



UNIVERSITY OF  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



**The Gloucester City Safe Scheme:  
*Examining views of the Scheme  
provided by the public and the  
Scheme's members***

Conducted by a research team from the University of  
Gloucestershire, School of Natural and Social Sciences

*March, 2017*

## **Acknowledgements:**

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## **Executive summary**

The Gloucester City Safe scheme is a not for profit crime reduction partnership designed to help reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in the county of Gloucestershire. The Scheme operates in two main locations: Gloucester and Stroud. Members comprise businesses from the day and night-time economies. Working in partnership with the Police, Local Authorities and other stakeholders, the Scheme aims to tackle local occurrences of issues such as shoplifting, theft, anti-social behaviour, alcohol related disorder, street drinking and begging.

In October 2016, students from the University of Gloucestershire conducted surveys and interviews to gather both public and member's views on the Scheme's operation in Gloucester city centre. In total 560 members of the public were surveyed and 35 interviews were conducted with Scheme members. This report presents some key findings from this research.

### **Public awareness of the Scheme**

Of the 560 members of the public surveyed in Gloucester City centre, 208 (37%) had heard of the Scheme. This was most commonly through word of mouth or observing the stickers displayed in windows of member premises. Almost all of those who had heard of the Scheme knew at least one accurate piece of information about the Scheme.

### **Public views on crime in Gloucester city centre**

Approximately two-thirds of the public sample stated that crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre. Viewing crime as a problem in Gloucester and feeling unsafe in Gloucester was reported by a higher percentage of those who had heard of the Scheme than of those who had not heard of the Scheme.

### **Public views on the Scheme**

Just under half of those who had heard of the Scheme stated that the Scheme has been successful in reducing crime in Gloucester. Offenders 'not taking the sanctions seriously', a general 'lack of support', 'crime still occurring at non-member locations' and 'not enough members', were all stated by the sample to be factors that could prevent the Scheme from reducing crime in Gloucester.

### **How members use the Scheme**

Members make use of the Scheme's information sharing resources to ensure that they are aware of details concerning those who have offended or received sanctions through the Scheme. The content of and process for making reports to the Scheme appeared to vary among members. Incidents of 'theft' and 'shoplifting' were most commonly reported by retail businesses whereas issues of 'violence', 'drunkenness' and 'anti-social behaviour' were reported primarily by the pubs, bars and other night-time economy members of the Scheme. Some members report incidents directly to the Scheme, whereas others pass information to security guards or the police and then make a separate report to the Scheme. Matters are more likely to go unreported when members are exposed to multiple incidents in a short space of time.

### **Member views on the Scheme**

All the members stated that their £1 per day membership fee represents value for money. Members were positive about the information and resources that they have access to through the Scheme, particularly the regular, prompt, useful emails which aid their awareness of individuals known to be offending. Members welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with businesses, the police, and other agencies through the Scheme. Members noted that the joint vigilance achieved through this partnership working arrangement provides a sense of

connectivity, a shared 'team' purpose and 'peace of mind'. Many members reported an increased sense of safety and community cohesion as a result of their membership.

### **Member views on the successes of the Scheme**

Around two-thirds of the members reported that the Scheme is successful in reducing crime in Gloucester. Roughly one-third of members stated that the Scheme deters people from offending. However, the large majority of members noted that there are a small number of prolific repeat offenders (primarily shoplifters) who are not concerned about the implications of their actions, and so are not at all deterred by the Scheme and its sanctions.

### **Considerations for the Scheme**

The research team recommends that the Scheme continues its efforts in the following areas:

- **Promoting consistency among members concerning the recording, reporting and issuing of sanctions;**
- **Sustaining the sense of shared ownership and community cohesion among members;**
- **Raising public awareness of the Scheme, expanding the Scheme and recruiting new members**
- **Enhancing the search functionality on the web platform for members**

These areas are discussed in more detail in the final section of the report.

# 1. Introduction and context

## 1.1 Introduction

The Gloucester City Safe scheme (hereafter ‘the Scheme’) is a not for profit crime reduction partnership designed to help reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. The Scheme’s members comprise businesses from the day and night-time economies in Gloucester, Stroud and the surrounding areas. They work in partnership with the Police, Local Authorities and other stakeholders to tackle local occurrences of issues such as shoplifting, theft, anti-social behaviour, alcohol related disorder, street drinking and begging.

In October 2016, criminology and sociology students from the University of Gloucestershire conducted surveys and interviews to gather views on the Scheme and collect information about the Scheme’s use. Students surveyed 560 members of the public in Gloucester city centre and conducted interviews with 35 of the Scheme’s members located in the centre of Gloucester. This report, produced by academic staff at the University of Gloucester for the Scheme’s Manager, Directors, members and other interested parties, provides an analysis of the data that were collected.

## 1.2. Background to the Scheme

Gloucester City Safe was established in May 2014. The Scheme is managed by Richard Burge, a retired police officer who spent his 30 year career working in the city of Gloucester. Richard and the Scheme’s Directors work closely with the police, Local Authority representatives and city managers to run the Scheme and manage its operation. The Scheme was first introduced in the city of Gloucester but has since expanded to include members in the surrounding area and in the nearby town of Stroud. The Scheme’s members are the businesses, restaurants, bars, retail establishments and transport services operating in Gloucester and nearby areas that have chosen to join the Scheme. For a membership fee of £1 per day, businesses commit to using and enforcing an exclusion based sanction system and gain access to an information sharing network. There were 24 members when the Scheme was first launched in 2014, and in January 2017 there were around 130 members.

The exclusion-based sanction system has two tiers. Members can issue ‘yellow cards’ to persons in or near their premises who they deem to have behaved in a manner that warrants such a sanction. A first yellow card is a warning and a second yellow card results in an exclusion which applies to all member premises. In more serious instances, persons can receive an exclusion (or a ‘red card’) without prior warning. Members can issue warnings themselves or relay information to the Scheme manager to issue the warning on their behalf. Exclusions are usually issued by the Scheme’s manager in partnership with the police and last for 12 months. Although the sanctions themselves are not legally binding, they are often enforced by the police and have in some instances been a factor within the police’s decision to issue a Criminal Behaviour Order. In each of the full calendar years during which the Scheme has been operational (2015 and 2016) there have been roughly 1000 incidents reported to the Scheme. At any one time there are usually around 100 exclusions issued through the Scheme that are live.

Information is communicated to and between members via a secure radio network, a secure website and through regular email updates. Information is shared over the radio network when incidents have just occurred and a suspect is still in the area (to ensure that other members are aware) or when someone who has received a sanction previously or is known to the police for offending has been spotted in or near to a member’s premises. The secure website holds information on those who have received sanctions, invites members to help identify unknown

offenders caught on camera, provides information on other relevant news and GCS events and holds a directory of members. The information on the website is organised in to 'galleries', through which details of the incidents reported to the Scheme are stored. A single incident will be added to all the relevant galleries on the website. For example, an incident that took place in Gloucester involving a youth, that occurred at night and that resulted in an exclusion would be added to the galleries titled 'Youth disorder in the city', 'Night-time offender', and 'Exclusions from member business and services'. A list of the galleries is included in Appendix C. There is also a Smart Phone application available to members that provides many of the same functions as the website. A regular email update is circulated to members by the Scheme manager containing information on the latest sanctions and other relevant news.

Staff and students at the University of Gloucester have worked with and supported the Scheme since soon after its inception. This is the third year in which the University has conducted surveys and interviews to gather information on the Scheme for its management, members and other interested stakeholders, and the University's staff and students value this important partnership.

### **1.3. Methodology and data collection**

This study was designed by academic staff at the University of Gloucestershire to capture views on or relevant to the function and operation of the Gloucester City Safe scheme. Second year BSc Criminology, BA Sociology, and BSC Criminology & Sociology students at the University of Gloucestershire collected the data. There are two main components to this data:

The first component was a short questionnaire used to survey members of the public (included at Appendix A). This survey was conducted on a Friday evening and during the day on a Monday in October 2016 in the centre of Gloucester. Members of the public were approached at random and asked about their perceptions of crime in Gloucester and their knowledge of the Scheme. Numbers of completed questionnaires were 199 from the Friday evening exercise and 361 from the Monday daytime exercise, giving a total of 560.

The second component consisted of interviews with members of the Scheme (the interview script is included at Appendix B). Members were asked about their experience of being part of the Scheme, about how they record and report information to the Scheme on the incidents that have taken place in their premises and about the Scheme's strengths, its benefits for members and improvements that could be made. Thirty-five members (including retail businesses, bars, pubs and clubs) located in the centre of Gloucester and in the Gloucester Quays were interviewed in October 2016. The data generated through the survey and interviews were analysed and the findings are presented in this report.

