



CCTV and Concierge Service Annual Report 2024-2025

**Working collaboratively to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Sandwell.
Keeping Sandwell safe by being the 'Eyes and Ears' of the community –
providing reassurance, monitoring, response and evidence.**

Sandwell Council's CCTV control room provides CCTV and Concierge services to the residents of Sandwell, this report captures some of the teams' outcomes and results.



The CCTV control room is expected to comply with all relevant legislation. To offer assurances to our customers, Sandwell Council continues to comply with an accreditation scheme run by the National Security Inspectorate [NSI]. The NSI can accredit CCTV control rooms against the requirements of the Protection of Freedoms Act and the Biometrics and Surveillance Commissioner's Code of Practice – a key regulator in relation to CCTV systems. Sandwell Council (hereafter referred to as SMBC) continues to meet these requirements.

The Commissioner states that the scheme enables organisations to demonstrate that the systems they operate comply with the provisions of the Commissioners Code of Practice. The commissioner further states that by successfully engaging with the certification scheme, an organisation, and more importantly the public, may be reassured that surveillance camera systems which intrude upon their privacy are being demonstrably operated ethically and legitimately to an appropriate standard.

More information about how SMBC's CCTV control room is operated and the standards it works to is detailed in a Code of Practice that can be found on the SMBC website and should be read in conjunction with this output report.

Introduction

This report highlights the work the CCTV and Concierge team do which contributes to keeping Sandwell residents safe. Staff have continued to deliver excellent services to some of our most vulnerable customers, having helped to reassure and comfort tenants that receive Concierge services whilst continuing to work with partners offering CCTV evidence in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour.

SMBC's CCTV operators deliver services to Sandwell residents, partners and colleagues as a vital community safety resource. A team of 27 control room staff work around the clock 24 hours a day to ensure services are delivered in an efficient and effective manner.



Control room staff monitor over 570 cameras across the Borough covering 27 high-rise blocks of flats, Bearwood High Street, Princes End High Street, West Bromwich and Wednesbury town centres, Friar Park and Yew Tree shopping precinct.

The service is also responsible for monitoring the SMBC's deployable camera stock. These cameras can be located across the Borough to help reduce ASB, crime and environmental crime in identified hotspots.

This financial year the team have monitored and responded to 7124 incidents of crime, ASB and tenancy breaches and a further 1734 tenant queries, which include requests for SMBC services such as repairs. 4876 [55%] of incidents were proactively captured by CCTV Operators with the remaining being reported to us by tenants and partners.

Staff work with a wide range of partners including West Midlands Police, Community Safety colleagues, Anti-Social Behaviour Officers, Tenancy Management staff, Taxi Licencing, Environmental Health and other teams such as caretaking and cleaning services, counter fraud teams and SMBC's Environmental Protection Team.



CCTV monitoring

Where possible Control Room Operators will resolve incidents at the time they are monitored by carrying out a series of actions. Such actions may include issuing warnings and/or advice as appropriate via tenant's intercoms; reporting litter, rubbish and dumped household items for removal; passing information onto police colleagues for response or intelligence or to environmental protection officers and other partner agencies to support the CCTV services with pro-active patrols where appropriate.

Incidents are also passed on to SMBC teams and partners for further appropriate action. Information can be passed on for intelligence-gathering purposes and control room staff play a key role in several multi-agency groups that make full use of the information gathered so issues can be identified and dealt with appropriately.

Within the Control Room, several types of incidents are monitored including reports of vandalism; vehicle nuisance; drugs; alcohol-related issues; violence; misuse of communal areas in high-rise blocks; litter and fly-tipping; animal nuisance and noise.

More serious incidents are also monitored and CCTV of evidential quality has been provided to West Midlands Police in relation to crimes such as assault, weapons offences, robbery, murder, drug dealing, sexual assault, firearms offences and burglary on over 250 occasions.

Information provided by the Control Room has been used to carry out arrests and secure convictions, tenancy warnings have been issued and ASB enforcement action undertaken. Control Room interventions have also helped put fraudulently used SMBC properties back into proper use, ensuring they are available to offer those in housing need. Staff have also reported domestic abuse and worked with teams to safeguard vulnerable tenants as well as being on hand to offer advice and reassurance to tenants through the Concierge Service.

Concierge services

The Control Room offers intercom and concierge services to over half of SMBC's high-rise tenants. Intercoms located on the front door panel of blocks allow Operators to control access whilst handsets in the tenant's flats allow them to have 24-hour contact with our Concierge service that they can use to report a range of issues.



