School of Education, Human Sciences & Law
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UNIVERSITY *of* DERBY

Violent crime in Sinfin:

Causes, Effects & Solutions

Written by

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INDEX

Acknowledgements

Introduction …… 2

Chapter 1: *Investigating violent crime, its causes and effects in Beat 603* …….. 4

Chapter 2: *The Crime Reduction Strategy* …… 9

Chapter 3: *Beat 603* …… 15

Chapter 4: *The rate of offending in Beat 603: the statistical background* ……..…… 18

Chapter 5: *The fear of crime in Sinfin: causes and effects* ……...…….……... 24

Chapter 6: *The adequacy of police responses to reports of crime* ….……..…….. 30

Chapter 7: *Violent crime, children and young people* ….…… 35

Chapter 8: *Domestic violence* ….…… 42

Conclusion ……..…….50

Appendix …….53

INTRODUCTION

This research was initiated by an approach to the University of Derby's Law Division from Derbyshire Constabulary under the auspices of the Derby City Crime and Disorder Partnership.

The Derbyshire Constabulary had identified Beat 603, comprising the area of Derby known as Sinfin, as an area of concern with respect to incidents of violent crime. Initial analysis of available statistical data indicated that the number of offences in which violence was a feature was more than other areas of Derby. In the main, these offences were recorded as

- Actual bodily harm, contrary to section 47 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861;
- Common assault;
- Offences under section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986; and
- Resisting/obstructing a police officer in the execution of his duty.

The Home Office's Action Plan, "Fighting crime together"[1], included the following statement from the Rt. Hon. Mr. Jack Straw, MP, then Home Secretary:

> …we need tough action … in tackling the conditions that all too often can lead to crime.

The Action Plan states that the Police Service is developing an "intelligence-led problem orientated approach to policing." Among other strategies, this necessitates the identification of problems through a process of analysis. It has been the ambition of both parties to this research project that the resultant data would, to some extent envisaged it at least, meet this aim.

A further theme of the aforementioned Action Plan is that of "partnership" among agencies and interested parties united by common aims of crime prevention and the reduction of crime. The matter of "partnership" provides yet another dimension to the context against which this research was to be conducted.

[1] Published January 2001.

CHAPTER 1

INVESTIGATING VIOLENT CRIME, ITS CAUSES AND EFFECTS IN BEAT 603

- **Objectives of the research**

In commissioning this research in spring 2002, the Derbyshire Constabulary and the University of Derby's Law Division agreed the following objectives:

- To identify the possible causes of violent crime and attitudes towards it in the Sinfin area;
- To briefly analyse the available statistical data provided by the Derbyshire Constabulary;
- To gather community views on the causes of violent crime in the area of Sinfin;
- To gather information on the views of community members on the possible ways of dealing with this identified problem; and
- To identify existing good practice and make suggestions as to its implementation in the Sinfin area.

Importantly, the objectives identified by the parties to the research recognised the significance of analysing statistical date against a broader and therefore, more illuminating context of attitudes to violent crime and its causes. A recent review of crime statistics conducted by the Hone Office observed that

> The circumstances in which certain crimes occur can help us to develop solutions.[2]

Moreover,

> The motive for a particular criminal act can be hard to identify outside of a court of law, but attempting to do so can provide additional information of considerable operational value to the police. [3]

To this end, the views of victims of crime may especially informative:

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[2] See www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimprev/crimsta2.htm: *Review of Crime Statistics: A Discussion Document"*, July 2000.
[3] *Ibid.*

> … the victim's own view as to motive can offer an important guide to the nature of particular crimes … information from victims might also help service-delivery, through identifying areas where there might be dissatisfaction with the police or with particular aspects of police performance. [4]

The close proximity of public confidence in the police and the reporting of crime were also noted:

> Perversely, if a local populace has less confidence in the police force, they are less likely to report crimes with the result that the particular police force may register a lower recorded crime rate compared to other forces. [5]

The parties to the research project felt that attainment of the research project's objectives would go some way to testing the validity of this assumption in the context of Sinfin.

- **Research methods**

Analysis of relevant quantitative data

The objectives set by the parties to this project did not anticipate any need to or purpose in, replicating the work of the crime analysts whose expertise contributes to the Crime and Disorder Partnership. Nevertheless, and as agreed by the parties to this project, a brief survey and analysis of some significant and relevant quantitative data (comprising statistics) has been included in this Report. In particular, reference has been made to the following resources:

- The British Crime Survey for 2001/02;
- The Crime Statistics for England and Wales for 2000/01 and 2001/02; and
- The Derby Crime and Disorder Audit (2001).

A brief synopsis of the Government's initiatives regarding crime reduction precedes this, in order to help contexualise the quantitative sources. Reference has also been made to those crime reduction strategies devised at local level.

The gathering of qualitative data

The research proposal emphasised that the primary focus would be on an analysis of qualitative data, gathered from interviews.

Therefore, the findings discussed herein are primarily based on interviews and discussions conducted with service providers and other interested parties in the area of Sinfin. In consultation with Sergeant David Simmonds, Liaison Officer for the Derby City Crime and

[4] *"Ibid.*

Disorder Partnership, a number of people were identified as likely interviewees. Although, due to the imposition of time and research constraints, the number of people interviewed was seemingly small, those interviewed represented a wide range of professions, service providers and interested parties, including

- Police officers;
- Teachers; and
- Community workers.

As a method of gathering data, the interview tends to be more open-ended than, for example, a questionnaire, because interviewees need not be led systematically through a prescribed list of topics, irrespective of their experiences, opinions or professions. For the purpose of gathering information relevant to achieving the objectives stated above, interviewers for the University of Derby tried to ask questions that pertained to their understanding of the interviewees' profession (if applicable) and expertise as these may (or may not) impact on their understanding of issues.

Nevertheless, despite the flexibility as to content and scope offered by this particular qualitative method of research, interviewees tended to identify and comment on, similar themes and issues of concern to them and those with whom they came into regular contact as a result of their professional or private activities.

The University of Derby's research team was not able to interview as many individuals and organisations as it would have liked. This was largely the result of time and resource imperatives of the research agenda itself, which were set at the beginning of the project. However, in some cases, relevant staff had changed jobs, whilst others, despite the best efforts of members of the University's research team, remained beyond contact. In this connection, it was sadly not possible to contact a member of the Youth Offending Team, although thankfully, a number of other individuals with knowledge or expertise in the area of youth offending were able to usefully inform members of the University of Derby's researchers on a number of relevant issues.

A public meeting jointly organised by members of Derbyshire Constabulary and representatives from the University of Derby was not possible. However, the author took the opportunity to observe a meeting of the Sinfin Police Liaison Group, which provided some useful information from members of the public and Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, past and present, in the Sinfin area. In the view of the University's researchers, these contacts yielded a good deal of valuable data.

[5] *"Review of Crime Statistics: A Discussion Document".*

The regular meetings of the Sinfin Police Liaison Group are a forum for the airing of concerns and the frank exchange of information and opinions between local people and police officers. These meetings are held every other month and are attended by at least one beat constable. Local elected politicians are also able to attend, although before the September meeting, none had done so. One police officer in attendance expressed the hope that local councillors would be able to attend future meetings. A member of the Police Authority, who had been allocated Sinfin as an area of responsibly, was also present.

- **The structure of this Report**

This report has been arranged to cover the relevant issues in a systematic and informative way. Therefore, the Report includes

- Summaries of the policy background as this may relate to the rate of violent crime and its reduction at national level and in Sinfin;

- A brief explanation of Sinfin's geography and population;

- A brief but informative comparison of statistical data concerning levels of violent crime in England and Wales with statistics reflecting the rate of violent crime in Derby and specifically, Sinfin;

- A summary of statistical evidence concerning the fear of crime at both national and local levels. Note that the inclusion of detailed statistical tables was rejected in favour of clearly worded text.

As previously indicated, interviewees identified and discussed a number of themes and issues. The structure of this report therefore reflects these issues and concerns, with sections dedicated to recurrent themes. Throughout, reference is made to the views of interviewees as these inform and illuminate issues relevant to attainment of the objectives outlined above. These include views on

- The causes of violent crime;
- The fear of crime;
- Policing Sinfin;
- Young people and crime;
- Domestic violence; and
- Best practice and solutions.

Many of the participants to this project were willing to talk the University's research team only if anonymity in the final reporting exercise was promised. In the interests of consistency

therefore, nothing in this Report intentionally identifies interviewees, although reference is made to their professions where this clarifies the context in which their views and co-operation were given.

A detailed exploration of some issues was precluded by the parameters of the agreed research proposal. The research team was advised that an assessment of the impact on the rate of violent offending, of those matters over which the Crime and Disorder Partnership has no control were beyond the stated scope of this research. These issues include the alleged correlation between socio-economic disadvantage and violent crime and the courts' use of sentencing powers. Thus, for example, evidence from the interviews of a connection between violent crime and socio-economic factors may not, of itself, benefit operational policing decisions in Sinfin without the necessary resources and expertise. Nevertheless, many interviewees wanted to discuss such matters anyway, and to the extent that these may or may not inform the project or indeed, further the attainment of the stated objectives, are included in this report.

In conclusion, this report will summarise the main recommendations and views of participants concerning the reduction of violent crime in Sinfin. In particular, exemplars of good practice at local level will be identified and explored.

CHAPTER 2

THE CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGY

- **Introduction**

In November 1999, the Government published its Crime Reduction Strategy. This set out its plans to achieve a reduction in the crime rate in the short to medium term.

The Strategy was devised against a background of increasing concern, particularly in central government, about the apparent rise in crime. In a summary of the Strategy's main points [6], the Home Office noted that, by international standards, the rate of offending in the United Kingdom is high, and has been rising every year since 1918 by about 5%.

The summary does not attempt to put these assumptions in any context not does it cite authority for them; there is not, for example, any mention of those countries with which the United Kingdom was compared. The summary does however, note that

> … certain economic and demographic factors, such as an increase in the numbers of young men in the population – which is the age group who are most likely to get involved in crime – could …lead the crime rate to rise.

In addition, the Government has expressed concern about the causes and effects of "anti-social behaviour", which can "be extremely distressing and can often lead to more serious crimes." Therefore, by way of prevention, as well as cure, the Government has said that

> Problems like this require new tools for the police and local councils, such as anti-social behaviour orders, but they also need broader strategies that address all of the problems that may be holding a neighbourhood back. Government departments and agencies at local level are joining up – through initiatives like the New Deal for Communities, youth inclusion schemes, work to tackle truancy and school exclusion, and rooting out race crime – to create the conditions for stable, healthy environments where criminal activity does not thrive.[7]

Therefore, the priority of the Crime Reduction Strategy is "to drive crime down". This was to be achieved, in part at least, by an ambitious programme of work, which would devolve power and responsibility to local communities to develop strategies at local level which "make major inroads into levels of crime."

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[6] www.crimereduction.gov.uk/crssummary.htm: *The Government's Crime Reduction Strategy – Summary*, December, 1999.

- **The Crime and Disorder Partnerships**

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires police forces and local authorities to consider the implications, for crime and disorder, in the exercise of their statutory and other functions and to do all that they reasonably can to reduce and prevent crime. Thus, the Act anticipates the creation of Crime and Disorder Partnerships (CDP) which aim to bring together local authorities and police authorities and forces, as lead agencies, to work with interested organisations such as may be prescribed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department. The Partnerships must formulate and implement crime reduction strategies every three years, based in part on the results of audits of crime and disorder in their respective areas. Therefore, the Partnerships would formulate an "evidence-based" strategy to reduce crime, with information on best practice for tackling crime and its causes being compiled by and shared between Partnerships. These efforts will, the Government hopes, force down the crime rate in England and Wales and promote *best value* by ensuring

> … that the greatest impact for the money spent can be achieved. [8]

Nine regional offices in England would liaise with the Home Office and advise on initiatives relating to the CRP in their areas, and where appropriate, initiatives and contacts with other regional offices and identify regional priorities.

Clearly then, *local participation* is pivotal to the Government's Crime Reduction Strategy. While the Government has accepted that it must assume responsibility for ensuring that every police force is performing to its "maximum potential", [9] the same must be expected of local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, which would direct their energies to reducing three types of high profile crime – vehicle crime, domestic burglary and robberies.

