

Statistical bulletin

Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2019

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

Contact:
Meghan Elkin
crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk
+44 (0)20 7592 8695

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1 . Main points

Overall levels of crime showed falls in recent decades, but levels have remained broadly stable in recent years. While in the last year there has been no change in overall levels of crime, this hides variation seen in individual crime types. The latest figures show a mixed picture, with continued rises in some types of theft and fraud and falls in computer misuse. Consistent with the rising trend over recent years, there were increases in some of the less frequently occurring but higher-harm types of violence, including offences involving knives and sharp instruments.

Headline figures

Over recent quarters, estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) have indicated rises in theft. While the latest estimate showed no significant change in the last year, theft showed a 13% increase compared with the year ending March 2017. Despite this increase, estimates of theft remain much lower than 20 years ago.

Police recorded crime figures give a reliable indication of trends in some types of offence involving theft that are thought to be well-reported and accurately recorded by the police. In the latest year these data show:

- a 2% increase in vehicle offences, which includes an 8% increase in the subcategory of “theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle”
- an 11% increase in robbery
- a 3% decrease in burglaries, following rises seen in the previous two years

The CSEW shows that the level of lower-harm violent offences (for example, violence without injury and assault with minor injury) did not change. However, police recorded crime gives more insight into the lower-volume but higher-harm violence that the survey either does not cover or does not capture well. These data show:

- a 4% decrease in the number of homicides¹ following a period of increases over the last four years
- an 8% increase in the number of police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments²
- a 3% increase in the number of police recorded offences involving firearms

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

The other changes seen in the main crime types measured by the CSEW were:

- a 17% increase in fraud offences
- a 21% decrease in computer misuse

Notes for: Main points

1. Includes the London and Manchester terrorist attacks.
2. This figure excludes Greater Manchester Police.

2 . Latest figures

A summary of the latest figures for a selection of crime types is given in Table 1, using the most appropriate data source for each. More detailed analysis by crime type is provided in Sections 6 to 11.

Police recorded crime can be affected by changes in recording practices, policing activity and willingness of victims to report. A rise or fall in recorded crime does not necessarily mean the actual level of crime in society has changed. For many types of offence these figures do not provide a reliable measure of trends in crime.

Table 1: What do the latest figures show?

Figures for year ending March 2019, compared with previous year

Things to note

Computer misuse	21% decrease (to 966,000 offences) in computer misuse offences estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).	The CSEW is the best source for measuring the volume of computer misuse offences as it captures offences that go unreported. However, as computer misuse is a recent addition to the CSEW and only limited time series data are available, caution must be taken in interpreting early trends.
Criminal damage and arson	No change in overall criminal damage and arson estimated by the CSEW (1,145,000 offences). 17% increase in criminal damage to a vehicle estimated by the CSEW (to 814,000 offences).	Police recorded crime shows a 7% decrease in criminal damage to a vehicle. However, this offence type is not well-reported to the police.
Domestic abuse	According to the CSEW, there was no change in the proportion of adult victims of domestic abuse in the year ending March 2019 (6.3%). 14% of all crimes recorded by the police were flagged as domestic abuse related.	Given the different factors affecting the reporting and recording of these offences, the police figures do not provide a reliable measure of current trends. The CSEW is the better source for domestic abuse victimisation.
Fraud	17% increase in fraud offences estimated by the CSEW (to 3,809,000 offences).	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, as fraud is a recent addition to the CSEW and only limited time series data are available, caution must be taken in interpreting early trends.
Homicide	4% decrease in police recorded homicide offences (from 728 to 701 offences).	Trends in homicide can be affected by events with multiple homicide victims, for example, the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester in 2017. Excluding these terrorist attacks, the number of homicides showed a small rise (from 693 to 701 offences).
Public order offences	16% increase in police recorded public order offences (to 447,896 offences).	A large part of this increase is likely to reflect improvements to recording practices. For example, incidents that may have previously been recorded as an anti-social behaviour incident may now be recorded as a public order offence. It is also possible that genuine increases in public disorder may also have contributed to the rise.
Robbery	11% increase in police recorded robbery offences (to 85,736 offences).	This increase is likely to reflect some real change in these crimes. Recording improvements are likely to have contributed, but the impact is thought to be less pronounced than for some other crime types. The CSEW does not provide a robust measure of short-term trends in robbery as it is a relatively low-volume crime. The offence of robbery involves theft (or attempted theft) involving the use or threat of force. However, it forms a standalone category, separate from theft.
Sexual offences	According to the CSEW, there was no change in the proportion of adults who experienced sexual assaults in the year ending March 2019 (2.9%). Over the longer-term, there was a rise in sexual assault estimated by the survey over the past five years, with the latest estimate returning to levels similar to those around a decade ago.	Given the different factors affecting the reporting and recording of these offences, the police figures do not provide a reliable measure of current trends. The CSEW is the better source of victimisation data on sexual offences.

Theft offences	<p>No change in overall theft offences estimated by the CSEW (3,750,000 offences) in the latest year, but a 13% rise compared with two years ago.</p> <p>2% increase in vehicle offences recorded by the police (to 468,315 offences). This increase is driven mainly by “theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle”, which showed an 8% increase.</p> <p>3% decrease in burglary offences recorded by the police (to 422,870 offences).</p>	<p>The CSEW provides the better indication of overall trends in theft offences. It better captures more minor thefts, such as from outside a dwelling, which are less likely to be reported to the police.</p> <p>However, police recorded crime data can help identify short-term changes in individual offences. Vehicle offences and burglary offences are thought to be generally well-reported by victims and well-recorded by the police.</p>
Violence and weapons offences	<p>No change in overall violent offences estimated by the CSEW (1,344,000 offences). However, rises seen in more harmful but less common violent offences.</p> <p>8% increase in police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (to 43,516 offences). This figure excludes Greater Manchester Police (GMP).</p> <p>3% increase in police recorded offences involving firearms (to 6,684 offences), driven by rises in offences involving weapons such as stun guns, CS gas and pepper spray, partly reflecting improvements in identifying these cases.</p>	<p>The CSEW provides the better indication of overall trends in violent crime, giving a good measure of the more common but less harmful offences.</p> <p>Police recorded crime provides a better measure of the more harmful but less common offences. Such offences are not well-measured by the survey because of their relatively low volume.</p> <p>GMP have changed their methodology after identifying an undercount of crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument. Data for GMP are not comparable over this time period. Including GMP, there were 47,136 knife or sharp instrument offences.</p> <p>It is possible that recording improvements in other forces have also contributed to the increase.</p>

Source: Office for National Statistics

3 . Statistician's comment

Commenting on today’s figures, Mark Bangs from the Office for National Statistics Centre for Crime and Justice said:

“The picture of crime is a complex one. Overall levels of crime have remained steady, but this is not the case for all types of crime. For example, overall levels of violence have remained steady but we have seen increases in violent crimes involving knives and sharp instruments. We have seen increases in fraud and overall theft, but decreases in burglary following recent rises.”

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 in total crime are often mainly 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.

Data sources included

This bulletin reports on two main sources of crime data: the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime. Where possible, we refer to other sources of data to support our findings.

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.

Police recorded crime is the number of notifiable¹ crimes reported to and recorded by the 44 police forces in England and Wales. For some types of crime, due to ongoing changes in police recording practices, an increase in the number of offences recorded by the police is unlikely to indicate a real rise in these types of crime.

For an overview of general data quality and specific quality issues to be aware of for this release, see the [Quality and methodology section](#).

Detailed information on the CSEW can be found in Section 2 of the [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#). Detailed information on police recorded crime can be found in Section 3.

Time periods covered

The latest CSEW figures presented in this release are based on interviews conducted between April 2018 and March 2019, 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 2019 (April 2018 to March 2019). A "snapshot" of police recorded crime data for the year ending March 2019 was taken on 7 June 2019 to ensure the data do not change during the analysis period².

Other crime statistics and the wider criminal justice system

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 findings need a fuller explanation. If you are looking for a more in-depth analysis of 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](#).

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.

Statistics in this bulletin are used to help monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Explore the UK data on our [SDGs reporting platform](#).

Notes for: Things you need to know about this release

1. The coverage of police recorded crime figures is defined by the [Notifiable Offence List](#).
2. See Section 3.6 of the [User guide](#) for more information.

5 . Overview of crime

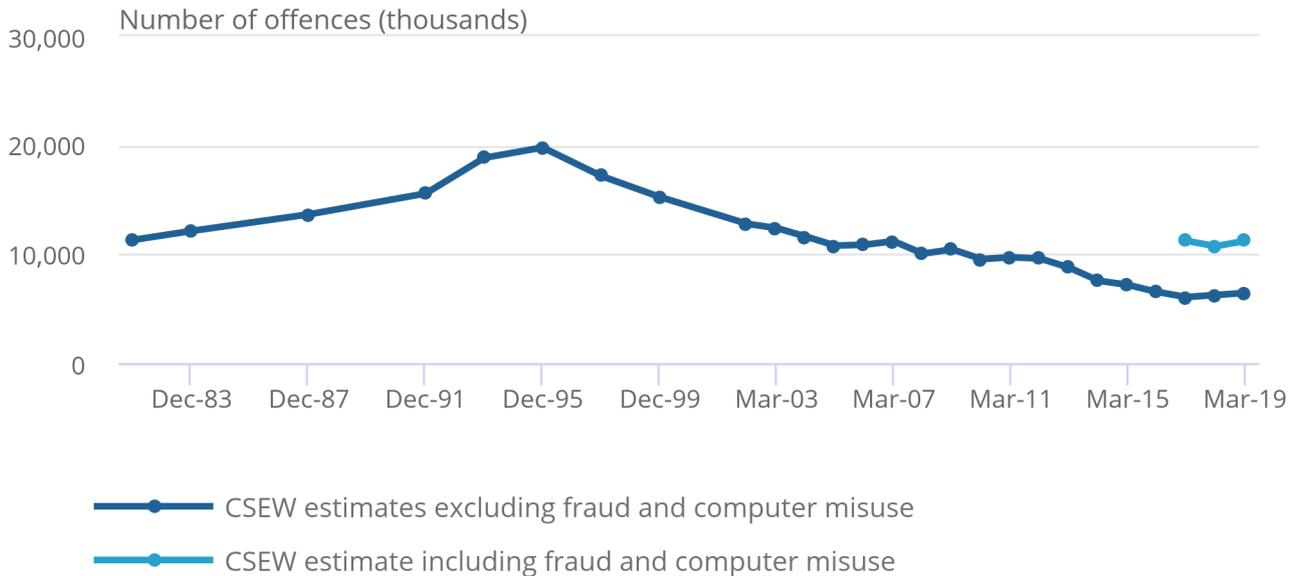
This section provides an overview of findings across our two main data sources. Some of these findings are discussed in more detail in later sections.

The latest estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending March 2019 show that there was no change in all CSEW crime (including fraud and computer misuse) compared with the previous year (11.2 million offences, Figure 1). Despite some apparent fluctuation over the last two years, there have been no statistically significant changes in all CSEW crime during this period. The trend has therefore been flat. It is important to look at individual crime types as the relatively stable overall picture hides variation both within and across crime types.

Figure 1: Following long-term declines crime estimated by the survey has not changed significantly over the last year

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

Figure 1: Following long-term declines crime estimated by the survey has not changed significantly over the last year. Rises in crime levels during the 1990s were mainly due to increases in violence, vehicle crime and burglary. We've seen continued falls in overall levels of crime since the mid-1990s. Estimates both including and excluding fraud and computer misuse showed no significant change from the last year.



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. 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).
3. Data relate to adults aged 16 years and over or to households.
4. 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 initially, and have been asked of the full sample since October 2017. These offences need to be excluded when looking at changes over the long-term to make figures comparable.