The team oversee the physical security of SMBC's high-rise and low-rise blocks. Contracts are in place to maintain door entry systems covering over 350 low-rise blocks as well as 54 high-rise blocks of flats. The Control Room team will process requests for maintenance, repairs and servicing of the door entry systems as required.

Operators will contact tenants to issue warnings about their behaviour where appropriate and intercoms are also used to make reassurance calls to tenants or to contact them to advise them that an issue they have reported has been dealt with.

Access systems have the facility to put blocks on 'control' allowing door entry calls to be re-routed through to the Control Room, this means nuisance callers can't disturb tenants during quieter hours.

With the tenant's permission, systems can be enabled where operators can take control of tenant's calls when they have been identified as being vulnerable and needing additional help in terms of vetting calls to them where they otherwise may be coerced or bullied into letting undesirable visitors into the blocks.

This year control room operators have dealt with 153,992 intercom calls from the Control Room. This figure includes over 27,500 calls that were made or received directly to or from tenant's flats.

New schemes and technology updates

Technology continues to move forward and while the Control Room is in its 14th year, regular maintenance programmes have ensured systems have remained in working order. Significant upgrades have been carried out recently to ensure that the infrastructure remains up to date and fit for purpose as well as being future proofed. This work has seen networks, hardware, software and recording systems renewed which will allow the Control Room to continue to provide and expand its services.



SMBC currently provides a CCTV and Concierge service to half of the high-rise blocks [27 of 54]. SMBC has listened to requests from residents residing in the blocks without this service and following completion of the Control Room upgrade there are plans to expand this provision to all high-rise customers.

Work is now underway to select a suitable contractor that can deliver CCTV installations and door entry upgrades to high-rise blocks not receiving these services currently. Customers have been consulted and work will soon commence which will ensure that all SMBC high-rise residents receive a CCTV and Concierge service. Tenants and residents will be updated as this work progresses.

The Control Room has expanded in other areas too. Having procured and commissioned the installation of 12 new cameras in Bearwood High Street in 2023 further funding has also been made available to SMBC through the Government's Levelling Up Fund that has seen several improvements to public safety through a range of initiatives, including enhanced CCTV provision in Wednesbury town centre and Friar Park.

These schemes, installed in summer 2024 have already yielded results and have provided CCTV evidence that has helped deter crime and anti-social behaviour. Businesses, the public and partners continue to comment positively on the impact of the improved CCTV schemes.

This year SMBC will be looking to invest further in CCTV technology with an upgrade planned for the West Bromwich town centre CCTV scheme as well as upgrades to the

deployable camera stock where old cameras and outdated infrastructure will be updated to new state of the art systems.

Information sharing and compliance.

Control Room staff continue to play a key part in local tasking groups to ensure that information that has been collated is used to forecast patterns and trends that will help improve operator responses to identified issues. The current partnership approach is being used to inform the tasking of Control Room Operators and cameras.

SMBC also continues to develop and train staff so excellent services can continue to be provided. Ongoing reviews of operating procedures, Control Room performance and outcomes are carried out regularly and continuous improvements made by way of training and staff development.

SMBC's commitment to compliance with all relevant CCTV legislation continues. This includes the Data Protection Act, the General Data Protection Regulations, the Human Rights Act and the Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act. The Control Room also remains accredited by the National Security Inspectorate which has confirmed compliance with the Protection of Freedoms Act and the Biometrics and Surveillance Commissioners Code of Practice.

Work has been completed and is regularly reviewed to evidence that all CCTV systems owned and operated by SMBC staff meet these requirements. This includes CCTV not monitored in the Control Room but managed locally in offices and other locations where the public may attend. SMBC's Surveillance Governance group ensures that all CCTV systems are operating to the same standards.

SMBC continues to utilise its deployable camera stock in response to identified problems. A process is already in place that recognises locations that require further support from the CCTV team and its partners, and these locations are identified through town tasking as anti-social behaviour and crime hot spots which would benefit from deployable camera provisions to tackle these concerns and environmental crime such as fly-tipping.

In short, the Control Room is delivering a proactive service alongside colleagues and partners. Control Room Operators continually monitor SMBC CCTV cameras and are available to residents through the concierge service where this is currently provided 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Further information about our services and outcomes can also be found at the following webpage:

www.sandwell.gov.uk/cctv

Examples of the CCTV Control Room outputs can also be found on the following pages.

