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Although Hertfordshire remains one of the safest counties in England and Wales there are many measures you and your children can take to avoid being a victim of crime whether you are in your home or on the move. This presentation will highlight the most common offences for which young people have become victims of crime and provide some useful advice which you may want to consider and pass on to your children.

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Hertfordshire Constabulary are committed to reducing crime and to supporting all members of their local communities, this includes young people.

As part of this commitment the Constabulary have a Youth Crime Reduction Officer (YCRO) for each of the 10 districts and 38 Youth and School Police Community Support Officers (Y&SPCSO) across the county.

You can find the details of your local YCRO and S&YPCSOs by visiting www.herts.police.uk

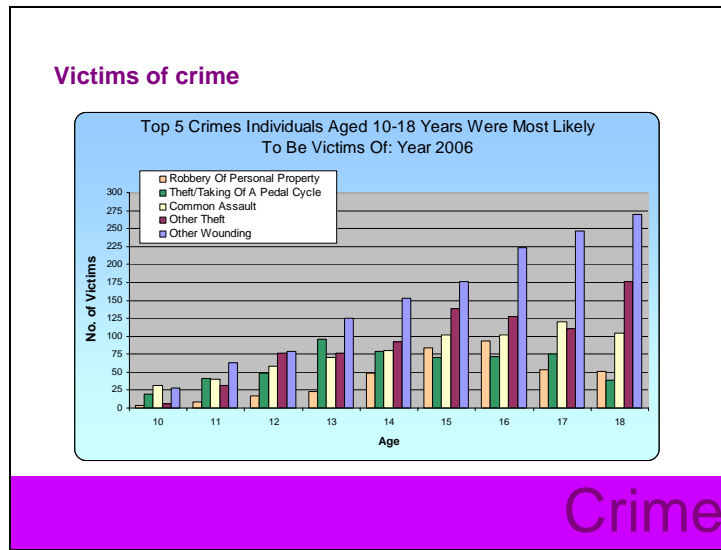
Crime

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As part of this commitment the Constabulary have a Youth Crime Reduction Officer (YCRO) for each of the 10 districts and 38 Youth and School Police Community Support Officers (Y&SPCSO) across the county. Their role is not only to deal with crime but to offer help, advice and support to young people and their families.

You can find the details of your local YCRO and S&YPCSOs by visiting www.herts.police.uk

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This data represents the offences for which young people have been victims of across the county between 01/04/2006-31/12/2006. It is not intended to represent any specific local issues.

Whilst it is clear there is a vast range of offences for which young people may become victims of, this graph has been prepared to identify the five most prevalent offences. In relative terms the number of victims in Hertfordshire for all the crimes illustrated is low


From a first glance at the graph you can see that:

There is a variation on offence type:

- **Common assault** – minor offences that result in little or no injury i.e. a black eye, bruising or spitting etc.
- **Other wounding** – Very serious violence e.g. broken bones, knife injuries which cut through all layers of skin.
- **Theft/taking of a pedal cycle** – removing a pedal cycle/bike that does not belong to you.
- **Other theft** – removal of personal items that do not belong to you i.e. taking a mobile phone from a hand bag or locker.
- **Robbery of personal property** – using the threat of violence to deprive an individual of personal property.

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Common assault – minor offences that result in little or no injury i.e. a black eye, bruising or spitting etc.



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Common assault offences remain fairly steady throughout the age groups. It is important to remember that victims of these minor offences could well be the victims of bullying or anti-social behaviour. To help young people avoid becoming a victim of common assault we need to ensure they are aware of how they can deal with issues such as bullying and anti-social behaviour.

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Prevention: Common Assault

Young people should be made aware:

- that bullying and anti-social behaviour is not acceptable forms of behaviour
- of the consequences if they act in such a manner
- of the importance of reporting bullying/anti-social behaviour to teachers, parents, and to police etc.
- that they should not try and deal with it on their own.



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It is important to stress that this type of offence/crime remains relatively low in Hertfordshire.

