

Statistical bulletin

# Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2020

Crime against households and adults using data from police recorded crime and the new Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales. Includes the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on crime and people's perceptions of crime during the June to November 2020 period.



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To be announced

## Correction

### 15 March 2021 12:32

A correction has been made to the number of incidents and victims estimated by the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales for fraud and computer misuse, and total crime (including fraud and computer misuse) for April to June 2020 and July to September 2020. This is because of a small error which occurred when processing data for repeat victims of these offences.

Sections 1 and 4 and Figure 3 in the bulletin, and Table A3 (experimental) within the Appendix tables have been corrected following this revision.

We apologise for any inconvenience.

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# 1 . Main points

This publication reports on crime in England and Wales in the 12 months to year ending September 2020 based on findings from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) and police recorded crime. The last half of this 12-month period was affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and related lockdown restrictions. Further information can be found in Section 15: [Measuring the data](#).

For the 12-month period to year ending September 2020:

- There have been fluctuations in the level of crime throughout 2020, particularly as the country went into lockdown and the later easing of restrictions; the TCSEW estimated that there were approximately 11.7 million offences in the last 12 months<sup>1</sup>; this estimate cannot be compared to previous periods because of the way the survey is currently conducted.
- Total police recorded crime decreased by 6% to approximately 5.7 million offences; this was driven by substantial falls during the April to June 2020 period, particularly in theft offences.
- There were also falls in offences involving firearms (7% decrease) and knives or sharp instruments (3% decrease) across England and Wales; similarly, these falls were driven by substantial decreases in the April to June 2020 period.
- The overall number of homicides increased by 7%; this figure includes the Grays lorry incident with 39 homicide victims, if this incident is excluded, the number of victims was similar to the previous year.
- Police recorded crime data showed a 16% increase in drug offences; driven by a large increase in April to June 2020, which reflected proactive police activity in crime hotspots.

The coronavirus pandemic and related lockdown restrictions have resulted in fluctuations in the level of crime experienced in England and Wales over the last six months, for example:

- The number of victims of total TCSEW crime including fraud and computer misuse in July to September 2020 (3.2 million) returned to the same level as estimated in the pre-coronavirus period of January to March 2020 following a 19% decrease in April to June 2020.
- The number of police recorded offences increased by 20% between April to June 2020 and July to September 2020 following a 15% decrease in the previous quarter.
- The 1.5 million offences recorded by the police in July to September 2020 was 5% lower than that recorded in July to September 2019 (1.6 million offences).
- There was a 47% increase in the number of victims of theft estimated by the TCSEW in July to September 2020 compared with April to June 2020 (to 1.2 million); following a decrease in the previous quarter, the number of victims was now the same as that seen in the pre-coronavirus period of January to March 2020 (1.2 million).
- Police recorded theft offences fell 38% between January to March 2020 and April to June 2020; the most recent data for July to September 2020 showed a 33% increase (to 371,367 offences); this remains 25% lower than July to September 2019.
- Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments were 3% lower in July to September 2020 (12,120 offences) compared with July to September 2019; in the same period, offences involving firearms returned to similar levels to that seen in July to September 2019 (from 1,747 to 1,760 offences).

## Statistician's comment

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

"The coronavirus pandemic and related lockdown restrictions have resulted in fluctuations in the level of crime experienced in England and Wales. Data from the survey showed decreases in crime at the start of the pandemic, with rises seen over the summer months, specifically in theft, following the easing of lockdown measures, with overall crime now back at pre-lockdown levels of January to March 2020.

"There were also fluctuations in police recorded crime, but total recorded offences for July to September 2020 were below that seen in the same period in 2019."

### Notes for: Main points

1. TCSEW estimates are based on responses from interviews conducted between 20 May and 30 November 2020 inclusive. TCSEW participants report on crimes experienced in the last 12 months. Depending on when the interview took place this covers the period from May 2019 to October 2020.

## 2. New in this release

This publication explores crime in England and Wales in the year ending September 2020, as reported by respondents in the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) between May and November 2020.

The TCSEW is designed to capture trends in crime whilst normal face-to-face interviewing is suspended<sup>1</sup>. Information is provided from the TCSEW on crimes experienced by respondents in a 12-month reporting period as well as crime estimates for specific periods of time affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions. Further information on how this survey was set up is available in our [Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

Data on police recorded crime have been provided in annual, quarterly and monthly formats. These data may be subject to revision in future quarterly releases.

Each data source includes additional reference periods to enable comparison with the previous quarter and the pre-coronavirus period<sup>2</sup>.

### Notes for: New in this release

1. TCSEW estimates are not directly comparable with estimates derived from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).
2. For police recorded crime, quarterly and monthly data are presented in order to compare the July to September 2020 period with the pre-coronavirus period. In most cases, we have compared police recorded crime in July to September 2020 with July to September 2019 to take account of any seasonal effects on crime trends. Alternatively, the TCSEW provides estimates for quarterly reporting periods for comparing the July to September 2020 period with the preceding quarter, April to June 2020 and the pre-coronavirus quarter January to March 2020.

