

Colchester Crime Survey 2022

Background and Introduction

Colchester City Council and the Safer Colchester Partnership are keen to understand how residents feel about crime in their local community and the city as a whole. In 2021 a survey was created to capture residents' feedback and feelings about this subject. We have repeated this survey again in 2022.

The survey also aims to establish whether residents themselves have been a victim of crime, or fear becoming a victim of crime. Being a victim of any form of crime can be a traumatic experience, and fearing crime, even if unfounded, can also cause stress and anxiety and affect mental and physical wellbeing.

The data collected from this survey will be used to help the Council and the Safer Colchester Partnership to plan future community safety and crime prevention services.

Method

The survey was available to residents through an online link, but where necessary residents could ask for assistance to complete the survey over the telephone.

The survey was advertised in the local press and through various communication channels. The survey was live on the Colchester City Council website from the 22 August to 19 September 2022. 351 residents responded to the survey. This was an improvement on the previous year when 111 responses were received.

Summary

- Fear of Crime was much greater than actual crime experienced.
- In 2021 the majority of respondents said their lives were not/or only slightly affected by fear of crime – 33% / 35%. This year only 19% of respondents were not worried or only slightly worried, with 68% of respondents either a little worried (53%) or very worried (15%) about being a victim of crime.
- Top 3 types of crime residents were worried or very worried about were: Anti-social behaviour (55%), Violent or sexual offences combined (48.6%) and Burglary (39%). This was similar in some ways to 2021 with Burglary and Anti-social behaviour both featuring. However Cyber-crime and online fraud were also a concern as had been reported in 2021.
- Less than a ¼ (21% n=65), of respondents said they had been a victim of crime in their local area
- The average rating given by residents on how much their daily life is affected by crime was 2.1.
- 75% of respondents said more police patrols were needed in the area (72% felt more policing was needed in their local area in 2021)¹.

¹ The sample achieved was higher this year and the wording of the survey was different; it is therefore difficult to make a definitive comparison.

Responses

There were 315 responses to the survey.

Figure 1 shows that the largest response came from those living in Castle (38, 12%), Mile End (36, 12%) and Shrub End (34, 11%). The lowest response was from those living in Mersea and Pyfleet, Marks Tey and Layer, Tiptree, Stanway, Rural North and Greenstead (from 2 to 3%). As can be seen in figure 2 the response in Castle and Mile End was higher than the proportion of households within these wards of Colchester, the reverse can be seen for other wards including, Mersea and Pyfleet, Marks Tey and Layer and Greenstead.