- **The Safer Communities Initiative**

£20 million has been provided for the 376 Crime and Disorder Partnerships under the Safer Communities Initiative, which was launched in 2002 by the Home Office. The CDP must use this to tackle crime and disorder in their respective areas with a view to meeting the aforementioned national crime reduction targets, as well as other, local priorities.[10] These additional priorities must be identified and agreed by both the Partnerships and the regional

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[7] www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimprev/crssummary_4.htm: *Dealing with disorder and anti-social behaviour* (summary), 11 January 2000.

[8] See in general, www.crimereduction.gov.uk/crimered.htm: *What is the Crime Reduction Programme*, 16 January 2002. See also *Raising the performance of the police and the Crime and Disorder reduction partnerships* (summary).

[9] See in general, www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimprev/crsummary_1.htm: *Raising the performance of the police and the Crime and Disorder reduction partnerships* (summary), 11 January 2000.

[10] For details, refer to Home Office Circular 14/2002 and see also, www.crimereduction.gov.uk/safercommunities.htm, *An Introduction to the Safer Communities Initiative*, 10 April 2002. The Home Office has indicated that more funding to promote and further these aims may be available but the Partnerships are promised at least as much in future spending rounds as that to be allocated for the financially year 2003 to 2004.

Crime Reductions teams. [11]However, particular importance is to be attached to issues arising in connection with repeat victims, repeat offenders and crime "hotspots". [12]

- **Communities Against Drugs**

A further £220 million over three years has been allocated under the auspices of another Government initiative, the Communities Against Drugs. Once again, these funds, are given to the Crime and Disorder Partnerships (although not directly, but to local authorities) with a view to "disrupting local drugs markets and drugs related crime and disorder."[13] In 2001-02, the city of Derby received £225,300 from the Home Office in the Communities against Drugs Programme.

- **Small businesses and retailers**

£15 million will be available over three years to improve the security of small retailers and businesses operating in the most deprived areas of England and Wales. Security improvements might, depending on the identified needs, include the installation of additional locks or toughened glass and may include shopping malls as well as individual shop units. The East Midlands region received £236,060 in the financial year 2001/02. This amount was calculated on the basis of, *inter alia*, the region's share of the number of recorded offences.

- **Initiatives concerning domestic violence**

In 1998, the Government stated that it there was a

> need for strategies which couple prevention with support for those who have already been victimised … [I]t is also vital that agencies work together and continue to improve their methods of communication and co-operation as well as their individual practice. [14]

The impetus for inter-agency support had begun in 1995 with the Home Office, in conjunction with the Welsh Office, issuing a joint circular on domestic violence to statutory and voluntary agencies and encouraging the establishment of local domestic violence forums[15]. Members

[11] Regional Crime Reduction Directors would provide support to local Crime and Disorder Partnerships, and a newly established Crime Reduction Task Force was to be a focus for the work of partnerships at national level.

[12] In summary, the aims of the Safer Communities Initiative are to enable the Crime and Disorder Partnerships to
- Deliver a complementary activity plan of situational and social reduction interventions, based on what works and which secure the maximum impact on crime reduction outcomes;
- Deliver a range of activities which is aligned with, and complementary to, the Communities Against Drugs programme and has robust links with Neighbourhood Renewal funding; and
- Build the capacity required to deliver strategies successfully, and lever in other sources of funding.

[13] www.crimereduction.gov.uk/drugsallcohol23.htm: *Communities against Drugs Funding*, (summary) 16 January 2002.

[14] *Building a Safe, Just and Tolerant Society*, Home Office1998, at para. 1.3.

[15] The Women's Unit reported that in 1998 62% of local authorities were participating.

include local authorities, police representatives, Women's Aid[16] and the Crown Prosecution Service.

In September 1999, the Home Office established an interdepartmental group[17] on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence[18]. Joint publication with the Cabinet Minister for Women, Baroness Jay[19] of a discussion document, Living Without Fear: An Integrated Approach to Tackling Violence Against Women followed[20]. The Executive Summary notes that:

> It is time to change. We have moved on from the days when no one wanted to intervene in a domestic situation. Just as a society, we have woken up to the horrors of child abuse, it is time to act to change attitudes and make sure women are not subject to violence in their own home or anywhere else.

Crime and Disorder Partnerships have been encouraged to develop strategies dedicated to reducing incidents of domestic violence. Audits are required to identify the nature and profile of domestic violence.

- **Key features of the Derby City Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy for 2002 to 2005**

The Crime and Disorder Partnership is required to formulate a Crime Reduction Strategy (the Strategy) every three years, which must be preceded by an audit identifying levels of crime and "hotspots" across the city. As part of the Strategy for 2002 to 2005, the Crime and Disorder Partnership identified the following areas for strategic development during this period:

[16] And other refuge groups.

[17] The Steering Group participants were: the Crown Prosecution Service, Department for Education and Employment, Department of Health, Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions, Department of Social Security, Health and Safety Executive, Home Office, Lord Chancellor's Department, National Assembly for Wales and the Women's Unit at the Cabinet Office.

[18] Headed by Paul Boateng, MP, Home Office Minister.

[19] Cabinet minister for women, In 1997, two Ministers for Women were appointed to head the Women's Unit which aims to develop and highlight women's issues and rights in collaboration with the Home Office and other departments.

[20] 1999 London: Cabinet Office/Home Office, at p. 2. Publication was followed by the allocation of funds to projects aimed at the reduction of crime against women, to finance a 24-hour helpline for women and Victim Support which women victims of *all* crime through the legal process.

- The development of the Crime and Disorder Partnership and the dissemination of information among Partners;
- Tackling persistent offending, with a particular focus on domestic burglary; and
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and violent crime.

Also,

- Improvements in data management which will assist the identification of "hotspots" of offending across the city;

- The development of a media strategy to promote the work of the Partnership and reduce the fear of crime and disorder; and

- Encourage the reporting of all crime and disorder.

These aims were identified from the findings of the Partnership's Crime and Disorder Audit for Derby City, published in 2001. A brief description of its methodology and findings as these may be relevant to violent crime in Sinfin is given in Chapter…

The Strategy acknowledges the importance of sharing information between agencies and addressing the needs of victims, offenders and the wider community. Moreover, it commits the CRP to developing mechanisms to harness public support in the investigation and reduction of crime and disorder and to devise ways of encouraging the reporting of all incidents of crime and disorder, particularly racial harassment, domestic violence and homophobic incidents. [21]

As part of its response to Government initiatives and the results of the recent Audit, Derby City's Partnership has overseen the development and use of crime analysis tools such as the Crime Pattern Analysis system, by the Derbyshire Constabulary. Although the development and use of quality data collection systems will be concentrated on the city centre in Derby in particular, it is to be hoped that such systems will be used to good effect in other areas where violent crime continues to be of concern to local people, police and others.

In summary, the Community Safety Strategy expresses the Partnership's priorities as being:

[21] The Police Reform Act 2002 (Part 6 - Miscellaneous - Bodies with functions in relation to the police – s. 97 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships) outlines the future status and role of Crime and Disorder Partnerships as Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) which will act as lead partners with the Police and Local Authority to contribute to crime reduction and provide annual reports on attainment of the Crime Reduction Strategy.

- A reduction in the number of violent crimes by 10% by 2005, using the 1998-99 recorded crime figures as baseline; [22]

- Ensure that 100% of recorded racially aggravated offences are investigated;

- Ensure that alleged perpetrators are identified for 65% of racially aggravated offences;

- Comply with the domestic violence outcomes which will be identified by the Derby Domestic Violence Partnership in their strategy document; [23] and

- Deal with the fear of crime, by reducing the number of people who are afraid, or very afraid, of violent crime by 10% by 2005, using the Derby Pointer Citizen's Survey conducted in the summer of 2001.

The Community Safety Partnership has also noted anecdotal evidence, which suggests that asylum seekers are increasingly being targeted.

[22] The Partnership's Community Safety Strategy classifies "violent crime" as any assault, including racially aggravated assaults; sexual offence; robbery; and Domestic burglary.

[23] The Domestic Violence Partnership has published recently published its Strategy and created two new posts to help the team focus on repeat victimisation and re-offending.

CHAPTER 3

BEAT 603

- **Introduction**

This is a report of the findings of research conducted the summer of 2002, in Beat 603, which comprises the Sinfin ward which is situated on the southern edge of the city of Derby.

- **Beat 603**

Beat 603 comprises four distinct areas: the Austin Estate, the Old Sinfin and New Sinfin estates and Stenson Fields. It has different types of housing, with a large percentage being housing association [24] and/or council owned and managed. A housing officer for Derby City Council noted that, as at July 2002, there were 448 properties in the ownership and management of Derby City Council in Old Sinfin. Some properties, once in the control of the Council, have been bought by tenants under the "Right to Buy" scheme and are now privately rented.

The Austin Estate in particular, was described by one interviewee, a police officer, as an "interesting area, geographically" with council housing in some parts and private owner-occupied residences in others. All of those interviewed who expressed an opinion on the matter, acknowledged that, from the perspective of policing and the maintenance of public order, Beat 603 is a very large area, and as such, is a difficult area to police. It is also, in parts, densely populated. In the period 1991 to 1999 Sinfin's population increased by 6% to 12,059 people and 4,840 households.[25] One officer felt that the large numbers of people living in Sinfin helped to explained the high reported crime rate.

Most, if not all of the property owned by Derby City Council in the Old Sinfin area was built in the 1930s'. The Council's Housing Department manages newer properties in "New Sinfin". One interviewee observed that the generous sized rear gardens attached to the older Council-owned properties allows offenders to use them as "rat runs" to escape through the estates. An area in the middle of Old Sinfin, comprising a small number of houses facing each other in a circle effectively creates a panoramic escape route. However, the Crime Reduction Unit has given the Council £30,000 to erect a two metre high, steel fence around this particular area, so that any escape route will be cut off.

[24] The Walbrook Housing Association owns a number of properties in the Sinfin area and a housing officer for Derby City Council indicated that a further seven housing associations manage property in the area.
[25] The *Audit.*.

At present, there is no close circuit television installed in the Sinfin area, save any that may have been erected around the Asda store and neighbouring shops. A housing officer for the City Council felt that the provision of satisfactory street lighting was a more pressing issue, although any doubts about the adequacy of lighting on Shakespeare Street and Thackery Street may be resolved by the installation of 100 columns of lighting, which, as at July 2002, had been ordered by the Council's Highways Department. The lighting will be white, which means, according to the housing officer that

> the lighting is stronger and it comes …directly down, so when that put up and with the fencing there will be no hiding places [for offenders].

- **The population of Beat 603**

Old Sinfin and New Sinfin are larger than the Austin Estate, comprising between them almost twice the number of residents. The Crime and Disorder Audit for 2001 described its population as culturally "diverse".

Some interviewees observed that the increasing numbers of asylum seekers presented a challenge to policing. Most originate from eastern Europe and have been housed on the Austin Estate. One police officer noted that burglars who steal the electrical goods the asylum seekers have been given often target them largely because

> Anyone who is perceived as different can be a target [of crime].

On the other hand, one police officer denied that Beat 603 had a "huge problem" with racism and related violence. One interviewee, a teacher at a local school concurred, although another said that racial abuse tended to involve asylum seekers from Bosnia and Zimbabwe; another said that there was, at times, an atmosphere of racial tension in Sinfin.

Evidence from the interviews suggests that trouble in the area tends to emanate from a few families, whose identity tends to be known to police and other agencies, such as the local schools. At least one interviewee suggested that among other measures, improvements in housing (although the interviewee was not specific as about which improvements could be made) and closer monitoring of "troublesome" families would help to reduce crime.

Beat 603 borders the area known to police as Beat 586. This encompasses part of Stenson Fields, whose residents are from a higher socio-economic group to that of many living within the boundaries of Beat 603. It is predominantly owner-occupied, and most residents there are either retired or in employment.

