

CRIME

Introduction

Crime levels are a key factor in determining local quality of life. Crime costs the community money, reinforces social exclusion and speeds up the environmental decline of neighbourhoods. If people are worried about crime it can have a negative effect on their behaviour, for example making them reluctant to go out at night. The fear of crime can often be greater than the reality, however, and in Hertfordshire the chances of becoming a victim of crime are lower than in most parts of the country.

Indicator CR1: Recorded Crime per 1,000 Population

Using Hertfordshire Constabulary National Performance Indicator figures, it is possible to show the total number of reported crimes per 1,000 population. As this indicator uses population data, and population is always changing, it will be revised to take account of the Registrar mid-season update.

Year	Crimes per 1,000 pop'n
1996-1997	60.20
1997-1998	56.20
1998-1999	56.85
1999-2000	59.88

During 1999-2000, Hertfordshire remained one of the safest counties in the country, despite a 7% increase in total crime. The county had the lowest level of violent crime in England and Wales, and the third lowest level of overall crime. Crimes of public concern continued to fall during this period. The rate of home burglary was 21% lower than it had been three years previously, and over 800 fewer offences of either breaking into cars or stealing were reported. There was an increase in robberies during this period – mainly involving young offenders and young victims. A rise in reports of racial crime and domestic violence was experienced, perhaps as a result of the Constabulary actively encouraging victims of such crimes to report them.

A change in boundaries with the Metropolitan Police means that since April 2000, Hertfordshire Constabulary has policed the entire county. This boundary change increased the area served by the Constabulary by almost a fifth, with the new areas including Hertsmere and Broxbourne. The impact of this increased area on crime levels has yet to be seen.