

Statistical bulletin

Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2023

Crime against households and people aged 16 years and over, using data from police recorded crime and the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

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1 . Main points

The latest estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending December 2023 showed that there were an estimated 8.4 million incidents of CSEW headline crime. Latest estimates do not show a statistically significant change compared with the year ending December 2022 survey, although they do follow a long-term downward trend. The total number of CSEW headline crime incidents is 25% lower than the year to March 2017 survey. This is the earliest comparable year for CSEW headline crime when questions on fraud and computer misuse were first included on the survey.

Compared with the year ending December 2022 survey, there was some variation for individual crime types:

- fraud decreased by 16%, with reductions in bank and credit account fraud (13%), advance fee fraud (34%), and other fraud (50%)
- computer misuse increased by 29%, mainly because of a 32% rise in unauthorised access to personal information
- criminal damage decreased by 18%, including a 25% fall in criminal damage to a vehicle

The CSEW remains the best estimate of long-term trends in crimes against the household population for the crimes included in the survey. However, estimates for survey years ending December 2022 and December 2023 should be interpreted with caution. The CSEW estimates presented for the year ending December 2022 are based on lower than usual interview numbers following the gradual return to face-to-face interviewing from October 2021 (26,621 respondents). Both years are subject to lower response rates, which may affect the quality of the estimates. The CSEW estimates have been temporarily suspended of their National Statistics status while we assess data quality since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. For more information, see the [Office for Statistics Regulation's \(OSR\) Temporary suspension of National Statistics status for estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales note](#).

Although police recorded crime does not tend to be a good indicator of general trends in crime, it can give more insight into lower-volume, but higher-harm offences reported to the police, including those that the survey does not cover or capture well. Data for the year ending December 2023 showed:

- the number of homicides decreased by 6% (to 577 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (616 offences)
- offences involving firearms (excluding Devon and Cornwall Police) increased by 9% (to 6,367 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (5,850 offences), attributed to the 27% increase in imitation weapons; the increase in offences involving firearms follows a downward trend seen in previous years, and remains 43% less than it was at its peak in the year ending March 2006
- offences involving knives or sharp instruments (excluding Greater Manchester Police and Devon and Cornwall Police) increased by 7% (to 49,489 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (46,153 offences), but remain 3% lower compared with the year ending March 2020 (51,206 offences)
- police recorded robbery offences increased by 13% (to 81,094 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (71,983 offences), but is 26% lower than the year ending March 2003 (110,271 offences), when current recording practices began
- police recorded theft from the person increased 18% (to 125,563 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (106,606 offences), the highest level since the year ending March 2004 (137,154 offences)
- shoplifting offences increased by 37% (to 430,104 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (315,040 offences), and is the highest figure since current police recording practices began for the year ending March 2003

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) headline crime captures a range of personal and household victim-based crime in the interviewer-led parts of the survey, including theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse and violence with or without injury. Experiences of sexual assault, stalking and harassment are presented separately in our statistics. Standalone survey modules are used to gather information from respondents about these highly sensitive crimes. Therefore, data are captured and processed separately and are not directly comparable.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is primarily an interviewer-administered face-to-face victimisation survey in which people (aged 16 years and over) resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a selected range of incidents in the 12 months prior to the interview. For the population and offence types it covers, the CSEW generally provides the better measure of trends on a consistent basis over time, because it is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices.

The interviewer-administered parts of the CSEW can capture a broad range of victim-based crimes experienced by those interviewed, not just those that have been reported to, and recorded by, the police. These questions yield headline estimates of CSEW crime and include theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse, and violence with or without injury. They are reported as both incident (the estimated number of crimes) and prevalence (the estimated proportion of the population that were victims) rates and numbers.

Because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter, sexual offences are covered by the CSEW in a self-completion section of the survey which is only able to capture prevalence estimates. This self-completion section also yields better estimates of the prevalence of domestic abuse and other offences disproportionately experienced by women than from the face-to-face component of the survey where victims may be reluctant to disclose in the presence of an interviewer. For this reason, such estimates are reported separately in [Section 8: Domestic abuse and sexual offences](#).

Other crimes not included in CSEW headline crime, such as homicide, are well reported to, and well recorded by, the police. Homicide is again covered separately in this report in [Section 4: Homicide](#). The survey excludes crimes against commercial or public sector bodies, tourists, or those living in communal establishments (such as care homes, student halls of residence, and prisons). The CSEW headline estimates are also restricted to the crimes against households (such as burglary and vehicle-related theft) and separate prevalence estimates for children aged 10 to 15 years are reported annually in March in our [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#). The survey does not cover "victimless" crimes, such as drug possession and other crimes against the state. For more information, see our [Crime trends in England and Wales and how we measure them article](#).

Police recorded crime figures are restricted to a subset of [notifiable offences](#) that have been reported to and recorded by the police. Therefore, while the police recorded crime series covers a wider population and a broader set of offences than the CSEW (for example, residents of institutions, tourists, and crimes against commercial bodies), it does not include all crimes and especially those that do not come to the attention of the police or are not recorded by them.

Changes in recording practices have, over time, led to discontinuity in police recorded crime figures, with changes having a particularly large impact on the recording of violent crime over the last 10 years. Most recently, conduct crimes such as stalking and harassment, which were until May 2023 recorded in addition to other crimes, are now recorded as the sole offence if the conduct crime is deemed to be the more serious offence. As a result, offences that often occur alongside a conduct crime will no longer be recorded. Police recorded violence does not provide reliable trends in crime but is a better indicator of police activity.

3 . Overall estimates of crime

According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending December 2023, people aged 16 years and over experienced an estimated 8.4 million incidents of CSEW headline crime in the 12 months before the interview took place. Latest estimates do not show a statistically significant change compared with the year ending December 2022 survey, although they do follow on from a long-term downward trend. The total number of CSEW headline crime incidents remain 25% lower than the year to March 2017 survey, when questions on fraud and computer misuse were first included.

