

Business Impact Statements relating to Durham City PSPO consultation 2024 (redacted)

Area	Impact Statement
North Road	<p>I would like to address the problems we are having on North Road with Street Drinkers and Homeless.</p> <p>Customers are not wanting to walk around the street due to there's people fighting a lot and asking for money.</p> <p>We get some sitting in bus stops outside drinking cans and giving abuse to customers in my premises. This is causing an impact on my business.</p>
North Road	<p>I am sorry to bother you, but I am hoping you may be the person to assist me with an ongoing problem I have. I bought a property in Reform Place just off North Road Durham. The property itself needed significant refurbishment and I have spent the last few months, as well as several thousands of pounds, to bring the building back to a fit and proper state to hopefully improve and sit amongst the other properties in the courtyard.</p> <p>For about the last 6 weeks there have been problems almost every evening with rough sleepers outside my property. Because the entrance door to my property is effectively hidden around a corner due to the angle of the walling, they can congregate unseen. This has meant that every morning I am faced with significant amounts of rubbish and discarded alcohol bottles and cans. As frustrating as this is though the issue has worsened recently.</p> <p>I am now faced on an almost daily basis with human excrement and waste every morning, most often literally directly on my doorstep. I initially reported it to the council who said they would pass the details on to the rough sleeping team but could not help beyond that. I subsequently reported it to the neighbourhood warden who was extremely helpful and giving of both his time and advice. Unfortunately, however the problem remains. I am aware of who the culprit is, and he is a large threatening looking person. Although I have requested him to move on numerous occasions, I am</p>

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	<p>somewhat concerned for the safety of both me and my daughter to challenge him further.</p> <p>Again this morning I have gone into work with my daughter and again I have been faced with the same issue. Today out of desperation I went to the police to try and report what I believe to be a criminal offence. I am now at my wits end as to what else I can do to prevent this daily occurrence from happening. I am also disappointed that the council are not concerned with the fact that there his human waste just sitting in the street every day.</p> <p>I have bought two properties to try and invest in the community and to try and make my part in keeping the area to be as wonderful as it can be but the issue of the rough sleepers and the effect it is having on the community really concerns me.</p>
North Road	<p>The impact stock loss through theft from our store had a massive impact on staff morale and ultimately staffing levels. Any stock loss is claimed back from our store budget so the staff who rely on overtime can't get as much.</p> <p>Staff morale is affected as we feel we're not doing our job properly every time there's a theft. The extra time it takes us to log all incidents is time taken away from our job role.</p>
North Road	<p>I regularly witness Antisocial behaviour incidents throughout Durham, particularly on North Road. The most common occurrences happen during the daytime outside of North Road off license supermarkets with perceived 'rough sleepers' or obviously underage drinkers.</p> <p>Today I have been working on site and must have walked up and down North Road approximately 5 times. Every single time (the first being 9:30am) there have been the 'rough sleepers' sat drinking cheap cans of alcohol on the bench outside Sainsburys. At 9:30am there was a loud verbal disagreement between around 5 of them. They were still there (approximately 15) at 3pm this afternoon and I personally witnessed 1 by 1 the group going in</p>

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	<p>to try to steal alcohol, with no security on, their staff were trying their best to stop it, but they were often unsuccessful. No less than 15 minutes later I again personally witnessed 1 from the group get spotted by staff steal alcohol but it was too late to catch him after they ran after him.</p> <p>Unfortunately, whilst this is just one day's experience, I could write a statement like this every day of the year.</p> <p>On top of that, we often witness them buying alcohol for blatantly underage children from the same shops, who then go on to cause a huge amount of trouble on the street. The looks of disgust on residents and visitors faces when they witness this behaviour must be putting people off coming into our city, and most definitely into licensed premises on our street as it reflects so badly on the reputation of the area.</p> <p>We regularly turn up to site in the morning and arrive to human faeces on our door step with smashed bottles of vodka, needles, cans and countless other rubbish. Evidence of which is attached).</p> <p>Any support you could provide would be hugely appreciated and we would be happy to support further in any way I can.</p>
North Road	<p>The constant gathering of the same group on the benches outside the front of my shop, drinking and swearing and stirring up trouble is affecting my store, my staff, and customers.</p> <p>The anti-social behaviour is intimidating my staff and, on several occasions, they have been shouted at and verbally abused for refusing to serve alcohol to these individuals. Often fights break out between individuals, racist comments have been heard from certain members. Often customers with young children and older customers are intimidated and sometimes even targeted for abuse, which causes upset and</p>

