportunity for those residing or working in the focus areas to share their views and experiences of violence in their local area, an online survey was created using the survey tool SmartSurvey. The survey was online for a limited period between August and September 2021. It was distributed to existing contacts, shared on Twitter and ran as a Facebook ad. 208 individuals took part in the survey.

The respondents were evenly spread across the focus areas, apart from Putney Bridge of which only 2.4% of respondents lived and/or worked.



Respondents had generally spent a long time living and/or working in the focus areas with 43.5% having done so for 10 years or more.

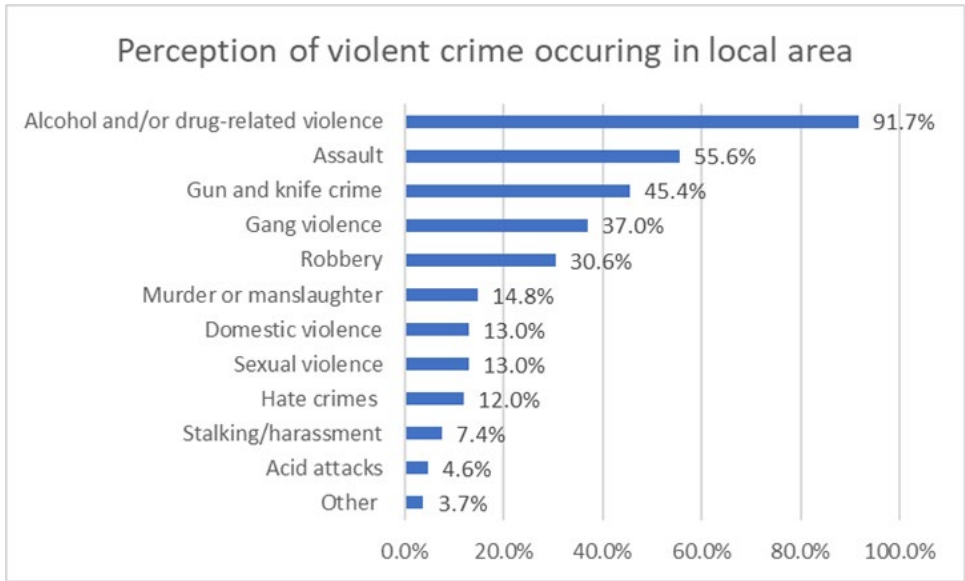


Findings

Public perception of violent crime and the extent of it

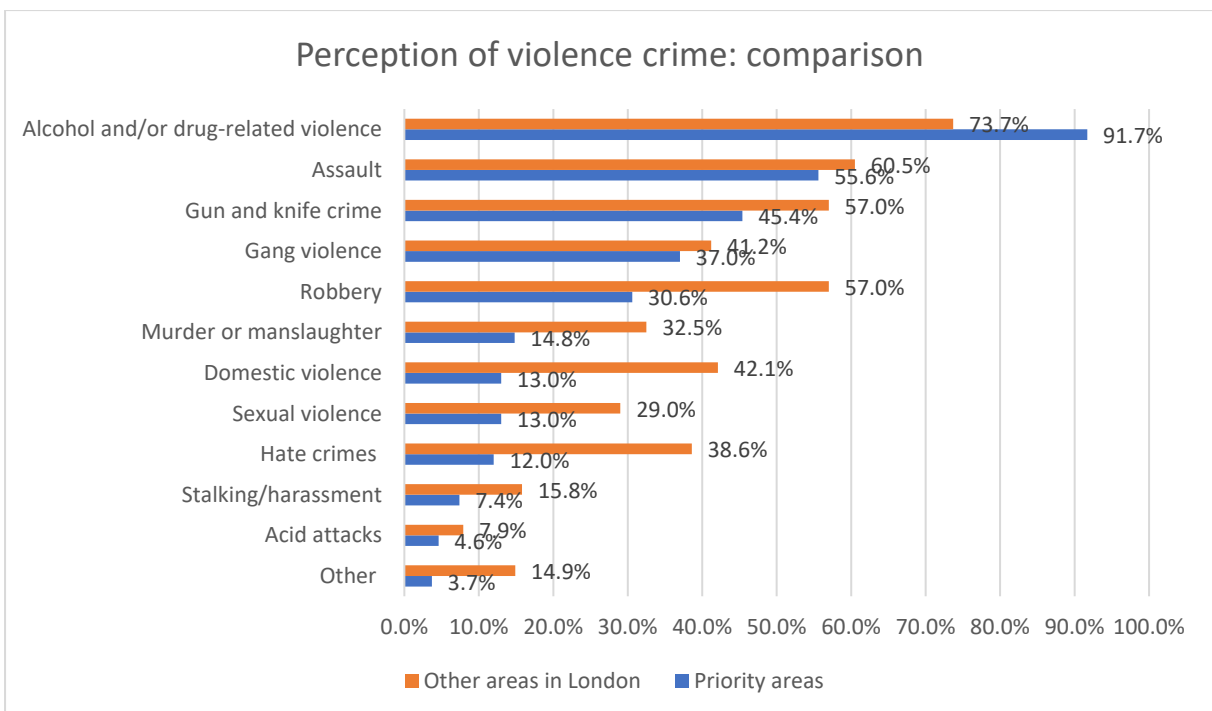
The vast majority of those in the focus areas (91.7%) stated that alcohol and/or drug-related violence took place, followed by assault (55.6%) and gun and knife crime (45.4%).

