

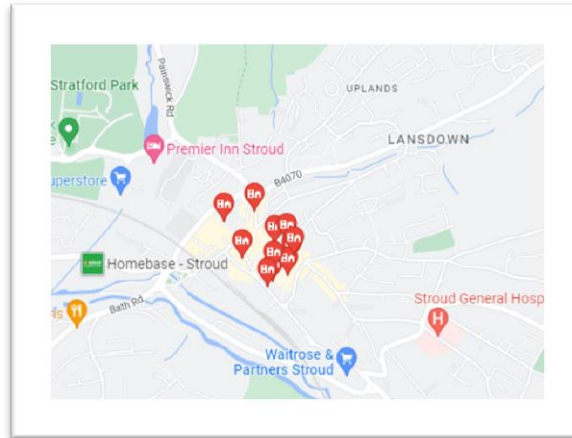


# Crime & Antisocial Behaviour Perception Survey

## 10-15 January 2023

Respondents: Anonymous including informal interviews

Focus Area: Stroud town centre only.



Indicative spread of respondents (not all shown)

### Executive Summary

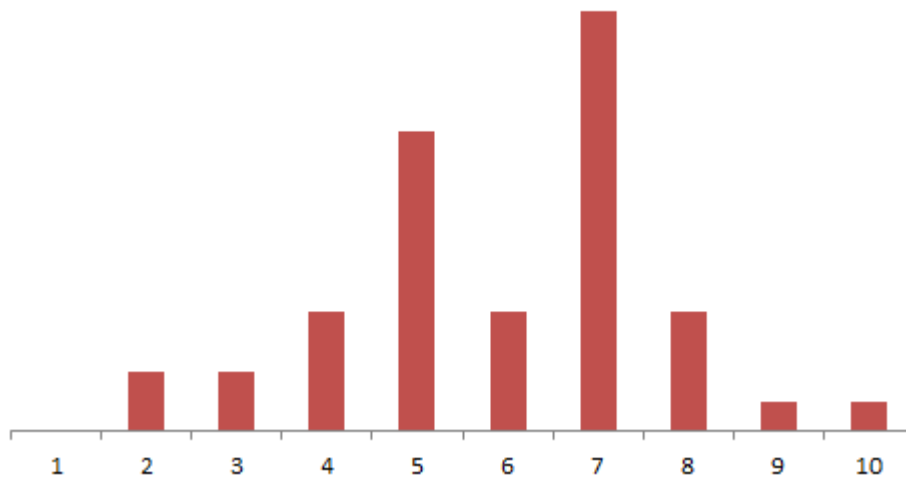
Business respondents in Stroud Town (based on the responses of respondents):

- Expressed concerns about Crime against Business and Antisocial Behaviour, with 52.3% expressing concern.
- Have reported (71%) being impacted by Antisocial Behaviour...
  - But 60% do not report it
  - ... often because they have a little or low level of confidence in a successful outcome (55%)
- Believe that levels of Antisocial Behaviour are either static over the last 12 months (52.4%) or believe it has increased (47.6%). The majority of those impacted by Antisocial Behaviour consider it to be increasing.
- Reported they had been impacted by Crime against their business (42.9%) and
  - A third of those did not report it
  - ...all of which had a low level of confidence that reporting it would lead to a successful outcome
- Overall, regardless of whether the respondent was impacted by Crime against their Business, there is a little or low level of confidence that reporting crime will lead to a successful outcome (52.4%)
  - With 16% who have reported Crime against the Business stating they felt there could be a successful result from doing so
- Crime against Business is perceived as having increased in the last 12 months (57.1%)
  - a belief held by 100% if those who identified they have been impacted by it
- Don't know how the importance of Crime against a Business compares to Crime against an Individual (52.4%) but 33% believe it is treated equally.

On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is low and 10 is highest) how satisfied are you with the results of policing in Stroud town centre?

