



Surrey Serious Violence
Involving Children
and Young People
Needs Assessment 2026



**Surrey
Serious Violence
Reduction
Partnership**

Foreword

As senior leaders with responsibility for keeping communities safe, we have a shared duty to understand serious violence clearly and to act decisively to prevent harm. This Needs Assessment provides that clarity.

Surrey remains one of the safest counties in the country. However, this report shows that serious violence involving young people, while affecting a small proportion of our population, is concentrated, complex and preventable. The harm experienced is rarely isolated. It is closely linked to trauma, exploitation, domestic abuse, unsafe environments, educational disruption and wider community pressures.

The evidence presented here draws on police-recorded data, professional insight and multi-agency analysis over a three-year period. It highlights clear age-related peaks during adolescence, geographic concentrations of harm, and significant overlap between victimisation and offending. Almost half of young people who commit violent offences have previously been victims themselves. This reinforces a fundamental truth: serious youth violence is as much a safeguarding and prevention issue as it is a criminal justice one.

This assessment also sets out why action is needed now. A growing youth population, rising complexity of need, earlier exposure to harm, and increasing digital and extrafamilial risks all point to the need for stronger, earlier and more coordinated intervention. Without this, we risk avoidable harm to young people and escalating demand across policing, safeguarding, health and education services.

The Surrey Serious Violence Reduction Partnership provides a strong foundation for this work. By aligning enforcement with prevention, education, safeguarding and community support, we can reduce harm, support vulnerable young people and improve safety across Surrey. This requires collective ownership, consistent leadership and a shared commitment to acting on the evidence.

This Needs Assessment strengthens our shared understanding and sets a clear direction for partnership action. I fully support its findings and the continued focus on prevention, early intervention and place-based responses to reduce serious violence and keep our communities safe.

Mark Offord

Mark Offord

Chief Superintendent, Surrey Police

Chair of the Surrey Serious Violence Reduction Partnership Executive Group

About this Report

This report has been developed by the Surrey Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) to build a comprehensive evidence-based understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of serious violence involving children and young people, aged 10 to 24, across Surrey. Its purpose is to provide a robust evidence base that supports effective decision-making, priority-setting and coordinated action by the partnership.

Drawing on quantitative data, professional insight and lived experience, the assessment identifies the key areas, patterns and underlying drivers of serious violence. It highlights who is most affected, where risk is concentrated, and how harm develops and escalates, in order to inform earlier and more preventative responses.

The assessment is grounded in a combined Public Health and place-based approach. The Public Health approach focuses on understanding serious violence through evidence, identifying underlying causes, risk factors and early indicators, with an emphasis on prevention and reducing incidence. The place-based approach considers where risk is concentrated and promotes community-led, asset-based responses that build on local strengths to create safe and supportive environments for children, young people and families.

Together, these approaches ensure that responses to serious violence are collaborative, preventative and proportionate, reflecting serious youth violence as a complex issue that extends beyond enforcement alone.

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Executive Summary

Serious violence presents a complex and far-reaching challenge, affecting individuals, families and communities across England. As defined in the Government's [Serious Violence Strategy](#), it encompasses offences such as homicide, knife and firearm crime, domestic abuse, sexual violence, robbery, exploitation, and emerging threats including corrosive substance attacks. These harms are rarely isolated; they often coexist with entrenched trauma, inequality and wider community harm. Serious Youth Violence focuses on offences perpetrated by and against children and young adults, for this report being the ages 10-24 year-olds.

Surrey continues to rank among the safest counties nationally. However, overall safety can obscure emerging risks and uneven patterns of harm for a small number of children and young people. The evidence is clear: **violence is not inevitable, it is preventable**, and Surrey's strong partnership landscape provides a critical opportunity to intervene earlier and more effectively.

Keeping children and communities safe

Most children and young people in Surrey grow up safe and thrive. Surrey remains one of the safest counties in England. However, a small number of children and young people experience serious violence, with impacts that can be profound and long-lasting for them, their families and their communities. This report exists to understand that harm clearly, and to identify opportunities to prevent it wherever possible.

Why this Assessment Matters

Preventing serious violence requires partnership. This Needs Assessment has been delivered through the Surrey Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) in collaboration with the Surrey Office of Data Analytics (SODA). It provides a comprehensive assessment of serious violence affecting children and young people aged 10–24, bringing together information from the police, youth justice, probation, education, health and safeguarding partners, for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, alongside professional insight and young person lived experience. The analysis seeks to answer three core questions: who is most affected, where harm is happening, and what helps prevent violence before it escalates.

Surrey operates a multi-agency, public health response to serious violence through the SVRP, embedded within the Community Safety and Prevention Board (CSPB). The evidence shows that Serious violence intersects directly with the CSPB's wider priorities and that the harms reinforce one another, shaping the environments in which serious violence emerges. Domestic abuse frequently escalates into coercive control, stalking, sexual violence and serious physical harm. Antisocial behaviour acts as an early warning sign of deeper vulnerability. Organised crime drives exploitation, weapon carrying and retaliatory violence, while

hate-motivated incidents increase fear and fracture community cohesion. Preventing serious violence therefore requires coordinated action across all harm areas, not siloed responses.

What the Evidence Shows

Serious violence affecting children and young people in Surrey is concentrated, not widespread. It is more likely to affect teenagers, particularly between the ages of 14 and 18, and to be linked to specific places, times of year and life transitions. Importantly, nearly half of young people who commit violent offences have previously been victims themselves. Victims were aged 13–20, with a clear peak between 14 and 19. This tells us that preventing violence is not just about enforcement, but about early help, trusted relationships and safe environments. A review of the Surrey Police 2025/26 data following completion of the main analysis identified no significant new or emerging concerns and confirms that the findings remain valid.

Key Findings

- Serious violence involving young people in Surrey is concentrated, patterned and preventable.
- Harm peaks between ages 14-18 and is strongly linked to trauma, exploitation, educational disengagement and adverse childhood experiences.
- 9,442 were recorded for serious violence-related offences involving an identified suspect aged 10–24.
- There were 14,572 victims of serious violence-related offences involving offenders of all ages.
- Most offences involved violence with (43%) or without injury (35%).
- Serious sexual offences accounted for 15% of the total over the three-years .
- Knife involvement was recorded in a small proportion of cases but was most common during mid-adolescence.
- Nearly half of young offenders had previously been victims themselves.
- Violence is concentrated in particular communities, with Guildford, Reigate & Banstead and Spelthorne recording the highest volumes, showing the importance of targeted, place-based action.
- Persistent absence, exclusion and elective home education align closely with areas experiencing higher levels of violence.
- Online environments increasingly influence harm through peer conflict, exploitation and exposure to violent content.
- Serious violence overlaps with domestic abuse, VAWG, exploitation, organised crime, hate crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Trusted adults, education, safe spaces and positive relationships remain the strongest protective factors.

Cross-cutting Risks

Cross-cutting risk flags indicate the frequent presence of wider harm:

- Domestic abuse flagged: 2,249 offences
- Alcohol related: 1,008 offences
- Drug related: 322 offences
- Knife flagged: 476 offences

Demographic Patterns

- **Gender: Males** account for **71%** of youth offenders; offending levels rise sharply from early adolescence and **peak between ages 14–18**.
- **Victims:** Highest victimisation occurs among **14–16-year-olds**, with **females forming the majority of victims (55%)**, reflecting the substantial overlap with violence against women and girls.
- **Victim–offender overlap:** National evidence consistently finds that young people involved in serious violence are frequently both victims and perpetrators, often within the same peer or social networks, reinforcing the need for trauma-informed and safeguarding-led responses rather than enforcement alone.

Geography and Place

- Offence volumes are highest in the **West Division**, followed by East and North (Surrey Police is currently organised into these three geographic areas).
- District hotspots over the three-year period include **Guildford (15.7%)**, **Reigate & Banstead (13.5%)** and **Spelthorne (10.8%)**, while Epsom & Ewell, Mole Valley and Tandridge show lower volumes.

Location Matters

- 36% of offences occur in domestic properties (dwellings)
- 18% in public or open spaces (predominantly streets and roads)
- 7% in education settings
- 28% have no recorded location, limiting full place-based analysis

Education

- 698 offences (7%) occurred in education settings, largely on school premises.
- School-linked incidents are dominated by violence with injury, violence without injury and serious sexual offences, particularly in Reigate & Banstead, Waverley, Spelthorne, Guildford and Elmbridge.

- Persistent absence, exclusion and rising Elective Home Education reduce visibility and access to early support, increasing vulnerability.

Risk Factors

The assessment identifies a consistent set of overlapping risks, including:

- Adverse childhood experiences and unresolved trauma
- Mental health need and emotional dysregulation
- Neurodivergence and SEND
- Educational exclusion and disengagement
- Criminal and sexual exploitation, including county lines
- Peer influence and unsafe physical and digital environments

What helps keep young people safe

The report demonstrates that the strongest protective factors are:

- Trusted adults and positive relationships
- Feeling safe and included in education
- Access to youth services and safe spaces
- Family support and stable housing
- Strong, connected communities

Data quality and limitations

Data completeness remains a significant challenge, particularly for ethnicity and location fields. This limits understanding of disproportionality and place-based risk and should be prioritised for improvement across agencies. This assessment is constrained by known data gaps:

- 28% of police records lack a recorded location
- Missing data remains an issue for protected characteristics, particularly ethnicity
- Improving the quality, consistency and sharing of multi-agency data is essential to strengthening prevention and targeted intervention.

What this means for Surrey

The evidence demonstrates that serious youth violence in Surrey is concentrated, patterned and preventable. Harm is most likely during adolescence, in specific places and among young people experiencing multiple disadvantages. Enforcement-focused responses alone will not deliver sustained reductions. Instead, Surrey

must prioritise earlier intervention, relational practice, place-based prevention and inclusive systems that keep children safe, visible and supported. By acting on this evidence, Surrey can reduce harm, support vulnerable young people and prevent serious violence before it escalates.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are informed by the evidence gathered through this Needs Assessment. Collectively, they reflect the finding that serious violence in Surrey is **concentrated, patterned and preventable**. These recommendations establish a clear, aligned and evidence-led framework for reducing serious violence involving children and young people in Surrey. Through strong partnership governance, shared accountability and a sustained focus on prevention, Surrey is well-placed to reduce harm, prevent escalation and support safer futures for children and communities.

Whole-System Alignment

The recommendations in this Needs Assessment are deliberately **cross-cutting**, reinforcing that serious violence reduction is not the responsibility of any single partnership or service, but a **shared, whole-system endeavour**.

The Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) plays a central convening role and aims to:

- align prevention, safeguarding and enforcement activity;
- avoid duplication across boards and partnerships;
- ensure shared accountability for outcomes; and
- strengthen Surrey's collective ability to prevent harm, reduce demand and promote safer communities.

Recommendation 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

Serious violence is rarely a sudden occurrence and is often preceded by identifiable and preventable indicators. By acting earlier and working collectively, the Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) and wider partnership boards can reduce the risk of escalation into serious violence and support improved long-term outcomes for children and young people across Surrey.

The Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) should continue to strengthen a whole-system approach to prevention and early intervention, focused on identifying and responding to indicators of serious violence as early as possible.

- **This includes improving earlier, coordinated action across agencies through effective information sharing and joint decision-making. This will support the early identification of risks such as**

disengagement from education, experiences of trauma, exploitation and peer-related harm, enabling timely support before concerns escalate.

- Continue to strengthen the emphasis placed on relational and trauma-informed practice, helping children and young people to develop trusted relationships with professionals and to receive proportionate, needs-led support that recognises the impact of adverse experiences.
- Targeted support should prioritise keeping children and young people engaged in education. This includes early help to address attendance, behaviour and wellbeing concerns, alongside flexible and inclusive pathways for those at risk of exclusion or persistent absence.
- Clear and well-understood pathways between universal and targeted services are also essential, ensuring that increasing levels of need lead to timely support without reliance on crisis thresholds. This is particularly important for children experiencing exploitation, harmful peer relationships or multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities.

Recommendation 2: Place-Based and Problem-Solving Approaches

Serious violence involving children and young people in Surrey is not evenly distributed, but is concentrated in particular locations and recurring settings.

The Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) should support a stronger place-based approach, focused on those districts, neighbourhoods and settings where the risk of serious violence is highest.

- This should include strengthening local, multi-agency problem-solving arrangements, bringing together partners to develop a shared understanding of local risks and agree coordinated responses.
- Greater alignment is also needed between policing, youth services, safeguarding and community safety activity within specific places and the development of knowledge to understand these from various lenses. Working in a more joined-up way will help ensure that action is timely, consistent and tailored to local need.
- Consistent use of place-based data and intelligence should underpin this work, enabling partners to identify emerging issues, target resources effectively and track the impact of interventions over time.

Recommendation 3: Targeted Interventions for Heightened Needs

Adolescence, particularly between the ages of 14 and 18, is the period of greatest risk of experiencing serious violence. This risk is especially significant for young people facing multiple and overlapping challenges, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those who are care experienced, and those affected by exploitation.

The Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) should ensure that action is focused on the groups of children and young people who experience disproportionate levels of harm.

- **This includes commissioning and supporting services that are age-appropriate and informed by adolescent development, recognising the specific needs, behaviours and risks associated with this stage of life.**
- **Responses should also be inclusive, equitable and trauma-informed, ensuring that services are accessible and responsive to diverse needs and do not inadvertently exclude or disadvantage particular groups.**

Recommendation 4: Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding

Serious violence affecting children and young people mainly takes place outside the family home and is closely linked to exploitation, peer networks and online spaces.

The Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) should continue to strengthen its contextual safeguarding approach, ensuring that risks in neighbourhoods, schools, peer groups and digital environments are identified and addressed effectively.

- **This includes improving recognition of exploitation as a key driver of serious violence, so that children and young people are supported as victims of harm rather than being viewed solely through a behavioural or criminal lens.**
- **Partners should strengthen timely, consistent and proportionate information sharing between agencies to build a shared understanding of risk, enable earlier identification of vulnerability, and support coordinated safeguarding responses.**
- **Greater attention is also needed to risks associated with digital spaces and social media, including the role of online activity in escalating conflict, grooming and peer-related harm.**
- **Schools play a critical role in this approach and should be supported to respond to safeguarding complexity rather than behaviour alone. This means recognising when behaviour may be an indicator of underlying harm and ensuring that appropriate, joined-up support is put in place.**

Recommendation 5: Systems, Data and Partnership Capability

There are a number of data limitations, including missing location information and inconsistent recording of demographic characteristics. These gaps reduce the ability of partners to fully understand patterns of serious violence and to target and evaluate activity effectively.

The Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) should ensure that the Surrey Office of Data and Analytics (SODA) are acting as a central mechanism for coordination, oversight and learning, bringing together information from community safety, safeguarding, policing, health, education and prevention partners. This cross-cutting intelligence is essential to developing a more complete understanding of the drivers and contexts of serious violence.

- **Better use of shared analysis can support more evidence-led commissioning and prioritisation, ensuring that prevention and early intervention activity across Community Safety and Prevention agendas is aligned with the areas, groups and settings of greatest need.**

Recommendation 6: Community Confidence and Safer Environments

The importance of trusted relationships, safe spaces and a visible community presence in preventing harm and reducing the risk of serious violence involving children and young people is important.

The Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) should support action that strengthens protective environments in the places where children and young people spend their time, including neighbourhoods, community settings and shared public spaces.

- **This includes improving the visibility and accessibility of youth support, ensuring that children and young people can engage with trusted adults and services at an early stage, before concerns escalate.**
- **A greater emphasis on prevention-led approaches can also help build community confidence, shifting the focus away from crisis-driven responses towards earlier, sustained and locally grounded support.**
- **By investing in relationships, safe spaces and community-based prevention, the SVRP and partners can create conditions that reduce vulnerability to harm and support safer, more resilient communities across Surrey.**

Alignment with Surrey Partnerships and Governance

Frameworks

- Reducing serious violence among young people in Surrey requires a coordinated, whole-system response across existing partnerships.
- The recommendations align with the work of the Community Safety and Prevention Board, recognising the close links between serious violence, domestic abuse, VAWG, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, organised crime and exploitation.
- They also support the priorities of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, Education and Inclusion Partnerships, Health and Wellbeing Board, Adult Safeguarding Board, and Prevent governance arrangements. It recognises the connections between youth violence involving young people, trauma-informed practice, early intervention and mental health, exploitation, and with Education and Inclusion Partnerships, given the protective role of education and the need to spot risk at key transition points.
- The Surrey Office of Data Analytics (SODA) provides the shared insight and evaluation needed to target activity effectively and measure impact.
- Together, these partnerships provide the foundation for a coherent, prevention-focused approach to reducing harm and improving outcomes for children and young people.

Learnings from this Needs Assessment

This assessment shows that serious violence affecting young people in Surrey is driven by multiple, overlapping factors and is both understood and preventable. Those most at risk often experience compounding vulnerabilities, including trauma, exploitation, and disengagement, and are frequently already known to services. While Surrey has a strong range of provision in place, the evidence highlights the need for a more coordinated, targeted, and consistent whole-system response. Strengthening trusted relationships, improving early intervention, and ensuring equitable access to support, particularly for less visible groups, is important. The priority is to align and enhance existing services, improve data and partnership working, and embed trauma-informed, inclusive approaches, so that the system moves from insight to effective, preventative action.

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Introduction

Serious violence places a significant burden on individuals, families, communities and wider society. Over the past decade, incidents of serious violence have increased across England and Wales ([Youth Endowment Fund 2024](#)). Serious violence involving young people is not the result of a single cause, but often reflects a complex interaction of factors, including exposure to adversity and trauma, economic hardship, and experiences of domestic or wider community violence.

Definitions

A clear and consistent set of definitions is essential for understanding the scope of this Needs Assessment and ensuring alignment across Surrey's multi-agency partnership. National terminology varies across government, policing, safeguarding and academic sources, and the Surrey Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) adopts definitions that reflect both statutory guidance and the county's prevention priorities.

