

Statistical bulletin

# Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2019

Crime against households and adults, also including data on crime experienced by children, and crimes against businesses and society.



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## Notice

### 23 April 2020

Face to face interviews for the Crime Survey in England and Wales (CSEW) were suspended in mid-March, as part of the efforts to minimise social contact and stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). The ONS is currently working with our suppliers to ensure we continue to deliver the vital information needed to respond to the impact of this pandemic on our economy and society. Current plans are to have a telephone survey running in May 2020, with an ambition to provide initial results by the end of July 2020.

This will not affect the results for the first quarter of 2020, planned for release in July 2020.

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# 1 . Main points

The level of crime has remained broadly stable in recent years; the latest figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimate a fall of 5% in the year ending December 2019. However, it is too early to say from this single data point whether this will come to represent a change in the recent trend. Underlying this fall, total theft decreased by 9%, to levels similar to those seen in the year ending March 2017. All other main crime types measured by the CSEW showed no change, including overall fraud and lower-harm violent offences (for example, violence without injury and assault with minor injury).

Police recorded crime data give more insight into the lower-volume but higher-harm violence that the survey either does not cover or does not capture well.

Police recorded crime data are not a [National Statistic](#), however, they provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police but not a reliable measure of all crime. In addition, data for Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have not been included in this release because of issues with their data supply following the implementation of new force IT systems. Any total police recorded crime data refer to England and Wales excluding GMP. For further information see [Strengths and limitations](#).

For the year ending December 2019 in England and Wales (excluding GMP) these data show a mixed picture, with:

- a 3% decrease in recorded offences involving firearms
- a 7% increase in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments
- a 2% increase in the overall number of homicides; this includes a single incident with 39 homicide victims <sup>1</sup>, which if excluded shows a 4% decrease overall

Many of these lower-volume, higher-harm types of violence tend to be concentrated in metropolitan areas such as London, the West Midlands and West Yorkshire.

While the total number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments in England and Wales (excluding GMP) increased by 7%, rates of increase varied across police forces. For example, there was a 5% increase in London, a 13% increase in the West Midlands and a 9% decrease in West Yorkshire. In addition, the number of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument was involved decreased by 8%. This decrease was despite a 13% increase in London in the number of homicides where a knife or a sharp instrument was involved.

While the CSEW provides the better indication of overall trends in theft offences, police recorded crime data can help identify short-term changes in individual offences that are thought to be well-reported and relatively well-recorded by the police. Total theft offences recorded by the police decreased by 2% compared with the previous year, although these data show a mixed picture, with:

- a 7% decrease in burglary
- a 12% increase in robbery
- a 1% increase in vehicle offences

## Statistician's comment

Commenting on today's figures, Joe Traynor from the Office for National Statistics Centre for Crime and Justice said:

"Information collected prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates a fall of 5% in crime for 2019. It is not possible to say whether this would have come to represent a change from the flat trend in recent years, as it is likely that the current lockdown will have an impact on the level of crime in 2020.

"The 2019 data revealed different patterns for specific types of crime, for instance, robbery increased but burglary decreased, while fraud and lower-harm violent offences remained stable. Although the number of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument was used fell across the country, it increased in London."

### Notes for: Main points

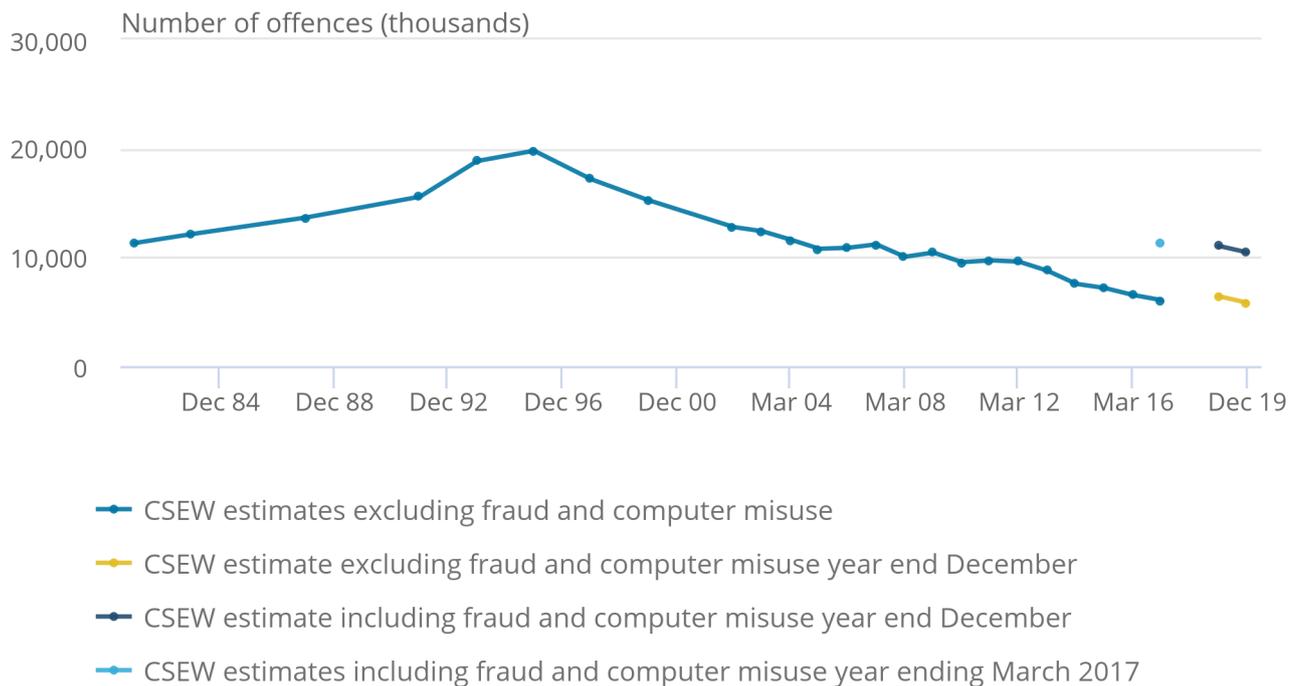
1. In October 2019, the bodies of 39 migrants were found in a lorry in Grays, Essex.

