

Article

The nature of violent crime in England and Wales: Year ending March 2022

An overview of the extent of violent crime in England and Wales, including long-term trends, use of weapons and victim characteristics.



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1 . Main points

- There was no change in Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) violence for the year ending March 2022 compared with the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2020
- This follows long term falls in CSEW violence from a peak of 4.5 million offences in the year ending December 1995 to 1.2 million offences in the year ending March 2020, a 72% decrease
- Police recorded crime showed that the number of homicides in the year ending March 2022 increased by 25% to 709 offences compared with the year ending March 2021; this is a similar level to the year ending March 2020 where there were 716 offences including the Grays lorry incident with 39 victims
- There was also a 10% increase in the number of police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments (knife-enabled crime) in the year ending March 2022 (to 48,931 offences) compared with the year ending March 2021; this remains lower than the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020 where there were 55,076 offences
- There was no change in the number of hospital admissions for assault with sharp objects in the year ending March 2022 (4,118 admissions) compared with the year ending March 2021 (4,112 admissions); this remains lower than the year ending March 2020 where there were 4,769 admissions

Survey estimates in this release were based on Telephone Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) data for year ending March 2022 to provide more detail on violent crime. More recent data on the extent of violent crime from the CSEW are published in the [Crime in England and Wales bulletin](#). TCSEW estimates are not directly comparable with face-to-face survey (CSEW) estimates because of changes to the sample and questionnaire (see Section 9). Percentage changes between TCSEW estimates and year ending March 2020 CSEW estimates are presented using figures adjusted for these differences.

2 . Extent of violent crime

The Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) estimated that 1.9% of adults aged 18 years and over were a victim of violent crime in the year ending March 2022, equating to 1.5 million incidents of violence. Around two thirds (65%) of all TCSEW violent incidents in the last 12 months resulted in no injury to the victim ([Appendix tables, year ending March 2022](#)).

There was no change in the number of TCSEW violent incidents compared with the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2020. However, the number of victims decreased by 29%. This was driven by falls in violence where the offender was a stranger and likely reflects a decrease in violence taking place in public spaces during national lockdown restrictions ([Appendix tables, year ending March 2022](#)).

The police recorded 2.1 million instances of violence against the person offences in the year ending March 2022, an increase of 18% from 1.8 million in the year ending March 2021 ([Appendix tables, year ending June 2022](#)). Of these:

- violence without injury accounted for 39% (811,798 offences)
- violence with injury accounted for 27% (566,588 offences)
- stalking and harassment accounted for 34% (719,458 offences)
- death or serious injury – unlawful driving accounted for 0.04% (737 offences)
- homicide accounted for 0.03% (709 offences)