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	<p>they don't want to shop with us anymore as they just want to get out of the city asap!</p> <p>Officers of Durham Police are abused and swore at if any questions are asked, it has been noted that several of the groups attain alcohol from other stores on North Road usually after me and Sainsbury's next door have refused them. The drinking can often go on most of the trading day and then leads to shoplifting or attempted shoplifting which ties up staffing resources within store which we can't afford. Regular customers who take seat on the bench are chased away by these people.</p>
North Road	<p>I'm writing to inform you of the issues within the city involving the homeless/beggars and how they are affecting our daily trade and our personal life.</p> <p>We have had customers get up and leave our venue saying they don't feel safe being inside the pub whilst they witness what's going on, on north road. This is effectively losing our business money daily. There aren't one day goes by without staff having to ask them to leave our venue which results in the staff being threatened and verbally abused. On many occasions we must ring the police and use the CCTV radio to report issues regarding these people.</p> <p>When staff finish their shift, they are very often scared to leave and go home because of the congregation outside.</p> <p>We have several long-term staff who have worked within the city for over ten years who have never seen it this bad. We know a lot of shops on north road who are losing money from them shoplifting and nothing seems to get done about it.</p> <p>The anti-social behaviour within the city is disgraceful. They're fighting, arguing, swearing, urinating, whilst tourists and families with children are walking past, which results in the families not wanting to come inside our venue and just want to get past them as quickly as they can.</p>
North Road	<p>I would like to let you know how the antisocial behaviour is affecting our business at North Road Durham.</p>

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	<p>We are unable to open our doors due to the shouting, fighting and foul language from the group of people. Some mornings there is people asleep in our doorway.</p> <p>We have also seen a drop in customers, especially on an afternoon, as people are dubious on coming into Durham to be caught up with the drunk gangs outside Sainsburys or CEX. This week for example our customer volume is down by 22%.</p> <p>Previously we had a couple of shoplifters come into the store. We were able to stop one theft but on another occasion a man stole a pair of kid's sunglasses then came back in on the afternoon shouting they didn't fit. There have also been incidents of harassing staff when leaving the store.</p> <p>I hope that something can be sorted out both for customers sake and for our staff.</p>
North Road	<p>The homeless situation within Durham city has affected our business massively in numerous ways, I will list them below. Something must be done for venues to survive; the reality is that tourists do not want to come to a city that has violent crowds of homeless people. They behave in a threatening & intimidating manner. Please see below the list I have compiled of incidents that have directly impacted our business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- in April 2023, we were approached by a neighbourhood warden who had received complaints from residents in nearby South Street who had seen rats & believed it was coming from our property. I showed the same neighbourhood warden the issues which were caused by homeless people who were seeking refuge under the temporary scaffolding, which was covering our rear fire exit. I explained to the neighbourhood warden that we were able to clean up most debris left by the homeless, but some items included used needles & other drug paraphernalia.- property at the front of the building has been damaged numerous times, particularly cigarette bins which have been ripped off the wall for the homeless to have free cigarettes butts. Again, we have replaced these several times now at the expense of the business.

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	<p>- I have staff who work until 1 or 2am on weekends & they do not feel comfortable walking to their cars on Crossgate bank because the homeless are often using drugs in the graveyard. I have had staff who have been pestered on their way home from work by the homeless who have begged for money or alcohol.</p> <p>- I also have customers who are made to feel very uncomfortable when the homeless try to enter the premises and sell their stolen items. Staff are often abused verbally and threatened when they intervene and ask the homeless to leave the venue.</p> <p>- I have also had several incidents of homeless people lying on the pavement outside the front of the business, unconscious from drinking stolen alcohol & passer-by's have called for staff to assist. This not only removes a member of staff from their position, which is often alone through the daytime but it also creates a bad reputation of the business. Passer-by's have often assumed that these homeless people have been drinking in our business all day & passed out on the street in their own vomit. This is not the case.</p>
Crossgate	<p>I own three separate licensed premises in the city all experiencing separate issues with the people that concerns the city at the moment. It's a daily occurrence in the houses at the rear of one of our premises of groups of people going into them taking drugs and doing whatever else. We see the cars pulling up in the street quite regularly dropping off to them. These are the same people getting drunk & drugged up in the streets in Durham causing the issues.</p> <p>The students above our pub got burgled from the same people going in and out of those houses too. We have them on camera all the time stealing furniture in the night, going through ash trays for cigarettes, trying doors on our venue etc. (this has all been passed to the police)</p> <p>Another premises I own is over the road to the last and bares a similar burden to the elm tree of the people passing by in these states which sometimes try to get in the venue which we then must remove or manage away from our premises.</p>