Respondents commented that other crimes not falling within the serious crime category such as burglary, street robberies and anti-social behaviour also occurred in their local area.

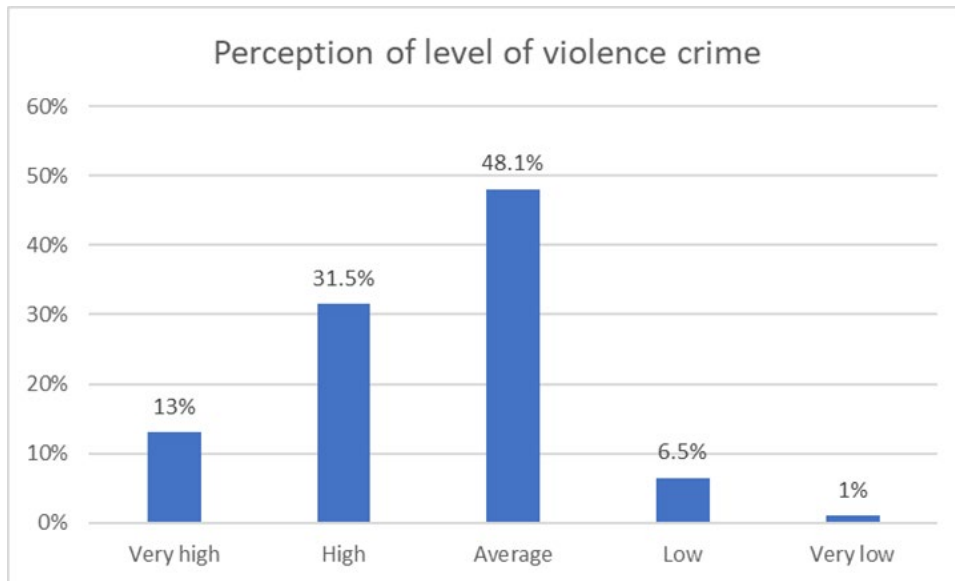


Interestingly, when comparing survey responses from the focus areas to that of responses from other areas in London, differences are evident. On the whole, respondents from other areas of London have listed higher number of serious crime types as occurring in their local area. This is apparent in particular, regarding domestic violence (29.1 percentage point difference) hate crime (26.6 percentage point difference), and robbery (26.4 percentage point difference).

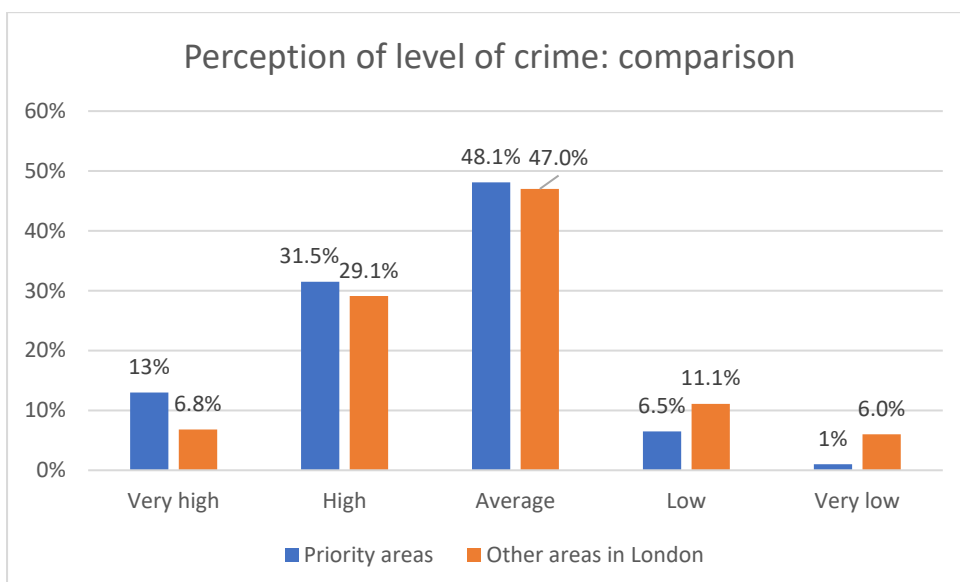
Only for alcohol and/or drug-related violence have a larger proportion of the focus area respondents indicated that this is an occurrence in their local area.