### **1.4. Structure of the report**

The remainder of the report is organised in to two sections:

- **Section 2** considers the views of the 560 members of the public surveyed as part of the research.
- **Section 3** considers the views of Scheme members interviewed as part of this research.

## 2. Public perceptions of the Scheme

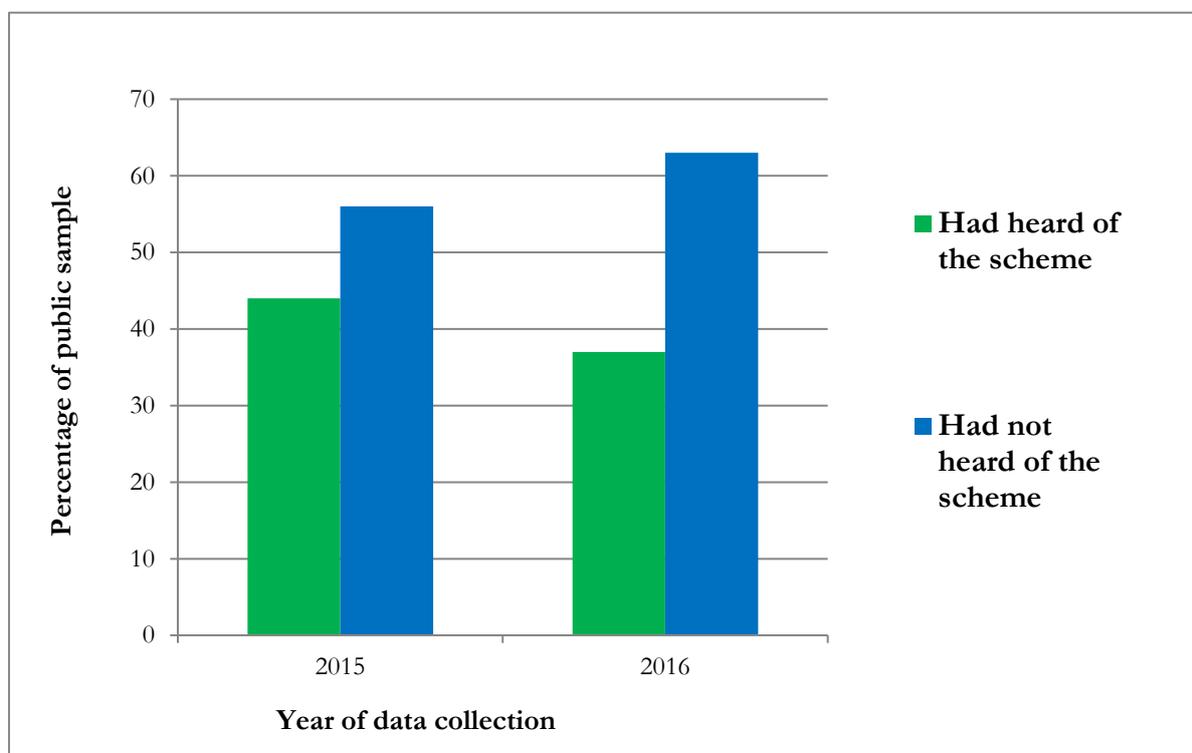
### 2.1 About the sample

A sample of 560 members of the public approached in Gloucester city centre were asked about their views and awareness of the Scheme. Of this 560, 360 (64%) lived within Gloucester or within five miles of Gloucester, and 370 (66%) visited Gloucester city centre once a week or more. Figures A and B in Appendix D show all the responses to the questions on these topics. Respondents were asked about the reason for their visit to Gloucester city centre on the day that they were surveyed, and the most common responses were for shopping (178/32%), for work (85/15%), visiting a pub, bar or nightclub (79/14%), accessing services such as the Bank or Post Office (72/13%), or eating out (64/11%).

### 2.2 Respondent awareness of the Scheme

Members of the public were asked whether they had heard of the Gloucester City Safe scheme. There were 208 (37%) respondents who had heard of the Scheme and 350 (63%) who had not. This is displayed in Figure 1 (along with responses to the same question gathered through a similar survey<sup>1</sup> conducted in October 2015). Those who had heard of the Scheme were asked how. Word of mouth (104 of 208) appeared to be the most common means through which respondents had heard about the Scheme by some margin, followed by the stickers that are displayed in the front windows of members' premises. Other responses to this question are displayed in Figure 2.

**Figure 1: Respondent awareness of the Scheme**



<sup>1</sup> A similar survey was conducted by University of Gloucestershire students in October 2015. 619 members of the public surveyed in Gloucester city centre were asked whether they had heard of the Scheme. 272 (44%) had heard of the Scheme and 347 (56%) had not heard of the Scheme.

**Figure 2: How respondents had heard of the Scheme**

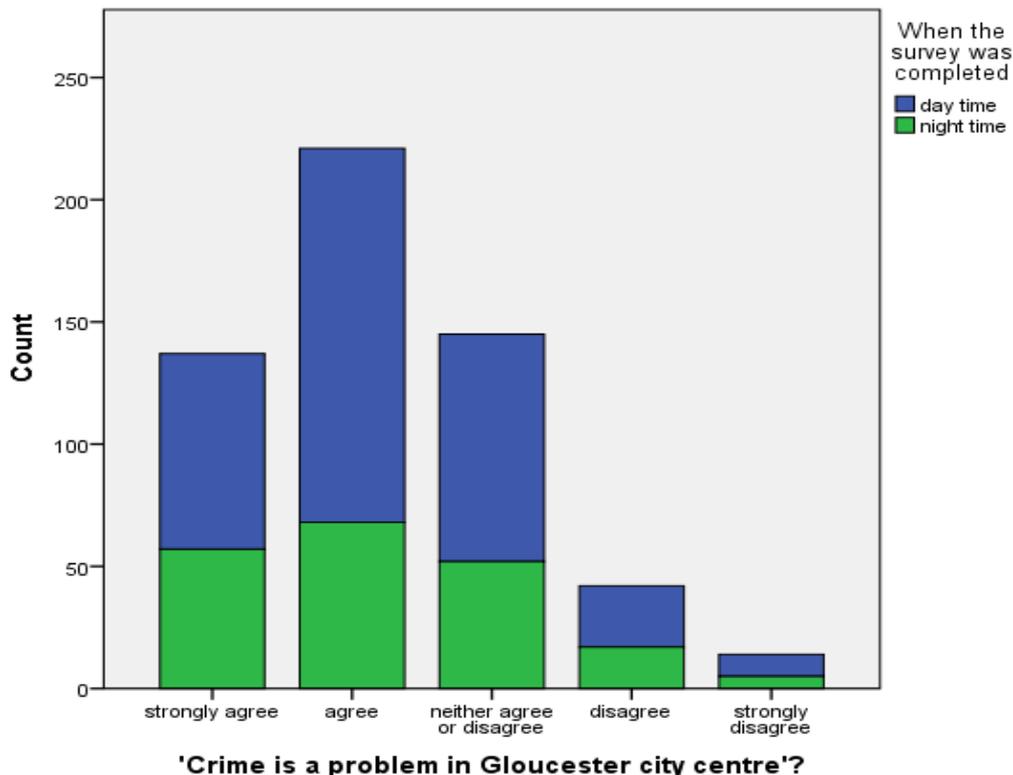
How did the respondents hear about the Scheme	Frequency
Word of mouth	104
Stickers	59
Work/employment	37
Social networking sites	35
Newspaper	28
Radio	18
Flags in the street	17
Flier	15

Respondents who had heard of the Scheme were also asked what they knew about the Scheme. There were only 12 respondents who had heard of the Scheme who did not know at least one piece of accurate information about the Scheme. A little over half of the respondents who had heard of the Scheme knew that it was a scheme for businesses in Gloucester (119 of 208) and slightly fewer knew that the Scheme used a yellow and red card sanctioning system (96 of 208).

### 2.3 Respondent views on crime and safety in Gloucester

Members of the public were asked for their views on crime and personal safety in Gloucester. As the Scheme works to tackle the former and increase the latter, the data presented here offers a valuable insight into public perceptions on these relevant topics. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement 'crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre'. Figure 3 shows the responses to this question coloured according to whether the respondent was surveyed during the evening or the day time.

