

5 DAYS IN AUGUST

An interim report on the 2011 English riots

RIOTS
COMMUNITIES
AND VICTIMS
PANEL

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FOREWORD FROM DARRA SINGH, PANEL CHAIR

In August 2011, England saw significant and widespread public disorder.

Television viewers watched news coverage of looting, violence, arson and vandalism on a scale which shocked and traumatised communities and the country as a whole. Five people lost their lives and hundreds more lost their businesses and homes.

Much has already been said about the riots, their causes and the response. During the course of our work, we talked directly to the victims and communities who have been affected. We were moved by the stories we heard of human loss, fear and abandonment as a result of the riots. We were also struck by the level of community spirit demonstrated in the aftermath.

In this report, we set out the events that took place over those five days in August, reflecting the experiences of those affected. We have aimed to tackle some of the myths that have been established about the cause of the riots.

On visits and through our discussions with communities and victims, we have discovered widespread levels of anxiety and anger about the 'mindless' nature of the riots and the level of criminality.

We have also noted a collective pessimism about the future. We were shocked by the number of young people we spoke to who had no hopes or dreams for their future.

At the same time, we must not lose sight of the fact that the vast majority of young people did not riot. It was heartening that so many people, including significant numbers of young people, came out to clean up their streets. Through their resilience, hope and optimism they reclaimed their communities.

There was no single cause of the riots and there is no single solution. This report is intended to prompt discussion about every aspect of the riots. It will generate ideas from which we will develop recommendations which will appear in our final report. We hope everyone who reads this report will want to work with us to develop proposals to address the fundamental challenges we face as a society.

It is thirty years since the publication of the Scarman report. We are clear that a huge amount has changed for the better and the riots in August bear no relation to the disturbances in 1981. However, it is a sad fact that in some respects, the underlying challenges are strikingly similar.

Will riots happen again? The answer is quite possibly 'yes'. This is why we need to work together to develop ideas which deal not only with the symptoms of the riots but with the deep-seated causes of dissatisfaction beneath. Now must be the time for leaders, national and local, to commit to build strong, resilient and thriving local communities where no one feels the urge to take such destructive action ever again.

‘There was no single cause of the riots and there is no single solution.’

WHY THIS REPORT IS BEING PUBLISHED

Following the riots that occurred in towns and cities across England between 6 and 10 August 2011, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Official Opposition established the Riots Communities and Victims Panel (“the Panel”) and asked it to consider:

- what may have motivated the small minority of people who took part in rioting
- why the riots happened in some areas and not others
- how key public services engaged with communities before, during and after the riots
- what motivated local people to come together to resist riots in their area or to clean up after riots had taken place
- how communities can be made more socially and economically resilient in the future in order to prevent future problems
- what could have been done differently to prevent or manage the riots.

Who we are



Darra Singh OBE
(Chair)



Heather Rabbatts CBE



Simon Marcus



**Baroness Maeve
Sherlock OBE**

Our task

Our remit is to listen to views of communities and victims about the riots. We launched a call for evidence on 16 September 2011. Since then, we have visited 20 areas and spoken with thousands of people who were affected by the riots and some who were not. We have sought views via radio phone-ins, Twitter, newspaper articles, our website and blog and in public meetings in some of the worst affected areas. Further information about who we are and the areas we visited can be found in the appendices.

We know there has already been a great deal of thinking within Government and more widely about the riots. We believe it is important that the voices of victims and communities can contribute to the debate. This is why we are now publishing our interim report 10 weeks after our call for evidence. It aims to reflect the views and opinions we have heard so far in order to draw together emerging themes, before we explore these issues in more depth.

This report is written from a national perspective and does not aim to analyse the riots at a local level. Each riot area had its own ‘DNA’ and we can’t reflect them all in depth in this report. Many areas which were affected by the riots have established their own panels to focus on local issues. The purpose of this report is to capture the overarching findings, while highlighting important local differences.

The structure of this report

This report is split into three sections:

- In the first we set out the facts, outlining what happened where and who was involved.
- In the second section, we consider what triggered the riots, why they spread and the motivations of those involved.
- In the final section, we outline some immediate recommendations based on what we have heard; outline the areas we intend to focus on in the next phase of our work; and set out further important questions we think need to be answered.

We hope that by setting out the facts clearly, our report will address some common misconceptions about the riots. This is important in itself – tensions between different communities, areas and groups can be needlessly inflamed by myths and untruths.

We will publish our final report in March 2012.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

On Thursday 4 August 2011, Mark Duggan was shot by police officers in Ferry Lane, Tottenham Hale, London. The incident was immediately referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission. On Saturday 6 August, the family and supporters of Mr Duggan, numbering around 120, marched from the Broadwater Farm estate to Tottenham police station to protest about the shooting. It was a peaceful protest but, later in the evening, violence broke out. By the early hours, rioting had spread to nearby areas. By Sunday 7 August the riots had spread to 12 areas within London and by Monday 8 August, the riots had spread nationally and eventually 66 areas experienced rioting.

The riots across England lasted for five days in total. Five people lost their lives and hundreds more lost their businesses and homes. There was widespread arson and looting. We estimate that the total cost of the riots will be more than half a billion pounds.

This Panel was established to listen to the views of communities and victims about what caused the riots and what we can do to prevent them from happening again. Since we launched our call for evidence on 16 September 2011, we have visited 20 areas and spoken with thousands of people who were affected by the riots and some who were not. We have sought views via radio, television, the internet and in public meetings.

This interim report is the product of those investigations. It is written from a national perspective and does not aim to analyse the riots at a local level. Its purpose is to capture our overarching findings, while highlighting important local differences.

Section One: Context

What happened when: questions and answers about the riots

Between 6-10 August 2011, we estimate that 13,000 - 15,000 people were actively involved in the riots. More than 4000 suspected rioters have been arrested. Nine out of ten were already known to the police.

In total, more than 5000 crimes were committed, including five fatalities, 1860 incidents of arson and criminal damage, 1649 burglaries, 141 incidents of disorder and 366 incidents of violence against the person.

The overwhelming majority of those brought before the courts so far have been male and had a previous conviction. At least eighty-four people had committed 50 or more previous offences each. Three-quarters were aged 24 or under.

Of children brought before the courts, two thirds had Special Educational Needs and on average missed almost one day of school a week. They were also more likely to live in the 10% lowest income areas, to be receiving free school meals and to have been excluded from school at least once. Only 11% had achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSE grades including English and Maths.

Whilst these are striking statistics, the vast majority of people we spoke to were clear that not having a good education or a job was not an excuse to do wrong:

'How does not having GCSEs give you the right to riot?'

There appears to be a link between deprivation and rioting. Our unique analysis shows that 70% of those brought before the courts were living in the 30% most deprived postcodes in the country. Although many deprived areas did not riot, of the 66 areas that experienced riots, 30 were in the top 25% most deprived areas in England. Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Rates are 1.5 percentage points higher among 16-24 year olds in riot areas (7.5%) than non riot areas (6%).

Rioter behaviour profiles

We know that the rioters were not a homogenous group of people all acting for the same reasons. They acted differently depending on why they decided to riot and what they wanted to get out of it.

We break down those present at the riots into five broad categories:

- Organised criminals, often from outside the area.
- Violent aggressors who committed the most serious crimes, such as arson and violent attacks on the police.
- 'Late night shoppers' – people who deliberately travelled to riot sites in order to loot.
- Opportunists – people who were drawn into riot areas through curiosity or a sense of excitement and then became caught up in the moment.
- Spectators – people who came just to watch the rioting.

Section Two: Analysing the findings

Rioting in Tottenham – what were the causes?

The riots which began in Tottenham spread across the country with unprecedented speed. Understanding what sparked them is fundamental to any effort to prevent riots in the future.

In our view they were triggered by the police handling of the death of Mark Duggan, in particular communication with his family, which was caused by the breakdown of their protocols with the IPCC. This was set against a historic backdrop of antipathy between some members of the black community and the police; some felt that these underlying tensions in the community had been rising for some time. Also a factor were rumours which circulated about the death of Mark Duggan, including allegations of 'his assassination'.

The rumours surrounding the shooting were not countered effectively. This was exacerbated by the release of information concerning an "exchange of fire" which had to be later retracted. In this "information vacuum" unfounded reports via social media could gain currency.

The speed at which rumours can spread makes rapid, informed communication vital in tense, inflammable situations. Currently there is a fault line running between the IPCC and the police in this area.

We recommend that the IPCC and police urgently review their existing protocols and ensure that they are adhered to in the future. This will help ensure that deliberate false rumours and unintended inaccuracies do not go unchallenged in future.

How the riots spread within an area

The vast majority of people we spoke to believed that the sole trigger for disturbances in their areas was the perception that the police could not contain the scale of rioting in Tottenham and then across London.

Lack of confidence in the police response to the initial riots encouraged people to test reactions in other areas. Most of the riots began with some trouble in retail areas with a critical mass of individuals and groups converging on an area. Rioters believed they would be able to loot and damage without being challenged by the police. In the hardest hit areas, they were correct.

How the riots went viral – the role of the media

A defining characteristic of the riots was the blanket media coverage. We witnessed 24-hour rolling news and near-constant reporting of events on social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and BlackBerry Messenger.

It seems clear that the spread of rioting was helped both by televised images of police watching people cause damage and looting at will, and by the ability of social media to bring together determined people to act collectively.

However, we do not believe that the Government should simply shut down social networks in the event of rioting. Social media was also used by family members, community groups and authorities to dissuade people from going out onto the streets and to provide reassurance to communities. It did good as well as harm.

What is clear from the riots is that there is no simple 'switch off' solution to the use of social media. Viral silence may have as many dangers as viral noise.

Why didn't the riots happen everywhere?

As the riots spread, some areas remained unaffected. Significantly, people in many areas felt they too would have experienced rioting if the disturbances in other areas had continued for much longer. Few people ruled out the prospect of riots in the future.

We heard a number of possible reasons why some communities experienced little or no rioting. These included the level of deprivation, the amount of social capital people had invested in their local communities, the physical environment, transport links and the preventative actions of local services and people.

We cannot hope to predict where any future riots will take place. We identify a number of practical, short-term actions central government and local communities can take to try and prepare for, and prevent, future riots.

We heard some harrowing stories on our visits to areas affected by rioting. Lives were lost. Parents had to carry children out of burning homes leaving a lifetime of possessions behind to be destroyed. Shopkeepers lost everything they had built up over many years. The consequences of the riots are still being felt. In many areas, there is an overriding sense of despair that people could destroy their own communities.

Why did people riot?

There was no one single motivating factor for the riots. We heard a range of motivations from the need for new trainers to a desire to attack society.

Many people asked how a wider collapse in values may have contributed to this situation. They were shocked to see so many of their fellow citizens engaged in criminal, sometimes violent behaviour, apparently oblivious to the consequences for themselves and for others. They questioned whether the issues of Bankers' bonuses, MPs' expenses, and a lack of personal responsibility had created a moral vacuum in society.

'Stop and search' was cited as a major source of discontent with the police. This concern was widely felt by young Black and Asian men who felt it was not always carried out with appropriate respect. We were told that, in at least some instances, this was a motivating factor in the riots, including some of the attacks on the police.

We know from rioters' criminal histories that most rioters had committed offences before. The chance to do so en masse, apparently increasing the number of opportunities and reducing the chances of being caught, seems to have represented a significant motivating factor for many.

But these were not just 'the usual suspects'. A third of under-18s seen by the courts had not committed a previous offence. We know that the great majority of these youths were not considered 'at risk' of offending by local area Youth Offending Teams. This suggests that

a significant number of these young people made bad decisions after getting caught up in the moment.

The fact that many people abused society's moral and legal codes when the opportunity arose paints a disturbing picture. Most disturbing to us was a widespread feeling that some rioters had no hope and nothing to lose.

'Some people get to 14 or 15 years old without ever being told they're good at anything. They feel a sense of worthlessness.'

Having a stake in society is important. We spoke to many individuals from similar backgrounds who didn't riot. They told us that they had a place in society that they did not want to jeopardise. They showed an awareness of shared values. They had the resilience to take the knocks and create opportunities for themselves. The fact that these people, who had similar disadvantages in life to many of those who chose to riot, felt able to look positively to the future greatly impressed us.

Addressing riot myths

As well as describing the experience of the riots for people around the country, we also want to establish what the riots were not.

These were not riots committed by children, but – largely – by young adults. We do not believe that these were race riots. Most convicted rioters were not gang members. Our conclusion is that there was no single cause of the riots and no single group was responsible.

How did public services perform?

The police have acknowledged that mistakes were made. The riots developed at an unprecedented scale and speed and police emergency plans were not always well adapted to cope.

The police decision to withdraw to the periphery of riot-hit areas left many communities feeling they had been abandoned. All the seriously affected communities felt that police numbers were not high enough and that the police did not act quickly enough to engage with the rioters.

There is still much distress and anger in communities about the police response. It is crucial that the police rebuild trust. This can start by ensuring plans are in place to deal with the risk of future disturbances, pursuing people who committed the crimes during the riots and supporting communities as they rebuild.

We are aware that as a consequence of these riots, the police have begun a review of their tactics on how to handle future riots.

Similarly, whilst there were some examples of good practice, all the local authorities we spoke to felt they had lessons to learn. In particular, there is scope to improve the effective use of social media both as a tool to gather and use information and to communicate messages to communities, businesses and individuals. We recommend that this is addressed urgently.

The scale of the London Olympics next summer will present a significant challenge for public services. It is critical that police and the relevant local authorities carry out proper resilience planning, incorporating scenarios which reflect the risk of a repeat of the August riots during the Olympic Games.

Financial recovery for individuals and businesses

Three months after the riots, there are still small businesses which have yet to receive a penny in compensation for the losses they have experienced. This is threatening the viability of some businesses and needs to be addressed urgently.

The insurance industry has not performed well. We are concerned at the large number of complaints we have received about the role of insurers. We heard repeatedly about delays and difficulties people and businesses were having dealing with insurance company. In most cases, the small businessman had fared worse, with the larger, national companies being best looked after.

Similarly, the Riot Damages Act (RDA) is not working. We did not hear of anyone who had received a payment under the Riot Damages Act. On current forecasts, in London, by 31 March 2012 – over six months after the August riots – nine out of ten of the largest claims will still not have been processed and barely half of people with the smallest claims will have been paid.

It will take time for the full picture of the financial effect of the riots on local people and businesses to emerge but it is clear, now, that the current system for financial compensation does not get money quick enough to those who need and deserve it most.

Riot heroes

We heard some amazing stories about individuals and groups organising large scale clean-ups after the riots to help their communities. We recommend that these people should be honoured both nationally and locally for this work.

Section three: Actions

We set out our key themes for our next phase of work:

- **‘Hopes and Dreams’** – the absence of hopes and dreams amongst many we spoke to is a danger for society. We need young people who are able to improve their education, get a job that fulfils their ambitions and allows them to achieve their potential. We were concerned at the level of despondency and anxiety amongst the young in particular;
- **Building personal resilience** – we heard a lot about the sense of hopelessness felt by young people in many areas. We want to look at how we can help all young people become more responsible, ambitious, determined, and conscientious members of their community;
- **Children and parents** – we were frequently told by communities that poor parenting was the underlying cause of the riots. We want to consider what more we could do to improve parenting, achieving the right balance between individual responsibility and the role of public services in supporting parents;
- **Riots and the ‘Brands’** – the rise in consumerism was raised as a concern by many people. The latest brand or gadget increasingly defines an individual’s identity. We want to explore how commercial brands’ can use their powerful influence positively for the good of the community;
- **‘The Usual Suspects’** – a common view focused on the relatively small number of people who commit multiple crimes and our inability to prevent re offending. We want to explore what more can be done to improve rehabilitation to better protect communities from repeat offenders;
- **Public and the Police** – good relationships are at the heart of maintaining order. We are disturbed at the reports we heard about the breakdown in trust between some communities and police. We want to explore what more we can all do to improve relationships across communities.

We also make a number of recommendations for immediate action which seek to achieve the following:

- Unblock the RDA system and ensure that victims of the riots receive compensation quickly;
- Prompt the insurance industry to root out the cases where service has been poor and to ensure that customers who are facing severe trauma are dealt with effectively;
- To honour the riot heroes – those that supported communities during the riots and in the clean up
- To honour the service personnel who protected communities at great risk to themselves;
- Stop and Search needs immediate attention to ensure that community support and confidence is not undermined
- Call on all local and police authorities to immediately review their emergency plans to ensure they properly cover public disorder on the scale of the August riots.
- Clear plans from Public services, including the probation service, youth offending teams and local government to deal with the return of rioters to reduce the potential for re-offending and to safeguard communities.
- Central and local government and the police should ensure all victims who want to face people who committed crimes against them can have the opportunity to do so.
- Some high streets continue to suffer financially. The government should start a fund to support struggling high streets, including using any potential underspend from the various support schemes to provide extra help.
- The police need to ensure they achieve the right balance in prioritising the protection of individuals and residential areas over commercial property in tackling riots.
- Local authorities and emergency services should review their processes for how to assist and/or evacuate residents and bystanders caught up in riot areas, including through designating particular sites ‘safe haven

We will publish our final report and recommendations in March 2012.

‘The absence of hopes and dreams amongst many we spoke to is a danger for society.’

Section 1

CONTEXT

In this section we focus on the facts: what happened and where, who was involved and what they did.

TIMETABLE OF THE RIOTS

This timetable is based on a number of sources, including the personal accounts and perceptions of people the Panel has spoken to during the course of its work. It is intended to give a broad overview of the nature and scale of the disturbances, at a national level, as seen by communities.

We discuss the events leading up to the disorder in Tottenham on page 35.

“Rumours circulate that a teenage girl has been attacked by the police and violence breaks out.”

Timetable of the riots

SATURDAY 6 AUGUST

5:30

PM

About 120 people gather outside Tottenham police station after marching from the Broadwater Farm estate.

8:20

PM

Violence breaks out. Bottles are thrown and two police cars are set alight.

Tottenham post office is set alight.

10:15

PM

10:45

PM

Riots spread with attacks on police cars, a double-decker bus, a branch of Aldi supermarket and Carpetright.

11:45

PM

Police begin to gain control of a 200m section of Tottenham High Road, allowing the fire brigade to begin tackling fires

In Brixton, around 200 people, many masked, pelt police officers with stones and bottles. Two separate cordons are established and businesses are advised to close. Looting continues into the early hours of Monday 8 August, with looters raiding shops including Footlocker, Halfords and Currys.

In Streatham, shops are looted and the owner of one shop is hospitalised.

11:30

PM

10:30

PM

Damage to property by 50 people in Oxford Circus, central London.

6:45

PM

Rioting and violent clashes with police break out in Enfield. A police car is attacked and local shops including an HMV store are broken into. Enfield is cordoned off by police and becomes a 'sterile area'.

MONDAY 8 AUGUST

Three police officers are hospitalised after being hit by a vehicle in Chingford Mount, Waltham Forest.

12:45

AM

12:45

AM

A sports shop in Kingsland Road shopping centre in Hackney is looted and police pursue 30 people. The mainly Turkish and Kurdish owned shops in Wood Green and Turnpike Lane form 'protection units' to defend their businesses against looters.

2:00

AM

Scotland Yard releases statement saying that 'small and mobile groups' of looters are targeting areas across London.

3:00

AM

Police begin to bring looting under control at Currys in Brixton.

SUNDAY 7 AUGUST

1:30

AM

BBC and Sky News crews are attacked south of Tottenham High Road and both organisations pull out staff in response.

3:00

AM

Riots reach Wood Green, shops including HMV and The Body Shop are looted and one car is set alight.

4:00

AM

Dozens of stores in Wood Green are raided by around 100 people.

Continued looting of Tottenham Hale retail park.

4:30

AM

The London Fire Brigade has dealt with 49 'primary' fires in the Tottenham area and received more than 250 emergency calls from the public.

6:15

AM

Police arrive in Tottenham Hale retail park, bringing looting in the area to a halt.

Police launch Operation Withern to investigate the riots in Tottenham.

Police announce that 26 officers have been injured and 55 arrests made.

'Hackney One' Carnival is cancelled at the last minute on police advice.

