

NPoCC SIB Public Safety Events Threat Assessment

March 2023

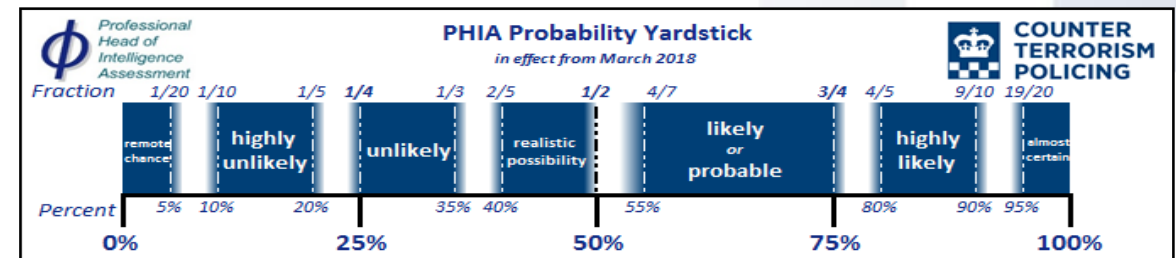
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Purpose

- The purpose of this document is to proportionately and lawfully share information to inform both 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 will provide 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 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.

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NPoCC SIB have received reports on 12 events for the period 16 February to 15 March 2023. This includes an event that took place over a number of nights at the same venue. Although reporting was received on a limited number of events, there are indications that specific criminality and safeguarding issues are beginning to increase. It is **likely** that as warmer months approach with the likelihood of more outdoor events, reporting of incidents will increase. This is partly due to the perception that the festival and summer season presents a greater risk of safety, criminality and safeguarding affected by the temporary environment and criminal opportunities.

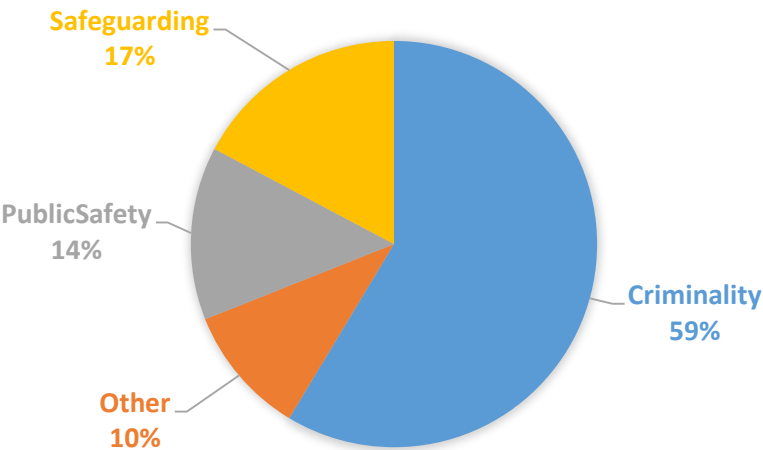
Reporting of the theft of mobile phones at music concerts is increasing. Over the period there have been reports of up to at least 16 stolen/lost phones at concerts, reports from across the country including the North East, North West and London regions. It is **likely** that this trend will continue at concerts and when the outdoor music festival season commences as the environment provides an environment for opportunist and organised criminals to steal mobile phones. It is **likely** that further regions will be affected by this type of criminality due to upcoming music tours and festivals in the next three months. It is **likely** that from the modus operandi of the majority of the thefts that there has been a level of organisation and expertise to commit offences undetected, including working in teams at the venues. Further development is required to establish any networks and disposal routes of the stolen phones to enable disruption of potential teams involved.

Sexual offences and harassment have been reported against attendees and staff at music and sporting events. Most reports relate to inappropriate touching of females in crowded environments which aids perpetrators to evade detection. An 'upskirting' offence was reported at an event where the demographic of the audience was **likely** to be young females. There is a **realistic possibility** there will be a minority of people exploiting the opportunities of vulnerable attendees through either their age or excess alcohol consumption to commit sexual offences.

Although there have been no reports of protests at events this month, it is **likely** looking ahead in the event calendar that there will be some that will attract demonstrations and protest stunts. This includes high profile sporting events in April 2023 such as the Grand National where live televised/media attendance will **likely** be utilised by protest groups to raise awareness for their cause. Further ahead, events such as the Eurovision Song Contest have a **realistic possibility** of being used as a platform not only for issues within environmental causes, but to increase recognition of international human rights concerns.



