

Statistical bulletin

# Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018

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



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Release date:  
19 July 2018

Next release:  
18 October 2018

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# 1 . Main points

Over recent decades, we've seen a fall in overall levels of crime, a trend that now looks to be stabilising. However, this hides variation in different crime types. Over the last year, we have seen rises in some types of theft and in lower-volume but higher-harm types of violence. This is balanced by a fall in the high-volume offence of computer misuse.

As the overall figure covers a broad range of crime types, it is useful to focus on individual crime types to understand these changes.

Our assessment is that the lower-harm violence offences are stable from the Crime Survey. However, police recorded crime data and NHS data give more insight into the lower-volume but higher-harm violence, which the survey doesn't capture well. These indicate:

- a continued rise in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments, with police recording 16% more offences this year compared with last year; provisional NHS data show a small proportion of these offences result in an admission to hospital with admissions for assaults involving a sharp instrument increasing by 15% for England in the last year
- the latest rise of 2% in recorded offences involving firearms was smaller than previously seen; this included a decrease in less serious firearm offences, whereas more serious firearm offences showed continued increases; some of these increases are likely to reflect improvements in recording
- the number of homicides recorded by the police showed a fourth consecutive rise, increasing by 12% compared with last year; this follows a long-term decline, although homicide remains rare
- these offences tend to be concentrated in London and other metropolitan areas

We have also seen rises in some types of theft offences. This includes that:

- latest estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed a 17% increase in vehicle-related thefts compared with the previous year, which is consistent with rises seen in the number of such offences recorded by the police
- the number of burglary offences recorded by the police has increased by 6% compared with the previous year
- the number of robberies recorded by the police also increased by 30% in the latest year; while recording improvements are likely to have contributed to this rise, this may reflect a real change; similar to offences involving weapons, these offences are disproportionately concentrated in London and other metropolitan areas

A 31% fall was estimated by the CSEW in the number of computer misuse crimes, which was driven largely by a decrease in computer viruses.

To put these figures into context, most people do not experience crime. In the year ending March 2018, only 2 out of 10 adults experienced any of the crimes asked about in the CSEW.

## Important points for interpreting figures in this bulletin

- an increase in the number of crimes recorded by the police does not necessarily mean the level of crime has increased
- for many types of crime, police recorded crime statistics do not provide a reliable measure of levels or trends in crime
- they only cover crimes that come to the attention of the police and can be affected by changes in policing activity and recording practice and by willingness of victims to report
- the CSEW does not cover crimes against businesses or those not resident in households and is not well-suited to measuring trends in some of the more harmful crimes that occur in relatively low volumes
- for offences that are well recorded by the police, police figures provide a useful supplement to the survey and provide insight into areas that the survey does not cover well

## **2 . Latest figures**

A summary of the latest figures for a selection of different crime types is given in Table 1, using the most appropriate data source for each. More detailed analysis and commentary by crime type is provided in Sections 6 to 12 of this bulletin.



**Table 1: What do the latest figures show?**

	<b>Figures for year ending March 2018</b>	<b>Things to note</b>
Violence	<p>No change in overall violent offences estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW, 1,259,000 incidents)</p> <p>16% increase in police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (to 40,147)</p> <p>2% increase in police recorded offences involving firearms (to 6,492)</p>	<p>The CSEW provides the better indication of trends in all violent crime, covering the more common but less harmful offences.</p> <p>Police recorded crime provides a better measure of violent offences that are more harmful but less common. Such offences are not well measured by the survey because of their relatively low volume, but are thought to be relatively well recorded by the police.</p>
Homicide	<p>12% rise in police recorded offences (to 701). This figure excludes terrorist attacks in London and Manchester, and events at Hillsborough in 1989.</p>	<p>Trends in homicide can be affected by exceptional events with multiple homicide victims. Excluding these victims provides a comparison over time on a more consistent basis.</p> <p>Including these events, police recorded crime shows a 2% increase in homicides (to 736 offences).</p>
Robbery	<p>30% rise in police recorded offences (to 77,103)</p>	<p>Recording improvements are likely to have contributed to this rise, but the impact is thought to be less pronounced than for other crime types. Therefore, the increase may also reflect an element of a real change in these crimes.</p> <p>The CSEW does not provide a robust measure of short-term trends in robbery as it is a relatively low-volume crime.</p>
Theft	<p>8% increase in overall theft offences estimated by the CSEW (to 3,585,000)</p> <p>17% increase in incidents of vehicle-related theft estimated by the CSEW (to 924,000)</p> <p>6% rise in offences of burglary, recorded by the police (to 437,537)</p>	<p>A 12% increase was also seen in vehicle offences recorded by the police (to 457,036). This continues the rising trend seen over the last two years. Vehicle offences are thought to be generally well-reported reported by victims and well-reported recorded by the police.</p> <p>While the 7% rise in domestic burglary estimated by the CSEW was not statistically significant, we would expect this to show up in the survey estimates in due course</p> <p>Both vehicle offences and burglary offences are thought to be generally well-reported reported by victims and well-reported recorded by the police. Therefore, police recorded increases in these crimes are likely to reflect genuine increases.</p>
Computer misuse	<p>31% decrease in offences estimated by the CSEW (to 1,239,000)</p>	<p>The CSEW is the best source for measuring this offence, as it captures incidents that go unreported. However, current comparison is based on two data points only, therefore caution must be taken in interpreting early trends.</p>
Fraud	<p>No change in the overall number of offences estimated by the CSEW (3,245,000)</p>	<p>The CSEW provides the best indication of the volume of fraud offences experienced by individuals as it captures the more frequent lower-harm cases that are likely to go unreported to the authorities. However, current comparison is based on two data points only, therefore caution must be taken in interpreting early trends.</p> <p>Additional administrative data collected over the longer term suggest an increase in the number of plastic card frauds being reported.</p>

Sexual offences	0.7 percentage point increase in the proportion of adults who experienced sexual assaults in the last year.	<p>The number of sexual offences picked up by the CSEW is too small to give reliable estimates. However, the survey does provide a measure of the proportion of adults affected by a crime.</p> <p>There has been increased public awareness and discussion about these types of crimes due to high profile cases and social media campaigns. This may mean people are more likely to report such offences in the survey. Therefore, it's difficult to tell if this is a genuine increase.</p> <p>A 24% rise in police recorded sexual offences is likely to reflect improvements made by the police in how they record crime, and in people being more willing to report a sexual offence.</p>
Public order offences	36% rise in police recorded public order offences (to 385,864).	This increase reflects improvements and changes to recording practices, but may also indicate a real rise in crime.
Criminal damage	No change in overall criminal damage offences estimated by the CSEW (1,083,000 incidents).	Despite no overall change, the CSEW estimated a 13% decrease in offences involving criminal damage to a vehicle (to 695,000).

Source: Office for National Statistics

### 3 . Statistician’s comment

“Most people don’t experience crime. Today’s figures show a fairly stable picture in England and Wales for most crime types. It is too early to say if this is a change to the long-term declining trend.

“There have been increases in some lower-volume “high-harm” offences such as homicide and knife crime, consistent with rises over the past three years. However, the latest rise in gun crime is much smaller than previously seen.

“We have also seen continued increases in some theft offences such as vehicle-related theft and burglary, while computer viruses have fallen.”

Caroline Youell, Crime Statistics and Analysis, Office for National Statistics

### 4 . Things you need to know about this release

#### How do we measure crime?

Crime covers a wide range of offences, from the most harmful such as murder and rape through to more minor incidents of criminal damage or petty theft. In general, the most serious crimes tend to be relatively low in volume and trends can be influenced by changes in the levels of higher volume but less harmful crimes. Crime is often hidden and different types of offence occur in different circumstances and at different frequencies. This means crime can never be measured entirely by any single source.

## Sources included

This bulletin reports on two main sources of crime data: the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime. More information on both these sources can be found in the [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#). Where possible, we refer to other sources of data or statistics to support our findings.

## Crime Survey for England and Wales

The CSEW is a face-to-face victimisation survey. People resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a selected range of offences in the 12 months prior to the interview. More information on the methodology can be found in the [Crime in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

The CSEW is our most reliable indicator for long-term trends, particularly for the more common types of crime experienced by the general population. In comparison with police recorded crime, it is unaffected by changes in reporting rates or police activity and it includes crimes that do not come to the attention of the police.

The CSEW does not cover crimes against businesses or those not resident in households (for example, short-term visitors, or people living in institutions – such as care homes). It also excludes homicides and crimes that are termed “victimless”, such as possession of drugs. The CSEW is not well-suited to measuring trends in some of the more harmful crimes that occur in relatively low volumes. This is because estimates of less frequently-occurring crime types can be subject to substantial variability from one time period to another, making it difficult to interpret short-term trends.

All changes reported in this bulletin, based on the CSEW, are statistically significant at the 5% level unless stated otherwise. When we say that a change in crime is statistically significant, we are confident that the change indicated by the data is likely to be real and not simply due to sampling variability.

## Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime is the number of crimes reported to and recorded by the police.

For crimes that are well-reported and accurately recorded, police recorded data can provide a good picture of the volume of this crime type. These data also provide an insight into the demands being made on the police and are useful in assessing how caseload has changed both in volume and nature over time.

However, police recorded crime statistics do not provide a reliable measure of levels or trends for many types of crime. This is because not all crimes are reported to the police. For example, victims may be reluctant to report a crime because it seems too trivial, or not worth reporting. In contrast, other crimes, such as thefts, may be more likely to be reported if they require a crime reference number to be issued by the police, to support an insurance claim.

Furthermore, police recorded figures can be affected by changes in recording practices. Some types of crime are less affected by changes in recording practices. In these cases, police figures can be a useful supplement to the CSEW by providing a measure that better covers the more harmful, less frequently-occurring offences that the survey does not cover well.

However, due to wider concerns over the quality and consistency of crime recording, police recorded crime data were assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics in 2014 (now the Code of Practice for Statistics) and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics<sup>1</sup>.

Since then, there has been an increased focus on improving recording practices, which has led to a greater proportion of reported crimes being recorded by the police<sup>2</sup>. For this reason, an increase in the number of crimes recorded by the police does not necessarily mean the level of crime has increased. [Inspection reports](#)<sup>3</sup> from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) suggest that some offences, including sexual offences, are still significantly under-recorded by the police<sup>4</sup>. Despite this, the most recent [Annual Assessment from HMICFRS](#) recognises that police forces are making improvements to their recording practices.

For more information about crimes recorded by the police, see [What's happened to the volume of crime recorded by the police?](#)

Information on why the CSEW and police recorded crime figures can sometimes show differing trends is published in the methodological note [Why do the two data sources show differing trends?](#) More detailed information about CSEW and police recorded crime is available in both [Quality and Methodology](#) and in our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#).

## Time periods covered

The latest CSEW figures presented in this release are based on interviews conducted between April 2017 and March 2018, measuring peoples' experiences of crime in the 12 months before the interview.

The latest recorded crime figures relate to crimes recorded by the police during the year ending March 2018 (between April 2017 and March 2018).

In this release:

- “latest year” (or “latest survey year”) refers to the (survey) year ending March 2018
- “previous year” (or “previous survey year”) refers to the (survey) year ending March 2017
- any other time period is referred to explicitly

Our bulletins are produced every quarter, based on rolling data. This means that there is an overlap of data from one bulletin to the next. For example, the time period covered in our last bulletin was from January 2017 to December 2017. Our current bulletin uses some of this data (from April 2017 to December 2017) and adds in new data gathered between January and March 2018. As a result, many findings do not change greatly between quarterly bulletins.

## Useful crime terms

Certain terms used to describe crime data within this bulletin can often be confused with other, related definitions. In particular, it is useful to know that:

- homicide is not the same as murder, rather, murder is a sub-category of homicide, which also includes: manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide; in the bulletin, we focus on homicide
- the bulletin refers to firearms rather than the more generic term of guns, a firearm is a portable gun; in our tables, the category of firearms includes: shotguns, handguns, rifles, imitation firearms, unidentified firearms and other firearms
- mugging is an informal term for robbery, in this bulletin we use the term “robbery”
- cybercrimes (or online crimes) are offences that can be committed via a computer, computer network or other form of information and communications technology (ICT); cybercrimes include computer misuse crimes, they also include some frauds that only occur online (for example, online shopping scams) and some non-fraud crimes (for example, online harassment)

## Crime statistics and the wider criminal justice system

The crime statistics reported in this release relate to only a part of the wider set of official statistics available on crime and other areas of the criminal justice system. This wider context includes statistics on: the outcomes of police investigations; the judicial process including charges, prosecutions and convictions; through to the management of prisons and prisoners.

Some of these statistics are published by the Home Office or the Ministry of Justice. We have produced [a flowchart](#) showing the connections between the different aspects of crime and justice, as well as the statistics available for each area.

## The current bulletin and other crime statistics

In this bulletin we present the latest crime figures and trends. It provides a general overview, with more detailed discussion for certain types of crime where our findings need a fuller explanation. If you are looking for a more in-depth analysis for specific types of offences, you may be interested in other articles and research that we produce throughout the year. To access these articles, see our [main crime and justice webpage](#).

## Notes for: Things you need to know about this release

1. The full assessment report can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website. Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) continue to be badged as National Statistics.
2. The [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#) report, published by HMICFRS in late 2014, found that violent offences had been substantially under-recorded (by 33% nationally) and led to police forces reviewing and improving their recording processes.
3. These reports were published during 2016 and 2018, including three re-inspection reports, which were published on 10 April 2018. The latest three inspection reports were published on 17 July 2018.
4. Of the 23 published inspection reports, only six forces received a rating of “good”, with a further six rated as “requires improvement” and 11 as “inadequate”. Three of the forces rated as “inadequate” have since been re-inspected and their ratings improved, with two of these forces rated as “good” and one as “requires improvement”.