Figure 1. Respondents by Ward

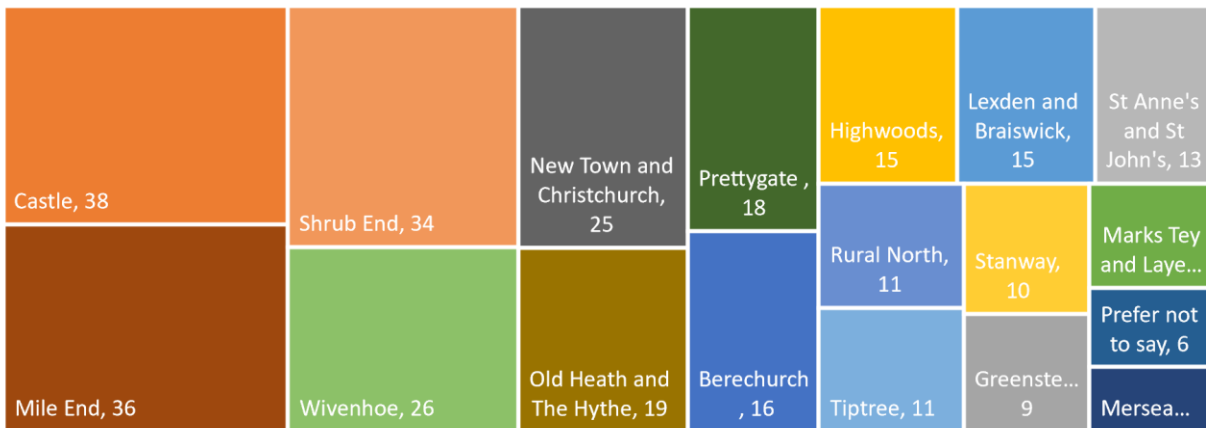


Figure 2. Proportion of response

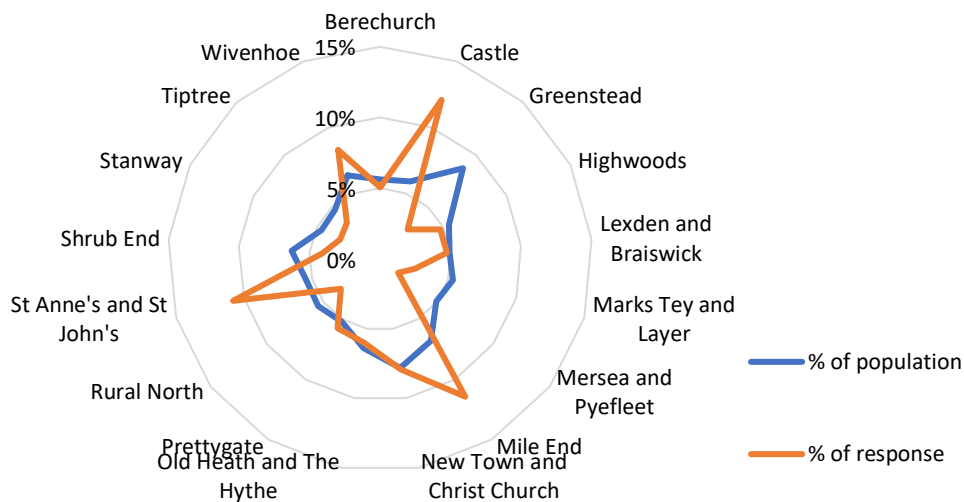
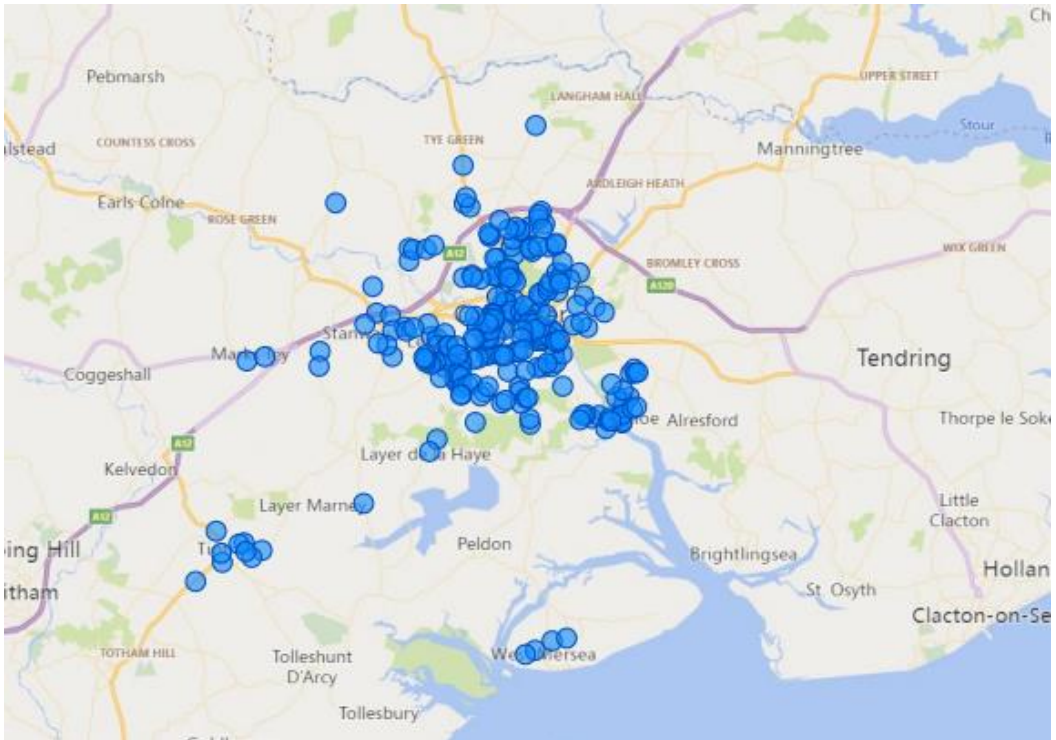


Figure 3. Respondents home postcodes



How long respondents have lived in Colchester

- The majority of respondents have lived in the city of Colchester for 10 years plus
- The majority of respondents to the survey were female (66.3%)
- There was good representation across age groups.