- **The regeneration of Sinfin**

In January 2001, the Government announced that Derby qualified for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. The Derby City Partnership, has identified the Sinfin area as a "priority neighbourhood" to which this funding should be targeted: according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Sinfin is one of number of wards that fell within the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

The Derby City Partnership's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (the Strategy) has identified a number of key service issues of concern, including insufficient funding for youth and child provision, recreational facilities, adult education, housing improvements and diversification, and community health projects. [26]

Among others issues, the Partnership acknowledges the need for a more sustained and concerted multi-agency approach to addressing the needs of these priority neighbourhoods. This approach will require a willingness to work closely with local residents and service providers to implement the measures needed to regenerate Sinfin. In particular, the Partnership's Strategy recognises that tackling anti-social behaviour is a principle concern. The Strategy does not seek to apportion blame but states that, whilst a lack of facilities and support for young people are matters of concern, "nuisance neighbours" are also "a substantial concern". [27]

The majority of those interviewed by the University of Derby believed that planners and authors of strategies to reduce crime and tackle offending behaviour could not ignore socio-economic factors. A teacher working in the area commented that Sinfin's community

> has changed into a troubled community. The area is a cultural wilderness. The answer – if there is an answer – is for national government to recognise how serious the problem is.

This interviewee saw the matter as one of concern for politicians, possessed of the resources and expertise to resolve the socio-economic crisis that hit areas like Sinfin and distort its crime rate.

It is arguable of course, the Government's Crime Reduction Programme, outlined above, will, on fruition, go some way to meeting such criticisms. For the present though, the impact of socio-economic factors on crime in the Sinfin must remain a matter of informed speculation, rather than concrete conclusions. The issue will be referred to again at various points throughout this Report as an accurate record of the interviews may demand.

[26] *Derby's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*, April 2002, at pp. 7 and 8.
[27] The *Strategy*, at pp. 20 – 21.

CHAPTER 4

THE RATE OF OFFENDING IN BEAT 603: THE STATISTICAL BACKGROUND

- **Introduction**

The objectives of this research included a brief analysis of relevant statistical data. This might have proved very difficult for there is much available data on rates of offending at both national and local levels. The Crime and Disorder Partnership has been instrumental in collating this data at local level. The Crime and Disorder Strategy commits the Partners to sharing more readily, and making more accessible to interested parties, that information.

Given the quality and breadth of the locally relevant data, neither party to the present research saw any advantage in collecting fresh statistics; neither was there much to be gained from attempting to emulate, or even replicate the expertise of the Partnership's crime analysts. Instead, a brief discussion of some of the major sources of statistics pertaining a range of issues, in particular, rates of offending at national level will follow, together with a brief comparison of some of the relevant data gathered at local level.

Notwithstanding the quality of these sources, it is advised that the information below should be understood in the context of the qualitative data gathered from the interviews conducted with those living and working in Beat 603. Their views are discussed throughout this Report.

- **Recording offences at national and local levels**

Two sources of statistical data relating to levels of offending are regularly gathered at national level. Both sources will be referred to throughout this Report:

First, crime recorded by the police is used to compile the annual Criminal Statistics for England and Wales, which are published annually.

In addition there is the British Crime Survey (BCS), which is based on responses to questions about the respondents' experience as victims of crime in the twelve months prior to the survey. The Survey has been conducted on an annual basis since 2001 and can provide a useful source of information about the so-called "dark figure" of crime – those incidents that may not have been reported to the police by victims. However, the Survey's estimates are based on interviews with people aged 16 or over and as such, potentially valuable evidence from children and young people may be lost to researchers.

In Derby, the Crime and Disorder Audit for 2001 provides a numerical picture of violent crime across the city, including Sinfin. Its findings have been based on analysis of data and

information from a number of sources including

- The results of the Derby City Crime and Disorder Survey (the Audit), which comprised, *inter alia*, a "general population survey" and a survey of young people aged between 11 and 16 years (the "Young Persons survey");[28]

- Indications from a "public attitude" questionnaire conducted in the summer of 2001, which asked members of the public about a number of issues, including their worries about crime and feelings of safety. [29]

- Information from, the BCS and police recorded crime.

Ultimately, the Crime and Disorder Partnership believed that the Audit would

> have a major influence over the development of strategy as it is imperative that the actions and priorities of the partnership fully reflect public opinion and concerns about crime and disorder in Derby.[30]

For the purposes of the Audit, carried out in Derby in 2001, the term "disorder" includes the following:

- Public disturbances
- Alcohol related incidents
- Domestic disputes
- Civil disputes
- Racial incidents
- Other disorder

Both the British Crime Survey (BCS) and the police recorded crime statistics include data on a range of offences under the heading of "violent crime". Police recorded crime includes the more serious offences against the person, such as homicides and sexual offences as well as the less serious, such as common assault, harassment and possession of offensive weapons. Many of these lesser offences may not involve physical violent at all but threats of violence to the person. The BCS categorises matters in much the same way. However, while the BCS

[28] The Citizens Involvement Support Centre at MEL Research, a Birmingham based consultancy helped the Partnership to conduct the surveys through the Derby Pointer Citizens' Panel.

[29] The public attitude survey, conducted by MEL Research, also questioned respondents (49.8% of those contacted) about the following: their experience of crime; domestic violence; drugs and alcohol consumption; and quality of life.

[30] The *Audit*, at p. 151.

classifies “snatch theft”, as a violent offence, the police do not. Rather mystifyingly, the recording of sexual offences by police includes non-violent offences such as bigamy.

Clearly then, not all violent crime – even if recorded as such – will necessarily have resulted in physical injury to the victim. Common assault for instance, may involve threats, pushing or jostling but usually does not result in injury to the victim. If an incident of this did, then in all likelihood, it would be recorded as a more serious offence against the person.[31]

In general, the recording of incidents as crimes is fraught with problems, largely because police exercise discretion. In order to overcome disparities and to promote consistency in data gathering and interpretation among England and Wales 43 police areas, the process of compiling data from police records of crime is guided by the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), [32]

In order to minimise doubt, the NCRS specifies that, as a general principle

> All reports of incidents, whether from victims, witnesses to third parties and whether crime related or not, will result in the registration of an incident report by the police. [33]

Clearly though, police officers will exercise discretion as to whether or not, after the initial registration with police, an incident should be recorded as a crime (a *notifiable offence*). The NCRS states that an incident should be recorded as a notifiable offence if

> (a) The circumstances as reported amount to a crime defined by law (the Police will determine this, based on their knowledge of the law and counting rules).
>
> And
>
> (b) There is no credible evidence to the contrary.[34]

The NCRS emphasises that the test for interpreting the outcome of applying these criteria is that of probability, rather than the more stringent, criminal law standard of proof (beyond a reasonable doubt). In other words, the investigating officer must ask the question

> Is the incident more likely than not the result of a criminal act?[35]

[31] For a more detailed explanation of legal definitions of some violent offences, see the Appendix to this Report.
[32] Each police area must appoint a Force Crime Registrar to act as a final arbiter in respect of the auditing process and the interpretation of the “counting rules” (these are the criteria for assessing how many offences have been committed, rather than detaining the tykes of offence(s)). Chief Officers of police are responsible for the accuracy and propriety of the crime recording processes.
[33] *National Crime Reporting Standard*, paragraph 2.1.
[34] Para. 2.2.
[35] Para. 3.2.

Often, the victim's assessment of events may prompt the recording officer to interpret an incident as a crime and indeed, the NCRS helps to reinforce the validity of such reliance by advocating "a more victim oriented approach" [36] to the classification of incidents as crimes. Indeed, confirmation from an alleged victim that an offence has taken place may often, be all that is necessary to interpret an incident as an offence, even when the individual refuses to support police action.[37]

- **The national crime rate**

The Crime Statistics based on police recorded crime in England and Wales reveal that:

- Police recorded 5.2 million offences in the period from April 2000 and 2001.

The BCS estimates that

- 2,891,000 violent incidents experienced by adults (i.e. individuals over the age of 16) in England and Wales in 2001/02.

Of course, not all of the 2,891,000 violent incidents reported by respondents to the BCS were reported to the police. Nonetheless, this represents a small increase of 2% on the estimates of violent incidents for 2000 but this must be assessed against an overall estimated fall in violent incidents since 1997 (a decrease of 22%) and 1999 (a fall of 17%): in other words, violent crime, as estimated in successive British Crime Surveys, has been falling for some time.

Conversely, police recorded data indicates that violent crime has increased in the period 1998/99 to 2002/02 by 34% with a significant number of the offences recorded by police for the national statistics in the period ending March 2001 involving violent crime: in the period 2002/02, police recorded 812,954 violent offences, an increase of 11% on 2000/01. Taken at face value, this contrasts starkly with the fall in violent incidents recorded by the BCS.

The authors of the BCS speculate that the increase in the number of violent offence recorded by police can by explained by changes in the recording process. However, equally, it may also be the result of an increasing willingness by victims, witnesses and third parties to report incidents as violent crime. The BCS for 2001/02 contains the observation that

[36] Para. 3.3.
[37] Para. 3.5.

> Trends in the number of recorded sexual offences are therefore unlikely to reflect real experience of such crimes … Sexual offences are significantly under-reported to the authorities. Police and government action to support the victims of sexual assaults is likely to have increased the number of such incidents being brought to the attention of the police, and therefore recorded by them. [38]

The latest results from the BCS for 2001/02, (based on a sample of 33,000 interviews out of a total number of 40,000 interviews) estimates that in half of all violent incidents, there is no injury to the victim(s). Some incidents – specifically robberies and common assaults result in even fewer injuries overall. [39] Research by Shepherd and Lisles (1998) estimated that about a quarter of injury cause by offences against the person necessitated attention at hospital accident and emergency departments. However, the 2001/02 BCS estimates that only 14% of injuries from violent incidents result in medical attention,[40] although a greater proportion of victims of more serious violent incidents, such as robberies sought medical attention.[41]

Of course, even where no physical injury is sustained by the victim, the psychological injury or harm that may result from an offence involving violence, although more difficult to quantify, may be just as real to the victim.[42]

- **The crime rate in Derby**

Of the 5.2 million offences recorded for the National Crime Statistics, police in Derby recorded about 29,322 offences in the same period (2001). This represents no significant change on the previous year.

At national level, violent crime rose by 3%, with offences against the person rising by 6% (up 3% nationally) and robberies up by 49% (13%) when compared to the year before. In Derby, the 2001 Audit of Crime and Disorder indicated that violent crime rose by 20.9% between April 1998 and 31 March 2001, a rate of 18.1 reported crimes per 1,000 of the population. Interestingly, whilst the number of sexual offences recorded nationally fell by 1% in the twelve months to March 2001, they rose by 5.1% in Derby. On the other hand, the total number of violent offences recorded per 1,000 of the population between 1 April 1998 and 31 March 2001 was about 27% below the average of other major cities in the East Midlands.

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[38] *British Crime Survey*, chapter 6: *Violent Crime in England and Wales*, at p. 53.
[39] See table 6.07, *Ibid.*, chapter 6 therein, *Violent Crime in England and Wales*, at p. 50.
[40] The BCS refers vaguely to "medical attention from a doctor" without specifying whether this includes hospital accident and emergency departments or not or merely refers to attention from another medical professional, e.g. a GP See further, *ibid.* At p. 49.
[41] *Ibid.* At p. 49.
[42] *Ibid.* A*t p. 49.*

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has recognised violent crime in Derby as an "area of concern". Derby appears in the bottom quartile for violent crime in "Family 10", a composite of areas across England and Wales, grouped together on the basis of socio-economic and demographic characteristics. [43]

People living and working in Sinfin, along with four other wards in the city of Derby experienced the most violent crime between 1998 and 2001. According to the 2001 Audit, 7 of the 20 City wards, including Sinfin, had crime rates over the city reported crime average in 2000/01. The overall crime rate in Sinfin is 19% above the average recorded for Derby for the purposes of the 2001 Audit: around 149.4 offences per 1,000 people per year were recorded between 1998 and 2001. Violent crime therefore was about 49% higher than the city average between 1998 and 2001.[44] /

[43] The *Audit*, at p. 11. Also see p 10 for a regional comparison.
[44] The *Audit*, at pp. 97 and 99.

