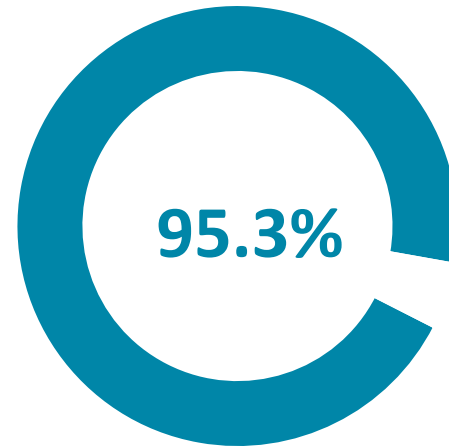


No Offence to 'Neds'

Exploring public perceptions and
media reporting of young people
involved in offending

Youth crime in Scotland

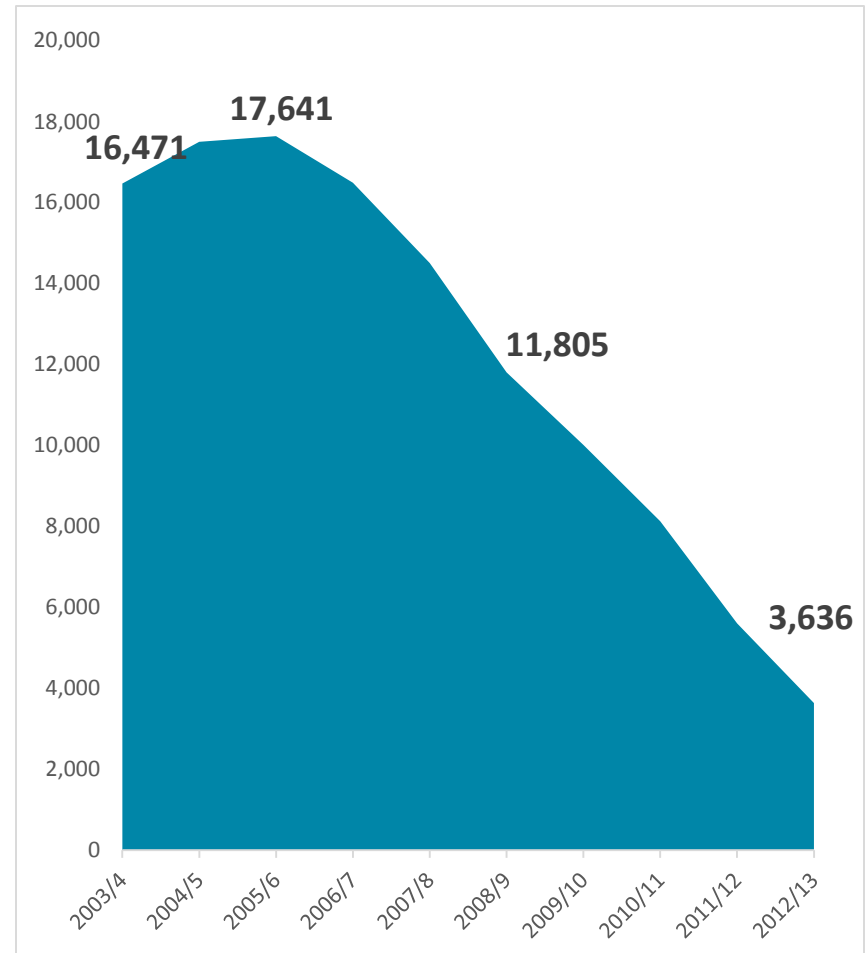
- The vast majority of young people do not get involved in offending behaviour