Defining Serious Violence (SV)

The Home Office's [Serious Violence Duty statutory guidance](#), serious violence includes: Domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property, and threats of violence (as defined in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022).

Specific crime types highlighted in the Home Office Serious Violence Strategy (2018), including:

- Homicide
- Violence against the person, including knife crime and gun crime
- Criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as county lines drug dealing
- Acid and corrosive substance attacks

Surrey Serious Violence Reduction Partnership Definition

Violent crimes or incidents that cause or are intended to cause serious injury, and includes homicide, knife crime (including knife possession), personal robbery and gun crime. 'Serious violence' includes specific crime types where there is the use of force or power, threatened or actual, against another person, or against a group or community with a focus on place.

Defining Serious Youth Violence (SYV)

Serious Youth Violence (SYV) is often seen as a subset of Serious Violence. There is no national definition of “serious youth violence”. However, the following definition is often used, which focused on the age of the victim: Any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19 including the offences of murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm ([Police Authority](#))

In Surrey, this Needs Assessment takes a broader approach in line with the Serious Violence Reduction Partnership’s priority to understand violence involving children and young people aged 10–24, considering individuals as both victims and offenders. This reflects growing recognition that many young adults continue to experience vulnerability linked to exploitation, trauma and key life transitions.

The National Approach to Serious Violence

The Serious Violence Duty

Introduced through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, the [Serious Violence Duty \(SVD\)](#) 2023, places a statutory requirement on key public sector bodies, including police, health services, local authorities, probation, and fire and rescue services, to work collaboratively to prevent and reduce serious violence within their areas.

The Duty embeds a public health approach to tackling serious violence, requiring agencies to:

- Focus on defined populations
- Share data and intelligence across sectors
- Embed community insight and lived experience into local strategies

It emphasises **early intervention**, **evidence-based practice**, and **long-term solutions** targeting the root causes of violence, such as trauma, deprivation, and social exclusion. The Duty also allows flexibility so that local partnerships can tailor their responses to the specific needs of their communities.

In Surrey, implementation is led by the Serious Violence Reduction Partnership within the Community Safety and Prevention Board framework.

Serious violence offences are prosecuted under a range of legislative acts depending on the type and severity of the offence. These include legislation governing assault, weapon possession, domestic abuse, sexual offences, homicide, and public order. Each provides prosecutors with specific powers and sentencing frameworks to respond proportionately to the harm caused.

National Policy Developments

The [National Youth Strategy](#) 2025 sets a 10-year plan emphasising:

- Safe places to go,
- Trusted adults,
- Community belonging, and
- Co-produced youth policy across sectors.

This aligns strongly with the needs identified in Surrey around youth provision, trusted relationships and community safety.

National Crime Patterns

Recent national [crime data](#) shows:

- Decreases in knife and firearms offences,
- Stable levels of stalking, harassment and domestic abuse,
- Ongoing risks to young people linked to online harms and exploitation.

These trends form the backdrop against which Surrey's local picture should be understood.

National Prosecution and Reoffending Trends

[Criminal Justice Statistics](#) (year ending December 2024) show notable shifts in the prosecution landscape:

- Prosecutions for indictable offences increased by 16%, reaching their highest level since 2016.
- Convictions rose by 12%, suggesting improved case progression despite continued system pressures.
- Average custodial sentences decreased slightly from 23.4 months (2023) to 22.0 months (2024), due in part to a rise in lower-level convictions.
- Remand rates at Crown Court increased to 53%, highlighting the seriousness of cases being brought forward.

Reoffending among young people involved in serious violence is often shaped by a range of interconnected experiences and needs. These can include early exposure to trauma, neurodevelopmental differences, social and economic disadvantage, and challenges such as substance use. [National data](#) highlights growing pressures: in late 2023 the proven reoffending rate for children was 32.3%, higher than the adult rate of 28.2%. Rates were substantially higher for those with previous serious sanctions, particularly custody, and exceeded 72% among children with 11 or more prior offences, illustrating the cumulative impact of entrenched disadvantage.

Why Serious Youth Violence Demands Focus

Serious violence involving young people, those aged 10 –24 year olds, requires sustained attention because of the scale, severity and long-term nature of its impacts at a critical stage of development. The consequences of serious violence extend well beyond immediate physical harm. Experiencing or being exposed to violence can have wide-ranging and lasting effects on a young person's life. It may disrupt their engagement with education, impact their mental health and emotional wellbeing, and increase feelings of fear or insecurity. Over time, these experiences can also heighten vulnerability to exploitation, repeated harm, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

The impact of serious violence extends beyond the individual, affecting families, communities, and wider systems. Those who experience harm may carry lasting psychological effects, while families and communities can feel increased fear, uncertainty, and a loss of trust and connection. These experiences can also place additional demand on public and voluntary sector services, including education, health, safeguarding, and community safety. Over time, this can contribute to deepening inequalities and sustained pressures on support systems.

At a national level, serious violence is recognised as a significant and evolving threat. Although overall levels of serious youth violence have stabilised in recent years, the degree of harm remains high, particularly for children and young adults. The economic cost of youth violence is estimated to be around £1 billion per year nationally ([Home Office Serious Violence Strategy, 2018](#)), reflecting both immediate responses by statutory services and longer-term impacts on health, employment and life chances. Inspectorate findings consistently demonstrate strong links between violence, exploitation and wider community harm, reinforcing the need for coordinated, multi-agency safeguarding and prevention approaches.

Government inspection frameworks consistently identify serious youth violence, exploitation (including county lines) and child criminal exploitation as causes of significant harm to individuals and communities. [Multi-agency inspections](#) highlight how these harms spread through peer networks and environments, undermining safety and community cohesion, and reinforcing the link between serious violence, exploitation and wider social conditions.

According to the [Crime Survey for England and Wales \(CSEW\)](#), for the year ending March 2024:

- 0.5% of adults experienced violence (with or without injury) from acquaintances
- 0.7% experienced violence from strangers
- One in four children under 18 reported being either a victim or perpetrator of violence

While these figures have remained relatively stable year-on-year, they represent hundreds of thousands of individuals and demonstrate the scale and impact of violent behaviour across society.

National evidence from the [Youth Endowment Fund \(2025\)](#) and [Youth Justice Statistics \(2023–24\)](#) highlights persistent reoffending and the disproportionate impact of violence on disadvantaged communities. Although there has been a [20% reduction in child hospital admissions due to knife assaults in 2024/25](#), wider indicators, including youth homicides, violent offending and children facing socio-economic disadvantage, show that serious youth violence remains a complex and evolving challenge.

The seriousness of this threat is further underscored by the [National Crime Agency's 2025 Strategic Assessment](#), which identifies serious and organised crime, including violent offending, as one of the greatest risks to UK national security. This risk is compounded by the increasingly interconnected nature of harm,

where online radicalisation, drug supply and exploitation, peer networks and offline violence overlap and reinforce one another.

National evidence on children's lived experiences reinforces the importance of early and preventative action. The Youth Endowment Fund's [Children, Violence and Vulnerability 2025](#) report draws on insights from nearly 11,000 children aged 13–17 in England and Wales and highlights that:

- Violence remains a common experience for teenagers, despite overall levels stabilising in recent years, with many children continuing to experience or witness violence in everyday life, both online and offline.
- Adolescents who may be experiencing additional challenges such as mental health needs, exploitation, or exclusion from education are disproportionately at risk of harm, reflecting the impact of wider inequality.
- Peer-on-peer violence is a dominant feature of children's experiences and is most often associated with friendship groups, schools, neighbourhoods and social spaces rather than strangers.
- Online environments play a significant role in the escalation of violence and conflict, including threats, harassment and exposure to harmful content that can translate into real world harm.
- Strong links exist between experiences of violence, poor mental health and exploitation, with affected children more likely to report anxiety, fear, low wellbeing and involvement in risky or exploitative situations.
- Access to trusted adults, youth services and positive activities can play an important protective role, while a lack of safe spaces or limited opportunities to build supportive relationships may result in increased exposure to harm.

Taken together, this evidence demonstrates that serious violence involving young people is neither isolated or short-term in nature, but often reflects patterns of ongoing unmet needs. Responding effectively requires a coordinated, preventative and whole-system response that acts early, addresses underlying factors that can increase vulnerability to harm and protects young people before violence becomes entrenched. This provides a clear and compelling rationale for sustained local focus and partnership action in Surrey.

Understanding Serious Violence in Surrey

Serious violence in Surrey remains lower than national averages but intersects closely with wider community harms including domestic abuse, exploitation, organised crime and anti-social behaviour. Professional and young person insight highlights growing complexity, hidden vulnerability and the importance of trusted relationships, early intervention and coordinated partnership responses.

In 2025, the [Community Safety Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) identified a range of local factors linked to serious violence in Surrey, including deprivation, experiences of trauma and challenges around mental health, as well as broader drivers such as alcohol-related harm and pressures associated with the night-time economy. While the report emphasises that Surrey continues to be one of the safest counties in England and Wales, it also highlights emerging concerns around domestic abuse, street harassment, acquisitive crime and rising public order offences. Despite generally high levels of community cohesion and pride, some areas report lower trust and heightened fear of crime, particularly among young people travelling alone after dark. Community feedback points to visible drug activity, groups gathering in public spaces, isolated high-profile violent incidents and media reporting as key influences shaping local perceptions of safety.

Surrey Serious Violence Reduction Partnership

In Surrey, implementation of the Serious Violence Duty is led by the Surrey Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP), which aligns with national expectations while shaping a Surrey-specific approach. The Partnership work together to prevent harm, reduce the occurrence of violence, develop a counter-narrative around violence and increase confidence in neighbourhoods. With insight and data, the aim is to co-design interventions and support, which will not only reduce the violence but work to prevent the causal factors that allow violence to grow.

Serious Violence Partnership Priorities 2026/2027

- Working to prevent and reduce knife crime
- Developing strategies to reduce public space violence
- Developing evidence led prevention and interventions for serious violence

Serious Violence as Part of Wider Community Harm

Serious violence in Surrey is increasingly understood through the lens of extra-familial harm, recognising that risk often arises beyond the home and is shaped by peer relationships, specific places, online environments and exploitation. Surrey's approach reflects a life-course perspective, acknowledging that early adversity, trauma and unmet need in childhood and adolescence can increase vulnerability to harm, including violence and exploitation. Key transition points, particularly between children's and adult services are recognised as times of increased uncertainty and reduced support. Strengthening coordination and continuity during these periods is essential to ensure young people feel supported and to reduce the risk of serious harm.

The Surrey SVRP sits within the Community Safety and Prevention Board (CSPB), whose seven focus¹ areas overlap significantly with patterns, drivers, and contexts of serious violence in Surrey. Domestic abuse often develops over time, with patterns of behaviour becoming more controlling and harmful if not recognised and addressed. This can include coercive control, harassment, sexual violence, and, in some cases, escalating physical harm. These patterns are not sudden but follow a progression, making early recognition and consistent, supportive intervention critical to reducing risk and preventing serious harm. Anti-social behaviour can be an early sign of underlying need, often reflecting wider vulnerabilities and environmental pressures that, without support, may increase the risk of harm. Serious organised crime further intensifies risk by driving knife carrying, drug market violence, exploitation related assaults, and retaliatory harm. Hate crime can intensify existing pressures within communities, contributing to fear, division, and heightened tensions that may increase the risk of conflict and harm. Together, these factors illustrate how different forms of harm overlap, reinforcing the broader ecosystem in which serious violence emerges and persists.

The Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board has a critical strategic role in addressing interconnected harms through its system leadership on prevention, inequalities and population health. The Board brings together local authorities, health services, the police and the voluntary sector to oversee delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which prioritises early intervention, mental health, children and young people's wellbeing, and reducing health inequalities. These priorities align strongly with the drivers and consequences of serious violence and community harm. Its focus on prevention, early help and coordinated partnership action supports the Serious Violence Duty by ensuring that responses address root causes, reduce escalation risk, and improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities most affected by harm.

The Safeguarding Adolescents Strategic Subgroup, as part of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, provides a clear strategic connection to the Serious Violence agenda by embedding a child-first,

¹ Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Harm; Violence Against Women and Girls and Domestic Abuse; Hate Crime and Community Cohesion; Prevent; Road Safety; Serious Organised Crime; and Serious Violence.

trauma-informed approach to understanding and responding to extra-familial harm. Through system leadership, shared intelligence and alignment with key strategic boards, the subgroup supports coordinated prevention, early intervention and protection for adolescents who may be experiencing increased vulnerability to harm across Surrey.

The Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board complements this work through its preventative, multi-agency approach to protecting adults at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Its alignment with community safety and serious violence partnerships strengthens shared intelligence, early intervention and whole-system learning to reduce harm across the adult population.

What does this mean for Surrey

Surrey continues to have lower levels of serious violence than the national average and remains one of the safest counties in England. However, even isolated incidents can have devastating consequences for victims, families and communities, while placing significant pressure on public services. Most residents will not have experienced or witnessed serious violence in the past year, but where it does occur, the impacts can be profound, undermining community confidence and cohesion and generating substantial social and economic costs.

Crucially, evidence consistently demonstrates that violence is not inevitable. With the right combination of early intervention, prevention and effective partnership working, it can be reduced and, in many cases, prevented. The Surrey Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) is clear in its commitment to a prevention-led approach. Through strong collaboration and sustained focus on early action, Surrey is well positioned to disrupt pathways from early adversity to serious violence and to create safer, more supportive environments for children and young people.

Activity to prevent and reduce serious violence in Surrey is informed by Surrey Police's operational priorities and the strategic direction set by the Police and Crime Commissioner. In the 2024/25 financial year, Surrey received £546,830.47 in Home Office funding through the Serious Violence Duty. This funding supports the delivery of a coordinated, multi-agency response through the SVRP, focused on prevention, early intervention and harm reduction. [Surrey's Serious Violence Reduction Strategy \(2024–2026\)](#), led by the Serious Violence Reduction Partnership, adopts a public health approach which recognises that violence is shaped by a range of social, economic and contextual factors and is therefore preventable. This includes recognising how a young person's sense of identity and belonging, such as connections to peer groups or networks can shape their experiences, relationships, and exposure to risk. Surrey's well-established multi-agency partnership infrastructure provides a strong foundation for collaboration between services and communities, enabling targeted action to address the conditions in which serious violence can emerge.

Trends from Surrey Professionals

Surrey professionals working with children and young people contributed to this assessment through a questionnaire and in-depth interviews with 18 practitioners. While Surrey has comparatively low levels of serious violence, professionals highlight concerns about hidden harm and disproportionality, including impacts on marginalised groups that may be less visible within existing data.

Professionals report that the profile of serious violence is changing, with knife crime involved at younger ages, more homicide suspects previously unknown to services, and increasing involvement from middle-income families, challenging assumptions that serious violence is limited to deprived areas.

Cross-border influence from larger urban areas, particularly London, is a growing concern, including the spread of gang activity, criminal networks and peer influence. Gangs are described as fast-evolving, with meet-ups often occurring in more urbanised areas of Surrey. Violence is more commonly associated with males, but girls are also affected, often through relationships with male perpetrators and on the periphery.

Significant unmet needs relating to neurodivergence and mental health, including delayed diagnoses, medication issues and limited early intervention support was highlighted as rising area around young people in Surrey. School exclusion is consistently identified as a key risk factor, strongly linked to disengagement and later criminal involvement, often alongside substance use.

A lack of ambition, opportunity and youth provision is also seen as contributing to risk, with insufficient youth workers and a decline in safe, accessible spaces for young people. Social media plays a growing role in harm, facilitating drug activity and violence, shaping identity through harmful gender norms, and normalising violence through online influencers and music culture.

Wider pressures such as the cost of living crisis, unemployment, family stress, reduced parenting capacity and constant online harm further exacerbate risk. Professionals also note limitations in police powers due to the age of children involved, reinforcing the importance of prevention.

Professionals consistently emphasise the need for earlier intervention, whole-system working, and trusted adults to provide stability, belonging and positive role models. Priorities include expanding youth provision, keeping children engaged in education through reduced exclusion, and strengthening multi-agency collaboration.

Across the 82 questionnaire responses, professionals describe a system facing rising and increasingly complex need, with multiple risks presenting simultaneously and insufficient capacity for early intervention. Effective approaches identified include positive relationships, accessible and relational support, purposeful activities, and consistent multi-agency working. A recurring challenge is poor demographic and protected

characteristic data, limiting understanding of unmet need, particularly for girls, minority groups and less visible cohorts.

Insight from Young People in the Service

Interviews were undertaken with young people known to services, providing valuable insight into their lived experiences. Young people wanted to provide information and demonstrated **significant self-awareness and insight**, particularly when they felt **safe, calm and genuinely listened to**.

Across the interviews, young people consistently highlighted the following themes:

- **Violence is rooted in trauma, identity and unsafe environments**, rather than intent. Trauma was described as a key driver of behaviour, with some adult responses unintentionally triggering trauma and escalating conflict.
- **Violence is often learned and normalised**, and in some contexts perceived as exciting or rewarding. Young people emphasised the importance of understanding the meaning behind behaviour, not solely the behaviour itself.
- **Family conflict, neglect and instability** were commonly identified as factors that push young people to seek a sense of belonging outside the home.
- **Peer pressure and influence from older young people** were viewed as the strongest catalysts for involvement. Exploitation was frequently experienced but often perceived by young people as friendship or protection.
- **Knife carrying was described primarily as a response to fear, protection, status and belonging**, rather than an intention to harm.
- **School exclusion was seen to increase vulnerability**, heightening isolation and increasing exposure to harmful peer groups.
- Some aspects of **care and supported accommodation** were reported to unintentionally increase risk, where reduced supervision and tolerance of certain activities made young people more exposed to situations or influences that could lead to harm.
- Young people consistently emphasised that **support must be relational, emotionally safe and built on trust**. Strong, supportive relationships were identified as the most important protective factor.
- **Positive activities and access to trusted adults** were viewed as powerful drivers of change. Creative, physical and purposeful activities were described as helping regulate emotions, reduce risk and support positive identity development

Who is involved in Serious Violence

Serious violence involving young people in Surrey is best understood through the interaction of multiple experiences rather than a single cause. National research and local evidence highlight how factors such as trauma, access to protective systems, unmet mental health and special educational needs, exploitation, digital harm, and the absence of trusted relationships interact and intersect over time, increasing vulnerability to harm. Understanding these influences is essential to shaping effective prevention, early intervention, and coordinated whole-system responses.