Figure 4. How long have you lived in the city of Colchester

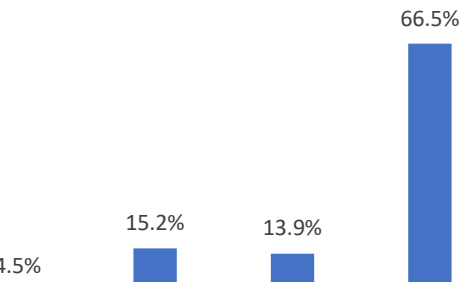


Figure 5. Gender of respondents

Gender of respondents

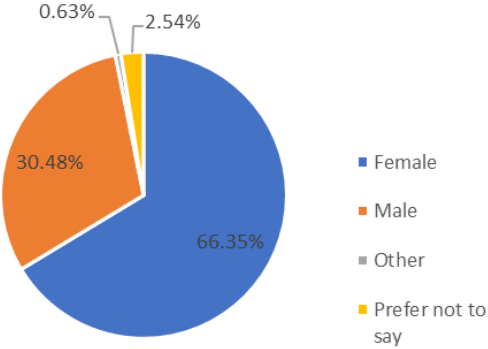
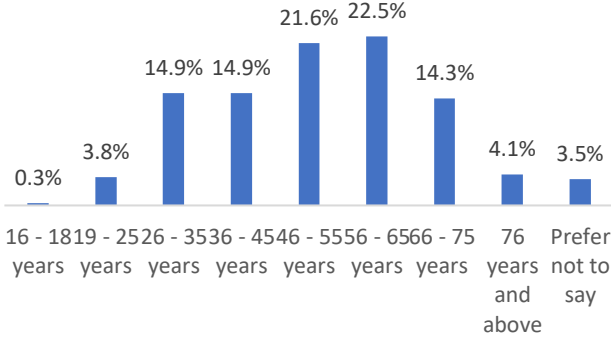
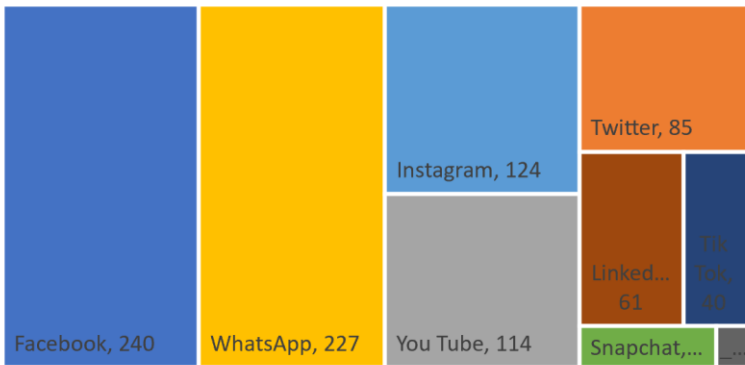


Figure 6. Age of respondents



Social Media use

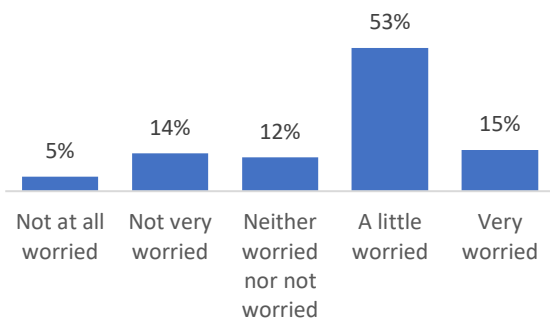


- The most common form of social media used was Facebook (N= 240) and Twitter (N=227).

Results

Fear of crime

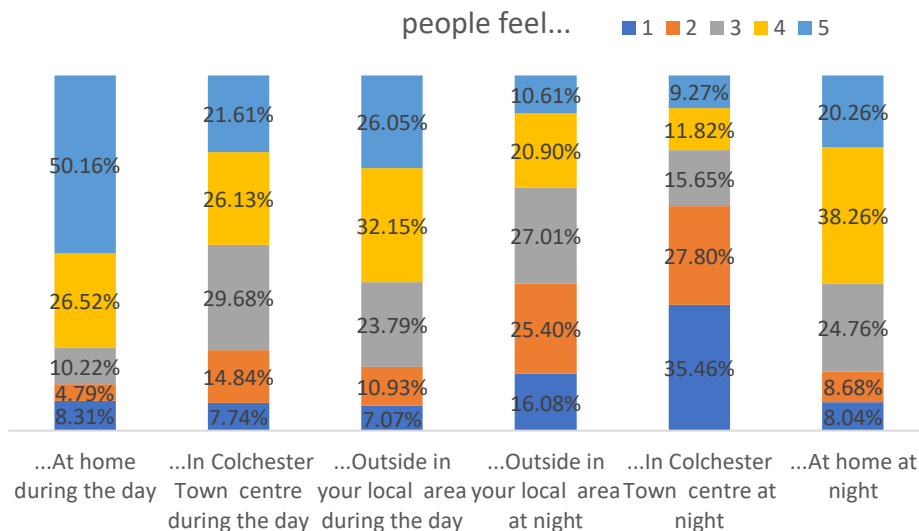
Thinking about crime in your local community, how worried are you about being a victim of crime...



