PAN MERSEYSIDE REPORT

VIOLENCE REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

MERSEYSIDE
Violence
Reduction
Partnership

Sefton
young
advisors

LIVERPOOL SAFEGUARDING
LSCP
CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

WIRRAL

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0 1

THE COMMISSION

In March 2020, we were approached by the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) with the aim of gathering views from young people aged 11-18 across Merseyside.

We wanted to find out what works to help young people who are at risk of committing or becoming a victim of violent crime, and what young people think should be put into place to prevent serious crime and child criminal exploitation in their area.

To do this we reached out to young people across Merseyside and used multi-platform techniques of consultation to find out their thoughts and views of violent crime in their area.

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WHO ARE WE?

The Pan Mersey Collaborative is a group of young people aged 15 to 24 and is made up of Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Young Advisors, Sefton Young Advisors and Wirral Youth Voice Group

These groups all work with business leaders, bringing unique expertise and knowledge about being young to influence strategic planning, decision-making and marketing

The commission was important to us as we wanted to ensure that young people across Merseyside feel safe and know what support can be offered to them as victims or offenders of violent crimes

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PLANNING

Due to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral came together remotely to discuss the commission and formed an executive group. This group met over Microsoft Teams once a month to discuss the commission

It was decided during the executive meetings that a survey would be produced to collect data from the three different boroughs. Each group targeted specific groups for survey responses

It was agreed that we would run focus groups to be able to have more detailed conversations with young people

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ENGAGEMENT

In total, we engaged with...

699

young people across Merseyside

290
from Liverpool

329
from Sefton

80
from Wirral

Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral each targeted groups of young people across their borough to hear their views. Each group contacted youth groups, community centres, schools and colleges to ensure that there was a wide variety of young people participating. We also ensured that a third of participants were from areas with traditionally lower engagement and participation.

An online survey was sent out to groups to gather their views and some groups were asked to take part in an interactive virtual focus group on the virtual platforms Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

As engagement during the first few weeks was slow, it was decided by the executive group, that the Liverpool Young Advisors would produce a video that all groups could use to accompany the survey to increase engagement.

Please note, during the report some respondents may have missed questions meaning the number of responses for each question may differ.

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WHAT WENT WELL

We managed to reach out across Merseyside to many young people despite the challenging circumstances. From that, we formed strong relationships between Liverpool Young Advisors, Sefton Young Advisors and Wirral Youth Voice which improved the quality of our work

We had to adapt our style of work to work around the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead of our usual face-to-face approach, we found that an interactive presentation with polls would be best to engage young people

We took the opportunity to create an executive group which allowed us to solve problems quickly and communicate effectively between young advisors and leads

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WHAT WE COULD DO DIFFERENTLY

We feel that if we had been able to do face-to-face consultation we may have had higher levels of engagement with young people. Unfortunately this was unable to take place due to the Covid-19 restrictions.
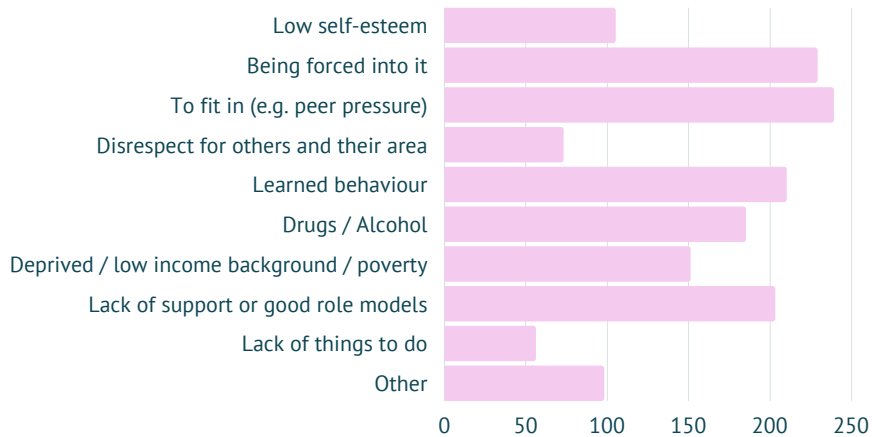
Each local authority ran their own survey using Survey Monkey, however we did not make it clear that each survey was for that specific local authority. For example, we should have stated that the Sefton survey was for Sefton residents only. A recommendation for future Pan-Mersey work would be to collect all the responses on one survey and then split the data at the end of the survey by using the postcodes given.

The aim of this commission was to engage with young people all over Merseyside, but participation from some areas was hampered logistically by the Covid-19 pandemic, for future projects we would try and target engagement with all areas across Merseyside.