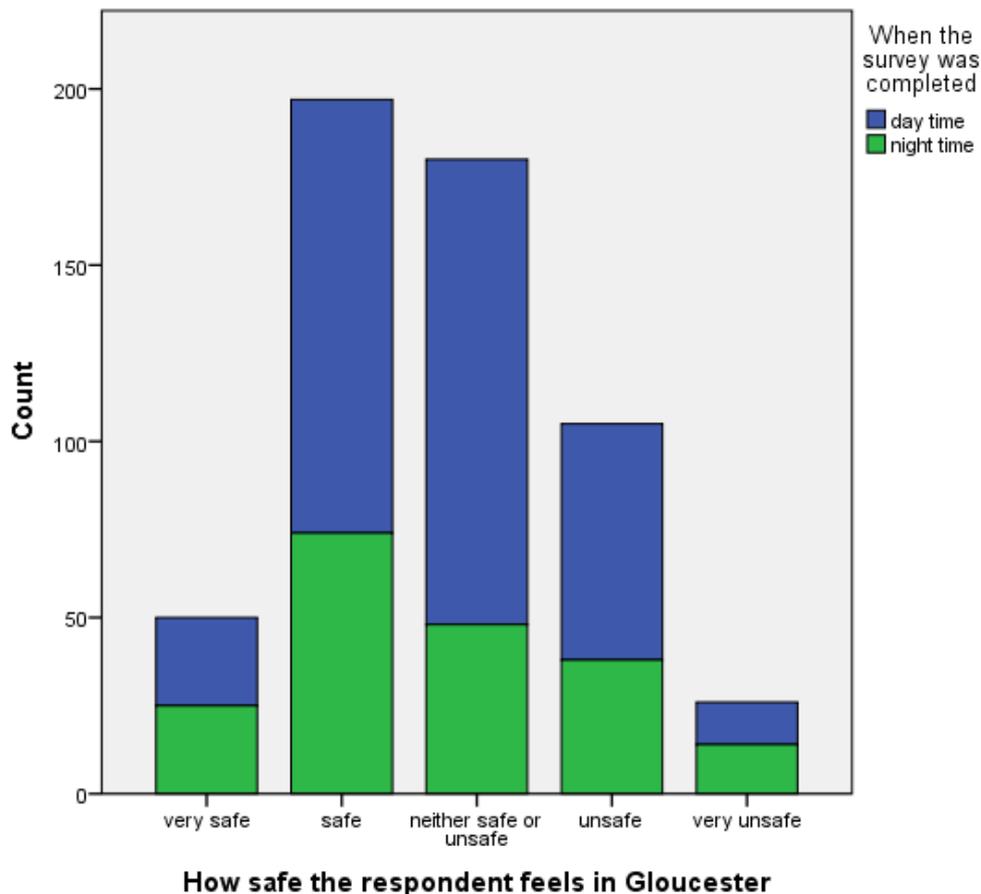
**Figure 3: The extent to which respondents agreed with the statement 'crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre'.**



The majority of respondents (358/64%) either strongly agreed (137/25%) or agreed (221/40%) with the statement ‘crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre’. The proportion of responses to each response option was similar across the day time and night time data.

Respondents were asked how safe they felt in Gloucester. Figure 4 shows the responses to this question coloured according to whether the respondent was surveyed during the evening or the day time.

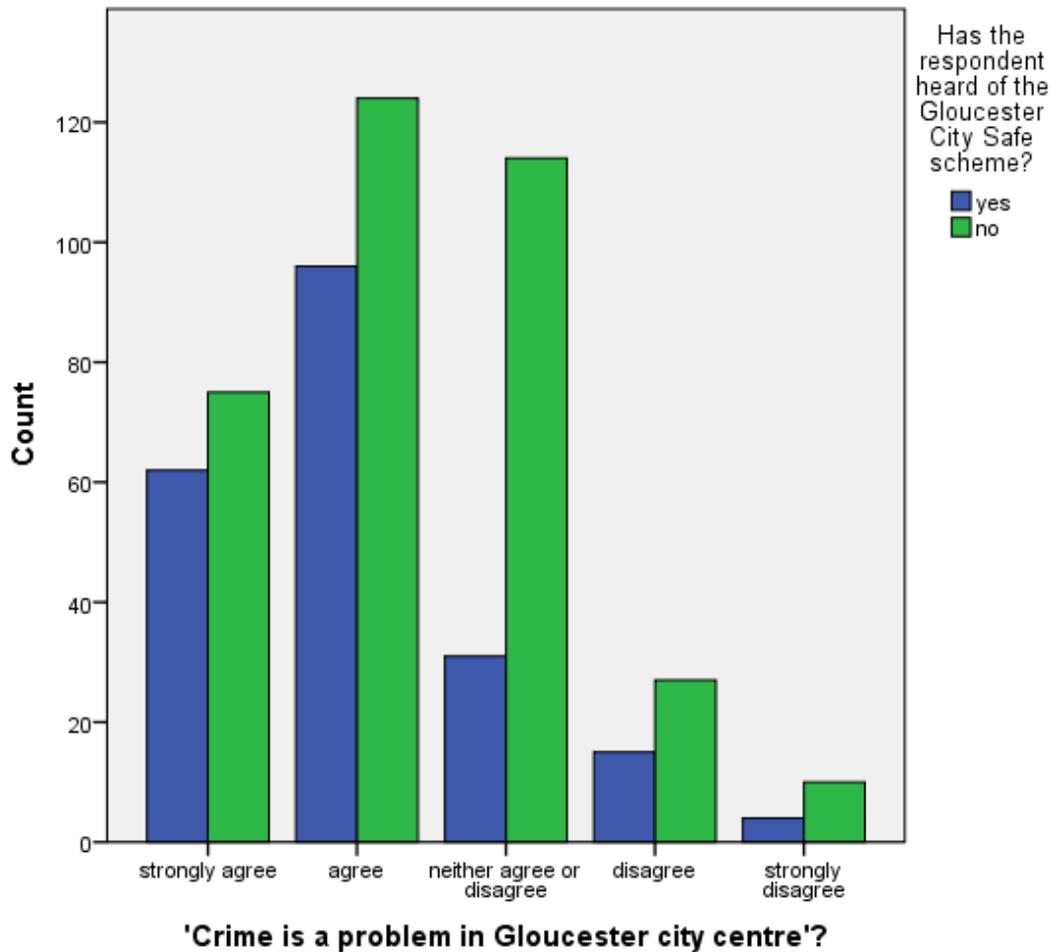
**Figure 4: How safe respondents feel in Gloucester**



Although 44% of respondents stated that they felt ‘very safe’ (50/9%) or ‘safe’ (197/35%), there were still almost a quarter of respondents who stated that they felt ‘unsafe’ (105/19%) or ‘very unsafe’ (26/5%) in Gloucester. There was little indication that respondents felt more or less safe in the daytime or night time as response patterns were broadly similar across the two sub-groups of respondents.

Comparing the sample’s views on crime and safety with their awareness of the Scheme provides some further insight. There were 208 respondents (37% of the whole sample) who had heard of the Scheme and 350 (63%) who had not. Figure 5 shows responses to the question ‘Crime is a problem in Gloucester City centre’ split in to two columns showing respondent awareness of the Scheme.

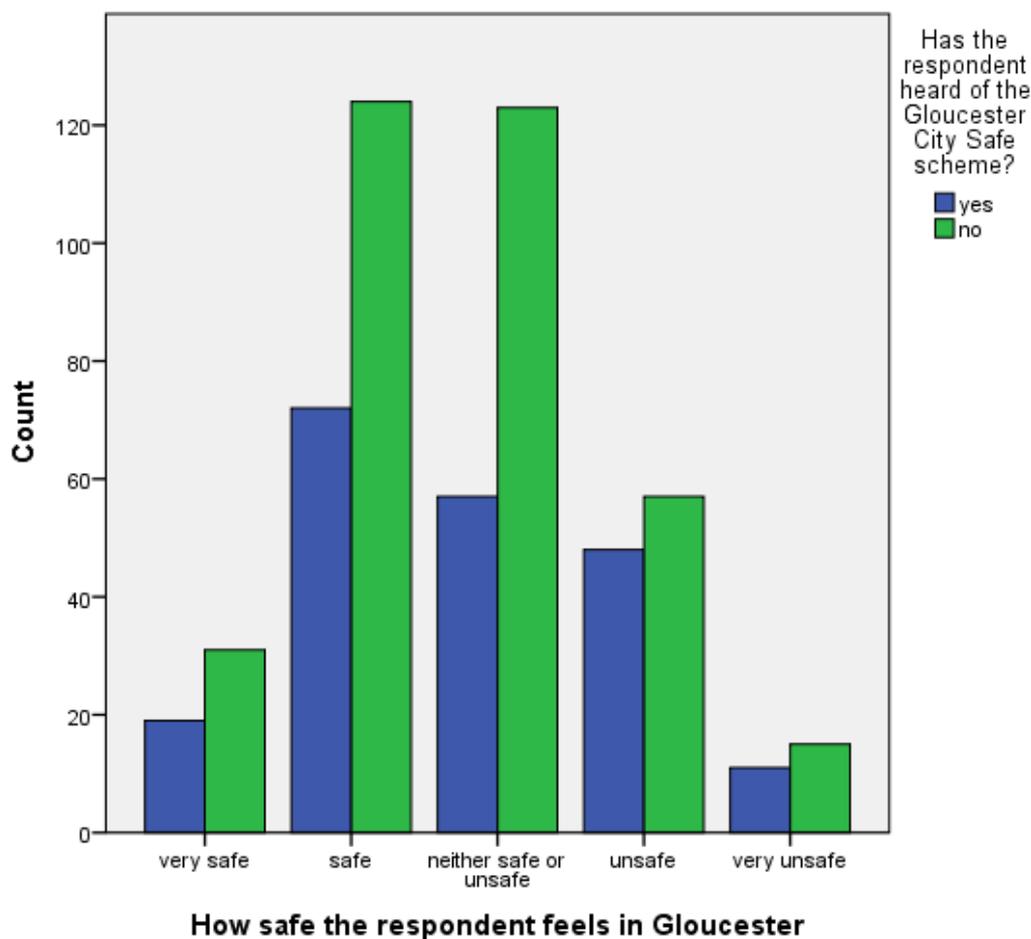
**Figure 5: Awareness of the Scheme and the extent to which respondents agreed with the statement 'crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre'.**