68% of respondents were either a little worried (53%) or very worried (15%) about being a victim of crime.

Respondents rated feelings of safety higher during the day, with 50% of respondents rating 'at home during the day' highly. However, 13% of respondents gave low ratings for feelings of safety at home during the day. 63 % of respondents gave low ratings for feelings of safety in Colchester city centre at night.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not very safe) how safe do people feel...

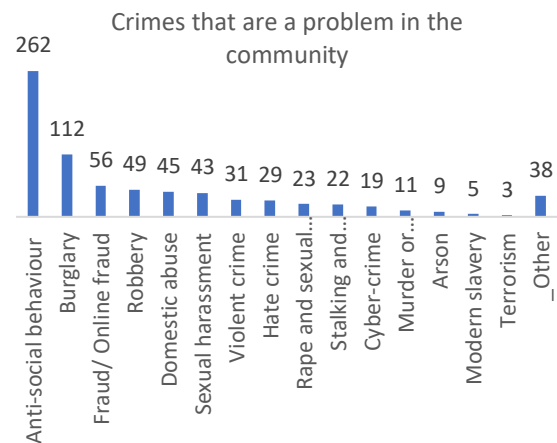


Fear of crime in the local area

When asked “what types of crime are more of a problem in your community,” Anti-social behaviour was again the most common crime noted, with 262 respondents (83%) saying this was a problem. Over a third of respondents also noted Burglary to be a problem in their community.

Just over 10% of respondents named ‘Other’ types of crime as being a problem in their community. These mainly related to Drugs/drug dealing and motoring offences (such as speeding).

In the further comments residents indicated the types of Anti-social behaviour they were concerned about.



“Anti social behaviour of all sorts has got worse in the 5 years I’ve been here - boy racers, petty vandalism , graffiti and littering.”

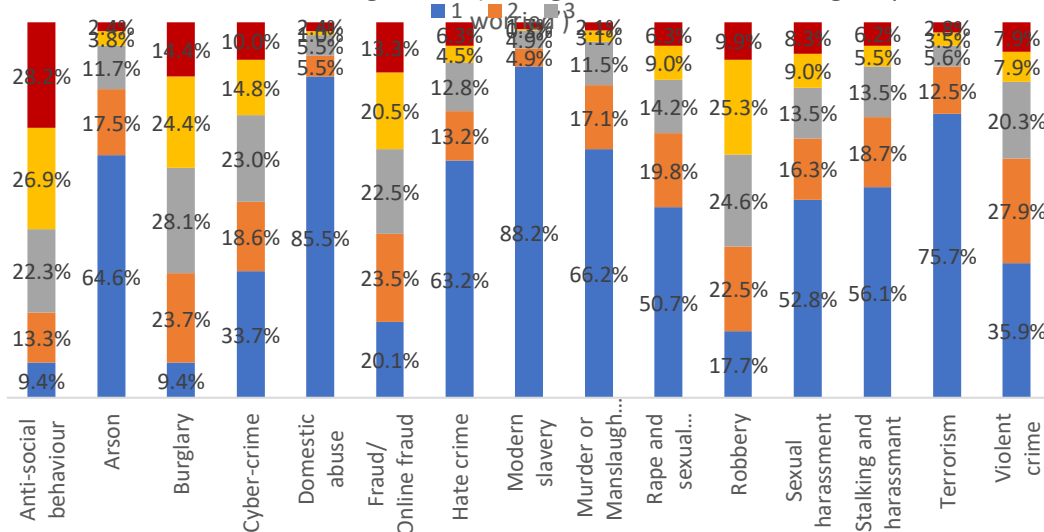
“The general behaviour in the area has really reduced in the last few years, with loads of speeding, loud cars revving, people yelling and arguing increasing over last 6 months.”