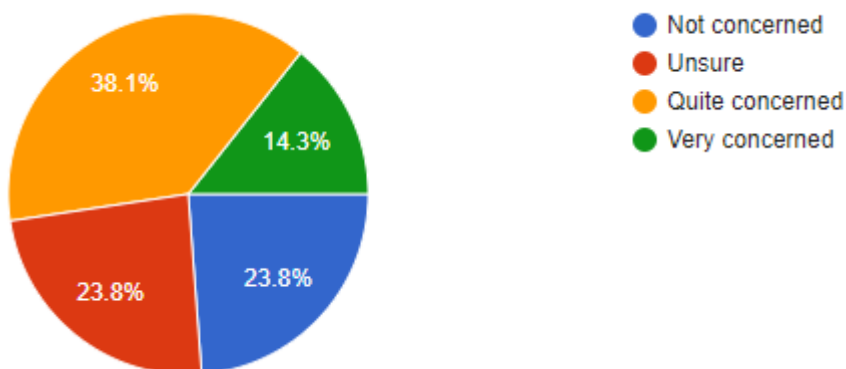
**Average: 5.95** NPS -47.62 Most common answers: 7/10 (33%), 5/10 (23.8%)

*Ahead of other questions, we sought to understand an overall perception of policing in Stroud town centre. We asked this first so as to get an unbiased response before prompting for specifics.*



How concerned are you about Antisocial Behaviour or Crime against your Business? This includes crimes against you whilst working in your business or as you access it.

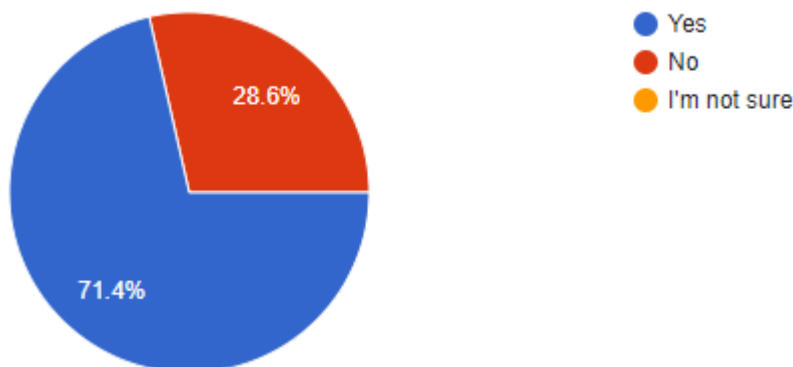
*We wanted to understand an overall perception of concern around Antisocial Behaviour and Crime against Business before delving into specifics.*



52.3% of respondents expressed concerns about Antisocial Behaviour or Crime against their Business. 23.8% expressed no concern.

## Have you been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour in Stroud town centre in the last 12 months?

We wanted to understand how many businesses felt they had been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour in the last 12 months. Complaints to the Chamber in relation to this have increased, but this may not be representative of the wider feeling. We defined Antisocial behaviour as: **taking over public spaces, graffiti, vandalism, fly-posting, people dumping rubbish, drug dealing, begging, antisocial drinking, misuse of minibikes or misuse of fireworks**



71.4% of respondents expressed they'd been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour in the Town Centre.

40% of those who expressed they were not concerned about Antisocial Behaviour or Crime against their Business expressed they had been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour.

## Have you reported Antisocial Behaviour within Stroud town centre in the last 12 months? If so, which methods did you use?