There is an upward trend across all ages for wounding. Factors that could contribute to this trend are:

Age. As age increases a young person may be 'out and about' more without the supervision from adults such as parents. Many young people are exposed to new experiences, such as mixing with older young people or perhaps even going to new social events i.e. a youth club. This could present young people with situations they are not used to, or experienced in dealing with, which in some cases could escalate and result in wounding (in extreme cases).

Strength. Another factor that could contribute to the upward trend in wounding is that as young people get older they get stronger and can cause more physical injury.

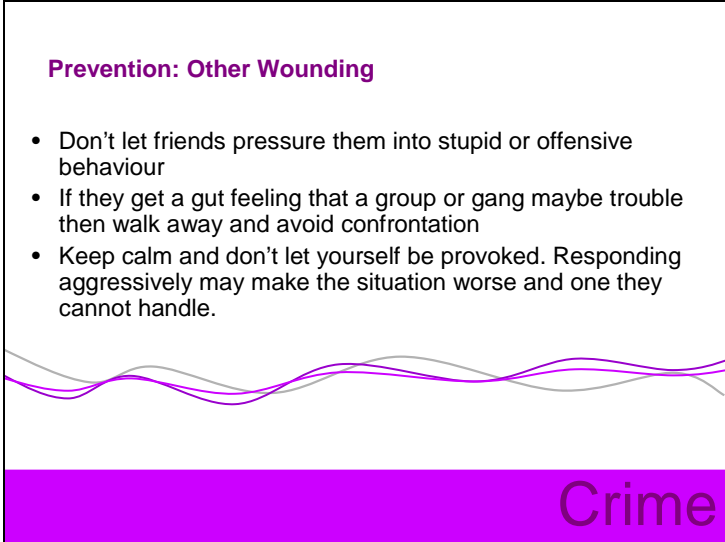
Drug and alcohol use. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol can make you act out of character, end up in situations you normally would not, or end up in situations you cannot control. It is no surprise that wounding peaks at 18 years, the age at which young people start going to pubs and clubs. It is important to note that many of these incidents involving 18 year olds have

probably taken place at weekends, when young people are more likely to be out drinking!

Weapons: Stories of young people in the UK being killed by weapons or injured are becoming common place in the media. **This is relatively low in Hertfordshire.**

As young people get older they are more likely to carry weapons, such as knives for protection, to feel safer or as part of a group. It can also give them credibility amongst their friends. This has the potential to result in very serious consequences.

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Prevention: Other Wounding

- Don't let friends pressure them into stupid or offensive behaviour
- If they get a gut feeling that a group or gang maybe trouble then walk away and avoid confrontation
- Keep calm and don't let yourself be provoked. Responding aggressively may make the situation worse and one they cannot handle.

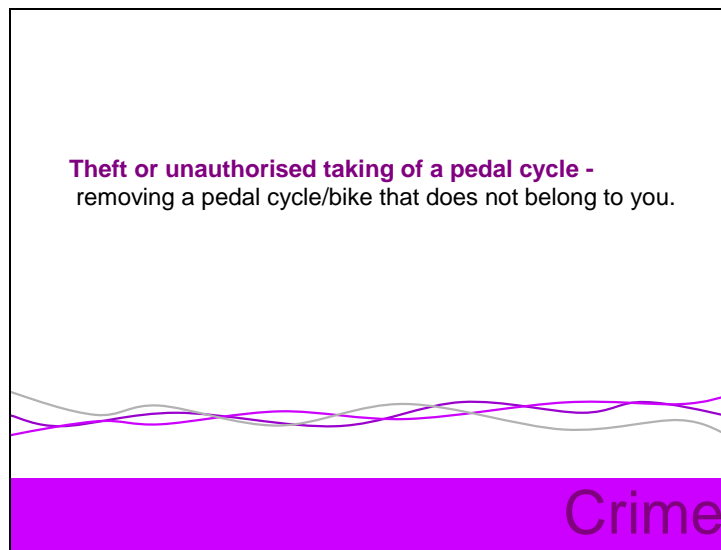
Crime

It is important for young people feel comfortable about walking away from situations they believe to be stupid, dangerous or offensive to others. These situations can cause various forms of anti social behaviour including fighting.