“Lots of youths in my area taking drugs and drinking. They are causing damage to my block of flats, and I am sometimes scared to leave in the evening.”

“Open drug use and drug driving in our area is shocking. Despite calls to police on numerous occasions nothing is done. The bus stops and bus station in the town centre are a disgrace frequented by drunks both day and night. Drug use is blatant and the feeling of intimidation in the town centre is unpleasant. Shouting and fighting is commonplace both day and night.”

Residents were more worried about being a victim of Anti-social behaviour (55% worried or very worried) than any other type of crime. When combined, 48.6% of residents were worried or very worried about being a victim of violent or sexual offences (Violent crime (15.9%), rape and sexual assault (15.3%), and sexual harassment (17.4%)). Over a third of residents were also worried or very

Thinking more about your local area, how worried are you about being a victim of the following crimes? (1 being ‘not worried’ and 5 being ‘very



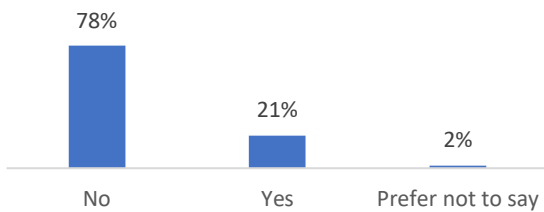
worried about becoming a victim of Burglary (39%) and Robbery (35.2%). This was similar in some ways to 2021 with Burglary and Anti-social behaviour both featuring. However, Cyber-crime and online fraud were more of a concern in 2021. (This year these categories were separated). Combined they would make up 58.5%.

It is also worth noting that worries over Anti-social behaviour are much higher than actual recorded crime in the Month of August 2022 (when the survey took place) with only 16% of crime being attributed as Anti-social behaviour. Generally, violent and sexual offences are the highest recorded crime in Colchester². In August 2022 39.4% of recorded crime was attributed to violence and sexual offences. It is important to note that resident classification is subjective and not based on the same framework Police use.

Victims of Crime

Less than a ¼ (21% n=65), of respondents said they had been a victim of crime in their local area.

In the past 12 months, have you been a victim of any form of crime in your local area?

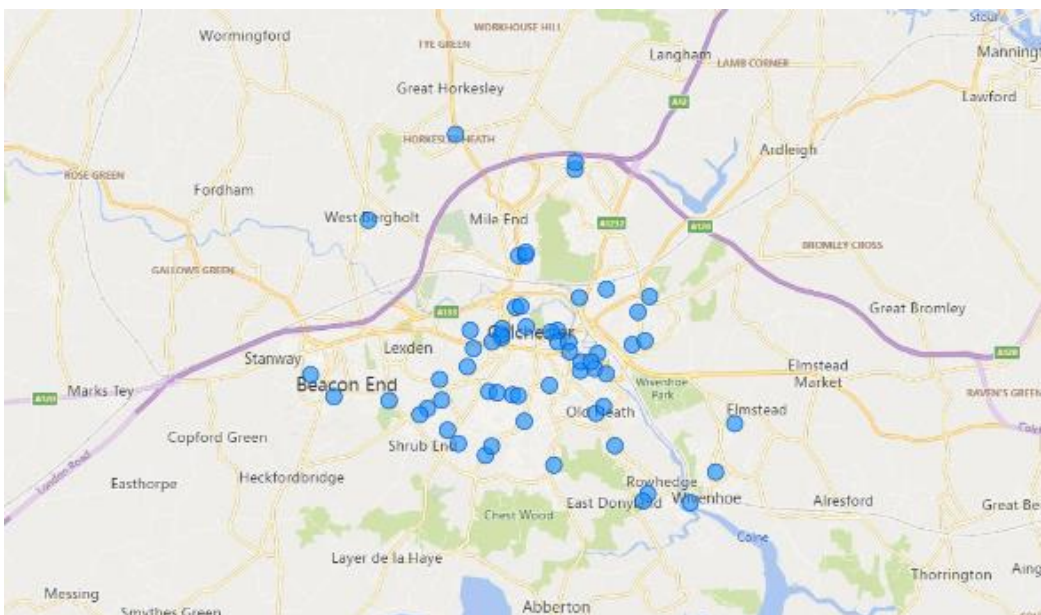


The average rating given by residents on how much their daily life is affected by crime