04:20

PM

12:00

PM

AFFECTED AREAS

Brixton, Dalston, Denmark Hill, Enfield, Islington, Leyton, Oxford Circus, Shepherd's Bush, Streatham, Waltham Cross, Woolwich, Wood Green.

Rioters clash with police in Hackney.

4:30

PM

Reports that a bus has been set alight in Peckham.

6:40

PM

Rioting spreads to Lewisham and vehicles are set alight.

6:45

PM

Rioting and looting breaks out in Croydon.

7:00

PM

Building on fire on Rye Lane in Peckham.

7:15

PM

First signs of trouble reported in Birmingham as windows are smashed, and around 200 people confront police in the city centre.

8:00

PM

Cars set alight on the Pembury estate in Hackney an hour before police arrive; four reporters are attacked, one seriously; a police officer narrowly escapes from a crowd as his car is attacked.

Looting breaks out in Birmingham and West Bromwich.

AFFECTED AREAS

Balham, Barking, Barnet, Battersea, Bayswater, Bethnal Green, Birmingham, Bristol, Camberwell, Camden, Catford, Charlton, Chelsea, Chingford, Chislehurst, Clapham Junction, Colliers Wood, Croydon, Ealing, East Dulwich, Enfield, Fulham, Hackney, Harlesden, Ilford, Islington, Leeds, Lewisham, Liverpool, Medway, Nottingham, Notting Hill, Oxford, Peckham, Romford, Streatham, Surrey Quays, Sutton, Tooting, Upminster, Walthamstow, Walworth Road, West Bromwich, Woolwich.

Rioters clash with police in Croydon and businesses and vehicles are attacked and set on fire. The furniture store House of Reeves is burned to the ground along with another nearby building.

9:00
PM

Widespread rioting breaks out in Hackney; people are seen 'queuing' in stores to acquire some items; one serious assault occurs.

9:45
PM

Widespread looting in Croydon, involving 300-400 people.

10:30
PM

It is reported that police are severely outnumbered by rioters in a number of places, including Clapham Junction and Woolwich.

11:00
PM

Trevor Ellis, 26, from Brixton Hill, is found with bullet wounds in a car in South Croydon and later dies in hospital. Two others arrested at the scene for handling stolen goods.

9:15
PM

Numerous shops on Rye Lane and Peckham High Street looted by a crowd of up to 400 people. A shop on Rye Lane is destroyed by fire.

10:00
PM

Currys is attacked on Northcote Road, Clapham Junction; police leave after coming under attack; more looters arrive.

10:45
PM

Richard Bowes, 68, is critically injured after confronting looters and trying to extinguish a fire in Ealing. Police and emergency services are obstructed by rioters trying to reach him. He is taken to hospital and dies from his injuries a few days later.

Police called to initial disturbances in Gloucestershire. Disorder continues until 4:00am, including the setting alight of a derelict site of Gloucestershire College of Art and Technology. A total of nine arrests are made.

11:00
PM

Canning Circus police station in Nottinghamshire is firebombed.

10:30
PM

Around 200 people, mostly males, including members of the English Defence League (EDL) gather in Eltham, southeast London, with the aim of 'protecting their community.'

10:25
PM

Around 200 people in Toxteth, Liverpool, throw missiles at police.

11:30
PM

WEDNESDAY 10 AUGUST

Police launch murder inquiry following the deaths of Haroon Jahan, 21, Shahzad Ali, 30, and Abdul Musavir, 31, in a hit and run incident in Birmingham.

5:30
AM

6:00
AM

Tariq Jahan, father of one of the victims of the hit and run incident in Birmingham, praised for his calls for people not to resort to vigilantism against rioters and for urging his community to 'stand united'.

7:30
PM

9:00
AM

Post riot clean-ups taking place in several affected areas, including Manchester, Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

11:15
AM

Premier League match between Tottenham and Everton at White Hart Lane, due to take place at the weekend, is postponed amid fears of further unrest.

8:00
PM

Disturbances continue in Nottingham, including an attack on a police station.

Increased police presence on the streets from the afternoon. No repeat of the large scale disturbances of previous days. Persistent heavy rain in some parts of England.

TUESDAY 9 AUGUST

12:00

AM

Severe fire in ground floor shop in Clapham Junction and widespread looting.

2:15

AM

Fire-fighters are called to a fire at the Sony CD distribution centre in Enfield. The building is completely destroyed.

2:30

AM

In Ealing, cars are set on fire and there is widespread looting, including a branch of Tesco Express and Ealing Broadway shopping mall. A bus is stolen by rioters and crashed.

2:45

AM

A police officer is run over by rioters in Wembley – three men are later arrested on suspicion of attempted murder.

3:00

AM

A Facebook group: 'Post-Riot clean-up: Let's help clean up London' is set up.

4:15

AM

First media reports of 20-year-old Malaysian student, Ashraf Rosli, injured during riots in Barking, after being 'aided' by a group of youths who then proceed to rob him.

Many shops and businesses closing early in riot-affected areas, heavy police presence from early afternoon. In London, Asian and Turkish owned shops largely stay open, guarded by employees and their family and friends.

AFFECTED AREAS

Balham, Barking, Basildon, Battersea, Beckton, Birkenhead, Birmingham, Bromley, Cambridge, Camden, Canvey Island, Croydon, Dagenham, Ealing, Gloucester, Greenwich, Kilburn, Kingsbury, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester, Merton, Newham, Nottingham, Sloane Square, Southwark, West Bromwich, Wimbledon, Wolverhampton.

Serious looting and disorder breaks out in Manchester and Salford. Manchester city centre is closed off to all traffic.

7:00

PM

6:30

PM

West Midlands police confirm pockets of disorder in Birmingham city centre.

2:00

PM

9:00

AM

Volunteers for the 'riot clean up' gather in Clapham Junction. By lunchtime, hundreds of people are working to clean the streets. Similar clean-ups taking place in other riot affected areas, including Walthamstow, Camden, Brixton, Birmingham and Bristol.

THURSDAY 11 AUGUST

10:45

PM

Police make several arrests of alleged EDL supporters, after dispersing a crowd of men gathered earlier in Eltham.

1:00

AM

Magistrates courts in London, Solihull and Manchester sit throughout the night to process those charged for disorder-related offences.

Candle-lit vigil held for the three men killed in Birmingham.

11:30

AM

Parliament recalled from summer recess to debate the riots.

Arsonists set alight to a skip and a recycling bin in two separate incidents in Banbury, Oxfordshire.

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN:

Questions and answers about the riots.

How many areas were affected by rioting?

Estimates of the number of local authorities affected by riots¹ range between 40 (the Guardian newspaper) and 66 (the Home Office²). In total, 31 areas reported over 40 crimes each.

How many people were involved? How many crimes were committed?

Many thousands of people – perhaps as many as 13,000–15,000³ – were actively involved in the riots across England, although possibly not all, perhaps not even the majority, committed criminal acts.

By early September the Home Office report that 5,112 crimes had been committed during the riots. The majority of these (68%) were committed in London.

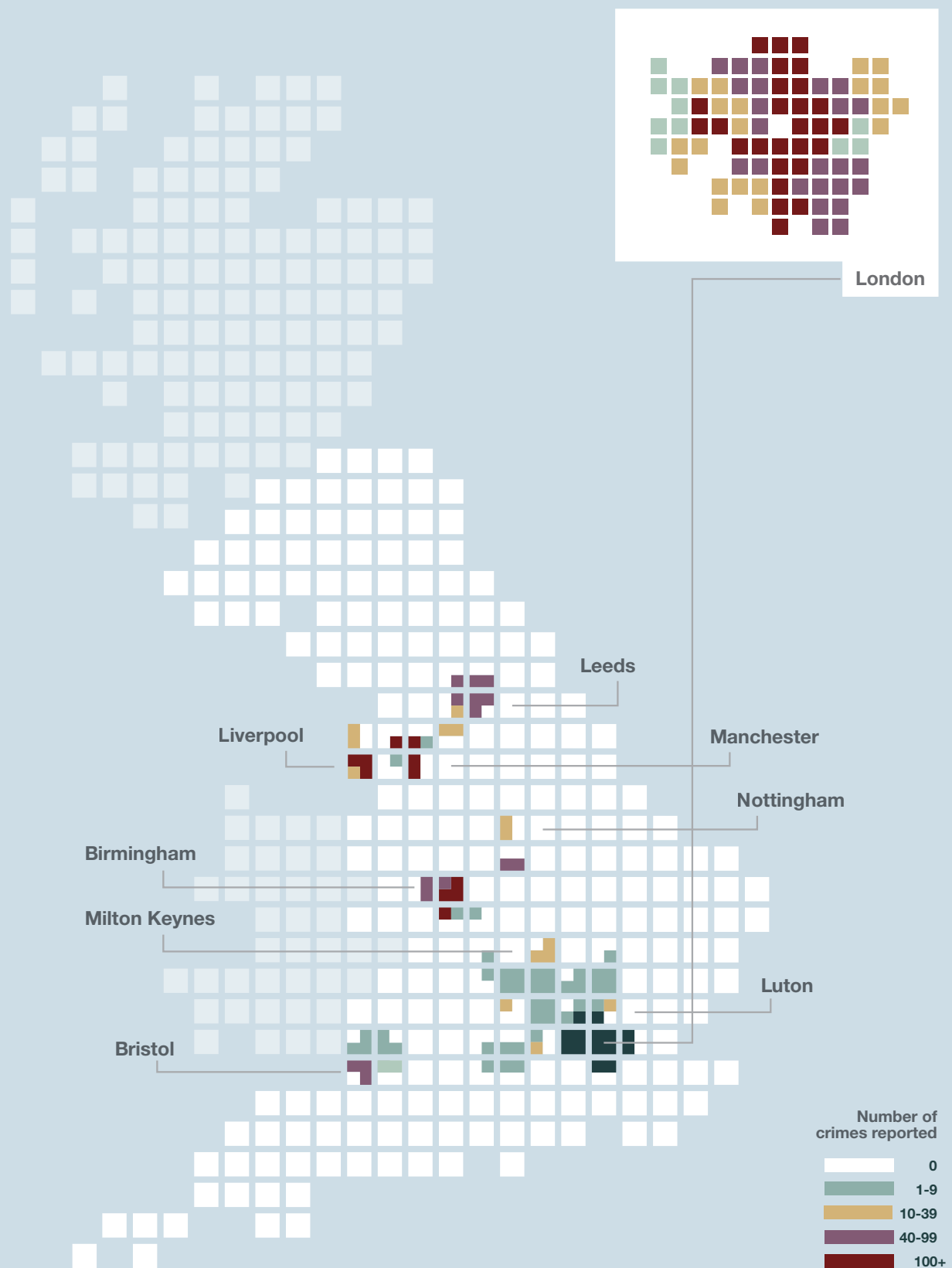
At the time of writing, the number of crimes reported is expected to continue to increase as the police process evidence. For example, there are thousands of hours of CCTV footage still to be examined – including 20,000 hours in London alone⁴.

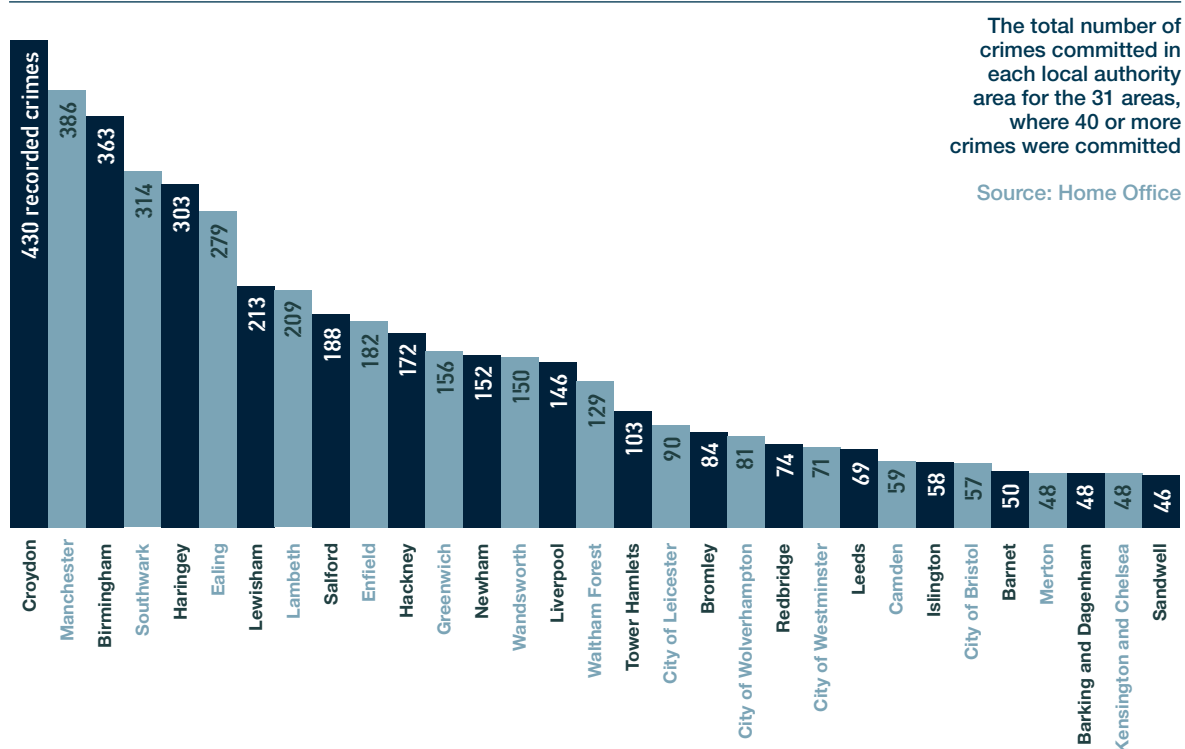
Fatalities

There were five deaths:

- Haroon Jahan, 21, Shahzad Ali, 30, and Abdul Musavir, 31, were run over by a car in Birmingham.
- Richard Mannington Bowes, 68, was injured and later died in Ealing.
- Trevor Ellis, 26, was shot in his car in Croydon.

¹The legal definition of a 'riot' is contained in s.1 Public Order Act 1986: "Where 12 or more persons who are present together use or threaten unlawful violence for a common purpose and the conduct of them (taken together) is such as would cause a person of reasonable firmness present at the scene to fear for his personal safety, each of the persons using unlawful violence for the common purpose is guilty of riot. For this report, we have chosen for the sake of simplicity and consistency to use the term 'riot' in its broadest sense (i.e. wider than its legal definition) to apply to all the criminal activity that could be regarded as part of the large-scale public disorder which took place between 6–10 August 2011. Similarly, when we use the term 'rioters' we refer to all people who took part, or who are suspected of taking part, in the criminal activities associated with the riots in this period. ²This figure is based on 10 police forces which experienced 20 or more riot related crimes, within this, a significant number of local authority areas experienced only relatively minor rioting. ³National estimate, based on information the Panel has obtained from 40 affected local authorities. ⁴Metropolitan Police estimate – Strategic Review of MPS Response to Disorder – Early Learning and Initial Findings.





What kind of crimes were committed?

There was a variety of types of crime committed.

Violence against individuals

We heard numerous accounts of assaults against the police. The Metropolitan Police reported 217⁵ injuries, while West Midlands Police reported 29⁶. There were attacks and attempted attacks on other rescue service personnel, and robberies perpetrated against ordinary people – in some cases, these included looters mugging other looters.

Arson and criminal damage

The extent of arson damage varied considerably. Tottenham and Croydon were particularly badly affected. In London alone, over 171 residential and 100 commercial buildings were affected by fire at a cost of millions of pounds⁷. We heard numerous accounts of people escaping from burning premises. Several people were only saved through the intervention of their neighbours or landlords. In London, the number of displaced households and residents totalled

174 – of these, 61 required long-term alternative housing⁸. In some areas, cars and bins were set alight, sometimes to create barriers against police intervention. As well as attacking firefighters trying to put out fires, some people taking part in the disturbances turned up at fire stations to prevent firefighters from going to emergency calls⁹.

Criminal damage

This included very extensive damage to commercial property. Many shops were subsequently looted, but in other cases, windows were simply smashed indiscriminately. Many thousands of shops were damaged¹⁰ – there were over 3,800 claims under the Riot Damages Act in London alone, with liabilities estimated to be between £200 and £300 million¹¹.

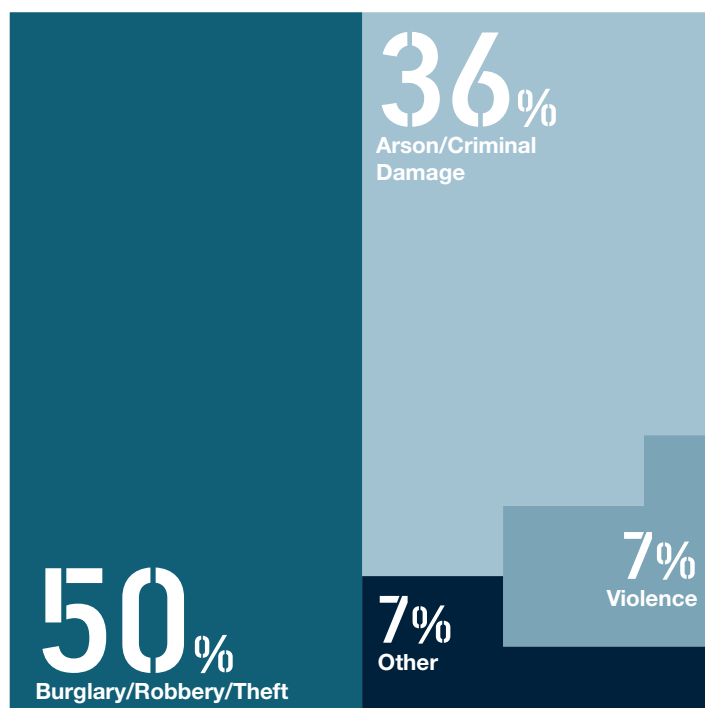
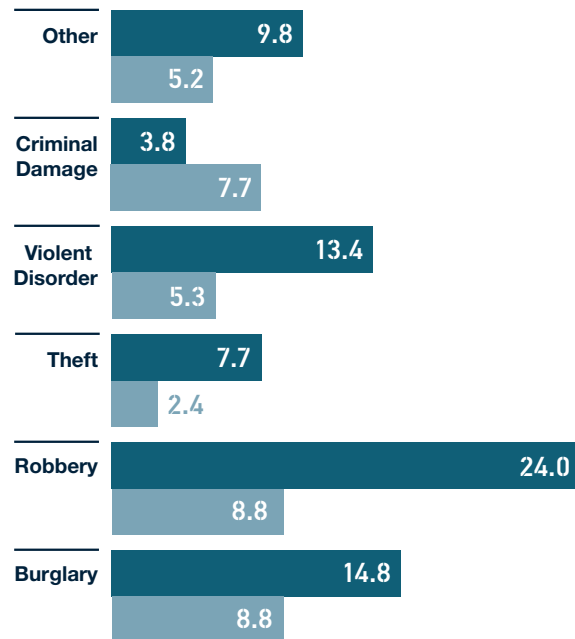
Theft

The Panel were told that the majority of shops targeted stocked high-value consumer products such as clothes and trainers or electrical products such as phones and computers.

⁵Metropolitan Police – Strategic Review of MPS Response to Disorder – Early Learning and Initial Findings. ⁶West Midlands Police submission to the Panel. ⁷London Fire Brigade and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) submission to the Panel. ⁸London Councils submission to the Panel. ⁹LFEPA submission to the Panel. ¹⁰The British Retail Consortium (BRC), whose membership comprises 27% of UK retail sales, estimates that around 900 of its members' stores were affected. The damage to the sector as a whole is likely therefore to be considerably higher. ¹¹Metropolitan Police – Strategic Review of MPS response to disorder: Early learning and initial findings report.

Average sentence length (months) by offence type

Source: MoJ



Riot-related crimes committed by type

Source: Home Office

What were the wider consequences?

We estimate the final bill may be around half a billion pounds (plus impacts on tourism).