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	<p>The other premises finds slightly less of an issue as it's the other side of town, but we have had some of them trying doors, going into the beer garden on a night, hassling our cleaner on a morning when she's in the venue alone. Just overall making a nuisance of themselves.</p> <p>To summarise the main problem, I'd say is drug and alcohol abuse from these people that aren't from the city, that are either being put up in supported housing or hanging out with the people that are. We have some lovely older residents that live in the supported housing near us then there's a massive divide into the other people that live in that housing that are involved and causing the above.</p> <p>I couldn't even begin to list all the issues of stealing and just overall nuisance from these people as it's just something we've had to start living with due to stretched resources of the force unfortunately so we've had to just start finding ways to manage this ourselves in the best way we can.</p>
Framwellgate Bridge	<p>I would like to express concern regarding the homeless and rough sleepers in the city.</p> <p>As a business owner, we have experienced numerous incidents in which these people have affected us not only emotionally but financially too.</p> <p>One male chose to throw one of our £300 outdoor chairs into the river for no given reason.</p> <p>A group decided to set up camp outside of our staff door, leaving alcohol bottles and drug needles scattered all over the floor.</p> <p>We have numerous members of staff, many being female, that must walk to the carpark under the cinema on a night in the dark alone. To find these people rough sleeping in the car park, with alcohol, drugs, and everything else. This is incredible intimidating and not acceptable when we pay a lot of money to park there every day.</p> <p>Just 3 days ago we had to break up a fight between a customer and one of the homeless group members, after he started to shout abuse</p>

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	<p>at our customer as he was eating his lunch with his wife, this then led to a physical altercation and injury.</p> <p>Durham used to be a lovely, pleasant, bustling place to visit & live, unfortunately now it's full of rowdy youths, homeless groups, and is always full of trouble caused from these people.</p> <p>I really hope something can be done to get these people away from the city. They fear no one, are dangerous, and unpredictable.</p>
North Road	<p>I write to tell you about the impact the homeless are having on our daily lives.</p> <p>I work in the city at a restaurant, in which we must deal with the problems from these people most days. From sitting on our outside seating with bottles of their own alcohol, in which none of us dare approach them to move so it puts customers off coming in, to them sitting right near our restaurant with drugs, alcohol, performing sexual acts on each other, and usually ending up fighting.</p> <p>I also must walk to the car park alone most nights, where they have set up camp near the cars, I regularly see them injecting drugs in broad daylight.</p> <p>We shouldn't feel intimidated or scared walking through the city, especially in daylight, but unfortunately this led you to no other option. They terrify the elderly, rob from stores, and generally cause a nuisance every single day.</p> <p>I hope something can be done to get Durham back to what it used to be.</p>
Market Place	<p>I am writing this to let you know that how much homeless people being in the town centre is affecting businesses and tourism in Durham.</p> <p>On one date, a few homeless people started yelling to each other and swearing without any care for the public who were passing by in Silver Street. I was in the shop at that time, and I could see that many people who walked past were scared to pass in the street as these homeless people were so aggressive. Even after police officers came, they were still swearing</p>

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	<p>and shouting. This wasn't the first time that I've seen them fighting so it wasn't a surprise, but it is surprising and shocking for the people who were walking past.</p> <p>They are sleeping and spending most of their time outside what used to be the Yorkshire Trading Co. but it is now vacant.</p> <p>My business is an easy target for them to steal the food as we are selling pre-made food in the chiller, available for anyone to reach in and collect, before taking it to the till you pay. Sometimes they are watching us, and they wait until our staff are busy dealing with customers before they come inside and grab food from the chiller before leaving the shop. I've had a few experiences of calling police to deal with the homeless people coming from outside Yorkshire Trading regarding shoplifting.</p> <p>These people being in Silver Street like this is affecting lots of other shop's business as they make street atmosphere so dark and intimidating and it makes people just pass by rather than staying to wonder around.</p> <p>Every morning I've had to face a group of homeless people in the marketplace square and their usual spot is in the corner of Yorkshire Trading Co.</p>
Market Place	<p>I write to you regarding the detrimental effects that the current situation has on our business.</p> <p>The issue being the number of homeless/inebriated individuals that congregate around the market place and surrounding areas.</p> <p>The behaviour we have witnessed, has deterred potential customers from our branch. Their behaviour has been seen as aggressive and frightening to customers who have then, not wanted to use our branch.</p> <p>We have found used needles in our doorway, empty bottles etc, around the area. This gives a bad impression to our branch and Durham. We have had small items taken from within branch, such as hand sanitiser, pens etc. we have also had occasions where they are trying to sell us</p>

