

NPoCC SIB Public Safety Events Threat Assessment

15 June – 19 July 2023

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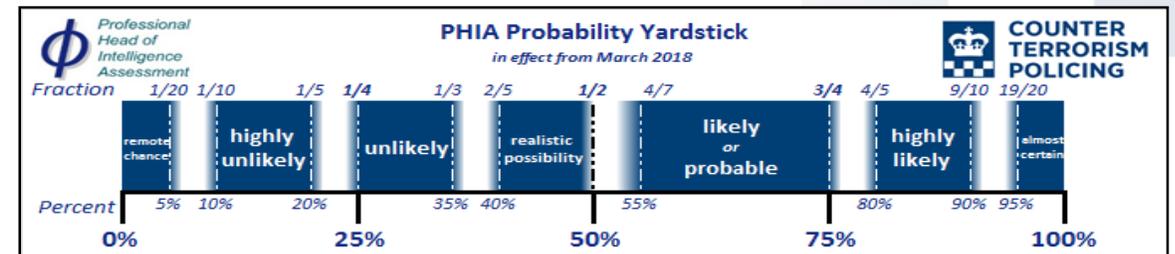
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Purpose

- The purpose of this document is to proportionately and lawfully share information to inform UK policing and law enforcement stakeholders:
 - To assist them with the development of assessments and event planning in line with policing's core duties.
 - To prevent and detect crime.
 - To keep the peace and to protect life and property.
- This product provides an assessment of current and emerging trends in the events space, including festivals, arena tours, sporting events and other large or crowded licensed events.
- The product will provide a forward look on factors that may have an impact on risk and threat for public safety.
- The products will be produced on a monthly basis.
- Please contact NPoCCMailbox-.SIB-Events@met.police.uk with questions or feedback.

Contents

National Assessment	Page 3
Dashboard	Page 4
Forecasting	Page 5
Sexual Offences and VAWG	Page 6
Substance Misuse	Page 7
Theft from Person	Page 8
Behaviour, Public Order, Assaults	Page 9
Protest	page 10



National Assessment

NPoCC SIB received updates on 59 events for the period of 15 June to 19 July 2023, across 20 police forces. This includes music concerts and festivals, sporting events and other public safety events such as LGBTQI+ Pride parades. The commencement of the outdoor music concert and festival season has led to increased reporting on safeguarding issues and criminality associated with these spaces. These relate to a range of issues from assaults and public order, to thefts and sexual offences. It is **highly likely** reporting of crime, safety and safeguarding incidents will increase in the short term due to the festival and summer season presenting greater opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour.

The behaviour of attendees at events continued to be reported as causing issues, with incidents of assaults, disorder and anti-social behaviour. At times this has affected staff safety and welfare as well as that of attendees. Excessive consumption of alcohol and drug use is **highly likely** to be a frequent contributory factor and it is **highly likely** there will be further reports of criminality, behaviour and welfare problems linked to excessive alcohol consumption.

Sexual incidents and sexual assaults have been reported at some events, including inappropriate touching, harassment, and two reports of rape. The close crowd dynamics and vulnerability linked to age and intoxication/illegal drug use of attendees are **likely** to be used to facilitate some forms of inappropriate behaviour. There has also been a small number of reports regarding 'spiking'. The issue of 'spiking' has been raised in the media again, regarding an incident at a festival where it was perceived that the victim was spiked through sharing a vape. While this raised concerns regarding new potential methods to spike victims, no further reports of this method have been noted.

Reports of theft came from a range of events, with most relating to mobile phones taken from tents and people at festivals. The crowd dynamics and opportunities presented at camp sites to gain access to unattended items are **likely** to attract organised theft teams, as well as opportunistic offenders. Reporting this period also highlighted thefts from vehicles at a number of festival events, of note was a small number of incidents which gained mainstream media coverage, including the theft of car parts from vehicles parked within festival parking zones. It is **highly likely** that criminals will take advantage of the lack of security opportunities in these areas.

Misuse of illegal drugs and drug dealing continued to be extensively reported at music events and festivals, this included a range of class A and B drugs found on persons within the event footprints. It is **almost certain** drug use within this setting will continue throughout the summer period, with this **likely** to continue to present a significant challenge for security at venues to prevent opportunities for those intent on using and selling drugs on site. Drug use is also **likely** to continue to present a persistent risk in terms of safeguarding, three reports this period related to hospital treatment for drug misuse.

