

## APPENDIX C

### Background Briefing Paper on Drug Offences in Cardiff and Wales

Scrutiny Research

14 May 2021

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### 1. Introduction

The Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee will be looking into the drug related challenges and issues confronting public services in Cardiff during its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2021.

This briefing paper was commissioned by the Chair of Cardiff Council's Community and Adult Services Scrutiny to inform their scrutiny of this topic. This briefing will provide an overview on drug related crimes in Cardiff and Wales and will illustrate local perceptions on crime safety in the community during the Covid pandemic outbreak.

The data presented on this briefing paper relied heavily on publically available documents from the open data websites, the ONS Statistical Bulletins and the special data sets requested from the ONS Crime Survey Team. All the data sources cited in this report can be accessed on the web links included in this report.

#### 1.1. Background of data on drug offences in Cardiff

It is important to have a clear definition of what is included in the broad category referred to as drug offences. According to the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime ([Drug Offences \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)) drug offences are differentiated into two main categories: 'Trafficking in Controlled Drugs' and 'Possession of Drugs'. Falling under the category of 'Trafficking of controlled drugs' are activities involving the production or manufacture of drugs, importation and export of drugs with intent to evade prohibition or restriction, supplying or offering to supply a controlled drug and possession with the intent to supply. The category broadly referred to as 'Possession of Drugs' include activities such as the possession of controlled Class A drugs including heroin, cocaine, MDMA, Methadone, crack, crystal meth but excluding Cannabis. The possession of Cannabis is a separate distinct category under this heading and is recorded separately. Possession of drug offences will for example include an individual searched by the

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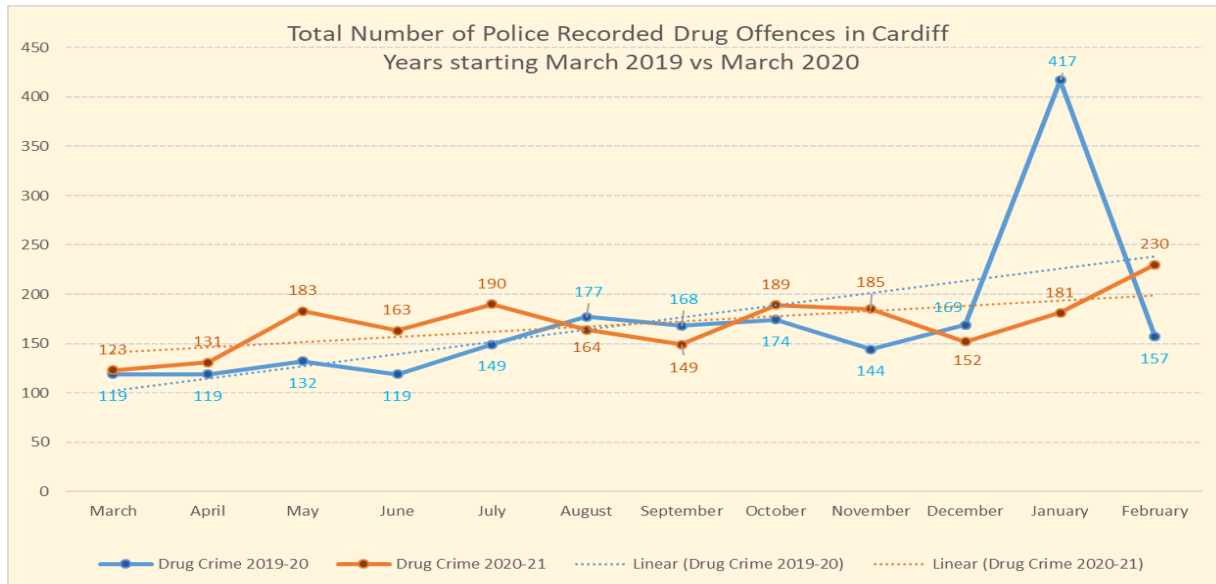
police and found to be in possession of various class A, B and C drugs (including cannabis) with no evidence of intent to supply. Included under this category is the possession of a drug as a result of a search of premises or a vehicle.

The data presented on total the number of recorded drug offences in Cardiff will cover the two-year period starting March 2019 - February 2020 and March 2020- February 2021. The specific details on the different types or categories of drug offenses were not readily available from the open data sources. Thus information presented here use the term 'drug offences' as a broad category and will not differentiate these into specific categories such as drug trafficking e.g. possession with intent to supply or the possession of A class drugs or the possession of Cannabis. The data on drug offences was downloaded from the police open data website ([Home | data.police.uk](https://data.police.uk)) covers a 12 month period in each year. The month of March 2020 was chosen the starting point as this period coincides with the enforcement of first nationwide lockdown in the UK. Data was also downloaded covering the same months in previous year 2019 for comparative purposes. The results of the comparative analysis of data on the two year period examined, could be indicative of the possible impact of the Covid pandemic lockdowns on drug related activities and extent of police response to these activities in various communities in Cardiff. Further research however, would need to be undertaken to identify the various factors that would have affected the change or variations in recorded levels of drug offences between the two-year period covered in this research.

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### 2. Drug offences in Cardiff in 2019 -2020 and in 2020- 2021

Chart 1. Total Number of Police Recorded Drug Offences in Cardiff, year starting March 2019 and March 2020



Source of raw data: [Home | data.police.uk](https://data.police.uk)

There is a very small difference between the total number of police recorded drug offences for the period covering March 2019- February 2020 when compared with the total figure for the same period in 2020-21. In 2019-20, the total number of drug offenses in Cardiff was 2044 and the total for the same period in 2020-21 is 2040. The difference between the two-year period is 4 cases or a decrease 0.19% from the previous year.

The results presented in the Chart above illustrates a very slightly increasing trend in the total number of police recorded drug offences in Cardiff for the two years. The Chart also shows that recorded figures from March to July 2020 were considerably higher when compared to the 2019 figures for the same months. More specifically, a comparative analysis has shown that the difference in total number of drug offences during that period was at its highest (38.6%) in May 2020, when compared with the figures reported for the same months in 2019. However, it must be noted in the remaining months of the year the differences between the 2020 and 2019 figures are

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much lower or in negative figures. The summary downloaded reported monthly figures for the two years are available in Appendix 1.

Although the total number of drug offences appears to be slightly higher in 2020 during the early lock down period (March – July) compared to reported figures in 2019, it would be incorrect to simply attribute this to rising in drug crime or drug related activities locally. There are other factors that would need to be explored further to establish the reasons for the increase in the recorded number of drug offences in 2020-2021.

