



**More in
Common**

Where are the police?

**Britons' attitudes to anti-social
behaviour and the police**

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Foreword

The ability to live your life without fear of threat to your personhood, property or local area is one of the most important prerequisites for a good life. Yet in too many of our communities this most basic of benchmarks is failing to be met.

Over the past year More in Common has spoken to hundreds of people across Britain, and polled tens of thousands more. Time and time again those conversations turned to the impact of rising crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour and the failure of the police to deal with it. This isn't just a case of misperception on the public's part. Last year, recorded crime reached a 20-year high, while the number of crimes solved by the police sank to a record low at 5.8 per cent (down from an already low 15.5 per cent a decade earlier). So low is people's faith in our ability to prevent and tackle crimes that many just assume that the police have given up. This dim view of the police's ability to do their job has been further compounded by revelations of discrimination, corruption, and outright criminality among our police forces.

But the consequences of rising crime and anti-social behaviour go far beyond frustration at law enforcement. Crime makes ever more of our public spaces inaccessible and unsafe, forcing people to retreat out of the community to hide behind ever higher gates. Crimes which are often erroneously labelled by policy makers as 'low-level' – vandalism, burglary, anti-social behaviour – are anything but, leaving victims with a sense of personal violation while at the same time despoiling our parks, high streets, and town centres. No wonder then that people cite crime as the number one reason for the decline of their neighbourhoods.

That points to another truth - the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour is not distributed evenly but concentrated in some of our most deprived communities. Tackling crime then is vital if the government or opposition are to succeed in turning levelling up from slogan to reality. We heard from residents of towns in the north and midlands of England who had been forced to take steps as drastic as moving home because of fear of crime. People explained to us how they saw the vicious cycle whereby crime and anti-social behaviour lead to a degradation of the public realm, which in turn leads to greater crime, as investment and opportunity move out and crime moves in. Perhaps most soberingly we heard from people who thought that there was simply no point in investing in local improvements, because in their words, they would just be trashed by criminals in a couple of months anyway.

This briefing paper is designed to act as a wakeup call on the public's experiences of crime, and growing anger that little is being done to tackle it. At the same time, we set out a series of potential policy solutions that both command public support and which would send a clear message that the government takes public concern seriously.

At the heart of those solutions is a rethink to our approach to policing first and foremost by getting the police, including the most senior officers, out from behind desks and onto community patrols. Visible policing is both overwhelmingly popular and helps to deter, tackle, and solve crimes. Rebuilding confidence in law enforcement also means that the police's attitude to anti-social behaviour, vandalism and burglary needs to change, with the public reassured that they will get more from reporting a crime than a shrug of the shoulders and an offer of a reference number. While the network of police forces also

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needs to do more to demonstrate that they are striking the right balance between important work on diversity, inclusion and community outreach, and the core business of solving crime.

But better policing isn't the only route to restoring the public's confidence in tackling crime. The public also want to see more done to ensure that those who engage in crime and anti-social behaviour are made to face up to and clean up the consequences of their actions. They also want to see parents and schools doing more to instil a sense of discipline in young people. But the public also think more activities need to be available so that young people don't end up bored on the streets. Alongside this Britons want to see proper support made available for those with mental health issues, rather than those problems having to be dealt with through the criminal justice system.

In perma-crisis Britain it is tempting to dismiss rising crime as just another issue on the to-do list. That would be a mistake. Crime is a cancer for social solidarity, corroding the fabric of our communities as well as making a whole series of other policy aims, from levelling up, to healthier citizens, to boosting employment, far more difficult. We hope that the findings of this report will act an impetus to policy makers, government and opposition alike, and to our police forces, of the need to act now to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and rebuild public trust.

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Executive Summary

This report is based on the conversations that More in Common has been having with the public since 2020. Over the last three years, More in Common has polled more than 35,000 Britons and conducted more than 100 focus groups speaking with over 1000 people. From this base, and specific polling and focus group research on crime in December 2022, we identify just how much of a priority tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is for the British public and how tackling it will shape our politics for the foreseeable future. Our takeaways include:

A failure to get a grip of crime and anti-social behaviour is not only making communities feel less safe but is eroding pride in place. Levelling up will fail if anti-social behaviour is not tackled

- Nearly seven in ten (68 per cent) believe the police have given up on trying to solve crimes like shoplifting and burglaries altogether. The public identify tackling crime and anti-social behaviour as the route to turning around their communities.
- Britons consistently report that graffiti and vandalism are dragging their communities down – 46 per cent believe that vandalism and graffiti should be treated as a serious crime, including 60 per cent of Loyal Nationals (the group of voters that best resemble red wall voters who swung behind the Conservatives in 2019)
- Most Britons (61 per cent) believe that anti-social behaviour should be treated as a serious crime, only 26 per cent think the police are doing a good job dealing with it
- The public's concern about anti-social behaviour is driven by its prevalence – more people report having been victims of vandalism, theft and burglary than any other crimes
- In focus groups, participants shared fears that as lower-level crimes were going unpunished, any levelling up investment to town centres would be wasted due to the inevitability of vandalism

Winning the public's trust on tackling crime will be key to determining who wins the Red Wall at the next General Election

- No party has a decisive advantage on who the public trust to tackle crime – 58 per cent of voters trust Labour, and 42 per cent trust the Conservatives. Among the swing group of Loyal National voters, that gap narrows to 52 per cent to 48 per cent
- Getting a grip of crime is particularly important for any party interested in winning Red Wall (Loyal National) voters – these voters are most likely to rank crime as one of the top issues facing the country, and most likely (67 per cent) to say the police aren't taking anti-social behaviour seriously enough

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The public think perpetrators of crime should be forced to take responsibility for their actions – but want an approach which is both tough on the culprits of crime, and the causes

- The majority of Britons (57 per cent) have little or no confidence that the justice system will prosecute those who are guilty, while 73 per cent think harsher sentences are needed for people who break the law
- The most popular policy on tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in the context of levelling up was ‘requiring people who have committed crimes to clean up litter and graffiti’
- Britons want action taken to stop littering those results from drug use, including Nitrous Oxide cannisters and syringes left in public places
- Voters want measures to be put in place to stop young people from being drawn into criminal activity in the first place, including more activities at night for young people and better discipline at home by parents and in school by teachers
- Four in five Britons think there should be better mental health services to relieve pressure on the police, while a further 60 per cent believe that many mental health issues are being mistaken for crimes

Britons feel let down by the police, think officers have given up solving crimes and are increasingly absent

- Britons are nearly twice as likely to think that police are doing a bad job at being visible than a good job
- Only five per cent of the population would say the police do “a very good job” at solving crime in their local areas
- Faith in police competence is waning. For those who say they have been a victim of crime, most (54 per cent) said they were not satisfied with police response, while nearly seven in ten (69 per cent) said that the crime was not solved
- Britons’ lack of faith in the police extends across types of crime. With the exception of murder and traffic offences, most Britons do not think that the police treat crimes with the appropriate level of seriousness

Trust in the police is fragile with only half of the public now saying that they trust police officers

- In February 2020, 63 per cent of Britons said they trusted police officers, compared to 83 per cent who said they trusted the NHS and doctors. By November 2021, shortly after the sentencing of Wayne Couzens for the murder of Sarah Everard, trust in the police had fallen to 53 per cent, while trust in other public services stayed level. Since then, levels of trust have remained flat
- Alongside lukewarm levels of trust, almost a third of the public think the police are corrupt or racist (at 31 per cent), and just 45 per cent of the public think the police tend to get it right

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Britons feel that the police have the wrong priorities and need to be more visible

- There is a growing sense that the police have become distracted and are focusing on the wrong things. Just over four in ten (41 per cent) believe that the police are more interested in being woke than solving crimes, while less than a quarter (23 per cent) disagree
- Nearly eight in ten (78 per cent) think we need more police on the street, with agreement across even the more socially liberal segments
- Only 16 per cent of the public think we should defund the police

To address crime, the public want a common-sense approach to policing that works with schools, local authorities, and voluntary organisations to tackle the causes, culprits and consequences of crime. Based on our findings, More in Common has identified the following recommendations on which the government, police and local authorities should work together to implement:

- 1. A reduction in police bureaucracy which puts officers back on the streets**
- 2. A Diversity and Inclusion Audit to ensure that the police's approach to DEI is evidenced-based, proportionate, and uses police resources efficiently**
- 3. Better vetting of police officers and greater routes to policing from other professions**
- 4. Investment in CCTV across the country, with CCTV inspected and investigated quickly**
- 5. Local clean up squads which rapidly clear up the litter and vandalism, restricting laughing gas sales, and fixed penalty clean up notices compelling those who engage in anti-social behaviour to clean up their mess**
- 6. New incentives and sanctions for parents to tackle undisciplined children**
- 7. Greater identification, support and discipline of children at risk of falling into crime within education**
- 8. Better provision for young people to keep them engaged at evenings, weekends and during holidays**
- 9. Better training and support for the police to deal with mental health emergencies**

Where are the police?

Part 1 - Crime matters

When the public are asked about the biggest issues facing the UK, crime emerges as a middle order concern – in December 2022 it placed eighth, with concern about crime dwarfed by the cost of living and the NHS, but also ranking lower than climate change, affordable housing, and mental health.

But reliance on comparative poll questions alone risks painting a misleading picture of both the salience of crime and its disproportionate impact on local communities. We know from conversations with the public, particularly in towns in the North and Midlands of England, that the fear and impact of crime is having a profound and insidious effect on their lives. What's more, communities feel the impact of crime most acutely at the hyperlocal level in what people see and experience as they go about their every day. That deleterious impact not only leads to individual frustration and misery, but also erodes people's pride in place and contributes to a sense that certain areas of the country are at best rundown, and at worst becoming no-go areas.

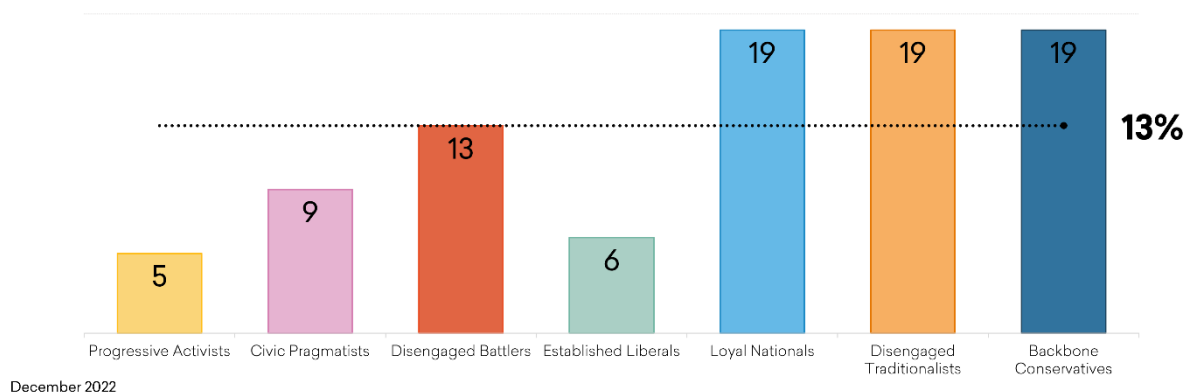
That is why action on crime matters– it goes to the heart of community, livelihoods, and prosperity. Tackling it matters, and politicians should be on notice that it matters particularly to those groups who will be pivotal in deciding the outcome of the next General Election.

Figure 1.1

Britons' top issues and crime

Although crime ranks lower than other top issues like cost of living and the NHS, concern is more marked among socially conservative segments

% selecting crime in their top three issues facing the country



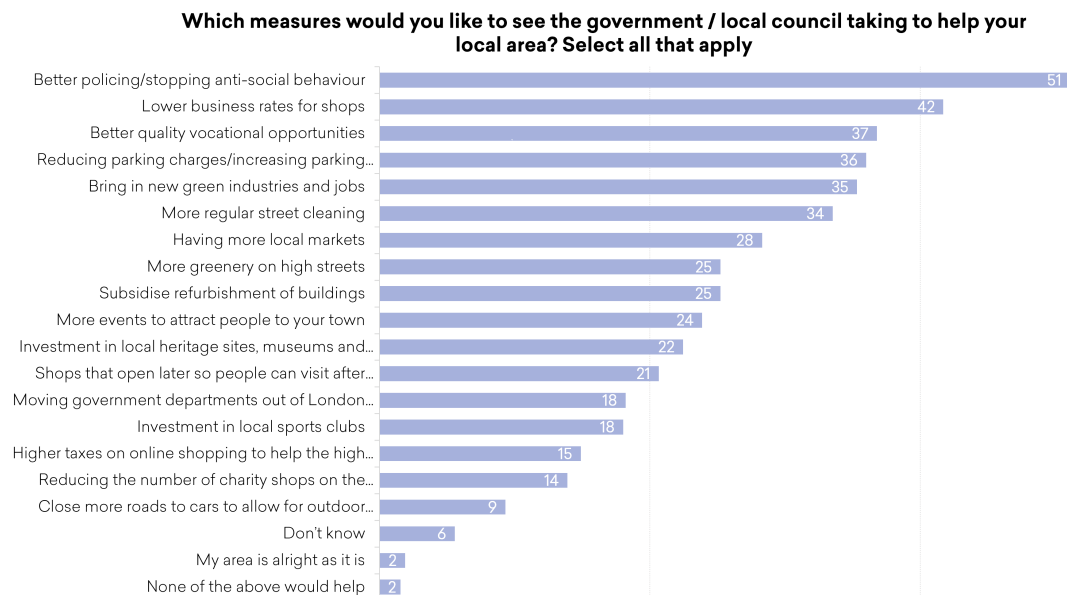
The pivotal importance of tackling crime to the public is best illuminated when they are asked what policies would most benefit them and their local areas – time and time again Britons opt for policies related to crime and anti-social behaviour.