45% of respondents in the focus areas rated levels of violence in their local area as above average. 48.1% rated it as average and 7.5% stated that it was lower than average.

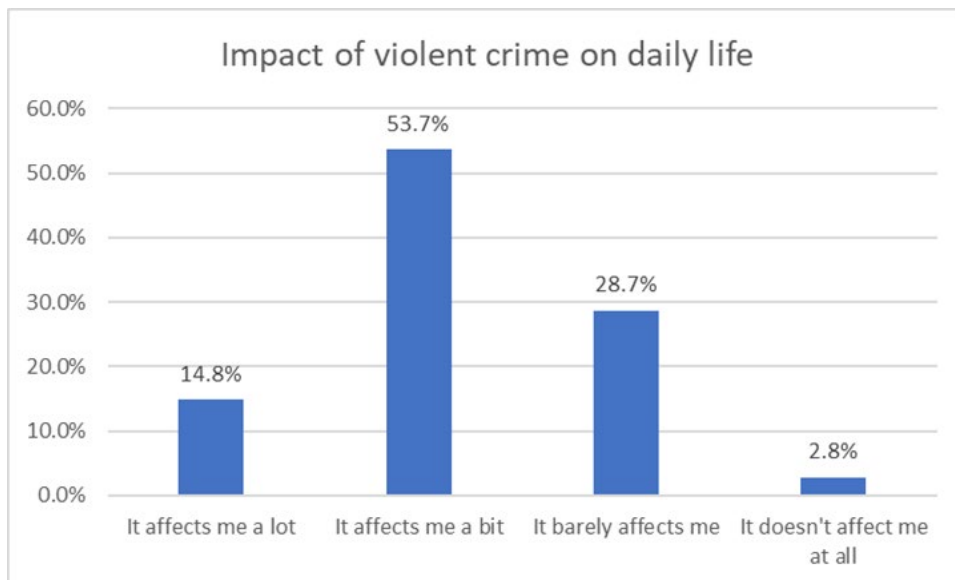


Comparing the focus areas to other areas in London shows that respondents from the focus areas reported higher levels of violent crime and those from other areas in London reported lower levels of violent crime. For instance, in the focus areas, 13% reported very high instances of violence crime compared to 6.8% of those in other areas in London.