Sandwell Council's CCTV Control Room 2024-25 – A Selection of Outcomes

- Control Room staff continue to be excellent at the basics and turn out some commendable outputs, this is shown in the year-to-date figures showing a total of nearly 9000 instances of crime, antisocial behaviour, breaches of tenancy and requests for assistance from tenants being captured and dealt with by control room staff.
- There have been a range of responses to these incidents such as warnings being issued via intercoms, rubbish and fly tipping reported for removal, EPO's and emergency services have been called on to respond to some of the more serious issues.
- The team have passed on information and evidence to police, colleagues and partners on a daily basis - continuing to be a key player in Town Tasking and other partnership meetings, passing on and using information to ensure best use of services.
- As well as day to day interaction with police colleagues, CCTV images of evidential quality to be used in relation to criminal investigations have been released on 259 occasions.
- The service is a lifeline to some residents who make regular use of the 24-hour Concierge service. Calls have continued to be received from vulnerable tenants seeking assistance. Assistance has been provided with several safeguarding incidents that has seen extremely vulnerable people removed from their perpetrators and made safe.
- Staff will make regular welfare calls to vulnerable tenants to check on their well-being. Operators have also assisted colleagues by making intercom calls to flats where tenants have been uncontactable and have helped arrange gas visits, welfare visits and repairs access for other SMBC departments.
- Interventions using deployable cameras in areas flagged as hotspots for crime or anti-social behaviour has seen incident rates decrease. Staff have used deployable camera stock to monitor hot spots and respond to incidents including street drug dealing, vehicle nuisance, youth violence, anti-social behaviour and firearms incidents.
- Sandwell Council's Cabinet and Chief Executive team visited the CCTV Control Room at Roway Lane recently. Members were briefed on the services provided and were given an insight into the partnership work the team is responsible for. Praise was passed on for what was described as an excellent visit with Cabinet Members and the senior management team commenting on what an invaluable and well-run service that was being offered to tenants and residents.

- The team continue to offer public assistance in relation to CCTV queries and requests. Regular calls are received from people seeking assistance in retrieving CCTV evidence for a range of reasons. Where appropriate and following recognised procedures, the team have assisted in dozens of these requests.
- Control Room staff have assisted the Environmental Protection Team in identifying incidents of fly-tipping across the Borough, resulting in £400 of fines being issued to perpetrators. The Control Room team have also passed on footage about dog fouling to support breaches of the SMBC's Public Space Protection Order. There was a positive outcome where a large-scale fly-tip was monitored and the vehicle was identified. The owner of the vehicle is due to be interviewed under caution in relation to this matter.
- Control Room Operators have also worked with the police Locate Team and have used CCTV cameras to assist in searching for missing persons.
- CCTV Control Room staff continue to provide a joined-up response to crime in the town centres. CCTV evidence is provided on a regular basis in a continued response to crime in town centres. Police colleagues have stated on several occasions how valued the service is and how helpful Control Room Operators are when they have alerted police to incidents on our High Streets that they were then able to disrupt.
- Operators have assisted police with 'action days' across the Borough where CCTV has been used to compliment police activities on the ground. This has resulted in drugs being removed from the streets, knives being found and confiscated as well as arrests being made for a range of crimes.
- Police colleagues passed on their thanks and praised the team after some excellent camera work captured images of individuals responsible for a large-scale public disorder. Police retrieved the footage from the CCTV team and were very complimentary about the work operators had done and how helpful operators were when reviewing and preparing the footage for release.
- The team are making good use of new and upgraded CCTV cameras in Wednesbury and Friar Park. These cameras, installed as part of the Governments Levelling Up programme, have been key in responding to crime and anti-social behaviour across Wednesbury.
- The CCTV control room is now working even closer with Wednesbury town centre traders utilising a newly installed radio system that allows real time dialogue with partners. Early reports are positive and arrests have already been made on the back of information shared across the radio that has allowed CCTV operators to identify perpetrators of retail crime and direct police colleagues to them. A Wednesbury Police Sargeant and a local Councillor acknowledged that Sandwell CCTV had been key in demonstrating some excellent partnership working.