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Figure 1.2

Better policing to improve local area

More than any other measure the public think “Better policing / stopping anti-social behaviour” would help to improve their local area



November 2021

What's more, when asked which manifesto proposals would make them most likely to vote for a particular party, the top option, selected by 59 per cent of the public, was a pledge to introduce longer prison sentences for criminals and an end to automatic early release.

For the government, the public's message on crime is particularly stark. While the Conservatives have historically been seen as the party of law and order and enjoyed a polling advantage as the party best placed to tackle crime, that is no longer the case. **In fact, in December 2022, 58 per cent of Britons said they would place their trust in Labour to tackle crime and just 42 per cent said the Conservative Party.**

However, our polling and conversations with the public suggest that both parties still have a window of opportunity to convince the public they are serious about tackling crime. That is particularly true of the Loyal National segment of the population – the group of voters who swung decisively behind the Conservatives at the last election, powering their victory in places like the Red Wall. This group for whom tackling crime matters immensely are currently split 52 per cent to 48 per cent on whether they trust Labour or the Conservatives on tackling crime.

Loyal Nationals

[Are there any issues in your area that make you frustrated or angry or disappointed?]

Antisocial behaviour, kids setting fires - the police not doing anything about it. Kids damaging cars on main roads - the police not doing anything about it.

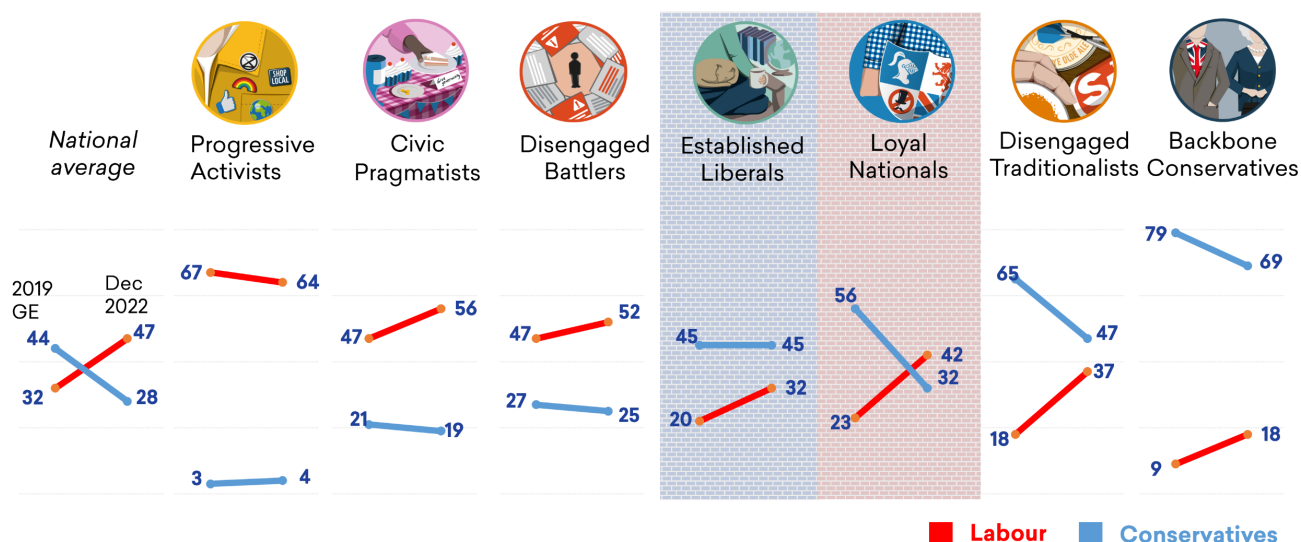
Ben, Loyal National, 22, Blyth

How Loyal Nationals vote at the next General Election will have a decisive impact on the result

Figure 1.3

British Seven segments – from the General Election to now

The decline in the Conservative vote has been most stark among Loyal Nationals who powered the Conservative victory in the Red Wall



Loyal Nationals are the most electorally important group of the population. Traditionally Labour-supporting, this group have been moving away from that traditional allegiance since before the Brexit referendum. They then swung dramatically behind the Conservatives at the last General Election. Economically statist but socially conservative, with a strong sense of in-group loyalty and high levels of threat perception, they are the best proxy for the 'Red Wall' voters, and this was the group who powered the Conservative victory in seats across the North and Midlands. However, as Boris Johnson correctly identified in his speech on the steps of Downing Street after that victory, these voters had not become solid Conservative converts and had instead 'lent' their vote to the Conservative Party. That fact is starkly illustrated by the fact that a 33-point polling lead with that group for the Conservatives has now been replaced by 10-point lead for the Labour Party.

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Tackling crime matters to Loyal Nationals – they are the most likely to rank crime as one of the top issues facing the country, alongside the Backbone Conservatives. They are also the most likely to say that the police are not taking crimes like anti-social behaviour seriously enough (67 per cent). Across every crime tested, Loyal Nationals are the most likely to say that that it is a problem in their local area. This is in striking contrast to the Established Liberals, the group on the other flank of the 2019 Tory voter coalition (and our best proxy for voters in the ‘Blue Wall’), who across the crimes tested, are among the least likely to think it is a problem in their local area.

Loyal Nationals are also the primary target for the government’s flagship Levelling Up programme, given they are the group most likely to say their area has been neglected (53 per cent). They lay the blame for that decline most squarely on the rise in crime and anti-social behaviour, with crime cited as by far the top reason among Loyal Nationals (62 per cent) for why their area has declined over the past decade. However, they also make the link between crime and community decline in the opposite direction, explaining how their derelict high streets, dirty streets and run-down town centres are contributing to make crime worse.

You don't get road sweepers anymore. I mean you used to get work road sweepers every week. And the mess in the streets is terrible. The council don't do enough anymore in that department and there are definitely these parks that need some attention, that could do with something new, like the swings and things. Just renew them, make them look inviting for people to want to take their children to. Lived here where I am eight years and I have never seen a road sweeper once.

Gill, Loyal National, 61, Grimsby

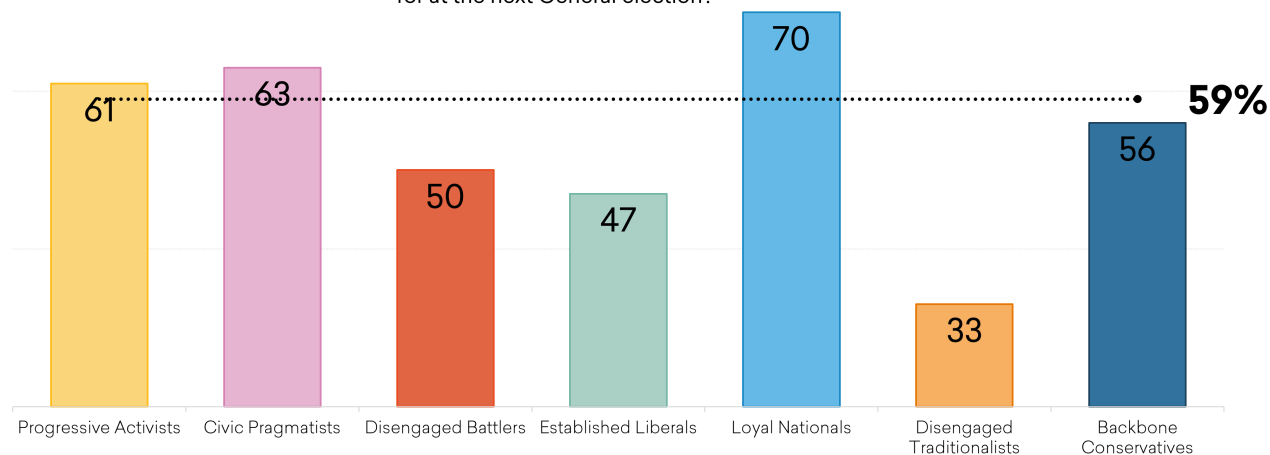
Given the link between crime and community decline, and the fact that 70 per cent (highest among any segment) of Loyal Nationals say that Levelling Up will be important in deciding how they vote at the next election, it seems obvious that the party that most convincingly sets out a plan to tackle crime will be rewarded by this group at the ballot box.

Figure 1.4

Importance of Levelling Up

Levelling up will be a key election issue. Delivery on levelling up will be particularly important for Loyal Nationals

When it comes to the next general election, how important or unimportant, will the Government’s ability to deliver on its promise to “level up” the country be to your decision on what party you vote for at the next General election?



November 2021

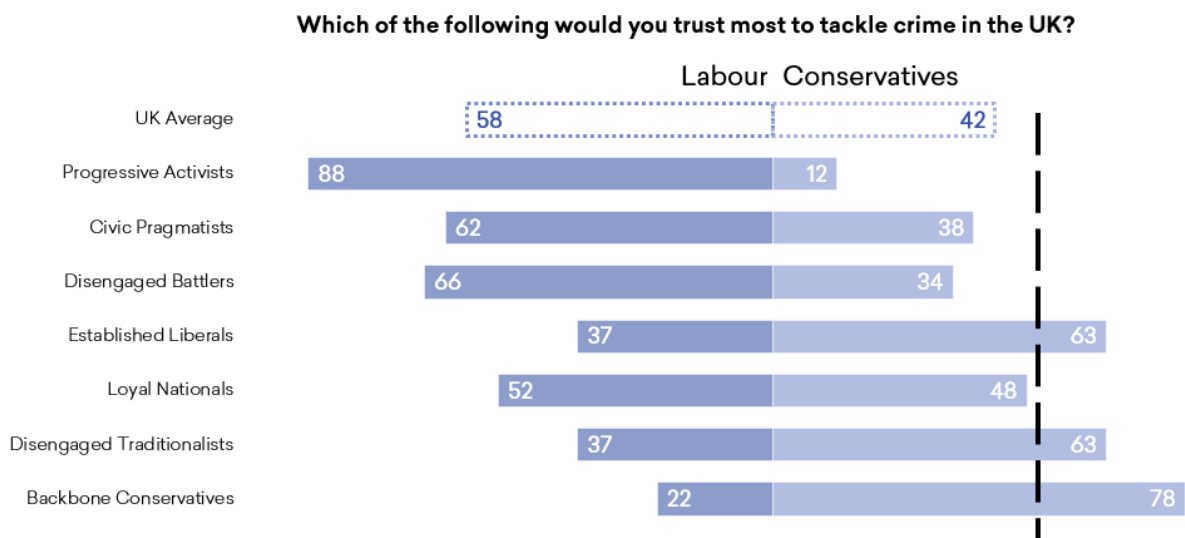
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Current polling suggests that the jury is still out on which party is doing that most convincingly. Loyal Nationals are the segment most divided on which party they trust most to tackle crime. While there is a clear left-right split on which party other segments trust most, Loyal Nationals stand out. Currently 52 per cent say they trust the Labour Party and 48 per cent the Conservatives. In short, among this electorally significant group, both parties have the opportunity to prove they are serious about tackling crime.

Figure 1.5

Which party trusted on crime

58 per cent trust Labour to tackle crime, compared to 42 per cent who trust the Conservatives. Among Loyal Nationals the split is narrower at 52 per cent to 48 per cent



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Part 2 - Crime and Community

The little park round the corner - I wouldn't dare go to, because it's covered in glass and graffiti. Little parks like that need a bit more of a push and things, because it's just not safe for the kids to go.

Laura, Loyal National, 37, Sheffield

I mean I used to play in the park at night. If you went to play in the park at night now, you wouldn't come back, would you?

Paul, Civic Pragmatist, 71, The Wirral

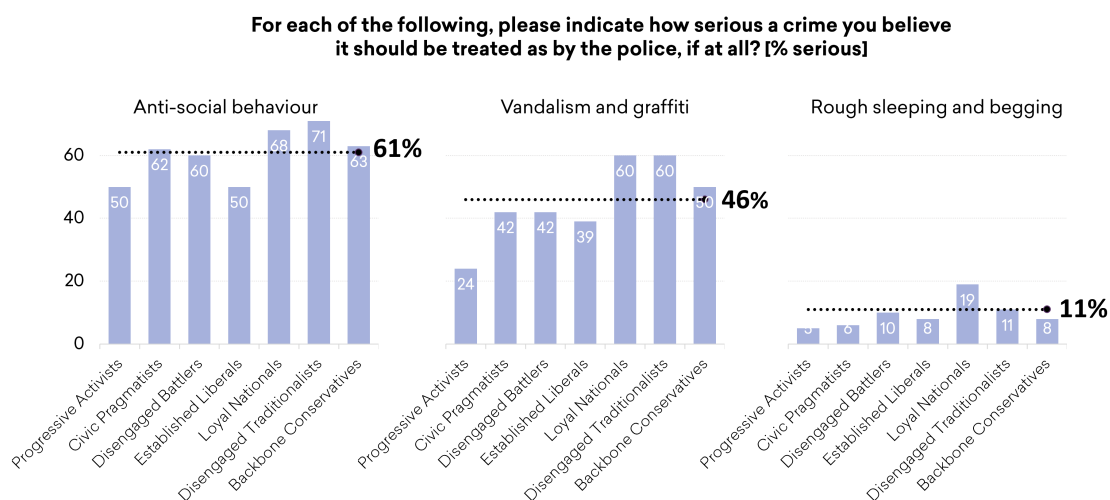
Tackling anti-social behaviour is a priority for Britons and an important step to restoring local pride

Most Britons (61 per cent) believe that anti-social behaviour should be treated as a serious crime and think (54 per cent) that the police are not treating it seriously enough – this view of the importance of clamping down on antisocial behaviour is shared across segments. However, when asked about specific elements of anti-social behaviour, differences emerge. Only 24 per cent of Progressive Activists think vandalism and graffiti are serious crimes, compared to 60 per cent of Loyal Nationals and Disengaged Traditionalists. Similarly, Loyal Nationals are twice as likely as average to think that rough sleeping and begging are serious crimes (19 per cent vs 11 per cent average), although overall, majorities in all segments believe these should not be treated as crimes.