SPPF, 2013; GRO(S), 2012

Youth crime in Scotland

- Youth crime has steadily fallen since 2006/07

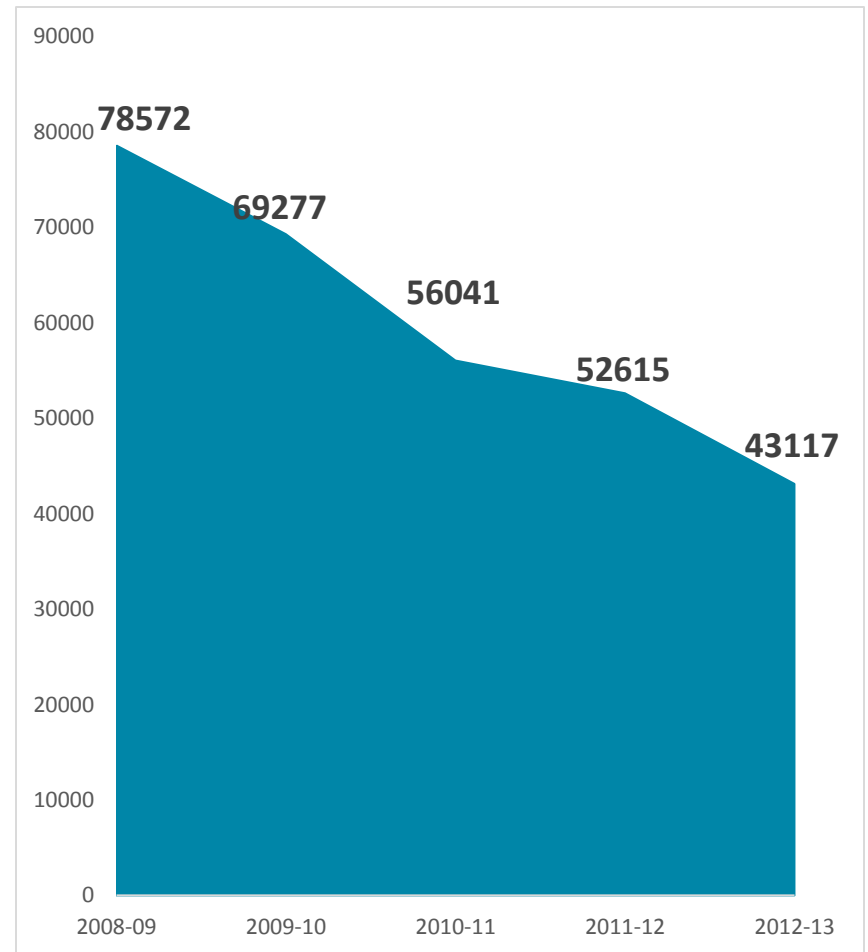


SCRA (2013)

Youth crime in Scotland

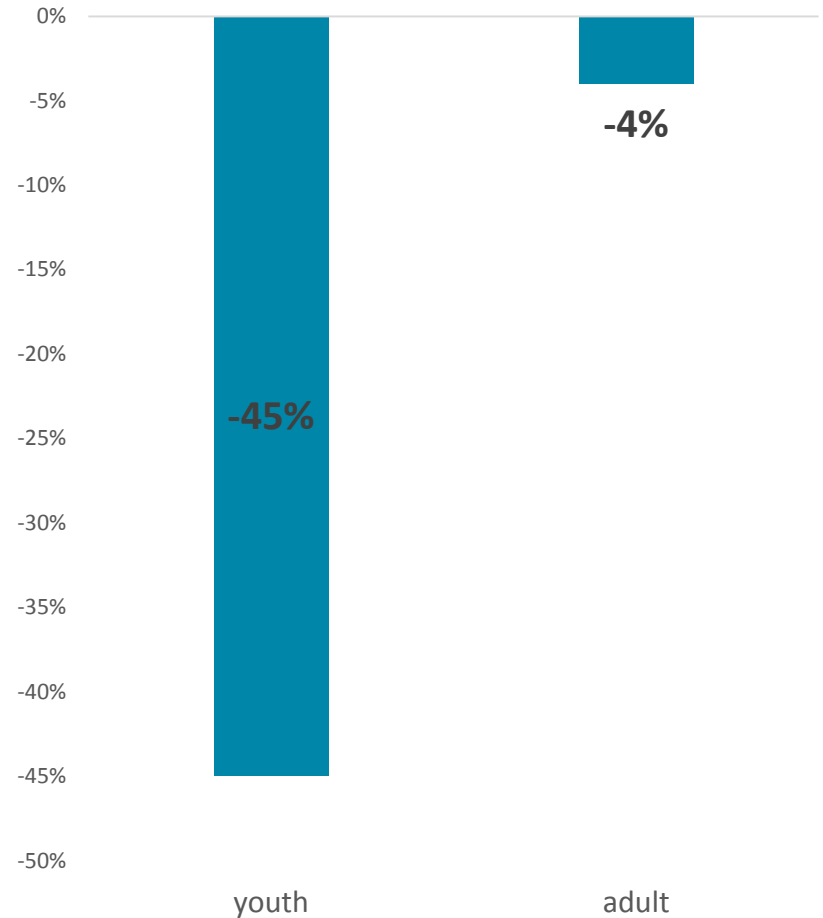
- Youth crime has steadily fallen since 2006/07

