**January 2023**

Serious Violence in

Blackburn with Darwen

District Needs Assessment



**Lancashire Violence Reduction Network**

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# Executive Summary

The following needs assessment is one of 14 produced for each of the 14 districts within the Lancashire area. These needs assessments intend to provide an overview of the area in terms of risk and protective factors for violence to support areas in addressing this need with appropriate action, reflecting the aims and objectives of the [violence reduction network](https://www.lancsvrn.co.uk).

**Aims and Background**

This needs assessment seeks to provide an understanding to the Violence Reduction Network (VRN), partners and public about the reality of violence within each district of Lancashire, and the prevalence of the underlying risk factors of violence. This assessment is a reflection of the Pan-Lancashire ‘[Strategic Needs Assessment](https://www.lancsvrn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Lancashire-Violence-Reduction-Network-Strategic-Needs-Assessment-2021-FINAL.pdf)’ for specifically Blackburn with Darwen.

**A** [**Public Health Approach**](https://www.publichealth.com.ng/who-definition-of-public-health/) **to Serious Violence**

A growing body of evidence tells us that violence is preventable. Since the publication of the World Health Organization’s [World report on violence and health](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/42495/9241545615_eng.pdf;sequence=1) in 2002, experience, research and intelligence has generated an understanding of the risk factors that contribute to violence, and the many things that can be done to prevent it. We have a growing body of knowledge regarding the impact of violence and those most at risk of being either a perpetrator and/or victim. This understanding allows us to design and implement a public health approach to violence prevention around evidence-based frameworks.

The preventable nature of violence naturally lends itself to a public health approach. Violence reflects many of the other common facets of important public health issues. There are wide inequalities in the prevalence of violence, with the greatest impacts being felt by the most deprived communities([Protecting People, Promoting Health, 2021](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216977/Violence-prevention.pdf)). There is also a cyclic nature of violence. For example, there is sound understanding that exposure to violence in childhood (amongst other adverse childhood experiences), increases the likelihood of an individual becoming involved in violence later in life. Finally, there are masses of data sources from across a range of partners, which support the implementation of life-course prevention strategies at a universal through to a targeted level.

**Approach**

This needs assessment includes the following areas of information:

* A demographic overview of the district;
* Epidemiology\* of risk and protective factors for violence in the district;
* A violent crime problem profile for the district.

*\*Epidemiology is a quantitative public health discipline which looks at the frequency and patterns of events in a group of people and what the risk and protective factors are.*

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# Serious Violence Definition

*‘Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.’*

(World Health Organization)

At the inaugural meeting of the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network leadership board, data was presented to contextualise the local picture and the definition of serious violence was agreed. These crime types and descriptors are:

**Assault resulting in injury**

**Rape**

**Robbery**

**Aggravated Burglary**

**Domestic Abuse and Violence**

**(DAV)**

**Child Exploitation (Sexual and Criminal)**

 **Homicide**

 **Knife Crime**

 **Gun Crime**

Using this definition means there are some crimes which will appear in multiple groups as not all crime categories are independent crime classifications. For example, an assault resulting in injury between two domestically related persons using a knife will be considered in three categories: knife crime, assault with injury and domestic abuse and violence.

# Data Sources

Data included in this needs assessment has been taken from several sources:

* [Public Health England (PHE) fingertips](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/)
* [Lancashire Insight](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/)
* [Office for National Statistics (ONS)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/)
* [GOV.uk: Home Office statistics](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/about/statistics)

Note – whilst there is more data available than that included in this needs assessment, only those updated since 2020/21 have been included to ensure relevancy (several from an earlier period are included, where relevant). A previous version was produced in 2021 and should be referred to for additional data prior to 2021 (please contact the VRN for this previous version).

All of the data used and discussed within this needs assessment is public-access, population level data. For this reason, this needs assessment can be distributed and shared with those necessary with reference to the original data sources as outlined prior. Any data caveats or data quality issues are listed within the original data sources and should be reviewed before any interpretations are made of the findings.