- Footage was captured by Sandwell Council cameras showing individuals breaking into properties. The footage captured by Control Room Operators was shared with police colleagues who later arrested two individuals who are suspected of being responsible for a spate of burglaries and a metal theft in a town centre. Police colleagues confirmed that they arrested two people who were both charged and remanded to appear in court. Thanks were passed on to the CCTV team with police colleagues praising the team for a great result.
- Further incidents in the town centres have seen a possession of knife incident reported to police with two youths who were involved arrested and a knife recovered. Police officers dealing with this incident thanked the Control Room for work carried out and stated this was "another smashing result for Wednesbury"
- Other feedback from police colleagues also confirmed 4 people were arrested for possession with intent to supply Class C nitrous oxide after being provided with CCTV evidence.
- Thanks have been received from Police in relation to ongoing operations in various locations across the borough. One officer stating, "I'll just start by saying thank you to the CCTV Control Room for their warm welcome, time and help with yesterday's Operation, again it shows how good partnership working can get good results".
- Positive feedback was received from a Police Inspector regarding the recent radio rollout in Wednesbury Town Centre. Following a robbery at a Wednesbury store, using the radio link staff were able to directly contact the CCTV room who were then able to track the offenders and advise police of their location. Police were very quickly in attendance and arrests were made with suspects placed in custody with charges to follow.
- Police were assisted after receiving a call via a town radio advising a taxi driver had been threatened with a pistol. CCTV operators followed a suspect on camera and alerted police to their whereabouts, and an arrest was made. CCTV operators had again led police to a suspect following information being passed to us over the radio system.
- The CCTV Control Room continues to tackle nuisance being caused at some high-rise blocks where rough sleepers are misusing communal areas. Through captured images, individuals are identified and partnership work takes place to ensure the relevant support is put in place to support rough sleepers and eliminate the misuse of these communal areas.
- On a flatted estate in Oldbury, CCTV provided to police allowed the identification of 3 offenders who had caused considerable damage to several cars outside a high-rise blocks.
- The team have supported the Boroughwide Nuisance Bikes Action Plan with breach of tenancy action taken after CCTV footage was shared with

colleagues in the Anti-social Behaviour Team showing bikes being ridden in a dangerous and anti-social manner.

- CCTV footage has been used to bring together prosecutions under Operation Hercules – the police and Council response to car cruising and street racing. CCTV evidence also helped SMBC in being successful in renewing the cross-council car cruising injunction.
- Positive comments and feedback have also been received from colleagues in the Counter Fraud Team for assistance provided in relation to investigations into subletting, right to buy fraud and abuse of the single person rent discount. The information provided has been vital in helping to prove a complicated series of frauds that had been committed against SMBC resulting in convictions and savings.
- On another camera scheme, several individuals were observed behaving suspiciously and after some good camera work by Control Room staff. Police colleagues were alerted and arrests were made as a result of this partnership working, that has seen individuals charged with a spate of thefts and robberies.
- Police colleagues passed on their thanks to the CCTV team in relation to the above, with one of the arresting officers stating the following. “I would like to express my thanks to your CCTV Control Room who were instrumental in apprehending these offenders who have been committing some violent and nasty robberies across the borough of Sandwell. Without them and their help I have no doubt they would still be out committing these offences, so please pass on my thanks”.
- Dedicated staff are not just on duty while they are at work either. During the commute home a Control Room Operator spotted a disruption in one of the town centres and alerted colleagues back at the control room, again information shared with police helped stem a disorder that was occurring.
- Transport for West Midlands staff have also commented positively on the support we are able to give their staff via radio and CCTV support. Staff commenting that they “feel a huge sense of relief just knowing the CCTV Control Room staff are there when they are lone working” and that they are “delighted to be working in partnership with you”

These are just a few examples of the work carried out by the CCTV Control Room Team, that demonstrates the impact and contribution made to enhancing community safety.

Further details of control room outputs during the year follow:

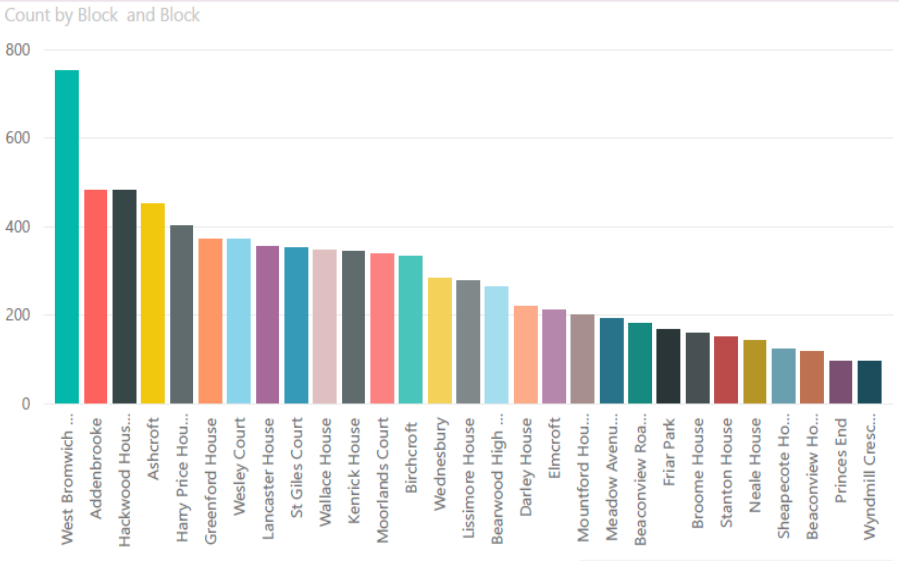
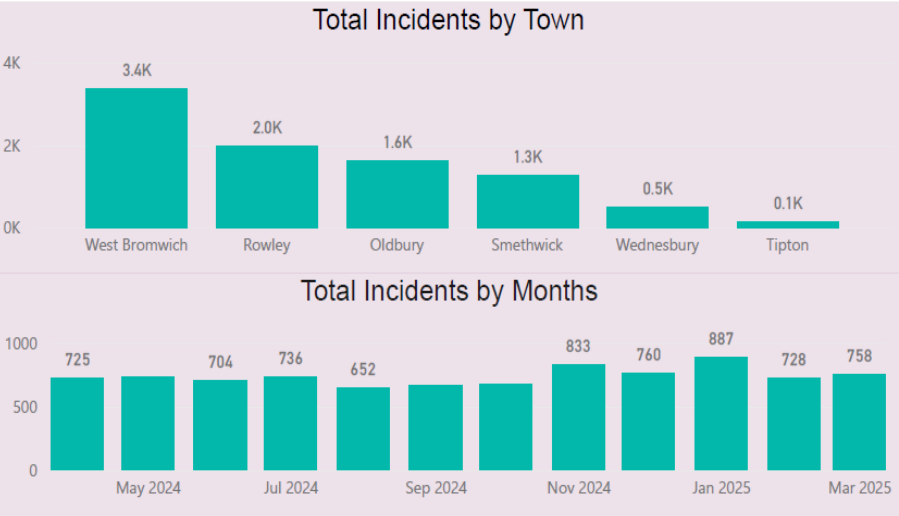
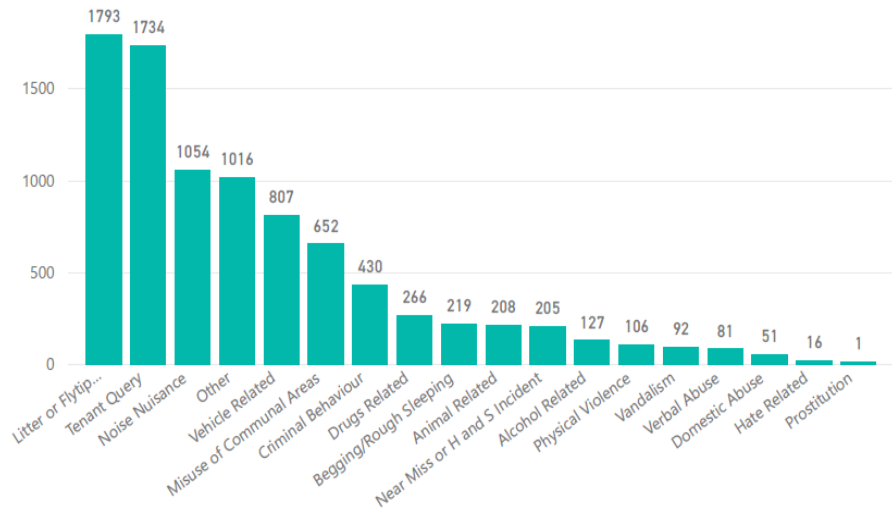
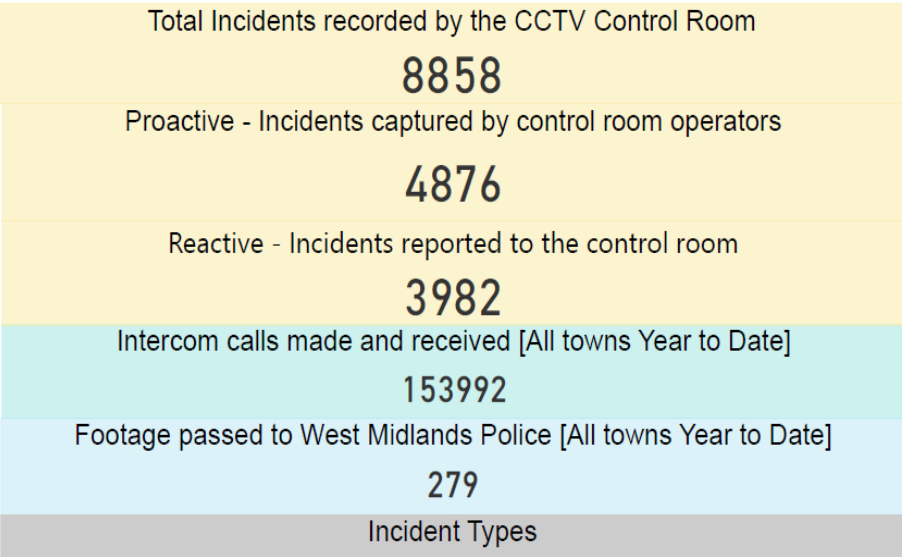