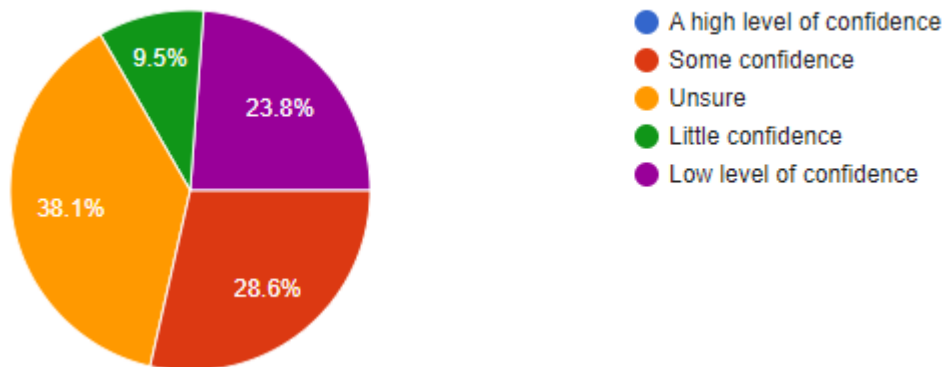
*Previous conversations with businesses have identified a reluctance to report Antisocial Behaviour. This is sometimes fuelled by having done so in the past with no perceived positive impact, leading to apathy. This has been fed back to Neighbourhood Policing. We wished to understand, with the shield of anonymity, what the wider perception may be and if reports were filed.*

60% of respondents who had been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour did not report it.

20% had called 101. 6% called 999. 6% said they had written to "the Council" (they did not specify which council). 6% reported they had logged it on DISC. 6% said they had logged it via the Website. 6% commented they had called an Officer directly and a further 6% that they had spoken to an Officer on the scene at the time. Two respondents had used more than one approach. Over 90% had used just one approach.

## If you report Antisocial Behaviour to the Police (regardless of whether you have or not), what level of confidence do you have there would be a successful outcome?

We wished to better understand how confident businesses were that reporting Antisocial Behaviour could lead to a positive outcome. We hoped this would add contextual evidence to the previous question regarding reporting Antisocial Behaviour.



33% of respondents stated they had little or low confidence that there would be a successful outcome if they reported Antisocial Behaviour. 28.6%, by contrast, had some confidence. The majority were not sure if there would be a successful outcome.

Of those who expressed they had not been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour, 66% had some confidence of a successful outcome if they were to report it. The remainder were unsure of the likely outcome or had low confidence in a successful outcome.

Of those who had been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour and had indicated they had not reported it, 44% were unsure of the outcome, 44% had a low level of confidence of a successful outcome and 11% had little confidence.

Of those who had been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour and had indicated they had reported it, 50% were unsure of the likelihood of a successful outcome, the remainder had some (33%) or little confidence (16%).

### Comments included:

*I don't [report Antisocial Behaviour] because there will be no results.*

*Street drinking is less of a problem than it was, but the same culprits (especially in the warmer weather) offend day after day. They're all there to see, but there seems to be insufficient policing to see them. The CCTV allegedly isn't working often - why isn't it fixed or maintained?*

*My shop is opposite the [redacted]. I'm scared for my safety.*

*The same anti-social drinkers are never cleared from the streets. They disappear for a while and then come back. There are also people begging which the Police know these people have homes to go to. Graffiti has got worse in the town and defacing many public properties/buildings. Drugs are actively being distributed around [Redacted].*

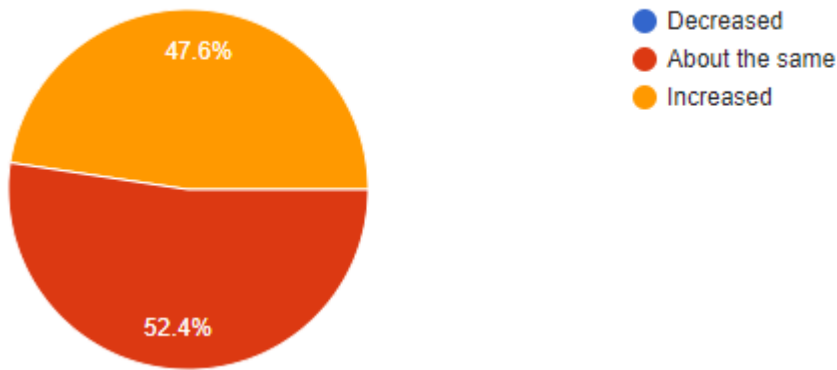
*For it has been (luckily) very petty stuff recently like finding cans of beer on our windowsill in the morning, or when we had a Christmas tree outside a family – children and their parents –*

*grabbing decorations off it as they walked past. The occasional fights that seem to flare up don't give a great impression to visitors to the town!*

*The bane of my life are the anti social cyclists of all ages and types who have no regard for pedestrians.*

## Thinking of Antisocial Behaviour in Stroud town centre in the last 12 months, do you believe it has increased, decreased or remained about the same?