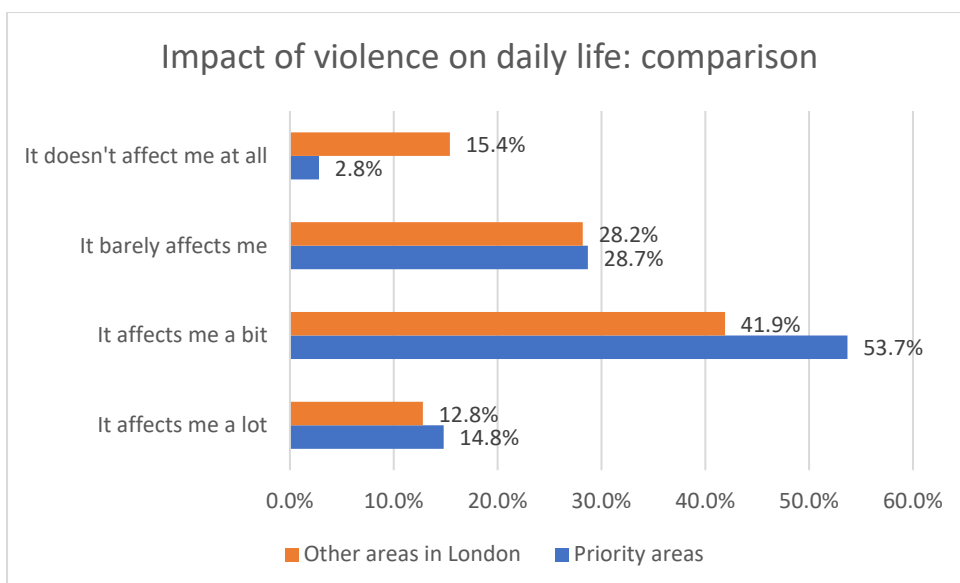


Impact of violent crime on daily life and levels of victimisation

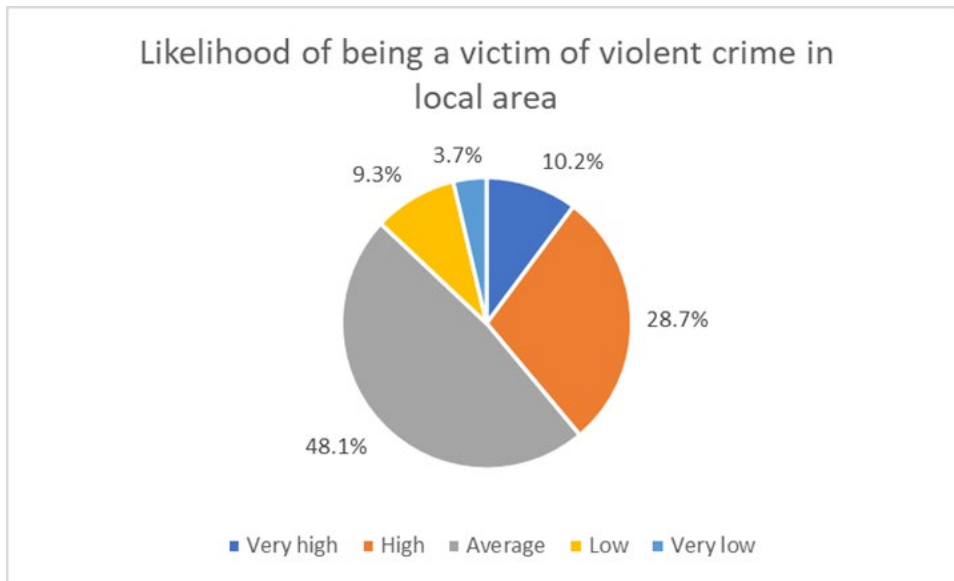
14.8% of those in the focus areas reported that serious crime in their local area affected them a lot. 53.7% stated that it impacted them a bit. A third of respondents felt largely unaffected by it.



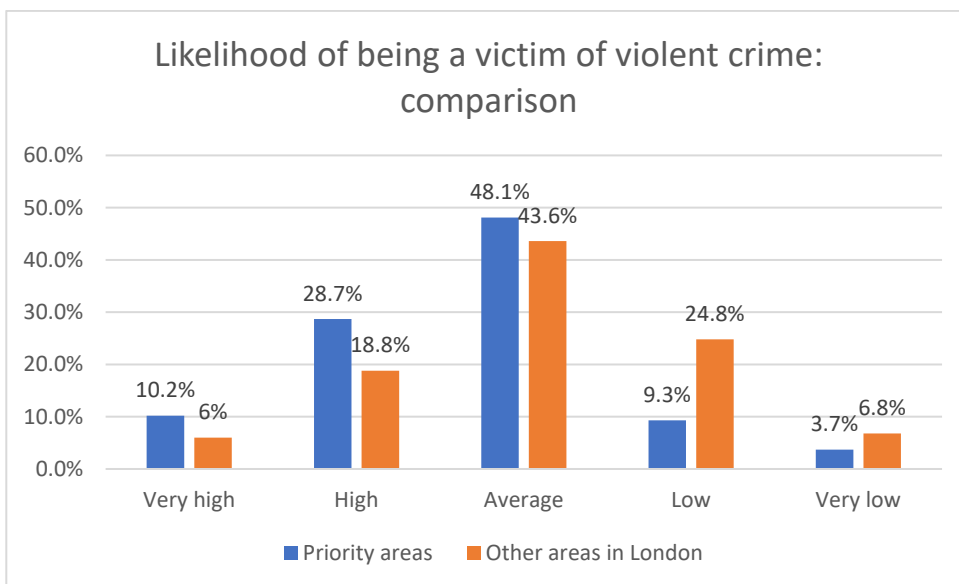
Respondents from the focus areas recounted a greater effect of violence on daily life compared to other areas in London. For instance, there was a 11.8 percentage point difference between the two groups in relation to violence affecting them a bit (53.7% vs 41.9%). In addition, only 2.8% of respondents in the focus areas stated that violence did not impact their lives at all, compared to 15.4% in other areas in London.



Nearly half of the respondents, (48.1%) felt that the chance of becoming a victim of violent crime in their local area was average, whilst 38.9% thought that the likelihood of becoming a victim was high or very high.



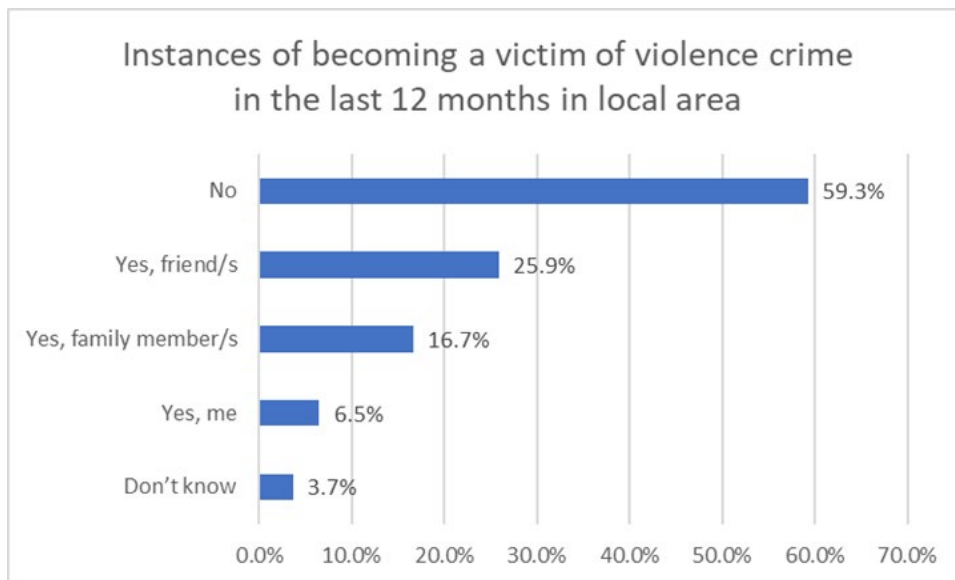
Respondents from focus areas were more likely to report high likelihood of being a victim of violent crime compared to those in other London areas. The “high” option saw a percentage point difference of 9.9 and the “low” option showed a 15.5 percentage point difference.