The CSEW shows changes in theft, computer misuse, fraud and criminal damage to a vehicle

When looking at the main types of crime, the CSEW shows:

- while the latest estimate of 3,750,000 theft offences showed no significant change in the last year, there was a 13% increase compared with the year ending March 2017
- computer misuse offences decreased by 261,000 offences (21%, to 966,000 offences), due largely to a 38% decrease in computer viruses
- fraud offences increased by 554,000 offences (17%, to 3.8 million offences); this was driven mainly by an increase in the “bank and credit account fraud” offence category, which saw a volume increase of 338,000 offences (15%, to 2.6 million offences)
- the overall volume of criminal damage has not changed (1.1 million offences), however, criminal damage to a vehicle increased by 121,000 offences (17% to 814,000 offences)
- all other main types of crime measured by the survey showed no statistically significant change in the number of offences (see [Appendix Table A1](#) for details)

Most people are not victims of crime

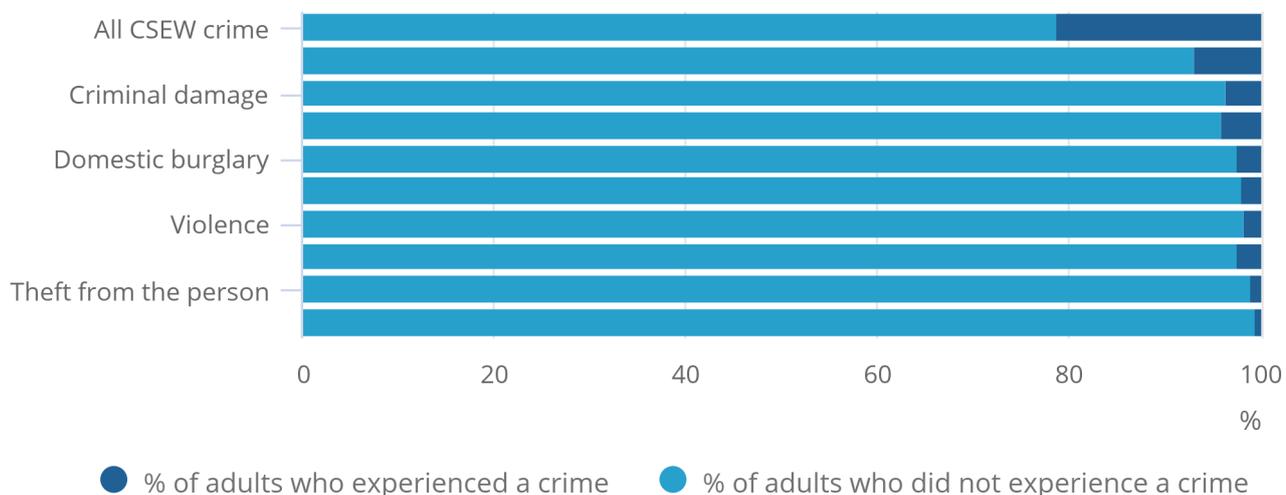
The latest survey estimates show that 8 in 10 adults did not experience any of the crimes asked about in the survey in the previous 12 months¹. This figure has remained stable since the introduction of fraud and computer misuse offences into the CSEW. It is much more likely for an adult in England and Wales to experience fraud, than a violent offence (Figure 2). However, likelihood of victimisation varies by personal and household characteristics (for more information, see the [Property crime tables](#) and [Nature of violent crime: appendix tables](#))

Figure 2: The likelihood of being a victim of crime varies by crime type

England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 2: The likelihood of being a victim of crime varies by crime type

England and Wales, year ending March 2019



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#)
2. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person, fraud and computer misuse are quoted for adults. Percentages for domestic burglary and criminal damage are quoted for households. Percentage for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted for vehicle or bicycle owning households.
3. For all CSEW crime including fraud and computer misuse this is the estimated 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.

Police recorded crime data show a continued, but smaller, rise in offences involving knives or sharp instruments

Figures for offences involving knives or sharp instruments (unless otherwise stated) exclude Greater Manchester Police (GMP) due to their previous undercounting of these offences. Improvements to address this problem led to a sharp increase in these offences identified by GMP and data from January 2018 onwards are not comparable with earlier figures.

Over the last year, police figures indicated rises in some higher-harm violent offences involving the use of weapons². Recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments increased by 8% to 43,516 offences³. This latest rise is smaller than that seen a year ago (up 19% in the year ending March 2018). However, the latest 8% rise is slightly higher than the 6% year-on-year rise reported last quarter.

As well as the increase in offences involving knives or sharp instruments, offences involving firearms recorded by the police rose by 3% (to 6,684 offences). These offences have seen rises over the last five years but the rate of increase was slower over the last two years (Figure 3).

Figures reported in the year ending December 2018 bulletin showed a small fall (2%) in the number of offences involving firearms but this has not continued in the latest data.

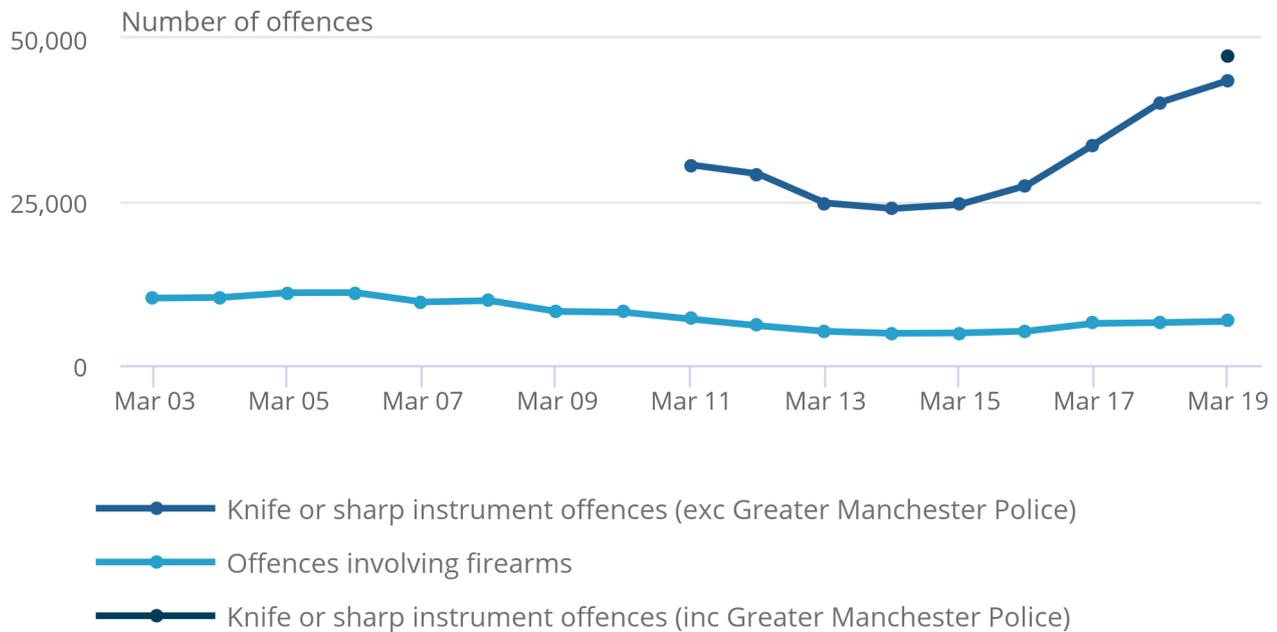
We are aware of improvements in recording practices by police to better identify the involvement of a firearm, which will have contributed to this latest rise. However, the scale of the effect is unclear. These improvements have impacted on offences identified as involving "other firearms", which include weapons such as stun guns, CS gas and pepper spray.

Figure 3: Continued rise in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument and an increase in offences involving firearms

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

Figure 3: Continued rise in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument and an increase in offences involving firearms

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



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via a special collection, which includes the offences: attempted murder; threats to kill; assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm; robbery; rape; and sexual assault.
3. Information on recording issues for individual police forces can be found in [Table P4](#) published alongside this bulletin.
4. 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.
5. Data on firearms offences are provisional and have not been reconciled with police forces.

Further discussion about offences involving knives or sharp instruments can be found in [Rises in offences involving knives or sharp instruments and firearms offences](#).

Decrease in the number of homicides following rises over recent years

The total number of homicides recorded by the police fell by 4% in the last year (from 728 to 701 offences)⁴. This fall comes after four consecutive annual increases in homicides since the year ending March 2014 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Homicides have decreased following increases over the last four years

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

Figure 4: Homicides have decreased following increases over the last four years

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



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

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 the Office for National Statistics, last released as part of [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#). 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.
3. Some forces have revised their data and police recorded crime totals may not agree with those previously published.
4. The dates shown for the London and Manchester terrorist attacks in 2005 and 2017 correspond to when the events occurred, rather than when the homicides were recorded by the police.

Rises in vehicle-related theft continue, but at a slowing rate

Police recorded crime figures showed a 2% increase in vehicle offences in the year ending March 2019 (to 468,315 offences). These offences have been increasing in each of the last four years but the latest annual increase is smaller than previously seen (the increase in the year ending March 2018 was 12%; Figure 5).

The increase in vehicle offences in the latest year is due largely to an 8% increase in the subcategory “theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle” (to 114,656 offences). However, this is the smallest increase seen in recent years and compares with a 20% rise in the year ending March 2017 and a 16% rise in the year ending March 2018. The subcategory “theft from a vehicle”, which accounts for more than half of vehicle offences, showed a 1% increase compared with the previous year, while “aggravated vehicle-taking” decreased by 6% following little change since the year ending March 2016 (see [Appendix Table A4](#)).

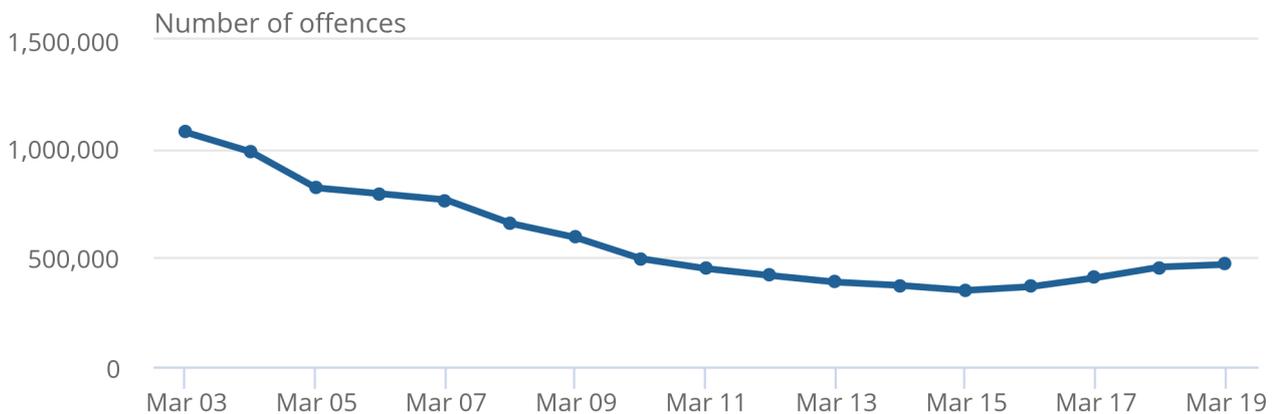
We believe the recent increases in police recorded vehicle offences reflect genuine rises as these offences are thought to be generally well-reported by victims and well-recorded by the police. This is supported by trend data from the CSEW. While the latest estimate from the crime survey showed no change in the last year, vehicle-related theft showed a 14% increase when compared with the year ending March 2017. This is similar to the increase of 15% in police recorded vehicle offences over the same two-year period.

Figure 5: Vehicle offences increasing at a smaller rate over the last year

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

Figure 5: Vehicle offences increasing at a smaller rate over the last year

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



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

Robbery showed an increase

The police recorded an 11% rise in robbery (to 85,736 offences; Figure 6). The number of recorded robberies is disproportionately high in London, accounting for 40% of all recorded robberies. In comparison, London accounts for 16% of all recorded crimes in England and Wales⁵.

The rise seen in robbery is likely to reflect a real increase in these crimes. While it is likely robbery is impacted by some recording effects, this is thought to be less pronounced than for other crime types (see [What's happened to the volume of crime recorded by the police?](#)).