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	<p>gold, however, due to them being intoxicated, no ID, we have been unable to serve them. This has resulted in them becoming very aggressive, using foul language and very rude/disrespectful. Customers who have been in on these occasions have been scared and did not wish to return.</p> <p>The shouting, fighting, bad language has been atrocious and is very intimidating when they are in groups. As a branch, we do have security precautions in place, however, it is always frightening when opening/closing etc.</p> <p>I strongly agree to any future interventions the police may have as the current situation has vastly reduced our incomings as a business.</p>
Market Place	<p>I would like to send some feedback relating to my store in Durham City and the issues we face with begging to be used in the consultation process.</p> <p>I run a store in the Market Place and have been at this store for 1 year. My store has a high student customer base and equally many visitors to the city, so we see a diverse customer base and shifts in trade patterns. I run a team of 85 colleagues.</p> <p><u>Financial Impacts</u></p> <p>I have had to pay to join Shopwatch this year as my team felt so unsafe and in need of support so wanted fast assistance. Whilst this has been beneficial it is an additional cost to my business. I see an average of £250 in alcohol thefts each week alone - only relating to beggars. A weekly total theft of £600.</p> <p>I have requested additional security from Amberstone our Security Guard team.</p> <p>Again, this is not budgeted for in my expenses. I have ordered additional headsets and Bodycams for the team to wear to protect their safety. I have ordered security mirrors for the store to support in visibility on the alcohol aisle.</p> <p>All the above impacts on the store's profitability.</p> <p><u>People impacts:</u></p>

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	<p>We see an average of 17 serious reportable incidents per week involving the beggars although other incidents occur, these are the most serious. The beggars enter the store to steal predominately alcohol.</p> <p>When challenging the beggars, my team are verbally abused and threatened. They have faced physical attack and threats towards them. Personally, I have been pushed and attempted to be head butted despite telling the beggar they could leave with the drink. The abuse is intense and extremely intimidating especially for my team who generally are running the store alone with minimal staffing late at night. My team start early in morning and late at night (from 5am - 1030pm), they are intimidated to walk through the market at these times as they regularly face the people they have been dealing with instore and face continued abuse at vulnerable times.</p> <p>When asking the known shoplifters not to enter the store, my team face verbal abuse, and threats, often for numerous people within the group.</p> <p>My Management Team and myself are not only concerned for our own safety but that of our team. We work across 2 floors in a large store and can't always be stood at front on watch. In a recent company survey, only 50% of my team felt safe at work. When we reviewed the reasons, it was due to the increasingly aggressive behaviour of the beggars.</p> <p><u>Customer Feedback:</u></p> <p>Whilst these security incidents are difficult for my team, customers are instore observing the conduct. It is not the service they expect when entering a Tesco store.</p> <p>We have had customers ask to stay in store whilst the beggars move or are fighting each other in the street. Customers attempting to get involved with security incidents putting themselves at risk. Customers have reported being verbally abused when declining to give cash to the beggars.</p>
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	<p>Beggars have been seen in a state of undress and urinating outside the store.</p> <p><u>Example incidents:</u> An overview of the most recent incidents relating to the beggars in the last 3 month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wagon at 3am - empty bottles thrown at colleagues and the wagon causing damage to vehicle and stock. For safety the wagon was told to leave and turned away with the required stock for the store. The front window of the store was then smashed. 2 colleagues took time off sick after the trauma from the attack. 1 arrested that night.• Urinating in the store at the Customer Service Desk when refused entry to store.• Wine bottle swung at colleagues and attempted to hit them when stealing crisps and wine - the beggar then stood in store refusing to leave until Police arrived.• Smoking in the foyer in wheelchair and refusing to move or stop.• Verbal abuse and threats to come back with another beggar's and physically assault colleagues.• Syringes found in bedding at rear of store at fire exit route.• Security gate kicked and broke.• Fighting between the beggars brought instore when looking for a 'safe space' on numerous occasions.• Beggar carrying a knife and threatening to stab the others in his group - arrested.• Beggar asked to leave so smashed our Newspaper stand.• Security gates smashed when asked to leave.• 15 serious theft incidents per week involving verbal or physical abuse - approx. £350 per week in alcohol theft. <p>I see the same people in Durham begging and feel frustrated it is allowed to happen. The money they raise from begging encourages them to attempt to enter my store despite banning orders. The begging is giving them a</p>
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	<p>reason to come to the city. Once they have cash, they become abusive and violent when refused entry to store or access to alcohol. If these people are not able to beg it will stop the ongoing security incidents. It portrays such a bad impression of what a beautiful city is to work in.</p> <p>Ill happily provide more specific feedback if required.</p>
Market Place	<p>RE: The Cities collective of thieves, drug addicts and alcoholics causing upset in the community.</p> <p>My company is impacted in a very negative way due to group gatherings causing anti-social behaviour in the near vicinity of our shop doorway.</p> <p>From a business perspective, visitors to Durham are subjected to witnessing violent clashes between these groups on a regular occurrence with foul and abusive language shouted out.</p> <p>Many of these visitors have young children and this cannot be acceptable.</p> <p>We are constantly on a state of high alert for known thieves who are operating freely and at stealing will. Shopwatch which we are a member of has been of tremendous benefit with the intel provided in advance.</p> <p>However, being a small independent business, we are unable to carry out many daily and everyday tasks due to the stress of worrying who is in the shop and out of sight. We do use CCTV but would have to be always monitored to be effective which it is not.</p> <p>I have been subjected to mobile phone theft, stock theft, counterfeit money scams, and price ticket swapping in recent times, and it takes its toll on your mental state of health.</p> <p>You can't have a day off or go on holiday and not be thinking of possible events happening.</p> <p>The same names of the perpetrators are present most days in the city centre radio chatter revealing their latest victim. I believe that a zero-tolerance position should be adopted with banning orders / prohibition</p>