Key costs include:

- up to £300m claims under the Riot (Damages) Act 1886;¹²
- £30m in recovery support funding including the High Street Support scheme;
- more than £30m in lost sales to retail businesses;¹³
- costs to police of £50m (including overtime costs)¹⁴; and
- costs to local authorities including significant clean-up costs, running into tens of millions of pounds.

330,000 tourists have been predicted to go elsewhere, cutting tourism spending by £520m over the next 12 months¹⁵.

In London boroughs which experienced widespread disorder, businesses reported a 50% loss of trade for the week following the riots.

By mid-September, trade was still down 20–30% and the Panel has heard from businesses across the country that trade remains down (for example, current trade in Tottenham is reported still to be 20–30% down). In some cases, this has led to businesses which existed on very low profit margins collapsing¹⁶.

**‘The final bill
may be around
half a billion
pounds.’**

¹²Metropolitan Police – Strategic Review of MPS Response to Disorder – Early Learning and Initial Findings. ¹³British Retail Consortium.

¹⁴Association of Chief Police Officers estimate. ¹⁵Centre for Retail Research. ¹⁶London Councils’ submission to the Panel.

WHO RIOTED?

Analysis paints a picture of those who rioted¹⁷. Ministry of Justice (MoJ) data shows that by 12 October 2011, 1,984 defendants had appeared before the courts for crimes committed during the riots. They were:

- 90% males;
- 26% aged 10–17;
- 27% aged 18–20;
- 21% aged 21–24;
- 5% aged over 40;
- 42% were White, 46% were Black (including Mixed Black Background), 7% were Asian and 5% were Other.

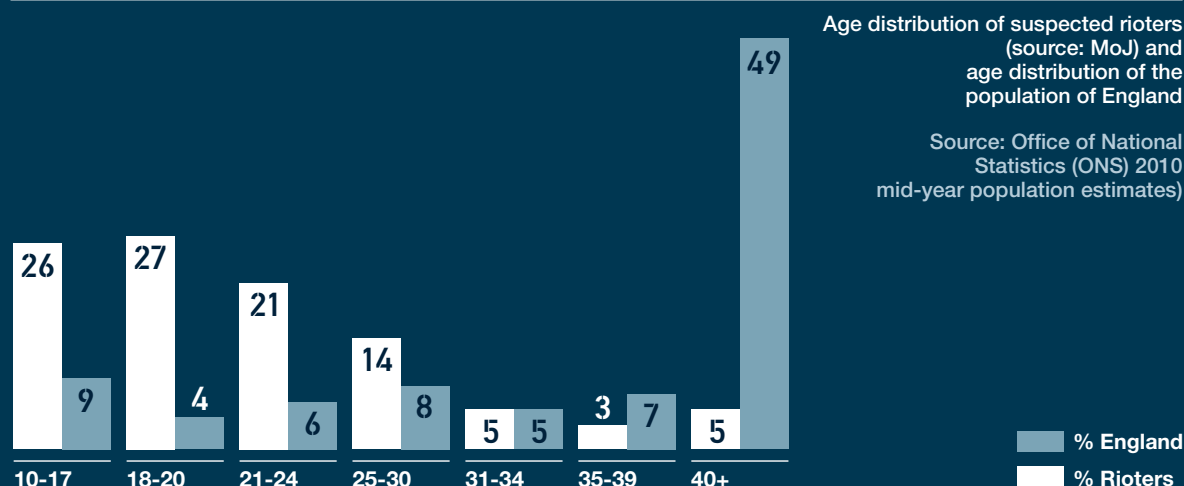
At the time when these statistics were published 1,362 (69%) of the defendants had not received a final outcome at court and therefore we should not infer any particular outcome in these cases. The remaining 622 (31%) had received a final outcome, of which 331 (53%) had received a custodial sentence, 220 (35%) received a sentence other than custody and 71 (11%) were either acquitted or had their case dismissed¹⁸.

The police have warned us that these statistics may change as those suspects so far identified are more likely to have been previously known to the police.

Criminal records

Just under 76% had committed previous offences compared with 77% amongst a group of offenders who received a reprimand, warning, caution or sentence for similar offences in the 12 months to the end of March 2011. At least 84 had committed 50 or more previous offences.

In total, those brought before the courts had committed nearly 20,000 previous offences with, on average, 11 previous offences per individual. Those individuals with at least one previous offence had each, on average, committed 14 previous offences. Nearly 9 out of 10 people (88%) arrested in relation to the riots were already known to the police, through previously being arrested, convicted or cautioned.



¹⁷The MoJ data presented in the remainder of this chapter all relate to suspected rioters (and a small number of convicted rioters) brought before the courts. ¹⁸These percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole integer.

Children aged 10–17

Among 10–17 year olds brought before the courts, 66% were aged 15 and 16, but children as young as 10 were arrested. We estimate that 25% of those brought before the courts were aged 11–16 (i.e. secondary school age).

Background

Rioters aged 10–17 are far more likely to be from poor homes, have poor educational records and have been in trouble with the police.

Poverty

46% of this group live in the 10% lowest income areas¹⁹. They were two and a half times more likely than other pupils to be receiving free school meals (42%).

Educational record

66% had special educational needs – a figure which is three times higher than for the population as a whole²⁰. On average, rioters in this age group missed almost one day of school a week, and 30% were persistent absentees – a rate which is more than four times higher than the population of school children in year 11²¹.

36% had at least one fixed period exclusion from school during 2009/10 – six times higher than the national average²². One in 10 achieved five or more A*–C GCSEs including English and Maths, compared with one in two amongst all pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2009/10.

Adult rioters

Adult rioters appear more likely than the general population to be out of work and possess a criminal record. 80% of those brought before the courts had a previous criminal conviction or a caution. In some areas, up to 61% were unemployed²³.

Nationally, 40% of adult rioters were on benefits, including 10% who were on Employment & Support Allowance or Incapacity benefits.

How many were sentenced to custody?

Latest available data suggest that 53% of rioters who received an outcome at court received a custodial sentence. Around 30% of juveniles were sentenced to custody.

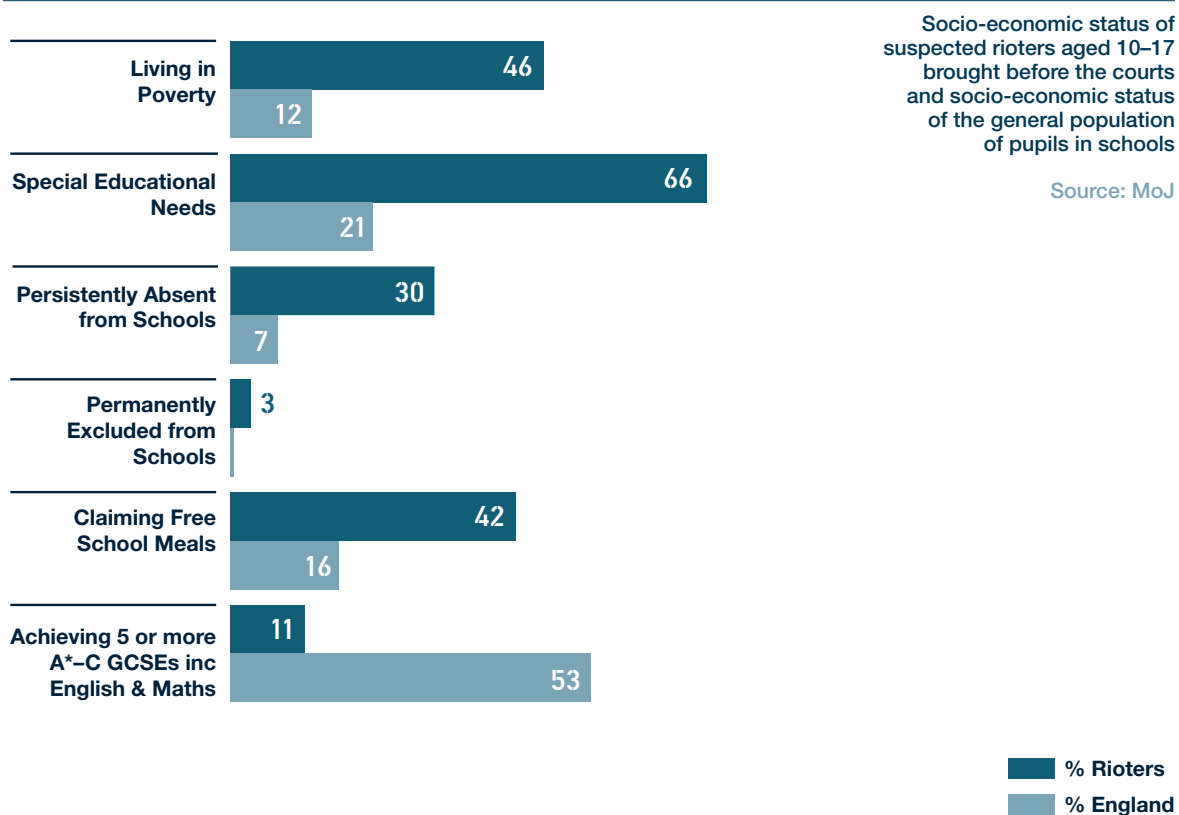
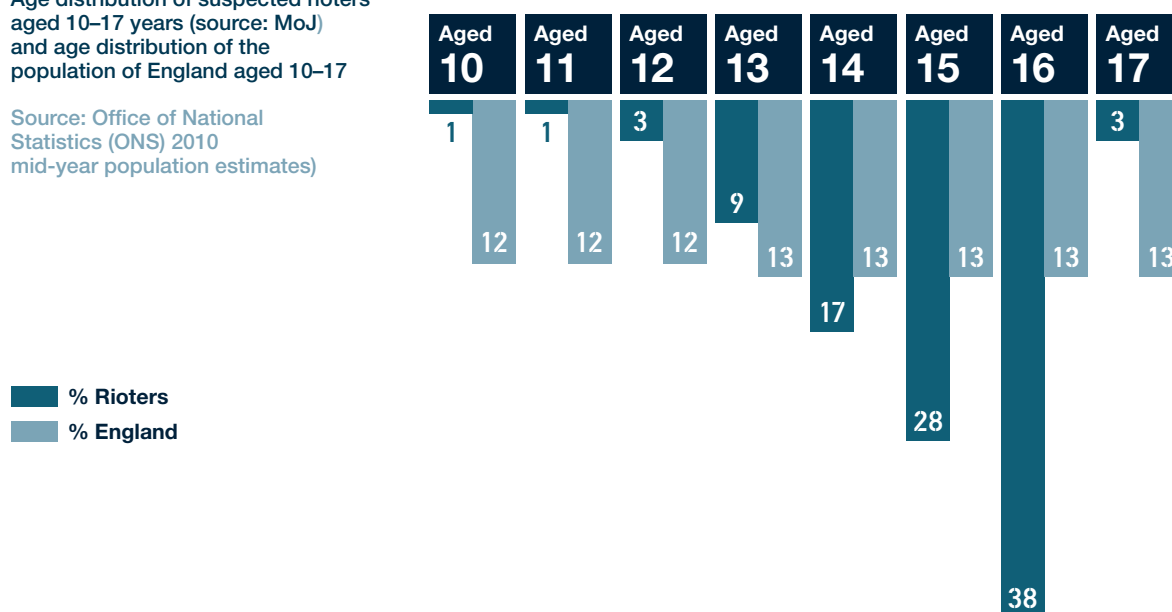
Severity of sentences

The average custodial length is 12.5 months. This compares with an average custodial sentence length of 3.7 months for those sentenced for similar offences in 2010.

¹⁹Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices. ²⁰Special Educational Needs (SEN): Pupils have special educational needs if they have learning difficulties that need special educational provision. They have learning difficulties if they find it much harder to learn than most pupils of the same age or they have disabilities that make it much more difficult for them in school. 66% of young people were classified as having some form of special educational need (compared with 21% of all pupils in maintained secondary schools). ²¹Persistent absentees: Defined as having 64 or more sessions of absence (authorised and unauthorised) during the year, around 20% overall absence rate. ²²Fixed period exclusion: Refers to a pupil who is excluded from a school but remains on the register of that school because they are expected to return when the exclusion period is completed. Over a third (36%) of young people were identified as having at least one fixed period exclusion from school during 2009/10 (compared with 6% of all pupils aged 15). ²³West Midlands

Age distribution of suspected rioters aged 10–17 years (source: MoJ) and age distribution of the population of England aged 10–17

Source: Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2010 mid-year population estimates)



The Riots – in Numbers

5 Deaths

90%
Of rioters were male

25%
Of rioters were students

People arrested known to police

9 Out Of
10

£300M
Estimated damage to property

£80M
Lost in sales

£43.5M

Cost of clean up

74%
Rioters under age 24

Youngest
arrested

101

£520M
Estimated cut in tourism spend

What happened?

Between 6 –10 August 2011, an estimated 13,000 to 15,000 people were actively involved in riots in England.

Over 5,000 crimes including:

- five fatalities;
- 1,860 incidents of arson and criminal damage;
- 1,649 burglaries;
- 141 incidents of disorder;
- 366 incidents of violence against the person.

Where?

31 areas experienced over 40 crimes each – highest crime areas were:

- London (68%);
- Greater Manchester (11%);
- West Midlands (10%);
- Merseyside (4%).

What was the cost?

The final bill may be around half a billion pounds (plus impacts on tourism) including:

- £200 – £300m for claims under the Riot (Damages) Act 1886;
- £50m on London policing.

Who?

Approximately 4,000 suspected rioters arrested:

- 9 out of 10 were already known to the police
- In some areas up to 61% were unemployed.

Of just under 2,000 people brought before the courts so far:

- 90% male;
- 74% aged 24 or under; 26% aged 10–17;
- 46% Black, 42% White, 7% Asian;
- 76% have at least one previous offence;
- 1,362 (69%) are awaiting an outcome at court;
- 622 (31%) have received an outcome; of which:
 - 331 (53%) received a custodial sentence;
 - 220 (35%) received a sentence other than custody;
 - 71 (11%) have been acquitted or had their case dismissed.

Of juveniles brought before the courts:

- 46% live in the 10% lowest income homes;
- 42% are in receipt of free school meals;
- 66% have Special Educational Needs;
- 36% excluded from school at least once during 2009/10;
- 11% achieved five A*–C GCSEs including English and Maths;
- 62% have at least one previous offence.

Focusing on adult suspected rioters brought before the courts:

- 80% have at least one previous offence.

RIOTER BEHAVIOUR – PROFILES

Eyewitness accounts tell us that the rioters were not a homogenous group of people all acting for the same reasons. Rioters acted differently depending on why they decided to riot and what they wanted to get out of it. In this chapter, we aim to describe some of the different ‘types’ of rioter, based on these eyewitness reports. We also highlight here the role of riot spectators.

It is important to note that not all these different types of rioter were present at each riot and the numbers of different types differed in each area. For example, most places saw large numbers of rioters who concentrated on looting, but in some areas, rioters were more focused on police attacks, at least at the beginning of the trouble. Some behaviours were typical of almost all the groups, such as using social media messaging.

It is also important to explain that many rioters fit into more than one of the types of rioter explained on the following pages and some may have moved from one type to another during the course of a riot or several riots.

Rioter behaviour – profiles

Type of rioter	Who were they?	When did they get involved?
Organised criminals 'Lots of flash cars suddenly arrived.'	Statements from eyewitnesses and the police suggest that known organised criminals, often from outside the area, arrived in vans and expensive cars to loot. Having seen the riots unfolding elsewhere, they may have planned their actions in advance – 'They were drawing up their shopping lists.'	Often the first on the scene, breaking into premises and setting off a 'chain reaction' which prompted others to get involved.
Violent aggressors 'They gave the feds [the police] a bloody nose.'	A much smaller group of people who committed the most serious crimes.	At all stages, although the most serious incidents often took place some way into a riot.
Late night shoppers 'iPhones! Xboxes! Everything! You can get whatever you want!'	People who deliberately travelled to riot sites in order to loot.	Early on the scene, possibly in response to social media calls to meet at pre-arranged points.
Opportunists 'Some people didn't plan their involvement, they just got swept along with the crowd.'	People who were drawn into riot areas through curiosity or a sense of excitement and then became 'caught up in the moment'. People described a 'party-like' atmosphere, something different from normal, everyday life.	Later on. Did not get involved in initial looting but decided to do so after a long period with little or no police response.
Spectators 'Most people got caught up watching the riots.'	At least at first, large numbers of people came just to watch the rioting. Police felt this was an unusual feature of the riots, highlighting a relative lack of aggression towards spectators from those involved in rioting.	Some were already at riot scenes for other reasons and stayed around to watch. Others deliberately travelled to places where riots were taking place after they heard about the disturbances.

How prepared were they?	What did they do?
<p>Very prepared. Willing to travel. They targeted particular shops which held cash or high value goods. Wore gloves and clothing to obscure their identities and took equipment to break into premises.</p>	<p>While they were mainly interested in what they could steal, in some areas organised gangs took advantage of the riots to launch sustained attacks on the police.</p>
<p>Sometimes very prepared. One witness reported seeing cars travel into and around an area and passing out firebombs.</p>	<p>Responsible for serious offences against the police and for cases of arson, setting light both to cars and residential premises.</p>
<p>Quite prepared. Often made the effort to hide their identities. We saw CCTV footage of one group wearing hooded tops and putting on disposable gloves. Some may also have brought equipment to break into premises. Willing to travel – in some areas over 50% of those arrested were from outside the area.</p>	<p>Among the first to begin looting, targeting shops with cash or high end goods. Significant numbers were also involved in attacks on police in some areas, although generally this was to repel police in order to continue looting.</p>
<p>Often not prepared. Unlikely to make any significant efforts to hide their identities, and therefore some of the most likely to get caught.</p>	<p>Did not think very hard about what they stole – some were seen taking cheap items such as bottles of drinks from shops, particularly shops which had already been damaged by other people.</p>
<p>Not prepared.</p>	<p>Watched. Sometimes used mobile phones or cameras to film or record events.</p>

Section 2

ANALYSIS

The data in the previous chapter paints a stark picture of the scale of the riots and the speed at which they were able to spread through communities. The damage caused was immense and incidents sometimes had tragic consequences.

In Section two of this report, we explore some key questions such as how events in Tottenham triggered national rioting and how social media influenced the spread of rioting from one community to another.

RIOTING IN TOTTENHAM – WHAT WERE THE CAUSES?

The riots which began in Tottenham spread across the country with unprecedented speed. Understanding what sparked them is fundamental to any effort to prevent riots in the future.

In this chapter, we give a breakdown of what happened in Tottenham. This account reflects a number of sources, including eyewitnesses.

Shooting of Mark Duggan

On Thursday 4 August, Mark Duggan was shot by police officers in Ferry Lane, Tottenham Hale. The police officers were working with Operation Trident, which investigates gun crime in the black community. They stopped a minicab in which Mr Duggan was a passenger and attempted to arrest him. During the arrest, Mr Duggan was shot and he died at the scene.

The incident was immediately referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) who arrived on the scene of the incident within a couple of hours. On the evening of the 4th August members of the family that had attended the police cordon were informed of the death of Mark Duggan by family liaison officers for the Metropolitan Police. Over the course of the 5th and 6th August, IPCC representatives met with a number of members of Mr Duggan's family and friends to facilitate the viewing of Mr Duggan's body and to explain their role and how they should be contacted for any further information. On 12 August, the IPCC stated that they might have given misleading oral information to journalists in the initial aftermath of the incident about whether there had been an exchange of fire between Mr Duggan and the police before

Mr Duggan was shot. Questions were raised about whether there had been sufficient and appropriate communication with the family of Mr Duggan around his death. The IPCC is now conducting a separate independent investigation into the contact between the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and members of Mr Duggan's family in the early hours and days after the shooting.

Initial protest

On Saturday 6 August at around 5:30pm, the family and supporters of Mr Duggan, numbering around 120, marched from the Broadwater Farm estate to Tottenham police station. Police had been informed, through the community contact, that a vigil may take place outside the police station at some point during the day.

One of the demands of the protesters was that a senior officer should come to talk to the family of Mr Duggan. However, the most senior officer available at the time, a Chief Inspector who the police say had been at the station since 6.15pm, was not considered senior enough. We were also told that an agreement was reached at 7.45pm that a more senior police officer would be present within an hour and the family would wait. In the event, Mr Duggan's family left at 8.20pm before this officer arrived. The crowd had been growing as night began to fall and it is reported that people who had not been at the original protest began to swell the numbers.

