

## SUMMARY OF STATISTICS ABERDEEN COMMUNITY SAFETY AUDIT 2001

### Chapter 1 Introduction

It is hoped the findings of the community safety audit will provide Aberdeen's Community Safety Partnership with the ability to implement their community safety strategy and action plan with the key aim of making Aberdeen a safer place in which to live and work.

### Chapter 2 Community Consultation

- □ Crime & Community Safety is one of the main issues of concern raised by members of the public, through community consultations.
- □ Five main areas of concern, regarding crime and community safety are; Speeding/ dangerous driving; Drug dealing/ drug taking; Vandalism/ graffiti; Provision of security cameras; Lack of policing.

### Chapter 3 Health

- □ The number of registrations at A&E has increased by 7% between 1998/99 and 2000/01. Cummings Park, Auchmill, Tullos and Springhill wards have had more than 1,700 registrations at A&E each year, over the past three years, compared to an average of approximately 1,200 per year for Aberdeen as a whole.
- □ Donmouth and Peterculter had the lowest number of registrations at A&E between April 1998 and March 2001.
- □ 19 year olds are more likely to attend A&E than any other age group in the city.
- □ 44% of accidents requiring A&E treatment occur in the home.
- □ The most common reason for people attending A&E in the past three years was an injury to a limb.
- □ Approximately 60% of people registering at A&E are discharged the same day.
- □ In Aberdeen the number of persons assisted by Aberdeen Coastguard between 1999 and 2000 rose by 54%.

### Chapter 4 Crime

- □ Domestic housebreakings increased by 21%, from 2,796 to 3,381 between 1998 and 2001.
- □ In 2000, Woodside & Tillydrone ward had the highest number of housebreakings.
- □ 1 in 6 of all commercial break-ins in Aberdeen occurred in the ward of Castlehill during 2000.
- □ Car crime is the most frequent type of crime reported in Aberdeen.
- □ Between 1998 and 2000, reported<sup>1</sup> Reset in Aberdeen decreased by 16%, from 241 to 202 crimes.
- □ Vandalism is the second most common type of crime reported in Aberdeen. Castlehill, Auchmill and Langstane wards feature among the wards with the highest number of vandalism reportings.
- □ Approximately £1million is spent annually by Aberdeen City Council on repairing damage to property as a result of vandalism.
- □ Drug possession has decreased by 24% over the past three years. Castlehill has the highest number of reported drug possession in Aberdeen.
- □ Drug supply is mainly concentrated within 8 wards in Aberdeen.

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<sup>1</sup> For definition of reported crime, see page 28.

## **Chapter 5 Fire**

- □ Accidental dwelling fires increased by 5% between 1999/00 and 2000/01.
- □ Approximately 45% of all accidental dwelling fires occurred in the evening (between 5pm and 12am).
- □ Malicious false alarm calls in Aberdeen fell by approximately 6% between 1999/00 and 2000/01.
- □ The number of wilful fires increased from 22 in 1999/00 to 42 in 2000/01.
- □ Chimney fires in Aberdeen decreased by 32% from 50, in 1999/00 to 34 in 2000/01.

## **Chapter 6 Road Accidents**

- □ In comparison to the early 1980's, the number of fatal and serious casualties in Aberdeen has more than halved.
- □ Motorcycle injuries rose by 20% between 1999 and 2000.
- □ 15% of all road accidents involved children in 2000. In 1999 the figure was 20%.
- □ The number of accidents involving people aged over 60 years, fell from 14% in 1999 to 10% in 2000.
- □ 50% of all rail vandalism occurred in the Kittybrewster area of Aberdeen.

## **Chapter 7 Risk Factors**

- □ All thirteen schools in Aberdeen encountered at least one case of chronic non-attendance between 1998 and 2001.
- □ For the academic years 1999/00 and 2000/01, six schools heavily influenced the total number of exclusions in primary schools.
- □ The number of violent and aggressive incidents against school staff soared between 1998/99 and 2000/01, from 321 to 669.
- □ Between 1999/00 and 2000/01 the grounds for referral to the Children's Reporter in Aberdeen fell by 26%, from 2,848 to 2,103.
- □ 57% of children referred to the Children's Reporter committed some type of offence.
- □ Between 1999 and 2001, the number of wards with unemployment rates above the city average fell from 35 to 18.
- □ Tillydrone and Old Aberdeen had the highest unemployment rates in Aberdeen between 1999 and 2001.
- □ Between 1998 and 2000, the largest number of requests for council housing transfers were for the letting areas of Central, Rosehill, Cornhill and Ashgrove.
- □ Tillydrone, Logie, Torry and Seaton had consistently high numbers of council house voids.
- □ In 1999/00 there were 948 new patients seeking advice on drugs in Aberdeen.
- □ Of the new patients seeking advice on drugs, 17% were in employment.
- □ 28% of new patients seeking advice on drugs lived with parents.
- □ There are approximately 23 drug-related deaths in Aberdeen annually.

## SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

This Audit has examined the scale and nature of Community Safety problems and the risk factors associated with these problems. It is hoped the Audit has successfully;

- (i) established links with the various problems and risk factors associated with community safety,
- (ii) examined measures already being taken to tackle the problems, and
- (iii) provided recommendations for future action based on Safety Targets set by Aberdeen's Community Plan (Aberdeen Futures, 2001) whose key aim is to make Aberdeen a safer place in which to live and work.

*“To make Aberdeen safer, we have to reduce violent behaviour; the opportunity for crime and offences to be committed; prevent accidents; reduce fires in domestic properties and related deaths and injuries; reduce the fear of crime, harassment and intimidation and offer support to victims of crime or anti-social behaviour”*. Aberdeen Futures, 2001.

### Health

Over the course of the three years, from April 1998 to March 2001, the highest number of registrations at the A&E department were attendees who lived in wards in the Northfield area of Aberdeen. High concentrations were recorded in the neighbouring wards of Cummings Park, Auchmill, Springhill and Mastrick, with the wards of Tullos and Torry, to the south of the city-centre also recording a high number of incidents requiring A&E treatment. However, as a proportion of the total number of attendees, there was a general trend with all wards in the city, with the vast majority registering at A&E following an incident in the home resulting in an injury to a limb. Wards in the Bridge of Don, Deeside and Dyce areas of Aberdeen experienced the lowest number of attendees requiring treatment at A&E over the three years.

### Pre-school Children

Patterns exist in the number and the reasons for children attending A&E. As expected the number of pre-school age registrations at A&E gradually decline as the child gets older. The number of children attending with an injury to a limb, cut/ wound and head/facial injury gradually decreases as the child gets older, as children become more stable on their feet and less accident prone.

The number of toddlers (1-2 year olds) attending A&E as a result of ingestion is quite high. This is an issue that parents/ guardians and childminders should be aware of. They should be made aware of home safety issues such as, keeping solvents and other dangerous liquids in a locked cupboard. Small objects kept out of reach of small children will also help curb the number of children attending A&E as a result of a foreign body.

**Measures Taken:** As part of the Community Plan there are currently initiatives set up to improve child safety by supporting the increased uptake of the Children's Traffic Club, particularly in disadvantaged areas, and deliver "Safety in Mind" multi-agency training to those working with under 5's.

**Community Plan Target:** Reduce accidents in the home by 10% by 2011.

## **School-age Children**

School-age children should be made aware of safety issues not only in the home but also in the school. Teachers and parents/ guardians are in a position to advise on safety issues, for example, simple issues related to falling over by, identifying hazards such as slippery floors, making sure children wear appropriate footwear and carpets/ rugs are even with no loose edges.

**Measures Taken:** Aberdeen City Council, through their Home Check Initiative, provides a free home safety check service where homes are checked for visual hazards as well as advice for minor repairs. However, the majority of clients who currently use this service are elderly, with very few family households availing of the service.

Within secondary-school age children the most common reason for attending A&E is still an injury to a limb, however, the figures fall as children get older. Two points of concern are the increasing number of registrations at A&E as a result of an assault, and as a result of an overdose within secondary age children. In both cases the figures greatly increase year on year by age from 12 to 17 year olds. This may be a result of bullying, which does not necessarily occur in schools alone. Also the issue of a child's desire to take an overdose voices concern of their reasons for doing so, which could range from physical abuse to mental abuse. The majority of overdose incidents at A&E are a result of ingesting non-prescriptive drugs such as paracetamol and aspirin. Therefore it is not easy to prevent older children getting access to such drugs. Almost 1 in 4, 12-17 year old registrations at A&E in 2000/01 as a result of an overdose, lived in the wards of Auchmill or Tullos. It is highly likely these children would attend Northfield Academy and Torry Academy. However, 1 in 3 wards in the city had no children attending A&E as a result of an overdose in 2000/01.

**Measures Taken:** Currently, Police Education Liaison Officers visit schools regularly. Pupils are actively encouraged to discuss with teachers and the Police, topics such as drugs, bullying, criminal damage, under age drinking and anti-social behaviour.