SPPF (2013)



Youth crime in Scotland

- Youth crime has fallen at a faster rate than adult crime

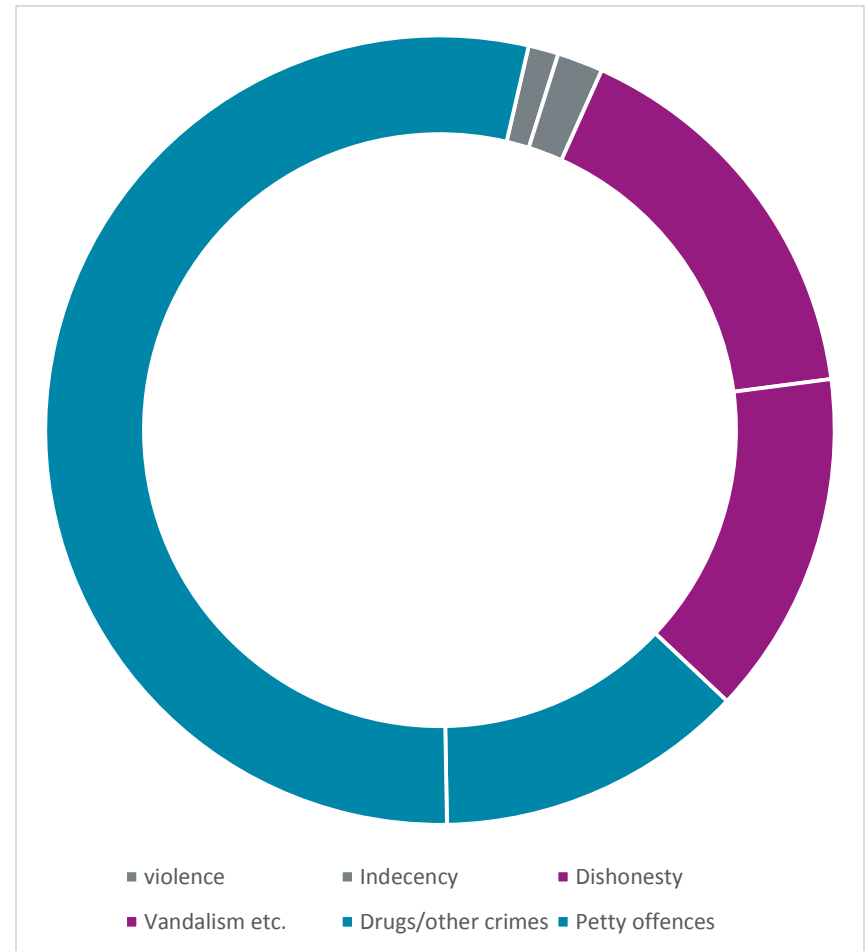


SPPF (2013)

Youth crime in Scotland

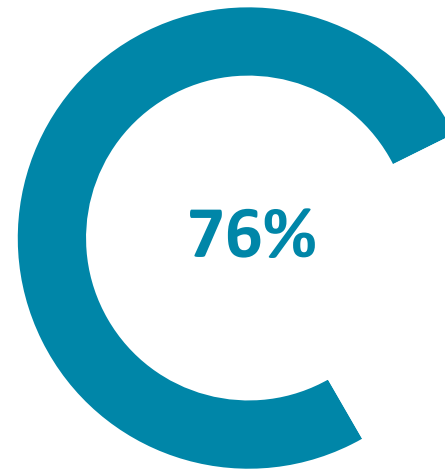
- The majority of youth crime involves petty or nuisance crime

SPPF (2013)



Perceptions of Crime

- 76% of the general public perceive crime in their area to have stayed the same or reduced in the past two years



SCJS (2014)

Perceptions of Crime

- However you could also say that 85% of the public think crime has stayed the same or increased in the past two years
- Adults overestimate their likelihood of being a victim of crime (i.e. burglary 6x overestimated)