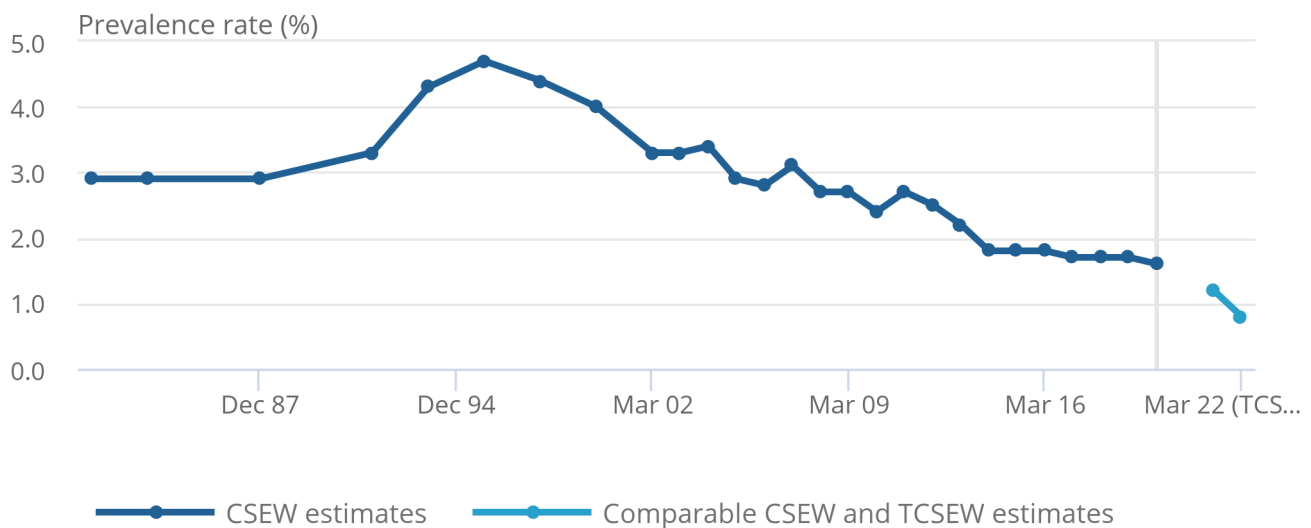
3 . Long-term trends in violent crime

Victimisation rates have been decreasing from a peak in the year ending December 1995, where 4.7% of adults were a victim of violent crime, and have remained below 2% since the year ending March 2014. (Figure 1, [Appendix tables](#)).

Figure 1: Prevalence of CSEW violent crime has remained fairly flat in recent years following long-term falls

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2022

Figure 1: Prevalence of CSEW violent crime has remained fairly flat in recent years following long-term falls
 Estimated for 2022 Office for National Statistics
 Comparable with year ending March 2020 using comparable data causing comparable data to be used for the main CSEW time-series
 England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – Crime Survey for England and Wales and Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales

Notes:

1. Data from the TCSEW are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year; and from year ending March 2002 onwards the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that financial year.
3. TCSEW data are not directly comparable with CSEW estimates. Estimates from TCSEW for year ending March 2022 are compared with the year ending March 2020 using comparable data and are not part of the main CSEW time series. [See Appendix Table A3](#)

Recording improvements have driven rises in violent crime recorded by the police

In contrast to the long-term downward trend of Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) violence, police recorded violent crime has increased between the year ending March 2013 and the year ending March 2022, with 2.1 million violent offences recorded in the latest year ([Appendix tables, year ending June 2022](#)). This was the highest in a 12-month period since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002. These increases are thought to be driven largely by improvements in police recording practices. For more information on recording improvements and comparing police recorded violence and CSEW violence estimates, see section 10.

4 . Police recorded crime trends for different types of violent crime

Homicide

Police recorded crime showed that the number of homicides in the year ending March 2022 increased by 25% to 709 offences compared with the year ending March 2021. This is a similar level to the year ending March 2020 where there were 716 offences. The year ending March 2020 included the Grays lorry incident which involved the death of 39 migrants. Excluding this incident, homicide in the year ending March 2022 would be 5% higher than in the year ending March 2020 ([Appendix tables, year ending June 2022](#)). The number of homicides this year returned to similar levels to those in the four years leading up to the year ending March 2020, following the decrease seen in year ending March 2021 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The rate of homicide in the population remains relatively low, at 12 homicides per 1 million people.

Offences involving firearms

In the year ending March 2022, firearms were used in approximately 0.2% of all police recorded offences, excluding fraud and computer misuse. This proportion has remained stable for the past ten years. (Our [Weapons tables](#) include further detail).

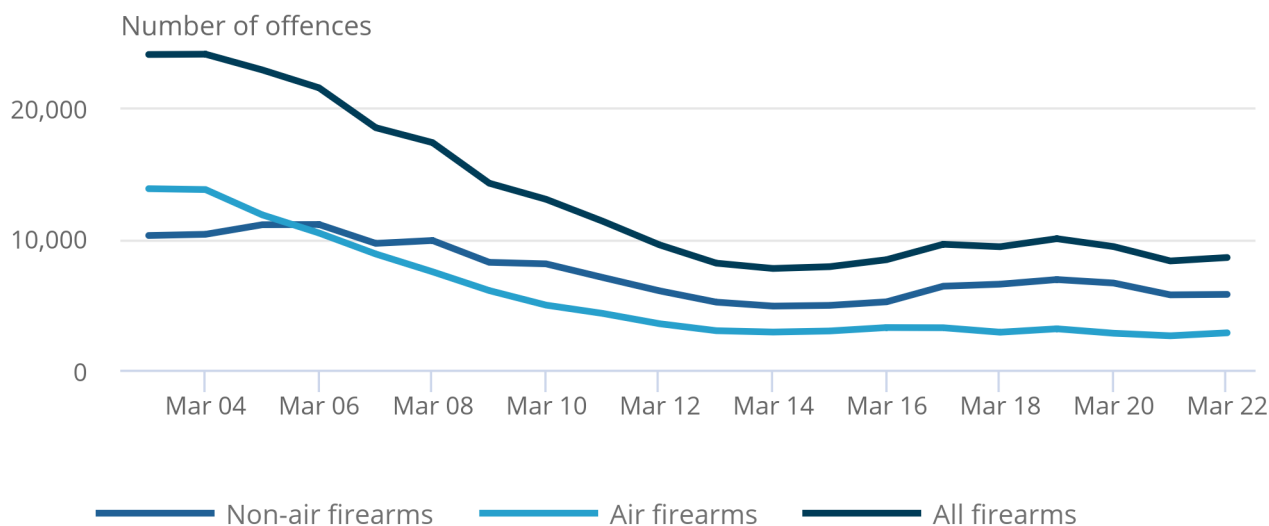
There was a 3% increase in offences involving firearms (including air weapons) in the year ending March 2022 compared with the previous year (to 8,565 offences). This remained 9% lower compared with the year ending March 2020. Similarly, there were 5,750 offences involving firearms excluding air weapons recorded in the year ending March 2022; this was a 1% increase compared with the previous year, but a 13% decrease compared with the year ending March 2020 (Figure 2, our [Weapons tables](#) include further detail).