## 5 . Overview of crime

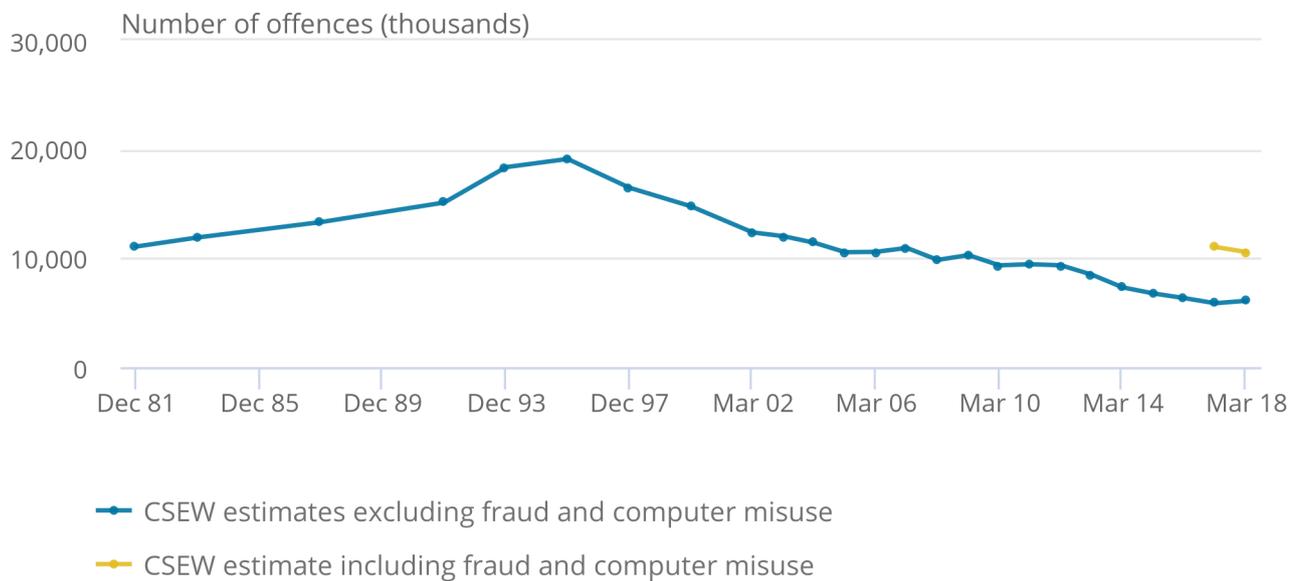
This section provides an overview of findings across our two main data sources. A selection of these findings are discussed in more depth in subsequent sections.

The latest estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending March 2018 show that most types of crime have stayed at levels similar to the previous year (Figure 1). Changes in estimates for total crime are not statistically significant.

## Figure 1: Crime estimated by the survey has not changed over the last year

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2018

Figure 1: Crime estimated by the survey has not changed over the last year. Rises in crime levels during the 90s were mainly due to increases in violence, vehicle crime and burglary. Excluding fraud and computer misuse, estimates are comparable with earlier years and remain lower than the mid-1990s peak.



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

### Notes:

1. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year (January to December); 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 (April to March).
2. Data relate to adults aged 16 years and over or to households.
3. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. The questions were asked of half the survey sample from October 2015 until September 2017, to test for detrimental effects on the survey as a whole and help ensure that the historical time series is protected, and have been asked of a full sample from October 2017.
4. In March 2018, the new CSEW estimates on fraud and computer misuse were assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation against the Code of Practice for Statistics and were awarded National Statistics status.

## Which crime types have changed, according to the CSEW?

When looking at the main types of crime, changes were only seen in:

- computer misuse offences, which decreased by 31% (to 1.24 million offences); this is the largest change in the volume of incidents across all crime types estimated by the CSEW
- vehicle-related thefts, which rose by 17% (to 924,000 offences); this is supported by a 12% increase in police recorded vehicle offences; a category that is thought to be well-reported by the public and relatively well-recorded by the police

All other main types of crime measured by the survey showed no statistically significant change in the number of offences, although changes were seen in some of the sub-categories (see [Appendix Table A1](#) for details).

## **Most people are not victims of crime**

According to the CSEW, most people do not experience crime. The latest survey estimates showed that very few adults (2 in 10) experienced any of the crimes asked about in the survey in the previous 12 months. As shown in Figure 2, the likelihood of experiencing a given crime can vary widely. The latest data show that it is much more likely for an adult in England and Wales to experience a low-harm offence such as fraud, than a high-harm offence like robbery.

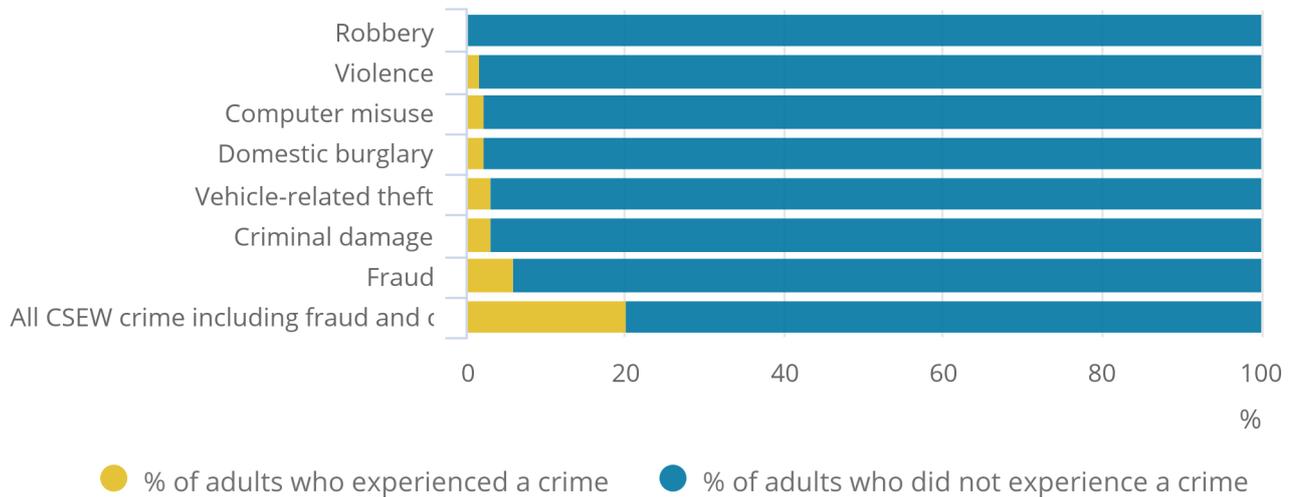
The likelihood of being a victim has fallen considerably over the long-term. Around 4 in 10 adults were estimated to have been a victim of crime in 1995, before the survey included fraud and computer misuse in its coverage. Looking at crimes comparable with those measured in the 1995 survey, 1 in 7 adults were victims of crime in the year ending March 2018.

**Figure 2: The likelihood of being a victim of crime in England and Wales, by offence type**

Year ending March 2018

Figure 2: The likelihood of being a victim of crime in England and Wales, by offence type

Year ending March 2018



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

**Notes:**

1. Percentages for all violence and robbery are quoted for adults. Percentages for domestic burglary, vehicle-related theft, and criminal damage are quoted for households.
2. For all CSEW crime including fraud and computer misuse this is the estimate percentage of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household crime. This has been calculated using a lower population base to account for the fraud and computer misuse questions not being asked of the full survey sample prior to October 2017.

**Police recorded crime shows a genuine increase in some higher-harm violent offences**

The latest police figures indicate rises in some of these higher-harm violent offences involving the use of weapons, which are thought to reflect genuine changes<sup>1</sup>. In particular, over the last year, recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments went up by 16% to 40,147. However, there was a far less pronounced rise than previously seen in offences involving firearms, which increased by 2% (up to 6,492 offences) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Continued rise in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, but increase in offences involving firearms has slowed**

## England and Wales, years ending March 2003 and 2011 to year ending March 2018

Offences involving a knife or a sharp instrument are at the highest level recorded, but are still relatively rare. These offences are concentrated in London and other metropolitan areas. However, the majority of police force areas saw a rise in this type of violent crime ([Tables P4 and P5](#)). The rise in this type of crime is supported by admissions data for NHS hospitals in England<sup>2</sup>, which have shown an increase in admissions for assault by a sharp object.

Further discussion about offences involving knives or sharp instruments can be found in [Some weapons offences are rising, but this type of crime remains rare](#).

### **Homicides have increased, but this remains a low-volume crime**

The total number of homicides recorded by the police rose by 2% (to 736 offences). However, recent trends are affected by the recording of exceptional incidents with multiple victims such as the terrorist attacks in London<sup>3</sup> and Manchester, and events at Hillsborough in 1989<sup>4</sup>.

If these cases are excluded we can provide a more consistent comparison of recorded homicides over time. In this case, the latest figures show 74 more homicides than the previous year, a 12% rise to 701 offences. This continues an upward trend in homicides since March 2014, indicating a change to the long-term decrease over the previous decade (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Homicides have increased over the last four years, following a long-term downward trend**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

Figure 4: Homicides have increased over the last four years, following a long-term downward trend. Since 2014, the number of homicides recorded by the police each year has been increasing



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data on homicide offences given in these police recorded crime data will differ from data from the Home Office Homicide Index, which are published annually by Office for National Statistics, last released as part of [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#). Police recorded crime data on homicide represent the recording decision of the police based on the available information at the time the offence comes to their attention. Homicide Index data take account of the charging decision and court outcome in cases that have gone to trial. It is not uncommon for offences initially recorded as murder by the police to be charged or convicted as manslaughter at court.

**Vehicle offences, burglary and robbery also thought to show genuine increases**

Both the CSEW and police recorded figures showed increases in vehicle-related theft for the year ending March 2018. There is also evidence of a 6% increase in police recorded burglaries (up to 437,537 offences). While the increase seen in CSEW burglary was not statistically significant, we would expect this to show up in the survey in due course.

Both crime types are thought to be generally well-reported by victims and well-recorded by the police and so we believe these increases to reflect genuine rises.

The police also recorded a rise in robbery (up 30% to 77,103 offences) (Figure 5). The number of recorded robberies are disproportionately high in London, accounting for 42% of all recorded robberies. In comparison, London accounts for 17% of all recorded crimes in England and Wales.

The rise in robbery may reflect a real increase in these crimes, but it also reflects an improvement in recording practices. The impact of better recording is thought to affect the increase in recorded robberies more than the increases in recorded burglary and vehicle offences. However, it is thought to be less pronounced than for other crime types (see [What's happened to the volume of crime recorded by the police?](#)).

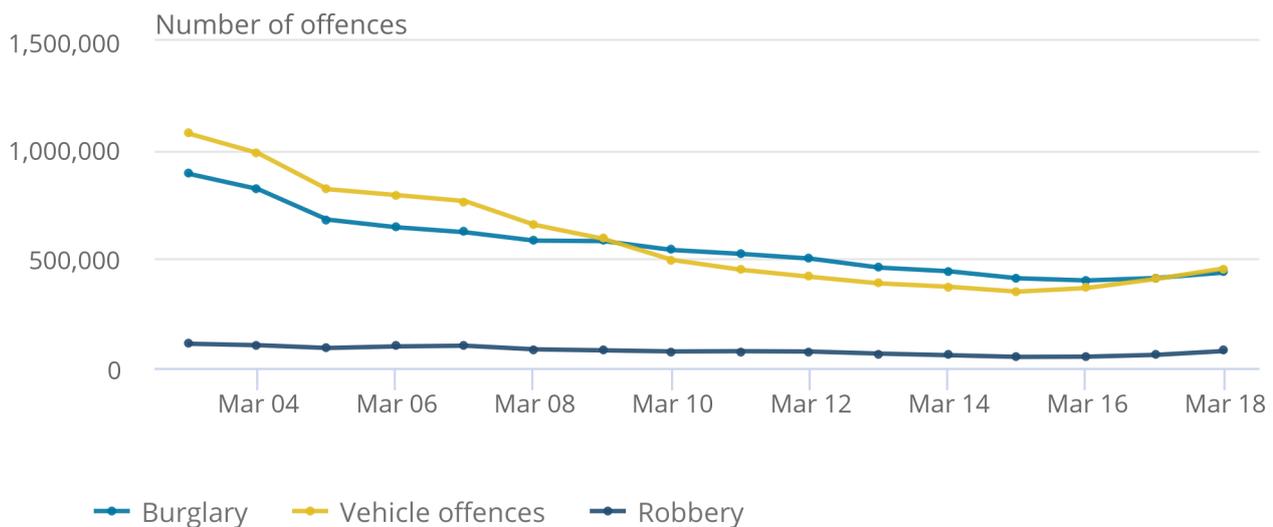
The CSEW does not provide a robust measure of short-term trends in robbery as it is a relatively-low-volume crime.

**Figure 5: Rises in vehicle offences, burglary and robbery recorded by the police are thought to reflect genuine increases**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

Figure 5: Rises in vehicle offences, burglary and robbery recorded by the police are thought to reflect genuine increases

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018



Source: : Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

More detailed analysis by crime type is provided in Sections 6 to 12 of this bulletin and further breakdown is provided in the [Appendix tables](#) published alongside this bulletin.



**Table 2a: Crime Survey for England and Wales incidence rates and number of incidents for year ending March 2018 and percentage change<sup>1</sup>**

Offence group <sup>2</sup>	Apr '17 to Mar '18	Number of incidents (thousands) <sup>4</sup>	April 2017 to March 2018 compared with:	
			Jan '95 to Dec '95	Apr '16 to Mar '17
	Rate per 1,000 population <sup>3</sup>		Number of incidents - percentage change and significance <sup>5</sup>	
Violence	27	1,259	-67 *	2
Robbery	3	159	-53 *	24
Theft offences <sup>6</sup>	:	3,585	-69 *	8 *
Theft from the person	9	425	-37 *	16
Other theft of personal property	14	655	-68 *	2
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,715	34,715		
Domestic burglary	28	697	-71 *	7
Other household theft	24	596	-62 *	2
Unweighted base - number of households	34,636	34,636		
Vehicle-related theft	47	924	-78 *	17 *
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	27,912	27,912		
Bicycle theft	24	288	-56 *	-1
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	16,259	16,259		
Criminal damage	44	1,083	-67 *	-8
Unweighted base - number of households	34,636	34,636		
All CSEW CRIME EXCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE <sup>6</sup>	:	6,087	-68 *	4
Fraud and computer misuse <sup>7,8</sup>	96	4,484	..	-13 *
Fraud	70	3,245	..	-4
Computer misuse	27	1,239	..	-31 *
Unweighted base - number of adults	25,725	25,725		
All CSEW CRIME INCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE <sup>6,8,9</sup>	:	10,571	..	-4

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

Notes:

1. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix tables A1 and A2.
2. Section 5 of the User Guide provides more information about the crime types included in this table.

