

# Focus on: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2011/12



Coverage: **England and Wales**

Date: **07 February 2013**

Geographical Areas: **Country, Region**

Theme: **Crime and Justice**

## Key points

- Violent and sexual crime covers a range of offence types. For example, violence spans minor assaults, such as pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm through to serious assault and murder. Sexual assault covers offences from indecent exposure to rape. In half of incidents identified by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (50%) and offences recorded by the police (56%), the violence resulted in no physical injury to the victim.
- The 2011/12 CSEW shows that there were 2.1 million violent incidents in England and Wales with 3% of adults victimised. The number of violent incidents has halved from its peak in 1995 when the survey estimated over 4.2 million violent incidents.
- Focusing on the most serious violence, the number of homicides currently recorded by the police has increased from 1961 to 2002/03, and shown a generally downward trend since. The number currently recorded for 2011/12 (540) is the lowest since 1989 (521).
- Offences involving the use of firearms peaked later than overall violent crime with 24,094 offences being recorded by the police in 2003/04. Since then the number of such offences has fallen by 60% to 9,555 recorded offences in 2011/12. The current 16% fall between 2010/11 and 2011/12 is the eighth consecutive annual decrease in firearm offences.
- With regard to sexual and domestic violence, the 2011/12 survey showed there were 536,000 victims of sexual assault in the last year and 2.0 million of domestic abuse. Although the estimated levels of domestic abuse experienced in the last year were lower than those in the 2004/05 CSEW (the baseline for this measure) there has been no statistically significant change since 2008/09. Sexual assault in the last year has shown no statistically significant change over this time period.
- The CSEW showed that young men were most likely to be the victims of violence. The profile of victims of violent and sexual violence varied according to the type of offence. In 2011/12, as in previous years, more than two-thirds of homicide victims (68%) were male. In contrast, women

were more likely to be a victim of domestic abuse. Some 7% of women and 5% of men were estimated to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million female and 800,000 male victims. Similarly, the survey found that young women were much more likely to be victims of sexual assault in the last year.

- The relationship between victims and perpetrators also differed by gender. For example, homicides against men were most likely to be committed by a friend or acquaintance (39%), whilst homicides against women were most likely to be committed by a partner or ex-partner, (51%).

## Introduction and sources

This release, the successor to 'Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2010/11: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11' ([Smith et al., 2012](#)) is a collaboration between ONS and Home Office analysts. It explores a variety of official statistics on violence, and is primarily based on crimes recorded by the police in the year to March 2012 and interviews carried out over the same period on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

This release is split into four sections, each covering a different range of sources of data on violent crime. The first section provides an overview of all of these sources to highlight the diversity of violent crime. It summarises long term trends and explores patterns in the circumstances of violent offences, using the '[Nature of crime' tables from the 2011/12 CSEW](#) published alongside this release. The second section presents more detailed analyses of Homicide Index data with details on the characteristics of victims and suspects. It also put the latest figures in the context of international comparisons and long-term trends. The third section presents findings on use of firearms in selected offences recorded by the police, how they are used, and the injuries caused, as well as describing the geographical distribution of these offences. The final section uses data from a self-completion section on the CSEW which asks about experience of sexual and domestic violence. It describes offences occurring in the 12 months before interview as well as those taking place since age 16, exploring patterns in victimisation and circumstances of the offence.

The 'Data sources – further information' section and [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#) give more details on each of the sources used in this release. A number of points are useful to bear in mind when interpreting findings.

- For the crime types and populations it covers, the CSEW, a representative sample survey of adults resident in households in England and Wales, is a more reliable source of long-term trends since it is unaffected by changes in levels of public reporting to the police or in police recording. Many offences covered by the survey are known to be particularly under-reported to the police, including lower-level violent incidents not involving injury.
- Since January 2009, the CSEW has asked children aged 10 to 15 about their experience of crime in the previous 12 months. Methodological differences, however, mean that direct comparisons cannot be made between the adult and child data ([Millard and Flatley, 2010](#)).
- The CSEW can be used to measure violence occurring while victims are at work. Figures from 2011/12 are included in the Health and Safety Executive's release, published on the same day as this release '[Violence at work 2011/12](#)'.

- Police recorded crime covers violence against the person. It measures some types of serious but relatively low volume offences that are not covered by the survey such as homicide. It also provides a richer source of other serious offences which, due to their small volume are problematic for the survey to measure such as offences involving firearms, or knives. It covers crimes against those groups not covered by the CSEW.
- Homicide data presented in this release are taken from the Home Office Homicide Index, a database separate to the main recorded crime dataset which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset. Data presented here therefore differ slightly from the homicide figures presented in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases.
- Police recorded crime covers sexual offences but the under-reporting of such offences is known to be particularly acute. Since the 2004/05 CSEW respondents aged 16 to 59 have been asked a comparable set of questions, via self-completion, to provide a more complete measure of intimate violence victimisation. This set of questions provides estimates of non-sexual abuse by partners or family members, sexual assault and stalking, which can be combined in several ways. Estimates of domestic violence based on face-to-face CSEW interviews are published quarterly; however the data presented here from the self-completion section provide a more accurate estimate of the levels of such offences with more detail on their circumstances and consequences.
- NHS figures on hospital admissions provide an additional source of information and are presented here to give another indication of levels of serious violence (which may capture incidents which the police do not come to know about).

## SECTION 1 - OVERVIEW

### Summary

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime together span the range of violent and sexual offences. The CSEW, which measures the experiences of a representative sample of the population resident in households, provides a good measure of the volume of violent crime offences. It shows 2.1 million offences occurring, based on the 2011/12 survey, mostly against men (62%), mostly not reported to the police (56%), and with a relatively high proportion being repeat victimisations (24%).

Police recorded crime figures are restricted to crimes that come to the attention of the police and are therefore lower in volume than the survey, but provide a better measure of many of the less frequent but most serious offences, such as homicides and firearm offences. Both sources show that half or less of violent incidents result in any physical injury to the victim (44% of police recorded offences, 50% of CSEW violent incidents).

Both sources point to a general downward trend in the volume of violent crime over the last 10 to 20 years but the pattern for individual offence group differs. The CSEW points to a rise in overall violent crime between the first survey covering 1981 and the mid 1990s, followed by a large reduction up to the 2001/02 survey, and a fairly flat trend since 2007/08. The overall decrease in CSEW violence was driven by decreases in several large-volume types of violence, in particular repeat victimisations (64%), domestic violence (69%) and acquaintance violence (60%).

With regard to most serious violent crime, homicides recorded by the police rose between 1961 and 2002/03 and have decreased since. There are currently 944 homicides recorded for 2002/03 compared with 540 for 2011/12, a decrease of 43%. Offences involving firearms recorded by the police peaked at 24,094 offences in 2003/04 and fell gradually by 60% to the current 9,555 recorded offences.

The profile of victims of violent and sexual violence varied according to the type of offence. For example, the chance of being a victim of violent crime, based on the 2011/12 survey, showed variations by gender (3.8% of men being victims compared with 2.1% of women), and age (16 to 24 year olds being twice as likely to be a victim as those aged 25 to 34). However, overall victimisation rates mask important differences in the victimisation experiences of men and women and people of different ages.

- Children under one were the group most likely to be a victim of homicide at 21 homicides per million population, followed by those aged 16 to 29 with a homicide rate at 15 per million.
- Men were most likely to be killed by a friend or acquaintance (39% of all homicides) while women were most likely to be killed by a partner or ex-partner (51% of all homicides).
- Women were more likely than men to have experienced domestic or sexual violence. For example, 3% of women had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year, compared with 0.3% of men (base on the 2011/12 CSEW).
- Women aged between 16 and 34 were more likely than any of the other age groups considered, (male or female) to be victims in the previous year of sexual assaults; non sexual partner abuse; stalking; or overall domestic violence.

A separate module of the CSEW estimates that some 8% of children aged 10 to 15 were a victim of violent crime, equivalent to 566,000 incidents. These differ from those against adults, tending to be lower level incidents often taking place during daylight, in school, and to be committed by an acquaintance. Those with a disability (11.3%) and boys (10.5%) showed higher probabilities of being a victim than others in the 2011/12 survey.

Alongside this release, a set of [appendix tables \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) are available covering a variety of violence statistics. These were previously published as part of [Crime Statistics, Period Ending March 2012](#).

## Overall violence – volume and comparison

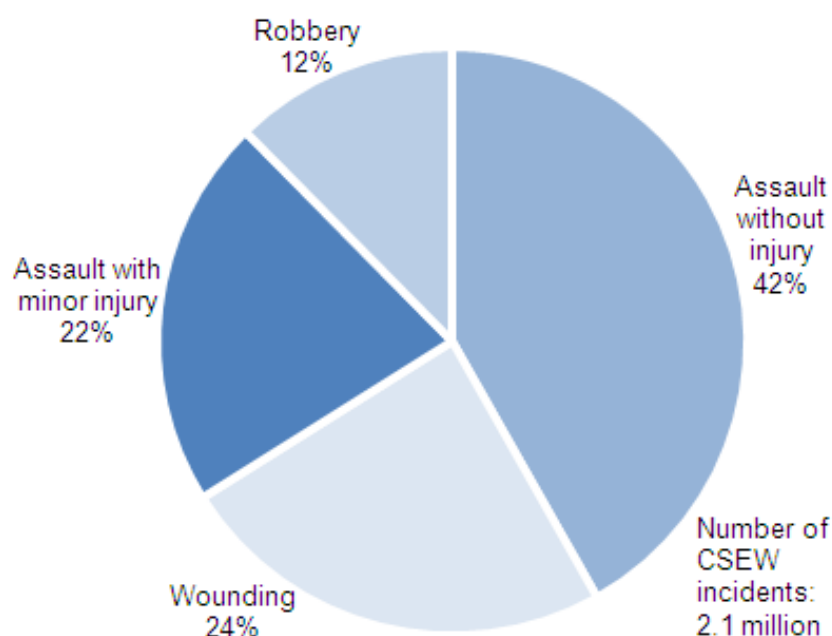
The 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates that there were 2,051,000 violent incidents against adults in England and Wales<sup>1</sup>. As in previous years, assault without injury accounted for the largest proportion of all CSEW violent incidents (42%), followed by wounding (24%), assault with minor injury (22%), and robbery<sup>2</sup> (12%) ([Appendix Table 1.01 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

There were 762,515 offences of violence against the person recorded by the police in 2011/12 ([Table 1.02 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#))<sup>3</sup>. Of these, 338,455 were violence against the person - with injury, most of which were Actual Bodily Harm (ABH) offences (90% of total) with the remaining offences covering Grievous Bodily Harm, endangering life or causing death. The remaining 424,070

offences are grouped as violence against the person – without injury. Around half of these offences were assaults without injury (52%), and the remainder covered a range of offences, including those causing public fear, alarm or distress and harassments. Some 5% of violent offences (or 36,417) were recorded as hate crimes<sup>4</sup> ([Home Office](#), 2012b).

Figure 1 shows how CSEW violent crimes can be broken down into different types of offences.

**Figure 1: Types of violent crime, 2011-12 CSEW**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(28 Kb)

The composition of CSEW violent crime has similarities with that of police recorded violent crime. For example, 50% of CSEW offences resulted in no injury, and 56% of police recorded violent crimes were violence against the person without injuries, based on data collected in 2011/12. There are important differences, however, for example in the way robberies or domestic violence incidents are classified in each source. Apart from the detailed record level data available from the Homicide Index, police recorded crimes are restricted to aggregate counts of offences. The CSEW collects a richer set of data about victims and the circumstances of crime (see, for example, the [CSEW 'Nature of crime' tables 2011/12](#), published alongside this release).

- Based on the 2011/12 CSEW, around 3% of adults in England and Wales were victim of a violent crime ([Table 1.03 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).
- Violence, along with vandalism, is a crime where repeat victimisations most often occur ([Table 1.04 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Some 24% of victims of violence reported being a victim on more

than one occasion (in the previous 12 months), and 12% reported being a victim three or more times ([Table 1.04 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

- [‘Nature of crime’ Tables 7.1 and 7.6 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) show that 62% of violence victims were male; while 80% of offenders were male<sup>5</sup>.
- This masks important variations by sub-type. Most victims were male in each of the different types of violent offences from 73% of the victims of robbery to 58% of victims of assaults with minor injury ([‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.6 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). Most victims of each type of domestic or sexual violence were female (see the ‘Intimate Violence’ section).

Using the separate module of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) that estimates crime against children aged 10 to 15 there were 566,000 such offences based on the 2011/12 survey. This equates to 8% of children aged 10 to 15 having experienced violent crimes in the last year; 5% having experienced violence with injury. These are not directly comparable with the proportions of adults who experienced violent crime. The nature of these crimes also differ to those against adults. The ‘violence against children aged 10 to 15’ section shows that these incidents frequently take place in different places and at different times of day to those against adults. For a further discussion of the relationship between the adults’ and 10 to 15s’ surveys see Section 2.4 of [Millard and Flatley, 2010](#).

In the 2011/12 CSEW 44% of adult victims of violent incidents reported that the police came to know about the matter, similar to the proportions estimated since the 2002/03 survey ([Table 1.06 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). This varied by violence type from 33% of incidents of assault with minor injury, to 65% of wounding incidents reflecting the fact that generally respondents were more likely to report the more serious offences to the police. One exception to this general pattern was serious sexual assault, as measured through the self-completion questions, which had a low reporting rate with 13% of victims reporting it to the police according to the 2011/12 survey (see ‘Reporting of serious sexual assault’).

Overall based on the 2011/12 survey, 44% of people not reporting a violent crime did not report it because the incident was trivial or they perceived the police would not or could not do anything ([Table 1.07 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Some 35% of non-reported crimes were not reported because they were felt to be private or to be dealt with by the respondent themselves.

In conclusion, looking at different aspects of violent crimes shows key differences between the two sources. The CSEW, which measures respondents’ experiences, shows a large volume of violent crime offences occurring, mostly against men, mostly not reported to the police, and a relatively high proportion being repeat victimisations. Police recorded crime figures show a smaller volume of offences, but unlike the survey provide measures many of the less frequent but most serious offences, such as homicides, and hate crimes.

## Notes for Overall violence – volume and comparison

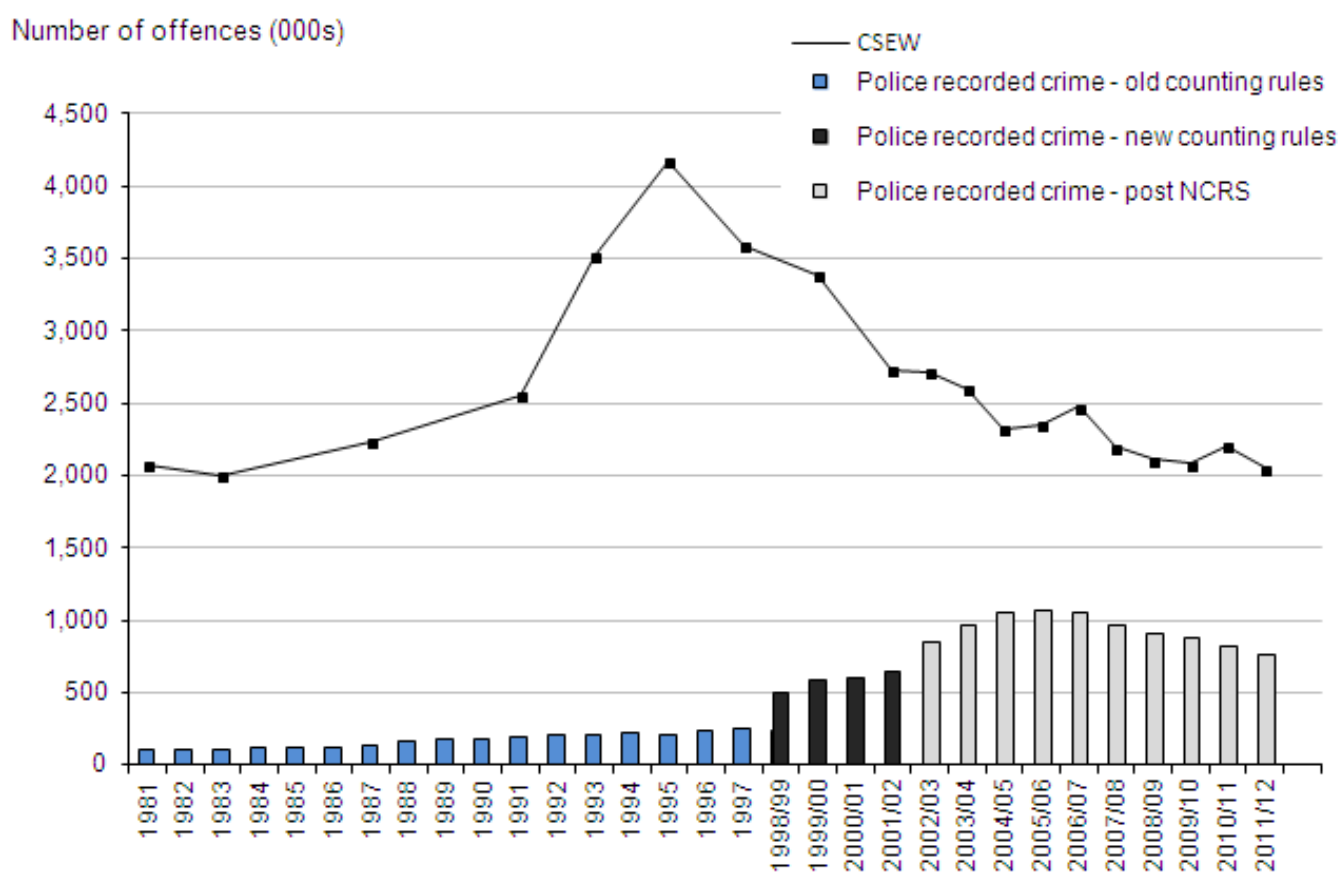
1. ‘All violence’ includes wounding, assault with minor injury, assault without injury and robbery. For more information see Section 5.1 of the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#).



2. Robbery, an offence in which violence or the threat of violence is used during a theft or attempted theft, is included within overall CSEW violence but not in police recorded violence where it is reported on its own as a separate category.
3. The police recorded figures presented here for the 2011/12 year are the same as those published in July 2012 as part of quarterly [Crime Statistics, Period Ending March 2012](#) release. Some forces have updated their data and therefore figures presented here vary slightly with figures for 2011/12 taken from later extracts of police records which have been published in subsequent quarterly releases.
4. 'Hate crime' is any criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by hostility towards someone based on their disability, race, religion, gender-identity or sexual orientation, whether perceived to be so by the victim or any other person.
5. Detailed questions about offender(s) are only asked of victims who experienced three or fewer offences in the last year to minimise respondent burden. Figures here are based on the 99% of incidents in which the victim could say something about the offender(s).

## Overall violence – trends

For the population groups and offences it covers, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is the best source for assessing long-term trends as it has used the same methodology since it first started in 1981. Figure 2 shows the number of incidents estimated each year by the CSEW, alongside the numbers of offences recorded by the police.

**Figure 2: Trends in recorded violent crime and CSEW violent crime, 1981 to 2011-12****Notes:**

1. Sources: Police recorded crime, Home Office and Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. NCRS = National Crime Recording Standard
3. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) CSEW - 1981 to 1999, police recorded - 1981 to 1997 refer to the calendar year (January to December). b) CSEW - 2000/01 to 2011/12, police recorded - 1998/99 to 2011/12 refer to the financial year (April to March).

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(30.5 Kb)

Current police recorded crime cannot be usefully compared to levels recorded prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002. This was thought to have resulted in a rise in the volume of offences recorded by the police, particularly in the categories of violent offences<sup>1</sup>. From 2002/03, violence against the person recorded by the police rose for three consecutive years, to a peak of 1.1 million offences in 2005/06. Since then the number of offences has fallen by 28%, to 762,515 offences. This is equivalent to 1.4 offences per 100 people in 2011/12 ([Table 1.05 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)), and is a 7% decrease on the previous year ([Table 1.02 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Within the overall category of police recorded violence against the person, both



violence with injury and violence without injury fell, by 8% and 6% respectively ([Table 1.02 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

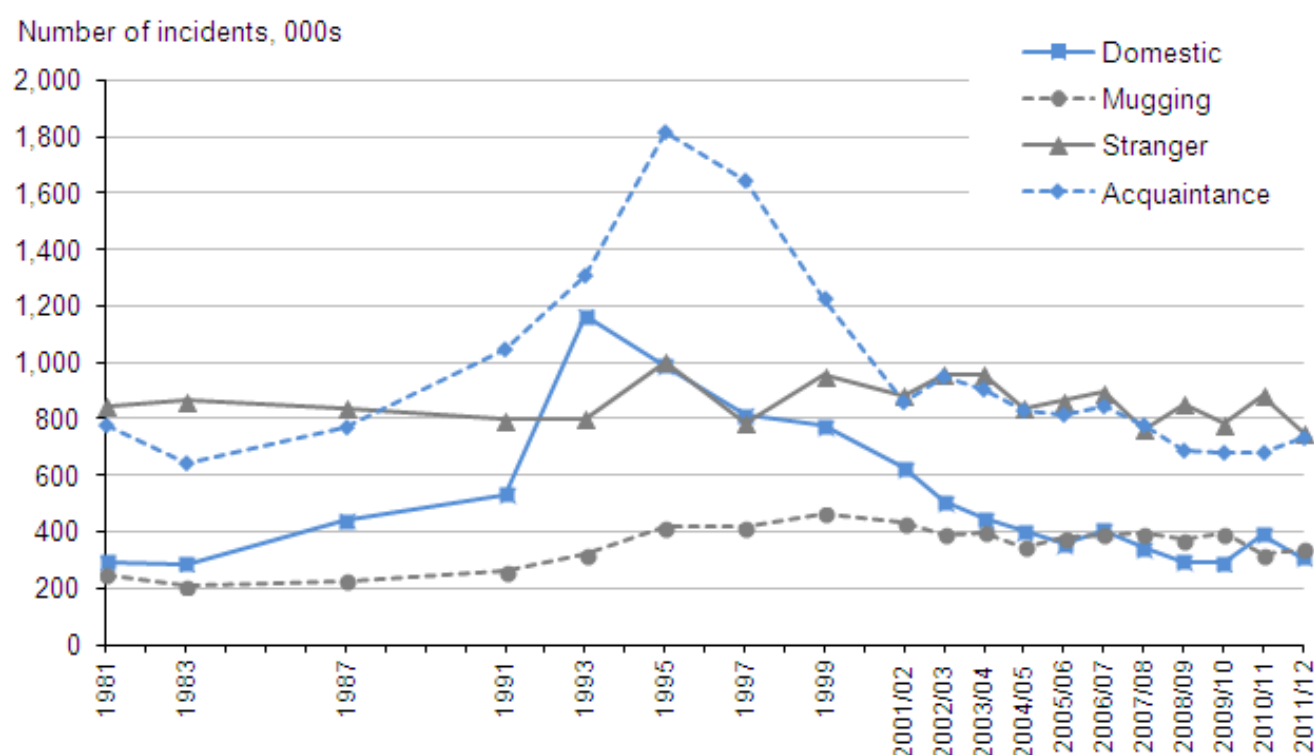
The number of CSEW violent crimes increased gradually through most years of the 1980s before rising sharply after 1991 to reach a peak in the mid 1990s. Between the 1995 and the 2001/02 surveys, the number of incidents fell sharply, with more gradual decreases being recorded thereafter. The levels of violence recorded by the survey have remained broadly stable since 2007/08. The apparent 7% decrease between the 2011/12 and 2010/11 surveys was not statistically significant<sup>2</sup>, but the 26% decrease in assault with minor injury was. The full time-series of data are reported in [Table 1.01 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) and [Table 1.03 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#).

- The level of offences in the 2011/12 survey represents a 51% decrease on that in 1995, and is now at a similar level to those shown in the 1981 and 1983 surveys.
- This fall represents 2.1 million fewer incidents and around 800,000 fewer victims in 2011/12 compared with the 1995 CSEW.
- In 1995, 5.3% of adults were a victim of one or more violent crimes; in the 2011/12 survey 3.0% were.

In 1981 57% of violent incidents were committed against repeat victims (or 1.2 million incidents), increasing to 68% in 1995 (2.8 million incidents) ([Table 1.08 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) and [Table 1.01 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). This had fallen to 50% in the 2011/12 survey (1.0 million incidents). This indicates that the decrease in violent incidents has been influenced to a larger extent by a decrease in repeat victimisations than sole victimisations, (a 64% decrease between 1995 and the 2011/12 survey compared with 24% in sole victimisations). This pattern (repeated across most crime types) is regarded in some quarters as an important factor in explaining the 'international crime drop' that occurred from the mid-1990s ([Van Dijk et al.](#), 2012). At present, however, there is no consensus as to what has been driving this drop in repeat victimisation.

