



Safer Harrow Partnership – Crime & Drugs

Audit Summary 2001-2004 (Appendix A)

The Safer Harrow Partnership is committed to working together to make Harrow a safer place to live and work. Local issues concerning crime and drugs are addressed and reviewed on a regular basis as part of this process.

The following provides a top-level summary of crime and drugs in Harrow between April 2001 and March 2004, the details of which can be found in the full audit report that will be presented to the Safer Harrow Management Group in October this year.

Harrow in Context

Harrow is an outer London suburb that accommodates a number of large residential areas, a thriving business and commercial centre and some more rural areas that reach into the countryside. Transport links within the borough are well situated, providing a quick and easy route into the city for commuters.

At the time of the 2001 Census, Harrow's population was 206,814 with around a quarter of people being under 18 years old (47,470). When compared to other London boroughs, Harrow's elderly population is also relatively large, with 7% of residents (14,609 people) being over seventy-five.

Harrow has a highly diverse community and around 40% of the population are from ethnic minority groups. Religion also plays an important role in Harrow. According to the Census, nearly 20% of the population are Hindu, giving Harrow a higher proportion of Hindus than any other borough in both England and Wales. The borough's Jewish community, accounting for nearly 6% of the population, is the second largest in London.

Perceptions of Crime

It is not uncommon for people to think that the level of crime in their area is higher than in reality and such perceptions have been in place in Harrow for a number of years. Local surveys show that most residents feel:

- a low level of crime is the most important factor in making somewhere a good place to live.
- crime is the issue in need of most improvement in order to make Harrow a better place to live.
- generally unsafe walking alone in Harrow after dark.

Crime in Harrow

Although recorded crime has generally increased in both Harrow and London as a whole, figures from 2002-2003 show that crime in Harrow has decreased by 6%, suggesting that crime is currently on the decline. It should be noted here that crime is always underreported and therefore crime statistics do not fully represent the actual level of crime.

- Harrow accounts for less than 2% of London's crime.
- Harrow's crime rate is the second lowest in London (90.6 offences per 1000 of the population).

Anti Social Behaviour and Quality of Life

'Anti Social Behaviour' is a priority in Harrow and covers a variety of issues ranging from abandoned vehicles to public disorder.

- 50% of people surveyed said that people being drunk or rowdy in public places is an issue in Harrow.
- Recent surveys show that vandalism, graffiti, abandoned/burnt out vehicles and other deliberate damage are all a concern for Harrow's residents.
- Since 2001, the majority of Harrow's disorder issues have been disturbances in a public place, criminal damage and drunkenness, all of which have increased over the last two years.
- Disorder incidents are most likely to occur between 7pm and 2am on a Friday and Saturday night.
- Abandoned vehicles are still a problem in Harrow, despite a 17% reduction in the last twelve months.

Burglary

This category covers both residential and non-residential burglary.

- 75% of residents claim they are worried about having their homes broken into.
- Burglary levels have generally remained stable in Harrow over the last three years.
- During 2001-2004, Harrow's residential burglary rate (64.2 offences per 1000 households) was lower than the London average.
- During 2003-2004, The Metropolitan Police's reduction target of 4% was achieved in Harrow.
- The Safer Homes Project has been successful in raising awareness concerning this type of crime and improving home security measures for a number of the borough's residents.

Drugs

This section covers a variety of offences, of which 'possession' accounts for around 85%.

- Recent surveys show that the majority of those asked think there is a drug problem in Harrow.
- Despite a London-wide increase of 23%, drug offences in Harrow decreased by 27% between 2001 and 2004
- During 2003-2004, Harrow had the lowest number of drug offences in London, with the total for this period being a third of the London average.
- Although the number of drug offences remains low, the numbers of residents entering drug treatment is increasing year on year.

Hate Crime and Domestic Violence

Underreporting makes the nature and extent of these crimes difficult to measure, meaning that they often have a far lower profile than in reality. Multi-agency partnerships continue to be very successful in helping to combat and raise awareness of this type of crime as well as improving the level of support that is offered to victims.

- 52% of residents feel that attacks motivated by skin colour, ethnicity or religion are a problem in Harrow.
- The number of racist offences has continued to decrease in Harrow throughout the last three years.
- Since 2001, there has been a 38% reduction in the number of repeat victims of racist crime.
- In contrast to the London-wide trend, the number of domestic violence offences that take place in Harrow has decreased slightly over the last three years.
- Initiatives aimed at the victims of domestic violence are being pioneered within the Borough and have so far proved to be very successful.
- The number of recorded homophobic offences is generally very low, although there has been an increase in the last twelve months.
- 'Clear up' rates for domestic violence, race crime and homophobic crime are significantly higher than the London average.
- Harrow Police's Community Safety Unit has been ranked the best performing unit in London since 2001.

Motor Vehicle Crime

This section includes theft of a motor vehicle, theft from a motor vehicle, tampering/interference and criminal damage to a motor vehicle, all of which currently account for 22% of Harrow's crime.

- 50% of those surveyed worry about either having their car stolen or having something stolen from their cars.
- Motor vehicle offences have generally increased since 2001.
- The number of motor vehicle offences recorded in Harrow between 2001 and 2004 was almost half of the London average.
- During 2003-2004, the Metropolitan Police's reduction target of 7% was achieved in Harrow, suggesting that motor vehicle crime is starting to decline.
- During 2003-2004, Harrow had the 3rd lowest rate of motor vehicle theft in London.
- During 2003-2004, Harrow had the 5th lowest number of motor vehicle offences in London.

Street Crime

Street crime has become an increasing problem within the UK; due partly to the increased presence of mobile phones and the ease with which they can be stolen.

- 66% of people surveyed said that they are worried about being mugged and robbed in Harrow.
- In contrast to the national trend, street crime in Harrow has decreased by 20% since 2001.
- In Harrow, the rate of recorded street crime stands at around 2-3 offences per day.
- The most common offence involves robbery of personal property; in Harrow, this has reduced by 30% in the last three years.
- During 2003-2004, Harrow had the 8th lowest rate of robbery in London.
- Males are around four times more likely than females to become the victims of robbery in Harrow, with those aged 13– 18 being most at risk.

Violence Against the Person (VAP)

This heading covers a number of different offences including murder, both actual and grievous bodily harm, common assault, harassment and those involving an offensive weapon.

- 63% of people surveyed claim to be worried about being physically attacked in the street.
- VAP offences in Harrow have increased slightly over the last three years.
- During 2003-2004, Harrow had one of the lowest rates for VAP and sexual offences in London.
- Most VAP offences occur in and around the town centre on a Friday or Saturday night, suggesting that alcohol may have a part to play in these offences.

Young People and Crime

This section covers a variety of offences that have been committed by people under 18 years of age.

- 60% of young people surveyed claim to be worried about having their mobile phone stolen.
- Figures since 2001 show that young people are four times more likely to become a victim of crime than be an offender.
- The introduction of the Youth Offending Service and the development of youth crime prevention initiatives have led to a significant decrease in youth offending over the last three years.
- The majority of youth crime relates to theft and motoring offences.
- Since 2001, there has been an 89% increase in the number of young people presented to Harrow's Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service.
- The number of 'persistent' youth offenders in Harrow has gradually decreased since 2001.