Data on specific types of drug offences was not readily available. Therefore it was not possible to establish the proportions of the drug offences in each year that fall under the category of drug trafficking (i.e. as possession or drugs with intent offences) and the possession of controlled Class A drugs or the possession of Cannabis, to enable comparative analysis between these data sets. There is currently no qualitative information available on the reasons for the increase in drug offences coinciding with the lockdown period in 2020 as well as information on the level of police stop and search activity in relation to the recorded data on drug offences. It would therefore be incorrect to conclude that the increase in drug offences during that period is a result of an increase in drug trafficking activity. Further research will need to be undertaken to establish the various reasons or factors that have contributed to an increase in police recorded drug offences in Cardiff.

### **3. Drug offences in areas of deprivation**

The data on the total number of drug offences in each ward in Cardiff was not readily available from the open data websites e.g. ONS and Police Data websites. An article written for the on-line publication called the 'Cardiffian' have cited comparative data for each electoral ward on the total number of drug offences for 2019 and 2020. Although the 'Cardiffian' article has referenced its data sources, it was unclear which months of the years cited were covered by the data sets that were presented in that on-line publication.

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There are perceptions that (in: [Is drug use mainly in deprived areas? – DrugWise](#)) ‘deprived areas can often suffer from greater and more visible public nuisance from drug taking and supplying’. The ‘Cardiffian’ article has highlighted certain areas in Cardiff associated with deprivation that have seen a rise in drug crime during the Covid pandemic.

The data cited from the ‘Cardiffian’ will be used here to illustrate the levels of recorded drug offences in the Southern Arc area of Cardiff. It is intended that these data sets will provide comparative information on the levels of drug offences by areas of deprivation between the years 2019 and 2020.

Table1. Total number of police recorded drug offences in the Southern Arc area of Cardiff

<b>WARD</b>	<b>Cardiff Area</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Adamsdown	Southern Arc	158	129	-18
Butetown	Southern Arc	236	302	28
Caerau	Southern Arc	75	79	5
Canton	Southern Arc	40	37	-8
Ely	Southern Arc	57	59	4
Grangetown	Southern Arc	117	141	21
Llanrumney	Southern Arc	31	23	-26
Riverside	Southern Arc	107	140	31
Rumney	Southern Arc	29	31	7
Splott	Southern Arc	60	52	-13
Trowbridge	Southern Arc	35	71	103

Source of data: [Cardiff faces drug crime epidemic during Covid lockdowns - The Cardiffian \(cardiffjournalism.co.uk\)](#)

A comparison of the 2019 and 2020 figures cited in Table 1 above, shows that the total number of recorded drug offences did not always increase in wards or areas of deprivation in Cardiff. In Adamsdown (-18%), Canton (-8%), Llanrumney (-26%) and Splott (-13%) the recorded drug

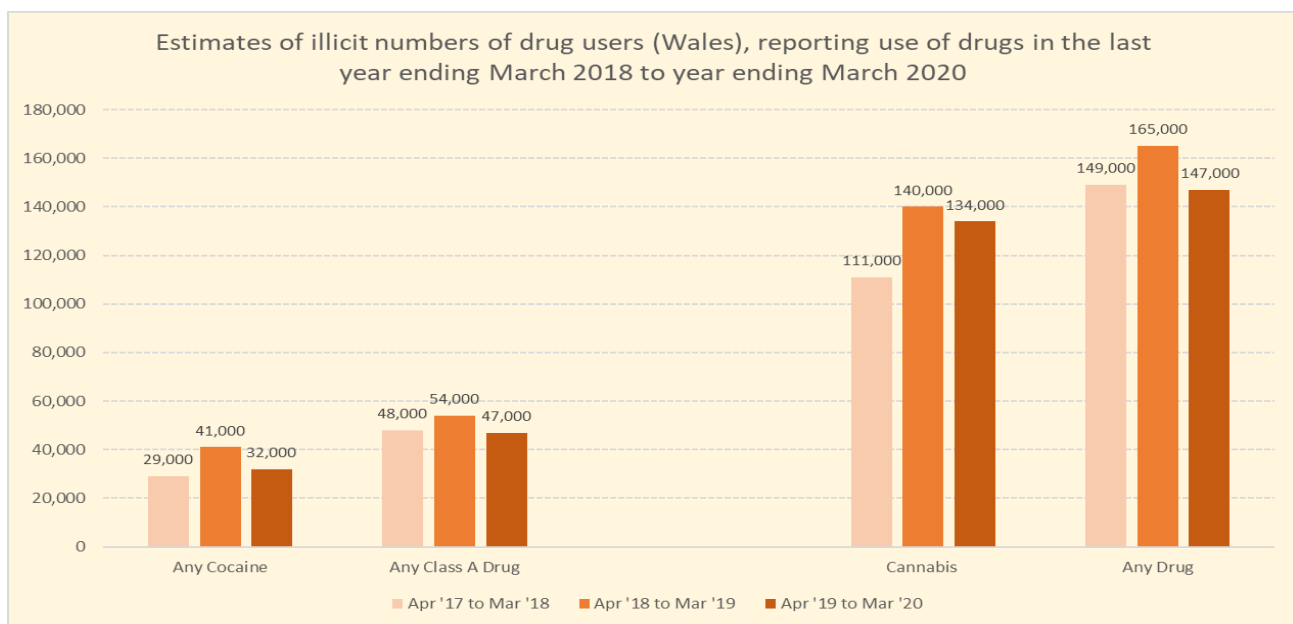
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offences in these areas have decreased in 2020. In contrast, the reported figures for Butetown, Grangetown and Riverside saw comparatively higher levels of recorded drug offences in 2020 compared to 2019. It would be incorrect however to conclude that the increase in recorded drug offences during Covid lockdown in these areas can be solely attributed to higher incidence or rising in drug crime and drug related activities. Furthermore, a decrease or fall in recorded drug offences cannot also be solely attributed to declining incidence of drug crime or drug related activities. Further research would need to be undertaken to establish the factors or reasons that have contributed to the rise or decline in recorded drug offences during 2020 and during specific periods of that year.

### 4. Estimates of drug usage

As part of this research, the ONS Crime Survey Team responsible for producing the Crime in England and Wales statistical bulletins and for the Crime Survey for England and Wales, was requested to provide the data sets that have been used in the charts and the further analysis presented below.