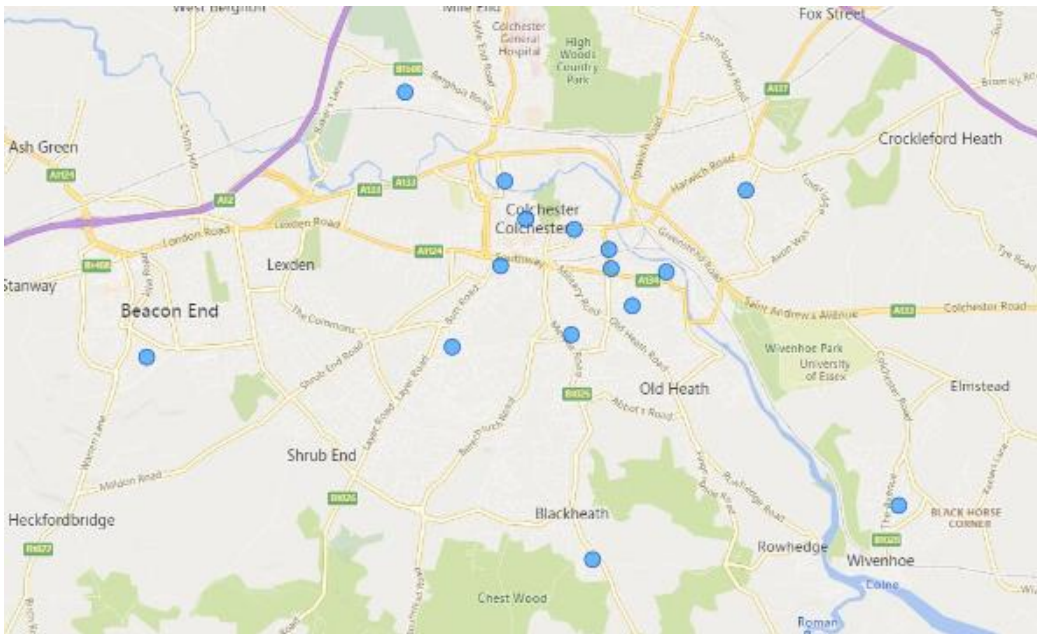
2.1 Average Rating

Location of those that said they had been a victim of crime



² Source: Police UK –Data for Colchester August 2022

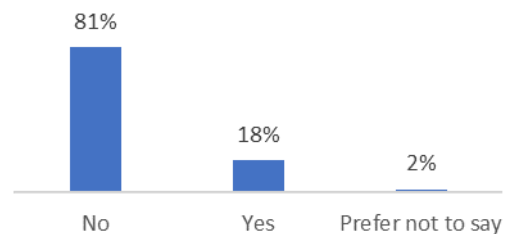
Location of those that said their daily lives are 'Very' affected by crime
 (Gave a rating of 5 when asked 'on a scale of 1 to 5, how much would you say that your daily life is affected by crime? (1 being 'not affected' and 5 being 'very affected')



For those that had reported that either they or a member of their household had been a victim of crime, the most common type of crime reported was Anti-social behaviour (85%, n = 55). This is much higher than what was reported in 2021 (63%). 'Other' types of crime reported included Assault, criminal damage (including to cars), threatening behaviour and intruders on their property.

Less than a 5th reported that a member of their household had been a victim of crime.

In the past 12 months, has anyone in your household been a victim of any form of crime

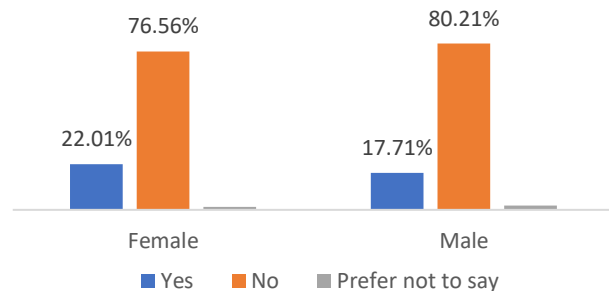


If you or a member of your household have been a victim of crime, what type of crime(s) were you a victim of?



A higher (but not statistically significant) percentage of men said they had been a victim of crime in the previous 12 months.

In the past 12 months, have you been a victim of any form of crime in your local area?