Dividing the sample in this manner allows us to consider the possible association between having heard of the Scheme and a person's view of crime in Gloucester City Centre. 76% of the respondents who were aware of the Scheme 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre. A lower figure of 56% of those who were not aware of the Scheme 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre. This is a noteworthy difference, with a considerably higher percentage of those who had heard of the Scheme stating that crime is a problem. The figures for these calculations are displayed in full at Figure C in Appendix D.

Another comparison provides further insight in to this matter. Figure 6 shows responses to the question that explored how safe the respondent feels in Gloucester split in to two columns to show respondent awareness of the Scheme.

**Figure 6: Awareness of the Scheme and how safe the respondents feel in Gloucester**



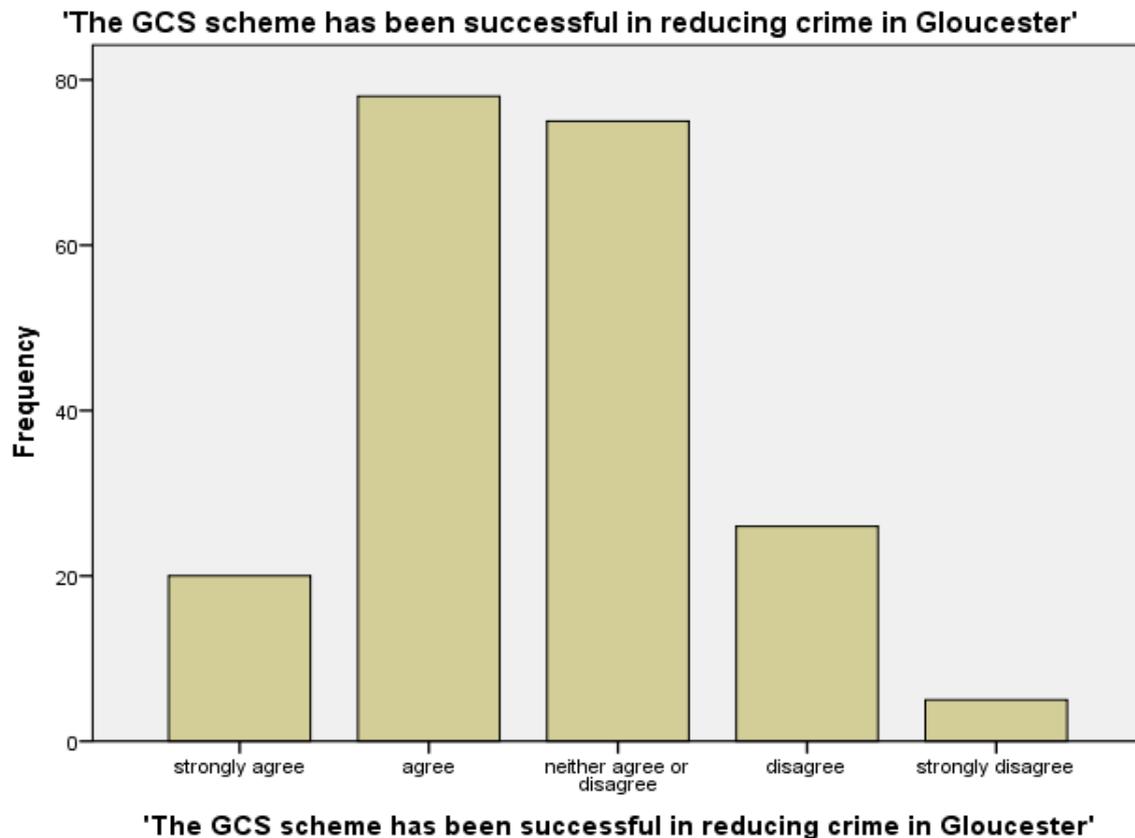
Responses here for both groups (i.e. those who had and had not heard of the Scheme) followed a similar distribution across the response options for the question on feelings of safety. The same percentage of those who had heard of the Scheme and of those who had not heard of the Scheme reported feeling 'very safe' or 'safe' in Gloucester (44%). 28% of those who had heard of the Scheme stated that they felt 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe', whereas a lower figure of 18% of those who had not heard of the Scheme stated that they felt 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe'. The figures for these calculations are displayed in full at Figure D in Appendix D.

It is important to note that respondent numbers are relatively small in the sub-sample comparisons that are presented here, and to recognise this when considering the possible relationship between awareness of the Scheme and perceptions of crime and safety. At the same time, the existence of crime reduction measures can be the first thing that alerts a person to the threat of crime, and this may have been the case for some of those in this sample.

#### **2.4 The Scheme and public perceptions of crime reduction**

Participants were asked questions about the Scheme and its efforts to reduce crime in Gloucester. Those who had heard of the Scheme (208) were asked about the extent to which they agreed with the statement 'the Scheme has been successful in reducing crime in Gloucester'. Just under half of these respondents (98/48%) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with this statement. However, a significant proportion selected 'neither agree or disagree' (75/37%) in response to this question. Responses are displayed in full in figure 7.

Figure 7: The extent to which respondents agreed with the statement ‘the Scheme has been successful in reducing crime in Gloucester’



All respondents (560) were asked whether there were things that they thought might prevent the Scheme from reducing crime in Gloucester. Their responses are shown at Figure 8. Two-fifths (42%/234) of the respondents stated that offenders not taking the sanctions seriously might have this effect. Because the sanctions carry no formal legal weighting or direct legal consequences themselves there is indeed a risk of this. Although there have been a small number of instances where serious and/or repeat Scheme offenders have received police Criminal Behaviour Orders, these were exceptional cases and there is currently no formal mechanism in place to underpin Scheme warnings or bans with punitive legal sanctions.

Figure 8: Responses to the question: ‘What might prevent the Scheme from reducing crime in Gloucester?’

What might prevent the Scheme from reducing crime?	Percentage <sup>2</sup> /Frequency
Offenders not taking the sanctions seriously	42%/234
Lack of support	29%/163
Crime still occurring at non-member locations	28%/156
Not enough members	26%/145
Better publicity	2%/12

<sup>2</sup> Participants could select multiple responses so percentages do not total 100% here.

Other responses here are equally pertinent. 'Lack of support' from those who live and work in Gloucester, from the Scheme's members and from other stakeholders will prevent the Scheme from functioning successfully. The Scheme will be at its most effectively when it is supported fully by the community, and it relies upon the prompt and consistent sharing of information, upon the support of its members and partners, and upon the hard work of its manager. Without each of these elements the Scheme cannot achieve its principal aim of reducing crime. Similar to this is the limitation posed by 'not enough members'. The Scheme manager and his colleagues work hard to publicise the Scheme and reach out to new members, but there are still retail business, restaurants, pubs and bars in Gloucester and in the surrounding areas that are not members of the Scheme.

The view that crime may still occur at non-member locations chimes with a popular discourse in contemporary criminology. In some instances, crime reduction initiatives can cause crime to be displaced rather than prevented fully. It is possible that those that are aware of Gloucester City Safe, or that have received sanctions through the Scheme, are only deterred from engaging in delinquent behaviours on Scheme member premises and not elsewhere. It is only possible to speculate here, and access to crime data held by the police (specifically to the records of those who had received sanctions through the Scheme and to records of all incidents reported at member premises and at similar comparable locations) would be required for a detailed examination of this.