### **3 . Long-term trends from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Because of the change in data collection mode, there is a break in the CSEW data time series. TCSEW estimates are not directly comparable with those previously published from the face-to-face CSEW.

The face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) was suspended on 17 March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. A telephone-operated version of the CSEW (TCSEW) was specifically designed to allow us to continue measuring crime during this period whilst face-to-face interviewing is not possible.

This release predominantly reports on estimates from the TCSEW, but it is important to set these in context of longer-term trends in crime, as estimated by the CSEW. For the crime types and population it covers, the CSEW is a better indicator of long-term trends than police recorded crime. It is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices.

Since the mid-1990s, there have been long-term falls seen in overall CSEW crime estimates (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Crime estimates by the CSEW December 1981 to March 2020, and TCSEW estimates for the year ending September 2020**

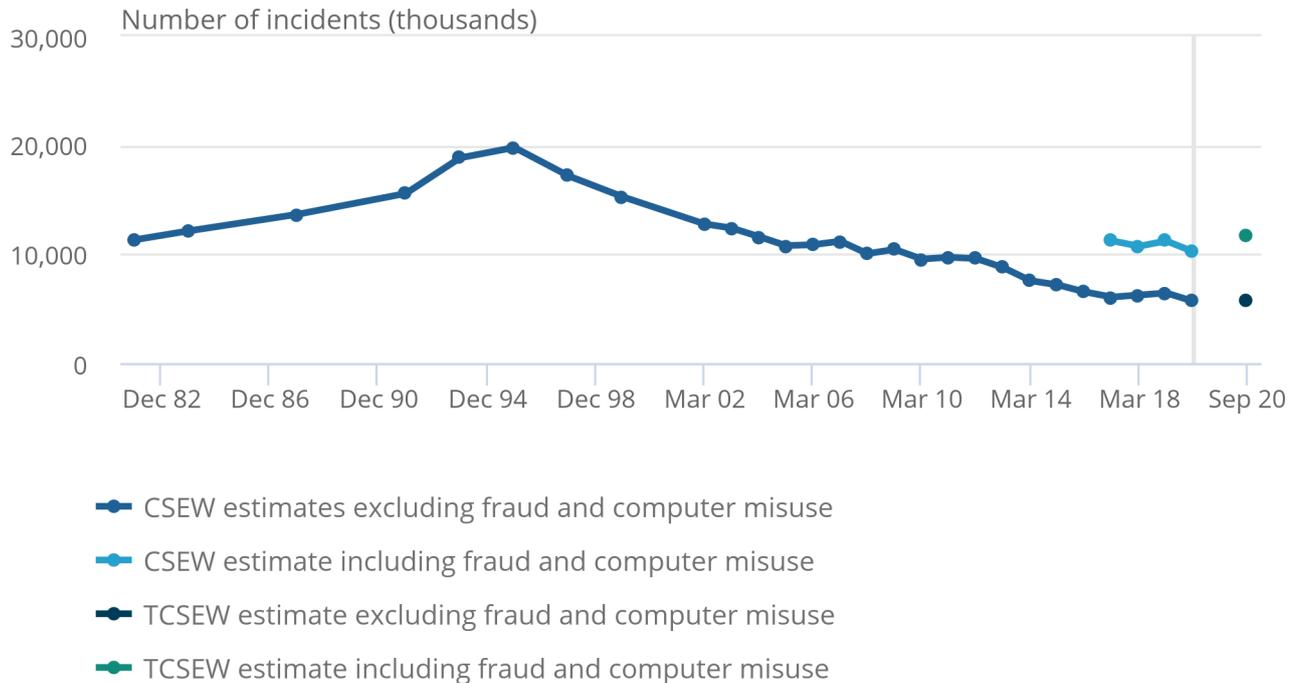
England and Wales, annual estimates

Figure 1: Crime estimates by the CSEW December 1981 to March 2020, and TCSEW estimates for the year ending September 2020

Rises in crime levels during the 90s were mainly due to increases in violence, vehicle-related theft and burglary.

Excluding fraud and computer misuse we have seen a long-term steady decline in the CSEW time series.

England and Wales, annual estimates



Source: Office for National Statistics - Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)

Notes:

1. These data are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Data on this chart refer to different modes: 1981 to March 2020 are based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), September 2020 are based on the Telephone-operated crime survey for England and Wales (TCSEW).
3. 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).
4. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over or to households. TCSEW data relate to adults aged 18 years and over or to households.
5. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. The questions were asked of half the survey sample from October 2015 until September 2017, to test for detrimental effects on the survey as a whole and help ensure that the historical time series is protected, and have been asked of a full sample from October 2017.
6. 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.