3. Rates for violence, robbery, theft from the person and other theft of personal property are quoted per 1,000 adults; rates for domestic burglary, other household theft, and criminal damage are quoted per 1,000 households; rates for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted per 1,000 vehicle-owning and bicycle-owning households respectively.

4. Data may not sum to totals shown due to rounding.

5. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.

6. : denotes not available. It is not possible to construct a rate for all theft offences or CSEW crime because rates for household offences are based on rates per household, and those for personal offences on rates per adult, and the two cannot be combined.

7. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. Up to the year ending September 2017 the questions were asked of half the survey sample. From October 2017 onwards the questions are being asked of a full survey sample.

8. In March 2018 the new CSEW estimates on fraud and computer misuse were assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation against the Code of Practice for Statistics and were awarded National Statistics status.

9. This combined estimate is not comparable with headline estimates from earlier years. For year-on-year comparisons and analysis of long-term trends it is necessary to exclude fraud and computer misuse offences, as data on these are only available for the latest year.

.. Denotes not available as data not collected.



**Table 2b: Crime Survey for England and Wales prevalence rates and numbers of victims for year ending March 2018 and percentage change<sup>1</sup>**

April 2017 to March  
2018 compared with:

Offence group <sup>2</sup>	Apr '17 to Mar '18		Jan '95 to Dec '95	Apr '16 to Mar '17
	Percentage, victims once or more <sup>3</sup>	Number of victims (thousands) <sup>4</sup>	Numbers of victims - percentage change and significance <sup>5</sup>	
Violence	1.7	811	-58 *	5
Robbery	0.3	132	-53 *	25
Theft offences <sup>6</sup>	10.2	4,748	-63 *	8 *
Theft from the person	0.8	395	-40 *	14
Other theft of personal property	1.2	582	-65 *	1
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,715	34,715		
Domestic burglary	2.3	577	-68 *	12 *
Other household theft	1.9	466	-56 *	-5
Unweighted base - number of households	34,636	34,636		
Vehicle-related theft	4.0	780	-74 *	14 *
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	27,912	27,912		
Bicycle theft	2.2	270	-52 *	2
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	16,259	16,259		
Criminal damage	3.2	797	-62 *	-6
Unweighted base - number of households	34,636	34,636		
ALL CSEW CRIME EXCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE <sup>7</sup>	14.4	6,696	-59 *	4
Fraud and computer misuse <sup>8,9</sup>	8.0	3,721	..	-7
Fraud	6.0	2,795	..	1
Computer misuse	2.3	1,051	..	-24 *
Unweighted base - number of adults	25,725	25,725		
All CSEW CRIME INCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE <sup>9,10</sup>	20.2	9,412	..	-1

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

Notes:

1. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix tables A3 and A8.
2. Section 5 of the User Guide provides more information about the crime types included in this table.

3. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person and other theft of personal property are quoted for adults; percentages for domestic burglary, other household theft, and criminal damage are quoted for households; percentages for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted for vehicle-owning and bicycle-owning households respectively.

4. Where applicable, numbers in sub-categories will not sum to totals, because adults/households may have been a victim of more than one crime.

5. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.

6. This is the estimated percentage/number of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal theft crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household theft crime.

7. This is the estimated percentage/number of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household crime.

8. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. Up to the year ending September 2017 the questions were asked of half the survey sample. From October 2017 onwards the questions are being asked of a full survey sample.

9. In March 2018 the new CSEW estimates on fraud and computer misuse were assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation against the Code of Practice for Statistics and were awarded National Statistics status.

10. This combined estimate is not comparable with headline estimates from earlier years. For year-on-year comparisons and analysis of long-term trends it is necessary to exclude fraud and computer misuse offences, as data on these are only available for the latest year.

.. Denotes not available.



**Table 3: Police recorded crimes in England and Wales - rate, number and percentage change for year ending March 2018<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>**

Offence group	Apr '17 to Mar '18		April 2017 to March 2018 compared with:		
	Rate per 1,000 population	Number of offences	Apr '07 to Mar '08	Apr '12 to Mar '13	Apr '16 to Mar '17
			<b>Number of offences - percentage change</b>		
Victim-based crime	72	4,223,519	-3	34	11
Violence against the person offences	24	1,395,688	86	132	19
Homicide	< 0.1	736	-5	32	2
Death or injury - unlawful driving <sup>4</sup>	< 0.1	722	64	109	-5
Violence with injury <sup>5</sup>	9	512,312	13	64	10
Violence without injury <sup>6</sup>	10	586,368	143	152	24
Stalking and harrassment <sup>7</sup>	5	295,550	442	427	30
Sexual offences	3	150,732	189	181	24
Rape	1	53,977	326	230	31
Other sexual offences	2	96,755	145	160	21
Robbery offences	1	77,103	-9	18	30
Robbery of business property	< 0.2	7,649	-17	25	27
Robbery of personal property	1	69,454	-8	18	30
Theft offences	34	2,009,697	-17	6	7
Burglary	7	437,537	-25	-5	6
Residential burglary <sup>8,9</sup>	5	309,805	..	..	..
Non-residential burglary <sup>8,9</sup>	2	127,732	..	..	..
Vehicle offences	8	457,036	-30	18	12
Theft of a motor vehicle <sup>10</sup>	2	112,099	-34	40	15
Theft from a vehicle	5	279,974	-35	-2	8
Theft from the person	1	64,963	20	189	25
Bicycle theft	2	99,394	-2	-9	12
Shoplifting	2	99,870	-4	3	6
All other theft offences <sup>11</sup>	7	382,100	31	27	3
Criminal damage and arson	9	533,760	-22	-2	6
Other crimes against society	10	590,299	-43	11	5
Drug offences	11	653,481	20	62	24
Trafficking of drugs	2	136,089	-41	-35	-0
Trafficking of drugs	< 0.5	26,585	-6	-11	6

Possession of drugs	2	109,504	-46	-39	-2
Possession of weapons offences	1	38,694	4	94	25
Public order offences	7	385,864	77	192	36
Miscellaneous crimes against society	2	92,834	62	118	20
Total fraud offences <sup>12</sup>	11	638,882	..	25	-2
Total recorded crime - all offences including fraud <sup>11</sup>	94	5,515,882	11	36	11

Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

2. Police recorded crime statistics based on data from all 44 forces in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police).

3. Appendix tables A4 and A7 provide detailed footnotes and further years.

4. Includes causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving, causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs, causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving, causing death by driving: unlicensed or disqualified or uninsured drivers, causing death by aggravated vehicle taking.

5. Includes attempted murder, intentional destruction of viable unborn child, more serious wounding or other act endangering life (including grievous bodily harm with and without intent) and less serious wounding offences.

6. Includes threat or conspiracy to murder, other offences against children and assault without injury (formerly common assault where there is no injury).

7. Includes harassment, racially or religiously motivated harassment, stalking, malicious communications.

8. Percentage change figures for Residential burglary and Non-residential burglary are not shown as they are affected by classification changes that were introduced from April 2017. It is not currently possible to make meaningful comparisons over time in these sub-categories. Figures for total burglary are unaffected.

9. Figures may differ slightly from table A4 as data from some forces include a very small number of crimes which have been erroneously recorded against an expired offence code (e.g. domestic and non-domestic burglary).

10. Includes theft of motor vehicle and aggravated vehicle taking.

11. All other theft offences now includes all 'making off without payment' offences recorded since year ending March 2003. Making off without payment was previously included within the fraud offence group, but following a change in the classification for year ending March 2014, this change has been applied to previous years of data to give a consistent time series.

12. Total fraud offences cover crimes recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau via Action Fraud, Cifas and Financial Fraud Action UK. Action Fraud have taken over the recording of fraud offences on behalf of individual police forces. Percentage changes compared with year ending March 2007 are not presented, as fraud figures covered only those crimes recorded by individual police forces. Given the addition of new data sources, it is not possible to make direct comparisons with years prior to Year ending March 2012.

## Police recorded rises in some offence types need to be interpreted with caution

For some crimes, police recorded data show an increase in the number of recorded offences, but this is unlikely to indicate a real rise in the amount of crime occurring. For the latest figures this relates to:

- violent crime, particularly offences that are not “higher-harm”, such as assault without injury
- sexual offences
- stalking and harassment
- public order offences

It is thought that increases in these crime types largely reflect changes in reporting and recording practices.

These are discussed separately in more detail in [What's happened to the volume of crime recorded by the police?](#)

You can also read more about our data sources in [Things you need to know about this release.](#)

### Notes for: Overview of crime

1. In this bulletin we discuss weapons offences as a whole, alongside violent offences. However, we note that sexual offences and robbery are defined as separate categories to that of violence.
2. Data are from [NHS hospital admitted patient care activity, 2016 to 2017](#) (see the External causes' dataset). Further, provisional data for April 2017 to March 2018 are available from [NHS supplementary information](#).
3. Includes victims of the London Bridge and Borough Market, and Westminster attacks. Events at Finsbury Park are not included as there were not multiple victims of homicide.
4. 96 offences of manslaughter from Hillsborough were recorded in April 2016 when the inquest into these events concluded.

## 6 . No change in the most common types of violent crime

This section examines the most recent findings about violent crime and includes:

- the more frequently-occurring types of violent crime measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), such as assault
- the relatively low-volume types of violent crime recorded by the police, including homicide, and death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving

Crimes involving knives and sharp instruments are discussed in [Some weapons offences are rising, but this type of crime remains rare.](#)

Violent crime is a broad term that covers a wide variety of offences, including: minor assaults such as pushing and shoving, harassment and psychological abuse (that result in no physical harm) and attempted offences, through to wounding, physical assault, and death.

The CSEW data include incidents with and without injury. Violent offences in police recorded data are referred to as “violence against the person” and include: homicide, death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving, violence with injury, violence without injury, and stalking and harassment<sup>1</sup>.

## **CSEW is the best measure of trends in the most common types of violence**

For the offences that it covers, the CSEW provides the best measure of trends for the population. It has used a consistent methodology since the survey began in 1981. The survey covers crimes that are not reported to or recorded by the police and so tends to provide the better measure of more common but less harmful crimes. Unlike police recorded crime statistics the CSEW is also not affected by changes in recording practices and police activity.

Factors influencing changes in police recorded crime are described in more detail in [What’s happened to the volume of crime handled by the police?](#)

## **CSEW shows no change in the level of violence in recent years**

There were an estimated 1.3 million incidents of violence experienced by adults aged 16 years and over in the latest CSEW survey for the year ending March 2018. This figure has not changed significantly compared with last year. This continues a period of no change seen over the last four years, following long-term decreases since the peak in 1995 (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: 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 March 2018

Figure 6: 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 in recent years there has been little change in the number of incidents of violent crime. The latest CSEW shows a slight increase in violence.



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

Notes:

1. Prior to the year ending March 2002, CSEW respondents were asked about their experience of crime in the previous calendar year, so year-labels identify the year in which the crime took place. Following the change to continuous interviewing, respondents' experience of crime relates to the full 12 months prior to interview (that is, a moving reference period). Year-labels for the year ending March 2002 identify the CSEW year of interview.

## Long-term reductions in violent crime supported by other data

The longer-term reductions in violent crime, as shown by the CSEW, are reflected in the findings of the most recent [admissions data for NHS hospitals](#) in England. Assault admissions for the year ending March 2017<sup>2</sup> (26,450) were 42% lower than the year ending March 2007 (45,890 admissions). In addition, research conducted by the [Violence and Society Research Group at Cardiff University \(PDF, 502KB\)](#) showed similar findings. Results from their annual survey, covering a sample of hospital emergency departments and walk-in centres in England and Wales, showed that violence-related attendances in 2017 fell 39% from 2010.

Estimates of violence against 10-to-15-year-olds, as measured by the CSEW, can be found in [Appendix tables A9, A10, A11 and A12](#). The estimates are not directly comparable with the main survey of adults, so are not included in the headline totals.

## Homicides have increased, but this remains a low volume crime

While the CSEW provides a good picture of the overall trend in violent crime, police recorded crime is a better measure of higher-harm but less common types of violence, such as homicide<sup>3</sup>, that the CSEW is not able to collect data on.

The police recorded 736 homicides<sup>4, 5</sup> in the latest year to March 2018, a 2% rise compared with the previous year ([Table A4](#)). However, recent trends in homicide have been affected by the recording of incidents with multiple victims. Of the 736 homicides recorded in the year ending March 2018, there were 35 that related to the London and Manchester terror attacks. The 96 cases of manslaughter that occurred at Hillsborough in 1989 were recorded in the year ending March 2017. Excluding these exceptional events, there was a volume rise of 74 homicides (a 12% rise, up to a total of 701) (Figure 7).

A general upward trend seen over the last four years contrasts with the previously downward trend since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in 2002. Despite this, the rate of homicide in the population remains very low, at 13 homicides per 1 million people.