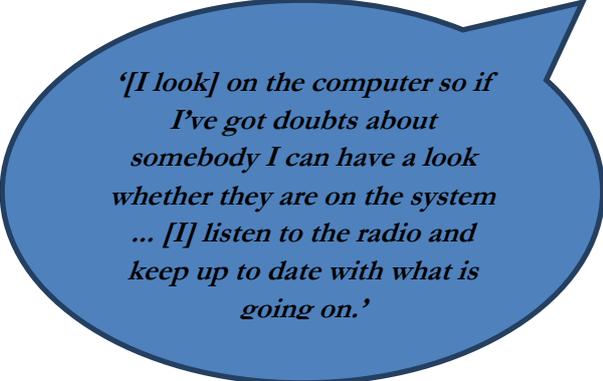
### 3. Member perceptions of the Scheme

#### 3.1 The sample of members

Interviews were conducted with 35 members of the Scheme. All were businesses operating in Gloucester city centre or Gloucester Quays. There were retail businesses, bars, pubs and nightclubs included in the sample. The employment role that the interviewee had within their company varied. In most instances the individual was a manager (either a general manager or shift manager). Most of the members who participated in this research stated that their business joined the Scheme at or soon after its inception (although understanding of when the Scheme's inception was seemed to vary widely between members).

#### 3.2 How members use the information that they have access to via the Scheme

Members used the Scheme's website, the email updates or the mobile application to keep abreast of the latest news and developments. Almost all the participants noted that they would use these sources/platforms to remain aware of the names, appearances and other details of those who had offended or received sanctions through the Scheme. Sixteen of the members also explained that they would relay this information to their colleagues, perhaps displaying printed images in staff rooms of those who had received sanctions or using regular briefing meetings to update their co-workers. There were interviewees representing bars and nightclubs who stated that they would focus their attention on the incidents involving the night-time economy and pay less attention to the information shared by the Scheme on incidents of theft or shoplifting that occurred during the day.



*'[I look] on the computer so if I've got doubts about somebody I can have a look whether they are on the system ... [I] listen to the radio and keep up to date with what is going on.'*

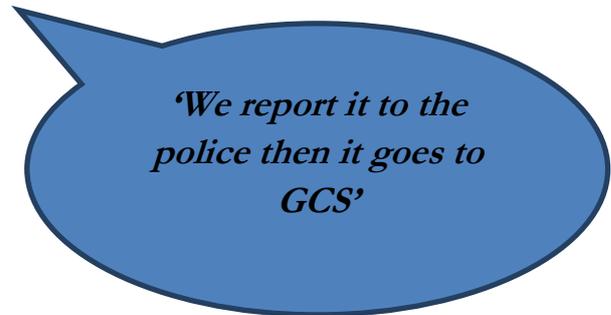
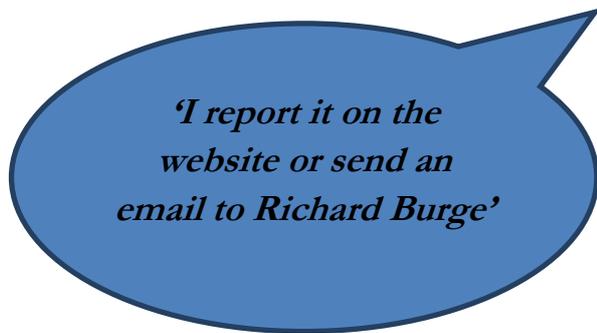


*'I've printed off pictures of [offenders] and I've put them in my staff room ... so [staff] can actually see if they were banned or not and what sort of offences they had.'*

#### 3.3 How members record incidents and relay information to the Scheme

Almost all of the participating members stated that there was a process that they employed, usually involving a company-specific log or form, for recording the incidents that occurred within their premises. When such a record was created, a manager would make a decision on how and whether to take the matter further. This is where the approach appeared to vary. For some members, it would be the managers themselves who would make a report to the GCS Scheme via email, telephone or the smart phone application. Retail or night-time economy business with their own security guards or door staff would often give responsibility for reporting matters to these individuals. Some members would report a matter to the police in the first instance and consider whether to contact the Scheme as an afterthought.

The retail businesses based in Gloucester's shopping centres would usually report a matter that they judged as suitable directly to the security team that worked in their shopping centre. This could occur in isolation (with an assumption that the security team would then decide whether to relay something to the Scheme or not) or as well as reporting a matter directly to the Scheme. The CCTV monitoring staff employed at the city's shopping centres work closely with the Scheme's manager and members, and although most members were clear on the distinction, there seemed to be a misunderstanding among some of the members as to the difference between the Scheme and the services run by CCTV monitoring teams.



### **3.4 The frequency and content of reports made by members**

Participating members were asked how many incidents they and their colleagues had reported to the Scheme. Nature of business seemed to have some bearing on the level of problem behaviour that would occur on a premises. For example, some of Gloucester's most popular bars and pubs stated that they had reported 'lots' or 'loads' of incidents. Some of the retail businesses selling small, low value items, high street fashion clothing and cosmetics provided similar accounts, stating that they had reported 'three to four incidents a day' or 'over 500' since the Scheme was introduced. Other members, whose products may be viewed as harder to steal or as less desirable reported using the Scheme far less frequently.

Questions exploring the type of incident that was most commonly reported, and what was not reported, provided further insight in to the views and practices of members. Almost all the retail businesses interviewed stated that incidents of 'theft' or 'shoplifting' were the most common matters that they would bring to the attention of the Scheme. Issues of 'violence', 'drunkenness' and 'anti-social behaviour' were mentioned primarily by the pubs, bars and other night-time economy Scheme members.

As noted above, members would exercise their own judgement on whether a matter was appropriate and sufficiently serious to be reported to the Scheme. Although some members stated that they reported everything to the Scheme, others explained that incidents involving 'little things, 'minor stuff', or 'petty arguments' were generally not reported. However, there also appeared to be occasions where members did not report incidents that there may have been a case to. One member acknowledged that there could be incidents that do not get reported when staff are too busy to do so. Several members stated that there are too many incidents to report everything, and that it is only the most serious that will reach the Scheme. A retail business member stated that if a shoplifter was caught in the act and immediately returned the stolen goods the incident might go unreported. Another retail business explained that they know that they are targeted by shoplifters as stock goes missing but they do not report this to the Scheme as they have no evidence of who the offender is. Another member explained that although all the instances of theft get reported to the police '101' non-emergency number, the decision to report the same instances to the Scheme comes after that, and so in some cases this second report may not happen.

There was also variation in the approach taken by the members who operated during the night-time economy. One member explained that:

*'A lot of the time people under the influence of alcohol do just act out of character and it would be unfair and go against the City Safe thing if we just put every single person who stepped out of line after a couple of drinks on there ... we've all done it: had a few too many drinks and acted up.'*

Another night-time economy member stated that they might simply exclude someone from their premises rather than requesting that they are banned from all member locations through the Scheme.

*'Most things do get reported but to be fair there are occasions where we are busy and we just forget about it'*

*'If someone was just being loud and aggressive or whatever we don't report that.'*

### 3.5 Benefitting from information sharing

The participating members were asked to describe the benefits of the Scheme and reflect on its most valuable attributes. Members were highly positive about the Scheme, and complimented its management, operation and the progress it had made since inception. The information and resources that members have access to were described positively in every instance. It was a consistent view that the email updates were regular, prompt (i.e. when an incident occurred an email update would be issued very soon afterwards) and useful. Members stated that this aided their awareness of the individuals who were known to be offending currently, and provided useful information on the habits of and issues concerning these individuals. Membership itself was stated to be 'easy', as not requiring a noteworthy amount of time or effort from businesses to be benefitted from, and by all members as 'value for money'. The radios and the website were commonly described as 'valuable', and other communications as 'excellent'. The process of reporting an incident to the Scheme was described primarily as 'good' and 'very easy', but as 'long-winded' and 'a little repetitive in places' by two members. Using the platform to share other, non-crime related information, such as locating a child who has become separated from a parent while in the city centre, was also noted as a benefit.

