

CCTV Half Yearly Report

Wantage and Abingdon

1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides information on how the district council's CCTV cameras in Wantage and Abingdon contribute towards deterring crime, reducing the fear of crime, increasing crime detection and protecting vulnerable people in the district.

The report is produced using information provided by the CCTV monitoring suite based in Abingdon. It is based on information drawn from the record of occurrences. A record of occurrence is reported each time a CCTV camera is used proactively to monitor a specific incident.

We aim to provide this report on a half yearly basis to share information and help publicise the positive outcomes of CCTV to residents and businesses. We have 23 cameras operating in Abingdon and six in Wantage.

DATA SUMMARY

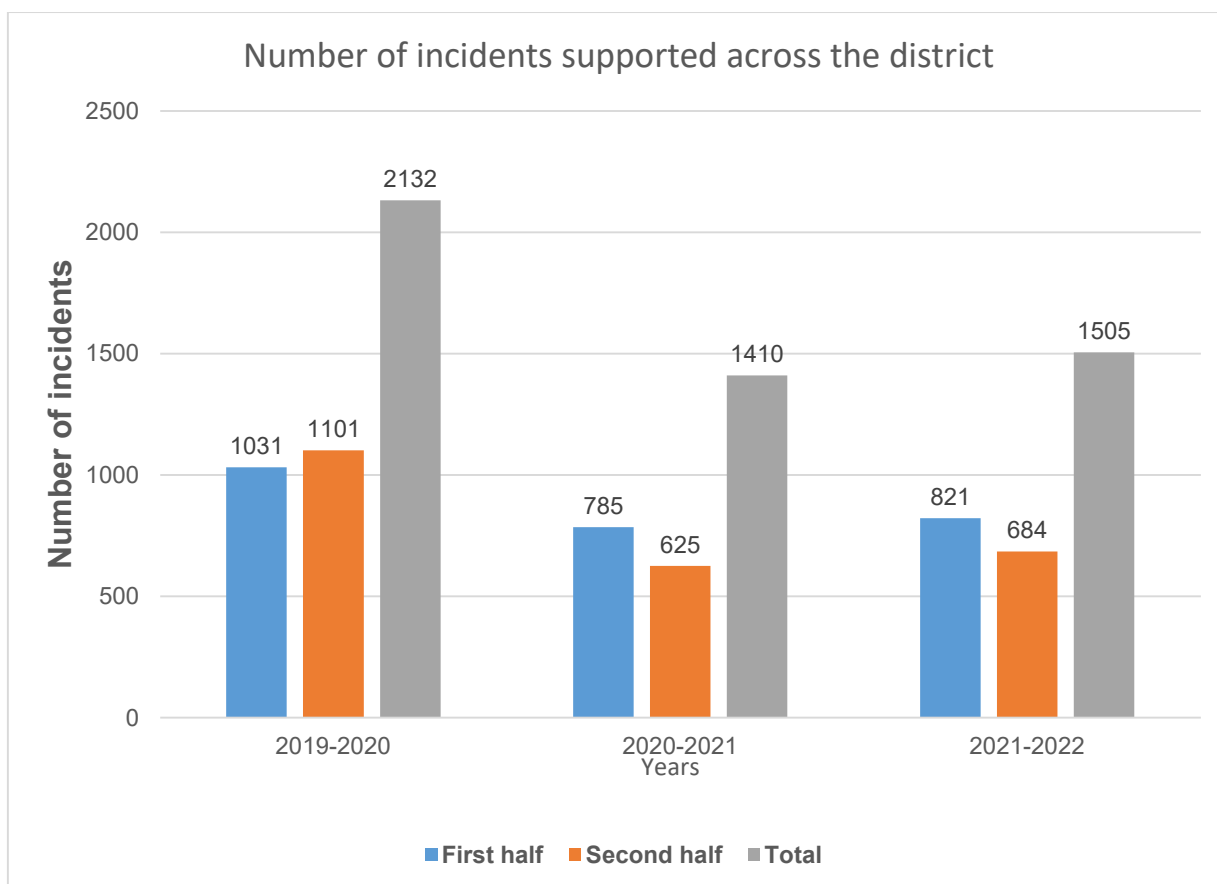
Across the Vale, CCTV operators supported 684 incidents during the second half of 2021-22.