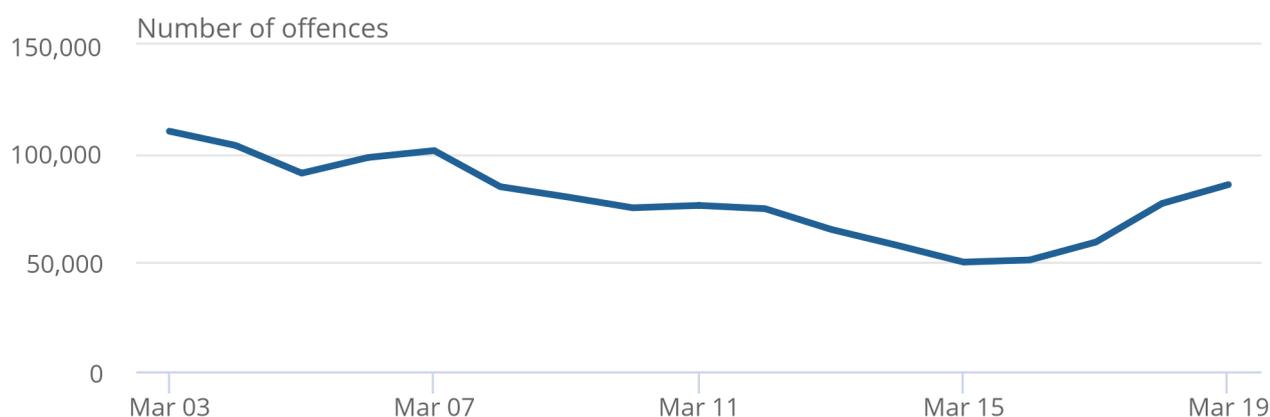
While the CSEW does show indications of a rise in robbery over the last two years, there was no change in the latest year. However, the CSEW does not provide a robust measure of short-term trends in robbery due to it being a relatively low-volume crime.

Figure 6: Rises in robbery recorded by the police reflect genuine increases

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

Figure 6: Rises in robbery recorded by the police reflect genuine increases

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



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

More detailed analysis by crime type is provided in Sections 6 to 11 of this bulletin and further breakdowns are provided in the [Appendix tables](#) published alongside this bulletin.

CSEW and police recorded crime figures for main crime types

Table 2a: Crime Survey for England and Wales incidence rates and numbers of incidents for year ending March 2019 and percentage change^{1,2}

England and Wales		Adults aged 16 and over or households			
Offence group ³	Apr '18 to Mar '19		April 2018 to March 2019 compared with:		
	Rate per 1,000 population	Number of incidents (thousands)	Jan '95 to Dec '95	Apr '17 to Mar '18	
			Number of incidents - percentage change and significance		
Violence	29	1,344	-70	*	-6
Robbery	4	192	-40	*	20
Theft offences	:	3,750	-68	*	5
Theft from the person	10	447	-34	*	5
Other theft of personal property	16	739	-64	*	13
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,163	34,163			
Domestic burglary	28	699	-70	*	1
Other household theft	27	651	-58	*	10
Unweighted base - number of households	34,103	34,103			
Vehicle-related theft	46	900	-79	*	-2
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	27,455	27,455			
Bicycle theft	26	315	-52	*	7
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	15,821	15,821			
Criminal damage	47	1,145	-66	*	6
Unweighted base - number of households	34,103	34,103			
All CSEW Crime excluding fraud and computer misuse	:	6,431	-67	*	3
Fraud and computer misuse ¹¹	102	4,775		..	7
Fraud ¹¹	81	3,809		..	17
Computer misuse ¹¹	21	966		..	-21
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,163	34,163			
All CSEW Crime including fraud and computer misuse ^{1,11}	:	11,207		..	4

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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix tables A1 and A2.
3. Section 5 of the [User guide](#) provides more information about the crime types included in this table.
4. 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.
5. Data may not sum to totals shown due to rounding.
6. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.
7. : 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.
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.
11. .. 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 2019 and percentage change^{1,2}

England and Wales	Adults aged 16 years and over or households				
	April 2018 to March 2019 compared with:				
	Offence group ³	Apr '18 to Mar '19	Jan '95 to Dec '95	Apr '17 to Mar '18	
	Percentage, victims once or more	Number of victims (thousands)	Numbers of victims - percentage change and significance		
Violence	1.7	811	-58	*	0
Robbery	0.4	168	-37	*	26
Theft offences	10.6	4,946	-61	*	4
Theft from the person	0.9	406	-38	*	3
Other theft of personal property	1.4	672	-60	*	16
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,163	34,163			
Domestic burglary	2.4	578	-67	*	1
Other household theft	2.2	530	-50	*	14
Unweighted base - number of households	34,103	34,103			
Vehicle-related theft	4.0	775	-75	*	0
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	27,455	27,455			
Bicycle theft	2.3	285	-49	*	3
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	15,821	15,821			
Criminal damage	3.5	850	-60	*	7
Unweighted base - number of households	34,103	34,103			
All CSEW Crime excluding fraud and computer misuse	14.9	6,964	-57	*	4
Fraud and computer misuse ^{1,11}	8.3	3,907	..		5
Fraud ¹¹	6.8	3,176	..		13
Computer misuse ¹¹	1.8	847	..		-19
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,163	34,163			
All CSEW Crime including fraud and computer misuse ^{1,11,12}	21.1	9,874	..		5

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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix Tables A3 and A8.
3. Section 5 of the [User guide](#) provides more information about the crime types included in this table.
4. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person, other theft of personal property, fraud and computer misuse 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.
5. Where applicable, numbers in subcategories will not sum to totals, because adults or households may have been a victim of more than one crime.
6. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.
7. This is the estimated percentage or 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.
8. This is the estimated percentage or 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. .. Denotes not available.
12. 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.

Rises in some offence types for police recorded crime need to be interpreted with caution

Police recorded crime can be affected by changes in policing activity, recording practices and by willingness of victims to report. A rise or fall in recorded crime does not necessarily mean the actual level of crime in society has changed. They do, however, provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police.

Over recent years, most crime types have been affected by improved police recording and changes in police priorities. This effect is particularly pronounced for:

- violent crime, particularly violence without injury offences
- 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 in more detail in [What's happened to the volume of crime recorded by the police?](#). Links to further information on the quality of police recorded crime can be found in [Quality and methodology](#).

Table 3: Police recorded crimes – rate, number and percentage change for year ending March 2019^{1,2,3}**England and Wales**

Offence group	Apr '18 to Mar '19		April 2018 to March 2019 compared with:	
	Rate per 1,000 population	Number of recorded offences	Apr '08 to Mar '09	Apr '17 to Mar '18
			Number of recorded offences - percentage change	
Victim-based crime	77	4,508,380	10	7
Violence against the person offences	28	1,671,039	136	20
Homicide	0	701	6	-4
Death or serious injury - unlawful driving	0	743	62	0
Violence with injury	9	547,060	30	7
Violence without injury	12	678,481	186	16
Stalking and harassment	8	444,054	775	50
Sexual offences	3	162,030	223	7
Rape	1	58,657	348	9
Other sexual offences	2	103,373	179	6
Robbery offences	1	85,736	7	11
Theft offences	34	2,015,998	-13	0
Burglary	7	422,870	-27	-3
Vehicle offences	8	468,315	-21	2
Theft from the person	2	104,101	16	5
Bicycle theft	2	98,283	-6	-2
Shoplifting	6	374,395	17	-2
All other theft offences	9	548,034	-14	3
Criminal damage and arson	10	573,577	-38	-3
Other crimes against society	13	748,701	39	14
Drug offences	3	151,471	-38	11
Possession of weapons offences	1	46,196	30	19
Public order offences	8	447,896	119	16
Miscellaneous crimes against society	2	103,138	85	11
Total recorded crime - all offences excluding fraud and computer misuse	89	5,257,081	14	8
Total fraud and computer misuse offences,, ^{1,11}	12	693,418	..	9
Total recorded crime - all offences including fraud and computer misuse, ¹	101	5,950,499	..	8

Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

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 and 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 and malicious communications.
8. 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 the year ending March 2009 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.
9. In October 2018, Action Fraud launched a new fraud and cybercrime reporting service. The transition to the new system is not yet complete and there has been a pause in the data feed from Cifas to the NFIB. Although fraud continues to be recorded by Cifas, cases from December 2018 have not yet been "referred" to the NFIB, therefore the Cifas figures and any NFIB totals presented in this bulletin and accompanying data tables are based on provisional data provided by Cifas. Once the issue has been resolved the NFIB will hold a full copy of the data, allowing Cifas figures to be treated as confirmed and recognised as "referred" to the NFIB.
10. .. denotes data not available
11. Following the introduction of Action Fraud's new fraud and cybercrime reporting service in October 2018, there was a technical issue whereby during the coding of postcode information the system was unable to allocate a force area to the fraud report. As a result some fraud and computer misuse offences with postcodes belonging to areas outside of England and Wales may have been included in the England and Wales figures in the year to December 2018 publication. This issue has now been resolved and the figures have been revised for the year to March 2019 publication.

Notes for: Overview of crime

1. This figure excludes domestic abuse and sexual assault measured by the self-completion module of the survey. Any domestic violence reported in the face-to-face interview is included.
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. Excludes Greater Manchester Police (GMP); there was a total of 47,136 offences including GMP.
4. Excluding the London and Manchester terrorist attacks, the number of homicides has increased by 1% (a volume rise of 8 homicides).
5. Excluding fraud offences.

6 . No change in the most common types of violent crime, but a fall in homicides

This section examines the most recent findings on 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
- some of the relatively low-volume types of violent crime recorded by the police, such as homicide, and death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving

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 murder.

The CSEW data include incidents of physical violence with and without injury. Violent offences in police recorded data are referred to as “violence against the person”¹ and include:

- homicide
- death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving
- violence with injury
- violence without injury
- stalking and harassment

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.

The latest trends in violent crime varied across different types of violence. The CSEW showed no change in the overall level of violence in recent years. However, there were rises seen in the higher-harm but less common types of violence recorded by the police, including offences involving knives or sharp instruments. These rises are consistent with trends seen over recent years. However, rises in homicide seen over the same period have not continued in the latest data. Crimes involving weapons are discussed in [Rises in offences involving knives or sharp instruments and firearms offences](#).

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

For the offences and population that it covers, the CSEW provides the best measure of trends for overall violent crime. It has used a consistent methodology across the time series back to 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 recorded by the police?](#)

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 2019. This figure has not changed significantly compared with last year. This continues the relatively stable trend seen over the last five years, following long-term decreases since the peak in 1995 (Figure 7).

Figure 7: 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 2019

Figure 7: 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 2019

After a long-term downward trend with last year, there has been a slight increase in violent crime in recent years. This is due to a change in the number of incidents of violent crime.



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. 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 onwards identify the CSEW year of interview.
3. Data relate to adults aged 16 years and over.

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 research conducted by the [Violence Research Group at Cardiff University \(PDF, 653KB\)](#)². Their annual survey covers a sample of hospital emergency departments, minor injury units and walk-in centres in England and Wales. Results showed that the number of violence-related attendances in 2018 was 41% lower than in 2010.

In addition, findings from the most recent [admissions data for NHS hospitals](#) in England showed that assault admissions for the year ending March 2018 were 33% lower than the year ending March 2008 (42,181 admissions). This is despite a recent increase of 7% in assault admissions for the year ending March 2018³ compared with the year ending March 2017 (a volume increase of 1,729 to 28,179 admissions). This increase was driven largely by admissions for assault by a sharp object and assault by bodily force.

Homicides have decreased, following four consecutive years of increases

The police recorded 701 homicides⁴ in the year ending March 2019, a 4% fall (from 728) compared with the previous year⁵ ([Table A4](#)). In part, this fall results from terrorist incidents having occurred in the previous year. It also reflects a decrease recorded by the Metropolitan Police in the latest year following a notably high number recorded in the previous year. The picture across other police forces was mixed.

This is the first fall in the number of homicides since the year ending March 2014, following four consecutive year-on-year increases. The rate of homicide in the population remains very low, at 12 homicides per 1 million people.

The number of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument was involved decreased by 9% in the last year (to 260 offences⁶). Of all recorded homicides in the latest data, 39% involved a knife or sharp instrument⁷ ([Table P4](#)), the same proportion as the previous year. The recent reduction in such offences was driven by falls seen in London. The Metropolitan Police recorded a 39% reduction to 67 homicides involving a knife or sharp instrument in the year ending March 2019. This latest figure was down from 110 recorded in the previous year but remains higher than 56 recorded in the year ending March 2017.

