

# Public Safety Events: Monthly Assessment June 2022

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## Purpose

- The purpose of this document is to proportionately and lawfully share information with 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.
- Products will be produced on a monthly basis.
- Please contact [NPoCCMailbox-.SIB-Events@met.police.uk](mailto:NPoCCMailbox-.SIB-Events@met.police.uk) with questions or feedback.

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The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee weekend was the first significant weekend since the ending of Covid-19 restrictions to have volume events across the UK. No significant public safety issues were reported for the majority of events that took place over this weekend.

Safeguarding is **highly likely** to continue to be the main risk at events. This is **likely** to include the impact of illegal drug usage and excessive alcohol consumption by attendees. Over the last four weeks, post-event reporting to NPoCC SIB has been received on excessive alcohol consumption, drug usage, drug confiscations, and drugs in circulation at music events in the North West, East Midlands, Scotland and South East regions. There is a **realistic possibility** that substance misuse will impact on the safety and health of attendees as the festival season continues. It is **highly likely** that as music, festival and sporting events continue over the summer there will be an increased risk of the misuse and circulation of substances, including illegal drugs of high strength and unknown toxicology, and poly-drug usage especially for younger demographic attendees. Drug warnings were issued during an event in the North West England due to high strength MDMA tablets in circulation.

It is **likely** that organised drug dealers will take advantage of the opportunities to supply at events. There is a **realistic possibility** that a minority of staff employed at the event will use their access to supply drugs. At a festival in the South East region over 2 – 4 June, police arrested bar staff dealing from the bar. On-site facilities including site lockers, were also used to store drugs by other dealers at events.

Spiking of individuals, through drink or needle has a **realistic possibility** of taking place in hospitality environments, and evolve to take place in the outdoor festival setting. Reported incidents have been low over the period; two offences were reported at a music event in the North East region on 3 June. Another potential spiking incident was reported at an event in the Eastern region. It is **likely** more offences will have taken place at events but not reported to police.

Behaviour of attendees that causes disruption and disorder at events continues to be identified by police and industry. East Midlands and North West regions report on behaviour that has led to requirement of an enhanced police presence. This escalation of behaviour to disorder is **likely** to impact on industry capability and police resourcing. There is a **realistic possibility** of injuries to attendees and staff during disorder and violence.



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Pyrotechnic usage at concerts and festivals has been reported by East Midlands and South Wales regions. Where pyrotechnics were found in possession of attendees, the attendees were typically ejected from the event. Although no reports were received, the use of pyrotechnics has a **realistic possibility** of causing injuries to attendees in the crowd. It is **likely** that attendees will attempt to smuggle in pyrotechnics to future events.

Theft of mobile phones has continued into the festival season. Three regions, North East, East Midlands, and Eastern reported incidents over four separate events. These were events of the music genre punk/rock/indie, with lively dynamics in the audience. One event on 3 June in the North East reported at least 25 stolen phones during the night. It is **likely** as the festival season progresses, further phones will be stolen by organised groups travelling around the country to commit these offences at crowded events.

Parts were stolen from a vehicle parked at an event in the North East region on 3 June. It is **likely** further thefts will take place at car parks for events, including at festivals. There is an increased demand and short supply of vehicle parts currently in the UK, and it is **likely** that organised teams will utilise the opportunities of these events to steal in-demand commodities.

Live televised events of national and international interest, which are **likely** to attract significant media attention, have been used by protest groups as a platform to promote their cause. Two protests in June took place at events linked to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend. There is a **realistic possibility** that protest groups will exploit the opportunity of live televised events over the next month at significant sporting events to raise the profile of their ideologies.

The illegal use of drones has been reported at several events. Drone usage took place at an event in the East Midlands in June. Flights at the nearby airport had to be diverted for safety reasons. It is **likely** drone usage will take place at future festival and sporting events mainly to gain sight and footage of the event taking place for personal and social media use. There is a **realistic possibility** of drones causing airspace disruption, or causing injuries in crowded spaces through reckless use.