07 FINDINGS

Q1. Why do you think young people commit violent crimes? (select all that apply)

Liverpool

Low self-esteem	~100
Being forced into it	~230
To fit in (e.g. peer pressure)	~235
Disrespect for others and their area	~95
Learned behaviour	~235
Drugs / Alcohol	~205
Deprived / low income background / poverty	~160
Lack of support or good role models	~210
Lack of things to do	~105
Other	~30

Sefton

Low self-esteem	~100
Being forced into it	~230
To fit in (e.g. peer pressure)	~240
Disrespect for others and their area	~70
Learned behaviour	~210
Drugs / Alcohol	~185
Deprived / low income background / poverty	~150
Lack of support or good role models	~205
Lack of things to do	~55
Other	~95

Wirral

Low self-esteem	~7
Being forced into it	~7
To fit in (e.g. peer pressure)	~20
Disrespect for others and their area	~1
Learned behaviour	~16
Drugs / Alcohol	~6
Deprived / low income background / poverty	~9
Lack of support or good role models	~16
Lack of things to do	~13

08   FINDINGS

Q1. Why do you think young people commit violent crimes?

Young people from across Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral overall selected the same answers for this question

Common answers young people chose included: learned behaviour, feeling the need to fit in and peer pressure

Overall 69% of young people across the three local authorities, think the most common reason young people commit violent crimes is to fit in

FINDINGS

Q2. How safe do you feel in your area on a scale of 1-10?

(1 being not safe at all, 10 being very safe)

The most common overall answer across Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral was...

8 / 10

More specifically...

76%

in Liverpool

79%

in Sefton
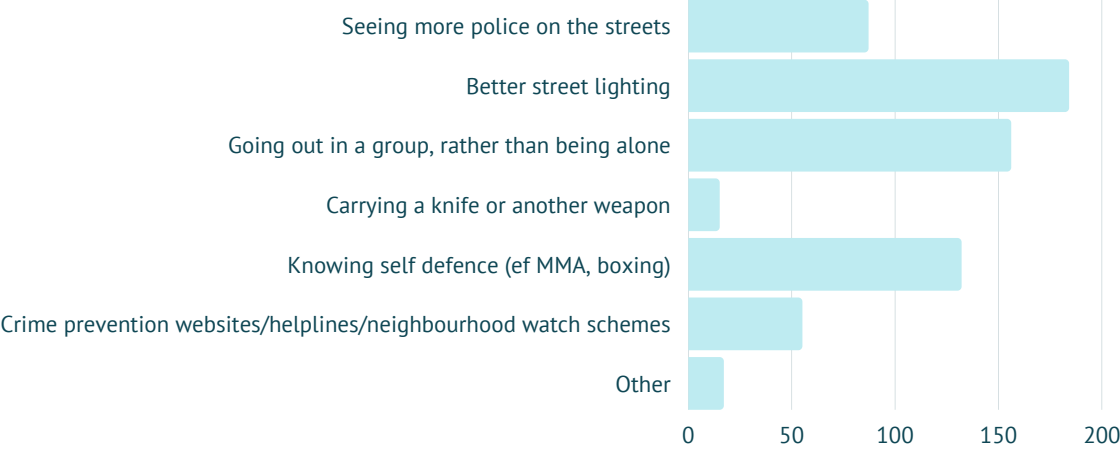
53%

in Wirral

rated 6 out of 10 or above for how safe they felt.

Overall 75% of young people across Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral selected 6 out of 10 or above for how safe they felt in their area.
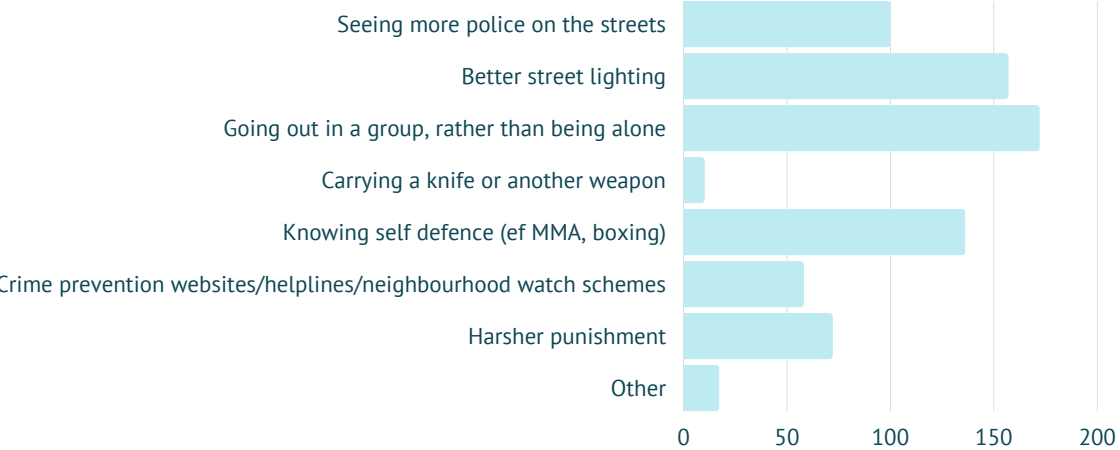
75%