Core Drivers of Serious Violence Involving Young People

Cumulative Trauma and Adversity

Experiences such as domestic abuse, neglect, and emotional or physical harm can have a profound impact on a young person's sense of safety, development, and wellbeing. These experiences are linked to an increased likelihood of both experiencing harm and becoming involved in harmful situations.

Trauma can affect emotional regulation, impulse control, and coping strategies, and may be expressed through behaviours such as withdrawal, heightened alertness, or attempts to manage overwhelming experiences or unmet needs. When these needs are not recognised or supported early, young people may seek connection, stability, or protection which may be exploited by those wanting to cause harm.

Economic and Structural Pressures

Poverty, rising living costs, unemployment, food insecurity and insecure housing can place significant strain on families and communities. Where these pressures are present, protective factors such as access to safe spaces, trusted relationships and consistent opportunities may be more difficult to sustain. As a result, some young people may be exposed to environments where there is increased risk of harm, including exploitation or violence. Nationally, serious youth violence is estimated to cost around £1 billion annually ([Home Office Serious Violence Strategy, 2018](#)), reflecting long-term impacts on health, education, employment and the criminal justice system. In Surrey, these pressures are unevenly distributed, with certain neighbourhoods experiencing higher levels of disadvantage that can heighten exposure to risk factors and reduce access to protective opportunities.

Education, Exclusion and Disengagement

Schools are a key protective environment. Where children experience exclusion, persistent absence or disengagement, this can reduce access to support, relationships and stability, increasing their exposure to harm, including serious violence. A 2025 report by [Youth Endowment Fund](#) focusing on the association between school exclusion, suspension, absence and violent crime, found that:

- Permanently excluded children are over eight times more likely to have a police record for serious violence.
- Children suspended or excluded are five times more likely to have a police-recorded offence.
- High levels of absence (20% or more) are a significant risk indicator, with strong associations to later violence and offending.

In Surrey, persistent absence remains above pre-pandemic levels, with 2023/24 seeing 228 pupils, who had previously been missing or absent, receiving permanent exclusions. Districts with the highest absence closely align with youth justice and police data. Rising levels of Elective Home Education (3,106 pupils in 2023/24) further limit oversight and access to early support (Department for Education (DfE)).

In Surrey, the [Oak Review](#) identified that experiences of trauma, racism and exclusion within education settings can undermine engagement and trust, particularly for young people from minoritised communities. These factors can increase exposure to risk. This highlights the importance of inclusive, trauma-informed school environments as a core component of violence prevention.

Peer Networks, Belonging and Exploitation

Serious violence involving young people is strongly shaped by peer relationships and the need for belonging. While “gangs” are often referenced, violence more commonly occurs within fluid, loosely connected peer networks rather than formal gang structures. Factors such as instability within the home environment, exposure to domestic abuse, care experience, family involvement in offending, and barriers to engagement with education can increase vulnerability to harm for some young people. These experiences can affect access to consistent support, safety and trusted relationships, which are key protective factors. In this context, some young people may be drawn to peer groups, including gangs, as a way of seeking safety, belonging, identity or financial security. This is often a response to unmet needs or gaps in support ([Safeguarding Network](#), 2025).

The [World Health Organisation](#) highlights that social tolerance to violence can be learned through exposure at home, in the community, or through media. Motivations for violent behaviour among young people are varied and often interconnected: fear of harm, peer pressure, a desire for status, and the allure of

adrenaline-fuelled risk-taking. Adolescents are particularly susceptible due to developing impulse control and a strong need for social belonging.

Exploitation is frequently misunderstood by young people as friendship or loyalty, especially when older peers provide perceived protection or resources. This dynamic is central to child criminal exploitation, county lines involvement and weapon carrying. These factors reinforce the importance of addressing the social conditions and experiences that influence safety, relationships and wellbeing.

Digital Environments and Online Harm

Social media plays an increasingly significant role in shaping attitudes towards violence and risk. Young people are routinely exposed to violent imagery, threats, gang-related content and online grooming through algorithm-driven feeds, often without actively seeking such material.

In a survey conducted by the [Youth Endowment Fund \(2024\)](#), 25% of young people in England and Wales reported that social media platforms had actively suggested violent content to them. It found that 70% of teens had seen real-world violence on social media in the past year. Common content includes fights (56%), threats (43%), gang activity (33%), and weapons (35%). Exposure is often algorithm-driven, not actively sought out by young people. This exposure can desensitise young people and normalise violence, with 64% of those who perpetrated violence stating that social media played a role. Although the survey did not establish a direct causal relationship, it highlighted the role of digital platforms in shaping attitudes toward violence and increasing exposure to harmful material.

Cyberbullying is another form of violence linked to social media, enabling harm at any time and without physical presence. Young people who experience online bullying often feel less supported and are less likely to seek help, particularly when adults are the perpetrators. This type of abuse is associated with serious impacts, including anxiety, depression, and increased risk of suicidal behaviour, especially when sexual exploitation is involved. ([Cyberbullying in Children and Youth: Implications for Health and Clinical Practice - PMC](#)).

While it is recognised that digital spaces can provide connection, excessive exposure is associated with loneliness, poor sleep and reduced wellbeing, all of which increase vulnerability to harm. A longitudinal study by the [University of Surrey](#) 2025, found that smartphone use both boosts perceived social support and increases loneliness, with excessive use linked to reduced life satisfaction. While not directly about violence, these emotional impacts can affect wellbeing and reduce access to protective factors, potentially increasing vulnerability to harm. Local trends mirror national evidence, highlighting the need for digital literacy, early intervention and safeguarding responses that reflect online as well as physical environments.

Looked After Children, Care-Experienced and SEND Young People

Looked after children and care-experienced young people are disproportionately affected by serious violence. This is linked to a range of intersecting experiences, including trauma, placement instability, disrupted education, which can impact access to protective factors and increase exposure to exploitation. According to the [Youth Endowment Fund 2025](#), while the number of children looked after by local authorities has slightly declined, the rates of hospital admissions for knife-related assaults and referrals to mental health services have increased, indicating a broader pattern of increased vulnerability shaped by overlapping experiences and reduced protective support.

Disabled and neurodivergent children are significantly overrepresented in school exclusions and the youth justice system. The 2025 UCL/Michael [Sieff Foundation](#) 2025 report revealed that 80% of children cautioned or sentenced in the youth justice system in England and Wales have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). These children are disproportionately represented within the youth justice system, including being more likely to enter custody at a younger age, receive longer sentences, and experience repeated involvement in offending with increased violence. The report highlights the need for systemic change, including early identification through screening, and embedding trauma-informed and neurodiversity-aware approaches across the justice system to ensure responses are supportive, proportionate and adequate to individual circumstances.

A study published in the [Children Journal 2025](#) examined Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) traits in a forensic youth population in London and found that ASD, particularly when combined with substance use, was associated with increased risk of violent offences and gang involvement. The study emphasised the need for more nuanced understanding and tailored interventions, as ASD traits alone did not predict offending but could interact with other risk factors to increase vulnerability.

In Surrey, the number of children and young people with active Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans has risen by 12.8% between 2023 and 2024, reflecting growing identification of additional needs across the county ([Surrey-i data](#)). Surrey Youth Justice Survey data shows **518 children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**, who had a Youth Justice intervention **between April 2024 and March 2025**, of which 169 have never had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or SEN Support Plan (33%). Looking at the **349** who have had or currently have an EHCP or SEN Support Plans (67%):

- 134 have an active EHCP
- 64 have SEN Support Plans
- 25 have former EHCP which has now ended
- 126 have former SEN Support Plans which has now ended

Transitions, System Gaps and Loss of Trust

Transitions, particularly from children's to adults' services, represent a critical point of vulnerability. At age 18, support often reduces sharply, creating a "cliff edge" where ongoing exploitation or coercion is no longer recognised, and young people are treated as offenders rather than victims.

Mistrust in services, including policing and statutory agencies, further compounds risk. Young people frequently report not feeling believed, understood or treated fairly. This mistrust can be linked to weapon carrying, disengagement from support and reluctance to seek help, reinforcing cycles of harm.

Perpetrators and Victims

Serious youth violence in Surrey affects a distinctive but diverse group of young people. While overall volumes remain comparatively low, the concentration of harm among adolescents, girls, minoritised groups, neurodivergent CYP, those with care experience, and those facing multiple disadvantages highlights the need for targeted, trauma-informed and intersectional responses. This section summarises the demographic, behavioural, and contextual profiles of perpetrators and victims using Surrey Police, Youth Justice, and multi-agency intelligence on those aged 10-24 years, between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025.

Perpetrators

The offender profile from the Surrey Police data indicates that serious and violent offending in Surrey is **predominantly driven by adolescent and young adult males**, with escalation beginning in early teenage years and continuing into the early twenties. Gaps in demographic data, particularly ethnicity, limit deeper understanding of disproportionality and should be addressed to support more targeted prevention and safeguarding responses.

Gender

Offending is predominantly male, with males accounting for just over 70% of all recorded Surrey Police offences (6,696 of 9,442). Females account for 28% (2,665 offences). Offences involving non-binary and transgender individuals are very small in number, and a small proportion of records have unknown gender.

Although females make up a smaller share of youth offending nationally, the [Local Government Association](#) highlights that their involvement in violence is often overlooked due to gender bias and limited gender-specific services. Females are more likely to be involved in low-level or peer-on-peer violence but are also increasingly affected by exploitation, gangs, and county lines. Contributing factors include adverse childhood experiences

(ACEs), poverty, care instability, discrimination, and unmet neurodiversity needs. Females may move between victim and perpetrator roles, with violence sometimes used as a survival strategy.

In Surrey, these national patterns are reflected clearly. Reports to Crimestoppers indicate that 71% of the alleged offenders linked to serious violence were male, compared with 16% female. 14 offenders were aged under 14. Surrey Police recorded 9,442 offences between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, of which 71% (6,696) involved male offenders, while 28% (2,665) involved female offenders. The most common age for offending was 15 years (10% of all offenders; 956 offences), followed by 16-year-olds (9%; 806 offences). Offending levels were also high among 14-, 18-, and 19-year-olds (each 8%; 800 offences). Several ages, including 13, 17, 20, 22, 23, and 24 years, each accounted for 7% of recorded offenders, while 12-year-olds accounted for 5%.

Surrey Youth Justice Service (YJS) data shows a sustained increase in female representation in offending. Between October 2022 and March 2025, 1,283 offences were recorded, with the proportion of female offenders increasing from 13% in 2020/21 to 26% in 2023/24, before falling slightly to 24% in 2024/25. Although total offences fell sharply from 563 in 2023/24 to 371 in 2024/25.

Recent probation data from 2025 indicates that among 112 individuals aged 18–24, the vast majority were male, unemployed, and assessed as medium-to-high risk of serious harm, with 77% under supervision for violent offences.

Ethnicity

The largest proportion of the Surrey Police offences involved individuals recorded as White British (5,359 offences), reflecting Surrey's wider population profile. Smaller numbers were recorded across a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. However, a substantial proportion of ethnicity data is missing or not stated (over 2,800 records combined), limiting the ability to draw robust conclusions about disproportionality.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, the Surrey Youth Justice Service recorded 4,409 cases. Across both 2023/24 and 2024/25, White children formed the largest proportion of Surrey's offending population, slightly overrepresented (+1%) relative to their share of the local 10–17 population. Mixed-ethnicity children were consistently overrepresented by +2% to +3%, while Asian or Asian British children were underrepresented (–4%). Black and Black British children showed growing overrepresentation, rising from +1% to +3% over the two-year period. Children from 'Other' ethnic groups remained slightly underrepresented overall.

Ethnic disproportionality is also visible in the secure estate, where Black, dual-heritage, Gypsy/Roma, and White Irish children are overrepresented. Surrey's Disparity Working Group is actively examining the underlying causes of these inequalities, using detailed analysis to inform targeted responses and system reform.

Age

Offending is concentrated in adolescence and early adulthood. The highest volumes of offences occur between ages 14 and 24, with a clear peak between 15 and 20. Offending increases sharply from age 12, peaks in the mid-to-late teenage years, and remains high into the early twenties.

Offence Type

Violence is the dominant offence category across all ages:

- Violence with Injury and Violence without Injury account for the largest volume of offences.
- Serious Sexual and Robbery offences increase markedly from early adolescence.
- Offending escalates rapidly between ages 13 and 16, coinciding with key developmental and safeguarding transition points.

Outcome

Across serious violence cases, only a small proportion progress to formal criminal justice action, with charges, summonses and cautions accounting for a minority of outcomes. The majority of cases conclude due to victim withdrawal, evidential difficulties or public-interest decisions, highlighting the limits of enforcement-led responses and the importance of early intervention, victim support and trauma-informed practice.

Victims

The victim profile indicates that serious violence in Surrey:

- Disproportionately affects females
- Is concentrated among teenagers and young adults
- Is driven primarily by violent and sexual offences
- Is constrained by significant gaps in demographic data, particularly ethnicity

Across the Surrey Police dataset, between 1 April 22 and 31 March 2025, there were 14,572 victims of serious violence, regardless of age of offender.

Gender

Victimisation is predominantly experienced by females, who account for almost 60% of all recorded victims (8,700 of 14,572). Males account for just under 39% (5,638). A very small proportion of victims are recorded as non-binary or transgender, while a small number of records have unknown gender.

Ethnicity

The majority of victims are recorded as White British (7,733), reflecting Surrey's population profile. Victims are also recorded across a broad range of ethnic backgrounds, including Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups.

However, data completeness is a significant limitation, with ethnicity either *not recorded* or *not stated* for over one third of victims (more than 5,000 records). This substantially restricts the ability to assess disproportionality or targeted risk for specific communities.

Age

Victimisation is concentrated in adolescence and early adulthood. The highest numbers of victims are aged 13–20, with a clear peak between 14 and 19. Victim numbers remain high through the early twenties, before gradually declining.

Offence Type

Violence is the dominant form of victimisation:

- Violence without Injury (5,221 victims) and Violence with Injury (5,153 victims) together account for the majority of incidents.
- Serious Sexual offences represent a substantial proportion of victimisation (2,779), with a strong concentration among adolescents.
- Robbery and other offence types make up a smaller but still significant share.
- Sexual offences and violence both show increasing prevalence from early adolescence, peaking in the mid-to-late teenage years.

Outcome

Youth Justice Service data shows that between 2022 and 2025, 31% of cases proceeded to court, while 69% were managed through the Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP). 53% of victims declined or withdrew support, and a further 15% could not be contacted, highlighting challenges in engagement and trauma-informed victim

support. 39% of the Surrey Police offences between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, against offenders aged 10-24 years, could not proceed due to the lack of victim support (3,710/9,442).

The Victim–Perpetrator Overlap

National evidence consistently finds that young people involved in serious violence are frequently both victims and perpetrators, often within the same peer or social networks. A 2025 national systematic review commissioned by the [Youth Endowment Fund \(YEF\)](#) and conducted by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) found:

- High overlap between victimisation and offending in serious youth violence
- Violence is often retaliatory, cyclical, and shaped by ongoing disputes
- Many young people enter violent behaviour after being victimised first

[HMICFRS](#) qualitative research with young people aged 18–24 in custody or on probation found:

- Most participants had been targets of serious violence before becoming perpetrators
- Violence was often framed as self-protection or retaliation, rather than predatory offending

Relationships

The Surrey Police data, between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, shows the offender relationship for each offence, with the majority of offences involving **conflict-driven, unknown, or loosely connected relationships**, rather than close friends or family.

The largest category is for rivals, feuding or unfriendly relationships, accounting for 1,965 offences (21%). This indicates that a significant proportion of incidents arise from ongoing conflict or hostility rather than established personal relationships. Strangers represent the second largest group, with 1,224 offences (13%), highlighting that a substantial share of harm occurs between individuals with no prior relationship. Acquaintance relationships collectively account for a notable proportion of offences, suggests that casual or situational contact carries appreciable risk, with Social acquaintances, 10% (976 offences) and Legal or business acquaintances, 1% (83 offences).

Domestic and intimate relationships account for a smaller but still significant share, with Ex-partners and ex-boyfriends/girlfriends together accounting for 10% and Current partners and boyfriends/girlfriends, representing 6%. These figures underline the continued relevance of intimate and domestic contexts. Family relationships (including children, siblings and other family members) account for a combined 10%, with offences involving a child alone representing 6% (584 offences). Associates and neighbours each contribute

around 4% or less, while friends and positions of trust each account for 1%, indicating lower overall prevalence in close or formalised relationships.

Unknown or other relationship types make up 11% (1,018 offences), reflecting limitations in recording but also indicating a wide variety of relationship contexts.

Summary - Who is involved in Serious Violence Section

Serious violence primarily affects adolescents and young adults experiencing multiple vulnerabilities. Trauma, educational disengagement, exploitation, SEND, mental health needs and transitions between services are recurring themes. Young people are often both victims and perpetrators, requiring safeguarding-led responses.

What are Serious Violence Offences

Information that is useful to understand serious violence and the contributing factors is held by many agencies, including Children services, Public Health, Youth Justice, Police, Probation, Prisons, Safeguarding teams, schools and all those that work with children.