Figure 2.1

How serious is crime

Loyal Nationals are consistently the most likely to say every crime listed should be treated seriously by the police



December 2022

Britons think graffiti and vandalism are dragging their communities down. While most do not consider graffiti and vandalism as serious as violent crimes, they do not think that should be an excuse for inaction. Too often anti-social behaviour, along with vandalism of property and burglary are referred to as ‘low-level’ crime, but for the victims of these

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crimes, the impact is anything but low level. In focus groups, the public explain the sense of violation, fear and despair that such crimes leave behind. This is especially the case among those who have the least means to replace or repair damaged or stolen property.

I mean I've been broken into, it's a horrible thing. I'm sure thousands of people have. And the police haven't even got the time to come out. Then you've got nothing. They've taken your jewellery, your telly, everything. It's really heart-breaking.

Alison, Loyal National, 65, Grimsby

The impact of these crimes goes beyond their impact on individual families. The sense that the police and local councils are neglecting these crimes is eroding a sense of community and leads people feeling they have no choice but to move away – unsurprisingly it is the most deprived segments that feel this most strongly. Time and time again Britons explain their frustration that not only was a crime not prevented or solved, but also that there was no support from the police or council to repair, and no clean up of the consequences of crime. For those living in our most deprived communities the scars and debris of vandalism and anti-social behaviour serve as a daily reminder that their hometowns are trapped in a spiral of neglect and decline.

I know I've mentioned about unsavoury people in parks and stuff like that. There are places that are really nice but they're a bit further away. And a lot of people are thinking the same - so when you do get there, it's busy then.

Ross, Disengaged Battler, 35, Bradford

Going back to play parks, for instance, and teenagers and broken glasses and the little ones' play parks where you can't take a little eight-month-old child on the swing. That's not right.

Andrea, Loyal National, 52, Blyth

I don't think that we've got a safe environment. The local police forces and councils, they can't make the place safe. The councils can't keep the glass off the floor in playgrounds now, and there's cannisters everywhere.

Tracey, Disengaged Traditionalist, 48, Rother Valley

I live on a road that has a nature garden, but it's full of syringes and cannisters. And then I've got another park that's on the other side of my road, and that's where all the kind of yobs go who are unsavoury. So I'm around quite a bit of greenery, and then I have greenery outside the back of my flats, but it's not peaceful. It's not where I would go or have my son go to play. I'd have to go and source that somewhere else.

Angel, Disengaged Battler, 52, Streatham

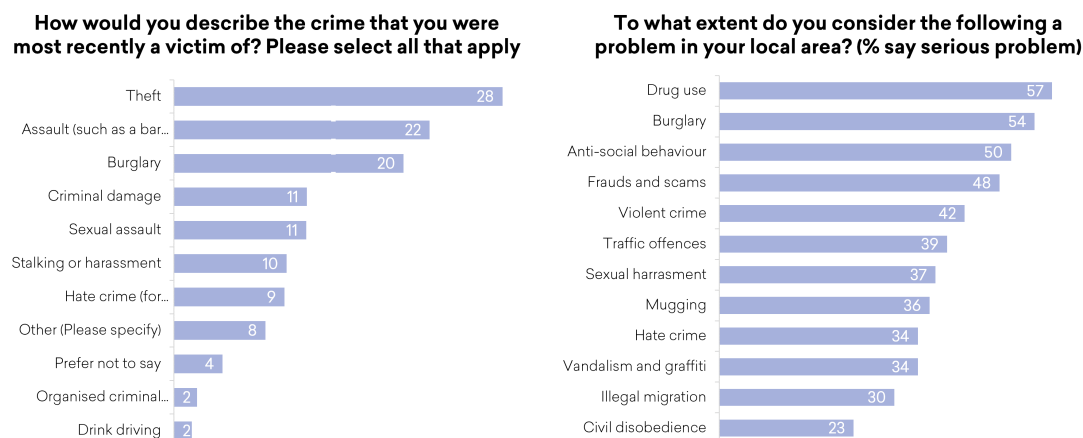
The public's concern about anti-social behaviour is driven by its prevalence – more people report having been victims of crimes like vandalism, anti-social behaviour, theft, and burglary than any other, and yet they feel these crimes get the least attention from the police. At the same time, more than half of Britons say that each burglary (54 per cent), anti-social behaviour (50 per cent) and drug use (57 per cent) are problems in their community.

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Figure 2.2

Prevalence of crime

Most people who said they had experienced crime, had been a victim of theft. Drug use, burglaries, and anti-social behaviour is the top things people said were a problem in their local areas



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Levelling up will fail if anti-social behaviour is not tackled

You make something look really nice and the next minute somebody trashes it just for the sake of it. And that's an education thing, and that's a family thing. It's almost as though there are a lot of parents now that just don't care where their kids are or what they're doing. And the punishments for these antisocial crimes basically just aren't good enough.

Lee, Disengaged Traditionalist, 50, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Britons do not just talk about crime as a problem in isolation. Instead, the impact of crime is a recurring theme in conversations about levelling up, community, and the cost of living.

It should be no surprise that for most Britons the most important policy concerns are personal. Britons want action on the things that affect their everyday lives, far more than debates about abstract principles. What many Britons, particularly those who are less well off, see on their doorsteps are littered streets, parks filled with needles, laughing gas cannisters scattered all around, and kids loitering on empty highstreets with nothing to do. All of which conspires to make their communities less attractive and less safe - with a growing number of public spaces having become 'no-go' areas.

There's like a few druggies around but apart from that it's pretty safe. I've got two small children so it's not nice walking around and they look scary, as in, scruffy, lost and begging. I know they're not really going to bother me, but it's just not nice to have the children looking at them.

Fern, Backbone Conservative, 39, Northampton

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A lot of kids hanging around all the time as well. But I suppose you get in any town, don't you? A lot of people loitering. Around by the McDonald's, there are kids hanging around where the bus stops are all the time, and it does look a bit dodgy, a bit dangerous – but I suppose they're kids aren't they. You sort of just walk past with a bit of speed to get past everyone.

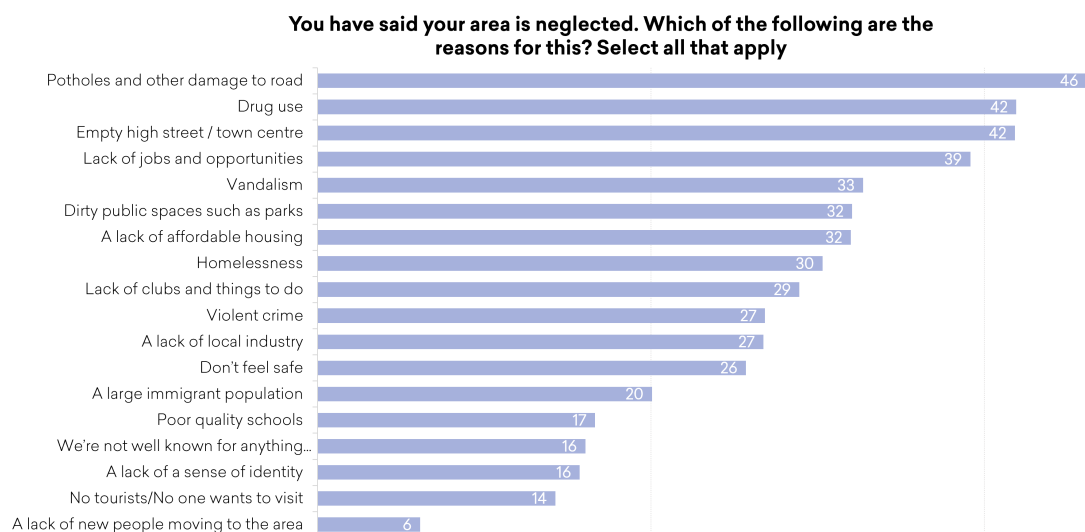
Ollie, Progressive Activist, 36, Northampton

The public link anti-social behaviour directly with community decline. When those in 'left-behind' communities are asked why they feel their area has been neglected, drug-use, vandalism and derelict high streets are among the top reasons. The public cite almost exactly the same factors to explain why their areas have become worse places to live over the past decade. The public strongly believe that problem flows both ways - crime begets decline and decline begets crime or put another way empty and dirty high streets have created the perfect conditions for low-level crimes to spiral out of control, while rising crime makes it hard to attract new investment, amenities or people to their area.

Figure 2.3

Why is local area neglected

Drug use, vandalism, dirty public spaces, and violent crimes, are among the public's top reasons as to why the people feel their area is neglected



November 2021 [shown to the 42 per cent who said their area neglected]

It is no surprise then that the public believe talk of levelling up deprived communities will remain just talk until the government get serious about tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. Nearly one in two Britons (48 per cent) feel that their local areas have become increasingly dangerous –no group feels this stronger than Loyal Nationals, among whom 63 per cent say their area has become more dangerous, a number that is almost four times more than Established Liberals (16 per cent) and almost twice as much as the number of Backbone Conservative (33 per cent) who say the same. While each of these segments who leaned Conservative at the last election share a respect for law and order and think crime is an important issue, it is Loyal Nationals who feel most strongly about the risks of crime. Disengaged Battlers are the only other group where a majority think their area has

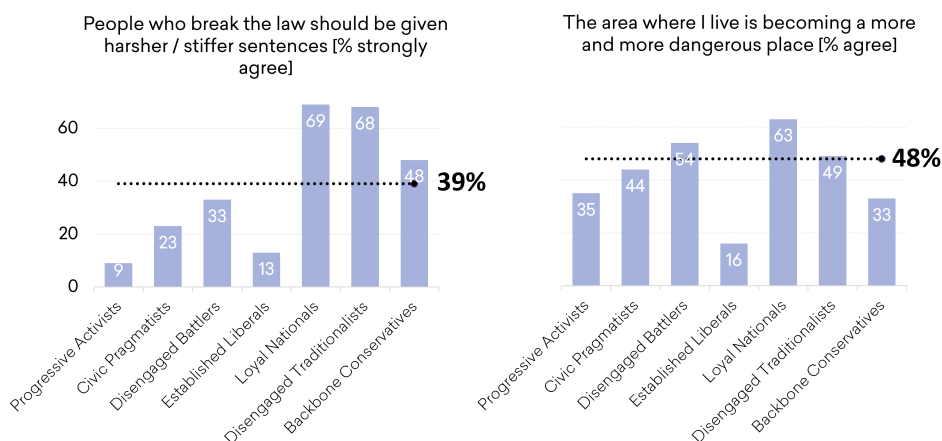
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become more dangerous (54 per cent). As the most socio-economically precarious group, Disengaged Battlers are the most likely of all groups to live in deprived areas and experience the effects of crime first-hand.

Figure 2.4

Local area and harsher sentences

Loyal Nationals are the most likely to say their area is becoming a more dangerous place, and that people who break the law should be given harsher sentences



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No, I think they say they will, or whatever, like everything counts, and then a few weeks later it's just all forgotten about and no I've never heard of the Levelling Up to be quite honest, but I can't see it all.

Alison, Loyal National, 65, Grimsby

Putting all these nice hanging baskets, doing the parks nice...And it stays nice for what? A couple of months. So it's all good and well saying let's make everything nice. It'd be a wonderful world if you could do that, but it's not going to stay like that.

Emma, Disengaged Battler, 29, Oldham

Feeling safe in your local area and not having to worry about crime on or beyond your doorstep is a basic pre-requisite for feeling pride in place. Yet for many communities, particularly in the North and Midlands, dealing with anti-social behaviour has simply become the norm. In focus groups, participants express this even more frankly, saying that as long as lower-level crimes go unpunished any investment made in town centres or across regions will quickly be vandalised and ruined. If the government is to ensure that levelling up is more than just a series of piece-meal investments in place-based projects, it needs to actively focus on the factors that contribute towards areas feeling left behind and neglected – of these crime and anti-social behaviour are number one.

And the punishments for these antisocial crimes basically just aren't good enough. I think they know they can get away with it as well. What are the police going to do?

Ricky, Loyal National, 31, Stoke on Trent

Where are the police?

Well, we had quite a lot of criminal damage done to our property, in the thousands, and we had all our windows put through, and when the police officer came out, he asked what we wanted to do and I said well, I wanted compensation - I wanted them to pay for the damage they'd done. And do you know what their response was? There was going to be an effect on the family, of the kid who did it or the youth who did it, whoever - a backlash on their family. And they got to move to a new house and we had to pay thousands of pounds. So I don't care whether it's boredom or not. To move them to a new house so they're not gonna be in our area to do it again is just moving the problem. They should have lifted him, I'm sorry, but when you've got to pay thousands of pounds to repair stuff that they've damaged or they've stolen. If they know who they are, they should be held to account.

Lorraine, Loyal National, 58, Grimsby

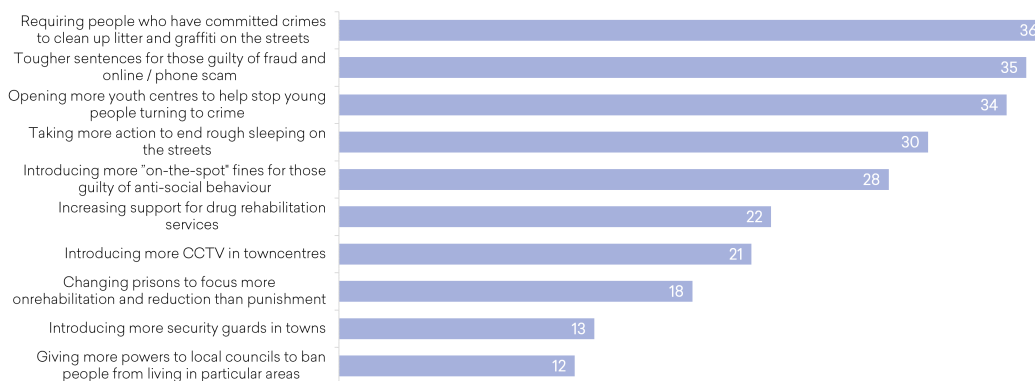
Perpetrators of crime should be forced to take responsibility for their actions. When asked about policies to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, the public's top response was "requiring people who have committed crimes to clean up litter and graffiti". For Britons, this is the simple application of common sense and fairness – if you engage in vandalism, you should be made to clear up the consequences of your actions. Not only does this help to undo criminal damage, but it will also make the perpetrators think twice about doing it again.