## 2 . Overall estimates of crime

**Figure 1: After long-term falls seen since the mid-1990s, overall crime estimates have changed little in recent years**

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending December 2019

Figure 1: After long-term falls seen since the mid-1990s, overall crime estimates have changed little in recent years. Rises in crime levels during the 90s were mainly because of increases in violence, vehicle crime and burglary. Estimates both including and excluding fraud and computer misuse showed significant increases from the last year.



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

### Notes:

1. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over.
2. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were added to the CSEW from October 2015. The questions were asked of half the survey sample initially and have been asked of the full sample since October 2017. These offences need to be excluded when looking at changes over the long-term to make figures comparable.

This bulletin reports on two main sources of crime data; the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime. For further information on these sources see [Measuring the data](#) and [Strengths and limitations](#).

The CSEW estimated that over 10.4 million offences<sup>1</sup> were experienced by adults aged 16 years and over based on interviews in the year ending December 2019. This was a significant decrease of 5% from the previous year. However, it is too early to say whether this will come to represent a change in the broadly stable levels of crime seen in recent years. It is also important to look at individual crime types for variation both within and across crime types.

The CSEW also measures the prevalence of crime, with the latest estimates showing that 8 in 10 adults did not experience any of the crimes asked about in the survey in the previous 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

Improvements to recording processes and practices by the police have made substantial contributions to rises in recorded crime over the last five years. This effect has been more pronounced for some crime types, and for many types of offence, these figures do not provide reliable trends in crime.

The police recorded 5.8 million crimes in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police<sup>3</sup>) in the year ending December 2019. These data provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police but are not a measure of overall crime or changes in the level of overall crime. Rises seen over recent years indicate a different trend to the CSEW, and reflect a combination of factors, including improvements to police recording processes and practices, variations in police activity, more victims reporting crime, and genuine increases in some types of crime.

For the latest headline figures relating to the CSEW and police recorded crime, and for detailed figures including time series, see [Appendix tables](#).

For a more detailed commentary on both CSEW and police recorded crime see our annual [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2019 bulletin](#).

## Figure 2: Overview of the main crime types

England and Wales, year ending December 2019

**Source: Office for National Statistics – Crime Survey for England and Wales, Home Office - Police recorded crime**

### Notes:

1. Data on violence, theft, fraud and computer misuse are from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and relate to adults aged 16 years and over.
2. Data on homicide, knife or sharp instruments, burglary, vehicle offences and robbery are from police recorded crime.
3. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
4. Police recorded crime data for the year ending December 2019 exclude Greater Manchester Police (GMP).
5. Data on knife or sharp instrument offences exclude GMP for the whole timeseries back to the year ending March 2011.
6. No change indicates no significant change in the last year.

### Notes for: Overall estimates of crime

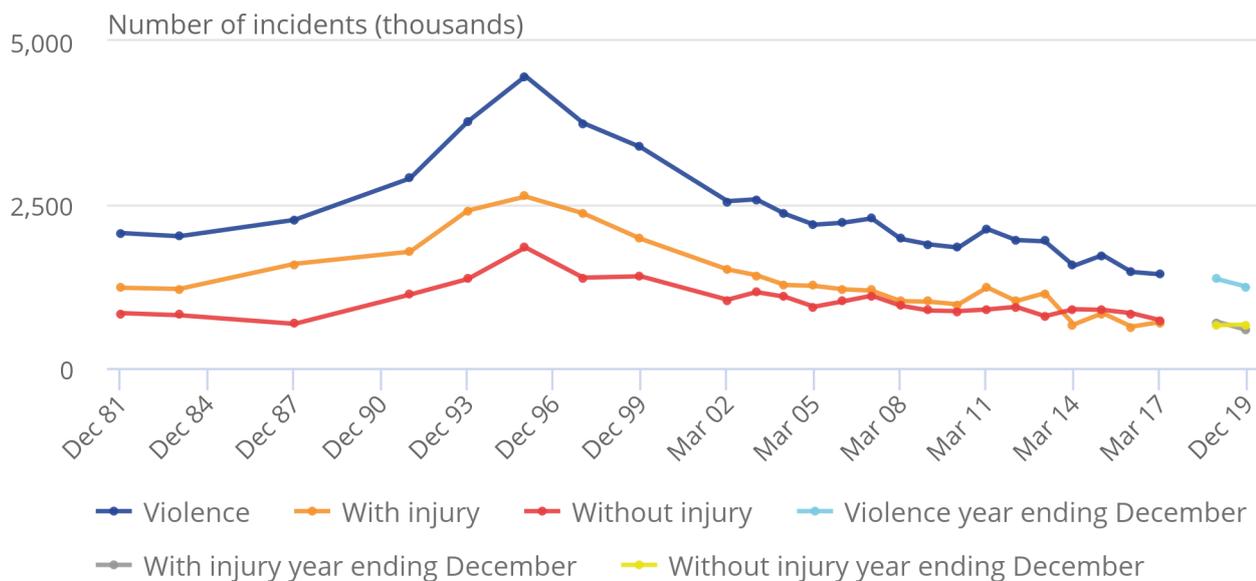
1. For more details about what is covered in the CSEW, see [Strengths and limitations](#).
2. This figure excludes domestic abuse and sexual assault measured by the self-completion module of the survey. Any domestic violence reported in the face-to-face interview is included.
3. Police recorded crime data for Greater Manchester Police are not included in this release because of issues with their data supply following the implementation of new IT systems.

### 3 . Violent crime

**Figure 3: Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in violent crime but little change in recent years**

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending December 2019

Figure 3: Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in violent crime but little change in recent years. After a long-term downward trend, compared with last year, in recent years there has been little change in the number of incidents of violent crime.



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

**Notes:**

1. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over.

For the offences and population that it covers, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the best measure of trends for overall violent crime; particularly for the more common but less harmful offences (for example, assault with minor injury).

There were 1.2 million incidents of violence estimated by the CSEW for the survey year ending December 2019. This figure has not changed significantly since the year ending March 2015, continuing the relatively stable trend seen in recent years.

The longer-term reductions in CSEW violent crime are reflected in research conducted by the [Violence Research Group at Cardiff University \(PDF, 652KB\)](#), and also in [admissions data for NHS hospitals](#)<sup>1</sup> in England.