CHAPTER 5

THE FEAR OF CRIME IN BEAT 603: CAUSES AND EFFECTS

- **Introduction**

With the exception of the police officers, few of those who were interviewed for this project expressed any knowledge or understanding of the statistics mentioned above. Other issues, based on their professional, and in some cases, personal, experience, mattered more to them and impacted considerably on the understanding of issues. In particular, most of those interviewed discussed at length, the phenomenon of the fear of crime, rather than the actual rate of crime.

- **"Hang on to your car" (in Sinfin)**

Many of those interviewed for this research project spoke of the presence in the minds of people in Derby, of negative images of Sinfin as an area in which to live, work and receive education. Advice given by a well-meaning colleague to the author of this Report prior to visiting Sinfin illustrates this point: the author was advised to "hang on" to her car when travelling in that area. More problematically still is that parts of Beat 603 are divided not only by types of housing, levels of crime and bypasses: the attitudes of some of the residents towards each other can be as divisive. For example, one interviewee spoke of the "snobbery" exhibited by some living in the New Sinfin area with respect to those living in Old Sinfin. Another interviewee, a police officer, commented that people living in the neighbouring Beat 586 do not want to be thought of as living in Sinfin but as residents of Stenson Fields, an area dominated by owner-occupied, rather than public, housing. A number of interviewees mentioned that some residents of Sinfin believed that Sinfin has a high crime rate.

Interviewees offered many reasons for the negative images of Sinfin. Socio-economic factors, such as unemployment and a large number of single-parent families, were mentioned a lot as was poor housing. However, two explanations stand out:

- The police are simply not effective enough at dealing with offenders and offending behaviour, which confirms people's perception that crime in Beat 603 is out of control; and

- The media unfairly reports issues pertaining to Sinfin, including incidents of crime.

- **Ideas about the effectiveness of policing in Sinfin and the fear of crime**

In the view of one interviewee (a police officer), the notion that Sinfin is a "hotspot" for crime in general, and property crime in particular (but not necessarily violent crime), is exacerbated by

the perceived failure of police to apprehend those responsible. The same interviewee explained that local people often wrongly blame the police for the failure of the courts to remand suspects in custody:

> … they [the offenders] keep being arrested and the police ask the court for them to be remanded in custody and they keep being released.

How, if at all, does this perception impact on people's relationship with locally based police officers in Sinfin? Evidence from the interviews suggests strongly that the impact may be dramatic, with members of the public declining to give the police vital information because

> the perception by people that come forward and tell the police what is going on … is that that they [the offenders] get away with crime.

Clearly, members of the public (and Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators especially) may usefully provide police officers in Sinfin with intelligence, as in any other place. However, given that many members of the public in Sinfin may have become disillusioned by the lack of fast or adequate response from officers to reports, any goodwill is at risk. Dwindling co-operation from members of the public might (if it has not already done so) undermine effective policing in the area: according to one police officer, criminals are

> getting more sophisticated and without the support of the public, things would rapidly grind to a halt.

All this raises important questions, but regrettably, seeking detailed and reliably informed answers to them was beyond the limited scope of the present research. In particular, the question of what proportion of the public are deterred from contacting the police to, for example, report crime remains, at least in the context of Beat 603, a matter of conjecture except to the extent that interviewees offered insights into the matter. Several interviewees expressed concerns about the effectiveness and willingness of police officers locally to deal with crime in the area. The particulars of "dealing with" crime in this context seemed to mean a number of things to different interviewees but in general, the interview evidence revealed a strong link between their perception of police effectiveness and their feelings of safety. Moreover, people's understanding of what they *think* the crime rate is can, the interview evidence suggests, be thoroughly damaging to relations with local police officers as the public become increasingly disillusioned and discouraged from reporting crime to the police or co-operating with police investigations.

Might local people have more confidence in other agencies, such as Neighbourhood Watch? In Sinfin, Neighbourhood Watch provision seems patchy, with provision in some areas of Beat 603 and none in others. A police officer said that for those parts of Beat 603 which tend to

have itinerant populations, establishing and sustaining viable Neighbourhood Watch schemes with the help of local people has been difficult.

A co-ordinator for Neighbourhood Watch suggested that, in those areas for which provision has been organised, such as parts of New Sinfin, local people might be more willing to report incidents to them, rather than to the police. This could be construed as positive, particularly if encouraging the reporting of crime is a priority; however, it may reinforce the suggestion, made by other interviewees that faith in the ability of beat officers to deal with, for example, anti-social behaviour, has been diminishing for some time. Nonetheless, this shift of allegiances can be difficult for Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators: one former incumbent suggested that he had felt discouraged by people's attitude to the role of Neighbourhood Watch:

> … people are abused by the people they are trying to help and not helped by the authorities [i.e. the police].

In summary, negative images both within and without Sinfin can impact on people's ideas about crime. In particular, A fear of crime seems to have become entrenched in the minds of some, if not many people in Sinfin. One police officer commented that

> There is a culture of [the] fear of crime in general and in Sinfin, particularly.

- **The role of the local media in fostering negative images**

In the view of one police officer,

> Crime is not as bad as people think it is and the fear of crime is greater than the crime itself.

From where or whom do people receive their ideas about crime? Does the local media help to foster and/or entrench a fear of crime in Sinfin? Although one police officer said that, on the whole, relations between the police and local media were "good", another claimed that the local media can fuel a "fear" of crime: local newspaper reporters may

> blow things up out of all proportion … to fill space and attract readers.

The scope of the present research project did not afford the opportunity to substantiate or refute these claims but a brief reference to nationally gathered data about the fear of crime might help to illuminate this point a little more.

- **Fear of crime as a national phenomenon**

Fear of crime is not confined to Sinfin but is in fact, experienced by communities all over England and Wales. About half of those interviewed for the British Crime Survey for 2001 thought that crime had increased *in their area* compared to two years previously.

Fears that the *national* crime rate has increased are also prevalent. The BCS for 2001 suggests that, despite an apparent fall of 14% in the number of crimes, almost one-third of respondents (30%) believed that the crime rate had risen "a lot". Moreover, this has been confirmed by initial results for 2002, wherein the BCS records a notable increase in the proportion of respondents who believe that crime has risen "a lot" in the first three months of this year.

However, as with Sinfin, there is evidence to suggest that nationally, the media may influence people's perceptions of the crime rate: the BCS suggests that the increase in the number of respondents fearing that crime had risen of 7% on the first quarter of the previous year may be explained by the fact that

> This period witnesses a heightened degree of press coverage on crime, which particularly focused on a claimed rise in crime.[45]

Assuming that the methodology with which this information was gathered and evaluated is reliable, there is no reason to suppose that locally, the media has any *less* influence over peoples' perceptions of offending. However, regardless of the source(s) of their perceptions, people may hold firm views not only about the crime rate but also about likely victims and offenders.

- **Who believes themselves to be more at risk from violent crime?**

To what extent do those people who fear that the crime rate has risen, also fear that they will be victims of violent crime? The authors of the BCS asked interviewees about their belief as to *who* are likely to be victims of crime. Only 2% of respondents thought that they were "very likely" to be victims of muggings, robberies and attacks by strangers, compared with 6% who believed themselves "very likely" to be victims of theft from their cars.[46] Overall, the proportion of respondents who felt that they would be victims of violent crime has increased – although only slightly – on the previous British Crime Survey.

[45] See, in general, chapter 9, *Concern about crime in England and Wales*. The BCS also sought to identify the newspaper readership of respondents, for the first time in 2002. Data available for the first quarter of this year indicates that readers of national tabloid newspapers are "much more likely" to believe that the national crime has increase over this period, compared to readers of broadsheet newspapers.

[46] For more detail on this issue, see Figure 9.3, *British Crime Survey*, chapter 9, *Concern about crime in England and Wales*.

As far as Sinfin is concerned, no clear picture emerged from the interviews about which sections of the local population fear themselves to be more at risk from violent crime than others. However, Derby's Crime and Disorder Audit for 2001 indicates that for approximately two-thirds of respondents to the Audit's survey, fear of physical attack by strangers was their second most prevalent concern[47] For young people in Derby, the fear of being raped was their most prevalent worry. Racial harassment also concerned young people in particular, with 20% - almost double that of the general population survey – fearing attack because of their skin colour.

One interviewee, a police officer, suggested that those who are least likely to be at risk from violent offending are most likely to fear being victims of it. The Derby City Audit suggests that males aged 25 to 59 and of white European origin were most at risk from violent attack. [48]

Moreover, many people fail, the officer said, to correctly identify who is most likely to commit violent assaults on others. Indeed, peoples' perceptions about who may attack them are at best exaggerated and at worst, at substantial variance with the truth. Elderly people, it was said, fear "stranger attacks" whereas numerical evidence compiled by Derbyshire Constabulary suggests that the majority of assailants are known to their victims. One interviewee, a police officer explained that

> Most assaults are for a reason. The public's fear that they are going to walk down a street and be attacked is really unfounded. Most people who are assaulted know who has assaulted them and it has been done for a specific reason.

However, in general, and aside from speculations about the influence of the media on peoples' perceptions of crime and the crime rate, it is difficult to ascertain the reason or reasons why people believe themselves to be particularly at risk from crime in Sinfin. The British Crime Survey indicates that nationally, the number of adults being subject to violent crime is very low and yet many more people it seems, fear that they are "very likely" (to use the phraseology of the Survey) to be victims of violence. Therefore, how do people form their assessments of "risk"?

The authors of the latest British Crime Survey speculate that, in addition to input from the media, a number of socio-economic factors impact on people's perceptions. For example, those living in inner city or urban areas "felt particularly vulnerable"; so too, people living in run-down or underdeveloped inner city or urban areas, and those from low-income

[47] Specifically, 69% of adults and 77% of young people surveyed indicated that this was the case.
[48] The *Audit*, at p. 146.

households. Conversely, owner-occupiers and people living in the privately rented housing sector feared victimisation much less. [49]

While a detailed examination of the reliability of such claims was beyond the scope of the current research into the violent crime rate in Sinfin, a number of those interviewed by the University of Derby felt that Sinfin is a "deprived area" (to repeat the words of one interviewee).

However, some interesting and worrying indications emerged from the interviews. One interviewee, a social worker who works with children said that, for the residents and workers of a local authority run residential facility for children in Sinfin, there may be more to fear from the outside community than from some of the more behaviourally challenged children cared for by the Centre's staff:

> It may be as much a matter of keeping the kids in and keeping the local community, or elements of it, out.

Comments from other interviewees – in particular, teachers – tended to substantiate this view. A member of staff at one school has recorded every incident of violence and anti-social behaviour perpetrated by people from outside her school with a view to convincing the local education authority of the need for a perimeter fence. At the time of writing, construction of this fence was almost complete. For one teacher working at this school, it cannot come too soon because

> you get people walking their dogs, riding motorbikes on school premises and other intruders, sometimes, who are sometimes quite threatening.

[49] See further, *"Considering perceptions"*, British Crime Survey, chapter 9, *Concerns about crime in England and Wales.*

CHAPTER 6

THE ADEQUACY OF POLICE RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF INCIDENTS

- **Introduction**

For many interviewees, relations with the police largely depended on the former's understanding of effective policing of Beat 603. In particular, a number of participants to the research project questioned the adequacy of police responses to reports of incidents. Specific areas of concern were response times to reports of crime and follow-up contact between police officers and victims.

- **"Over-stretched and under-resourced"**

In the course of the interviews, a frequent observation was that beat constables are "over stretched and under-resourced" (to repeat the words of one participant). As a consequence, officers are unable to attend every call promptly. In a few cases, it was alleged that local officers have failed to attend at all[50]. This comment was made in the context of all reported crime.

Whilst it was appreciated by many of those who raised the issue, that the police must prioritise their time, resources and expertise, many interviewees expressed their frustration about the apparent failure of officers to respond adequately to "low-level" complaints of say, anti-social behaviour from youths. One local resident described youths in the area as "untouchables", presumably meaning that anti-social – and perhaps more violent behaviour - seems to be immune from police intervention.