Figure 2.5

Support for policies to tackle crime

The most popular policy to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, is requiring people who have committed crimes to clean up litter and graffiti on the streets

Looking at the following options for policies to "level up" local areas by tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, which would you be MOST supportive of the Government implementing? Please select up to three of the following



November 2021

However, the public's views are more nuanced than wanting a crackdown, Britons want more to be done to tackle the source of anti-social behaviour. In focus groups, anti-social behaviour is most often associated with young people. As well as punishing perpetrators voters want measures to be put in place to stop young people from being drawn into criminal activity in the first place. Part of that, which again is often linked to levelling up, is making sure that young people have more productive things to do than crime. The public consistently express concern with the lack of activities and opportunities for young people. Britons across the country lament the closure of youth groups, community spaces and sports clubs, alongside the rising cost of entertainment in their towns. This has led to the sense that young people, especially those who cannot

Where are the police?

afford extra-curricular activities or the latest technology to keep them occupied, are driven into crime out of boredom.

I just don't think they get out enough to see the countryside, and I think that's why there's a lot of problems with gangs and everything because they're not getting a proper childhood like I had.

Paul, Civic Pragmatist, 71, The Wirral

I just associate it with a drab looking building that no one ever goes to or uses. I feel like I remember a community centre growing up and I remember the youth club growing up and I remember none of us using it or going there. Maybe they need a bigger budget or something.

Dinoe, Progressive Activist, 29, Camden

Somebody was going down one of the streets and then into where I live keying all the cars and they went down two or three blocks and then turned into our street. Luckily, my car was fine. But if the young people had something to do then surely they won't be getting their kicks by trashing people's cars - hard earned money that they've had to go work for to get cars.

Tom, Disengaged Battler, 41, Grimsby

Just kids bored, nothing else to do, nowhere to go. I'm not just justifying it but yeah that seems to be what it is to me.

Matt, Backbone Conservative, 31, Northampton

Dealing with anti-social behaviour is not just a police problem

The public do not see rising anti-social behaviour as a purely a problem of policing.

In some focus groups, people directed their anger at the lack of a basic common-sense approach from local authorities. The public feel especially let-down by local councils' approach to refuse collection and provision of bins which is exacerbating littering and fly-tipping. This basic neglect of the public realm by local councils contributes to an atmosphere of decline, driving the public out of common spaces and creating the space for criminals to move in.

I walk around my streets these days and they're the worst they've ever been. The bins aren't being emptied as much.

Jade, Loyal National, 32, Leigh

I know there's loads of community groups and things like that at the moment, for litter picking and things like that, because obviously the councils are useless, to say the least.

Karen, Progressive Activist, 39, Ashton-under-Lyne

There's a big Sainsbury's just down our road and they used to have these recycle bins there and I used to take my recycling bottles down there, get rid of a bunch whenever

Where are the police?

I was going past. But they've removed the recycling bins completely and not replaced them and all you've got there are signs saying "fly-tippers will be prosecuted" and stuff. They've still kept the clothes bins and the shoes bins and that but not the recycle bins. They just removed them completely.

Peter, Disengaged Battler, 39, Grimsby

Where I live, on the corner there used to be a dustbin, and the amount of people that used to come and throw their household rubbish in the bin, and then when that bin was full, they'd just fly-tip it around the thing. So our bright sparks at the council decided to take the bin away completely, so there's no dustbin at all now. So they'd just fly-tip on the floor. Instead of maybe putting a bigger bin there or doing something to stop the fly-tipping when the bin was full. No – our council thought it would be clever to take the bin away completely.

Tom, Disengaged Battler, 41, Grimsby

Some of the areas around here, some people have just got no respect, and they just leave their crap anywhere and everything. But I don't think I'd actually go out and campaign and litter pick myself. That's why I pay council tax and things.

Jonathan, Progressive Activist, 29, Ashtown-under-Lyne

They have a real problem with bins. The council doesn't pick the bins up enough. And I think that can encourage littering. There's a skate park I used to visit as a youngster, and the bin would overflow, and people would just throw stuff near the bins.

Ben, Loyal National, 22, Blyth

What's more, alongside a feeling that their areas had been forgotten, voters feel that their elected officials often neglect issues like crime because it does not affect them – perceived to be more affluent members of society, the public think MPs and councillors are insulated and protected from the effects of crimes. As a result, the public think the people who should be putting a stop to crime are so far-removed from local reality as to fail to understand the need to tackle it.

I think they live on a different planet than we all do. Listen to them talk. I don't think any of 'em have got a grasp on reality sadly.

Jeff, Civic Pragmatist, 68, Bolton

The other thing that really hit home after more things have come out about [Rishi], is he's been fed from the silver spoon hasn't he. I feel he's completely out of touch with the reality of the poorer people in the country, and also the middle-class earners. Like when you have to look at your bills and stuff – he doesn't have to worry about that sort of thing, has he? So it's hard to relate to someone that you know hasn't ever had any money worries. All MPs though, you could say that probably about all of them. I don't think many of them come from working class backgrounds.

Dave, Disengaged Traditionalist, 33, South Swindon

The public want parents and schools to do their bit. Many Britons think feel that parents and schools are failing to step up to the plate when it comes to tackling anti-

Where are the police?

social behaviour. More socially conservative segments tend to blame lack of parental discipline – either due to lack of time or laziness – for anti-social behaviour and crime among young people. They contrast respect for the police when they were young to how young people treat the police today and feel police interventions are pointless if young people are not taught to respect authority and continue to ignore police orders.

We need more police, but police that kids are actually wary of – because if you ask any teenager now, they won't think twice of smacking a copper at the moment – they just don't care. There's no consequences for their actions at all, In school, at home...The way some of the kids on my street talk to their parents...bloody hell, if I spoke to you like that, I'd be in so much trouble.

Sarah, Disengaged Battler, 42, Blackpool

Somewhere along the line, they've lost respect for law and order. I dunno if it's from home, from schools, from society, dunno who you can put the finger of blame but it's as if they don't respect authorities. I don't know how much notice they would take anyway and if the police got the power to actually sort them out in any way other than a ticking off, which to be honest, doesn't seem to work.

Jackie, Disengaged Traditionalist, 57, Northampton

They know they can get away with it. So they know there's no one going to be there to stop them.

Matt, Backbone Conservative, 31, Northampton

I think it's got to come down to the parenting as well as a lot of parents are letting their kids get away with a lot more than they used to, say, ten, twenty years ago. Parents are backing up their kids a lot more than they used to. They've probably taken their word over someone with authority...Parenting, schooling, just letting kids get away with a lot more I guess. Giving them a bit too much power.

Ollie, Progressive Activist, 36, Northampton

There's no discipline for the children anymore. They can do what they like. The teachers can't tell 'em off. So they just think they can do what they like.

Tom, Disengaged Battler, 41, Grimsby

If the government and parents took time to invest in the education of young people, we would grow up with that pride of how you live, where you live. If we took pride in how we lived, we'd behave better. I live in flats and someone will drop a packet of crisps or whatever on the floor and walk off. But if their parents taught them not to do that outside their own home, then that would help. If the schools taught people to take pride in, how you are, how you live, how you behave, it all helps.

Angel, Disengaged Battler, 52, Streatham

That frustration with a lack of basic discipline among young people extends to schools as well as parents. While there is strong evidence that behaviour, at least in English

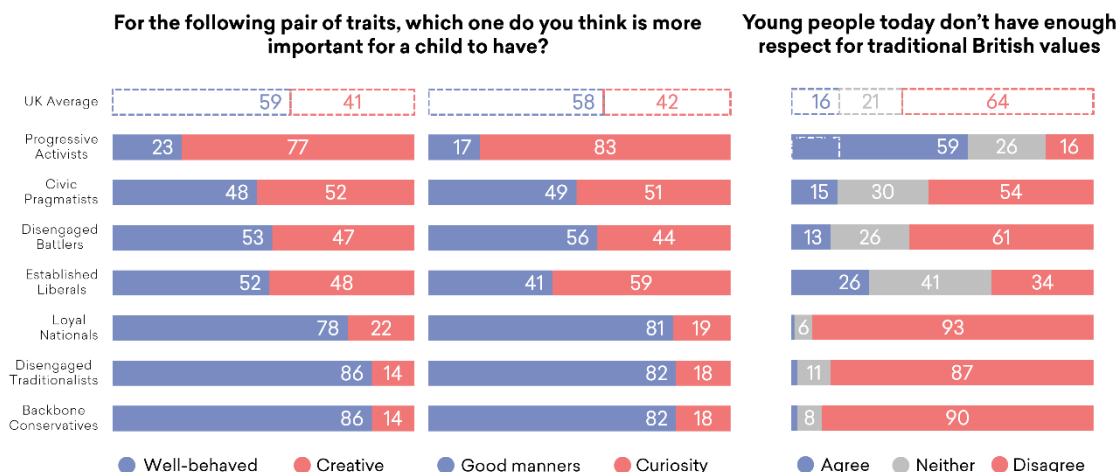
Where are the police?

schools, had improved prior to the pandemic, the public continue to express frustration that not enough is being done to instil good behaviour outside of the classroom. The public agree by a significant margin (58-42) that it is more important that children have good manners than are curious, be well-behaved than creative (59-41), and by a slightly greater margin (64-16) that young people do not have enough respect for traditional British values – agreement is even higher among more socially conservative segments of the population. These beliefs lead to the public feeling that progressive approaches to education are preventing young people from learning important values of respect, discipline, and responsibility.

Figure 2.6

Young people today

Almost two thirds (64 per cent) think young people today don't have enough respect for British values. Clear majorities emphasise the importance of young people being well-behaved and having good manners. These views are most pronounced in more socially conservative segments



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For the public, good policing is not sufficient to tackle crime and make their towns feel safe again. Instead, an approach that includes support from schools, local authorities, and parents to get young people off the conveyor belt to crime is one that commands public support. People also expect a common-sense test to be more often applied to and want public services to work together to make tackling crime and anti-social behaviour a priority. Nonetheless, there is no escaping the fact that more than any other group it is the police who the public feel are responsible for, and who are currently failing to, get a grip on crime.

Where are the police?

Part 3 - Britons and the Police

The police don't do anything. They don't even come out to you if people are caught doing things like stealing. Nothing happens to them – you get away with it, slap on the wrist or whatever, and they go out and do it again.

Alison, Loyal National, 65, Grimsby

Britons feel let down by the police, think officers have given up solving crimes and are increasingly absent

Britons are united in their belief that the police are absent from their communities.

There is a shared frustration across ideological and demographic divides that the police are absent from Britain's streets. The consequences of that absence are lost opportunities to prevent and solve crimes. There are very few areas where Britons consider the police to be succeeding or doing a good job, but police visibility is where they feel most let down.

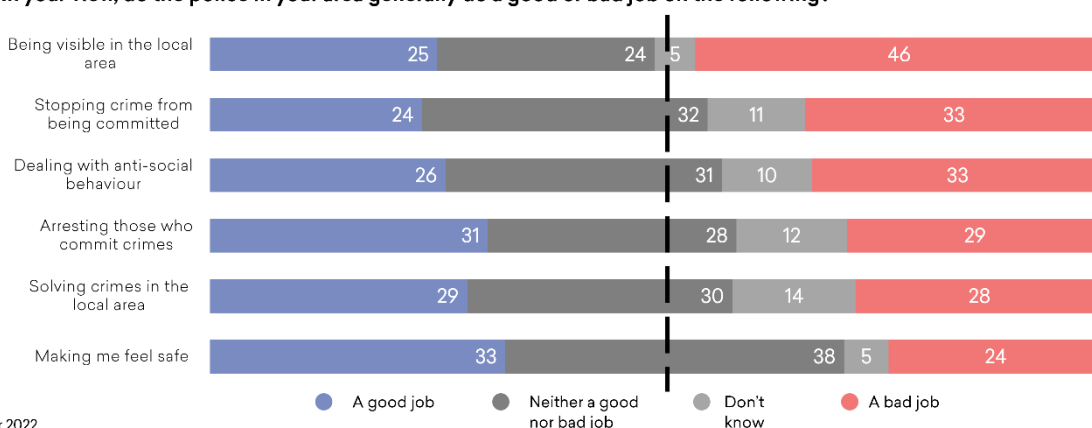
Britons are nearly twice as likely to think that police are doing a bad job at being visible than a good job. Only six per cent of the population would say they have “a lot of confidence” in the police to solve crime in their local areas. Less than a third of the public say that they think the police are doing a good job at making them feel safe, stopping crimes from being committed or arresting those who commit crimes. Instead, most are unsure if they can even trust the police on the everyday basics of policing.

Figure 3.1

Police doing a good job or bad job

Less than a third of the public think the police do 'a good job' in any of the areas tested. The public are more likely than not to say the police do a bad job on being visible in the local area, stopping crimes from being committed, and dealing with anti-social behaviour

In your view, do the police in your area generally do a good or bad job on the following?



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Several years ago, I had my car broken into. When I rang the police, all they gave me was a crime number so I could claim off the insurance. But they weren't interested. So, all you get is a crime number and they can do what they want.