Violence breaks out

Reports suggest that at around 8:00-8:30pm, a rumour began to circulate that a 16-year-old girl had confronted the police line. According to the rumour, the police responded with force. Regardless of whether this rumour was true or not, eyewitnesses say word quickly spread and violence broke out.

Police numbers were insufficient to quell the escalating violence and rioters broke through police lines. Police had been attempting to turn traffic away from the closed-off Tottenham High Road, but the rioting became more intense and vehicles, including two police cars and a double-decker bus, were targeted by rioters and set alight.

Reports via television, radio and social media suggest that the police were unable to adequately cope with the rioting. Numbers swelled, either to watch, or join the disturbances, perhaps influenced by the fact that the police were not intervening. People reported seeing looters turning up with vans and shopping trolleys to carry off stolen goods.

Around 11:30pm, police managed to clear an area of Tottenham High Road in order to let the fire brigade through. However, rioting continued elsewhere and began to spread to the nearby Tottenham Hale retail park and to Wood Green. As police continued dealing with incidents around Tottenham High Road, no police attended Tottenham Hale or Wood Green and uninterrupted looting continued until early the following morning when police arrived. Twenty-six officers were injured over the course of the night.

What the community told us about police handling of the events that triggered rioting in Tottenham

A significant number of people we spoke with both in Tottenham and more widely have been critical of police handling of the death of Mark Duggan.

Many in the community feel that the police did not properly liaise with the family of Mark Duggan in the days following his death – particularly around providing official confirmation of his death, but also to address reports that he had fired shots at police officers. Many also feel that police handling of events around the initial protest march led directly to the hugely destructive rioting in Tottenham between 6–7 August.

Almost all the residents we spoke with in Tottenham felt that the police should have sent a more senior officer to meet with the family of Mark Duggan much more quickly after the protest march and that the family should not have been left to wait for so long.

While some felt positive steps had been taken to improve relations between the police and the community, some felt that tensions had been rising in Tottenham for some time and that it was no surprise that disturbances had flared up.

Local people in Haringey were extremely upset and angry that the police did not intervene as the riots grew. Many felt they had been left to fend for themselves. Residents and businesses on the High Road felt they had been abandoned.

‘I know it’s only Tottenham, I can’t help but feeling that if my flat was in Knightsbridge, they wouldn’t have let it burn’.

Our view

The perceived failure to liaise effectively with the family of Mark Duggan caused by lack of coordination between the police and the IPCC was clearly the focus of considerable anger among some people in the community. This is set against a historic backdrop of antipathy between some members of the black community and the police. The police have since apologised to the family of Mark Duggan for their failure to communicate properly with them¹.

A key factor influencing the initial spread of the riots in Tottenham was a number of rumours which circulated about the death of Mark Duggan, including allegations of 'his assassination'. These rumours 'went viral' and the unprecedented way in which the rioting spread virally through media is examined in Chapter 8.

Previous investigations into riots dating back to the 1960s have identified 'iconic events' as a trigger for public disorder and have also consistently stressed the importance of killing rumour.

The rumours about the shooting were not countered effectively, partly due to interfaces between the IPCC and the police service when an investigation is under way. This was exacerbated by the oral release of information concerning an 'exchange of fire' which had to be later retracted as incorrect. This led to a vacuum within which information reported via social media could gain currency without counter-information being made available. The speed at which rumours can spread makes rapid, informed communication vital in tense, inflammable situations like this.

The Panel was given copies of protocols in place between IPCC and ACPO which set out respective responsibilities when a death has occurred. Section 5 of the protocol states that:

'Referral to the IPCC does not preclude comment or response to the media by a police service nor should referral be presented as a reason for lack of response to questions from the media'.

Section 6 sets out media handling where the IPCC will take the lead and how liaison/statements etc should be co-ordinated. This protocol was established in 2009.

In a world where media interest is no longer in a contained environment, the provision of information is paramount if rumour and speculation is not to fill the vacuum.

Further, in fast moving and highly tense situations there needs to be effective communication between the police and IPCC. Having robust and clear lines of accountability for information and statements does not in itself compromise independence.

It is appreciated that for both the IPCC and the police fulfilling their respective roles and responsibilities is a challenging and difficult task. However in the age of 24 hour news and social media the need for information – even when this is just about process – and the need for clear denial of rumour when possible is of critical importance.

Currently there is a fault line running between the IPCC and the Police in this area. The potential for future iconic events triggering further escalation remains a significant risk.

Our recommendation

This Panel urges both the police authorities and the IPCC to urgently review protocols to consider whether they are being adhered to and remain fit for purpose. This is important to ensure that they make clear statements can be made at the earliest possible stage. This will help ensure that deliberate false rumours and unintended inaccuracies do not go unchallenged.

¹MPS evidence to Home Affairs select committee.

CASE STUDY

The Victim – Tottenham

I was a resident at the River Heights flats in Tottenham, which were burnt down by rioters. As my partner and I slept, our building was set alight. We were extremely lucky to get out with our lives, but we lost everything.

On the night of the riots in Tottenham, there were not enough police on the streets and the ones that were there failed to contain the riot. They stood back and watched as people set fire to everything and anything. The police and the fire brigade did nothing to protect us or help us that night. We were left to fend for ourselves. If the police had intervened earlier, I believe the scale of the riots could have been prevented and my home could have been saved.

“The police stood back and watched Tottenham burn”

If this is an example of how this country deals with disorder, it is a shambles. My flat was impeccable. Everything we had worked so hard for over the years, all our memories and photos – absolutely everything down to the teaspoons – is gone. I am devastated.

People in Tottenham are angry at the police because of stop and search, and because of funding cuts amongst other things. But they took their frustration out on the most defenceless. The rioters did not care about human life and they acted in the knowledge that the police would do nothing when they broke the law.

I was shocked that this could happen in the UK. The police are supposed to be there to protect the public, but I did not feel protected that night. I feel abandoned by the police.

ANATOMY OF A RIOT

– How the disorder spread within an area

The riots which began in Tottenham on Saturday 6 August hit 12 areas within London on Sunday 7 August and spread nationally to 44 areas by Monday 8 August. England was affected by riots for five days in total.

A key focus of our work is to look at how the riots were able to spread so fast, both within local areas and across regions.

While no two riots were exactly the same, public services and eyewitnesses have in most cases described the riots and the response in their areas in similar terms.

1 “One minute there are lots of groups hanging around – then they all flipped.”

Individuals and groups acting under their own initiative converge on an area; sometimes in a specific place in response to a message disseminated by social media. Police did not always act on this intelligence. Initial damage to a business premises or an exchange with the often limited police presence follows. ‘The atmosphere quickly changed.’

2 “There were ‘spotters’ on bikes casing opportunities.”

‘I’ve never seen so many people come together so quickly.’

These exchanges with police and the visible damage being caused quickly encourage and embolden others to damage property, loot or engage with the police, who are forced to retreat.

The riots are not centrally co-ordinated, although there is sometimes significant co-ordination within groups – including use of group messaging.

Some groups may have co-operated in an impromptu fashion because people in those groups knew each other or knew of each other. Many people commented that the rioters generally had better information on the progress of the disorder than the police did.

3

If they have not done so already, police commanders make calls for reinforcements.

4 “We suffered ferocious attacks.” – police officer

A ‘spike’ in social and (some time later) broadcast media – dramatically increases the numbers of people in an area, described as ‘waves’ hitting the area. This may include groups of looters, spectators and those intent on confronting the police or damaging premises.

5

Police commanders seek to regroup and concentrate their available numbers of police on trying to prevent violence from spreading further and protect key sites. The number of entry and exit points in some areas make this particularly difficult. Police also use available resources to provide protection for other emergency services, such as the fire service – who are attacked, sometimes first having been deliberately lured into high risk areas such as cul-de-sacs. This reduces operational police numbers even further.

6

“ They gave a green light to lawlessness.”

Police in most areas begin to feel it is unsafe to confront and disperse crowds and await sufficient numbers of reinforcements in order to do so. Police who try to disperse rioters – a common public order tactic – find that crowds quickly regroup elsewhere ‘like shoals of fish’, ‘continuing their rampage’.

Spectators in some areas cause police particular difficulty, both as an obstacle – some police officers described literally tripping over those watching – and because rioters can slip in and out of the crowd, making it difficult to identify perpetrators.

8

Reinforcements arrive, often slowly. Officers from other areas are often unfamiliar with the terrain, while local officers are sometimes still providing support elsewhere. Eventually, police numbers increase sufficiently to slowly move to take hold of areas, creating a ‘sterile’ space free of rioters behind them.

For periods varying between minutes and hours, rioters are able to loot, cause often indiscriminate damage and commit arson largely at will, while also in some areas making ongoing attacks on police, who remain in limited numbers and largely at the periphery of the activity. Residents, especially in localities where residential areas were also attacked, report being unable to receive police assistance.

9

Rioters disperse – in some cases permanently but in other cases, moving to other riot focal points within the area.

10

Where rioters are displaced, shops in secondary locations sometimes become a focal point. Some of these have flats above the premises. Occasionally, residential areas are also targeted. In some cases residents and businesses have to escape from their homes and premises. They find themselves in the middle of a riot area without assistance to evacuate them.

Police hold ground they have re-taken while freeing up as many officers as possible and prioritising additional reinforcements on any other focal points for rioting.

12

Rioters are finally forced to disperse from other areas, sometimes only after considerable additional disturbances.

13

Some riots occur in subsequent days in the same area. With far greater numbers and often changed tactics, police are able to swiftly deal with disturbances, although some areas still experience considerable damage.

Our view



The vast majority of people we spoke to believed that the sole trigger for trouble in their areas was a belief that the police could not contain the scale of rioting in Tottenham and then across London.

As the diagram in this chapter shows, at a local level, a lack of confidence in the police response encouraged people to test reactions.

A critical mass of individuals and groups with common motivations converged on an area. Rioters believed they would be able to loot and damage without the police interfering and in the worst affected areas, this proved to be the case.

‘Criminals were drawing up their shopping lists.’

At first, the belief that the police would not be able to stop rioting incidents was relatively localised to the London area. Riots on Sunday 7 August were within an 18km radius of Tottenham. Those who rioted on Sunday were again felt to have been unchallenged and confidence among potential rioters in other parts of the country grew. By Monday, riots had spread nationally.

Local policing decisions can lead to national consequences. It is clear that policing tactics for local incidents need to take account of their potential wider impact.

We set out our recommendations for responses to future disturbances in chapter 16.

CASE STUDY

22-year-old male resident, Salford

I saw a lot of what happened in Salford from my flat. There were large numbers of people involved, not just kids but adults too. They looked like zombies, it was just mad.

People had seen the disorder in London and other parts of the country. They saw the way the police couldn't cope and thought 'If they're doing it in London, why can't we?'.

Looters in London were going into shops like JD Sports and stealing trainers and clothes. It looked so easy and people round here got the same idea. Some people didn't plan their involvement; they just got swept along with the crowd.

It was shocking how it got out of hand so quickly and the police struggled to control things. The day afterwards, there were a lot more police officers. If there had been the same number on the night they would probably have been able to deal with things a lot better.

The precinct was badly damaged and many of the shops could not open for a while after the riots and some of them are still closed.

I have a partner and young child and we had real problems getting our food and groceries locally. I was worried for older people too; it must have been difficult and frightening.

I think there is a lack of opportunity for young people in this community, whether that is jobs or training or just activities for young people, which might be the reason people rioted.

If my family weren't my main concern, I would probably have been tempted to go out there and riot too. We need to provide more opportunities for people, otherwise they might riot again.

“It was like something out of a zombie movie.”

HOW THE RIOTS WENT VIRAL – THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

One of the defining characteristics of the riots was the huge quantity of media reporting, both via professional news teams and citizen journalists.

The riots received blanket coverage on rolling 24-hour news, across major print publications (including photography), and via near-constant reporting of events on social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook.

Television channels showed repeat footage of the fires, looters stealing trainers and TVs, police being subject to attack, mobs breaking into shops and London as a city under siege.

For people watching on TV, there was a palpable sense of shock that such disorder was taking place in London and then across England. Shop keepers and residents, who had fled, saw images of their premises and homes burning in real time.

When we spoke with young people, they talked about news becoming compelling reality TV. As one young adult put it: 'I have never watched Sky News but I could not switch it off... it was incredible.'

Convicted rioters discussed how the news became a source of information about where police resources were stretched. One offender told us: 'I just needed to watch the TV to see where I needed to head to.'

For residents also, the news became an important source of information – especially in cases where public authorities failed to provide a reliable flow of information and advice.

In a democracy, the freedom of the press is an essential principle, yet in some instances, news coverage of the riots provided information which could be used by the rioters against ordinary citizens. In other cases, the prospect of media coverage was an added attraction for rioters, an appealing prospect of '15 minutes of fame'.

'Facebook, Twitter and the (BBM) platform helped spread

What people said to us about the media's role

Social media

The vast majority of people we spoke to think social media messaging on sites such as Facebook, Twitter and the BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) platform helped spread the riots, both by publicising them and by allowing information to be spread rapidly.

The BBM service is particularly attractive to young adults because it is free, instant and provides access to a wider community than SMS texting. Rioters using BBM were able to communicate with each other and link up without being traced by the authorities in many instances.

Social media was described by one person as the 'virus' that helped the 'contagion' of the riots to spread. This is demonstrated in the chart opposite.

However, many people argued that social media had also played a positive role in the riots. In some cases, family members, community groups and authorities effectively used it both to dissuade people from going out onto the streets and to reassure communities.

We are aware that some polls show that people would support the closure of social media networks during rioting. However, very few people we spoke to made similar suggestions to us.

Television news

Many people we spoke to felt that 24-hour rolling news exaggerated the extent of rioting where they lived, especially before rioting had taken hold of an area.

Respondents to our call for evidence cite small sections of footage played repeatedly on a loop – 'You'd have thought it was a war zone out there.' Some felt broadcasts showing scenes of one riot while reporting on another was misleading, especially as images sometimes depicted riots that had already been dealt with and had stopped. People felt this served to make rioting a self-fulfilling prophecy, attracting looters to areas they believed were already seeing significant rioting.

We have heard other reports of unsubstantiated rumours being reported via the 'ticker' which highlights breaking stories on the news channels. People who talked to us believed that these rumours may also have encouraged more rioting. Some felt that it would have been simple for the media companies to check if rumours were true before broadcasting them and that this should have been done.

Regional and local news coverage

Many people we spoke to particularly commended regional and local news outlets for their coverage of the riots, the clean ups and their efforts to support police investigations to bring rioters to justice.

Our view

From the evidence around the August riots and from what people have subsequently told us, it seems clear to us that the spread of rioting was made worse both by televised images of police apparently watching people cause damage and loot at will, and by the ability of social media to bring together determined people to act collectively.

BlackBerry Messenger read the riots.'

However, concluding that media played a role in making the riots worse does not make it simple to prevent this happening in the future. Media freedom is a complex and sensitive area, touching on important issues such as freedom of speech. Many countries including the UK pledged support for the use of social media and argued against censorship across the Middle East during the unrest seen in the Arab Spring.

There is no question that the rioters were aided by the existence of social media. The overthrow of Egypt's President Mubarak and other incidents in the Arab Spring have demonstrated the speed with which large crowds can be mobilised on the streets and the dramatic effects they can achieve. In effect, social media enables the creation of 'instant communities'.

However, we do not believe that the Government should shut down social networks in the event of rioting.

The communities brought together by social media can be a force for either good or bad. Many local authorities and other agencies used social media during the riots to get information to local people and businesses, to alert parents to keep their children at home, to ask youth workers dealing with young offenders to take them off the streets and to support and promote instant community fight back groups.

The police have also said that monitoring communications allowed them to identify and intervene to contain further riots. Social media messaging was also used in the aftermath of the riots to organise community clean-ups.

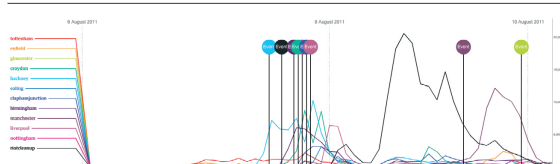
Lessons to be learned?

For the police, dealing with public disorder in the future will present unknown challenges. Rioters have already learned the lessons from the August 2011 riots and their strategies will evolve if there is future disorder. Policing will therefore have to adapt quickly to bring control to the streets.

There may also need to be changes in communications policy. During the riots, many people called for network closure. Since then, the Home Secretary has announced a review of police powers to intervene in mobile communications.

Mobile communications technology is continually evolving and new developments may benefit the police and authorities rather than rioters. For example, some networks have installed systems to detect crowds and the direction they are moving in order to manage capacity. In the future, it may be possible to use cell congestion monitoring as a tool to tackle rioting.

What is clear from the riots is that there is no simple 'switch off' solution. Viral silence may have as many dangers as viral noise.



Twitter traffic during the riots

The Guardian has compiled a unique database of more than 2.5m tweets related to the riots, showing the majority of social media traffic during the riots

<http://tinyurl.com/6oju34a>

Our recommendation



Social media networks should not be shut down during future disturbances.

The Government is preparing a Green Paper on communications. Because of the important and growing role local communities see social media playing in reducing the spread of riots in the future, we recommend that the experiences of communities, public authorities and others in the August riots are considered when new principles are being developed.

We fully support the freedom of the press. We appreciate the challenges around reporting of large scale, fast moving, public disorder events.

However, regardless of this, because of the potential implications of inaccurate reporting, it is essential that TV reports are accurate and that the link between the issue being reported and the accompanying images is clear.

The reach of the media provides a useful channel to reach affected citizens. Public services should work with the media to better harness this opportunity during any future disorder.

ADDRESSING RIOT MYTHS

As well as painting a picture of what the experience of the riots was like for people around the country, we also want to establish what the riots were not. At a time when tension, suspicion and distrust can rise quickly between different groups, it is vital to establish the truths and disprove the myths about the riots.

Were these youth riots?

This depends on what is meant by 'youth'. The majority of rioters brought before the courts are not under 18. However, three-quarters were under 24 years old and the largest single group were young adults aged 18–24.

Were these race riots?

These were not race riots. They differed considerably from riots in previous years such as 1981 and 1985. We cannot discount the fact that some rioters may have been motivated by issues of race. However, aside from the riots in Tottenham (explored in chapter six), evidence from people involved, eye-witnesses and the arrest statistics suggests that in most cases, the primary motivation for rioting was theft.

We explore some of the underlying factors that may have encouraged some people to riot, including issues around race, on page 58.

Were these gang riots?

Most convicted rioters were not gang members. Home Office figures show that 13% of offenders arrested were known to be gang members. In London this was higher, at 19%. It is not clear how many of these individuals were acting independently or as a gang member.

Some areas talked about a gang 'truce' during the riots, where rival members could safely travel into town centres without fear of attack.

It is not clear what connection exists between the motives which cause people to join gangs and those that cause people to get involved in criminal activity.

Some areas strongly believe organised criminal groups took part in the riots and have drawn a distinction between these groups and far looser affiliations of teenage street gangs which fight postcode wars and engage in 'tit-for-tat' confrontations.

Our view



There was no single cause of the riots and no single group was responsible. We explore the motivations and underlying causes for the riots elsewhere in this report.

THE IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES AND VICTIMS

We heard some harrowing stories on our visits to areas affected by rioting.

Lives were lost. Parents had to carry children out of burning homes leaving a lifetime of possessions behind to be destroyed. Shopkeepers lost everything they had built up over many years. Some were forced to sell their homes as they could no longer pay their bills.

‘Words cannot describe the absolute horror we went through that night... if it weren’t for the neighbours alerting us that there was a fire in the building and thumping on the door, we would have died in our beds as we lay sleeping.’

The consequences of the riots are still being felt in many areas. We heard of children unable to sleep at night and elderly people frightened to leave their homes.

Some families still can’t find new homes. Many businesses remain closed and the people who worked for them have lost their jobs. Many businesses were uninsured or under-insured and some may never open again. Trade for a lot of businesses who remain in affected areas is down, leaving people struggling to get by.