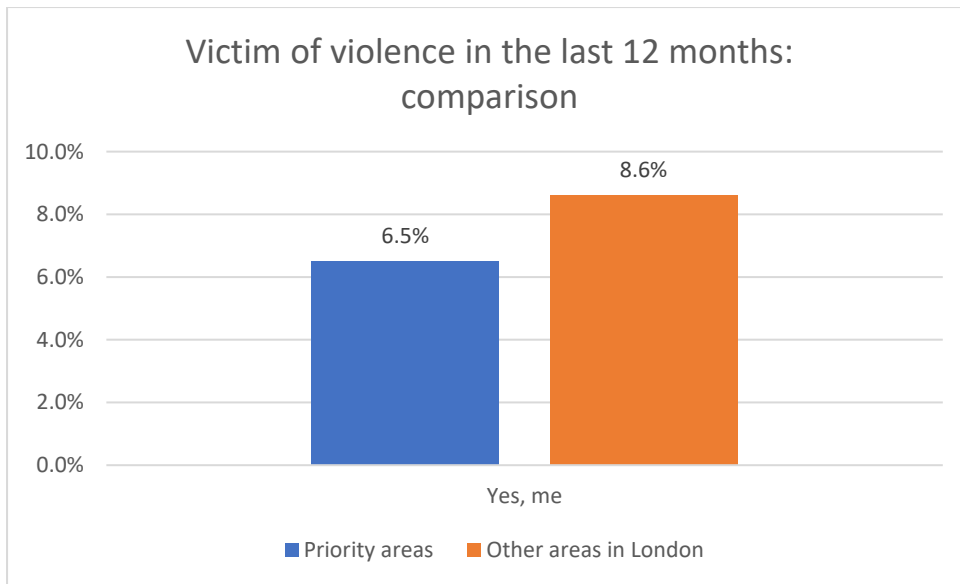
The majority (59.3%) of respondents reported that neither they, their friends nor their family had been victims of violent crime in the last 12 months. 49.1% stated that either themselves, a family member or friend had become a victim. Out of those who had experienced violent crime, 75% had reported the matter to the police. Those who did not report the crime commented that they felt that the police would not be able to help them:

“No, I didn’t, no point they never do anything, they don’t care about females and brush us off, gave up on police years ago.”

“Nobody contacts the police, they wouldn’t come, and they don’t care.”