Figure 2: Firearm offences recorded by the police increased this year, but have not returned to pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2022

Figure 2: Firearm offences recorded by the police increased this year, but have not returned to pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2022



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. More explicit guidelines for the classification of weapons introduced on 1 April 2004 may have increased the recording of firearm offences, particularly those committed by imitation weapons.

Offences involving a knife or sharp instrument

Offences involving knives or sharp instruments rose by 10% in the year ending March 2022 (to 48,931 offences) compared with the previous year, but remained 11% lower than in the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020. More information can be found in our [Weapons tables](#).

Out of the 48,931 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument recorded in year ending March 2022:

- 50% (24,337 offences) were assaults with injury and assaults with intent to cause serious harm offences
- 35% (16,994 offences) were robbery offences
- And 12% (5,868 offences) were threats to kill offences

The past several years have seen a rise in the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in England and Wales, except for the year ending March 2021 where a decrease was seen, likely because of the period of coronavirus (COVID-19) related lockdowns.

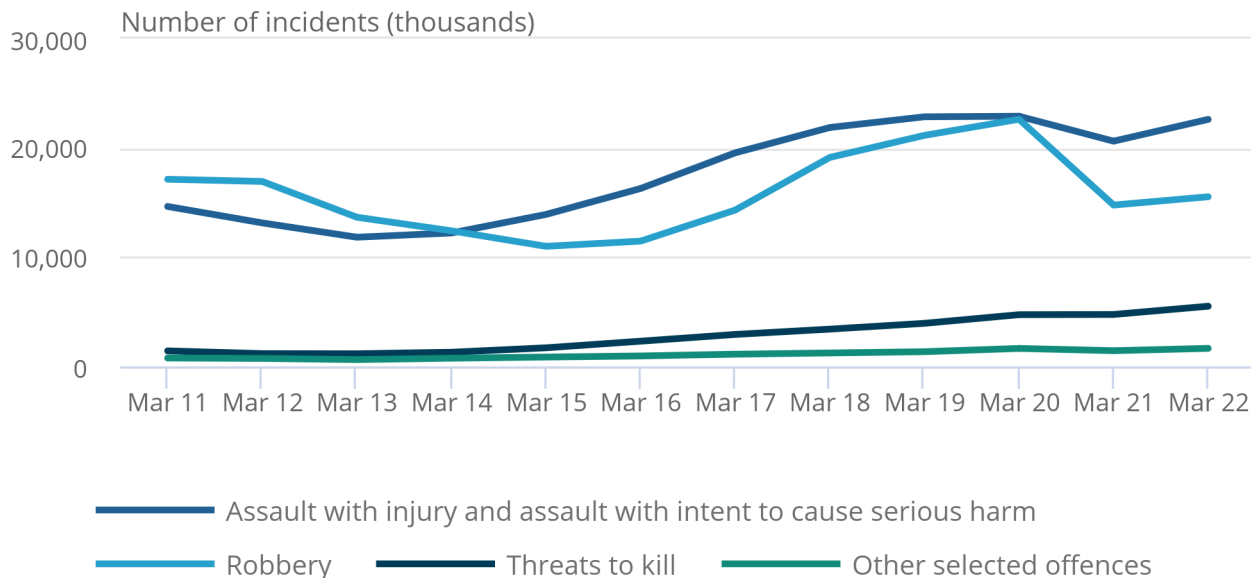
Increases in offences from the year ending March 2014 to the year ending March 2020 may partly be explained by improvements in crime recording practices. For more information, see section 9.