CCTV & Concierge Service All Sites Outputs 2024/25

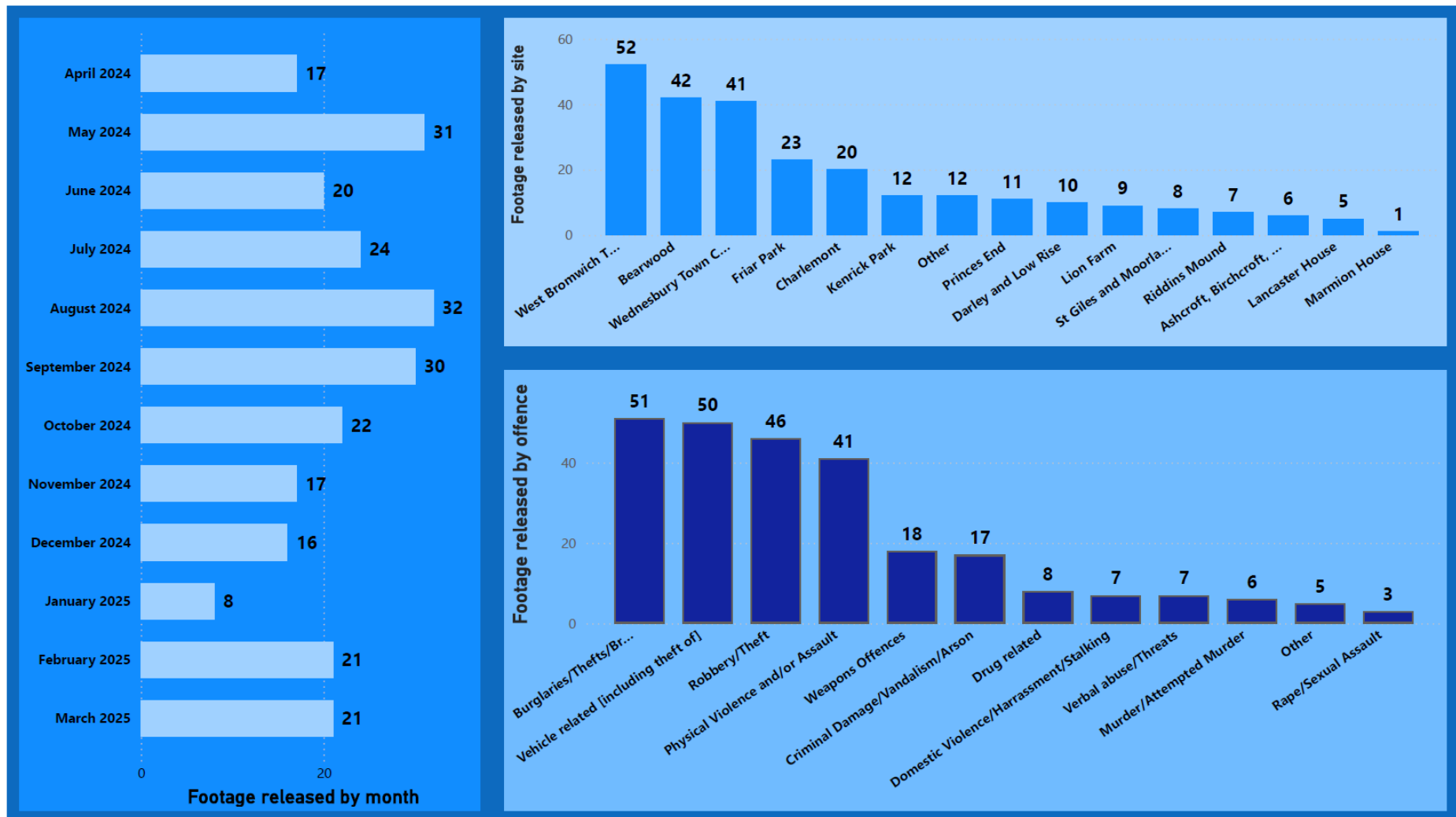
'Working collaboratively to reduce crime and ASB in Sandwell. Keeping Sandwell safe by being the 'Eyes & Ears' of the community – providing reassurance, monitoring, response and evidence'.