Young people need to be aware of the signals the body gives to indicate that something is wrong e.g. butterflies in your stomach, heart beats faster etc.

While some young people are encouraged to 'fight back' by their parents or peers we must remember that responding aggressively may make the situation worse and one they cannot handle.

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Theft of pedal bikes increase from the age of 10 and peaks at the age of 13. From the age of 14 the figures stay fairly even until the age of 18 years, where it dips lower then for 11 year olds.

You can presume that this crime is in the top five because a pedal cycle/bike is the main form of transport for young people before they can drive, and therefore are more likely to be stolen.

They may also be unaware of the likely hood of their bike being stolen.


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Prevention: Theft of a pedal cycle

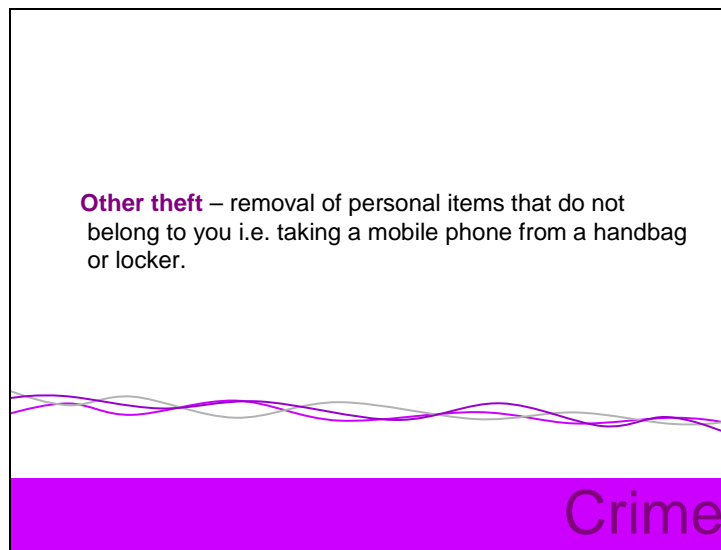
- Keep your bike in a secure garage or shed and keep the door locked
- Avoid parking your bike in isolated or dimly lit places
- Always lock your bicycle to an immovable object, even if you are just leaving it for a couple of minutes.
- There are many different locks on the market. The most important factor is how long the product can resist attack.



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 *There are many different products on the market and price is not necessarily a reliable indicator of quality. The most important factor is how long the product can resist attack. Invest in a quality lock. Hardened steel D-shaped locks are recommended as the minimum standard. It is worth spending proportionately more on a lock for a more expensive bike*

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With more young people owning expensive items this puts them at increase risk of theft. Theft will take place where ever the opportunity arises, with personal items being at risk. Many of these thefts tend to be committed from places such as lockers and bags.

Most stolen items include:

- Mobile phones
- MP3 Players
- Ipods
- Cash
- Jewellery
- Bikes

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Prevention: other theft

- Don't carry a lot of valuables all at once. Carry what you need for where you are going.
- Avoid displaying valuable items, such as your phone, ipod, pin number or cash in public places.
- Security mark valuable items. There is a chance that you could get back your property if it is stolen and later retrieved by police.

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Prevention: Mobile Phones

- Avoid using your phone in crowded places where it could be snatched.
- Keep it with you at all times – never leave it unattended.
- Security mark the phone and battery with your postcode. This will help police identify stolen ones.
- Report a stolen phone to police and your network provider immediately.