For more information on selected violent and sexual crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument, see Table 4 in [Rises in offences involving knives or sharp instruments and firearms](#).

There was also a 23% decrease in attempted murder offences in the latest year (to 1,033 offences). Much of this fall is because of the large number of attempted murder offences recorded in the previous year from the Manchester (235 offences) and London terrorist attacks (59 offences).

Little change in death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving in the latest year

Offences recorded by the police related to death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving have showed little change in the year ending March 2019 (743 offences, compared with 740 in the previous year). There has been some fluctuation over the last few years, but the number of offences recorded in the latest year increased by 62% compared with the year ending March 2014.

Estimates of violence against children aged 10 to 15 years, 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.

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 2018](#) and [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#). Other publications that discuss violent crime can be found via our [main crime and justice page](#).

Notes for: No change in the most common types of violent crime, but a fall in homicides

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. Violence in England and Wales in 2018: An Accident and Emergency Perspective was published by Vaseekaran Sivarajasingam, Nicholas Page, Giles Green, Simon Moore and Jonathan Shepherd in April 2019.
3. The “External Causes” datasets within [Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2017-18](#), [Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2016-17](#) and [Hospital Episode Statistics, Admitted Patient Care - England, 2007-08](#) 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. The latest data were published on 20 September 2018.
4. Homicide includes the offences of murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide.
5. Excluding the London and Manchester terrorist attacks, the number of homicides rose by 1% (a volume rise of 8 homicides).
6. Includes Greater Manchester Police. The recording of homicides involving a knife or sharp instrument was unaffected by their recording review in December 2017.
7. Percentage calculated based on homicides recorded in the Homicide Index; data from this source will often differ from the main police recorded crime collection.

7 . Rise in offences involving knives or sharp instruments and firearms offences

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

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, although not all offences will come to the attention of the police.

An offence is recorded as involving a knife or sharp instrument¹ when the weapon is present during the offence or the threat is believed to be real. The weapon does not necessarily have to be used. Offences of “possession of an article with a blade or point” are covered separately by a specific recorded crime category.

Some police forces have encountered issues in identifying all recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments. While this has not had a substantial impact on the national trend, improvements to flagging of these offences have led to rises in some areas. In particular, we are aware of recent improvements in Greater Manchester Police (GMP).

Highest number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments² since recording began

The police recorded a total of 47,136 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the year ending March 2019³. However, recent trends in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument have been affected by the previous undercounting in Greater Manchester Police (GMP)⁴ data. Figures including and excluding GMP can be found in [Table F3](#).

In the remainder of this section, unless otherwise stated, offences involving knives or sharp instruments data exclude GMP to allow comparisons over time.

There was a volume rise of 3,301 offences (an 8% rise) to 43,516 offences (Table 4). This is the highest number since the year ending March 2011, the earliest point for which comparable data are available⁵. The past five years have seen a rise in the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, following an initial downward trend (Figure 3). The volume of knife and sharp instrument offences has increased by 42% since the year ending March 2011.

Table 4: Selected violent and sexual offences involving a knife or sharp instrument recorded by the police in England and Wales^{1,2,3},
Year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2019 with percentage change

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police)³

Selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument	April 2018 to March 2019 compared with:				
	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Apr '17 to Mar '18	Apr '18 to Mar '19	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Apr '17 to Mar '18
	Number of offences			Percentage change	
Attempted murder	217	366	405	87	11
Threats to kill	1,352	3,001	3,541	162	18
Assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm	13,129	19,253	20,182	54	5
Robbery	15,377	16,732	18,462	20	10
Rape	240	437	517	115	18
Sexual assault	85	159	159	87	0
Total selected offences	30,400	39,948	43,266	42	8
Homicide	220	267	250	14	-6
Total selected offences including homicide	30,620	40,215	43,516	42	8
Total selected offences inc Greater Manchester Police,	32,669	42,168	47,136
	Rate per million population - selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument				
Total selected offences including homicide	577	719	778		

Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. 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.
3. Police recorded crime statistics are based on data from 43 police forces in England and Wales. Data from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) are excluded. A review revealed that they were under-counting knife or sharp instrument offences. Following this review, there has been a sharp increase in the number of knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by GMP between April 2018 to March 2019 compared with previous years. Previous data have not been revised and the data are therefore not comparable.
4. Information for individual police forces can be found in Table P4 published alongside this bulletin.
5. Changes to offence codes in April 2012 mean the category of assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm is not directly comparable with previous years. Appendix table A4 contains more details.
6. Sexual assault includes indecent assault on a male and female and sexual assault on a male/female (all ages).
7. Homicide offences are those currently recorded by the police as at 27 February 2019 and are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available. 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.
8. Includes homicides.
9. . . Denotes not available.

In the latest year, the offence “assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm” accounted for almost half of all offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (46% or 20,182 out of 43,516 offences). Robberies accounted for a further 42% (18,462 out of 43,516 offences). Rape, attempted murder, sexual assault and homicide accounted for a very small proportion of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (3%, or 1,331 out of 43,516 recorded offences; Figure 8).

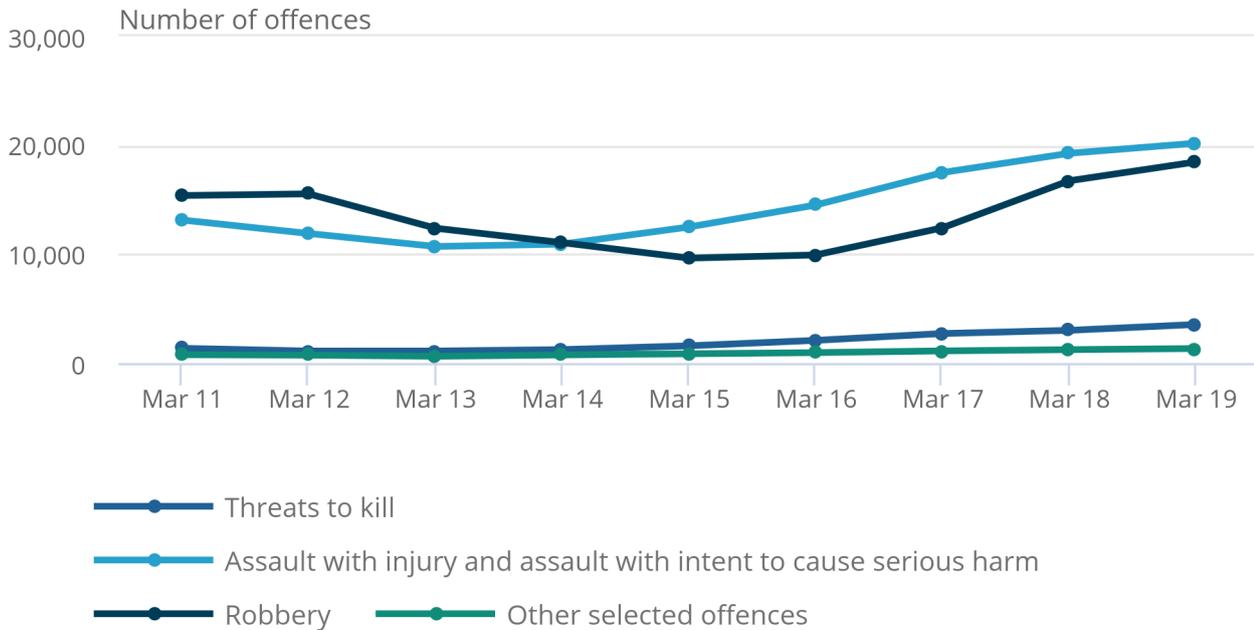
The volume of robberies involving a knife or sharp instrument has risen for the past four years, following a decreasing trend between 2011 and 2015. A 10% increase in the year ending March 2019 compared with the previous year is consistent with the overall increase in robbery during this period (11%). The number of incidents of “assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm” involving knives increased by 5% over the last year, following larger increases seen since 2015 (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Rising trend in crimes involving knives or sharp instruments driven by increases in assaults with injury or assaults with intent to cause serious harm and robberies

England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 8: Rising trend in crimes involving knives or sharp instruments driven by increases in assaults with injury or assaults with intent to cause serious harm and robberies

England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via a special collection. This figure is based on this special collection. Other offences that are not shown in this chart may include the use of a knife or sharp instrument.
3. Police recorded crime statistics are based on data from 43 police forces in England and Wales. Data from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) are excluded. A review revealed that they were under-counting knife or sharp instrument offences. Following this review, there has been a sharp increase in the number of knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by GMP between April 2018 to March 2019 compared with previous years. Previous data have not been revised and the data are therefore not comparable.
4. Information for individual police forces can be found in [Table P4](#) published alongside this bulletin.
5. Other selected offences include rape, attempted murder, homicide and sexual assault.

Higher rates of knife crime seen in urban areas

Knife or sharp instrument offences tend to be concentrated in metropolitan areas. In the year ending March 2019, 32% of all offences recorded by the police (including Greater Manchester) involving a knife or sharp instrument happened in London (169 offences per 100,000 population). The highest rates after London were seen in Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and West Yorkshire (129, 118 and 116 offences per 100,000 population respectively). These areas saw higher rates than the England and Wales average of 80 offences per 100,000 population (Figure 9).

The majority of police forces (36 of the 43)⁶ recorded a rise in offences involving knives or sharp instruments in the year ending March 2019. The Metropolitan Police recorded a 1% increase in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments. This is smaller than the increases seen previously (24% in the year ending March 2017 and 22% in the year ending March 2018). However, the rate of increase has not slowed down in all other metropolitan forces. For example, Merseyside recorded a 49% increase (to 1,404 offences) in the last year. This was the largest volume rise in knife or sharp instrument offences across all police forces over this period (Figure 9).

Although recent increases in recorded knife or sharp instrument offences reflect a real rise in the occurrence of these types of crime, improvements in recording practices to better identify the involvement of a knife or sharp instrument are also a factor. For example, Sussex Police have taken steps to improve their identification of these offences and have recently revised their data. It is possible that other police forces have made similar improvements.

Figure 9: Offence rates and changes in the volume of crimes involving knives or sharp instruments vary by police force area

England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. One police force (Surrey) include unbroken bottle and glass offences in their returns, which are outside the scope of this special collection. As such, data for these forces are not directly comparable with data for other forces.
3. Excludes Greater Manchester Police as their data for the year ending March 2019 are not comparable with previous data.
4. The changes presented are the percentage changes in the volume of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument over the last year.

[Download the data](#)

A breakdown of offences for each police force area and the time series for these data are published in [Tables P4 and P5](#).

NHS data provide insight into offences involving knives or sharp instruments

Provisional [admissions data for NHS hospitals](#) in England reported 5,024 admissions for assault by a sharp object between April 2018 and March 2019⁷. This is an increase of 1% compared with the previous year.

The number of offences resulting in admission to hospital is substantially lower than the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument. This may be explained by differences in the collection of these data:

- the hospital admissions data do not include cases involving more minor injuries where the victim may have attended A&E for treatment but was not admitted to hospital, or homicides where the victim died without being admitted to hospital
- the weapon does not have to have been used in the offence for it to be included in the police recorded special collection, which includes cases where the weapon was simply present or the threat was believed to be real

Possession of an article with a blade or point also increased

Police recorded “possession of an article with a blade or point” offences rose by 21%, to 22,169 offences in the year ending March 2019. This rise is consistent with increases seen over the last six years and is the highest figure since the year ending March 2009, the earliest point for which these offences were separately identifiable⁸. 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.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) have published 2019 figures [on knife and offensive weapon sentencing for England and Wales](#). These figures cover cautions and convictions for possession of a knife or offensive weapon. This includes offences that involved threatening with one of these types of weapon. The MoJ figures show that the criminal justice system formally dealt with the highest number of knife and offensive weapon offences since 2010. While these figures are not directly comparable with those presented in this bulletin, they do reflect the increases seen in police figures.