The operators also produced 48 evidence packs for possible court proceedings, carried out 33 reviews of CCTV footage (a review is undertaken as a result of a written request) and supported 41 arrests.

The table below displays the most common type of incident monitored for each town during the second half of 2021-22 where CCTV was involved at some stage:

MOST COMMONLY MONITORED INCIDENTS	
Abingdon	Wantage
Fear for Welfare (78)	Missing Persons (12)
Missing Persons (59)	Fear for Welfare (10)
Anti-social Behaviour (57)	Drunkenness (9)

The chart below compares this half yearly total with previous half years:



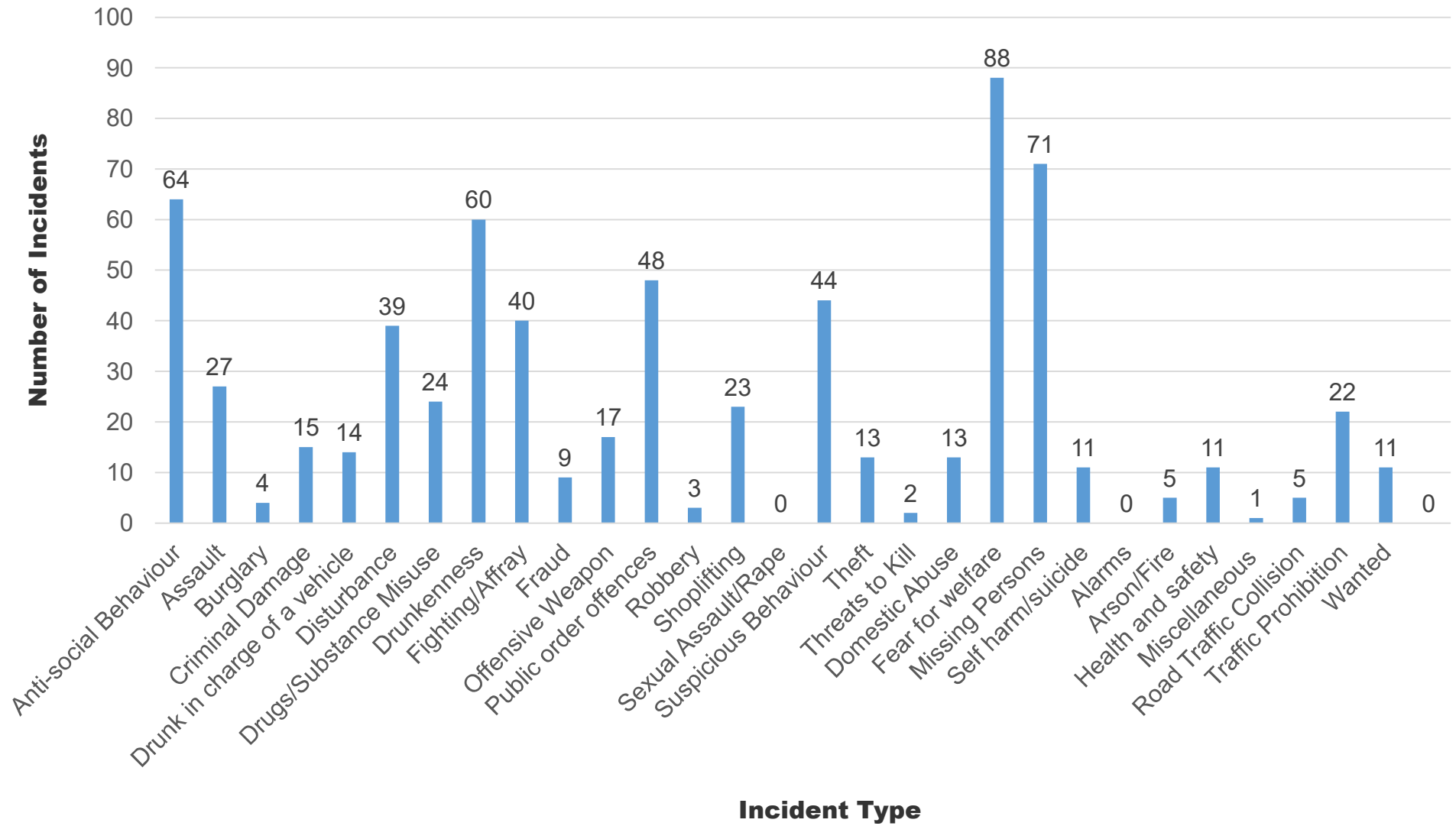
For further breakdown please see the table below:

	2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022		
	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total
Abingdon	873	908	1781	662	542	1204	672	614	1286
Wantage	158	193	351	123	83	206	149	70	219
Total	1031	1101	2132	785	625	1410	821	684	1505

TYPE AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

The chart on page three shows the numbers and types of incidents the CCTV Operators monitored from 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022 across both towns.