Trends in violent crime also vary by the type of violence. Information on the offender can be used to measure domestic violence<sup>3</sup> (14% of 2011/12 CSEW violence and snatch theft<sup>4</sup>), acquaintance violence (34%), stranger violence (35%) and mugging (robbery and snatch theft, 16%)<sup>5</sup> ([Table 1.01 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Figure 3 shows that larger increases and then decreases took place in levels of domestic and acquaintance violence than other types of violence (mugging and stranger violence).

From the peak in 1995 to the 2011/12 CSEW acquaintance violence decreased by 60% from 1.8 million offences in 1995, to 731,000. Incidents of CSEW domestic violence peaked in 1993, decreasing by 74%, from 1.2 million to 308,000 in the 2011/12 survey. These are therefore large-volume offences, and the substantial changes seen since the mid 1990s have been an important driver in changes in violence, and to some extent in overall CSEW crime. It is important to bear in mind, however, that domestic violence measured this way is prone to under-reporting, and the self-completion section of the survey, collected since 2004/05 and presented in the 'Intimate violence' section, covers many more such incidents, and provides a greater level of detail.

**Figure 3: Trends in violent crime by type of violence, 1981 to 2011-12****Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1981 to 1999 refer to crime experienced in the calendar year (January to December). b) 2000/01 to 2011/12 refer to crime experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews in the financial year (April to March).
3. The 1991 estimates for domestic, acquaintance and stranger violence and mugging were calculated based on the estimate for all violence. Estimates for these individual categories could not be calculated using their individual incidence rates because the data used for calculating these rates were not collected for that year.

**Download chart**
[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(31.5 Kb)

Long-term rises and then falls are not limited to the types described earlier, but occur for all violent crimes. Numbers of homicides peaked in 2002/03 ([Table 2.01 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)), and as described in the 'Homicide' section have declined since.

Other explanations for the drop include a wide variety of social and even environmental changes. The take-up of mobile phones ([Klick et al. 2012](#)), changing drug markets, policing that is data-driven and focussed on problem hot-spots ([Van Dijk et al., 2012](#).) are all commonly cited causes in reducing levels of overall crime. In their review of evidence about the International Crime Drop, Van Dijk et al. did not find consistent evidence to support the link between the decrease in crime and such specific changes, particularly those that did not occur across all developed countries at similar times. Furthermore, changes in crime or violent crime did not occur at the same time as wider

social changes that are often thought to be important factors, such as post-war “youth bulges” and economic booms.

Van Dijk et al. suggest several more subtle or hard-to-measure changes in policy or society that might help explain the decrease in violence, including:

- decreases in acquisitive crime leading to fewer criminals and falling revenues from crime in general;
- changes in the patterns of victims becoming offenders; and
- successful programs targeted at reducing repeat victimisation.

A theory which has received much recent media attention is that lead exposure (through paint and petrol) at a very young age results in increased aggression in later life ([Nevin](#), 2007, [Reyes](#), 2007).

### Notes for Overall violence – trends

1. See section 3.2 of the [User Guide](#).
2. More recent headline figures, covering interviews conducted and crimes recorded by the police in the 12 months to September 2012, are available in ‘[Crime statistics, period ending September 2012](#)’. This release, however, focuses on statistics from the [year ending March 2012](#).
3. Domestic violence refers to incidents reported through the face-to-face interview questions; the self-completion questions give a more accurate and useful picture of the extent of domestic abuse (see ‘Intimate Violence’ section or ‘Data Sources’ for further information).
4. This grouping combines incidents of violence with snatch theft against the person, and hence can cover muggings (a group combining robberies and snatch theft).
5. See Section 5.1 of the [User Guide](#).

### Overall violence – victim profile

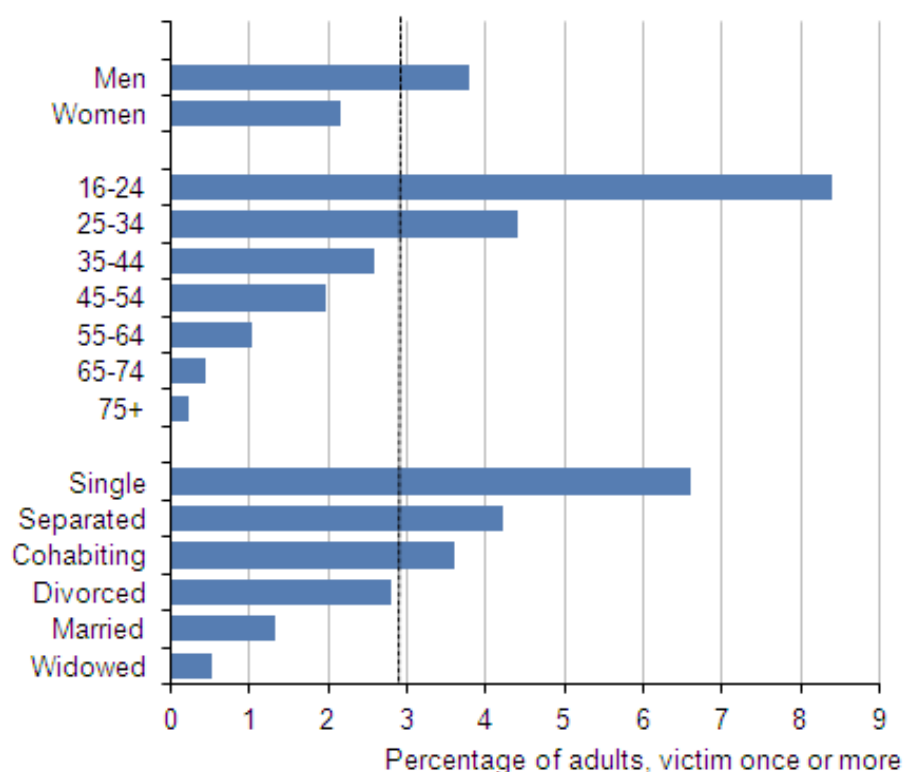
A full breakdown of the personal, household and area characteristics of the victims of violent crime is shown in [Tables 1.09 to 1.12, \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) based on the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). Younger people, and particularly younger men, had the greatest chance of becoming victims of violent crime. Using other characteristics such as disability or ethnicity gives groups with different age profiles, so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effects of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation. Caution is also needed when thinking about hard-to-measure crime; and so separate analysis is available in the ‘risks of sexual and domestic violence’ and the ‘types of violence – violence against children aged 10 to 15’ sections.

Further analysis using logistic regression can identify which characteristics are independently associated with an increased chance of being a victim. For example, [Table 1.09 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) shows that there was little difference in the proportion of adults with and without a long-standing illness or disability falling victim to violence. However, logistic regression based on the

2009/10 CSEW shows that when taking into account differences such as older age profiles, adults with a long-standing illness or disability were more likely to be a victim of violence than those without (Table 3.07 in [Flatley et al.](#), 2010).

The model in [Flatley et al.](#) found no area characteristics, such as levels of employment, deprivation or being urban or rural, that had a strong relationship with the chance of being a victim of violence. Rather, age, sex and marital status had strong relationships with the chance of being a victim when the effects of many other characteristics were taken into account. Figure 4 shows the proportion of adults who were victim of a violent crime, based on the 2011/12 CSEW, split by each of these characteristics.

**Figure 4: Characteristics associated with being a victim of violence, 2011-12 CSEW**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. See Section 7.3 of the User Guide for definitions of personal characteristics.

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(29.5 Kb)

Figure 4 and [Tables 1.09 to 1.12 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) show that based on the 2011/12 survey:

- Overall, men were nearly twice as likely as women (3.8% compared with 2.1%) to have experienced one or more violent crimes in the year prior to interview.

- Those aged 16 to 24 were more likely to be a victim of violence (8.4%, or 11.0% for men and 5.7% for women) than older age groups. This is roughly twice as high as the victimisation rate of those aged 25 to 34 (4.4%) and roughly 20 times as high as the rate for those aged 65 -74 (fewer than 0.5%).
- Looking at marital status, single people had the highest chance of being a victim (6.6%). The logistic regression analysis carried out on the 2009/10 survey suggests that this reflects a difference from married people that cannot be explained simply by differences in the age profiles of these groups.
- Separated and divorced people were also more likely to be victims of violent crime than those who were married; but differences for those who are cohabiting or who were widowed from those who were married may reflect age differences.

Those most likely to be victims remained broadly similar across all types of violence except domestic and sexual violence. Table 4.04 shows that women were more likely than men to be a victim for each type of intimate violence, based on the 2011/12 CSEW.

## Types of violence – homicide and attempted murder

There are two sources of homicide<sup>1</sup> data; the Home Office Homicide Index and the main recorded crime data return. The Homicide Index is a record level dataset of every homicide that takes place in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset. Data presented here are from a snapshot of the Homicide Index, frozen on 1 November 2012, while data presented in quarterly bulletins are sourced from the main recorded crime return and regarded as correct at the time of presentation. Due to the different sources, figures presented here may differ slightly from those presented in recent quarterly bulletins.

The Homicide Index shows that in 2011/12 there were 540 currently recorded<sup>2</sup> homicides in England and Wales. This is 95 fewer than the 635 recorded in 2010/11, a decrease of 15%. The number of homicides recorded in 2011/12 is the lowest since 1989, when 521 were recorded<sup>3</sup>.

In 2011/12, the number of attempted murders recorded by the police was 483, an 8% decrease compared with the previous year, when 523 were recorded ([Table 1.02 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). This is the lowest number of attempted murders recorded by the police since 1990 (476).

In 2011/12 there were 9.7 recorded homicides per million people. The profile of homicide victims differs from those for other types of violent crime. Children aged under one year old, and adults aged 16 to 29, were the age groups most likely to be a victim of homicide, while more than two-thirds of homicide victims (68%) were male. Detailed findings from the Homicide Index can be found in the 'Homicide' section.

To give a fuller picture of how rare homicide is in England and Wales, it is useful to make a broad comparison with other causes of death. Figures for 2011<sup>4</sup> show that more people were killed as a result of falls (3,885), intentional self-harm (3,644), and transport accidents (1,815), but fewer were killed by exposure to smoke fire and flames (242) or accidental drowning or submersion (175).

## Notes for Types of violence – homicide and attempted murder

1. Homicide covers murder, manslaughter (including corporate manslaughter) and infanticide.
2. See the 'Homicide' section for more information on 'initially' and 'currently' recorded homicides – the main police recorded crime collection initially showed 510 homicides for the same period.
3. Figures for police recorded homicide prior to 1997 are available from the [Home Office](#).
4. See Table 5.19 of [Mortality Statistics: Deaths registered in England and Wales \(Series DR\), 2011](#)

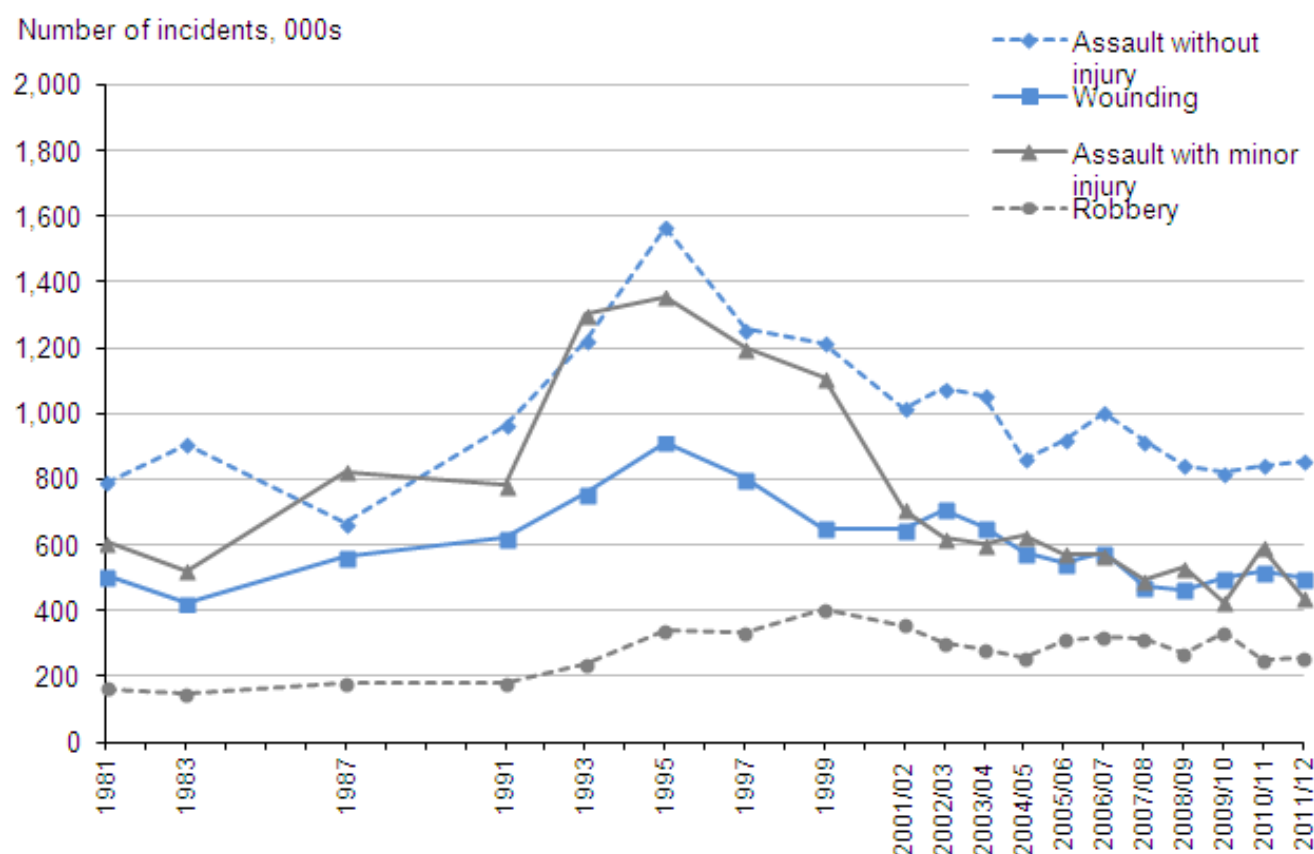
## Types of violence – violence with injury

In 2011/12 the police recorded 762,515 violence against the person offences of which 44% involved injury. Violence against the person with injury offences were 8% lower than in 2010/11, and the lowest figure since the NCRS was introduced in 2002/03 ([Table 1.02 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#))<sup>1</sup>. The 2011/12 CSEW estimated that just over 2 million violent incidents took place (2,051,000) of which half (50%) involved injury ([Table 1.01 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). The 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) also estimates that in 16% of violent incidents the victim required some form of medical attention with 11% requiring the medical attention of a doctor, and 1% a hospital stay. The most common injury sustained was minor bruising/black eye (30%) followed by, cuts (15%), severe bruising (14%) and scratches (13%) (['Nature of crime' Table 7.7 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

The 2011/12 CSEW indicated that there was no change in the overall level of violence compared with the previous year as the 7% decrease was not statistically significant, The 15% decrease in violence with injury was statistically significant although this in contrast to trends since 2002/03 which have been broadly flat. The decrease in 2011/12 returns the volume of violence with injury to levels similar to those in 2009/10 after higher estimates in 2010/11.

Figure 5 shows that assaults with minor injury decreased by two-thirds (67%) between the peak in 1995 and the 2011/12 CSEW, whilst wounding and assaults without injury decreased 46% and 45% respectively over the same time period. Decreases in the levels of robbery were less marked, decreasing by 37% since their peak in 1999.



**Figure 5: Trends in violence by type of offender or violence, 1981 to 2011-12 CSEW****Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1981 to 1999 refer to crime experienced in the calendar year (January to December). b) 2000/01 to 2011/12 refer to crime experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews in the financial year (April to March).

**Download chart**
[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(30 Kb)

Further evidence on trends in violent crime involving injury is available from administrative data collected from health services. Although not classified as National Statistics, these data include incidents not reported to the police and those populations not covered by the CSEW. An estimated 308,000 people attended emergency departments or minor injury units in England and Wales following violence in 2011 ([Sivarajasingham et al., 2012](#)). Figure 1 of [Sivarajasingham et al., 2012](#) shows that trends in hospital data on violence fit well with CSEW patterns, albeit at levels about a fifth of those in the survey.

**Notes for Types of violence – violence with injury**

1. The 'with injury' offences include homicide, attempted murder, causing death by dangerous driving, grievous bodily harm with or without intent or other act endangering life and actual bodily harm and other injury.

## Types of violence – offences involving firearms

Due to the serious nature of most offences involving weapons, additional details are collected by the police where firearms and knives and sharp instruments have been used. Offences relating to firearms are those where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument (hitting a victim with the weapon) or as a threat. Figures differ from the provisional estimates released in [Crime statistics, period ending March 2012](#), as air weapon offences included in this publication are not included in provisional estimates.

In 2011/12, firearms were used in 9,555 recorded offences in England and Wales, of which 3,351 were violence against the person offences. This represents a decrease of 16% compared with the previous year, when 11,335 offences were recorded. This compares with a 4% decrease across all offences recorded by the police over the same period.

The number of firearm offences has fallen by 60% since its peak of 24,094 in 2003/04. This decrease has largely been due to a reduction in the number of air weapon offences recorded by the police, which has fallen by three-quarters (74%) over the same time period. In comparison, non-air weapon offences are 42% lower than 2003/04, having peaked later, in 2005/06. Over the same period police recorded crime overall has fallen by around a third (34%).

Further details on firearm offences are presented in the 'Firearms' section.

## Types of violence – offences involving knives and sharp instruments

For the selected offences where additional data on the use of knives or sharp instruments are collected, the police recorded 30,999 ([Table 1.13 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). In all, this represents a 5% decrease on the previous year with 32,711 offences recorded in 2010/11. The Homicide Index shows that 209 of these were homicides<sup>1</sup> ([Table 2.03 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). [Table 1.13 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) shows substantial variations in offences where knives and sharp instruments are used including; 51% of attempted murders; 39% of homicides; 22% of robberies and 15% of threats to kill. Overall the proportion of the selected offences that involved a knife or sharp instrument in 2011/12 was 7%.

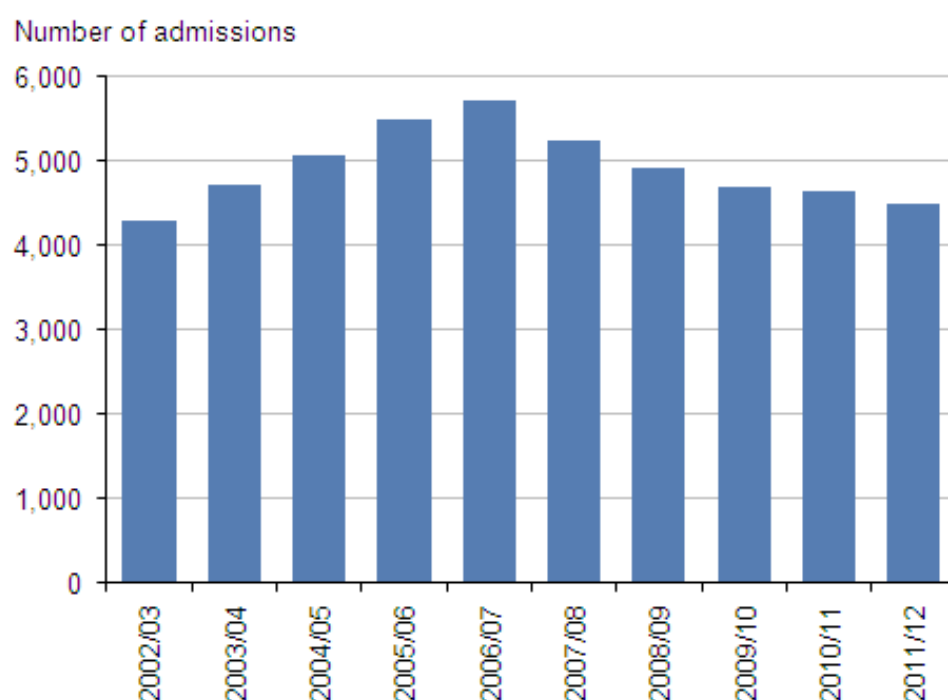
The proportion of selected police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument has remained broadly stable in each of the four years for which data are presented. Although changes in recording practices in some police forces mean it is not possible to make direct comparisons between 2009/10 and 2010/11, it is reasonable to say that the numbers of both offences with and without knives and sharp instruments have been declining in recent years ([Table 1.13 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

According to the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), knives were the most common types of weapons used in violent incidents (7%). Hitting implements<sup>2</sup> were used in 5%

of incidents, and glasses or bottles in 4%. In total, weapons were used in about one in five (22%) incidents of violent crime in the 2011/12 CSEW ([‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.8 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). [‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.9 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) shows that the use of weapons, as a whole, has shown no trend since the 1996 CSEW.

An additional source of information about serious incidents involving violence is provided by NHS hospital admission statistics. NHS hospital admissions are collated from Hospital Episodes Statistics (HES), for all NHS trusts in England. Figure 6 shows that admissions for assault with a sharp instrument peaked at 5,720 in 2006/07. Admissions have declined since that year, and in 2011/12 there were 4,490 admissions, similar to the levels shown in 2002/03 and 2003/04.

**Figure 6: All hospital admissions in NHS hospitals in England for assault with sharp objects, 2002-03 to 2011-12**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, National Health Service

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(28 Kb)

**Notes for Types of violence – offences involving knives and sharp instruments**

1. See the ‘Homicide’ section for more information on ‘initially’ and ‘currently’ recorded homicides – the main police recorded crime collection initially showed 209 homicides using knives or sharp instruments.

2. This category includes sticks, clubs and other hitting implements.

## Types of violence – domestic violence, sexual offences and intimate violence

Intimate violence is a collective term used to refer to a number of different forms of physical and non-physical abuse consisting of partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault and stalking. It is difficult to obtain reliable information on the extent of intimate violence as there is a degree of under-reporting of these incidents, affecting both the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime figures.

Due to the sensitivity of questions on intimate violence and the level of underestimation, a separate self-completion module is included in the CSEW which asks 16 to 59 year old respondents about their experience of intimate violence. It is important to note that this module of the CSEW asks questions on the wider topic of domestic abuse rather than domestic violence, with only 5% of respondents who reported being victims of domestic abuse in the last 12 months in the self-completion also saying that had been victims of domestic violence in the face-to-face interviews. The difference is likely to be due to the wider definition of domestic abuse as well as the under-reporting issue. Findings from the self-completion module can be found in the 'Intimate Violence' section.

In the last year, 7.3% of women and 5.0% of men reported having experienced domestic abuse<sup>1</sup>, equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million female victims and 800,000 male victims. There was no statistically significant change in the level of domestic abuse experienced in the last year between the 2010/11 and 2011/12 surveys.

Domestic abuse can be sexual and non-sexual abuse carried out by a partner or family member. In addition to domestic abuse, respondents are asked about sexual assault or stalking carried out by anyone. In the last year, non-sexual abuse by a partner and stalking were the most common of the separate types of intimate violence:

- 4.2% of women and 3.0% of men reported having experienced non-sexual partner abuse.
- 4.2% of women and 2.7% of men reported having experienced stalking.
- Many more women than men experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year: 3% of women compared with 0.3% of men. The majority of these were less serious sexual assaults ([Table 4.01 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).
- Less than 1% of both women and men reported having experienced a serious sexual assault ([Table 4.01 \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#))<sup>2</sup>.

Three of the four main categories of domestic abuse (non-sexual partner abuse, non-sexual family abuse and stalking) have all shown statistically significant decreases between the 2004/05 and 2011/12 CSEW. Sexual assault has shown no statistically significant change over this time period.

In 2011/12, the police recorded a total of 53,665 sexual offences across England and Wales. The most serious sexual offences of rape (16,041 offences) and sexual assault (22,053 offences) accounted for 71% of sexual offences recorded by the police. A further 6,300 most-serious sexual offences related most to sexual activity with minors, and a further 9,271 other sexual offences related mostly to exposure or voyeurism. This differs markedly from victims responding to the CSEW

in 2011/12, the majority of whom were reporting being victims of other sexual offences outside the most serious category. 13% of victims of serious sexual assault from the 2011/12 CSEW told the police about the incident.