Chart 2. Estimates of numbers of illicit drug users, 16 to 59 year olds (Wales) reporting use of drugs in the last year, year ending March 2018 to year ending March 2021





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Data Source: [Estimates of illicit drug users, 16- to 59-year-olds reporting use of drugs in the last year, year ending March 2018 to year ending March 2020, Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

A comparison of the estimated figures shown in Chart above covering the years ending March 2018 and 2019, saw a rise in all types of illicit drug users taking Class A drugs including Cocaine and a rise in those using Cannabis and those using 'Any drug'.

The figures reported for the following year ending in March 2020, saw a decline in the estimated numbers of illicit drug users reporting the use of all the various types of drugs. The estimated number of those reporting the use of Cocaine in year ending March 2020 has declined by 21.95% compared to the estimated figures reported at the end previous year 2019. In Year ending March 2020, the figures show a decline in the estimated number of Cannabis users, but at a much lower level (4.29%) when compared to the previous year. The reduction the proportion of those reporting use of Cocaine has been greater when compared to the reduction in those reporting use of Cannabis in year ending March 2020. Overall, the total number of illicit drug users reporting use of 'Any Drug' has declined by 10.91%.

### 4.1. Prevalence of drug use in Wales

To gain a better understanding on the likelihood of illicit drug use in Wales, the data provided by the ONS Crime Survey Team was used to calculate estimates of the prevalence of illicit drug use in Wales.

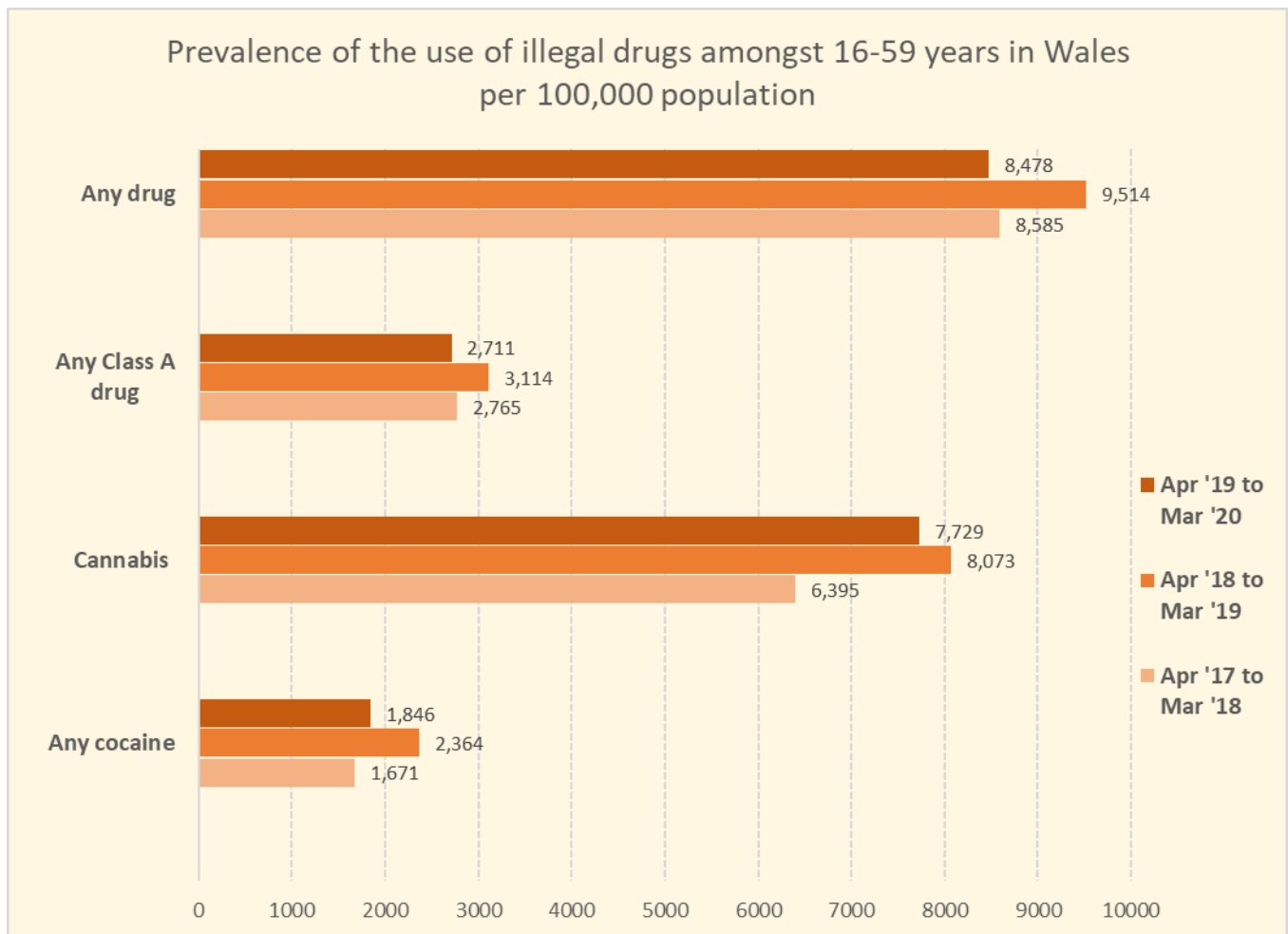
Prevalence is used as a measure here to provide an estimate of the proportion of the population that have a specific characteristic (i.e. illicit drug use) in a given time period (2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-2020). Prevalence as a measure that would that allow us to determine the proportion of the population that is likely to be using an illicit drug. ([NIMH » What is Prevalence? \(nih.gov\)](#))

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Prevalence should not be confused with incidence which is a measure of the number of new cases of a characteristic that develop in a population in a specified time period.

The Chart that follows illustrates the prevalence rate of the use of various types of illicit drugs in Wales per 100,000 population.

Chart 3. Prevalence rate of use of illegal drugs per 100,000 population in Wales



Data source: [Estimates of illicit drug users, 16- to 59-year-olds reporting use of drugs in the last year, year ending March 2018 to year ending March 2020, Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

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The estimates that have been provided have shown that the prevalence of drug use has declined during 2019-20. Throughout the three year period, the prevalence of the use Cannabis (in the range of >6,000 up to 8000 per 100,000 population) has been higher compared to the use of Cocaine (in the range >1,600 up to <2,400 per 100,000 population or any Class A drug (in the range (>2700 up to 3,100 per 100,000 population).