For more detailed figures relating to violent crime including time series see [Appendix tables](#).

## **Notes for: Violent crime**

1. Please see the “External causes” datasets within [Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity 2018 to 2019](#) for assault admissions.

# 4 . Homicide

**Figure 4: Homicide shows a small increase following the Essex lorry deaths**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2019

Figure 4: Homicide shows a small increase following the Essex lorry deaths

2003 by 2005: 172 victims of homicide and 100 victims of road collisions are recorded.

April 2016: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

April 2017: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

May 2017: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

June 2017: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

July 2017: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

August 2017: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

September 2017: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

October 2017: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

November 2017: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

December 2017: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

January 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

February 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

March 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

April 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

May 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

June 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

July 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

August 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

September 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

October 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

November 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

December 2018: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

January 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

February 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

March 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

April 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

May 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

June 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

July 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

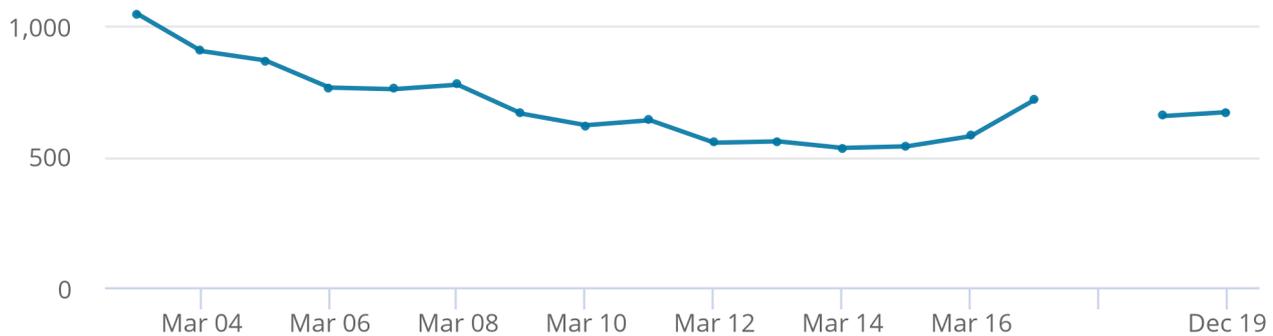
August 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

September 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

October 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

November 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.

December 2019: 96 victims of homicide are recorded.



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Some forces have revised their data and police recorded crime totals may not agree with those previously published.
3. The dates shown for the London terrorist attacks in 2005 and 2017 correspond to when the events occurred, rather than when the homicides were recorded by the police.
4. The time series does not include data for April to December 2017. Full data are available in [Appendix table A4](#).
5. Data from Greater Manchester Police are not included for the years ending December 2018 and December 2019.

The police recorded 670 homicides in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police <sup>1</sup>) in the year ending December 2019, a 2% increase (from 655) compared with the previous year.

The total figure for homicides includes 39 people whose bodies were found in a lorry in Grays, Essex in October 2019. Without this homicide incident, the number of victims would have fallen by 4%. The figures also include a 15% increase (from 127 to 146) recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service in the latest year. The rate of homicide in the population remains very low, at 12 per 1 million people.

The number of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument was involved decreased by 8% in the year ending December 2019 (to 242 offences). Of all recorded homicides in the latest year, 40% involved a knife or sharp instrument, a similar proportion to the previous year. The recent reduction in such offences was driven by falls in 17 Police Force Areas. Despite the overall fall in this type of crime, London had a 13% increase in homicides involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument, from 77 to 87. However, the latest figure is 19% lower compared with the year ending March 2018.

For the latest headline figures relating to homicide and more detailed figures including time series see [Appendix tables](#) and [Other related tables](#). For Police Force Area breakdowns see [Police Force Area data tables](#).

## Notes

1. Police recorded crime data for Greater Manchester Police are not included in this release because of issues with their data supply following the implementation of new IT systems.

## 5 . Knife or sharp instrument offences

Figures for offences involving knives or sharp instruments continue to exclude Greater Manchester Police (GMP) because of issues with their data supply following the implementation of new force IT systems. Any total figures refer to England and Wales excluding GMP.

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

Figures for the year ending December 2019 showed a 7% rise in offences involving knives or sharp instruments recorded by the police in the last year (to 45,627).<sup>1</sup> This was 49% higher than when comparable recording began (year ending March 2011) and the highest on record.

The change in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments in the latest year varied by police force. For example, looking at the three areas with the highest rate per 100,000 population:

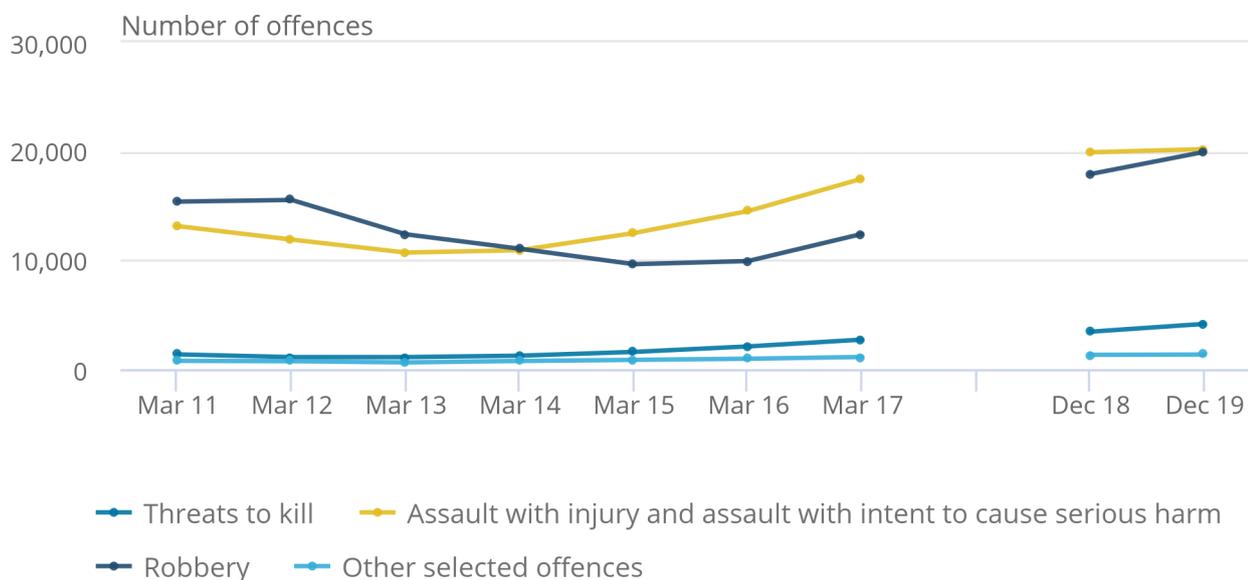
- London<sup>2</sup> saw a 5% increase
- West Midlands saw an increase of 13%
- West Yorkshire saw a decrease of 9%