Changes in the levels of police recorded sexual offences over time are particularly likely to be affected by changes in recording practices. These kinds of changes may in part be due to greater encouragement by the police to victims to come forward and improvements in police recording, rather than an increase in the level of victimisation.

Further information on sexual offending from across the crime and criminal justice system can be found in [‘An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales’](#), a joint publication compiled by the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and the Office for National Statistics. Key findings include:

- Around 90% of victims of the most serious sexual offences in the previous year knew the perpetrator, compared with less than half for other sexual offences;
- Frequently cited reasons for not reporting the crime were that it was ‘embarrassing’, they ‘didn’t think the police could do much to help’, that the incident was ‘too trivial or not worth reporting’, or that they saw it as a ‘private/family matter and not police business’; and
- While the sanction detection rate for sexual offences was higher than for a number of other offences, such as robbery (21%) and burglary (13%), it was lower than other contact crimes such as violence against the person (44%). This may reflect the greater challenges associated with investigating sexual offences and the reluctance of some victims to proceed with prosecutions.

### **Notes for Types of violence – domestic violence, sexual offences and intimate violence**

1. Domestic abuse includes non-physical abuse, threats, force, sexual assault or stalking carried out by a current or former partner or other family member. ‘Domestic abuse’ is not directly comparable to the main CSEW ‘domestic violence’ category
2. See Section 5.1 of the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#) for categories of intimate violence

### **Nature of violence – offenders and locations**

Victims were able to provide some details about the offender(s) in nearly all (99%) incidents of Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) violence ([‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.1 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). As with victims of overall violent crime, offenders in violent incidents were most likely to be young and male. In around half of violent incidents (52%) the offender was believed to be aged between 16 and 24 years and over four out of five (86%) involved male offenders. Separate Home Office analysis of police recorded crime figures has estimated that young people (using a different age group 10 to 17 year olds) were the offenders in 18% of violence against the person and 51% of robbery offences in 2009/10 ([Home Office](#), 2012a).

In 45% of violent incidents reported to CSEW interviewers the offender was a stranger; in 31% the offender was well known to the victim. These patterns have remained broadly stable since the

2002/03 survey ([‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.1 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). Domestic abuse incidents such as sexual assault show their own patterns in offender characteristics – see ‘nature of sexual assault’.

[‘Nature of crime’ Table 7. \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)<sup>2</sup> shows that just under a third of CSEW violent crimes took place in the street (29%), and around a fifth took place around the home or in a pub or club (22% and 20% respectively). Assaults without injury were more likely to happen at work than other types of violence (16% compared with 11% of all violence), while the majority of robberies (61%) took place on the street.

[‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.3 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) shows that violent crimes were equally likely to take place during the week or at the weekend, based on the 2011/12 survey, and 62% took place during the evening or at night. However, around two-thirds of incidents of stranger violence (63%) took place at the weekend, and three quarters (75%) during the evening or night.

## Nature of violence – influence of alcohol and drugs

According to the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), victims believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol in around half (47%) of all violent incidents, or 917,000 offences<sup>1</sup>. [Table 7.11 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) also shows that in nearly a quarter (23%) or 446,000 violent incidents the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of drugs.

Levels of both these types of crime are at similar levels to those seen in recent years. The proportions of violent crimes where offenders were under the influence of alcohol or drugs increased between 1995 and 2001/02, but stayed at broadly similar levels thereafter.

### Notes for Nature of violence – influence of alcohol and drugs

1. Questions were asked if the victim was able to say something about the offender(s), which they could do in nearly all (99%) incidents. If there was more than one offender, victims were asked if any of the offenders were perceived to be under the influence. Questions were not asked if any offender was perceived to be school age.

## Nature of violence – emotional impact and seriousness

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides some measures of the impact of crime on victims. [‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.4 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) shows that four out of five victims of violence (82%) were emotionally affected, including the one in five (21%) who were very much affected. The proportion of violence victims very much emotionally affected is lower than that of burglary victims (30%) but higher than other types of crime (for example vandalism, at 14%). The most common form of emotional reaction were anger (45% of all violence victims from the 2011/12 CSEW) followed by annoyance (41%) and shock (37%)<sup>1</sup>.

Victims are also asked to rate the seriousness of each incident on a scale of 1 to 20<sup>2</sup>. [‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.5 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) shows that over half of violence victims (56%) rated the incident in the least serious range (1-6); while one in eight (12%) rated it in the most serious range



(14-20). There are no consistent trends across the last ten surveys in the seriousness ratings that victims place on violent crimes or the level of reporting being affected emotionally.

The impact of violence in the 2011/12 CSEW varies by violence type, with stranger violence victims being the least likely to report being very much emotionally affected (12%) and domestic violence victims the most likely (39%). Domestic abuse is better measured through the self-completion intimate personal violence questions. The 'nature of sexual assault' section shows, for example, that over half (56%) of victims of serious sexual assault suffered mental or emotional problems; a further quarter (25%) reported having problems trusting people or having difficulty in other relationships; and in 4% of incidents the victim attempted suicide as a result.

### Notes for Nature of violence – emotional impact and seriousness

1. Respondents can report more than one emotion.
2. Respondents are asked to use this scale, bearing in mind "1 being a very minor crime like theft of milk bottles from a doorstep, to 20 being the most serious crime of murder".

## Violence against children aged 10 to 15

Crimes against children are estimated using a separate module of the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and are based on a 'preferred measure' that takes into account factors identified as important in determining the severity of an incident such as the relationship of the victim to the offender and level of injury. Using this measure, 8% of children aged 10-15 experienced at least one violent incident in the previous 12 months, of which just 15% became known to the police (['Nature of crime' Table 8.5 \(176.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). ['Nature of crime' Table 8.4 \(176.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) shows that much of violence is bullying for this age group, with 55% of incidents being perceived to be part of a series of bullying. Violent offences recorded by the police, are therefore of a different nature, with police recorded offences against children focussing on the most serious or harmful offences.

The chance of being a victim of violent crime for varied by personal characteristics in different ways for children aged 10 to 15 than they did for adults.

Boys were over twice as likely as girls to be a victim of violent crime (10.5% compared with 4.6%); and those with a long-standing illness or disability were also more likely to have been a victim as those without one (11.3% compared with 7.3%).

Unlike adults, the probability of children aged 10 to 15 years being the victim of violent crime varied by the type of household and area they lived in. Children in high income households (4.9%) and those in rural households (6.7%) were less than half as likely to have been a victim of violence as low income households<sup>1</sup> (10.6%), social renters (12.7%) or those in flats and maisonettes (11.3%).

The survey asks children about injuries sustained through violence. ['Nature of crime' Table 8.6 \(176.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) shows that, based on the 2011/12 CSEW, 17% of victims aged 10-15

received some form medical attention and 74% sustained an injury, compared with 16% and 50% respectively for adults ([‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.7 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

In all, 22% of incidents against children aged 10 to 15 involved the use of a weapon ([Table 8.7 \(176.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)), the same as those against adults (22%, [‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.8 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). Sticks, clubs and hitting implements, were used in 40% of incidents involving weapons, ‘something else’ in 47%, and knives, screwdrivers or stabbing implements in 12%<sup>2</sup>.

Violent incidents against children tend to be committed by acquaintances ([‘Nature of crime’ Table 8.3 \(176.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). Where something could be said about the offender, 20% were committed by a stranger, compared with 45% in violence against adults in the 2011/12 survey ([‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.1 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). As in incidents against adults, in eight out of ten offences the offenders were male, and in six in ten there was a single offender.

Just over half of all violent incidents against those aged 10 to 15 (53%) took place in school, based on the 2011/12 CSEW ([‘Nature of crime’ Table 8.1 \(176.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). A further 18% occurred around the home or a housing estate (compared with 22% of violence against adults taking place around home, [‘Nature of crime’ Table 7.2 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)), and 15% in a park, common or other open space. The timing of incidents of violence against 10 to 15 year olds also differs from those against adults, with just under nine out of ten occurring in daylight (88%, compared with 38% of incidents against adults occurring between 6am and 6pm) ([‘Nature of crime’ Tables 8.2 \(176.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) and [7.3 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Victims aged 10-15 are also asked about the seriousness of crimes they experienced. [‘Nature of crime’ Table 8.4 \(176.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) shows that, based on the 2011/12 survey, 25% of violence victims aged 10 to 15 thought the incident was a crime, 36% thought it wrong but not a crime, and 39% thought it ‘was just something that happens’. This compares with 45% of theft victims aged 10 to 15 perceiving the incident to be a crime.

## Notes for Violence against children aged 10 to 15

1. These are the households in the lowest income band in the survey, with a total household income of less than £10,000; high income households are those with £50,000 or more.
2. Respondents could name more than one type of weapon, and so percentages add up to more than 100%.

## SECTION 2 – HOMICIDE

### Summary

The Home Office Homicide Index shows that there were 540 homicides (murder, manslaughter and infanticide) currently recorded in 2011/12 in England and Wales, 95 fewer than the 635 homicides recorded in 2010/11 (a decrease of 15%). These figures refer to the position as at 1 November 2012, the date the database was ‘frozen’<sup>1</sup> so that analysis could be conducted.

- Over recent years, the number of currently recorded homicides has shown a generally downward trend, with the number for 2011/12 (540) being the lowest since 1989 (521).
- In 2011/12, there were 9.7 offences per million population, the lowest since 1978 (9.6 offences per million population). As in previous years, children under one year old had the highest rate of homicide compared with other age groups, at 21 homicides per million population.
- With the exception of those aged under one year, adults generally had higher incidence rates of being a victim of homicide than children, with adult homicide rates peaking at 15 per million for those aged 16 to 29. For children aged one or over, homicide rates were higher at 6 per million for one-to-four year-olds than for five-to-fifteen year olds (2 per million).
- In 2011/12, there were 47 homicide victims aged under 16 years. In line with previous years, the majority of these victims were killed by a parent or step-parent (60%, or 28 offences).
- In 2011/12, as in previous years, more than two-thirds of homicide victims (68%) were male. There were differences between males and females in the pattern of relationships between victims and suspects.
- Female victims were more likely than male victims to be killed by someone they knew. Over three-quarters (78%) of female victims knew the main suspect, compared with 54% of male victims. In most of these cases, female victims were killed by a current or ex-partner (51% of all female victims) while male victims were most likely to be killed by a friend or acquaintance (39%).
- The most common method of killing continued to be by sharp instrument. In 2011/12, there were 209 victims killed in this way, accounting for 39% of all homicides. Although the volume of homicides committed by sharp instrument has been generally falling over the last ten years, the proportion of homicides committed by this method has increased.
- In 2011/12, 39 homicide victims were killed by shooting, 22 fewer than the 61 recorded in 2010/11 and similar to that in 2008/09 (39) and 2009/10 (41). The 2010/11 figure included the 12 victims of the Cumbrian shootings on 2 June 2010. The proportion of homicides committed by shooting was 7% in 2011/12.

## Notes for SECTION 2 – HOMICIDE

1. The Homicide Index is continually being updated with revised information from the police as investigations continue and as cases are heard by the courts. The version used for analysis does not accept updates after it is 'frozen' to ensure the data do not change during the analysis period.

## Background - homicide

The term 'homicide' covers the offences of murder, manslaughter (including corporate manslaughter) and infanticide. Murder and manslaughter are common law offences that have never been defined by statute, although they have been modified by statute. The offence of infanticide was created by the Infanticide Act 1922 and refined by the Infanticide Act 1938 (s1).

Data presented in this section have been extracted from the Home Office Homicide Index, a database separate to the main recorded crime dataset which contains detailed record-level

information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset. Data presented here therefore differ slightly from the homicide figures presented in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases<sup>1</sup>.

Homicide offences recorded in the financial year 2011/12 are presented in this section, with offences shown according to the year in which the police initially recorded the offence as homicide. This is not necessarily the year in which the incident took place or the year in which the case was heard in court. The data refer to the position as at 1 November 2012, when the Homicide Index database was 'frozen' for the purpose of analysis. The data will change as subsequent court hearings take place or as other information is received.

### Notes for Background - homicide

1. Provisional homicide figures published in the [Crime statistics, period ending March 2012](#) release showed 550 homicides recorded in 2011/12 and 638 for 2010/11. The corresponding figures from the Homicide Index were 540 and 635.

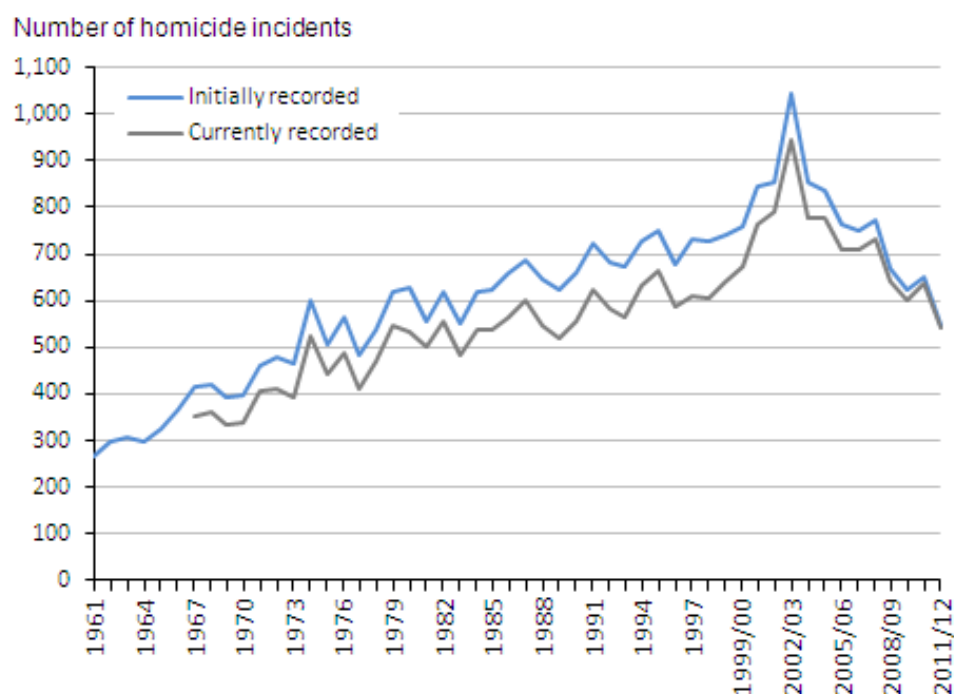
### Offences recorded as homicide

Figure 7 and Table 2.01 show the numbers of homicides, as taken from the Homicide Index, for the last 50 years. Homicides increased steadily from 1961 up to the early 2000s (the peak in 2002/03 includes 172 homicides committed by Dr Harold Shipman). The number of homicides has shown a general downward trend since 2002/03.

As of 1 November 2012 when the homicide index was 'frozen' for analysis, the total number of offences recorded as homicide in 2011/12 was 540. This represents a decrease of 95 offences (15%) from the 635 recorded for 2010/11. The 2011/12 figure was the lowest number since 1989, when 521 were recorded.

When the police initially record an offence as a homicide it remains classified as such unless the police or courts decide that a lesser offence, or no offence, took place. In all, 547 deaths were **initially recorded as homicides** by the police in 2011/12. This means that by 1 November 2012, 7 were no longer recorded as homicides, giving the total 540 offences **currently recorded as homicides** reported earlier.

Caution is needed when looking at longer-term homicide trend figures, primarily because they are based on the year in which offences are recorded by the police rather than the year in which the incidents took place. For example, the 172 homicides attributed to Dr Harold Shipman as a result of Dame Janet Smith's inquiry took place over a long period of time but were all recorded by the police during 2002/03. Also, where several people are killed by the same suspect, the number of homicides counted is the total number of persons killed rather than the number of incidents. For example, the victims of the Cumbrian shootings on 2 June 2010 are counted as 12 homicides rather than one incident in the 2010/11 data.

**Figure 7: Homicide offences recorded by the police in England and Wales, 1961 to 2011-12****Notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Year 1987 includes 15 victims of Michael Ryan.
3. Year 2000/01 includes 58 Chinese nationals who suffocated in a lorry en route into the UK.
4. Year 2002/03 includes 172 victims of Dr Harold Shipman.
5. Year 2003/04 includes 20 cockle pickers who drowned in Morecambe Bay.
6. Year 2005/06 includes 52 victims of the 7 July London bombings.
7. Year 2010/11 includes 12 victims of Derrick Bird.

**Download chart**
[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(31.5 Kb)

Homicides are relatively low-volume events, and year-on-year variations need to be interpreted with some caution. A statistical analysis of trends (discussed within 'Statistical interpretation of trends in homicides' of this section) indicates a significant reduction in homicides in recent years.

**Case outcomes**

The circumstances surrounding a homicide can be complex and it can take time for cases to pass through the criminal justice system (CJS). Due to this, the percentage of homicides recorded in 2011/12 (and, to a lesser extent, those recorded in earlier years) that have concluded at Crown Court is likely to show an increase when the next figures from the Homicide Index are published in twelve months' time. Conversely, the proportion of cases without suspects or with court proceedings pending is expected to decrease as police complete more investigations and as cases pass through the CJS (see 'Suspects' within this section for further details).

Where there are multiple suspects in any homicide they are categorised in the Homicide Index as either the principal suspect or a secondary suspect. There is only ever one principal suspect per homicide victim. If there is any conviction information available then the suspect with the longest sentence or most severe conviction is determined to be the principal suspect. In the absence of any court outcome, the principal suspect is either the person considered by the police to be the most involved in the homicide or the person with the closest relationship to the victim.

As more than one person can be convicted for a single homicide, the number of people convicted will not necessarily be the same as the number of victims recorded. However, if the outcome of only the principal suspect in each case is examined (that is, one suspect per victim), this can provide a more direct comparison to the case outcome of each homicide.

Of the 540 cases currently recorded as homicide in 2011/12, data on the case outcomes of the principal suspects at 1 November 2012 showed (Table 2.02):

- court proceedings had resulted in homicide convictions in 170 cases (31%);
- court proceedings were pending for 264 cases (49%);
- in 29 cases (5%), the suspect had committed suicide or died;
- proceedings had been discontinued or not initiated or all suspects had been acquitted in 16 cases (3%);
- no suspects had been identified in connection with 60 cases (11%); and
- in the remaining 1 case, the suspect was found by the court to be insane.

These figures are similar to those published last year for 2010/11. Analysis of homicide suspects is included in the sub-section 'Suspects'.

## Victims

The incidence rate for homicide remains low, with 9.7 such offences recorded per million population during 2011/12. This is the lowest homicide rate since 1978, when there were 9.6 homicides per million population (the rate was also 9.7 per million population in 1983). If the 172 homicides committed by Harold Shipman which were recorded in 2002/03 are excluded from analysis, homicide rates peaked in 2001/02, at 15.2 offences per million population<sup>1</sup> (Table 2.01).

The homicide rate has consistently been higher for males than for females. In 2011/12 the homicide rate for males (13.4 per million population) was more than twice that for females (6.1 per million population) (Table 2.03).

In 2011/12, 367 homicide victims were male and 172 were female<sup>2</sup>. There were decreases in both the number of male victims (down 16% from 435) and the number of female victims (down 14% from 200) compared with 2010/11.

The proportion of victims that were male has remained similar (68%) to that in previous years (69% in 2010/11 and 68% in 2009/10).

## Method of killing



As in previous years, the most common method of killing for both male and female victims was by a knife or other sharp instrument, with 209 such homicides recorded in 2011/12 compared with 234 in 2010/11 (Table 2.04). Although the volume of homicides committed by sharp instrument has been generally falling over recent years, the proportion of homicides committed by this method has increased. While there is some fluctuation from year to year, the proportion of homicides committed by a sharp instrument in the five-year period 2007/08 to 2011/12 was 37%, compared with 32% in the previous five-year period (2002/03 to 2006/07).

The second most common method of killing in 2011/12 was hitting or kicking without a weapon, accounting for 93 homicides (17% of the total). This was lower than for 2010/11 (120 homicides or 19%) and the lowest involving this method since 2005/06 (112 homicides or 16%).

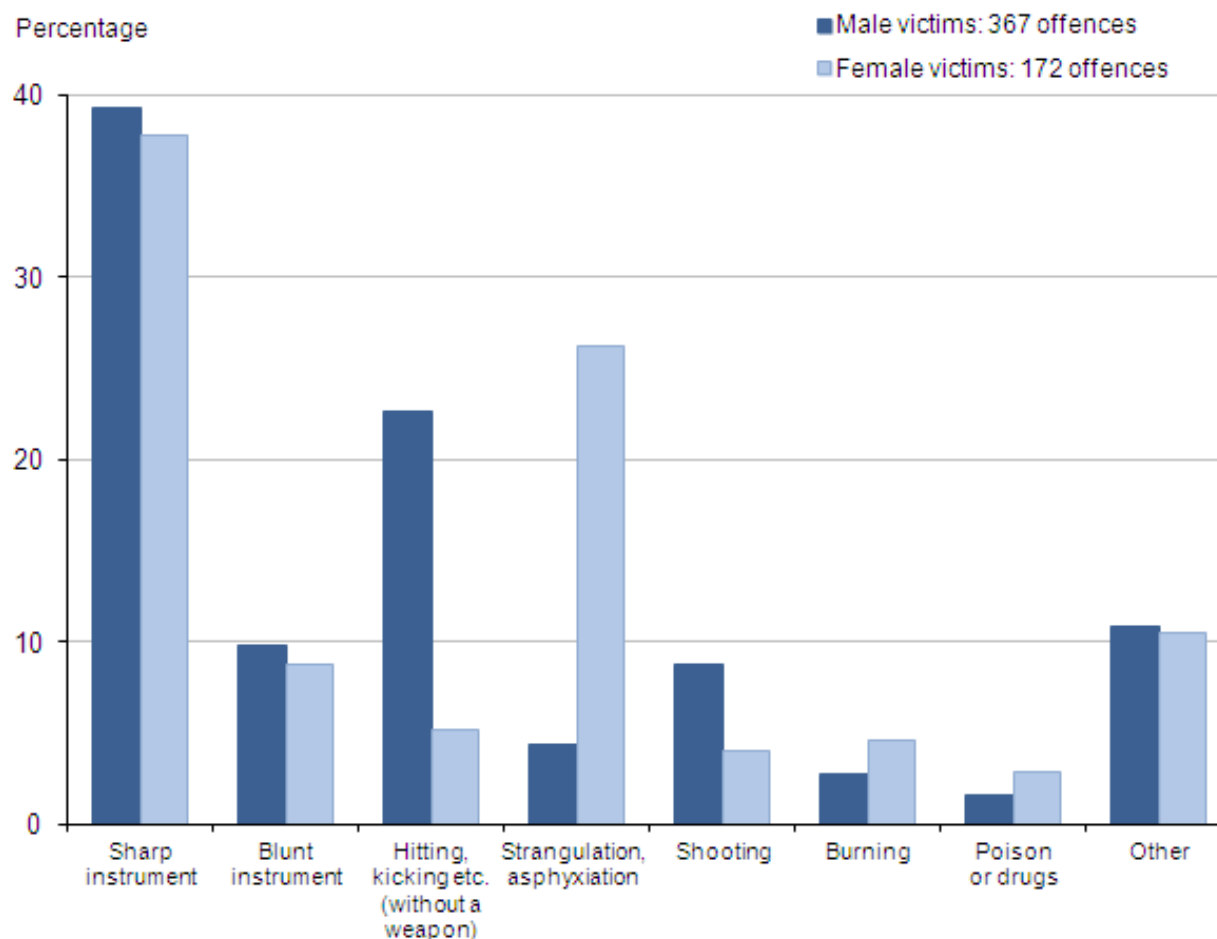
While hitting and kicking without a weapon was the second most common method overall, for female victims, it was strangulation or asphyxiation (45 homicides in 2011/12; 26% of female homicides). Differences in methods of killing by sex of victim are shown in Figure 8.

In 2011/12, 39 homicide victims were killed by shooting, a decrease of 22 from the previous year (which included the 12 victims of the Cumbria shootings on 2 June 2010) and the lowest number since 1989 (38 homicides).

Figure 8 also provides a percentage breakdown for each method of killing.

- Over a third of both male and female homicides in the last year were killed with a sharp instrument (39% and 38% respectively).
- Around a quarter (23%) of male homicide victims over the last year were killed by hitting or kicking without a weapon.
- Around a quarter (26%) of female homicide victims were strangled or asphyxiated.