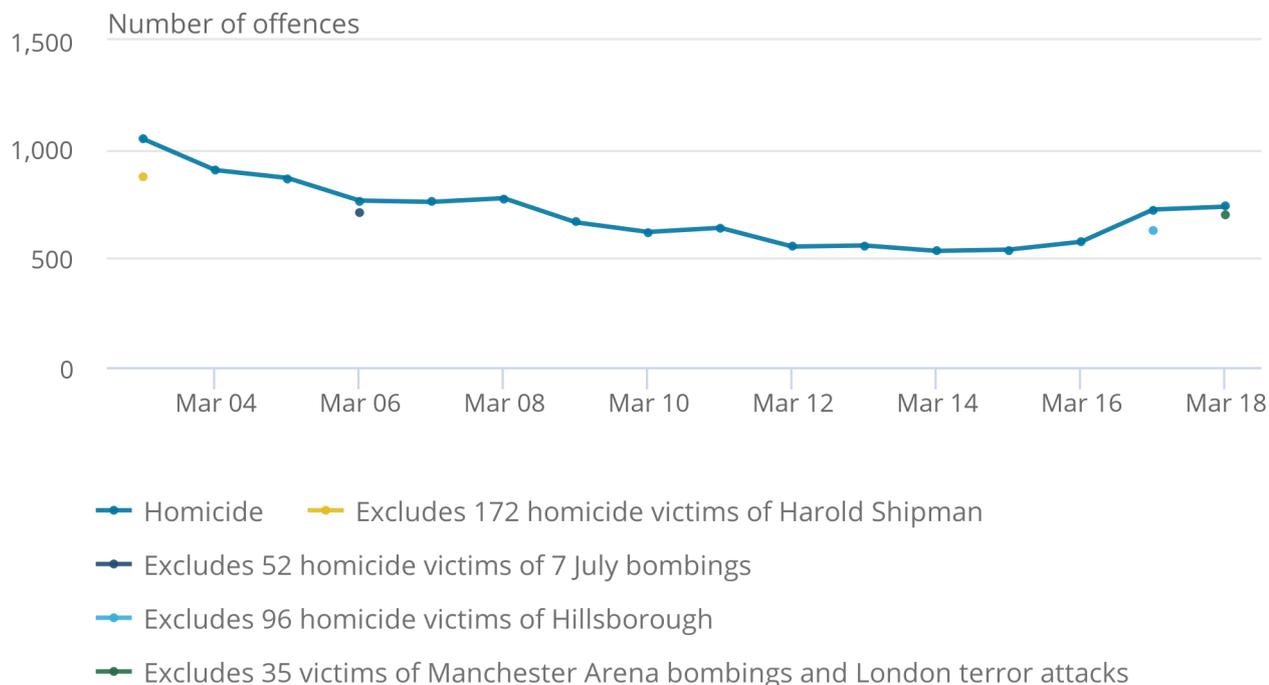
**Figure 7: Homicides have increased over the last four years, indicating a change to the long-term downward trend**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

Figure 7: Homicides have increased over the last four years, indicating a change to the long-term downward trend

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

In more recent years the number of homicides is increasing, even excluding exceptional cases such as multiple victim events.



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data on homicide offences given in these police recorded crime data will differ from data from the Home Office Homicide Index, which are published annually by Office for National Statistics, last released as part of [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#). Police recorded crime data on homicide represent the recording decision of the police based on the available information at the time the offence comes to their attention. Homicide Index data take account of the charging decision and court outcome in cases that have gone to trial. It is not uncommon for offences initially recorded as murder by the police to be charged or convicted as manslaughter at court.

Of all recorded homicides in the latest data, about 4 in 10 involved a knife or sharp instrument (39%). This proportion has increased, in comparison with last year, when about 3 in 10 homicides involved a knife or sharp instrument (30%).

The number of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument had been used has increased by 24% in the last year (to 268 offences). For more information on selected violent and sexual crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument, see Table 4.

## Small decrease in death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving

Offences related to death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving decreased by 5%, compared with the previous year (to 722 offences). The drop in offences is in contrast with recent years where there has been a rising trend.

This sub-category has been included within the violence against the person offence group since the year ending June 2017. It contains offences previously counted under “violence with injury”. As with homicide offences, this category is thought to be well-recorded by the police.

There is more detailed information on long-term trends and the circumstances of violence in [The nature of violent crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2017 and Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#). We have produced other publications that discuss violent crime, which can be found via our [main crime and justice webpage](#).

### Notes for: No change in the most common types of violent crime

1. There are some closely-related offences in the police recorded crime series, such as public order offences, that have no identifiable victim and are contained within the “other crimes against society” category.
2. [Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2016-17](#) and [Hospital Episode Statistics, Admitted Patient Care - England, 2006-07](#) provided by NHS Digital. Assault admissions do not include sexual offences but include assault codes X85 to Y04 and Y08 and Y09 from the dataset.
3. Homicide includes the offences of murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide.
4. Figures from the Homicide Index for the time period April 2016 to March 2017, which take account of further police investigations and court outcomes, were published in [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#) on 8 February 2018.
5. These figures include murders related to the Westminster Bridge terrorist-related incident in March 2017. It also includes seven offences of corporate manslaughter relating to the Croydon tram crash.

## 7 . Some weapons offences are rising, but this type of crime remains rare

In this section, we focus on crimes involving weapons. Police recorded data are available for both offences involving knives or sharp instruments and offences involving firearms.

### Police recorded crime can be a good measure of less common types of violence

As offences involving the use of weapons are relatively low in volume, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is not able to provide reliable trends for such incidents. In this case, police recorded crime is a useful source for measuring these offences. Not all offences will come to the attention of the police, but those that do are relatively well recorded.

# Highest number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments since 2011<sup>1</sup>

Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via an additional special collection. Proportions of offences involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument presented in this section are calculated based on figures submitted in this special collection. Although not every type of offence is included, those selected are those thought to cover most offences involving a knife or sharp instrument.<sup>2</sup>

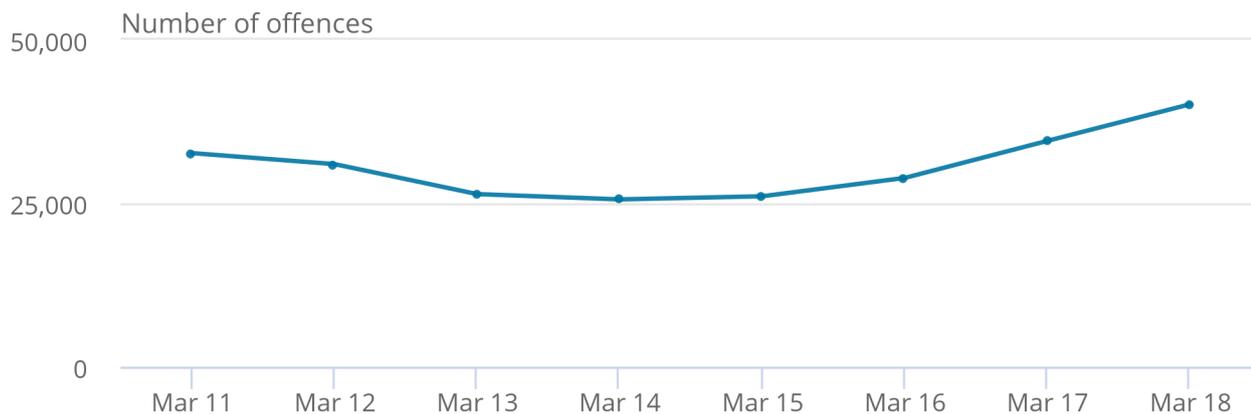
The police recorded 40,147 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the year ending March 2018, a 16% increase compared with the previous year (from 34,547 offences). This is the highest number since the year ending March 2011, the earliest point for which comparable data are available<sup>3</sup>. The past four years have seen a rise in the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, following a general downward trend (Figure 8).

## Figure 8: Police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument have risen for the fourth year running

England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2018

Figure 8: Police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument have risen for the fourth year running

England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2018



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

### Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via an additional special collection. This special collection 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.

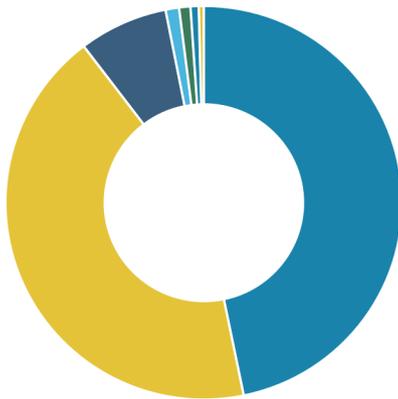
The offences “assault with injury” and “assault with intent to cause serious harm” accounted for around half (47%) of total selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (Table 4) and robberies accounted for a further 43%. Of all of the offences in this dataset, robberies had the largest rise in volume in comparison with the last year (up 33% to 17,207 offences). Rape, attempted murder, sexual assault and homicide account for a very small proportion of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument – just 3% (1,241 out of 40,147 recorded offences from March 2017 to March 2018) (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Crimes involving knives and sharp instruments are most often robberies and assaults**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 9: Crimes involving knives and sharp instruments are most often robberies and assaults

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via an additional special collection. This special collection 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.

In comparison with last year, the majority of police forces (36 of the 44)<sup>4</sup> recorded a rise in offences involving knives or sharp instruments. The Metropolitan Police had the largest volume increase, accounting for 47% of the total increase of these offences in England and Wales. A breakdown of offences for each police force and the time series for these data are published in [Tables P4 and P5](#).



**Table 4: Selected violent and sexual offences involving a knife or sharp instrument recorded by the police in England and Wales, year ending March 2017 and year ending March 2018 with percentage change <sup>1</sup> , <sup>2</sup> , <sup>3</sup> , <sup>4</sup> , <sup>5</sup> , <sup>6</sup>**

	Apr '16 to Mar '17	Apr '17 to Mar '18	Apr '17 to Mar '18 compared with previous year
<b>Selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument</b>	<b>Number of offences</b>		<b>Percentage change</b>
Attempted murder	355	372	5
Threats to kill	2,744	2,912	6
Assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm	17,683	18,787	6
Robbery	12,956	17,207	33
Rape	413	437	6
Sexual assault <sup>7</sup>	180	164	-9
<b>Total selected offences</b>	<b>34,331</b>	<b>39,879</b>	<b>16</b>
Homicide <sup>8</sup>	216	268	24
<b>Total selected offences including homicide</b>	<b>34,547</b>	<b>40,147</b>	<b>16</b>
Rate per million population - selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument			
<b>Total selected offences including homicide</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>688</b>	

Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

2. Police recorded crime statistics based on data from all 44 forces in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police).

3. Police recorded knife and sharp instrument offences data are submitted via an additional special collection. Proportions of offences involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument presented in this table are calculated based on figures submitted in this special collection. Other offences exist that are not shown in this table that may include the use of a knife or sharp instrument.

4. Data from Surrey Police include unbroken bottle and glass offences, which are outside the scope of this special collection; however, it is not thought that offences of this kind constitute a large enough number to impact on the national figure.

5. Numbers differ from those previously published due to Sussex Police revising their figures to exclude unbroken bottles.

6. Greater Manchester Police reviewed their recording of knife or sharp instrument offences in December 2017. This has revealed that they were under-counting these offences. Following this review, there has been a sharp increase in the number of knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by Greater Manchester Police in January to March 2018 compared with previous quarters. Previous data have not been revised and the data are therefore not comparable. However, this does not affect the annual percentage change in these offences across England and Wales.

7. Sexual assault includes indecent assault on a male/female and sexual assault on a male/female (all ages).

8. Homicide offences are those currently recorded by the police as at 22 May 2018 and are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available. They include the offences of murder, manslaughter, infanticide and, as of year ending March 2013, corporate manslaughter. These figures are taken from the detailed record level Homicide Index (rather than the main police collection for which forces are only required to provide an overall count of homicides, used in Appendix table A4). There may therefore be differences in the total homicides figure used to calculate these proportions and the homicide figure presented in Appendix table A4.

## **Recent increases reflect a real rise in offences involving knives or sharp instruments**

While it is thought that improvements in recording practices have contributed to the recent increases in recorded knife or sharp instrument offences, these increases also reflect a real rise in the occurrence of these types of crime.

NHS data help to provide further insight into offences involving weapons. For example, provisional data for NHS hospitals in England reported 4,656 admissions for assault by a sharp object between April 2017 and March 2018<sup>5</sup>, an increase of 15% in the last year. This also highlights that the number of offences resulting in admission to hospital is substantially lower than the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument.

## **Possession of an article with a blade or point also rose**

Police recorded “possession of an article with a blade or point” offences also rose, by 28%, to 18,207 offences in the latest year. This rise is consistent with increases seen over the last five years, but this is the highest figure since the series began in the year ending March 2009. This figure can often be influenced by increases in targeted police action in relation to knife crime, which is most likely to occur at times when rises in offences involving knives are seen.

## **Increase in offences involving firearms is smaller than previously seen**

Recorded offences involving firearms<sup>6, 7</sup> increased by 2% (to 6,492) in the year ending March 2018 compared with the previous year (6,375 offences). This is a slower rate of increase than seen in recent releases (Figure 10).

## Figure 10: The increase in police recorded offences involving firearms has slowed in the latest year

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

Figure 10: The increase in police recorded offences involving firearms has slowed in the latest year. Similar to offences involving a knife or a sharp instrument, since 2014, the number of offences involving firearms have been increasing. The most recent data, this rise is smaller than in previous years. The number of recorded offences involving firearms have had a long downward trend.



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

### Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. 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.

There was an increase in the number of offences involving more serious weapons such as handguns (up 6% to 2,847) and shotguns (up 10% to 650). However, it is thought that some of the increase in offences involving handguns is due to improvements in police recording.

In contrast, there have been falls in the number of offences involving less serious weapons such as imitation firearms (down 7% to 1,523) and “other firearms”<sup>8</sup> (down 8% to 506).

Further analysis on offences involving knives or sharp instruments and offences involving firearms, including figures based on a broader definition of the types of firearm involved<sup>9</sup>, can be found in [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#). However, this does not include the most recent statistics for the year ending March 2018.

**Notes for: Some weapons offences are rising, but this type of crime remains rare**

1. A sharp instrument is any object that pierces the skin (or in the case of a threat, is capable of piercing the skin), for example, a broken bottle.
2. In this bulletin we discuss weapons offences as a whole, alongside violent offences. However, we note that sexual offences and robbery are defined as separate categories to that of violence.
3. The [Focus on violent crime and sexual offences](#) publication includes data on offences involving a knife or sharp instrument going back to the year ending March 2009; however, this excludes data for West Midlands and Sussex due to inconsistencies in their recording practices, which did not change until the year ending March 2011. Data for the year ending March 2017 are published in the [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#).
4. Greater Manchester Police reviewed their recording of knife or sharp instrument offences in December 2017. This has revealed that they were under-counting these offences. Following this review, there has been a sharp increase in the number of knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by Greater Manchester Police in January to March 2018 compared with previous quarters. Previous data have not been revised and the data are therefore not comparable. However, this does not affect the annual percentage change in these offences across England and Wales.
5. Provisional data for April 2017 to March 2018 are available from NHS Supplementary Information.
6. Firearms include: shotguns; handguns; rifles; imitation weapons such as BB guns or soft air weapons; other weapons such as CS gas or pepper spray and stun guns; and unidentified weapons. These figures exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.
7. Offences involving a firearm include: if a firearm is fired, used as a blunt instrument, or used as a threat.
8. Other firearms include CS gas / pepper spray, stun guns and other weapons.
9. The broader definition of firearms includes conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.