It was also claimed by a local resident that officers often neglected follow-up calls to victims of crime and there that was a lack of information in the public domain about how police telephone operators prioritise complaints. Some participants stressed that people in Sinfin want to act responsibly and contact the police rather than tackle (for example) anti-social youths themselves; but of those who expressed a view, many seemed frustrated by the lack of urgency with which they claim police respond to complaints. A Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator claimed that, in respect of a violent assault, which had recently occurred, following the initial contact, no officer had actually pursued the matter with the alleged victim. One police officer suggested that on occasion, there may be a misunderstanding about whether or not a police officer has been in touch with victims following reports of offending.

As previously indicated, these concerns were shared by a number of participants to the research. An employee of a local authority run facility for children said that police took forty

[50] It was not possible to substantiate this point.

minutes to arrive for one serious incident involving a child who had been taken hostage by a local person. A teacher at a local school recited a similar story: an education officer had advised the teacher to report an incident involving an aggressive parent to the police; however, an officer did not attend the school to discuss the matter until three days after the event.

- **The importance of "visibility"**

Another aspect of this frustration stems from the apparently infrequent, or at least, sporadic, visibility of police officers on the streets. A Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator said that he had not seen a "bobby on the beat" since the departure of the former incumbent. A former co-ordinator of Neighbourhood Watch said that

> we want to work with the police but at the moment, we are on our own.

This is at variance with the opinion of one police officer who stressed that

> there is more of a visible police presence in Sinfin than there ever used to be.

The same officer acknowledged that the system of beat constables currently in place was "by no means perfect" but said that the situation had improved in the last fifteen months (as at July 2002). Nevertheless, three officers now police the areas comprising Beat 603, where once there were five officers. At the time of the interviews (July 2002), one officer had responsibility for two of the aforementioned areas, making this the largest Beat geographically in the City. *(The division includes South Derbyshire, which has much bigger beats.)*

An increase in the number of beat officers from three to five is planned at the end of 2002. Of those police officers interviewed for the present research, all welcomed a commitment to increasing the number of Beat constables. Moreover, these officers are acutely aware of the importance of visibility as a desirable and even necessary means of maintaining public confidence, since their presence helped to create a sense of "safety". Evidence from other interviewees would seem to reinforce this claim: of those that expressed views on this question, all participants agreed that there is a correlation between visible policing (whether that means high-profile operations or officers pounding the beat or both) and the public's feelings of safety. In the minds of many participants therefore, *effective* policing is *visible* policing.

However, it became apparent that frustration caused by the apparent unavailability of police officers is felt by local officers themselves. That a beat constable may be called to assist police operations outside the Sinfin at a moment's notice does not help. Whilst the abstraction

of officers from their regular beat was unavoidable given the limited resources of police forces generally, the consequence was that officers

> are not out there being seen.

- **Contacting the police**

It was evident that those police officers responsible for policing Beat 603 have gone to some considerable lengths to inform the residents, service providers and businesses of the means by which beat constables and other police officers can be contacted. Members of the public can, for example, contact beat officers individually by telephone, rather than dial 999.

However, an analysis of the interviews suggests (as previously indicated) that contacting local police by telephone may sometimes be problematic. The local telephone numbers for contacting local police officers, it seems, don't always work: sometimes, officers simply cannot be contacted. One participant to the project described the numbers given as "impossible" to use, with the result that, sometimes, members of the public may feel that they have no choice but to dial 999 in order to get an adequate response – indeed, doing so might be one of securing more immediate attention! One interviewee, a member of the teaching staff at a local school, suggested that it was appreciated that police resources and officers are stretched; therefore, 999 calls from the school to police were not lightly undertaken, and, in any case, there is a reluctance to "waste police time".

Indeed, many incidents, which the staff in the school has classified as "minor", have not been brought to the attention of police officers at all. Assaults on teaching staff – which on teacher said, tend to involve pushing and shoving – are, the teacher claimed, generally regarded as "minor" (although it was not clear by whom). However, the same source suggested that, sometimes, staff at the school have no choice but to make 999 calls in order to receive adequate and fast responses from the police. The interviewee referred to a police disinterest in attending the school, even during the day, although, rather confusingly, later described relations with local beat constables as "good".

Nevertheless, even using the '999' service may be problematic, according to one interviewee. A member of staff at a local school said that sometimes, police have arrived fifteen minutes after the initial '999' call. This, the interviewee said, was unacceptable, given the school's responsibilities to students and staff at the school, although it was not clear to the interviewer, whether this was a regular or occasional occurrence.

The tone of operators receiving and prioritising telephone calls is another matter that may impact of the public perception of the availability of police. Those using the local numbers

(rather than dialling ‘999’), it has been claimed, may be “put off” - that is, discouraged, by the tone of one operator.

Indeed, for a variety of reasons, some people prefer to bring incidents of offending to the attention of people other than police officers. A representative of Derby City Council said that Council tenants may complain to the Housing Department, rather than the police, or for that matter, Crimestoppers, a free telephone service to which people can give information concerning crime. This service assures anonymity. Similarly, the Shakespeare Street Housing Office operates a ”post-box” for complaints of crime in the area, so that people may come into that office “write what they want to tell the police and … put it in an envelope.” This mechanism may suit those local people who might prefer anonymity or at least minimal conflict? with authority. However, no evidence on this specific issue was gathered in the course of this research**.**

Nevertheless, more than one police officer and some interviews drawn from other professions emphasised that local people in Old Sinfin in particular, enjoy a good relationship with the Beat Constable. Moreover, it was evident to the author that as a result of at least two particular officers efforts, people

> “have got a lot of trust in [the police] here”.

The Sinfin Police Liaison Group and others like it may contribute much to a relationship whose success depends on trust and confidence between public and police. However, without further investigation, it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty, what proportion of complaints are reported to the police.

- **Meeting “expectations”**

The perceived (or actual) absence of beat officers on the streets or at the end of a telephone line perhaps matters less than the public perception that the police in general, and beat constables are available less often, being over-stretched and under-resourced. In Sinfin, perhaps as in other areas, this perception is at least partly fuelled by the high expectations of members of the public about what the police *should* achieve, rather than a detailed and informed understanding about what *can* be achieved in reality. One police officer commented that

> the more affluent end of Sinfin has higher expectations of the police.

The same officer also suggested that people in better-off areas – and Stenson Fields was specifically mentioned by this particular interviewee - are more likely to report crime because

of the concentration of older people who would tend to be less tolerant of deviant behaviour: “you didn’t do that in our day”.

Of those police officers interviewed and observed, it is evident that all are acutely aware of these frustrations and that some may actually share them. In particular, they are aware of the problems caused by anti-social behaviour, and understand that, even where this does not amount to criminal behaviour, it is still disturbing to local people. One officer called the perpetrators “nuisance youths”, a description that caught the imagination of at least one participant to the research. More than one police officer spoke of the importance of

> getting their [the public’s] confidence and getting them to come forward and give evidence against those committing crime.

One officer was convinced that “people trust the police more” if officers are prepared to make the effort to be seen in the community: as previously indicated, “visibility” may help to reinforce people’s feelings of safety. In the course of this project, nothing emerged to cast doubt on, or dispute this but what became clear from the interview evidence is that local police officers do their best to be “seen”. One way of doing this is to publicise the methods by which police officers can be contacted. Another is to visit schools: in Sinfin, beat constables often talk to children about a range of issues, including bullying or drugs in school assemblies. Indeed, local police officers endeavour to visit schools in the area as frequently as possible. These visits are not merely in response to complaints but are often a way of giving advice and are, in any event, effective “bridge-building exercises”. A police officer noted that

> When I first started to walk the beat [in Sinfin], kids used to swear at me. But now as the police are going into the schools, things have improved.

In this way, officers become known to students, parents and staff alike and evidence from interviewees suggests that such arrangements help to foster goodwill and co-operation between the public and the police. The Sinfin Police Liaison Group is another means of maintaining contact with local people. These meetings may do more than remind the public of the police presence in an area: they contribute to feelings of involvement – a stake in the local community and its safety.

CHAPTER 7

VIOLENT CRIME, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- **Introduction**

The Derby City Crime and Disorder Audit for 2001 indicates the greater proportion of violent offenders to be male (84%), aged 25 to 59 and of white European origin (79%). [51] People aged between 18 and 24 and fewer between the ages of 10 and 17 carry out less violent crime. [52]

However, in the view of a police officer with experience of policing parts of Beat 603, most visible violent crime (as opposed to, for example, domestic violence, which is more likely to occur in the home) in Sinfin tends to involve school children, often as perpetrators rather than victims. However, views were mixed on the question of locations and times. A police officer said that in Old Sinfin, a group of teenagers is responsible for a lot of crime; further, all are related to each other with strong family links in that area. Monday afternoons appears to be a favoured time to offend in you are young; and groups of schoolchildren and teenagers may often "travel" from one school gate to another looking for trouble. A teacher commented that

> It is not my children but children from another school or older children that cause the problems. It is very rare that children actually vandalise or threaten their own school.

Another police officer opined that most violence between schoolchildren occurs in school time on school premises. Yet another took a broader view, saying that offending can occur in school hours and outside of them – for example, incidents that began on school premises in school time may be concluded at the school gates or in the local parks after school has finished. One interviewee, a teacher at a local school, indicated that the school's role might be limited in respect of child on child violent crime because anti-bullying policies only apply in school and so had no relevance outside of it. Representatives from two of the schools in Sinfin (contacted for the purposes of this research) maintained that in any event, bullying in their schools is rarer than might be supposed by outsiders and that adequate procedures are in place to deal with such incidents.

- **Children who are "challenging" and the challenges of social and economic disadvantage and poor parenting**

One interviewee, a teacher at a local school suggested that others can misconstrue the behaviour of some children:

[51] The *Audit,* at p. 146.
[52] *Ibid.*

> What they [the children] classify as playing is sometime play-fighting which can be rough.

The teacher went on to say that the backgrounds and family lives of some children may exacerbate or even engender anti-social behaviour:

> [The] social skills of children may need to be developed - to learn how to co-operate with other children … Some children come from backgrounds where they are not taught how to interact with others, they are left alone in front of the TV. Some do not have the language or social skills to know how to respond. Sometimes their response is to hurt people.

Thus,

> Dealing with the social problems of the children can impact on the learning process.

In general, teachers in Sinfin's schools seem acutely aware of the social and economic problems faced by some children. Social and economic disadvantage was mentioned by a number of interviewees across a range of professions as a cause of violent behaviour among children. One teacher commented that teachers in the area faced

> A difficult challenge with [some] children because of the environment they go back to at the end of the day.

Therefore, and despite contradictory evidence from other interviewees, putting more police officers on the beat may not be enough to deal with anti-social behaviour and violence. A teacher commented that

> Social and environmental factors need to be worked on.

In Sinfin, most parents are supportive of the role of teachers and schools. Teachers and support staff work hard to win parental support because

> When the children and parents trust the teachers, it can make a big difference … It is rewarding to see the progress the children have made.

Therefore, it may be reasonable to suppose that a lack of adequate family support for children and schools is likely to impact adversely on a child's education and behaviour. More than one teacher mentioned attacks on staff by irate parents. Although, in general, most professionals questioned said that such incidents are rare, all those can feel the impact of violence in school with connections to the school. One teacher described an incident where a senior

teacher was assaulted by a parent whose child had been excluded by that school. The police were called to deal with the matter. Some parents

> take action before they think what they are doing.

This kind of incident helps to foster and entrench the perception of some local people, that schools in Sinfin are generally “rough”. One teacher implied that such negative images can undermine the confidence of pupils, who may already lack a sense of self-worth, inherited, in many cases, from parents. In the view of this interviewee, a downward spiral may be created which is damaging and self-perpetuating because:

> Violence comes from a lack of self-control, and the ones who do this have the lowest self-esteem and this [i.e. violent behaviour] is the only way they know how to handle situations.

It may not matter even that Sinfin

> may look rough on the outside [because] get on the inside and it’s a different story. The bad reputation of Sinfin is wholly unjustified.

More than one school in Sinfin has been, or continues to be, under ”special measures”. At least one has been threatened with closure by the City Council because of falling numbers of pupils. Teachers leave to get better-paid jobs or less stressful ones. In the opinion of the majority of teachers interviewed, all this may badly affect the morale of children, staff and parents, and distort perceptions of the quality of education and learning in Sinfin. It also adds to the perception of Sinfin as crime-ridden.