Offences involving firearms showed a rise

Recorded offences involving firearms^{9,10} increased by 3% (to 6,684) in the year ending March 2019 compared with the previous year (6,492 offences). These offences have seen rises over the last five years but the rate of increase was slower over the last two years. Figures reported in the year ending December 2018 bulletin showed a small fall (2%) in the number of offences involving firearms but this has not continued in the latest data.

There were large increases in unidentified firearms¹¹ and other firearms¹² (31% and 40% respectively), which have driven the small increase in firearms offences. But, these were balanced by the large volume decreases seen in offences involving imitation firearms and handguns ([Table E2](#), Figure 10).

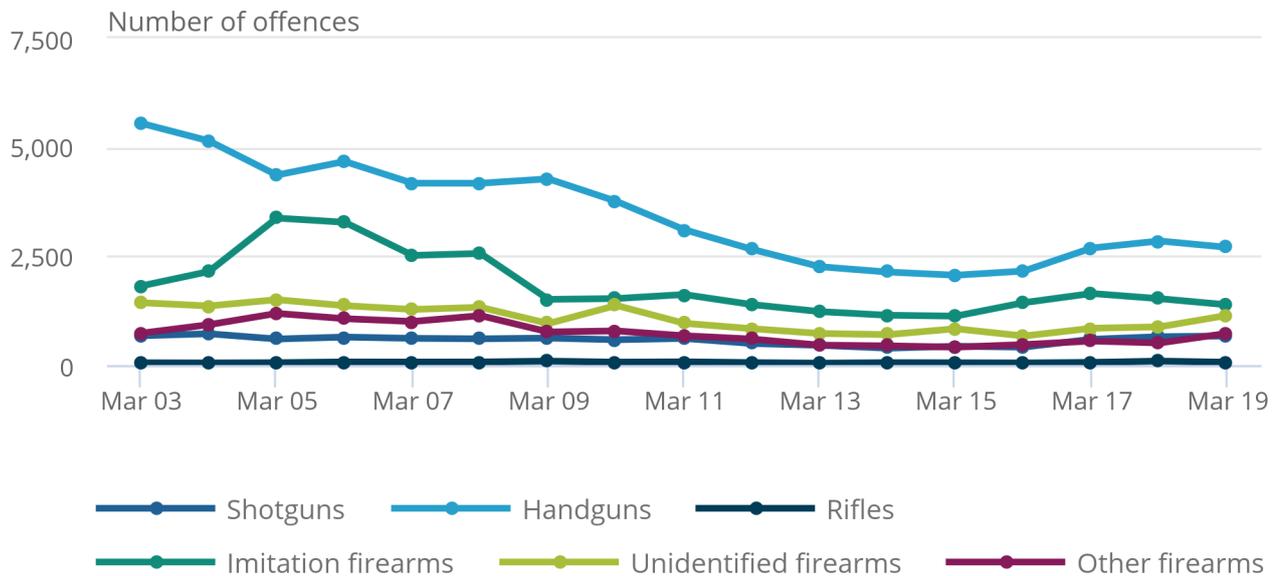
We are aware of improvements in recording practices by police to better identify the involvement of a firearm, which will have contributed to this latest rise. However, the scale of the effect is unclear. These improvements have impacted on offences identified as involving "other firearms", which include weapons such as stun guns, CS gas and pepper spray.

Figure 10: The recent rise in crimes involving firearms is driven by an increase in unidentified firearm and “other firearm” offences

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

Figure 10: The recent rise in crimes involving firearms is driven by a increase in unidentified firearm and “other firearm” offences

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



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. More explicit guidelines for the classification of weapons introduced on 1 April 2004 may have increased the recording of firearm offences, particularly those committed by imitation weapons.
3. Data are provisional and have not been reconciled with police forces.
4. Imitation firearms include replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons which fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons.
5. Other firearms include CS gas and pepper spray, stun guns and other weapons.
6. Figures exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.

Firearms offences are concentrated in urban areas, with London and the West Midlands each recording 24 offences per 100,000 population in the year ending March 2018 (latest data available). This compared with 11 offences per 100,000 population in England and Wales in the same period.

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 involved¹³, can be found in [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#). However, this refers to the year ending March 2018.

Notes for: Rise in offences involving knives or sharp instruments and firearms offences

1. These data are based on a special collection. This covers the offences: attempted murder; threats to kill; assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm; robbery; rape; and sexual assault. Homicide data are provided additionally from the Homicide Index. These selected offences are thought to cover most crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument.
2. 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.
3. Including Greater Manchester Police.
4. Greater Manchester Police (GMP): A review identified previous undercounting of crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument in GMP. This occurred because of a technical issue with the identification and extraction of all relevant records from their crime recording system. While offences were recorded, the involvement of a knife or sharp instrument was not identified. GMP have now changed their methodology and data from December 2017 onwards have been revised. Previous data have not been revised and are likely to exclude relevant crimes, so data including GMP are not comparable over time.
5. Data on offences involving a knife or sharp instrument began to be collected in April 2008; however, comparable data are only available from the year ending March 2011. The [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#) include data on offences involving a knife or sharp instrument going back to the year ending March 2009.
6. Excludes Greater Manchester Police (GMP) because of a technical issue that resulted in previous undercounting of crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument. GMP have now changed their methodology and data from December 2017 onwards have been revised. However, data for earlier periods have not been revised and are likely to exclude relevant crimes that were recorded in GMP. Because of these changes, data for GMP are not comparable over this time period.
7. Hospital admissions by sharp object provided by NHS Digital. The latest data were published on 17 June 2019.
8. The offences “possession of firearms with intent”, “possession of other weapons” and “possession of article with blade or point” were introduced from 1 April 2008 and had previously been recorded in the classification “possession of weapons”.
9. 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.
10. Offences involving a firearm include: if a firearm is fired, used as a blunt instrument, or used as a threat.
11. If the police do not have sufficient information about the type of firearm used in the offence, or if the firearm was concealed during the offence, then the police will record the weapon as an unidentified firearm.
12. Other firearms include CS gas or pepper spray, stun guns and other weapons.
13. The broader definition of firearms includes conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.

8 . Rises in some types of property crime

In this section we look into both the long-term and short-term trends in theft, robbery¹, and criminal damage and arson.

Recent increase in CSEW theft offences follows a long-term downward trend

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is the most reliable indicator for long-term trends, particularly for the more common types of crime experienced by the general population. It has shown long-term reductions in most categories of theft. The overall number of theft offences has fallen by 68% since the year ending December 1995.

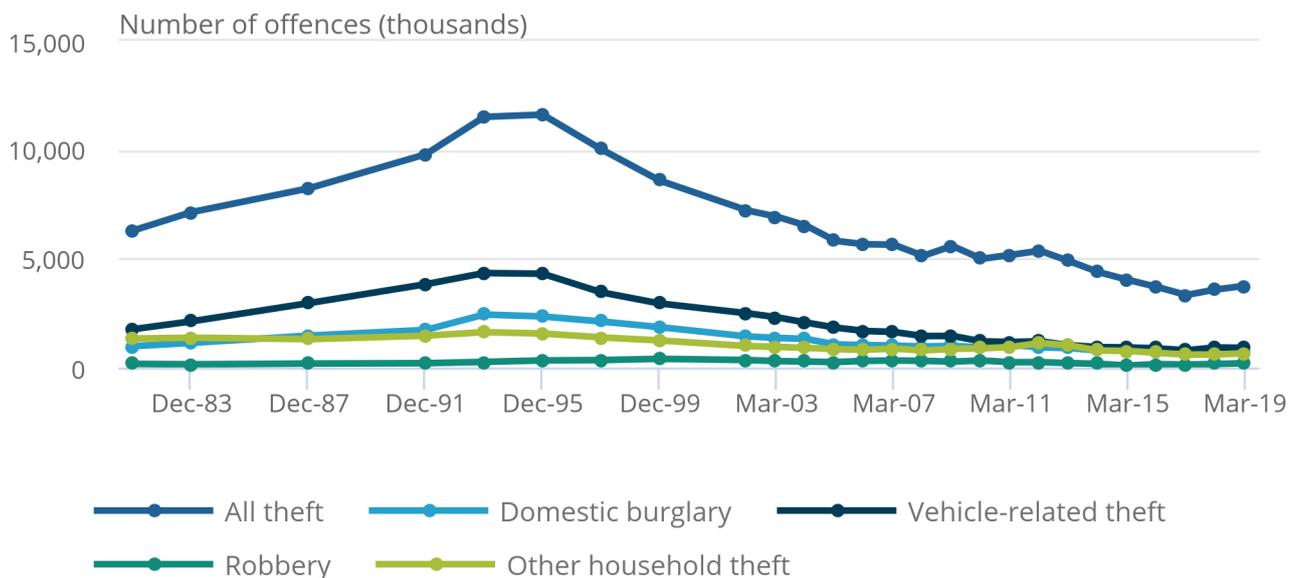
Although there was no overall change in the number of theft offences compared with the previous year, there was a 13% increase in theft offences compared with the year ending March 2017 (Figure 11, [Table A1](#)). It is too early to say whether this recent rise represents a change in the long-term downward trend in theft.

Figure 11: The Crime Survey for England and Wales indicates emerging rise in overall theft offences following long-term declines

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to March 2019

Figure 11: The Crime Survey for England and Wales indicates emerging rise in overall theft offences following long-term declines

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to March 2019



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. 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).

For some types of theft, police recorded crime provides a reliable measure of trends

Some types of theft, such as domestic burglary and theft of a vehicle, are relatively well-reported to (and subsequently recorded by) the police. Victims often require a crime reference number to be issued by the police to support an insurance claim. However, more minor thefts such as thefts from outside a dwelling are less likely to be reported to the police given the low value of the items stolen.

Increases in vehicle offences have slowed

Police recorded vehicle offences increased by 2% (to 468,315) in the year ending March 2019, continuing the rising trend seen over the last three years. However, the size of the increase has reduced over the last year; the latest rise compares with an increase of 12% in the year ending March 2018. This is due mainly to a smaller increase (8%, to 114,656 offences) in “theft or unauthorised taking of a vehicle” compared with previous years. Recent rises are also evident in the number of motor insurance claims relating to theft².

The trend in police recorded vehicle offences is also reflected in the CSEW. While vehicle-related theft offences estimated by the survey showed a 14% increase compared with the year ending March 2017, there was no significant change in the latest year.

Genuine increase in robbery

Rises in police recorded robbery offences were evident in the latest year (up 11% to 85,736 offences; Figure 12). This increase is likely to reflect a real change in these crimes. While recording improvements are likely to have contributed to this rise, the impact is thought to be less pronounced than for some other crime types.

Fall in burglary recorded by the police

Police recorded burglary offences had shown rises in recent years (6% in the year ending March 2018 and 3% in the year ending March 2017). However, figures for the year ending March 2019 show that the number of burglary offences recorded by the police decreased by 3% (to 422,870 offences; Figure 12).

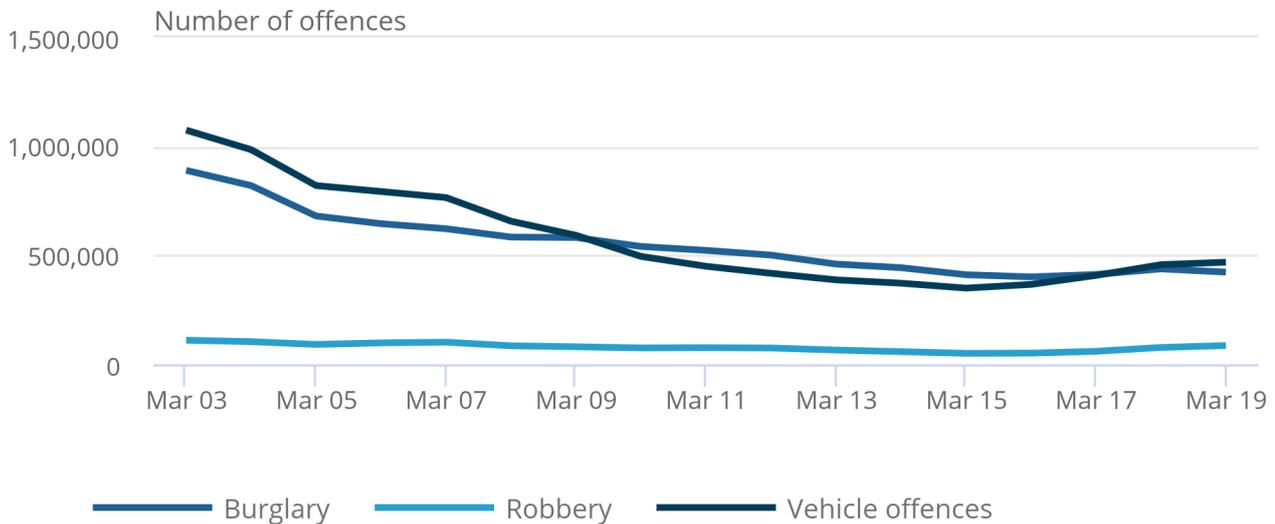
We believe this crime type is less affected by the impact of recording improvements than other types of crime, as it is generally well-reported by victims and well-recorded by the police. CSEW domestic burglary has remained stable since the year ending March 2017.