Protest at cultural and sporting events increased this period with a range of events targeted by environmental and animal rights protesters. These actions continue to gain traction both in national media and on social media platforms. Actions of note include continued stunts by environment group Just Stop Oil (JSO) reported at five different public events: three pitch/court invasions, incursions at a music performance and live comedy set, as well as a sit-down protest during London's LGBTQI+ Pride Parade. Animal rights groups also continued protests at events deemed to exploit animals for entertainment, with a low impact disruption at the Towcester dog races. There is a **realistic possibility** of the risk of protest at future sporting or cultural events, particularly those with a live televised feed, high recognition or significance, or controversial sponsorship.

Other incidents raised through this period have included illegal drone use, scams and fraudulent tickets, robbery, and traffic issues. However there are no discernible trends or headlines of note in these areas of activity.



Thousands gather to watch Elton John's headline set at the Glastonbury Festival. (Image: BBC News) <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/whats-on/music-nightlife/glastonbury-2024-pyramid-stage-odds-8611842>.



Animal Rights Activists at Towcester Races <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-northamptonshire-66076031>



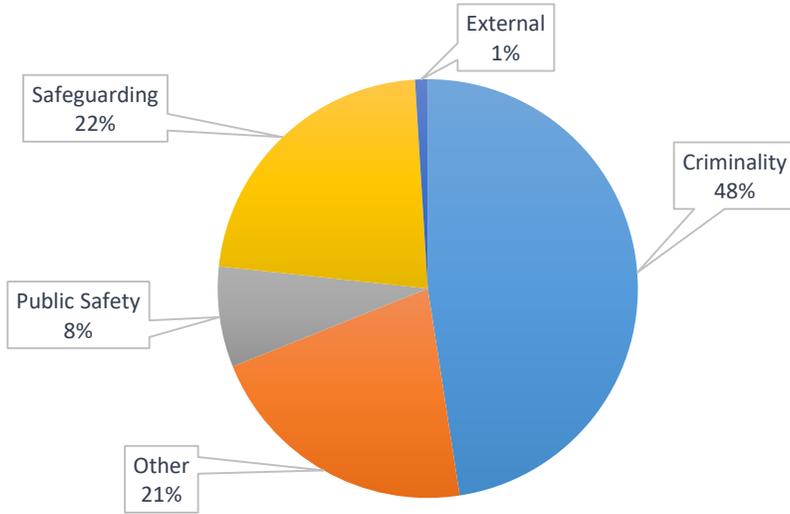
London Pride: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/pride-london-2023-parade-time-route-latest-b2367673.html>



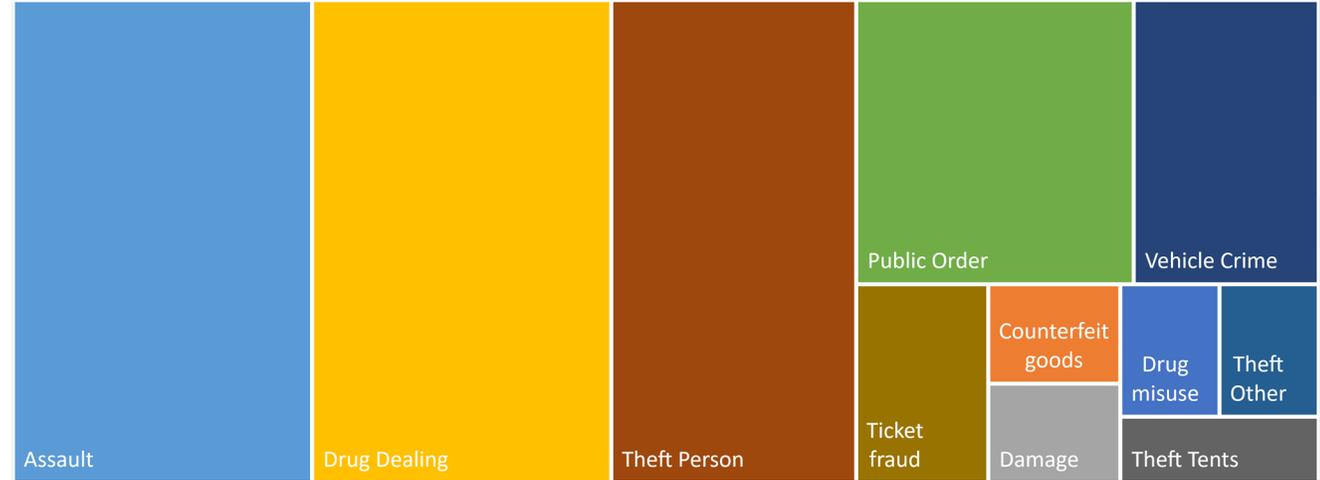
Police reveal arrest numbers at Muse gig in Bellahouston Park. (Image: Police Scotland)