## Drugs

Safeguarding risks relating to drug and excessive alcohol usage are **highly likely** to be sustained as music, festivals and sporting events increase over the summer season. It is **likely** that some drugs taken will be of a high dosage or mixed with unknown ingredients, which could lead to hospitalisations or deaths. Poly-drug usage is also another factor that has a **realistic possibility** of increasing the risk of the safety of the attendee.

## Current Intelligence

- June 2022 at an event in East England, multiple incidents of drug usage were reported. The event was an electronic dance festival which attracted young adults. The event security seized multiple drugs and found various types of concealments. The predominant illegal drug used at this event was Ketamine. The festival had enhanced searching for drugs and drug dogs were utilised. This event was cash free, but despite this people were found to be carrying cash. It is **likely** cash was being used to purchase recreational drugs. Further similar events will **almost certainly** see drug usage and attempts to conceal drugs for personal use and distributing.
- In June 2022 at an event in Scotland it was observed that there were high levels of intoxication from many which lead to an intoxicated male falling from a balcony into the main stand. There were also six other reports involving intoxication and ASB.

## Concealment

There have been various methods to conceal drugs, which can be seen in the images on the right. The pink drugs have been hidden in noodles, and the noodles then placed into a foil tin. The other two images show baby wipes being used to hide white powder. It is **highly likely** other methods will be utilised to smuggle drugs into festivals and events over the summer period.

## Forward Look

Drug usage by a minority of attendees is **highly likely** to occur at music events and sporting events, including football. It is **likely** attendees will utilise concealment methods to bring illegal drugs on site for personal use. There is a **realistic possibility** that harm and injury will be caused to some attendees from substance misuse.



Cannabis seized at an event in June 2022

Image: Industry

Concealment of drugs in June 2022



Image: Industry

## Crowd Dynamics

Reporting on the behaviour of attendees causing disruption, disorder, and violence at events has continued over the last four weeks. This behaviour increased the risk of injuries of attendees. Some behaviour is **likely** to have been influenced by excessive alcohol and drug consumption. This behaviour is **likely** to impact negatively on other attendees and staff. Behaviour that extends beyond the event footprint into the wider community is also likely to cause concerns for safety.

## Current Intelligence

- At an event in South Wales there was a report of an assault on an emergency worker when assisting security with a male that had been told to leave .
- An event in East Midlands there was reports of disorder at a special event in a town centre, based in a nightclub. Late arrivals at the venue resulted in queue jumping and the queue spilling out and blocking the road. Attendees became impatient due to “last entry time” and a crowd surge knocked over the security barriers. A near crush incident was narrowly avoided. An early finish of the event led to a mass exodus of unhappy attendees. Several large fights broke out in the crowd as they spilled out into the street and again blocked the road. Bottles and other missiles were thrown amongst the crowd, and officers assaulted. As result of the above, additional policing resources from across the county were deployed to help with the dispersal. Large parts of the crowd offered aggressive resistance and were argumentative.
- In June in the East Midlands region, door staff alerted police to a large fight outside a venue premises after a verbal altercation between two groups inside the premises. Some of the group were armed with knives and three males were stabbed. Nine persons were subsequently arrested either at, or in proximity to, the premises. A number of knives were recovered nearby .
- Over the weekend at an event in the North West of England, there was reports of violent disorder incidents. This included a report of violent disorder involving a group of 60+ armed with sticks and a potential knife. It was reported that organised fights had also taken place.

## Forward Look

It is **likely** that inappropriate and disruptive behaviour of attendees will continue at some events as the outdoor festival season continues. Crowd behaviour such as queue rushing to gain entry to a venue and crowd surges have a **realistic possibility** of leading to injuries and death, as experienced in the USA in November 2021.

There is a **realistic possibility** that this will challenge the organisers through staffing gaps, especially in security, and the lack of experience for newer staff. It is **likely** that behaviour leading to disorder will on occasion be beyond the capabilities of the organiser and their security staff to mitigate, so will require police resources.