Serious violence in Surrey is grouped into six main offence categories: homicide; knife-enabled offences (including possession); firearms offences; robbery; domestic abuse; sexual offences; and exploitation. Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, **Surrey Police recorded a total of 52,565 serious violence offences**, of which **9,442 (18%) involved identified perpetrators aged 10–24**. Overall offending has decreased year on year, including within the 10–24 age group. The following sections will exam this cohort in more detail.

Table 1: Surrey Police Violent Offences by Year (2022–2025)

Year (April to March)	All Offences	10-24 Year Olds	Percentage 10-24 of Total
2022/2023	17,921	3,443	19%
2023/2024	17,782	3,214	18%
2024/2025	16,862	2,785	17%
TOTAL	52,565	9,442	18%

Overview of Offences for Surrey

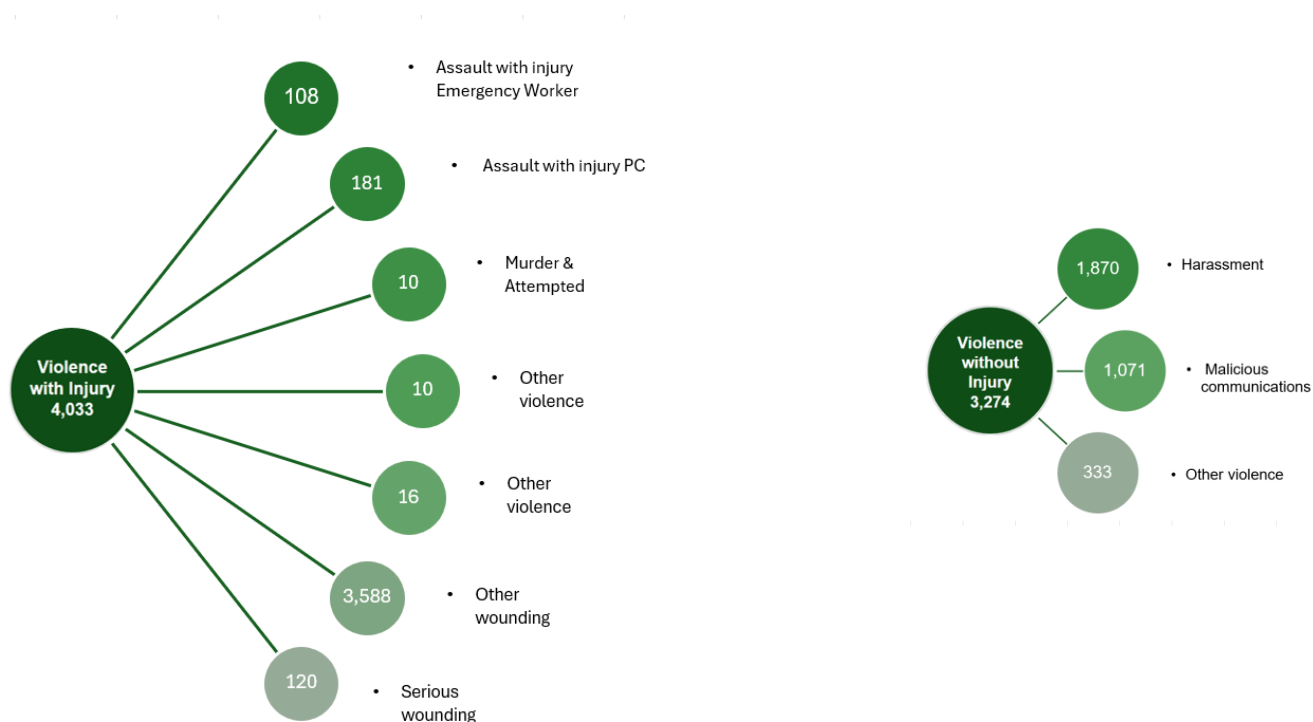
When looking at the offences for serious violence, the focus is on specific crime types where violence or the threat of violence is inherent. The Surrey Police dataset shows clear patterns in the types of serious violence recorded across the year. ‘Violence with injury’ and ‘Violence without injury’ account for the overwhelming majority of all offences, followed by ‘Serious Sexual offences’. The offences have flags for Alcohol (1,008), Drugs (322), Cyber crime (972), Knife crime (476) and Domestic (2,249).

Diagram 1: Number of Offences by Type (2022-2025)

Other Criminal Offences • 47 Crimes	Other Sexual Offences • 351 Crimes	Robbery of Personal Property • 293 Crimes	Serious Sexual • 1,444 Crimes	Violence with Injury • 4,033 Crimes	Violence without injury • 3,274 Crimes
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Violence With Injury and Without Injury

Diagram 2: Number of Violence with Injury and With Injury Offences by Type (2022-2025)



Relationship context is a major factor in violence, with the data showing that violence and sexual offending span a **wide spectrum of personal, familial, and trust-based relationships**,

Violence with and without injury offences involve a broad mix of **known and unknown relationships**, but are most commonly linked to **rivals/feuding/unfriendly relationships, strangers, and current or former intimate partners**. Importantly, a substantial number of cases involve **children (517 with injury; 67 without injury)**, highlighting a strong **domestic and family-based harm dimension**.

Serious violence among young people remains closely linked to substance and alcohol use, which can reduce inhibitions, impair decision-making, and increase the risk of situations escalating into harm. Between August 2024 and June 2025, [Catch22](#) worked with 480 young people in Surrey, with non-opiate substances and alcohol accounting for the largest treatment cohorts. Of those supported, 62% were male, 37% female, and 1% unknown. Referrals most commonly came from Children and Family Services (65), Universal Education (60), Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (25), and relatives, peers or other concerned individuals (52).

In Surrey, between 2022 and 2025, there were 35,983 alcohol-related hospital admissions, including 830 involving 10–24-year-olds. Teenage girls were disproportionately affected, with 149 female admissions

among 12–17-year-olds compared with 63 males. Drug-related harm followed a similar pattern: 1,779 drug-related admissions were recorded, including 164 for under-18s, alongside 967 non-fatal overdoses in 0–17-year-olds, with 820 of which involved girls. During the same period, there were 1,643 drug-related ambulance call-outs and 285 alcohol-related call-outs, with 15 involving young people aged 10–24. Violence-related harm was also evident in the admissions data, with 122 assault-related admissions for 0–24-year-olds (355 across all ages), most commonly linked to head injuries and external-cause trauma. Areas such as Waverley, Guildford, Woking, and Reigate & Banstead saw the highest levels of assault admissions (Surrey Heartland data).

The Surrey Police data shows 1,008 offences (11%), which had a flag relating to alcohol. Violence with injury (657) and Serious sexual (239) had the highest number of offences. Violence without injury had 80 offences. Drug-related flags were on 322 of the offences, with 170 for violence with injury, 70 for serious sexual and 61 for violence without injury.

Combined Alcohol with Knife Flag

- 25 of the alcohol related offences also had the flag for knife related (Violence with injury) and 18 were for violence without injury.
- The drug-related offences show the knife flag for 10 relating to violence without injury and 9 violence with injury.

Combined Alcohol with Domestic Abuse Flag

- 198 of the 657 alcohol related offences with an alcohol flag for violence with injury also had a domestic abuse flag. Half of the violence without injury and 36 of the serious sexual (40/80).
- The drug-related flag against domestic abuse, shows 61/170 offences for violence with injury.

Combined Alcohol with Drug Related Flag

- 129 of the 657 offences for violence with injury had both flags. 29/80 violence without injury and 48/239.

It should be noted, that across offence types, there are persistent volumes recorded as ‘no relationship provided’ or ‘no victim’. This is particularly evident for violent offences and other sexual offences, indicating incomplete relationship recording that may understate certain relationship types (especially domestic or familiar links).

Homicide (Murder and Attempted)

In UK law, homicide refers to the unlawful killing of a human being and includes several distinct offences. The most serious is murder, defined as intentional killing or causing grievous bodily harm with malice aforethought. Manslaughter is a lesser offence where the killing occurs without intent, either due to negligence or mitigating circumstances such as diminished responsibility or loss of control. Other forms include infanticide, where a mother kills her infant due to postnatal mental disturbance, and corporate manslaughter, where a death results from gross negligence by an organisation.

Nationally, there were 522 homicide victims of all ages in England and Wales in the year ending March 2025, according to the [Office for National Statistics](#). Of these, 63 victims were recorded in the South East region.

Looking specifically at young people, [Youth Endowment Fund](#) analysis of the Home Office Homicide Index shows that 63 victims were aged 16–24 across England and Wales in the same period. Homicides involving young people remain a relatively low-volume but high-impact form of violence, meaning figures can fluctuate significantly year to year.

Crimestoppers, an independent charity that allows people to report crime 100% anonymously via phone or online, received 23 contacts regarding Homicides. Surrey Police had 10 offences recorded as ‘Murder and Attempted’ during the three-year period, 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, with under 5 involving a knife.

Victim

Male victims accounted for 70% of homicide cases in Surrey, with victim ages ranging from 17 to 54 years. Ethnicity information was unavailable for 70% of victims.

Offender

The Surrey Police data over the three-year period shows that 80% of homicide offenders were male and 20% female, with over half residing outside of Surrey. Offending began at age 16 and continued through to age 24, with no offenders recorded at age 20 during this period. In terms of ethnicity, White British was the most frequently recorded group, although the number was fewer than five.

As the numbers of homicides in Surrey are low, the outcome and geography breakdown can not be presented.

Knife-enabled offences (Including possession)

Knife-enabled offences refer to crimes where a knife or other bladed or pointed article is used, threatened, or possessed unlawfully. These offences fall into two main categories: possession and use. Possession offences involve carrying a knife in public without lawful authority or good reason, while use offences involve employing a knife to threaten, injure, or commit another crime such as robbery, assault, or murder. The legal definition includes a wide range of items beyond traditional knives, such as razors, swords, broken glass bottles, and improvised weapons.

Missing from home or being approached to carry drugs or weapons increases the likelihood of violence involvement by 5–6 times. ([Youth Endowment Fund](#)). Children who carry knives are likely to have been a victim of violence or carry a knife out of fear of victimisation ([Knife Crime, Key Evidence and Insights 2025](#)). Social media is seen as a factor contributing to the surge in knife crime in schools. Knife crime is not seen as a standalone issue by schools, but part of a broader safeguarding ecosystem including gang culture, mental health, and exploitation ([Schools' Response to Knife Crime in Schools 2025](#)). [HMICFRS, Ofsted, CQC and HMI Probation 2024](#) findings show that children as young as 11 carry knives due to feeling unsafe.

Surrey hospital data shows that between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, there were 723 admissions across all ages linked to sharp-object injury diagnosis codes, 443 of which involved people under 25. 11% of all admissions (79, including 36 under-25s) were recorded as assaults or legal interventions, while the remainder were attributed to self-harm or undetermined intent. Admissions declined year-on-year from 2022 to 2024, with a slight increase in 2025, ([Surrey Heartlands data](#)).

Crimestoppers received 87 contacts with information around knives in Surrey. When looking at the Surrey Police for 10-24 year-olds, over the three-year period, 5% of the total offences are flagged as being knife related (476 of the 9,442). When looking at the offence categories, 289 offences were for having or threatening with a blade or point, with 219 of these being for 'having an article with a blade or point in a public place'.

Victim

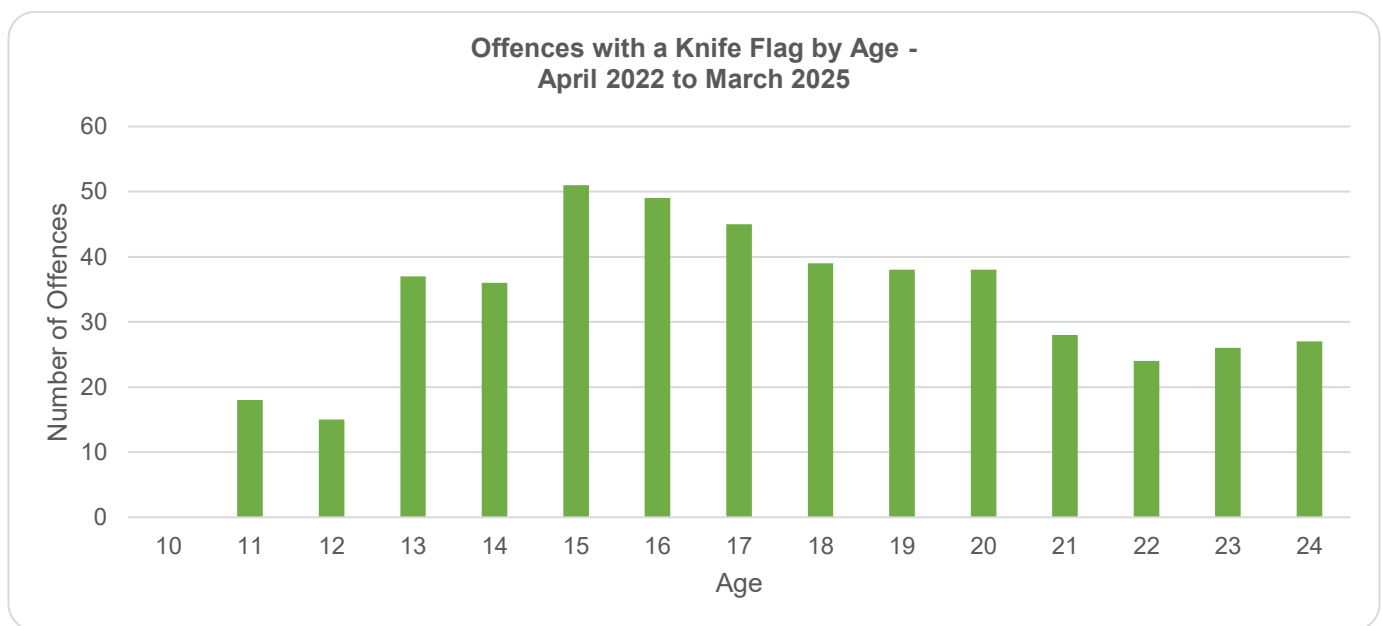
Males accounted for 56% of knife-related victim offences (267), 19% were female (89), while 25% of cases had no gender recorded (116). The number of cases rises steadily from age 11 (9) to a peak at age 16 (38). The offences between 14- and 16-year-olds (30, 32 and 38 respectively) are the highest points, indicating these as key ages where prevalence is greatest. The numbers rise slightly again at age 22 (14) after reaching a low point at 21 years (9), but these remain far below the mid-teen peak. In terms of ethnicity, White British victims represented 40% of cases, with ethnicity unknown for 46% (217). The data shows the victim and offender relationship, with 22% of the relationships categorised as being rivals, feuding or unfriendly (105), and no victim or relationship information was recorded for 33% (159).

Offender

When looking at the Surrey Police data for perpetrators aged 10-24 years, 86% of the offenders were male (411) and 13% female, the remainder were unknown. Offences were lower among children aged 10 to 12, but from age 13 onwards there is a marked increase (37), rising sharply through age 14 (36) and reaching the highest levels at ages 15 and 16 (51 and 49 respectively). From age 17 to 19, the numbers begin to fall gradually, although they remain noticeably higher than those seen in the younger age groups. By the early twenties, the figures continue to decline. Overall, the pattern indicates that mid-adolescence, particularly ages 15 and 16, represents the period of greatest risk, with involvement increasing steeply from age 13 and then tapering off only gradually into early adulthood. 57% of the offenders were White British (272), while 24% unknown (114).

Chart 1: Knife related offences (2022-2025)

Values under 5 have been replaced with 0



Outcome

26% were classified as Victim Declines/Withdraws Support – Named Suspect Identified (126). 18% of offenders for knife-related offences were charged (84), with 33% of these charges relating to Robbery of Personal Property (28/84) and 30% to Having an Article with a Blade or Point on School Premises (25/84). 19% had victim support but encountered evidential difficulties (53). 9% received a Summoned/Postal Requisition (41), and 6% were directed towards diversionary, educational, or intervention activities (30).

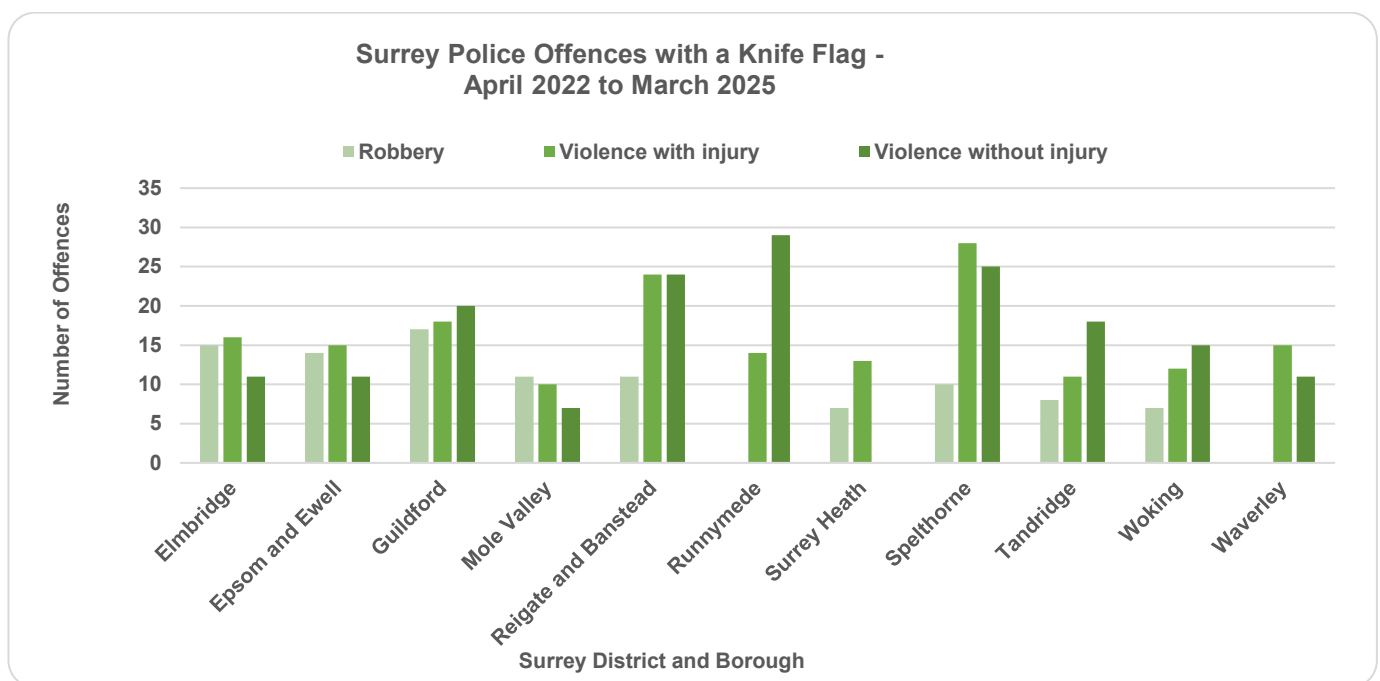
Geography

Reigate and Banstead (49), Spelthorne (48) and Runnymede (43) had the highest number of offences recorded relating to a blade or point. When looking at the offence types and locations involving a knife, the following can be seen:

- Violence without injury: Runnymede (29), Spelthorne (25), Reigate and Banstead (24) and Guildford (20).
- Violence with injury: Spelthorne (28), Reigate and Banstead (24) and Guildford (18).
- Robbery: Guildford (17), Elmbridge (15) and Epsom and Ewell (14).
- Guildford had 7.7 offences per 1,000 residents in the east side of the town centre. 4.5 offences per 1,000 residents in Redhill East.