Incidents by Type - 1 October 2021 - 31 March 2022

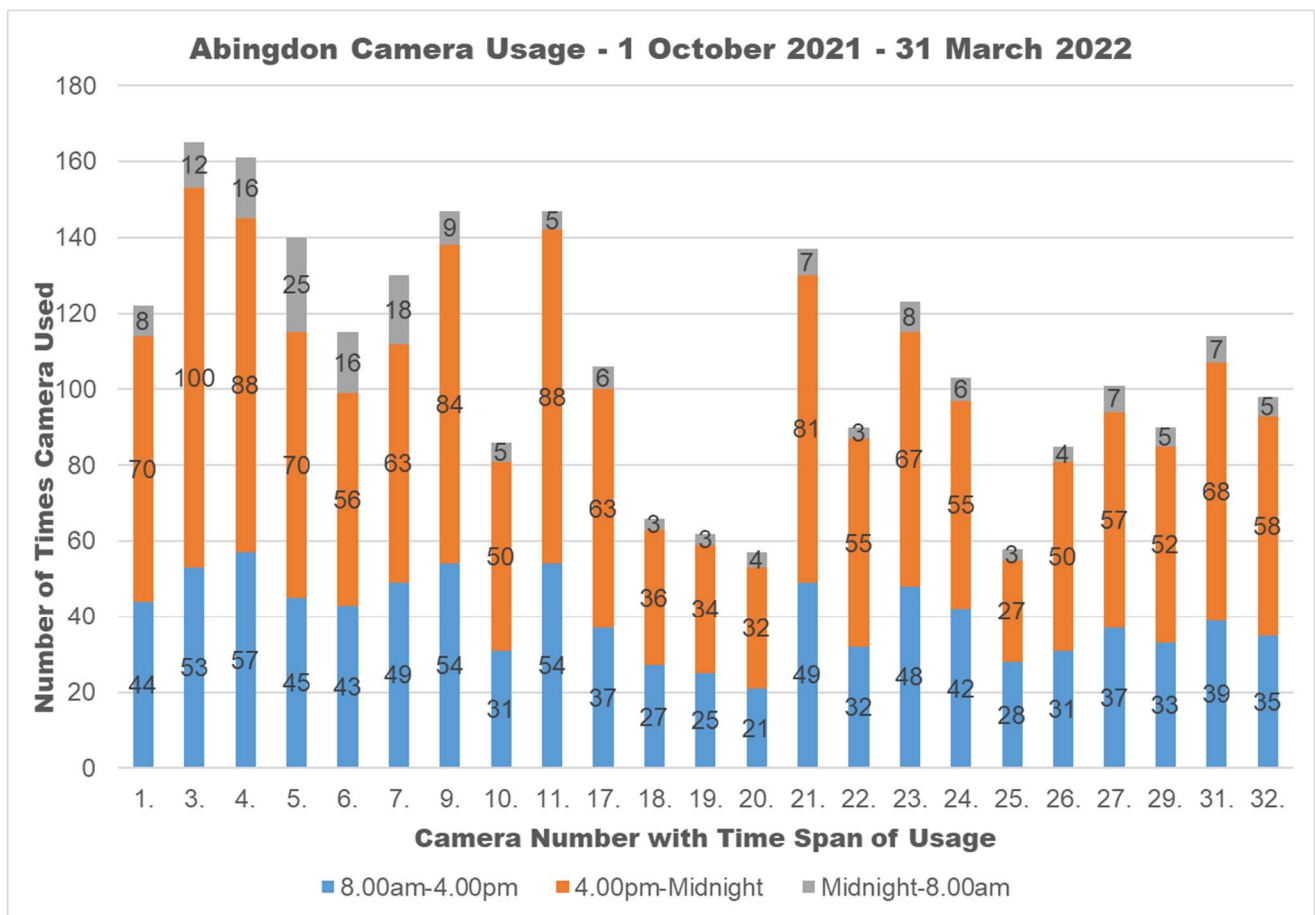


CAMERA USAGE

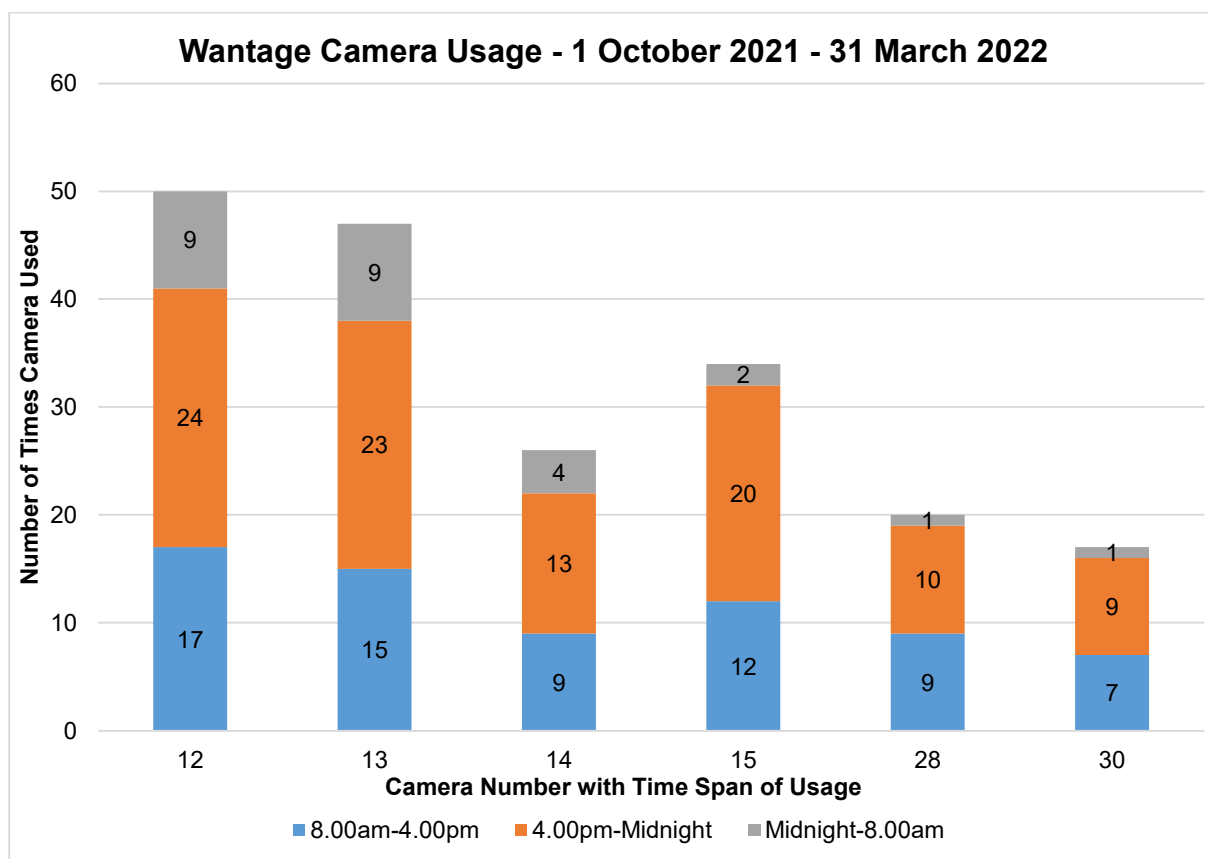
The following charts show camera usage for each town. These indicate the number of times that individual cameras are deployed in recorded, monitored events.

The number of times that each camera was used has been divided into three sections, covering a 24-hour period.

It is worth noting that for the period midnight to 8am, most of the camera usage occurred between midnight and 4am.



Cameras three, four, nine and eleven cover the High St., Market Place and shopping precinct and show the greatest amount of use.