The CSEW provides the best measure of trends for the more common types of crime experienced by the population including theft, overall violent crime, criminal damage, fraud and computer misuse. Long-term trends vary by headline CSEW crime types. For all headline figures, including a data time series, see [Appendix tables](#).

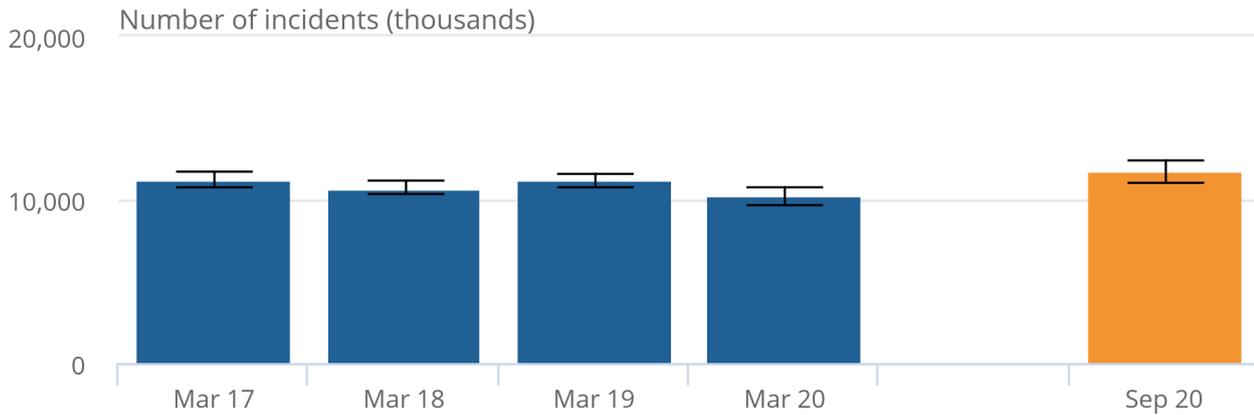
Because of the change in data collection mode and sample design, CSEW and TCSEW estimates are not directly comparable and there is a break in the data time series. TCSEW annual estimates of total crime are, however, similar to levels estimated by the face-to-face CSEW in recent years (see Figure 2). We plan to investigate and report on the impact of the mode change and sampling biases on Crime Survey estimates soon.

**Figure 2: TCSEW annual estimates for total crime lie within the range of what has been estimated in the face-to-face CSEW in recent years**

England and Wales, annual estimates (with 95% confidence intervals)

Figure 2: TCSEW annual estimates for total crime lie within the range of what has been estimated in the face-to-face CSEW in recent years

England and Wales, annual estimates (with 95% confidence intervals)



Source: Office for National Statistics - Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)

**Notes:**

1. These data are published as Experimental Statistics
2. Data on this chart refer to different modes: March 2017 to March 2020 are based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), September 2020 are based on the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW).
3. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over or to households. TCSEW data relate to adults aged 18 years and over or to households
4. 95% confidence intervals are included. This means that if we drew 20 random samples and calculated a 95% confidence interval for each sample using the data in that sample, we would expect that, on average, 19 out of the 20 (95%) resulting confidence intervals would contain the true estimate.

## 4 . Crime estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Telephone-operated Crime Survey (TCSEW) estimated that 11.7 million offences, including fraud and computer misuse, were experienced by adults aged 18 years and over in the last 12 months<sup>1</sup>.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and related lockdown restrictions have resulted in fluctuations in the level of crime experienced in England and Wales over the last six months. The TCSEW estimated that 3.5 million offences, including fraud and computer misuse, were experienced by adults aged 18 years and over in July to September 2020<sup>2</sup>. This is similar to the number of offences estimated in January to March 2020 and in April to June 2020 (3.2 million and 2.9 million offences, respectively). As a result of the small TCSEW sample size, measuring change in incidence between quarterly periods is affected by increased uncertainty around repeat incidents.