## **Child Risk Factors**

Not only can schools provide children with information on health and safety issues but by tackling the risk factors that have an indirect impact on children's safety, can influence children's future decision making and lifestyles.

The risk factors associated with community safety and children, are that of truancy and exclusion, low achievement and disruptive behaviour at school. However, within Aberdeen the schools that have high numbers of such problems seem to be concentrated in a few specific areas of town.

Unauthorised absences reflect truancy levels in schools. Over the past three years St Machar Academy, which is situated in the Woodside & Tillydrone area of the city and Torry Academy, in the Torry area of town, had higher rates of unauthorised absence than other secondary schools in Aberdeen. However, when looking at serious non-attendance at schools, there lies a problem with Northfield Academy and those primary schools that are within the Northfield Associated School Group. Although significant efforts have been made by schools and the authority through the Home School Liaison Service to solve cases of serious non-attendance, this service must continue to reduce these levels to the national average or below.

The rate of exclusions from three secondary schools in Aberdeen give cause for concern. Again these schools are located in areas that have been highlighted with regard to other risk factors associated with community safety.

**Measures Taken:** Linksfield Academy which is in the Seaton area of the city along with St Machar Academy and Northfield Academy, have experienced high rates of exclusions that must be further tackled by the “Alternatives to Exclusion Initiatives”, which is currently in place by the Education Department. Again, these schools along with Torry Academy have a below average proportion of S4 pupils gaining 5 or more standard grades at levels 1-6.

Over the past three years, Northfield Academy and Torry Academy have had very low staying on rates of S5 pupils. The areas of town where these schools are situated have a high concentration of 16-24 year olds and high rates of youth unemployment.

### **Road Safety**

As stated earlier in the Audit, A&E provide information by the postcode of the attendee, not the postcode location of the incident. Therefore, although people attend A&E as a result of a road traffic accident, the accident will not necessarily have occurred in the ward where they live.

The highest number of attendees at A&E over the past three years as a result of a Road Traffic Accident (RTA) lived in the Newhills ward, in the Kingswells area of Aberdeen. Both the wards of Newhills and Torry had over 90 registrations at A&E. Torry's neighbouring ward Tullos and the neighbouring wards of Auchmill and Cummings Park, in the Northfield and Middlefield areas of the city along with the ward of Loirston, in the Cove area of Aberdeen all had more than 80 incidents between 1998 and 2001. On average over 40% of incidents involving RTA's in Newhills and Torry involved 25-35 year olds, with at least 1 in 4 aged between 17-24 years old. The number of school age children was very small, suggesting a high percentage of RTA's in the city involving cars/ vehicles, rather than involving pedestrians.

Of the wards recording at least 80 incidents since 1998, those that are located on the outskirts of the city such as Newhills and Loirston had very small numbers of RTAs involving school age children, however those located more centrally had much higher volumes of school age children involved in RTAs.

The wards of Donmouth, Mannofield , Hazlehead and Cults had less than 40 registrations at A&E over the three years as a result of a RTA. The ward of Donmouth (in the Bridge of Don area) had the lowest number of total registrations at A&E during this time period.

From the information provided by Aberdeen City Council's Roads Department, only one child was killed as a result of a road accident in 1999, falling to zero in 2000. However, the number of children seriously hurt actually increased by one over the same time period, from 12 to 13.

**Measures Taken:** As mentioned earlier in the Audit, Grampian Police currently provide an educational unit to schools in a bid to increase awareness of the possible dangers encountered on the roads. Such steps must be continued, if targets such as those in the Community Plan are to be met.

**Measures Taken:** Aberdeen City Council have set up target initiatives to improve child safety by supporting increased uptake of the Children's Traffic Club, particularly in disadvantaged areas, and deliver Safety in Mind multi-agency training to those working with under 5's.

**Community Plan Target:** *A reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 25% by 2005.*

**Measures Taken:** Traffic calming measures have been introduced in some areas of Aberdeen, by means of a "twenty's plenty" campaign, in home zones reducing speeds to a maximum of 20 miles per hour in residential areas. This coupled with the compilation of safety audits on all new road schemes, are some of the current measures to reduce RTAs in Aberdeen.