- **Distinguishing offenders from victims and the nature of juvenile offending in Beat 603**

The question of *who* the offenders and victims are among young people and children is even more difficult to answer, it seems. One interviewee, a police officer, thought that children might be both victims and perpetrators, often because

> Kids fall out one day and the next day they are best friends.

The same officer gave an example of an incident in which three girls from a local school had an altercation in school time during which one girl was injured as a result of being pushed off her chair. It was a case of

> she said such and such about me and that is why she hit her [the injured party].

This can make policing and satisfactorily resolving incidents among young people and/or school children difficult for

> Rarely [is there] an innocent party.

These remarks raise the possibility that at least some violent crime recorded in the Sinfin area and involving young people and/or school children constitutes "revenge" attacks. In the opinion of one police officer, a lot of incidents are "tit-for-tat"; thus, there is a culture of "self-policing" which encourages and perpetuates attacks as a means of "sorting out problems in their own way" (as the officer described it) without involving the police, or for that matter, other authority figures. Thus, for example, assaults, involving actual violence or at least, the threat of it, may be one way of dealing with

> Someone say, who has been mouthing off at school…

A group of youngsters may

> Get that person in a quiet corner and see to that person.

The same officer said that "actual violence on the streets is rare".

That young people and children might be subjected to assaults or threats of assaults for "mouthing off" (as one interviewee put it) also suggests that co-operating with police officers – or indeed, any authority figure, such as a school teacher, may be sufficient to prompt an attack. One interviewee, a teacher at a local school, described a "culture against grassing up", wherein confiding in authority figures is routinely discouraged and infractions punished.

Information from the interviews strongly suggests that much of the violent crime relates to, or involves, the theft of property. A police officer noted a

> huge increase in robberies, mainly due to [young people] stealing mobile phones.

Much "juvenile-on-juvenile crime" involves, according to the same officer, the taking of trainers and other, similar apparel and may sometimes involve violence.

- **Changes in attitudes and approaches to reporting incidents to the police**

Some interviewees also discussed the sorts of incidents that typically involving children and young people of school age, and which come to the attention of the police but one police officer felt that

> Some of the violent incidents that occur today in the schools would not have been reported in the past because the School would have dealt with them themselves. If they [the police] had been called it would probably only result in a stern talking to those involved and the incident would not have been recorded.

However, there has been a shift in attitude among public and police alike to the recording of incidents as "crime". This shift is due largely to the requirement that every incident should be recorded as a crime. A police officer said that

> Times have changed and the police are duty bound to report these incidents.

The same officer speculated that the stringency with which the police now record incidents might explain, at least in part, any increases in the recorded crime rate in Sinfin and elsewhere. Moreover, schools are more likely than ever, to report incidents of violence among pupils to the police, as well as evidence of violence and abuse of children by parents and/or carers.

In addition, one police officer viewed what the officer referred to as "the compensation culture" as being another reason why individual members of the public might themselves be more willing to report crime. Indeed, this officer had no doubt that this had an effect on the number of reported incidents of assault. Advertisements on television, in the Eagle centre, in newspapers and the like advising people of say, the work of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Agency, were at least partly, if not wholly responsible for encouraging false reports of assaults and other crimes:

> A lot of the assault allegations are made not to bring the perpetrators to justice but in the hope of getting cash for any injuries …

- **Relieving tensions**

However, other factors particular to the area of Sinfin might, in the views of some interviewees also explain any increases in the rate of recorded violent crime. According to one police officer, the closure of the Village Community School has caused problems that will take time to resolve. Students from that school were relocated to two other schools. One, the Sinfin Community School has tried to integrate the new pupils. As a result of the closure of the Village School, the Community School now boasts about 1,000 students.

However, the pupils from the Village Community School have not, according to the aforementioned police officer, assimilated with complete success. Part of the reason for this, the interviewee explained, was an element of "cliqueness" in the Sinfin Community School with the result that

Some of the problems that have appeared over the last year or so have been as a result of frictions between ex-Village people moving down to Sinfin and pupils not getting on well with other.

Conversely, a teacher from the Sinfin Community School explained that, in his experience,

[integration of the two schools] has not necessarily made things worse.

- **Substance and alcohol abuse, offending and the young**

Successive British Crime Surveys indicate that a high proportion of perpetrators of violent crimes are drunk (for example, the Survey for 2000 estimated that 44% of victims of assaults were attacked by drunken assailants). Evidence gathered for the Derby City Crime and Disorder Audit for 2001 also suggests a correlation between violent crime and alcohol, particularly among the young: the mean number of units of alcohol consumed by adults on the days on which they drank alcohol was 3.2. For 11 to 15 year olds, the number of units was 3.63. The recommended "safe" drinking levels are 2 to 3 units a day for women and 3 to 4 units for men.[53] Only one interviewee commented on public houses in the area as a likely venue for alcohol related violence and this individual, a police officer said that there was very little of it.

A number of interviewees suggested that, in their view, alcohol and more particularly, solvent abuse, are often features of violent offending involving young people and the Derby City Crime and Disorder Audit for 2001 does not contradict this view: it states that available evidence indicates "a strong positive correlation" between "excessive alcohol consumption and incidents of violent crime, youth crime and anti-social behaviour".

However, one police officer said that in general, few offences involving violence seem to be related to the misuse of drugs. The Audit does not appear to contradict this: fewer young people admitted to regularly using drugs than alcohol and in general, fewer drugs related offences are recorded by police for the Sinfin area than other areas of Derby.[54]

On the other hand, another police officer *did* think that "a lot of it [i.e. violent crime] is drugs related". A teacher said that the Community School has experienced "waves" of drug abuse in the past, with for example, some, such as cannabis resin. sold at home time at the school gate, although to the best of this teacher's knowledge, little is sold *on* school premises. From time to time, plain-clothes police officers have been posted to the School. Of course, without

[53] At p. 165, which also includes data on the frequency of alcohol consumption by adults and young people.
[54] The *Audit,* at p. 164.

further investigation of this specific issue, it is impossible to draw any concrete conclusions of the effect of this trade on levels of violent crime in and around schools in Sinfin.

Neither is it clear whether drugs and alcohol have a greater or lesser impact on offending than, for instance, solvent abuse. One police officer was of the opinion that solvents cause more problems, for their effects are “worse than alcohol”: abusers can become “hyperactive and abusive” and can threaten themselves and/or others.

In order to deal with the problem, this officer has tried to remind local retailers of the law (retailers cannot sell solvents to anyone under 16 years of age). As a consequence of this advice, the officer said, a number of retailers in the area keep solvents behind their counters, rather than displayed on the shelves. But still, young people continue to obtain these substances with relative ease. Recently, the same officer had heard about a 17 year-old male who was purchasing glue for his younger friends and acquaintances. Policing this can be difficult: “you have to catch them [i.e. the offender] in the act”, the officer said.

Where then, do these offences occur? One police officer said “actual violence on the streets is rare”. Another’s suggestion, commented on above, that children and young people will often take one of their number to “a quiet corner” suggests that violent crime among young people is something occurs away from the prying eyes of the public and authority figures.

CHAPTER 8

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- **Introduction: the Derby City Domestic Violence Strategy[55]**

In 2001, the Derby City Domestic Violence Partnership (the DV Partnership) published its Domestic Violence Strategy. [56] Amongst other initiatives, the Strategy recommended the appointment of a Domestic Violence Partnership Officer, [57] but its principle focus is on tackling repeat victimisation and re-offending and identifies three main aims:

- To provide a co-ordinated and effective response to complaints of domestic violence;
- To promote justice by providing support and protection for people putting cases through the courts; and
- To help prevent domestic violence. [58]

- **Incidents of domestic violence in Derby**

The Crime and Disorder Strategy for Derby [59] includes domestic violence in its definition of "violent crime". The police record such incidents as crimes if domestic violence features in the method of execution.

In the period 2000-01, the police recorded 4,706 incidents of domestic violence, include 2,569 repeat victims. 704 arrests were made. This represents a rise in reported incidents of 1.8% and a 5% increase in arrests on the period 1999 - 2000 when there were 4,624 incidents reported and 670 arrests. In Derby, there was an average of 1.56 domestic violence crimes per 1,000 people for each year between 1 April 1998 and 31 March 2001. In Sinfin, there were 2.93 crimes per 1,000 of the population. Nevertheless, this was by no means the worst area for domestic violence: in Derwent, there were 4.32 incidents, and in Litchurch, 3.35.[60]

Two major surveys with a detailed focus on domestic violence in Derby city have been conducted under the auspices of the Crime and Disorder Partnership: first, a general

[55] *Domestic Violence - making a difference ... A strategy to improve services for people affected by domestic violence, April 2001 to March 2004:* Derby Domestic Violence Partnership May 2001.

[56] Members include refuge workers, voluntary agencies and other community organisations, the Derbyshire Constabulary, Derby City Council's Housing, Education and Social Services departments, the Health Authority, the courts, the probation service and the Law Society: *ibid.* At p. 43.

[57] *Ibid.* At p. 4.

[58] *Ibid.* At p. 3.

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] See further, the *Audit* (2001) at pp. 159 – 162.

population survey of 2,200 people was carried out in the summer of 2001 ("the general population survey"); and second, the Youth Offending Service organised a survey of 600 children aged between 11-17 years in the autumn of 2001 ("the youth survey").

Unsurprisingly, questions concerning the sensitive issue of domestic violence provided a limited response, with 85% of respondents to the general population survey omitting such questions and 62% for the young people's survey. A further 7% and 13% respectively, indicated that they did not wish to answer. Of the remainder, 7% and 25% respectively, highlighted a range of problems, including physical assault (14.8%) and threats of violence (10.4%). However, the Audit concluded that that most respondents had experienced different forms of abuse [61] and most respondents spoke of a "bundle" of problems at the hands of abusers.[62] The young persons' survey also indicated a higher level of reported experience than the general population survey.

The general population survey indicates a trend of repeated experience of domestic violence. For those answering the question, only 1 in 8 said that it happened only once. For those experiencing the problem within the twelve months prior to the survey, more than one-quarter (27%) said it happened "too many times to remember"; for those experiencing it more than twelve months previously, the figure was 40%.

Although a higher proportion of young people reported to the authors of the survey, repeated experience of domestic abuse seems to have been less prevalent. For those answering the question, one quarter said that domestic violence happened only once. In particular, the youth survey indicated that the incidents of domestic violence among the young may be even greater than for that reported by the general population.

Those interviewees who expressed opinions on the subject confirmed that victims may have suffered over a long period. For instance, a police officer said that frequently, victims of domestic violence have been

> suffering from abuse for a long time before they have the courage to speak up.[63]

[61] *Ibid.* At p. 159.

[62] *Ibid.* At. 161.

[63] The Women's Unit in the Government's Cabinet Office has stated that:

- One woman in 4 experiences domestic violence at some time in her life and it is estimated that between 1 in 8 and 1 in 10 has experienced domestic violence in the past year
- Every day, thousands of children witness violence and cruelty behind closed doors. More than 1/3 of children of domestic violence survivors was aware of what was happening. This rises to 2 if the woman has experienced repeated violence.
- Domestic violence accounts for 1/4 of all violent crime recorded by the police.
- Women aged between 16 and 29 years are at greatest risk of experiencing domestic violence.

Alcohol often plays a part in cases of domestic violence: Alcohol Concern estimates that around 40% of reported incidents of domestic violence involve excessive consumption of alcohol.[64]

- **The problem of profiling abusers and victims**

None of the interviewees who expressed opinions on domestic violence, offered a profile of a "typical" victim of domestic violence. However, a police officer with expertise in dealing with complaints of domestic violence suggested that abusers are typically characterised by a number of features, in particular, their intelligence, plausibility, and ability to manipulative both their victims and what the officer referred to as "the system". Moreover, whilst the "typical" abuser may have a propensity for violence, for this person, *control* is the issue. Invariably, abusers endeavour to present their actions as reasonable. The parameters of the present research precluded a thorough investigation of these claims but many points seem to concur with, or at least, are not at significant variance with, dedicated research on the subject.

