

PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER: SHREWSBURY TOWN CENTRE

EVALUATION REPORT: 01.04.2023 – 31.03.2026.

Overview

A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) has been enforced in Shrewsbury Town Centre since 1st August 2017. Shropshire Council are currently seeking views and comments on extending the Order for a further 3 years from August 2026.

This report presents an analysis of anti-social behaviour data collected in Shrewsbury Town Centre between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2026. Data was gathered by Shrewsbury Town Council, through the multiagency operational group 'Team Shrewsbury'. The analysis focuses on behaviours and conditions specified within the PSPO.

In addition to 'Team Shrewsbury' data this report presents enforcement figures relating to the Shrewsbury Town Centre PSPO over the past three financial years, provided by Shropshire Council. West Mercia Police have offered additional insights by providing statistics acquired through searches of logs and reports using a range of search tools, as well as data concerning anti-social behaviour within Shrewsbury Town Centre for the period 2024 to 2026.

Data analysis is in line with the geographical boundary covered by the Public Spaces Protection Order.

Reporting categories

After evaluating the datasets compiled by Shropshire Council and its partner agencies regarding crime and anti-social behaviour, the following reporting categories were developed to facilitate monitoring of the order's impact. The categories were introduced as of 1st October 2016 and are aligned with the behaviours the PSPO aims to prohibit. Other categories relevant to wider ASB issues have continued to be recorded by a number of agencies; however, the categories detailed below have been developed to reflect the most problematic issues encountered within the town centre.

Alcohol Litter	Dog fouling	Excrement/Urinating
Alcohol Related Incidents	Dog control	Fly tipping/Littering
Aggressive Begging	Damage/arson	Left belongings <small>(incident type not in use from July 2024 onwards)</small>
Begging	Drug Litter	Graffiti
Nuisance Busking	Drug Misuse	Suspicious behaviour
Congregation	Drug Dealing	

Data constraints- Limitations of the report

Prior to 2023, West Mercia Police recorded all Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Penalty Charge Receipts (PCRs) issued, including the specific enforcement reasons. After the 2023 PSPO renewal, Town Rangers and Quarry Security staff gained enforcement powers. This led to a shift: West Mercia Police reduced their data recording to only the number of PCRs, no longer documenting things such as enforcement grounds. The change aimed to avoid duplicating records, since Shropshire Council maintains a centralised register for all PCRs issued by authorised officers.

Since October 2021, Shropshire Council no longer routinely logs ASB incidents, except for statutory noise nuisance complaints managed by Environmental Health officers. The only consistently tracked PSPO-related ASB data concerns noise from busking, restricting the ability to analyse broader ASB trends connected to PSPO enforcement.

From July 2024 'Team Shrewsbury' did not use the incident type 'Left Belongings (removed)'. Therefore, comparisons over different periods should be made cautiously. The report uses multiple sources for balance, but some omissions remain due to inherent data limitations.

Analysis of Team Shrewsbury Data- PSPO conditions

a) No person shall urinate or defecate in a public area not being a facility intended for such use

Incident type:	01/04/2023-31/03/2024	01/04/2024-31/03/2025	01/04/2025-31/03/2026	Total	3 yr % change
Excrement/Urinating	135	72	70	277	48.1% reduction

b) No person shall, for any duration of time, leave unattended in a public area any personal effects or belongings or any other material or paraphernalia including anything that may be considered discarded or waste material.

Incident type:	01/04/2023-31/03/2024	01/04/2024-31/03/2025	01/04/2025-31/03/2026	Total	3yr % change
Left belongings (removed) *	6	0	N/A	6	100.0% reduction
Alcohol Litter	82	51	54	187	34.1% reduction
Drug litter	193	310	102	605	47.2% reduction
Fly tipping/Littering	245	181	148	574	39.6% reduction

*Incident type not in use from July 2024 onwards

c) No person shall refuse to stop drinking alcohol or hand over any containers (sealed or unsealed) which are believed to contain alcohol, when required to do so by an authorised officer, provided that officer has reason to believe that that person is causing or is likely to cause nuisance, alarm, harassment or distress to any other person

Incident Type	01/04/2023-31/03/2024	01/04/2024-31/03/2025	01/04/2025-31/03/2026	Total	3yr % change
Alcohol Related behaviour	536	307	290	1133	45.9% reduction
Alcohol Litter	82	61	54	197	34.1% reduction

c) No person, who is sitting or lying on any footpath or pedestrian area or in any fire escaper, stairway or other entrance or exit to any premises within the protected area, shall refuse to move when required to do so by an authorised officer, provided that officer has reason to believe that that person is causing or likely to cause nuisance, alarm, harassment or distress to any other person