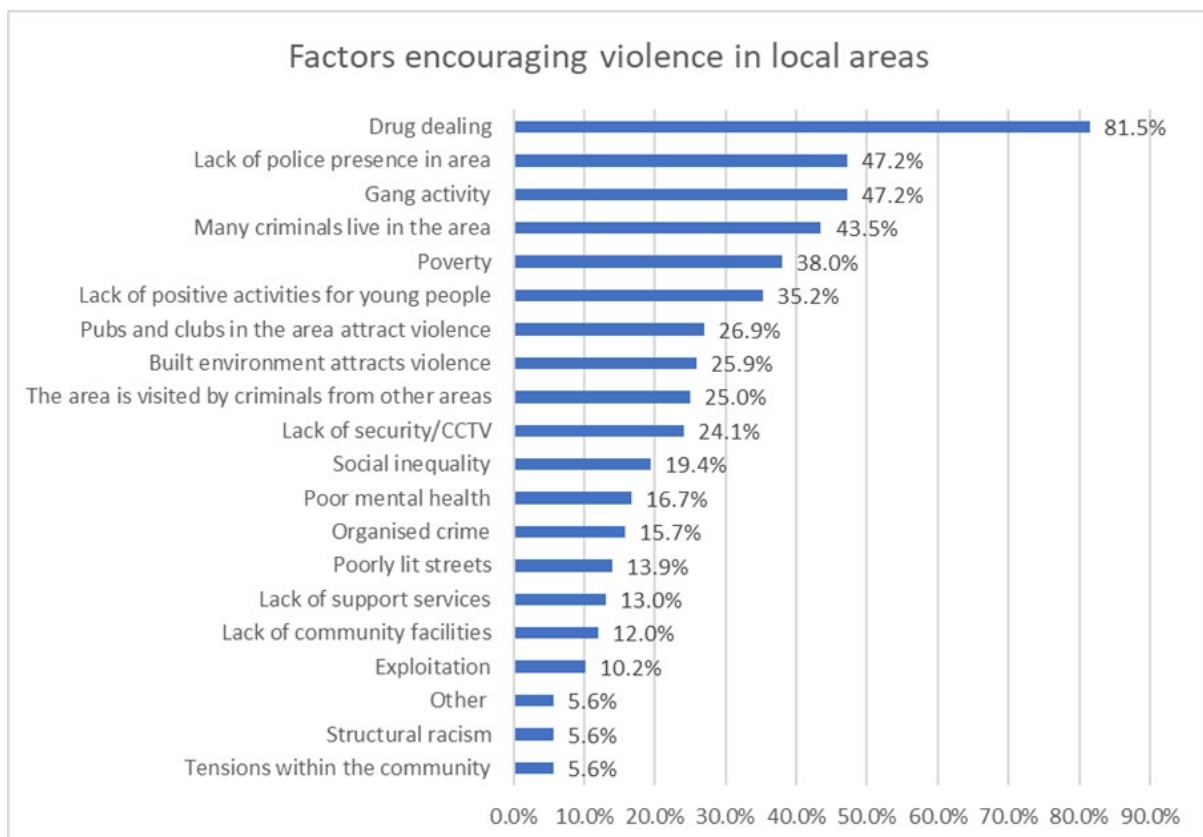


Comparing instances of self-experienced violence, it is interesting to note that 6.5% of respondents in the focus areas have faced this in the last 12 months compared to 8.6% in other areas in London.



Factors encouraging and preventing violent crime

81.5% of respondents in the focus areas quoted drug dealing as encouraging violence in their local area. Nearly half cite lack of police presence and gang activity as encouraging or allowing violence to take place. Many criminals living in the area (43.5%) and poverty were also mentioned (38%).

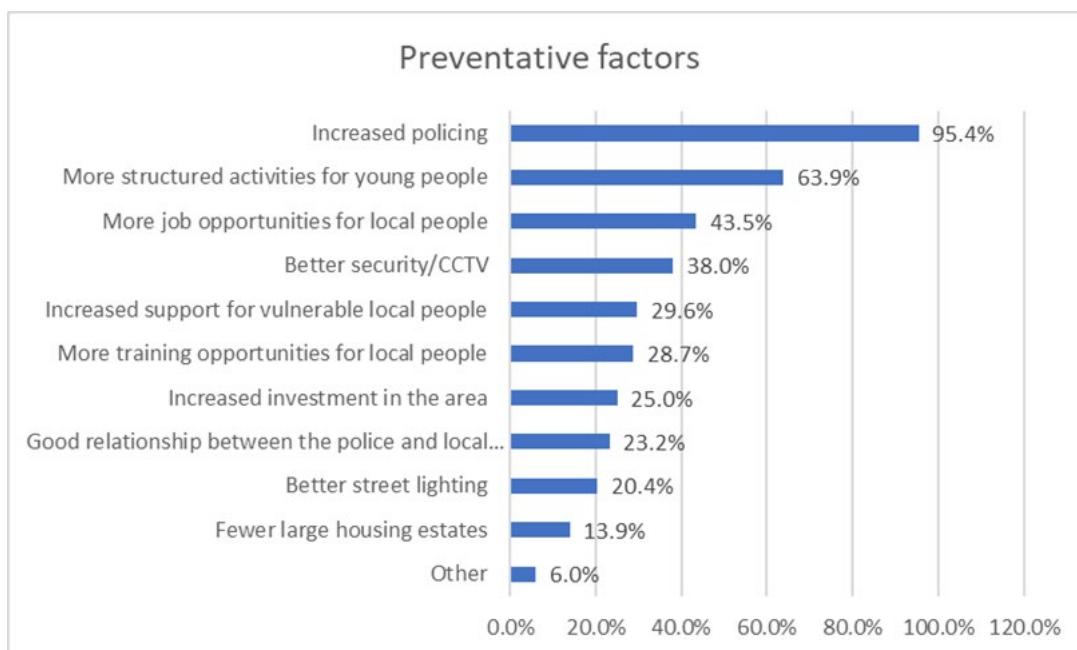


Perceived factors encouraging violence tended to be broadly similar between the focus areas and other areas in London with both drug dealing and lack of police presence listed as the top two factors. Gang activity, drug dealing, and poverty were more frequently viewed as contributing to violence in the focus areas compared to other areas in London. However, a greater proportion of respondents from other areas in London named lack of police presence as encouraging violence.