*With a notable increase in conversations with the Chamber relating to the state of our streets, the increase in graffiti, vandalism, fly-posting and street drinking, we wished to understand if this was a wide perception or just that of a vocal minority.*

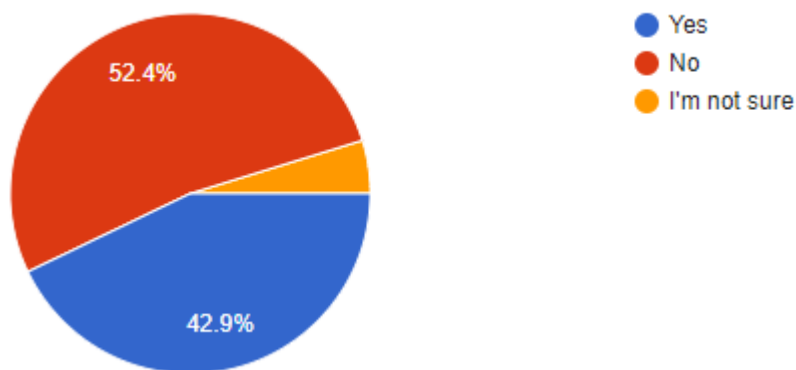


52.4% of respondents said they believe the levels of Antisocial Behaviour in the last 12 months has remained the same. 47.6% stated they believed it had increased. No respondent expressed they felt Antisocial Behaviour had decreased.

Of those who identified they have been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour, 60% believe it has increased with the remaining 40% believing it has remained the same.

## Have you been impacted by Crime against your Business in Stroud town centre in the last 12 months?

We wanted to understand how many businesses felt they had been impacted by Crime against Business in the last 12 months. Complaints to the Chamber in relation to this (especially shoplifting and criminal damage) have increased, but this may not be representative of the wider feeling. We defined Crime against Business as including: **criminal damage (e.g.) window smashing, theft of property, shoplifting, assault, verbal abuse**



52.4% of respondents stated they had not been impacted by Crime against their Business in the last 12 months. 42.9% stated they had.

20% of those who expressed they were not concerned about Antisocial Behaviour or Crime against their Business expressed they had been impacted by Crime against their Business.

## Have you reported Crime against your Business within Stroud town centre in the last 12 months? If so, which methods did you use?

*Previous conversations with businesses have identified a reluctance to report Crime. This is sometimes fuelled by having done so in the past with no perceived follow-up or positive impact, leading to apathy. This has been fed back to Neighbourhood Policing. We wished to understand, with the shield of anonymity, what the wider perception may be and if reports were filed following crime.*

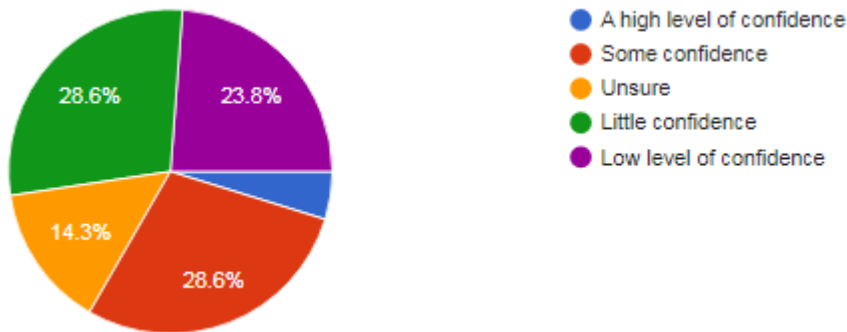
33% of respondents who had been impacted by Crime against their Business did not report it.

Of those not impacted by Crime against their business, 1 had called 101.