**Community Plan Target:** *A reduction in the number of adults killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 18% by 2005.*

## **Fire**

Whether it be accidental dwelling fires or malicious fire alarm calls, between 1999 and 2001, the neighbouring wards of St Machar and Seaton along with the ward of Tullos were among the top four wards in Aberdeen with the highest number of both these types of fire. However, the wards surrounding St Machar and Seaton i.e. Pittodrie, Woodside/ Tillydrone and Kittybrewster also had high volumes of accidental dwelling fires over the two years. Malicious fire alarm calls were not as concentrated throughout a large number of neighbouring wards, however, high concentrations of malicious calls were mainly confined to 8 wards scattered throughout Aberdeen.

**Measures Taken:** Over 100 social work staff have been trained by the Fire Brigade to help reduce the risk of fire in clients homes.

**Community Plan Target:** *Reduce the number of accidental house fires by a third by 2006.*

## **Crime - Housebreakings**

Over the past three years the highest number of domestic housebreakings occurred in three neighbouring wards of the city. These were Woodside & Tillydrone, St Machar and Sunnybank. These wards have high concentrations of council owned housing and low concentrations of owner occupied housing.

**Measures Taken:** Grampian Police have many on-going initiatives that offer advice on the methods of prevention of housebreakings.

By the end of 2001, the Community Safety Partnership, funded by Common Good, issued over 1,000 space alarms, timer switches and other personal home safety equipment, to relevant households in Aberdeen, in a bid to reduce the number of housebreakings and home accidents.

The Aberdeen Community Safety Partnership have drawn up a Crime Reduction Action Plan for 2002/2003.

*Community Plan Target: A 10% reduction in domestic housebreaking by 2005.*

### **Commercial Break-ins**

As expected the total number of commercial break-ins by ward over the past three years are concentrated in the city-centre wards of Castlehill and Langstane. Not many commercial break-ins occurred in the industrial areas of Aberdeen which are located near the outskirts of the city.

### **Car Crime**

Car crime, being the most reported type of crime in Aberdeen is again concentrated in the city-centre, with high numbers also recorded in the Berryden area of town. Both these areas have high concentrations of public car parks within the vicinity of major shopping areas which suggest a high correlation of unsupervised parking with car crime. However, the Tillydrone area of Aberdeen also recorded high number of car crime over the three years. This is quite surprising as this area of town is likely to have a low number of car ownership per household in the area, while the wards in the city that have a very low prevalence of car crime, tend to lie in the suburbs of the city where the number of cars per households tend to be higher.

The majority of car crime involves forcing entry and stealing property from within the car. Grampian Police through various channels e.g. media, encourage members of the public to be aware of the risks of car crime and the preventative measures that should be carried out to reduce the risk of cars being broken into.

*Measures Taken:* “Secured by Design” and “Secure Car Parks” are crime prevention concepts actively encouraged by Police Forces throughout the country. They are generally regarded as “situational” crime prevention measures which “design out crime” and usually pertain to new or existing large scale developments or car parks. This initiative has been carried out in one of Aberdeen’s main public car-parks’ and to date there has been a significant reduction in car crime in the area. It is this type of action that must continue to combat Aberdeen’s most frequently reported crime.

### **Serious Assault**

Over 120 serious assaults were recorded in each of the city centre wards of Langstane and Castlehill over the three year period. The third highest number of serious assaults was recorded in the Torry ward, where 30 serious assaults were recorded over the three years. As mentioned earlier the city centre wards contain the majority of public houses in Aberdeen. There is an obvious link to serious assault and the consumption of alcohol which explains the high number of serious assaults in the city centre, however, in more residential areas such as Torry, it is much harder to make links or identify reasons for having a relatively high number of crimes of this type.

### **Assault & Robbery**

As expected the highest number of assault & robbery incidents occurred in the city-centre ward of Castlehill between 1998 and 2000. This ward includes the three main shopping centres in Aberdeen as well as the majority of individual city-centre shops. However, the neighbouring wards of St Machar, Woodside & Tillydrone and Sunnybank, had the second,

fourth and fifth highest number of assault & robbery crimes over the three years, each experiencing at least 40 crimes of this type. These three wards are mainly residential areas, unlike the city-centre wards, and have already been highlighted as areas with major safety associated problems.

### **Reset**

The highest number of reset crimes over the time period again occurred in the ward of Castlehill. This would indicate the convenience to shops for stealing items and its central location for “selling on” such goods. However, the second and third wards with the highest number of reset crimes are wards in the Tillydrone and Middlefield areas of the city. This would suggest a shift from “the street to the home”.