10   FINDINGS

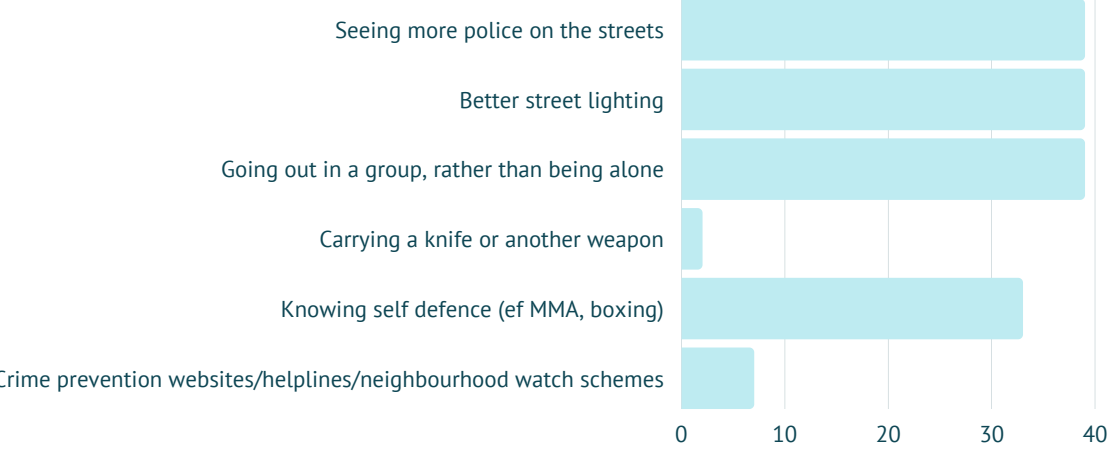## Q3. What would make you feel safe/safer in your area? (select all that apply)

Liverpool

Seeing more police on the streets	
Better street lighting	
Going out in a group, rather than being alone	
Carrying a knife or another weapon	
Knowing self defence (ef MMA, boxing)	
Crime prevention websites/helplines/neighbourhood watch schemes	
Other	

0   50   100   150   200

Sefton

Seeing more police on the streets	
Better street lighting	
Going out in a group, rather than being alone	
Carrying a knife or another weapon	
Knowing self defence (ef MMA, boxing)	
Crime prevention websites/helplines/neighbourhood watch schemes	
Harsher punishment	
Other	

0   50   100   150   200

Wirral

Seeing more police on the streets	
Better street lighting	
Going out in a group, rather than being alone	
Carrying a knife or another weapon	
Knowing self defence (ef MMA, boxing)	
Crime prevention websites/helplines/neighbourhood watch schemes	

0   10   20   30   40

11   FINDINGS

## Q3. What would make you feel safe/safer in your area?

In **Liverpool**, the most popular response to this question was 'Better street lighting'

In **Sefton**, the answer which occurred most frequently, was 'Being out in a group rather than being alone'

In **Wirral,** the top three, with an equal amount of responses were 'More police on the streets', 'More street lighting' and 'Going out in a group rather than being alone'

Comments from individuals in focus groups in response to this question:

- "More CCTV on the streets"

- "I think more police should be on the streets"

- "I would like to know self-defence"

- "Better knowledge of service contacts and awareness"
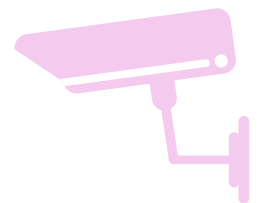
12 FINDINGS

Q4. Are there any times/places that you feel unsafe?
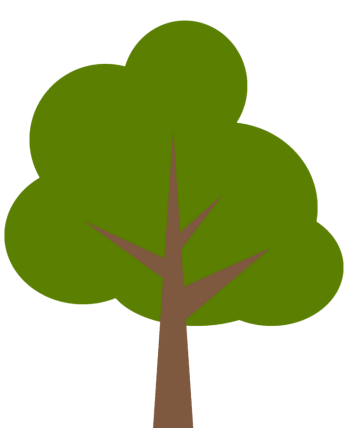
From the **Liverpool** survey:

'Travelling alone at night'
'When there is no street lighting'
'Dark alleys'

From the **Sefton** survey:

'At night'
'At the train station past 6pm'
'Walking alone to the shops'

From the **Wirral** survey:

'In Birkenhead'
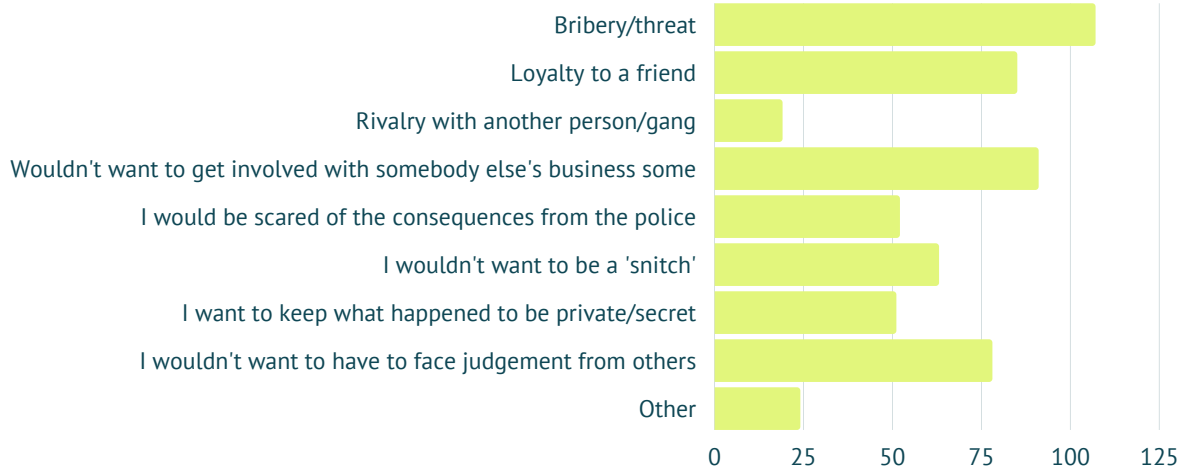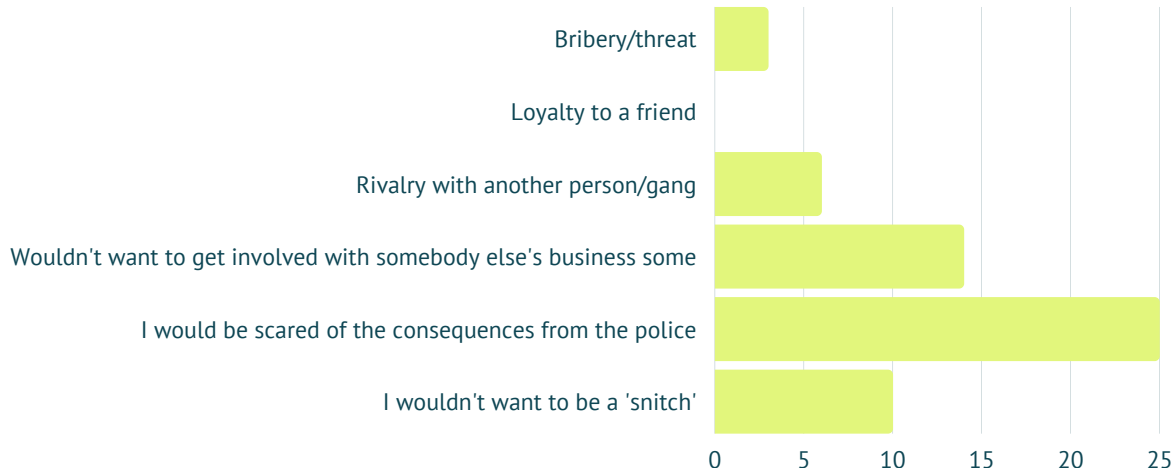'In the park at night'
'In the forests or woods'

Overall, the responses from young people within Liverpool, Sefton, and the Wirral state that being out in the dark or at night is a time that makes them feel unsafe. The majority of young people think that being alone makes them feel unsafe. In particular, Birkenhead was highlighted by young people from both Liverpool and Wirral as an area they felt less safe.