Figure 3. Offences involving knives or sharp instruments recorded by the police increased in the last year but remains lower than pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2022

Figure 3. Offences involving knives or sharp instruments recorded by the police increased in the last year but remains lower than pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2022



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) reviewed their recording of knife enabled crime in December 2017 which revealed that they were under-counting these offences. Previous data were not revised at the time and therefore data from GMP are excluded to allow for comparison over time.
3. An adjustment has been made to data prior to the year ending March 2021 for police forces who are now using the NDQIS tool and the total for England and Wales. As more police forces switch to the NDQIS tool, historical data for these forces and for England and Wales will continue to be updated. For more information on the adjustment to the time series and the differences in data collection methods, please see the methodology note [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments: methodology changes](#).
4. Other selected offences include rape, attempted murder, homicide, and sexual assault.

The definition of domestic violence in the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) refers only to incidents reported as perpetrated by a partner, ex-partner or family member. The level of domestic violence reported via telephone and face-to-face interviewing is prone to significant under-reporting and is likely to be under-estimated. The latest estimate of our preferred domestic abuse measure, collected in the CSEW self-completion module, are available in the Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2022 publication.

5 . The relationship between victims and perpetrators

The Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that the most common perpetrators of violence were strangers (44%, 666,000 offences), followed by acquaintances (34%, 505,000 offences), with the remaining 22% (328,000 offences) categorised as domestic violence in the year ending March 2022 ([Appendix tables, year ending March 2022](#)). The number of victims of stranger violence fell by 43% compared with the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2020, while there was no change in the number of victims of acquaintance and domestic violence.

Relationship between victims and suspects from the Home Office Data Hub

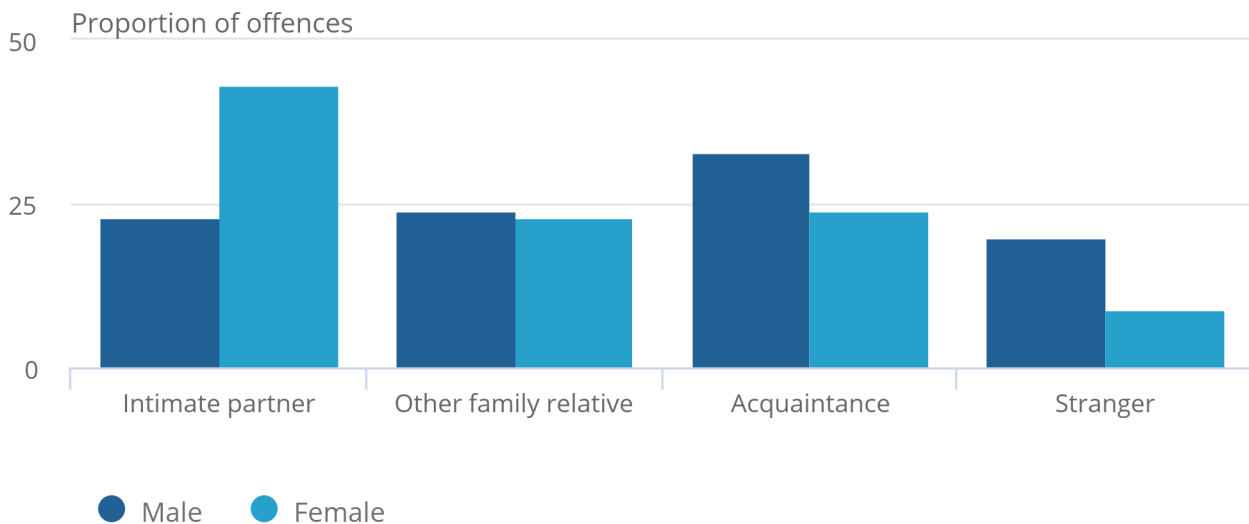
Analysis of data from 18 police forces showed that a greater proportion of police recorded violent offences against women were committed by an intimate partner. For female victims, 43% of suspects were intimate partners, compared with 23% for male victims. The proportion of violent offences committed by a family relative was similar for both female (23%) and male (24%) victims. Acquaintance and stranger relationships between victims and suspects were more common for men, 33% and 20% respectively, compared with women, 24% and 9%, respectively (Figure 4, [Nature of violent crime appendix tables](#)).

