

Community Safety Context - 2009/10 Single Outcome Agreement

East Lothian is a relatively safe place to live, with low levels of serious crime and disorder. Although crime rates recorded for East Lothian as a whole are lower than the Scottish average there are certain communities that do experience a high volume of low-level crime and antisocial behaviour. Increased crime rates can be closely linked to deprivation.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) has identified a number of small areas in East Lothian that have relatively high concentrations of specific crimes.¹ These small areas (eleven in total) are in Prestonpans, Musselburgh, Dunbar, Tranent and Macmerry and fall within the “20% most deprived” in Scotland (four of them falling into the “5-10% most deprived” category).

East Lothian residents’ reported experience of antisocial behaviour is lower than the Scottish average². There were 7,543-recorded complaints of antisocial behaviour in 2007/08. The 2005 Residents’ Survey did, however find that a significant percentage of residents witness some form of antisocial behaviour on a regular basis. Residents living in some areas were more likely to be affected by antisocial behaviour than in others (again linked to deprivation).

Antisocial behaviour and disorder in town centres is an issue that generates a high proportion of calls to the Police. A high volume of these calls relate to young people “hanging around” or consuming alcohol in public places and also to “boy racers” (local residents’ perceptions / levels of tolerance are, however, significant in relation to this). Alcohol related violence / disorder in town centre streets is also an issue, particularly at weekends and when licensed premises are closing.

People often experience fear of crime that does not reflect the actual probability of them becoming a victim of crime, and this fear can compromise their quality of life. Figures from the Scottish Household Survey show that East Lothian residents feel relatively safe when walking alone at night in their communities, with 76% saying they feel “very safe” or “fairly safe” (compared to 73% Scotland wide). This did, however, leave 15% claiming to feel “a bit unsafe” and 7% “not safe at all”.

Once more, rates vary according to locality - the 2005 East Lothian Residents’ Survey found that residents of Prestonpans, Musselburgh and Tranent generally felt less safe, while North Berwick residents felt safest. Certain groups of individuals are also likely to feel less secure, including women, older people and disabled people. [Victim Support Scotland](#) estimate that while less than 1.5% of young people commit crime, approximately 50% become victims (in Scotland as a whole). However, many of these crimes go unreported and official crime surveys are poor at recording the extent to which young people become the victims of crime.

There were 49,655 incidents of domestic abuse reported to Scottish Police in 2007/08 - 792 of these were in East Lothian, around 1.5% of the total figure (East Lothian’s share of the overall Scottish population is 1.8%). Although reported domestic abuse rates are below the Scottish average (the national rate of incidents per 100,000 was 965, whereas in East Lothian it was 772)³ this is still an

¹ Including crimes of violence, drug offences, domestic house breaking, minor assault and vandalism

² Scottish Household Survey 2005/06

³ These figures should be seen as only a proxy measure of the actual rate of domestic abuse

issue affecting an unacceptably high number of families in East Lothian. An upward trend in the reporting of domestic abuse is evident in East Lothian (up by 16% last year), and this is consistent with a national rise of reporting across Scotland. Interpretation of this rise should take into account factors such as increased public awareness / education. A recent pilot project addressing reporting in East Lothian is also likely to have increased local rates.

East Lothian Community Safety Forum is committed to working in partnership to ensure the safety of all residents within their homes. The fitting of smoke detectors, installation of monitors, safety equipment and regular safety checks are some of the initiatives currently in place with the partnership continually seeking to reduce the number of unintentional injuries and accidental fires recorded.

The number of road accidents per million vehicle kilometres in East Lothian is declining and is lower than the Scottish average. Road accidents, however, remain a significant cause of premature death in East Lothian. There are still a number of issues that cause particular concern, these include young / inexperienced drivers, recreational motorcyclists and single vehicle accidents on rural roads.

*** Work is currently underway to update this context in preparation for developing the 2010/11 East Lothian Single Outcome Agreement ***