FINDINGS

Q5. Is there anything that would prevent you from reporting a violent crime to the police as a victim/witness?
(select all that apply)

Liverpool

Category	
Bribery/threat	
Loyalty to a friend	
Wouldn't want to get involved with somebody else's business some	
I would be scared of the consequences from the police	
I wouldn't want to be a 'snitch'	
Other	
Blank	

(Horizontal axis: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80)

Sefton

Category	
Bribery/threat	
Loyalty to a friend	
Rivalry with another person/gang	
Wouldn't want to get involved with somebody else's business some	
I would be scared of the consequences from the police	
I wouldn't want to be a 'snitch'	
I want to keep what happened to be private/secret	
I wouldn't want to have to face judgement from others	
Other	

(Horizontal axis: 0, 25, 50, 75, 100, 125)

Wirral

Category	
Bribery/threat	
Loyalty to a friend	
Rivalry with another person/gang	
Wouldn't want to get involved with somebody else's business some	
I would be scared of the consequences from the police	
I wouldn't want to be a 'snitch'	

(Horizontal axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25)

14 FINDINGS

Q5. Is there anything that would prevent you from reporting a violent crime to the police as a victim/witness?

28%

of young people in **Liverpool** selected bribery/threat to be the main reason that they would prevent reporting a violent crime

31%

of young people in **Wirral** selected consequences from police to be the main reason preventing them from reporting a violent crime

33%

of young people in **Sefton** selected bribery/threat to be the main reason that they would prevent reporting a violent crime

In focus groups delivered by Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral common answered included:

- "I would only report a crime if I could do it in secret"

- "I wouldn't want to get involved in other peoples business"

- "The police might not believe me"

Overall from across the three areas, bribery/threat was the most popular reason that young people selected. Overall 19% of young people from across Merseyside would not want to get involved in other peoples business (bystander effect) this was also mentioned a high volume of times from focus group discussions.
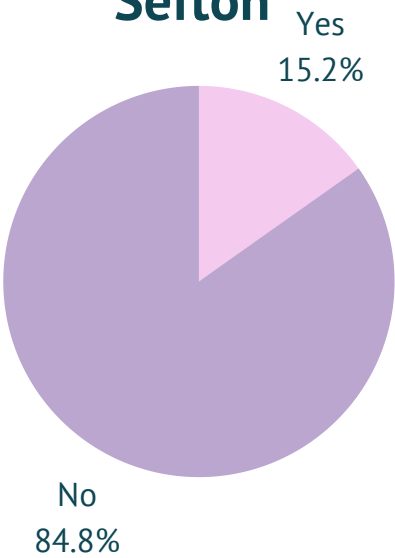
15

FINDINGS

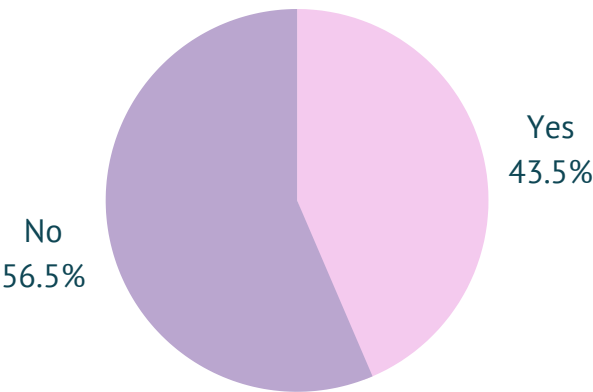**Q6**. Are you aware of any services which help young people who have been involved in violent crime?

Liverpool
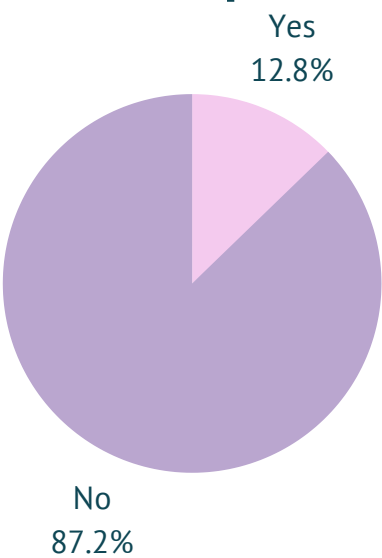
Yes
12.8%

No
87.2%

Sefton

Yes
15.2%

No
84.8%

Wirral

Yes
43.5%

No
56.5%

FINDINGS

Q6. Are you aware of any services which help young people who have been involved in violent crime?