Figure 12: Fall in police recorded burglary but rises in police recorded robbery and vehicle offences

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

Figure 12: Fall in police recorded burglary but rises in police recorded robbery and vehicle offences

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



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

A mixed picture for criminal damage

The overall volume of criminal damage in the CSEW has not changed over the last year (1.1 million offences). However, there was a 17% increase in the subcategory “criminal damage to a vehicle” in the year ending March 2019 compared with the previous year (to 814,000 offences from 693,000 offences).

This follows a sustained period of decrease over the last 10 years. However, it is too early to say whether this recent rise is evidence of a change to the longer-term pattern. The latest figure is similar to the level seen in the year ending March 2017 and is less than half the volume it was in the year ending December 1995 (1.8 million offences).

In comparison with the findings from the CSEW, police recorded crime data show a 3% decrease in criminal damage and arson (to 573,577 offences) and a 7% fall in criminal damage to a vehicle. The differences in criminal damage to a vehicle between the CSEW and police recorded crime could be partly explained by a relatively low reporting rate for this type of offence (Table D10).

Notes for: Rises in some types of property crime

1. Robbery, which is theft (or attempted theft) involving the use or threat of force, is included in this section as it is a property crime, but it is not included in the “all theft” category.
2. Based on [Driving on – motor insurers paying out a record amount to motorists.](#)

9 . Increase in the volume of fraud offences in the last year

This section covers a range of fraudulent activities including bank and credit account fraud, consumer and retail fraud, and advance fee fraud¹. It reports on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime.

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 Finance² (who report instances of fraud where their member organisations have been a victim³).

CSEW provides the best indication of the 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, involving a loss and incidents not reported to the authorities.

Contrasts in findings between the CSEW and the data collated by 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. This is because the survey captures a large volume of lower-harm cases that are less likely to have been reported to the authorities. The CSEW estimated 3.8 million incidents of fraud for the year ending March 2019 compared with 0.7 million incidents referred to the NFIB^{4,5} (see [Appendix Tables A1 and A5](#)).

Incidents of fraud referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud, Cifas and UK Finance will include reports from businesses and other organisations. They also tend to mostly be focused on the more serious cases. This is because they 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 fewer than one in six incidents of fraud (15%) are reported by the victim to either the police or to Action Fraud ([Table D10](#)).

Increase in fraud measured by the CSEW

Findings for the year ending March 2019 CSEW estimated that the number of fraud incidents (3.8 million) increased by 17% from the previous survey year.

The increase was driven mainly by a 15% increase in “bank and credit account fraud” (to 2.6 million offences), with smaller volume increases in “consumer and retail fraud” (to 1.0 million offences) and “other fraud”⁶ (to 154,000 offences) contributing to the rise (Table 5)⁷.

Table 5: Crime Survey for England and Wales fraud – number of incidents for year ending March 2018 and year ending March 2019 with percentage change^{1,2,3}

England and Wales		Adults aged 16 years and over		
Offence group	Apr '17 to Mar '18	Apr '18 to Mar '19	Percentage change and significance	
Number of incidents (thousands)				
Fraud	3,255	3,809	17	*
Bank and credit account fraud	2,241	2,579	15	*
Consumer and retail fraud	873	1,019	17	*
Advance fee fraud	69	57	-18	
Other fraud	71	154	117	*
Unweighted base - number of adults	25,725	34,163		

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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.
5. 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.

Recorded crime also shows an increase in fraud offences

The recorded crime series showed a 9% increase in the total number of fraud offences referred to the NFIB⁸ in the year ending March 2019 (693,418 offences) compared with the previous year (638,358 offences).

Some differences were apparent when looking at the separate reporting bodies. However, these need to be interpreted in the context of differences in coverage and fraud types captured by each reporting body. Action Fraud reported a 12% rise⁹ (to 311,083 offences) and Cifas reported a 13% rise (to 313,175 offences) (see [Appendix Table A5](#))¹⁰. UK Finance reported an 18% fall (to 69,160 offences), but due to a temporary problem with NFIB systems, these figures are known to exclude a large number of cases referred to the NFIB by UK Finance.

Due to a temporary problem with NFIB systems, it is estimated that around 8,000 fraud offences referred by UK Finance have not yet been uploaded. The scale of the decrease compared with the previous year is likely to be substantially smaller than reported in these figures.

Please note: the above information was updated on 24th July 2019 to provide extra clarification on the recent problem in uploading crimes to the NFIB recording system.

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

Additional data collected by UK Finance via their CAMIS system¹² provide a broader range of bank account and plastic card frauds than those referred for police investigation to the NFIB.

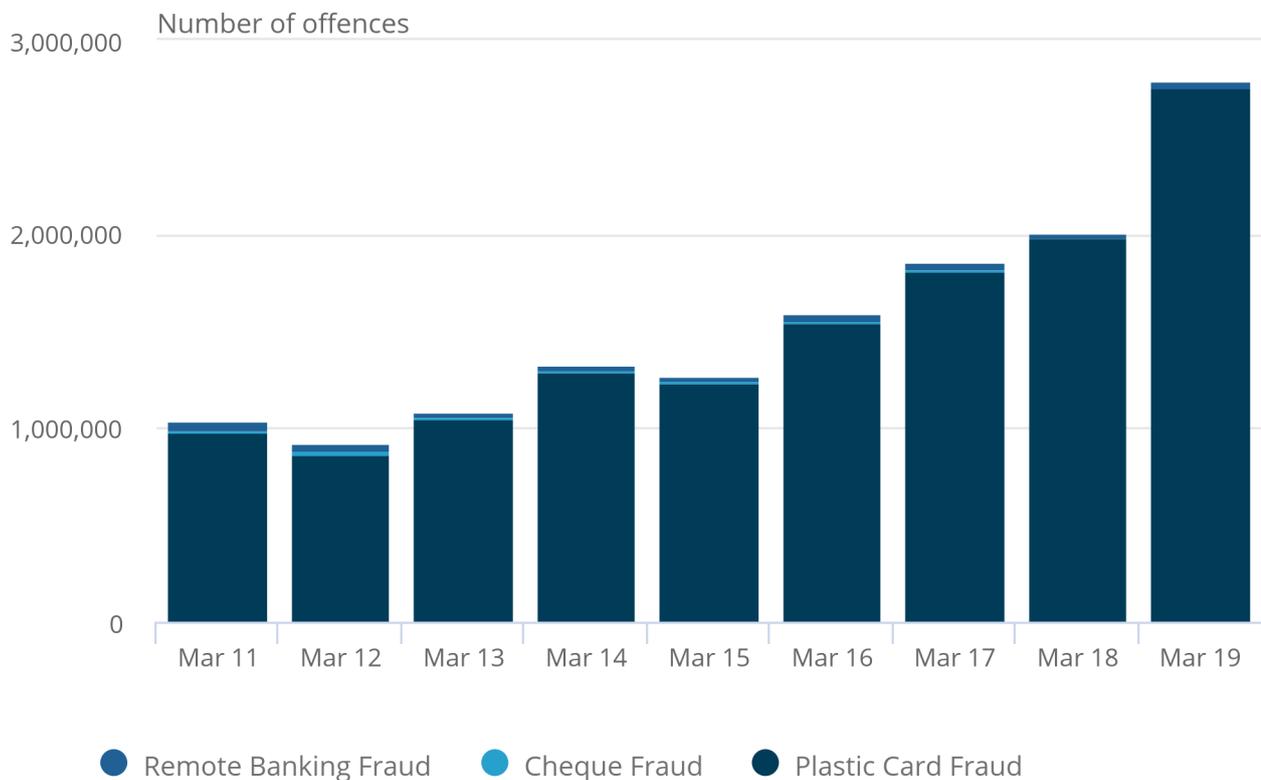
In the latest year, UK Finance reported 2.8 million cases of frauds (excluding authorised push payments) involving UK-issued payment cards, remote banking and cheques via CAMIS. This is an increase of 39% from the previous year ([Table F4](#)), driven largely by a 39% rise in plastic card fraud. This is a much larger increase than that seen in the year ending March 2018 (9% increase; Figure 13).

Figure 13: CAMIS data show an increase in plastic card fraud reported to UK Finance in recent years

UK, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2019

Figure 13: CAMIS data show an increase in plastic card fraud reported to UK Finance in recent years

UK, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2019



Source: UK Finance

Notes:

1. All offences are classed under Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) as National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) 5A, cheque, plastic card and online bank accounts (non Payment Service Providers (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. These data do not include Authorised Push Payments.

These data are able to capture card fraud not reported to the police for investigation¹³. They provide 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 fraud¹⁴ 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 and have consistently accounted for around three-quarters of all plastic card fraud reported to UK Finance.

Remote purchase fraud rose by 47% (a volume increase of 694,736 offences) from the previous year (to 2,174,177 offences). This accounts for most of the increase in plastic card fraud reported via CAMIS. The increase in remote purchase fraud is thought to be because of a number of high-profile data breaches affecting UK cardholders in 2018 and lower-profile attacks, with criminals using the stolen data to make unauthorised purchases online.

The increase in plastic card fraud also includes a rise in “card ID theft” offences¹⁵, which have more than doubled (a volume increase of 37,685 offences) since March 2018. The main component of “card ID theft” is data obtained by fraudsters through methods including phishing emails, scam texts and the theft of mail from external mail boxes and multi-occupancy buildings.

The number of “lost and stolen cards” also increased by 16% compared with the previous year (a volume increase of 59,910 offences). This increase is thought to be related to a rise in distraction thefts and courier scams¹⁶. Distraction thefts are where fraudsters steal cards in shops and at cash machines, and courier scams are where victims are tricked into handing over their cards on the doorstep.

Improvements in the identification of authorised push payment fraud offences lead to rises

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 CAMIS data for the year ending December 2017¹⁷.

In the year ending March 2019, there were 98,261 cases of APP fraud reported to UK Finance, a 97% increase since March 2018. This large increase is due mainly to improved identification and reporting processes following new Best Practice Standards for banks and building societies introduced by UK Finance in January 2018.

APP fraud can often involve significant sums of money and have adverse financial and emotional consequences for the victim. Unlike most other frauds, victims of APP fraud authorise the payment themselves and this means that they have no legal protection to cover them for losses.

UK Finance reported that £354.3 million was lost in total through such scams in 2018¹⁸. In the majority of cases (92%), victims lost savings on personal accounts, losing an average of approximately £2,920, and the remainder were businesses, who lost on average approximately £19,660 per case.

Notes for: Increase 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. This figure excludes computer misuse offences.
5. In October 2018, Action Fraud launched a new fraud and cybercrime reporting service. The transition to the new system is not yet complete and there has been a pause in the data feed from Cifas to the NFIB. Although fraud continues to be recorded by Cifas, cases from October 2018 have not yet been “referred” to the NFIB, so the Cifas figures and any NFIB totals presented in this bulletin and accompanying datasets are based on provisional data provided by Cifas. Once the issue has been resolved, the NFIB will hold a full copy of the data, allowing Cifas figures to be treated as confirmed and recognised as “referred” to the NFIB.
6. “Other fraud” includes offences such as charity fraud, investment fraud or application fraud.