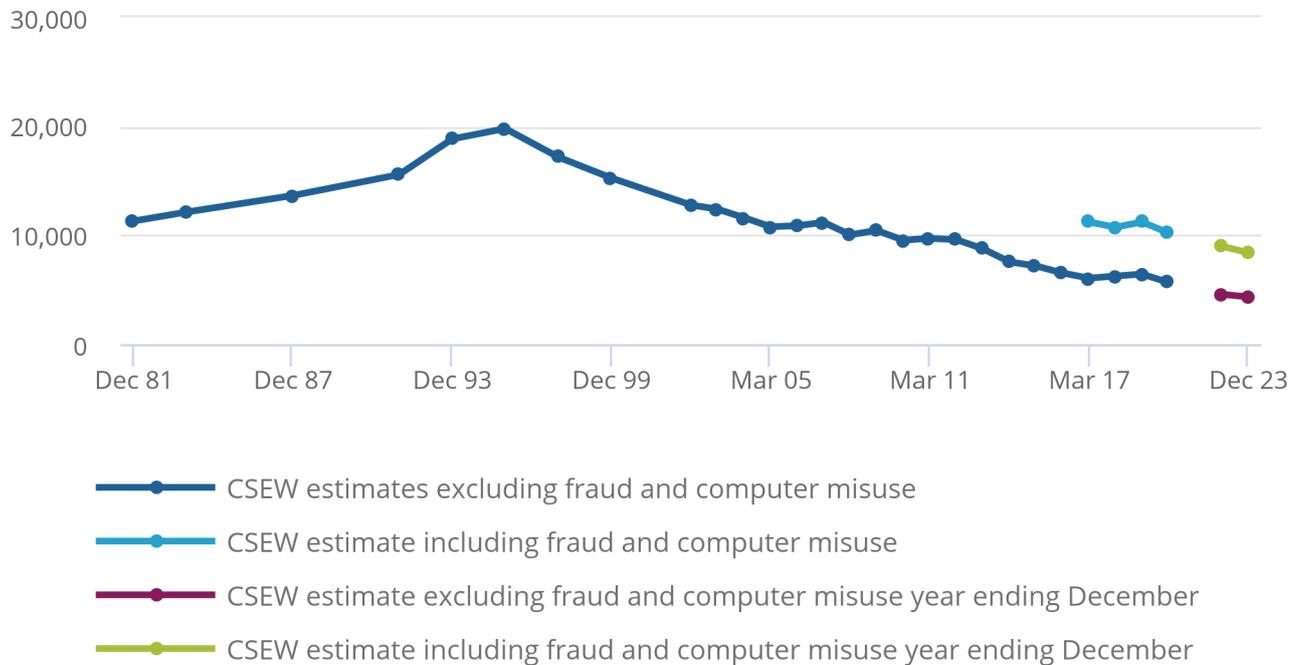
The latest CSEW figures are based on interviews conducted between January 2023 and December 2023, measuring experiences of crime in the 12 months before the interview. This means these crimes could have occurred any time between January 2022 and November 2023. Similarly, the year ending December 2022 will include crimes committed during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and as early as January 2021. Crime Survey estimates are not currently designated as National Statistics. Please use these data with caution because of the potential impact of lower response rates on data quality. Read more in [Section 15: Measuring the data](#).

Since the mid-1990s, there have been long-term falls in the headline measure of crime estimated by the CSEW (Figure 1). However, long-term trends vary by crime type. For more information, see Table A1 in our [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#).

Figure 1: Headline crime estimates from the CSEW years ending December 1981 to December 2023

England and Wales, annual estimates

Figure 1: Headline crime estimates from the CSEW years ending December 1981 to December 2023. Rises in crime levels during the 90s were mainly because of increases in violence, vehicle crime and burglary. Excluding fraud and computer misuse, we have seen a continued fall in overall levels of crime over recent decades. Excluding fraud and computer misuse, March 2020 face-to-face interviewing was suspended. COVID-19 causing a break in the CSEW time-series.



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending December 2022 and December 2023 are not designated as [National Statistics](#).
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year; from the year ending March 2002 onwards, the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that year.
3. The headline crime estimates from the CSEW only include crimes covered by the interviewer-administered parts of the survey including theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse and violence with or without injury. Because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter, domestic abuse and sexual offences are covered by the CSEW in the self-completion section of the survey and reported separately in [Section 8: Domestic abuse and sexual offences](#). Further information about crimes covered by the survey is included in our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).
4. New questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. The questions were asked of half the survey sample from October 2015 until September 2017 and have been asked of a full sample from October 2017.
5. There was a break in the CSEW time-series because of the suspension of face-to-face interviewing between March 2020 and October 2021, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

For the crime types and population it covers, the CSEW is a better indicator of long-term trends than police recorded crime. It is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices.

Likelihood of victimisation

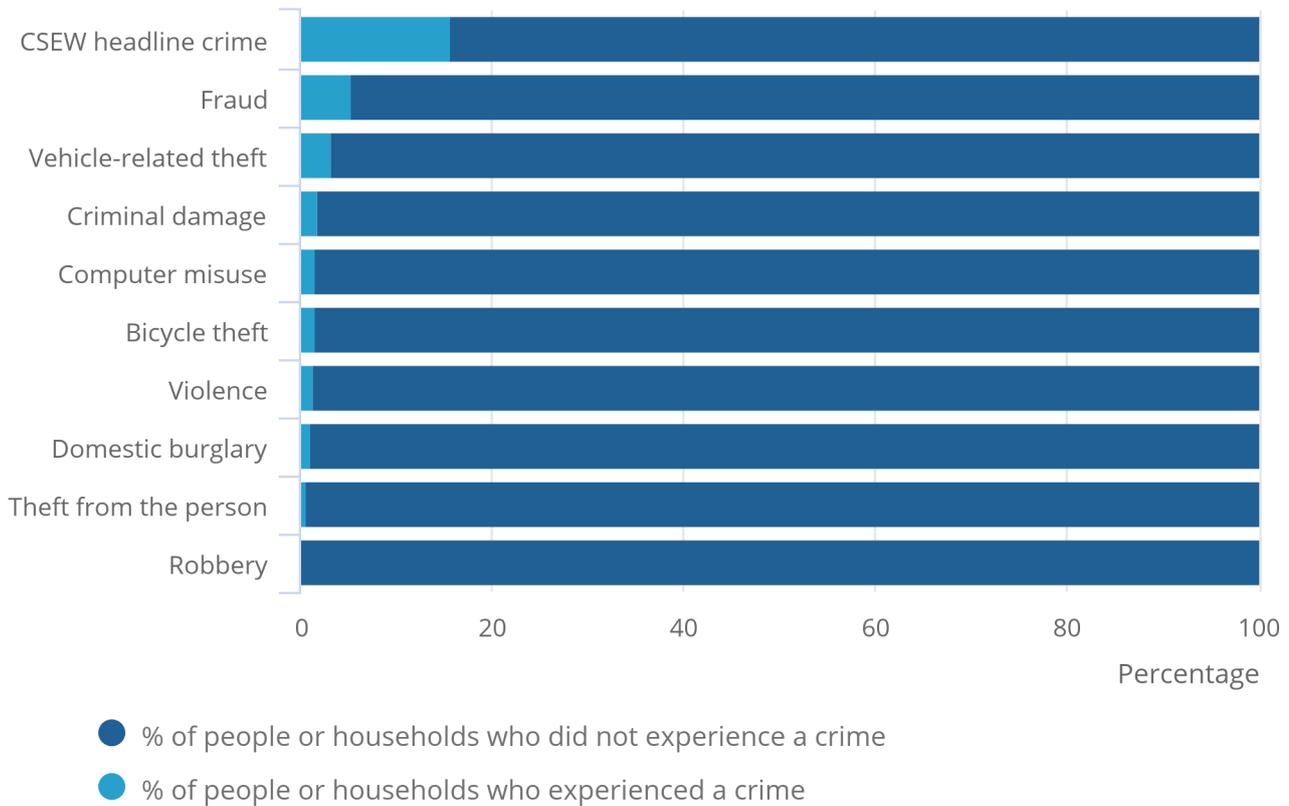
The CSEW for year ending December 2023 estimated 84% of people aged 16 years and over did not experience a crime covered by the interviewer-administered parts of the survey (Figure 2). Overall, 16% said they had experienced a crime included in the headline measure in the previous year. The likelihood of being a victim varied by crime type, with fraud having the highest likelihood of victimisation (5.5%), followed by vehicle-related theft (3.3%).