**Figure 5: Rising trend in crimes involving knives or sharp instruments driven by increase in robberies**

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

### Figure 5: Rising trend in crimes involving knives or sharp instruments driven by increase in robberies

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



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data from Greater Manchester Police are excluded to allow for comparison over time. See [Strengths and limitations](#) for more details.
3. Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via a special collection.
4. Other selected offences include rape, attempted murder, homicide and sexual assault.

In the latest year, the offence “assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm” accounted for almost half of all offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (44% or 20,196 offences). Robberies accounted for a further 44% (19,943 offences).

Knife or sharp instrument offences continue to be concentrated in metropolitan areas across England and Wales with around a third (34%) of all offences recorded by the police in London. The highest rate was also seen in London, with 174 offences per 100,000 population. This compared with an England and Wales average of 81 offences per 100,000 population.

Other sources of data can help to provide insight into offences involving knives or sharp instruments. For example, although for a different time period, the latest available provisional [admissions data for NHS hospitals](#) in England reported 5,024 admissions for assault by a sharp object between April 2018 and March 2019. This was, an increase of 1% compared with the previous year.

Police recorded “possession of an article with a blade or point”<sup>3</sup> offences also rose by 11% to 21,527 offences in the year ending December 2019. Trends in this offence would have been influenced by increases in targeted police action, such as the recent increases in stop and searches<sup>4</sup>, which are most likely to occur at times when rises in offences involving knives or sharp instruments are seen. Data related to stop and searches can be found in the Home Office publication [Police powers and procedures](#).

This is reflected in the latest figures published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) on [knife and offensive weapon sentencing](#) for England and Wales. While these figures are not directly comparable with those presented in this bulletin, they show that the criminal justice system formally dealt with the highest number of knife and offensive weapon offences since 2009.

For data relating to offences involving knives or sharp instruments see [Other related tables](#), for geographic breakdowns see [Police Force Area data tables](#) and for sharp instrument homicides see [Appendix tables: homicide in England and Wales](#).

Notes for: Knife or sharp instrument offences

1. Police recorded crime data for Greater Manchester Police are not included in this release because of issues with their data supply following the implementation of new IT systems.
2. Includes the Metropolitan and City of London Police Force Areas.
3. Offences of “possession of an article with a blade or point” are covered separately by a specific recorded crime category.
4. In August 2019, [a pilot easing restrictions around emergency stop and search powers](#) was extended to all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

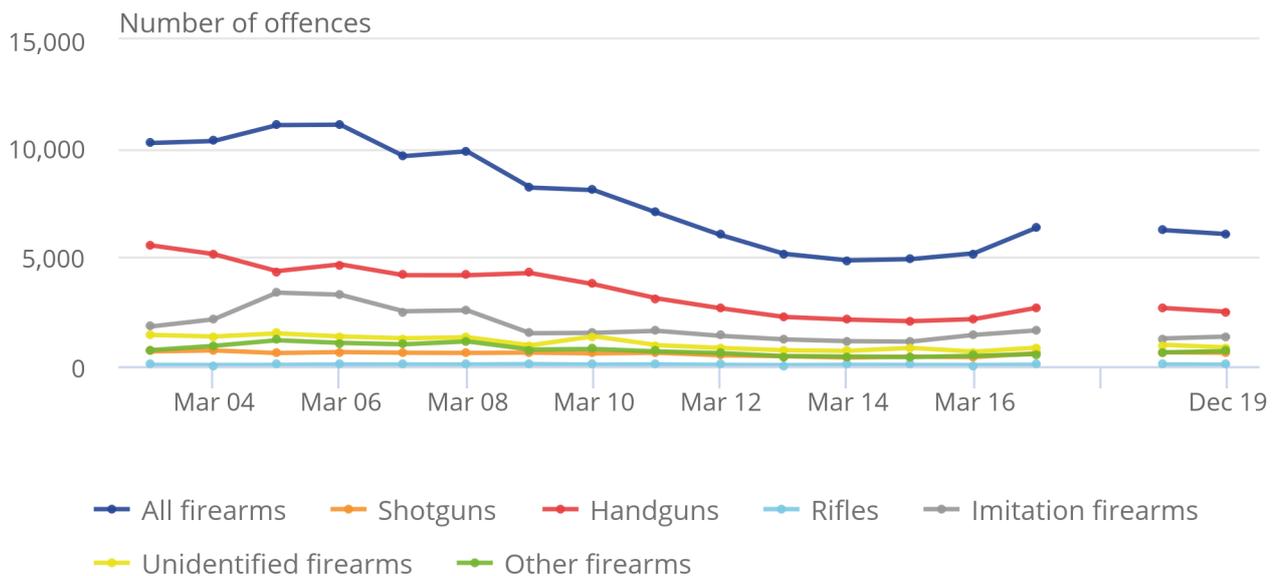
## 6 . Offences involving firearms

**Figure 6: Following longer-term declines and more recent rises, crimes involving firearms show a small decrease compared with the previous year**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2019

Figure 6: Following longer-term declines and more recent rises, crimes involving firearms show a small decrease compared with the previous year

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2019



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

### Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data are provisional and have not been reconciled with police forces.
3. Figures exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.
4. Data from Greater Manchester Police are not included for the years ending December 2018 and December 2019.

There were 6,060 recorded offences involving firearms in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police<sup>1</sup>) in the year ending December 2019, a 3% decrease from last year (6,243 offences).