7. A small change has been made to the coding of subcategories of “Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)” and “Other fraud”. As a result, these latest estimates will show small differences compared with publications prior to April 2019. Within the coding of offences relating to “Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)”, there were found to be a small number of cases with no evidence that a victim’s personal information had been stolen online. Looking in more detail at these, in some cases respondents report receiving new bank cards that they had not ordered, or new accounts in their name that they had not set up. Such cases are now coded as “application frauds” within the “other fraud” category.
8. In October 2018, Action Fraud launched a new fraud and cybercrime reporting service. The transition to the new system is not yet complete and there has been a pause in the data feed from Cifas to the NFIB. Although fraud continues to be recorded by Cifas, cases from October 2018 have not yet been “referred” to the NFIB, so the Cifas figures and any NFIB totals presented in this bulletin and accompanying datasets are based on provisional data provided by Cifas. Once the issue has been resolved, the NFIB will hold a full copy of the data, allowing Cifas figures to be treated as confirmed and recognised as “referred” to the NFIB.
9. Following the introduction of Action Fraud's new fraud and cybercrime reporting service in October 2018, there was a technical issue whereby during the coding of postcode information the system was unable to allocate a force area to the fraud report. As a result, some fraud and computer misuse offences with postcodes belonging to areas outside of England and Wales may have been included in the England and Wales figures in the year to December 2018 publication. This issue has now been resolved and the figures have been revised for the year to March 2019 publication.
10. 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.
11. Due to an administrative problem following migration of records to a new system, not all crimes referred by UK Finance were uploaded to the NFIB crime recording system. The NFIB are working to resolve this issue.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. Remote purchase fraud refers 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.
15. “Account takeover” has been renamed to “card ID theft” to more accurately reflect the data captured in this category, which includes third party application fraud and account takeover. Figures continue to be comparable with previously published figures.
16. Further information on trends in payment industry fraud based on industry data collated by UK Finance is available in [Fraud the Facts 2019](#).
17. 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. 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 preceding year.
18. Data reported by UK Finance article [Fraud the Facts 2019](#).

10 . Decrease in computer viruses continues to drive the fall in computer misuse offences

This section covers our findings about computer misuse crime, which includes offences such as computer viruses and hacking¹.

Data on computer misuse crime are available from two sources:

- questions introduced into the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) in October 2015
- offences referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre)

CSEW provides the better indication of the volume of computer misuse offences

Action Fraud data on computer misuse represent only a small fraction of all computer misuse crime, as many incidents are not reported. The CSEW is able to capture some of these unreported offences ([Table D10](#)). This can be seen by the large difference in volume of computer misuse offences between the two sources – 966,000 offences estimated by the CSEW compared with 21,321 offences referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud.

In addition, the two sources have different coverage. The questions in the CSEW provide fuller coverage of computer misuse crimes against the household population. However, they do not generally include offences committed against businesses and other organisations, which are included in Action Fraud data. As such, it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons between the two sources.

Fall in computer viruses drives decrease in CSEW computer misuse offences

In the year ending March 2019, the CSEW estimated that computer misuse offences decreased by 21% from the previous year (down to 966,000 offences; Table 6). This decrease was largely owing to a fall in “computer viruses” (down 38% to 444,000 offences).

Incidents involving “unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)” did not change from the previous year (522,000 offences).

Table 6: Crime Survey for England and Wales computer misuse – numbers of incidents for year ending March 2018 and year ending March 2019 with percentage change^{1,2,3}

England and Wales	Adults aged 16 years and over		
	Apr '17 to Mar '18	Apr '18 to Mar '19	Percentage change and significance ⁴
	Number of incidents (thousands)		
Computer misuse	1,227	966	-21 *
Computer virus	712	444	-38 *
Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)	516	522	1
Unweighted base - number of adults	25,725	34,163	

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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. 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 asked of a full survey sample.
3. 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.
4. 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”³ referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud increased by 1% in the latest year ending March 2019 (up to 21,321 offences). This rise was less pronounced than that seen in the year ending March 2018 (9%), due in part to a notable decrease of 37% over the latest year in computer viruses (down to 4,177 offences).

The overall rise in computer misuse recorded by Action Fraud was driven by increases in:

- “hacking – extortion”, up 303% to 4,150 offences⁵
- “hacking – social media and email”, up 3% to 8,340 offences

An increasing awareness of falling victim to hacking among the public, leading to a greater likelihood of incidents being reported, is thought to have contributed to the rise. Computer misuse crimes such as extortion hacking occur in relatively small volumes and are more likely to target companies than individuals and households. This might explain why the increases are not captured in the CSEW.

Notes for: Decrease in computer viruses continues to drive the fall in computer misuse offences

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.
4. Following the introduction of Action Fraud's new fraud and cybercrime reporting service in October 2018, there was a technical issue whereby during the coding of postcode information the system was unable to allocate a force area to the fraud report. As a result, some fraud and computer misuse offences with postcodes belonging to areas outside of England and Wales may have been included in the England and Wales figures in the year to December 2018 publication. This issue has now been resolved and the figures have been revised for the year ending March 2019 publication.
5. The increase in hacking (extortion) figures is driven primarily by the mass extortion campaigns that started in May 2018 and peaked over the summer of 2018. These campaigns included hoax bomb threats to schools, hoax Wannacry and DDoS campaigns and multiple sextortion campaigns.

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

In this section we discuss police recorded crime data in more detail, including how these data have changed over time. Additionally, we focus on 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 (some types of violence, public order offences, domestic abuse and sexual offences). While these figures do not provide reliable trends in crime for many offence types, they do provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police.

Improvements to recording processes and practices by the police have made substantial contributions to rises in recorded crime over the last five years. This effect has been particularly pronounced in the crime types covered in this section. The level and speed of improvement has varied across police forces and such activity could continue for some time.

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

England and Wales, December 1981 to year ending March 2019

Figure 14: The volume of police recorded crime has increased over recent years
 2002: Introduction of national crime recording standard (NCRS).
 2014 onward: Police records added to crime by HMCRS.



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

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.

Over the longer-term, the trend in the number of crimes recorded by the police has been similar to that measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). However, the rises seen over recent years indicate a different trend to the CSEW. These rises are known to have been driven by improvements to police recording practices.

Larger increase in violence without injury than violence with injury

The “violence without injury” subcategory accounted for 41% of all violence recorded by the police and showed a larger increase in the latest year (up 16% to 678,481 offences), than the “violence with injury” subcategory (up 7% to 547,060 offences; Figure 15). The effect of recording improvements by the police is thought to have been most pronounced in the relatively less harmful types of violent crime.

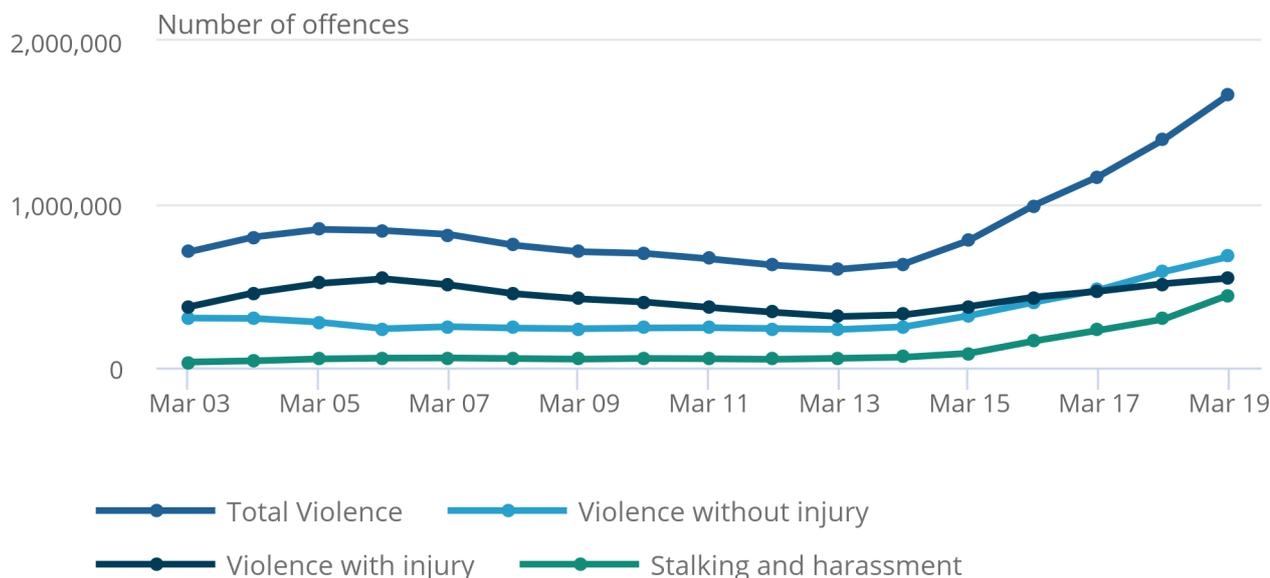
Figure 15: The volume of violent crime being recorded by the police has increased over the last few years

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

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 2019

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



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data on homicide and death or serious injury – unlawful driving data are not included in this figure due to the relative low number of offences.

Stalking and harassment accounted for half of the increase in violence

The stalking and harassment¹ subcategory rose by 50% compared with the previous year (Figure 15). This accounted for 54% of the change in violence recorded by the police (a volume increase of 148,106 offences). Harassment offences increased by 72% in the last year and accounted for nearly half (48%) of all stalking and harassment offences.

Trends in stalking and harassment offences recorded by the police need to be interpreted with caution. There have been changes in the coverage of this group of offences and in the rules governing the recording of these offences; details are provided in this section.

It is likely that recording improvements are an important factor in this rise, particularly in relation to malicious communication offences because of improved compliance in recording of these offences since they were introduced in April 2015.

From April 2018, a change to the Home Office Counting Rules meant that the offence of stalking or harassment is recorded in addition to the most serious offence involving the same victim and offender. This change has been a large driver in the increase in stalking and harassment offences recorded by police in the last year. It is likely that the number of such offences recorded will continue to increase until the rule changes have bedded-in across all forces.

The latest [joint inspection](#)² conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) 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 that we cannot currently be confident about the accuracy of the recorded crime figures for the separate categories of stalking or harassment.

Public order offences show a smaller increase than previously

Public order offences cover a range of incidents including “causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress”. Latest police recorded figures show that public order offences increased at a slower rate in the last year compared with previous years. An increase of 16% (to 447,896 offences) was seen in the latest year, following a 36% increase in the year ending March 2018.

A large part of the increase in public order offences over the past few years is likely to reflect improvements and changes to recording practices. In particular, we think that some incidents that would have been recorded as anti-social behaviour previously, are now being recorded as public order offences. This is consistent with the continued drop in the number of recorded anti-social behaviour offences since figures began in 2008. However, it is possible that genuine increases in public disorder may have contributed to this rise. These figures can also be affected by changes in police activity.

Police recorded domestic abuse continues to rise

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 abuse³.

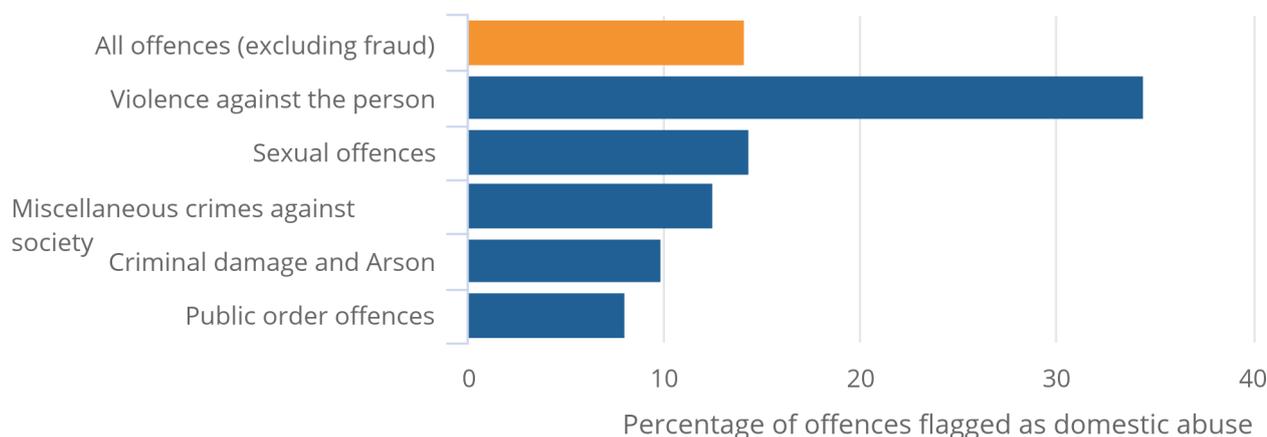
Domestic abuse recorded by the police is not a reliable measure of trends in this type of crime and the quality of these data may be inconsistent across police forces. These offences have been subject to recording improvements, including better identification of domestic abuse at the point of recording. In addition, the police have been actively encouraging victims to come forward to report these crimes.