Figure 2: The likelihood of being a victim of CSEW headline crime by crime type

England and Wales, year ending December 2023

Figure 2: The likelihood of being a victim of CSEW headline crime by crime type

England and Wales, year ending December 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending December 2022 and December 2023 are not designated as [National Statistics](#).
2. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person, fraud and computer misuse are quoted for people aged 16 years and over. Percentages for domestic burglary and criminal damage are quoted for households. Percentages for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted for vehicle or bicycle owning households.
3. For all CSEW headline crime, including fraud and computer misuse, this is the estimated percentage of people aged 16 years and over who have been a victim of at least one personal crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household crime.
4. CSEW headline crime estimates include crimes covered by the interviewer-administered parts of the survey including theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse and violence with or without injury. Because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter, sexual offences are covered by the CSEW in the self-completion section of the survey and reported separately in Section 8: Domestic abuse and sexual offences. Further information about crimes covered by the survey is included in our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

Trends in police recorded crime

For crimes that come to the attention of the police, police recorded crime has wider coverage than the CSEW, as it includes offences against all people (including those aged under 16 years old and the non-household population), and businesses, as well as "victimless" crimes, such as drug possession.

Improvements to recording processes and practices by the police, expansions of the recorded crime collection to include new offences, variations in police activity, more victims reporting crime, and genuine increases in some types of crime, have each made substantial contributions to rises in recorded crime over recent years. This effect has been more pronounced for some crime types, although more recent small falls or flattening trends could suggest that improvements in recording practices are beginning to have less impact for some offences. For further information, see [Section 16: Strengths and limitations](#).

There has been little change in the volume of police recorded crime in England and Wales for the year ending December 2023 compared with the previous year (showing a 0.2% decrease). Overall, 6.7 million crimes were recorded by the police in the year ending December 2022 and December 2023. Notable increases were observed in some offence types, including shoplifting and robbery offences. Information on the investigative outcomes of crimes recorded by the police can be found in the [Home Office's Crime outcomes in England and Wales publication](#).

Crime survey and police recorded crime data can be used together to develop a more complete picture of crime (Table 1).

Table 1: Overview of main crime types

Notes

1. PRC and CSEW data for the year ending December 2022 and December 2023 are not designated as National Statistics.
2. CSEW headline crime data relate to people aged 16 years and over. PRC data relate to crimes against individuals (including children), households, businesses, and society.
3. Estimates for fraud, computer misuse, and criminal damage are statistically significant at the 5% level. PRC figures are not subject to significance testing because they are not estimates but counts.
4. Data on knife or sharp instrument offences exclude Greater Manchester Police for the whole time series back to the year ending March 2011 and exclude Devon and Cornwall Police for the years ending December 2022 to December 2023.

Table 2: Trends in the prevalence of experiences of sexual assault and stalking, to year ending March 2023

Notes:

1. Standalone modules for stalking and sexual assault are ran annually on the survey. Therefore, estimates are updated annually, with the most recent available for the year to March 2023.
2. Data for the year ending March 2023 are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.
3. The category "any sexual assault" include attempts.
4. Data for stalking are not available for the year ending March 2008 because comparable questions were not included in that year.
5. Estimates for stalking and sexual assault are not statistically significant (NS) at the 5% level.

5 . Knife or sharp instrument offences

Police recorded crime provides a better measure than the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) of higher-harm but less common types of violence, such as those involving a knife or sharp instrument (knife-enabled crime).

Figures for Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and Devon and Cornwall Police are not included in the England and Wales and regional totals of knife or sharp instrument offences for the years ending December 2022 and December 2023. GMP have been unable to supply offences involving knives or sharp instruments data for July to December 2023 because of an IT issue in processing these data. Additionally, following the implementation of a new IT system in November 2022, Devon and Cornwall Police have been unable to supply these data for the period, October 2022 to December 2023.