Muse Concert Scotland: <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/23611959.police-reveal-arrest-numbers-muse-gig-glasgow/>

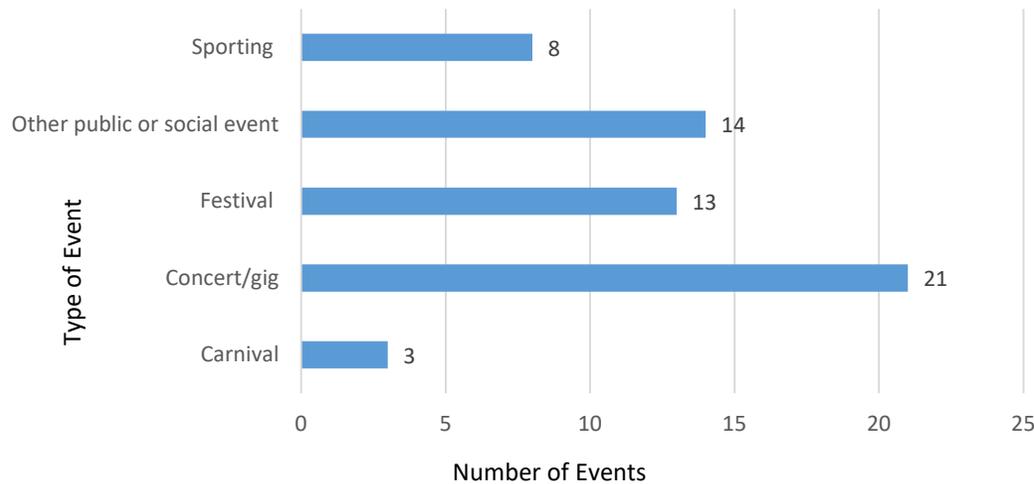
Incident Type Distribution



Criminality Reports by Offence Type (Criminality represented almost 50% of incident reporting)



Event Type - 15/06/2023 - 19/07/2023



This reporting period included a significant number of outdoor music and sporting events, with an increase in associated incidents being reported. **Criminality at events has continued to be the highest reported incident type.** The list of crime types has expanded to cover criminality likely to be seen more in a festival environment, for example theft from tents and vehicle crimes. This is in addition to an increase in the reporting of drug dealing at outdoor festivals. Behaviour of attendees resulting in public order and assault offences was widely reported, a number of which were directed towards site security/staff. Others were reported to be unprovoked, linked to excessive consumption of alcohol and/or drug use. It is **highly likely** this type of behaviour will continue. Mobile phones and bank cards continued to be the most common items reported as stolen, through pickpocketing methods as well as abstraction from vehicles and tents.