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A British Crime Survey report (2000) showed that:

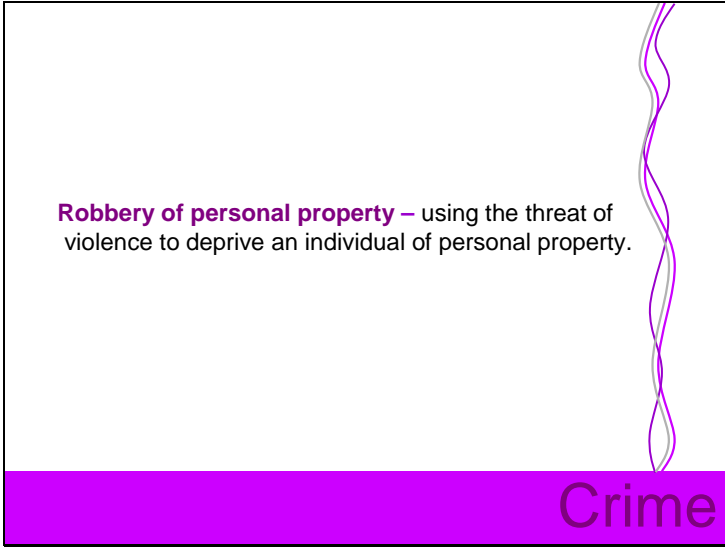
In 23 per cent of incidents victims were using their mobile phone or had it on display when it was targeted

Victims of mobile phone robbery tend to be younger than victims of other types of robbery - 48% of victims are under 18.



There is an online system which allows you to register the serial numbers of as many possessions as you wish. Registration is free and you can use 'immobilise' to register any item with a make, model and serial number i.e. mobile phone, computer or MP3 player etc. Directly from your immobilise account you can report an item lost or stolen and will appear on the Police Stolen Property National database. This could help get your property back and detect the offender. For further information see www.immobilise.com

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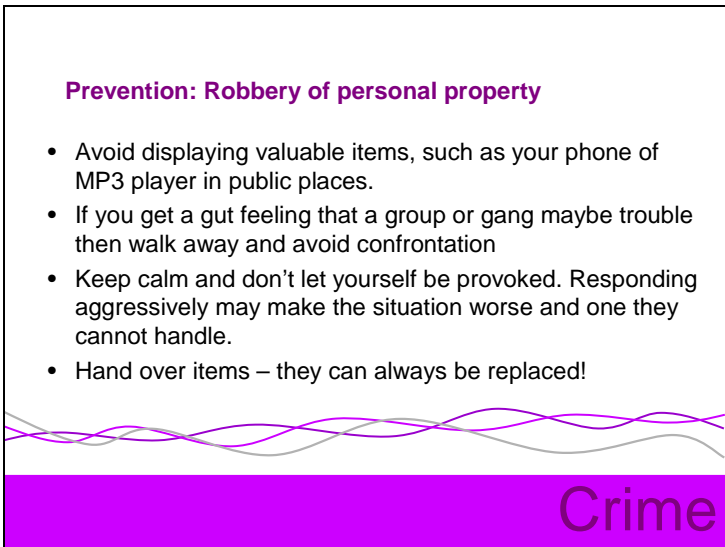
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Robbery of personal property – using the threat of violence to deprive an individual of personal property.

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Between the ages of 11 to 18 years, 15 and 16 year olds in Hertfordshire are most likely to become victims of robbery of personal items. This is where the threat of violence or actual violence has been used to take property not belonging to you. This suggests that it is during these age ranges that young people may have items on their person whilst out and about, making them more susceptible to robbery.

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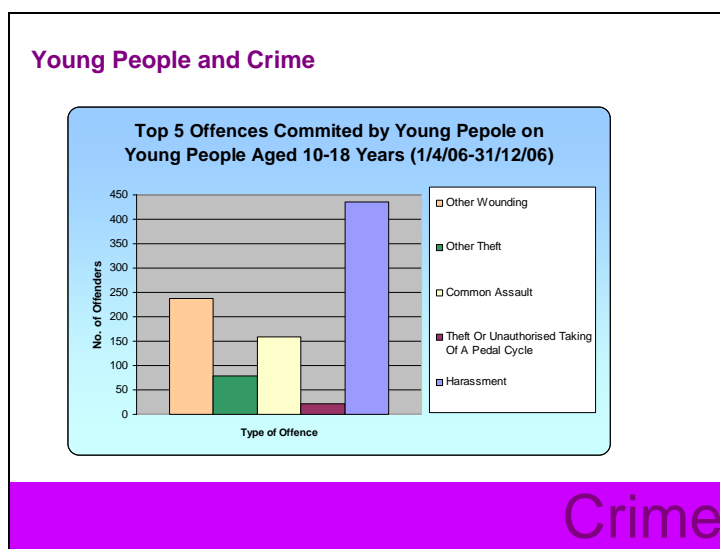
Prevention: Robbery of personal property