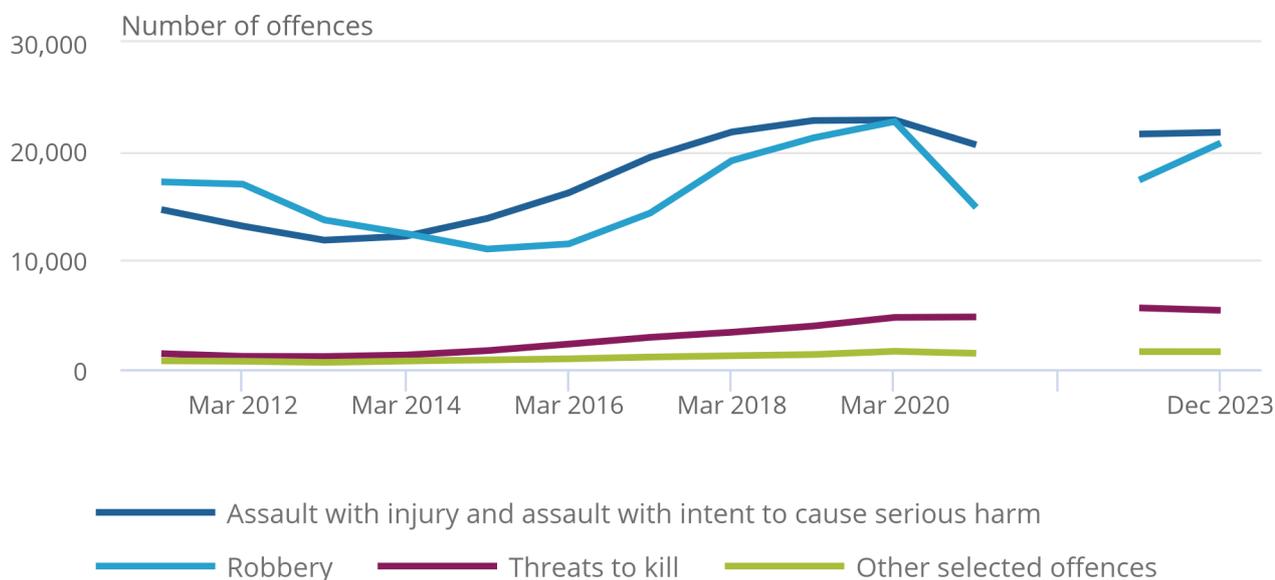
Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police in the year ending December 2023 increased by 7% (49,489 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (46,153 offences). Notable increases were seen in the number of robberies involving a knife or sharp instrument (up 20% compared with the previous year). However, knife-enabled crime overall was still 3% lower than pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels in the year ending March 2020 (51,206 offences). All figures exclude Devon and Cornwall and Greater Manchester Police. For further information, see [Section 16: Strengths and limitations](#).

Figure 4: Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police increased in the last year

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending December 2023

Figure 4: Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police increased in the last year

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending December 2023



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

- Greater Manchester Police conducted a review of their recording of offences involving knives or sharp instruments in December 2017 that revealed that they were under-counting these offences. Previous data were not revised at the time, and therefore data from Greater Manchester Police are excluded to allow for comparison over time.
- Figures for Devon and Cornwall Police are not included for the years ending December 2022 and December 2023.
- An adjustment has been made to data prior to the year ending March 2020 for police forces who are now using the NDQIS tool and the total for England and Wales. For more information on the adjustment to the time series and the differences in data collection methods, please see our methodology note [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments: methodology changes](#).
- Other selected offences include rape, attempted murder, homicide, and sexual assault.

Knife-enabled crimes continue to be concentrated in metropolitan areas across England and Wales, with 29% of all offences recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service and 11% by the West Midlands Police. Compared with the year ending December 2022, knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by the West Midlands Police saw an increase of 8% (to 5,324 offences), while the Metropolitan Police saw a 20% increase (to 14,577 offences). However, levels for the Metropolitan Police were still 1% lower compared with the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020 (14,680 offences).

Police recorded "possession of article with a blade or point" offences were 1% higher in the year ending December 2023 (27,672 offences) than the year ending December 2022 (27,463 offences). This follows more substantial increases in recent years, which may have been influenced by targeted police action to tackle knife crime. Police recorded "possession of article with a blade or point" offences for the year to December 2023 is 19% higher than the year to March 2020 (23,264 offences) and 92% compared with the year to March 2017.

Other sources of data

The latest provisional admissions data for NHS hospitals in England and Wales showed a decrease in the number of admissions for assault by a sharp object in the year ending December 2023 (3,803 admissions). This was 2% lower than the year ending December 2022 (3,864 admissions) and 20% below the pre-coronavirus pandemic year ending March 2020 (4,769 admissions).

Data related to stop and searches can be found in the [Home Office's Police powers and procedures England and Wales statistics publication](#).

6 . Offences involving firearms

The recording of offences involving firearms cover a wide range of weapon types, from imitation guns through to handguns and shotguns. Offences involving firearms (excluding Devon and Cornwall Police) increased by 9% (to 6,367 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (5,850 offences). The rise in offences involving firearms follows a downward trend seen in previous years and remains 43% less than it was at its peak in the year ending March 2006.

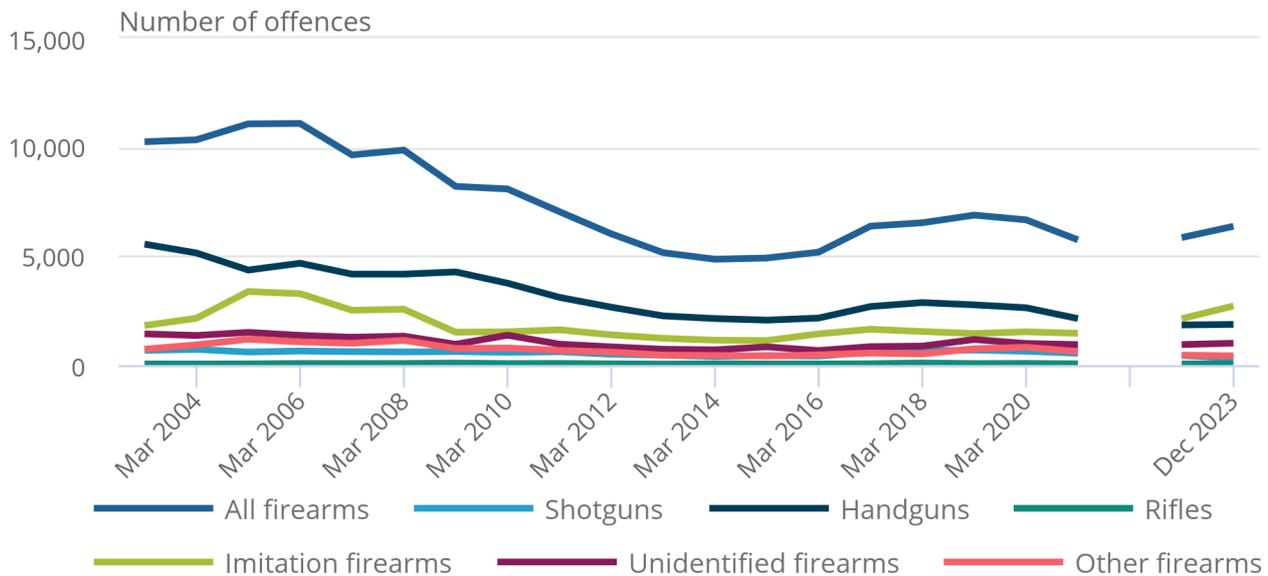
Recent trends have been driven by the increased use of imitation firearms, such as replica weapons and BB guns. Offences involving imitation firearms increased 27% (to 2,713 offences) when compared with the year ending December 2022 (2,128 offences). In contrast, offences using handguns have changed little, increasing by 1% (to 1,864 offences) when compared with the previous year (1,840 offences). Over the same periods, offences involving shotguns decreased 28% for year ending December 2023 compared with the previous year (from 436 offences to 315 offences). Offences involving imitation firearm weapons have overtaken handguns as the most used weapon in the year ending December 2022 and this trend has continued for year ending December 2023. These figures exclude Devon and Cornwall Police. For further information, see [Section 16: Strengths and limitations](#).