# Demographic of Blackburn with Darwen

Blackburn with Darwen is a unitary authority in East Lancashire (policed by East division of Lancashire Constabulary) that covers 137 square kilometres. Blackburn with Darwen is made up of 23 wards (at the time of the 2011 Census).

**Population**

Blackburn with Darwen has a slightly higher than national average rate of deliveries to teenage mothers (12–17-year-olds) at 0.9% compared to 0.7% (2020/21), similarly with more babies (10%) born at a lower birth weight compared to 6.8% nationally (2020).

The population of Blackburn with Darwen (‘mid-year estimate’, Census 2021) was 154,800. This was the highest recorded of the 14 districts in Lancashire.

The population of Blackburn with Darwen is estimated to increase by just 1% between 2018 and 2043. This is the lowest rate for all 14 districts.

Blackburn with Darwen had an estimated population density (number of people per km2) of 1,130. This was the 3rd highest across the 14 districts.

**Age and Sex Structure**

Blackburn with Darwen has a near equal split of sex within the district, with a 50.4% female population, and a 49.6% male population. For both females and males, the highest recorded age band was 10- to 14-year-olds.

**65+**

**20-64**

57%

15%

57%

28%

29%

14%

**Male**

**Female**

****

**0-19**

****

****

**Housing**

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£134,000 median house price (£285,000 England average)

3.7 homeless households per 1,000 (7th highest in Lancs)

2,504 vacant dwellings (2nd highest in Lancashire)

62,510 dwelling stock (4th highest in Lancashire)

20 households in temporary housing (7th highest in Lancs)

57% of housing in council tax band A (40% in the North West)

# Risk and Protective Factors for Serious Violence

**Education**

2.6%

of young people (known to local authority) in Blackburn with Darwen were NEET (not in education, employment or training) during 2020/21. This is lower than the North West total rate (3.4%) and the England total rate (2.8%).

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In the year 2020/21, Blackburn with Darwen made 12 permanent exclusions – this equates to a rate of 0.04 (3rd lowest in Lancashire). There were also 801 suspensions – this was a rate of 2.9 (2nd lowest in Lancashire).

The average attainment 8 score (measure across 8 core qualifications scored at the end of key stage 4 for state-funded school pupils) in Blackburn with Darwen is 50.7, this is higher than the North West average score of 49.6 (2020/21).

**Employment and Income**

Blackburn with Darwen has a below North West rate (73.2%) of the working age population in employment at 65.3%. This is the lowest employment rate across Lancashire districts.

Blackburn with Darwen has the 3rd highest rate of persons on universal credit (20.3%). This was higher than the North West rate of 15.8%.

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Blackburn with Darwen has 34% of under 16’s living in ‘relative’ low-income families (2nd highest in Lancashire), this is higher than the North West rate of 21.2%. Similarly, Blackburn with Darwen has 27.3% of under 16’s living in ‘absolute’ low-income families (2nd highest in Lancashire), which is higher than the North West rate of 16.6% (2020/21)

**Health and Wellbeing**

The life expectancy of males born in Blackburn with Darwen is 74.7 – this is slightly below the North West life expectancy of 77 and 78.7 in England. Similarly, the life expectancy of females born in Blackburn with Darwen is 79.7 – this is also slightly below the North West life expectancy of 81 and 82.6 in England (2020).



Below North West rate (500) for admission episodes for alcohol-related conditions at 489 per 100,000 (2020/21)

Substantially below the North West rate (64.5%) for physically active adults at 47.8% (2020/21)

Similar to the North West rate (11.0%) for smoking status at time of delivery at 11.1% (2020/21)

Lower than North West rate (10.7) of suicide at 9.3 per 100,000 (2020)

# Violent Crime Profile

**Serious Violence**

Whilst the focus of the LVRN is on the underlying drivers of serious violence as depicted prior, it is also important to understand where serious violence is taking place within a locality. When referring to serious violence here, this is reflective of the Home Office Crime types – violence against the person, and sexual offences as opposed to the [LVRN serious violence definition](#_Serious_Violence_Definition).