- Avoid displaying valuable items, such as your phone or MP3 player in public places.
- If you get a gut feeling that a group or gang may be trouble then walk away and avoid confrontation
- Keep calm and don't let yourself be provoked. Responding aggressively may make the situation worse and one they cannot handle.
- Hand over items – they can always be replaced!

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Slide 14 - Young people and crime

The top five crimes that were **committed** by young people on young people in 01/04/2006 – 31/12/2006 are:

- Other wounding
- Other theft
- Common assault
- Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle
- Harassment

The issues around wounding are probably very similar to those discussed in the victim data. However, a possible explanation for the higher numbers for harassment and common assault could be due to bullying or anti-social behaviour.


Harassment can take many forms and examples can include: wilful damage to property, assault, unwarranted verbal or physical threats, abusive communication or repeated attempts to talk to or approach a person who is opposed to this.

👉 For all the crimes illustrated in the graph, in relative terms the number is low for Hertfordshire as a whole.

HARASSMENT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Definition: *“A person must not pursue a course of conduct which amounts to harassment of another and which he/she knows, or ought to know, amounts to harassment of the other.”*

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Official sanctions

- Reprimand
- Final Warning
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC)
- Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)

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You may decide to cut the amount of information given regarding sanctions depending on time constraints and needs of the audience.

It would be beneficial to have some knowledge of youth justice in case of questions from the audience.

It is important that young people know that bullying and anti-social behaviour is not acceptable forms of behaviour and are aware of the consequences if they act in such a manner.

Where a young person persistently acts in an anti-social or bullying manner, or if their behaviour is serious enough on any one occasion, it could result in official sanctions **which could include:**

Reprimand - a formal verbal warning given by a police officer to a young person who admits they are guilty of a minor first offence.

Final Warning – a formal verbal warning given by a police officer to a young person who admits guilt for a first or second offence.

Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) – a voluntary agreement made between those committing the anti-social behaviour, the local police, or local authority. The contract sets out the behaviour that is expected of the individual.

Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) – evidence is presented to a Magistrate’s Court who decides whether to impose the order. ASBOs can be made against any person aged 10 years of over whose behaviour has caused harassment, alarm of distress and can last between 2 to 5 years.



It is also important that young people know they need to report bullying/anti-social behaviour to teachers, parents, and to police etc. and not to try and deal with it on their own.

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Personal Safety

Remain alert when out and about.

Keep to well lit streets and avoid short cuts.

Avoid going home alone, especially late at night.

When out walking don't use personal stereos because you may not be aware of what is going on around you.

Plan your day or evening out so you know where you are going, how you will get there and get how you will get home etc.

Crime


Young people often think they are very streetwise and are aware of all the risks there are to know. However, this presentation illustrates that young people need to be made aware and reminded of how to look after their personal safety. It is important for them to never assume it won't happen to them as this can leave them vulnerable.

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Let someone know your plans and let them know if they change.

Try and stay with a group of friends when you are out, and avoid becoming isolated, especially in the evening.

Using drugs (including alcohol) can change your character/mood and can alter your ability to make sensible and safe decisions.



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Useful crime prevention websites

- **Personal Safety** – www.suzytoplugh.org
- **Crime Reduction** – www.crimereduction.gov.uk
- **Local Police** – www.herts.police.uk
- **Young People** - www.rizer.co.uk

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