*'I just think it's very good, a lot of shops have got on board now and it's doing very well.'*

*'The information is pushed out to you rather than you having to actively go and find that information. It's up to date. It's instant.'*

*'It's just a brilliant scheme. It works and it's brilliant.'*

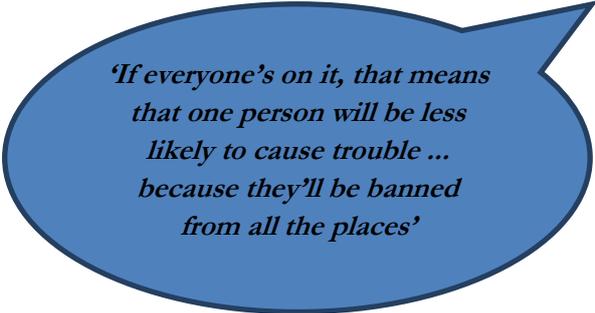
### 3.6. Benefitting from community cohesion

Members expressed feeling an increased sense of community cohesion and safety as a result of being involved in the Scheme. Members described working in partnership with other businesses and with the police and other agencies as providing them with connectivity, a shared ‘team’ purpose and ‘peace of mind’ resulting from joint vigilance. As one member noted:

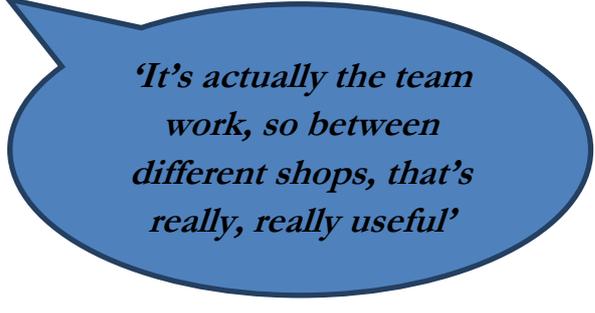
*‘We have a lot more strength by being a part of the Scheme. Rather than just standing on your own and saying “right, you’re barred, that’s it, you’re out”. And that one person, out of one pub: how many pubs are there in Gloucester? Hundreds. So, you’re not allowed to go into one pub: well who cares?’.*

Having direct access to the police and security personnel via the radio appeared to increase perceptions of safety for some members. Some members would go to considerable efforts to report and share anything that they thought other members could use as information, rather than just reporting incidents that concerned them directly.

Almost all the participating members reported occasions where an individual serving an active Gloucester City Safe exclusion entered their premises. A security guard in one of the city’s shopping centres noted that this happens: ‘on a daily basis ... We pick them up quickly by city officers, or security will find them on CCTV. They are reminded of the ban and nine times out of ten they will leave without any problems’. All of these members also reported that when this happens they explain to the person that they are currently banned from their premises and ask them to leave. A number of observations can be deduced from this. Firstly, as noted above, there is clearly cohesion and a strong supportive culture among the members of the Scheme. There were no members who stated that they had ignored an instance of someone entering their premises who they knew was serving an active ban issued by/on behalf of another member. Secondly, identifying those who have received sanctions elsewhere requires regular consultation of the Scheme’s website and email updates. If members are enforcing the bans that do not concern them directly then they are making use of the information available to them through the Scheme. Thirdly, there are clearly some individuals who have received sanctions and either choose to ignore them (this is discussed in the following section), or who are not aware of the conditions or durations of their sanctions.



*‘If everyone’s on it, that means that one person will be less likely to cause trouble ... because they’ll be banned from all the places’*



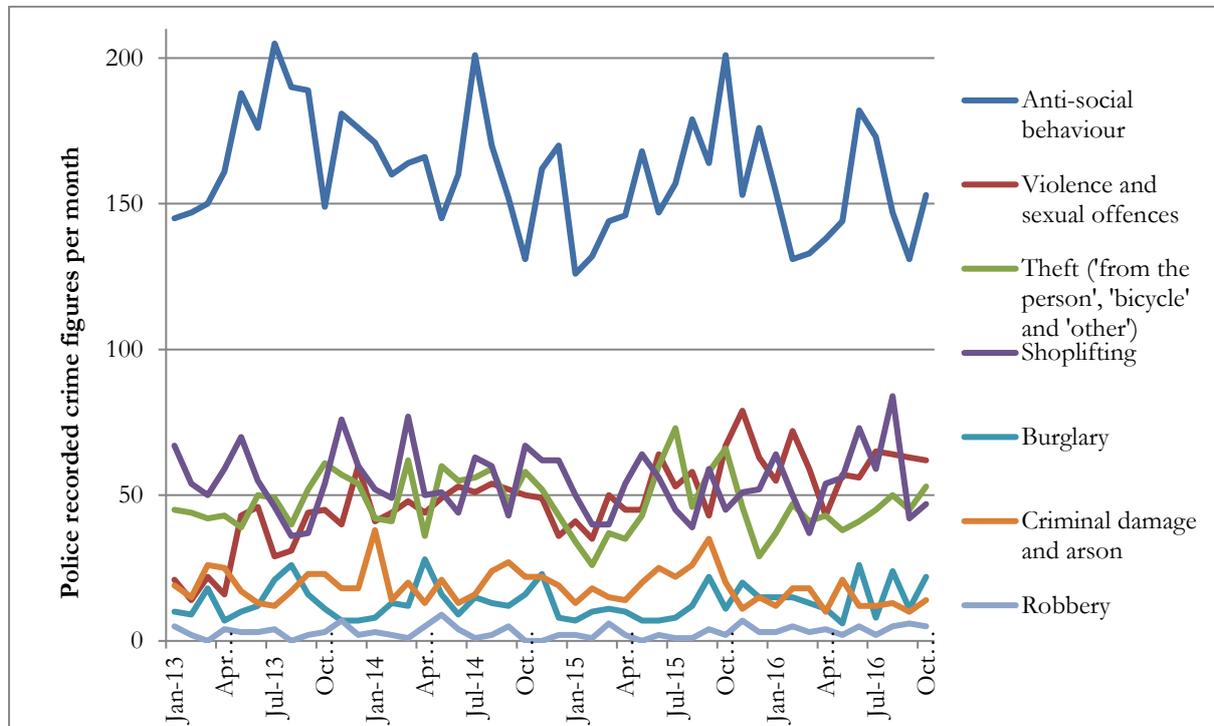
*‘It’s actually the team work, so between different shops, that’s really, really useful’*

### 3.6 The Scheme and changes in levels of crime and anti-social behaviour

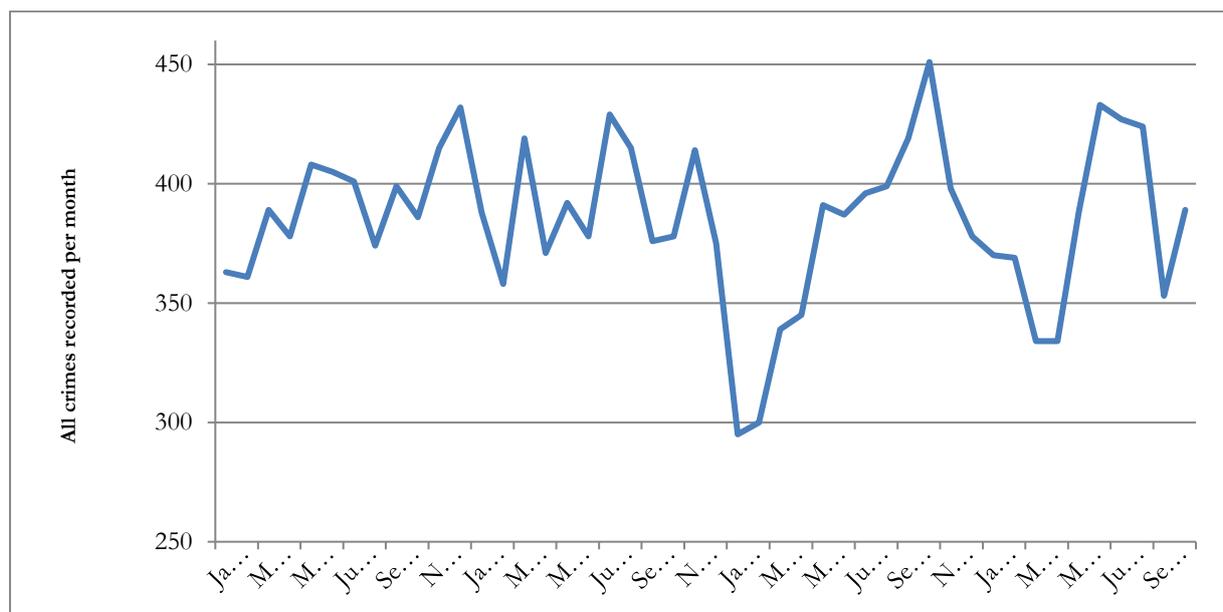
According to its website, the Scheme’s principal aim is to tackle shoplifting, theft, anti-social behaviour, alcohol related disorder, street drinking and begging. What constitutes ‘tackling’ may well differ slightly depending on which stakeholder is consulted, but it is likely to involve reducing and preventing the occurrence of crime, increasing willingness and propensity to report crime and reducing fear of becoming victim of a crime. Crime data for Gloucester City centre

(figures 9 and 10) from the period just before the Scheme was introduced and up to October 2016 show little sustained and consistent reduction in levels of relevant crimes. However, crime rates can mask many phenomena: it is indeed possible that relatively static crime rates can occur as a result of reduced frequency occurring alongside increased reporting. More sophisticated analysis of crime data held by the police would be necessary to explore this further.

