

100 Days of summer

Weymouth 2019

Inspector Barry Gosling – Dorset Police

Summary

Scanning:

Melcombe Regis is the ward area that makes up the town centre within the resort of Weymouth. There is significant social deprivation and it has been recognised as being within the top 10% of most deprived areas nationally. The combination of deprivation, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse and unemployment has contributed to disproportionately higher levels of reported crime, antisocial behaviour (ASB) and low public confidence. Consultation with local residents, business community, partner agencies and visitors identified daytime ASB as a key community concern and the subject of this initiative.

Analysis:

Analysis showed the key behaviours of concern were street drinking, begging, rough sleeping in public areas, abusive behaviour, overt drug use and public intimidation. Many of the offenders live chaotic lifestyles and drug and alcohol misuse is a significant contributor to their offending behaviour. The locations where the ASB occurs have significant community impact as they are all highly visible public locations. These locations were plotted on heat maps to identify the hotspots and temporal analysis identified the times when offending behaviours occurred (1200 – 2000 hours daily). Limited visible police presence in these areas was identified as being a key contributor.

Response:

The objectives of this initiative were to reduce incidents of daytime ASB and crime and improve public trust and confidence (from local residents, the business community and visitors to the town). This was achieved by ensuring officers were deployed to the right places at the right times using the hotspot policing model and Koper curve principle. Officers were required to conduct foot patrols around 5 key hotspot locations. Each location was visited 3 times during the course of a shift, at least every 2 hours on a random basis for a period of between 14 to 16 minutes. There was a focus on robust enforcement of offences with strong partnership working. This was key to effective management of offenders. The public were kept updated on actions taken through Facebook and various public engagement events.

Assessment:

Over the 100 day period, total crime reduced by 22% and ASB by 28% against the same time the previous year. There was a reduction in public place violence of 24%, most serious violent crime by 60% and shoplifting reduced by 35%. A Facebook survey was conducted at the end of the initiative and 78% of respondents felt the area felt safer and 84% felt the initiative had been a success.

Description

Scanning:

Weymouth and Portland covers an area of 16.14 sq miles and consists of the resort of Weymouth and the Isle of Portland on the south coast of England. Melcombe Regis contains the commercial core of Weymouth, night-time economy and transport hub (bus and trains). This area contains the highest proportion of transient rental residents with a predominantly younger demographic, a 59.9% employment rate (16 – 64 year olds) is the worst in South West and the area attracts the highest rate of crime with 39% of the section crime reported in this area. Public health data suggests that 1% of the population has an opium addiction which has contributed to residents of Melcombe Regis having a life expectancy 10 years lower than other areas of Dorset. Melcombe Regis is within the top 10% of most deprived areas nationally and has the highest rate of rough sleepers per 1000 population within all Dorset sections. Rough sleeper count in November 2018 showed that there were 18 rough sleepers in Melcombe Regis and in September 2019 there were 27 recorded. According to the state of the nation social mobility report (2017), Melcombe Regis has the third worst social mobility in the country.

The combination of significant deprivation, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse and unemployment has contributed to disproportionately higher levels of reported crime, ASB and low public confidence within the Melcombe Regis area. Officers wanted to fully understand the impact of these issues on Melcombe Regis using both quantitative and qualitative sources.

Quantitative data was taken from police 4 year (Dormis) crime statistics, and specifically highlighted Melcombe Regis as the single highest contributor to crime and ASB with 39% of the Weymouth and Portland section demand. Crime data in 2018 indicated that total crime in Melcombe Regis was 22% higher than the 4 year average and ASB was 1% higher. Further criminal consequences were also identified in Melcombe Regis indicating increased public place violence 7% higher, serious violence 25% higher and shoplifting 1 % higher against the 4 year trends.

Qualitative research was conducted by officers to better understand the impact of crime and ASB on key stakeholders such as local residents, businesses, key partner agencies and visitors to Melcombe Regis.