Figure 4: The suspects of violence against the person offences were most likely to be in “intimate partner” relationships with female victims, and “acquaintance” relationships with male victims

England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 4: The suspects of violence against the person offences were most likely to be in “intimate partner” relationships with female victims, and “acquaintance” relationships with male victims

England and Wales, year ending March 2022



Source: Home Office - Home Office data hub

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data based on 18 forces that provided data via the Home Office Data Hub, data are indicative as includes offences with more than one victim-suspect relationship and data have not been reconciled with forces.

6 . Groups of people most likely to be victims of violent crime

The year ending March 2022 Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that:

- men were more likely to be victims of violent crime than women (2.2% of men compared with 1.6% of women); although this measure likely underestimates the number of female victims (see Section 10)
- younger people aged 18 to 24 years (3%) and 25 to 34 years (2.9%) were more likely to be victims of violent crime than older people aged 65 to 74 years (0.6%) and 75 years and over (0.2%)
- those living in the most deprived areas of England were more likely to be victims of violence with injury than those living in the least deprived areas (1.2%, compared with 0.5%); they were also more likely to be victims of stranger violence (2.2%, compared with 0.2%) (See our [Nature of violent crime appendix tables](#) for more information)

A similar pattern for age was observed in data from the Home Office Data Hub. Younger adults were also more likely to be victims of violent crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2022 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Younger adults were more likely to be victims of violent crimes recorded by the police

England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded crime data are based on 31 forces that provided data via the Home Office Data Hub or in manual return. Data have not been reconciled with forces.
3. Population figures are based on the ONS population estimates for England and Wales.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

7 . Violence and health service use

According to research conducted by the [Violence Research Group at Cardiff University](#) (PDF, 650KB), an estimated 146,856 people attended emergency units in England and Wales for treatment of violence-related injury in the year ending December 2021. This is a 23% increase compared with the year ending December 2020 (119,111 people), but attendance remained lower than the pre-coronavirus year ending December 2019.

NHS hospitals in England and Wales reported 4,118 admissions for assault by a sharp object and 120 admissions for assault by firearm between April 2021 and March 2022. This is little change when compared with the previous year but 14% and 26% lower than in the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020, respectively ([Weapons tables](#)).

8 . Glossary

All CSEW violence

“All violence” includes violence with injury (wounding, assault with minor injury), and violence without injury. Victims may report experiencing more than one incident of violence and, therefore, may report experiencing more than one type of violence.

Violence with injury

Includes all incidents of wounding and assault with injury; homicide is only included for police recorded crime. Police recorded crime also includes attempts at inflicting injury, although the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) would not include these if no actual injury occurred.

Wounding

The incident results in severe or less serious injury, for example, cuts, severe bruising, chipped teeth, bruising or scratches requiring medical attention or any more serious injuries.

Assault with minor injury

An incident where the victim was punched, kicked, pushed or jostled and the incident resulted in minor injury to the victim, for example, scratches or bruises.

Violence without injury

Includes all incidents of assault without injury (or attempt from the CSEW only) where the victim was punched, kicked, pushed or jostled but resulted in no injury. From July 2013, police recorded crime no longer includes under this sub-category possession of weapons offences and public order offences, such as public fear, alarm or distress. These offences are now included in new sub-categories within “other crimes against society”, named “possession of weapons offences” and “public order offences”.

Intimate partner violence

“Intimate partner” refers to all partner and ex-partner relationships, not just where the couple were married or in a civil partnership, but also including co-habiting partners and those considered in a relationship.

Homicide

Includes the offences of murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide.

Knife or sharp instrument offences

An offence is recorded by the police as involving a knife or sharp instrument when the weapon is present during the offence or the threat is believed to be real. The weapon does not necessarily have to be used. These data are based on a special collection that includes the offences: homicide; attempted murder; threats to kill; assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm; robbery; rape; and sexual assault. Knife possession offences are not included in this analysis.

Offences involving a firearm

Includes those where a firearm is fired, used as a blunt instrument, or used as a threat. Firearm possession offences, where the firearm has not been used in the course of another offence, are not included in this analysis. Firearms include shotguns; handguns; rifles; imitation weapons such as BB guns or soft air weapons; other weapons such as CS gas, pepper spray and stun guns; and unidentified weapons. They exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.

More information and further definitions can be found in the “offence type” section of the [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#).

9 . Measuring the data

Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates continue to provide information in relation to longer-term trends in crime from year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2020. The TCSEW provides estimates of crime for the year ending March 2022.