**Figure 9: Police recorded crime data for Gloucester City Centre 2013-2016 by crime type**



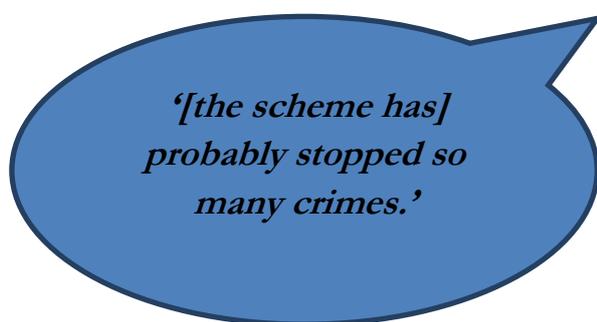
**Figure 10: Police recorded crime data for Gloucester City Centre 2013-2016 for all crimes**



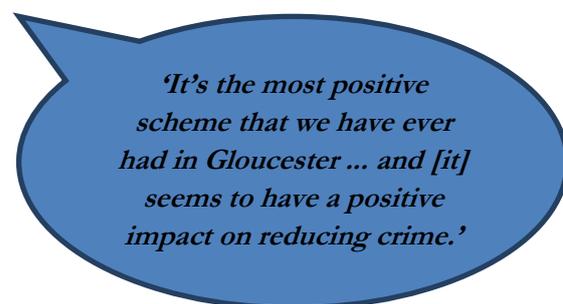
Police recorded crime data is not the only way to examine the Scheme's efforts to tackle crime. The Scheme's members who participated in this study were asked about the Scheme and crime reduction. Around two-thirds stated that they believed the Scheme to have been successful in reducing crime in Gloucester. Roughly one-third of members stated that the Scheme deters people from offending. The latter was often described to be more the case in circumstances of further offending (i.e. an individual being deterred after receiving a warning through the Scheme) than initial offending. However, the large majority of members noted that there were individuals – a small number of prolific repeat offenders (primarily shoplifters) – who were not concerned about the implications of their actions, and so were not at all deterred by the Scheme and its sanctions. As one member explained, 'you have got the people that obviously have drug and alcohol issues that don't care, you know? People that live off shoplifting too, you know, they don't care if they have been seen in the centre or have been banned. They brush it off'.

Repeat offending can be tackled partly by the collective enforcement of the exclusions issued through the Scheme. Members were of the opinion that when they actively enforce an exclusion by being vigilant and ensuring that excluded persons do not enter their premises, by asking such persons to leave before they have the opportunity to offend, or by ensuring that other members are aware that an excluded person is in the city centre as soon as they are spotted, the opportunity for offending is reduced and potential crimes prevented by removing this opportunity. When these steps are taken, members become aware of the most prolific offenders, have knowledge of their habits, and use this information to make it more difficult for the individual to offend.

Although 'situational crime prevention'<sup>3</sup> methods such as this can be effective at reducing the propensity for crime in particular situations, they are not usually considered to be a means of tackling the root cause of crime. Indeed, it would require analysis of police data to determine whether the offending behaviour of those who were sanctioned through the Scheme would decrease after receipt of their sanction or would simply be displaced to another (non-Scheme member) location. Around a third of members were of the view that certain repeat offenders will not desist from offending until they are issued with a more severe punishment. All members that were asked a question on this topic (33) were in favour of the police considering the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders for those who received exclusions through the Scheme. However, members described other issues, primarily drug and alcohol dependency, homelessness and poverty, to be the cause of much of the repeat theft and shoplifting in Gloucester, none of which can be addressed directly by a Scheme such as this.



***'[the scheme has] probably stopped so many crimes.'***



***'It's the most positive scheme that we have ever had in Gloucester ... and [it] seems to have a positive impact on reducing crime.'***

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<sup>3</sup> Situational crime prevention is described by Ronald Clarke (1997: 4) as comprising 'opportunity-reducing measures that (1) are directed at highly specific forms of crime; (2) involve the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in as systematic and permanent way as possible; (3) make crime more difficult and risky, or less rewarding and excusable as judged by a wide range of offenders'.

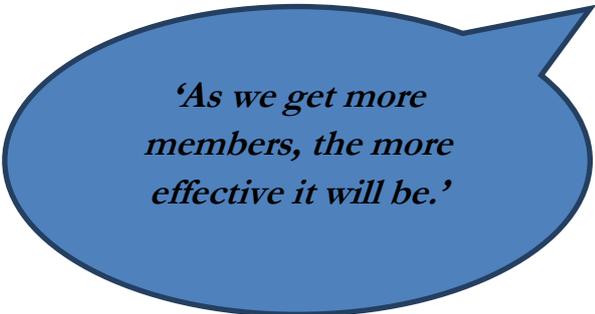
### 3.7 Member suggestions for changes and improvements

Participating members were asked if there was anything they would change about the Scheme or improve. Members were very positive about the Scheme's current functions and around half stated that there was nothing that they would change. The suggestions that were received from other members generally concerned the expansion of the Scheme and the refinement and consistency of its operation.

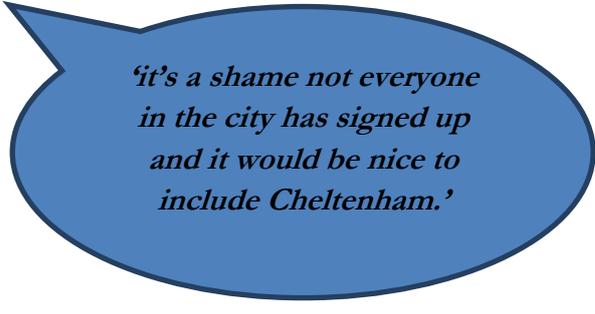
A number of suggestions for improvements concerned the Scheme's web platform and its functionality. The website contains a searchable database of all the incidents that have been reported to the Scheme. Suggestions for improvements to the search facilities included being able to search by the type of business that the incident concerned at (e.g. shop, pub, restaurant etc.), to be able to search incidents at a street address level, and to be able to search incidents by whether they occurred during the day time or night time (or concerned members from the day or night-time economies).

The consistency with which members use the Scheme, report incidents and issue sanctions has already been discussed in this report. However, a number of members mentioned it again as an area for improvement and change. It was noted that all members should report the same types of incidents, should issue the same sanctions for the same incidents, should share the same types of information (in the same way) using the radios, and should enforce and support sanctions issued by/on behalf of other members consistently. It was also noted that more information (and more consistent information) should be shared by the Scheme with members who report incidents on the outcome of their report and on the subsequent police activity that may have followed this.

The remaining suggestions all concerned expansion. Recruiting more members in current locations (notably the Gloucester Quays), expanding in to Cheltenham, and having more security guards on hand (particularly at Christmas time), were all among the suggestions. Activity to facilitate expansion was also mentioned (such as increasing publicity), and that would strengthen the cohesion between members and assist their sharing of information (such as more meetings for members). A small number of members who operated in the night-time economy stated that much of the Scheme's activity was geared towards supporting the shops and other businesses that operated during the day time, and that more emphasis on and support for members only open during the evening and night times would be welcomed.



*'As we get more members, the more effective it will be.'*



*'It's a shame not everyone in the city has signed up and it would be nice to include Cheltenham.'*

## 4. Conclusion

This report has presented the findings from research designed to capture views on the Gloucester City Safe scheme, understand its use and aid the continuing operation and improvement of the Scheme. Views from members of the public and the Scheme's members have provided a unique insight in to the Scheme's efforts to tackle issues of crime and disorder in Gloucester. Although this report sheds light on a number of areas that the Scheme's manager and its directors may wish to give some attention to, the accounts provided by the Scheme's members are highly positive. They praise the Scheme's manager, value the resources that the Scheme provides, and attach great importance to the sense of community that exists between members.

Staff and students at the University of Gloucestershire would like to thank the Scheme manager, Richard Burge, and its members for providing the opportunity to conduct this research. The opportunity to work with the Scheme offers a unique learning experience for the Students at the University of Gloucestershire and is one that the teaching staff at the University are proud of and promote widely.