The most common answer to this question from across all areas was **'no'**

87%
in Liverpool

85%
in Sefton

56%
in Wirral

were unaware of services which help young people involved in violent crime

Overall 77% of young people who took part in this consultation across Merseyside are <u>unaware</u> of services which help young people

17 FINDINGS

Q7. What activities do you think would be effective in helping young people who are at risk of committing a violent crime?

Below is a visual of suggestions from young people across Merseyside. The larger the word, is the more times it has been suggested:

Activities Support Sports Clubs Health Guidance Youth Mental Education School Therapy Police Facilities Cinema Wellbeing Classes Volunteering Places Yoga Relax Running Spaces Apprenticeships Gyms Jobs Groups Music Parents Walking Talking Teaching SelfDefence Centres Boxing Relationships go Counselling Leisure presence Parks Outdoor

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FINDINGS

Q7. What activities do you think would be effective in helping young people who are at risk of committing a violent crime?

In **Liverpool**, the most popular answer was 'access to youth clubs and activities'

In **Sefton**, the most popular answer was 'mental health support'

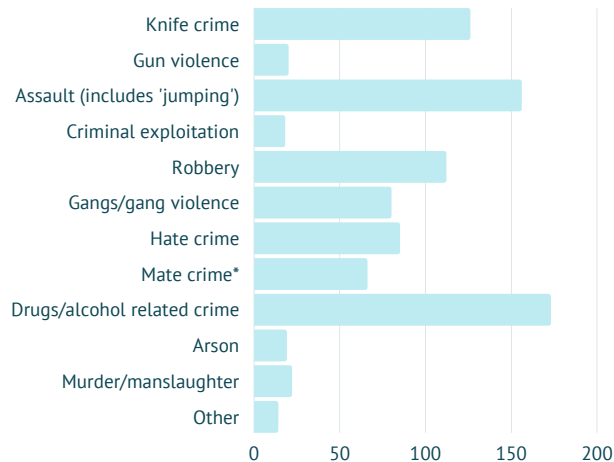In **Wirral,** the most popular answer was 'an increased police presence'

19 FINDINGS

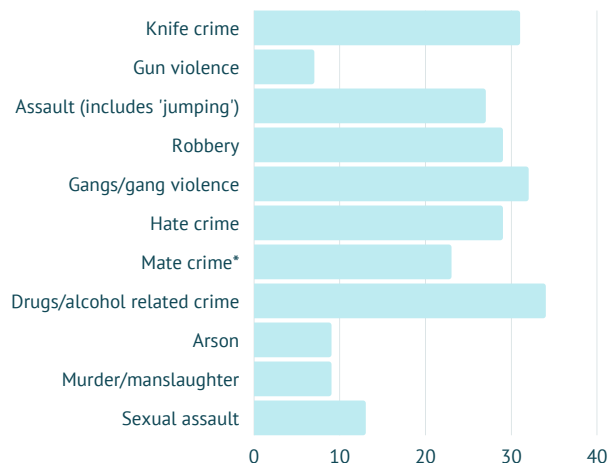**Q8**. What do you think the biggest violent crime issues are in your area? (select all that apply)

Liverpool

Issue	Value
Knife crime	~155
Gun violence	~45
Assault (includes 'jumping')	~178
Robbery	~158
Gangs/gang violence	~118
Hate crime	~80
Mate crime*	~53
Drugs/alcohol related crime	~172
Arson	~30
Murder/manslaughter	~125
Sexual assault	~38

(x-axis: 0, 50, 100, 150, 200)

Sefton

Issue	Value
Knife crime	~123
Gun violence	~18
Assault (includes 'jumping')	~155
Criminal exploitation	~15
Robbery	~112
Gangs/gang violence	~78
Hate crime	~85
Mate crime*	~63
Drugs/alcohol related crime	~173
Arson	~18
Murder/manslaughter	~22
Other	~12

(x-axis: 0, 50, 100, 150, 200)

Wirral

Issue	Value
Knife crime	~31
Gun violence	~7
Assault (includes 'jumping')	~27
Robbery	~29
Gangs/gang violence	~32
Hate crime	~28
Mate crime*	~23
Drugs/alcohol related crime	~34
Arson	~9
Murder/manslaughter	~9
Sexual assault	~13

(x-axis: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40)