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	<p>orders to be delivered upon the said few constant repeat offenders.</p> <p>To summarise, please remove the cancer that is killing our City Centre and put a smile back on the communities faces. Allow City Centre workers to come into work without fear or stress.</p>
Market Place	<p>I have worked in Durham City centre for over 20 years and never had an issue until this last year. I work at an independent store in the Market Place. The past couple of months we have issues with the homeless who had taken up residency right outside of our door. One gentleman (wheelchair user) normally is there every day. He is actively begging for money whilst given out £20.00 notes to others and is quite aggressive if not given any change from the public.</p> <p>I have also witnessed racial abuse. He attracts other homeless people also, sometimes we can have 6-7 people outside and for all day. I have witnessed drugs been sold and taken outside of the shop window and I am more than sure that they are using the corner of the alleyway as a toilet.</p> <p>I have seen the vomit in the street right outside our door. They have smoked drugs right at our doorway when we have patients in with young families and our practice has taken a day or 2 to get rid of the smell (this is disgusting). They are constantly drinking alcohol and asking people (students) for alcohol and when they say NO, they are then arguing and wanting to fight them. We have patients who have by passed us as they have been intimidated not wanting to go past them. Sometimes we have only one member of staff in, and they are locking the door as they don't feel safe with them all there. We have contacted the police on several occasions to report our concerns.</p> <p>I would really like a permanent solution with the homeless as I feel Durham City is becoming a dying city. I am sure you would not like this happening outside your place of work or home.</p>
Saddler Street	<p>I'm writing this email regarding the impact that the rough sleepers, beggars, and general anti-</p>

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	<p>social behaviour is having on me and my staff as the manager of a retailer in Durham City centre.</p> <p>I am currently the store manager on Saddler Street in the City. We could on most days report shoplifting several times a day. I would say at least 6 days out of 7 we are informed by members of the public that someone next to them in the queue has stolen items. These people aren't bothered who sees them, they walk in whether the shop is full or not, take whatever they can and leave without any attempt to pay for them. This is very frustrating to myself and my staff many of whom get up at 4am to come to work to support their families and literally watch our stock and profits walking out of the door.</p> <p>Regarding early starts, coming to work between 5am and 5.15am to be confronted in the dark by people sleeping rough in the streets is very intimidating. I'm lucky that I get dropped off at the door, however many of my staff must walk across the city after they've parked and in some cases been confronted in the dark in the car park by people asking for money as soon as they leave their car. This leaves them feeling vulnerable before they've even started their walk to work, especially in the colder darker mornings. These individuals are the same people in many cases who then come and steal from us later in the day.</p> <p>My staff and I have been repeatedly sworn at, spat at, threatened with violence, asked for money, called all sorts of names, for simply doing their jobs. Not to mention when they refuse to leave our store and claim our toilets are for public use, which they aren't, we must clean up the mess after they leave.</p> <p>We've previously had members of the council team who are "trying to help" come in buy them breakfast, sit them in our seating area then simply leave us to it after bringing them in, feeding them and then leaving us to deal with the consequences.</p> <p>We've had to report fights between groups of these alleged rough sleepers and/or beggars. Customers have been harassed and, in some</p>
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	<p>cases, we've had customers say they didn't come in on a particular day because they were sitting outside, and they felt intimidated. Therefore, impacting our sales even more as on top of the losses through theft we've then lost sales.</p> <p>As a company, we do a lot to support people in the community who are genuinely in need and these people are taking away from that by their behaviour. My business is suffering monetary losses because of them, my staff have been left feeling demoralised in their jobs, vulnerable, and in some cases frightened to walk to work.</p> <p>Something must be done, and I do fully appreciate the efforts of certain members of Police staff who see this on a day-to-day basis and who check in with us, however we're all also aware that they can't be around 24hrs a day 7 days a week.</p> <p>I would very much like to see current restrictions extended, with harsher punishments for the offenders, many of whom know exactly how to play the system in the 1st place.</p>
Prince Bishops	<p>During my time as an independent business owner in Durham I have had several dealings with the alcoholics who frequent the city centre, I have also witnessed several incidents involving them and students/visitors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stock stolen from shop including one incident where one of the alcoholics distracted the young female student who was on duty while the other grabbed a bottle and ran off. The person left in the shop then blocked the student's way so they couldn't try and recover the bottle.• An attempt by 3 of them to carry out a 'grab & run' on the shop which was foiled by a member of the public who overheard them plotting and came into the shop to warn us. They tried to enter the shop but the student on duty barred their entrance by physically standing in the doorway.• An attempt by one of them to come into the store to sample gin (even