Figure 5: Police recorded firearms offences saw a 9% increase compared with the year ending December 2022

England and Wales year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2023

Figure 5: Police recorded firearms offences saw a 9% increase compared with the year ending December 2022

England and Wales year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2023



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

1. Excludes offences involving the use of conventional air weapons, such as air rifles, and offences recorded by the British Transport Police. Includes crimes recorded by police where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument against a person or used as a threat.
2. Imitation firearms include replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons that fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons.
3. Other firearms include CS gas and pepper spray, stun guns and other weapons.
4. Figures for Devon and Cornwall Police are not included for the years ending December 2022 to December 2023.

For data relating to offences involving weapons, see our [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#). For data relating to offences involving firearms, see our [Crime in England and Wales: Other related tables](#).

7 . Violence

For the crime types it covers, the interviewer-administered parts of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provide the best picture of the overall trends in violent crime experienced by the household population. According to the CSEW for the year ending December 2023, people aged 16 and over experienced an estimated 1 million violence incidents, indicating no change compared with the year ending December 2022 survey. This follows on from a general downward trend in violent crime since its peak in 1995 (Figure 6).

Figure 6: The Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in violence offences since the peak in 1995

England and Wales, annual estimates

Figure 6: The Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in violence offences since the peak in 1995

In March 2020 face-to-face interviewing was suspended because of COVID-19, causing a break in the CSEW

England and Wales, annual estimates



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from the interviewer-administered part of the CSEW for the year ending December 2022 and 2023 are not designated as [National Statistics](#).
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year; from the year ending March 2002 onwards, the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that year.
3. There was a break in the CSEW time-series because of the suspension of face-to-face interviewing between March 2020 and October 2021, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
4. CSEW headline crime estimates only include crimes covered by the interviewer-led parts of the survey including theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse and violence with or without injury. Because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter, sexual offences are covered by the CSEW in the self-completion section of the survey and reported separately in [Section 8: Domestic abuse and sexual offences](#). Further information about crimes covered by the survey is included in our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

Police recorded violence should be interpreted with caution as increases may reflect improvements made by police forces in identifying and recording offences, as well as an increase in victims reporting incidents. Changes in recording practices have had a particularly large impact on the recording of violent crime over the last 10 years. Most recently, conduct crimes such as stalking and harassment, which were until May 2023 recorded in addition to other crimes, are now recorded as the sole offence if the conduct crime is deemed to be the more serious offence. As a result, offences that often occur alongside a conduct crime will no longer be recorded. Police recorded violence does not provide reliable trends in crime but is a better indicator of police activity.

Overall, the police recorded 2 million offences of violence against the person in the year ending December 2023, a 3% decrease compared with the year ending December 2022 (2.1 million offences). This follows large increases in police recorded violence against the person since 2015, after His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) [Crime-recording inspection report \(PDF, 1,106KB\)](#) highlighted under-recording of such offences. The decrease this year could suggest that the way in which conduct crimes are being recorded from May 2023 may be affecting the figures, while the impact of older inflationary changes are having a reduced effect.

In published crime statistics, violent crime as measured by the interviewer-administered parts of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime differ. This includes large volume crimes such as stalking and harassment, which the survey does not publish in its headline estimates of crime but are included in police figures. In the year to December 2023, stalking and harassment accounted for nearly a third (32%) of all police recorded violence. Some other crimes, including some high harm but low volume offences, such as sexual offences, are captured in the self-completion sections of the survey and reported separately. For more information, see Section 4 of our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#) and [Crime trends in England and Wales and how we measure them article](#).

There were 663,526 stalking and harassment offences recorded by the police in the year ending December 2023. This is a 6% decrease from the year ending December 2022 (707,267 offences) and follows a period of rises in stalking and harassment offences from March 2012 (49,766 offences). There have been several changes to the recording rules for conduct crimes such as stalking and harassment. The latest change from May 2023 removes the requirement to record two crimes when one of them was a conduct crime. This will inevitably lead to a reduction in those crimes often associated with conduct crimes, such as low-level assaults, malicious communications, and crimes of theft and damage. For example, there has been a reduction in police recordings of malicious communication offences since June 2023, with 39,309 offences recorded between July 2023 to September 2023 and 39,975 offences recorded between October 2023 to December 2023. This compares with 70,731 offences recorded between January and March 2023.

8 . Domestic abuse and sexual offences

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides a more reliable measure of long-term trends for domestic abuse and sexual offences than police recorded crime data.

Standalone self-completion modules which are ran annually on the survey gather data on these highly sensitive crimes. Therefore, estimates are updated annually, with the most recent available for the year to March 2023.

Domestic abuse-related crimes and sexual offences recorded by the police do not provide a reliable measure of trends in these types of crime. Improvements in police recording practices and increased reporting by victims have contributed to increases in recent years. The figures do, however, provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police. The crime survey estimates for domestic abuse and sexual assault for the year ending March 2023 are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates. For more information, see Section 2.1 of our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

Domestic abuse

Estimates from the self-completion section of the CSEW showed that 4.4% of people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023. When analysing data over time, we use the 16 to 59 years age range to give a comparable time series. The CSEW for the year ending March 2023 estimated that 5.1% of people aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This was a significant decrease compared with the year ending March 2020 (6.1%).

The police flagged 846,929 recorded offences as domestic abuse-related in the year ending December 2023, including 668,103 violence against the person offences and 33,777 sexual offences. Overall, the number of domestic abuse-related offences decreased 5% compared with the year ending December 2022 (889,306 recorded offences). This decrease may partly be attributed to the changes in the recording of stalking and harassment, as the requirement to record two crimes when one of them was a conduct crime (such as stalking and harassment) has been removed since May 2023. These figures exclude Devon and Cornwall Police. For further information see [Section 16: Strengths and limitations](#).

Further information and data related to domestic abuse can be found in our [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2023 bulletin](#).

Sexual offences

Latest available annual estimates from the self-completion section of the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 showed that 2.1% of people aged 16 years and over had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences) in the last year. For analysing data over time, we use the 16 to 59 years age range to give a comparable time series.