Gill, Loyal National, 61, Grimsby

Where are the police?

If you have any problem here with street crime, when you ring the police, they'll only come after two or three hours. They make excuses "We are short staffed". In the last couple of months, somebody damaged my car outside in the drive, smashed my windscreen and smashed my front window as well. When I rang police, they said they'd come after three hours, then didn't. They said "Oh, we are short staffed. We can't do anything.

Majid, Loyal National, 43, Stoke-on-Trent

Faith in police competence is waning. For those who say they have been a victim of crime, most (54 per cent) say they were not satisfied with police response, while nearly seven in ten (69 per cent) say that the crime was not solved. In focus groups, Britons explain it has become normal to expect nothing will happen when crimes are reported. Most people believe that crime reports just become another statistic. A common complaint is that even when police do get involved, they are unable or unwilling to do anything to catch perpetrators. There is also a perception that crime is more often ignored in deprived communities, while wealthier areas are being better served.

There's a point I'd like to make, you've got some rich twat living in a posh house gets his window put through. I bet the f*** police turn up and take the statement from them.**

Peter, Disengaged Battler, 39, Grimsby

Does depend on your post code, definitely.

Alison, Loyal National, 65, Grimsby

Britons' lack of faith in the police extends across all crimes. With the exception of murder and traffic offences, most Britons do not think that the police treat crimes with the appropriate level of seriousness. At the top end, 57 per cent say that sexual assault is not treated seriously enough, while 44 per cent say that vandalism and graffiti is not treated seriously enough. Nearly seven in ten (68 per cent) believe the police have given up on trying to solve crimes like burglary and shoplifting altogether.

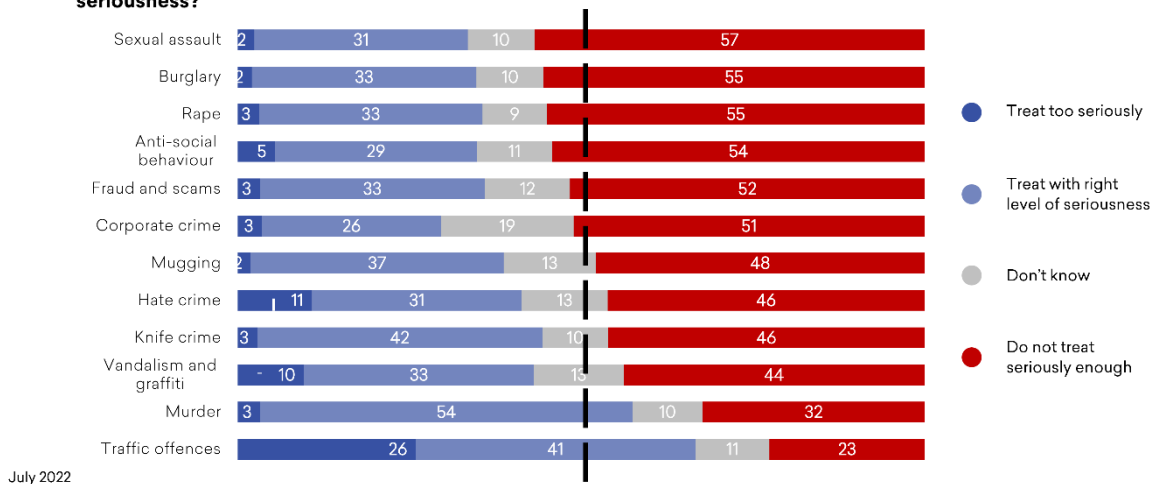
Where are the police?

Figure 3.2

Police taking crime seriously

For almost all crimes, the public are more likely to think that the police don't treat it seriously enough

Do you believe police take the following types of crime too seriously, not seriously enough, or with the right level of seriousness?



Trust in the police is fragile

A central pre-requisite to effective policing is that the public trust the police. While more people are likely to say they trust the police than think they are doing a good job, headline figures suggest, if not yet a crisis, there has been a stark erosion of public trust in the police.

In February 2020, 63 per cent of Britons said they trusted police officers, compared to 83 per cent who said they trusted the NHS and doctors. By November 2021, shortly after the sentencing of Wayne Couzens for the murder of Sarah Everard, this had fallen to 53 per cent, while trust in the NHS stayed at the same level. Since then, levels of trust remain unchanged at 52 per cent - though this figure pre-dates recent revelations about David Carrick's multiple sexual offences as a serving police officer.

That barely half of the public now say that they trust police officers should be a moment of reckoning. Lack of trust has clear implications for the willingness of the public to share information, report crimes and co-operate with the police, all of which ultimately go to the heart of the police's ability to do the job well.

The decline in trust in the police is even more stark among individual segments of the population. Between 2020 and 2021, trust fell most dramatically among Progressive Activists, among whom there was 21-percentage point fall from 58 per cent in 2020 to 37 per cent in 2021. As the group with the most socially liberal tendencies, most likely to live in London and most likely to prioritise a radical reform of the system, a low base line in trust is to be expected. What's more, at least some of the fall in trust among this group can be explained by their tendency to import concepts such as "defund the police" (26 per cent of Progressive Activists support this compared to 16 per cent average) from the United States. But trust also fell significantly among other less liberal segments –

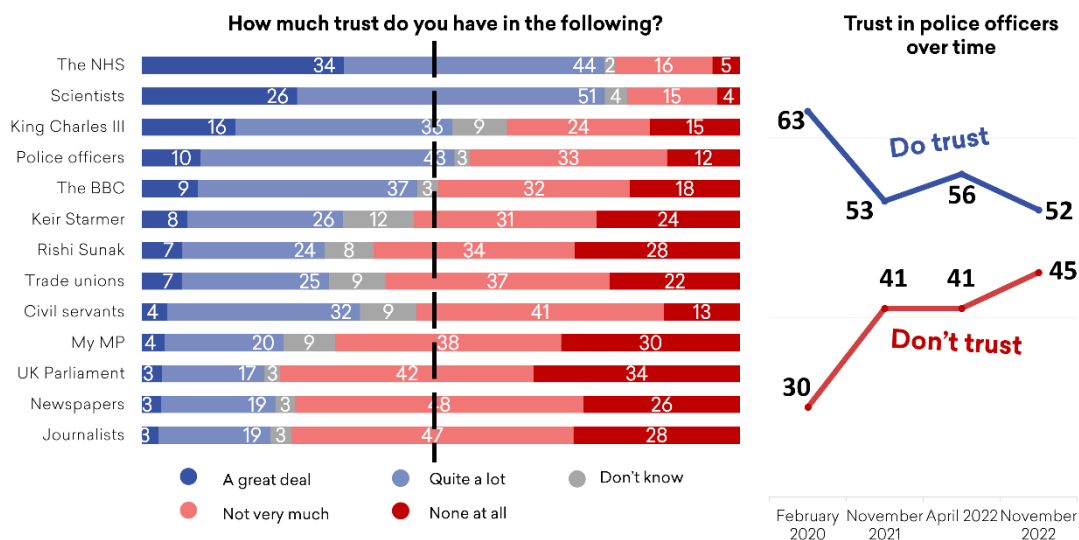
Where are the police?

including Backbone Conservatives and Loyal Nationals. Both of these segments back a tough, authoritarian approach to ensuring law and order and should, ordinarily, be expected to be staunch supporters of the police.

Figure 3.3

Trust in police officers

Almost half of Britons say they do not trust police officers, and only one in ten say they trust them 'a great deal'. This has got worse in recent years



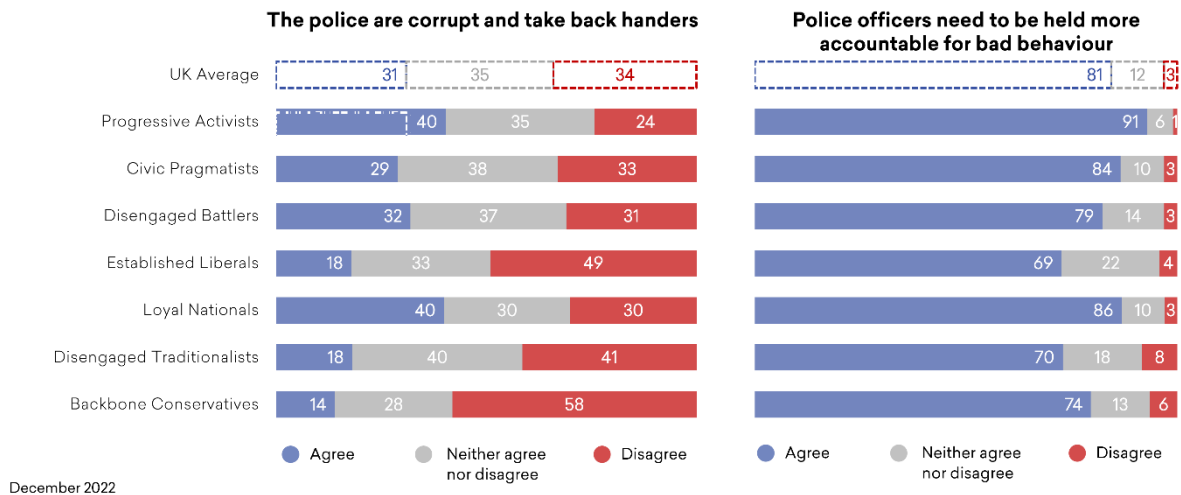
Alongside lukewarm levels of trust, almost a third of the public think the police are corrupt or racist (both at 31 per cent), and just 45 per cent of the public think the police tend to get it right. This suspicion towards the police is highest among Progressive Activists and Loyal Nationals. There is a sense among both groups that bad behaviour among the police isn't being properly rooted out. In both segments, 40 per cent believe the police are corrupt and take backhanders – making them more than twice as likely as to think this than Established Liberals, Disengaged Traditionalists and Backbone Conservatives. Again, this perception of corruption can partly be explained by the social psychology of the segments - Loyal Nationals' high threat perception makes them particularly sensitive to perceptions and suspicions of wrongdoing. Progressive Activists, on the other hand, tend to be more likely to see systemic problems within establishment institutions at play. This also explains why Progressive Activists also almost twice as likely as average to believe police in the UK are racist (55 per cent vs 31 per cent average) – making them clear outliers on this issue. However, the view that police officers need to be held more accountable for bad behaviour extends across all segments with 81 per cent of the British public agreeing - again this sentiment is felt even more strongly among Progressive Activists and Loyal Nationals.

Where are the police?

Figure 3.4

Police are corrupt

Significant numbers think the police are corrupt. This sentiment is particularly pronounced among Progressive Activists and Loyal Nationals. Overwhelming majorities in all segments think police officers need to be held more accountable for bad behaviour

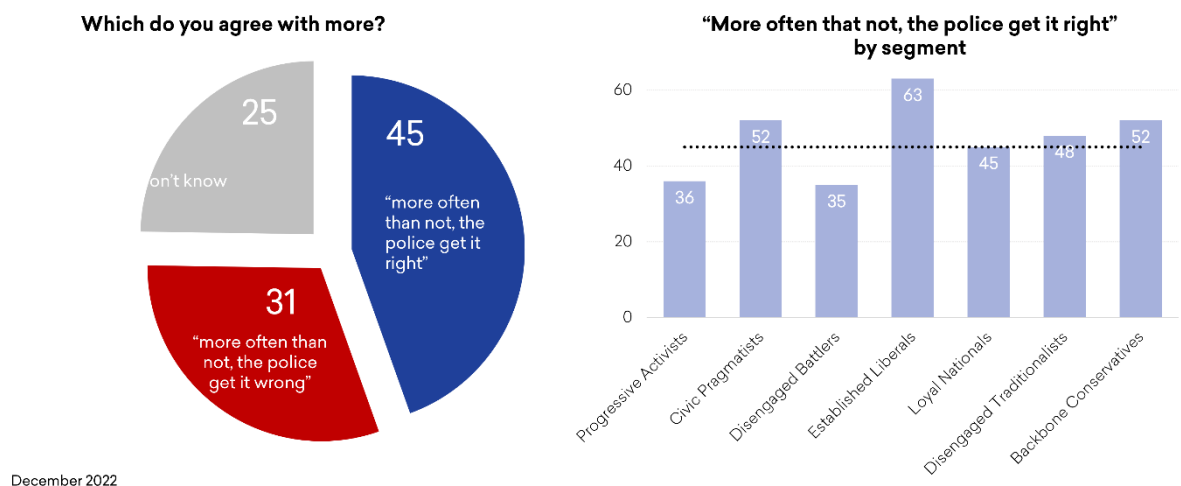


The public are even less certain the police make the right judgements. Established Liberals are the only segment where a clear majority say the police generally get it right.

Figure 3.5

Police more often right than wrong

Less than half of Britons (45 per cent) say that "more often than not, the police get it right"



Wonder if they worry enough about domestic burglaries and stuff like that? It quite often just goes unsolved. People don't seem to trust them to find who did it. They just know they'll become a statistic rather than solve the crime if you like.

Jackie, Disengaged Traditionalist, 57, Northampton

Where are the police?

The combination of lukewarm trust and lack of faith in the police's ability to make the right judgements poses real challenges to the police's standing and ability to do their job. There is also no doubt that revelations about the behaviour and vetting of police officers that emerged after this research was conducted, most appalling that of David Carrick, will have eroded this already poor perception even further.

Britons feel that the police have the wrong priorities

I agree with obviously celebrating and stuff like that. But, obviously, the Pride in Doncaster and the policing levels in there is ridiculous. You don't even get it for Leger [races] now. It is ridiculous.

Andrew, Loyal National, 29, Don Valley

I think they're being made to be woke. Whatever they say, they're offending somebody, aren't they?