There were decreases seen in offences involving: handguns (6%), shotguns (4%), rifles (10%) and unidentified firearms<sup>2</sup> (13%). However, increases were seen in imitation firearms<sup>3</sup> and other firearms<sup>4</sup> (7% and 10% respectively). For these less serious weapon types, it is likely that some of these increases reflect improvements in crime recording and that the police are now including these offences when previously they were being excluded.

Detailed data for the year ending March 2019 were released in [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#) in February 2020. For data relating to offences involving firearms see [Other related tables](#).

## Notes for: Offences involving firearms

1. Police recorded crime data for Greater Manchester Police are not included this release because of issues with their data supply following the implementation of new IT systems.
2. The police will record which type of weapon has been used in an offence, given the evidence available. If the police do not have sufficient information about the type of firearm used in the offence, then it will be recorded as an "unidentified firearm".
3. Imitation firearms include replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons which fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons.
4. Other firearms include CS gas or pepper spray, stun guns and other weapons.

## 7 . Other types of violence

For some types of crime, increases in the number of police recorded offences are largely because of recording improvements or more victims reporting, rather than a genuine rise in crime.

The effect has been particularly pronounced for some types of violence such as sexual offences, stalking and harassment, and offences flagged as domestic abuse-related. There is some evidence, however, that recording improvements are starting to have a smaller impact on these crime types.

Over the last seven years, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have published a range of inspections related to police forces' crime and incident recording practices. In 2014, [Crime recording: making the victim count](#) concluded that 33% of cases involving violence and 26% of sexual offences were not recorded by the police in England and Wales. On 7 February 2020, HMICFRS published a report [assessing the 43 police forces in England and Wales based on PEEL \(police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy\) inspections \(PDF, 329KB\)](#). The report suggests, "inspections show that policing across England and Wales is largely good" although it goes on to say that, "inspection results allow us to show how the service provided by forces can vary between force areas, sometimes to a significant extent."

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides a better picture of the overall trend in violent crime and a more reliable measure of the long-term trends in sexual assault, stalking and harassment, and domestic abuse.

In the year ending March 2019 CSEW, the latest data available, an estimated 2.1 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year (1.4 million women and 0.7 million men). There has been little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years. However, the cumulative effect of small year-on-year changes has resulted in a small, significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2019 (6.3%), compared with the year ending March 2005 (8.9%).

Estimates from the CSEW for the year ending March 2019 showed that 2.9% of adults aged 16 to 59 years had been victims of sexual assaults in the last year (including attempted offences). This estimate showed no significant change compared with the previous year (2.7%). Over the past five years, there has been a rise in the prevalence of sexual assault estimated by the survey, with the latest estimate returning to levels similar to those over a decade ago.

Sexual offences and domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police do not provide a reliable measure of trends in these types of crime. Improvements in police recording practices and increased reporting by victims have contributed to increases in recent years, although this effect is thought to be gradually receding. The figures do, however, provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police.

In the year ending December 2019 in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police <sup>1</sup>), there was an 11% increase in the total number of domestic abuse-related offences compared with the year ending December 2018 (to 741,819 offences). This increase is thought to reflect factors related to reporting and recording and does not provide a reliable indication of current trends.

The number of sexual offences recorded by the police increased by 2% from the previous year (to 153,794 offences), the lowest rate of increase seen in recent years. This changing trend may suggest that the influence of improvements in recording practices for this particular offence is diminishing, although the figure should not be interpreted as a reliable indication of recent trends.

Further information and data related to domestic abuse can be found in [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2019](#).

Data related to sexual offences can be found in [Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system](#).

For more detailed figures relating to violent crime including a time series see [Appendix tables](#).

CSEW data on the prevalence of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking can be found Table S42 in [Annual supplementary tables](#).

For more information about HMICFRS and Inspections of police recorded crime and incident data quality see our [User guide](#).

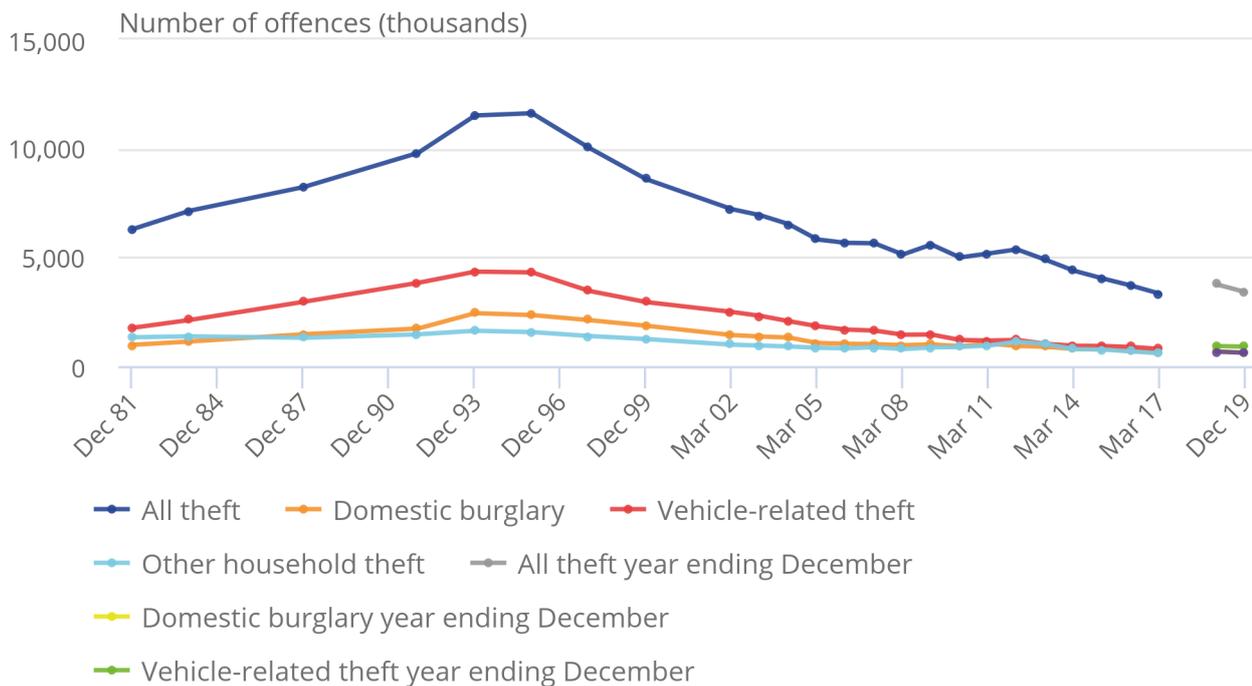
## 8 . Long-term trends in theft offences