The CSEW for the year ending March 2023 estimated 2.7% of people aged 16 to 59 years had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences) in the last year. There was no significant change compared with the year ending March 2022 (2.7%) or the year ending March 2020 (2.2%). The CSEW can also provide important context for police figures. For example, latest estimates showed that fewer than one in six victims of rape or assault by penetration reported the crime to the police (Table 13 of our [Nature of sexual assault by rape or penetration, England and Wales dataset](#)).

Improvements in police recording practices and increased reporting by victims have contributed to increases in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police in recent years, although latest figures could suggest that they are having a reduced effect. Police recorded sexual offences decreased by 2% in the year ending December 2023 (191,052 offences) compared with the year to December 2022 (194,621 offences). Despite the 2% decrease in the last year, sexual offences for the year ending December 2023 remain 17% higher than the year ending March 2020 (163,338 offences) and 116% higher than the year to March 2015 (88,576 offences).

Of all sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending December 2023, 36% (68,387) were rape offences. This was a 1% decrease from 69,067 offences in the year ending December 2022. For a subset of forces supplying data to the Home Office Data Hub, 21% of all sexual offences, and 24% of adult rape offences, in the year ending December 2023, had taken place over a year prior to the incident being recorded.

Further data related to sexual offences can be found in our [Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2022 bulletin](#).

CSEW data on the prevalence of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and stalking for the year ending March 2023 can be found in Tables S40 to S42 of our [Crime in England and Wales: Annual supplementary tables, year ending March 2023](#).

9 . Theft, robbery, and criminal damage

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is the most reliable indicator for long-term trends in the more common types of crime experienced by the general population, such as theft. However, police recorded crime data can give reliable indications of trends in some offences involving theft that are well-reported to the police (for example, burglary) and can provide better insight into emerging short-term trends.

The CSEW for the year ending December 2023 estimated there were 2.6 million incidents of theft offences, which was a similar level compared with the previous year's survey. This remains 78% lower than its peak year in the year ending December 1995 (11.6 million incidents). The sub offence category of theft from the person was found to be significantly higher, with an increase of 56% (to 321,000 incidents) compared with the year ending December 2022 (206,000 incidents). However, the figure is not significantly different compared with the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic figure of 367,000 incidents for the year ending March 2020 survey and remains 53% lower than its peak year in 1995 (680,000 incidents).

The year ending December 2023 CSEW survey estimated 744,000 incidents of vehicle-related theft; no significant change compared with the previous survey year.

"Neighbourhood" crime, as defined in the [Home Office's Beating crime plan](#), includes robbery and selected theft offences (theft from the person, domestic burglary, and vehicle-related theft). The CSEW for the year ending December 2023 estimated that there were 1.5 million "neighbourhood crime" incidents, no change compared with the previous year's survey.

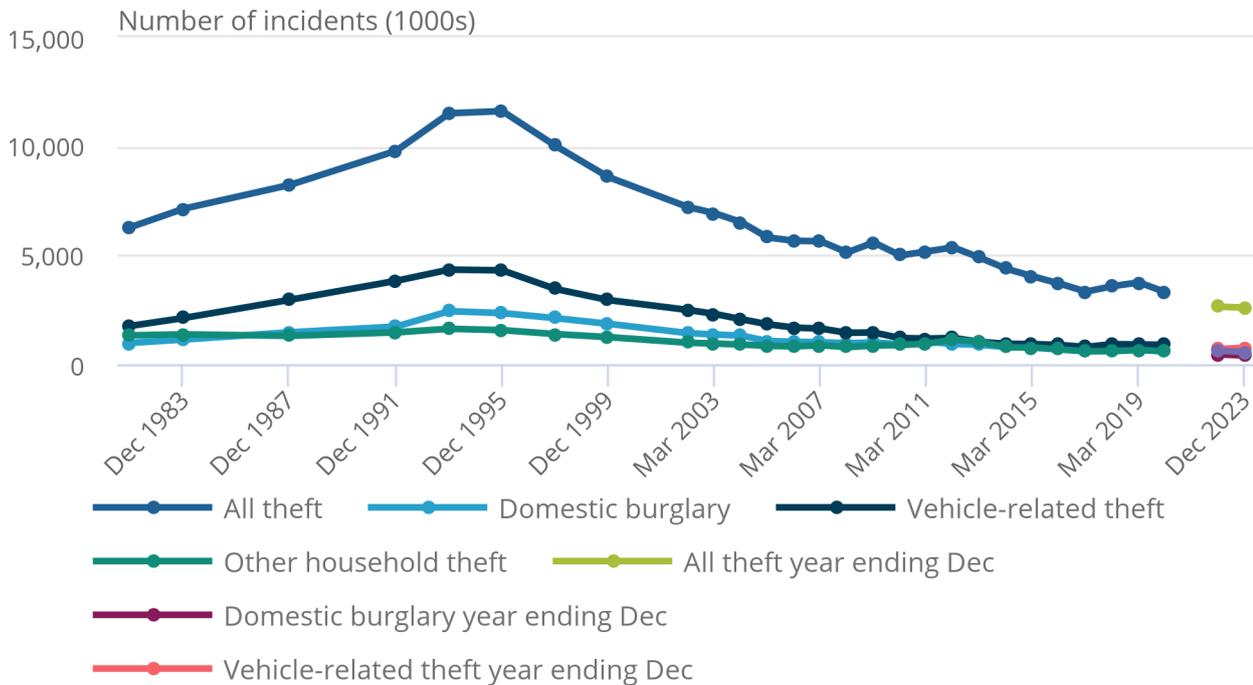
Figure 7: The CSEW shows long-term reductions in incidents of theft offences

England and Wales, annual estimates

Figure 7: The CSEW shows long-term reductions in incidents of theft offences

In March 2020 face-to-face was suspended because causing a break in the CSEW

England and Wales, annual estimates



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending December 2022 and December 2023 are not designated as [National Statistics](#).
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year; from the year ending March 2002 onwards, the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that year.
3. There is a break in the CSEW time-series because of the suspension of face-to-face interviewing between March 2020 and October 2021, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Police recorded theft has increased by 7% (to 1.8 million offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (1.7 million offences). This rise was predominantly the result of increases in shoplifting offences. The year ending December 2023 saw the number of recorded shoplifting offences increase by over a third (37%) compared with the previous year, with 430,104 offences compared with 315,040 in the previous year.

