



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

Robbery

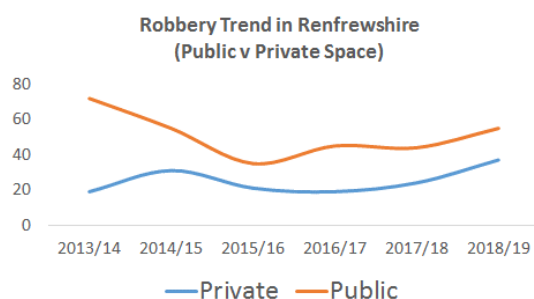
Robbery is defined as a theft that is accompanied by violence (threatened or actual) which deprives the victim of their property. In 2018/19, 92 robberies were recorded in Renfrewshire - an increase of 35.3% on the previous year, which equated to an additional 24 victims of this type of crime. The detection rate for robberies within this period was 73.9%, a notable increase on the previous year's rate of 60.3%.

Public and Private Space Robberies

While robberies occurring in 'public space' (a term which incorporates including street robberies, robberies occurring within common closes, and those targeting commercial premises such as convenience stores and betting shops) increased by approximately ten percent on the preceding five year average, the primary issue underlying the 35.3% increase in robberies was determined to relate to 'private space' robberies - i.e., those targeting victims within dwelling houses and other private residential premises. Robberies of this kind increased by more than 60% against the preceding five year average volume, and nearly 55% compared to the previous year.



Over 40% occurred in private spaces such as dwelling houses in the 2018/19 period. This is the highest proportion of 'private space' robberies recorded compared to the preceding five years. During the previous five year period overall, less than a third of robberies occurred within private settings.



This trend is highly representative of the general 'shift' from public space violence towards violence occurring within private settings. Several factors are assessed to

underlie this underlying shift, including the cultural shift towards alcohol consumption within the home setting in recent years - driven by the rising cost of alcohol and ever increasing, technology driven home entertainment options.

Private space violence (including robbery and assault with intent to rob) presents additional challenges to traditional preventative policing approaches, due to its 'hidden' nature, and lack of detection opportunities which are more often present in public spaces (e.g. CCTV coverage and presence of independent witnesses).

Commercial Robberies

While robberies targeting commercial premises continue to comprise only a small proportion of robberies overall, (slightly more than one in every ten robberies) crimes of this type reached the highest volume recorded since 2013/14 in Renfrewshire in the most recent year. Commercial robberies primarily targeted grocers and convenience stores, with no repeat locations identified in the 2018/19 period. While foodstuffs, tobacco products and low three-figure sums of cash were obtained by offenders in some of these robberies, in nearly half of commercial robberies, offenders failed to obtain any monies or other properties and fled empty handed. Two thirds of commercial robberies within 2018/19 were detected.

Offender and Victim Association

Research postulates that crimes of violence who are personally acquainted are most likely to occur within private, residential settings;ⁱ analysis of robbery within Renfrewshire indicated that in over three-quarters of private space robberies, the offender was known to the victim. While a substantial proportion of victims of street and other public space robberies also knew the offender, this was to a comparatively lesser degree (32%). Overall, just under half of identified robbery offenders were known to their victims. However, it should be noted that this proportion is assessed to be considerably higher - with many robberies involving



uncooperative complainers who refused to divulge any information to police, following the initial report - precluding the possibility of analysis of the nature of association between victim and offender in such cases. Notably, approximately eight percent of recorded robberies had a domestic element (i.e. the victim and offender were in or had previously been in a relationship together).

Uncooperative Complainers

The acquisition of accurate and comprehensive statements from all those involved within the criminal justice process, including witnesses, victims and suspects is an essential component of any police investigation.ⁱⁱ Without cooperative victims and witnesses, significant challenges are faced by police in arresting and charging suspects for crimes of robbery. In the current year, a minimum of five percent of recorded robberies in Renfrewshire involved uncooperative complainers or key witnesses. Further analysis identified that robbery crimes involving uncooperative victims/witnesses were less likely to be detected.

Alcohol

Research in the UK and beyond increasingly highlights the role of alcohol consumption in people becoming victims of violence and perpetrators of violence.ⁱⁱⁱ This continues to be the case in Renfrewshire, with approximately 32% of



all robberies being recorded as 'alcohol-related' in the current period. Alcohol was found to feature in a significant proportion of both 'public' and 'private' space violence in Renfrewshire featuring in over 40% of private space robberies and also more than a quarter of public space robberies.

Use of Weapons

More than half of recorded robberies did not involve the use of any weapon, instead involving threats of violence or acts of bodily violence (e.g. punching and kicking). Where weapons were involved, bladed weapons featured most commonly, featuring in slightly more than 20% of robberies in Renfrewshire. In many cases, where weapons were presented, these were used to threaten and intimidate robbery victims as opposed to being used to cause physical injury.



Stolen Property

Goods which are most frequently stolen in robberies are characterised by the acronym 'CRAVED' - they are concealable, removable, available, valuable, enjoyable and disposable. While cash and mobile phones featured most predominantly in terms of stolen goods in Renfrewshire robberies, other property targeted included credit and debit cards, jewellery and watches, clothing and cigarettes.



ⁱ Tompson, L. (2016) Explaining Temporal Patterns in Street Robbery. *Department of Security and Crime Science: University College London*.

ⁱⁱ Milne, B., & Bull, R. (2003) 'Interviewing by the Police'. In: Carson, D., & Bull, R. (eds):

Handbook of Psychology in Legal Contexts. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

ⁱⁱⁱ World Health Organization (2005) 'Alcohol and Interpersonal Violence: Policy Briefing'.