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	<p>though they are on the shop watch banned list), they would not take no for an answer, again I had to stand in the doorway to prevent them coming in and in the end, I had to shut the door on them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congregating on Silver Street, often in a doorway opposite the shop, openly drinking, swearing loudly, arguing, and asking for money. I have witnessed them swearing at members of the public who ignore their requests for money.• 'Cat calling' young female students.• Hanging around cash machines and begging from people who have just withdrawn money.• Urinating in public.• Walking alongside people (especially female & foreign students) and persistently begging until the victim feels obliged to give them some money just to get rid of them.• Shoplifting from other stores in the city centre• Wandering around town centre while high on drugs• Wandering into the shop while high on drugs, trying to join a gin tasting and having to be herded out of the store as they try and pick stock up from the shelves as they go. <p>As a business I have lost a lot of stock to shoplifting, something no business can afford to do during the most difficult trading conditions I have ever known.</p> <p>I am constantly watching the door, especially when it is open during open hours in case, they try to come in. If they are hanging around or do, try to come in I must leave whatever I am doing (including serving customers) to deal with them which can be very stressful. This type of situation, and those listed above are not the lasting memory you want visitors to Durham to have and they hardly encourage people to come back to Durham. It certainly isn't what you expect to witness or experience at a World Heritage Site.</p>
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Prince Bishops	<p>Our store is massively impacted by rough sleepers and shoplifters that are in the city. We have had several occasions when the same people that are always in the marketplace drinking alcohol and then come into store and attempt theft. When we are sometimes lone working, we have lost staff due to the threat of this.</p> <p>Customers are also saying they don't like coming into the city anymore as not great to get harassed for money all the time.</p>
Prince Bishops	<p>We have had a noted rise in the number of incidents we are called to daily.</p> <p>This is mainly down to the homeless population frequenting the market area in and around the prince Bishop's place. This seems to have increased with the number of new homeless that have set up in Durham.</p> <p>We average around an average of 4 to 5 incidents daily these include shoplifting, drinking and antisocial behaviour in the Prince Bishops shopping mall by these individuals.</p> <p>We have issues with the same people in the car park drinking taking substances and attempting to sleep on the decks when the car park is closing. The toilets also are abused needles and drug taking paraphernalia are found by security daily and individuals must be evicted when in drug induced states.</p> <p>These incidents have taken a major part of the security time removing the individuals and then sorting out the mess and damage these people leave after incidents, it has a great impact on the customers and our visitors when they see the individuals' causing problems, stealing from the onsite shops.</p>
Saddler Street	<p>Just to outline a bit about general problems we seem to be having outside at the moment and also a few specific incidents.</p> <p>The steps outside our shop seem to be a meeting place and problem area particularly on sunny days and weekends. Groups of people getting drunk while sitting on the steps and shouting abuse/obscenities at people going past, often using quite racist and/or foul language which can be heard loudly and clearly in our shop. This is obviously a problem for us as we're trying to encourage a family</p>