Incident Type	01/04/2023-31/03/2024	01/04/2024-31/03/2025	01/04/2025-31/03/2026	Total	3yr % change
Sitting on floor	166	138	25	329	84.9% reduction

d) No person shall refuse to leave a public toilet when required to do so by an authorised officer, provided that officer has reason to believe that that person is causing or likely to cause nuisance, alarm, harassment or distress to any other person

Incident Type	01/04/2023-31/03/2024	01/04/2024-31/03/2025	01/04/2025-31/03/2026	Total	3yr % change
Refused to leave toilets	2	3	0	5	100% reduction

e) No person shall refuse to stop using a device intended to amplify sound when required to do so by an authorised officer, provided the officer has reason to believe that the person is causing or likely to cause nuisance, alarm, harassment or distress to any other person

Incident Type	01/04/2023-31/03/2024	01/04/2024-31/03/2025	01/04/2025-31/03/2026	Total	3yr % change
Amplified Music	16	17	15	48	6.3% reduction
Busking- nuisance	23	3	2	28	91.3% reduction

- f) **No person shall refuse to disperse from a public area and not to return to that public area for 48 hours when required to do so by an authorised officer, provided that officer has reason to believe that that person is causing or likely to cause nuisance, alarm, harassment or distress to any other person.**

All reporting categories can be considered relevant to this particular condition. However, it should be recognised that certain issues will potentially be dealt with via more appropriate and effective primary legislation.

Incident Type	01/04/2023-31/03/2024	01/04/2024-31/03/2025	01/04/2025-31/03/2026	Total	3yr % change
Alcohol Litter	82	51	54	187	34.1% reduction
Alcohol related	536	256	290	1082	45.9% reduction
Aggressive begging	5	3	0	8	100% reduction
Begging	68	12	4	84	94.1% reduction
Busking – nuisance	23	2	2	27	91.3% reduction
Congregation	588	88	21	697	96.4% reduction
Dog fouling	2	2	3	7	50% increase
Dog control	12	2	2	16	83.2% reduction
Damage/Arson	186	42	17	245	90.9% reduction
Drug litter	193	310	102	605	47.2% reduction
Drug misuse	372	176	40	588	89.2% reduction
Drug dealing	44	15	24	83	45.5% reduction
Excrement/ Urinating	135	55	70	260	48.1% reduction
Fly tipping/ Littering	245	181	148	574	39.6% reduction
Personal items left	109	111	188	408	72.5% increase
Graffiti	39	36	30	105	23.1% decrease
Suspicious individuals	123	55	60	238	51.2% decrease
Grand total	2762	1397	1055	5214	61.8% decrease

Other incident types recorded by 'Team Shrewsbury'

Incident Type	01/04/2023-31/03/2024	01/04/2024-31/03/2025	01/04/2025-31/03/2026	Total	3yr % change
Rough sleepers	1747	357	283	2387	83.8% reduction
River safety	32	29	15	76	53.1% reduction
VAWG incidents	129	39	8	176	93.8% reduction
Shoplifting	260	367	410	1037	57.7% increase
Returning within 48	13	2	0	15	100.0%

Supporting data: West Mercia Police

ASB incidents demand by year since 2024

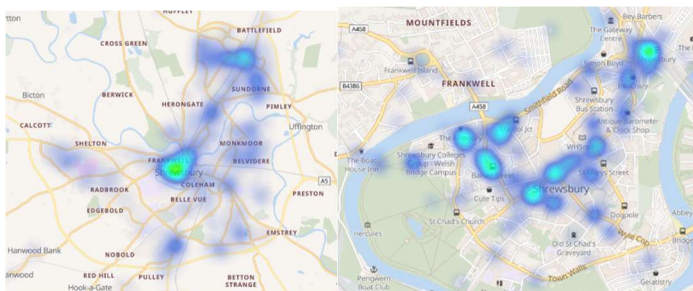
Demand by Year	
Year	Incidents
2024	319
2025	285
2026	90
Grand Total	694

ASB incidents, comparing 1st Jan to the 26th of May 2025 with same period in 2026

YTD 2025		YTD 2026		
Incident Type	Totals	Incident Type	Totals	Variation
AS-Nuisance	120	AS-Nuisance	86	Decrease of 28.3%
AS-Personal	4	AS-Personal	3	Decrease of 25.0%
AS-Environmental	2	AS-Environmental	1	Decrease of 50.0%
Grand Total	126	Grand Total	90	Decrease of 28.6%

This shows that there has been a reduction in ASB incidents of 28.6%

Heat maps looking at ASB in Shrewsbury for the last 12 months



These maps show the concentration of ASB incidents around the town centre area

Keyword searches conducted on incident reports recorded by West Mercia Police for the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2026 split up by incidents and crime.