**Figure 8: Percentage of offences currently recorded as homicide by apparent method of killing and sex of victim, 2011-12**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. "Other" includes all other apparent methods and where method is unknown.

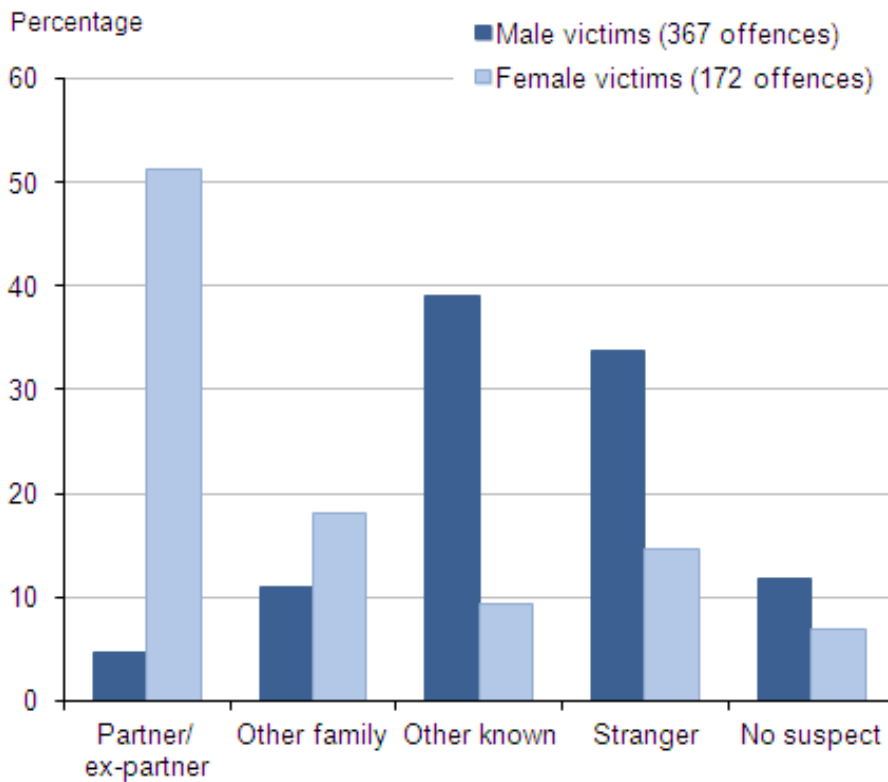
**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(29.5 Kb)

**Relationship between victim and principal suspect**

Data on relationship of victim to principal suspect for 2011/12 show similar findings to previous years. Female victims were more likely than male victims to have been acquainted with the principal suspect (78% and 54% respectively). Female victims were more likely than male victims to be killed by a partner or ex-partner (51% and 5% respectively) but less likely to be killed by a stranger (15% compared with 34%) (Table 2.05; Figure 9). The relationship between victim and principal suspect is not always known and, for the purposes of this analysis, such cases have been included in the 'stranger' category<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 9: Relationship of victim to principal suspect by sex of victim, 2011-12****Notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

**Download chart**
[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(29 Kb)

To account for differences by age in victim relationships to principal suspect, the following analysis reports on victims aged under 16 and victims aged 16 and over separately.

**Victims aged 16 years and over**

In 2011/12, around three-fifths (59%) of female victims aged 16 or over had been killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover (88 offences). This is higher than 2010/11 when the proportion of female victims killed by a partner or ex-partner was 53% (94 homicides). In contrast, only 5% of male victims aged 16 or over were killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover in 2011/12 (17 offences) (Table 2.06).

Around two-fifths (41%) of male victims aged 16 or over were killed by a friend or acquaintance in 2011/12 (142 offences, down from 184 in 2010/11). Female adult victims were less likely to be killed by a friend or acquaintance, at 11% of homicides in 2011/12 (16 offences).

In 2011/12, 122 males (35%) and 20 females (13%) aged 16 and over were killed by strangers.

## Victims aged under 16 years

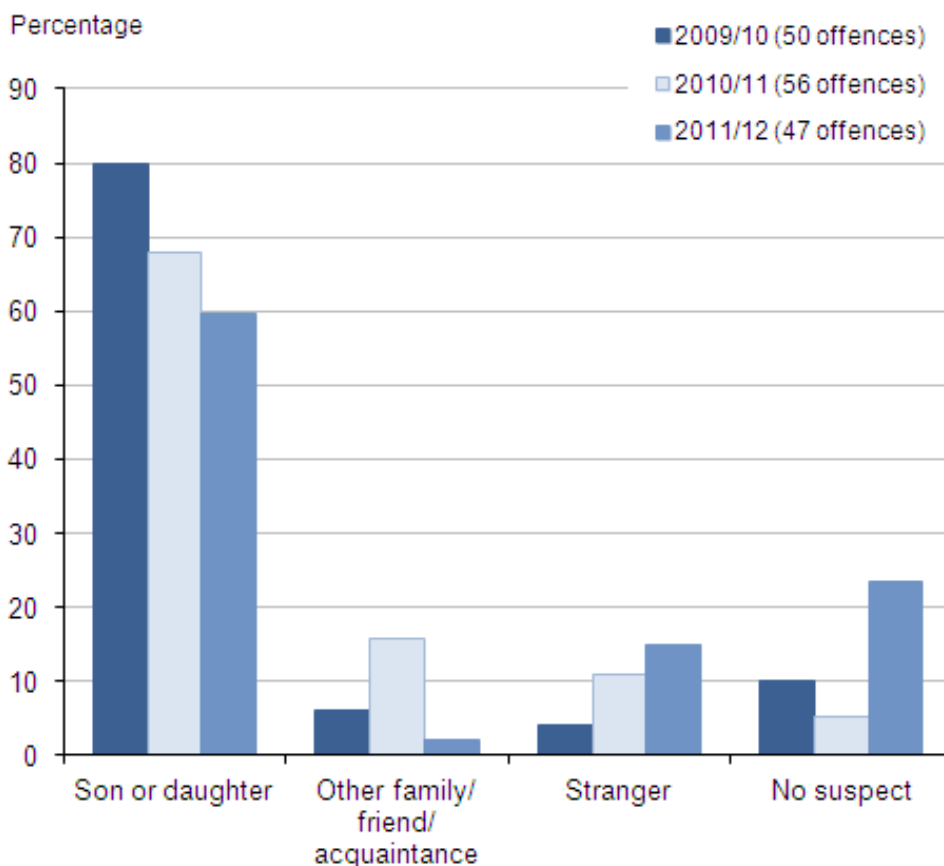
In 2011/12, there were 47 victims under 16 years of age, compared with 56 victims in the previous year. Of all the offences currently recorded as homicide in 2011/12 (540 victims), 9% involved victims under the age of 16, the same as in 2010/11 and a similar proportion to the 8% in 2009/10 (Table 2.03).

As in previous years, the majority of victims aged under 16 were acquainted with their principal suspect (62%, 29 offences), and in all but one of these cases they were killed by a parent or step-parent (60%, 28 offences) (Figure 10).

Proportionally few homicides of those aged under 16 are committed by strangers. The victim was known to have been killed by a stranger in 7 offences in 2011/12 (15%). This compares with 6 offences in 2010/11 (11%) and 2 offences in 2009/10 (4%).

As of 1 November 2012, there were 11 victims aged under 16 (23%) for whom no suspect had been identified. This number is likely to fall as investigations continue. For example, at the time of publication last year<sup>4</sup>, no suspect had been identified for 7 victims aged under 16 recorded in 2010/11 and this had decreased to 3 victims by 1 November 2012 (Table 2.06).

**Figure 10: Victims under 16 years of age, by relationship of victim to principal suspect, 2009-10 to 2011-12**




### Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

2. Figures are likely to change as cases progress through the courts and more information becomes available.

## Download chart

 [XLS format](#)  
(29 Kb)

## Circumstances of the homicides

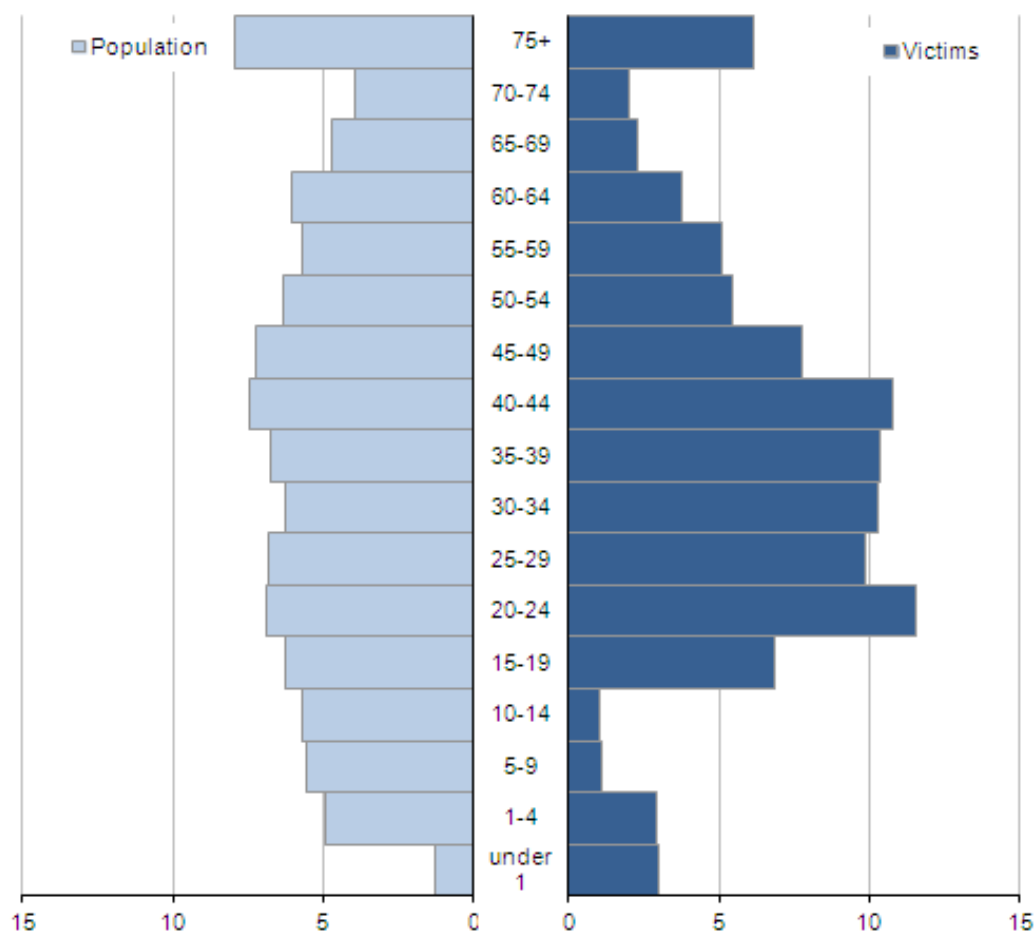
Nearly three-fifths (59%, or 316 offences) of homicide cases in 2011/12 resulted from a quarrel, a revenge attack or a loss of temper. This proportion was higher where the principal suspect was known to the victim (68%), compared with when the suspect was unknown to the victim (43%). Nine per cent of homicides (46 offences) occurred during robberies or burglaries and another 6% (31 offences) were attributed to irrational acts<sup>5</sup>. As at 1 November 2012, the apparent circumstances were not known for 16% of homicides (84 offences) recorded in 2011/12 (Table 2.08). This figure may decrease as police carry out further investigations.

## Homicide rates for different age groups

Previous analysis of Homicide Index figures has consistently shown that children under the age of one are the age group most at risk of homicide. There were 15 homicide victims under the age of one in 2011/12, two fewer than the 17 recorded in 2010/11 (Table 2.03). Analysis and commentary focus on data combined from the last three years (2009/10 to 2011/12) to allow a greater breakdown of age groupings, including by sex (Figure 11; Table 2.09).

- Victims aged between 20 and 44 years old formed a disproportionately large number of victims compared with the population profile, particularly so for those in the 20 to 24 years age group. While 7% of the population were aged 20 to 24, this age group accounted for 12% of homicide victims (205 victims).
- The relatively high incidence rate among 20-to 24-year-olds was largely due to the higher incidence rate amongst males in this age group. While 7% of the male population were aged 20 to 24, this age group accounted for 13% of male homicides (156 victims).
- The distribution among females is more even than that for males, but there was still a disproportionately high number of female victims aged between 20 and 44 years old compared to the population profile (48% female homicides were against victims aged between 20 and 44 years old, whereas 34% of the female population was covered by these age groups).
- For female victims, a disproportionate small number of victims were in the age groups 5 to 9 years and 10 to 14 years. For example, while 5% of the female population were aged 10 to 14 years old, this age group accounted for less than 1% of homicide victims (4 victims).

**Figure 11: Age profile of currently recorded homicide victims compared to population profile, combined years 2009-10 to 2011-12**



#### Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

#### Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(29.5 Kb)

#### Analysis of ethnicity in homicide data

Additional analysis has been conducted on the ethnicity, sex, age and method of killing of victims. Due to the relatively low numbers of homicides, there can be considerable year-to-year variability. This analysis considers a three-year period (2009/10 to 2011/12) to provide more stable results. Caution should nevertheless be taken in drawing conclusions from these figures because the numbers remain small for some ethnic minority groups. The Ministry of Justice 'Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System' publication<sup>6</sup> also reports on homicide and ethnicity, as part of more detailed discussion on the representation of Black and Minority Ethnic groups as suspects, offenders and victims within the criminal justice system.



Of the 1,776 homicides recorded by police in the three-year period ending March 2012, 75% of victims were White (1,333 offences), 11% were Black (195), 9% were Asian (160) and 3% were of other minority ethnic groups (55). The ethnicity of 2% of victims was not recorded (33 offences) (Table 1).

By way of comparison, Census results for 2011 by ethnicity indicate that 86% of the population of England and Wales are White, 3% are Black, 8% are Asian and the remaining 3% are of other ethnicity<sup>7</sup>. Black victims are therefore over-represented and White under-represented but it should be noted that these results have not been age-standardised, and it was shown earlier (Table 2.03) that there is a relationship between age and being a victim of homicide.

There are differences in age profile, and method of killing by ethnicity. The following analysis excludes offences for which the victim's ethnicity is not known or not recorded.

Ethnic minority victims tended to be younger than White victims, with those in the Black ethnic minority group the youngest. The average age of Black victims was 29 years, compared with 40 for White, 34 for Asian and 30 for 'Other'. The lower average age of Black victims is due to proportionately more homicides in the 16-to-29 age ranges than for other ethnic groups (data not shown).

Black or Minority Ethnic victims were more likely than White victims to be stabbed or shot and less likely to be a victim of homicide by hitting, kicking etc. (Table 1).

Homicide by sharp instrument was the most common method of killing across all ethnic groups, although Black victims were more likely to have been killed this way than other groups (Black: 46%, White: 35%, Asian: 39%, 'Other': 40%).

Black homicide victims were proportionally more likely to have been shot (27% of Black victims) than other ethnic groups (White: 6%, Asian: 8%, 'Other': 5%). White victims were proportionally more likely to have been killed by hitting or kicking (22%) than other ethnic groups (Black: 9%, Asian: 15%, 'Other': 13%; Table 1).

**Table 1: Apparent method of killing of currently recorded homicide victims by ethnic appearance of victim, combined data for 2009-10 to 2011-12**

England and Wales

Homicide Index

Apparent method of killing	Ethnic appearance of victim				
	Total homicides	White	Black	Asian	Other
	Number of offences				
Sharp instrument	652	470	89	62	22
Blunt instrument	162	124	6	21	8
Hitting, kicking, etc.	339	287	17	24	7
Strangulation, asphyxiation	174	140	11	11	6
Shooting	141	74	52	12	3
Other	308	238	20	30	9
<b>Total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1,776</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>55</b>
Percentage <sup>3</sup> within ethnic appearance category					
Sharp instrument	37	35	46	39	40
Blunt instrument	9	9	3	13	15
Hitting, kicking, etc.	19	22	9	15	13
Strangulation, asphyxiation	10	11	6	7	11
Shooting	8	6	27	8	5
Other	17	18	10	19	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Total includes 33 homicides where the ethnicity of the victim was 'not known' or 'not recorded'.

3. Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

### Download table

**XLS** [XLS format](#)

(35 Kb)

There are likely to be important socio-economic factors in homicides that cannot be examined using Homicide Index data. There is evidence from other studies that suggests that ethnicity is just one of many factors in homicides and violent incidents in general. [Leyland and Dundas](#) (2009), for example, investigated Scottish homicides between 1980 and 2005, and concluded that “contextual influences of the neighbourhood of residence might be more important than individual characteristics in determining the victims of assault”. When analysing overall Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) violence, the 2009/10 survey ([Flatley et al.](#), 2010) showed that ethnic groups other than white do not have a higher risk of being a victim of CSEW violence. While the CSEW looks at violence overall (and does not cover homicide), and the Leyland and Dundas study is for Scotland, this does provide some evidence that other socio-factors may also be important.

Estimated homicide rates by ethnicity shown in Table 2 have been produced using the [mid-2009 experimental Population Estimates by Ethnic Group](#), produced by the ONS<sup>8</sup>. Caution should be taken when using these population estimates as they are experimental statistics which have not yet been shown to meet the quality criteria for National Statistics, and they rely on self-identification of ethnic group, which is not directly comparable with the visual identification of homicide victims<sup>9</sup>. These estimates indicate that Black and Asian people have higher homicide rates when compared with White people. For example, Black males, at a homicide rate of 68 offences per million population, are almost six times more likely to be a victim of homicide than White males (12 offences per million population). The differential is less pronounced for female victims; Black females were nearly three times more likely to be a victim of homicide than White female victims (17 million offences per population compared with 6 million offences per population).

**Table 2: Currently recorded homicide victims by ethnic appearance and sex, rates per million population, combined data for 2009-10 to 2011-12**

England and Wales

	Homicide Index				
	White	Black	Asian	Other	All ethnic groups
	Rates per million population				
<b>All victims</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
Male	12	68	23	13	15
Female	6	17	10	6	7

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Total includes 33 homicides where the ethnicity of the victim was 'not known' or 'not recorded'.

**Download table**
[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(33 Kb)

In many homicide cases, victims are killed by someone from the same ethnic group. Of those cases with a current suspect, 74% of Black victims and 57% of Asian victims were killed by someone from the same ethnic group. For White victims, the figure was 90% (Table 3).

**Table 3: Ethnic appearance of currently recorded homicide victims by ethnic appearance of principal suspect(2), combined data for 2009-10 to 2011-12**

England and Wales

Homicide Index						
Ethnic appearance of victim	Ethnic appearance of principal suspect (%) <sup>3</sup>					Number of cases with current suspect
	Total <sup>4</sup>	White	Black	Asian	Other	
White	100	90	6	2	2	1,160
Black	100	16	74	5	4	150
Asian	100	24	14	57	4	136
Other	100	29	19	8	38	48

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

2. Excludes cases where no suspects are charged or all suspects are acquitted (see Table 2.02).
3. Percentages may not sum due to rounding.
4. Total percentages include the 42 cases between 2009/10 and 2011/12 where the ethnicity of the victim and/or the principal suspect was 'not known' or 'not recorded'.

## Download table

 [XLS format](#)

(34.5 Kb)

## Notes for Victims

1. In 2002/03, the rate of homicide was 17.9 homicides per million population. If the 172 Harold Shipman homicides recorded that year are excluded, the rate would have been 14.6 offences per million population.
2. There was one victim where the sex was not known.
3. Stranger category includes: business associate, police/prison officer killed in the course of duty, stranger (terrorist/contract killing and other) and where there is insufficient information about the suspect to determine relationship to victim.
4. As published in [Smith et al.](#), 2012.
5. These figures do not account for all homicides committed by mentally disturbed people, as offences with an apparent motive (for example, during a quarrel or robbery) are instead included under the respective circumstance. Higher overall totals for homicides committed by mentally disturbed people are quoted elsewhere (Appleby, [2006](#), [2010](#)).
6. Latest release is available from the [MoJ website](#).
7. Census results are published on the [ONS website](#).
8. The Crime in England and Wales release has not yet moved to using Census based estimates and therefore they have not been used in this release.
9. ONS population statistics by ethnic group are based upon self-defined ethnicity whereas homicide victims' ethnicity is visually identified by the police. ONS figures are based on the ethnic group classification used in the 2001 Census for England and Wales and include mixed group categories which are not an option on the homicide data return. This may affect the homicide rates presented here.

## Suspects

### Definition of homicide suspect

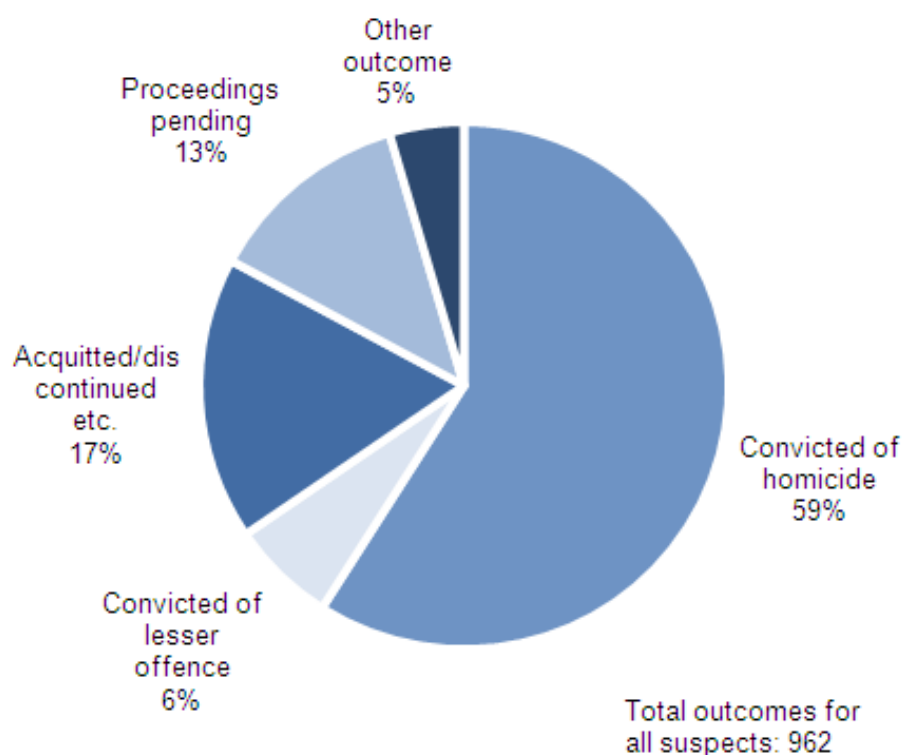
For the purposes of the Homicide Index, a suspect in a homicide case is defined as:

- (i) A person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide and charged with homicide; or
- (ii) A person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest/being charged.

More than one suspect may be tried per homicide victim and in some cases no suspect is ever brought to trial. Due to this, the number of suspects is not the same as the number of offences. In total, there were 619 suspects (Table 2.11) as at 1 November 2012 relating to 547 homicides initially recorded in 2011/12. Of these:

- Court proceedings had concluded for 236 suspects (38% of all suspects). Of these, 230 were indicted<sup>1</sup> for homicide offences (Table 2.12) and 6 for a lesser offence.
- Court proceedings were pending for 366 suspects (59%; Figure 13).
- The remaining 17 suspects had died or committed suicide before indictment (Table 2.11).