In a number of areas, there is an overriding sense of despair that people could destroy their own communities.

“They attacked their own – we’re not rich.”

CASE STUDY

The Insurance Claimant – Tottenham

Our building was set on fire and destroyed in the riots and we lost all of our possessions. My husband is a freelance graphic designer and photographer and he lost all his equipment and his livelihood. I have also lost my job because the distress made it impossible to keep my hours. We have both been left traumatised.

We are being forced to pay a service charge for a building that does not exist any more. This is not helped by the behaviour of our insurance company, which has just been inappropriate to say the least.

On the first week, our insurance company promised to pay our temporary accommodation and service charges in full, then cancelled this the following week. They said this was because we were “making a profit out of the insurance policy” and were “better off” when nothing had changed. They are now saying that they want some money back for the first week they paid for. This is unacceptable treatment – we are the victims!

“We’ve lost our homes and jobs and still have no clarity from our insurance company...”

We still have to pay our mortgages and are really struggling to pay other outgoings. We have not received any clarity on how long the rebuild of our property will take or how long we will be supported by the insurance company.

What if our insurer changes their mind again and stops providing temporary accommodation all together? What will happen to us then? We need an assurance from the Government and help to deal with our insurance company.

CASE STUDY

The Boutique Owners – Peckham

Our boutique was looted and trashed on the night of 8 August. Many years-worth of bespoke bridal gowns, customer garments, irreplaceable catwalk collection pieces, designer jewellery and one-of-a-kind fabrics were stolen.

Despite our present resolve to continue trading in the same location, it has been an extremely distressing, exhausting and challenging time both physically and financially. We are facing the predicament of not being able to re-order completed stock to replace our stolen goods, due to the fact that we make all the garments on site ourselves.

Sales figures since the riots have diminished staggeringly, making it extraordinarily difficult to fulfil even the basic business overheads such as rent and business rates. New orders and passing trade in the immediate aftermath of the riots ground to a halt, firstly because of the insurance company's delays in approving shop repairs and secondly because we could no longer afford to sell the limited remaining samples.

“The growth of our business will be crippled for at least two years”

Independent of any legitimate protests that occurred, the opportunist spree of criminality was allowed to take place with limited police intervention. If stronger measures and warning systems were put in place, maybe the riots in Peckham could have been prevented and our livelihoods would be intact.

Sadly we've seen very little in the wake of the riots which indicates society has moved beyond the troubled conditions that sparked the riots across England in the first place.

WHY DIDN'T THE RIOTS HAPPEN EVERYWHERE?

As the riots spread, some areas remained unaffected. Why was this the case? The answers might be helpful in protecting communities in the future.

To try and answer this question, we talked to people from some of the areas most affected by the riots and some from a more limited number of areas that were not. **We are interested in hearing from more people about this.**

What people told us

Significantly, people in many areas felt they would have experienced rioting if disturbances in other areas had continued for much longer. Few people ruled out the prospect of experiencing riots in the future.

People suggested a number of possible reasons why their communities had little or no rioting. We discuss these below. Sometimes, one of these factors was felt to be sufficient to avoid significant disturbances, while in other cases, it was a complex mix of factors.

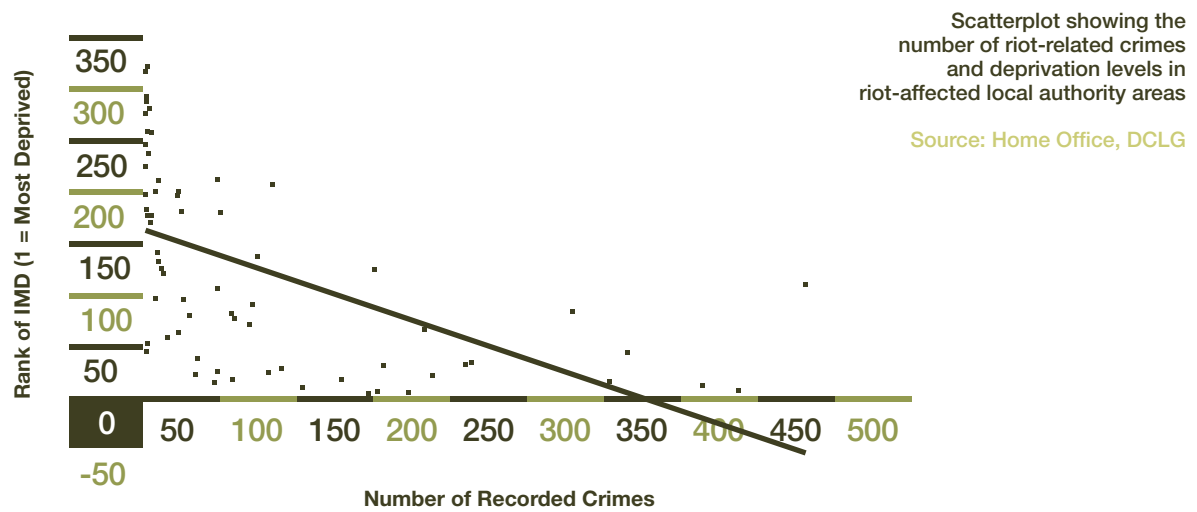
Deprivation

There appears to be a link between deprivation and rioting. Although many deprived areas did not riot, of the 66 local authority areas¹ that experienced riots, 30 were in the top 25% most deprived areas in England², including 15 in the top 25. Some significant exceptions include Sheffield and Bradford, which are among the top 25% most deprived areas but did not experience riots. However, St. Albans and North Hertfordshire, which are among the 25% least deprived areas, experienced some form of disorder during the five days in August.

Wider analysis from Experian³ highlights that 58% of the riots took place in the areas ranked in worst 10% for crime. The analysis shows that 55% of the riots were located in the worst 10% areas for vulnerability for long term employment.

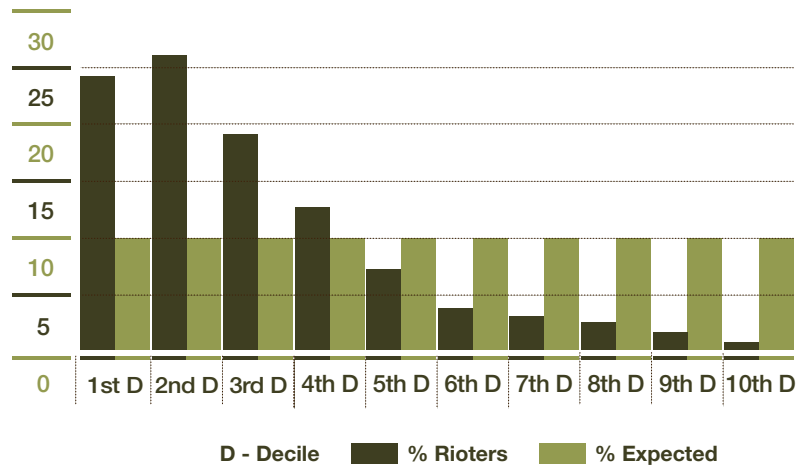
Analysis of 1479 areas in England where rioters live reveals that 70% of those areas are in the 30% most deprived. This is based on information obtained about rioters brought before the courts. This contributes to an overall picture linking the riots and deprivation which requires further exploration⁴.

¹ There are 326 local authority areas in total. ² As measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010. ³ Experian submission to the panel. ⁴ An area's score is affected by the scores of every other area, so it is impossible to tell whether a change in score is a real change in the deprivation level of an area, or whether it is due to the scores of other area going up or down.



Deprivation in the areas (LSOAs⁵) where suspected rioters live

Source: MoJ, DCLG
Note: LSOA's are Lower Super Output Areas



⁵ Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). This is an established geographical classification used by the Office for National Statistics and Government Departments including Department for Communities and Local Government. There are 32,000 LSOAs covering all of England, each LSOA contains approximately 1,500 people.

Social capital

Many people told us in different words that strong community cohesion, shared identity, community pride or having a stake in their local area stopped or reduced rioting in their area: 'We don't smash up our own town.'

In some areas, people thought the role of faith groups or other effective state and voluntary agencies helped promote a sense of belonging, shared values and strong families: 'How can I go to church on Sunday if I loot?'

Experian analysis highlights that 71% of the riots occurred in the areas ranked in the worst 10% for social cohesion.

The physical environment

Riot areas generally shared a number of physical characteristics.

Concentration of attractive shops

As our findings show, the primary reason for rioting in most areas was to loot, especially high value goods. The areas targeted in most cases contained a large number of shops with high value goods.

When we visited some areas which did not experience rioting, local people often noted that the most 'lootable' shops were not located in the city centre, often because of the presence of nearby out-of-town shopping centres.

Layout

The layout of local shopping areas appears to have helped determine the level of rioting. Shopping precincts with multiple entries and exits presented a difficult environment for police to contain the trouble. Many people felt that their area had been targeted partly for this reason.

Transport links

Many people have mentioned proximity to good public transport links, including roads as a contributing factor. All the London disturbances, for example, took place close to either an underground or overground train station.

People also discussed accessibility as an issue in areas where there was no rioting. For example, Sheffield did not attract rioters from nearby areas as other cities did. This was in part attributed to poor East/West train links and the fact that Sheffield is bounded by the Pennines.

Timing

Sometimes only one of two local areas with similar characteristics experienced rioting.

We know from police descriptions that 'waves' of extra rioters appeared in areas which were already experiencing rioting. Our study of rioters' motives has highlighted that determined rioters were attracted to areas which were already experiencing trouble, partly because the chances of being arrested were lower.

It is therefore likely that a key reason why one area was affected over another was the timing of initial disturbances, especially if it was equally easy for rioters to travel to either area. As crowds swelled and momentum built, one area would look increasingly attractive to a rioter over another.

The weather

The weather has been mentioned a number of times in various areas, not as a trigger for rioting but as a deterrent. In some cases, this may have been because it lessened the numbers of bystanders, making it easier for the police to identify potential looters.

Action from local services and people

A great number of people we have spoken to believed that their area would have experienced rioting (or worse rioting) if it had not been for the actions of local services and hard work from people within the community. The table opposite highlights a number of the key actions which were felt to be effective. Chapter 16 highlights wider views on how public services could respond appropriately in future.

Action	Response felt to be effective	Reasons given by other areas why they could not use this effective response
Early preparation	Key people and organisations met early to consider actions in event of riots.	Many areas were taken by surprise, sometimes because of the lack of any local trigger point.
Visible presence	Strong police and wider public service presence.	Police forces including the MPS had moved officers from areas considered less at risk to higher risk areas, reducing available numbers in a number of areas. Estimations of overall police numbers required was too low, meaning they had to be too thinly spread.
Local knowledge	Good use of local officers familiar with the territory and local 'trouble-makers' to watch.	Officers sent to other areas. Subsequent reinforcements not local people.
Policing approach	Robustly tackled rioters and made arrests.	Concerns for officer safety as a result of not having enough officers on the ground. The rioters' unexpected focus on looting caught police by surprise.
Evidence gathering	Able to gather and make use of a lot of social media messaging.	Difficult or impossible using traditional methods to separate out genuine intelligence from rumours. Social media not corporately used by public services so could not be used as part of emergency response.
Using evidence	Able to use information to plan effective response.	Weight of traffic. At its peak, the police reported receiving more than one piece of information per second. The number of 999 calls to the Metropolitan Police increased by 400% in a 24-hr period, to over 20,000. In the same period, the fire brigade received over 1,700 calls.
Advice	Consistent messages and advice to residents and businesses.	Arrangements were not in place to contact all businesses, sometimes because co-ordination within and across trader associations was not in place. Public unsure in advance where to get messages from.
Co-ordinated agency and third sector response	Wide response including the community, voluntary sector, housing associations, etc.	Unforeseen need – not built into contingency plans.
Practical local actions to deter rioters in advance	Removing potential missiles; blocking off key routes to prevent entry to potential riot areas.	Disturbances were not expected, so authorities had too little notice to act.

Experience of rioting in the recent past

A few areas including Bristol, Harrow and Bradford felt that recent rioting or threat of disorder acted as a deterrent, often because of a desire from the community not to see it happen again. For instance, in the previous month, Bradford had marked the tenth anniversary of the 2001 riots. People in some areas told us this anxiety to not relive past rioting experiences meant communities were more organised and willing to act, and more intolerant of people who might want to get involved in rioting.

Recent rioting or the threat of disorder also meant that public services felt they were better prepared. Lessons learned from previous riots about what had gone well and what had not were still fresh in people's minds.

Potential rioters also had recent memories of severe sentences passed down in the past, which was believed to have deterred them.

An English problem?

We are interested in views on why these disturbances didn't take place in other parts of the UK.

Our view



We cannot hope to predict where riots will take place in the future. However, if we can better control some of the factors described in this chapter, we may be able to stop some riots before they start and reduce the damage caused by others.

We can already identify some practical, short-term actions – for instance, looking at the way both central government and local communities prepare when there is a threat of rioting. We consider these in chapter 16. Other measures will need to be more complex and longer-term – for example, helping riot areas improve in prosperity. We set out our longer-term work to examine how this might be achieved in chapter 17.

WHY DID PEOPLE RIOT?

What made each of the estimated 13,000 – 15,000¹ people take part in the riots?

What made some people, undisguised, break into and loot from shops in full view of CCTV cameras?

What made others burn down buildings in the knowledge that residents lived above them?

In this chapter, we examine rioters' motivations from a range of different perspectives. It is important to note that considering motivations – including through interviews with those that took part – does not mean condoning rioter behaviour. However, through greater understanding of motives, we may be able to help prevent riots from happening in the future.

Motivations around the initial rioting in Tottenham on 6 August

The majority of people we spoke to felt that the initial disturbances at Tottenham police station were motivated by police handling of the protest, which included members of Mark Duggan's family. This was set within the context of a history of deaths of black people in custody.

It is not clear if there were other motivating factors involved. Some people have pointed to a general antipathy between some members of the black community and Haringey police over use of 'stop and search' powers, as well as more deep-seated issues of deprivation and lack of opportunity.

Most people we spoke to believe that the handling by the authorities of Mark Duggan's death was considerably less of a motivating factor in rioting away (even a short distance) from the initial disturbances.

People we spoke with suggest that the rioters who took part in the initial looting and violence in Tottenham and around Haringey were mostly opportunists, especially those that travelled into the area to participate. However, some felt a number of people might have been influenced by the wish to protest.

¹ National estimate, based on information the Panel has obtained from 40 affected local authorities.

Motivations for riots elsewhere – From the rioters' perspective

“There was a 50:50 chance of getting caught and the prize made it a good enough gamble.”

‘It was a moment of madness – I regret it every day.’

‘Revenge.’

‘They wanted to give the feds [the police] a bloody nose.’

‘No opportunities, no jobs – why not?’

‘They were all insured, so it didn’t matter.’

‘It was the holidays – people were bored.’

‘It was like a zombie movie – people were just getting involved.’

‘They never listen to us – they did that day.’

‘This was is our chance to make history.’

‘It was a stupid mistake. I was just acting hard.’

‘I just got carried away.’

‘I was stupid, I’d had a drink.’

‘It was the heat of the moment.’

**‘It’s a once-in-a-life-time.
It’s like the Olympics.’**

**‘What’s the difference
between claiming for
a TV and claiming a TV?’**

**(Parent shouting after child)
‘Get me a Sat Nav!’**

**‘I nick a radio and the
world comes down on
me, bankers take a million
and nothing happens.’**

**‘This is the most
exciting two nights
of my life.’**

**‘iPhones! Xboxes!
Everything! You can get
whatever you want!’**

**(About the police) ‘They’re just
the biggest gang on the block –
but they weren’t that day.’**

**‘We’re dispersed by the police but
there’s nowhere to disperse to.’**

**‘The riots were payback
to the police.’**

**‘The police shoot someone dead
and nothing happens. We do it
and we end up inside. The riots
were payback to the police for
the grief they have caused in our
communities.’**

**‘I needed to provide for my family
but a “need to” turned to greed
and so I looted.’**

**‘Jobs aren’t available
or very badly paid,
but the pressure to have
the latest designer items
is immense.’**

Motivations for riots elsewhere – From the communities' and victims' perspective

'Some people get to 14 or 15 years old without ever being told they're good at anything. They feel a sense of worthlessness.'

'The have-nots in a must-have society.'

'There are barriers to progression and no opportunities. We have to try twice as hard to get half as far.'

'Broken people and broken places are an incendiary mix.'

'There seems to be a moral vacuum.'

'I don't understand the motivation for people to burn others out of their homes.'

'It's not disaffected young people but a lack of responsibility, families have a role.'

'There's not a collapse of morality, but there was a collapse of rationality.'

'Kids need more discipline – it's about Mum and Dad.'

'This country has lost its values, respect and morals.'

'An excuse to be noticed.'

'People had seen the disorder in London and other parts of the country. They saw the way the police couldn't cope and thought, "If they're doing it in London, why can't we?"'

'Being bored is no excuse for murder and looting.'

'All news channels were playing end-to-end coverage of the London riots. It was like an open invitation to go out and riot.'

'If people are stuck in situations that they cannot move out of, why should they play by our rules?'

'Government policies are to blame for the problems. In order to get a job you need a degree, but how can the poor go to university? Cancelling the EMA hasn't helped.'

'Most people got caught up watching the riots. They saw the police doing nothing and just thought they could get away with it too.'

'The squaddies are very different – bring back national service.'

'Given how they're living – the question is why didn't more people riot?'

'Rioting is back in fashion.'

'You are what you shop.'

'Kids need more discipline – it's about Mum and Dad.'

'Young people are angry. Violence was the quick answer.'

'It took one spark for the riots to happen. But things have been happening to young people for a long time. Youth clubs in Tottenham have closed and so has Connexions.'

'I don't think its cuts, they haven't really kicked in yet.'

'You are what you shop.'

'It wasn't political – it was shopping.'

'There's not a collapse of morality, but there was a collapse of rationality.'

'The Government has a big part in this, rising tuition fees and the way police are allowed to treat people are all reasons for the riots. We need to look more at the Government than the people who started the riots.'

'All the riots come down to is money. Kids aren't able to do well at school as they have too many other issues, like distractions at home, to contend with.'

'It is not mindless behaviour, certain young people inducted into alternative lifestyles who are vulnerable to gangs will offend.'

'An excuse to be noticed.'

'Rioting is back in fashion.'

Our view

There is no one cause or single motivating factor for the riots. Individuals – including those who rioted – highlighted a range of motivations from the immediate gratification of a free pair of trainers, to a desire to attack society.

We know from rioters' criminal histories that 56% had committed 3 or more offences, and 40% 6 or more offences. The chance to commit further offences en masse, thus seemingly increasing the number of opportunities and reducing the chances of being caught, must have represented a significant motivating factor for many.

A third of under 18s had not committed a previous offence. We know from our discussions that the great majority were not considered 'at risk' of offending by local area Youth Offending Teams.

'These were not people we ever expected to get involved – some were crying for their mothers.'

This evidence, supported by direct and indirect evidence from discussions with offenders themselves, does suggest that a significant number of these young people made bad decisions after getting caught up in the moment.

The fact that many people abused society's moral and legal codes when the opportunity arose paints a disturbing picture. This suggests that we consider the underlying reasons for some people's actions. Most disturbing to us was a widespread feeling that some rioters had no hope and nothing to lose.

It is therefore worth reflecting here on some of the reasons cited by people who face many of the same disadvantages in life, but who chose not to riot. These are representative of the many comments we received:

'I would have rioted before, but I've got a baby now, and a flat. I've got too much to lose.'

'I'm in college – I've got prospects – I'm not going to throw that away.'

'I was brought up better than that.'

'I was brought up here – why would I destroy my community?'

'If my Mum didn't notice, someone in the community would have and then told her.'

'It's against my religion.'

'I know right from wrong.'

These people were positive about their lives. Some explained to us that they had grown up in poverty, but had made the necessary sacrifices to build a better future for themselves.

They showed an awareness of shared values and had the resilience to take knocks and create opportunities. They all had, as one told us: 'life plans' – and the desire to see them through. This provided them with a stake in society that they did not want to jeopardise.

'I was from a poor home with no money but I worked hard, grafted and had three jobs so I could save up, and I didn't complain and I didn't loot and burn people out of their houses.'