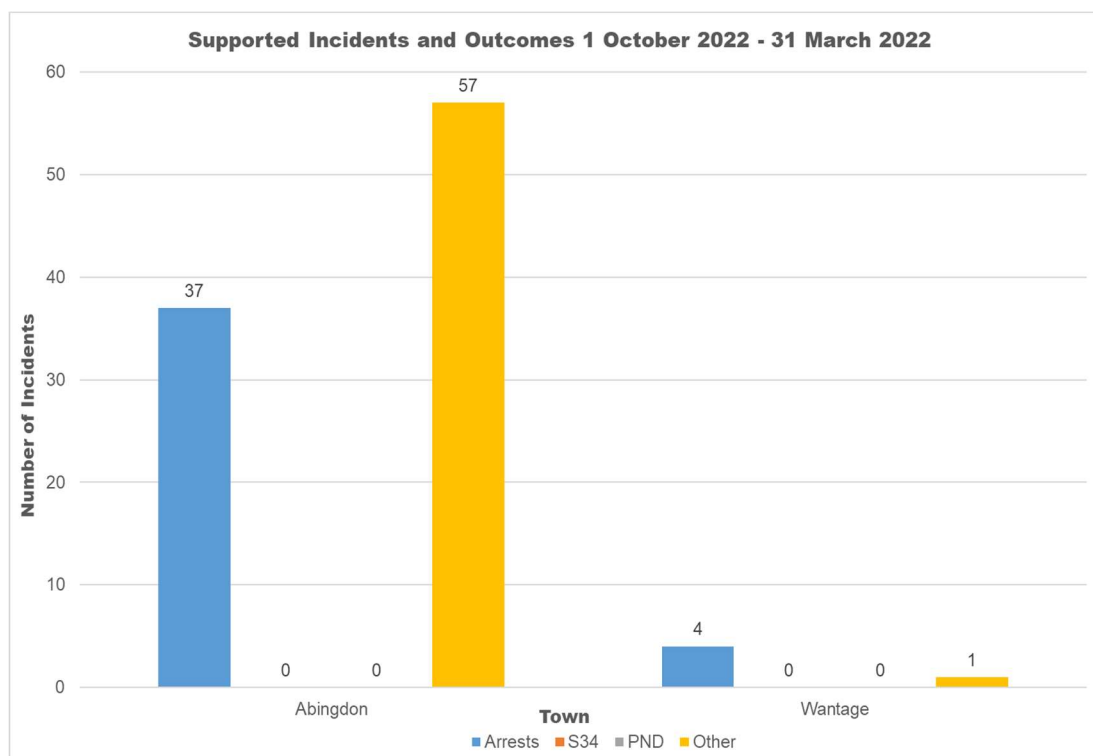
Although the graph shows significant usage across all cameras in Wantage, cameras 12 and 13 cover most of the town centre activity.

ARRESTS, SECTION 34S AND OTHER OUTCOMES

The chart on page six shows the outcomes the CCTV operators supported while involved in monitoring an incident. The police use their discretion on how an incident is resolved based on experience, the gravity of the offence, the resources that are available to them at that time and so on. Whilst we cannot always be certain whether CCTV was solely instrumental in an arrest or the serving of a Section 34 or a Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND), we do know the cameras alert police to incidents they may not have known about. CCTV also gives the police the ability to assess and allocate resources and priorities in real time e.g., should the situation allow, leaving CCTV to monitor incidents or offenders while officers attend other incidents.