**Figure 7: Following longer-term declines, the latest decrease in Crime Survey for England and Wales overall theft offences is similar to levels seen two years ago**

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending December 2019

Figure 7: Following longer-term declines, the latest decrease in Crime Survey for England and Wales overall theft offences is similar to levels seen two years ago

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending December 2019



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

### Notes:

1. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over and households.
2. All theft includes theft from the person, other theft of personal property, domestic burglary, other household theft, vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is the most reliable indicator for long-term trends in the more common types of crime experienced by the general population, such as theft.

There were 3.4 million incidents of theft estimated by the CSEW for the survey year ending December 2019. While this figure is 9% lower than the previous year, it is similar to the figure for the year ending March 2017 (3.3 million offences). This indicates there has been little change over the last couple of years.

The latest decrease included a 23% fall in “theft from the person” offences (to 360,000 offences). However, as this is a low-volume crime, CSEW estimates are prone to greater fluctuations than estimates for more frequently occurring offences. The latest estimate was similar to that for the year ending March 2017 (370,000 offences) and the year ending March 2016 (363,000 offences).

For the latest headline figures relating to theft and for more detailed figures including time series see [Appendix tables](#). Additional demographic data from the CSEW related to theft can be found in [Property crime tables](#).

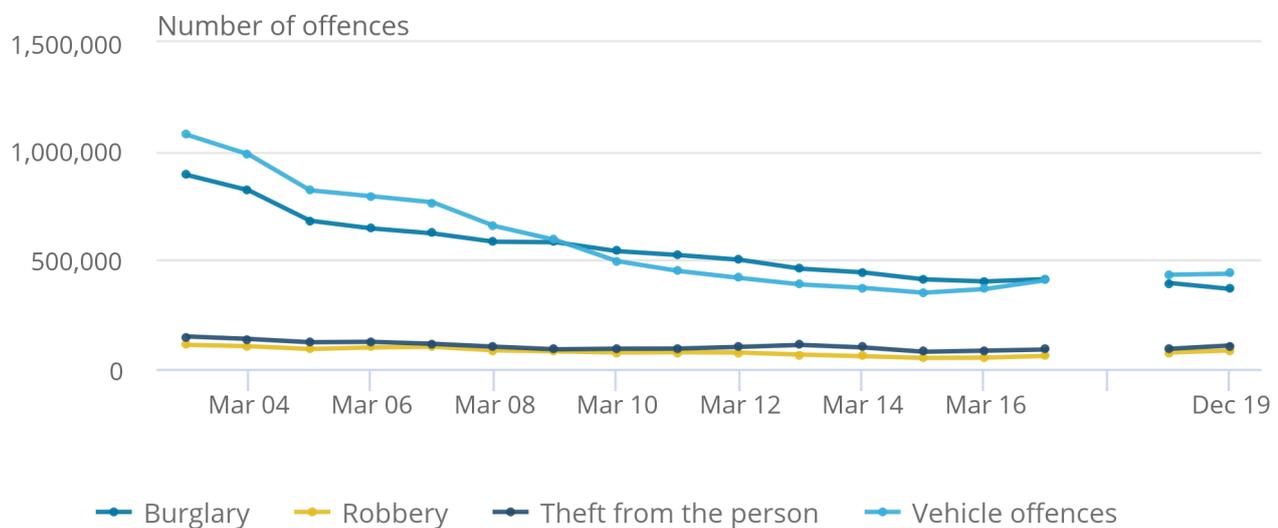
## 9 . Emerging trends in robbery and theft offences

**Figure 8: Fall in police recorded burglary and a rise in police recorded robbery**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2019

### Figure 8: Fall in police recorded burglary and a rise in police recorded robbery

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2019



**Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime**

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data from Greater Manchester Police are not included in the years ending December 2018 and December 2019.

Police recorded crime data can give reliable indications of trends in some offences involving theft and may provide a better measure of short-term trends than the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). For example, domestic burglary and theft of a vehicle are less likely to be affected by the impact of recording improvements, as they are relatively well-reported to (and subsequently recorded by) the police.

Police recorded vehicle offences increased by 1% (to 436,868 offences) in the year ending December 2019. This continues the rising trend seen since the year ending March 2015, although the latest increase is lower than the rises seen in recent years.

Figures for the year ending December 2019 show that the number of burglary offences recorded by the police decreased by 7% (to 366,718 offences). This is a larger decrease than the 3% decrease seen for the year ending December 2018. This decrease follows a long-term decline in burglary with the exception of the year ending March 2017, when a small increase was recorded.

Rises in police recorded robbery offences were evident for the fourth consecutive year, with an increase of 12% (to 83,930 offences) in the year ending December 2019 compared with the previous year. Robbery is an acquisitive crime involving violence or the threat of violence, that is more likely to be reported by the victim and recorded by the police than some other theft offences.

There has also been a similar increase in police recorded theft from the person (17% to 107,235 offences) in the year ending December 2019, although these figures are more likely to have been influenced by improvements in recording practices than robbery. Since the year ending March 2015, there has been a 37% rise, a volume increase of 28,801 offences. While recording improvements are likely to have varyingly contributed to the rise in robbery and theft from the person offences, some of these increases are likely to reflect a real change.

For the latest headline figures relating to burglary, robbery and vehicle theft and more detailed figures including time series see [Appendix tables](#).

## 10 . Criminal damage and arson

The overall volume of criminal damage in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) has not changed over the year ending December 2019 (1 million offences). However, the subcategory “criminal damage to a vehicle” shows a 15% decrease, which continues the general downward trend in these offences seen over the last 10 years. The latest figure (690,000 offences) was less than half the volume it was in the year ending December 1995 (1.8 million offences).