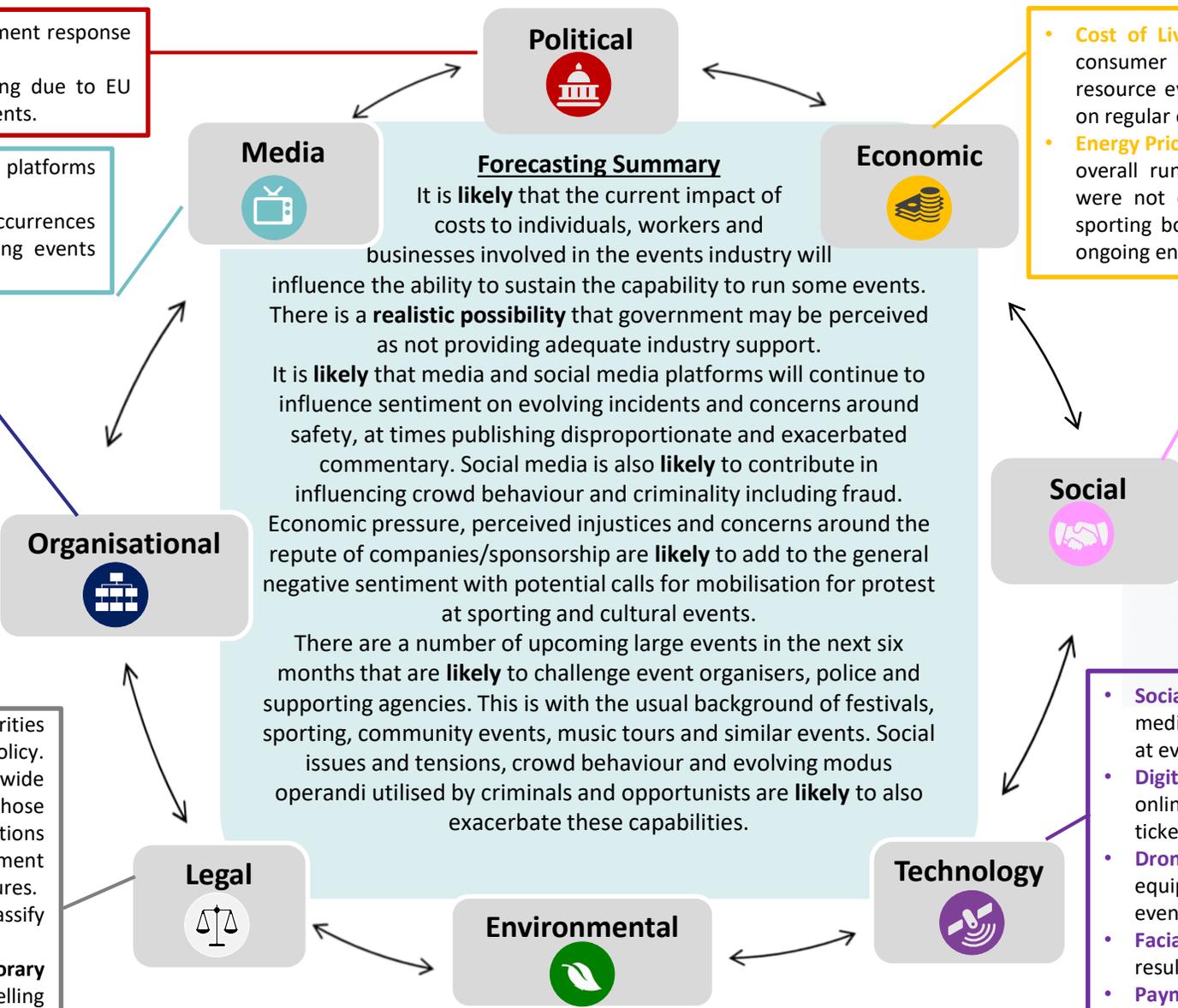
Safeguarding issues continued to be reported across a range of event types, with music events targeting younger demographics accounting for the highest number of sexual incidents and drug misuse. Incidents of perceived 'spiking' were reported at seven events. The victim demographic of these continues to be predominantly female, with a small number of spiking incidents also linking to sexual incidents. It is **likely** reports of alleged spikings will continue at the current level, in line with the frequency of those festival and music events appearing to offer environments more conducive to offending.

- **Geo-politics:** Perceived disparity in the Government response to the event industry during Covid-19.
- **EU Exit:** The challenges of industry and touring due to EU legislation. Wider impact of staffing at larger events.

- **Sensationalism:** Media and social media platforms exacerbating extent of disorder at events.
- **Significant Incidents:** Traction of significant occurrences around events such as the protests at sporting events gaining national/international media coverage.

- **Police priorities:** Competing demands on police resources to support large/high risk events.
- **Industry Staffing:** Shortages and lack of experienced staff working in the events industry.
- **Sponsorship and Partnerships:** Perception of negative repute of a company, organisation or event involved in partnering/sponsoring an event influencing the likelihood of protest.
- **Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs):** Inconsistencies across the country in decisions made at SAGs.