Chart 2: Knife Flag offences by District and Borough

Serious sexual and Other Criminal Offences have been excluded as values were under 5 per district and borough



Firearms offences

Firearms offences refer to a range of criminal acts involving the possession, use, manufacture, or distribution of firearms and ammunition, as defined under the Firearms Act 1968. A firearm is legally described as a lethal barrelled weapon capable of discharging a missile with kinetic energy exceeding one joule at the muzzle, and includes component parts, accessories (such as silencers), and certain types of ammunition. Offences include possession without a valid certificate, carrying a firearm in public, possession with intent to endanger life or cause fear of violence, and using a firearm during the commission of another crime. UK law imposes strict licensing requirements, and unauthorised possession alone is a criminal offence, regardless of intent to use.

Crimestoppers received 125 contacts relating to gun crime in Surrey. The Surrey Police data shows 66 firearms related offences between 2022 and 2025, 47 of which fell under Other Criminal Offences (based on perpetrators aged 10-24 years). The most common offence type was Carrying a loaded, unloaded, or imitation firearm or air weapon in a public place (26 offences), accounting for 39% of all firearms offences. A further 26% were for Possession of a firearm or imitation firearm with intent to cause fear of violence (Group 1) (17 offences).

Victim

91% of firearms-related offences had no victim details recorded (60 cases), while the remaining 9% involved male victims (6). Age information was missing for 61 of the 66 recorded firearms offences, and ethnicity was unknown in 62 cases, indicating significant gaps in victim data for firearm offences.

Offender

94% of offenders linked to firearms offences were male (62), with the remaining cases involving female offenders. Offending shows a peak at age 14 (10 offences), followed by a decline at age 15 (fewer than five offences), before rising again to nine offences at age 16. In terms of ethnicity, 62% of offenders were recorded as White British (41), while 20% (13) had no ethnicity information recorded.

Relationship

Where the perpetrator is known, offences recorded under *Other criminal offences* remain low volume (47) and are almost entirely recorded as no victim.

Outcome

26% of outcomes involved cases where a suspect was identified and the victim supported police action, but the investigation could not proceed due to evidential difficulties (19 cases). A further 18% resulted in a charge or a summons/postal requisition (12).

Geography

Runnymede had 10 of these offences, followed by Guildford (8), Reigate and Banstead (7) and Spelthorne (7). 26 of the offences were for 'Other Criminal Offences: Carrying a loaded or unloaded or imitation firearm or air weapon in public place'. 18 were for 'Violence without injury: Other violence', with 17 of these for 'Possession of a firearm or imitation firearm with intent to cause fear of violence (Group 1)'.

Robbery

Robbery is defined under Section 8 of the Theft Act 1968 as the act of stealing combined with the use or threat of force. A person is guilty of robbery if they steal, and immediately before or at the time of doing so, and in order to do so, they use force on any person or put them in fear of being subjected to force. Robbery is considered an aggravated form of theft due to the element of violence or intimidation.

Crimestoppers received 16 calls or online forms for Robbery. There were 293 offences recorded by Surrey Police for the three-year period, with 289 for 'Robbery of Personal Property'.

Victim

Males accounted for **90%** of robbery victims (263), with **8%** recorded as female (23) and the remaining cases involving individuals recorded as transgender or where gender was not specified (7). Victim numbers increase from age **12**, doubling at **13**, and continue to rise through to **15**, which represents the peak victim age (**41** offences). Numbers decline slightly at **16** (39 offences) before dropping more sharply at **17** and **18** (21 offences each), and again at **19** (13 offences). **White British** individuals made up **53%** of robbery victims (156). When looking at the relationship between the victim and offender, 48% of the victims were strangers (140) and 28% were categorised as rivals, feuding or unfriendly (83).

Offender

94% of robbery offenders were male, with 6% recorded as female. Offending begins to rise from age 13 (24 offences), peaks at 16, and then declines steadily through ages 20 (19 offences) and 21 (15 offences). In terms

of ethnicity, 58% of offenders were recorded as White British (169), while ethnicity was unknown for 23% of cases (66).

Relationship

Robbery (293 incidents) is most strongly associated with:

- Rivals/feuding/unfriendly relationships
- Strangers

This confirms robbery as an offence type more closely aligned with peer conflict and opportunistic violence, rather than domestic or familial settings.

Outcome

37% of the offenders were known and had victim support, but faced evidential difficulties (109). In 26% of the cases, the suspect was known, but the victim declined or withdrew support (75). 15% were charged with robbery offences (45) and 9% were summonsed or sent a postal requisition² (25).

Geography

Guildford (44) and Elmbridge (42) had the highest number of offences for Robbery in Surrey. When looking at the data by division, the West had the most, but only a few more than the East. A peak can be seen in June for the North (16), whereas the West sees a large decrease for this month. The West division peaks in March (13) and the East in February, April, May and August, all with 11 offences each.

² The way the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) require a person to attend court without arresting them.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse, as defined by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic abuse, as well as controlling or coercive behaviour between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected. It can involve a single incident or repeated patterns of harm, and children are recognised as victims where they see, hear or experience its impacts. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence and often causes long-term emotional and psychological harm.

Domestic abuse is a well-evidenced driver of serious violence, creating cycles of trauma that extend beyond the home. Nationally, it is estimated that 2.3 million people experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024, with young people aged 16–24, particularly women, disproportionately affected ([Office of National Statistics ONS](#)).

In Surrey, domestic abuse remains a key community safety priority. While recorded rates are below the South East average, thousands of families are affected each year. Crimestoppers received 259 contacts relating to domestic abuse and sexual offences. Surrey Police data shows that nearly one quarter of recorded serious violence offences (24%) between 2022 and 2025 had a domestic abuse flag, most commonly linked to wounding, harassment and coercive control. Domestic abuse is also frequently associated with other risk factors, including alcohol use, cyber-enabled offending and knife involvement.

Service and safeguarding data consistently highlight the intergenerational nature of harm, with large numbers of children living in households affected by high-risk domestic abuse. MARAC data shows sustained volumes of cases involving children, indicating widespread exposure to trauma and instability. Intervention most often occurs in early adolescence (ages 11–15), reinforcing the importance of early, whole-family, trauma-informed responses.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is increasingly recognised in Surrey and nationally as a core component of the wider serious violence landscape. The [Surrey Violence Against Women and Girls Needs Assessment \(2024–2025\)](#) highlights that VAWG encompasses some of the most harmful and high-impact offence types, including domestic abuse, sexual offences, child sexual exploitation, stalking, and harassment, many of which also fall under the statutory definitions of serious violence. Surrey data shows a total of 1,870 offences recorded across harassment, stalking, coercive control, and related breaches. 40% of these have a domestic abuse flag (743), with 32% of this total for engaging in controlling / coercive behaviour in an intimate / family relationship (238/743).

Victim

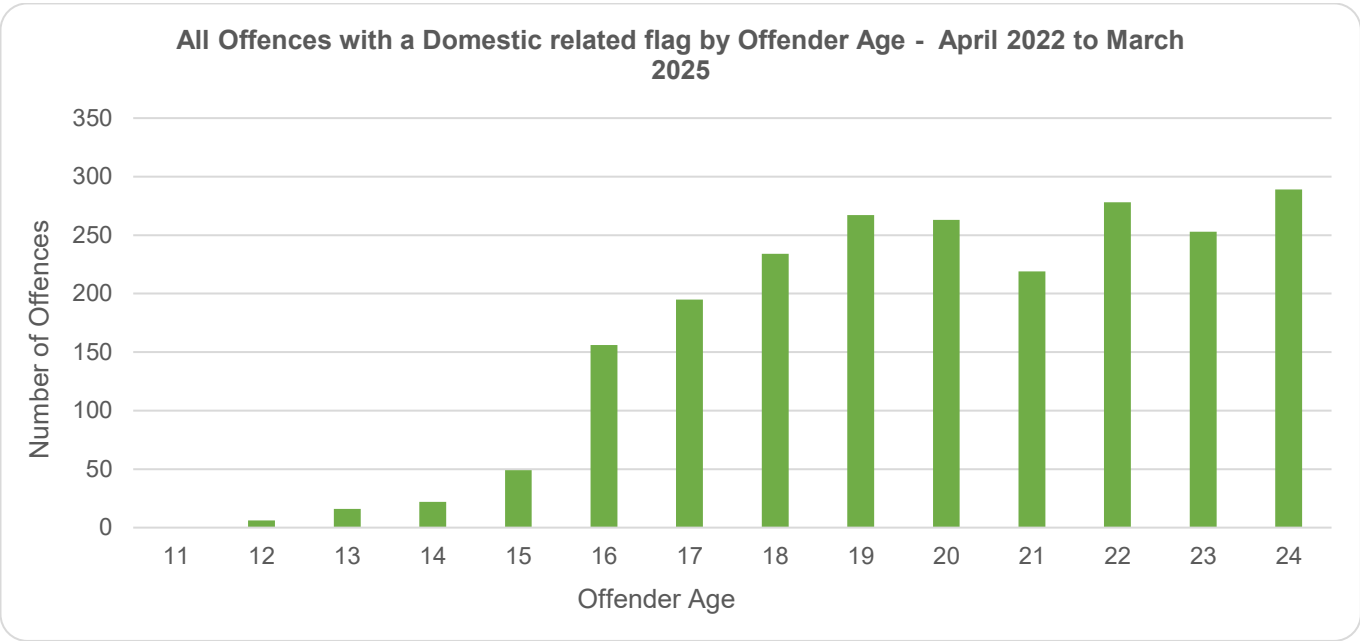
58% of victims in offences flagged as domestic related were aged 16 to 23 (1,300 of 2,249), with the highest numbers among 18, 19 and 20 year olds. Females accounted for 72% of victims, compared with 26% male. 31 were non binary, transexual of unknown. White British individuals made up 62% of recorded victim ethnicity (1,399), while 27% of cases (596) had no ethnicity information recorded.

Offender

Among offences with a domestic involvement flag, 74% of offenders were male (1,676) and 25% were female (559), with the remaining 14 individuals recorded as non-binary, transgender, or unknown. Offending begins to rise from age 16, continues increasing through age 20, then dips slightly before rising again from ages 22 to 24, with 24-year-olds accounting for the highest number of offences (289). 62% of the offenders were White British (1,391), with ethnicity unknown for 24% of the domestic cases (530).

Chart 3: Surrey Police Offences with a Domestic Related Flag (2022-2025)

Values under 5 have been replaced with 0



Relationship

Where the offender was identified, 985 of the harassment cases were for the offence of pursuing a course of conduct amounting to harassment. These are most frequently associated with rivals/feuding/unfriendly relationships (366), neighbours (83), acquaintances (112 social), ex-partners (59 combined) and strangers (76), indicating a mix of community conflict and known-perpetrator behaviour. A further 149 cases involving fear of violence. Harassment in the home was relatively low (16 cases).

Coercive and controlling behaviour (253 cases) is overwhelmingly linked to intimate and family relationships, especially current and former partners (ex-partners heterosexual 84; boyfriend/girlfriend 52; ex-boyfriend/girlfriend 50; partners 27 combined). Children are directly involved in 16 cases, reinforcing the domestic abuse and family harm dimension.

Stalking offences totalled 448 over the three-year period (24% of the harassment offences). Across all stalking types, offences are predominantly relationship-based, with former and current intimate partners most frequently identified.

Pursued a course of conduct amounting to stalking (191 cases) is the largest category. Over half involve ex-partners or ex-boyfriends/girlfriends, with smaller proportions linked to current partners, rivals/unfriendly relationships, and a limited number of strangers.

Stalking involving fear of violence (110 cases) and stalking involving serious alarm or distress (81 cases) show a similar pattern, with ex-partners accounting for the largest share, followed by current partners. This highlights elevated risk following relationship breakdown.

Racially or religiously aggravated harassment or stalking (57 cases) is lower in volume and more likely to involve rivals/feuding relationships, neighbours, or strangers, indicating a different context to domestic-related stalking.

Breaches of stalking or interim stalking orders (9 cases) are few but almost entirely linked to former intimate relationships, suggesting continued risk despite legal protections.

Harassment involving fear of violence (149 cases) shows a distinct pattern, with over half linked to rivals/feuding/unfriendly relationships (77), alongside partners, ex-partners and acquaintances, suggesting elevated risk in ongoing interpersonal conflict.

Aggravated harassment or stalking on racial or religious grounds (57 cases) is relatively low in volume but is concentrated among rivals/unfriendly relationships, neighbours, and strangers, indicating a different risk profile from domestic-focused offences.

Breaches of restraining or stalking orders (28 cases) are small in number but largely associated with former intimate relationships, pointing to continued risk post-separation.

Outcome

In **52%** of cases, a suspect was identified but the **victim declined or withdrew support** (1,159). A further **26%** of cases had a named suspect but **could not progress due to evidential difficulties** (579). Overall, **5%** of cases resulted in a **charge**, with **54%** of these charges relating to **violence without injury** (61 cases), of which **92%** were for **harassment** (56). A further **38%** of charged cases involved **violence with injury** (43), with **'other wounding'** accounting for **91%** of these offences (39).

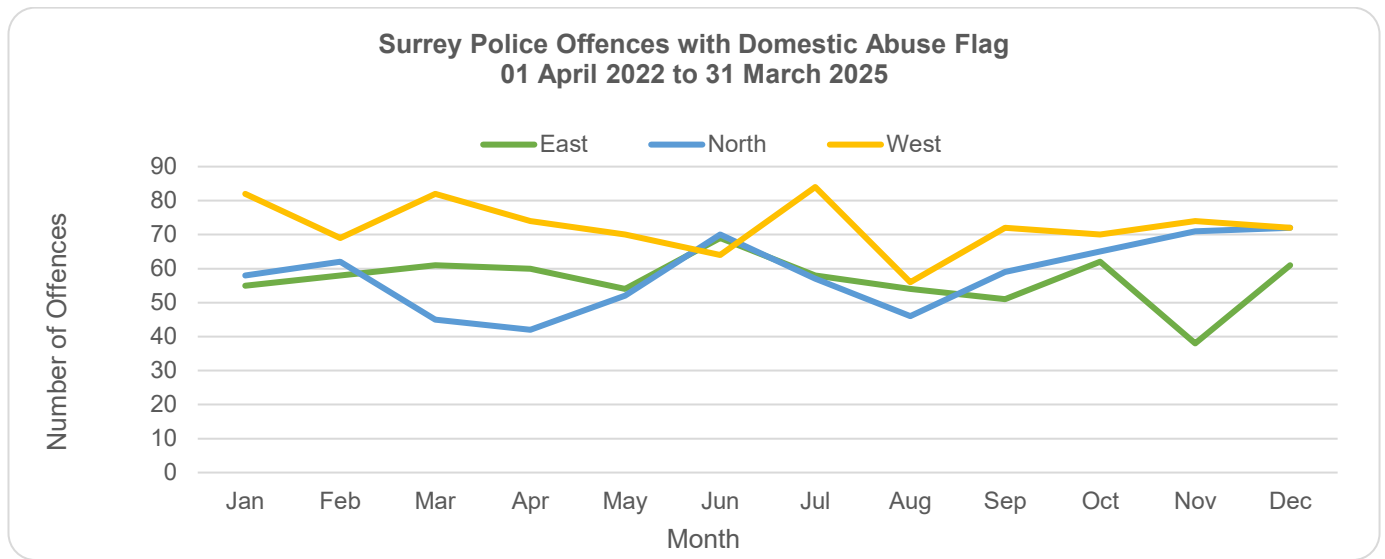
Geography

At district level, **Guildford (GD)** records the highest volume of domestic abuse incidents, with **339 of the 2,249 offences**, and monthly counts ranging from **19 to 43**. Guildford also has the highest number of **'other wounding'** offences (144) and **harassment** offences (115). **Reigate & Banstead (274)** follows, with **126 other wounding** and **82 harassment** offences, while **Elmbridge (220)** recorded **110 other wounding** offences. **Spelthorne (244)** reported **106 other wounding** and **97 harassment** offences, and **Runnymede (235)** recorded **101 and 82** respectively.