We were told that rioters often lacked these attributes and this outlook. We consider ways in which society can provide rioters with them in chapter 17.

ONGOING TENSIONS WITH THE POLICE – STOP & SEARCH

In many areas people identified stop and search (in relation to Black and Asian men) as a major source of discontent with the police. In some instances these tensions were cited as a motivating factor in the riots, including some of the attacks on the police.

Some said that these powers are regularly used inappropriately, referencing the unprofessional way in which some officers undertake searches, but also the regularity of searches and the circumstances in which certain people are targeted.

‘I was out shopping with my Dad – and they wanted to search me!’

However, most of those we spoke with – including people who are most affected by searches – agree with the principles behind stop and search, particularly to reduce the number of weapons carried in public in areas of high crime.

‘As a young black male stop and search is more important to me than anyone.’

Some felt the actions and behaviour of neighbourhood policing teams were more accepted and acceptable than those of teams from outside an area, who had less incentive to treat people with appropriate respect.

The Panel has heard from many people that stop and search is necessary – to protect in particular young people. However, if searches are insufficiently targeted and not carried out professionally, there is a risk that the consensus that has built up around stop and search is eroded. While there are routes of complaint if searches are not handled well, some young people we spoke to did not have confidence in the system.

The Panel has heard from police forces who feel they have been very successful in building and maintaining confidence around stop and search; best practice should be shared across forces to ensure standards are high.

Where young law abiding people are repeatedly targeted there is a very real danger that stop and search will have a corrosive effect on their relationship with the Police. As these young men become future parents these negative experiences will be passed on to another generation.

Across police forces there has been significant effort to reform and improve the way stop and search is conducted. These include initiatives such as “Stop and Account” to try and ensure that information and accountability as to why a individual is stopped is conveyed with a right to complaint.

The argument from the police is that stop and search is a major tactic in controlling the street and in the prevention of crime.

We understand that current research is underway to look into this further and the Panel would urge that any evidence on the effectiveness of stop and search be an area for continuous review within the police service.

The Panel calls on the police to urgently work with communities and across forces to improve the way in which stop and search is undertaken to ensure confidence in the police is widespread.

The Panel calls on the police to work with communities and across forces to improve the way in which stop and search is undertaken.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE RESPONSE TO THE RIOTS

When we discussed the riots with affected communities, the most passionate views we heard from individuals were often about the public service response.

People have clear expectations about the role of the different organisations before, during and after the riots. This chapter reflects the views of communities, and the organisations themselves, on whether these were met.

Local authority response

‘The council were a shoulder to cry on.’

There were some excellent examples of good practice in the response of local authorities. But all of the local authorities we spoke to felt they had lessons to learn.

Emergency planning

Generally speaking, emergency planning systems worked effectively and the contingency plans were timely. In the best practice cases, police authority Gold Teams took control and co-ordinated the response in areas through a single point of access.

In Southwark, a key part of the emergency plan was to utilise community leaders on the ground to minimise the impact of disorder and reduce tension in the borough in the preceding days.

Several authorities questioned why a London-wide Gold Team was not activated. Many felt there would have been an advantage to London-wide planning and allocation of resources. This should be considered as an option for any future riots.

Street based teams

The Panel were impressed with those areas that had developed multi-disciplinary teams combining police and local authority staff along with the voluntary sector. These teams were quickly deployed to provide a concerted and unified street presence to talk to groups as they formed and to persuade them to disperse. We would encourage all local authorities and other partners to seriously examine this model.

Communication

There were useful communication channels in lots of areas. In particular, text message and email groups were used by several local authorities.

Some areas found innovative ways of communicating within their communities:

- Community leaders and faith groups helped address rising tensions in some areas;
- Social and youth workers were praised for individually contacting and seeking to persuade younger people not to participate – the very low number of children in care involved was attributed mainly to these actions;
- Bradford flooded the streets with public sector workers to talk about the consequences of rioting to people who might be thinking of getting involved.

However, many people we spoke with were not sure about where to go for trusted information – local authorities should take proactive steps to make this clear both before and during riots.

Communicating the right messages to different groups was also important – especially given the number of spectators and individuals who made snap decisions to commit crime. Many felt that outlining the consequences of rioting to younger adults was effective, as were messages to parents advising them to keep children indoors.

Use of social media

Many people we spoke to recognised the need for improving the use of social media to rebut rumours and encourage potential rioters and spectators to stay at home.

The ability to use social media effectively was clearly identified as a major weakness for local authorities and the police. They need to be able to use it both to gather and use information and to communicate messages to communities, businesses and individuals. This needs to be urgently addressed.

Use of CCTV

CCTV allowed local authorities to identify vehicles and individuals and provided the bulk of evidence needed for subsequent convictions. In some areas, the authorities had a police presence in the CCTV room to support the flow of information and intelligence during the riots. This enabled effective tasking of resources and evidence gathering. Where local authorities have invested in modern, high quality CCTV this increased their ability to aid the police in terms of quality of evidence they were able to deliver.

Borough CCTV networks were monitored through council control centres. This helped the police to mobilise and effectively deal with emerging hotspots, as well as providing useful evidence at a later stage. Some boroughs were able to deploy mobile CCTV vans to help with identifying rioters – building on existing strong partnerships between the local authority and local police.

The clean-up

The speed of the clean-up was impressive. Most areas had swept away all debris by early the next morning, even while rioting was taking place in neighbouring streets. Street cleaning teams liaised with the emergency planning departments to remove glass and debris from the streets. This was achieved while preserving crime scenes and working around structurally unsafe buildings.

Support for individuals

Councils responded quickly to support those families that were left without accommodation. Local sites were used to set up emergency rest centres and officials arranged for help with rent, completing insurance claims and looking for alternative accommodation for those families affected.

However we were concerned that there were a number of cases where individuals and families who had experienced significant trauma as a result of the riots had not been dealt with adequately by the local authority. In particular, we heard from some individuals who had encountered unnecessary bureaucracy. In these cases a single source of support within the local authority, to help the family deal with any of their concerns on housing, insurance or recovery generally, would have been useful.

Support for business

Most local authorities provided speedy information, advice and support to affected businesses. They recognised the importance of getting them back on their feet as soon as possible to minimise the economic impact locally. The majority of affected businesses had individual visits, often several times, from officers. They provided helpful advice on financial recovery and the various ways business could access additional support.

Many areas circulated leaflets to thousands of businesses highlighting support available within days of the riots happening, and held business forums to talk about financial aid. Existing networks (such as Business Improvement Districts) were available as multi-agency business recovery groups. They helped in assessing the damage and establishing initiatives which would encourage a return of footfall to the affected areas.

However, some businesses were unhappy at the response. In some areas, where arson and looting were particularly bad, local businesses felt that they effectively had been abandoned by public services. They complained of confused messages from different sources as to whether businesses should close early and board up their premises. Local authorities and the police will need to review how they communicate quickly and effectively with local business in these situations.

The police response

‘They could police 30,000 Glasgow Rangers fans without anything closing, but a couple of hundred kids managed to shut down the entire town centre.’

‘When we escaped from a burning building... the police didn’t do anything.’

‘We phoned the fire brigade three times, but no one came. I called the police and they said to forget about it.’

‘I tried to get back to my shop but they [the police] wouldn’t let me. When I came back all my stock had gone.’

‘I expected to be safe in my own home and I expected the police to do their job. They didn’t.’

‘The police just watched – we were left to burn.’

‘Worried about their safety? What about our safety?’

Why were they protecting town centres? What about protecting lives?’

‘It was clear riots were going to come here – it was avoidable and predictable.’

‘I waited 10 minutes to get though – once someone answered, they said they couldn’t help me.’

[Speaking of the police and IPCC] I want to know where the complacency came from.’

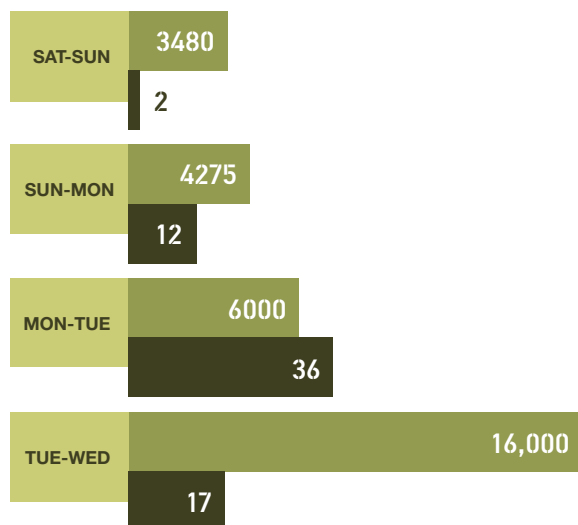
‘When we escaped from a burning building... the police didn’t do anything.’

‘The reasons why these riots took place is because of police abuse of stop and search – period.’

‘I feel very let down by the police officers that night.’

‘Don’t cut the police.’

‘It’s thanks to the police we didn’t get a worse incident.’



Metropolitan police officers
and the number of areas in
London affected by riots

Number of Areas Affected by Rioting
Met Police Numbers

**‘The police
faced riots of an
unprecedented
scale and speed.’**

Our view

We were struck by the sometimes horrifying and tragic accounts of people's experiences of the riots. It will take some considerable time for them to rebuild their lives.

We heard numerous very positive stories about the behaviour and bravery of individual officers. However, we also heard lots of negative comments from individuals about the police withdrawing from riot-hit areas. Many of these people felt they had been effectively abandoned by the police during the riots.

We understand that the police withdrawal in many areas was a deliberate tactic – in order to create a 'sterile' area, or because the police simply did not feel they had sufficient officers with the right equipment to engage the large number of rioters they faced. While we are not in a position to judge police tactics, our view is that the police, when carrying out their own review of tactics, must take account of this widely held perception that they abandoned some communities.

Victims felt they did not receive police support when they were in considerable danger. Businesses told us they lost everything they had worked for. Communities felt they had been left without protection.

The unprecedented speed at which the riots spread took the police by surprise. The areas that were targeted were not always the ones the police anticipated. All the seriously affected communities felt that police numbers were not high enough (see chart on previous page). We were told that Greenwich had fewer than 15 police officers at one point, including Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Croydon at one stage had fewer than 100 officers to cope with groups numbering several hundred. This is partly because officers had been transferred to other areas considered more at risk of rioting.

The police were in many cases unprepared for the scale – but also crucially the type – of disturbances which did not sit well with their traditional rioting response. Contingency plans were not always well adapted to cope. The wider impact, both within an area and nationally, of the perception that individuals can riot without response is a key lesson of the riots.

The MPS have acknowledged that 'with hindsight the numbers were not enough and did not arrive quickly enough'¹ and acknowledged that they need to be more flexible tactically. There is still much distress and anger in communities. It is crucial that the police rebuild trust. This can start by ensuring plans are in place to deal with the risk of future disturbances, pursuing the people who committed the crimes during the riots and supporting communities as they rebuild.

Contingency plans clearly need to be adapted to reflect this type of rioting. We outline our recommendations for improving local preparations and response in chapter 16.

¹ Metropolitan Police – Strategic Review of MPS Response to Disorder – Early Learning and Initial Findings.

FINANCIAL RECOVERY FOR INDIVIDUALS & BUSINESSES

During our visits, we met many victims who had lost their homes and businesses through targeted arson and looting.

These ranged from the owners of small corner shops with relatively low turnovers to large supermarket chains and branches of nationwide retailers.

One of the most important questions individuals and small shop-keepers asked was about when their insurance money would come through, so they could get their businesses – and lives – up and running again.

For people and business affected by the riots, there were a number of separate ways to claim financial support for losses inflicted:

- Directly from their insurance company.
- For the non- or under-insured, the Riot (Damages) Act 1886.
- The High Street Support Scheme for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Payments direct from local authorities.
- Emergency support from banks.
- Private sources.

In this chapter, we look at the experiences businesses had in claiming support from these different sources following the riots.

Insurance companies

In the first instance, many people we spoke to looked to their insurers to compensate them for the damage caused by the riots. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) estimates the insurance industry has dealt with thousands of claims resulting from the riots, the total cost of which will exceed £200m.

While individual circumstances vary, generally damage caused by theft, arson and looting is covered under home insurance policies. Many of these policies also cover people for temporary accommodation costs if they become homeless.

Businesses have been able to claim under commercial insurance policies. Most commercial insurance policies cover businesses for damage to their premises, including interruption to their business as a result of fire, looting and other damage caused by the recent riots. Some policies also cover businesses which are not damaged but whose trade has been affected in the aftermath.

During our visits we have been told repeatedly about delays and difficulties people and businesses are having processing insurance claims. Individual businesses, and those co-ordinating support at local authority level, have reported to us that some insurance companies are slow to process claims and make payments.

One particular issue raised was over the rebuilding of domestic properties in Haringey. We heard that once residents had received payments to move to alternative accommodation, no or limited support was given to help them find properties. This is proving particularly difficult as many people are in full-time jobs and had already used their annual leave to cope with the immediate aftermath of the riots. Many struggled to get extra time off to look for somewhere else to live.

A number of residents have told us they are unhappy with the way insurance companies are communicating with them. A lot of communication has been via third parties and even when communication has been direct, information provided is sometimes misleading.

We have also heard that several small businesses had not received any financial recompense from their insurers up to three months after the riots. At one community discussion in Tottenham, hosted by the BBC, not a single victim in the room had received an insurance pay-out or knew of any victims who had.

In Ealing, we heard from a shopkeeper whose property had been looted and destroyed by fire and a restaurant owner whose livelihood had been destroyed by smoke and water damage. Neither the shopkeeper nor the restaurant owner in Ealing had received any insurance money when we checked with them in mid-November.

Interestingly, we did not hear the same message from the larger businesses such as the supermarket chains and nationwide retailers that we spoke to on our visits.

There is clearly a gap, in perception at least, in the level of service received by small and larger businesses. Some of this may be down to longer-standing and more developed relationships between insurance companies and their larger clients. Many small business owners told us they had never made an insurance claim before the riots. This had important practical effects. Those businesses that were the first to be able to replace the broken glass in their shop fronts and replenish their stock were generally those that reported a positive response from their insurers.

We recognise that insurance companies must undertake due diligence before paying out claims and that the circumstances in a number of these cases will be difficult to resolve quickly. Resolving the insurance position where there has been a wholesale destruction of buildings will necessarily take time. In some cases, there may have been a delay in reporting the damage to the police and obtaining a crime reference number, which is a necessary pre-condition in most insurance contracts. In response to this, some insurers extended their claims notification period to 30 days (from seven days) to help customers file claims on time.

In addition, we understand that most insurers set up 24 hour call centres to help deal with the volume and urgency of complaints. And we note that the ABI has commented publicly that the industry, broadly speaking, reacted well and quickly. They also made the point to us that insurers have no interest in delaying claims (many of which will be for business interruption), as the longer a business is shut, the more it will cost the insurers.

Nevertheless, we are concerned at the large number of complaints we have received about the role of insurers.

Riot (Damages) Act 1886

A significant number of businesses were either not insured or were under-insured, especially for consequential loss such as interruption to their trading. Some have reported that this may mean they find it difficult to continue trading at all. In these cases, the Riot (Damages) Act 1886 (RDA) was a potential source of financial help.

Under the provisions of this Act, the police are required to compensate people and organisations who suffer loss or damage as a result of a riot¹. This includes damage caused to houses, shops, buildings or property within a building. Importantly, the Act does not include damage to vehicles, personal injury or business interruption, which has to be claimed for under separate cover. The logic behind the 1886 Act was that the police are responsible for keeping law and order and if they fail, they should be held responsible for the damage caused. There is no cap on the potential liability of the police under the Act.

The RDA applies to all individuals and businesses who suffer a riot-related loss, whether or not they are insured. Insurers can claim under the scheme for money they have paid out to their customers for loss and damage they have suffered as a result of the rioting. As this means insurance companies will be able to recover substantially under the provisions of the RDA, there seems to be little justification for insurance companies to raise premiums for businesses affected by the riots. There was no noticeable increase in premiums following the riots in Tottenham in 1985.

As the RDA is not widely known about, it is not surprising that we heard numerous myths about how it works. One of these rumours was that a disturbance needed to be formally declared a 'riot' by the Government or police authority before people could claim under the RDA. In fact, neither the Home Secretary nor the police need to officially designate events as a 'riot' in order for the Act to apply. Nonetheless, many people we spoke to believed that the Government and/or the police were reluctant to refer to the disturbances as a 'riot' in case it prompted people to claim under the RDA.

At the time the riots occurred, a person or organisation was required to lodge a claim under the Act within 14 days of the date of the riot. It quickly became clear that this notice period would not give many individuals and businesses enough time. In many cases, the residences and businesses damaged and destroyed were crime scenes, or were so extensively damaged they were structurally unsafe. In these cases, owners are prevented from entering their homes or business premises to assess the damage they have suffered. In this case, it is impractical and unreasonable to expect a person or organisation to have properly assessed their situation and submitted a claim. In addition, many people were unlikely to have been aware of the existence of the RDA. In the light of these concerns, the Home Secretary decided that the deadline to submit a claim would be extended from 14 to 42 days. The Home Office also introduced a simplified claims form and set up a dedicated claims bureau to handle uninsured claims under the Act.

This 42-day deadline for authorities to make a claim expired on 19 September. Several thousand claims were received, although a number of these have been rejected as out of scope of the Act – usually because they related to business interruption or damage to vehicles, which are not covered. Claims still being processed are with police authorities for a final decision. Insurance industry claims were sent direct to police authorities. They are processing these claims and are trying to estimate costs operationally and for riot damages.

The Metropolitan Police Authority, as part of their Strategic Review into the riots, declared in their Early Learning & Initial Findings Report that:

'The MPA has received over 3,844 claims. 70% of the claims have now been checked to remove duplicates and to place the compensation amount requested by the claimant onto the IT system. Liabilities are currently estimated to be between £200m and £300m, the MPA continue to look to fully recover all costs from the Home Office via special grant.'

We have heard worrying accounts of delays in settling claims. In Tottenham, some residents have reported that they have not even had any contact or acknowledgement of their claim. And for those who have been contacted, there have been instances where the claim information has been lost by the loss adjusters and residents have been asked to resubmit.

¹The definition of a riot is outlined in Section 1 of the Public Disorder Act 1986, which states: 'Where 12 or more persons who are present together use or threaten unlawful violence for a common purpose and the conduct of them (taken together) is such as would cause a person of reasonable firmness present at the scene to fear for his personal safety, each of the persons using unlawful violence for the common purpose is guilty of riot.'

High Street Support Scheme

On 11 August, the Prime Minister announced a High Street Support Scheme which would make £20m available to local authorities to help small and medium-sized businesses and commercial districts get back on their feet after the riots.

Payments are made to individual businesses or groups of businesses to reimburse them for costs that were a direct consequence of the riots. These include the loss of business assets and exceptional business expenses and also cover costs which businesses might later recover from their insurers. This was particularly useful in helping businesses with their cash flow requirements, and there was provision for local authorities to recover the money paid out.

The deadline for councils to submit claims was originally set for early November. In response to requests from councils and shopkeepers and to cover the crucial Christmas period, the Communities Secretary decided to extend the deadline until the New Year. This extension was welcomed by businesses.

Local authorities

A number of local authorities made short-term grants available to small businesses to help them get back on their feet as quickly as possible, in some cases drawing on the High Street Support Scheme.

In Ealing, small independent traders were given £1,200 each to help them pay for immediate repairs. Wandsworth immediately offered grants of up to £2,000 to replace stock. They also suspended business rates collection to ease cash flow pressures and introduced a business rate discount scheme that will run until April 2012.

Croydon Council has provided more than £200,000 of interest free loans to the worst affected traders to help them re-open as quickly as possible. As well as establishing the Croydon Enterprise Loan Fund, the council granted £1,000 to any business with a crime reference number without the business having to ask for it. The police made direct contact with the council, which then made a payment without the need for a formal 'claim' to be made by the affected businesses.

Some councils also used their powers to offer business rate relief for local firms. As business rates are normally the third largest outgoing for firms (after rent and staff), this was particularly welcome.