Night-time Economy

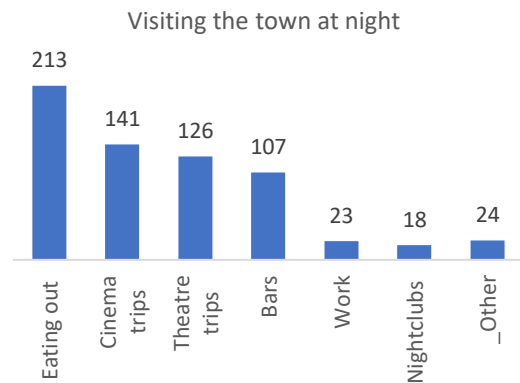
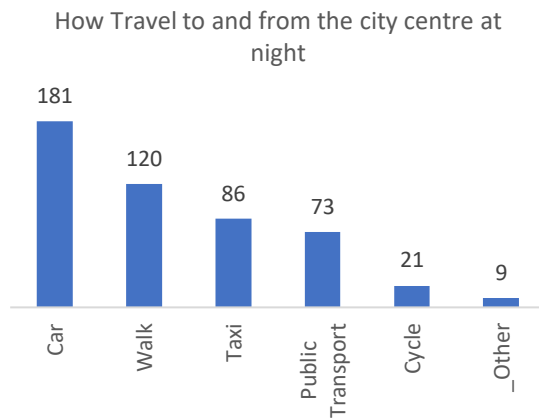
Respondents reported visiting the city centre at night for a variety of reasons. The most common reasons were eating out and cinema trips.

'Other' reasons stated included visiting friends and shopping.

A few residents indicated they did not enter the city at night, in part due to safety concerns.

"NOT in ANY circumstances would we come into the CITY at Night"

"No, I don't do Colchester at all. Not safe. "



Over half of respondents said they travelled to and from the city centre at night by car (57%).

Factors noted as contributing to methods of travel were generally feeling safer in a car, being female, from an ethnic minority or being disabled (and having a blue badge).

Over a third of respondents also said they walked to and from city at night (38%). However, this was not necessarily without incident

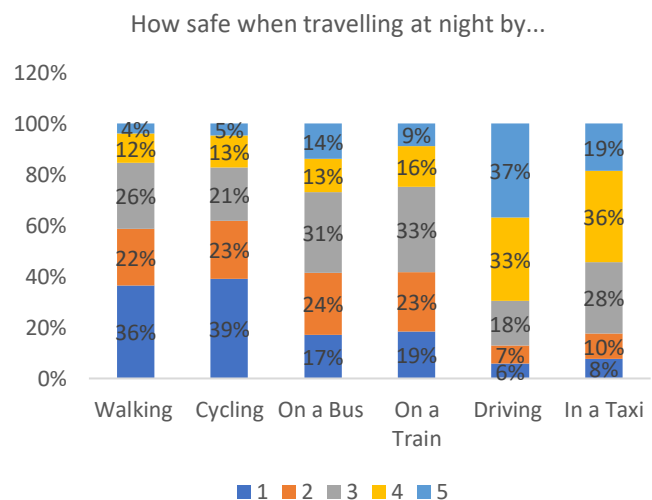
"Lots of poorly lit & isolated spots on the way home, and I live near the town centre."

"I feel unsafe walking on my own after dark & have therefore changed my choices to avoid this...I really resent this as I live close to the town centre."

RATES OF SAFETY ON DIFFERENT MODES OF TRANSPORT.

Respondents generally felt safer when driving in their own car with 70% of respondents rating safety as 4 (33%) or 5 (37%). The next safest was In a Taxi (54%). People felt least safe when cycling. This was in part due to road safety. Those who walked were generally only travelling short distances.

Some of the comments regarding cycling explained why low ratings had been given. (See over)



"Lots of poorly lit & isolated spots on the way home, and I live near the town centre. I feel it's unsafe for

"Cycling is not safe due to motorists' aggression and speeding."

my teenage children coming home at night by bike. The well-lit, non-isolated routes are too dangerous because of traffic."

"Cycling itself is relatively safe but unlocking your bike not - had situation where at this very moment a friend had been assaulted as a group of people were trying to steal his bike"

A whole range of comments were received regarding reasons for the ratings given, the following demonstrate some of the complexities involved in deciding how to travel to and from the city centre.

"The route I have to walk to town is quite daunting as a female. North Station Road has groups of men that hang outside the shops. The increase of violent crime in town isn't reassuring."

"As a small female I NEVER feel safe when alone, especially at night, unless I am quite literally locked in my car."

"I absolutely do not feel safe when in my local area when travelling by any means other than a car with locked doors..."