Local residents were consulted through public engagement events that were held in key locations throughout Melcombe Regis in collaboration with local councillors and the Homewatch scheme. We also used comments made on social media platforms such as Facebook to understand what was happening in the local area. Issues raised mainly focused on feelings of public safety, such as being able to walk along the esplanade without feeling intimidated by groups of abusive street drinkers, overt drug dealing and uncapped needles being left in public places regularly visited by children using the beach.

Business –Tourism provides the main economy for Melcombe Regis as guests visit the area to enjoy the blue flag beaches and other areas of outstanding natural beauty of the Jurassic coast. Officers consulted the local Business Improvement District (BID), Chamber of trade, Shopwatch and Hotelwatch schemes to better understand the impact on businesses. Hoteliers within this area reported 86% of their annual business (in terms of volume of guests and revenue) were generated between 1st April and 30th September inclusive. This also coincides with an increase in rough sleepers in the area during this period. Many of the hoteliers raised concerns over overt drug taking, ASB and violence outside their premises during the daytime. This was affecting trade with customers at a critical time during the year, especially with customers using review sites such as Trip advisor which hotels rely heavily upon for recommendations. Some hotels reported having to refund unhappy customers due to the unsavoury activities taking place outside the hotel. Local shops and Shopwatch also reported

that shoplifting had a large financial impact on their businesses, especially those smaller independent ones.

Partner agencies – Officers liaised with key partner agencies including the voluntary sector to gain further understanding of the impact of the issues. Similar concerns were raised around overt drug taking, street drinking, begging and ASB.

Visitors – Officers engaged with visitors and worked in partnership with the town council Beach Officer to identify similar issues and the fact that these had been witnessed by children visiting the beach. Many visitors to Weymouth were older, retired people who commented that they had no access to the beach shelters on the esplanade for rest or shade due to these being inhabited by street drinkers and rough sleepers. They felt intimidated and commented on general decline of the area. The local section inspector also received a number of complaints from repeat visitors to the town who had reported that antisocial behaviour, drug taking and street drinking had significantly increased in the last year. This was significant enough to inform the police that they would not be returning to the area.

This project was intended to address issue of daytime ASB within Melcombe Regis, which include street drinking, begging, overt drug taking, shoplifting, public order and public place violent crime (PPVC).

Analysis:

In order to fully understand the problem of daytime ASB within Melcombe Regis officers broke the problem down into component parts including the behaviour, location, persons involved and time.

Behaviour - The behaviours that were identified related to daytime ASB such as street drinking, begging, rough sleeping in public areas, abusive behaviour, overt drug use and public intimidation. These also led to crime related behaviours such as violent assaults, drug dealing, public order and shoplifting.

Location – Crime and ASB data was gathered and plotted on heat maps (figure 1) to identify the five core locations in Melcombe Regis where incidents were reported. Melcombe Regis is also host to numerous public events during the summer months and this information was also considered.

Persons – Officers used police Sigma reports to identify key offenders, victims and vulnerable persons at risk of exploitation through crime and ASB within Melcombe Regis. Key partner agencies such as the Community Mental Health Team, drug and alcohol workers, housing associations, licensing, Public Health Dorset, Community Safety Team (CST), Community Safety Accredited Scheme (CSAS) officers and town centre manager were consulted through the Partnership Coordination Group (PCG).

Time – The core times that ASB was committed was analysed using temporal analysis (see figure 2) and identified as between 1200 and 2000 hours daily. This analysis indicated that 52.2% of ASB incidents occurred between this time. The peak time for ASB was between 1200 – 1600 with 27.3% of incidents reported. There was no significant difference in terms of days of the week.