## 8 . Computer misuse offences show decrease in computer viruses

This section covers our findings about computer misuse crimes, which include offences such as computer viruses and hacking<sup>1</sup>.

Data on computer misuse crime are available from offences referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) and from new questions introduced in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from October 2015<sup>2</sup>.

Following the introduction of these new survey questions, we can look at changes in these estimates over the last two years. However, as this comparison is based on two data points only, caution must be taken in drawing conclusions about trends at this early stage.

### CSEW provides best indication of volume of computer misuse offences

It is important to consider that Action Fraud data on computer misuse represent only a small fraction of all computer misuse, as many incidents are not reported. The CSEW is able to capture some of these unreported offences. This can be seen by the large difference in volume of computer misuse offences between the two sources – 1.2 million offences estimated by the CSEW compared with around 21,000 offences referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud. As such it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons between computer misuse reported to Action Fraud and that measured by the survey.

## Fall in computer viruses drives fall in CSEW computer misuse

In the year ending March 2018, offences involving computer misuse showed a 31% decrease from the year ending March 2017 (down to 1.2 million offences). This decrease was largely owing to a fall in “computer viruses” (down 40% to 710,000 offences).

Incidents involving “unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)” did not show a significant change from the previous year (528,000 offences) (Table 5).

**Table 5: Crime Survey for England and Wales computer misuse - number of incidents for year ending March 2017 and year ending March 2018 with percentage change<sup>1, 2</sup>**

England and Wales		Adults aged 16 and over	
Offence group	Apr '16 to Mar '17	Apr '17 to Mar '18	Percentage change and significance <sup>3</sup>
	Number of incidents (thousands)		
Computer misuse	1,795	1,239	-31 *
Computer virus	1,193	710	-40 *
Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)	603	528	-12
Unweighted base - number of adults	17,171	25,725	

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

1. New victimisation questions on computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. Up to the year ending September 2017 the questions were asked of half the survey sample. From October 2017 onwards the questions are being asked of a full survey sample.

2. In March 2018 the new CSEW estimates on computer misuse were assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation against the Code of Practice for Statistics and were awarded National Statistics status.

3. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.

## Increase in incidents of computer misuse reported to Action Fraud

All “Computer misuse crime”<sup>3</sup> referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by Action Fraud increased by 9% in the latest year (up to 21,134 offences). This rise was less pronounced than that seen in year ending March 2017, due in part to a notable decrease of 8% for the latest year in computer viruses (down to 6,691 offences).

This fall in computer viruses is consistent with the latest CSEW fall in this type of crime and follows a previous substantial rise where a high number of such offences were reported to Action Fraud in the first part of 2017.

The overall rise in computer misuse recorded by Action Fraud was driven by an increase in “hacking – social media and email” over the last year (up 48% to 8,096 offences). This is thought to reflect an increasing awareness of social media scams among the public, leading to a greater likelihood of such incidents (including unsuccessful attempts) being reported.

## Notes for: Computer misuse offences show decrease in computer viruses

1. A full definition of terms is provided in the [User Guide](#).
2. For further information on these sources and their strengths and weaknesses, please see Section 5.4 of the [User Guide](#) and also the [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics](#) article.
3. Computer misuse crime covers any unauthorised access to computer material, as set out in the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

## 9 . Little change in the volume of fraud offences in the last year

This section focuses on our most recent findings about fraud, which encompasses a range of fraudulent activities including bank and credit account fraud, consumer and retail fraud, and advance fee fraud <sup>1</sup>.

The recorded crime series incorporates fraud offences collated by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from three reporting bodies: Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) and two industry bodies, Cifas and UK Finance<sup>2</sup>, who report instances of fraud where their member organisations have been a victim<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, new questions on fraud were introduced in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from October 2015. We can look at changes in these estimates over the last two years. However, as this comparison is based on two data points only, caution must be taken in interpreting trends at this early stage.

### CSEW provides best indication of volume of fraud offences

The CSEW provides the best measure of fraud offences directly experienced by individuals in England and Wales. CSEW estimates cover a broad range of fraud offences, including attempts and offences involving a loss and include incidents not reported to the authorities.

Contrasts in findings between the CSEW estimates and the data referred to the NFIB may be explained, in part, by differences in the coverage of the two sources. The number of incidents estimated by the CSEW is substantially higher than the number of incidents referred to the NFIB, as the survey captures a large volume of lower-harm cases that are less likely to have been reported to the authorities. For example, the CSEW estimated 3.2 million incidents of fraud for the year ending March 2018 compared with 0.6 million incidents referred to the NFIB see ([Appendix Tables A1 and A5](#)).

In contrast, incidents of fraud referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud, Cifas and UK Finance will include reports from businesses and other organisations, and will tend mostly to be focused on cases at the more serious end of the spectrum. This is because, by definition, they will only include crimes that the victim considers serious enough to report to the authorities or where there are viable lines of investigation.

As a result, fraud offences referred to the authorities make up a relatively small proportion of the overall volume of fraud. This is supported by findings from the CSEW, which suggests that less than one-fifth (13%) of incidents of fraud are reported by the victim to either the police or to Action Fraud ([Table E5](#)).

### No change in fraud measured by CSEW

Findings for the year ending March 2018 estimated the number of fraud incidents (3.2 million) had not significantly changed from the previous survey year (3.4 million). Latest results also showed no significant change in offences falling under the separate subcategories of “bank and credit account fraud”, “consumer and retail fraud”, “advance fee fraud” and “other fraud” (Table 6).

Over half of fraud incidents for the latest survey year were thought to be cyber-related<sup>4</sup> (54% or 1.7 million incidents) ([Table E6](#)).

**Table 6: Crime Survey for England and Wales fraud - number of incidents for year ending March 2017 and year ending March 2018 with percentage change<sup>1, 2</sup>**

England and Wales		Adults aged 16 and over	
Offence group	Apr '16 to Mar '17	Apr '17 to Mar '18	Percentage change and significance <sup>3</sup>
Number of incidents (thousands)			
Fraud	3,370	3,245	-4
Bank and credit account fraud	2,489	2,246	-10
Consumer and retail fraud <sup>4</sup>	737	872	18
Advance fee fraud	76	69	-9
Other fraud	68	58	-14
Unweighted base - number of adults	17,171	25,725	

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

1. New victimisation questions on fraud were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. Up to the year ending September 2017 the questions were asked of half the survey sample. From October 2017 onwards the questions are being asked of a full survey sample.

2. In March 2018 the new CSEW estimates on fraud were assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation against the Code of Practice for Statistics and were awarded National Statistics status.

3. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.

4. Non-investment fraud has been renamed as 'Consumer and retail fraud' to reflect the corresponding name change to the Home Office Counting Rules from April 2017.

Further findings from the CSEW fraud questions for the year ending March 2018 are presented in the [Additional tables on Fraud and Cybercrime](#).

## Recorded crime shows small decrease in total fraud offences

The recorded crime series indicated a small decrease of 2% in the total number of fraud offences referred to NFIB in the year ending March 2018 (638,882 offences) compared with the previous year (652,362 offences). Some differences were apparent when looking at the separate reporting bodies – Action Fraud reported a rise in fraud offences (up 6% to 277,561), Cifas reported a fall (down 10% to 276,993 offences) and UK Finance reported no change (84,328 offences). However, these need to be interpreted in terms of differences around coverage and the main types of fraud captured by each reporting body (see [Appendix Table A5](#))<sup>5</sup>.

## Additional administrative data gives a fuller picture of card and bank account fraud

The latest number of fraud offences referred to the NFIB by UK Finance showed no change from the previous year. However, additional data collected by UK Finance via their CAMIS system<sup>6</sup> 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 1.9 million cases of frauds (excluding Authorised Push Payments) involving UK-issued payment cards, remote banking and cheques via CAMIS. This is an increase of 5% from the previous year ([Table F4](#)), accounted for solely by a rise in plastic card fraud (Figure 11).

These data are able to capture card fraud not reported to the police for investigation<sup>7</sup> and so offer a better picture of the scale of bank account and plastic card fraud identified by financial institutions in the UK. The data also help to supplement the CSEW, possibly giving a better indication of short-term trends and helping to bridge the gap between the broad coverage provided by the survey and the narrower focus of offences referred to the NFIB.

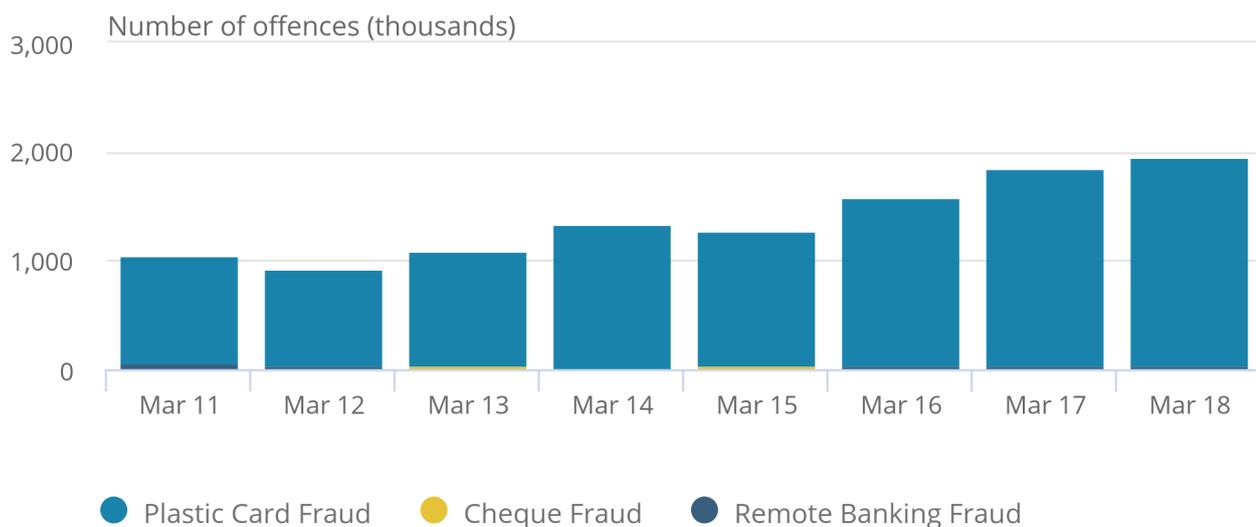
Most of the additional offences covered in the CAMIS data fall into the category of “remote purchase fraud”<sup>8</sup> and fraudulent incidents involving lost or stolen cards. These account for a high proportion of plastic card fraud that is not included in the NFIB figures.

**Figure 11: CAMIS data suggest an increase in plastic card fraud reported to UK Finance over recent years**

England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2018

Figure 11: CAMIS data suggest an increase in plastic card fraud reported to UK Finance over recent years

England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2018



Source: UK Finance

Notes:

1. All offences are classed under HOCR as NFIB5A, cheque, plastic card and online bank accounts (non PSP). The categories they have been split into are UK Finance's breakdowns.
2. Fraud data are not designated as National Statistics.
3. Remote banking fraud includes telephone and internet banking.
4. The data do not include Authorised Push Payments.

The introduction of chip card technology has forced fraudsters to change their methods of working. CAMIS figures indicate that remote purchase fraud has consistently accounted for around three-quarters of all plastic card fraud reported to UK Finance. However, most of the latest increase in plastic card fraud reported via CAMIS was covered by offences falling into the category of “lost or stolen cards”, which rose by 52% from the previous year (to 374,604 offences).

This increase in lost and stolen card fraud reported to UK Finance is thought to be related to a rise in distraction thefts, where fraudsters are stealing cards in shops and at cash machines, and also courier scams, where victims are tricked into handing over their cards on the doorstep<sup>9</sup>.

This is supported by CSEW data on the nature of theft from the person offences. For the survey year ending March 2018, credit cards were indicated to be one of the most commonly stolen items during incidents of theft from the person (44%) and were stolen in a higher proportion of incidents than five years ago (23%).

## **New data on Authorised Push Payment fraud is now included in CAMIS data**

Authorised Push Payment (APP) fraud refers to cases where victims are tricked into sending money directly from their account to an account that the fraudster controls. APP was included for the first time in the UK Finance CAMIS data for the year ending December 2017. As this is a new data collection it is not yet possible to make comparisons over time. The new data show that in the year ending March 2018, there were 49,811 cases of APP fraud reported to UK Finance, raising the total CAMIS volume to 2 million incidents of fraud.

APP fraud can often involve significant sums of money and have massively adverse financial and emotional consequences for the victim. Unlike most other frauds, victims of APP fraud authorise the payment themselves and means they have no legal protection to cover them for losses. UK Finance reported that £236 million was lost through such scams in 2017<sup>10</sup>. The majority of victims (88%) were retail consumers, losing an average of £2,784 and the remainder were businesses who lost on average £24,355 per case. These new data were produced in response to investigations by the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) into a [Super-complaint](#) received from the consumer group Which? in 2016. Following the Super-complaint, the PSR, the [Financial Conduct Authority \(FCA\)](#) and the [payments industry](#) (represented by UK Finance) have developed an ongoing programme of work to reduce the harm to consumers from APP scams<sup>11</sup>.