Increases were also seen in police recorded theft from the person offences, up by 18% to 125,563 crimes, and other theft, which was up by 2% to 355,152 offences. There was a slight decrease in vehicle offences to 389,887 offences (down 2% compared with the previous year) which included a 6% decrease in theft from a vehicle to 201,070 offences. This contrasts with a 3% increase in theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle (to 130,903 offences).

Police recorded burglary includes both residential and non-residential categories, such as those committed against a business premises, and therefore is broader than the residential burglary captured by the Crime Survey. Although police recorded total burglary remains comparable, a [new classification of residential burglary offences](#) from the Home Office was introduced in April 2023 to provide a breakdown of incidents related to the main home and from other buildings that are within the boundary of a dwelling (such as sheds). Police recorded burglary fell 1% in the year to December 2023 (271,449 offences) compared with the previous year and is 70% lower than March 2003 (890,099 offences) when current recording practices began.

Police recorded robbery increased by 13% (to 81,094 offences) in comparison with the year ending December 2022 (71,983 offences). However, it remains lower than the number of offences recorded before the pandemic, being 10% lower than in the year ending March 2020 (90,197 offences) and 26% lower than the year ending March 2003 (110,271 offences). Police recorded crime is our preferred measure for robbery because we do not consider it subject to extensive changes in recording practice, whereas the CSEW estimates are subject to year-to-year volatility because of the small number of victims found within the sample.

The CSEW for the year ending December 2023 estimated there were approximately 623,000 incidents of criminal damage, an 18% decrease compared with the previous year's survey (approximately 758,000 offences). Of these incidents, approximately 393,000 were criminal damage to vehicles, which was a 25% decrease compared with the previous year's survey (approximately 523,000 offences). Police recorded criminal damage also decreased by 4% (to 484,720 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (506,226 offences).

10 . Fraud

Estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending December 2023 survey showed that there were 3.1 million fraud incidents experienced by people resident in households. This was a 16% decrease compared with the year ending December 2022 survey (3.7 million offences) and includes reductions in bank and credit account fraud (13%), advance fee fraud (34%), and other fraud (50%).

The CSEW can also provide important context for police figures. For example, the latest estimates shown in our [Crime in England and Wales: Annual Trend and Demographic dataset](#) estimated that fewer than one in seven fraud offences were reported to the police or Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre).

Fraud offences investigated by the police are recorded and collected by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from Action Fraud and two industry bodies: Cifas and UK Finance. Data from Action Fraud exclude Devon and Cornwall Police because of a system change affecting their ability to provide accurate data. UK Finance and Cifas are not affected by this issue. For further information, see [Section 16: Strengths and limitations](#).

Overall, police recorded fraud was 1% higher (1.2 million offences) compared with the year ending December 2022. The increase in overall fraud was mainly influenced by a rise in offences reported by UK Finance (See [Section 15: Measuring the data](#)). UK Finance reported a 10% increase (to 515,575 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (467,371 offences). This was a result of an increase in reporting from their existing members because of engagement from UK Finance. Action Fraud also reported a 1% increase in fraud (301,166 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (298,792 offences).

However, Cifas reported a 9% decrease in fraud (to 338,948 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (373,882 offences).

11 . Computer misuse

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides a better indication of the volume of computer misuse offences experienced by people aged 16 years and over than those reported to the police, as it captures incidents that go unreported to the police. The latest CSEW estimates, as shown in our [Crime in England and Wales: Annual Trend and Demographic Tables dataset](#), showed that fewer than 1 in 20 computer misuse offences were reported to the police or Action Fraud.

Estimates from the CSEW, for the year ending December 2023 survey, showed that there were approximately 984,000 offences of computer misuse. This was a 29% increase from the year ending December 2022 survey (approximately 764,000 incidents), and 44% lower than the year to March 2017 survey, when questions on fraud and computer misuse were first included on the survey.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) record computer misuse offences and refer those with good investigative leads to the police for further investigation. The NFIB reported a 27% increase in computer misuse offences referred by Action Fraud (from 27,447 to 34,941 offences) for the year ending December 2023 compared with the year ending December 2022.

12 . Anti-social behaviour

Estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending December 2023 showed that 35% of people had experienced or witnessed some type of anti-social behaviour (ASB). This was the same as in the year ending December 2022 survey (35%).

The police recorded 1.0 million incidents of ASB in the year ending December 2023 (including the British Transport Police). This was a 4% decrease compared with the year ending December 2022 (1.1 million incidents).

The CSEW also asks questions around individuals' perceptions of ASB in their local area, resulting in both a general and more specific measure based on several types of ASB. In the year ending December 2023 survey, the CSEW estimated that 24% of people perceived ASB to be a fairly or very big problem in their local area (general measure) compared with 8% of people who perceived their local area had a high level of ASB. Since the year ending March 2013 survey, the trends across both measures have remained consistent, with little change year on year.

13 . Crime in England and Wales data

[Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#)

Dataset | Released 25 April 2024

Trends in Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) crime experienced by people aged 16 years and over and Home Office police recorded crime, by offence type. Also includes trends in offender relationship of CSEW violence.

[Crime in England and Wales: Other related tables](#)

Dataset | Released 25 April 2024

Firearms, knife and sharp instrument offences, offences involving a corrosive substance, hospital admissions for assault with sharp objects, fraud, offences flagged as domestic abuse-related, corruption, child sexual abuse and child exploitation. Data tables also include information on anti-social behaviour, perceptions, and non-notifiable incidents.

[Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables](#)

Dataset | Released 25 April 2024

The number of police recorded crimes, percentage change from previous year and rate per 1,000 population by offence group, firearms, knife and sharp instrument, fraud and anti-social behaviour offences by Police Force Area.

[Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly data tables](#)

Dataset | Released 25 April 2024

Data from Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and Home Office police recorded crime, broken down into quarterly time periods.

[Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area](#)

Dataset | Released 25 April 2024

Recorded crime figures for Community Safety Partnership areas, which equate in the majority of instances, to local authorities. Contains the number of offences for the last two years, percentage change between these two time periods and rates per 1,000 population for the latest year.

14 . Glossary

Computer misuse

Computer misuse is when fraudsters hack or use computer viruses or malware to disrupt services, obtain information illegally or extort individuals or organisations.

Criminal damage

Criminal damage results from any person who, without lawful excuse, destroys or damages any property belonging to another. This includes either intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged.

Fraud

Fraud involves a person dishonestly and deliberately deceiving a victim for personal gain of property or money or causing loss or risk of loss to another. The majority of incidents fall under the legal definition of "fraud by false representation", where a person makes a representation that they know to be untrue or misleading (for example, banking and payment card frauds and dating scams). Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates cover a broad range of fraud offences, including attempts, involving a loss and incidents not reported to the authorities. See the Glossary section of our [Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2022 article](#) for definitions of the different fraud types.