The issues of daytime ASB within Melcombe Regis has evolved over a number of years due to significant deprivation, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse and unemployment. These issues are escalated during the summer months due to the seasonal economy of Melcombe Regis where the population significantly increases with tourism. With this increase in tourism the area also experiences

an increase in vulnerable homeless persons living on the streets, who often live chaotic lifestyles and are engaged in drug and alcohol misuse. Transport links into Melcombe Regis are good via the railway with trains direct from London. This precipitates the problem of daytime ASB as it enables offenders that live out of the area to visit. As with many market towns there has also been a rise in County lines networks operating within Melcombe Regis which contributes to the problem by increasing the availability of drugs.

The Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT) was used to assess the conditions contributing to the issues of daytime ASB and crime within Melcombe Regis.

Victims - Were identified as local residents, visitors to the town and business owners. The predominant condition producing the problem behaviour for victims was the absence of a capable guardian. Police resources had withdrawn from the area and adopted a reactive approach to calls for service from victims due to demand elsewhere and capacity. There was limited proactive crime prevention to safeguard and protect victims until they became a victim. The new council led CSAS scheme only had 1 officer, and there were no other security provision in the area.

Offenders - Many live chaotic lifestyles, often with limited local connections, disengagement with agencies and often no obvious handler. For most of the offenders, the conditions contributing to their offending behaviours were associated with their connection to drug and alcohol misuse. Some of the offenders were vulnerable due to poor physical and mental health which also put them at risk of criminal exploitation.

Place – The locations where the offending behaviours was reported were within small geographical areas that are highly visible to the public. These locations included the railway station, public shelters along the Esplanade, the sides of hotels or in the high street. The presence of persons drinking, overtaking drugs, sleeping rough, behaving violently within these areas significantly raised the profile of their offending behaviour and consequently the community impact at these locations was high. These areas were mostly managed by the Weymouth Town Council who operate beach wardens. Due to the aggressive and abusive behaviours of the offenders the wardens and CSAS officers were often limited as to what they could do to resolve the issues and relied upon police attendance.

The key issue identified was the lack of an appropriate guardian within the town.

In previous years the approach to managing daytime ASB within Melcombe Regis was more reactive and relied upon calls for service from the public. Officers were deployed to deal with the incident as they happened, with limited preventative policing. Neighbourhood officers did not routinely consider an evidence based approach to inform their deployments, and relied upon professional judgement and experience rather than evidence to inform where they patrolled. Officers were often not in the right places to deal with the emerging incident and were required to travel to scene which increased response times and often the incidents escalated due to slower police attendance.

Public confidence in local policing was low as local residents, business owners and visitors did not see a visible police presence within Melcombe Regis. The public perception was that the issue of daytime ASB and associated crime did not appear to address and offender's behaviour, and were not appropriately dealt with by police. This culminated in April 2019 with local community groups and the Dorset Echo reporting on their concerns over police action within Melcombe Regis. Link attached: <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/17568184.police-need-to-do-more-to-tackle-anti-social-behaviour/> . There was also limited public engagement and communication to update on actions the local police team were taking in response to issues identified.

Response:

The objectives of this initiative related specifically to Melcombe Regis to:

- Reduce incidents of daytime ASB and crime.
- Improve trust and confidence from local residents, the business community and visitors to the town.

The '100 Days of summer' initiative adopted four pillars to achieve these objectives:

Hotspot Policing – was chosen to ensure officers were deployed to the right places at the right times to maximise their presence, provide effective public engagement and create an efficient deterrent effect through visible officer presence (capable guardian). From the information gathered within the analysis phase, five core locations (stands) were identified within Melcombe Regis. Analysis showed critical times where ASB was most prevalent and a rota was created where a PC and two PCSOs were detached from the duty sheet and specifically committed to the 100 days initiative. The PCSOs conducted foot patrols around the stand locations and the PC supported them with police powers should they be needed. Each stand was visited three times during the course of a shift, at least every 2 hours on a random basis for a period of between 14-16 minutes. The length of patrols was specifically chosen following the findings of the Koper Curve principle (Koper 1995). This identified the optimum time at any given stand to have a deterrent effect during and after the patrol. Whilst they were at each stand, officers tackled any ASB and engaged with the public. Hotspot data and police intelligence was also shared with local CSAS and British Transport Police officers in order to inform their patrol plans and ensure collaborative working through joint patrols and operations.