- **2010 Equality Act:** Sporting bodies/authorities interpretation when constructing transgender policy.
- **Protect Duty (Martyn's law):** Pending UK wide legislation that will place a requirement on those responsible for certain publicly accessible locations to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.
- **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971:** Proposal to classify nitrous oxide as a class C drug under the act.
- **Permitted development right for temporary recreational campsites** – Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities have proposed additional rights around recreational campsites.
- **Drug Testing Licence** – requirement for drug testing providers of controlled drugs to have licence



- **Cost of Living:** Cost of living influencing ticket sales and consumer choices. Ability of organisers and venues to resource events due to rising cost of commodities. Impact on regular earnings and equipment costs for performers.
- **Energy Prices:** Increasing costs of energy prices effecting the overall running of events. Venues and linked businesses were not covered by the energy price cap. Coalition of sporting bodies have written to the UK PM regarding the ongoing energy crisis.

- **Large events:** Seasonal sporting and festival events during the summer period.
- **Social and community issues:** Narrative on violence against women and girls at events and the night time economy.
- **Behaviour:** Deterioration of crowd behaviour. Trends in throwing items at performers and on stage.
- **Community tensions:** Impact of events in communities including noise, littering and behaviour of attendees.

- **Social Media:** Influencers/celebrities utilising social media platforms to encourage behaviour and activity at events.
- **Digital Opportunities:** Prospects of fraud through online marketplaces and social media selling event tickets.
- **Drones:** The availability of cheaper and better equipment for reconnaissance and live streaming of events of interest.
- **Facial recognition:** Use of AI technology by police resulting in conflict with human rights groups.
- **Payment Technology:** Advancement and use of biometric/contactless payment options. Use of card readers for drug dealing at events.

- **Favourable weather:** Outdoor events with favourable weather achieving greater capacity, as well as lighter evening for night time events.
- **Green priorities:** Development of green and sustainability policies at event venues and festival sites. This includes recycling and biofuel schemes.

National Assessment

Sexual offences and spiking incidents were reported at seven different events. These mainly took place at outdoor festival and concert settings, which increase both in numbers and as a proportion of events over the summer period. Incident types including sexual touching, harassment, as well as two reports of rape. Reported offending is **likely** to be facilitated by the close crowd dynamics in the festival/concert setting providing non-consensual opportunity for offenders to inappropriately touch victims. Offenders are also **likely** to exploit vulnerability of age and intoxication/illegal drug use by attendees to facilitate their behaviour, two reports of spiking at a festival included an alleged sexual offence.

Reports of spiking continue to be reported at outdoor music and festivals. Spiking is giving alcohol or drugs to someone without their knowledge or agreement. Potential spiking incidents were reported at festivals in across three force areas. The issue of spiking achieved national media coverage with an incident reported of a female spiked at a festival through using an offered vape. While there has been no further reporting of this MO this reporting period, there is a **realistic possibility** further reports will be received over the summer, aided by increased awareness of the potential spiking risk by this MO and the traction in media and social media platforms as a 'worrying new trend'.

Incidents of Note

- **June: Music Festival (South of England):** One report of a female alleging her vape had been spiked. Site medics treated the female who was in and out of consciousness and conveyed to a medical centre.
- **June: Music Festival (South of England):** Eight reports of sexual incidents were reported, plus two spiking incidents with reference to a sexual assault, and an additional six reports of alleged spiking.
- **July: Music Festival (North of England):** One report of a female sexually assaulted within the festival grounds, dealt with by security with the suspect being ejected, male arrested outside the venue by police.
- **July: Music Concert (North of England):** Victim has consumed alcohol brought at the concert and has felt unwell and had to be taken home. Victims symptoms have led her to believe her drink was spiked.
- **July: Music Concert (Northern England):** One report of an alleged spiking incident. Victim has consumed water passed through the crowd from the front of the stage. The victim has collapsed and been taken to hospital for treatment.
- **July: Sporting Event (Eastern England):** Two reports of sexual incidents, including a sexual assault and a rape.