## **Notes for: Little change in the volume of fraud offences in the last year**

1. A full definition of terms is provided in the [User Guide](#).
2. For further information on these sources and their strengths and weaknesses, please see Section 5.4 of the [User Guide](#) and also the [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics](#) article.
3. A full breakdown of the types of fraud offences referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud, Cifas and UK Finance in the latest year is presented in [Table A5](#) and a definition of terms is provided in the [User Guide](#).
4. Based on whether the internet or any type of online activity was related to any aspect of the offence.
5. For further information on these sources and their strengths and weaknesses, please see Section 5.4 of the [User Guide](#) and also the [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics](#) article.
6. For more information on UK Finance and CAMIS, please see Section 5.4 of the [User Guide](#) and also the [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics](#) article.
7. The CAMIS system contains cases where it has been judged that there is no evidential value and no hope of identifying the offender. CAMIS data include those cases referred by UK Finance to the NFIB.
8. Remote purchase frauds refer to frauds where, in the vast majority of cases, card details have been fraudulently obtained through unsolicited emails or telephone calls or digital attacks, such as malware and data hacks, and then used to undertake fraudulent purchases over the internet, phone or by mail order.
9. Further information on trends in payment industry fraud based on industry data collated by UK Finance is available in [Fraud the Facts 2017](#).
10. Data reported by UK [Finance article Finance industry stop £1.4 billion in attempted fraud](#).
11. For more information see the [report and consultation](#) published on 7 November 2017, explaining the work the PSR, the FCA and the payments industry have undertaken in the past year.

## 10 . A rise in theft is driven by vehicle-related offences

In this section we focus on vehicle-related thefts, burglary and robbery.

Since the mid-1990s, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) has shown long-term reductions in most categories of theft, with the overall number of theft offences having fallen by 69% since the year ending December 1995. More recently, there is evidence of rises in some types of theft recorded by the CSEW, particularly in vehicle-related theft.

Despite the CSEW showing no statistically significant change in burglary and robbery<sup>1</sup>, recent rises in burglary recorded by the police are thought to indicate some genuine rises in this type of crime and changes are expected to be reflected in the CSEW in due course.

Robbery is a relatively low-volume crime and the CSEW does not provide a robust measure of short-term trends. However, it is also possible that recent increases in robbery recorded by the police indicate some real rises.

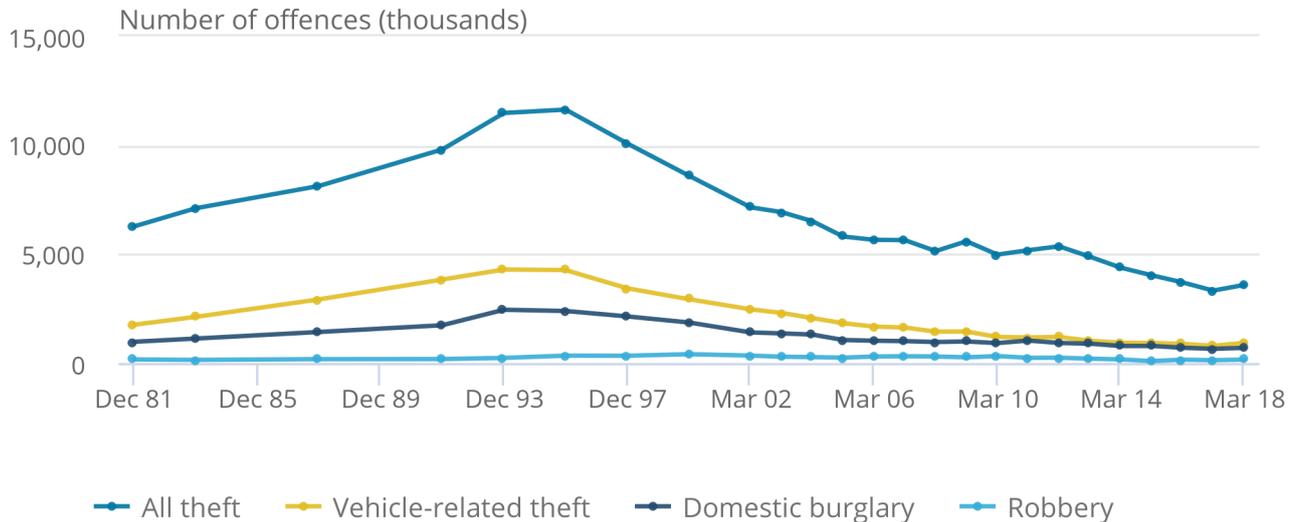
Other types of theft offences that have seen increases recorded by the police may be more prone to changes in recording practices, making the picture less clear for these offences.

**Figure 12: Rise in vehicle-related theft offences measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales, but apparent rises in domestic burglary and robbery were not statistically significant**

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2018

Figure 12: Rise in vehicle-related theft offences measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales, but apparent rises in domestic burglary and robbery were not statistically significant

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year (January to December); 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 (April to March).
2. As robbery is not a type of theft, it does not contribute to the measure of all theft.

The CSEW showed a rise of 8% in the overall number of theft offences in the year ending March 2018, compared with the previous year (to 3,585,000 offences). This is due largely to a rise in vehicle-related theft, which increased by 17% (to 924,000 offences) (Figure 12) ([Table A1](#)).

Within the 17% increase in vehicle-related theft estimated by the CSEW in the latest year:

- “theft of vehicles” increased by 40% (to 82,000)
- “theft from vehicles” increased by 14% (to 656,000)
- a non-significant rise of 19% in “attempts of and from vehicles” (187,000)

The CSEW increase in vehicle-related theft is supported by police recorded crime figures, which are thought to be fairly well recorded for this crime type.

Police recorded vehicle offences increased by 12% (to 457,036) in the year ending March 2018, continuing the rising trend seen over the last two years. There were increases in both “theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle” (up by 16% to 106,334 recorded offences) and “theft from a vehicle” (up by 8% to 279,974 recorded offences). Recent rises are also evident in the number of motor insurance claims relating to theft<sup>2</sup>.

However, the volume rises shown by both CSEW and police recorded crime for vehicle-related offences are relatively small in the context of a longer-term reduction. CSEW vehicle-related theft has fallen by 78% since the year ending December 1995 and in comparison to year ending March 2008, police recorded vehicle offences have decreased by 30%.

## **Police recorded crime data indicates a genuine increase in burglary and robbery**

As with vehicle-related theft, burglary and robbery tend to be relatively well-reported by the public and relatively well recorded by the police. Burglary is thought to be less affected by the impact of recording improvements than other types of crime. Whilst recording improvements are likely to have contributed to the observed rise in robbery, this offence is also thought to be reflecting a genuine increase.

Latest figures show:

- the number of burglary offences recorded by the police increased by 6% (to 437,537 offences)
- the number of recorded robbery offences rose by 30% (to 77,103 offences) (Figure 13)

### **Figure 13: Recent rises in burglary and robbery signal a change to the long-term downward trends**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

## **Crimes involving mopeds may have contributed to the increase in some types of theft**

Anecdotal evidence suggests that an increase in moped-related crime may have been a contributory factor to rises in vehicle-related thefts, theft from the person and robbery offences. Stolen mopeds have been used to facilitate snatch thefts and robberies. Such vehicles have no or limited security, are less likely to have immobilisers and therefore become an easier target for thieves<sup>3</sup>. However, it is not possible to separately identify moped-related crime in our data meaning we are unable to provide statistics specifically for either the number of mopeds that have been stolen, or the number of crimes enabled by a moped.

As in previous years, the latest data show that robbery and theft from the person offences are disproportionately concentrated in London and other larger cities. In the year ending March 2018, London accounted for 42% of all police recorded robbery and 48% of all police recorded theft from the person offences in England and Wales, compared with 17% across all crime types, excluding fraud ([see Police Force Area Data Tables](#)).

In our last bulletin, we referred to data published by the Metropolitan Police<sup>4</sup> that suggested an increase in robberies and thefts committed on mopeds across London. However, the Metropolitan Police have reported [drops in moped crime in London](#) for selected months in the year ending March 2018, due to increased efforts to tackle these sorts of offences.

As these crimes are spread across a range of crime types and our data cover an entire quarter, these decreases are not apparent in this quarterly release.

Overview articles containing more detailed information on the long-term trends, for [bicycle theft](#), [vehicle-related theft](#), [robbery and theft from the person](#) and [burglary and other household theft](#) have previously been published.

## Notes for: A rise in theft is driven by vehicle-related offences

1. Robbery, which is theft (or attempted theft) involving the use or threat of force, is included in this section as it involves theft, but it is not included in the “all theft” category.
2. Based on unpublished information from the Association of British Insurers (ABI).
3. Evidenced in the Metropolitan Police’s [Be Safe](#) Campaign.
4. Data obtained from a published [Freedom of Information request](#).

## 11 . What’s happened to the volume of crime recorded by the police?

For many types of offence, police recorded crime figures do not provide a reliable measure of trends in crime, but they do provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police.

In this section we discuss police recorded crime data in more detail, including:

- how police recorded crime data has changed over time
- improvements in recording practices and the impact on the number of recorded crimes
- particular crimes where an increase in the number of recorded offences is due largely to recording improvements or more victims reporting, rather than a genuine rise in crime (violence, public order offences, domestic abuse and sexual offences)

### Police recorded crime data have changed over time

Previously, the trend in the number of crimes recorded by the police has shown a broadly similar pattern to that seen in Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) crime. Increases in the volume of crimes recorded were seen during the 1980s until the early 1990s. Changes to recording rules and processes resulted in rises between 1998 and 2004, followed by declining numbers of recorded crimes during the 2000s and early 2010s.

However, since 2014 the two sources have shown differing trends, with consistent increases in the number of crimes recorded by the police. The size of year-on-year increases has grown, with police recorded crime increasing by 3% in the year ending March 2015, by 8% in the year ending March 2016, by 10% in the year ending March 2017 and by 11% in the latest year (Figure 14).

## Figure 14: The volume of police recorded crime has increased over recent years

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2018

Figure 14: The volume of police recorded crime has increased over recent years

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2018



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

### Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. From the year ending March 2012 onwards, police recorded crime data have included offences from additional sources of fraud data.
3. Some forces have revised their data and police recorded crime totals may not agree with those previously published.

Rises seen over recent years reflect a combination of factors, which vary for different crime types, and include:

- continuing improvements to recording processes and practices
- more victims reporting crime
- genuine increases in crime

These factors are believed to have the largest impact on violent and sexual offences, as evidenced by [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#), published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in November 2014. This report showed that violence against the person and sexual offences had the highest under-recording rates nationally (33% and 26%, respectively).

In the rest of this section, we discuss police recorded crime in terms of: violent crime, public order offences, domestic abuse, and sexual offences.

## Recording improvements have had a big impact on police recorded violence

Interpreting trends in police recorded violence is difficult. Ongoing work by police forces over the last three years to improve crime-recording practices has driven an increase in recorded violence against the person offences. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the improvements have had a larger effect on relatively less-harmful types of violent crime and less impact on more harmful sub-categories, such as homicide and violent offences involving weapons.

In 2014 HMICFRS found that violent offences were more prone than other offences to subjective judgement about whether or not to record a crime. Since then, these offences have been one of the three main categories of crime focused on in the subsequent rolling programme of HMICFRS inspections.

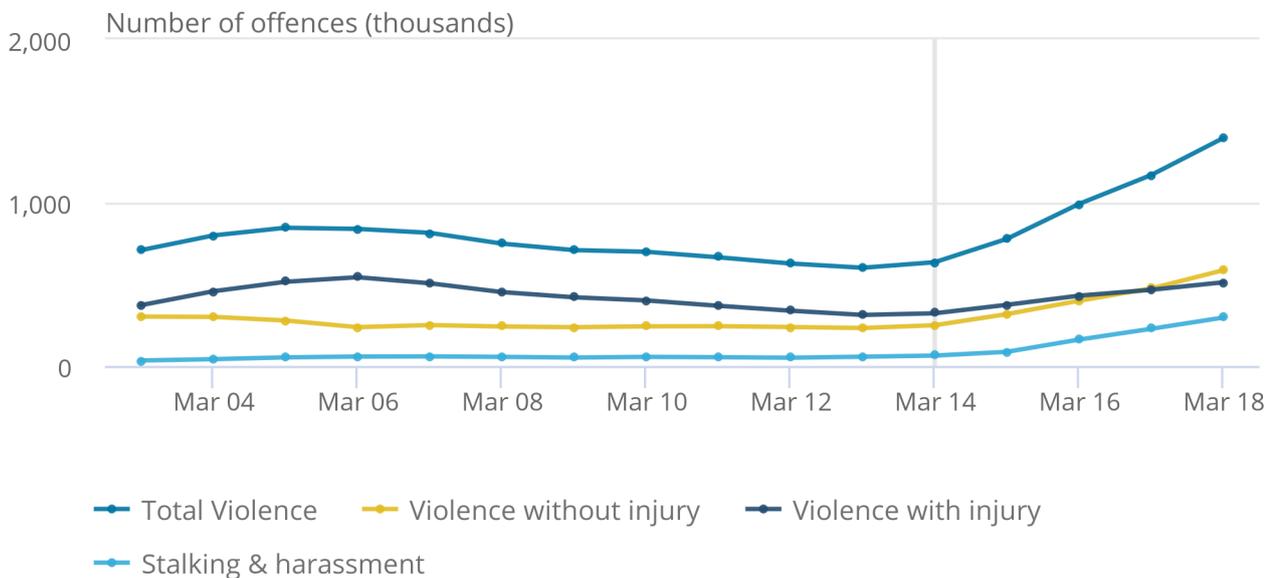
**Figure 15: The volume of violent crime being recorded by the police has increased over the last few years**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

Figure 15: The volume of violent crime being recorded by the police has increased over the last few years

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

November 2014: Publication of HMICFRS reports highlighting the issues in recording practices for violent offences



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

Evidence of improvements in recording since 2014 can be found in the more recent [Crime Data Integrity \(CDI\) inspections](#) carried out by HMICFRS<sup>1</sup> in the last two years. Findings from the 23 inspections suggest that crime recording practices by police forces in England and Wales are, in general, improving. However, the level and speed of improvement varies across the country and some forces have further work to do to ensure reports of crime, in particular violent crime, are recorded correctly.

It is therefore likely that the increases in police recorded violence as a result of improved recording could continue for some time. It is also possible that there have been some genuine increases in crime among the less serious categories at the same time as ongoing improvements to recording. Further CDI inspection reports are due to be published in late July and early October, this year.

HMICFRS have recently published their annual report, [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2017](#). This summarises the progress of police forces to improve their recording practices, on the basis of the ongoing Crime Data Integrity programme.