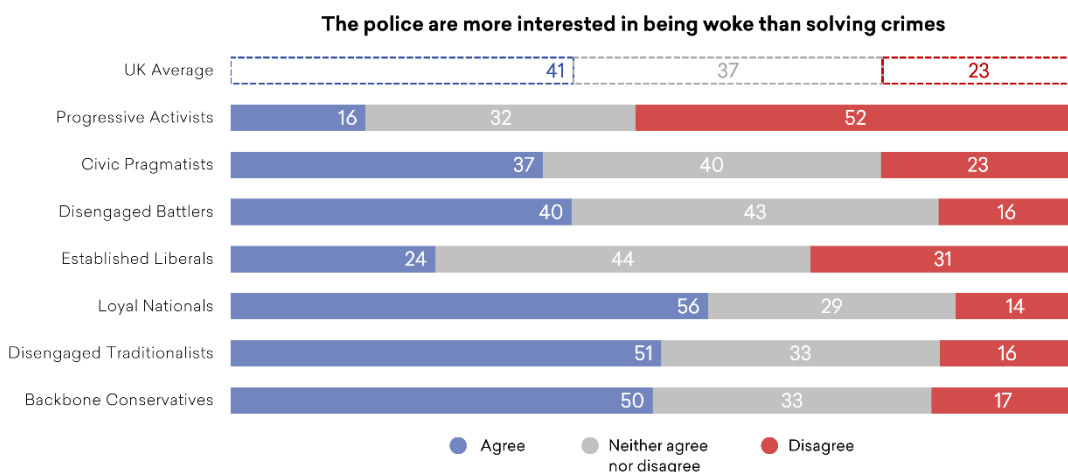
Shelley, Loyal National, 59, Don Valley

There is a growing sense that the police have become distracted and are focusing on the wrong things. Four in ten (41 per cent) believe that the police are more interested in being woke than solving crimes, while only two in ten (23 per cent) disagree. Among Loyal Nationals, Disengaged Traditionalists and Backbone Conservatives, more than half think the police are more interested in being woke than solving crimes. These segments are also more likely to believe that the police are too concerned or distracted with political correctness and attending events like Pride. They directly link this distraction to higher crime. For that reason, a pledge to end public funding for 'woke' jobs in policing such as diversity and inclusion roles is particularly popular among these segments. When asked if they would be likely to vote for a party who pledged to stop police spending money on these roles, 63 per cent of Backbone Conservatives, 56 per cent of Loyal Nationals and 53 per cent of Disengaged Traditionalists said they would be likely to support such a party.

Figure 3.6

Police, woke, and crime

Almost twice as many agree than disagree that the police are more interested in being woke than solving crime



May 2022

Where are the police?

The public want the police to be free to get on with doing their jobs in preventing and dealing with 'real' crime. That does not mean the public do not want the police to have regard to and respect diversity and inclusion. Instead, many feel the police are currently getting the balance wrong. As with other public policy issues, the public want to see a practical and common-sense approach to tackling crime. It is the absence of this common-sense approach that the public blame for rising crime – after cost of living and rising poverty, the top explanation given by the public for record high crime levels is the visible lack of police on the street.

Britons want a tougher justice system

I think help should be there really for the ones that need it. The crime itself might be a cry for intervention. So I think there should be help there for and rehabilitation for particularly the younger end of the offending ladder.

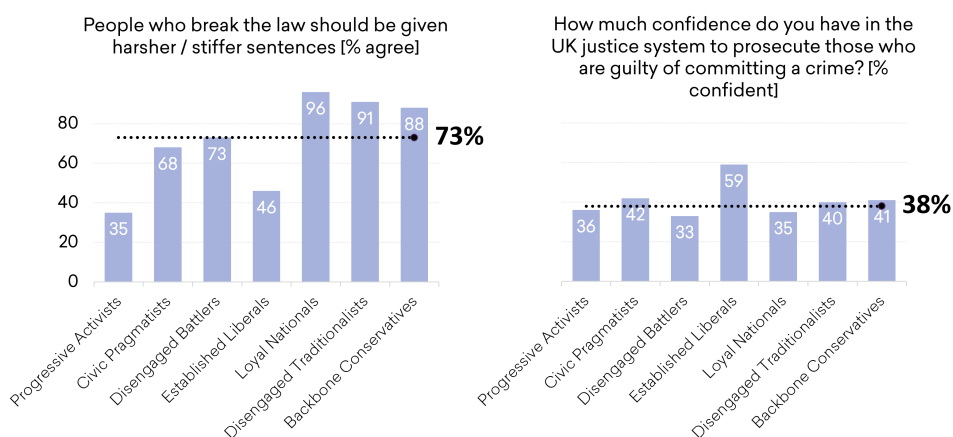
Jackie, Disengaged Traditionalist, 57, Northampton

Britons want an approach to crime that is tough but also supportive and preventative. They want to be confident that those guilty of crimes will be brought to justice, prosecuted and properly punished. At the same time, they want measures to be put in place that support those who find themselves in trouble so that they do not end up turning to crime.

Figure 3.7

Harsher sentences and justice system

Most Britons want greater accountability for criminals, and with the exception of Established Liberals, they have little confidence in the justice system to deliver that



December 2022

That expectation is not currently been met. The majority of Britons (57 per cent) say they have little or no confidence in the UK justice system to prosecute those who are guilty of committing a crime. Even greater numbers think that even where people are found guilty, punishments are too lenient - 73 per cent think we need harsher sentences for those who break the law. The only segment where more disagree than agree with this

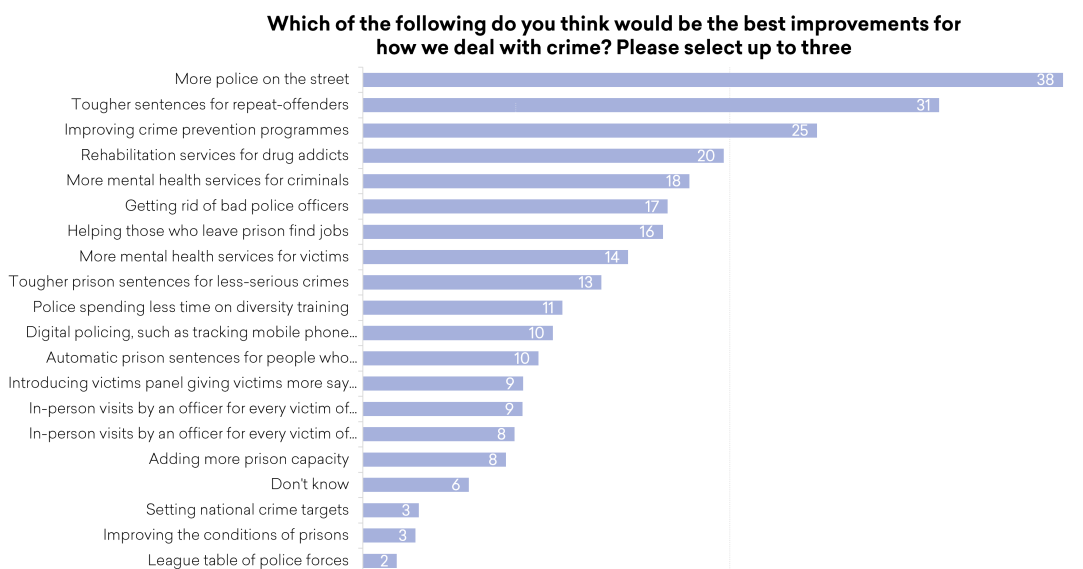
Where are the police?

sentiment are Progressive Activists. There is also particularly strong support for the justice system to take a tougher stance on re-offenders. Tougher sentencing for repeat offenders ranks as the second most popular change people would like to see in our approach to dealing with crime, second only to putting more police on the street.

Figure 3.8

Best improvements for how we deal with crime

The public want more police on the street, and tougher sentences for repeat-offenders



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We need the police

Yeah, just more police about and having more of a presence especially around town areas. It'll just invite people to feel more safe to travel into the town areas for entertainment. So if there's police around, feel a bit safer. That's all.

Ollie, Progressive Activist, 36, Northampton

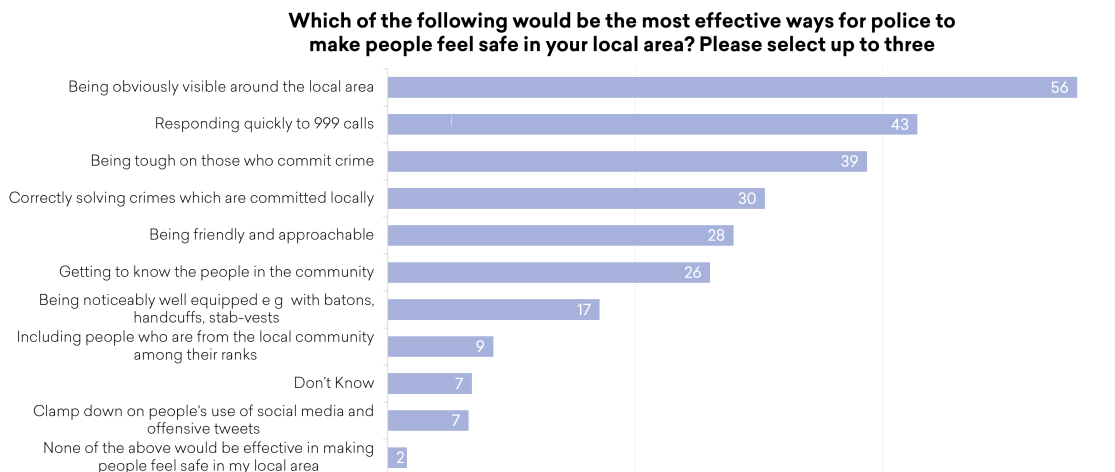
Visible policing is a top priority for Britons – nearly eight in ten (78 per cent) think we need more police on the street, with agreement across even more socially liberal segments. When asked what it would take for local areas to feel safe, the most popular response is more visible policing (50 per cent). Better policing also tops the list on the broader question of what measures would improve people's local area (51 per cent). Across the board, visible community policing is seen as the best way to help people feel safe – more so even than being tough on those who commit crime or solving more crimes. In contrast to the much-quoted slogan adopted by some US inspired activists, only 16 per cent think we should defund the police.

Where are the police?

Figure 3.9

Make people feel safe

'Being obviously visible around the local area' is the most effective way for the police to make people feel safe in their local area



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Obviously there's going to be less vandals on the streets if you've got more police out there.

Sophie, Loyal National, 29, Leeds

I think more police around is the main thing for me because you just don't see enough of them.

Lucy, Progressive Activist, 28, Northampton

When I was growing up you always saw police in twos walking the street. There'd always be a policeman around and you don't see that as much anymore. But we need the right people in the job as well.

Zoe, Disengaged Traditionalist, 48, Northampton

Whatever their frustrations with the current model of policing there is no doubt for Britons that better policing is the best improvement we can make to tackling crime. The role and importance of the police is one of the primary areas in which Britons find common ground. That they are currently seen to be failing in that role as custodians of the public realm helps to explain the widespread feelings of dismay towards our current approach to crime.

Where are the police?

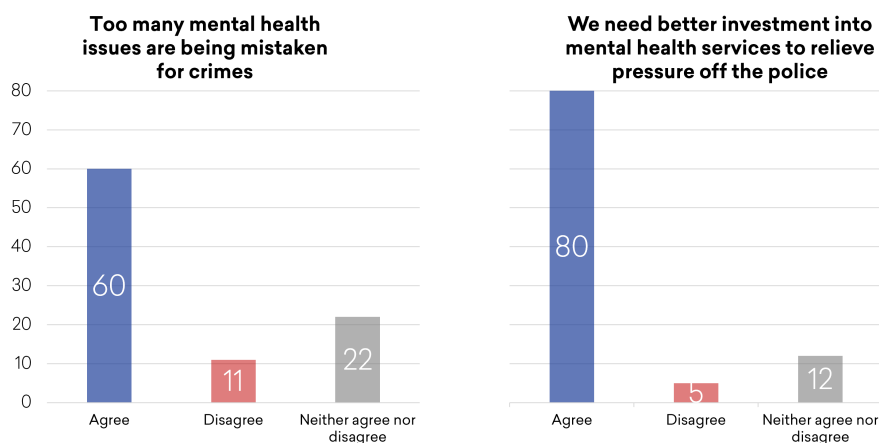
Policing Plus

While Britons agree that visible and better policing is necessary condition for tackling crime, it is not sufficient. They also want to see more support to get people off the conveyor belt to crime. This is particularly true when it comes to offences like drug use and rough sleeping – here four in five Britons think there should be better mental health services to relieve pressure on the police, while a further 60 per cent believe that many mental health issues are being mistaken for crimes. There is also significant support for improving access to homeless shelters to stop rough sleeping (it was the third most popular option people thought the government / local council should prioritise to make their local area safer - after more police on the streets and harsher sentences for criminals).

Figure 3.10

Mental health and crime

Clear majorities think too many mental health issues are being mistaken for crimes, and we need better investment in mental health services to take the pressure off the police



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Overall while the police are still seen as best placed to deal with most crimes, and for many in the socially conservative segments, still best placed to deal with all crimes, people also favour a collaborative approach and support interventions from other professionals that enables the police to make better use of their time.