**Figure 12: Current outcomes for suspects of homicides recorded in 2006-07**



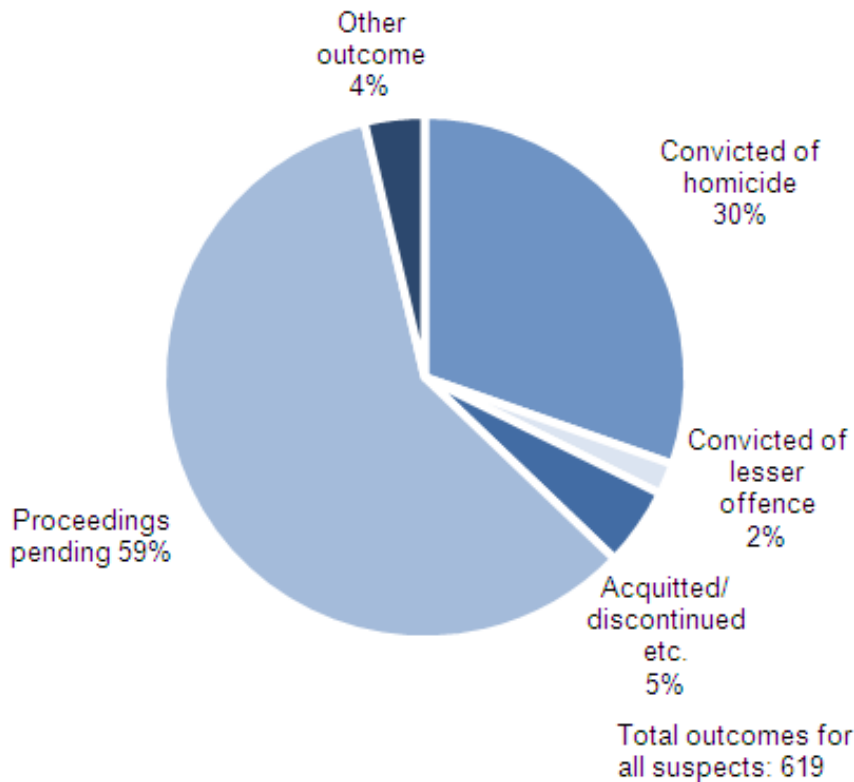
**Notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. As of 1 November 2012.
3. "Other outcome" includes suspect unfit to plead, proceedings concluded with other outcome, suspect committed suicide or died and the cases where no court proceedings were taken.



**Download chart**[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(29 Kb)

**Figure 13: Current outcomes for suspects of homicides recorded in 2011-12****Notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. As of 1 November 2012.
3. "Other outcome" includes suspect unfit to plead, proceedings concluded with other outcome, suspect committed suicide or died and the cases where no court proceedings were taken.

**Download chart**[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(29 Kb)

For those suspects where proceedings had concluded, 89% were male (210 suspects) and 11% were female (25 suspects) (data not shown). There was one case of corporate manslaughter. Over half (53%) of males indicted for a homicide offence were convicted of murder, 30% were convicted of manslaughter and 12% were acquitted or their proceedings were discontinued and 5% had another outcome. For females indicted for homicide, 52% were convicted of murder, 20% of manslaughter, 4% of infanticide, 16% were acquitted or had their proceedings discontinued and 8% had another outcome. Between 2001/02 and 2010/11, 75% of suspects indicted for homicide

(murder, manslaughter or infanticide) were found guilty of homicide and 20% were acquitted (Table 2.12).

The case outcomes for suspects of homicides recorded in 2011/12 (Figure 13) are likely to change as cases progress through the criminal justice system and more information becomes available. As such, cases from previous years are more likely to have concluded at court. This is illustrated in Figures 12 and 13 which shows the court outcomes for all suspects of homicides recorded in 2006/07 and 2011/12. While 59% of the suspects in homicides recorded in 2011/12 are awaiting court proceedings, proceedings are pending for only 13% of the cases recorded in 2006/07. Conversely, 30% of the suspects of homicides recorded in 2011/12 have been convicted of homicide compared with 59% of those recorded in 2006/07.

### **Previous homicide convictions**

In 2011/12, data from the Homicide Index showed that there were 2 convictions for homicide offences recorded that had been committed by a suspect who had a previous conviction for a homicide offence. As more cases are concluded at Crown Court, this figure may change. For homicide offences recorded in 2010/11, there were 10 people convicted of homicide who had a previous conviction for a homicide offence (Table 2.14). This is the highest figure since records began in 1963 when this information was first collected in the Homicide Index.

For homicide offences recorded between 2001/02 and 2011/12, 40 people who were convicted of a homicide offence had a previous conviction for a homicide offence. Of these 40 offences, the second conviction was for murder in 32 cases (Table 2.15).

### **Notes for Suspects**

1. The formal charges presented at the start of a Crown Court trial.

### **International homicide comparisons**

A number of international organisations, including Eurostat, have attempted to collate international homicide statistics. It is important to note that there are issues surrounding the comparability of international homicide data. There are different definitions of homicide between countries, although definitions vary less than for some other types of crimes. Furthermore, there are differing points in criminal justice systems at which homicides are recorded, for instance, when the offence is discovered or following further investigation. The figures are for completed homicides but, in some countries, the police register any death that cannot immediately be attributed to other causes, as homicide. It may, therefore, be over represented in the statistics.

Eurostat's most recently published figures compare homicide rates averaged over the years 2007 to 2009<sup>1</sup>. The rates for the member countries of the European Union are shown in Table 4, per million population (the rate for Latvia is not available). The Eurostat published rate for England and Wales

is 12.5, which is below that for Scotland (18.9) and Northern Ireland (14.7) and in the mid-rank of the EU countries shown.

**Table 4: Homicide rate per million population for European Union(2) countries (ranked in order high to low), averaged data for 2007 to 2009**

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Lithuania	83.1	Luxembourg	13.1
Estonia	57.4	Poland	12.9
Finland	23.6	France	12.7
Bulgaria	21.4	<b>UK: England &amp; Wales<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>12.5</b>
Romania	20.6	Greece	12.2
Ireland	20.2	Malta	11.4
UK: Scotland	18.9	Italy	11.0
Belgium	18.7	Netherlands	10.5
Slovakia	16.5	Sweden	10.5
Cyprus	15.2	Czech Republic	10.0
UK: Northern Ireland	14.7	Spain	9.6
Denmark	14.2	Germany	8.9
Hungary	14.0	Slovenia	7.9
Portugal	13.8	Austria	5.4

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Eurostat
2. Excludes Latvia as rate not available.
3. Eurostat calculated this figure using the recorded crime returns, not the Homicide Index. If the Homicide Index was used, the figure would be slightly lower.

**Download table**

**XLS** [XLS format](#)  
(33.5 Kb)

Although the rate of murder and non-negligent manslaughter in the USA has fallen substantially in recent years, it is still well above those experienced in Western Europe, at 47.0 per million population<sup>3</sup>.

The Scottish Government publish annual homicide figures<sup>4</sup>, and the most recently published report shows that there were 17 homicides per million population in Scotland in 2011/12, a fall from 19 per million in the previous year.

### Notes for International homicide comparisons

1. Eurostat's '[Crime and Criminal Justice](#)', by Cynthia Tavares and Geoffrey Thomas.
2. Data are shown for all European Union countries (except Latvia), though data are shown separately for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Overall combined data for the UK are not available.
3. As reported in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's '[Crime in the United States, 2011](#)'.
4. [Homicide in Scotland](#).

### Statistical interpretation of trends in homicides

The number of homicides recorded by the police fluctuates from year to year and there is interest in knowing the extent to which these fluctuations in the level of homicides represent an indication of a real underlying trend as opposed to random year-to-year variation. Using data for London between April 2004 and March 2007, Spiegelhalter and Barnett (2009) found that homicides in London have a predictable level of fluctuation over time, which allowed them to apply statistical techniques for analysis.

It should be noted that the discussion in this section is related to the statistical properties of the data, and it should not be interpreted as saying that small changes in the numbers of homicides are not of concern. Homicide is the most serious violent crime and is treated extremely seriously by the criminal justice agencies.

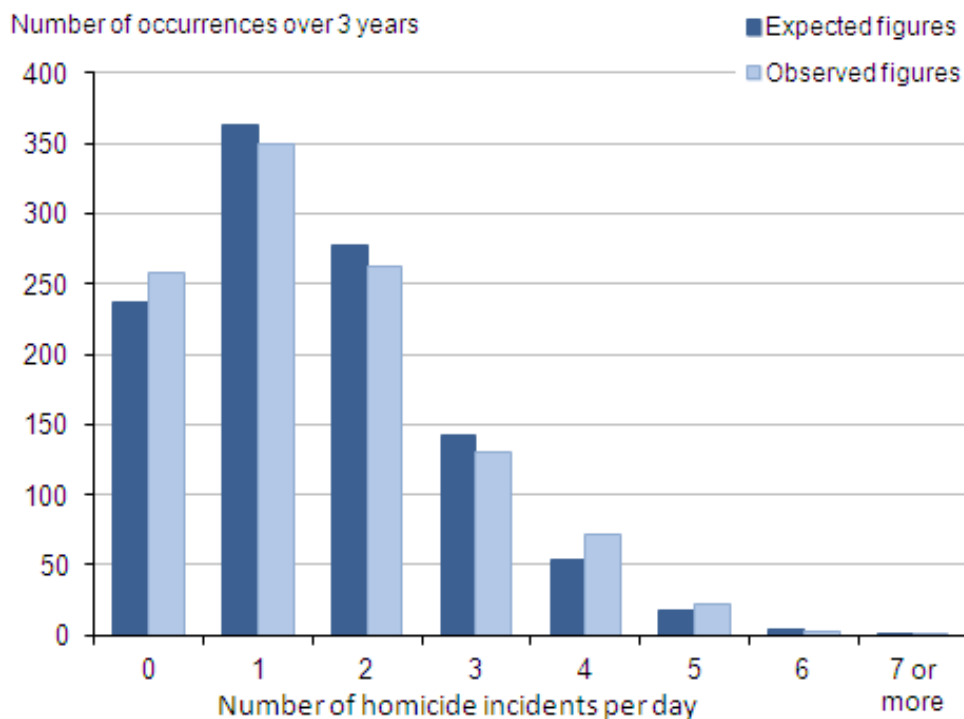
This section presents analyses of homicide incidents, defined as incidents where the same person (or a group of persons) is suspected of committing one or more related homicides. The numbers therefore differ from the total number of recorded homicides presented earlier. The focus of this analysis is on incidents as it is not possible to statistically model multiple homicides that relate to one case and were recorded on the same day. For example, the homicides attributed to Dr Harold Shipman and the 7 July London bombings are each treated in this analysis as one incident. Although each incident is highly related to socio-economic characteristics of the suspect and the victim and independent from other incidents, over a period of time, the probabilities of homicide incidents happening can be closely modelled by a Poisson distribution<sup>1</sup>. This can be used to test whether any change in the numbers of incidents per year is statistically significant, or what can be termed within the range of expected 'natural variation' of the data.

### Expected homicide incidents per day

Between April 2009 and March 2012 the police recorded 1,678 independent homicide incidents in England and Wales. Figure 14 illustrates that the observed number of homicide incidents on

a daily basis closely matches the expected number under the Poisson distribution. For example, from knowing there was an average of 1.53 incidents a day, we would predict over the time period of 1,096 days that there would be 142 days on which there would be exactly three independent incidents. This is close to the observed number of 130 incidents, indicating that the occurrence of these apparent 'clusters' is not as surprising as one might anticipate. A statistical test ( $\chi^2$ ) shows no significant difference between the expected and observed figures. Thus, the observed figures are in fact Poisson distributed. This allows for calculation of the number of days on which it would be expected that no incidents or one incident occurs and so on.

**Figure 14: Observed and expected number of homicide incidents recorded on a day, combined years 2009-10 to 2011-12**



#### Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

#### Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(28.5 Kb)

#### Trend analysis

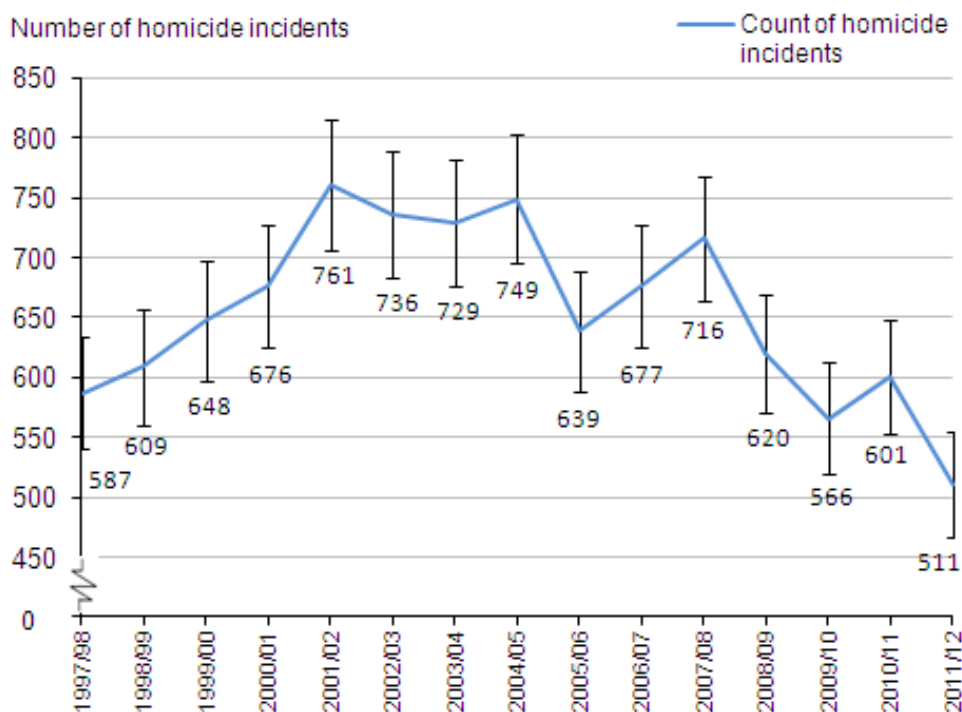
Furthermore, knowing that homicide incidents are statistically distributed allows the application of statistical techniques in order to assess longer-term trends. Figure 15 shows the number of homicide incidents since 1997/98. For each year, the observed count is given along with a 95% confidence interval on the Poisson error. The interval represents the range of values one would expect to measure 95% of the time if the underlying risk of homicide remained unchanged. These confidence intervals can be used as a rough approximation to determine whether the numbers of homicide incidents in any two years are statistically different from one another. If the confidence intervals do

not overlap, one can infer there has been a significant change in the underlying risk of homicide. However, it is possible for the confidence intervals to overlap and for there still to be a statistically significant change in the number of homicide incidents. In order to measure the significance more accurately, it is appropriate to use a statistical test.

As has been shown, the Poisson distribution can be applied to the number of homicide incidents per year and the number of these incidents is large enough to approximate the normal distribution. Therefore, a statistical test (in this case a Z-test) can be used to determine if the counts in each year are statistically significantly different from one another at the 95% confidence level (whether there has been a true change in the underlying risk).

Based on this statistical test, the number of homicide incidents recorded in 2011/12 was statistically significantly lower at the 5% level to the number recorded in every year shown in Figure 15 with the exception of 2009/10. This means the risk of becoming a victim of homicide was, in fact, lower for 2011/12 compared with those earlier years.

**Figure 15: Homicide incident trend analysis, 1997-98 to 2011-12**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Previous analysis of homicide incident data had underestimated the range of the confidence interval for each year. Confidence intervals in Figure 1.9 are therefore larger than as published in previous years.

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(29 Kb)

Many of the short-term fluctuations seen from year to year in the number of homicide incidents are not statistically significant and appear to arise as natural statistical variation in the data. In looking at homicide data the degree of natural variation needs to be considered in interpreting trends and also when looking at year-to-year changes.

### Notes for Statistical interpretation of trends in homicides

1. The Poisson distribution expresses the probability of the number of events occurring in a given period of time if these events occur with a known average rate and independently from each other.

## SECTION 3 – RECORDED OFFENCES INVOLVING THE USE OF FIREARMS

### Summary

Offences involving the use of firearms relate to any crime recorded by the police where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument or in a threat. Firearm possession offences, where the firearm has not been used, are not included. Firearms covered by the Firearms Act 1968 include handguns, shotguns, rifles, imitation weapons, air weapons and some other weapon types such as CS gas and pepper sprays.

Offences involving the use of a firearm continue to make up a small proportion of recorded crime. In 2011/12, firearm offences accounted for 0.2% of all recorded crimes.

- Overall, firearms were reported to have been used in 9,555 recorded crimes in 2011/12, the eighth consecutive annual fall and a 16% decrease on 2010/11. This compares with an overall decrease of 4% of all offences recorded by the police between 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- In 2011/12, there were 42 fatal injuries from offences involving firearms<sup>1</sup>, 17 fewer than in 2010/11 (which includes the 12 people killed by Derrick Bird in June 2010). Serious injuries decreased by 15% from 330 in 2010/11 to 282 in 2011/12, continuing the long-term downward trend.
- Around a fifth (21%) of firearm offences in 2011/12 resulted in any type of injury (1,970 offences); this is similar to proportions seen over the past ten years which have ranged between 17-24%.

Firearm offences, excluding air weapons, decreased by 15%, from 7,040 in 2010/11 to 6,001 in 2011/12. Offences involving these firearms tend to be for more serious offences, and they are involved in most of the fatalities and serious injuries.

- The fall in non-air weapon offences in the last year is largely driven by the fall in the use of handguns, down 15% between 2010/11 and 2011/12 (from 3,107 to 2,651). This continues the fall in the use of handguns since it peaked in 2001/02 at 5,874 offences.
- As in previous years, firearm offences, excluding air weapons, were geographically concentrated in three police force areas: Metropolitan Police, West Midlands and Greater Manchester accounted for three in five (58%) of such offences, while just under a quarter of the population of England and Wales reside in these areas.



- There was a reduction in non-air weapon robbery offences of 13% from 2,925 in 2010/11 to 2,532 in 2011/12; while robberies that involved a knife or sharp instrument remained at a similar level over the same period<sup>2</sup>.

There was a 17% fall in air weapon offences in 2011/12 compared with the previous year. This continues a broadly consistent downward trend seen since 2003/04.

### Notes for SECTION 3 – RECORDED OFFENCES INVOLVING THE USE OF FIREARMS

1. This number differs from the 39 shooting homicides shown in the 'Homicide' section. This is due to offences where a firearm has been involved but shooting has not been the method of killing.
2. See [Crime statistics, period ending March 2012](#)

## Background - firearms

Offences involving the use of firearms relates to any crime recorded by the police where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument or in a threat. Firearm possession offences, where the firearm has not been used, are not included (2011/12 statistics are available in Table A4 of [Crime statistics, period ending March 2012](#)).

The different types of firearms included in this section mirror those covered by the Firearms Act 1968 and the associated amendments to the Act. These are:

- **Firearms that use a controlled explosion to fire a projectile.** This category includes handguns, shotguns and rifles. These types of weapon are often used in more serious offences, and tend to account for most of the fatalities and serious injuries that arise.
- **Imitation firearms.** This category includes replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons which fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons. While injuries can occur from offences involving these weapons, they are less common and tend to be less serious.

These two categories combined are referred to as non-air weapons in this section.

- **Air weapons.** The majority of offences which involve air weapons relate to criminal damage. While air weapons can cause injury (and sometimes fatalities), by their nature they are less likely to do so than firearms that use a controlled explosion.

It is not always possible for the police to categorise the type of firearm that has been used in an offence. For example, some imitation weapons are so realistic that they are indistinguishable from a real firearm. The police will record which type of weapon has been used given the evidence available, and may depend on descriptions of victims or witnesses. If the police do not have sufficient information about the type of firearm used in the offence, or if the firearm was concealed during the offence, then the police will record the weapon as an unidentified firearm.

## Offences involving the use of firearms

Firearm offences make up a small proportion of overall recorded crime. In 2011/12, firearms were used in 0.2% of all police recorded offences, or two in every thousand offences.

In 2011/12, firearms were used in 9,555 recorded offences in England and Wales, a decrease of 16% compared with the previous year, when 11,335 offences were recorded. This compares with a decrease of 4% in all offences recorded by the police over the same period. Air weapon offences fell by 17% over the same period and non-air weapons fell by 15% (Table 3.01).

**Table 5: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used and total police recorded crime, 2010-11 and 2011-12**

England and Wales

	Number of offences		Recorded crime
	2010/11	2011/12	% change 2010/11 to 2011/12
Non-air weapons	7,040	6,001	-15
Air weapons	4,295	3,554	-17
<b>Total firearm offences</b>	<b>11,335</b>	<b>9,555</b>	<b>-16</b>
<b>Total police recorded crime</b>	<b>4,150,915</b>	<b>3,976,312</b>	<b>-4</b>

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

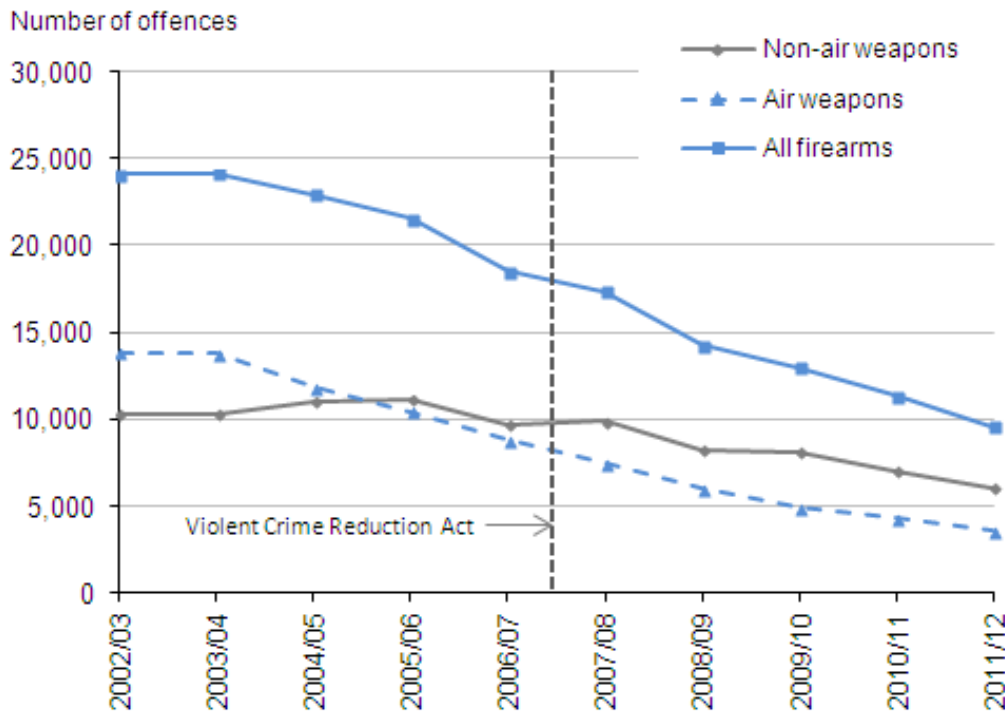
### Download table

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(33 Kb)

The number of firearm offences has fallen steadily since peaking at 24,094 in 2003/04, and has decreased by over half (60%) since then. This represents a greater fall than in total police recorded crime, which has fallen by around a third (34%) over the same period. The number of air weapon offences recorded by the police has fallen by three-quarters (74%) since 2003/04. In comparison, non-air weapon offences are 42% lower than 2003/04, having peaked later, in 2005/06 (Table 3.01; Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, 2002-03 to 2011-12**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. The Violent Crime Reduction Act introduced in October 2007 made it illegal to import or sell imitation firearms and tightened the rules for the manufacture and sale of certain types of air weapon.

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(28 Kb)

The fall in non-air weapon offences in the last year is largely driven by the fall in the use of handguns, down 15% between 2010/11 and 2011/12 (from 3,107 to 2,651). This continues the fall in the use of handguns seen since it peaked in 2001/02 at 5,874 offences (data not shown).

Offences involving the use of imitation firearms also fell by 15% between 2010/11 and 2011/12 (from 1,618 to 1,377) having remained broadly similar between 2008/09 and 2010/11. Over the longer term the 1,377 offences recorded in 2011/12 was less than half the number recorded in 2004/05 when offences involving these types of weapons peaked at 3,373 offences (a fall of 59%) (Table 3.01).

There was a 17% fall in air weapon offences in 2011/12 compared with the previous year. This continues a broadly consistent downward trend seen since 2003/04 (Table 3.01; Figure 16).

The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 was introduced during a period of declining offences involving the use of imitation firearms and air weapons. The Act, introduced in October 2007, made it illegal to import or sell imitation firearms and tightened the rules for the manufacture and sale of certain

types of air weapon. It is not possible to assess the exact impact of the introduction, although the use imitation firearms and air weapons continued to fall after the legislation came into force.

## How firearms were used

In 2011/12, firearms were discharged in 56% of the offences in which a firearm was involved. Similar figures have been recorded over the last three years although the proportion of incidents in which a firearm has been discharged prior to 2008/09 were considerably higher, ranging from 70% in 2004/05 to 62% in 2007/08.

The likelihood of a weapon being discharged varies considerably by weapon type. In 2011/12, air weapons were discharged in 89% of recorded offences in which they were involved compared with non-air weapons which were discharged in around a third of offences (37%).

As well as being discharged, firearms can be used as a blunt instrument (hitting a victim with the weapon) or to threaten.

- Handguns were fired in 13% of the recorded offences in which they were involved, similar to the previous year.
- Shotguns were fired in half (50%) of the recorded offences in which they were involved, again similar to last year's level. This is notably higher than previous years; for example, between 2002/03 and 2009/10, the percentage of offences in which a shotgun was fired ranged between 31-41%.