Spelthorne (SL) experienced several higher-volume months, with notable peaks in **November (32)** and **December (31)**. **Reigate & Banstead (RB)** shows a peak in **October (32)** and maintains elevated levels across spring and summer. **Runnymede (RM)** records moderate to high volumes throughout the year, with **October (28)** and **November/December (24 each)** representing its highest months.

Across the county, **July and October** show heightened levels in several districts, particularly **Guildford, Reigate & Banstead, Spelthorne, and Runnymede**. **November and December** also display increased activity, which may reflect winter-related pressures within households.

Chart 4: Offences in Surrey with a Domestic-Related Flag (2022-2025)



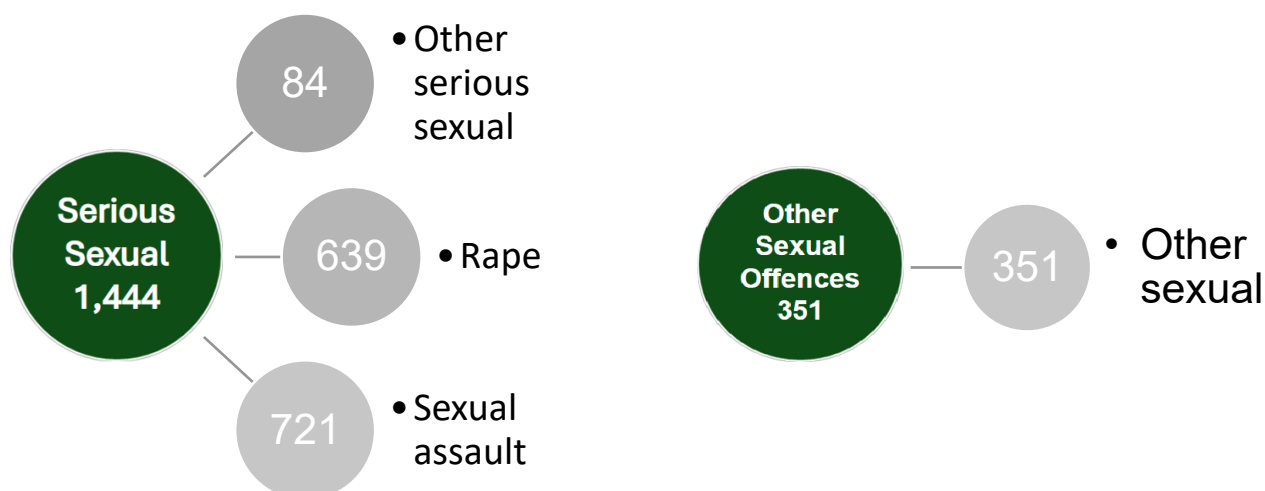
Overall, the data indicates that domestic abuse is a persistent, year round issue, with only modest seasonal variation.

Sexual Offences

Sexual offences are defined primarily under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which categorises a wide range of unlawful sexual behaviours involving lack of consent, exploitation, or abuse. Key offences include rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, and causing sexual activity without consent, all of which require the absence of freely given and informed consent. The Act also covers offences against children, vulnerable adults, and those with mental disorders impeding choice, as well as abuse of positions of trust and online sexual communication. Consent is legally defined as a person agreeing by choice, with the freedom and capacity to make that choice, and can be withdrawn at any time.

Crimestoppers received **259 contacts** relating to domestic abuse and sexual offences. Across the three-year period, **Serious Sexual offences** (1,444) and **Other Sexual offences** (351) together accounted for **19%** of all Surrey Police-recorded offences (1,795 out of 9,442). **40% were sexual assaults** (721) and **36% were rapes** (639).

Diagram 3: Number of Sexual Offences by Type (2022-2025)



Cyber-crime flags were applied to **35%** of offenders for Other Sexual Offences (122) and **31%** of Other Serious Sexual Offences. Knife-related flags appeared on **10 rape offences** and **6 sexual assaults**. A total of **320 sexual offences** had a domestic involvement flag, with rape accounting for **66%** of these domestic-flagged cases and **33%** of all rape offences.

Alcohol (320) and drug related (74) flags were present on **394 sexual offences** in total. Rape had the highest proportion of these substance related flags, with **21% of rape offences involving alcohol (132)** and **7% involving drugs (43)**.

Victim

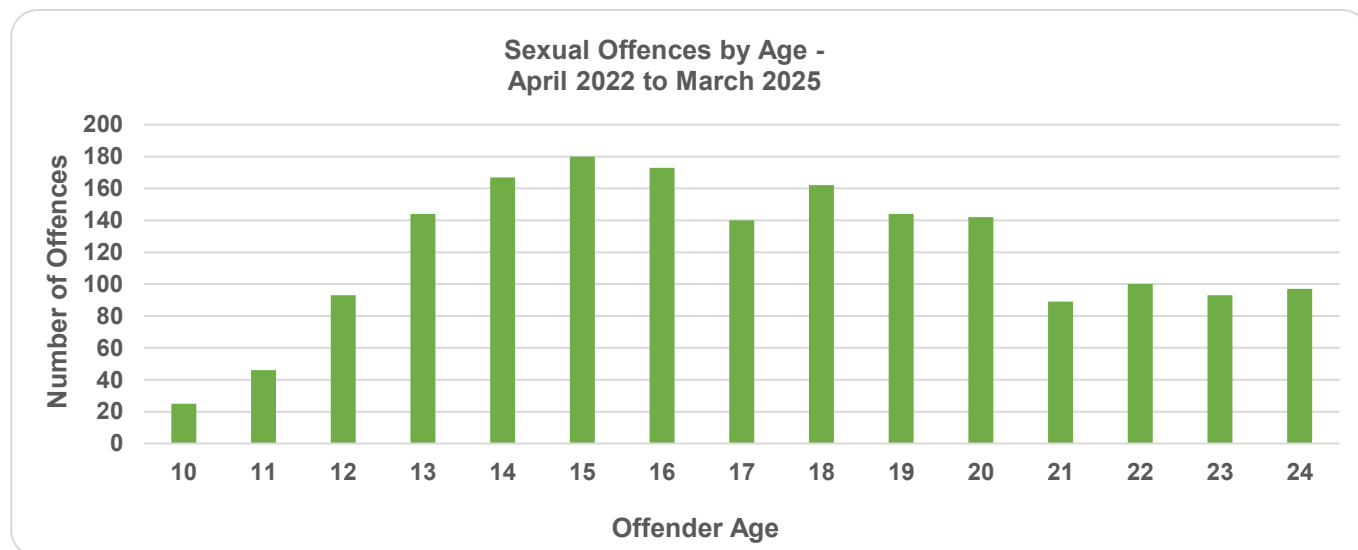
In Surrey, **79% of recorded sexual offences involved female victims (1,423)**, while **15% involved male victims (265)**. A further 107 cases involved victims recorded as non-binary, transgender, or where gender was **unknown (97/107)**. Victimisation was most common among young people aged **13 to 18**, with the highest numbers seen among **14- and 15-year-olds** (233 and 240 offences respectively). White British individuals accounted for **51%** of recorded victim ethnicity in Surrey (912 cases), while **40% of cases (724)** had **no ethnicity information recorded**.

Offender

Male offenders accounted for the vast majority of sexual offences (**90%**, 1,612), with **9%** committed by females (157) and the remaining cases (20) involving individuals recorded as nonbinary, transgender or with unknown gender. Offending increases steadily from age **10** (25 offences) through to **15** (180 offences). The highest volumes occur between **ages 14 and 18**, with a peak at **15 years**, followed by elevated levels at **16**,

14, 18, and 13. This pattern highlights mid-adolescence as the period of greatest risk. Offending declines from **age 19** onwards, dropping to **21** years (89 offences), suggesting a reduction as young people move into early adulthood. A secondary, smaller increase is observed in the early twenties, with offences rising again at **22 years** (100), and remaining relatively high at **23** (93) and **24** (97). In terms of ethnicity, **50%** of offenders were recorded as White British (902), while ethnicity was **not recorded** for **36%** (652) of cases.

Chart 5: Surrey Police Sexual Offences from (2022-2025)



Relationship

Serious sexual offences are largely perpetrated by known individuals:

- **1,444 incidents overall**
- Most frequently involving **acquaintances (social and legal/business), associates, ex-partners, and current intimate partners**
- Notable volumes also involve **family members** (siblings, cousins, step-relations) and **positions of trust**

While stranger-perpetrated offences are present, the detailed breakdown reinforces that **serious sexual harm predominantly occurs within existing relationships**, rather than random encounters.

Other sexual offences (351) show a similarly diverse relationship profile, including:

- **Acquaintances, current and former partners, family members, and strangers**
- Smaller but notable counts involving **positions of trust** and **exploitation contexts**

Outcome

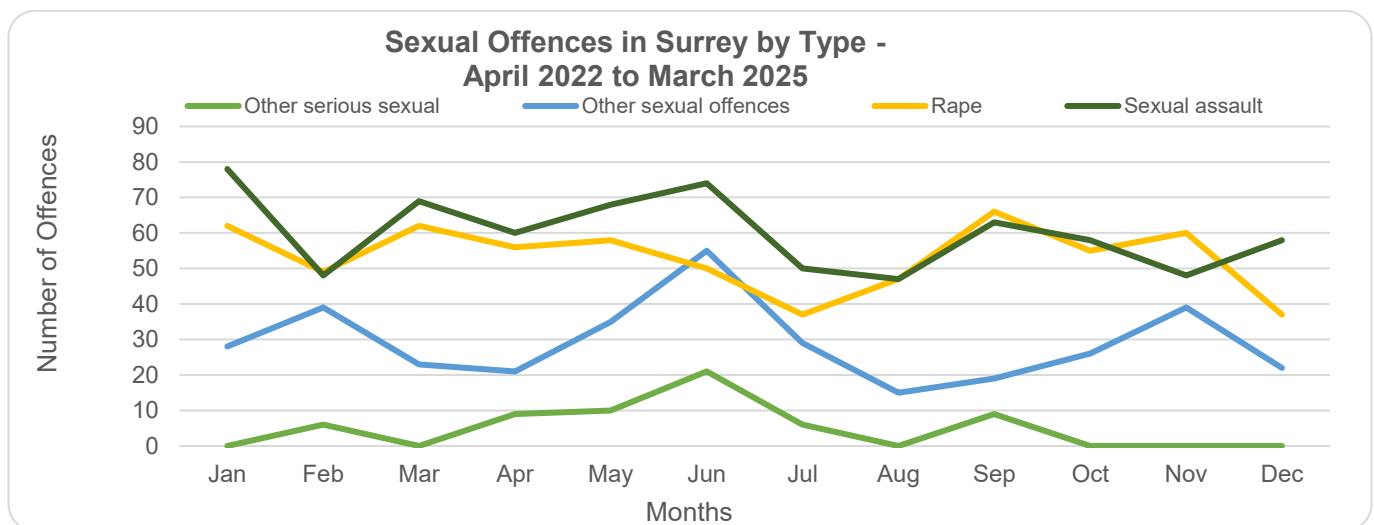
Case outcomes were most commonly affected by **withdrawal of victim support**, with **39%** of cases involving an identified suspect but no further action following victim disengagement. In an additional **29%** of cases, **victims supported proceedings but evidential thresholds could not be met**. Over the three-year period, **8%** of cases remained **under investigation** and **7%** were being **progressed by another body or agency**. **Summons or postal requisitions** were issued in **4%** of cases and **charges** brought in **4%** of sexual offences.

Geography

Guildford recorded **19%** of all sexual assault offences (138 of 721), the highest proportion county-wide. **Reigate and Banstead (76)**, **Runnymede (76)** and **Waverley (79)** each accounted for **11%** of these offences. Rape offences were also highest in **Guildford (18%)**, followed by **Waverley** and **Reigate and Banstead**, each representing **12%** of recorded rape cases.

Chart 6: Sexual Offences in Surrey by Type (2022-2025)

Values under 5 have been replaced with 0



The presence of offences from as young as age 10 demonstrates that harmful sexual behaviours can emerge very early, reinforcing the need for early intervention, healthy relationships education, and support for families and schools.

Exploitation

Extra-familial harm refers to abuse, exploitation or violence that occurs outside the family, often through peers, gangs, community networks or online spaces, and is harder for families and services to identify and control. **Exploitation** involves taking advantage of vulnerability through coercion, deception or control. Under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, this includes criminal, sexual and labour exploitation, with **child criminal exploitation (CCE)** increasingly recognised as a safeguarding issue rather than criminal behaviour.

Children and young people are drawn into criminal networks for reasons such as belonging, protection, status, or financial gain. Instability at home, exposure to domestic abuse, mental health issues, care experience, and poor engagement with education heighten vulnerability ([Safeguarding Network](#), 2025). Gang membership - whether structured or fluid - remains a key driver of serious violence ([Nuffield Foundation, 2024–26](#)).

National evidence shows children as young as six are being exploited, with higher risks for care-experienced children, those with SEND, and children from marginalised backgrounds. Exploitation is strongly linked to knife crime, youth violence and serious harm, and is often hidden by gendered stereotypes, particularly for girls. Technology plays an increasing role in recruitment and control.

In Surrey, young people identify exploitation, gangs and safety at night as key concerns. Local data shows sustained demand across Early Help, safeguarding and youth justice services, with missing episodes, criminal and sexual exploitation, and peer-on-peer harm common presenting issues. While multi-agency work is strengthening responses, gaps remain in data, consistency and early intervention, reinforcing the need for coordinated, trauma-informed prevention and safeguarding approaches.

The [Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) outlines how gangs exploit young people by manipulating their need for **belonging, protection, and status**. This exploitation can take many forms, including **county lines drug trafficking**, **cuckooing** (taking over the homes of vulnerable individuals), **sexual exploitation** (particularly of girls), and **violence used to assert control**. Young people often refer to gangs as “family” or “crews,” reflecting the emotional pull these groups exert.

Modern slavery overlaps with serious youth violence through CCE. According to the [Centre for Social Justice](#) and the [Children’s Society](#), the majority of victims of criminal exploitation are British boys under the age of 17. These children are often targeted due to vulnerabilities such as poverty, school exclusion, learning disabilities, and unstable family environments. Technology has further enabled perpetrators to recruit and control victims remotely, making exploitation harder to detect and disrupt. National Referral Mechanism data shows rising child victims linked to county lines. Surrey recorded 20+ National Referral Mechanism cases for modern slavery, often tied to housing insecurity and rough sleeping (**Centre for Social Justice**; Unseen, 2024).

In Surrey, while overall crime rates remain low, youth violence and exploitation are growing concerns. The [Surrey Youth Commission](#) has highlighted safety at night, gang activity, and exploitation as key issues affecting young people. Multi-agency efforts are underway to improve safeguarding and disrupt exploitation networks, but gaps in data, training, and service provision persist.

Information from Surrey County Council Early Help, for the period August 2023 to March 2025, shows information for Surrey families who were supported. Support was mainly provided for Mental & Physical Health, Family Relations and Education. For the support given to 11 to 25 year olds, 18% was for Child Abuse and Exploitation, compared to 4% of the overall forms for all age groups. Common concerns included missing episodes, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation (e.g., county lines), radicalisation, and peer-on-peer harm. Youth Offer data shows 152 high-risk referrals (June 2022–June 2025), with 88 children having active social care involvement and 34 flagged for CSE.

Crimestoppers had **110 contacts relating to Exploitation and county lines drug dealing**. Surrey Police recorded **21 offences**, under four categories linked to exploitation during the period 2022 to 2025:

- Arrange or facilitate travel of another person with a view to exploitation
- Arranging or facilitating the sexual exploitation of a child - child 13 to 17
- Cause or incite the sexual exploitation of a child - child 13 to 17
- Commit offence of kidnapping or false imprisonment with intention of arranging travel with a view to exploitation

Victim

43% of victims were **male** and **38% female**, with **highest** numbers seen from **14 to 16 years** (number below 5), with **highest ethnicity for White British**.

Offender

The Surrey Police data identifies **male offenders in 81%** of the cases, with the remainder being female. The **offending age of exploitation** peaks at **19 years**. **52%** are of **White British** ethnicity (11).

Information has been provided on the children who have come through the Surrey Daily Risk Briefings (DRB) channel, which sits within the engage part of the Youth Offer service. Children who come through this channel have been arrested. These children are a clear cohort that could be at risk of exploitation, extra-familial harm, drugs misuse, county lines and other serious violence factors. From June 2022 to June 2025, **152 referrals** were received, of which:

- 14 were for females and 138, males.

- 60% (91) of the referrals were from categories of ethnicity classed as 'White'. Ethnicity was unknown or blank for 47/152 referrals.
- 43 children had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- 18%, when the school data was recorded, were Not in Education, Elective Home Education and Missing From Education (21/114 - 38 were blank).
- Two schools had higher levels of referrals, one in Chobham and the other in Dorking,
- 29 were missing education
- 14 had received speech and language therapy
- 88 children had active social care involvement
- 10 had known substance misuse issues.
- 34 were recorded as experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- When looking at the trends in referrals, October saw the highest number across the years (19), followed by September (16) and then July and August (14 each).

Outcome

43% of exploitation offences resulted in the **victim declining or withdrawing support**, even though there was a named suspect.

Geography

The West division saw the highest number of exploitation offences (11/21), followed by the North.

Use of corrosive substances

The **use of corrosive substances** as a weapon is addressed under both the **Offensive Weapons Act 2019** and the **Offences Against the Person Act 1861**. A corrosive substance is defined as any chemical capable of burning or damaging human skin through corrosion. It is a criminal offence to **possess a corrosive substance in a public place without lawful authority or good reason**, and to **sell such substances to individuals under 18**. Using a corrosive substance to cause harm - such as in assaults or robberies - is treated as an aggravating factor, indicating **higher culpability** and resulting in more severe sentencing.