Of those who stated they were impacted by Crime against their Business and reported it: 33% had called or emailed 101. 11% called 999. 11% reported they had logged it on DISC. 11% said they had logged it via the Website. 11% commented they had called an Officer directly; none reported they had spoken to an Officer on the scene at the time. Two respondents had used more than one approach. Over 85% had used just one approach. One respondent has used Social Media to report a crime.

## If you report Crime against your Business to the Police (regardless of whether you have or not), what level of confidence do you have there would be a successful outcome?

We wished to better understand how confident businesses were that reporting Crime against their Business could lead to a positive outcome. We hoped this would add contextual evidence to the previous question regarding reporting Crime against their Business.



33.4% of respondents stated they had some or a high level of confidence that reporting crime could lead to a positive outcome. 52.4%, by contrast, had little or low confidence that reporting crime could lead to a successful outcome. 14.3% were unsure if there would be a successful outcome.

Of those who expressed they had not been impacted by Crime against their Business, 45% had some confidence of a successful outcome if they were to report it; 27% were unsure; 18% had low or little confidence and 9% had a high level of confidence that reporting a Crime against their Business would have a positive outcome.

Of those who had been impacted by Crime against their Business and had indicated they had not reported it, 100% had a low level of confidence that there would be a successful outcome were they to report crime.

Of those who had been impacted by Crime against their Business and had indicated they had reported it, 16% believed there could be a successful outcome, 66% had little confidence in a successful outcome, and 16% had a low level of confidence in there being a positive outcome.

In total of those who had reported they were impacted by Crime against their Business, 11% have any confidence that there will be a positive outcome as a result of their report.

### Comments included:

*I used to [report crime against my business] but as the reports aren't even followed up, what's the point?*

*We stopped reporting Shoplifters because there is no interest.*

*Graffiti across town. Smashed windows. Shoplifting on the rise. Reporting crime is pointless, it seems to have no impact on staffing and no-one follows up.*

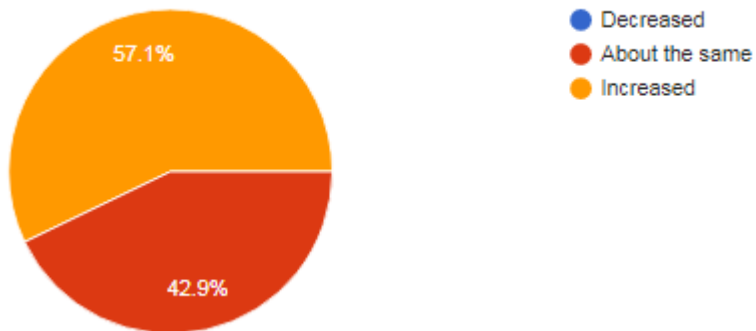
*Theft from a shop isn't treated as high as abusive behaviour.*

*I am very glad [Redacted] is in jail. It took a bit too long to get him off the streets, in my opinion. He caused a lot of harm.*



## Thinking of Crime against Business in Stroud town centre in the last 12 months, do you believe it has increased, decreased or remained about the same?

*With a notable increase in conversations with the Chamber relating to the criminal damage, increases in shoplifting (amongst a variety of age groups) and verbal abuse, we wished to understand if this was a wide perception or just that of a vocal minority.*



57.1% of respondents said they believe the levels of Crime against Business in the last 12 months has increased. 42.9% stated they believed it had remained about the same. No respondent expressed they felt Crime against Business had decreased.

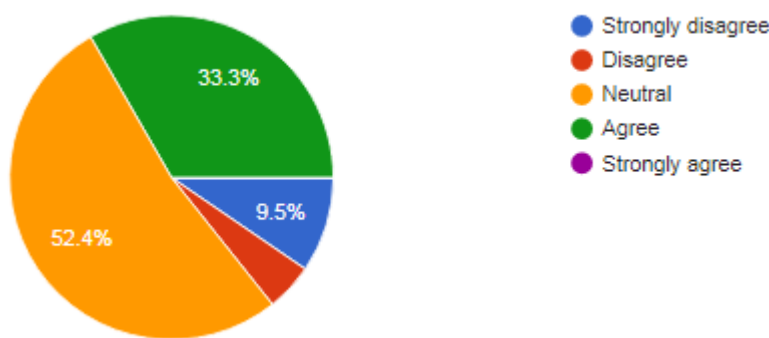
Of those who identified they have been impacted by Crime against their Business, 100% believe it has increased.