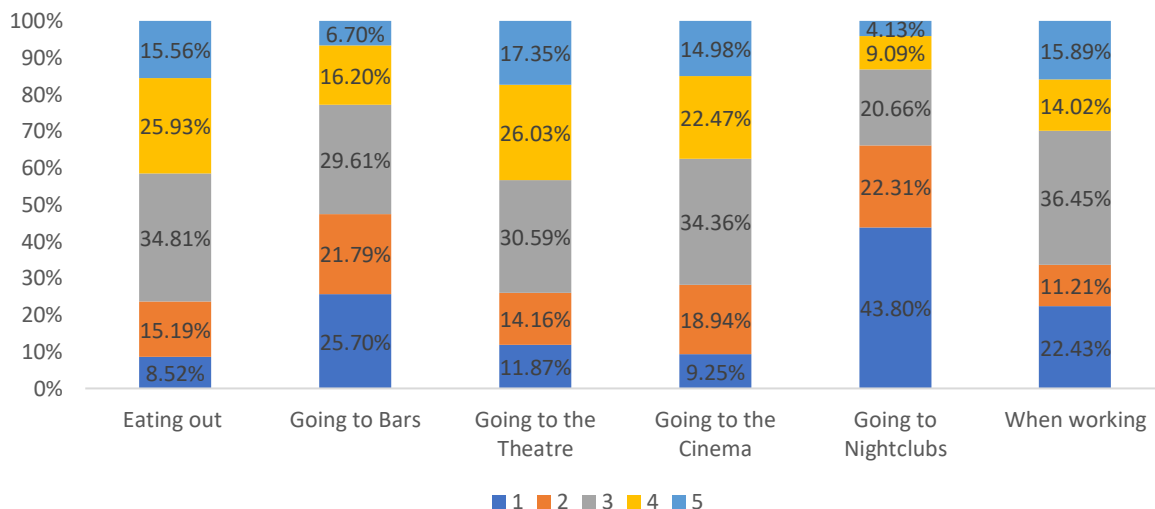
"It depends on whether I will have a drink or not. If I'll have a drink, I obviously won't drive but take public transport or a taxi. If late at night and I'm alone I'm more likely to take a taxi than public transport because I don't always feel safe alone with lots of men around who have been drinking."

"I would not feel safe to walk home alone. The buses are usually fine but some abuse from the public to others (and bus driver) does happen. Taxis usually feel safe, but some can be unsafe in driving practices or talk about dodgy things"

RATES OF SAFETY WHEN OUT IN CITY CENTRE

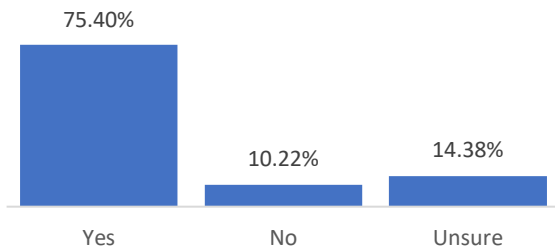
Respondents felt safest when going to city centre for the theatre (43% rating 4 or 5) or when eating out (41% rating 4 or 5). Respondents felt less safe when going to nightclubs with 66% of respondents giving this a low rating (1 or 2).

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not very safe) how safe do you feel at night in city centre when...



Police and Crime Prevention

Do you feel there needs to be more police patrols in your local area?

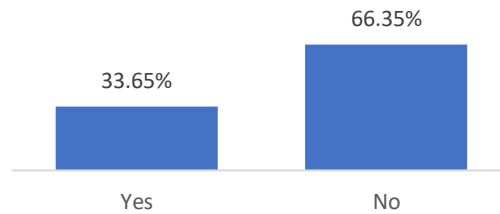


75% of respondents said there needs to be more police patrols in their local area. This was also mentioned by a number of respondents when asked for further comments.

“My fear of crime would be much lessened if we had more Police walking on the streets.”

When asked how they would like to be informed about crime prevention activities residents named a wide range of methods including hard copy leaflets, the most popular methods mentioned being social media and email/ newsletters sent by email. Other preferences included leaflets/newsletter in hard copy and face to face methods.

Do you feel informed about local policing and crime prevention activities in your area?



Conclusions and Recommendations for Safer Colchester Partnership

The findings from this survey will be used as a data source in the Strategic Assessment of Crime report. They will further be used by the Safer Colchester Partnership, along with the Strategic Assessment of Crime, to set key priorities and formulate the Annual Partnership Plan for 2023-24.

Appendix

Sample characteristics