Progressive Activists

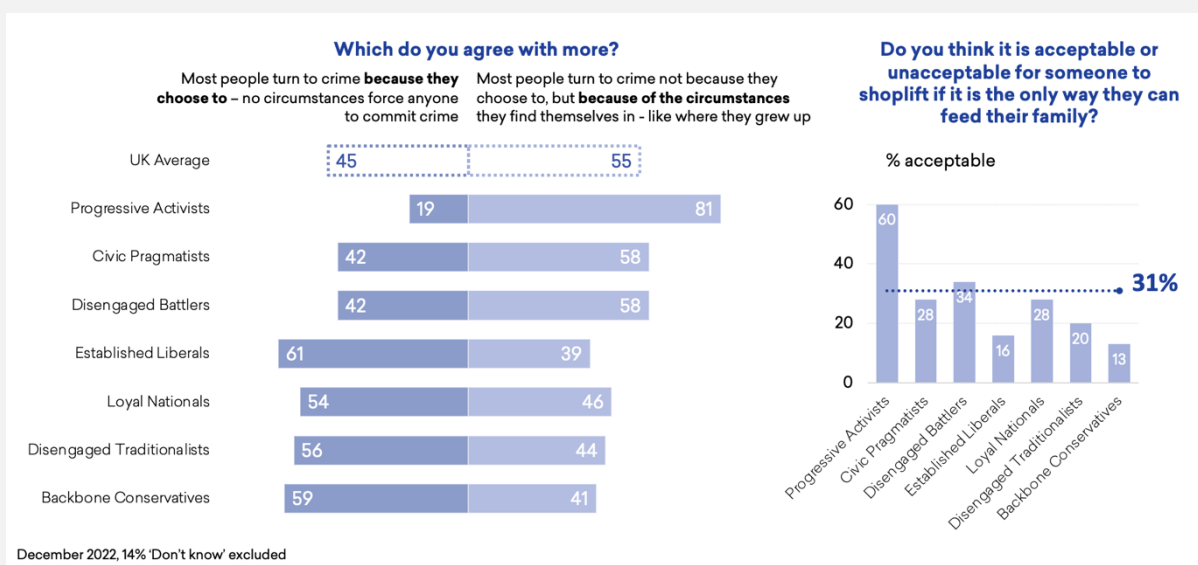
It's not always coming from a bad place, but I think people need to be a bit more clued up about microaggressions or asking black women about their hair, and it's just little things like that really that kind of wear on people. So it's not the overt racism that we hear of, or getting called a racist name – it's the little microaggressions that really have an impact on a person of colour's life as well.

Emma, 42, Progressive Activist, London

As one of the most politically oriented groups, Progressive Activists drive many of the debates we see play out across traditional and social media. They care deeply about injustice and believe an overhaul of the system is needed to create a better society. Their desire for radical change means they tend to be outliers on attitudes to both institutions and public policy compared to the rest of the public. This dynamic plays out in their attitude to crime and policing.

As the most metropolitan of the segments, they are less concerned with the local, and while they appreciate anti-social behaviour is serious, they are more likely to think crimes like sexual assault, rape and corporate crime should be the priority.

Progressive Activists also stand out for their views on the causes of crime. Over eight in ten (81 per cent) of Progressive Activists see crime and criminality as being driven by a person's life circumstances than active choice, far higher than any other segment. Similarly, Progressive Activists are the only segment who believe shoplifting is acceptable if it is the only way to feed your family - 60 per cent of Progressive Activists say this is acceptable, almost twice the average (31 per cent). In contrast, 60 per cent of Disengaged Traditionalists explicitly say it is unacceptable, a number which rises to 69 per cent of Backbone Conservatives.



As Progressive Activists place greater blame on the system than individuals, they are more likely to believe that harsh punishment for crimes is counterproductive. Instead, and unlike other segments, they believe rehabilitative approaches work better. When asked what the best improvements would be for how we deal with crime, their top answers include “improving crime prevention programmes”, “rehabilitation services for drug addicts” and “more investment in mental health services and facilities for criminals”. They are the only segment not to prioritise “more police on the street”. Other segments are also more likely to place a higher premium on stricter punishments for crimes.

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I agree that their main responsibility is to solve the crime, but I don't think that they can function to the best of their ability without a relation to the community they're looking after. I think having a relationship with the community that you look after is important in order to solve the crime.

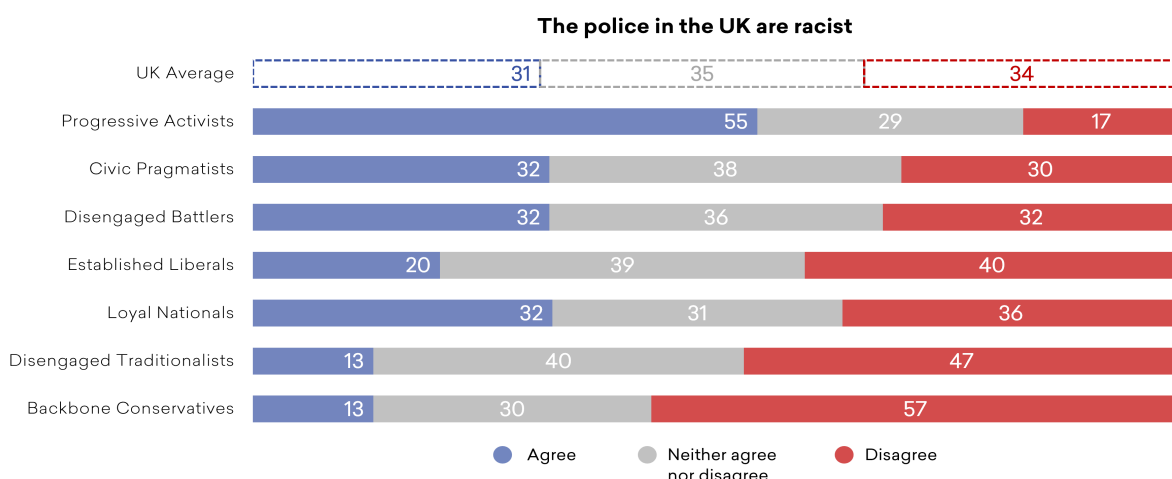
Lucy, Progressive Activist, 28, Northampton

More than any other group, Progressive Activists also think that policing needs to be overhauled. Cases such as the tragic murder of Sarah Everard had the biggest impact on this group, with their levels of trust in the police plummeting following the arrest of Wayne Couzens. They are the only group in which a majority think that the police in the UK are racist – 55 per cent believe this compared to less than a third in every other segment - while a further 40 per cent also say that the police are corrupt, the joint highest of any group. For Progressive Activists, many problems with crime and the criminal justice system come from within the police force itself.

Figure 3.12

Police are racist

Progressive Activists are almost twice as likely than average to believe the police in the UK are racist



May 2022

Yeah, more police about, more of a presence - it'll just invite people to feel more safe to travel into the town areas for entertainment. So if there's police around, feel a bit safer. That's all.

Ollie, Progressive Activist, 26, Northampton

While Progressive Activists are outliers in many of their views on crime there is some common ground. Firstly, while they are less likely to see policing as the silver bullet to tackling crime, a majority still agree (52 per cent) that there should be more police officers on the street. Secondly, most Britons share to some degree their desire to see action on tackling the causes of crime as well as the consequences. While other segments favour stricter punishments for those who commit crimes, they don't ignore the need for better prevention. All segments include "improve crime prevention programmes" as one of their top priorities for improving how we deal with crime.

Where are the police?

Recommendations

The public do not think that our current approach to crime, policing and anti-social behaviour is working. It is a failure that is leaving people feeling unsafe and damaging the fabric of our communities.

Britons are equally clear that there is no silver bullet to changing this, nor will solely draconian or solely progressive tactics provide the solution to restoring confidence in our criminal justice system. Instead, what the public want is a common-sense approach to policing, that works with schools, local authorities and voluntary organisations to tackle the causes, culprits and consequences of crime.

Such an approach would require those engaging in anti-social behaviour to face the consequences of their crime but would also provide routes away from anti-social behaviour to begin with. It would involve moving police out of the back office and onto the streets. But it would also recognise policing is made a lot easier if principles of discipline are properly instilled in young people by parents and schools, and mental health problems are dealt with by mental health professionals.

The following recommendations are a product of the ideas, initiatives, and programmes that most resonated with the public during our research. And while we do not believe that policy, especially in a complex area like criminal justice, should be designed solely based on current public opinion, we are confident these suggestions would go some way towards addressing the concerns and fears that the public expressed to us.

A reduction in police bureaucracy with officers put back on the streets

[Police should] be seen. You only see them if they're called or they're going somewhere. You don't just see them out and about like you used to, preventing. If they're out more than people might not commit crimes.

Derrick, Disengaged Traditionalist, 35, Northampton

More than anything else the public wants to see visible policing back on the streets and for the police to pay attention to their communities. More resources should be diverted into street patrols, with an expectation that all police officers, including the most senior ranks spend a proportion of their time on the street, accessible to the public. New league tables should be introduced that hold forces accountable for time officers spend out on patrol.

Alongside this, every victim of crime should have the chance to be visited by an officer in person - with every burglary investigated on the same day the crime is reported. To help free up officers from the burdens of desk work, a policing red tape challenge should be launched to identify opportunities to cut back on bureaucracy or invest in time-saving technological improvements and digitisation.

Where are the police?

Diversity and Inclusion Audit

I know that we got a pot of money. And we had a 500 pound pot of money for us to buy things for gay pride event and things like that. That could have been spent somewhere else – instead of 500 pounds of decorations and a bit of food for one weekend – it could have been spent on staff. It's only 500 pound, I know, but it could have gone towards staffing – or it's a lot of money that could have gone on something else like equipment.

Daniella, Loyal National, 28, Don Valley

In all public services an understanding and appreciation of diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) is vital. That is particularly true in policing, where officers need to have an active understanding of issues and sensitivities that affect particular communities. From the handling of Stephen Lawrence's murder and the Stephen Port investigation to the evidence of endemic sexism and misogyny in police forces, we have seen the very real consequences of what happens when a commitment to DEI is not at the heart of policing.

However, we also know that the public is concerned that certain DEI initiatives are acting as a distraction from the police doing their job and, in some cases, actively hampering investigations. To restore public confidence, the College of Policing should conduct an audit of the types of DEI activities the police are engaging in with a particular focus on ensuring that they are using proportionate evidence-based approaches, that use police resourcing efficiently. Where possible, police forces should see DEI as something they do throughout their job, rather than a stand-alone or tick box activity at specific events.

Better vetting and greater routes to policing

It's one of the issues isn't it? That it's in the police force. They've had quite a few problems highlighted recently and in the recent past of their behaviour and attitudes. People sort of look at the police now and half of the time ask how you can trust that they're not behind the scenes with a completely different mentality.

Jackie, Disengaged Traditionalist, 57, Northampton

The murder of Sarah Everard by Wayne Couzens, the revelations of David Carrick's litany of assaults, along with other high-profile examples of criminality and misconduct among serving officers have shaken trust in the police. Unless this changes, the ability of the police to command community confidence will falter. Part of restoring trust will involve doing more to screen out bad apples before they join the force. However, it is clear that insider cultures within the police hamper efforts to root out wrongdoing. The government should do more to ensure there are routes into policing at different stages of people's careers and restore direct entry programmes. To further reduce 'insider culture' employment in policing should be more closely integrated into other parts of the public sector workforce, allowing people to move in and out of the force from the civil service, local government, prisons, and the education system.

Where are the police?

Investment in CCTV

I think with policing, they should be empowering police officers and insisting that they track these individuals down and they are charged for it. There's CCTV everywhere now, they can find out one fan who's hurling abuse at the footballers. You can find the fans that are throwing bottles and coins at the black footballers and celebrating in the corner of football pitches. So it's not about them not being able to do it - they can do it but, personally, they're leaving it and letting it be.

Westley, Disengaged Battler, 40, Manchester

While visible policing is the surest way to improve public confidence that crime is under control, it is clearly not possible or affordable to have an officer on every street corner. For the public, CCTV serves several purposes, it helps to deter crime, it helps to catch those engaged in crime, and most importantly, it makes them feel safer - particularly when travelling in isolated or dimly lit areas. But CCTV is not distributed evenly across the country and in some of the areas that need it most, CCTV is lacking. A new funding stream should be made available to local authorities or in partnership with local business investment districts to make CCTV more accessible. The police should be expected, as a matter of course, to investigate CCTV in the vicinity of a crime in a timely manner.

Local clean up squads

Some of these parks you see, they're grim and you hear that there are drug dealers and dangerous places and not somewhere your children could go safely and play.

Sarah, Civic Pragmatist, 55, The Cotswolds

While the primary focus of government and police energy should be on preventing and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, the public is equally frustrated that when crime - and vandalism in particular - does occur its consequences are not cleaned up.

Participants in focus groups told us that graffiti was often left on walls for months and that they did not feel safe letting their children run around local parks because of the prevalence of syringes and broken glass. These lingering consequences of crime make areas feel rundown and unsafe. As much as active vandalism, the public were concerned about wanton littering. While local clean ups do not command the same media attention as set piece place-based investments, they are vital to levelling up. As part of levelling up funding the government should introduce a targeted fund for combined mayoral and local authorities to fund rapid crime clean up teams. Local bodies should be held accountable for their performance in repairing and restoring reported acts of vandalism.

The government should take forward proposals to better prevent people from getting access to nitrous oxide/laughing as a legal high. From our conversations with the public, we heard that laughing gas cannisters are regularly being left strewn across public spaces contributing creating unsightly littering.

Where are the police?

New incentives and sanctions for parents to tackle undisciplined children

They've got no respect, because they haven't been told by their parents and nothing's going to happen.

Joe, Disengaged Battler, 27, Blackpool

The public believe that anti-social behaviour and ill-discipline starts in the home. While all generations have a tendency to lament poor behaviour among successive generations, it is clear that many are concerned that some parents are either unable or unwilling to discipline their children. Greater resourcing should be offered to provide evidence-based parenting classes that offer support in encouraging good behaviour and instilling discipline in children from an early age. Incentive schemes similar to those piloted in Camden and Middlesbrough should be expanded to encourage take up among parents.

For parents of those children who repeatedly engage in bullying or anti-social behaviour, new powers should be given to the police to mandate a wider range of parenting orders, attendance at parenting classes and fines for parents who don't comply.