Corrosive substances are increasingly used in street violence, often by young males to enforce drug debts, commit robberies, or enhance street reputation. They are easily disguised in water bottles and used as alternatives to knives. In 2023, **1,244 corrosive substance offences** were recorded in the UK, a 75% increase from the previous year. Only 8% of offenders were prosecuted ([University of Leicester – Corrosive Attacks](#)

[Policy Report](#), 2024). Youth involvement is significant, especially in gang-related activity and county lines drug trafficking, where corrosives are used as weapons. ([Serious youth violence: County lines drug dealing and the Government response](#)).

There were a total of 498 physical attacks in Britain involving corrosive substances in 2024, up from 454 in the previous year. ([Acid attacks on the rise in Britain as police warn of 'over the counter' corrosives | LBC](#)). Surrey police data shows less than 5 offences where the use of a corrosive substance was used.

Linked Offences and Escalation Pathways

Serious violence is a cross-cutting issue within community safety and prevention work, intersecting with multiple harm types rather than existing in isolation. Serious violence does not occur in isolation and is best understood as part of a wider pattern of **interconnected harm within communities**. Evidence consistently shows that serious violence overlaps with other offence types, including Hate Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), sharing common risk factors such as entrenched hostility, identity-based targeting, coercive control, and repeat victimisation. Behaviours linked to fire setting and arson and animal abuse are also recognised as important indicators of escalation risk, frequently co-occurring with wider violent, controlling, or intimidatory behaviour.

Hate-Related Violence

Hate crime, motivated by hostility towards protected characteristics, frequently involves harassment, intimidation and violence and can act as a catalyst for wider serious harm. Patterns of hate-related offending are often linked to online abuse, gender-based violence and retaliatory or extremist behaviours. [Surrey's Hate Crime and Community Cohesion Needs Assessment 2025](#), highlights that between **2020 and 2024**, Surrey Police recorded **over 11,800 hate crimes, around 2,400 per year**, with harassment being the most common offence and incidents increasingly linked to **online abuse and gender-based violence**. These patterns demonstrate how hate-motivated hostility contributes to fear, trauma, and social fragmentation, which in turn increase vulnerability to serious violence.

Surrey police data for violent offences, between 2022 and 2025, shows **1%** relating to **racially or religiously motivated offences (115/9442)**, with **58** of these for **Assault** and **57** for **harassment or stalking offences**.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Anti-social behaviour encompasses conduct causing harassment, alarm or distress, including intimidation, vandalism and verbal abuse. [Research](#) shows that ASB, progresses in to more serious offences including violence, particularly for young people. ASB and serious violence share common drivers, including childhood

adversity, social exclusion and unmet support needs. Persistent ASB is associated with poor long-term outcomes, including higher likelihood of criminal offending, violence, and involvement with the criminal justice system. A 2025 report by [UCL](#) and the [Ending Youth Violence Lab](#) highlights that ASB and youth violence disproportionately affect vulnerable communities and cost the UK economy an estimated £60 billion annually, with £37.5 billion attributed to violent crime alone.

In Surrey, youth ASB hotspots overlap with areas of wider community harm, reinforcing ASB as both a precursor to and component of the serious violence landscape. This will be explored further as part of a specific Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Harm Needs Assessment.

Animal Abuse

Animal abuse rarely occurs in isolation and is increasingly recognised within legislation and statutory safeguarding guidance as a significant indicator of wider harm, including domestic abuse and violence within households. Research consistently demonstrates strong associations between animal cruelty, domestic abuse and child maltreatment, with animals frequently used as tools of coercion, control and intimidation.

Recent legislative developments reinforce the seriousness of animal abuse and its relevance to safeguarding and violence prevention. The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021 increased the maximum custodial sentence for the most serious animal cruelty offences to five years, reflecting recognition of the severity of harm involved and its links to broader patterns of violence. Updated Sentencing Council guidelines (2023) explicitly identify offences committed in the presence of children as an aggravating factor, strengthening the connection between animal abuse and child safeguarding responsibilities.

Statutory safeguarding guidance, including [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#), emphasises the importance of recognising harm that occurs outside the immediate experience of the child, including indicators within family and community environments. Safeguarding procedures increasingly highlight animal abuse as a potential marker of risk to children and vulnerable adults, requiring professional curiosity and appropriate information sharing across agencies.

Evidence also shows that childhood involvement in animal abuse is associated with conduct disorders, multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and an increased risk of later interpersonal violence, including serious youth violence and gang involvement. Early identification of animal abuse therefore presents a valuable opportunity for intervention, allowing agencies to address underlying trauma, disrupt escalating patterns of harm and prevent progression to more serious forms of violence.

Fire setting and Arson

Fire-setting and arson are criminal offences defined under the Criminal Damage Act 1971. Arson refers specifically to the intentional or reckless destruction or damage of property by fire, without lawful excuse. It is considered a serious offence due to the potential risk to life, property, and public safety. Arson can be categorised into basic arson (without intent to endanger life), arson with intent to endanger life, and reckless arson, depending on the offender's intent and the consequences of the act. Fire-setting behaviour may also be linked to mental health issues or coercion, and courts may consider psychiatric evaluations when determining culpability. [Firewise](#) is a scheme run by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service to address fire setting behaviour in children and young people (under 18 years old). Information from Surrey Fire and Rescue Service identifies an average of 49 referrals per year in the last 10 years for Firewise, which is for young people who have exhibited signs of fire setting behaviour, not for 'actually' committing arson. They average 90 visits per year to work with the young people and families that are referred. 97.4% of children and young people who have had a Firewise intervention in the past 10 years have not displayed fire setting behaviour 6 months after the visit.

Understanding these interconnected harms is critical to identifying opportunities for early intervention and preventing escalation to serious violence.

Summary - What are Serious Violence Offences Section

Violence with injury, violence without injury and serious sexual offences account for the majority of serious violence involving children and young people in Surrey. Although serious violence has reduced over time, domestic abuse, sexual violence, knife crime and exploitation remain important drivers of harm requiring continued partnership focus.

Where is Serious Violence Happening

Serious Youth Violence can have profound impacts on local communities, eroding trust, heightening fear, and placing sustained pressure on public services, particularly in areas where harm is concentrated. These patterns demonstrate the need for place-based approaches that draw on local insight, strengthen community partnerships, and tailor interventions to the specific environmental, social, and cultural factors shaping risk within each neighbourhood.

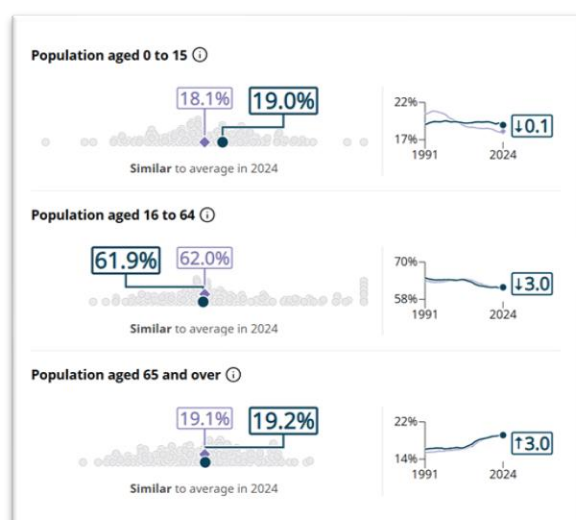
Who Lives in Surrey?

Surrey's population is estimated at **1.25 million residents** as of mid-2024, reflecting a steady population growth of 7% over the past decade. This growth has been driven primarily by internal migration from other parts of the UK, alongside international migration.

While Surrey has a notably ageing population, with one in five residents aged 65 and over, the number of children and young people has also increased. Specifically, there are **15,749 more residents aged 17 and under than a decade ago**, representing a **6.2% growth** in this age group. By 2030, the population over 55 is expected to increase, while the population under 55 is projected to decline. Birth rates in Surrey have been decreasing, with a drop of 8% in children under 4 since 2011. **204,097 pupils** attend Surrey schools (2024/25), with **19.8% (40,440)** in independent schools. [Population Estimates | Surrey-i](#).

Age split Overview –

[Local indicators for Surrey \(E10000030\) - ONS](#)



Deprivation and Area Characteristics

The distribution of serious violence aligns closely with patterns of deprivation:

- Spelthorne is Surrey's *most deprived* district overall. It ranks in the middle third of all 296 English lower-tier authorities for overall IMD and nearly all sub-indices.
- Tandridge is most deprived in Surrey for Barriers to Housing and Services (ranked 87 out of 296).

- Epsom & Ewell is one of the *least deprived* areas in England (ranked 293 or 296).

Areas with higher deprivation often correspond to higher volumes of serious youth violence, indicating a connection between socioeconomic inequality and geographic clustering of harm. ([Indices of Deprivation \(IoD\) 2025 in Surrey | Surrey-i](#))

Hotspots for Serious Youth Violence in Surrey

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, Surrey Police recorded 9,442 violent offences for those aged 10-24, with clear geographic variation across the county. Surrey Police is organised into three geographic areas. The West Division recorded the highest volume across the three-year period (3,713), followed by East (2,913) and North (2,816), indicating a strong concentration of activity in the western part of the county.

Table 2: Violent Offences by Division - 10-24 year-olds (2022–2025)

SURREY DIVISIONS	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
East (Epsom & Ewell; Mole Valley; Reigate & Banstead; Tandridge;)	803	974	931	205	2913
North (Elmbridge; Runnymede; Spelthorne;)	799	1004	825	188	2816
West (Guildford; Waverley; Woking; Surrey Heath)	950	1370	1120	273	3713
TOTAL	2552	3348	2876	666	9442

District-Level Hotspots

Table 3: Violent Offences by District and Borough – 10-24 year-olds (2022-2025)

	YEAR AND NUMBER OF OFFENCES					
DISTRICT AND BOROUGH	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL	%
Elmbridge	294	339	264	61	958	10.15
Epsom and Ewell	148	166	155	46	515	5.45
Guildford	349	537	474	118	1478	15.65
Mole Valley	163	177	163	31	534	5.66
Reigate and Banstead	335	422	423	95	1275	13.50
Runnymede	246	306	224	62	838	8.88
Surrey Heath	167	253	207	49	676	7.16
Spelthorne	259	359	337	65	1020	10.80
Tandridge	157	209	190	33	589	6.24
Woking	204	282	241	52	779	8.25
Waverley	230	298	198	54	780	8.26
TOTAL	2552	3348	2876	666	9442	100.00

Analysis at district and borough level shows clear geographic clustering:

Highest-volume areas

- **Guildford** recorded the **highest number of offences** at **1,478 (15.7%)**, consistently leading month-to-month.
- **Reigate & Banstead** followed with **1,275 offences (13.5%)**, showing some of the highest spring and autumn peaks.
- **Spelthorne** ranked third, with **1,020 offences (10.8%)**, maintaining relatively high activity throughout the year.

Mid-range areas

- **Elmbridge** (958, 10.1%) showed summer peaks, especially in **June (133)**.
- **Runnymede** (838, 8.9%), **Waverley** (780, 8.3%), **Woking** (779, 8.3%) and **Surrey Heath** (676, 7.2%) formed a mid-volume cluster with stable but fluctuating patterns across months.

Lower-volume areas

- **Tandridge** (589, 6.2%) and **Mole Valley** (534, 5.7%) recorded comparatively fewer offences.
- **Epsom & Ewell**, at **515 offences (5.5%)**, had the lowest share across all districts.

Specific offence type hotspots include:

- **Other Criminal Offences:** Highest in Runnymede (10).
- **Other Sexual Offences:** Highest in Elmbridge (58).
- **Robbery:** Highest in Guildford (44) and Elmbridge (42).
- **Serious Sexual Offences:** Highest in Guildford (259), followed by Reigate & Banstead, Waverley (166), Elmbridge, and Runnymede.
- **Violence With Injury:** Highest in Guildford (670), Reigate & Banstead (610) and Spelthorne (424).
- **Violence Without Injury:** Highest in Guildford (445), Reigate & Banstead (414), and Spelthorne (420).

Areas with the highest levels of persistent school absences closely mirror patterns observed in both Surrey Youth Justice Service data and Surrey Police data for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025. Police data indicates that **Reigate and Banstead (90 offences)**, **Waverley (84)**, **Spelthorne (82)** and **Guildford (79)** recorded the highest number of education-related offences. While **Epsom and Ewell** reported a comparatively lower total (**36 offences**), it remained the fifth highest district for school absence, missing pupils and exclusions, suggesting a different but notable risk profile.

Levels of Elective Home Education (EHE) have increased in Surrey, which can change how young people access support and services. In 2023/24, **3,106 pupils** were recorded as **home educated** at some point during the academic year, with **Guildford and Waverley** reporting the highest numbers.

Analysis of Surrey Police data by offender age and district shows that **Guildford, Reigate and Banstead, Spelthorne, and Elmbridge** consistently record the highest volumes of offences across most age groups. The highest overall number of offences was recorded in **Guildford (1,478)**, followed by **Reigate and Banstead (1,275)** and **Spelthorne (1,020)**. Lower volumes were seen in **Epsom and Ewell (515)**, **Tandridge (589)** and **Mole Valley (534)**.

Overall, the analysis highlights that serious youth violence is not evenly distributed across Surrey, with clear geographic hotspots concentrated in Guildford, Reigate & Banstead, Spelthorne and parts of the West Division. These areas consistently record the highest levels of youth violence, violence with injury, robbery and serious sexual offences, while also overlapping with wider vulnerability indicators including persistent school absence, exclusions, missing episodes and higher levels of elective home education. The strong alignment between police, education and youth justice data suggests that serious youth violence is closely linked to broader social, educational and safeguarding risks. This reinforces the need for a place-based, multi-agency approach that targets prevention, early intervention and support in the areas and communities where young people are most vulnerable to involvement in violence, either as victims or perpetrators.

Table 4: Violent Offences by Offender Age by District and Borough between (2022-2025)

BOROUGH AND OFFENDER AGE	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	TOTAL
Elmbridge	9	21	46	113	75	107	96	69	58	60	69	57	57	75	46	958
Epsom and Ewell	6	13	26	37	34	40	41	46	56	45	45	19	44	19	44	515
Guildford	12	29	55	73	112	95	107	102	150	122	133	96	133	130	129	1478
Mole Valley	6	16	28	40	42	61	45	30	45	34	38	49	34	37	29	534
Reigate and Banstead	14	43	70	100	106	154	118	88	88	102	95	68	70	78	81	1275
Runnymede	6	20	38	47	63	77	55	47	70	89	78	67	60	66	55	838
Surrey Heath	8	17	30	40	59	70	43	49	42	64	59	52	43	50	50	676
Spelthorne	12	34	73	90	87	104	95	73	73	65	67	65	50	54	78	1020
Tandridge	10	19	42	36	58	78	52	47	35	26	25	35	50	39	37	589
Woking	11	19	31	35	86	87	75	51	72	67	51	47	41	51	55	779
Waverley	15	18	32	64	78	83	79	69	57	48	42	52	46	31	66	780
TOTAL	109	249	471	675	800	956	806	671	746	722	702	607	628	630	670	9442

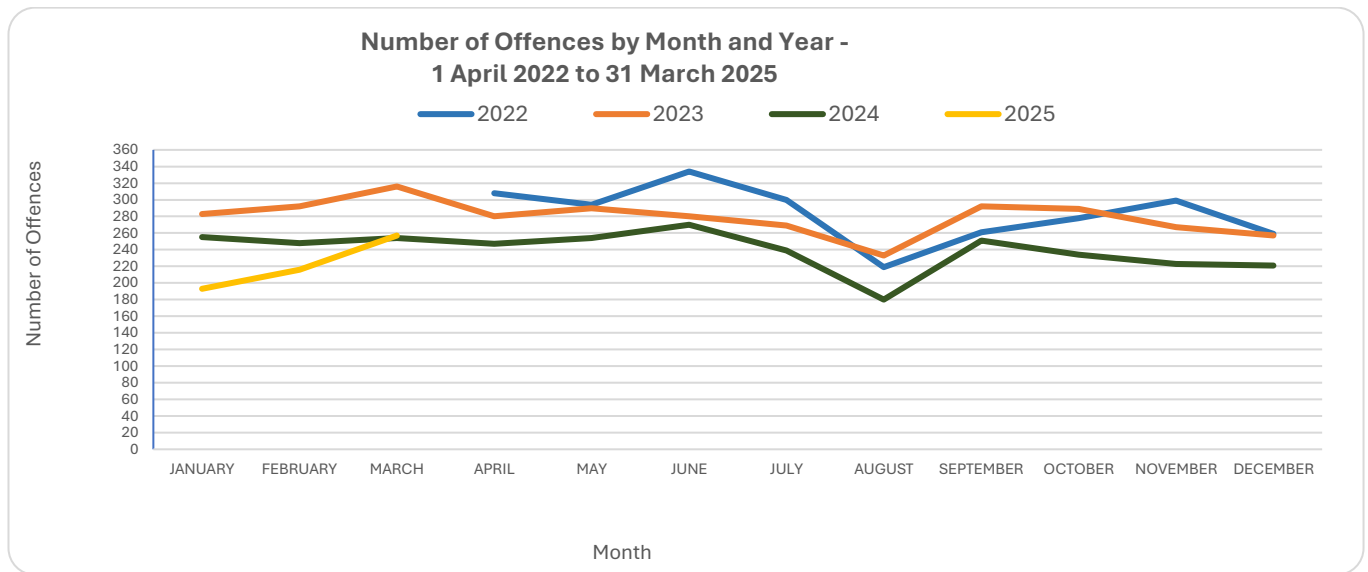
Seasonal Trends in Serious Violence

The police data highlights that across all years, the pattern is broadly similar for all offence types.