Key word	2023/24 incidents	2024/25 incidents	2025/26 incidents
Alcohol/drinking/drunk	5	3	2
Drugs Cannabis	1	2	1
Dog	1	2	0
Damage	1	1	1
Litter/rubbish/vomit	1	1	0

Key word	2023/24 Crime data	2024/25 Crime data	2025/26 Crime data
Alcohol/drinking/drunk	63	38	32
Busking	1	0	1
Drugs Cannabis	41	31	37
Dog	9	7	1
Damage	80	55	51
Litter/rubbish/vomit	13	6	2
Graffiti	4	0	3
Urinating/Defecating	6	8	3

Below are the categories that did not have either any incident or crime data as specified.

- Begging- no incidents or crime
- Busking- no incidents
- Graffiti- no incidents
- Urinate and defecate- no incidents

The keywords are taken from the initial detail of the report made rather than the entire incident log, which may result in under-reporting however they do indicate potential data that could be considered in order to monitor the proposed additional categories. However, further incident detail would be required to establish whether reports refer to anti-social behaviour and specifically relate to the conditions detailed within the PSPO.

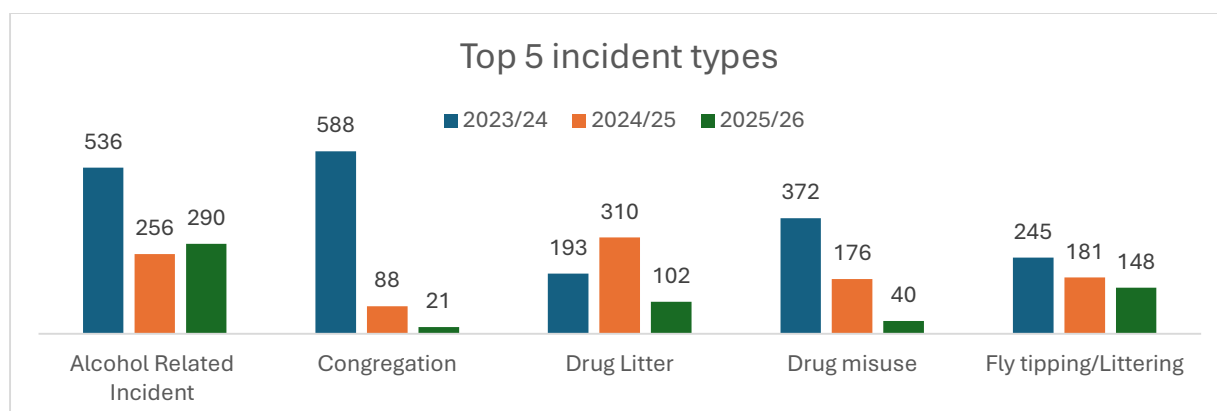
Supporting data: Shropshire Council

Enforcement data for the Shrewsbury Town Centre PSPO

Enforcement type	April 2023- March 2024	April 2024 – March 2025	April 2025 – March 2025
Written Warnings	2	4	3
FPNs	3 (1 paid, 2 unpaid)	2 (both paid)	2 (both unpaid)
Prosecutions Pursued (for unpaid FPNs).	2	N/A	2

Key findings

The graph below identifies the top 5 incident types generating the highest number of reports during the review period.



Headlines:

- Total recorded incidents fell by 61.8% over a three-year period. This indicates a strong positive impact the PSPO and multi-agency approach
- Major reductions across incidents such as aggressive begging, drug misuse and damage/arson
- Alcohol related incidents decreased by 45.9% but still represent one of the highest volume categories
- Enforcement activity remains relatively low, with small numbers of FPNs, warnings and prosecutions suggesting that the PSPO may be acting as a deterrent rather than relying heavily on formal enforcement

There are no proposed additions to the current PSPO to tackle ongoing issues linked to Anti-social behaviour in Shrewsbury Town Centre.

Conclusion

All incident types have continued to generate reports during the last 3 years. However, dog fouling, aggressive begging and dog control incidents have recorded significantly lower levels in comparison n to the remaining categories.

This report highlights that the PSPO has contributed to a significant and sustained reduction in anti-social behaviour in Shrewsbury Town centre with major decreases in high harm behaviours.