The majority of businesses we spoke to praised the support provided by Local Authorities. They welcomed the various grants put in place, although some felt it was unclear exactly who might qualify for which grants, that some of the forms were confusing and that it took the police some time to provide the necessary crime reports so that they could qualify.

Banks

A number of banks put in place special arrangements to ensure emergency enquiries from their affected customers were dealt with as simply and quickly as possible. For example, RBS/NatWest provided interest free loans of up to £25,000 to small business customers directly impacted by the riots for up to six months.

A number of financial institutions also made available short-term funding to replenish lost stock and undertake general repairs. In addition, some businesses were granted repayment holidays until insurance claims were settled.

Private sources

A number of private individuals and companies have given extra support to victims of the riots. The most significant was the William Castell High Street Fund. This was established as a registered charity to provide immediate financial help to small businesses, particularly those with less than ten employees, affected by the August disturbances. The Fund accepted claims up to 31 October and made discretionary grants to help with short-term hardships, including loss of income.

In addition, we heard many commendable accounts of local people carrying out fund-raising activity to provide extra financial support to local businesses affected by the riots.

Our view

The picture for financial recovery for individuals and business affected by riots is a complex one and the relevant legislation is over 125 years old.

As we have noted, many businesses were not insured for direct or indirect loss of trade following the riot. This is also not covered under the RDA. To help prevent similar circumstances happening again, the Panel recommends either that the scope of the RDA be extended to include loss of trade or that the Government commits to establishing an awareness-raising campaign to encourage businesses to review their insurance arrangements and ensure their coverage is sufficient.

We also note that the deadline for submitting claims under the RDA (now 42 days, extended from 14 days shortly after the riots) is still too short a time for some businesses.

The Panel recommends that the deadline for submission of a claim under the provision of the RDA should be fixed at 90 days.

We did not hear of anyone who had received a payment under the Riot Damages Act. On current forecasts, in London, by 31 March 2012 – over six months after the August riots – nine out of ten of the largest claims will still not have been processed and barely half of people with the smallest claims will have been paid.

The delays in processing these payments need to be urgently addressed.

While we welcome the different initiatives set up by central and local government to support people who were affected by the riots, it has made the process of financial recovery for many a difficult and confusing one. There is clearly scope for the various different processes to be made clearer.

The Panel recommends that the Government looks at ways to streamline the processes for financial recovery following any similar disturbances. The Panel also recommends that all local authorities identify an officer who can provide a knowledgeable single point of contact on financial recovery to riot-affected people and businesses in their area.

The Panel were told that at least some insurance companies only pay out for lost trade if shops are closed under police orders. Police were often reluctant to do this. This required shopkeepers to make difficult decisions balancing personal risk with lost earnings.

The Panel recommends that the police work with local businesses to ensure such considerations are taken into account during future disturbances.

The Panel is concerned at the complaints it has received in relation to the handling of insurance claims and is particularly concerned about the position of small businesses which have reported that they have yet to receive any financial assistance from their insurers.

The Panel is also concerned that, after all of our visits, we are yet to hear from anyone who has received a payment under the RDA. The delays in processing these claims need to be urgently addressed.

The fact that three months after the riots, there are still small businesses which have yet to receive a penny in compensation for the losses they have experienced is wholly unacceptable.

The Panel seeks further information about the handling of financial compensation claims in relation to the riots.

Some high streets continue to suffer. A number of retailers have reported that they are still experiencing significant falls in customers due to the riots.

The Panel recommends that the Government considers using any potential underspend from the High Street Support Scheme (or other earmarked funds) to provide additional support to areas still struggling to recover.

It will take time for the full picture of the financial recovery to emerge.

We will return to this issue in our final report when we expect to have a clearer understanding of the performance of the insurance industry and the way the various government schemes operated in the post-riot recovery period.

CASE STUDY

Shopkeepers – Salford

During the riots our computer shop was badly fire damaged and looted. Our flat was above our shop and that was burnt out too. We lost everything.

We left our building when the disorder started and within half an hour the property was destroyed. We are trying to recover the insurance losses for our home and business, but this is taking a very long time. We still can't believe this has happened to us.

'Watching our whole life in flames haunts us every day'

This has been a very stressful time for our family and we've had to move in with our parents, which is not ideal. Returning to our shop brings back bad memories. We just want to get back in business and get the flat sorted so we can live as a proper family again.

There is a lot of unemployment and poverty in Salford. The riots provided a lot of people the opportunity to see what they could get away with. We think that people in Salford saw people in London and Birmingham getting away with the looting on the news and copied them. Salford was an easy target; it was during the school holidays and there were opportunistic jobs and kids just going along with the flow.

More police and fire service personnel should have been made available to get people to vacate the area sooner. However, it all happened so quickly and there were too many jobs for them to deal with.

We are glad that no one lost their lives in the Salford riots, but this doesn't compensate us for what we have lost. Watching our whole life in flames haunts us every day.

RIOT HEROES

Following the riots, communities mobilised to undo what the rioters had done. Horror at what had happened motivated people to demonstrate shared values and show that the rioters' actions were not in their names.

People were on hand the day after the riots to help the authorities with the clean-up across a number of riot-affected areas.

Many people we spoke to said that the riots helped bring communities together. From those who organised large-scale clean-ups to people who checked in on elderly neighbours, significant numbers of people took time to look after their friends, neighbours and their communities.

We were told about the concern in riot-hit communities about the lasting stigma for their areas, and their young people. We saw first-hand that communities are fiercely protective of both.

At our public meetings, we have witnessed communities determined to face up to challenges from the riots. These challenges range from rebuilding their areas, to tackling some of the underlying issues that prevent their communities from realising their full potential.

“There’s a village atmosphere – it’s wonderful.”

CASE STUDY

The Riot Clean Up – Manchester

As I watched reports of riots in other English cities I thought “Nice one, Manchester. You’re better than that.” Unfortunately though, it didn’t take long for them to reach us.

I had already seen Manchester rebuild itself following the IRA bomb in 1996. I didn’t want to see that happening again. But I wasn’t the only person to feel that way, with over 1,000 people assembling at Piccadilly Gardens at 9am on the morning following the riots to help clean up.

I set up the @riotcleanupmanc Twitter account and linked in with a Facebook group to amass over 15,000 followers in under 12 hours. The local authority offered to help co-ordinate the clean-up too. Everyone was overwhelmed by the response.

There was a real party atmosphere at the clean-up. Everyone had smiles on their faces. Businesses donated items, like brooms, and provided refreshments for the volunteers.

‘Cleaning up my city made me proud.’

I believe the riots in Manchester were motivated by opportunism and a sense that the crimes were ‘victimless’ and penalty-free. But short of having an unfeasible number of police on the streets it would have been difficult to prevent them.

People are unhappy, whether that’s due to cuts in services, unemployment, or stigmatising reporting of ‘feral youths’. The sentences imposed on the rioters will probably act as a deterrent though.

For me, the major positive was that the community united as one after the riots in the clean-up. Age, race, and religion were irrelevant.

CASE STUDY

The Riot Womble

I was responsible for creating the hashtag #riotcleanup on Twitter. By the middle of August we had 86,000 followers.

I was also one of those people brought together via social media to get down to riot-affected areas with brooms to help clean up where they live.

Although the brooms and the people were initially a symbol more than anything else, it has allowed us to begin a process to start helping communities in the long-term.

Since the riots I've organised one clean-up on an estate in Hackney. It was very successful and the volunteers who helped really enjoyed giving up a day to help. I've also had meetings with various people including people at Vinspired, the young people's volunteering organisation, about taking more action to clean up riot-hit communities.

I am working with the person who helped mobilise people overnight to clean up spots across London, and together we have set up riotcleanup.co.uk. I organised a group of people to get the website looking better, and although it needs work, it's a start.

We've been overwhelmed by the response of so many people who want to change things for the better. With enough funding, we think we could build a website and hope to start a charity to help disadvantaged communities across the UK.

'The brooms in Clapham sent a message to the rest of the world that things were going to be okay.'

Our view



Because of the riot heroes – those individuals who mobilised communities to action – the riots will be remembered as much for the clean-up as the scenes of devastation.

Watching people pull together, including huge numbers of young people, helped a shocked country to remember that the overwhelming majority wanted to help build society rather than tear it down.

The impact of this should not be underestimated. It is for this reason that the Panel recommends that riot heroes be honoured both nationally and in town halls across the country.

CASE STUDY

Community Resilience: It started with a love wall...

As well as the community clean-ups which were in the main led by citizens there were also a range of responses to the riots from both members of the public, community groups and local councils.

Immediately after the riots peace parades and rallies were organised in many of the areas and by many individuals.

One of the most iconic images was the Peckham Peace Wall. In the immediate aftermath of the riots Peckham Shed, a local theatre company, wrote a simple message of 'We love Peckham because...' on the boarded-up Poundland shop on Rye Lane.

They handed out coloured Post-it notes and pens and invited people to offer messages of good will.

Following this activity feel-good campaigns, many under the 'I love' banner, were rolled out across areas affected by the riots. The visibility was brought to life through use of posters, banners, badges and in social media.

The 'I love' campaigns have allowed people to demonstrate their passion for their cities, bring about unity among residents and encourage shoppers back into the areas worst affected by the disorder.



Section 3

ACTIONS

Having explored communities' views on what happened - including the triggers and motivations for the riots and how they were handled - this final section looks to the future.

Based on what we have heard we set out a series of immediate recommendations to support communities and businesses, and to help mitigate the risk of future riots. We also outline the issues we want to explore in the next phase of our work.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

This section reflects the thoughts of communities and victims about issues they believe need to be addressed immediately. Some of these are covered elsewhere in this report, while others we introduce here for the first time. Following our recommendations, the next section of the report outlines the longer-term focus of our work.

Recommendations to support victims and communities

Theme	Issues	Recommendation
Community heroes	Those service personnel who put themselves at risk to try and protect communities, the people who mobilised communities to action to defend areas against rioting and the people who helped to clean up afterwards were all ‘riot heroes’ and their contribution should be acknowledged.	Riot heroes should be honoured nationally and locally.
Bringing rioters to justice	It is important to communities and victims that justice is done and seen to be done. Those involved in the riots must be caught and punished for their actions.	The police must continue to prioritise the pursuit and arrest of suspected rioters and should ensure victims are kept up-to-date about the progress of their cases.
Restorative justice	There have already been some small-scale efforts to allow victims who express an interest in doing so to meet people who committed crimes against them. Some evidence on restorative justice shows that it can be effective in reducing re-offending rates.	Central and local government and the police should ensure all victims who want to face people who committed crimes against them can have the opportunity do so.
Release of rioters who have completed their sentences	<p>Managing the return of people who are released after serving a custodial sentence for riot-related offences will present immediate challenges both to communities and public agencies. They will need to look at the potential risks and develop clear plans to deal with the return of rioters in a way which helps to reduce the potential for re-offending and safeguards communities.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned to note that some local authorities say they are facing difficulties getting information about the release dates of local riot offenders.</p>	<p>Public services, including the probation service, youth offending teams and local government, should develop strategies which ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a clear system of ‘wrap around’ support is put in place which starts before release and continues until ex-offenders are resettled; – arrangements are made immediately to ensure local authorities are provided with information about offenders’ release dates; – that youth offending and the probation service are able to deal with any spikes in demand; – the transition for 18-year-olds to the adult justice system is well managed.

Theme	Issues	Recommendation
Review of IPCC and police protocols on how complaints about police action are handled	The speed at which rumours can spread makes rapid, informed communication vital in tense, inflammable situations. It is important that clear information is made available to the media and public at the earliest possible stage.	Police authorities and the IPCC should urgently review their communications protocol to ensure they remain fit for purpose and are being correctly adhered to.
Stop and search	Stop and search is a necessary part of police processes. However, if searches are not carried out correctly, there is a risk that communities' belief in stop and search as an effective policing method will be eroded. Although there are already complaint processes people can use if they feel searches are not handled well, some young people we spoke to did not have confidence in the system.	The police should urgently work with communities and across forces to improve the way in which stop and search is undertaken to ensure confidence in the police is widespread.
Communication policy	During the riots, many people called for mobile networks to be temporarily shut down. Since then, the Home Secretary has announced a review of police powers to intervene in mobile communications.	The Government should ensure that the evidence and experiences of public authorities, community organisations and other affected by the August riots is considered when new principles are being developed.
Broadcast media	Many people we spoke to felt that 24-hour rolling news exaggerated the extent of rioting where they lived.	Broadcast media coverage should continue to work to ensure that TV coverage is accurate, the highest journalistic standards are maintained and that the link between the issue being reported and the accompanying images is clear.
Riot (Damages) Act 1886 (RDA)	<p>The deadline for submitting claims under the RDA was extended from 14 days to 42 days shortly after the riots. However, it is still too short a time for some businesses.</p> <p>The Panel is also concerned that, after all of our visits, we are yet to hear from anyone who has received a payment under the RDA. The delays in processing these claims need to be urgently addressed.</p>	<p>The Government should fix the deadline for submission of a claim under the RDA to 90 days.</p> <p>Any delays in processing legitimate claims need to be urgently addressed.</p>

Theme	Issues	Recommendation
Scope of insurance cover	As we have noted, many businesses were not insured for direct or indirect loss of trade following the riot. This is also not covered under the RDA.	The Government should either extend the scope of the RDA to include loss of trade, or conduct an awareness-raising campaign to encourage businesses to review their insurance arrangements and ensure their coverage is sufficient.
Complexity of different compensation processes	<p>While we welcome the different initiatives set up by central and local government to support people who were affected by the riots, it has made the process of financial recovery for many somewhat confusing. The various different ways of claiming for compensation and/or support need to be made clearer.</p> <p>The Panel were told that at least some insurance companies only pay out for lost trade if shops are closed under police orders. Police were often reluctant to do this. This required shopkeepers to make difficult decisions balancing personal risk with lost earnings.</p>	<p>The Government should work with insurers, local authorities and other relevant organisations to find ways to streamline compensation and support processes following disturbances.</p> <p>Each local authority should identify an officer who can provide a knowledgeable single point of contact on financial recovery to local people and businesses affected by the riots.</p> <p>The police should discuss these issues now with local businesses and ensure insurance considerations are taken into account in responding to future disturbances.</p>
Insurance	The Panel is concerned by the number of complaints it has received about the handling of insurance claims and is particularly concerned about the position of small businesses, which have reported that they have yet to receive any financial help from their insurers.	<p>The Panel seeks further information from insurers about the handling of insurance claims relating to the riots.</p> <p>Any delays in processing legitimate claims need to be urgently addressed.</p>
Supporting high streets	Some high streets continue to suffer financially. A number of shopkeepers have reported that they are still seeing fewer customers due to the riots.	The Government should start a fund to support struggling high streets, including considering using any potential underspend from the High Street Support Scheme (or other earmarked funds) to provide extra help to areas still struggling to recover.

Practical measures to help reduce the future risk of riots

The police and other public organisations, including local authorities, agree that we must learn from the August disturbances in order to reduce future riot risk. The following table makes some specific recommendations to the police and to local authorities. In some cases, our recommendations are also relevant to other local public service providers such as housing associations.

Theme	Issues	Recommendation
Physical environment	The layout of some town centres was felt to make them easier targets for looting.	Local emergency plans should include a full threat assessment and review of town centre layouts. Use of Dispersal Orders as a tool to prevent rioting should be reviewed.
CCTV	Use of CCTV footage has proved very important in bringing rioters to justice.	Local authorities and other relevant organisations should review local CCTV coverage and consider if it needs to be extended.
Effective partnerships	It is vital for local communities to build strong, functioning alliances between organisations and individuals who would be likely to assist in preventing a repeat of the riots. This may include youth groups, traders' associations, local authorities, church leaders and the police.	Local authorities should engage all frontline workers (eg, neighbourhood wardens) when there is a risk of rioting, for example to patrol the streets. Local authorities should consider asking charities and housing associations to help prevent disturbances. They should get local communities involved by creating 'community gold commands' which reflect the police 'gold command' emergency response teams and forming community reference groups.
Information management	Traditional ways of gathering and processing intelligence were too slow to compete with the speed at which rumours circulated and took hold.	The police should look at mechanisms, including links with frontline services, to improve the speed at which information can be confirmed as correct and acted on.
Trusted information sources	People were unsure about where to go for trusted information.	Local authorities and the police should draw up plans to reach key target groups when trouble is brewing, for example via detached youth workers; messages to social housing residents; messages to parents.

Theme	Issues	Recommendation
Speed of communication	Fast communication was vital, both to transmit practical messages to the public and to rebut rumours (especially via social media).	Local authorities and the police should ensure information can be spread swiftly in an emergency situation.
Access to information	Some local authorities were unable to contact key groups of people during the riots, to keep them safe or to dissuade them from rioting.	Local authorities and the police should ensure that mechanisms are in place to contact key groups of people if there is a risk of rioting.
Social media	The inability of the police and public services to use social media effectively was clearly identified as a major weakness in most areas.	Local authorities and the police should urgently review how they use social media and assess if they need to improve their capabilities.
Broadcast media	It was important to have a clear plan for engaging with local media to provide safety advice, contradict inaccurate rumours and encourage people to stay at home when trouble started.	Local authorities and the police should check if they need to revise their current media handling plans.
Appropriate messaging	It was important to provide different messages which were relevant to different groups. For example, outlining the consequences of rioting to younger adults was effective, as were messages to parents advising them to keep children indoors.	Local authorities and the police should consider in advance the messages they should provide to different groups of people if there is a risk of rioting, to ensure they can act quickly in an emergency situation.
Practical measures	<p>Some but not all local areas took precautionary measures when they identified a risk of rioting.</p> <p>In some places, there was a lack of diversionary activity.</p> <p>Riot spectators got in the way of the police and some became involved in the rioting.</p>	<p>A number of practical measures should be deployed more widely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – removing street debris; – monitoring access to petrol, which can be used to start fires; – blocking road access to key areas; – increasing police visibility; – increasing the presence and visibility of frontline public service workers on the street. <p>Local authorities should review the use of diversionary activity when there is a risk of rioting. This could include voluntary as well as local authority services.</p>

Theme	Issues	Recommendation
Emergency plans	All areas need to make sure their emergency plans can deal with the scale and changing nature of any future riots. The Panel notes that in seemingly similar circumstances police forces often responded differently in relation to the issues we highlight here.	<p>Police, local authorities and other relevant organisations should immediately review their emergency plans to ensure they properly cover public disorder on the scale of the August riots.</p> <p>Police forces and HMIC may want to consider the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Should town centres be closed to the public in the run up to and during disturbances? – How can police work with large retail chains to agree on action locally? Some national chains made company-wide decisions about how to handle the riots. – Should non-riot trained officers including PCSOs and specials be utilised in dealing with riots and respond to the riot response, to what extent and in what circumstances. – When is it, and isn't it, appropriate for police to engage in riot situations, and with what equipment? – How should public transport be handled when a riot is taking place – for example should transport hubs such as rail links be shut? – How to ensure especially during peak holiday periods that police have sufficient senior officers on standby. – How can police balance the desire of people to protect their property and communities with the fact that this may have unintended consequences, including hampering police actions? – When Police and Crime Commissioners are introduced, the new arrangements will need to ensure there is adequate provision of public order trained officers and to guarantee their strategic deployment across the country when needed. <p>All methods developed to deal with rioters should bear in mind that there may also be innocent bystanders in the streets.</p> <p>In future disturbances, the police should ensure transparency in their determining the relative priority attached to defending different districts e.g, commercial / residential.</p>

Protecting bystanders	<p>As a result of transport companies' emergency plans, some members of the public were asked to get off public transport (for example, buses) in riot areas.</p> <p>Residents in some areas were forced onto the streets by the actions of the rioters – for example, because their homes had been set alight.</p>	<p>Transport services should ensure their emergency plans always consider the needs and safety of the travelling public.</p> <p>Local authorities and emergency services should review their processes for how to assist and/or evacuate residents caught up in riot areas.</p> <p>Local authorities should consider designating particular sites (for example community centres or churches) as potential 'safe havens' during future public disorder situations so that stranded citizens, especially children or vulnerable adults, have somewhere to go.</p>
Olympics	<p>The scale of the London Olympics already presents a significant policing challenge for next summer. It will be essential to have enough emergency services personnel available to deal with riots at the same time, if necessary.</p>	<p>Local authorities which may be affected (e.g. London authorities) should carry out proper resilience planning, incorporating scenarios which reflect the risk of a repeat of the August riots during the Olympic Games.</p>

BUILDING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

In this chapter, we explore some of the underlying issues that we and many of the people we spoke to believe ultimately led to the riots.

