

Article

Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update: July 2026

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

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Table of contents

1. [Recent updates](#)
2. [Planned work for the next 12 months](#)
3. [Cite this methodology](#)

1 . Recent updates

We are continuing to improve how we collect and present crime data to more effectively meet users' needs and provide the best overview of crime using all available sources. Over the past year, we have made several important updates. We have:

- published an [update to our consultation](#) on the redesign of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) in 2022 to update users on plans and to give users an opportunity to provide feedback
- evaluated and implemented new sexual victimisation and stalking questions on the CSEW, which provide a more accurate measure
- continued work to update the CSEW offence classification process to align more closely to the current Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR); a review will be published later this year
- published an [action plan](#) for improving the quality of fraud and computer misuse statistics, in collaboration with the Home Office, the City of London Police, and His Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
- performed a comprehensive analysis to [evaluate the usefulness of the panel design](#) for the CSEW
- advanced our plans for online data collection, including [redesigning CSEW screener questions for online use](#) and [researching how participants conceptualise and recall their experience of crime](#); a field test was conducted in autumn 2025 and first results will be published in summer 2026
- decoupled the Children's Crime Survey for England and Wales (CCSEW) from the adult CSEW; [the newly developed online CCSEW](#) uses the [NHS Personal Demographic Service \(PDS\)](#) to sample children aged between 10 and 15 years; the first results will be published in September 2026
- [continued the development of a new Safety During Childhood Survey](#), to measure the prevalence of child abuse through an online survey for those aged 16 to 25 years, with a plan to roll out the survey later this year

Publications from the past year

In addition to our [Crime in England and Wales bulletins](#), we have continued to publish crime-specific bulletins and articles, and supporting methodology articles.

Bulletins and articles

- [Perceptions and experience of police and criminal justice system, England and Wales, year ending March 2025](#)
- [Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2025](#)
- [Abuse during childhood in England and Wales: March 2024](#)
- [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2025](#)
- [Drug misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2025](#)
- [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2025](#)
- [Sources of support and personal safety among children in England and Wales: year ending March 2024](#)
- [Fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2025](#)

Supporting methodology articles

- [Crime Survey for England and Wales Transformation — Discovery Part 2: mental models research](#)
- [An evaluation of the Crime Survey for England and Wales Panel Design Test](#)
- [Exploring the feasibility of a survey measuring child abuse: May 2026](#)

2 . Planned work for the next 12 months

Improving crime statistics presentation

Over the next year, we will continue to improve how we present crime statistics. This will include making changes to our statistical articles in line with [improvements we are making to the ONS website](#).

Data quality

High-quality Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) face-to-face data collection remains a critical priority. Our preliminary response rate to the CSEW for year ending (YE) March 2026 was 48%. Although this is an improvement from last year (46%) and from when we restarted fieldwork in YE March 2023 (42%), this is still well below pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic response rates (64% in YE March 2020). We are continuing to work closely with our contractor, Verian, to improve this response rate. The sample profile is monitored closely on a quarterly basis to ensure it remains representative of the population. As part of this, we will test a tailored approach to advance letters sent to households before interviewer visits.

We are continuing to review how crime types are prioritised in the CSEW. In some instances, the current order no longer matches the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) used for police recorded crime. We plan to publish an analysis of the effect of updating this priority order later this year, aiming to align with the current HOCR from April 2027. This work has taken longer than we had originally expected. Our current assessment is that any impact on previously published estimates will not be statistically significant.

We recently identified that increases in estimates of experienced anti-social behaviour were partly because of changes to the way questions in the CSEW questionnaire were asked in April 2025 onwards. We will publish a methodological report on this on 25 August 2026. We are currently conducting a review of the CSEW questionnaire development process and how we can better monitor for effects of questionnaire changes on our estimates.

We are continuing to implement our action plans to improve the quality of [police recorded crime statistics](#) and [fraud and computer misuse statistics](#). We have made the recommended changes to our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#) to provide more information on:

- individual police force IT systems
- crime data integrity in police forces
- our data quality framework
- the quality of the recorded fraud and computer misuse series
- how CSEW fraud categories align with recorded fraud categories

Crime Survey for England and Wales online development

We will continue our programme of work to assess the feasibility of delivering the CSEW online. We are widening our testing this year to include a broader range of CSEW questions. We will evaluate how accurately respondent experiences can be measured when collecting information across different modules using an online, self-completion survey.

A feasibility test is currently scheduled for October 2026. We will use this test as proof of concept that an online survey can produce important metrics tied to the government's Safer Streets Mission, including anti-social behaviour and perceptions of the police. It will also provide an early testing platform for our prototype screener and victimisation module, which has been redesigned to improve the way we collect information about crime victimisation from respondents online. We will also be testing selected questions from our domestic abuse module, to evaluate responsiveness to more sensitive topics that are asked in the CSEW. As part of the feasibility test, methodological experiments will be conducted to strengthen our understanding of design, mode and order effects, and assess how we can develop strategies to minimise non-response bias. Initial results from the test are expected in spring 2027.

Alongside the feasibility test planned in October 2026, there will be other strands of development this year. The prototype screener and victimisation modules will undergo iterative rounds of cognitive testing between now and March 2027 to ensure they have been fully developed in line with a respondent-centred design approach. We will also be undertaking further review of complex survey modules, including those covering domestic abuse and sexual victimisation. As part of this work, we will review patterns of item non-response across the survey, drawing on findings from the 2025/2026 field test. We will also address the ethical and safeguarding considerations associated with collecting highly sensitive information in an online context.

Crimes against children

The newly developed online Children's Crime Survey for England and Wales started data collection in December 2025 with children aged between 10 and 15 years. The first results from an initial module of questions on online activity and security, perceptions of safety, and well-being will be published in September 2026. We are currently developing a further module, which will include updated measures on crime victimisation and bullying; we plan to add this into the live survey in autumn 2026.

We are also continuing to develop the Safety During Childhood Survey, which is an online survey of individuals aged 16 to 25 years that aims to measure the prevalence of child abuse. A small-scale field test was carried out in January 2026, and a larger scale field test is currently underway. Subject to successful evaluation of that test, we will then roll-out the full survey and aim to publish first results by the end of the financial year.

3 . Cite this methodology

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 23 July 2026, ONS website, methodology, [Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update July 2026](#)