## Drugs

Pre-pandemic, organised crime groups (OCGs) utilised the opportunities presented at events to supply drugs. It is **likely** that this will continue, as there is ready-made market demand from attendees, with the potential to recoup earnings lost over the Covid-19 period. It is **likely** that OCGs will travel to events across the UK to increase their market reach and to avoid recognition from their home communities.

## Current Intelligence

- June 2022 - the outdoor music and festival events season has now begun. Drugs including MDMA tablets and crystals, and nitrous oxide (NOS) have been found at several festival music events. It is **likely** that some of these finds are linked to organised drug supply due to the methods utilised to conceal drugs on the site pre-event. There is a **realistic possibility** that a minority of food and drink vans will attempt to sell drugs during their event as seen in this reporting period.
- June 2022 it was reported during an electric dance festival that dealers on site were using lockers that were provided in the campsite areas. Nitrous oxide was also found in several rucksacks in the perimeter of the festival hidden by dealers for collection later. Bar staff were detained during the event after being seen dealing drugs from the bar.
- June 2022 at an event in the North West, there were reports of an address being utilised to sell cocaine, balloon cannons and illegal alcohol from. There were two large events taking place in the area.

## Forward Look

Drug dealing is **highly likely** to take place at music events and festivals over the next six months. It is **likely** that some dealing will be linked to OCGs. It is **likely** that OCGs will seek opportunities pre-event to secrete drugs on the site to evade searches when the event commences. There is a **realistic possibility** of infiltration through staffing to facilitate drug dealing on site. This is **likely** to include gaining access through food and retail stalls at the event. There is a **realistic possibility** of safeguarding issues presented by drug dealing at events including the exploitation of vulnerable persons made to sell the drugs.

### Drugs recovered in June 2022

(Image provided by Industry)



### Drugs seized in June 2022

Crack Cocaine, Mushrooms, Medical drugs, Viagra, Nitrous Oxide and a large quantity of cash (Image provided by Police)

## Pickpocketing

Mobile phone theft from attendees at music concerts, festivals, and crowded spaces is **likely** to increase over the next six months across the UK due to the increased opportunities at events. There is a **realistic possibility** of organised pickpocketing criminal groups targeting crowded events as they provide rich environments to steal mobile phones. The close crowd dynamics including 'moshing' behaviour enables potential offenders to avoid detection.

## Current Intelligence

Theft of phones from attendees are now being reported at festival events. Locations where large volumes of phones have been stolen are **likely** to have been committed by those linked to organised criminal networks. Other indicators of organised criminality included phones being turned off straight away to evade tracking, and discarded phone cases at the venue.

- June 2022 at a pop-punk festival in the North East, there were at least 25 mobile thefts reported, mostly from persons whilst in the crowd. Phone cases were reported on the floor.
- June 2022 at two separate events there were reports of phone thefts, both events being in East England. One event was a pop-punk festival and the other a pop concert.
- June 2022 at least 15 phones were reported stolen from the person at a rock Festival in the East Midlands.

Information has been received from Europe of similar thefts occurring at festivals in Belgium and Germany. Historically, those involved in organised thefts at music events and festivals have been known to travel Europe-wide to commit these offences. There is a **realistic possibility** this will occur again with the removal of restrictions to travel, enabling offenders to travel freely to the UK.

## Forward Look

It is **likely** that festivals over the summer will attract pickpocketing criminality, based on crowd demographics and dynamics. It is **likely** that organised teams will travel around the UK to commit theft of mobile phones. There is a **realistic possibility** that these teams will utilise methods such as swimsuits and tights under their clothes, and bags, including aluminium lined, to transport the stolen phones out of the location.



Regional locations of high volume phone thefts



Example of 'swimsuit' – arrest in 2017  
<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/crime/2017/12/19/pickpocket-dressed-in-swimsuit-to-hide-stolen-phones-at-royal-blood-gig/>

## Theft from Motor Vehicle

Pre-pandemic, organised crime groups (OCGs) utilised the opportunities presented at events to target large volumes of parked vehicles for vehicle crime. This included the theft of items left in the vehicle, and vehicle parts, despite event car parks having security.