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	<p>environment and children into the shop. A specific Sunday a couple of weeks ago this went on for about 5 hours uninterrupted with numerous customers commenting on it, this naturally affects our footfall going forward.</p> <p>We've also had multiple people visiting for University Open days commenting that they won't be happy for their child to attend here as the city doesn't feel very safe because of the amount of anti-social behaviour they witnessed which again will impact our footfall.</p> <p>In winter certain staff will not be able to come in at normal time as they don't feel safe walking across from North Road and through the marketplace in the dark because of the amount of anti-social and/or aggressive behaviour first thing in the morning.</p> <p>It's problematic to put our bins out overnight for collection in the morning because of the amount of really disgusting things that we find in them which ultimately the staff must deal with before bringing the bins back into the shop to store them the next morning.</p> <p>We have also had a specific incident in the last few months where somebody who was very badly affected by alcohol/drug use came into the shop near collapsing and fell onto one of our staff who was trying to help, covering the staff member in bodily fluid which from a mental health point of view was obviously very distressing.</p> <p>Aside from all this there's also multiple times where we must try and tactfully get drunk people out of the shop without escalating the situation for the customers in the shop so that can be really intimidating for our staff and disrupts staff hugely while it's going on.</p> <p>If you need any more information, please get in touch.</p>
Saddler Street	<p>1 Homeless/Street drinkers</p> <p>There are occasional problems - many of them wander up Saddler Street for the free breakfasts at the salvation army place.</p>

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	<p>The main issue is that they are often drinking in the morning, and emboldened by this they can be loud, swear a lot and are abusive to passers-by. When they are in groups of males, they sometime make lewd comments to passing young women. This is not something that happens every day - and many of these incidents would be seen as minor - but they do make the area unpleasant when this does occur.</p> <p>In store problems here are very rare - the last incident I had was 2 years ago, when one of them threatened to "put me on the floor" when he asked me for money, and I refused. He wasn't one of the usual ones I see around and have not seen him since.</p> <p>2 Rough sleeping - we've only had a person asleep in the morning in the shop doorway twice, both times it was someone passing through Durham, and both times the person was polite, and he had not caused any mess in the area.</p>
Saddler Street	<p>Many incidents have happened over the years, but stand out issues that we have noticed are...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passed out drunk in front of the pub; to the point where we phoned the guy an ambulance, it turns out that he'd just left the hospital that morning, got on the cans with his pals and had a bad turn after it mixed with his medication.• We regularly get a smell of urine from our side door access, and they have been known to defecate on the steps of our neighbours.• We have moved them on from our doorway on numerous mornings.• The lady at the premises opposite has felt scared on numerous occasions; as we take parcels in for her, we talk regularly.• Fights have broken out between them to the point that the police have been called to break it up.• Particularly female staff have felt scared coming in on an early morning and going home late at night. So, we make sure they are never alone.

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	<p>I hope this helps and any further clarity or if we think of other things, we will get back in touch.</p>
Prince Bishops	<p>I've personally been made to feel uncomfortable by the groups in question, and it has impacted the staff in our store as our shop does not have a designated security presence so quite often it has fallen on me as the full-time floor manager, or other members of staff who are confident enough, to confront any shoplifters or antisocial behaviour within the store. I've always had to tell staff to tannoid for assistance, and not to try and confront anybody without back-up, as a lot of the time these individuals are under the influence of substances so they can be quite unpredictable.</p> <p>Shoplifting has become quite a problem at times, with the same individuals hitting us several times for £100's at a time, and as a store that runs on very few staff, quite often this can even go unnoticed for days, or even at all, which is why they feel like they can target us so often I believe. While in these cases no one is affected personally, it has affected our stocktake results with the amount of missing stock which will in part come from theft.</p> <p>As far as shoplifters go, the regular hitters who mostly now are on shopwatch ban, do know which members of staff to look out for, and it can be quite uncomfortable that they are able to pinpoint you like that. I've even had them shouting abuse at me from across the far side of the marketplace before, or from the steps down onto Milburngate Bridge.</p> <p>There have been occasions where I have witnessed antisocial behaviour including an assault by St. Nic's church which has meant I've had to radio for CCTV to monitor and ask for any PCSOs in the area to try and get a speedy response, but then had to walk past the ongoing scene to be able to get back to my car at the end of the day. The incident here actually involved a male getting a glass bottle smashed over his head, and in turn pinning the woman he was with against the door of the church and hitting her head off it, also causing her head to bleed. This then of course left blood and smashed glass over the pavement as well. Both had been seen walking up and down the</p>