Top 5 factors encouraging violence: comparison			
Focus areas		Other areas in London	
Drug dealing	81.5%	Drug dealing	66.7%
Lack of police presence in area	47.2%	Lack of police presence in area	63.2%
Gang activity	47.2%	Lack of positive activities for young people	48.3%
Many criminals live in the area	43.5%	Gang activity	41.2%
Poverty	38.0%	Poverty	33.3%

Considering what might prevent violent crime from occurring, the vast majority (95.4%) felt that increased policing would help. Many also viewed structured activities for young people (63.9%) and increased job opportunities for local people (43.5%) to be preventative factors. Some respondents commented that reducing inequality and misogyny and improving the built environment would help tackle crime.

“Restoring imagination in planning, more open spaces and recreation areas, spaces to breathe, and the ability to feel greater pride in where we live.”



Comparing the top 5 preventative factors it is evident that both the focus areas and other areas in London thought that increased policing could be effective in tackling violence. Both also felt that providing job opportunities and support for vulnerable people could reduce the issue.

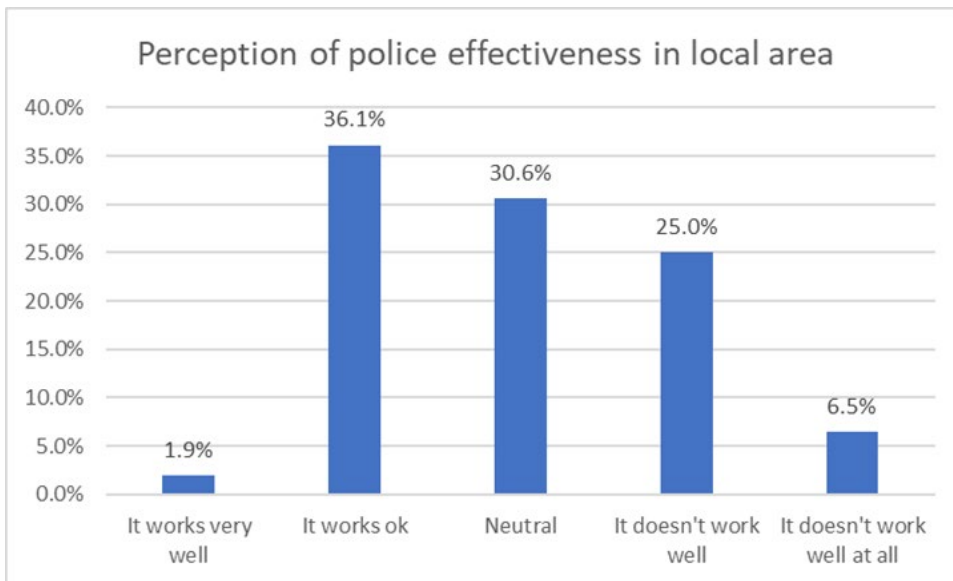
Top 5 preventative factors: comparison			
Focus areas		Other areas in London	
Increased policing	95.4%	Increased policing	77.4%
More structured activities for young people	63.9%	Better security/CCTV	55.7%
More job opportunities for local people	43.5%	Increased support for vulnerable local people	47.8%
Better security/CCTV	38.0%	Good relationship between the police and local community	45.2%
Increased support for vulnerable local people	29.6%	More job opportunities for local people	40%

Perception of police effectiveness

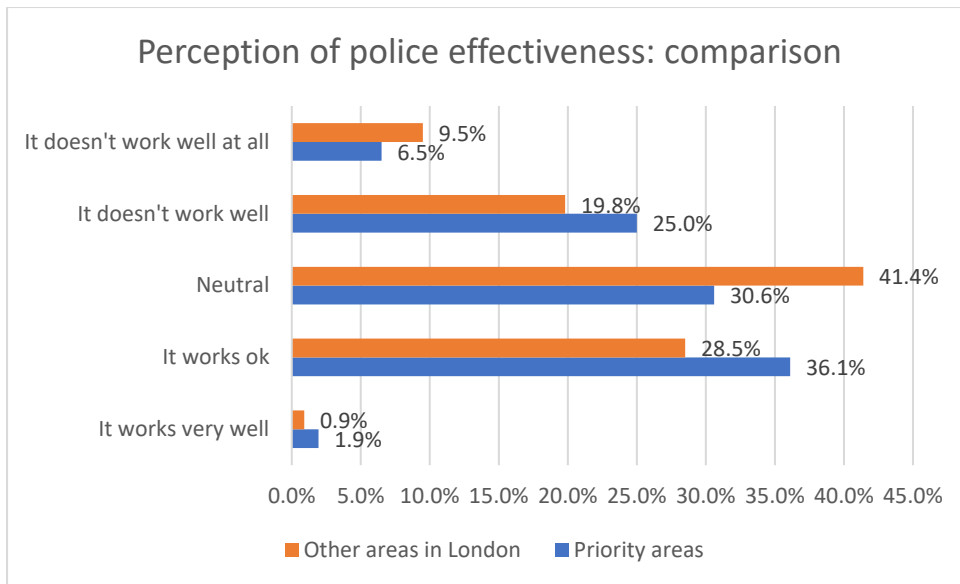
38% of those in the focus areas reported some degree of effectiveness in local policing. 30.6% felt neutral and 31.5% stated that policing in their area was not effective. Those holding negative perceptions commented that policing was underfunded and often not responsive enough.