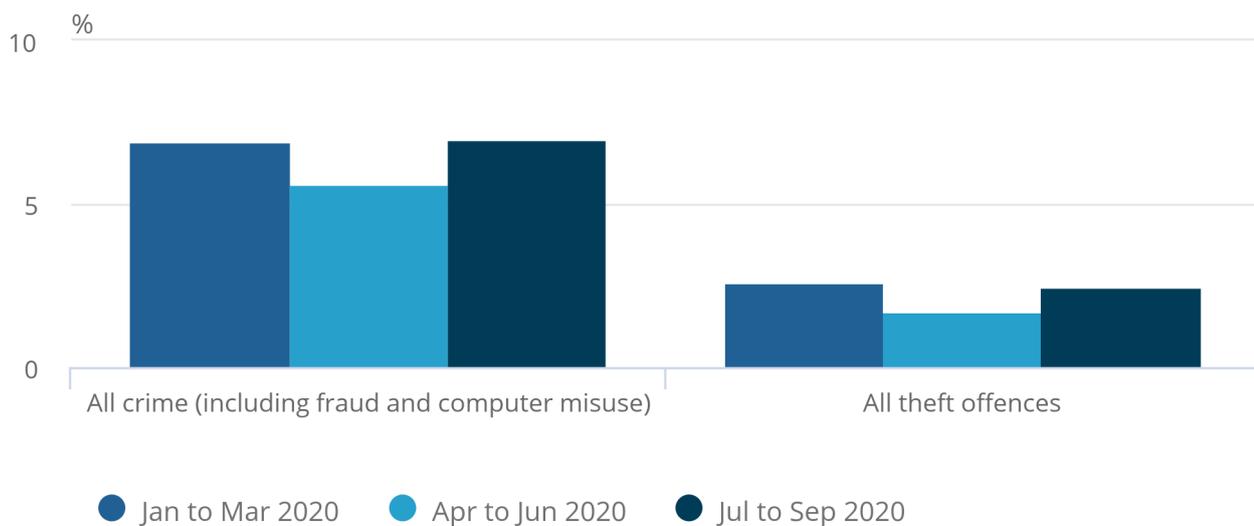
Prevalence estimates, however, are not affected by this. In July to September 2020, there was a 25% increase in the number of victims of total crime including fraud and computer misuse compared with April to June 2020 (from 2.6 million to 3.2 million). This follows a corresponding decrease of 19% between January to March 2020 and April to June 2020. The estimated number of victims is therefore at the same level as the number recorded in the pre-coronavirus period of January to March 2020 (3.2 million).

**Figure 3: Rising Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) victimisation levels during September to July 2020 driven by increases in theft offences**

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May and November 2020

Figure 3: Rising Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) victimisation levels during September to July 2020 driven by increases in theft offences

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May and November 2020



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

Notes:

1. These data are published as Experimental Statistics.

There were significant increases in the number of victims of theft (47%) in the July to September 2020 period compared with the previous quarter, April to June 2020, following falls in the preceding, January to March 2020, quarter (see Figure 3). The other offence categories measured by the TCSEW did not change significantly compared with April to June 2020.

For more detailed figures relating to estimates from the TCSEW, see [Appendix tables](#).

## Notes for: Crime estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales

1. TCSEW estimates are not directly comparable with estimates derived from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). TCSEW estimates are based on responses from interviews conducted between 20 May and 30 November 2020 inclusive. TCSEW participants report on crimes experienced in the last 12 months. Depending on when the interview took place this covers the period from May 2019 to October 2020.
2. The TCSEW provides estimates for quarterly reporting periods in 2020, January to March, April to June and July to September. Data for the January to March 2020 quarter is based on interviews carried out between May and November 2020. Data for the April to June 2020 quarter is based on interviews carried out between July and November 2020, and data for the July to September 2020 quarter is based on interviews carried out in October and November 2020. TCSEW quarterly estimates are not comparable with quarterly estimates derived from the face-to-face CSEW. In addition, TCSEW quarterly estimates are calculated on a different basis to TCSEW annual estimates and therefore cannot be summed or compared.

## 5 . Trends in police recorded crime

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

The police recorded 5.7 million crimes in England and Wales in the 12-month period to year ending September 2020, a 6% decrease from the previous year. This reduction was apparent across all regions of England and in Wales with decreases of between 3% and 9% in police recorded crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse). The annual decrease was driven by substantial falls during the April to June 2020 period. This reflected the increase in time people spent at home under national lockdown restrictions, a reduction in opportunities for theft in public spaces and the closure of the night-time economy.

Overall, theft offences fell by 21% in the year ending September 2020. There were also falls in robbery offences (17% decrease), sexual offences (6% decrease) and criminal damage and arson (8% decrease) but there were rises in drug offences (16% increase). These annual changes were mainly driven by what happened during the lockdown in the April to June 2020 quarter.

For lower volume crimes, police recorded crime data for the year ending September 2020 showed:

- a 7% increase in the overall number of homicides; this includes a single incident in October 2019, when the bodies of 39 migrants were found in a lorry in Grays, Essex, which if excluded, shows a 1% increase from 655 to 659 homicides
- a 3% decrease in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments
- a 7% decrease in recorded offences involving firearms