ARREST MADE AFTER ALLEGED VAPE SPIKING AT ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL

News article on suspected vape spiking
<https://www.islandecho.co.uk/arrest-made-after-alleged-vape-spiking-at-isle-of-wight-festival/>

Forward Look

It is **likely** a small minority of people will continue to seek opportunities for sexual offending at outdoor event locations, including music festivals and concerts.

There is a **realistic possibility** that sex offenders will attempt to infiltrate events through staffing and positions of trust to gain access to vulnerable persons, particularly where it is evident there are a lack of background checks.

It is also **likely** there will be a short-term increase of reporting of sexual incidents / offences and spiking offences over the summer period. This is **likely** to reflect both more overall incidents (from more events) and improved reporting from trust and confidence gained by experienced welfare teams engaged at events. Police / industry campaigns are also employed to support victims and to educate all involved around inappropriate behaviour and responses.

National Assessment

Illegal drugs and the means used to smuggle prohibited substances into the event location, particularly outdoor music festivals, has been reported at events across the UK. At least seven events reported some level of drug use, drug amnesty surrenders, or arrests for possession with intent to supply. It is **highly likely** drug use and dealing will continue to present a significant issue for event security, as organisers are faced with increasingly diverse ways and means to convey drugs into events.

In line with previous reporting, a minority of attendees continue to attempt (or succeed) in bringing in drugs, for personal use. The use of ‘amnesty bins’ at events has continued to be reported at a minority of events with indication this has helped to mitigate some of the risk, with persons using these to avoid the consequences of being caught with the illegal substances or prohibited items. Reports from different events highlighted illegal substances such as MDMA pills, magic mushrooms and LSD being recovered in the bins.

Due to the high demand for illegal drugs, the financial gain of supplying at festivals is **likely** to be perceived to outweigh the risk from law enforcement or security for a proportion of dealers. At least 22 arrests were recorded linked to Possession With Intent to Supply (PWITS), with a greater number linked to possession for personal use. Suspicious activities were also highlighted believed to be linked to drug dealing at events. These included use of card readers, lone persons walking around campgrounds during key times, unoccupied or infrequently used tents and the handing out of business cards to enable drug dealers to be contacted during the event.

Incidents of Note

- **June: Music Festival (South of England):** A number of reports relate to possession of MDMA, Cannabis, Ketamine and nitrous Oxide canisters. Four arrests recorded linked to possession of drugs. Also of note was a report of site crew dealing cocaine on site, male suspect ejected from the site and searched.
- **June: Music Festival (Southern England):** One male arrested for possession of a class B controlled drug. No further drug related instances reported.
- **June: Music Festival (South of England)** There were 57 reports of substance misuse, of which one report was alcohol and the remaining reports linked to class A and B drug use and dealing. There were a total of 26 arrests of which 14 were for possession with intent to supply.
- **July: Day Music Festival (South of England):** Reports of five persons found in possession of controlled drugs.
- **July: Pride Parade (South of England):** Reports indicate three persons were treated for drug misuse from within the event footprint.
- **July: Music Festival (North of England):** Report received from security that 2 males were dealing in the venue and using a card reader to process transactions, the 2 males were searched and although no drugs were recovered they did have a portable card reader which they stated was used for work.
- **July: Music Festival (Eastern England):** One report of a male arrested within the festival site for dealing drugs. Also of note was a female taken to hospital after suffering a cardiac arrest, the woman is suspected to have taken an unknown substance leading to her medical episode.

Forward Look

Safeguarding risks relating to drug and excessive alcohol usage are **highly likely** to continue at outdoor music concerts and festivals over the summer period. Drug dealing is **highly likely** to continue, with the **realistic possibility** that some dealing will be linked to OCGs.

Known tactics such as attempting to pre-hide drugs on the site to evade later searches and infiltration into event or concession staff to facilitate drug dealing remain a **realistic possibility**.