## **Larger increase in violence without injury than violence with injury**

The “violence without injury” sub-category accounted for 42% of all violence recorded by the police and showed a larger increase in the latest year to March 2018 (up 24% to 586,386 offences), than the “violence with injury” sub-category (up 10% to 512,312 offences) (Figure 15).

Almost 9 in 10 “violence without injury” offences<sup>2</sup> recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018 were classified as assaults without injury<sup>3</sup> (87%; 509,012 offences). This category showed a 25% increase (of 100,310 offences) compared with the previous year; which contributed to 90% of the increase in “violence without injury” offences. Smaller increases were seen in:

- threats to kill (up 5,276 offences; 5% of the increase)
- assault without injury on a constable (up 1,578 offences; 1.4% of the increase)
- modern slavery<sup>4</sup> (up 1,094 offences; 1% of the increase)

Most of the 10% increase in the “violence with injury” sub-category (up to 512,312 offences) is a result of an increase in assault with injury (69% of the increase). Assaults with intent to cause serious harm accounted for a further 10% of the increase (up 4,446 offences).

A substantial increase of 71% (562 offences) in the number of attempted murder offences in the latest year is due largely to the Manchester terror attacks, with most of this rise being recorded by Greater Manchester police (498 offences).

## **Stalking and harassment accounted for one-third of increase in violence**

The stalking and harassment<sup>5</sup> sub-category rose by 30% compared with the previous year (Figure 15), accounting for almost one-third of the change in violence recorded by the police (30%; 68,307 offences). It is likely that recording improvements are an important factor in this rise, particularly in relation to malicious communication offences due to improved compliance in recording of these new offences over time.

The latest [joint inspection](#)<sup>6</sup> conducted by HMICFRS and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS) found that stalking was not always recorded accurately by the police and in some of these cases, stalking was recorded as harassment. These findings suggest we cannot currently be confident about the accuracy of the recorded crime figures for the separate categories of stalking or harassment.

## Changes in violence vary by police force area

All police forces recorded a rise in violence in the latest year to March 2018 compared with the previous year. It is important to bear in mind that these increases will reflect recording improvements and the extent of such effects differs across police forces ([Tables P1 and P2](#)).

### Public order offences show increases

Public order offences cover a range of incidents including “causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress”. These offences are not covered by the CSEW and can be influenced by changes in police activity and recording practices. Public order offences increased by 36% in the latest year following a 39% increase in the previous year. The rise in public order offences is due largely to an increase of 43% in recorded offences of “Public fear, alarm, and distress” (to 285,426). This accounts for approximately 3 in 4 (74%) of all recorded public order offences in the latest year.

It is likely that these increases reflect improvements in recording processes. In particular, we think that some incidences that would in past years would have been recorded as anti-social behaviour, are now being recorded as public order offences. This accords with the consistent drop in the number of recorded anti-social behaviour offences since figures began in 2008. However, it is also possible that genuine increases in public disorder may have played a part in this rise.

### Police recorded domestic abuse continues to rise

A 2015 [HMICFRS report](#) concluded that recent increases in the number of domestic abuse-related crimes were due, in part, to police forces improving their recording of domestic abuse incidents as crimes and to forces actively encouraging victims to come forward to report these crimes.

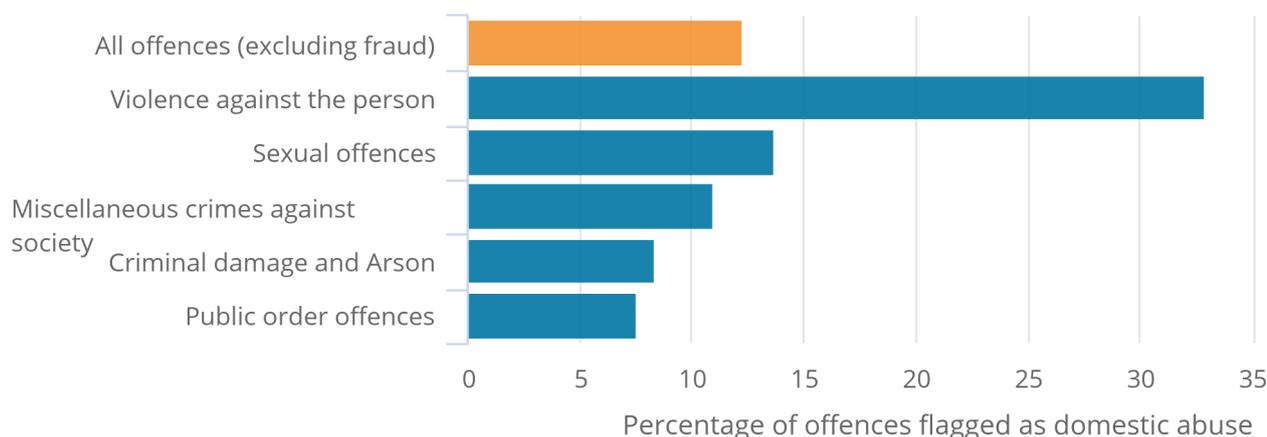
Since April 2015, crimes should be “flagged” as being domestic abuse-related by the police if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse<sup>7</sup>.

**Figure 16: The crime type of “violence against the person” has the highest proportion of domestic abuse-flagged offences**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 16: The crime type of “violence against the person” has the highest proportion of domestic abuse-flagged offences

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data are provisional and have not been reconciled with police forces.

As the flagging of offences relies on a manual intervention in the crime recording system, the quality of these data may be inconsistent across police forces and open to more variation than the underlying number of recorded offences.

In the year ending March 2018, there was an increase in the total number of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police (up 23% to 599,775 from 488,049). As well as general improvements in recording, the police may have improved their identification of which offences are domestic abuse-related and more victims may be coming forward to report these crimes. Given the different factors affecting the reporting and recording of these offences, we feel the police figures do not currently provide a reliable indication of current trends.

In comparison, figures from a self-completion module in the CSEW have shown little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years. However, the cumulative effect of these changes has resulted in a small, significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2018 (6.1%) compared with the year ending March 2005 (8.9%), when this time series began. This indicates a gradual, longer-term downward trend ( [Table S39](#)).

Further analysis on domestic abuse can be found in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales, year ending March 2017](#) release and [Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#).

## **New data will help us measure coercive behaviour and sexual offences against children**

Included in the rise in domestic abuse-related crimes are offences of coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship<sup>8</sup>. This became a new criminal offence as part of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and came into force on 29 December 2015. Of the 42 forces for which data were available, 9,052 offences of coercive control were recorded in the year ending March 2018. Data for the previous year showed that 38 forces recorded 4,246 coercive control offences. This increase is likely to be due to police forces increasing their use of the new law over the last year.

A further change to recording practices is to flag offences where children have been sexually abused or exploited. New experimental statistics this year showed the police flagged 55,061 crimes as involving child sexual abuse<sup>9</sup> and 15,045 as involving child sexual exploitation<sup>10</sup>. As with flagging for domestic abuse, the data quality for these figures is variable across police forces, but is expected to improve over time. A breakdown of these data across police force areas is available in [Other related tables](#).

## **Rises in police recorded sexual offences**

There was an increase of 24% in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018 compared with the previous year (up to 150,732, (Figure 17) ([Table A4](#))):

- police recorded rape increased by 31% (to 53,977 offences)
- other sexual offences increased by 21% (to 96,755 offences)
- the increase in sexual offences against children<sup>11</sup> contributed around one-quarter (27%) to the total increase in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police

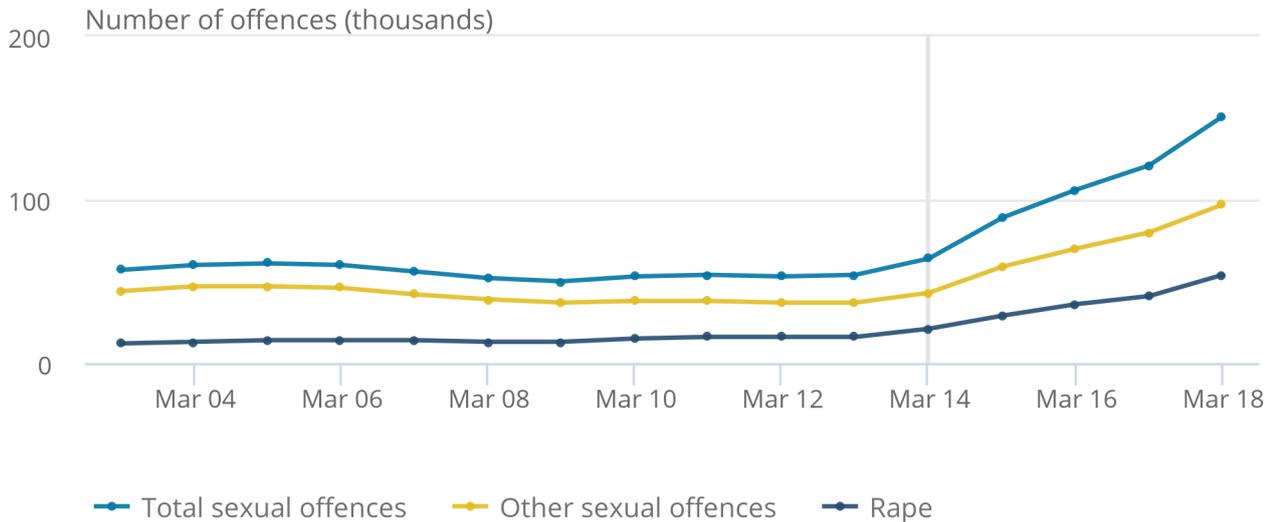
**Figure 17: Police recorded sexual offences are at their highest volume since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in 2002**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

Figure 17: Police recorded sexual offences are at their highest volume since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in 2002

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

November 2014:  
Publication of HM  
reports highlight  
issues in recording  
practices for  
sexual offences



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime are not designated as National Statistics.
2. The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.

A factor in the latest rise is improvements made by the police in the recording of sexual offences. More recent [Crime Data Integrity inspections](#) carried out by HMICFRS<sup>12</sup> indicate that there is evidence of improvements in the recording of sexual offences made by forces since 2014. However, the level of improvement varies between forces and some have further work to do to ensure that all reports of sexual offences are recorded correctly. Therefore, the increases seen as a result of improved recording may continue for some time.

An increased willingness of victims to come forward and report these crimes to the police is also thought to have contributed to the increase. High-profile coverage of sexual offences and the police response to reports of non-recent sexual offending are other factors that are likely to have influenced police recording of sexual offences. For example, Operation Yewtree, which began in 2012, and more recently, allegations against prominent individuals in Hollywood. Such operations are likely to have an ongoing influence on victims' willingness to come forward to report both recent and non-recent offences.

For a subset of forces providing data to the Home Office Data Hub <sup>13</sup>, 26% of sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018 were non-recent offences (those that took place more than 12 months before being recorded by the police). Non-recent offences increased by 25% compared with the year ending March 2017, in line with the overall increase over the same period. While non-recent offences remain an important contributor to the latest rise in sexual offences (26% <sup>14</sup>), the rise was due mainly to increases in recent offences (those that took place within 12 months of being recorded by the police).

Given the different factors affecting the reporting and recording of these offences, we feel the police figures do not currently provide a reliable indication of current trends in these types of crime.

Estimates from the CSEW for the year ending March 2018 showed that 2.7% of adults aged 16 to 59 years had been victims of sexual assaults in the last year (including attempted offences), a small but statistically significant increase compared with the previous year's estimate (2.0%) ([Table S39](#)).

This is driven by an increase in our estimates for how many women have been victims of indecent exposure or unwanted sexual touching in the last year ([Table S38](#)). From the latest survey data, we estimate that 3.8% of women aged 16 to 59 years were victims of indecent exposure or unwanted sexual touching, a percentage point increase of 1.1 in comparison with last year's estimate. We will be publishing further analysis of sexual offences data later this year.

More information on interpreting longer-term trends in these offences can be found in [Sexual offences in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#); however, this does not include the most recent statistics for the year ending March 2018.

**Notes: What's happened to the volume of crime recorded by the police?**

1. These reports were published during 2016 and 2018, including three re-inspection reports which were published on 10 April 2018. The latest three inspection reports were published on 17 July 2018.
2. Stalking and harassment offences are no longer included within the category of “violence without injury”.
3. Assaults without injury offences are those where at the most a feeling of touch or passing moment of pain is experienced by the victim.
4. Modern slavery can take multiple forms including sexual exploitation, forced labour and domestic servitude. Before 1 April 2015, modern slavery offences were recorded under trafficking for sexual exploitation, immigration offences, and other indictable or triable-either-way offences. As of 1 April 2015, a separately identifiable crime recording category of modern slavery was introduced. The [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) consolidated existing slavery and trafficking offences into one Act. These provisions came into force on 31 July 2015.
5. Stalking and harassment offences have moved out of the sub-category of “violence without injury” and are now in a separate sub-category along with the new notifiable offence of malicious communications. These are “disclosure of private sexual photographs and films (including on the internet) with the intent to cause distress or anxiety” and “sending letters (including emails) with intent to cause distress or anxiety”. These were added to the notifiable offence list in April 2015.
6. [Living in fear - the police and CPS response to harassment and stalking](#) inspection report was published in July 2017.
7. Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
8. This offence is constituted by behaviour on the part of the perpetrator, which takes place “repeatedly or continuously”. The victim and alleged perpetrator must be “personally connected” at the time the behaviour takes place. The behaviour must have had a “serious effect” on the victim, meaning that it has caused the victim to fear violence will be used against them on “at least two occasions”, or it has had a “substantial adverse effect on the victims’ day to day activities”. The alleged perpetrator must have known that their behaviour would have a serious effect on the victim, or the behaviour must have been such that he or she “ought to have known” it would have that effect.
9. Child sexual abuse is defined as “forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (for example, masturbation, kissing, rubbing, touching outside of clothing and so on). They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)”.
10. Child sexual exploitation is defined as “a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology”.
11. This includes “rape of a male or female child under 16 years”, “rape of a male or female child under 13 years”, “sexual assault on a male or female child under 13 years”, “sexual activity involving a child under 13 years or under 16 years” and “abuse of children through sexual exploitation”.
12. These reports were published between 2016 and 2018, and the most recent reports were published on 15 February 2018. Three re-inspection reports were published on 10 April 2018.
13. The Home Office Data Hub is a live database that allows police forces to provide the Home Office with record-level information on every crime recorded in a year.
14. Based on findings from the Home Office Data Hub (HODH) from a subset of forces.