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	<p>marketplace all day drinking together, arguing with each other and generally being quite aggressive. Not a sight you wish to come to work to see or have to either walk a longer way home to avoid, which would only mean walking down to North Road which of course hosts its own incidents daily that can be heard over the Shop Watch radio. As a store we also have several very young staff for whom this is their first job at 16 and 17 years old, and these are not the sort of things they should have to witness either.</p> <p>On another occasion I heard over the radio that one of the known offenders had just assaulted the manager of TJ Hughes and was on his way up the mall towards my store, so I had to watch for him coming in the store.</p> <p>When he did attempt to enter, I turned him away at the door to be faced with abuse myself before he made his way across the marketplace to later be arrested, but this individual had already stolen from our store on many occasions and has tried again even since his release.</p> <p>Furthermore, the car parks in Durham have often been used by the rough sleepers to camp for the night, which has meant that even if I have avoided them on my way back to my car, I've still had to face them once I've gotten to the car park itself, with one group even approaching me on one occasion and asking if I'm the girl from my store, when I had never actually interacted with the group myself, so it made me quite uncomfortable that they were able to recognise me and where I work, and now where I park my car. For the next few weeks, I felt like I had to be on guard for them either targeting my store or approaching me again.</p> <p>Luckily, I believe they were given a banning order from the city centre and were moved on. But this is also concerning for others working here, as during term time especially we have a lot of students working here who live in the city centre so are likely to be out and about around Durham a lot more often, so to be recognised</p>
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	<p>or pinpointed in the street could be a scary experience for them.</p> <p>More recently, groups have used the seating area coming from Prince Bishops down onto Milburngate Bridge to gather and drink alcohol, and often stand on both sides of the path so you have no choice but to walk through the middle of them. I have personally taken to phoning my partner as I'm walking the 3-minute journey back to my car, just to try to avoid the group trying to approach me as they can be very intimidating.</p> <p>We also have a lot of members of staff who rely on the bus service to get to and from work, which means needing to wait for their buses on North Road. I have noticed in recent months that a lot of these members of staff are beginning to carpool with friends and family who work in the city centre, or get lifts off partners, parents etc. just to avoid having to wait on North Road due to the antisocial behaviour going on there making them feel unsafe, which no doubt will have an impact on the bus service as well. This has also left us at times with fewer staff for closing times as some may have to leave at 5 and 5.15 to be able to get their lift, which is also an impact on the business.</p>
Prince Bishops	<p>We have had numerous incidents with the rough sleepers in Durham which have left staff anxious, scared, and intimidated coming to work due to threats, break ins and volatile confrontations.</p> <p>I was personally threatened to be stabbed when I told two of the rough sleepers I was unable to store their sleeping bags/personal items, one of them physically came into the building and started making threats to which I needed to change how I left work and had to ask a member of security to walk me to the car because I was worried I would be attacked . 2 days later the same couple came back as if nothing had happened to buy food, they were refused service as advised by the police and security, to which more threats were made, swearing, shouting, and causing a scene in front of other customers.</p>

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	<p>On an occasion when one of the rough sleeps paid for their order, he came back a total of 13 times to complain about nothing, pushing in front of customers, swearing, being aggressive, he then came into the building to 'apologise' for his behaviour but became highly agitated when he was told to leave which resulted in us calling 999 on 3 occasions. We've had the rough sleepers asking customers in the queue for money, customers have refused, and they have been met with abuse which has resulted in them making complaints and refusing to come back causing us a loss in sales which we can't afford to have in current times. Verbally abused/threatened in the streets and at work because we had to call the police for a previous incident.</p> <p>We are damned if we do and damned if we don't. If we serve them, they take advantage, asking for food for an extremely low price, asking if they can pay us next time, asking for extras for free, if we refuse service we are threatened, sworn at, verbally abused.</p> <p>We do a lot of lone working, and this is well known through the community, when you have 3/4 rough sleepers coming up it is incredibly intimidating because you are quite simply out matched, and you don't know what to do for the best.</p> <p>All we want is to be able to our job without the constant worry of whether we are safe, the job is no longer enjoyable, and staff are refusing to work late shifts or work alone.</p> <p>Something needs to change.</p>
Elvet Bridge	<p>As a business in the city centre, staff have experienced numerous instances of harassment, in particular female colleagues, both coming to work at 0930 and when leaving in 1700.</p> <p>The rough sleepers seem to be intoxicated and aggressive. It is not uncommon to see instances of drug taking, and its consequences in alleyways and under the bridges in the city centre. The knock-on effect on trade is very noticeable also. Most of my regular customers are in the 50 to 70 years old range, and many are worried about visiting my business due to</p>

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	<p>the prevalence of rough sleepers, having experienced harassment themselves.</p> <p>Undoubtably this also has an impact on visitors to the city and hence on passing trade. Any assistance to the hard-working police in the city centre whether practical, financial or by way of legislation I am sure would be helpful.</p>
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