**Table 6: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by type of principal weapon and weapon usage, 2011-12**

England and Wales

Recorded crime

Weapon type	Number of offences	Percentages <sup>2</sup>		
		Fired	Used as blunt instrument	Used as threat
Shotguns	495	50	5	44
Handguns	2,651	13	8	79
Imitation firearms <sup>3</sup>	1,377	76	2	21
Rifles/others <sup>4</sup>	1,478	40	2	57
<b>Non-air weapons</b>	<b>6,001</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>58</b>
Air weapons	3,554	89	0	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,555</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. Percentages may not sum due to rounding.
3. Imitation firearms include weapons such as BB guns and soft air weapons, which can fire small plastic pellets at low velocity.
4. Starting guns, supposed/type unknown, prohibited firearms (including CS gas) and other firearms.

**Download table**

**XLS** [XLS format](#)  
(34.5 Kb)

**Type of weapon used**

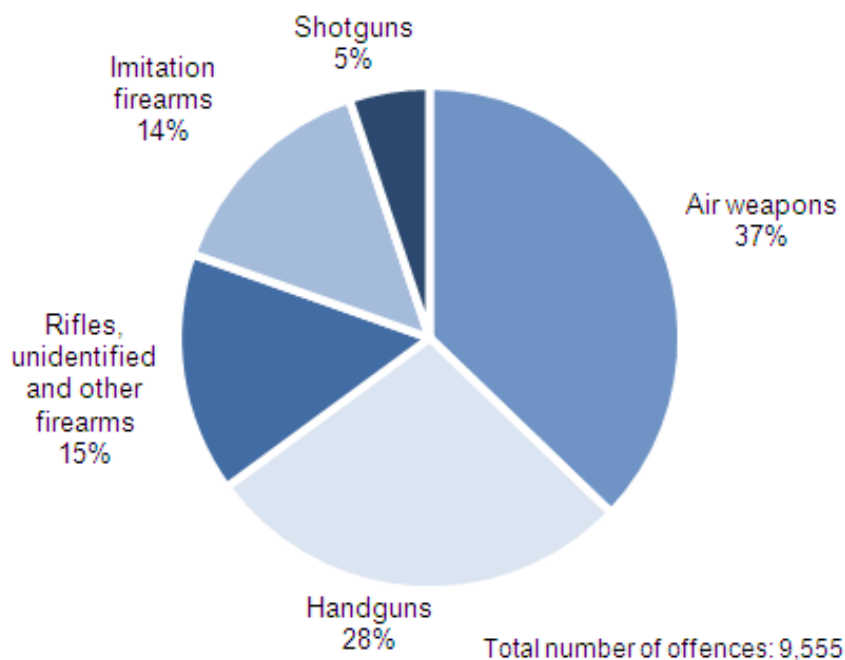
Information is collected on the type of weapon used in an offence, although it is not always possible to categorise the type used. For example, if a weapon is not fired and not recovered after an offence, it may not be possible to know exactly what type of weapon was involved or whether it was real or imitation. The categorisation of firearms will often depend on descriptions given by victims or witnesses. In some offences, the firearm will not have been seen but will have been concealed and used as a threat.

In 2011/12, as in previous years, the most commonly used firearm was an air weapon, with 3,544 offences accounting for 37% of all recorded firearm offences. This proportion has fallen steadily since its peak in 2002/03 where 57% of all recorded firearm offences involved an air weapon.

There were 2,651 handgun offences in 2011/12, accounting for 28% of the total number of firearms offences (or 44% of the total excluding air weapons) (Figure 17).

Although the number of offences involving a shotgun has fallen by a fifth (19%) between 2010/11 and 2011/12 (from 611 to 495), the level of shotgun offences had remained fairly constant between 2004/05 to 2010/11 (fluctuating around 600 offences per year). Despite the fall in the number of offences involving a shotgun in the last year, the proportion of offences involving a shotgun has increased over recent years.

**Figure 17: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by type of principal weapon, 2011-12**



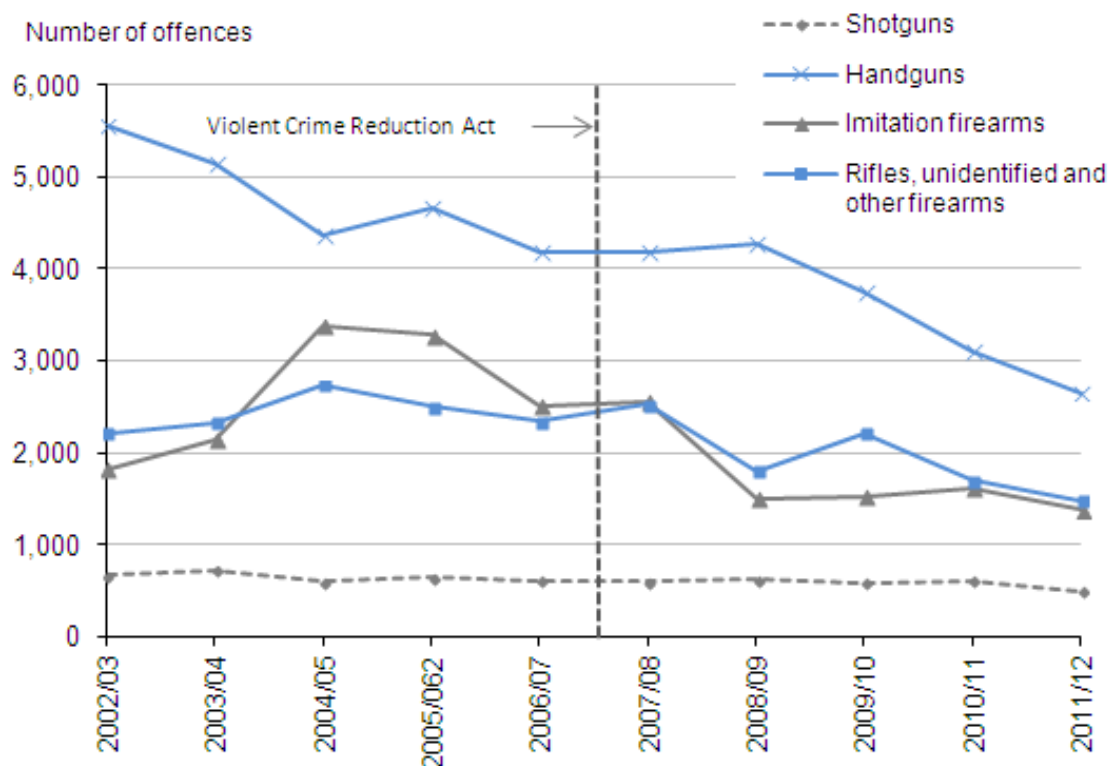
**Notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(27.5 Kb)

**Figure 18: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by type of principal weapon (excluding air weapons), 2002-03 to 2011-12**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. More explicit guidelines for the classification of weapons introduced on 1 April 2004 may have affected the recording of firearm offences committed using handguns, imitation weapons, and other weapons.
3. The Violent Crime Reduction Act introduced in October 2007 made it illegal to import or sell imitation firearms and tightened the rules for the manufacture and sale of certain types of air weapon.

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(28.5 Kb)

**Injuries sustained in firearm offences**

In 2011/12 four out of five firearm offences (79%) no injury was sustained by the victim (Table 3.02). In 2011/12, there were 1,970 injuries recorded as a result of firearm offences, a decrease of 18% on the previous year. This is a slightly greater fall than the number of overall firearm offences over the same period (16%) (Table 3.01).

Over the longer term the number of injuries sustained by a victim has fallen by nearly two thirds (64%) from the peak of 5,402 in 2004/05. Of the 1,970 injuries recorded in 2011/12, there were 42 fatal injuries involving firearms, 17 less than in 2010/11 (which includes the 12 people killed by Derrick Bird on 2 June 2010). There were a further 282 firearm offences that resulted in serious injury (an injury which requires a stay in hospital or involves fractures, concussion, severe general



shock, penetration by a bullet or multiple shot wounds). In line with the falls in the number of offences involving firearms, there has also been a reduction in the number of serious injuries resulting from these offences in recent years. The majority of the injuries (84%; 1,646 injuries) were slight injuries (Table 3.02).

### **Injuries by degree of injury**

- Less than one per cent of all firearm offences in 2011/12 resulted in a fatal injury (Table 3.02). All 42 fatalities in 2011/12 involved a weapon being fired, with 18 of the fatalities involving the use of a handgun, 16 involving the use of a shotgun, 3 involving a rifle and the remaining 5 involving the use of an unidentified or other firearm (Table 3.03 and 3.05).
- Three per cent of all firearm offences in 2011/12 resulted in a serious injury. There were 282 serious injuries resulting from firearm offences recorded in 2011/12, a fall of 15% on the previous year, when 330 were recorded (Table 3.02).
- Seventeen per cent of all firearm offences in 2011/12 resulted in a slight injury. There was an 18% fall in slight injuries, from 2,013 in 2010/11 to 1,646 in 2011/12. As with serious injuries, the recent trend has been downwards (Table 3.02).

The number of non-air weapon offences that resulted in injuries fell by 18% between 2010/11 and 2011/12 in line with the 17% fall in non-air weapon offences over the same period.

- The number of handgun weapon injuries fell by 18%, compared with a fall of 15% in the number of offences involving handguns. For shotguns, the number of injuries and offences also decreased, by 14% and 19% respectively over the same period (Tables 3.01 and 3.04).
- The number of air weapon injuries fell by 18% between 2010/11 and 2011/12, while the number of offences involving these firearms fell by 17%. The proportion of air weapon offences where the victim sustained an injury has remained fairly stable over the past eight years, ranging between 11-13% (Tables 3.01 and 3.04).

### **Injuries by degree of injury and weapon type**

The likelihood of a weapon being fired as well as the seriousness of injury sustained varied according to the type of weapon used. Air weapons and imitation firearms<sup>1</sup> were the most likely to be fired in an offence (89% and 76% respectively). However, if they were fired, they were the least likely to cause a fatal or serious injury (both accounting for 1% of those fired) (Tables 7 and 3.05).

- Handguns were fired in only 13% of the offences they were involved in; and 36% of these offences resulted in a fatal or serious injury. This compares with 5% for all firearms resulting in a fatal or serious injury.
- Shotguns were fired in 50% of offences, and if they were fired, 29% of cases resulted in a fatal or serious injury.

**Table 7: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by type of principal weapon and injury sustained when weapon was fired, 2011-12**

England and Wales

Recorded crime

Weapon type	Number of offences	Fired (Per cent)	Percentage <sup>2</sup> of those fired:			
			Fatal injury	Serious injury <sup>3</sup>	Slight injury	No injury
Shotguns	495	50	6	23	15	56
Handguns	2,651	13	5	31	17	47
Imitation firearms <sup>4</sup>	1,377	76	-	1	59	40
Rifles/ others <sup>5</sup>	1,478	40	1	8	52	38
<b>Non-air weapons</b>	<b>6,001</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>42</b>
Air weapons	3,554	89	-	1	10	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,555</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>69</b>

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. Percentages may not sum due to rounding.
3. A serious injury is one which necessitated a stay in hospital or involves fractures, concussion, severe general shock, penetration by a bullet or multiple shot wounds.
4. Imitation firearms include weapons such as BB guns and soft air weapons, which can fire small plastic pellets at low velocity.
5. Includes starting guns, supposed/type unknown, prohibited firearms (including CS gas) and other firearms.

**Download table**
[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(36 Kb)

**Injuries to police officers**

Five police officers were slightly injured by firearms while on duty in 2011/12 (Table 8). This is the lowest number of police officers injured since 1990 (also 5; data not shown) and is around half the number in 2010/11.

**Table 8: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, in which a police officer on duty was injured by a firearm (excluding air weapons), by type of injury, 2002-03 to 2011-12**

England and Wales

Recorded crime				
Year	Total	Fatal injury	Serious injury <sup>2</sup>	Slight injury
Number of offences:				
2002/03	12	-	1	11
2003/04	14	1	3	10
2004/05	23	-	2	21
2005/06	23	1	6	16
2006/07	21	-	3	18
2007/08	24	1	3	20
2008/09	9	-	1	8
2009/10	17	-	1	16
2010/11	9	-	1	8
2011/12	5	-	-	5

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. A serious injury is one which necessitated a stay in hospital or involves fractures, concussion, severe general shock, penetration by a bullet or multiple shot wounds.

**Download table**

**XLS** [XLS format](#)  
(33.5 Kb)

**Notes for Injuries sustained in firearm offences**

1. The imitation firearms category includes BB guns and soft air weapons.

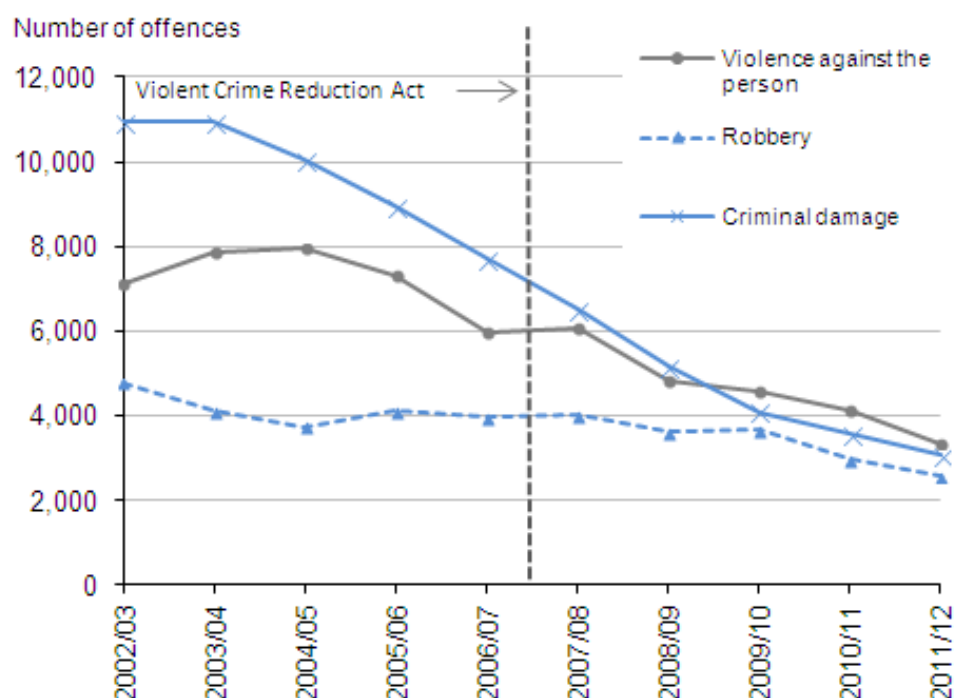
**Types of offences where firearms are used**

There are clear differences in the types of offences committed when these were analysed separately by weapon type. In 2011/12, 88% of the recorded offences involving non-air weapons were for violence against the person and robbery. In contrast, 77% of recorded offences involving air weapons were for criminal damage (Table 3.08).

For offences involving non-air weapons, violence against the person offences decreased by 17%, from 3,355 in 2010/11 to 2,775 in 2011/12. This was greater than the 7% fall in all recorded violence against the person offences<sup>1</sup>.

- Forty-six per cent (2,775 offences) of recorded offences involving a non-air weapon were for violence against the person offences, 42% for robbery (2,532 offences) and 6% for criminal damage (331 offences).
- Non-air weapon offences for violence against the person have fallen by over half (53%) since the peak of 5,914 offences in 2004/05. This rate of decrease is double that seen in all violence against the person offences over the same period (27%).
- There was a reduction in non-air weapon robbery offences of 13% from 2,925 in 2010/11 to 2,532 in 2011/12, while robberies that involved a knife or sharp instrument<sup>2</sup> remained at a similar level over the same period. The reduction in non-air weapon robbery offences of 393 offences accounted for 26% of the 2% fall in recorded robbery offences<sup>1</sup>. Taken together these figures indicate that firearms are being used in a smaller proportion of robberies.
- Since 2002/03 the number of robbery offences involving a non-air weapon has fallen by 45%, a greater reduction than that of all robbery offences over the same period (32%).
- Seventy-seven per cent (2,730 offences) of air weapon offences were for criminal damage offences, with a further 16% (576 offences) for violence against the person offences.

**Figure 19: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used by selected offence type, 2002-03 to 2011-12**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. The Violent Crime Reduction Act introduced in October 2007 made it illegal to import or sell imitation firearms and tightened the rules for the manufacture and sale of certain types of air weapon.

**Download chart****XLS** [XLS format](#)

(28 Kb)

The proportion of offences where a firearm was used also differed by offence type. For example, while less than 1% of all recorded violence against the person offences involved the use of a firearm; this figure was higher for the more serious offences of homicide (8%) and attempted murder and grievous bodily harm with intent combined (3%). Around 3% of robberies involved the use of a firearm in 2011/12 (Tables 9 and 3.09). More information on the use of weapons in homicides is available in the 'Homicides' section.

**Table 9: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by selected offence type, 2002-03 and 2011-12**

England and Wales

Recorded crime

Offence type	2002/03		2011/12	
	% of all firearm offences	% of offence type involving firearm	% of all firearm offences	% of offence type involving firearm
Violence against the person	30	0.8	35	0.4
of which:				
Homicide	0	7.7	0	8.0
Attempted murder and other most serious violence	5	3.5	..	..
Attempted murder and GBH with intent offences <sup>2</sup>	..	..	6	3.3
Other	24	0.7	28	0.4
Robbery	20	4.3	27	3.4
Criminal damage	46	1.0	32	0.5
<b>Total firearm offences</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.2</b>

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

2. The offence classification 'more serious wounding or other act endangering life' was replaced with three new offence classifications in April 2008, including the 'inflicting GBH with intent' offences that are included in this table.
3. .. Denotes 'not available'.

### Download table

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

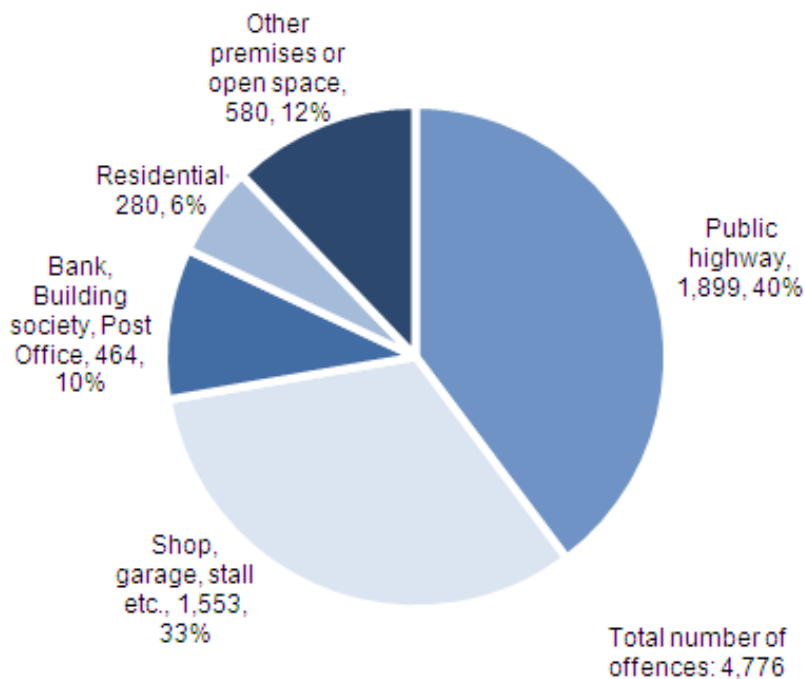
(35.5 Kb)

### Location of robberies involving a firearm

In 2011/12, of the 2,566 robbery offences recorded which involved a firearm, around a third (33%; 844 offences) were committed on public highways, with a further 27% (694 offences) committed in shops. Robberies of banks, building societies and Post Offices with a firearm accounted for 3% (69 offences) of robberies with a firearm.

There has been a reduction in robberies involving a firearm at most types of location since 2002/03. The exception is residential areas, where robberies involving a firearm have increased from 280 in 2002/03 to 385 in 2011/12 (Table 3.10; Figures 20 and 21).

**Figure 20: Proportion of robberies in which firearms were reported to have been used, by location of offence, 2002-03**

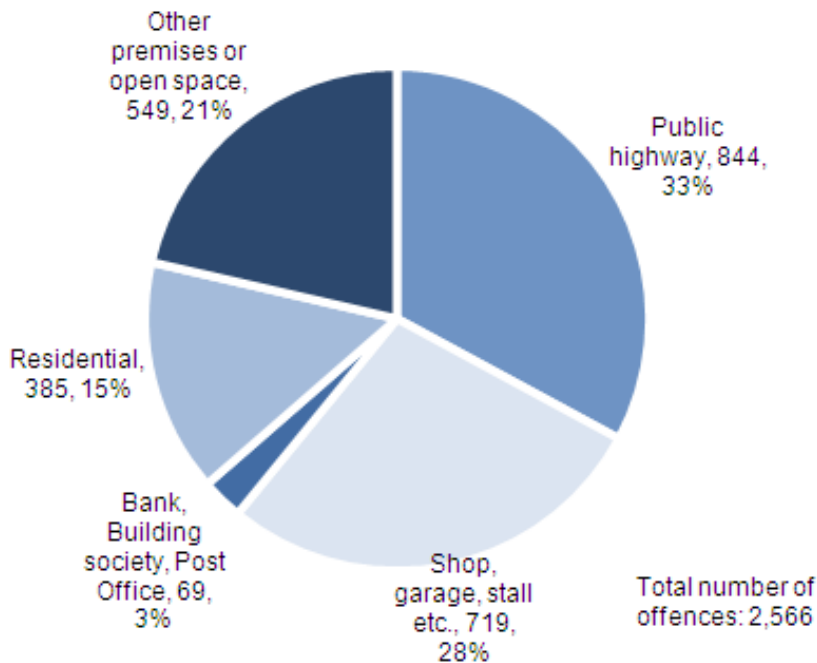


#### Notes:

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. "Residential": These crimes are classified as robberies but are mostly break-ins where firearms have been used immediately before or at the time of stealing items from a residential property, and in order to steal these items. If firearms are used instead in the getaway, the crime is classified as a burglary.

**Download chart**[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(28 Kb)

**Figure 21: Proportion of robberies in which firearms were reported to have been used, by location of offence, 2011-12****Notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. "Residential": These crimes are classified as robberies but are mostly break-ins where firearms have been used immediately before or at the time of stealing items from a residential property, and in order to steal these items. If firearms are used instead in the getaway, the crime is classified as a burglary.

**Download chart**[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(28 Kb)

**Types of firearms involved in robberies**

Handguns were used in 64% of robberies involving firearms in 2011/12; this has fallen from a peak at 71% in 2008/09. A further 6% involved shotguns, 5% imitation weapons and in 15% of cases the firearm could not be identified (for example, a firearm was not actually seen, or the type of firearm was not identified). Air weapons were involved in around 1% of firearm robberies in 2011/12 (Table 3.11).

**Notes for Types of offences where firearms are used**



1. See Table A4 in [Crime statistics, period ending March 2012](#)
2. See Table D21 in [Crime statistics, Annual trend and demographic tables 2011-12 \(1.33 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

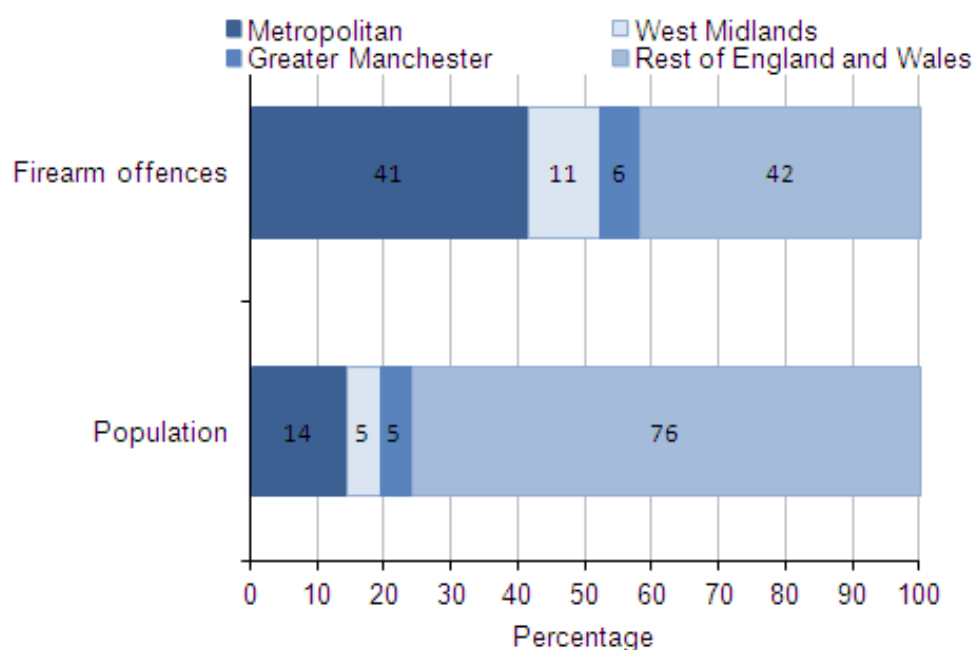
## Geographical distribution of firearm offences

Offences involving the use of non-air weapons (which tend to be used in more serious offences) are geographically concentrated. Around three in five (58%) of these offences recorded in 2011/12 occurred in just three police force areas – Metropolitan Police, West Midlands and Greater Manchester. In comparison, just under a quarter (24%) of the population of England and Wales reside in the areas covered by these three forces (Figure 22). This is a similar proportion of offences recorded for these three police forces to the previous year.