Greater identification, support, and discipline of children at risk of falling into crime within education

We don't need laws, we need education. It needs to be the schools. It needs to be the parents. It has to be everybody. That's why I say about the education because, in this day and age, the way parents have to work so many hours to make ends meet - you can't just rely on the parents.

Angel, Disengaged Battler, 52, Streatham

Much alternative provision and many pupil referral units do fantastic work in supporting children who have been excluded from mainstream education. Yet too often alternative provision is the first step on the conveyor belt to criminal activity. The government should explore how it can learn from free schools such as the Hackney Boxing Academy that offer innovative approaches to reaching disengaged and marginalised young people. At the same time, to make the transition into and back out of alternative provision, the government should introduce an expectation that every large and medium sized academy chain contain a pupil referral unit that is integrated into its trust. There should also be greater data sharing between the police, schools and Ofsted about prevalence of pupils that engage in anti-social behaviour so that they can be offered intervention or support.

To further deter young children from engaging in crime, the practice of Saturday detentions should be reintroduced, (potentially at a local authority or ward level to pool school resources), as punishment for young people who engage in bullying, and anti-social behaviour. Proposals championed by Boris Johnson as Mayor of London to introduce 'boot camps' in the place of summer holidays should be piloted for the worst offenders. Police should actively refer and recommend this option to schools when they are dealing with young people outside of school.

Where are the police?

Fixed penalty clean up orders

I mean, one of the companies that I've worked for installed CCTV which prevented antisocial behaviour and also crimes, including littering. They noticed a drastic drop in littering. And they noticed a drastic drop in the need to clean these areas...But I think we need more lot of enforcement as well, now that we don't see many police on the street whatsoever.

Ben, Loyal National, 22, Blyth

Clean up should not simply be the job of the council, instead young people should be made to directly address the consequences of their actions. A new type of fixed penalty notice should be created which gives the police, teachers and local council officers the ability to mandate those who take part in anti-social behaviour to clean up their mess. Clean up activity need not necessarily be directly to the specific act of anti-social behaviour with young people given other clean up jobs instead. Much in the same way that driving awareness courses are offered as an alternative to license points, those who refuse to partake in clean-up activities should be fined or prosecuted through the criminal justice system.

Better youth provision

There are gangs of young lads, they've got nowhere to go so they'll just hang around the Co-op outside and you never see police walking around to sort of move them on or anything. That's an issue because they don't have anywhere to go anymore, do they? If they're shutting down all the community centres down, what are they supposed to do?

Denise, Loyal National, 63, Leeds

Most Britons recognise that much of what constitutes anti-social behaviour is driven by opportunism and boredom. There seems to be little doubt that a failure by local authorities to maintain adequate youth services (in turn necessitated by reduced budgets from central government) has left young people, particularly the most disadvantaged who cannot afford extra-curricular activities or the latest technology with little to do. While schemes like NCS do a fantastic job at community integration, there needs to be greater investment in activities that keep young people engaged on a regular basis at the local level.

Where are the police?

Better training and support for the police to deal with mental health emergencies

One big thing that I hear is that there is a really poor mental health services that aren't being touched by the government. There's no real core grasp on trying to improve them, which is really worrying for young people and just people in general. It would be good to see if the government would just try and improve mental health services in a good way to help everyone.

Liam, Disengaged Battler, 28, Oldham

A significant amount of police time is spent dealing with behaviour or crimes incited by mental health emergencies. The public thinks that the police need more co-operation from mental health services and greater resource for those services so that police can adequately refer those in need for support. At the prevention end of the spectrum the government should make good on its commitment to ensure the parity of treatment between mental and physical health to ensure that fewer people end up in the desperate situations where their mental health results in anti-social behaviour or criminal activity.

Conclusion

Crime and anti-social behaviour blight the lives of millions of people across the country. But more than ever the public lack confidence that anything is going to be done about it. A culture of 'law enforcement as process' has led to a situation where across whole swathes of offences victims think that little to nothing will happen if they report it. This is damaging cohesion, contributing to community decline, and exacerbating feelings of neglect and having been left behind – particularly in our most deprived communities.

The good news, however, is that the public think there is a way out of our current failure to deal with crime, through new approaches to crime and criminal justice. What unites the policies that public want to see to tackle crime is that they are not ideological - the solutions which command support could not be described as Tory or Labour, progressive or conservative, liberal, or authoritarian. Instead, the public want action at every level, to prevent crime and offer alternative avenues to criminal behaviour, to punish those involved and to give the police the space they need to do their jobs well.

Some of these suggestions simply require an application of common sense, some will require new investment and others a sea change in how we approach crime and policing. But driven by proper leadership from politicians, a joined-up approach across our public services and visible community policing it is possible to rebuild confidence in our ability to tackle crime. As this report shows, crime and anti-social behaviour pose very real threats to individuals, communities, and our whole societal fabric. We should not be afraid of being bold in our solutions to tackling it.

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Annex A

Methodological Information

The polling cited in this report came from several polls conducted by Public First and YouGov since 2020. The primary polls used are:

- More in Common – Public First (Fieldwork 17th – 23rd November 2021), N= 2,007
- More in Common – Public First (Fieldwork 27th May – 1st June 2022), N = 2,000
- More in Common – Public First (Fieldwork 21st –26th July 2022), N= 2,686
- More in Common – Public First (Fieldwork 2nd – 5th December 2022), N = 2,001

Details of other polls available on request.

The qualitative research in the report was carried out between 2020 and 2022. Participants were screened using the British Seven segmentation survey. Recruitment was carried out by the independent research recruitment agency (CRD) and moderated by More in Common's researchers.

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Annex B: British Seven Segments

In 2020, More in Common introduced a new model to better understand the British public and identify areas of common ground for navigating polarising issues. The segmentation draws from six areas of social psychology to map Britons according to their values and core beliefs rather than reliance on demographic characteristics:

- **Group identity and tribalism:** the extent to which people identify with different groups based on nationality, gender, political party, ethnicity, and other factors
- **Group favouritism:** views on who is favoured and who is mistreated in society
- **Threat perception:** the extent to which people see the world as a dangerous place
- **Parenting styles:** research suggests that basic philosophies regarding people's approach to parenting can have predictive power in explaining their attitudes towards public policies and authority more generally
- **Moral Foundations:** the extent to which people endorse certain moral values or 'foundations', including fairness, care, purity, authority, and loyalty
- **Personal agency:** the extent to which people view personal success as the product of individual factors (i.e., hard work and discipline) versus societal factors (i.e., luck and circumstance)

This mapping identified seven distinct groups we call the 'British Seven'. These segments are often more useful for understanding people's views and starting points than standard ways of categorising people such as demographics or voting intention. The values-based segmentation moves upstream to look not only at the public's attitudes to specific issues, but what drives and shapes those attitudes. Understanding the psychology of different segments allows us to better identify their starting points on a range of issues and how best to approach difficult subjects.



Progressive Activists

A passionate and vocal group for whom politics is at the core of their identity, and who seek to correct the historic marginalisation of groups based on their race, gender, sexuality, wealth, and other forms of privilege. They are politically engaged, critical, opinionated, frustrated, cosmopolitan, and environmentally conscious.

Progressive Activists are often outliers on values – unlike other groups, they primarily see the world through the moral foundations of care and fairness and have much lower reliance on the moral foundations of purity, loyalty and authority. Compared to other groups, Progressive Activists feel less threatened in the world and in their community. They consider that outcomes in life to be more defined by social forces and less by personal responsibility. Although they are a higher-earning segment, many of them consider this to be down to good luck than individual effort. They have the lowest authoritarian tendencies of any group.

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Starting point on crime

Progressive Activists are driven to fight for social justice and their attitude to crime and criminal justice is no exception. Progressive Activists think the way we deal with crime needs to be changed from the top down. They are the most likely to view the police as corrupt and racist, and most likely to think that issues like corporate crime, rape and sexual assault are not being taken seriously enough. They are least likely to view crime as a choice, and as a result, have the most relaxed attitudes towards drug use. They are also the only segment to think shoplifting is acceptable if it is the only way to feed your family. They also stand out as the strongest supporters of rehabilitative approaches to dealing with crime and punishment. While they are the most likely to say they have personally witnessed or been a victim of crime, they generally feel safe where they live.



Civic Pragmatists

A group that cares about others, at home or abroad, and who are turned off by the divisiveness of politics. They are charitable, concerned, community-minded, open to compromise and socially liberal. Civic Pragmatists have a similar values foundation to the Progressive Activist group in prioritising care and fairness, but they channel their energies into community and voluntary work, rather than political activism. They are also set apart from Progressive Activists (and some of the other segments) by their higher-than-average levels of threat perception.

Starting point on crime

Civic Pragmatists start from a position of compassion and fair play. Their instincts on the police are less cynical than Progressive Activists as they take into account the challenges and pressures of policing as well as the mistakes that can be made. They are more likely than other segments to believe that the police generally get it right, but also believe the police need to be held more accountable for bad behaviour. They are second-most likely, after Loyal Nationals, to think that anti-social behaviour is not being taken seriously enough by police, but they are less likely to think it is a serious crime. They are also most likely to think that civil disobedience is not a serious crime. While they are more likely to avoid travelling late at night, they feel their local areas are generally safe.



Disengaged Battlers

A group that feels that they are just about keeping their heads above water and who believe their struggles are the result of an unfair, rigged system. They are insecure, disillusioned, disconnected, overlooked but also tolerant and socially liberal. They are a low-trust group with a tendency to ignore civic messaging (they are joint most likely to have not been vaccinated

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for Covid-19). Their overarching sense that the system is broken drives their disengagement from their communities and the broader democratic system with which they see 'no point' in engaging.

Starting point on crime

Disengaged Battlers views on crime and punishment are less driven by their politics, but more by their reality. They are more likely to view crime as a result of circumstance and less likely to think it is unacceptable to shoplift if it is the only way to feed your family. They also hold some of the lowest trust in police officers generally. More than any other segment, Disengaged Battlers' views on crime are shaped by their first-hand experiences, rather than a general perception. They are the segment least likely to feel safe walking around in their local area, and the least likely to trust the people who live in their area.



Established Liberals

A group that has done well with an optimistic outlook that sees a lot of good in the status quo. They are comfortable, among the more privileged, cosmopolitan, trusting, liberal, confident and pro-market. They have low authoritarian tendencies and the lowest threat perception of any segment – which is reflected in their broad support for diversity, multi-culturalism, and sense that their local community is neither dangerous nor neglected.

Starting point on crime

Established Liberals' optimistic outlook on life means they are the least likely to think that there are deep set societal problems. They rarely feel like they are in danger and do not think their local areas are particularly affected by crimes. Their faith that the system generally works quite well means they are the least likely to think the police are doing a bad job and most likely to think the police generally get it right. While their low threat perception tends to mean they lean left on many social issues, their beliefs on personal responsibility mean that on crime, they are less likely to be sympathetic to structural causes of crime. Most view crime as a choice and see shoplifting as unacceptable, even in desperate times.



Loyal Nationals

A group that is anxious about the threats facing Britain and themselves. They are proud, patriotic, tribal, protective, threatened, aggrieved and frustrated about the gap between the haves and the have-nots. They feel the 'care' and 'fairness' moral foundations more strongly than other groups. Their key orientation is that of group identity – belonging to a group (and particularly their nation) is important to Loyal Nationals. This strong in-group identity shapes

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their equally strong feelings of threat from outsiders. This in turn can drive their support for more authoritarian, populist leadership.

Starting point on crime

Loyal Nationals high threat perception and premium on the loyalty and authority foundations strongly shape how they view issues of crime. On every crime tested, Loyal Nationals were most likely to say it was a problem in their local area. They are also most likely to have taken actions in response to the threat of crime – such as moving house because they no longer felt safe. While they do care about wider systemic issues such as police misconduct and accountability, issues of safety are paramount and take priority. Because of this, they are certain the police are still needed to protect them and to protect their towns. They are also the most likely to believe that the police today are more interested in being woke than solving crimes.



Disengaged Traditionalists

A group that values a well-ordered society, takes pride in hard work and wants strong leadership that keeps people in line. They are self-reliant, ordered, patriotic, tough-minded, suspicious, and disconnected. They place a strong emphasis on personal responsibility, are mindful of others' behaviour and rely much more on individual rather than systemic explanations for how people's lives turn out. When they think about social and political debates, they often consider issues through a lens of suspicion towards others. They value the observance of social rules, order, and a British way of doing things, but don't play an active role in their communities – they are the least likely to eat out, visit museums or go to local libraries. They often have views on issues but tend to pay limited attention to current debates. Disengaged Traditionalists are similar to Loyal Nationals in their more authoritarian predisposition.

Starting point on crime

Disengaged Traditionalists approach crime through the lens of order. They believe in rules and discipline and see a need for the police in maintaining the ordered society which is important to them. They are more likely than any other segment to say crime is one of the most important issues facing the country. Their individualistic nature means they are more likely to see committing crime as a choice and that they are less convinced there are systemic problems such as corruption or racism within the police force. But their tendency towards individualism also means they do not fully trust the criminal justice system either.

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Backbone Conservatives

A group who are proud of their country, optimistic about Britain's future outside of Europe, and who keenly follow the news, mostly via traditional media sources. They are nostalgic, patriotic, stalwart, proud, secure, confident, and relatively engaged with politics. They want clear rules and strong leaders and rely heavily on individual explanations for how life turns out, with this shaping how they respond to questions about deprivation and discrimination in society.

Starting point on crime

Backbone Conservatives have similar views on law and order as Disengaged Traditionalists, but they are more ideological. Their strong 'authority' and 'loyalty' foundations means their faith in the police remains unshaken even in the face of controversy. Of all segments, Backbone Conservatives, by far, place the highest trust in police officers. However, a large majority feel the police have given up on crimes like shoplifting and burglaries and they are among the most likely to blame police concerns about political correctness for rising crime.