As the 100 days of summer campaign progressed key stakeholders such as local councillors, Weymouth Town Council and local community groups were consulted to determine the ongoing impact of the initiative. This information alongside statistical analysis informed the locations of the stands. Where new crime and ASB patterns emerged the location of the stands were changed in order to maintain the effectiveness of the initiative.

Safeguarding – Identification and safeguarding of the vulnerable was paramount as many persistent offenders were also very vulnerable individuals with drug and alcohol dependencies, mental and physical health concerns and chaotic lifestyles. Information was regularly shared around persistent offenders, repeat victims and vulnerable locations with partner agencies including the voluntary sector. NPT officers conducted daily foot patrols in partnership with local homeless charities to check on the welfare of persons sleeping rough and signpost them for support and advice.

Robust enforcement - was achieved through strong partnership working. The NPT conducted a briefing session with key partner agencies including local councillors prior to commencement of the initiative. The CST recorded all incidents of crime and ASB and plotted where the offenders were on an escalating scale of enforcement. This ranged from section 35 dispersals, community protection warning (CPW) and notices (CPN) through to criminal behaviour orders (CBO). This approach provided police and partners greater enforcement options for repeat perpetrators of crime and ASB, and demonstrated to the courts that offenders were provided maximum opportunities to reform their behaviour. In order to take a firm stance on offending behaviour, officers were encouraged to use police powers such as arrest where they had grounds, and it was proportionate to do so. Enforcement actions were promoted to the public daily to demonstrate our robust stance against persistent offenders and to provide public reassurance.

Effective Community engagement - was achieved through a strong social media campaign, engaging visitors to the town and targeted engagement events.

Social media - Officers committed to updating the public every day on the progress of '100 Days of summer' through social media platforms such as the Weymouth and Portland Facebook site. Updates provided details of actions that had been taken, general advice on crime prevention and humorous posts to engage the audience. Comments on the Facebook site were reviewed for community intelligence and, where appropriate, responded to in order to engage and empower the community to be part of the solution.

Developing awareness with visitors - The 100 Days initiative was promoted through poster campaigns at local campsites and hotels and through the BID and Hotelwatch in order to raise awareness and encourage visitors to report crime or ASB. Visitors were encouraged to sign up to the Facebook page and follow the posts to improve communication, engagement and build public trust and confidence.

Public engagement events – targeted different community groups such as disability, older people, visitors and the business community within Melcombe Regis. Many of the engagement events were held in partnership with local councillors and partner agencies such as the CST. These events aimed to raise the profile of the 100 days initiative, listen to community needs and concerns, gather community intelligence and build public trust and confidence.

Assessment:

The 100 Day of summer campaign was assessed using both quantitative and qualitative data to determine if it was successful in achieving the initial objectives:

Objective 1 - Reduce incidents of daytime antisocial behaviour and crime.

Baseline data to measure the success of the 100 days of summer was obtained through corporate development and compared the 104 day period (25th May – 7th Sept 2019) against the same time the previous year and also against the 4 year average for the same location over the same period of time. Although the scheme was called the 100 days of summer it actually ran for 104 days to fit into whole weeks.