In year ending March 2020, the proportion of the population who were likely to have used Cannabis is around 7.8% or has a prevalence rate of 7,729 per 100,000 population. The proportion of the population who were likely to have used Cocaine is 1.8% or 1,846 per 100,000 and for those who were likely to have used any Class A drug including cocaine is 2.7% or 2711 per 100,000 population.

It must be noted that the calculations made by this research on the prevalence rate for the use of various drugs in Wales will not be fully applicable to the population in Cardiff due to the differences in demographic and socio economic characteristic of the population in Cardiff vis a vis population Wales.

The calculations made by this research on the prevalence of the use Cocaine, Cannabis, any Class A drug or Any Drugs are in Appendix 2.

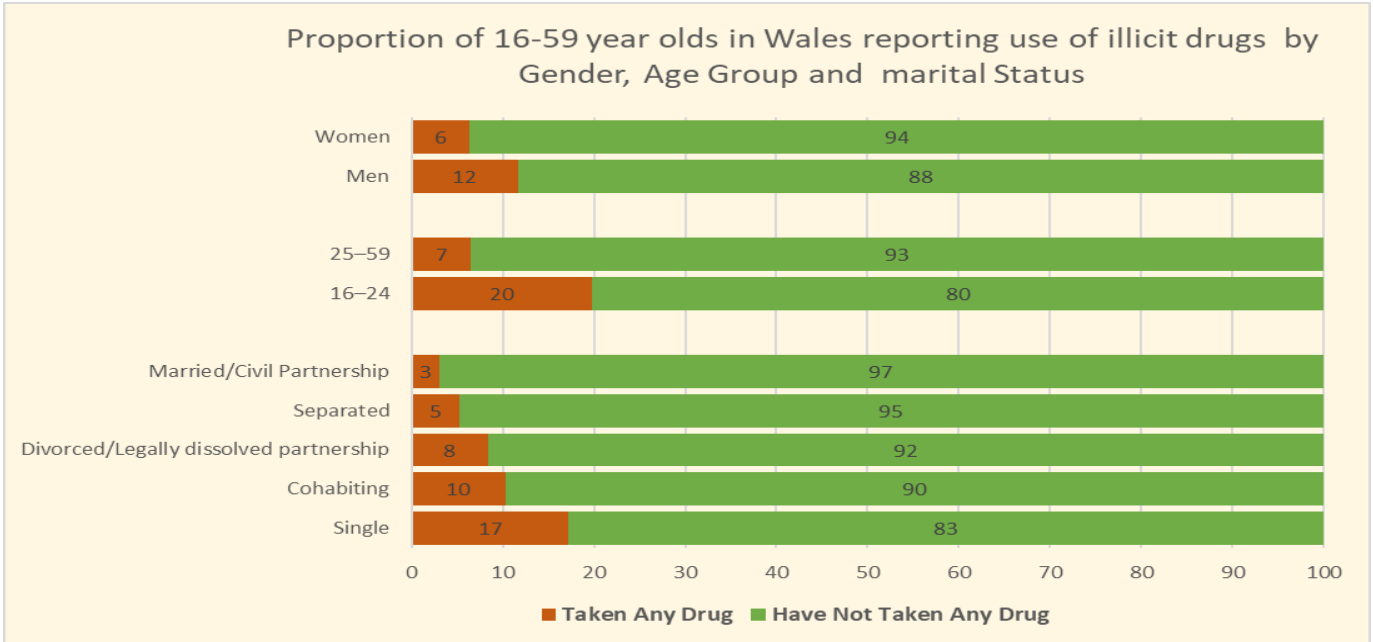
### **5. Personal characteristics of individuals who have taken drugs**

The data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales for the years ending March 2018- 2019, 2020 were used in the following Charts to illustrate the some of the personal characteristics of 16-59 year olds in Wales who reported using illicit drugs.

Data Source: [Estimates of illicit drug users, 16- to 59-year-olds reporting use of drugs in the last year, year ending March 2018 to year ending March 2020, Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

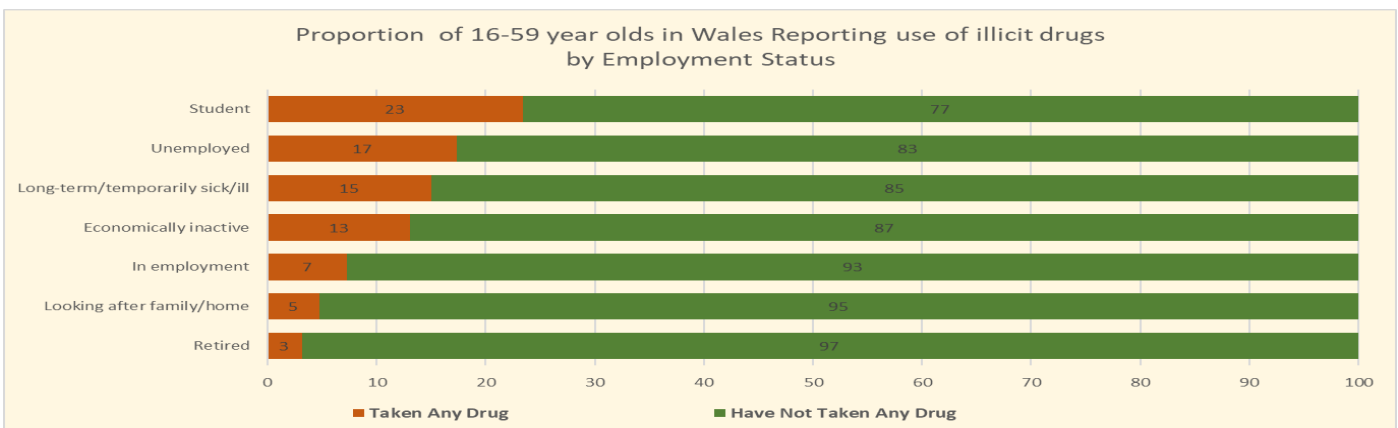
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Chart 4. Proportion of adults in Wales aged 16-59 reporting use of illicit drugs by gender, age and marital status



The results above show that a substantial proportion (20%) of those who have reported using illicit drugs in Wales were aged between 16-24, are of a male gender (12%), and have declared their marital status to be 'single' (17%).