Thus, while the rate per population for firearm offences was 11 per 100,000 (Table 3.12) for England and Wales as a whole, for these three forces they were:

- thirty-one offences per 100,000 population in the Metropolitan Police force area;
- twenty-four per 100,000 in the West Midlands force area; and
- fourteen per 100,000 in the Greater Manchester force area.

**Figure 22: Proportion of firearm offences, excluding air weapons, in three police force areas, compared with population profile of those forces, 2011-12**



### Notes:

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. The population figures are based on mid-2011 projections from the Office for National Statistics.

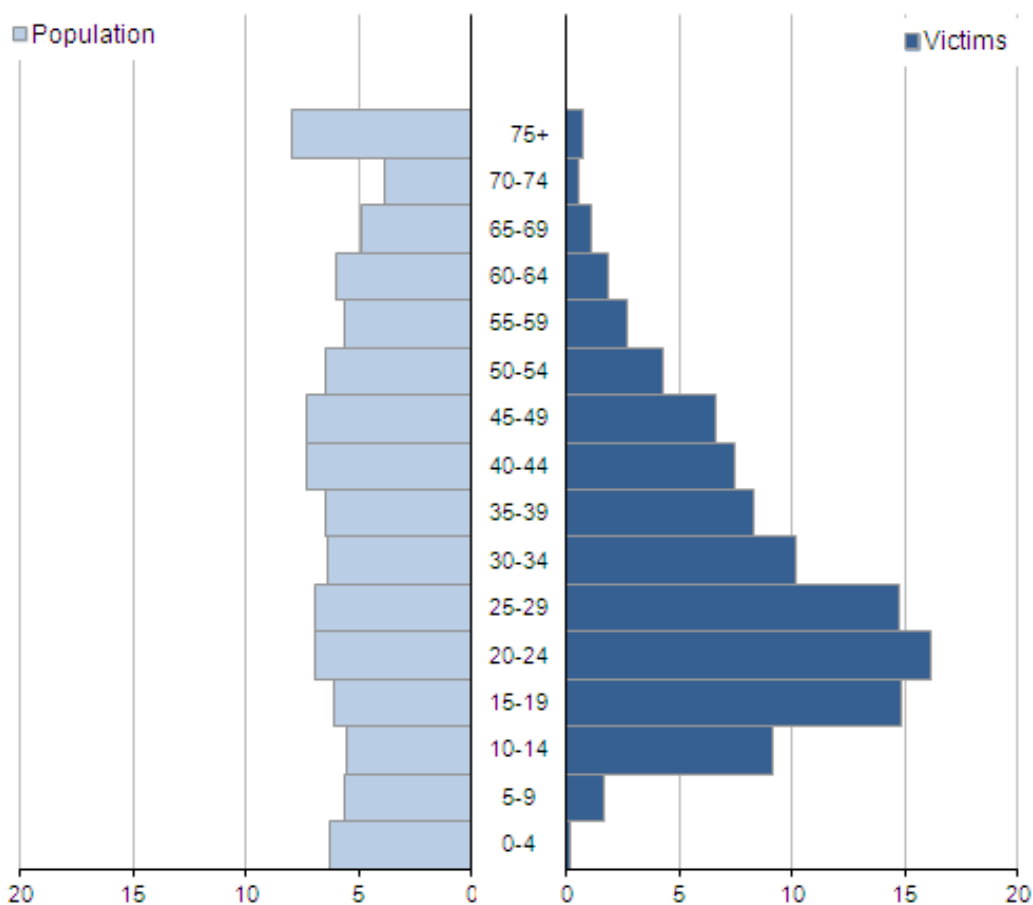
**Download chart****XLS** [XLS format](#)

(28 Kb)

**Age of victims**

As in previous years, there was variation in the risk of being a victim of a firearm offence by age. Of the non-air weapon offences in which the ages of victims were known (93% of all victims), people aged between 15 and 29 years formed a disproportionately high number of victims; 15 to 29 year-olds comprised 20% of the population but were victims in 46% of the recorded offences. In contrast, people aged 60 years and over were less likely to become victims. Although this age group comprised 23% of the population, they were victims in only 4% of the recorded offences (Figure 23).

**Figure 23: Age profile of firearm victims, excluding air weapons, compared to population profile for England and Wales, 2011-12**

**Notes:**

1. Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office
2. The population figures are based on mid-2011 projections from the Office for National Statistics.

**Download chart****XLS** [XLS format](#)

(28.5 Kb)

**Misappropriated (stolen) firearms**

'Misappropriated firearms' are defined as those stolen, obtained by fraud or forgery, or handled dishonestly. For simplicity, they are referred to as 'stolen' hereafter.

The number of firearms recorded by the police as being stolen has fluctuated between 2,000 and 3,000 in the past ten years. During 2011/12, 2,173 firearms were stolen. This is a decrease of 14% compared with the 2,534 firearms stolen in 2010/11. The fall is mainly due to a reduction in stolen shotguns and imitation firearms (Table 3.13). In 2011/12, 63% of firearms were stolen from residential premises. Air weapons accounted for around a half (53%) of the thefts (Table 3.14).

To reduce the burden on police forces, the Home Office ceased collecting information centrally on stolen firearms from 1 April 2012 and this will not appear in future National Statistics publications.

**SECTION 4 – INTIMATE VIOLENCE****Summary**

This section presents findings from the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) self-completion module on intimate violence which is asked of adults aged 16-59. This covers experience of emotional, financial and physical abuse by partners or family members, as well as sexual assaults and stalking by any person. The 2011/12 module included a special focus on the nature of serious sexual assault, findings from which are presented here.

- Seven per cent of women and 5% of men were estimated to have experienced any domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million female and 800,000 male victims.
- Overall, 31% of women and 18% of men had experienced any domestic abuse since the age of 16. These figures were equivalent to an estimated 5.0 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.9 million male victims between the ages of 16 and 59.
- There was no statistically significant change in the level of domestic abuse experienced in the last year between the 2010/11 and 2011/12 surveys.
- Estimated levels of domestic abuse experienced in the last year were lower than the level in 2004/05 when the self-completion module was first included in the CSEW, although there has been no statistically significant change in the level of domestic abuse since the 2008/09 survey.
- Three of the four main categories of intimate violence in the last year (non-sexual partner abuse, non-sexual family abuse and stalking) have all shown statistically significant decreases between the 2004/05 and 2011/12 CSEW.
- Sexual assault in the last year has shown no statistically significant change over this time period.
- The 2011/12 survey showed that for women who had been victims of serious sexual assault since they were 16, the most common perpetrator was a partner or ex-partner (52%).

- Forty per cent of those who had experienced serious sexual assault since the age of 16 thought the offender was under the influence of alcohol and 13% thought the offender was under the influence of drugs at the time of the incident. Around a third of victims (32%) said they themselves were under the influence of alcohol and 3% were under the influence of drugs at the time of the incident.
- Thirteen per cent of those who had been victims of serious sexual assault in since the age of 16 had reported the abuse to the police, a level of reporting that was not statistically significantly higher than that found in the 2007/08 (11%) and 2009/10 surveys (11%).

## Background - intimate violence

This section includes headline findings from the 2011/12 self-completion module of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) on the extent of, and trends in, intimate violence among men and women aged 16 to 59 resident in households in England and Wales.

A self-completion module on intimate violence was included in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) in 2001 and then on a continuous basis since 2004/05<sup>1</sup>. Intimate violence is a collective term used here to refer to a number of different forms of physical and non-physical abuse consisting of partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault and stalking. The term reflects the intimate nature either of the victim-offender relationship or of the abuse itself.

### Definitions of abuse in the intimate violence self-completion module

- **Intimate violence:** this term covers everything contained in the module: partner abuse (non-sexual), family abuse (non-sexual) and sexual assault or stalking by anyone. Due to the irregular nature of what is contained in this category, estimates for total intimate violence are not presented here.
- **Domestic abuse:** this category combines partner abuse (non-sexual), family abuse (non-sexual) and sexual assault or stalking carried out by a current or former partner or other family member<sup>2</sup>.
- **Non-sexual abuse by a partner:** physical force, emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them carried out by a current or former partner.
- **Non-sexual abuse by a family member:** physical force, emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them carried out by a family member other than a partner (father/mother, step-father/mother or other relative).
- **Sexual assault:** rape or assault by penetration including attempts ('serious'), indecent exposure, sexual threats or unwanted touching ('less serious') carried out by any person.
- **Stalking:** one or more incidents (causing distress, fear or alarm) of receiving obscene or threatening unwanted letters, e-mails, text messages or phone calls, having had obscene or threatening information about them placed on the internet, waiting or loitering around home or workplace, following or watching, or interfering with or damaging personal property by any person, including a partner or family member.

There are two headline measures of intimate violence in the CSEW: one relates to experiences since the age of 16 and the other is limited to those experiences in the last 12 months. As well as questions on experience of intimate violence, the CSEW self-completion module also includes a set of questions asking victims for further details about the nature of the incidents they experienced.

These questions focus in alternate years on partner abuse or sexual assault. The questions in the 2011/12 CSEW focused on the nature of serious sexual assault and as a result this section also includes analysis of these questions, including information about the context of victimisation and reporting of incidents to the police and others.

The under-reporting of crime to the police is known to be particularly acute for intimate violence offences and one of the strengths of the CSEW is that it covers many crimes that are not reported to the police. Figures on prevalence of domestic violence based on face-to-face CSEW interviews are regularly published<sup>3</sup> issue of willingness to disclose incidents in face-to-face interviews means that this crime type is particularly liable to under-reporting to interviewers using this method. For example, only a small proportion of respondents (5%) who reported being victims of domestic abuse in the self-completion module had reported that they were victims of domestic violence in the last 12 months in face-to-face interviews. This is likely to be due to both:

- the increased reporting of sensitive issues expected on account of the greater confidentiality provided by self-completion methods; and
- the broader definition of domestic abuse used in the self-completion module.

Findings from the self-completion module published here provide a more complete measure of intimate violence victimisation, but as there are several differences in the coverage of the self-completion and face-to-face figures, care should be taken when making comparisons between the two.

The small number of sexual offences identified in face-to-face CSEW interviews and the likelihood of under-reporting means that figures are too unreliable to report and these data are excluded from the counts of violence from the main CSEW count of crime.

Detailed tables on the variations of intimate violence experienced by a wider range of personal, household and area characteristics are also presented.

## Notes for Background - intimate violence

1. The 2001 module differed from the one used since 2004/05 and therefore 2004/05 is used as a baseline for trends.
2. This broadly matches the government's definition of domestic violence and abuse which will be used from March 2013. More details are available from the [Home Office website](#).
3. See Appendix Table A3 of [quarterly crime statistics publications](#).

## Prevalence of intimate violence

### Extent

The self-completion module on intimate violence included questions covering experiences since the respondent was 16 (treated here as a measure of adult lifetime prevalence) and in the last year (treated here as a measure of recent experience).

As in previous years, women were more likely than men to have experienced intimate violence across all the different types of abuse asked about (Table 4.01). This is in contrast to findings on overall violent crime victimisation in which men, particularly young men, were more likely to have experienced violent crime<sup>1</sup>. However, it is known that in these overall violence estimates, domestic violence is under-estimated.

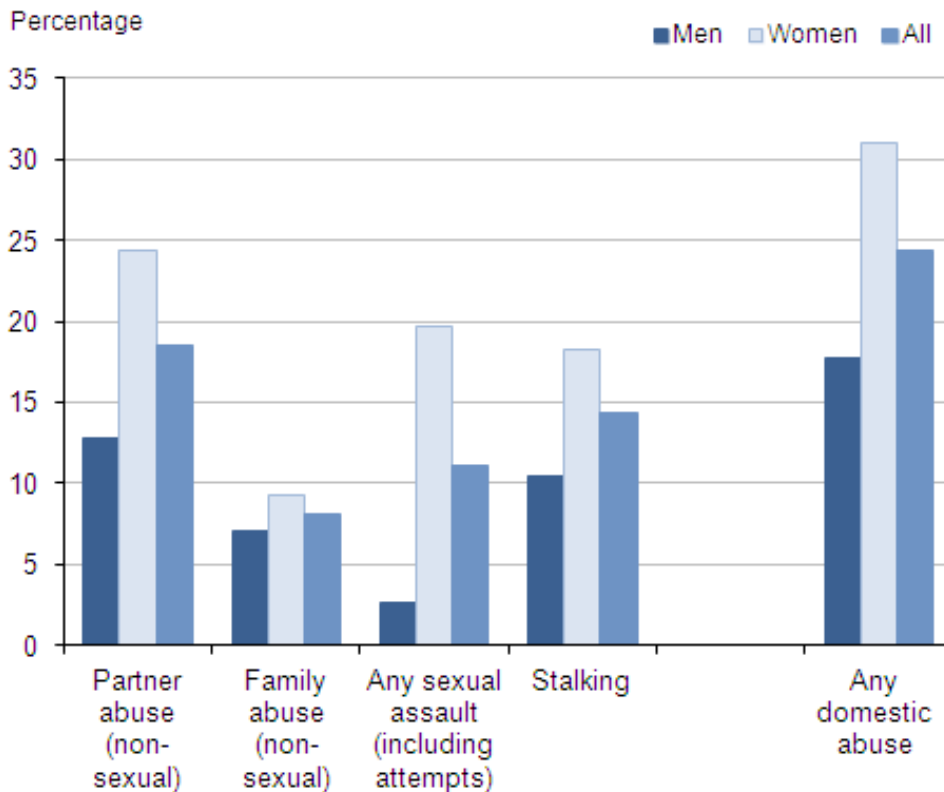
### **Intimate violence experienced since the age of 16.**

Overall, 31% of women and 18% of men had experienced any domestic abuse since the age of 16 (Table 4.01 and Figure 24). These figures were equivalent to an estimated 5.0 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.9 million male victims (Table 4.02).

Partner abuse (non-sexual) was the most commonly experienced type of intimate violence covered by the survey among both women and men. Twenty-four per cent of women and 13% of men reported having experienced such abuse since the age of 16 (Table 4.01 and Figure 24).

Consistent with previous findings, the largest difference between the sexes was shown for sexual assault, with 20% of women and 3% of men having experienced sexual assault (including attempts) since the age of 16 (Table 4.01 and Figure 24).

**Figure 24: Prevalence of intimate violence experienced since the age of 16, by sex and category, 2011-12 CSEW**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(28 Kb)

**Intimate violence experienced in the last year**

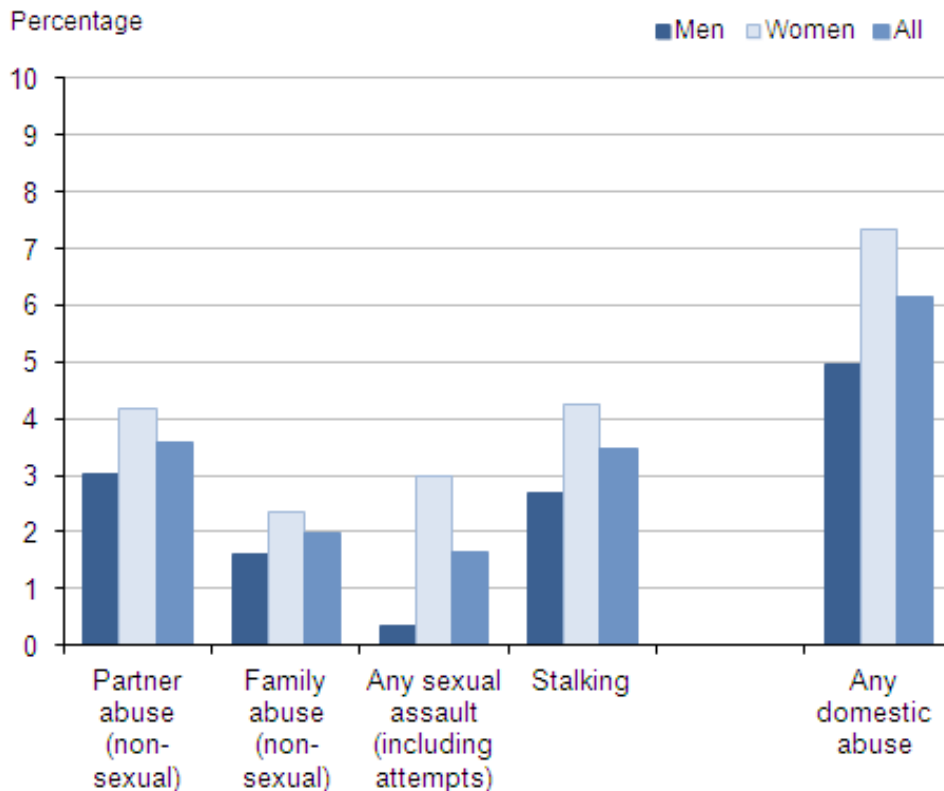
Respondents who had reported at least one incident of being a victim of intimate violence since they were 16 were asked whether they had been a victim in the last year. Women were more likely than men to have been a victim of intimate violence in the last year with the differential being most marked for sexual assault. The 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that (Tables 4.01 and 4.03; Figure 25):

- Seven per cent of women and 5% of men reported having experienced any type of domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million female victims of domestic abuse and 800,000 male victims.
- In the last year, partner abuse (non-sexual) and stalking were the most common of the separate types of intimate violence: 4% of women and 3% of men reported having experienced partner abuse (non-sexual); 4% of women and 3% of men reported having experienced stalking.



- Around 3% of women and around 0.3% of men had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year. The majority of these were for less serious sexual assault, such as indecent exposure, unwanted sexual touching or sexual threats.
- Prevalence of serious sexual assault was lower than other forms of intimate violence among both women and men, with 0.6% of women and under 0.05% of men experiencing serious sexual assault in the past year.

**Figure 25: Prevalence of intimate violence experienced in the last year, by sex and category, 2011-12 CSEW**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(27.5 Kb)

An additional source of information on domestic abuse is available from the police. The police record domestic abuse incidents<sup>2</sup> in accordance with the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR); for further details, see Chapter 5 of the [User Guide](#). While incidents are recorded under NSIR in accordance with the same 'victim focused' approach that applies for recorded crime, these figures are not accredited National Statistics and are not subject to the same level of quality assurance as the main recorded crime collection.

In 2011/12, the police recorded nearly 800,000 domestic violence incidents<sup>3</sup> (Table 4.07). This figure is lower than the survey estimate, as may be expected given that many domestic abuse incidents will not come to the attention of the police<sup>4</sup>.

Further information is also available on sexual offences in [‘An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales’](#). This is a joint publication by the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and the Office for National Statistics which brings together a range of official statistics from across the crime and criminal justice system on sexual offences.

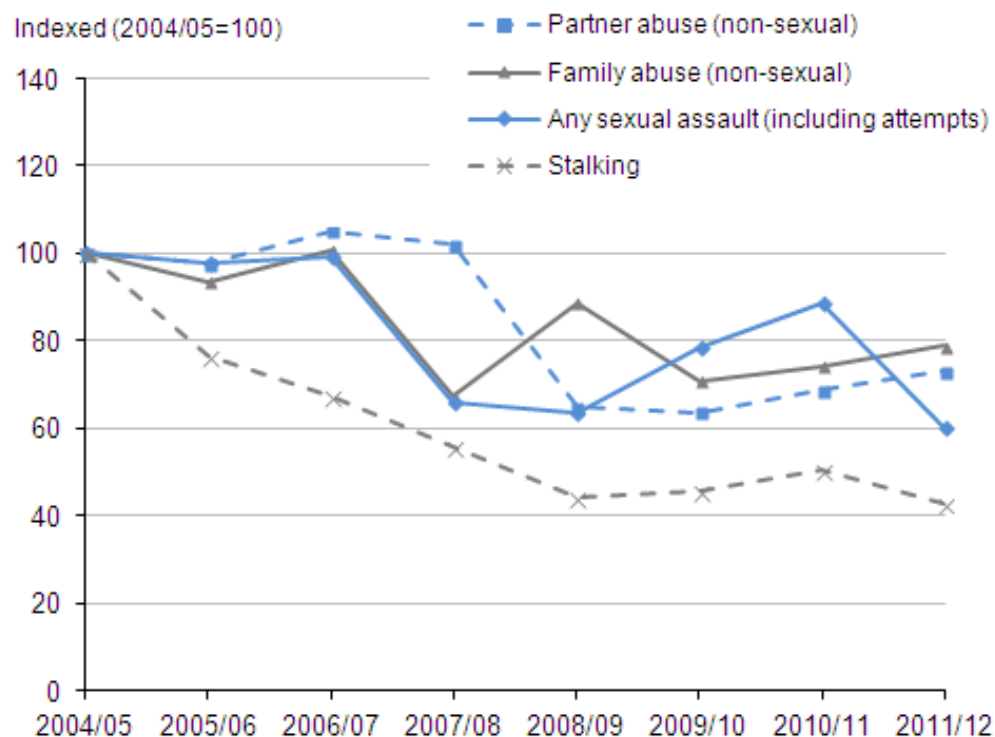
## Trends

The 2011/12 CSEW self-completion module shows that the prevalence of intimate violence experienced in the last year was lower than in the 2004/05 survey when the module was first introduced. A time series for the four main categories (see definitions of the headline categories) that make up domestic abuse can be found in Figures 26 and 27. The data are indexed to allow a clearer comparison of the changes over time between series that have very different magnitudes. The 2004/05 CSEW has been used as the base year as it was the first year that comparable questions were included.

- Between the 2010/11 and 2011/12 CSEW, there were no statistically significant changes in any of the headline categories.
- Between 2004/05 and 2011/12, prevalence of any domestic abuse in the last year declined for both men and women (from 8.9% to 7.3% for women and from 6.5% to 5.0% for men). This was equivalent to an overall fall from around 2.4 million to 2 million victims per year.
- For both men and women, there has been a decline in partner abuse between the 2004/05 and 2011/12 CSEW.
- Of all of the measures covered by the module, stalking has shown the largest decreases in prevalence for both men (6.3% to 2.7%) and women (6.6% to 4.2%) since 2004/05.
- Most of the reductions in intimate violence came between the 2004/05 and the 2008/09 surveys. All apparent changes to the headline measures (including those in Figures 26 and 27) since 2008/09 were not statistically significant.

A comparable question on stalking was not included in the 2007/08 CSEW self-completion module on intimate violence, and so data for 2007/08 are omitted from the trends time series.