Over the 104 day period total crime reduced within the Melcombe Regis area by 22 per cent against the same time the previous year (4 per cent decrease against the 4 year average). ASB also reduced with a 28 per cent reduction (27 per cent against 4 year average). Public placed violent crime (PPVC) was a key concern to community stakeholders during consultation, and this category reduced by 24 per cent (19 per cent against 4 year average). Within the PPVC category there were significant reductions in the most serious assaults which include offences such as GBH with a 60 per cent reduction (50 per cent against 4 year average). It is worth noting that within this category the volume of incidents is low with only 2 incidents compared to 5 the previous year. Within the combined category most serious and assault with injury there was a 13 per cent reduction (3 per cent against 4 year average). Public order offences also reduced by 12 per cent, however there was a 22 per cent increase against 4 year average. This was to be expected due to stricter data integrity rules, compliance with Home office counting rules and greater officer presence leading to more proactive arrests for public order offences. There was also an unexpected spin off within these results in that the area experienced a 35 per cent reduction in shoplifting (34 per cent against 4 year average). This was because the offenders for street related drinking, overt drug use and ASB were also the same offenders that targeted local shops.

Strong partnership working with the CST was critical to the success of the initiative. There were 3 CPWs and 1 CPNs served with 4 CBOs obtained through the magistrates court and a further one pending. One recipient of a CBO breached the order a sufficient number of times that they received a six month prison sentence. Officers also issued 28 Section 35 dispersal notices to 25 individuals.

Some community groups felt that the ASB had been displaced, however there was no evidence of any displacement to other communities. Only two out of eight neighbouring beat areas saw any increase in ASB. In both circumstances the small increases in ASB were linked to youth ASB or neighbour issues which were not influenced by the 100 Days of summer campaign.

Objective 2 - Improve trust and confidence from local residents, the business community and visitors to the town.

Qualitative research was conducted via Facebook, public engagement and consultation with key community stakeholders.

Facebook was key to keeping the public informed of police actions and between May and Sept 2019 Facebook following grew from 4334 in May 2019 to 5402 in Sept 2019. A Facebook survey was conducted at the end of the initiative to test public opinion of the scheme and asked 2 questions (figure 4).

- 1) **As a result of the 100 Days of our summer initiative, do you think Weymouth town center feels like a safer place to be?** There were 538 responses to this question and **78%** said yes.
- 2) **Has the 100 Days of summer been successful in reducing antisocial and criminal behavior in Weymouth town center and surrounding area?** There were 825 responses to this question and **84%** said yes.

Facebook comments were monitored and there were also 71 comments made to these posts (hundreds of comments throughout the initiative), of which the majority were positive supporting and praising police action in reducing ASB and crime.

A partnership debrief was held at the end of the initiative to give key stakeholders opportunity to provide feedback and to involve them in embedding the key learning points into business as usual. The feedback was really positive and the general consensus was that the initiative had been a huge success, although there were concerns that the momentum of the initiative could not be maintained with current resource and the gains within the town would erode. Craig Oaks, chair of the Chamber of Trade commented *'local businesses felt the town felt significantly safer, they had experienced lower crime and intimidating behavior toward their staff and they were optimistic for the future'*.

There was also local and regional press coverage praising the 100 Days of summer campaign:

South Dorset MP Mr Drax commented 'The police do exemplary work for our community'
<https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/17945480.column-police-exemplary-work-community/>

Dorset Echo article (25th September) '100 Days of Summer a success - and patrols will continue'
<https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/17925758.100-days-summer-success---patrols-will-continue/>

Dorset Echo article (12th September) 'Police success as crime has reduced by more than 20 per cent in Weymouth Town Centre'
<https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/17895755.police-success-crime-reduced-20-per-cent-weymouth-town-centre/>

BBC Spotlight news article broadcast on 1st October with Anna Varle on patrol with officers conducting hotspot patrols - <https://youtu.be/DgKsbMqdyQ>

Lessons learnt - Problems encountered during this initiative mainly focused on having sufficient officers to fulfil the rota commitment. Resourcing relied heavily on the flexibility and goodwill of staff which would not be sustainable long term. At the end of the initiative, staff were fatigued and felt that they had lost some autonomy due to the precise and autocratic nature of the hotspot policing model. Officers also felt that they had lost touch with their own beat areas due to the focus of resources on the Melcombe Regis over their own areas.