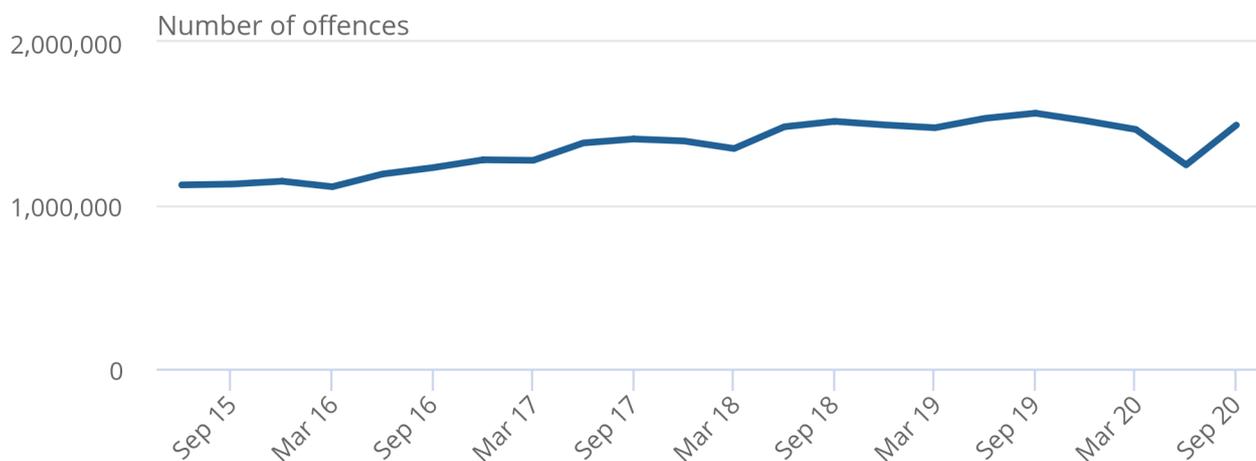
Total recorded crime, including fraud, has fluctuated over the year ending September 2020. Although a small proportion of these fluctuations will be the result of seasonal effects on crime trends, the majority can be attributed to the introduction and subsequent easing of lockdown restrictions. There was a 15% fall in the number of offences recorded by the police between January to March 2020 and April to June 2020 (from 1,464,800 to 1,247,432 offences). The most recent data for July to September 2020 showed a 20% increase to 1,491,186 offences (see Figure 4). Despite this quarterly increase, the number of offences recorded by the police in July to September 2020 remained 5% lower than that recorded in the July to September 2019 period (1,564,287). As lockdown restrictions are introduced and eased, recorded crime is expected to fluctuate further.

**Figure 4: Police recorded crime during July to September 2020 at a similar level to pre-coronavirus pandemic periods**

England and Wales, quarterly figures (April to June 2015 to July to September 2020)

Figure 4: Police recorded crime during July to September 2020 at a similar level to pre-coronavirus pandemic periods

England and Wales, quarterly figures (April to June 2015 to July to September 2020)



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

**Notes:**

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

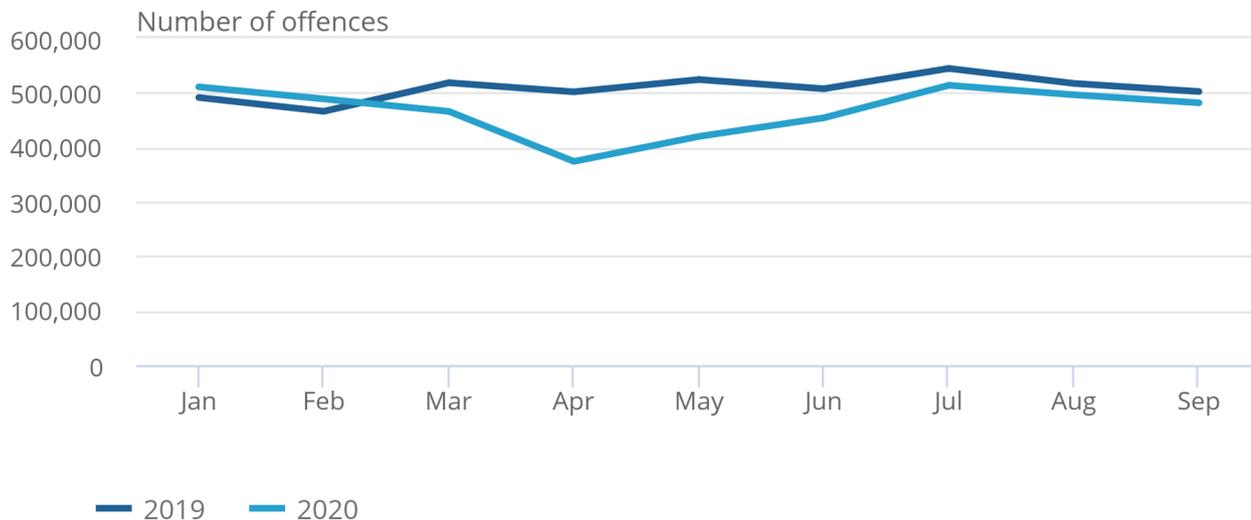
For the months April to September 2020, the number of recorded offences remained lower than their 2019 equivalents, however, this difference narrowed each month as lockdown restrictions were eased (see Figure 5).