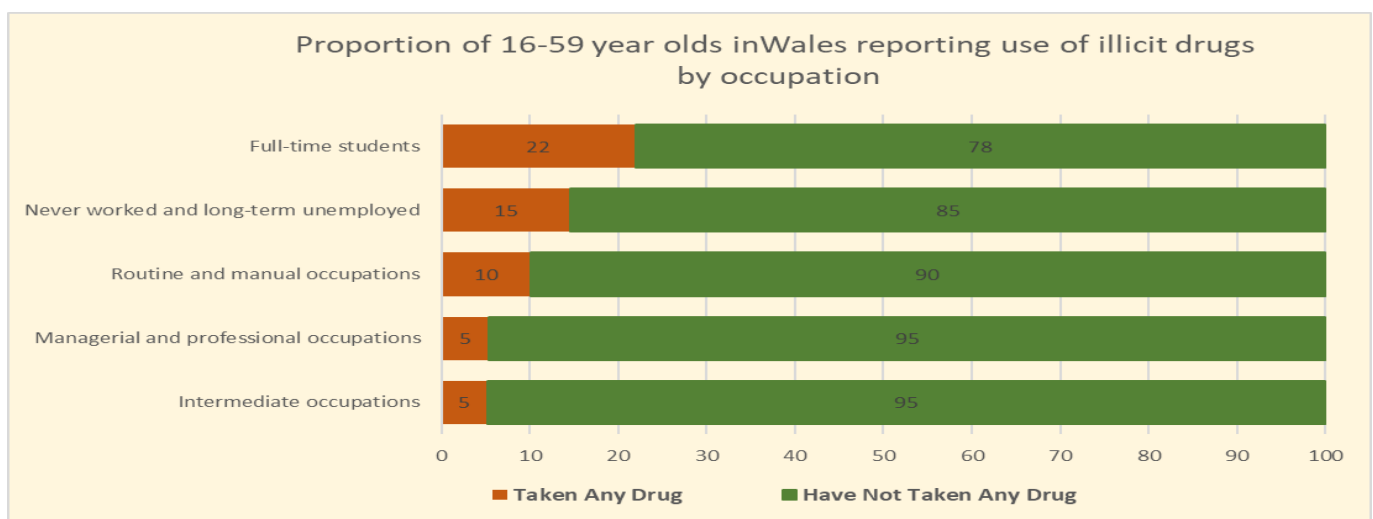
Chart 5. Proportion of adults aged 16-59 in Wales reporting use of illicit drugs by employment status.



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In terms of employment status, these individuals were more likely to be a student (23%), or unemployed (17%), or has long-term illness or temporarily ill (15%) or economically inactive (13%). Only a very small proportion of those who are in employment (5%) or are retired (3%) were likely to report using illicit drugs.

Chart 6. Proportion of adults in Wales aged 16-59 reporting use of illicit drugs by occupation.



The results also show that those in managerial and professional occupations (5%) as well those in intermediate occupations (5%) were less likely to report using any illicit drugs. In contrast, a substantial proportion of students (22%) and those who have never worked or are long term unemployed that are likely to indicate using illicit drugs

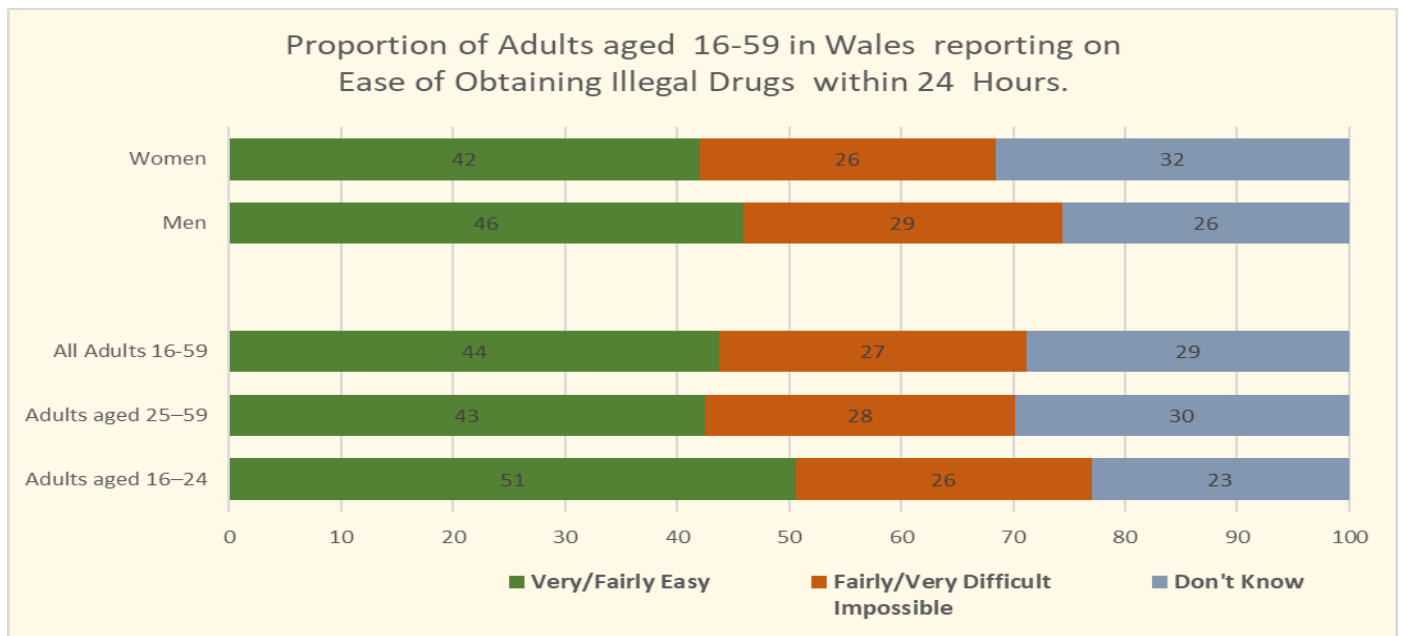
The data provided by the ONS Crime Survey Team has also shown that a small proportion (around 20%) of the 16-59 year olds who regularly visit a nightclub (1-3 visits in the past month) and a pub or bar (9 or more visits in the past month) are more likely to report using illicit drugs in the last year.

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### 6. Ease of obtaining illegal drugs within 24 hours

The ONS Crime Survey Team also provided the data for the population in Wales on the 'Ease of obtaining illegal drugs within 24 hours'. The results presented here on Wales were based on disaggregated data sets from the Crime Survey for England and Wales conducted in year ending March 2018 up to year ending March 2020. Due to limitations of the Crime Survey, the data in Chart below is presented as combined results for the 3-year period.