Through social media scanning and public engagement it was identified that the name '100 Days of summer' created a countdown throughout the summer. Community feedback generally praised the initiative, however there was also concern that things would revert back after day 101. Fortunately this was identified early and the team were able to reassure the public that this style of policing would remain.

Next steps

The new campaign is called **#bootsontheground**, this initiative embeds key principles and lessons learnt from the 100 days of summer initiative into business as usual.

- The name no longer creates a countdown and will be used for all social media updates.
- The hotspot patrols will continue to be evidence based and times spent at each location guided by the Koper Curve principle.
- Patrols will be conducted jointly with CSAS officers to increase the resilience, sustainability and officer presence.
- The geographical area will be increased to cover the neighboring beat areas if the analysis indicates that they are emerging hotspots.

Supporting charts and diagrams

Figure 1 - Hotspot map showing key locations

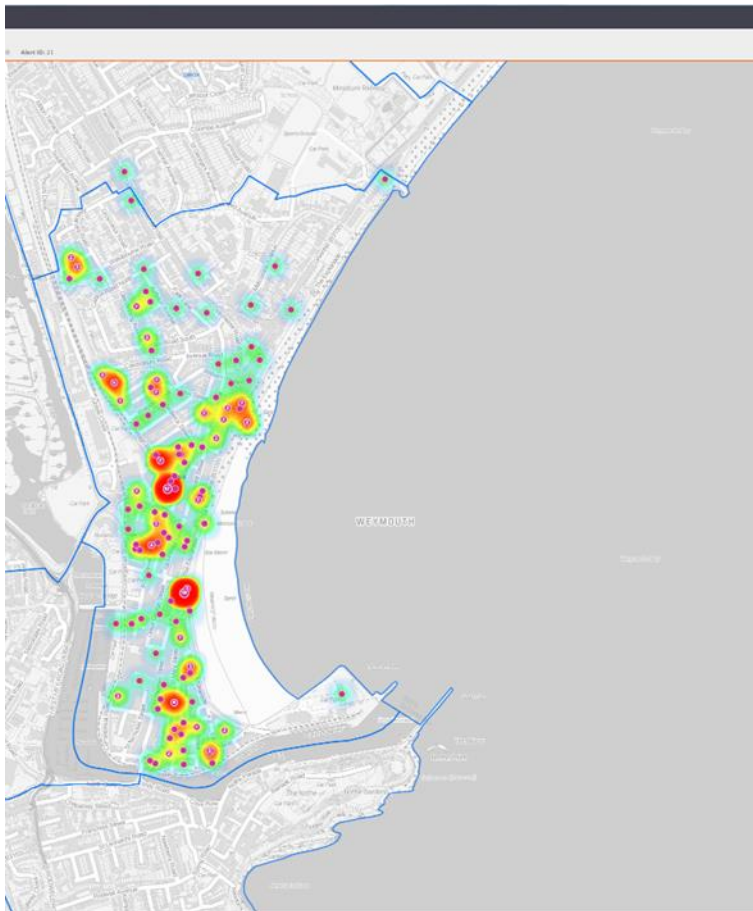


Figure 2 – Statistical data showing key times -

Breakdown by time of day:

Time	Number of occurrences	Percentage of total
0:00 - 3:59	12	5.9%
4:00 - 7:59	8	3.9%
8:00 - 11:59	42	20.5%
12:00 - 15:59	56	27.3%
16:00 - 19:59	51	24.9%
20:00 - 23:59	36	17.6%
Unknown	0	0.0%
Total	205	100%