Police recorded crime data showed a 1% decrease in criminal damage and arson (to 530,618 offences) and a 5% fall in criminal damage to a vehicle (195,387 offences) in the year ending December 2019. The differences in criminal damage to a vehicle between the CSEW and police recorded crime could be partly explained by a relatively low reporting rate for this type of offence.

For the latest headline figures relating to criminal damage and more detailed figures including time series data see [Appendix tables](#).

Additional demographic data from the CSEW related to criminal damage can be found in [Property crime tables](#).

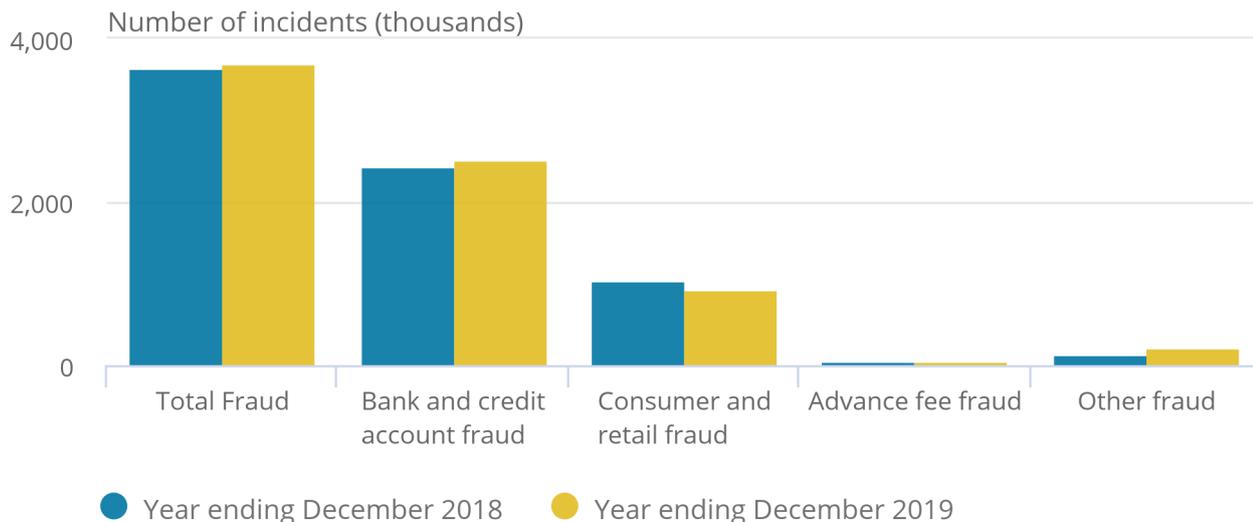
# 11 . Fraud

**Figure 9: No change in the estimated number of Crime Survey for England and Wales fraud incidents**

England and Wales, year ending December 2018 and year ending December 2019

Figure 9: No change in the estimated number of Crime Survey for England and Wales fraud incidents

England and Wales, year ending December 2018 and year ending December 2019



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

**Notes:**

- 1. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the best measure of fraud offences experienced by adults in England and Wales. In the year ending December 2019, the estimated number of fraud incidents did not change from the previous year (3.7 million offences). Individual fraud types showed no significant change other than the low volume category of “Other fraud”, which increased by 56% (to 210,000).

Fraud offences referred to the authorities make up a relatively small proportion of the overall volume of such crime. The CSEW captures a large volume of lower-harm cases that are less likely to have been reported to the authorities. Incidents of fraud referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) will include reports from businesses and other organisations, which are not included in the CSEW, and tend to be focused on the more serious cases. Because of such large differences in coverage between the CSEW and what is reported to the NFIB it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the two sources. <sup>1</sup>

Reported fraud offences are recorded and collated by the NFIB from Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) and two industry bodies, Cifas and UK Finance (who report instances of fraud where their member organisations have been a victim). Latest figures showed a 14% increase in the total number of fraud offences referred to the NFIB,<sup>2,3</sup> in the year ending December 2019 (739,131 offences) compared with the previous year (648,214 offences).

All three fraud reporting bodies: Action Fraud, Cifas, and UK Finance, reported increases in the latest year. Action Fraud reported a 13% rise (to 314,848 offences), Cifas reported a 13% rise (to 334,413 offences) and UK Finance reported a 24% rise (to 89,870 offences). These increases need to be interpreted in the context of differences in coverage and fraud types captured by each reporting body.

Additional fraud data collected by UK Finance provide a broader range of bank account and plastic card frauds than those referred for police investigation to the NFIB. In the latest year, UK Finance reported 2.8 million cases of frauds involving UK-issued payment cards, remote banking and cheques via their recording system, CAMIS. This was an increase of 5% from the previous year, driven largely by a 5% rise in plastic card fraud and more specifically a 107,143 volume increase (5%) in the subcategory “remote purchase fraud”.

For the latest headline figures relating to fraud and for more detailed figures including time series data see [Appendix tables](#) and [Other related tables](#).

## Notes for: Fraud

1. More information can be found in the [Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#).
2. Cifas figures and any NFIB totals presented in this bulletin and accompanying data tables are based on provisional data provided by Cifas. For more information see footnote 4 in Table A5 of the [appendix tables](#).
3. The UK Finance figures and NFIB totals presented in this bulletin and accompanying data tables are supplemented by provisional data provided by UK Finance. For more information see footnote 9 in Table A5 of the [appendix tables](#).

## 12 . Computer misuse

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the better indication of the volume of computer misuse offences experienced by the adult population as it captures incidents that go unreported to the police. This can be seen by the large difference in the volume of computer misuse offences between the two sources.

Around 900,000 offences were estimated by the CSEW in the year ending December 2019. This compared with 23,135 offences referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre). In addition, the two sources have different coverage, which means it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons between them.

In the survey year ending December 2019, the CSEW estimated that the volume of computer misuse offences did not change from the previous year. This is unlike previous years, which have shown a decline.

Variations within CSEW computer misuse are evident within the subcategories of “computer virus” and “unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)”. Computer viruses showed a 20% decrease compared with the previous year (to 376,000 offences). However, the apparent 7% increase in unauthorised access to personal information (to 540,000 offences) was not statistically significant.