Chart 7. Proportion of adults aged 16-59 (Wales) reporting on ease of obtaining drugs within 24 hours if they wanted to, year ending March 2018 to March 2020

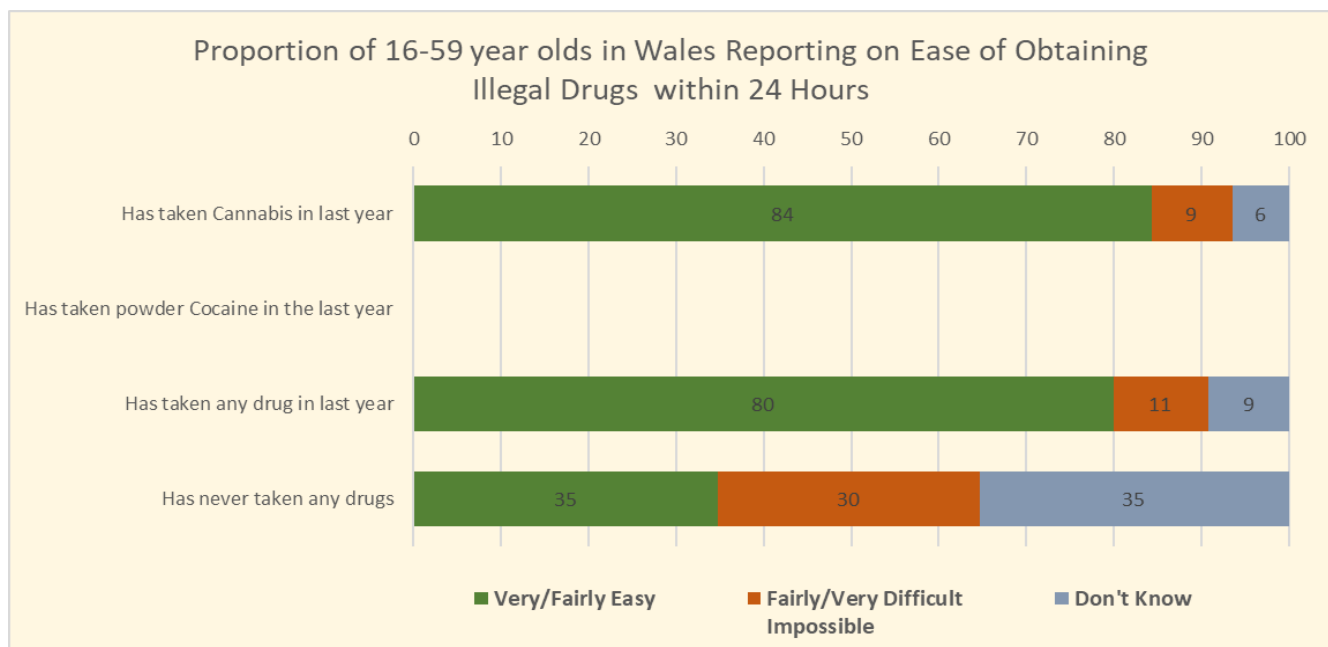


Data Source: [Estimates of illicit drug users, 16- to 59-year-olds reporting use of drugs in the last year, year ending March 2018 to year ending March 2020, Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

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A substantial proportion of adults (44%) aged 16-59 in Wales have indicated that it is either 'Very or Fairly Easy' to obtain illegal drugs within 24 hours if they wanted to. A comparison the views of adults in different age group brackets have shown that there is a much higher proportion (51%) of those aged 16-24 who indicated ease of obtaining illegal drugs within 24 hours, when compared to those aged 25-59 (43%).

Chart 8. Proportion of adults aged 16-59 (Wales) reporting on ease of obtaining drugs within 24 hours year ending March 2018 – March 2020



Data Source: [Estimates of illicit drug users, 16- to 59-year-olds reporting use of drugs in the last year, year ending March 2018 to year ending March 2020, Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

A high proportion of individuals in aged 16-59 who have taken either Cannabis (84%) or any drugs (80%) in the last year, have indicated that it is either 'Very or Fairly Easy' to obtain illegal drugs within 24 hours if they wanted to. There is no data available on the views of those who have

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taken cocaine in the past year. It is interesting to note that more than a third (35%) of those who have never taken drugs, have the perception that it is either 'Very or Fairly Easy' to obtain illegal drugs within 24 hours.

### 7. Perceptions of crime and safety

#### 7.1. Perceptions of crime in local area during virus outbreak

The data presented below are based on the results of the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) between June and November 2020.

When asked 'What do you think has happened to crime in your local area since the virus outbreak?', the proportion of respondents who held the view that 'crime has gone down' appears to have been declining slightly from 41% in July to 25% in November 2020. Conversely, during the same period there is a slightly increasing proportion of those who felt that the level of 'crime remained the same'. The data suggests that some of those who felt that crime was increasing in their area, had shifted their views in the succeeding months and have indicated that crime levels have remained the same. There is a much smaller proportion of respondents who felt that crime has gone up in their local area during the months of June to November 2020. The increase in the proportion of those having this view was quiet small, from a total of 12% in June, rising to 15% August and up to 16% in November. It is also noted that the perception that crime is going up in the earlier months until August, appears to coincide with the easing of the lockdown restrictions in the late summer 2020.