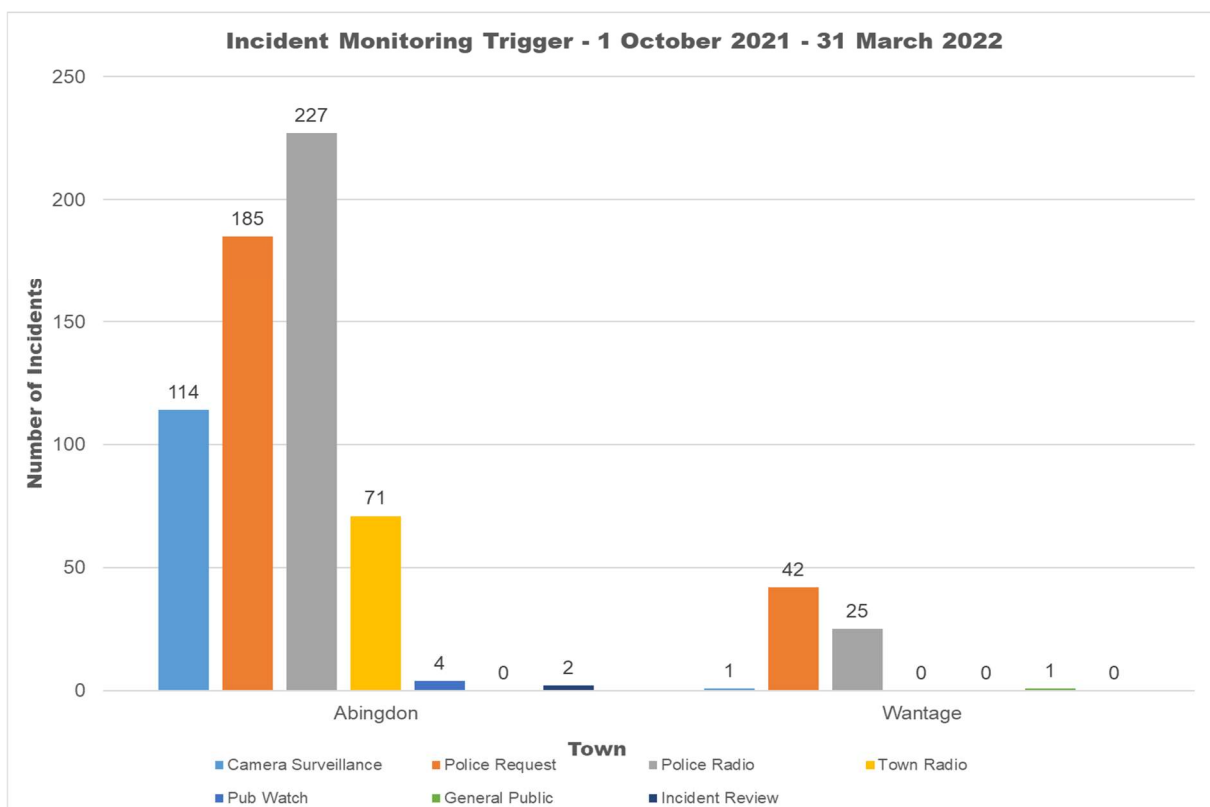
A Section 34 allows the police to move someone from a specified area for a period of up to 48 hours if they believe the person poses a risk of anti-social behaviour disorder. A PND is an 'on the spot fine'.

Actions on the chart designated 'other' usually means that the police either gave verbal advice or admonition or a non-recordable sanction, for example, replace items in a bin that had been kicked over. 'Other' outcomes also include incidents resolved by police attending and dispersing groups and persons, the instances relating to missing persons being safeguarded.



HOW CCTV MONITORING WAS INITIATED

The chart below shows how many of the incidents monitored by CCTV were as a result of the following: a direct request from the police (police requests); the CCTV operator hearing about an incident on a police radio (police radio); request to review footage at the time of an incident (incident review); the operator proactively patrolling the cameras (camera surveillance). Only Abingdon has a shop radio scheme.



REVIEWS AND EVIDENCE PACKS

When not tasked by police, the operators patrol all the cameras and focus on 'hotspot' areas. All cameras are recording 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are set in 'default' positions which are agreed with the police as the areas most likely to experience problems.