All “computer misuse crime” referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud fell by 1% in the year ending December 2019 to 23,135 offences. This small decrease follows consecutive rises in the previous two years, and the latest estimate remains 75% higher than in the year ending March 2016. The recent fall in computer misuse recorded by Action Fraud will, to some extent, have been affected by improvements to both internal case review processes and their online reporting tool. These changes took place in October 2018, resulting in some computer misuse offences now being more accurately classified as fraud offences.

For the latest headline figures relating to computer misuse and for more detailed figures see [Appendix tables](#) and [Other related tables](#).

## 13 . Crime data

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

Dataset | Released on 23 April 2020

Trends in Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) crime experienced by adults and children aged 10 to 15 years and police recorded crime, by offence type. Also includes trends in offender relationship of CSEW violence.

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

Dataset | Released on 23 April 2020

Data tables include those on firearms, and knife and sharp instrument offences. The data contained in these tables are from four sources: Crime Survey for England and Wales, police recorded crime, fraud data from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and figures from the Ministry of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics.

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

Dataset | Released on 23 April 2020

Data from police recorded crime. Shows the number of police recorded crimes, percentage change from previous year and rate per 1,000 population by offence group, and knife and sharp instrument offences by Police Force Area.

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

Dataset | Released on 23 April 2020

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

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

Dataset | Released on 18 July 2019

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales on perceptions of the police, criminal justice system, crime and anti-social behaviour. Also contains data on prevalence of intimate personal violence.

### [Crime in England and Wales: Annual trend and demographic tables](#)

Dataset | Released on 18 July 2019

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales showing breakdowns of victimisation over time and by various demographic characteristics.

## 14 . Glossary

## Fraud

Fraud involves a person dishonestly and deliberately deceiving a victim for personal gain of property or money, or causing loss or risk of loss to another. The majority of incidents fall under the legal definition of “Fraud by false representation” – where a person makes a representation that they know to be untrue or misleading (for example, banking and payment card frauds and dating scams). Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates cover a broad range of fraud offences, including attempts, involving a loss and incidents not reported to the authorities.

## Homicide

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.

## Offences involving firearms

Offences involving a firearm include those where a firearm is fired, used as a blunt instrument, or used as a threat. 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.

## Overall theft offences

Crime Survey for England and Wales theft offences include all personal and household crime where items are stolen, including theft from the person; other theft of personal property; domestic burglary; vehicle-related theft; and bicycle theft.

## Robbery

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

## Violent crime

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

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

# 15 . Measuring the data

## Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

The CSEW is a face-to-face victimisation survey, which asks people resident in households in England and Wales about their experiences of a selected range of offences in the 12 months prior to the interview.

Putting the safety of the public first, we have suspended all face-to-face interviewing on the CSEW to minimise social contact as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. We are exploring moving the CSEW to a telephone survey during this period. However, given the sensitivities of the topic, this would be a reduced set of questions.

Today's publication is unaffected by the pause to the CSEW. This year's annual publication in July for the year ending March 2020 data will also be largely unaffected. This includes associated annual tables, such as those on domestic abuse.

The first release of data to be affected by the coronavirus pandemic will be the year ending June 2020 publication released in October, as it will include the period March to June 2020. The outbreak will also impact the year ending March 2021 annual dataset.

We are considering options and will update stakeholders in the future.

### Police recorded crime

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

## 16 . Strengths and limitations

### Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

The CSEW is a large nationally representative sample survey that has used a consistent methodology over time. The survey covers crimes not reported to the police and is not affected by changes in police recording practice; therefore, it is a reliable measure of long-term trends.

The CSEW does not cover crimes against businesses and those not resident in households (for example, residents of institutions and visitors). Headline estimates exclude offences that are difficult to estimate robustly (such as sexual offences) or that have no victim who can be interviewed (for example, homicides and drug offences). In addition, the survey is subject to error associated with sampling and respondents recalling past events. Potential time lag between occurrence of the crime and survey data collection means that the survey is not a good measure of emerging trends.

## 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.

## Issues with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) recorded crime data

Following the implementation of a new IT system in July 2019, GMP have been unable to provide police recorded crime data since that time. This issue is ongoing and will also affect next quarter's data.

In order to allow for accurate comparisons across the years, data for GMP have been excluded from all the police recorded crime data and tables presented in this bulletin for the years ending December 2019, March 2019, December 2018 and March 2018.

Data including GMP (excluding the months July to December 2019) are published by the Home Office in [Police recorded crime open data Police Force Area tables from year ending March 2013 onwards](#).

Data on offences involving knives or sharp instruments in England and Wales currently exclude GMP for the whole time series back to the year ending March 2011. In addition to the IT system implementation issue, which impacts data from July 2019 onwards, GMP data for previous time periods are affected by a separate technical issue. A review by GMP in December 2017 revealed an undercount of crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument. Following implementation of a subsequent methodological change in January 2018, data for GMP are not comparable over time.

## 17 . Related links

### [Property crime tables](#)

Dataset | Released on 23 January 2020

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

### [Child abuse in England and Wales: March 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released on 5 March 2020

Statistics and research on child abuse in England and Wales, bringing together a range of different data sources from across government and the voluntary sector.

### [Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system](#)

Article | Released on 13 December 2018

An overview of sexual offending in England and Wales, using a range of National Statistics and official statistics from across the crime and criminal justice system.

### [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2019](#)

Bulletin | Released on 25 November 2019

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

### [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#)

Article | Released on 13 February 2020

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.

### [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#)

Dataset | Released on 13 February 2020

Data tables relating to offences involving weapons as recorded by police and hospital episode statistics for the year ending March 2019.

### [Nature of crime tables, children aged 10 to 15 violence](#)

Dataset | Released on 27 March 2020

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, including when and where incidents happened and the victim's perception of the incident.

### [Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#)

Article | Released on 19 March 2020

Summary of the various sources of data for fraud and computer misuse and what these tell us about victims, circumstances and long-term trends.

### [Modern slavery in the UK: March 2020](#)

Article | Released on 26 March 2020

The hidden nature of modern slavery makes producing an accurate prevalence measure difficult. This article explores the issue and brings together data sources linked to modern slavery from a range of organisations.