National Assessment

Reported theft offences have significantly increased at music events and festivals over the period, the majority of which continue to be theft of mobile phones and other personal items such as bank cards and money. Thefts took place in the North and Eastern of England. The music genre of the events ranged from metal to punk to electric dance music (EDM). This in addition to two reports of thefts taking place at sporting events. The events all had the common characteristics of close crowd dynamics, as well as opportunities to steal items concealed in unoccupied tents, with potential offenders blending in with the normal comings and goings of the event. It is **highly likely** festivals and outdoor music events will continue to be targeted over the summer period. Thefts from motor vehicles was also reported this period, with incidents where large car parts had been removed from vehicles parked on site. A number of these reports have gained mainstream media coverage. Large multi-day festivals which have secluded parking areas potentially provide lucrative opportunities for car crime groups. There is a **realistic possibility** this will cause concern for festival goers over the security of their vehicles at events, as well as causing reputational damage to events where such crimes have taken place.

Incidents of Note

- **June: Music Festival (South of England):** Two persons were detained after a stolen bag was traced back to their tent using Airtag. They were working as cleaners on site.
- **June: Sporting Event (North of England):** One report of alleged theft of a mobile phone by unknown person. Device lost in venue and later located outside the venue through phone tracking, with no attempts made to locate owner.
- **June: Music Festival (South of England):** There were 10 reports of theft from person and 25 reports of thefts from tents recorded. Circumstances around tent thefts were predominantly during the early hours of the morning, as well as during peak times of headliner performances. Also of note two instances of theft of ticket books from stalls and a security jacket taken. A total of three arrests were made.
- Eight reports of vehicles thefts were also reported at the festival, of note was the theft of car doors from a vehicle parked within festival car park.
- **July: Sporting Event (Eastern England):** One report of theft of Bank cards, with no suspect identified, also of note was one report of theft of sporting equipment from onsite.

Future Look

It is **highly likely** the trend of stolen phones will continue into the summer festival season where crowd dynamics are conducive to undetected theft.

It is **highly likely** those intent on theft will use pre-planned tactics to evade crime prevention measures used by security at locations. It is **likely** organised theft groups of three to five members will attend some events. Previous reporting has detailed the members of such groups performing specific roles in the theft process and the numbers allowing some operational resilience if any are ejected or arrested.



<https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/blokes-music-festival-horror-after-30497369>

CRIME 'Car cannibals' behind Land Rover door thefts at Glastonbury Festival



One festivalgoer found that thieves had stolen the doors on his family's Land Rover Defender

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/car-cannibals-behind-land-rover-door-thefts-at-glastonbury-festival-fsqbczqvq>

National Assessment

Behaviour that leads to disruption, distress or criminality has been reported across at least 19 different events. NPoCC were informed of incidents of anti-social and violent behaviour at music, sporting and community events during the period. Police and industry have highlighted a number of incidents which have resulted in the ejecting of persons from the venue for safety of all. There have been several reports of security / site staff and police officers being assaulted in the course of their duties. This has been the case in a small number of reports where suspects were due to be ejected, searched or arrested. This has a **realistic possibility** on occasions of raising concerns for crowd and staff safety and also leading to negative reputation for specific artist events.

Also of note this period was the widespread media reporting of re-emerging trend of throwing items at performers during sets. Greater awareness was brought to incidents as performers have spoken out about the impact this behaviour has on the safety of artists. A small number of incidents have been reported in the media to have resulted in minor injuries. While it is **likely** the majority of incidents are not intended to cause harm to performers, there is a **realistic possibility** the perception of engaging directly with artists when items are thrown on stage may contribute to the increase in this trend.

Incidents of Note

- **June: Music Festival (South of England):** 26 reports of assault in and around the festival grounds, including common assault and battery, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, common assault and battery. Eight reports were of security staff being assaulted attempting to detain suspects / festival goers. This is addition to three reports of domestic disturbances within the festival.
- **June: Music Concert (Northern England):** Two reports of assault, including one assault causing ABH injuries when a customer was punched in the face resulting in one arrest and a second assault with an unknown object causing no injury.
- **June: Music Concert (Scotland)** Five persons were detained for public order offences at a Muse concert. No further details known.
- **June: Music Festival (South of England):** Nine reports including eight assaults, one breach of a RSO resulting in 10 arrests.
- **June: Music Concert (Northern England):** One report of assault when an unknown male threw a cup of beer in a victims face causing no injury.
- **July: Music Concert (West Yorkshire)** One report of criminal damage when a concert attendee smashed a shop window by punching it.
- **July: Sporting Event (Northern England):** One report of assault towards bar staff when suspect became agitated. Suspect threw a pint over victim causing no injury.
- **July: Sporting Event (Eastern England):** A total of 12 arrests were made including a number of common assault offences, drunk and disorderly and affray.