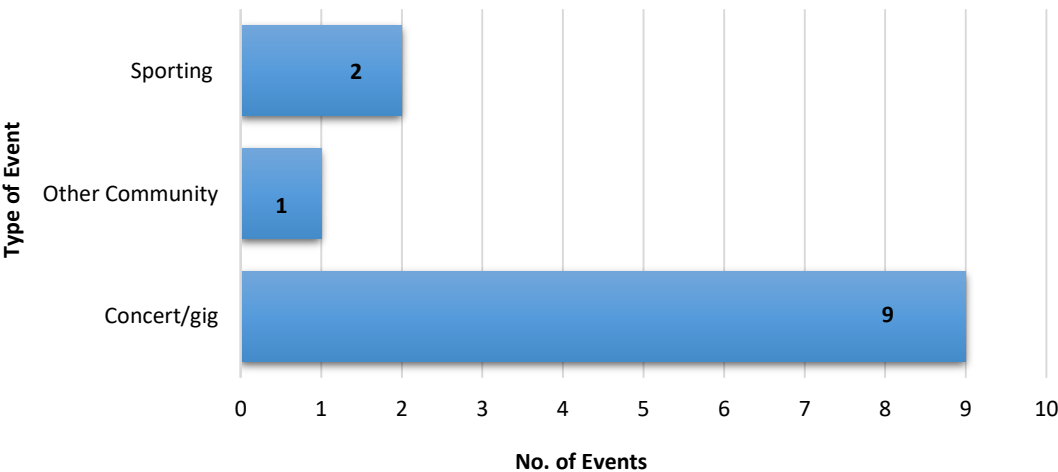
INCIDENT TYPE DISTRIBUTION - 16 FEBRUARY TO 15 MARCH 2023



CRIMINALITY - 59% OF TOTAL INCIDENTS



EVENT TYPE - 16 FEBRUARY TO 15 MARCH 2023



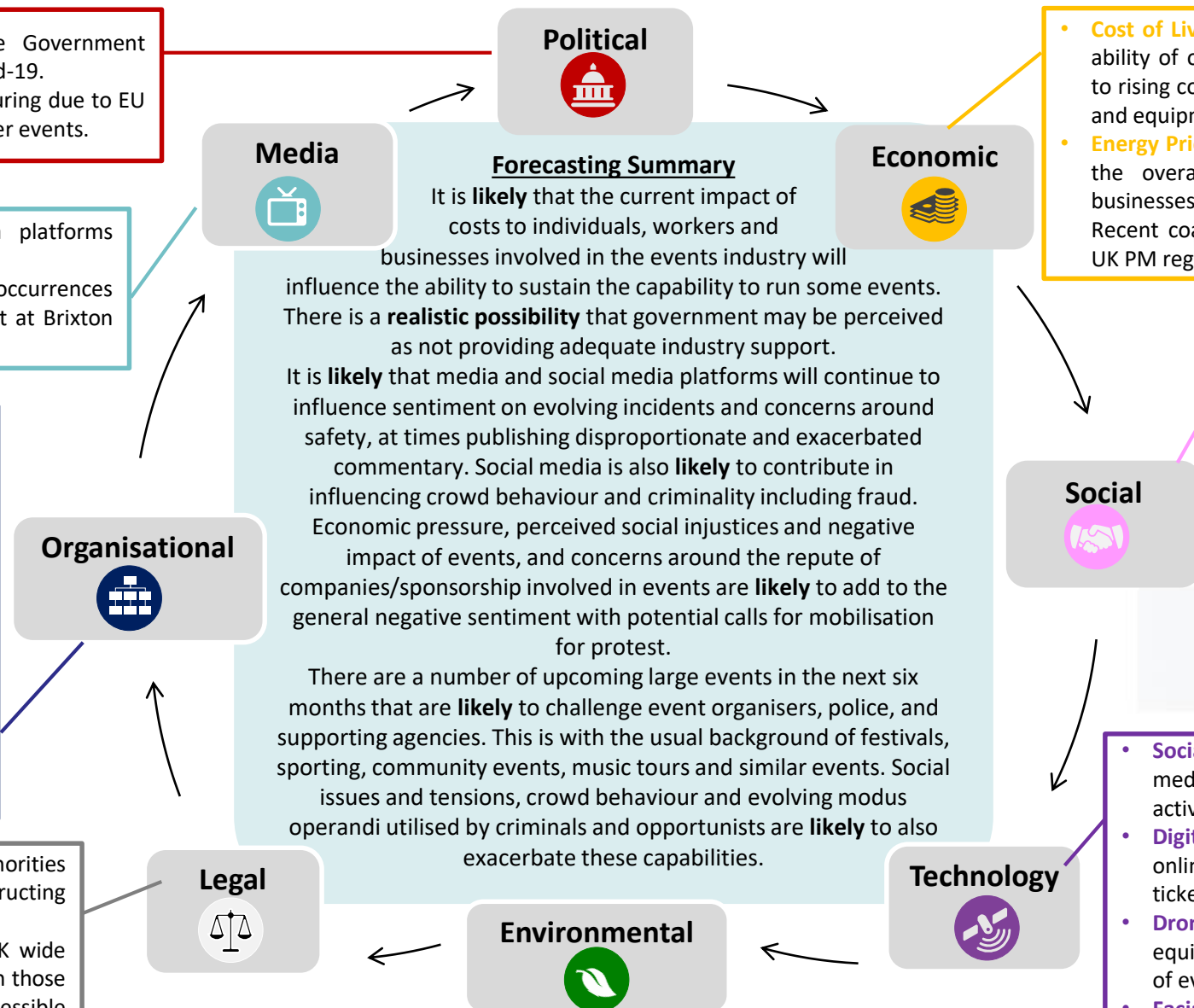
Most criminality or public safety incidents took place at music venues/concerts. It is **likely** reporting will continue to be higher at music concerts over the next two months due to the high volume of music tours taking place.