### **Vandalism**

The highest number of vandalism crimes reported in the city occurred in the city centre. However, the second and fourth highest wards with vandalism crimes were in the neighbouring wards of Auchmill and Cummings Park which are located in the Northfield and Middlefield areas of Aberdeen. High concentrations of vandalism over the three years have also occurred in the Woodside/ Tillydrone area of the city. These areas of Aberdeen are possibly highly correlated with risk factors associated with such problems, for example high rates of unemployment and youth unemployment.

**Measures Taken:** The Anti-Vandalism campaign, developed with young people, a poster campaign helped raise awareness of the costs of vandalism and “Just the Ticket” card for young people aged 12-18 provides discounts to many leisure, sports and arts venues throughout the city.

**Measures Taken:** It has been agreed a Youth Crime Action Plan will be developed by 2002.

**Measures Taken:** Grampian Police have set a target of answering all 999 calls in 10 seconds and ensuring that the most serious calls get immediate response (within 10 minutes). Police response times will be reviewed by 2002 to see if targets are being met.

### **Racist Incidents**

In general racist incidents within Grampian have increased over the past three years. Currently racist incidents are tackled by Grampian Police and victims supported through the Racist Incidents Partnership and the Domestic Abuse Forum.

**Community Plan Target:** Increase the detection rate of racist incidents by 10% by 2005.

### **Other Risk Factors**

There are other risk factors that increase the likelihood of these problems occurring. Again, these risk factors are more concentrated in the areas of Aberdeen that have already been highlighted with Community Safety issues.

Between 1998 and 2001, four housing letting areas of Tillydrone, Logie, Torry and Seaton had high volumes of void council housing properties. Similarly, Logie (in the Middlefield area of the city) and Tillydrone were among those letting areas of town that received the least number of transfers requesting housing to those areas over the three years.

## **Drugs**

Statistics do not fully reflect the extent of drug possession/ drug supply in Aberdeen as much of this type of crime goes unreported. Between 1998 and 2000, the same nine wards recorded the highest number of reported drug possession and drug supply crimes. The city-centre wards of Castlehill and Langstane had by far the highest number of reportings, however, the other seven wards are located in the Torry, Tillydrone, Seaton and Northfield areas of the city. All 43 wards had at least 5 reportings of drug possession, however not all wards had a reporting of drug supply.

**Measures Taken:** As mentioned earlier in the Audit, as part of the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency (SDEA), which was launched in June 2000, eight police constables were recruited within Grampian Police to help combat the threat of drug trafficking in the area and will therefore attempt to facilitate the achievement of the Community Plan Target in relation to drug seizures.

There are a number of specialist drug services in Aberdeen, available for drug users seeking treatment or advice. Of those people who use the services in Aberdeen, 17% are in employment with 77% unemployed. 26% of the clients live alone, with more than half living with a spouse/ partner or with parents.

**Measures Taken:** A Drug Testing and Treatment Order Scheme will be established in 2001.

**Community Plan Target:** An increase in drug seizures of 25% by 2005.

## **CONCLUSION**

In general, with regard to Community Safety, crime is a major issue in Aberdeen's city – centre wards. More specifically, these are commercial break-ins, car crime, vandalism drugs, serious assault and assault & robbery. Housebreakings and assault crimes feature in more residential areas, with none more so than in the Tillydrone and Woodside areas of the city. Drug crime is also highly concentrated in the city centre wards, however, high number of drug reportings have been recorded in the Torry, Tillydrone, Seaton and Northfield areas of the city.

The Tillydrone and Seaton areas of Aberdeen also stand out when analysing fire statistics over the past few years, however, when looking at the health statistics of A&E registrations there is a shift to the Torry and Northfield areas of the city.

Again, Torry features among those wards with a high number of A&E registrations as a result of road traffic accidents (RTAs). However, two wards on the outskirts of the City, i.e. that of Newhills (Kingswells area) and Loirston (Cove area) have the highest concentration of RTAs.

Tillydrone, Seaton and Middlefield areas of the city have high numbers of council housing and large proportions of void council housing. Unemployment in these areas is amongst the highest in the city. Also, secondary schools located in these areas have low levels of academic achievement and in some cases have higher levels of other associated school risk factors compared to other schools in the city.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the analysis of the Audit, it is recommended that;

- the Partnership address the main areas of concern within the various communities in Aberdeen and determine targets from the analysis in other areas not yet specified by the Partnership;
- the Partnership should continue to monitor and evaluate the statistics to ensure that projects and initiatives agreed are worthwhile; and
- the Partnership should assess the progress towards attaining the Community Plan Targets when feasible and reassess if required.