## Figure 5: Police recorded crime in July to September 2020 returns to a comparable level with that in September 2019

England and Wales, monthly figures (January to September 2019 and January to September 2020)

### Figure 5: Police recorded crime in July to September 2020 returns to a comparable level with that in September 2019

England and Wales, monthly figures (January to September 2019 and January to September 2020)



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

#### Notes:

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

Police recorded crime data provide a good measure of crime-related demand on the police but are not a measure of overall crime and how it has changed. Prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, rises seen over recent years had indicated different trends to the CSEW. These reflected a combination of factors, including improvements to police recording processes and practices, expansion of the recorded crime collection to include new offences, variations in police activity, more victims reporting crime, and genuine increases in some types of crime.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report on the [State of Policing 2019](#) provides insight into the improvements in police recording practices over recent years. The report estimates that "because of better recording standards, and compared with the findings of our 2014 inspection, forces recorded around 570,000 more crimes during 2019". Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the rate of increase had been slowing. This likely reflects the diminishing impact of recording improvements.

For some offence types recorded by the police, the trends over recent months have showed different patterns (see Figure 6). For more detailed figures relating to month-on-month changes in police recorded crime see [Quarterly data tables](#).

## Figure 6: Police recorded crime returning to levels similar to the 2019 average

England and Wales, January to September 2019 and January to September 2020

### Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data, supplied by the Home Office, are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Following the implementation of a new IT system in July 2019, Greater Manchester Police have been previously unable to supply data from the period of July 2019 to March 2020. Figures for Greater Manchester are now included in the National and Regional totals for the months presented in this table. Comparisons made with previous versions of this table will display noticeable differences due to the exclusion of Greater Manchester in prior publications.
3. The index was calculated by dividing the number of police recorded incidents for each crime type and month by the average number of incidents for that crime type for the period January to December 2019. An index value of 100 is equivalent to the 2019 monthly average number of incidents; a value above 100 indicates an increase from the average while a value below 100 indicates a decrease

### Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

## Theft

Recorded theft decreased by 21% in the year ending September 2020 compared with the previous year, with decreases in theft from the person (28%), shoplifting (23%) and burglary (20%). This fall in offences was most likely the result of lockdown restrictions, with fewer shops being open and people spending more time in their homes.

Lockdown restrictions have led to fluctuations in police recorded crime. While there was a fall in the number of recorded theft offences between January to March 2020 and April to June 2020 (from 451,477 to 279,856 offences), the most recent data for July to September 2020 showed an increase to 371,367 offences. However, despite this quarterly increase, the number of theft offences recorded by the police remained 25% lower than that recorded in the July to September 2019 period (498,072 offences).

## Drug offences

Recorded drug offences increased by 16% to 198,780 offences in the year ending September 2020 compared with the previous year. The increase was driven mainly by an increase in April to June 2020 reflecting proactive police activity in crime hotspots. In the year ending September 2020, increases were seen in offences that involved trafficking (18%) and possession of drugs (15%). The largest percentage-change increases in recorded drug offences were seen in the South East (25%), Yorkshire and The Humber (21%) and the North West (20%) regions.

As lockdown restrictions eased in the summer of 2020, proactive policing reduced as the police had less capacity and the number of stop and searches relating to drugs decreased as indicated by the Metropolitan Police Service Stop and Search Dashboard<sup>1</sup>. There were 16% fewer drug offences recorded in July to September 2020 compared with the previous quarter, April to June 2020. However, the number of police recorded crime offences in July to September 2020 was at a similar level to that recorded in the same period in 2019.

## Notes for: Trends in police recorded crime

1. Data from the [Metropolitan Police Stop and Search Dashboard](#).

## 6 . Homicide

The police recorded 698 homicides in England and Wales in the year ending September 2020, a 7% increase (from 655) compared with the previous year (see Figure 7). Since 2016, the trend in homicide offences has been broadly stable.

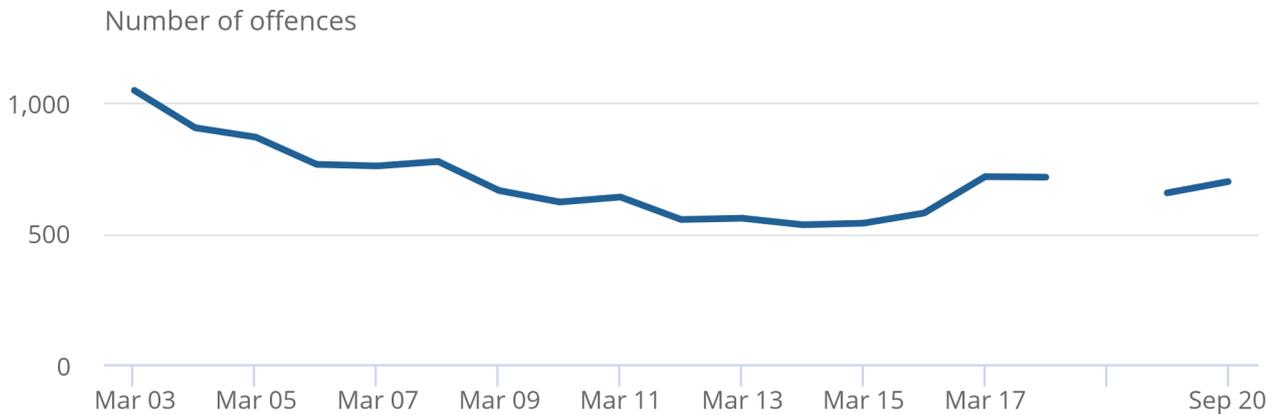
The latest figure for homicides includes 39 victims of human trafficking who were found in a lorry in Grays, Essex in October 2019. Without this homicide incident, the number of victims would have been similar to the previous year. The figures also include a 5% decrease (to 127) recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service in the latest year. The rate of homicide in the population remains low, at 12 per 1 million people in the year ending September 2020.