Summary

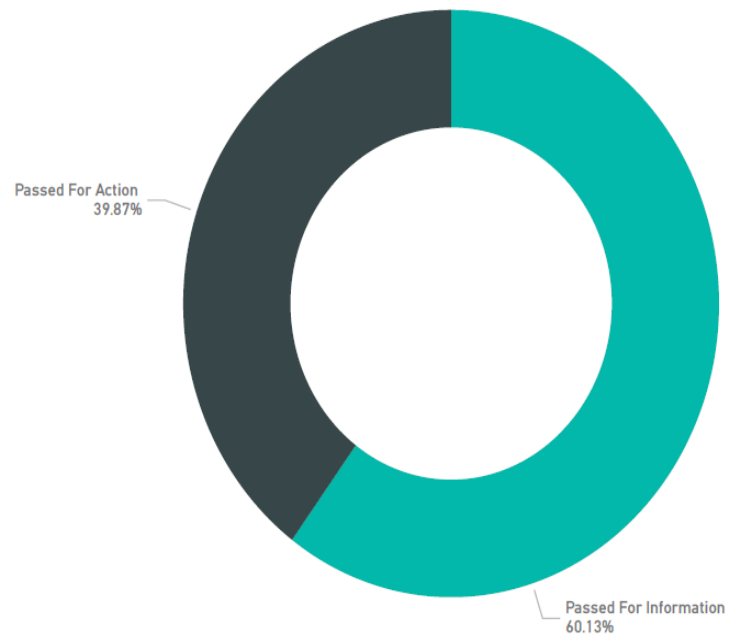


CCTV footage shared with West Midlands Police

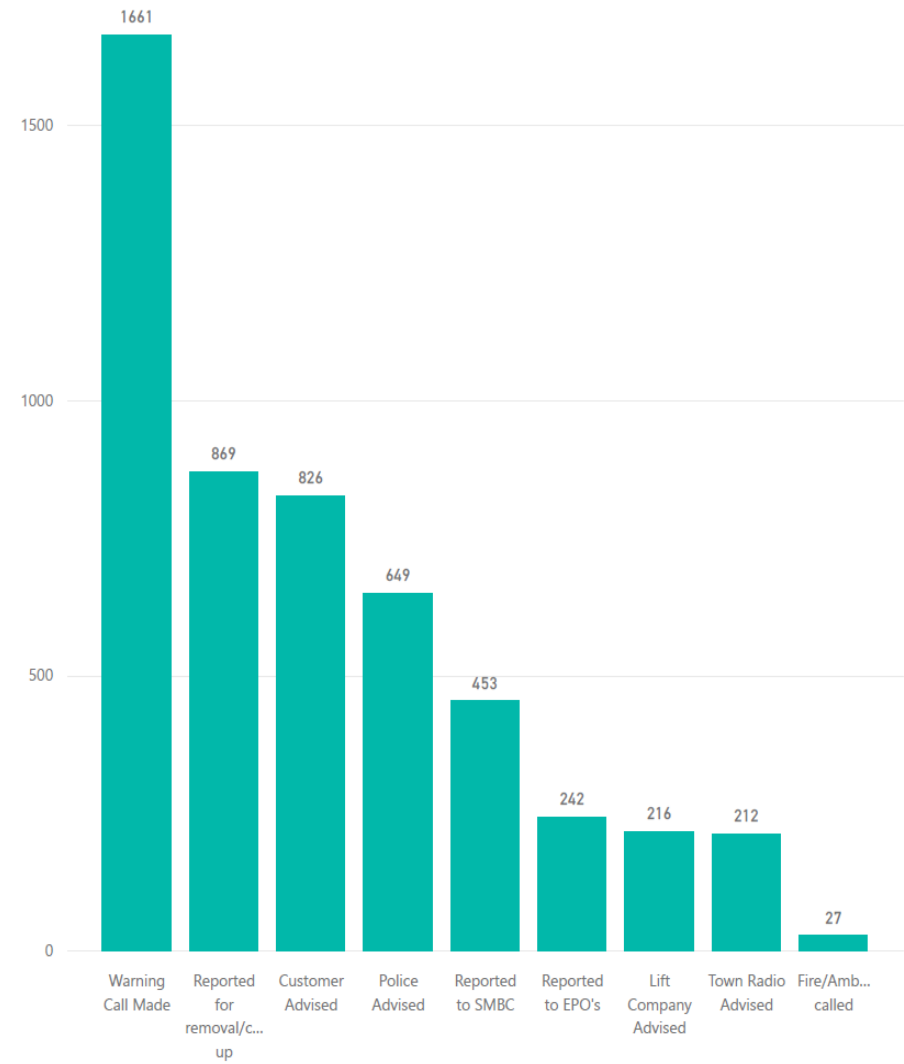


Control Room Responses

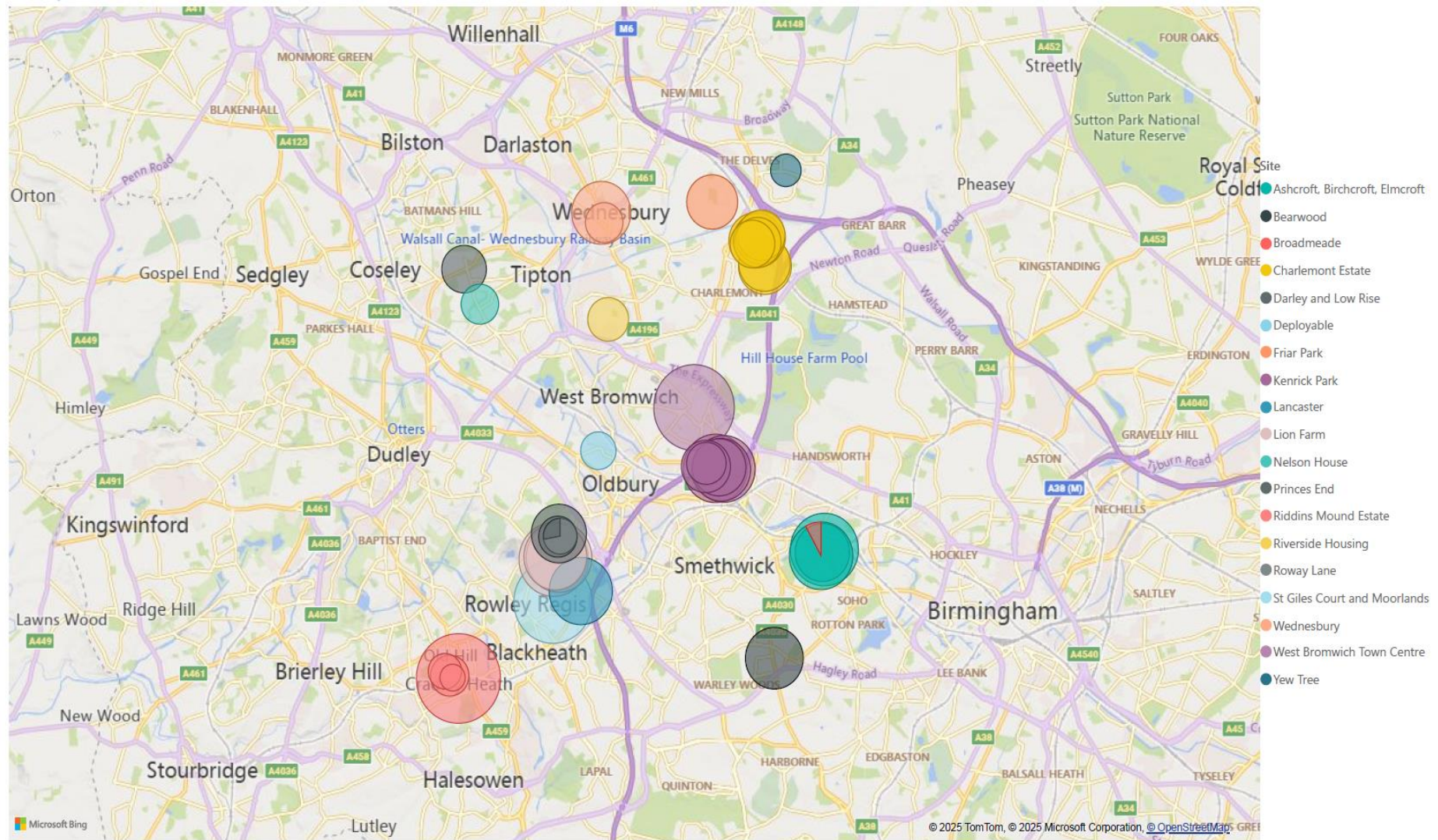
Incident Status



Response Type



Mapping Detail



Contact Details in relation to this document

CCTV Control Room Manager - 0121 368 1166

www.sandwell.gov.uk/cctv

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