## 12 . Other sources of data provide a fuller picture of crime

Neither the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) nor the main police recorded crime series cover all crime. This section provides an overview of supplementary data sources, including:

- the Crime Survey for England and Wales for children aged 10 to 15 years old
- recorded crime data for incidences of anti-social behaviour
- data concerning non-notifiable offences
- the Commercial Victimization Survey, which gathers data on crimes experienced by businesses

### Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated 1 in 10 children aged 10 to 15 years were victims of crime

CSEW estimates of crimes experienced by children aged 10 to 15 years ([Appendix tables A9, A10, A11 and A12](#)) are not directly comparable with the main survey of adults, so are not included in the headline totals. However, estimates are presented to provide a better understanding of victimisation experiences among children resident in households. The CSEW estimated that around 1 in 10 children aged 10 to 15 years were victims of at least one crime in the latest year ending March 2018. A total of 645,000 crimes<sup>1</sup> were estimated to have been experienced by children aged 10 to 15 years:

- 49% were violent crimes (313,000), with the majority of these being low-level violence<sup>2</sup>
- 38% were thefts of personal property (242,000)
- 8% were criminal damage to personal property (53,000)
- 6% were robbery (37,000)

Given the small sample size for the 10-to-15-year-old element of the CSEW, estimates can fluctuate over time and trends can be difficult to interpret.

### Decrease in anti-social behaviour recorded by police

Around 1.7 million incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) were recorded by the police (including the British Transport Police<sup>3</sup>) in the latest year, a decrease of 9% from the previous year ([Figure F1](#)). These are incidents that may still be crimes in law, such as littering or dog fouling, but are not severe enough to result in the recording of a notifiable offence and therefore are not included in the main police recorded crime series.

There have been no recent inspections into ASB, however, [a review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\)](#) in 2012 found that there was a wide variation in the quality of decision-making associated with the recording of ASB. As a result, ASB incident data should be interpreted with caution. It is possible that, given the focus on the quality of crime recording, some incidents that may previously have been recorded as ASB have more recently been recorded as crimes. In particular, this is likely to account for some of the recent rise in public order offences.

The CSEW estimated that 33% of respondents experienced or witnessed ASB in their local area in the latest survey year. While this was a statistically significant increase from the 30% found in the previous survey year, this estimate has remained at a similar level (between 27% and 32%) since the data were first collected in the year ending March 2012. Further information is available in [Figures F1 and F2, and Tables F7 and F8](#).

## **Non-notifiable offences remain at similar level to previous year**

In the year ending December 2017 (the latest period for which data are available), there were 1.1 million convictions for non-notifiable offences<sup>4</sup> that were not covered in police recorded crime or the CSEW, similar to the number seen in the previous year.

In addition, 12,000 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) were issued in relation to non-notifiable offences for the year ending December 2017, a decrease of 26% from the year ending December 2016. The majority of these PNDs related to drunk and disorderly behaviour<sup>5</sup>. Further information is available in [Tables F9a and F9b](#).

## **Wholesale and retail businesses experienced the highest levels of crime**

As the CSEW is a survey of the population resident in households, it traditionally has not covered crimes against businesses<sup>6</sup>. Additionally, the police recorded crime series can only provide a partial picture of crimes against the business community as not all offences come to the attention of the police. The [Commercial Victimisation Survey \(CVS\)](#) provides estimates of crime against selected business premises<sup>7</sup> covered in its sample and gives some insight into the number of these crimes that go unreported to the police.

The 2017 CVS<sup>8</sup> showed that businesses in the wholesale and retail sector experienced the highest levels of crime – an estimated 8.1 million incidents, a rate of around 23,000 incidents per 1,000 business premises. However, care must be taken when comparing crime rates over time, based on CVS data. This is because the CVS does not cover all industry sectors (the survey generally covers premises in three or four industrial sectors each year) and sample sizes associated with individual sectors are small.

### **Notes for: Other sources of data provide a fuller picture of crime**

1. The survey of children aged 10 to 15 years only covers personal level crime (so excludes household level crime) and, as with the main survey, does not include sexual offences.
2. 77% of violent crimes experienced in the latest survey year resulted in minor or no injury.
3. It is not possible to look at longer trends in ASB including British Transport Police, as data are only available from the year ending March 2013.
4. Non-notifiable offences are offences dealt with exclusively by magistrates' courts or by the police issuing of a Penalty Notice for Disorder or a Fixed Penalty Notice. Along with non-notifiable offences dealt with by the police (such as speeding), these include many offences that may be dealt with by other agencies – for example, prosecutions by TV Licensing, or the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for vehicle registration offences.
5. A pilot scheme was implemented from November 2014 in Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire police forces to reduce the types of out-of-court disposals available for adult offenders, including limiting their use of Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND). In the pilot areas, the only out-of-court disposals available are community resolutions and conditional cautions. Since the pilot ended in November 2015, these three forces have continued with their limited use of out-of-court disposals and some other forces have also adopted similar policies. This is likely to have been a factor in the declining number of PNDs issued.
6. Although the recent extension to cover fraud against adults resident in households includes incidents where the victim has been fully (or partially) reimbursed by their financial provider.
7. This is a premises-based survey; respondents were asked if the business at their current premises had experienced any of a range of crime types in the 12 months prior to interview.
8. Data from the 2017 CVS are the latest data available.

## 13 . New and upcoming changes to this bulletin

[Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update](#) provides an overview of our plans to improve the design, coverage and presentation of crime statistics in England and Wales over the next few years. In addition, this section provides details of a number of specific changes, including changes to the categorisation of police recorded crime and changes to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

### Improving the treatment of high-frequency repeat victimisation on the Crime Survey

In cases where high levels of repeat victimisation have been recorded on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) the survey has always only included the first five incidents of a series within published estimates. In 2015, following criticism of this methodology we commissioned an independent review of the methods for addressing high-frequency repeat victimisation; launched a public consultation, and; published our findings. As a result of this work it was decided that we would drop the current cap of five and move to the 98th percentile as the agreed cut-off point for repeat victimisation.

Since the majority of crime types will have been affected to some extent, and the total volume of crime as measured by the CSEW will change, we will be carrying out a series of user engagement activities prior to this change in methodology. If you are interested in attending one of these events or would like to be kept informed, please contact Crime statistics inbox at [CrimeStatistics@ons.gov.uk](mailto:CrimeStatistics@ons.gov.uk). More information on this change can be found in [Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update](#).

## Delay to publication of tables to implement new methodology

We are currently revising the entire Crime Survey history in the light of this improved methodology for high-frequency repeat victimisation. Revised estimates going as far back as 1981 are now nearly complete. It is expected that the next quarterly release in October 2018 (or possibly the subsequent release in January 2019) will be the first release of data based on these revised estimates.

However, this also means that the current bulletin will not include the full complement of tables that are usually published alongside our year ending March bulletin in July. Specifically, there are several tables in the [Annual Trend and Demographic](#) collection and the [Additional tables on Fraud and Cybercrime](#) that cannot be updated until we have implemented the new changes. Publication of these tables for the year ending March 2018 is planned for October 2018.

More information on this change can be found in [Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update](#).

## National Statistics status of fraud and computer misuse

Estimates of fraud and computer misuse were previously classed as Experimental Statistics. Following assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation in March 2018, [they have now been classified as National Statistics](#).

## Changes to the categorisation of police recorded crime

New subcategories of “violence against the person” were first introduced in the quarterly bulletin [Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2017](#).

“Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving” has been created to include the following:

- causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving (4.4)
- causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs (4.6)
- causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving (4.8)
- causing death by driving: unlicensed or disqualified or uninsured drivers (4.9)

These offences were previously included within the subcategory of violence with injury.

“Stalking and harassment” has been created to include:

- harassment (8L and 8M)
- stalking (8Q)
- malicious communications (8R), which came into effect from April 2017

Stalking and harassment offences were previously included within the subcategory of violence without injury. For malicious communications, only data for the period April 2017 to March 2018 are presented in this bulletin as there was no central collection of these data in the preceding nine months.

Additionally, since January 2018, the [appendix tables](#) accompanying this release provide a more detailed breakdown of homicide offences than has previously been provided. Separate figures are given for each of the constituent categories of homicide: murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide.

Figures given in this breakdown of police recorded homicide will differ from those sourced from the Home Office Homicide Index<sup>1</sup> because of an important distinction between the two data sources. Police recorded crime data on homicide (as presented in this release) represent the recording decision of the police based on the available information at the time the offence comes to their attention.

In contrast, Homicide Index data take account of the charging decision and court outcome in cases that have gone to trial. It is common for offences initially recorded as murder by the police to be charged or convicted as manslaughter at court. As a result, manslaughter consistently makes up a notably higher proportion of offences in the Homicide Index compared with police recorded crime.

## Crime Severity Score

[Experimental Statistics](#) on a newly developed [Crime Severity Score](#) (CSS) have been released alongside this bulletin. The CSS has been developed as an additional measure to supplement existing Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics on crime. This new measure weights different types of crime according to severity, with more serious crimes carrying a higher weight to better reflect the level of harm to society and demand on the police caused by crime.

[Initial research outputs](#) based upon the CSS were published in November 2016, along with a request for feedback from users. We now issue an updated CSS dataset alongside each quarterly crime statistics bulletin.

## Changes to the Crime Survey for England and Wales

From April 2018, a number of changes have been made to the CSEW following a review of the best approach for mitigating public sector financial constraints on the future level of funding for the survey. These follow on from initial proposals published in a [consultation response paper](#) in October 2017. Small reductions have been made in the survey's sample size and target response rate and a series of questions related to the criminal justice system have been removed from the questionnaire.

## Downloading bulletin tables

Bulletin tables that were previously accessible in a separate set of data tables alongside the bulletin will no longer be published. All tables can be downloaded from within this bulletin. Additionally, tables on further data sources including non-notifiable offences, anti-social behaviour and the Commercial Victimization Survey that were previously published as "former bulletin tables" are now published as [other related data tables](#).

## CSEW module on plastic card fraud

Separate questions limited to fraud on plastic cards (bank and credit cards) have been included in a supplementary module of the CSEW since 2005. These questions continued to be included in the survey while the new questions on fraud and computer misuse were bedded in, but were removed from the questionnaire in October 2017 when the new questions were expanded to the full survey sample. All future estimates relating to bank and credit card fraud will be calculated using data from the new questions. For more information see the [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics](#) article.

## Feedback

We've made a number of changes to this bulletin to improve the clarity of the main messages. We welcome feedback on this new format quarterly bulletin at [crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk](mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk).

### Notes for: New and upcoming changes to this bulletin

1. These figures are published annually by ONS and were last released in [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#).

## 14 . Quality and methodology

The Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases are produced in partnership with the Home Office who collate and quality assure the police recorded crime data presented in the bulletins. Home Office colleagues also quality assure the overall content of the bulletin.

[National Statistics](#) are produced to high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

The [UK Statistics Authority](#) has designated this statistical bulletin as a National Statistics output, in accordance with the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#) and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

However, statistics based on police recorded crime data have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Statistics and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. The [full assessment report](#) can be found on the UK Statistics Authority website.

A new data quality framework has been compiled to help inform users about the quality of crime statistics for different types of crime and which source is thought to provide the most reliable measure. This can be found in Chapter 5 of the [User Guide](#).

Table 7 summarises the strengths and weaknesses of the two main sources of data used in this bulletin.

**Table 7: Strengths and limitations of the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime**

<b>Crime Survey for England and Wales</b>	<b>Police recorded crime</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Strengths</b>
Large nationally representative sample survey that provides a good measure of long-term crime trends for the offences and the population it covers (that is, those resident in households)	Has wider offence coverage and population coverage than the CSEW
Consistent methodology over time	Good measure of offences that are well-reported to and well-recorded by the police
Covers crimes not reported to the police and is not affected by changes in police recording practice; therefore, is a reliable measure of long-term trends	Primary source of local crime statistics and for lower-volume crimes (for example, homicide)
Coverage of survey extended in 2009 to include children aged 10 to 15 years resident in households	Provides whole counts (rather than estimates that are subject to sampling variation)
Independent collection of crime figures	Time lag between occurrence of crime and reporting results tends to be short, providing an indication of emerging trends
<b>Limitations</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
Survey is subject to error associated with sampling and respondents recalling past events	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)
Potential time lag between occurrence of crime and survey data collection means that the survey is not a good measure of emerging trends	Trends can be influenced by changes in recording practices or police activity as well as public reporting of crime
Excludes crimes against businesses and those not resident in households (for example, residents of institutions and visitors)	Not possible to make long-term comparisons due to fundamental changes in recording practice introduced in 1998 and the year ending March 2003 <sup>2</sup>
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)	There are concerns about the quality of recording – crimes may not be recorded consistently across police forces and so the true level of recorded crime may be understated
Previously excluded fraud and cybercrime <sup>1</sup>	

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. From 1 October 2015, the offence coverage of the CSEW was extended to include fraud experienced by the adult population. Estimates from these new questions were published for the first time in the "Crime in England and Wales, year ending March 2016" release.

2. Section 3.3 of the User Guide has more information

The [Crime in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information](#) report contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data
- uses and users of the data
- quality characteristics of the data
- methods used to produce the data

Unless stated otherwise, all changes in Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates described in the main text are statistically significant at the 5% level. Since the CSEW estimates are based on a sample survey, it is good practice to publish confidence intervals alongside them; these provide a measure of the reliability of the estimates and can be found in the [User Guide tables](#)<sup>1</sup>. Further information on statistical significance can be found in Chapter 8 of the [User Guide](#).

More information regarding the coverage, coherence and accuracy of the CSEW and police recorded crime can be found in the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#), the [Crime in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information report](#) and (for CSEW only) the [CSEW technical report](#).

### **Notes for: Quality and methodology**

1. These tables are usually published alongside our year ending March bulletin in July. However, publication of the tables for the year ending March 2018 has been pushed back to October 2018 while we implement a change to our method for handling repeat victimisation. More information on this change can be found in [Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update](#).