Criminality at events has emerged as the main thematic over the last month. This has been influenced by an increase in reporting of the theft of mobile phones at music concerts. Reporting is **likely** to continue at indoor music concerts until the end of May 2023, incidents are then likely to increase at outdoor festivals as these events recommence.

Safeguarding incidents were all sexual incident types of offences. These took place at concerts and crowded environments that are **likely** to provide an environment to evade detection of the perpetrator.

Currently other types of criminality and safeguarding reporting has been low. However, numbers are **likely** to be higher across most themes due to factors including non or late reporting by victims.

- **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 technology by police resulting in conflict with human rights groups.
- **Payment Technology:** Advancement and use of biometric/contactless payment options.



National Assessment:

It is **likely** over the next six months there will be individuals or groups attempting to smuggle items into events via various methods of concealment. This is **likely** to occur at music, sporting and night time economy events, but is **highly likely** to increase when outdoor music events commence from May 2023 onwards. Most reported incidents are **highly likely** to be of attendees smuggling items into the event for personal consumption. This includes alcohol and illegal drug substances. Methods often include adapting common items, secreting items on the body, or purchasing items that are purposely constructed for concealment. It is **highly likely** methods will continue to evolve as concert and festival goers remain determined to smuggle contraband into the events.

Tactic Image	Details	Event Type
 <p>Adapted Vape, drugs concealed (Image from Industry liaison)</p>	<p>Concealment - Vape</p> <p>February 2023 – Smuggling drugs into events for personal use include utilising ‘normal’ objects that may evade initial suspicion. A music event occurred in London where drugs were secreted in a vape. This is not a new tactic, previously occurring at festivals.</p>	<p>Concert</p>
 <p>Alcohol in hand sanitizer bottle (Image from Industry liaison)</p>	<p>Concealment – Hand Sanitiser</p> <p>Historic July 2022 – a hand sanitiser bottle was used in an attempt to smuggle in vodka at a festival.</p>	<p>Festival</p>

National Assessment

Theft offences have been reported at music events over the period. These have predominantly comprised of the theft of mobile phones. Thefts took place in the North West, North East, Wales and London regions. The music genre of the events ranged from heavy metal to punk to electronic dance music. However, they all had the commonality of close crowd dynamics to enable potential offenders to avoid detection and present a normalised scenario to be in close contact.

It is **likely** that organised teams of 'pickpockets' were responsible for the thefts at some of the events. Large numbers of phones were stolen, particularly newer models of iPhones and Samsungs. Phones being switched off to evade tracking and empty phone cases discarded at the venue are indications of more organised theft. Thefts have occurred despite measures introduced by venues to mitigate the risk indicating a level of expertise by the offenders.

It is a **realistic possibility** not all mobile phone thefts have been reported to police. There is a **realistic possibility** that having no phone insurance is a reason for some victims to not report the theft or that the owner believes it may have simply been lost. It is **likely** that music tours and festivals assessed by criminals as providing more opportunities for theft will be targeted in the upcoming months, with reported indicators already of further thefts as we move into the latter part of March 2023.