## Current Intelligence

- In June 2022 it was reported a vehicle was attacked whilst parked in a secure monitored car park at a festival in the North East region. Vehicle parts were stolen.
- In June 2022 a report from police featured in the national press relating to the large scale problem of theft of car parts after the pandemic closed vehicle factory's and the production of spare parts (<https://news.sky.com/story/cars-being-stripped-in-hours-as-rise-in-thefts-linked-to-parts-shortage-12628544>)

## Forward Look

Vehicle crime is **likely** to take place at music events and festivals over the next six months. It is **likely** that locations will be targeted as there is ready-made market and demand, due to an international shortage of spare vehicle parts to fulfil the repair sector.

It is **likely** that organised crime groups will travel to events across the UK to satisfy the demand for vehicle parts. There is a **realistic possibility** of infiltration through staffing to facilitate the theft. It is **likely** they will target security staff though threats or bribery to allow the activity to take place as a vehicle is needed to facilitate the theft.



Pictures courtesy of Cheshire Police



## Protest

There is a **realistic possibility** that single issue protest groups will utilise events that are televised, or attract national/International media attention to highlight their cause. This may or may not be a cause directly linked to the specific event.

## Current Intelligence

Within this reporting period there has been further protest activity at events around the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee:

- On 2 June Animal Rebellion protesters entered the ceremonial route on The Mall before the Trooping the Colour.
- On 4 June Animal Rebellion protesters ran onto the track before the Epsom Derby. Six female protesters were intervened by security and police before any locks on took place.

There is a **realistic possibility** that these protests took place due to the event being televised and having a high public presence.

## Forward Look

There are number of high profile sporting events that are taking place over the next month. There is a **realistic possibility** that protest groups will utilise the opportunity of live televised events to raise their cause at these events.

There is a **realistic possibility** that protest will take place at the entry or on the periphery of the event where attendees can be confronted or disrupted before entering. Although this is the most likely option other methods will be utilised to gain access inside the event. There is a **realistic possibility** that entry may be gained through legitimate means with a valid ticket. There is a also a **realistic possibility** that tactics such as fake tickets and infiltration through staffing at the event will be used.



**Animal Rebellion protest Epsom Derby**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/04/animal-rebellion-protesters-run-on-to-track-before-epsom-derby>

## Drones at Events

Flights were diverted at an airport in the Midlands, June 2022 after a drone sighting. Eight further flights were diverted and a runway temporarily closed after further reported drone activity. At the time of reporting, the drone operator had not been identified but is believed to have located within or close to the nearby Festival. Enhanced police patrols in the area were put in place as a response.

Drone activity was also reported at an earlier festival event (May 2022) in the West Midlands. Three incidents of drones were reported flying over the event area. On each occasion, police were informed and were able to take positive action to deter activity (Industry return).

Drone activity within airport Flight Restriction Zones (FRZs) without authorisation from the airport Air Traffic Control (ATC) is an offence under Art. 94 of the Air Navigation Order (ANO) 2016 (as amended). Drones above 250g and <250g with a camera must show the pilot's Operator Registration Number on the drone. Police officers have the power to compel a pilot to ground a drone if there is reasonable grounds for suspecting the drone has been, or is likely to be involved in the commission of an offence, as well as search persons and vehicles if suspected offences have been committed under the ANO 2016 (as amended), under the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021.

NPCC Counter Drones recommends that a counter drone plan be put in place at all airports nationally. This includes conducting a launch site assessment, patrol plan, access to regional or local detection and effector equipment, and an action-on workflow following the initial drone detection/sighting. NPCC Counter Drones can provide guidance on how to establish this plan, as well as direct forces to their regional counter drone lead.

## Forward Look

It is **likely** drones will be used at events without authority. It is **likely** that this will be done to gain sight and footage of the event taking place for personal and social media use. There is a **realistic possibility** of drones causing airspace disruption, or injuring people if they fall into the crowd.





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