Adele warns fans about throwing items on stage

The singer was performing at her Weekends with Adele concert in Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, and was seen armed with a t-shirt cannon as she warned fans about throwing items on stage at concerts.

© Wednesday 5 July 2023 09:58, UK

Article Source: <https://news.sky.com/story/adele-warns-fans-about-throwing-items-on-stage-12915130>.

Forward Look

It is **highly likely** that disruptive behaviour of attendees will continue at many events. It is **highly likely** that some behaviour will be fuelled by excessive alcohol and /or drug consumption.

It is **likely** in the course of their duties a minority of staff will experience abuse and assaults from such behaviour. There is a **realistic possibility** of incidents being recorded and uploaded to social media platforms, with negative traction if an incident is perceived as not dealt with by staff and/or police appropriately.

National Assessment

It is **likely** sporting and cultural events of significance will continue to be targeted by protest groups over the next period. Based on a review of seasonal trends from 2022 and 2023 and current intelligence, the greatest threat of disruption continues to be from groups linked to Environmentalism, Animal Rights and Internationally Inspired protest.

Just Stop Oil (JSO) continued to conduct protest stunts at events likely to gain significant media coverage. JSO are reported to have targeted five separate events this period: two sporting events, a televised comedy talk show, the London Pride Parade and a Proms musical performance at the Royal Albert Hall. All actions involved a small number of protesters utilising low sophistication tactics to cause short term disruption. It is **likely** that JSO will continue to disrupt significant sporting and cultural events in the short-term to raise awareness for their cause. While the majority have caused short term disruption, the actions have **likely** raised the profile of the group and their aims, with continued mainstream media reporting on event disruptions.

- Just Stop Oil protesters targeted the Proms at the Royal Albert Hall on 14/07/2023, two protesters brandishing banners caused short term disruption to the performance which was managed internally by security with no arrests made.
- On the same day JSO protesters made it onto the set of 'The Last Leg' which was being televised live. Two protesters threw confetti and engaged with presenters before exiting the stage.
- On 01/07/2023 a small group of JSO protesters engaged in a sit down protest during the London LGBTQI+ pride parade, causing a short term halt to the parade as the group blocked the Coca Cola float.
- JSO protesters engaged in two separate court invasions in the first week of Wimbledon tournaments, three Just Stop Oil (JSO) supporters invaded Court 18 in two separate protests and threw orange-coloured confetti and jigsaw puzzle pieces onto court.
- On 28/06/2023 three JSO protesters made it on to the pitch at the England vs Australia Lords test ashes. Short term disruption was caused by two protesters throwing orange powder onto the pitch.
- Animal rights group Animal Rising (AR) continued their campaign against animal based sporting events with an attempt to disrupt the final of the Towcester Dog races. Pre-event, AR protesters scaled a display screen onsite using at-height superglue lock-ons. A small number of arrests were made, with minimal disruption reported causing a slight delay to the start of the races. It is believed the group has taken a pause in action for the near future in light of upcoming court trials. It is **unlikely** animal-based sporting or showcasing events will be targeted by the group during this period, with a **realistic possibility** of action afterwards.



29 June 2023– JSO protest at Lords ashes test match
Image source –
<https://news.sky.com/story/just-stop-oil-protesters-charged-with-trespass-after-disrupting-ashes-test-12911878>



5 July 2023 – JSO protest at the first week of Wimbledon Tennis Tournament. Image source:
<https://www.malvern gazette.co.uk/news/national/23644781.wimbledon-organisers-very-disappointed-protest-disruption-first-week/>



Stop Oil protesters stopped the Pride London parade by spraying the road and sitting in front of a Coca-Cola float. Photograph: Avpics/Alamy Live News/Alamy Live News.

1 July 2023 –JSO Sit down protest during London Pride Parade Image source:
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jul/01/just-stop-oil-protesters-disrupt-london-pride-over-polluting-sponsors>



JSO protest on set of the Last Leg comedy show – Image source <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12300951/Now-Just-Stop-Oil-protesters-interrupt-live-recording-Channel-4-Leg.html>.



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