Incidents of Note

- **February 2023: (UK Concert Tour)** - Reports were received of theft of mobile phones at two dates of the tour of the French heavy metal band **Gojira**. At one date there were 15 reported lost/stolen phones initially, the other 10. After reports of thefts at the first event, extra control measures were employed at other dates to mitigate the risk. However, thefts still occurred at one venue that are **likely** to have been committed by organised thieves, indicators including empty phone cases discovered on the venue floor at the end of the event (Industry and police returns).
- **March 2023: (North East)** – Theft of mobile phones have occurred at two separate dance/DJ events in the North East region. Phones were stolen from the bags of attendees. At one incident, the cash cards enclosed in the phone case also had attempted usage. At another event, the stolen phone was tracked to the North West area (police return).
- **March 2023: (UK Concert Tour)** – The American hardcore punk band **Beartooth** commenced a UK tour on 14 March 2023. Thefts were reported at events including the theft of 16 mobile phones lost/stolen at one venue. (Police return).

Future Look

It is **likely** indoor venues, particularly music tours will be targeted where crowd dynamics are conducive to enabling undetected theft. There are several upcoming tours and festivals in the next three months that have a **realistic possibility** of attracting organised groups to steal phones at the event. These include for example:

- **Don Broco** – 21 – 25 March 2023 – UK tour – British rock band – there are indications already that the tour has been targeted by pickpockets.
- **Limp Bizkit** – 12 – 17 April 2023 – UK tour – American rap rock.
- **Sabaton** – 14 – 18 April 2023 – UK tour – Swedish heavy metal, support **Babymetal**.
- **Slam Dunk Festival** 27-28 May 2023 - UK Pop-Punk, Emo, Metal, and Alternative Music Festival.
- **Download Festival** 8 – 11 June 2023 – rock festival – includes acts/support acts that have previously been targeted for thefts including **Pendulum** and **Slipknot**, and support acts such as **Motionless in White** and **Stray from the Path** from the **Beartooth** tour.

Mobile phones and other high value goods in crowded spaces are **highly likely** to remain an attractive commodity to steal for individuals and groups as a means of financial gain. It is **likely** those intent on stealing items will attempt to evade security and any crime prevention tactics used by venues. It is **likely** organised theft groups of three – five members will attend some events to increase opportunity to steal if any are ejected or arrested.



National Assessment

Incidents of sexual assault and harassment have been reported at five different music and sporting events. These have occurred over London and the North East regions. Allegations of sexual harassment and assaults have a **realistic possibility** of being reported at some events, which is **likely** to increase following industry and government initiative to tackle violence against women and girls. However, currently the number of incidents is **likely** under represented, due to a number of explanations including lack of confidence with police or acceptance incidents are normalised behaviour.

Attendees and staff have reported experiencing inappropriate behaviour at events that include 'groping' type offences, 'upskirting' and indecent exposure. The close proximity/crowded environment of some events enables perpetrators to evade detection. As well as a crowded environment, some events may also present further opportunities due to the potential vulnerabilities of attendees. There is a **realistic possibility** that acts where the audience will attract a mainly younger female demographic will also attract a minority of individuals acting inappropriately. This may include 'upskirting' type offences, covered under the Voyeurism Act, as noted at a recent music event in the London region.

Charities and campaigns such as 'Safe Gigs for Women' continue to work for safer live music events to prevent sexual violence, including providing training. Although no spiking incidents have been reported this month, the Government also continue their national 'Enough' campaign which incorporates advice and awareness on 'spiking'.

Incidents of Note

- **February 2023: (London region)** – Two members of the venue welfare team at a music event claimed to have been inappropriately touched by a guest. The guest was ejected by a supervisor (Industry return)
- **February 2023: London region** – A male was arrested for 'upskirting' offences. He was observed taking photos and filming up girls' skirts, the victims unaware. The male was not knowledgeable of the act or their music, an act that is popular with a younger demographic, especially females (Industry and police returns).
- **February 2023: London region** – sporting event – an indecent exposure occurred at the event (Industry return).
- **March 2023: North** – two dance/DJ events took place in March where there have been reports of 'groping' sexual assaults on females (Police return).

Future Look

There is a **realistic possibility** that offenders will seek opportunities attending music and sporting events and the night time economy where the audience may be more vulnerable due to age or voluntary intoxication. This behaviour is **likely** to continue into the music festival environment from May 2023 onwards.

It is **likely** that schemes employed by industry and charities will encourage persons affected by this behaviour to report issues and seek support. It is also **likely** that raising awareness will reduce the normalisation of this behaviour in the settings.



Enough Campaign:
<https://enough.campaign.gov.uk/get-support>



Safe Gigs for Women:
<https://sgfw.org.uk/>



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