20 FINDINGS

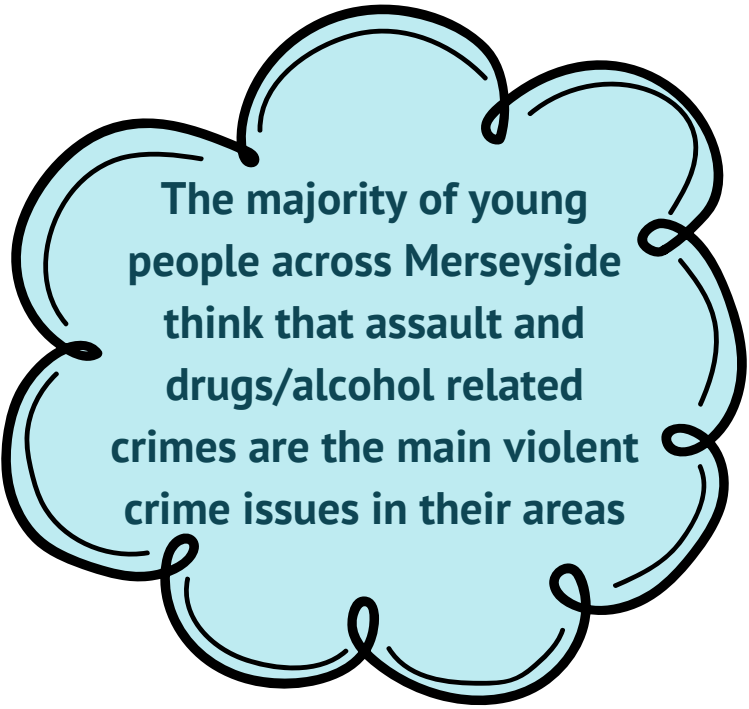**Q8**. What do you think the biggest violent crime issues are in your area?

In Liverpool young people felt that assault was the biggest violent crime issue in their area

Young people in Sefton and Wirral felt that drugs and alcohol related crimes were the biggest issues in their area

Proportionally to each cohort of participants across all 3 boroughs, knife crime was a consistently common response
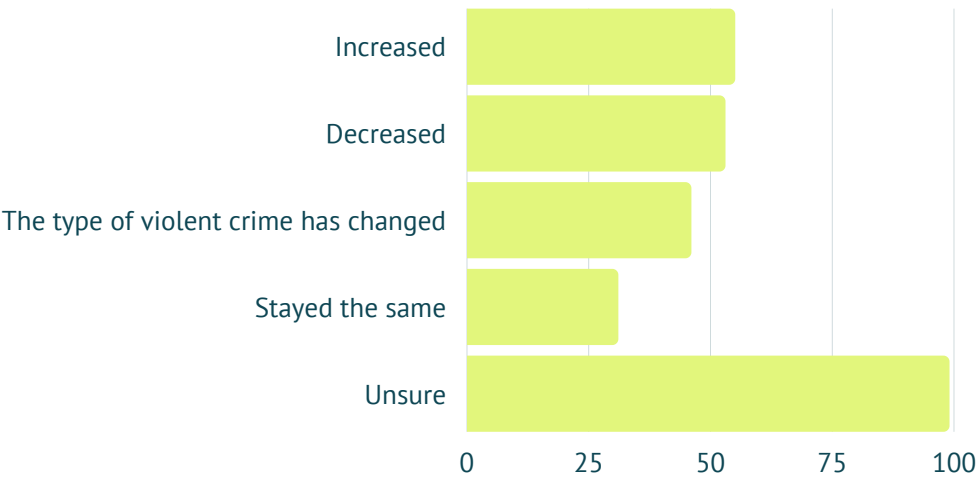
The majority of young people across Merseyside think that assault and drugs/alcohol related crimes are the main violent crime issues in their areas

2 1   FINDINGS

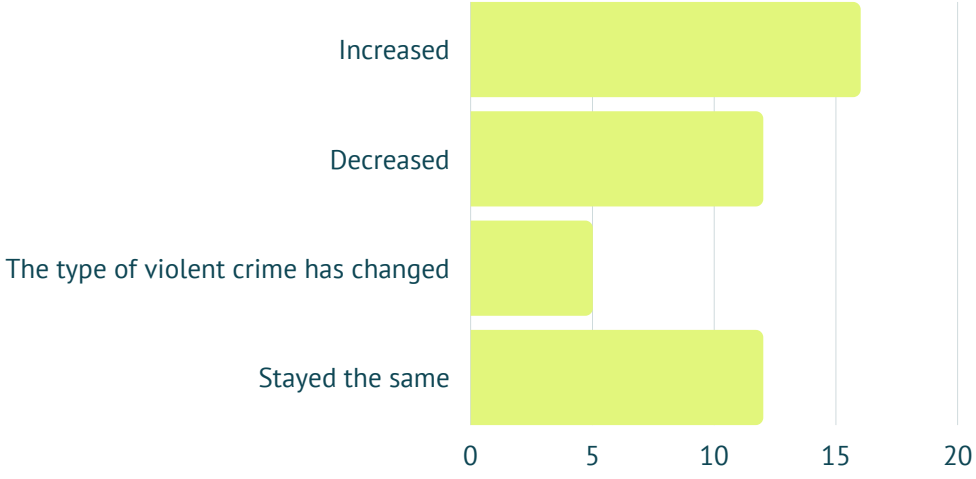**Q9**. Do you think that violent crime has changed during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Liverpool