As you can see in the right-hand side graph, the annual volume of serious violence has been increasing in Blackburn with Darwen, to over 7,000 recorded crimes in 2021/22. In addition, the left-hand side image shows Blackburn with Darwen separated by lower super output areas ([LSOAs](https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/c481f2d3-91fc-4767-ae10-2efdf6d58996/lower-layer-super-output-areas-lsoas)). From this heat map, you can see two LSOAs that have the highest volume of serious violence, these are 006E (Central Blackburn), and 011F (Queen’s Park and Higher Croft).

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Blackburn with Darwen had the 4th highest rate (38.9 per 1,000) for hate crime (2021/22).

The most common motivation for hate crime being race/ ethnicity/ nationality

In 2021/22 Blackburn with Darwen had the 2nd highest volume of serious violence in Lancashire, with a rate of 39.4 violent offences per 1,000 population compared to 29.5 nationally, and 34.5 regionally (2020/21)

Between 2021/22 Blackburn Central Ward had the highest number of domestic abuse incidents in BwD at 30.1 per 100,000 (10th highest in Lancashire), followed by Darwen East Ward (23.3), and Mill Hill & Moorgate Ward (22.9)

**Perpetrators and Offending**

Blackburn with Darwen had above Lancashire average rate (per 1,000) of the 10-17 population receiving custodial sentences (2020/21).

Blackburn with Darwen had the highest volume of adult reoffenders (2019/20). These were most commonly White males, aged 30 to 34.

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Blackburn with Darwen had a higher rate of first-time offenders in 2021 with 174 per 100,000 compared to 169 regionally, and 155 nationally.

*See ‘*[*Lancashire Strategic Assessment’*](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/929934/lancashire-strategic-assessment-2022.pdf) *(Partnership Intelligence, 2022-2025) for further detail on the long-term issues and threats from crime and antisocial behaviour across Lancashire (by district area).*

**Health Demand of Violence**

The below outlines the standardised rate (per 100,000) of hospital admissions for violence (including sexual violence) during the years 2020/21. As you can see, the rate for Blackburn with Darwen was substantially higher than the North West and England rate.

**41.9**

**61.6**

**83.8**

**Blackburn with Darwen**

**North West**

**England**

Blackburn with Darwen also has an above average rate of emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm. During 2020/21, the rate per 100,000 population was 228, compared to 225 in the North West, and 181 in England.

Blackburn Central Ward had the highest number of ambulance call outs at 278.1 per 1,000 population (5th highest ward in Lancashire), followed by Blackburn South East Ward (244.6), and Blackburn South East Ward (244.6).

*See ‘*[*Demonstrating the Costs of Violence to the Healthcare System: Development of a costing tool*](https://www.lancsvrn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Costs-of-Violence-to-the-Healthcare-System-Lancashire.pdf#:~:text=Demonstrating%20the%20Costs%20of%20Violence%20to%20the%20Healthcare,A%20report%20for%20the%20Lancashire%20Violence%20Reduction%20Network.)*’ (Liverpool John Moores University, Lisa Jones, 2021) for further detail on the financial demand that violence places on the healthcare system within Lancashire.*

**Cost of Violence**

To calculate the cost of serious violence within Lancashire, the ‘[Home Office Economic and Social Cost Estimates](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime)’ were used, multiplying the recorded crime (robbery, homicide, rape and violence with injury) in that district between June 2021 and July 2022, by the estimate unit cost. The below infographic shows these costs per district to the nearest million.

As shown, serious violence in Blackburn with Darwen was estimated to cost approximately £33 million between 2021 and 2022, making it the 4th highest costing district in Lancashire.

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