**Figure 26: Indexed prevalence of intimate violence experienced in the last year by men, 2004-05 to 2011-12 CSEW (2004-05 CSEW = 100)**



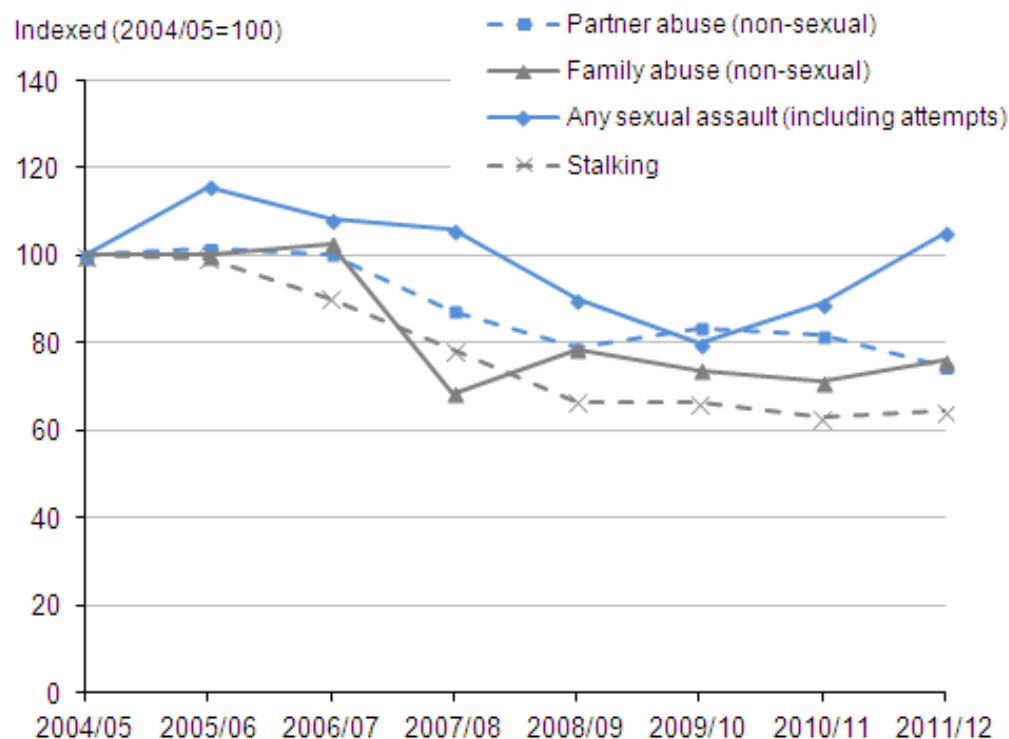
**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The stalking time series excludes a data point for 2007/08 due to comparable questions on stalking not being included that year.

**Download chart**

**XLS** [XLS format](#)  
(28 Kb)

**Figure 27: Indexed prevalence of intimate violence experienced in the last year by women, 2004-05 to 2011-12 CSEW (2004-05 CSEW = 100)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The stalking time series excludes a data point for 2007/08 due to comparable questions on stalking not being included that year.

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(28 Kb)

**Intimate violence in the last year by personal characteristics**

In addition to women being more likely than men to have experienced intimate violence in the last year, victimisation varied by other personal characteristics. Across the main categories of intimate violence there were characteristics which were associated with an increased prevalence of victimisation in the last year (Tables 4.08 and 4.09). Many of these characteristics will be closely associated (for example marital status and age) so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effects of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation.

- For women, the prevalence of intimate violence was higher for younger age groups. Women aged between 16 and 19 or between 20 and 24 were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse (13.7% and 12.6% respectively) or of stalking (7.9% and 7.3% respectively). Women aged between 16 and 19 were most likely to be victims of sexual assault (9.2%) (Table 4.08).

- Although younger men appeared to be more likely to have experienced any domestic abuse in the last year than older men, there were no statistically significant differences between different age groups.
- Women who were separated had the highest risk of any domestic abuse in the last year (21.0%) compared with all other groups by marital status. The pattern was slightly different for sexual assault, with single women (6.5%) and separated women (4.1%) being more likely to be a victim than those who were married (0.8%).
- There was less variation in terms of marital status for men. However, married men were less likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year (3.4%) than single, divorced or separated men.
- Both women and men with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year (12.8% and 7.3% respectively), compared with those without a long-term illness or disability (4.6% and 6.1%). Similarly, women with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to be victims of stalking (6.5%) than those without (3.7%).
- Women with a degree or diploma were less likely than women with no qualifications or other qualifications to be a victim of any domestic abuse in the last year (5.6% of women with a degree or diploma compared with 7.9% of women with 'A level or equivalent qualifications' and 9.3% of those with 'GCSE or equivalent qualifications').

## Notes for Prevalence of intimate violence

1. Overall violent crime in the CSEW is measured as part of the face-to-face interview. For estimates of victimisation from the face-to-face interview see Appendix Tables D22 to D25 of [Crime statistics, period ending March 2012](#).
2. Domestic abuse incidents are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
3. It is important to note that not all incidents that are recorded by the police will subsequently be recorded as crimes. Information on the number of recorded crimes which are related to domestic abuse is not available as domestic abuse (or domestic violence) is not a crime defined in law.
4. Unlike the CSEW, the police recorded domestic incident figures exclude incidents where the victim was aged 16 or 17. From April 2013, these incidents will be included in police figures.

## Nature of sexual assault

Further questions were asked in the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) to provide more detail on the circumstances of sexual assault (including rape) experienced by respondents either since the age of 16 or in the past year. Reflecting the differential rate of prevalence, it should be noted that the results for all adults presented in this section are dominated

by the responses of women as the number of men interviewed who had experienced sexual assaults was small.

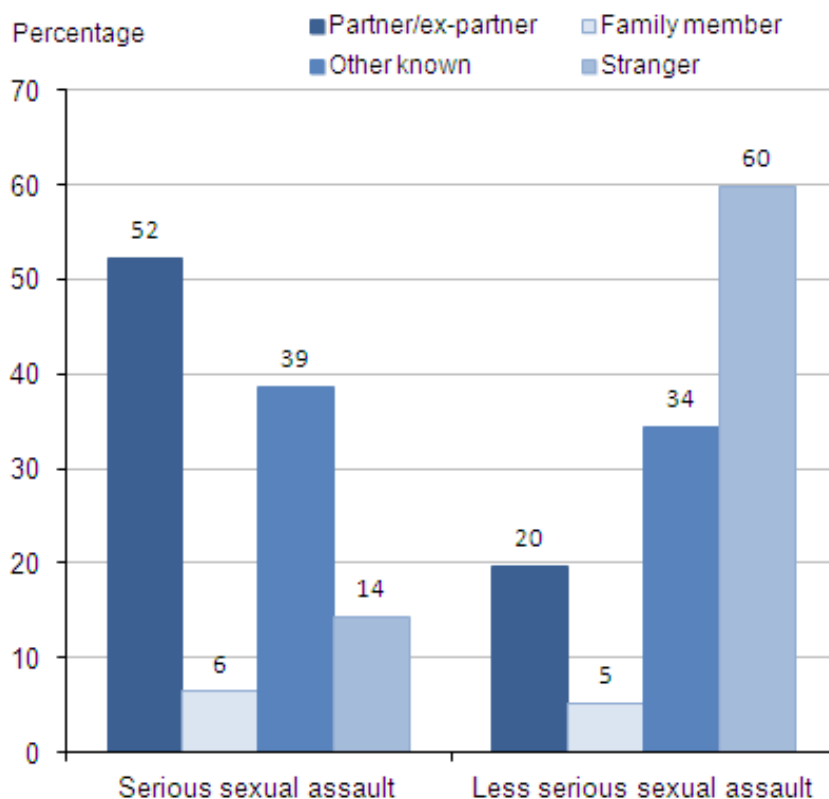
### Offender characteristics

Respondents who had experienced serious sexual assault since they were 16 reported that offenders in incidents of serious sexual assault were most likely to be men, with 62% of victims reporting that the offender was a male aged between 20 and 39 (Table 4.10).

However, the victim-offender relationship profiles varied considerably between different types of sexual assault, and also between female and male victims (Table 4.11 and Figures 28 and 29).

- Overall, sexual assaults were most likely to be carried out by a stranger (57%). However, this largely reflects the victim-offender relationship in incidents of less serious sexual assault (for example, indecent exposure, unwanted sexual touching or sexual threats) against women, which make up the majority of incidents of any sexual assault.
- For women who had been victims of serious sexual assault since they were 16, the most common offender was a partner<sup>1</sup> (52%), whereas among women who had been victims of less serious sexual assault since they were 16, the offender was most likely to be a stranger (60%).
- For men who had been victims of any sexual assault since they were 16, the most common offender was someone other than a partner/ex-partner or family member known to them (for example: a date, friend, acquaintance or colleague; 48%) or a stranger (47%)<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 28: Victim-offender relationship for incidents of serious sexual assault and less serious sexual assault experienced by women since the age of 16, 2011-12 CSEW**



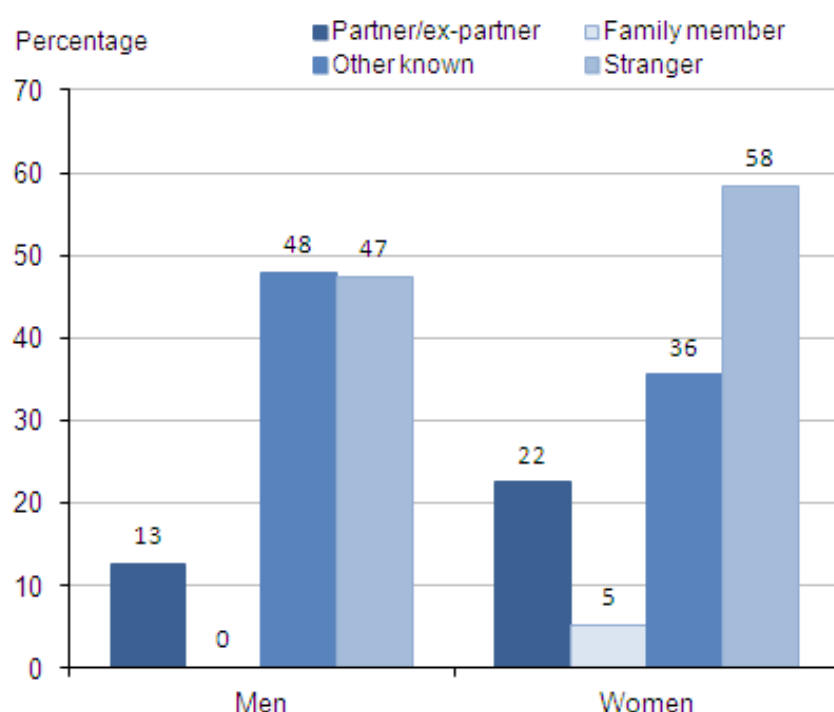
**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. Figures add to more than 100 as some people were assaulted by more than one person

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(27.5 Kb)

**Figure 29: Victim-offender relationship for incidents of any serious sexual assault experienced since the age of 16, by sex, 2011-12 CSEW**

**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. Figures add to more than 100 as some people were assaulted by more than one person

**Download chart**

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)  
(28 Kb)

**Influence of alcohol and drugs**

Respondents who reported that they had been victims of serious sexual assault since they were 16 were asked whether they thought the offender (or offenders) was under the influence of alcohol or drugs and whether they (the victim) were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the incident<sup>3</sup>. For those who had experienced more than one incident, only the most recent incident was asked about.

Victims were more likely to report that offenders were under the influence of alcohol rather than drugs in the most recent incident of serious sexual assault that they had experienced (Table 4.12).

- Forty per cent of those who had experienced serious sexual assault since they were 16 thought the offender had been under the influence of alcohol and 13% thought the offender had been under the influence of drugs.

This is similar to the findings from the main 2011/12 CSEW, which showed that victims believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol in around half (47%) of all violent incidents. The CSEW 'Nature of crime' [Table 7.11 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) also shows that the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of drugs in nearly a quarter (23%) of violent incidents.

Victims were asked whether they themselves were under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the most recent incident of sexual assault that they had experienced (Table 4.12).

- A third (32%) of victims reported that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the most recent incident of serious sexual assault and 3% reported that they were under the influence of drugs they had chosen to take.
- Six per cent of victims reported that they thought that the offender had drugged them during the last incident of serious sexual assault that they had experienced.

Around a third (31%) of victims who were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the incident were seriously sexually assaulted while asleep or unconscious (data not shown).

## Location of incidents

Incidents of serious sexual assault were most likely to take place in the victim's home (42%), followed by the offender's home (24%) or a park or other open public place (7%) (Table 4.13).

## Reporting of serious sexual assault

Those who had experienced a serious sexual assault since the age of 16 were asked who they had personally told. A large proportion had not told anyone about their most recent experience (38%), and only a small minority had told the police (13%) (Table 4.14).

- Thirty-eight per cent of victims of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 told no-one about their experience.
- For those that did tell someone about their experience, the main group that victims confided in was friends, relatives or neighbours (49%).
- Thirteen per cent of victims told the police about their most recent experience of serious sexual assault. This level of reporting to the police is not statistically significantly higher than the previously published figure based on 2009/10 CSEW interviews (11%) ([Smith et al., 2011](#)).

Despite the low level of reporting to the police, in cases where the police did come to know about the incident of serious sexual assault, the majority of victims (63%) reported that they found the police to be very or fairly helpful and 37% reported they found the police not very helpful or not at all helpful (data not shown).



## Effects of serious sexual assault

Around four in five (79%) of victims of serious sexual assault reported that they suffered some ill-effects as a result of the incident. Over half (56%) of victims of serious sexual assault suffered mental or emotional problems, and a further quarter (25%) reported having problems trusting people or having difficulty in other relationships. The physical injuries victims were most likely to suffer were minor bruising or a black eye (20%). In 4% of incidents the victim attempted suicide as a result of the incident. Two per cent of victims of serious sexual assault become pregnant as a result of the incident (Table 4.15).

Findings from the main 2011/12 CSEW, '[Nature of crime' Table 7.07 \(451 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) showed that victims said they sustained physical injuries in half (50%) of all violent incidents, and in 30% of violent incidents this was a minor bruise or black eye.

## Notes for Nature of sexual assault

1. Includes both current and former partner.
2. Due to the small number of males interviewed who were victims of serious sexual assault, it is not possible to produce robust figures for victim-offender relationship for male victims for serious sexual assault.
3. The questions on influence of alcohol or drugs were asked of victims of serious sexual assault since age 16 because the number of victims of serious sexual assault in the last year was low. Some respondents to these questions on the influence of drink or drugs responded "Don't know", "Don't want to answer" or "Can't remember".

## Attitudes to sexual violence

In addition to questions about experience of sexual assault, questions were included in the 2011/12 survey to gauge public attitudes towards victims of such violence. All adults aged 16 to 59 were asked in the self-completion section of the interview about their attitudes towards sexual violence: the majority of people thought that victims were not responsible for someone sexually assaulting or raping them when they were drunk, under the influence of drugs or if they had been flirting heavily beforehand.

However, around one in twelve people thought that the victim is 'completely' or 'mostly' responsible for someone sexually assaulting or raping them when they were under the influence of drugs (8%), by someone they have been flirting heavily with beforehand (7%) or while drunk (6%) (Table 10).

Men were more likely than women to think the victim was 'completely' or 'mostly' responsible for someone sexually assaulting or raping them if they had been flirting heavily beforehand (8% and 6% respectively) (Table 4.16).

**Table 10: Attitudes to sexual violence, 2011-12 CSEW**

England and Wales

Adults aged 16 to 59

**Percentage saying the victim is completely or mostly responsible for someone sexually assaulting or raping them:**

While drunk	5.8
While under the influence of drugs	7.7
By someone they have been flirting heavily with beforehand	7.1
Unweighted base <sup>2,3</sup>	5,686

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The bases given are for 'while drunk'; the bases for the other attitudes presented will be similar.
3. Attitudes to sexual violence questions were only asked of one-quarter of the CSEW sample.

**Download table**

**XLS** [XLS format](#)  
(33 Kb)

**Data sources – further information**

For detailed information about the statistical sources used here, refer to the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#) (ONS, 2013)<sup>1</sup>.

**Police recorded crime**

Police recorded crime is the primary source of sub-national crime statistics and lower-volume crimes. It covers people (for example residents of institutions and tourists) and sectors (for example commercial crime) excluded from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) sample, and has a wider coverage of offences - for example homicide, and 'crimes against the state' (for example, drug offences). Police recorded crime also covers some types of serious but relatively less common offences that are not covered or are less well covered by the survey, including homicide, firearms, and use of knives and sharp implements within selected violent offences.

It should be noted that recorded crime can be influenced by changes in recording practices or police activity. As well as the main police recorded crime series, there are additional collections covering knife crime and firearm offences, which are too low in volume to be measured reliably by the CSEW.

Police recorded crime figures have been subject to a data reconciliation process with individual forces although forces can revise figures during the financial year.

## Homicide Index

The Home Office Homicide Index is a database which contains detailed record-level information containing additional information, including victim and suspect details and the circumstances of the offence, for each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset. Data presented in this release therefore differ slightly from the homicide figures presented in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases.

## Firearms

Offences involving the use of firearms relates to any crime recorded by the police where a firearm has been discharged, used as a blunt instrument or in a threat. Firearm possession offences, where the firearm has not been used, are not included. Firearms covered by the Firearms Act 1968 include handguns, shotguns, rifles, imitation weapons, air weapons and some other weapon types such as CS gas and pepper sprays.

## The CSEW

The British Crime Survey is now known as the Crime Survey for England and Wales to better reflect its geographical coverage. While the survey did previously cover the whole of Great Britain it ceased to include Scotland in its sample in the late 1980s. There is a separate survey – the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey – covering Scotland. Given the transfer of responsibility for the survey to ONS, it was decided that the name change would take effect from 1 April 2012.

The CSEW is a face-to-face survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of crime in the 12 months prior to the interview. The overall sample size for the CSEW is gradually being reduced from April 2012. The sample size will decrease from an achieved sample of 46,000 households per year in the year ending March 2012 to 35,000 households in the year ending March 2013. The sample size reduction will take 12 months to implement and readers of the quarterly bulletin will see a gradual decrease in the un-weighted bases referenced in tables as data based on the old sample of 46,000 households reduces to the new sample size of 35,000 households.

The CSEW fieldwork was carried out by TNS-BMRB. In the year ending March 2012, the CSEW had a nationally representative sample of 46,031 adults and 3,930 children with response rates of 75% and 67% respectively. The survey is weighted to adjust for possible non-response bias and to ensure the sample reflects the profile of the general population. Being based on a sample survey, CSEW estimates are subject to a margin of error. Unless stated otherwise, all changes in CSEW estimates described in the main text are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level. For more information on statistical significance and confidence intervals for CSEW data, see Section 8 of the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#) (ONS, 2013).

## CSEW 10 to 15 year olds

Since January 2009, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) has asked children aged 10 to 15 resident in households in England and Wales about their experience of crime in the previous 12 months. The questionnaire has been refined since its inception with the most recent

data published in [Crime in England and Wales, year ending September 2012](#). Violence accounts for a large proportion of the crimes experienced by 10 to 15 year olds. Methodological differences mean that direct comparisons cannot be made between the adult and child data ([Millard and Flatley, 2010](#)). Children are not asked questions about intimate violence reported on in the last section of this bulletin.

## **CSEW self-completion intimate violence questions**

Figures on prevalence of domestic violence based on face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) interviews are regularly published (for example, many of the [Appendix tables \(2.01 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) and 'Nature of crime' tables published with this release break violence down into different categories, including one labelled 'domestic violence').

The issue of willingness to disclose incidents in face-to-face interviews means that this crime type is particularly liable to under-reporting using this method. Since 2004/05 respondents have been asked a self-completion set of questions, in addition to the questions asked by interviewers directly, to provide a more complete measure of intimate violence victimisation.

The self-completion set of questions provide estimates of non-sexual abuse by partners or family members, and sexual assault and stalking, which can be combined in several ways. Only a small proportion (5%) of respondents who reported being victims of domestic abuse in the self-completion module had reported that they were victims of domestic violence in face-to-face interviews, reflecting both the broader scope of domestic abuse, and the sensitivity and complexity of this topic. A full discussion of the definitions, issues, and estimates from this module can be found in the 'Intimate Violence' section.

## **Robbery**

As the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a sample survey, relatively few victims of less frequently occurring crimes are interviewed and these figures are therefore subject to greater fluctuations between years. These offences are better represented within police recorded crime figures, though they are still subject to the aforementioned limitations and will only include those offences that come to the attention of the police.

## **Additional sources**

NHS hospital admissions are collated from Hospital Episodes Statistics (HES). They include patient-level data on hospital admissions (inpatient episodes), outpatient appointments, and Accident and Emergency attendances. Inpatient episodes have been collected since 1989.

The data include specific information about the patient, such as age, gender and ethnicity; clinical information about diagnoses, operations and consultant specialties; administrative information, such as time waited, and dates and methods of admission and discharge; and geographical information such as where the patient was treated and the area in which they live. The external cause data includes specific codes for assault by various means (for example: sharp object, blunt object, handgun discharge, etc.).

While the inpatient data are unaffected by police enforcement activity, in contrast to police recorded crime data, and are generally considered to be complete and robust, there are three key caveats to their use. First, it should be remembered that HES data relates to hospital activity not individuals. For example, apparent reductions in activity may be due to procedures being undertaken in outpatient settings and therefore no longer being included in admitted patient data. Second, the admissions data do not include cases where someone came to Accident and Emergency with a violence-related injury but was not admitted (for example, minor injuries) or refused treatment. Third, there are potential recording differences in the external cause coding between Trusts. For example, injury information could be missing from the admission episode record and added later to a subsequent episode record. In addition, the coding is dependent on the clinician's judgement about the underlying cause of the admission, which may be difficult to ascertain.

### Notes for Data sources – further information

1. This [User Guide](#) is the standard source of information on both police recorded crime figures and the CSEW.

### List of products

The following are URL links associated with the production of Crime Statistics:

1. [Crime statistics, period ending September 2012](#)
2. [Historic police recorded crime](#)
3. [Pre-April 2012 publications on the Home Office website](#)
4. [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#)
5. [2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales: Technical Report, Volume One](#)
6. [Crime statistics, period ending March 2012 – reference tables. Published 19 July 2012](#)
7. [Crime Statistics - Focus on Public Perceptions of Policing, Findings from the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales. Published 29 November 2012](#)
8. [‘Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2010/11’](#) Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 02/12. Published 19 January 2012
9. [‘Hate crime, cyber security and the experience of crime among children: Findings from the 2010/11 British Crime Survey’](#) Supplementary Volume 3 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 06/12. Published 29 March 2012
10. [National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics](#)
11. [UK Data Archive](#)

In addition to these National Statistics releases, provisional management information drawn from police recorded crime figures, published at street level each month, is available:

1. [Police recorded crime, street level mapping tool](#)

## References

- Home Office 2012a, [An estimate of youth crime in England and Wales: Police recorded crime committed by young people in 2009/10](#), Christine Cooper and Stephen Roe
- Home Office 2012b, [Hate crimes, England and Wales 2011/12](#), Home Office statistical bulletin 11/12
- Flatley et al., 2010, [Crime in England and Wales 2009/10: Findings from the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime](#), Home Office statistical bulletin 12/10
- Millard and Flatley, eds. 2010, [Experimental statistics on victimisation of children aged 10 to 15: Findings from the British Crime Survey for the year ending December 2009 England and Wales](#), Home Office statistical bulletin 11/10
- [MoJ, ONS, Home Office](#), 2013, 'An overview of sexual offending in England and Wales'
- Nevin, R, 2007, '[Understanding international crime trends: the legacy of preschool lead exposure](#)', Environmental Research 104 (2007) 315–336
- Reyes, J W, 2007, '[Environmental Policy as Social Policy? The Impact of Childhood Lead Exposure on Crime](#)' NBER Working Paper No. 13097
- Sivarajasingham V., Wells, J.P., Moore, S., Morgan, P. and Shepherd, J.P., 2012, '[Violence in England and Wales 2011. An accident and Emergency Perspective](#)', Cardiff: Cardiff University
- Smith, K., (ed), 2011, '[Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2009/10: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2009/10](#)', Home Office statistical bulletin 01/11
- Smith, K., (ed), 2012, '[Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2010/11: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11](#)', Home Office statistical bulletin 02/12
- Van Dijk, J., Tseloni, A., and Farrell, G., (eds), 2012, '[The International Crime Drop: New Directions in Research](#)'

## Background notes

1. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
2. Details of policy governing the release of new data are available from Media Relations Office.
3. Next quarterly crime statistics publication: 25 April 2013.

Future thematic reports due to be published:

Focus on Property Crime: Findings from the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales and Police Recorded Crime: May 2013.

4. Follow us on [twitter](#) or join us on [Facebook](#).

View the latest [podcasts](#).

5. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

## Copyright

© Crown copyright 2013

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This document is also available on our website at [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk).

## Statistical contacts

Name	Phone	Department	Email
John Flatley	+44 (0)207 5928695	Crime Regional and Data Access	<a href="mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk">crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk</a>



**Issuing Body:**

Office for National Statistics

**Media Contact Details:**

Telephone: 0845 604 1858  
(8.30am-5.30pm Weekdays)

Emergency out of hours (limited service): 07867 906553

Email:

[media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)