Figure 16: Over one-third of violence against the person offences are flagged as being domestic abuse-related

England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 16: Over one-third of violence against the person offences are flagged as being domestic abuse-related

England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

In the year ending March 2019, there was an increase in the total number of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police (up 22% to 732,444). This rising trend is thought to reflect factors related to reporting and recording and does not provide a reliable indication of current trends.

Figures from a self-completion module in the CSEW, which give a reliable measure of long-term trends, have shown little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years. However, the cumulative effect of small year-on-year changes has resulted in a small, significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2019 (6.3%), compared with the year ending March 2005 (8.9%). This indicates a gradual, longer-term downward trend ([Table S42](#)).

Further analysis on domestic abuse can be found in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) release and [Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#).

Increase in recording of coercive behaviour

Included in the rise in domestic abuse-related crimes are offences of [controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship](#)⁴. This became a new criminal offence as part of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and came into force on 29 December 2015. Of the 43 forces⁵ for which data were available, 17,069 offences of coercive control were recorded in the year ending March 2019. Data for the previous year showed that a total of 9,101 coercive control offences were recorded. This increase is likely to be because of police forces increasing their use of the new law over the last year.

Additional data on controlling or coercive behaviour are published in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) release. We are conducting research into extending the CSEW questions to measure controlling or coercive behaviour. An update on testing some experimental questions and our proposed next steps can be found in [Developing a measure of controlling or coercive behaviour](#).

Increase in police recorded sexual offences slowing down in the last year

There was an increase of 7% in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019 compared with the previous year (up to 162,030; Figure 17, [Table A4](#)). This is a smaller increase than in recent years (24% in the year ending March 2018). Within the overall increase:

- police recorded rape increased by 9% (to 58,657 offences), compared with 30% in the year ending March 2018
- other sexual offences increased by 6% (to 103,373 offences), compared with 20% in the year ending March 2018

The increase in sexual offences against children⁶ contributed to around one-fifth (20%) of the total increase in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police.

Sexual offences recorded by the police are not a reliable measure of trends in this type of crime. Improvements in police recording practices and an increased willingness of victims to come forward and report sexual offences to the police are both thought to have contributed to increases over recent years.

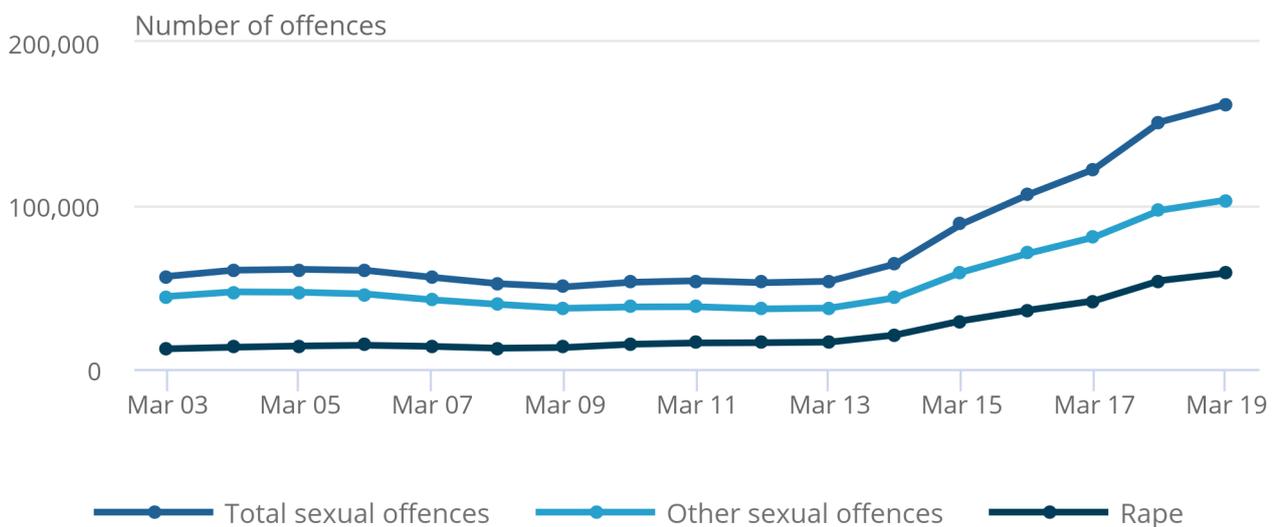
Figure 17: Police recorded sexual offences are at their highest volume since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in 2002

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

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

November 2014: Publication of HMICFRS report highlighting the issues in recording practices for sexual offences.

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



Source: Home office - police recorded crime

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.

While recording improvements and better reporting rates have both contributed to the rise in sexual offences recorded by the police, it is not possible to say how much of the increase each of these factors accounts for.

For a subset of forces providing data to the Home Office Data Hub⁷, 25% of sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019 were non-recent offences (those that took place more than 12 months before being recorded by the police). While non-recent offences remain an important contributor to the latest rise in sexual offences, the rise was due mainly to increases in recent offences (those that took place within 12 months of being recorded by the police).

Estimates from a self-completion module in the CSEW for the year ending March 2019 showed that 2.9% of adults aged 16 to 59 years had been victims of sexual assaults in the last year (including attempted offences). This estimate showed no change compared with the previous year (2.7%). Over the longer-term, there has been a rise in the prevalence of sexual assault estimated by the survey over the past five years, with the latest estimate returning to levels similar to those over a decade ago ([Table S42](#)).

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 latest two years. The [Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system](#) release also provides more information on sexual offending in England and Wales, bringing together a range of official statistics from across the crime and criminal justice system.

New data will help us measure sexual offences against children

A further change to police recording practices is to flag offences where children have been sexually abused or exploited. New experimental statistics for the year ending March 2019 showed the police flagged 60,685 crimes as involving child sexual abuse⁸ and 13,133 as involving child sexual exploitation⁹. 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](#).

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

1. Stalking and harassment offences have moved out of the subcategory of “violence without injury” and are now in a separate subcategory along with the 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.
2. [Living in fear – the police and CPS response to harassment and stalking](#) inspection report was published in July 2017.
3. Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 years and over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
4. 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.
5. British Transport Police are not able to provide data.
6. 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”.
7. 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.
8. 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)”.
9. 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 years 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”.

12 . Other sources of data help 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 CSEW for children aged 10 to 15 years
- recorded crime data for incidences of anti-social behaviour
- data concerning non-notifiable offences
- the Commercial Victimisation Survey, which gathers data on crimes experienced by businesses

CSEW 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. A total of 841,000 crimes¹ were estimated to have been experienced by children aged 10 to 15 years:

- 54% were violent crimes (457,000), with the majority of these being low-level violence²
- 27% were thefts of personal property (223,000)
- 15% were criminal damage to personal property (125,000)
- 4% were robbery (36,000)

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.

Increase in anti-social behaviour estimated by the CSEW

The CSEW provides estimates of adults experiencing or witnessing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local area ([Tables F12 and F13](#)). Since these questions were introduced in the year ending March 2012 survey, estimates have ranged between 28% and 33%. While the latest estimate showed a rise, this is believed to reflect changes made to the order in which survey questions were asked, which may have affected responses. We are investigating this potential issue further.

Around 1.5 million incidents of ASB were recorded by the police (including the British Transport Police) in the latest year, a decrease of 12% from the previous year ([Figure F1 and F2](#)). 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 have previously 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.

Non-notifiable offences remain at a similar level to the previous year

In the year ending December 2018 (the latest period for which data are available), there were 1.1 million convictions for non-notifiable offences³ that were not covered in police recorded crime or the CSEW. This is similar to the number seen in the previous year.

In addition, 10,000 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) were issued in relation to non-notifiable offences for the year ending December 2018, a decrease of 16% from the previous year⁴. The majority of these PNDs related to drunk and disorderly behaviour. Further information is available in [Tables F14a and F14b](#).

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 businesses⁵. 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 premises⁶ covered in its sample and gives some insight into the number of these crimes that go unreported to the police.

The 2017 CVS⁷ 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 ([Table F15](#)). 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 help 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. 81% of violent crimes experienced in the latest survey year resulted in minor or no injury.
3. Non-notifiable offences are offences dealt with exclusively by magistrates' courts or by the police issuing 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.
4. 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.
5. Although the recent extension to cover fraud against adult resident in households includes incidents where the victim has been fully (or partially) reimbursed by their financial provider.
6. 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.
7. Data from the 2017 CVS are the latest data available.

13 . New and upcoming changes

This section provides information about changes to the publication of police recorded crime data, and changes to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

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

This bulletin is the third release of data following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW. The first release including this change was published on 24 January 2019. More information on this methodological change and the impact on CSEW estimates can be found in the [User guide to crime statistics in England and Wales](#).

Recorded crime data at police force area, community safety partnership and local authority level

We have ceased the publication of the following three sets of tables:

- [Recorded crime data at community safety partnership and local authority level](#)
- [Recorded crime data at police force area level](#)
- [Recorded crime data at police force area level \(including pivot table\)](#)

These tables, which provided the number of offences by offence type on a 12-month rolling basis, closely duplicated [data published by the Home Office](#) on GOV.UK.

We will, however, continue publishing on a quarterly basis, the [Crime in England and Wales: Police force area data tables \(P1 to P5\)](#). These provide offence rates and percentage changes for the latest year for each police force area in England and Wales.

As part of this change, we will now publish [breakdowns of police recorded crime figures by Community Safety Partnership \(CSP\) area](#) alongside each quarterly crime statistics bulletin.

Users requiring access to more detailed CSP or police force area level recorded crime data, including longer time series data at these local levels, will be able to download the [Home Office open data tables on police recorded crime](#).

Fraud and computer misuse redistribution of tables

We are no longer releasing the [Additional tables on fraud and cybercrime as a separate set of tables](#). All content previously released within these tables has, or will be, redistributed among other sets of tables.

The majority of these tables have either been published within the [Annual trend and demographic tables](#) or the [Other related tables](#) accompanying this release. The remainder will be published within our [Property crime tables](#) and newly planned “Nature of fraud and computer misuse” release later within the 2019 to 2020 financial year.

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 Figure 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

Crime Survey for England and Wales	Police recorded crime
Strengths	
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
Limitations	
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 ²
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 ¹	

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. From 1 October 2015, the offence coverage of the CSEW was extended to include fraud and computer misuse 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.

Inspections of police recorded crime and incident data quality

Over the last seven years Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have published a range of inspections related to police forces' crime and incident recording practices.

In 2012, [A step in the right direction review](#) found that there was a wide variation in the quality of decision-making associated with the recording of anti-social behaviour (ASB). It is possible that, some incidents that may have previously been recorded as ASB have more recently been recorded as crimes.

In 2014, [Crime recording: making the victim count](#) concluded that around one in five crimes were not recorded by the police in England and Wales.

Crime Data Integrity (CDI) inspections are a rolling programme of inspections of police forces. Findings from these inspections suggest that crime recording practices by police forces in England and Wales are, in general, improving. More information is available in Section 3.3 of the [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#). Also, HMICFRS published [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2018](#), which summarises the progress of police forces in improving their recording practices, based on the ongoing CDI programme. This report also concludes, however, that crime recording standards still vary a great deal between police forces.

In 2015, the [Increasingly everyone's business 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.

In 2017, the [Living in fear report](#) concluded stalking was not always recorded accurately by the police and in some of these cases, stalking was recorded as harassment.

Other information on quality and methodology

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](#). Further information on statistical significance can be found in Section 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](#).