However, it may be difficult sometimes, to separate victims from perpetrators: one police officer said that on occasion, the truth about the nature of a complaint of domestic violence might be difficult to ascertain. The officer gave the following statement by way of explanation:

> … because the male is physically stronger than the female, she is likely to come out worse in an altercation. Even though the initial argument may have been a 50/50 affair, because her injuries are likely to be that much worse, he will tend to be the one who gets arrested, even in self-defence.

This evidence concurs with a similar comment made in connection with assaults against young people and children.

Reporting domestic violence

29% of respondents to the general population survey who claimed to have experienced domestic violence told police officers or legal advisors of their experiences; 24% told their doctor or health worker, and 11% told someone at work. Young people, it seems are *less* likely to tell someone about their experience: these figures drop to 7%, 1% and 3% respectively in the youth survey.

Amongst the general population, one in six (15.3%) told no one but among the young, the proportion was greater: approximately one-third (30%) of respondents to the youth survey said that they had told no one of their experiences.[65]

- Domestic violence often starts and can escalate during pregnancy. (Quoted by the Audit, at p. 158.)

[64] The *Audit*, at p. 165

[65] *Ibid*. At p. 162.

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When the general population were asked *who* helped them, 44% said a friend, relative or neighbour had done so, 29%, the police, and 12%, a doctor or health worker. 20% said that no one had helped. Alarmingly, 37% of respondents to the youth survey believed that no one *could* help them. These responses may indicate the isolated and informal nature of support for those experiencing domestic violence, but equally, may signpost the potentially wide range of agencies that could support, identify and sign-post assistance to people in this vulnerable position.

Reasons for not reporting the incident or withdrawing a complaint vary. 40% of the general population and 51% of respondents to youth survey claimed that their experiences were private or family matters; a further 23% of the general population claimed to have been "threatened by or afraid of the person doing this"; and 23% of the general population felt that "the police would not help you". Only 12% and 10% respectively said they did not report incidents because they were "too trivial".[66]

In the general population survey, a number of reasons were put forward by respondents from failing to report incidents of domestic violence, including opinions that "police could have done nothing", and the "police not bothered or would have done nothing". Fear of reprisal was also a reason for not reporting incidents for 19% of the general population, while 11% claimed to have dealt with matters personally and a further 9% considered it to be a private or personal matter anyway. 40% of respondents to the young people's survey said that they dealt with incidents personally and 14% said it was a private matter.[67]

Evidence from a number of interviewees for this research substantiates aspects of this data. One police officer said that a failure to report domestic violence may be due to one or more of a variety of reasons, including economic dependency on an abusive party, pressures from other family members and the presence of children of the family. Moreover, since domestic abuse is "about control", the victim may not have the will to leave the scene of domestic violence or complain to the police.

- **Fear of domestic violence and changing attitudes**

As with crime generally, *fear* of domestic violence is a commonly felt sensation. Respondents to general population survey were asked about the level of their concern about domestic violence; only 15 % said that they were "very or fairly worried", compared to 49% of young people who claimed to be about domestic violence. [68]

[66] *Ibid.* At pp. 161 – 162.

[67] See further, Hoyle, C., 1998 *Negotiating Domestic Violence, Police, Criminal Justice and Victims* Clarendon Studies in Criminology, Oxford University Press.

[68] The *Audit*, at p. 161.

One police officer noted a "sea-change" in the way in which police deal with complaints of domestic violence, although another interviewee who works for a support agency said that they were still problems caused by some officers perceiving domestic violence as a "private" matter. A Home Office Circular, issued in 1990[69], reminds

> all police officers involved in the investigation of cases of domestic violence [that they must] regard as their overriding priority, the protection of the victim and the apprehension of the offender.

The Circular also promoted the establishment of Domestic Violence Units (DVUs), a review of recording policy and raising awareness of police powers of arrest[70]. However, how easy is it, even with a shift in police culture and an awareness of this by members of the public, for the police and other agencies to deal effectively with incidents of domestic violence? While some victims may not wish to pursue a complaint through formal channels, others may withdraw their complaints before or during subsequent legal proceedings. Nevertheless, a police officer with experience of dealing with domestic violence said that officers and the Crown Prosecution Service may view domestic violence with such seriousness that they may

> bring pressure to bear and encourage the victim to press charges.

While none of the police officers interviewed expressed any doubts about the degree of commitment to resolving and dealing incidents of domestic violence, shown by Derbyshire Constabulary as a whole and at divisional and beat levels, securing a prosecution can be hampered by a victim's reluctance to co-operate. The Code for Crown Prosecutors[71] obliges prosecutors to have regard to the availability of sufficient evidence for the case to proceed to trial and the prospect of its successful prosecution; thus, a "realistic possibility of conviction" may become less so when the main source, or in the majority of cases, the only source of evidence, is a reluctant victim. [72] Therefore, the role of police officers in particular, may be vital to bringing a successful prosecution.

- **The Domestic Violence Unit**

A police officer has responsibility for running the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU). The Unit offers support to victims of domestic abuse. However, this work is limited to an extent by the

[69] 60/1990 Domestic Violence.

[70] The first DVU was set up in Tottenham, London, in 1987 and offered victim support by way of referral to local agencies, providing court chaperones and information of case progression.

[71] Issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions pursuant to section 10 Prosecution of Offences Act 1985.

[72] Hoyle (1998) states that evidential problems lead to discontinuance or collapse in over 33% of cases. The Code was revised in 1994 for cases where the victim had withdrawn her statement. Prosecutors were required to consider the history of the relationship and the effect on children living in the household[72] when considering whether to bring a public interest prosecution.

key objectives of the Unit which revolve around offence detection and prosecution. All operational police report to the DVU; community workers such as health visitors, school nurses, hospitals and the Youth Service also provide reports.

The DVU has embraced a wide definition of “domestic violence” so that any interpersonal violence or abuse within the home may come within its ambit: the DV Strategy states that

> domestic violence includes any type of violence, abuse or aggression, happening in a close relationship or where there has been a close relationship. It can be physical, sexual, emotional or psychological. [73]

A police officer with expertise in this area, said that between 650 - 750 incidents are reported each month. The same officer stressed that, although the DVU has identified "pockets" of activity in Beat 603, it not the worst area in the Division for domestic violence. At the same time, the officer suggested that the socio-economic conditions of many people in Sinfin – a transient population, high incidents of single parent families, poverty and so on – contribute to the problem.

- **Responding to complaints**

In common with other violent incidents, evidence from the interviews suggests that police response times to incidents may vary, with much depending on officers’ workloads. Moreover, officers exercise discretion as to how quickly they will respond to calls: if no immediate threat is assessed, there is a greater likelihood that the matter will be dealt with after other, more urgent matters, have been dealt with. The exercise of discretion in this respect may be imperative when officers’ time must be used judiciously.

Who then, responds to a complaint? Beat constables usually attend the initial call but refer the details to the DVU for subsequent “follow up” action. A police officer with experience of dealing with incidents of domestic violence estimated that about 50% of 999 calls to the police

[73] PODA defines “domestic abuse” as

[T]he physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse of one person by another. It is essentially the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one person over another. The two people have usually been in or are still in some form of intimate relationship. The perpetrator of the abuse is usually but not always male and the abuse can be actual, threatened or attempted. What is common to all domestic abuse is that the perpetrator uses humiliation, threats and/or force to control their victims.

For statistical purposes only the police returns to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary use the following definition:

The term domestic violence shall be understood to mean any violence between current or former partners in any intimate relationship, wherever and whenever it occurs. The violence may include physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse. [73]

However, for local record keeping the forces are free to use whatever definition they wish. The prescribed definition is designed for comparative statistical analysis between Police Forces.

are “DVU issues”. The DVU has advised beat constables to err on the side of caution rather than fail to report something that may seem “borderline”.

Once a report is received at the police control room, an incident “log” is generated and an officer is allocated to deal with the matter. The responding officer will report back to the Communications Operator and if the incident involves domestic violence, a print out is automatically sent to the DVU. The officer seconded to the DVU will consult the CARE database to obtain further details such as confirmation of the address provided. This database houses all information regarding prior incidents so that an historical file can inform the “risk assessment”: it might, for example, include information on the involvement of children of the family.

An officer of the Derbyshire Constabulary explained that reports of domestic violence are also received from Accident and Emergency departments. Referrals may be made in confidence but will inform the victim of his or her right to support from the DVU. A protocol of questions provides guidance in respect of how best to obtain information from alleged victims.

- **Relationships with other agencies**

The DVU regularly liases with other agencies, depending on the nature of support required by the victim. Agencies such as Social Services departments, schools, and PODA (Prevention of Domestic Abuse), can provide a range of support services to victims and survivors of domestic abuse, including one-to-one counselling. These services may exceed those offered by the DVU, the priority of which to help victims through prosecutions.[74] Thus, the relationship between the police, the DVU and other agencies may be vital to tackling and reducing the rate of domestic violence.

However, at least one police officer was sceptical as to the effectiveness of the Crime and Disorder Act (and the Working Together document[75]) on improving performance. This arose in part at least, from the officer’s belief that while the police will refer and share information, others agencies do not readily do so; that data-sharing agreements were not yet in place did not help the situation. Moreover, other agencies may “have their own agendas” which, it was claimed, differ from that of the police. These claims suggest a culture of “exclusivity” among agencies (and perhaps the police) when it comes to dealing with domestic violence – that some agencies are better at dealing with it than others. However, it was not clear to the interviewer how these “agenda” might differ but the officer did say that sometimes, problems

[74] One to one Counselling is available to children who have experienced situations of domestic abuse. *Freephone* helplines are available to all victims of abuse. All services offered by PODA are free and confidential and are funded by The National Lottery Charities Board.

[75] *Working Together to Safeguard Children* Government Guidance on Inter-Agency Co-operation 1991, issued jointly by the Department of Health, the Home Office and the Department for Education

arise in connection with agency workers: specifically, those who have undergone training in domestic abuse make far more referrals than those without the relevant training. Recipients of this training have included Accident and Emergency staff, school nurses, and school secretaries, as well as teachers. According to one source, the DVU's programme of training has since been withdrawn. The police officer regretted this and stressed once again, that training had had a positive effect on the number of referrals to the DVU.

CONCLUSION

- **Main areas of concern**

Those who participated in this research raised many issues but in summary, the principle issues of concern were

1. The social and economic regeneration of Sinfin, which for some interviewees, is a major contributing cause of violent crime.
2. The complexity of the causes of violent crime, which for some interviewees went beyond socio-economic disadvantage.
3. The visibility of beat constables on the streets of Beat 603 and the quality of their responses to reports of incidents (see further, "exemplars of good practice", below).
4. The fear of crime and associated perceptions, such as ideas about likely victims of violent offending.
5. The consequences of (3) and (4) above for the reporting of incidents to the police, in particular, violence involving children and young people (either as victims or offenders) and domestic violence.
6. The accuracy and tone of reporting by local media, of matters relating to Sinfin.
7. The quality of inter-agency responses to reports of domestic violence.
8. Also of concern to the University of Derby's research team was that only one interviewee mentioned the Crime and Disorder Partnership by name; no one else referred to it explicitly or obliquely. Given that the Partnership was established some time ago, this is disappointing and raises questions about the Partnership's place in the community as well as the success of its Strategy.
9. The attainment of inter-agency and/or multi-agency approach anticipated by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 should improve the exchange of information between interested parties; in the long run, this may benefit victims of violent crime and impact positively on the crime rate itself. However, in Derby, this approach, whilst demonstrating good practice at times, is also beset by those very problems that it (i.e. the multi-agency approach to crime reduction) was supposed to overcome: namely, a poor exchange of information and a lack of an immediately identifiable and unifying approach to crime reduction initiatives.
10. Finally - and perhaps following on from (8) and (9) above – of those interviewees who expressed views on the matter, most (including some police officers) were sceptical of the effectiveness of various initiatives for reducing the incidence of offending in Beat 603. Some expressed a preference for a return to a "common-sense" approach to crime reduction and prevention which should focus on matters of immediate concern to public and professionals alike, such as improving the response times of police to reports of incidents.