**Figure 7: Homicide shows a large increase following the Essex lorry deaths**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending September 2020

Figure 7: Homicide shows a large increase following the Essex lorry deaths

2003: 175 victims of Harold Shipman are recorded.  
 2005: 172 victims of London bombings are recorded.  
 May 2017: 22 victims of Manchester Arena bombing are recorded.  
 April 2016: 96 victims of Hillsborough are recorded.  
 March 2020: 27 victims of Essex lorry are recorded.



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Some forces have revised their data and police recorded crime totals may not agree with those previously published.
3. The dates shown for the London terrorist attacks in 2005 and 2017 correspond to when the events occurred, rather than when the homicides were recorded by the police.
4. 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, within the [Homicide in England and Wales articles](#).

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 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.

The number of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument was involved decreased by 2 in the year ending September 2020 (from 250 to 248 offences). The number of homicides involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument in London<sup>1</sup> decreased from 79 to 75. Of all recorded homicides in the latest year, 38% involved a knife or sharp instrument.

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

## Notes for: Homicide

1. Includes the Metropolitan and City of London Police Force Areas.

## 7 . Knife or sharp instrument offences

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

There was a 3% decrease in offences involving knives or sharp instruments recorded by the police in the year ending September 2020 (to 47,119 offences) compared with the previous year. Offences involving knives or sharp instruments have been rising since the year ending March 2014, although in recent years the rate of increase has slowed.

There was an 18% decrease in robbery offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in July to September 2020 compared with the same period in 2019 (from 5,182 offences to 4,254 offences). In the same period, there was a 13% increase in “threats to kill” offences involving a sharp instrument (from 1,124 offences to 1,270 offences; see Figure 8).

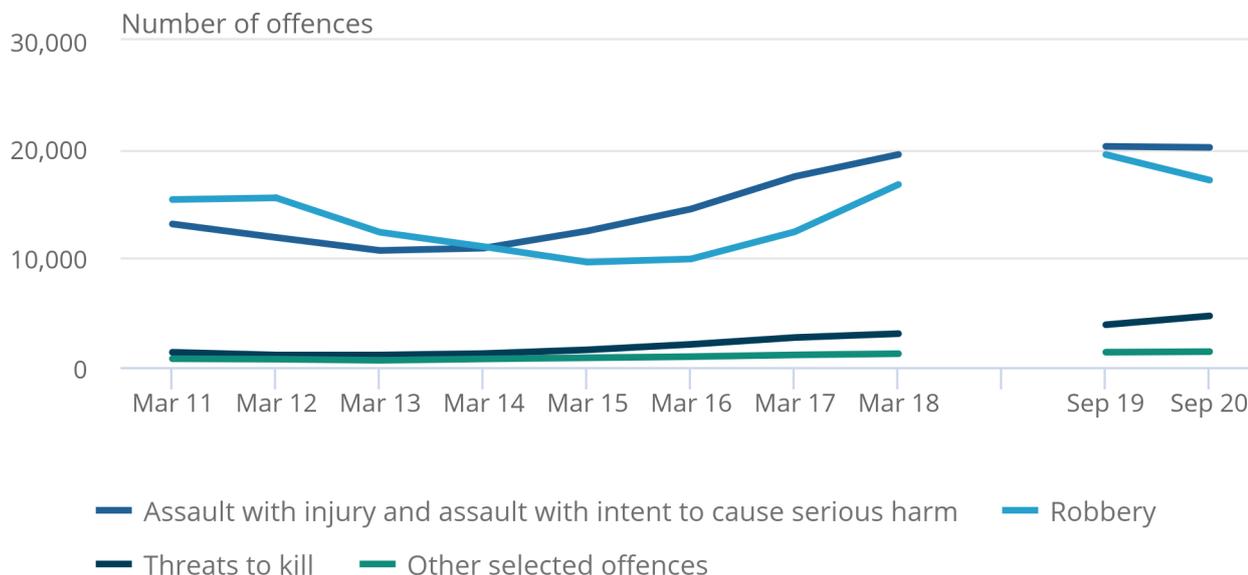
The annual decrease in offences involving knives or sharp instruments can be largely attributed to the decrease seen in April to June 2020 compared with the previous quarter, January to March 2020, where offences fell by 22% (12,414 to 9,669 offences). The number of offences then increased from this period by 25% to 12,120 offences in July to September 2020, which is 3% lower than that recorded in the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) period of July to September 2019 (12,451 offences).