Estimates from the TCSEW are derived from a total of 31,204 telephone interviews conducted with household residents in England and Wales aged 18 years and over, in the year ending March 2022. The sample was formed from respondents who had previously participated in the face-to-face CSEW in the last two years. TCSEW estimates cannot be compared with estimates for the year ending March 2021 because of overlapping reporting periods for some respondents. Therefore, TCSEW estimates are compared with the year ending March 2020 CSEW estimates throughout this bulletin.

Findings from our [comparability study](#) showed that TCSEW estimates are comparable with CSEW estimates after certain adjustments are applied. All direct comparisons between the year ending March 2022 TCSEW estimates and the year ending March 2020 CSEW estimates are made with the use of these comparable datasets. An additional table, [Appendix Table A3](#), presents percentage changes between these estimates. Estimates presented in [Appendix Table A3](#) will be lower than those presented in [Appendix Table A2](#) and underestimate the extent of crime.

Further information is available in our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: measuring crime during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

As we are collecting data in a new survey mode, the telephone-operated survey estimates are presented within this release as [Experimental Statistics](#).

Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime figures are supplied to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) (via the Home Office) by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police. As with the CSEW, both actual and attempted assaults are included in the figures. Figures presented in this release are those notified to the Home Office and that were recorded in the Home Office database on 9 September 2022, covering data up to the year ending June 2022. See [Appendix Table A4](#) for the full dataset.

Police recorded crime data are not comparable with TCSEW estimates.

The coverage of police recorded violent crime is defined by the [notifiable offence list](#).

For some types of crime, because of ongoing changes in police recording practices, an increase in the number of offences recorded by the police is unlikely to indicate a real rise in these types of crime.

Police recorded crime data cannot provide information on longer-term trends in violent crime, as major changes such as the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), and the expansion of the [Home Office Counting Rules \(HOCR\)](#) in April 1998, mean that the volume of violent crime recorded before and after these dates is not comparable.

The Home Office continue to roll out the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDQIS) data collection methodology. For more information please see our [methodology note Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments, methodology changes](#) and [improving data collection for knife enabled crime blog](#).

Police recorded crime data are not designated as [National Statistics](#). Details of concerns over the quality of these data are in the UK Statistics Authority [most recent assessment report](#).

More information on both these sources can be found in the [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#).

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [Crime in England and Wales QMI](#).

NHS hospital data

Figures based on hospital data were provided by NHS Digital and Digital Health and Care Wales.

Estimates on emergency unit attendance from the [Violence Research Group at Cardiff University](#) are based on 37,475 people who were treated for violence-related injuries at 74 hospital sites.

10 . Strengths and limitations

Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)

Although the TCSEW was set up in a short timeframe in response to developing world events, findings from our [comparability study](#) showed that TCSEW estimates are comparable with CSEW estimates with the use of newly created comparable datasets. However, TCSEW estimates cannot be compared with the year ending March 2021 CSEW estimates because of overlapping reporting periods for some respondents.

Domestic violence in the TCSEW and CSEW refers to incidents reported through the face-to-face/telephone interview that were perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner, or a family member. The level of domestic violence reported in this way is prone to significant under-reporting because many victims will not be willing to disclose such incidents in the context of a face-to-face personal interview. Therefore, for domestic violence the self-completion module of the survey is the preferred measure. See our [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2021 bulletin](#).

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

Police recorded crime

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

On the other hand, police recorded crime excludes offences that are not reported to, or not recorded by, the police and does not include less serious offences dealt with by magistrates' courts (for example, motoring offences). Trends can be influenced by changes in recording practices or police activity as well as public reporting of crime, making it difficult to make long-term comparisons. There are also concerns about the quality of recording and that crime is not recorded consistently across police forces.

11 . Related links

[Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables: year ending March 2022](#)

Dataset | Released 9 November 2022

Data tables relating to offences involving weapons as recorded by police and hospital episode statistics.

[Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 27 October 2022

Crime against households and adults using data from police recorded crime and the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales. Includes the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on crime.

[Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update July 2022](#)

Methodology | Released 21 July 2022

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

[Guide to finding crime statistics](#)

Methodology | Released 21 July 2022

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

[Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain: 16 February to 13 March 2022](#)

Article | Released 25 May 2022

Perceptions of safety and experiences of harassment, by personal characteristics, based on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

[Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#)

Article | Released 10 February 2022

Analyses of information held within the Home Office Homicide Index, which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales.

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 24 November 2021

Figures on domestic abuse from police recorded crime and a number of different organisations.

12 . Cite this bulletin

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