

Article

Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update: July 2024

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

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1 . Recent updates

We are continuing to adapt both our data collection and presentation of statistics to meet users' needs and to provide the best overview of crime from all available sources. In the last year, we have:

- conducted our [Crime Survey for England and Wales \(CSEW\) data quality review: June 2024](#) that showed the quality of CSEW data for the year ending (YE) March 2023 was broadly similar to the YE March 2020, when they were last accredited official statistics
- improved how we present our CSEW headline crime measure and which measures are best for different crime types, as described in our [Crime trends in England and Wales and how we measure them: June 2024 article](#)
- introduced regular reporting of experiences and perceptions relating to anti-social behaviour in our [quarterly Crime in England and Wales bulletins](#)
- redesigned the CSEW sample to collect more data from high crime areas for estimates of neighbourhood crime
- continued to improve our data collection and statistics related to our [Violence against women and girls: research update November 2023](#), including publishing new CSEW statistics in our [Experiences of harassment in England and Wales: December 2023 bulletin](#) and starting evaluation of the new domestic abuse questions, as described in our [Redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics: research update November 2023](#)
- continued to implement a new multimodal panel design for the CSEW – second wave telephone interviews started in October 2022 and third wave interviews started in October 2023
- continued to explore the feasibility of online surveying as part of a multimodal approach to survey data collection; see our [Transformation of the CSEW methodology](#) for more information
- continued to work on the transformation of the children's CSEW and completed a pilot for collecting these data online, as described in our [Transforming children's crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023 article](#)
- explored the [feasibility of conducting a survey to measuring child abuse in the UK](#)

This work has allowed us to continue publishing our regular bulletins and a range of articles on crime. In the last year, we have published:

- our [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2023 bulletin](#), our [Homicide in England and Wales: YE March 2023 article](#) and our [Drug misuse in England and Wales: YE March 2023 article](#)
- new articles on [Experiences of harassment in England and Wales: December 2023](#), [Bullying and online experiences among children in England and Wales: YE March 2023](#), and [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics: YE March 2023](#), which includes data on abuse experienced by care home residents
- a full set of [Nature of crime tables: YE March 2023](#) for the first time since 2020, including robbery, theft offences, and criminal damage
- methodology articles on [Measuring drug-related homicide methodology: February 2024](#), [Incorporating data on crimes experienced by care home residents into crime statistics](#) and Exploring diverging trends between the CSEW and police recorded crime

2 . Crime statistics development

We have provided updates on strands of work to continue improving crime statistics over the next 12 months. However, we are developing a longer-term work plan for crime statistics, which we intend to publish in the autumn.

Presentation of crime statistics

We are taking forward a review of the presentation of our crime statistics to ensure better user interpretation of our data and to improve public understanding of crime. We have engaged with a range of users and stakeholders and started to incorporate changes to make it easier to interpret the main messages from our statistics. We will continue to engage with our users, including the new government, to understand emerging priorities and how our statistics can deliver even greater insights for the wider public good. We aim to update on this later this year.

Data quality

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) remains the best estimate of long-term trends in crimes against the household population, for the crimes included in the survey. However, CSEW estimates have had their accredited official statistics status temporarily suspended because of the potential effect of lower response rates on data quality following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) is currently [reviewing our request for reaccreditation](#). We made this request following our [CSEW data quality review: June 2024](#) that showed the quality of CSEW data for the year ending (YE) March 2023 was broadly similar to CSEW data for YE March 2020, when they were last accredited official statistics.

We will continue to ensure the quality of the CSEW by maintaining our sample size, making incremental improvements to increase response rates, and continuing to monitor and make post-survey adjustments to ensure our sample is representative of the household population of England and Wales.

The OSR published their review of [The quality of police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales](#) in May 2024. In response, we published our [Action plan for improving the quality of police recorded crime statistics in England and Wales](#). As we progress through this action plan and publish our findings, we will continue to update and provide evidence to users.