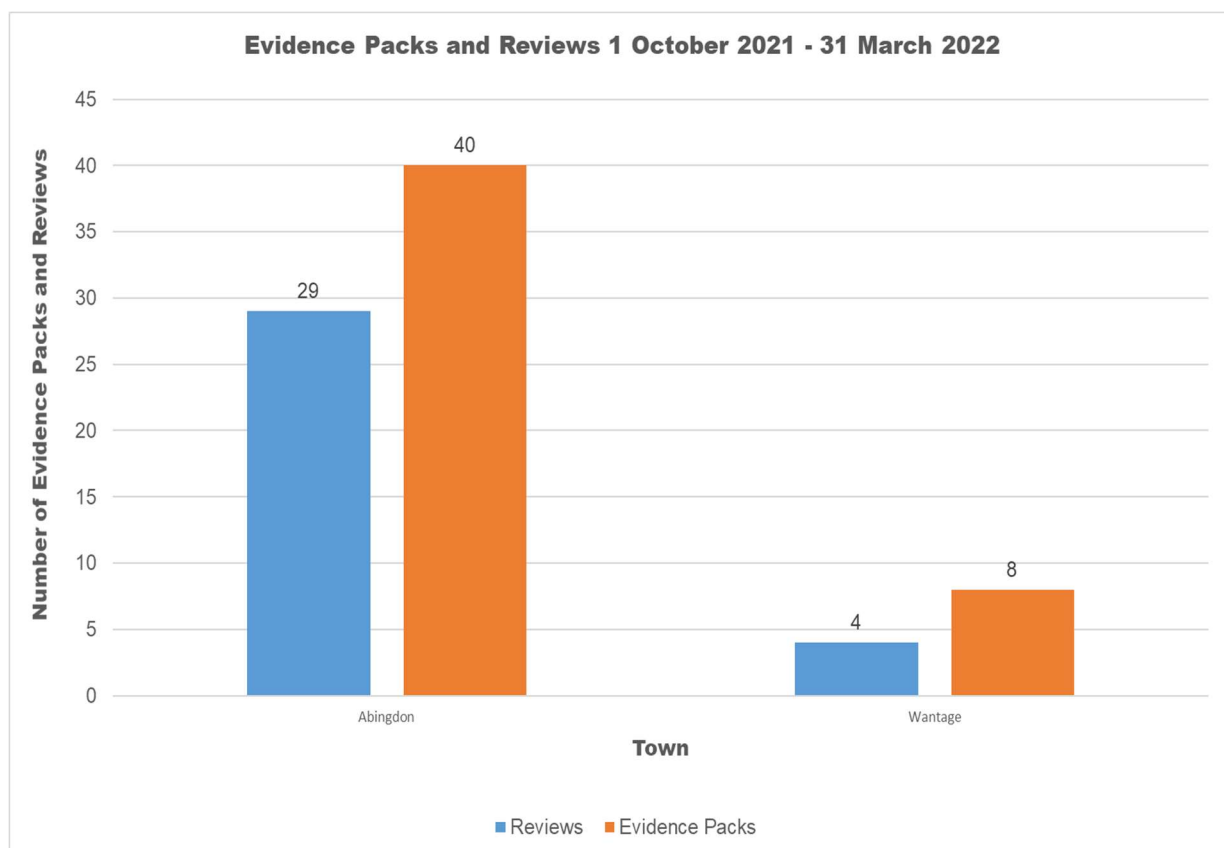
CCTV operators and the CCTV supervisor also respond to requests from members of the public and third parties under data protection legislation and subject access requests (SARs). The most common request is to examine car park or road cameras for evidence of 'non-stop road traffic collisions' in which the complainant's car has been damaged. All such requests are actioned, and replies given. Altogether we received two such requests during this half of the year. We also received one request from town and district council departments to review footage.

The chart below shows the number of evidence packs the CCTV operators put together and the number of evidence reviews undertaken as a result of formal written requests.

Evidence reviews are checks through historical material. The evidence packs are the recordings and statements which the CCTV operators produce for police, solicitors and the Crown Prosecution Service.