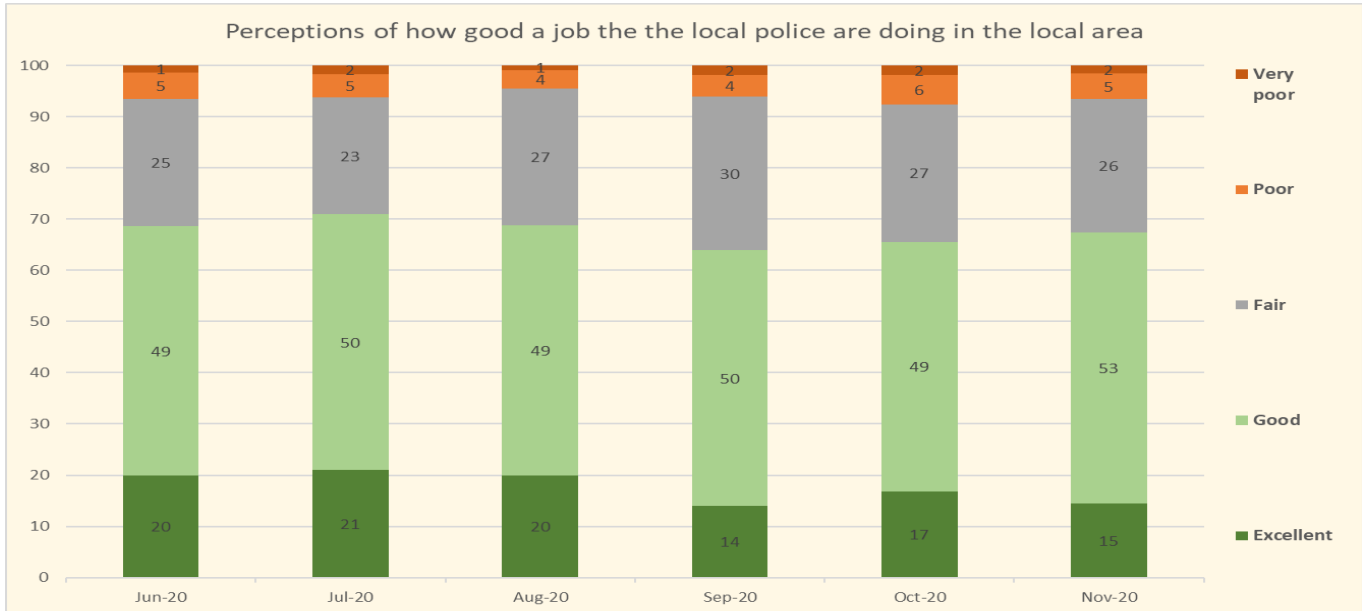




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### 7.2. Perceptions of Police Effectiveness in local area

Chart 10. Perception of how good a job police are doing in local area



Source of data: [Crime in England and Wales: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and crime tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/crime-in-england-and-wales/coronavirus-covid-19-and-crime-tables)

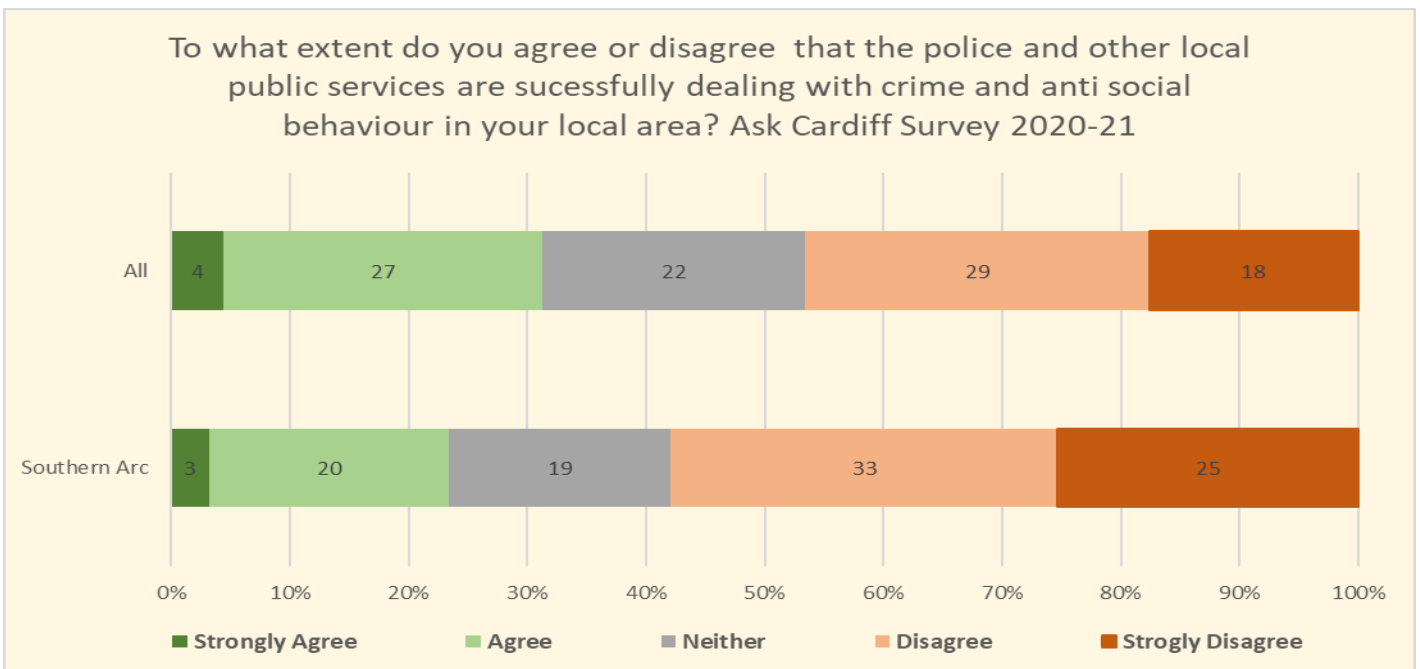
The Crime Survey also asked 'How good a job do you think the police in your local area are doing at the moment?' during the pandemic period in 2020. The results show that the majority held very positive views on how well the police are doing their job in their local area. These respondents (in the range 64%-71%) felt that the police have been doing either an 'Excellent' or 'Good' job. Only a very small proportion (in total at the least 5% up to 8%) felt that either the police are doing a 'Poor' or a 'Very Poor' job in their local area.

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### 7.3. Success of public services in dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in Cardiff

The results of the 2020-21 Ask Cardiff Survey presented here illustrate local residents' perceptions of the success of the police and public services in dealing with crime and antisocial behaviours locally.

Chart 11. Respondents' agreement to statement that police and public services are successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area