Of those who stated they have not been impacted by Crime Against their Business (or they were not sure), 75% believed the rate of such Crime was about the same in the last 12 months, with 25% believing it has increased.

"Gloucestershire Constabulary treat crime against business with the same interest as crime against an individual or their property". How much do you agree with that statement?

At the Retail Crime Conference hosted at the DRIC by the OPCC on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019 there was a significant difference in view of how Gloucestershire Constabulary view retail crime and that retailers (and their security representatives) expressed they experienced. Further, at the OPCC Building Better Communities Roadshow held in Stroud on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021, we established that the importance of Retail and Business Crime is in the OPCC prospectus.

We wanted to understand if, 16 months on from the last meeting and 39 months since the DRIC meeting, if the treatment of crime against an individual is considered equal to that as against Business. This is especially relevant where, for many independent businesses, their business is them.



52.4% were unsure of the accuracy of the statement and selected "neutral". 55% of these respondents reported they had not been impacted by Crime against their Business; with 45% of neutral responders being those who expressed they had been impacted by Crime against their Business - seemingly unsure of the interest in comparison to crime against an individual.

33% agreed that Gloucestershire Constabulary treat Crime against Business on a par with Crime against an Individual. None strongly agreed.

9.5% disagreed, with fewer than 5% strongly disagreeing.

Of those who stated they had been impacted by Crime against their Business in the last 12 months, 11% agreed with the statement; 55% were neutral, 22% strongly disagreed and 11% disagreed.

## Chairman's Statement

The Survey was not to criticise any one individual, team or organisation, but to attempt to better understand the wider perception of Business in Stroud Town Centre in relation to both Antisocial Behaviour and Crime against Business; not to lay blame but to understand.

It is acknowledged that different agencies can play their part in addressing issues, not limited only to Gloucestershire Constabulary and tiers of Councils, but the Chamber can influence too.

Increasingly, the Chamber has received complaints about Crime against Business and Antisocial Behaviour and identified the apathy towards reporting crime. The Chamber (and Stroud Town Council) had been actively involved in promoting the importance of reporting crime, with the understanding that it can make a positive difference. Anecdotal evidence, somewhat supported by the survey, shows this aim does not always translate into the intended outcome. Reports are believed to be submitted and lack any known follow-up, which cannot be considered to be an incentive to continue to report. There have been reports of insufficient Police resources to attend incidents in a timely manner (even when ongoing). There are no criticisms of individuals, but an acknowledgement of an apparent insufficient level of resources to deliver a service to a level suggested or expected. The results of the survey appear to indicate that those who do report may often not receive the experience they had hoped for.

It is notable that in our August 2022 Survey only 14% of respondents expressed a concern about Crime against Business and Antisocial Behaviour. This survey has returned a 52.3% response rate and a concerning 71% who report they have been impacted by Antisocial Behaviour.

The Chamber continues to be asked to encourage Business to report Crime and Antisocial behaviour, but we need better assurance and evidence that Crime will be followed up and Antisocial Behaviour quashed. As indisputable the message "if you don't report it, nothing will happen" is, this message is becoming ever more lacking in credibility when reporting leads to perceived inaction.

We should seek to end the regular rollercoaster of enforcement by having a clear plan of action and ensuring expectations are better set based on available resources, and an understanding of the impact that will have.

The limitations of interest in long surveys means we cannot ascertain all the facts we ideally would need such as which elements of Antisocial Behaviour are impacting businesses (for example) not all of which are under the jurisdiction of Gloucestershire Constabulary. A "successful outcome" from reporting Antisocial Behaviour or Crime against Business is subjective. However, this does not undermine the important results of the survey.