The research team recommends that the Scheme continues its efforts in the following areas:

### **Promoting consistency among members concerning the recording, reporting and issuing of sanctions**

There was a common view that all members should report the same types of incidents (and where possible provide the same details concerning these incidents), and should issue the same sanctions for the same incidents. Although member accounts suggest that it is unlikely that serious incidents would go unreported to the Scheme, it is possible that more minor incidents, or small pieces of information relevant to a repeat offender, may not always reach the Scheme due to the different ways in which members approach the reporting process. This highlights the importance of the clear direction that the Scheme's manager provides to its members on what should be reported and how, and the need for this to continue both as part of the induction for new members and through appropriate prompts and reminders in the communications that are sent to current members.

### **Sustaining the sense of shared ownership and community cohesion among members**

The Scheme's manager has worked hard to establish a sense of community among the Scheme's members. Not only does this install feelings of increased safety among members, but the Scheme relies on cohesion among its members in order to operate effectively. When a sanction is issued, the benefits that it can offer members will only be fully realised when it is enforced collectively. If a ban from all member premises is issued, it is important that all members make efforts to support this sanction. This requires members to be aware of those who have received sanctions through the Scheme, and, if such an individual enters a member premises, identify them, ask them to leave, and report the incident to the Scheme. Without this consistent approach the Scheme's sanctions cannot be enforced and the Scheme's reputation could be damaged. It is therefore imperative that the Scheme's manager and the Scheme's current members continue their efforts to grow and maintain this sense of community and shared responsibility for collective enforcement among those involved with the Scheme and extend it to new members when they are recruited.

### **Raising public awareness of the Scheme, expanding the Scheme and recruiting new members**

As noted above, much of the strength of the Scheme appears to come from the sense of community and cohesion that is apparent among its members. However, this connectivity does

not stop at the Scheme's members, and the support and involvement of the general public is also important for the successful operation of the Scheme. The Scheme manager's efforts, along with the efforts of his colleagues, to publicise the Scheme and reach out to other parts of the community are particularly important here. Only 37% of the members of the public surveyed as part of this research had heard of the Scheme. There were also requests from the Scheme's members to increase member recruitment efforts, to expand in to new parts of the County, to increase publicity and to run more meetings for members to encourage networking and information sharing.

#### **Enhancing the search functionality on the web platform for members**

Members made a number of suggestions for improvements to the search facilities on the secure web platform. These included being able to search by the type of business that an incident concerned (e.g. shop, pub, restaurant etc.), to be able to search incidents at a street address level, and to be able to search incidents by whether they occurred during the day time or night time (or concerned members from the day or night-time economies).

## Appendices

### Appendix A – the questionnaire for members of the public

#### 1 How often do you visit Gloucester city centre?

[tick one option]

- Daily
- Several time a week
- Once a week
- Once a fortnight
- Less often

#### 2 Where do you live?

[tick one option]

- Within Gloucester city
- Within 5 miles of Gloucester
- Within 10 miles of Gloucester
- More than 10 miles from Gloucester

#### 3 What is your main reason for visiting Gloucester City Centre on this occasion?

[tick one option]

- Shopping
- Accessing services [banking, post office etc]
- Pub, bar or nightclub
- Eating out
- Other [please specify]

#### 4 To what extent do you agree with the statement that ‘crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre’

[tick one option]

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

#### 5 How safe do you feel in Gloucester?

[tick one option]

- Very safe
- Safe
- Neither safe or unsafe
- Unsafe
- Very unsafe

#### 6 Have you heard of the Gloucester City Safe scheme?

- Yes (Continue to question 7)
- No (Go to question 10)

#### 7 What do you know about the scheme?

[Select all that apply]

- It's a scheme for businesses in Gloucester
- It's a yellow/red card system for sanctioning people

- It targets and tackles anti-social behaviour
- It targets and tackles shop lifting/theft
- Other [please specify]

**8 How did you hear about the scheme?**

[Select all that apply]

- Newspaper
- A flier
- Radio
- Social networking sites
- Stickers in shops/pubs
- Flags in the street
- Word of mouth
- Other [please specify]

**9 To what extent do you agree with the statement that ‘the GCS scheme has been successful in reducing crime in Gloucester?’**

[tick one option]

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**10 ‘The scheme works by its members issuing warnings or exclusions when people commit crime or anti-social behaviour in or near their premises, and those sanctions then apply to all member locations. There are shops, restaurants, pubs and clubs among the members, and the scheme is designed to reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in Gloucester.’ Can you think of anything that might prevent the scheme from reducing crime in Gloucester?**

[Select all that apply]

- Lack of support
- Not enough members
- Offenders not taking the sanctions seriously
- Crime still occurring at non-member locations
- No
- Other [please specify]

**11 Is there anything else you’d like to add?**

[free text]

## **Appendix B – the interview questions used with Scheme members**

1. How long have you been a member of Gloucester City Safe?
2. What kind of records do you keep of incidents that occur here?
3. Who here decides whether something should be reported to GCS, and how?
4. How many incidents have you and your colleagues here reported to GCS since you joined the scheme?
5. What kind of things do you and your colleagues report to GCS?
6. Are there things that you and your colleagues don't report to GCS?
7. Have you personally ever reported an incident to GCS?
8. Has there been an occasion where someone who has received a City Safe exclusion has then entered your premises?
9. How do you use the information that you have access to through the scheme?
10. What would you say are the benefits or the things that work best about the scheme?
11. Is there anything you would change or improve about the scheme?
12. Do you think the scheme has been successful in reducing crime in Gloucester? Why?
13. Can you think of anything that might prevent the scheme from reducing crime in Gloucester?
14. Do you think the scheme deters people from offending? Why?
15. Do you think that the police should consider issuing Criminal Behaviour Orders to those who receive a ban through Gloucester City Safe?
16. Would you say that your membership is value for money, and why?
17. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the GCS scheme?

## **Appendix C – Gloucester City Safe website gallery classifications**

- Day-time offenders
- Night time offenders
- Exclusions from member businesses and services
- Street people
- Stroud offenders
- Stroud offenders excluded
- Top 10 offenders
- Youth disorder in the city

## Appendix D – Survey responses

**Figure A**

Table showing how close to Gloucester the respondent lived

Location	Number of respondents	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Within Gloucester	174	31.1	31.1
Within 5 miles of Gloucester	186	33.2	64.4
Within 10 miles of Gloucester	82	14.6	79.1
More than 10 miles from Gloucester	117	20.9	100.0
<b>Total</b>	559	99.8	

**Figure B**

Table showing how often the respondent visits Gloucester city centre

Frequency of visit	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Daily	148	26.4	26.4
Several times a week	129	23.0	49.5
Once a week	93	16.6	66.1
Once a fortnight	52	9.3	75.4
Less often	138	24.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	560	100.0	

**Figure C**

Table showing a comparison of responses to the questions: ‘Has the respondent heard of the Gloucester City Safe scheme?’ and ‘Crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre’

		'Crime is a problem in Gloucester city centre?'					Total
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	disagree	strongly disagree	
Has the respondent heard of the Gloucester City Safe scheme?	Yes	62 (30%*)	96 (46%*)	31 (15%*)	15 (7%*)	4 (2%*)	208
	No	75 (21%*)	124 (35%*)	114 (33%*)	27 (8%*)	10 (3%*)	350
<b>Total</b>		137	220	145	42	14	558

\*The percentage figures included here are not of the full sample. Those who responded ‘yes’ to the question ‘has the respondent heard of the Gloucester City Safe scheme?’ make up the 100% on the ‘yes’ row. The same is the case for the ‘No’ responses on the row below this.

**Figure D**

**Table showing a comparison of responses to the questions: ‘Has the respondent heard of the Gloucester City Safe scheme?’ and ‘How safe the respondent feels in Gloucester’**

		How safe the respondent feels in Gloucester					Total
		very safe	safe	neither safe or unsafe	unsafe	very unsafe	
Has the respondent heard of the Gloucester City Safe scheme?	Yes	19 (9%*)	72 (35%*)	57 (28%*)	48 (23%*)	11 (5.3%*)	207
	No	31 (9%*)	124 (35%*)	123 (35%*)	57 (16%*)	15 (4%*)	350
Total		50	196	180	105	26	557

\*The percentage figures included here are not of the full sample. Those who responded ‘yes’ to the question ‘has the respondent heard of the Gloucester City Safe scheme?’ make up the 100% on the ‘yes’ row. The same is the case for the ‘No’ responses on the row below this.