The OSR also published their [Review of fraud and computer misuse statistics for England and Wales](#) in April 2025. The review outlined a number of recommendations for improvements. In response, we will work closely with data providers to develop a joint action plan for addressing these recommendations and publish this by the end of 2025.

Improving measurement of crime

Domestic abuse

We have started a user engagement, research and testing programme to improve domestic abuse data collection. This programme aims to redevelop the domestic abuse questions in the self-completion section of the CSEW. A new set of questions was included in the survey on a split-sample basis from April 2023. We are now analysing these data and assessing them against our evaluation criteria.

An overview of work to date is available in our [Redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics: research update November 2023 article](#). Our next update, including trial outputs based on the new questions, will be published in late 2024.

Sexual victimisation

We have begun research to improve sexual victimisation data collection in the self-completion section of the CSEW. We conducted a user survey to understand requirements and data gaps in summer 2023. We are now starting qualitative research to understand lived experience and to test new questions.

National Data Quality Improvement Service

The [National Data Quality Improvement Service \(NDQIS\) tool](#) is now in use for three police collections. NDQIS automatically flags offences involving knives or sharp instruments, domestic abuse-related offences, and child sexual abuse-related offences; the tool avoids relying on a manually added marker. Currently, 42 police forces have switched to NDQIS for knife or sharp instrument offences, 37 forces for domestic abuse-related offences, and 30 for child sexual abuse-related offences. The tool was recently applied to the online crime collection from April 2024, and there are plans to apply it to the hate crime collection.

Crime Survey for England and Wales transformation

The CSEW is an important source of evidence in the crime debate. It is critical that the survey continues to provide high-quality crime statistics in a cost-effective and resilient way.

The CSEW's new multimodal panel design, with Wave 2 telephone interviews, was implemented in October 2022. However, further work is required to assess the effect of survey transformation on data quality. We are currently investigating the quality of Wave 2 data, and the comparability of Wave 1 and 2 data, to assess how these data can be used together in future statistical outputs. We will make further information on the progress of this work, and our future plans for seeking accreditation, available at the earliest opportunity.

We are also continuing to explore the feasibility of online surveying, as part of a multimodal approach to survey data collection. See our [Transformation of the CSEW - Discovery research on the redesign of multi-mode questions methodology](#) for more information.

Crimes against children transformation

To ensure that we also continue to provide high-quality statistics on children's experiences of crime in a cost-effective and resilient way, we are redesigning the Children's Crime Survey for online data collection. Collecting data from children through face-to-face interviewing has become increasingly challenging. Fieldwork was suspended between March 2020 and March 2022 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Since returning to the field, the response rate and number of achieved interviews are much lower than they were prior to the suspension of fieldwork.

In February, we piloted an online children's crime survey, sampling from the Department for Education's National Pupil Database. This pilot concluded two years of research on the feasibility of collecting sensitive data from children online. Following the success of this research, we have decided to stop interviewing children aged 10 to 15 years through the CSEW from April 2025. This will allow us to invest our resource in further developing the online survey. Over the next year, we will be finalising the methodological and operational design for the full children's online survey, launching as soon as possible.

Alongside this work, we have continued the Child Abuse Prevalence Survey Feasibility Study. We are currently in Phase 2 of the project. This includes developing and conducting a pilot survey with children and young people aged 11 to 25 years. For more information on Phase 1, please see our previous [Exploring the feasibility of a survey measuring child abuse in the UK progress update articles](#) published in January 2021 and April 2022. Recently, the University of Edinburgh and the University of Greenwich completed their contract with us; they designed two questionnaires and a safeguarding procedure for the pilot. We have also been developing the methodological and operational design for the survey. There are a number of final activities that need to be carried out before we can pilot the survey. More detail can be found in our most recent progress update article, [Exploring the feasibility of a survey measuring child abuse in the UK: June 2024](#).

3 . Cite this methodology

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 24 July 2024, ONS website, methodology, [Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update July 2024](#)