“Police don’t respond quick enough, no police on the streets.”

“If other services were resourced and available more readily (e.g. Mental Health) police would be freed up to deal with crime and not situations where people need help and support in a crisis. “



Comparing the focus areas to that of other areas in London does not show a particular pattern as a higher ratio of respondents in the focus areas stated that “it works ok” compared to other areas in London. However, a higher proportion of residents from focus areas compared to the other areas also reported that “it doesn’t work well”. Respondents from other areas were more likely to feel neutral about policing effectiveness.



Summary

- Alcohol and/or drug-related violence is the most frequently reported violent crime.
- A greater proportion of respondents in the focus areas rated levels of violence as above average compared to those in other areas in London.
- A higher proportion of respondents in the focus areas felt that violent crime affected their daily lives “a bit” or “a lot” compared to those in other areas in London.
- Respondents in the focus areas were more likely to think that the likelihood of becoming a victim was high or very high, compared to other areas in London.
- Over 80% of those in the focus areas quoted drug dealing as encouraging violence in their local area – a smaller proportion of those in other areas in London agreed.
- Respondents across all areas felt that increased policing as well as providing job opportunities and support for vulnerable people could be effective in tackling violence.
- Around 1/3 reported ineffective local policing across all areas.

Appendix D: Topic Guide for the Interviews

The aim of meeting with people with knowledge and expertise on these areas is to:

- Learn of peoples' experiences and perspectives on living in this area and the impact violence has on them and that area.
- Gain their understanding about why things are the way they are.
- Gain their perspective on how things can change for the better.

Questions/issues to help explore the three above aims

The following are for guidance and to ensure coverage and need not be asked in a particular order, and some may be covered naturally and without prompting in the course of the interview.

No identifying data should be recorded.

Background questions

- Background questions on the person being interviewed if not known prior to interview.
 - Role / reside in area
 - Length of time living /working in area

Safety in your area

1. How safe is it living in *the area*? (option: rating how safe)
2. Has the safety of this area changed in recent years?
 - a. If so, how?
 - b. Why do you think this is?
3. How does violence in this area affect you, if at all?
4. How does violence affect the wider community in this area, if at all?
5. Is it more unsafe living here for people from particular ethnicities/cultures/age groups/religions other? Why do you think this?
6. Do you think the violent incidents in this area are linked to any wider problems in society (e.g., racism, sexism, hate crime, gangs, youth violence, poverty etc)?
7. Why do you think things are as they are in *the area*?
8. What needs to change?
9. What would make it a safer place to be?
10. What role/responsibility does the community have in determining the level of safety in *the area*?
11. What role/responsibility do you have in helping to maintain safety in *the area*?

12. Can community initiatives make a difference? Do you know of any examples already taking place in the local community?
13. What do you know about Youth violence and gang related violence associated with *the area*?
 - a. Rivalries and factionism
14. What are relationships with local authority and social services.
15. History of *the area*?
 - a. History of investment and initiatives
 - b. What has worked previously and what has failed and why?

Policing in your area

1. How are the police perceived in *the area*? Why do you think this is?
2. Has the perception of the police changed in recent times? In what way?
3. What has been your personal experience of policing in *the area*?
4. Aside from the police force, what other organisations and/or institutions have a critical role in improving safety on the streets? What is the role of these organisations?
5. What improvements could be made to foster better relations between the local community and those that police the streets?
6. Who should be responsible for improving relations between the local community and those that police the streets?
7. In what way do you think safety in *the area* is linked to

Experience of violent incidents (for residents)

1. Have you/your family/friends experienced violent incidents in the area you live in?

[If yes]

 - c. I'm sorry to hear about that. If you feel comfortable to tell me a bit more about what happened, please do....
 - d. Did you **seek** any help or support after the incident?
 - e. Did you **get** any help or support after the incident?
 - f. What role did the police/local authority/other organisation play after the incident, if at all? How effectively did they help you?
 - g. How much trust/confidence in these did you feel and why?
 - h. Is there anything you feel could have reduced the likelihood of the incident occurring?

[If no]

- a. If you experienced or witnessed a violent incident, who (including any organisations/public bodies if relevant) would you go to for help, if any?
- b. How much trust/confidence in these would you feel and why? (consider prompting for police, emergency services, etc.)

Improving safety

Tell us a bit about what you think needs to happen for things to improve?