Seasonal analysis indicates:

- **January–April:** Offences remain steady or rise slightly.
- **August:** A sharp annual dip, observed every year, indicating a consistent seasonal reduction.
- **September–October:** A rebound in offences post summer.
- **Winter (Nov–Dec):** Levels remain stable, with slight increases in Guildford and Reigate & Banstead.
- 2022 displayed the highest volatility, with a peak in June (334) and a strong autumn rise.
- 2024 was the most stable year, with the lowest August levels of the period (180).

Chart 7: Violent Offences by Month and Year (2022-2025)



Offence Patterns

Violence With Injury: Largest Offence Category for 2022-2025 (4,033 offences; 43%)

- Peaks in June (372) and July (386).
- Lowest levels in August (254).
- Highest volume areas: Guildford (17%), Reigate & Banstead (15%), Spelthorne (11%).
- Other Wounding accounts for 38% of this category; 87% of these were Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm (ABH).

Violence Without Injury: Second Largest (3,274 offences; 35%)

- Stable monthly activity, with peaks in November and March.
- Mirrors seasonal dip observed in violence with injury.
- Highest volume areas: Guildford (14%), Reigate & Banstead (13%), Spelthorne (13%).

Harassment: comprises 57% of offences; 24% were for stalking related offences and coercive control forms 14% of harassment related incidents.

- Serious Sexual Offences (1,444 offences; 15%)
- Two pronounced peaks: June (145) and September (138).
- Rape accounts for 44%, with most victims being female.
- Highest volume areas: Elmbridge (17%), Guildford (15%), Reigate & Banstead (14%).

Other Sexual Offences: (351 offences)

- Consistent across the year; peak in June (55).
- Highest volume areas: Guildford (18%), followed by Reigate & Banstead and Waverley.

Robbery: (293 offences)

- Stable across the year with minor rises between April and June.
- Highest volume areas: Guildford (15%) and Elmbridge (14%).

Offence Locations

The Surrey Police data for serious violent offences between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025 show that 36% of the 9,442 offences were in a Dwelling (3,361), 18% in a Public/Open Place (1,697) and 7% were in an Education setting (698). The type of location was unknown in 28% of the offences during this period.

Across the period 2022 to 2025, a total of 9,442 offences were recorded. While 36% (3,361 offences) took place in domestic dwellings, the majority of offences (64%) occurred outside the home, highlighting the importance of community, public-facing and institutional settings in understanding risk and harm.

Table 5: Violent Offences by Location Type (2022-2025)

LOCATIONS	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL	%
DWELLING	890	1146	1057	268	3361	36
BLANK	836	975	706	152	2661	28
PUBLIC/OPEN PLACE	437	613	531	116	1697	18
EDUCATION	170	235	238	55	698	7
HOSPITALITY	71	99	92	25	287	3
MEDICAL	35	72	65	17	189	2
SHOP	30	61	49	13	153	2
PUBLIC BUILDING	22	44	74	11	151	2
LEISURE	28	49	27	<5	107	1
COMMERCIAL	21	24	19	<5	65	1
MOVING VEHICLE	8	21	10	<5	44	0
TRAVEL	<5	7	6	<5	17	0
MILITARY	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
TOTAL	2552	3348	2876	666	9442	100

The largest proportion of non-dwelling incidents relates to unknown or unspecified locations ("Blank"), accounting for 28% (2,661 offences).

Among clearly defined locations outside the home, public and open spaces represent the most significant setting, with 18% of all recorded offences (1,697 incidents). This reinforces the role of streets, parks and other

open environments as key contexts for harm, and suggests a continued need for place-based prevention and safety measures.

Educational settings account for a further 7% (698 offences), underlining schools and related environments as notable locations for incidents. This is particularly relevant for partnership work involving safeguarding, youth services and early intervention.

Smaller but still important proportions of offences occurred in:

- Hospitality venues (3%, 287 offences)
- Medical settings (2%, 189 offences)
- Shops (2%, 153 offences)
- Public buildings (2%, 151 offences)

Collectively, these settings reflect routine public interactions and service environments where risks may arise, often involving staff and members of the public.

Other locations, such as leisure facilities, commercial premises, moving vehicles and travel-related settings, each account for 1% or less of total offences. Although lower in volume, these locations are dispersed across the community and may require targeted or sector-specific responses.

The School Environment

Schools are increasingly recognised as key environments where early signs of serious youth violence can emerge. Offences linked to school settings often stem from peer conflict, bullying, and social pressures, and can escalate into more serious incidents involving weapons or group violence.

The Surrey data shows that schools have experienced incidents of serious youth violence:

- 7% of Surrey's violent offences (698) occurred in education settings (Inside or in the grounds of a Nursery, School, College, University or Training Centre);
- 87% of these (605) took place on school premises.
- Reigate and Banstead (90), Waverley (84), Spelthorne (82), Guildford (79), Elmbridge (74) and Runnymede (73) had the highest number of offences in a school setting across the three-years.

Across school-based incidents in Surrey, violence with injury (291), violence without injury (201), and serious sexual offences (178) were the most common in schools, with the highest volumes concentrated in Reigate & Banstead, Waverley, Spelthorne, Guildford, and Elmbridge, while all other sexual offences, robbery, and other criminal offences occurred at very low levels across districts.

Crime Outside of the Home and the Night-Time Economy

Children and young people can encounter a range of risks outside the home, including situations where they may feel unsafe or vulnerable in their communities. These risks can include exposure to violence, exploitation, or harmful behaviour, particularly in busy public spaces or during night-time social activity. Increasingly, professionals recognise that influences beyond the family, such as peer groups, community environments, and social settings, can play an important role in shaping young people's safety and wellbeing.

Public and open-place offences are heavily concentrated on streets, roads and pedestrian areas, accounting for nearly two-thirds of incidents (6,081 of the 9,442 Surrey Police offences were for locations outside of a dwelling). This distribution highlights the importance of multi-agency, place-based approaches to prevention and response, extending beyond the household into the wider community. Location is not included for 28% of the offences, which affects place-based analysis.

Table 6: Public / Open Place Violent Offences by Location Type (2022-2025)

Values under 5 have been grouped into 'other category'

Location: Public / Open Place	Number of Offences	%
Street / Road	954	56
Park / Garden	197	12
Other Open Space	139	8
Pavement	127	7
Car Park	63	4
Footpath	51	3
Field	46	3
Woods	37	2
Town Centre	31	2
Bus Stop	19	1
Other Categories Grouped	33	2
TOTAL	1697	100



Summary - Where is Serious Violence Happening Section

Serious violence is concentrated within specific locations and communities rather than evenly distributed across Surrey. Guildford, Reigate & Banstead and Spelthorne consistently record the highest levels of violence and overlap with wider indicators of vulnerability including school absence, exclusions and safeguarding concerns. Place-based prevention should remain central to future activity.

Learnings from this Assessment

The evidence demonstrates that serious violence is concentrated, patterned and preventable. Surrey already has many effective services and partnerships in place, but improved coordination, earlier intervention, intelligence sharing and targeted prevention are needed to maximise impact and reduce future harm.

This Needs Assessment demonstrates that serious violence affecting young people in Surrey is both understood and preventable, with clear patterns in age, vulnerability, place, and experience. The evidence highlights that those most at risk are often already known to services, experiencing trauma, exploitation, educational disengagement, and exposure to harm beyond the home. Addressing this requires a coordinated, whole-system response built on a public health approach, prioritising early intervention, strengthening protective relationships, improving inclusion within education, and targeting support in the places and communities where risk is most concentrated. By aligning partnership activity, improving data and intelligence, and investing in evidence-led services, Surrey is well placed to move from understanding to action. The challenge now is to translate this insight into consistent, targeted delivery, ensuring that every young person has access to the support, safety, and opportunities they need to thrive free from violence.

The Serious Violence Reduction Partnership completed a workshop for service mapping against the findings from this report. This reinforces that Surrey already has a wide range of activity in place, but the system must now become more coordinated, targeted, and consistent in how these services respond to identified need. Both professional and young person insight emphasise the importance of trusted relationships, safe spaces, and earlier intervention, with practitioners highlighting challenges around fragmented pathways, data sharing, and transitions, and young people consistently pointing to the need for accessible support, positive activities, and adults who understand their experiences. There is also a clear message that services must better recognise hidden harms, including exploitation, peer dynamics, and online influences, alongside ensuring that support reaches those who are less visible, including girls, minority groups, and those outside mainstream education. Bringing these insights together with the evidence base, the priority is not simply to increase provision, but to align and strengthen what already exists, embedding trauma-informed and contextual approaches across all partners, improving access and consistency, and ensuring that services are shaped with, and not just for, young people. This will be critical to delivering a system that is not only responsive to harm, but actively works to prevent it and build long-term resilience across Surrey's communities.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary and Acronyms

Term	Definition
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)	Traumatic events occurring before age 18 (e.g. abuse, neglect, household dysfunction) that can impact long-term health and wellbeing.
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	A form of abuse where children are coerced or manipulated into committing crimes (e.g. carrying drugs or weapons) for criminal networks.
Community Safety and Prevention Board (CSPB)	A multi-agency partnership that coordinates activity to reduce crime and improve safety across communities.
Contextual Safeguarding	An approach recognising that risks to young people often occur in peer groups, schools, and communities, not just within families.
Cyberbullying	Bullying conducted through digital technologies such as social media, messaging apps, or online platforms.
Exploitation	The use of coercion, control, or deception to take advantage of children or vulnerable individuals for criminal or sexual purposes.
Extra-Familial Harm (EFH)	Harm occurring outside the home (e.g. through peers, gangs, or online environments), including exploitation, trafficking, and harmful behaviours.
Joint Decision Making Panel (JDMP)	A panel used to decide outcomes for youth cases, prioritising diversion and avoiding unnecessary criminalisation where possible.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	A process assessing current and future health and wellbeing needs to guide local service planning and commissioning.
Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSP)	Multi-agency partnerships (local authorities, police, health) responsible for protecting children and vulnerable individuals.
Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)	A framework for managing risks posed by individuals convicted of serious violent, sexual, or terrorist offences.
National Crime Agency (NCA)	UK law enforcement agency tackling serious and organised crime such as trafficking, cybercrime, and drug networks.

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	Young people (typically aged 16–24) who are not in education, training, or employment.
Peer-on-peer violence	Harm between children or young people, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, bullying, and exploitation.
Place-Based Approach	A collaborative, locally focused approach that uses community insight and resources to address needs in a specific area.
Public Health Approach	A prevention-focused method that identifies root causes, risk factors, and early indicators of violence to reduce harm.
Serious Violence (SV)	Violent crimes causing or intending serious harm (e.g. homicide, robbery, knife crime), often involving force or threat of force.
Serious Violence Duty (SVD)	A statutory requirement for public bodies to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence.
Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP)	A multi-agency partnership responsible for coordinating prevention, safeguarding, and enforcement responses to serious violence.
Serious Youth Violence (SYV)	Serious violent offences involving young people (typically 10–24 in this report), either as victims or perpetrators.
Trauma-informed Practice	An approach recognising the impact of trauma on development and behaviour, shaping supportive and appropriate interventions.
Violence Reduction Units (VRUs)	Regional partnerships funded to address the root causes of serious violence using a public health approach.

Appendix B: Service Opportunities to Tackle Serious Violence Involving Young People

1. Overview

This section summarises insights from the multi-agency workshop exploring how partners across Surrey can strengthen their response to serious violence involving young people. The session focused on identifying practical actions for 2026/27, understanding service gaps, improving intelligence sharing, and developing opportunities for earlier, more effective prevention.

2. Key Learning Themes

A. Strengthening Partnership Working

Participants highlighted the need for more seamless, coordinated multi-agency working to address contextual risks and improve safeguarding responses.

- Improve intelligence sharing across police, children's services and local authorities.
- Strengthen JAGs as core place-based problem-solving forums.
- Reduce silo working and embed a stronger health and public-health lens.
- Ensure third-sector partners are fully engaged in the Serious Violence Duty.
- Improve consistency in the use of the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) data, Pegasus flags and partnership intel forms.

B. Improving Prevention and Early Intervention

A strong consensus emerged that long-term, generational approaches are needed, beginning in early childhood.

- Early years focus on trauma, emotional literacy and trusted adults.
- School-based prevention around identity, masculinity, healthy relationships and belonging.
- Mentoring and lived-experience role models.
- Parental support, training and engagement.
- Targeted interventions for excluded pupils and those who feel socially marginalised.

C. Targeted Interventions for At-Risk Young People

Partners identified several opportunities to intervene earlier and more effectively with those already at risk.

- Trauma-informed practice across all services.
- Diversion, harm-reduction and youth justice responses.

- Knife-related interventions (habitual carrier index, safer knife replacement scheme, retailer scheme).
- Substance-use prevention and early identification.
- Support for care leavers, children in residential care and those transitioning at 18.

D. Place-Based and Environmental Approaches

Participants emphasised the importance of understanding local contexts and designing responses around places, not just individuals.

- Hotspot mapping for ASB, SV and exploitation.
- Environmental improvements (lighting, CCTV, walk-throughs).
- Community guardianship and safe spaces in businesses.
- Support for British Transport Police and night-time economy safeguarding.

E. Youth Voice and Engagement

Young people's insights were seen as essential to shaping effective services.

- More interviews and direct engagement.
- Surrey County Council Youth Cabinet involvement.
- Youth engagement officers in schools.
- Understanding what realistically draws young people away from violence.
- Activities that build ambition, skills and positive identity.

3. Opportunities for Partnerships, Training and Gaps

This section consolidates the workshop's detailed ideas into clear thematic opportunities.

A. Schools: Opportunities and Gaps

- Identify which schools are using the **Healthy Schools toolkit** and support those who are not.
- Improve education around **challenging topics**, including targeted group work on masculinity, identity and relationships.
- Provide **tailored interventions** for schools with the highest exclusion rates.
- Strengthen the role of **youth engagement officers** in delivering early warnings and support to pupils and parents.
- Embed **kindness, belonging and inclusion** within school culture.
- Address the needs of children who are **excluded** or feel excluded from school or society.
- Develop **alternative provision** where gaps exist.

B. Police: Opportunities and Gaps

- Consider **remand fostering** as an alternative to custody.

- Ensure **trigger plans** are consistently shared with call handlers and frontline officers.
- Improve police responses to **youth justice information requests**.
- Strengthen action on **Pegasus information** and improve accuracy of police flags (e.g. sexual assault).
- Build trust through **community guardianship**, outreach and visibility.
- Support British Transport Police with **real-time safeguarding** and youth surveys.
- Address gaps in **police intelligence sharing** with children's services and local authorities.
- Continue **knife-related interventions**, including the safer knife replacement scheme and habitual knife carrier index.
- Maintain targeted patrols in **ASB and serious violence hotspots**.

C. Parents and Carers: Opportunities and Gaps

- Provide support to help parents understand and respond to their children's behaviour.
- Address gaps in **parenting support** and access to trusted adults.
- Offer training on **social media, phones and online risks**.
- Improve parental engagement across all services.
- Strengthen signposting to available support and resources.
- Use accessible materials such as **Ben Kinsella information leaflets**.

D. Youth: Opportunities and Gaps

- Use feedback from youth justice to shape services.
- Involve the **Surrey County Council Youth Cabinet** in decision-making.
- Address the gap in **safe spaces** for sessions with children and young people.
- Understand what realistically draws young people away from violence and build these into interventions.
- Expand youth engagement offers, including identity toolkits and cultural inclusion work.
- Address the lack of **onward support at 18**, including life skills, financial literacy and transition pathways.
- Strengthen support during the **child-to-adult services transition**.

E. Training and Interventions

- Develop **bespoke, targeted interventions** for high-risk groups.
- Provide training for young people at risk of **primary exclusion**.
- Increase interviews and engagement with young people to inform practice.
- Create opportunities to prevent "**blocked futures**", including early substance-use prevention.

- Embed **trauma-informed practice** and professional curiosity across all services.
- Deliver **cuckooing training** for care-leaver teams.
- Expand mentoring, lived-experience roles and early intervention.
- Adopt a **long-term, generational approach** to anti-violence.
- Increase work experience and ambition-building opportunities.
- Improve collaboration across sectors and reduce silo working.
- Conduct regular **serious violence case reviews**.
- Promote positive role models and trusted adults.
- Improve mapping and sharing of information on those at risk of exploitation.

F. Partnerships and System Opportunities

- Strengthen the **Adolescent Central Hub**.
- Use JAGs for multi-agency problem-solving and place-based responses.
- Expand **community guardianship** models.
- Use CHARM to support the most vulnerable individuals.
- Ensure third-sector partners are fully engaged in the SV framework.
- Implement the **responsible retailer scheme** to restrict knife sales.
- Strengthen place-based partnerships and ensure the right agencies are involved.
- Improve coordination across hotspot areas (Redhill, Spelthorne, Guildford).
- Use locality assessments (CEMU team) to inform targeted action.
- Expand **business places of safety** for children and young people.

G. Other Cross-Cutting Opportunities

- Improve use of the **Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) contact data** and risk indices.
- Commission SAFE, well-staffed children's homes with strong oversight.
- Continue support for the **Surrey Steps to Change** domestic abuse hub.
- Commission services for **14–25 year olds**, recognising cross-age exploitation.
- Secure additional funding to sustain interventions.
- Improve profiling data to support prevention and early identification.

4. Opportunities for 2026/27

- Trauma-informed, whole-system approach
- Stronger multi-agency intelligence sharing

- Expanded mentoring and trusted adult programmes
- Targeted school-based interventions
- Improved parental support
- Enhanced knife-related prevention
- Place-based partnerships in hotspot areas
- Better transition support for 18–25 year olds
- Youth voice embedded in service design

5. Conclusion

The workshop highlighted a strong appetite across partners to move towards a more integrated, trauma-informed and preventative approach to serious violence. The learning points emphasise the need for earlier intervention, stronger collaboration, better intelligence sharing and a focus on both people and places. By addressing the identified gaps and building on existing strengths, Surrey can develop a more coherent and effective system to protect young people from serious violence.