- **Exemplars of good practice**

Amid the concerns expressed by interviewees, there were some indications of good practice. The following can by surmised from the interviews:

1. Evidence from police officers (which was substantiated by other interviewees) indicates that local officers work hard to maintain a presence, even though they are few in number and often face hostility from (some) local people. Seconding officers at short notice for operations outside Beat 603 without replacing them in Sinfin hinders the attempts of beat officers to be seen. The efforts of beat constables to maintain a visible presence in Beat 603, often by involving themselves (in the case of one police officer at least) in locally organised activities, such as fetes, should be recognised and encouraged. Other mechanisms for maintaining and improving visibility include visits to schools and advice to local retailers; evidence from the interviews does not dispute or cast doubt on, the usefulness of these.

2. Regular meetings of platforms such as the Sinfin Police Liaison Group are a useful, if at times, confrontational means, of securing a frank exchange of views and vital information between members of the public and police officers. Creating and maintaining channels of communication in this way can do no harm it seems and may in fact do much good, by involving local people. Although the same people tend to participate in such groups, to *not* hold meetings of this sort would probably undermine the quality of the relationship between police and community. Political acknowledgement, preferably by way of regular attendance at meetings (although not necessarily active involvement) from ward councillors may enhance the standing of these public forums as mechanisms that can contribute to positive change and make a difference.

3. The present research was welcomed by all interviewees as a positive step toward securing local support for crime reduction initiatives. Many participants commented favourably on being asked for their views: making themselves heard was, to paraphrase one interviewee, a necessary step towards involving at least some of those who live and/or work in Sinfin.

- **Areas identified for future research and investigation**

As stated throughout this Report, a thorough investigation of some issues was beyond the stated remit of the present research. Nonetheless, interviewees repeatedly raised some matters, which suggests that a dedicated research focus might yield valuable insights for those seeking to further the aims and objectives of the Crime and Disorder Partnership and the Crime Reduction Strategy. In particular, the impact of socio-economic factors, such as unemployment and poor housing on violent offending in Sinfin was raised by many interviewees who could not – or would not - always separate such issues from other potential

causes of violent crime. A few participants also commented on the impact on people's perceptions of offending, of reporting by local media.

APPENDIX

NON-FATAL OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON

- **Introduction**

The basic rule of criminal liability is expressed in the common law maxim *"actus non facit reum, nisi mens sit rea"* – "an act is not necessarily a guilty act unless the accused has the necessary state of mind required for that offence" Generally speaking therefore, a person cannot be guilty of an offence unless two elements are present:

- the *actus reus* (the prohibited conduct or behaviour); and

- the *mens rea* (the mental element or state of mind required for that act).

The *actus reus* and *mens rea* for an offence must be identified from the statutory or common law definition of that offence.

(1) COMMON ASSAULT

- **Definition**: The defendant (D) must intentionally or recklessly cause another to apprehend immediate and unlawful personal violence.

- ***Actus Reus:*** an unlawful display of force against another that causes the other person to apprehend immediate and unlawful personal violence:

a. "Apprehend"

The victim (V) does not have to be scared as such (he may be confident that he can repel the attack) but he does have to apprehend the use of violence against himself by D.

In *R v Lamb* [1967]] 2 QB 981, Lamb pointed a revolver at his friend in jest. The friend was not frightened and thought it all a joke. Lamb pulled the trigger but was totally unaware that this act would rotate the cylinder and place a bullet opposite the barrel. His friend was killed but it was held that this was not an assault because the friend did not apprehend violence.

b. "Immediate" unlawful personal violence

The physical act will normally place the victim in fear of immediate violence, for example, shaking a fist in front of him. However, if D threatens V with a knife but a raging river separates them and D has no means of crossing it, then there can no apprehension by V of immediate unlawful personal violence.

The decisions in *Ireland* [1998] AC 147, *Burstow* [1998] AC147 and *Constanza* [1977] 2 Cr App R 492, seem to widen the scope of *immediacy*. When *Ireland* appealed to the Court of Appeal Swinton Thomas L.J. said

As to "immediacy", by using the telephone the appellant put himself in immediate contact with the victims and when the victims lifted the telephone they were placed in immediate fear...

The Court of Appeal had followed *Smith v Chief Superintendent of Woking Police Station* (1983) 76 Cr App R 234, in which the court held that a man who just stood and stared through a window at a woman in her night-dress was guilty of an assault. The court was satisfied that Smith had gone to the woman's house with the *intention* of frightening her and causing her to fear immediate unlawful violence.

In *Constanza* it was said that all that was required was that the victim was put in fear of immediate violence. It did not matter *how* D achieved this result so long as he did and that he foresaw that the victim would be put in fear of immediate violence. The court said that the V must have had a *"fear of violence at some time not excluding the immediate future."*

c. "Unlawful"

Sometimes, the D may be justified in using force, for example, in self-defence. However, if there is no justification for it, then any use of force can amount to a common assault.

Does there always need to a physical act or could words alone constitute an assault?

In *Meade* and *Belt* (1823) 1 Lew CC 184, it was held that, *"no words … are equivalent to an assault"* (per Holroyd J.). However, in *Wilson* [1955] 1 All ER 744, Lord Goddard commented that D had called out

"Get out the knives," which itself would be an assault.

In the recent cases of *Ireland*, and *Burstow* (1998) 1 Cr App R. 177, the House of Lords held that silent telephone calls and malicious telephone calls resulting in psychiatric injury were *capable* of amounting to an assault. In *Constanza* (1997) 2 Cr App R 492, D made silent telephone calls and sent over 800 letters. It was held that conduct accompanying words was capable of making the words an assault.

On other hand, words alone can negate an assault. In *Turberville v Savage* (1669) 1 Mod Rep 3, T placed his hand on his sword and said, *" If it were not assize-time I would not take such language from you".* T was not guilty of an assault because his statement negated his action.

- ***Mens rea:*** D must intend to put the victim in fear of immediate and unlawful violence, or be reckless as to whether such apprehension is caused: *Venna* [1976] QB 421.

In *Savage* and *Parmenter* [1991] 4 All ER 698, the House of Lords said that a defendant's *recklessness*, that is, a conscious taking of a risk, could satisfy the *mens rea* requirement.

(2) COMMON BATTERY

- **Definition**: the intentional or reckless infliction of unlawful personal force by one person on another.

- ***Actus reus:*** infliction of unlawful personal force by D on the victim. A battery normally follows on from an assault but this need not be the case; imagine for example, the victim who has force applied from behind and therefore could not have apprehended that act.

a. "unlawful"

The slightest application of force, even mere touching, is enough to constitute a battery. In *Brown* [1994] AC 212, the House of Lords accepted that battery required an element of "hostility".

b. "force"

"Force" can be applied directly or indirectly. In *DPP v K* [1990] 1 All ER 331, a schoolboy hid sulphuric acid in a hot air drier in a toilet. The boy intended to wash away the acid later. However, before he could do so, another boy used the drier and was permanently scarred as the acid flew in his face.

- ***Mens rea***: the intention to apply force or recklessness as to the application of force, to another.

Note: although assault and battery are separate offences, the terms are almost always treated as if they are interchangeable, and 'assault' has been used generically to cover both assaults and batteries.

Defences to common assault and common battery

In addition to the "general defences", there are three specific defences available to a defendant charged with assault/battery. These are

a. Reasonable chastisement: by parent or guardian. [Note section 47 Education (No. 2) Act 1986 - teachers no longer have the right to administer corporal punishment when acting in *loco parentis*]

b. Self-defence and the prevention of crime: "reasonable force" is the key here. D may only use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances. Whether force is reasonable is a question for the jury (or magistrate): would a reasonable man have used force in such circumstances?

c. Consent of the victim: an act done with consent may, in certain circumstances, be lawful. The law recognises implied consent to everyday situations such as being jostled on a crowded train or in a busy shop. However, the law also recognises express consent must come within the limited categories defined by the courts. In *Attorney General's Reference* (No. 6 of 1980), Lord Lane said that

> *The answer to the question, in our judgment, is that it is not in the public interest that people should try to cause, or should cause, each other actual bodily harm for no good reason. ... it is an assault if actual bodily harm is intended and/or caused ...*

Note that actual bodily harm is any injury likely to interfere with the health or comfort of the victim which is more than trifling or transient, and as such does not have to be at all serious.

Therefore, subject to the following reasons, consent can never be a defence to the more serious offences against the person:

> *Nothing which we have said is intended to cast doubt upon the accepted legality of properly conducted games and sports, lawful chastisement or correction, reasonable surgical interference, dangerous exhibitions, etc. These apparent exceptions can be justified as involving the exercise of a legal right, in the case of chastisement or correction, or as needed in the public interest, in the other cases.*
>
> Per Lord Lane, *Attorney General's Reference* (No. 6 of 1980)

(3) Section 47 Offences Against the Person Act 1861: assault occasioning actual bodily harm

- **Definition:** "… *whosoever shall be convicted upon an indictment of any assault occasioning actual bodily harm shall be liable to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding five years".*

- ***Actus reus*:** as for common assault, e.g. an unlawful display of force against another which causes that other to apprehend immediate and unlawful violence with the addition of the required consequence of *actual bodily harm* (ABH)**.**

In *Miller* [1954] 2 QB 282, the court defined ABH as

any hurt or injury likely to interfere with the health or comfort of the victim (the hurt or injury need not be permanent or serious but must be more than trifling).

ABH also includes *"recognisable psychiatric illness"* but excludes mere emotions such as fear, distress or panic: *Chan-Fook* [1994] 2 All ER 552.

- ***Mens rea*:** as with assault or battery; the intention must be to put V in fear of immediate and unlawful violence. Moreover, D must be reckless as to whether such apprehension is caused; a battery requires proof of an intention to apply force or recklessness as to the application of force, to another.

(4) S. 20, OAP 1861: maliciously inflicting wounds or grievous bodily harm

- **Definition:** … *whosoever shall unlawfully and maliciously wound or inflict any grievous bodily harm upon any other person, either with or without a weapon or instrument, shall be guilty of an offence, and being convicted thereof shall be liable…to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.*

There are two ways of committing this offence:

- maliciously wounding another person; or
- maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm.

- ***Actus reus:***

a. "wounding"

A *"wound"* for these purposes requires that the *"continuity"* of the skin be broken: *Moriarty v Brookes* [1834]. In *C (A Minor) v Eisenhower* [1984] QB 331, there was no wound when an airgun pellet hit V in the eye that ruptured the blood vessels but did not break the skin. However, in *Waltham* (1849) 3 Cox CC 442, it was held that a rupture of the inner skin of the cheek or of the urethra resulting in bleeding, was *"wounding".*

b. Inflicting

In *Burstow* [1998] 1 Cr App R 177, it was held that it is possible to *"inflict'* a wound without assaulting a person.

c. Grievous bodily harm –

In *Smith* [1961] AC 290, the court said that this means "*really serious harm".* In *Burstow* (above) it was conceded that severe depression could amount to serious bodily harm.

- ***Mens rea*: *"maliciously"* –** D must have foreseen some harm although not necessarily grievous bodily harm.

(5) Section 18 Offences Against the Person Act 1861- Wounding with intent

- **Definition:** *"… whosoever shall unlawfully and maliciously wound or cause grievous bodily harm to any person…with intent…to do some…grievous bodily harm to any person, or with intent to resist or prevent the lawful apprehension or detainer of any person, shall be guilty of an offence, and being convicted thereof shall be liable…to imprisonment for life"*: section 18, OAP 1861.

- ***Actus reus:*** the only difference with section 20, OAP 1861 (above) arises from use of the word *"cause"* which implies a wider meaning than *"inflict".* However, since *'inflict"* no longer always means that an assault has occurred and indirect actions can constitute an offence under s. 20, OAP 1861, it seems that there is very little difference in the *actus reus* of these offences.

- ***Mens rea:*** D must maliciously wound or cause grievous bodily harm and, secondly he must do so with the ulterior *intent* either to do some grievous bodily harm or to resist or prevent the lawful apprehension or detainer of any person (malice has the same meaning as in s. 20, OAP 1861)