Overall theft offences

CSEW theft offences include all personal and household crime where items are stolen, including theft from the person, other theft of personal property, domestic burglary, vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft.

Robbery

Robbery is an offence in which force, or the threat of force, is used either during or immediately prior to a theft or attempted theft. Mugging is an informal term for robbery. In this bulletin, we use the term "robbery".

Violent crime

Violent crime covers a range of offence types from minor assaults, such as pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm, to murder. This includes offences where the victim was intentionally stabbed, punched, kicked, pushed, or jostled, as well as offences where the victim was threatened with violence, regardless of injury.

More information and further definitions can be found in the "Offence types" section of our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

15 . Measuring the data

Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates continue to provide important information in relation to longer-term trends in crime from the year ending December 1981 to the year ending December 2023.

The face-to-face CSEW was suspended on 17 March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. A telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) was designed to continue measuring crime while the face-to-face CSEW was suspended. TCSEW data collection took place between 20 May 2020 and 31 March 2022.

Face-to-face CSEW interviewing for people aged 16 years and over resumed on 4 October 2021. Crime estimates for the year ending December 2023 are produced from data collected between January 2023 to December 2023 and are based on 31,181 interviews. Data collected during this period include experiences of crime in the 12 months before the interview month, and therefore include crimes committed as early as January 2022. The year ending December 2022 (26,621 interviews) will include crimes committed during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and as early as January 2021.

Crime Survey estimates for the year ending March 2022 onwards are not designated as National Statistics. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the potential impact of lower response rates on data quality. For more information, see the [Office for Statistics Regulation's Temporary suspension of National Statistics status for estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales note](#).

Our [Crime in England and Wales: appendix table A1](#) presents CSEW headline crime for the year ending December 2023. For the crime types it measures, these estimates best reflect the current extent of crime and are directly comparable with the main CSEW time-series estimates, which are also included in the table.

Further information is available in our [Crime in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime data are supplied to us by the Home Office, who are responsible for the collation of recorded crime data supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police. These data are supplied to the Home Office on a monthly basis for each crime within their [notifiable offence list](#).

The recorded crime figures are collated through a live administrative system that is continually being updated as forces submit data. The data represent a "snapshot" of the live database taken on 12 March 2023 (for data up to the end of December 2023).

Figures may differ slightly from those published in subsequent bulletins for the same period, although this does not mean that the figures previously published were inaccurate at the time that they were reported. Police recorded crime data are not designated as [National Statistics](#).

A new data collection method, the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDQIS), is now in use for two police collections, offences involving knives or sharp instruments and domestic abuse-related offences. NDQIS identifies offences that involved a knife or were domestic abuse-related rather than relying on a manually added marker. Currently, 42 police forces have switched to NDQIS for knife or sharp instrument offences. One remaining police force, Gloucestershire, and the British Transport Police have yet to implement the new system.

Since April 2023, police forces have been using the NDQIS methodology to help identify whether an offence was domestic abuse-related or not. So far, 28 forces (Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, City of London, Cleveland, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Dorset, Durham, Gwent, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Norfolk, North Wales, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire, West Mercia and Wiltshire) have used NDQIS, and further forces will be moving to this methodology in future releases.

The NDQIS methodology will lead to an increase in offences identified as being domestic abuse related. Data based on ten police forces on both the old and new NDQIS method showed that the number of additional offences that were identified as being domestic abuse related across these forces was 2%. Therefore, data for the latest year are not directly comparable with previous data.

For more information on NDQIS, please see our [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments: methodology changes](#).

16 . Strengths and limitations

Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) includes crimes that are not reported to, or recorded by the police, but is limited to crimes against people resident in households and does not cover all crime types.

The CSEW is a better indicator of long-term trends for the crime types and population it covers than police recorded crime because it is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices. The victimisation methodology and the crime types included in the main count of crime have remained comparable since the CSEW began in 1981.

Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime has wider offence coverage and population coverage than the CSEW. It is the primary source of local crime statistics and is a good measure of offences that are well reported to, and well recorded by, the police, including lower-volume crimes (for example, homicide). In addition, the time lag between occurrence of crime and reporting results tends to be short, providing an indication of emerging trends.

Police recorded crime excludes offences that are not reported to, or not recorded by, the police. Trends can be influenced by changes in recording practices, or police activity and public reporting of crime, making it difficult to make long-term comparisons. There are also concerns about the quality of recording and that crime is not recorded consistently across police forces or over time.

For more information, see our [Crime in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

Issue with Devon and Cornwall Police recorded crime data

Following the implementation of a new IT system in November 2022, Devon and Cornwall Police have been unable to supply data for the period, January 2022 to December 2023 for the following offences: knife or sharp instruments, firearms, those flagged as domestic abuse related and those recorded by Action Fraud.

Issue with Greater Manchester Police recorded crime data

Figures for Greater Manchester Police (GMP) are not included in the England and Wales and Regional totals of knife or sharp instrument offences for the years ending December 2022 and December 2023. GMP have been unable to supply offences involving knives or sharp instruments data for the period of July to December 2023 because of an IT issue in processing these data.

Violent crime

In published crime statistics, violent crime as measured by the CSEW and police recorded crime differ. This includes large-volume crimes such as stalking and harassment, which the survey does not publish in its main estimates of crime but are in the police figures. For more information, see Section 4 of our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

17 . Related links

[Improving crime statistics for England and Wales - progress update July 2023](#)

Methodology | Released 20 July 2023

Latest update on the progress being made to improve crime statistics for England and Wales.

[Guide to finding crime statistics](#)

Methodology | Released 20 July 2023

A guide that directs you on where best to find different crime statistics.

[Crime in England and Wales QMI](#)

Methodology | Last revised 1 March 2024

Quality and Methodology Information for crime levels and trends in England and Wales, detailing the strengths and limitations of the data, methods used, and data uses and users.

[Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales appendix tables: year ending March 2023](#)

Dataset | Released 22 September 2023

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), including numbers of incidents and characteristics of victims.

[Property crime tables, England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#)

Dataset | Released 22 September 2023

Annual data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and metal theft offences recorded by the police, including demographic and offence type breakdowns and time series data.

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 24 November 2023

Figures on domestic abuse from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, police recorded crime and a number of different organisations.

[Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 23 March 2023

Data on sexual offences from the year ending March 2022 Crime Survey for England and Wales, police recorded crime, and victim services.

18 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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