SCJS (2014)

Perceptions of youth crime

- In 2004, **60%** of respondents to the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey think that young people's behaviour was worse than it was in the past
- **69%** thought that youth crime was higher than a decade ago
- Up to **two-thirds** of respondents thought that various types of youth crime-related problems (groups of young people hanging around; vandalism etc.) were common in their area

Perceptions of Crime

- Studies tended to find a perception that crime was increasing even when it was falling
- Ipsos MORI (2006) survey of 1001 respondents: young people were perceived to commit **47%** of crimes (on average)
- (In Scotland in 2012/13 the actual proportion was **16%**)

Reasons behind the perceptions?

- **Personal experience** of crime (the risk of being a victim was 16.9% in 2012/2013)
- **Contact with young people:** In SSA 2004 biggest concerns were framed as either a 'lack of opportunities for young people' or 'young people hanging around' around depending on contact

Reasons behind the perceptions?

- **Media:** most common sources of crime information in CYCJ survey were: Newspapers (**100%**); TV News (**73%**).
- Sources of information about youth crime (Hough and Roberts, 2004)
 - Media **64%**
 - Crimes committed against me or people I know **18%**
 - What other people say **16%**
 - Personal observation **9%**
 - Government statistics **5%**

The role of the media?

- “print media influences public opinion on crime trends by increasing coverage of certain crimes disproportionately to the amount of crime in a community” Carli (2008)
- “...heavy media consumption had statistically significant relationships with fear of crime and punitive attitudes” Boda and Szabó (2011)

The role of the media?

- Certainly media reporting can paint a negative picture of young people

Are our youths the worst in Europe?

Aberdeen Evening Express,
Nov 3 2006

Tough ASBOs ban teenage gang from town centre for five years

The Scotsman, Oct 25 2006

Cops move on 40 youth in new gang blitz

Evening Times, Sept 5 2006

Media Reporting

- However, does the media get a ‘bad press’?
- Analysis of 6 papers across:
Glasgow; Edinburgh and Aberdeen
- Compared headlines relating to young people from a six month period in 2006, to the same six-month period in 2013

Media Reporting: 2006

- Almost half of all headlines painted a negative picture of young people (46.6%)

“Teen ‘mob’ sprays seat at museum”

EE, July 22 2006

“Tougher action needed on neds”

ET, Dec 4 2006

- Only 17.2% of headlines outlined young people doing something positive

“Reward for young volunteers”

P&J, Sept 1 2006

- The rest were either neutral (15.2%) or reported the young person to be a victim of crime or other circumstances (21%).

“Teenagers in China to sit Highers”

Scotland on Sunday, Sept 3 2006

Media Reporting: 2013

- There was a notable decrease in headlines that painted a negative picture of young people (28.9%, compared to 46.6% in 2006)

“Teenager admits travel fraud charges”

The Herald, Aug 17 2013

“Gang of 40 young thieves causes havoc”

P&J, Sept 20 2013

- There was an increase in headlines that describe young people as a victim of crime or circumstance (31.1%, compared to 21%)

“Criminal records ruin young lives”

Scotland on Sunday, Nov 3 2013

- There was an increase in headlines that were neutral about young people (22.5% compared to 15.2%)

“Referendum drive to get young voters”

ET, Oct 1 2013

Media Reporting: 2013

- However, only **17.4%** of headlines outlined young people achieving something positive (compared to **17.2%** in 2006)

“Teenagers march in support of their deported classmates”

The Herald, Oct 18 2013

“Young choir raises £450 for charity”

EE, Dec 27 2013

Media Reporting

2006

- 1,088
- “thug” 103 (9.5%)
- “knife” 32 (2.9%)
- “gang” 25 (2.3%)
- “yob” 9 (0.8%)
- “ned” 9 (0.8%)

2013

- 768
- “thug” 48 (6.3%)
- “knife” 10 (1.3%)
- “gang” 6 (0.8%)
- “yob” 0 (0%)
- “ned” 1 (0.1%)

What is behind the change?

- Less stories about young people in general?
- Less crime?
- Changes in the media?
- Societal changes?

Conclusions?

- Whatever the reason these are positive changes.
- However, given that less **5%** of young people were involved in any level of offending is this still a fair reflection of young people in the media?