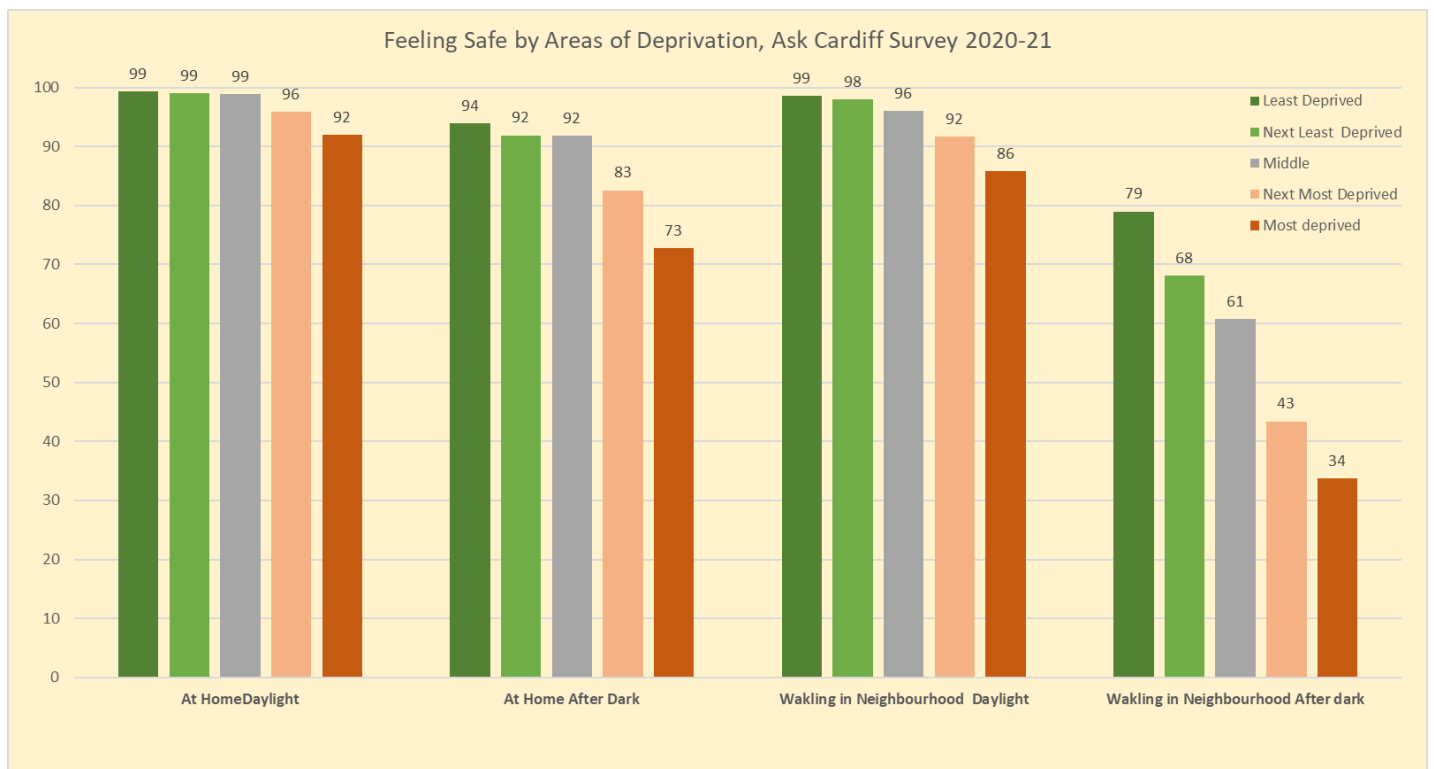
Source of data: <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Your-Council/Have-your-say/Ask%20Cardiff%20Library/Ask%20Cardiff%202020%20Report.pdf>

Nearly a third of residents (31%) in Cardiff are likely to either 'Agree or Strongly Agree' that the police and other local public services are successfully dealing with antisocial behaviours and crime in the local area. There is however a much smaller proportion of residents (23%) in the Southern

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Arc area who are likely to hold similar views. Conversely, the results also show that as many as 58% of residents in the Southern Arc are likely to have a view that they either 'Disagree or Strongly Disagree' with the statement above.

Chart 12. Respondents views on feeling safe in their homes or walking in neighbourhood by areas of deprivation



Source of data: <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Your-Council/Have-your-say/Ask%20Cardiff%20Library/Ask%20Cardiff%202020%20Report.pdf>

When asked about their feelings of safety in their homes or when walking in their neighbourhood, there is a marked difference in the views of those living in 'least deprived areas' in Cardiff when

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compared with those residing the 'most deprived areas'. Compared with the views of those living in the 'least deprived areas', there is a much smaller proportion of residents in the 'most deprived areas' who are likely to say that they 'feel safe at home after dark' (73%) or when 'walking in their neighbourhood after dark' (34%).

Various reasons were cited why residents feel unsafe in their homes. More than a third cited antisocial behaviour (36%) and a round a quarter identified level and risk of burglaries (25%) and problems with gangs and youth (19.8%). A much smaller proportion identified drink and drug related problems in their area (14.5%). More specifically this group cited the 'influx of cannabis users' and the presence of drug dealers on the streets. It was noted that only a very small proportion (10%) cited that the lack of police presence is a reason for feeling unsafe in their homes.

Similar reasons were also cited by respondents why they feel unsafe walking in their neighbourhood. The predominant views cited were: 'gangs and youth' (37.5%) antisocial behaviours (26.1%), lighting/ in the dark (20.5% and drug related problems (18.9%) Some of the respondents have specifically cited their concerns over the presence of gangs and the associated antisocial behaviours and drug dealing activity in the streets after dark. Only a very small proportion indicated (7.8%) that the lack of policing or enforcement was a reason for feeling unsafe while walking in their neighbourhood.

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### 8. Appendices

#### 8.1. Appendix 1

Count of Drug Offences in Cardiff by Month				
Month	Drug Crime 2019-20	Drug Crime 2020-21	Total Crime 2019	Total Crime 2020-21
March	119	123	3905	3620
April	119	131	3893	4143
May	132	183	4283	4745
June	119	163	4087	4133
July	149	190	4283	4143
August	177	164	3956	3897
September	168	149	4032	4089
October	174	189	4129	4609
November	144	185	3760	4413
December	169	152	3670	3652
January	417	181	11150	4043
February	157	230	3887	3991
<b>Total</b>	<b>2044</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>59085</b>	<b>53365</b>

Source of raw data: ([Home | data.police.uk](https://data.police.uk))

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### 8.2. Appendix 2

Prevalence Calculations									
	Apr '17 to Mar '18	Prevalence	Prevalence/100000	Apr '18 to Mar '19	Prevalence	Prevalence/100000	Apr '19 to Mar '20	Prevalence	Prevalence/100000
Any Cocaine	29,000	0.016708139	1671	41,000	0.023640975	2364	32,000	0.01845641	1,846
Any Class A Drug	48,000	0.027654851	2765	54,000	0.031136895	3114	47,000	0.027107852	2,711
Cannabis	111,000	0.063951844	6395	140,000	0.080725282	8073	134,000	0.077286216	7,729
Any Drug	149,000	0.085845268	8585	165,000	0.095140511	9514	147,000	0.084784132	8,478
	Mid year estimate Wales Population aged 16-59								
		<b>2017</b>		<b>2018</b>			<b>2019</b>		
		1,735,681.00		1,734,277.00			1,733,815.00		
Population	100000								

For more information about this research you can contact:

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