Category	
Increased	
Decreased	
The type of violent crime has changed	
Stayed the same	
Unsure	

0   25   50   75   100

Sefton

Category	
Increased	
Decreased	
The type of violent crime has changed	
Stayed the same	
Unsure	

0   25   50   75   100

Wirral

Category	
Increased	
Decreased	
The type of violent crime has changed	
Stayed the same	

0   5   10   15   20
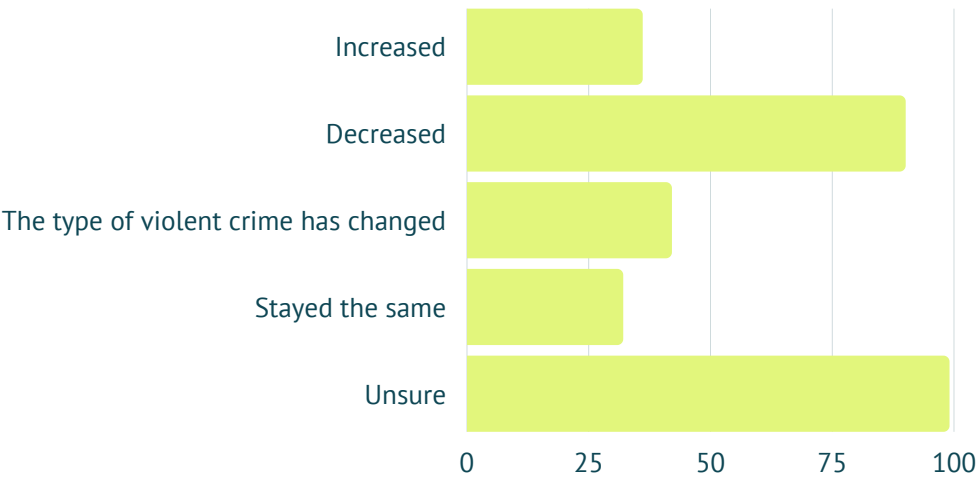
22

FINDINGS

Q9. Do you think that violent crime has changed during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Most young people across the three boroughs said that they were unsure.

In **Liverpool**, 11% of young people think violent crime has stayed the same

In **Wirral**, 36% of young people believe that violent crime has increased

In **Sefton**, 30% of young people believe violent crime has decreased

Many young people stated that domestic abuse has increased, see example below:

" I think that domestic abuse has increased during the pandemic because people have been inside more "

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Policing and Building Relationships

- Focus heightened police presence on the streets in Wirral, as suggested by young people in this consultation

- Police to work with local sports clubs and youth centres to potentially teach self-defence classes to build confidence in young people

- In areas where heightened police presence was not considered helpful, police should focus on creating long-lasting, positive relationships with children and young people as early as primary aged children

- Local Police should take action to build positive relationships with young people in the community

- Youth Clubs should link and build relationships with sports and other clubs for young people. This would support young people to engage in activities and link in with positive mentors in their community

Increased Street Lighting

- Across all areas, young people felt strongly that better street lighting would make them feel safer in their area, and deter other young people from committing crimes. Local Authorities should talk to young people about their plans for street lighting

2 4

Clear Guidelines for Young People

Across all areas, there were some young people who were unsure of how to actually report a crime; clear, youth-friendly guidelines are necessary to ensure that young people are educated on this matter

Young people should be encouraged to report crimes, and reassured that they will be taken seriously by authorities

Young people should be made aware of their rights and the process of reporting a crime. For example: what police officers can and cannot do, what might happen after they file a report and organisations which they can turn to, should they need further support

Open Communication

More promotion of communication systems such as fearless.org, where young people could flag up areas of concern (i.e. specific postcodes/public spaces) on a more regular basis may help to curb violent crime in these areas

Promoting services which help young people involved in violent crime should be a priority. This would greatly benefit young people across Merseyside, as around 77% of young people are not aware of any services which they could turn to

25 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Pan Mersey Collaborative would like to thank all of the young people that were involved in our surveys and focus groups

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