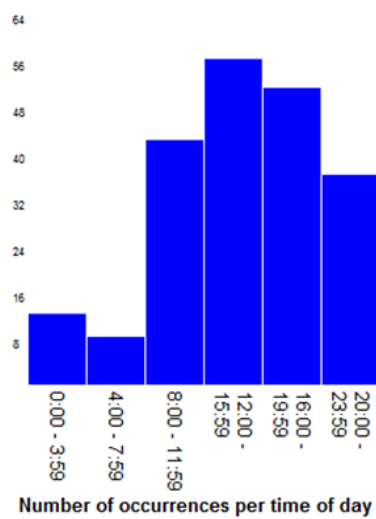
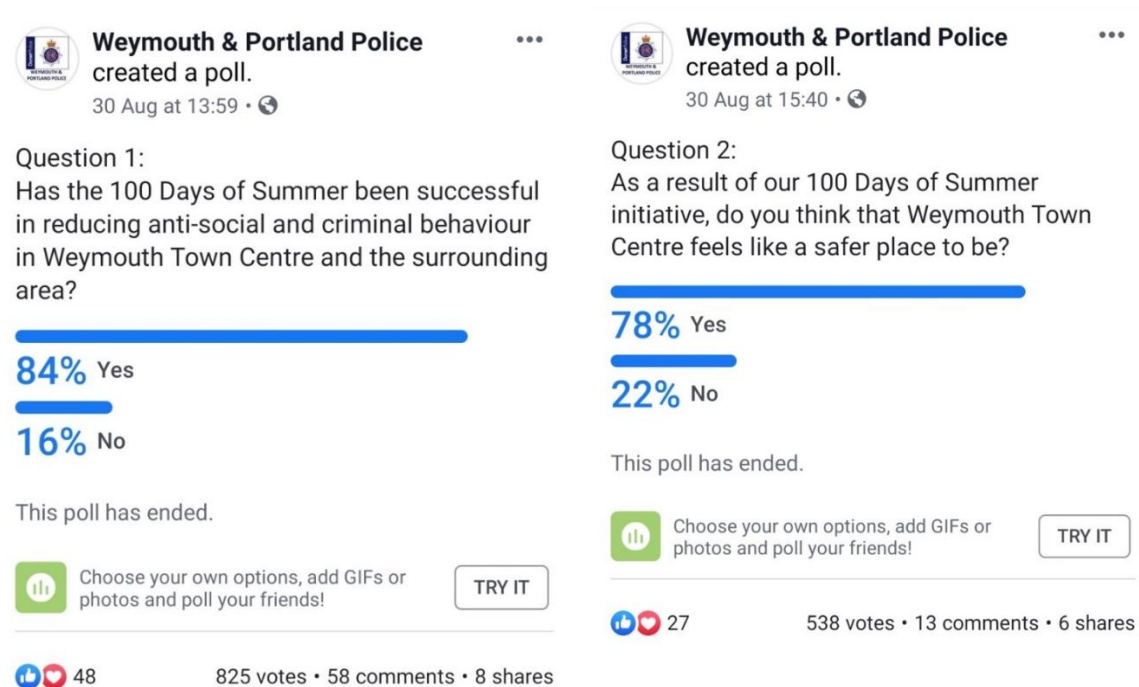


Figure 3 - 100 Days of summer performance data – Produced by Dorset Police Corporate Development

	4 Year average (25 TH May to 7 th Sept) Benchmark Excluding 2019	25 th May to 7 th Sept 2018	100 days of summer 25 th May to 7 th Sept 2019	Impact of the 100 days of summer – against last year	Impact of the 100 days of summer – against 4 year average	Notes
Total crime	631.75	770	607	22% reduction	4% reduction	
Total ASB	494	501	362	28% reduction	27% reduction	
PPVC	150.25	161	122	24% reduction	19% reduction	
Serious Assaults - MSV	4	5	2	60% reduction	50% reduction	
Serious Assaults – MSV & AWI	104.25	116	101	13% reduction	3% reduction	
Shoplifting	83.75	85	55	35% reduction	34% reduction	
Public order	41.75	58	51	12% reduction	22% increase	Result of increased POA offences detected by officers and improved crime data integrity

Figure 4 – Facebook survey



Contact details

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