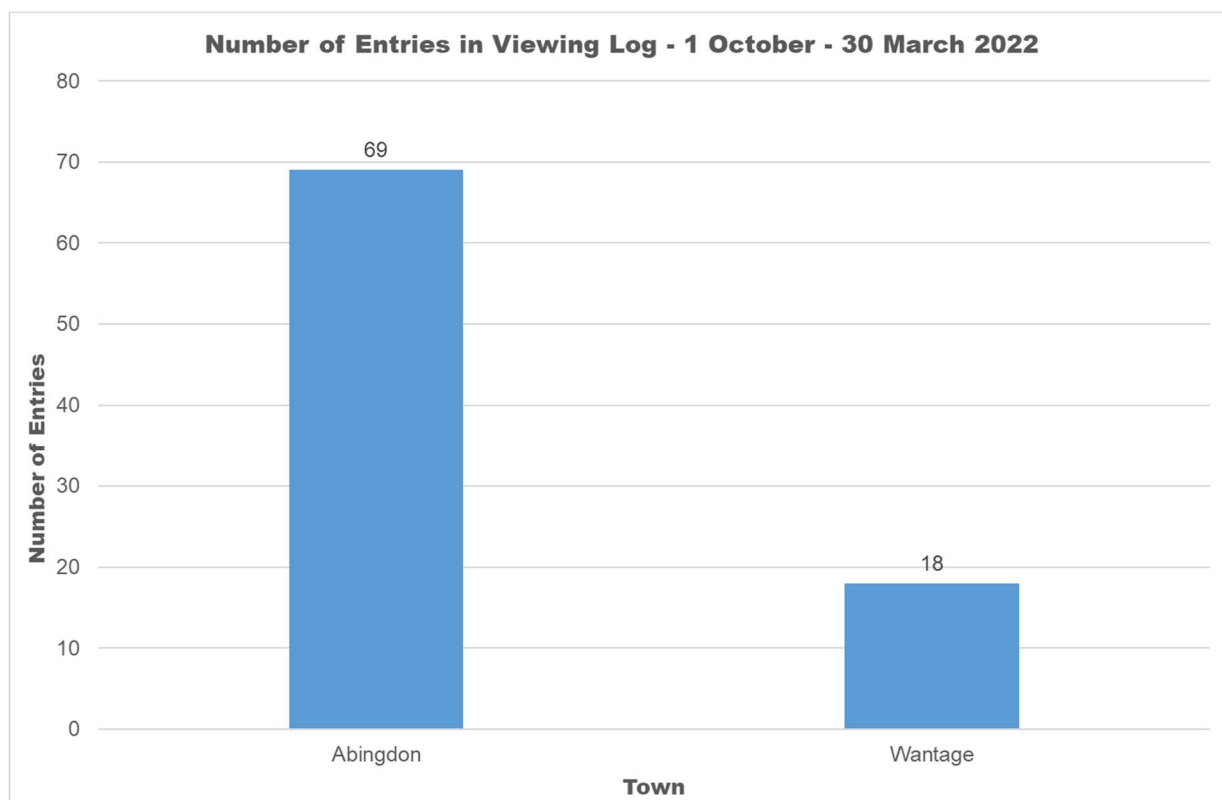
Activity that monitors past footage but does not result in an evidence pack being produced is termed 'a review'. This may be, for example, that the footage does not show an event clearly enough to warrant making a permanent DVD copy for evidential use.

One of the greatest advantages of CCTV footage is in obtaining a guilty plea at the early interview stage. For many offences this early admission is due to the offence being captured clearly on camera and saves the expense of full trial at either magistrates or crown court.



VIEWING LOG

The below graph shows the number of instances that TVP staff attended the control room to view CCTV or conduct reviews, with the assistance of an operator. Please note that the viewing of footage may or may not be followed by a formal written request for footage.



CASE STUDIES

The following are examples of incidents dealt with by CCTV operators during the second half of 2021–22. They aim to demonstrate how our CCTV service helps to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Abingdon

A man was reported to have been stabbed at Abingdon fair. Despite the crowds and with only a minimal description of the offenders, our operator was able to quickly review camera footage and locate possible suspects. They then tracked them to a taxi and obtained details of the vehicle. Subsequent investigations led to five arrests for multiple offences.

Using the store-net radio, a local shop reported a large group causing damage inside and outside of the store, and staff had been assaulted. Our operator liaised with police, passing on detailed descriptions of those involved. Officers attended and issued a section 35 dispersal order to ensure the group disbanded and left the area.

Late one night a member of the public reported to police that a relative had threatened to jump into the river to end their life. Despite not being directly requested to monitor, our operator quickly located a woman sat by the side of the river and informed the police. As officers arrived, she attempted to jump into the water, but they were able to stop her and keep her safe.

In the early hours, our operator spotted four young boys on their own and was concerned for their welfare due to the time of night and the cold weather. Our operator directed police officers to the boys and all four were taken back home. The eldest was ten years old.

Wantage

Our operator observed a fight taking place in the market place and informed the police as they were concerned it could escalate. Officers quickly attended and made two arrests. No injuries were reported.

A high-risk missing person was reported in Wantage. Our operator conducted several extensive reviews of camera footage and was able to locate the missing person getting onto a bus. Due to this information, the police were able to locate the missing person in Oxford and take them to a place of safety.

A member of the public reported that a vehicle had been driven into the marketplace, resulting in a collision with the side of a building. Our operator located the vehicle and continued to monitor the area. They also conducted a review of camera footage and established that the vehicle had been driven at high speed prior to the collision. Our operator was also able to get a clothing description of the driver and using this, was able to find the driver amongst the gathered crowd and directed police officers to them. One arrest was made.

Date of report: April 2022

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