Many people who spoke to us were concerned that the riots were indicative of a wider collapse in morals and values. Bankers bonuses, MPs expenses, consumerism, a lack of personal responsibility or appreciation of right from wrong demonstrated that too many individuals and organisations were taking more out of the country than they put in. This was having a corrosive effect on society. This issue is significant and complex. But the goodwill people and businesses displayed after the riots is a sign that we are all willing to do more for our communities. In the next phase of our work, we want to consider across our themes ways we can provide the right conditions for more individuals and organisations to contribute positively to society.

We recognise that there is a lot of work and effort already targeted at addressing some of the themes we identify here. We are interested in gaining further insight into the range of activity in Government, the wider public and voluntary sectors as well as the contribution that businesses can make. Clearly the perspective of think tanks and academics is also valuable. We see our role in the next few months to bring together the key players to take stock of the response to the challenges facing communities, to review what more can be done and to report on our findings in March 2012.

In considering what more we can do to address these issues, we are mindful of the tightened economic circumstances we live in. Nevertheless, we do still spend significant sums of money on public services. In addition, few we spoke with believed that solutions were entirely down to the Government; both individuals and communities recognised the need for them to share the responsibility in realising them.

Hopes and dreams

On our visits, we asked what people needed to succeed in life. We were struck by a common theme, best described in one young man's words: 'people need hopes and dreams'. This sense of injustice, powerlessness and lack of opportunity weighed heavily in their minds. They did not feel they had a stake in society.

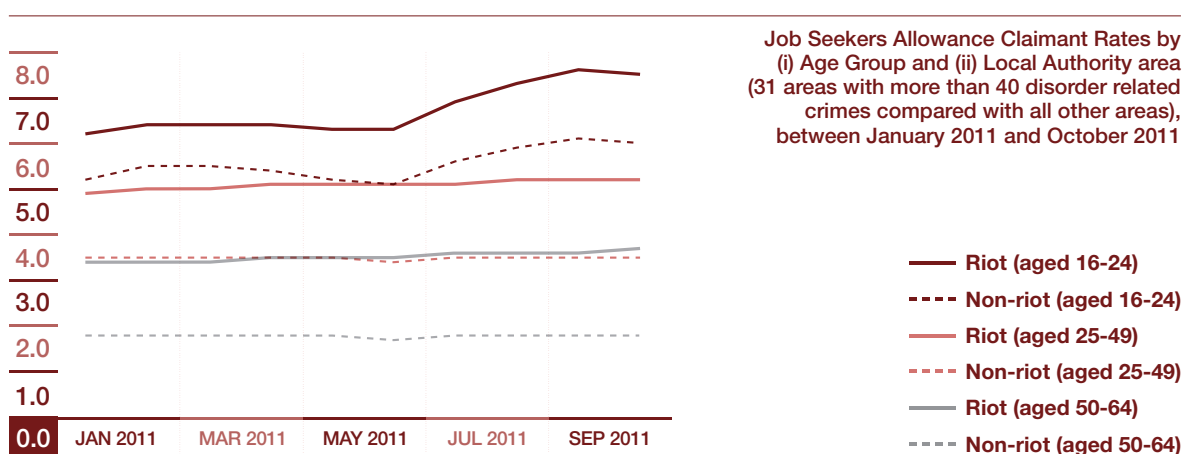
Young people across the country are worried about the prospect of long-term unemployment. While the vast majority of people we spoke to were clear that not having a job was not an excuse to do wrong: 'How does not having GCSEs give you the right to riot?', people felt that this was a significant national issue. Worklessness particularly affects deprived areas (see chart x below) and those – like the majority of the younger rioters – who have poor school records and extensive criminal records.

We acknowledge the range of employment support available through Job Centre Plus and the Work Programme launched earlier this year, as well as the recently announced Youth Contract Programme. We are also aware of the Government's imminent Youth Participation Strategy. Nonetheless, with youth unemployment over one million we believe we should consider what more can be done, particularly to help young adults furthest from the job market.

Alongside this, there is much that local public services and businesses can contribute. In riot-hit areas, entrepreneurial spirit, economic growth and job creation will be vital in order to break a cycle of long-term poverty, lack of ambition and youth unemployment.

We heard some encouraging stories. Some councils told us about projects working with local businesses which had helped create new jobs, improving whole areas; the panel are interested in the Portas review and its work looking at ways to improve local high streets in this respect and will pay close attention to its findings. There were also examples where councils had cut business rates and rents for riot-affected businesses.

We also heard about the creation of enterprise and regeneration zones, improved business/local authority cooperation and better training and education as ways of creating sustainable growth and opportunity.



Building personal resilience

In our visits to many deprived areas, we observed a sense of hopelessness. Many young people we met felt that goals many people take for granted such as getting a job or going to college or university were unachievable for them.

They believed that they were bearing the brunt of cuts caused by irresponsible bankers who had enriched themselves at the cost of others: 'There are double standards in morality' and were bitter about the rise in tuition fees and the removal of the Educational Maintenance Allowance.

Poor schools and a poor education system were also highlighted. Occasionally, people commented that failing students did not receive enough support at school: 'No one asks why you have a problem'.

However, we also talked to people who were ambitious and determined to succeed, regardless of their background.

Individuals, sometimes in the same school class as those who felt helpless, expressed optimism, self-sufficiency and a belief that hardship could be overcome: 'It's an individual choice, you deal with your own circumstances...start your own business'.

Many people spoke of a common awareness of community pride, shared values and a strong understanding of right and wrong. This was shown by the large numbers of highly motivated and passionate residents of all ages who volunteered to help clear up riot-affected areas.

The fact that these people, who had similar disadvantages in life, felt able to look positively to the future greatly impressed us.

It is clear that young people can be responsible, ambitious, determined, conscientious – all the things which their parents, schools and the community want them to be. The question is how more young people can be encouraged to develop a positive mindset even in difficult circumstances.

“There are double standards in morality.”

Children and parents

During our call for evidence, we met many people who were shocked to see so many of their fellow citizens engaged in criminal, sometimes violent behaviour, apparently oblivious to the consequences for themselves and for others. Many asked how the failure of family values may have contributed to this situation.

Two distinct messages came across everywhere we visited: firstly, children and young people telling us they feel demonised and blamed for the riots (and everything else wrong with society) and secondly, adults telling us that some children and young people are out of control.

We do not want to demonise young people. It is clear that the great majority of children and young people in this country are not causing problems. In our call for evidence, we heard many heart-warming stories of young people helping support their communities, from baking cakes for fire-fighters to turning out to clean up their neighbourhoods after the riots. But we also heard from a significant number of adults who see a problem with some young people lacking discipline, respect and values, most often evidenced through persistent low-level anti-social behaviour.

Some people believe it is the job of parents to tackle this, but many people also told us that the wider community need to take responsibility too. Adults should be willing to challenge anti-social behaviour when they see it and to support authorities who are trying to impose order, whether in school or in public.

It is clear that a small number of children do lack adult guidance or control. Both CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts showed that during the riots, a number of children, some quite young, were out on the streets without adult supervision until late at night. Whether or not those children were involved in any criminal activity, many people asked why they were allowed out at night by their parents.

At the same time, we heard from many school-age young people who were not involved in the riots. Even though they were often sympathetic to those who did take part, when we asked them why they themselves had not got involved, they usually cited their parents – either because they had been brought up with clear values which enabled them to make good choices or simply because their parents had made sure they were safely at home during the disturbances. This indicates that strong, principled parenting can be effective in helping children to stay out of trouble.

However, there are children, some as young as 11 who committed crimes during the riots and some ended up in custody. The evidence on what happens in later life to young offenders suggests that the life chances of those children could be seriously damaged by their actions during the riots. As a panel, we want to discuss further what can be done to ensure that all children get the right support, control and guidance from parents or guardians to give them the best possible chance of making the most of their lives. We would also like to understand more about the circumstances that lead to children ending up in prison and to examine what could have been done earlier in these children's lives to help them stay out of trouble.

Riots and the brands

‘You are what you own’.

Over the last 20 years, we have witnessed the rise of the brands. They have employed creative marketing strategies which positioned products not only as symbols of success but also as markers of individual self-esteem. Increasingly we live in a society where conspicuous consumption and self worth have become intrinsically interlinked. Some would argue consumerism is the ‘new religion’.

In the Panel’s conversations with communities and young people, the desire to own goods which give the owner high status (such as branded trainers and digital gadgets) was seen as an important factor behind the riots. In addition, the idea of ‘saving up’ for something has been replaced by the idea that we should have what we want when we want. Levels of personal debt are in part a scary testimony to this. When asked why he rioted, one rioter responded simply ‘greed’.

In our conversations both with rioters and with young people who did not riot, it was clear that brands and appliances are strongly associated with their sense of identity and status. In these riots certain brands and products were repeatedly targeted.

The anger and violence of the riots was mostly directed not towards police, homes or onlookers but towards retail and the high street. In particular, certain brands and products were repeatedly targeted. These included JD Sports, Footlocker, designer wear and mobile and electrical products.

As CCTV footage unfolded, images of rioters trying on trainers and carrying flat screen TVs and iPads frequently appeared. The ownership of luxury branded goods confers instant status. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that these goods became the rioters’ main objectives.

This is not unique to young people or those who live in deprived areas. We all know that social standing in society is strongly calibrated by ownership of certain goods and brands – from luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton and Mercedes cars to Nike trainers or Diesel jeans.

Deprivation can be looked at in a variety of ways, but it is important to remember that it is relative – people understand their value not in relation to their next door neighbour but to those who are at the top of the pyramid.

As one rioter tweeted in response to the question ‘Why?’ – ‘Because we are worth it’.

It is important to clarify that we are not in any way condoning this behaviour, it is wrong to steal, nor do we blame the brands for what happened. Rather, we are considering all the features which made these riots so extraordinary, in order to help prevent events like these from happening again.

Increasingly, the private sector, led by business leaders such as Sir William Castell, the Chairman of the Wellcome Trust, has been looking at the role of business as a response to the riots. With other companies, he has helped establish a fund to support small businesses which suffered during the riots.

Businesses and brands do not operate in a moral vacuum where right and wrong do not apply. We want to explore how ethical thinking influences the way business operates, especially given the challenging economic times we are now experiencing.

Brands have a special relationship with their customer and the Panel is keen to explore how brands could use their powerful influence positively for the good of the community.

'The usual suspects'

Many communities felt that the current system to help individuals turn themselves around didn't work. This could have a devastating local effect; there were simply too many people leading destructive lives within these areas.

Communities felt that rioters needed to be punished, but they also recognised that these people, primarily young men, had been punished many times before and it had not changed their behaviour. The average riot offender has committed 11 previous crimes. As the Panel were told, 'You can't punish someone back into society'.

People also talked about persistent low level crime and anti-social behaviour that was not being dealt with – shopkeepers told us that they face constant theft which they no longer report. We were told that support for people to turn their lives around, especially for those who had committed serial low level offences, was either non-existent or inadequate, especially for some young adults moving from the youth to the adult justice system.

The problems faced by many of these people are complex. They have often faced very difficult childhoods. Many are unhappy with their lives, but don't know how to turn them around. Some organisations, including those that involve local communities in their work, show significantly lower reoffending rates by bringing people back into society.

'The police are the public and the public are the police'

It is not surprising that police and policing has featured throughout our meetings and in the evidence presented to the panel.

At the outset it is important to explain and clarify our remit. The panel has not been established to address the tactical decisions made by police forces across the country; these will necessarily be the subject of other investigations. In particular the MPS has a major internal review underway.

Our role is to understand the extent to which perceptions of policing acted as an accelerator of disorder, the experience of policing by victims and communities, in riot areas and lessons for the future.

It is fair to say for the police, the summer riots will totally change the policing of public disorder for the foreseeable future. The HMIC will be making recommendations in a report to be shortly published.

In our analysis the images of police being seen to 'back off' in Tottenham and their rapid circulation across social media and broadcast news services conveyed a loss of control of the streets. This combined with a febrile rumour environment created an unprecedented explosive cocktail.

'The streets were there for the taking.'

It began to build a perception (and ultimate reality) that the street was no longer defended or defensible once resources were split. Second, the ability of social media to act as a platform for mobs to regroup and move at fast speed across the cities in ways which in effect outpaced traditional policing.

Third by the creation of endless rumour which has its own 'credibility' in the viral space, making emergency services decisions and police deployment extremely challenging.

The need for effective communication and a greater use of social media to challenge rumour and to inform the public is a major area for the MPS and other police authorities to consider in their internal reviews.

One of the complex issues to emerge is whilst there may well have been good tactical reasons for the policing decisions made initially at Tottenham. The perception of retreat acted as a call to arms throughout the country. In talking with local commanders in London and across the country all believed that the 'contagion' would not have spread if Tottenham had been contained.

The thin blue line evaporated. In effect the policing of perceptions may well have to play a role in the future. This raises complex questions for police authorities but it is crucial.

In the Panel's meetings with victims and communities there has been a significant theme of abandonment.

For many the absence of police on the streets was deeply shocking.

We heard from individuals who were trapped in their homes, calling the police services to inform them of criminal activity, of rioters throwing petrol bombs, of widespread disorder and the police service unable to respond and as one resident told us as her door was being kicked in 'the police said they were sorry but they had no one to send'.

The relationship between the police and the public, the DNA of British policing is built on confidence and consent. The August riots seriously challenged this consensus.

The panel would also wish to state that there were acts of outstanding bravery by police officers and ultimately order was restored by national support with police from around the country and Scotland sending resources to London.

There are discussions underway on the future governance and structure of leadership across the police service. This is a major debate and one which the Panel can only make a limited contribution.

The one point we would wish to stress is the requirement for the country to have a police service where in high stress situations major strategic decisions on deployment of resources can be made through a clear and simple command structure. Any reorganisation should pay real attention to how this can best be served.

Finally there will be reviews in the police on levels of force to be used. Again these are tactical matters but proportionality has been at the heart of the policing relationship with the public.

More widely, the panel were disturbed to find that a significant number of people in some communities are sceptical or even hostile to the Police.

'When I was young, I was told "If you're in trouble, go to your family, not the police" I now might need to tell my own child the same thing.'

Many people believe the police have significant work to do to rebuild trust and genuine cooperation.

Yet the Panel have also seen good examples where communities and the police – have built up strong relations, even around stop and search. One police force talked with some pride about the fact that some local groups had deliberately avoided getting involved in the disturbances because 'they felt they would be letting us down'.

We have been told by a number of officers that they feel there has been a breakdown in one of the founding police principles: 'the police are the public and the public are the police'. In some communities, the police are no longer seen as members of the public who work full-time on duties which are also the responsibility of every citizen.

'In some communities, the police are no longer viewed as they once were.'

CONTACT DETAILS

If you were affected by the riots and have a view on the themes raised in this report we want to hear from you, so please get in touch.

You can submit a detailed response or just one or two lines. It is all important.

There are several different ways to have your voice heard.

You can:

- respond via the online form linked to this report at www.5daysinaugust.co.uk
- email your views to riotspanel@communities.gsi.gov.uk
- follow us on Twitter - @riotspanel
- write to the Panel at:
Riots Panel
6th floor
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

If you are writing or emailing us please include your age and where you live. This will help us to see how views vary across different groups and areas.

We expect to receive evidence from organisations too, for example faith groups, businesses, charities and community groups, who will all wish to take views from their members and communities.

Deadline for submitting evidence

The deadline for submitting evidence to be included in the final report is 1 February 2012.

Personal information

By providing personal information to the Riots Communities and Victims Panel it is understood that you consent to its disclosure and publication. If this is not the case, you should limit any personal information provided, or remove it completely.

If you want the information you provide, or any part of it, to be kept confidential, you should explain why as part of your response. However, we cannot guarantee confidentiality as all information contained in your response may be subject to publication or disclosure if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Nor can we give assurance that any disclosure you make which could implicate you in any criminal activity will not be disclosed in the event of criminal proceedings being brought against you in relation to that activity.

APPENDIX A

Panel Visits

On each visit to areas affected by the riots the Panel spent as full a day as possible visiting and speaking to a wide range of people including:

- affected businesses;
- affected residents and community representatives;
- the voluntary and community sector and faith groups;
- council leaders;
- chief executives;
- other relevant council officials involved during the riots; and
- senior police officers.

A number of the visits included open public meetings in the evening.

The areas the Panel have visited so far:

Name	Date
Ealing	Tuesday 13 September
Manchester	Monday 19 September
Tottenham	Thursday 22 September
Westminster	Thursday 26 September
Barnet	Tuesday 27 September
Barking	Thursday 29 September
Salford	Tuesday 4 October
Wolverhampton	Wednesday 5 October
Lewisham	Tuesday 11 October
Brixton	Wednesday 12 October
Greenwich	Friday 14 October
Ealing - open public meeting	Monday 17 October
Croydon	Monday 17 October
Camden	Tuesday 18 October
Croydon - open public meeting	Tuesday 18 October
Harrow	Wednesday 19 October
Bradford	Thursday 20 October
Sheffield	Friday 21 October
Birmingham - open public meeting	Monday 31 October
Enfield - open public meeting	Wednesday 2 November
Tottenham - open public meeting	Thursday 3 November
Peckham	Monday 14 November
Hackney	Monday 14 November
Hackney	Wednesday 16 November
Wandsworth	Wednesday 23 November

APPENDIX B



Darra Singh OBE

Darra Singh was, until the end of September 2011, Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus and the Department for Work and Pensions' second Permanent Secretary since November 2009. Before joining the Department, Darra was the Chief Executive of Ealing Council for four years and, prior to that, the Chief Executive of Luton Council.

Darra started his career in 1984 as a volunteer and housing case worker in Tyneside before moving to London to work for The Single Homelessness charity and as a Senior Policy Officer for the London Housing Unit. He became a Regional Director of the North British Housing Association in 1991, and later Chief Executive of the ASRA Greater London Housing Association. He has also been the Northern Region Director for the Audit Commission.

In 2006, Darra was appointed the Chair of the Commission for Integration and Cohesion which published its report, 'Our Shared Future', the following year. He was appointed Chair of the London Serious Youth Violence Board in 2009.



Simon Marcus

Simon founded the Boxing Academy in 2006. This is a full-time alternative education project for teenagers at risk of gang crime and social exclusion with sites in both Tottenham and Hackney. He also acts as an advisor to other alternative education projects. Before this Simon worked for the British Chamber of Commerce in Brussels and has been involved in small business management and investment in both the publishing and leisure sectors.

About the Panel

The Panel members are:

- Darra Singh OBE;
- Simon Marcus;
- Heather Rabbatts CBE; and
- Baroness Maeve Sherlock OBE.



Heather Rabbatts CBE

Heather Rabbatts has a singular biography ranging across law, Government, sport and media. Beginning her career as a Barrister at Law she then moved to become a government advisor, a senior executive in public services and the youngest CEO in the UK. During this time she began an on-screen media career as a social commentator and then moved behind the scenes. She became a governor of the BBC followed by an appointment as a senior executive at Channel 4, commissioning programmes across genres and developing a range of talent development initiatives.

She then became Chairman of Shed Media, a publicly-listed media production and distribution company, recently bought by Time Warner.

Heather is currently advising a number of UK production companies, is a non-executive for Arts Alliance (a major film/digital investment fund) and sits on the Board of the Royal Opera House.



Baroness Maeve Sherlock OBE

Maeve Sherlock was made a life peer in 2010 and focuses her work mainly on issues affecting families with children, particularly health and welfare. Maeve has spent much of her working life in the voluntary sector including heading up the Refugee Council and the National Council for One Parent Families. Maeve also spent three years in the Treasury advising ministers on families with children, poverty and employment issues. She has served on various boards and chaired an Advisory Panel on the role of the Third Sector in Economic and Social Regeneration. She is the Chair of Chapel St, a social enterprise working for change in under-resourced areas. Maeve is also doing research on faith schools for her PhD at Durham University.

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