**Figure 8: Crimes involving knives or sharp instruments decreased in the latest year, driven by a decrease in robbery offences involving knives**

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester police), year ending March 2011 to year ending September 2020

Figure 8: Crimes involving knives or sharp instruments decreased in the latest year, driven by a decrease in robbery offences involving knives

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester police), year ending March 2011 to year ending September 2020



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Greater Manchester Police reviewed their recording of knife or sharp instrument offences in December 2017, which revealed that they were under-counting these offences. Previous data have not been revised and therefore data from Greater Manchester Police are excluded to allow for comparison over time.
3. Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via a special collection.
4. Other selected offences include rape, attempted murder, homicide and sexual assault.

The change in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments in the latest year varied by Police Force Area (see Figure 9). For example, looking at the three areas with the highest rate per 100,000 population (Table P6):

- London<sup>1</sup> saw a 10% decrease
- Greater Manchester<sup>2</sup> saw a 7% increase
- West Midlands saw a 14% decrease

The change in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments in July to September 2020 compared with July to September 2019 also varied by Police Force Area. For example, looking at the three areas with the highest rate per 100,000 population ([Table P6](#)):

- London<sup>1</sup> saw a 15% decrease
- Greater Manchester<sup>2</sup> saw a 1% increase
- West Midlands saw a 2% increase

### **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 September 2020**

#### **Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data, supplied by the Home Office, 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 this force are not directly comparable with data for other forces.
3. The changes presented are the percentage changes in the volume of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument over the last year.
4. In recent years most police forces have made data quality and recording improvements which means data from earlier years are not directly comparable with recent years. Forces who have made notable revisions to their data are: Essex; data for recent years are not comparable prior to the year ending September 2020

#### **Download the data**

[.xlsx](#)

Knife or sharp instrument offences continue to be concentrated in metropolitan areas across England and Wales with almost a third (29%) of all offences recorded by the police in London<sup>1</sup>. The highest rate was also seen in London, with 152 offences per 100,000 population. This compared with an England and Wales average of 79 offences per 100,000 population.

### **Improving data collection on offences involving knives or sharp instruments**

To improve data quality the Home Office and police forces have developed a new methodology for identifying recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments.

Data on police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments are currently collected by the Home Office via a special collection, separate to the main recorded crime returns. The way police forces currently identify and “flag” these records differs, as does the accuracy in the use of the flags, meaning data between forces are not always comparable.

The new methodology requires police forces to run their record-level crime data through the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDQIS) computer-assisted classification tool to identify records that should be tagged as involving a knife or sharp instrument prior to submitting their crime data to the Home Office.

Work during the pilot phase showed the new process improved data quality across all the test forces when compared with the present methodology. The rollout to all forces is now underway with larger forces, with the highest levels of knife crime, prioritised. Data using this new process will be included in the next quarterly crime statistics bulletin, covering data for the year ending December 2020. It is anticipated that forces accounting for over half of police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments recorded in England and Wales will be using the new method by this point.

Data from forces using the new NDQIS method will not be directly comparable with forces who have yet to switch to the new methodology.

Further information on the changes made will be included alongside the published statistics in the next release.

## Other sources of data

Although for a different time period, the latest available provisional [admissions data for NHS hospitals](#) in England reported 1,277 admissions for assault by a sharp object between April 2020 and July 2020. This was a decrease of 23% compared with the period between April 2019 and July 2019 and can be attributed to national lockdown restrictions. This decrease is also in line with the decrease in overall offences involving knives or sharp instruments and specifically “assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm” offences recorded by the police in April to June 2020, compared with April to June 2019.

Police recorded “possession of an article with a blade or point”<sup>3</sup> offences similarly fell by 9% to 21,343 offences in the year ending September 2020. Trends in this offence have often been influenced by increases in targeted police action, such as the recent rise in stop and searches<sup>4</sup>. Although stop and searches are regularly used, they are used more often following rises in offences involving knives or sharp instruments. Data related to stop and searches can be found in the Home Office publication [Police powers and procedures](#).

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

## Notes for: Knife or sharp instrument offences

1. Includes the Metropolitan and City of London Police Force Areas.
2. These increases should be interpreted within the context of changing recording practices. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) reviewed their recording of knife or sharp instrument offences in December 2017. This revealed that they were under-counting these offences. Following this review, there were sharp increases in the number of knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by GMP in January to December 2018.
3. Offences of “possession of an article with a blade or point” are covered separately by a specific recorded crime category, which is the specific crime of possessing an article with a blade or point illegally.
4. In August 2019, a [pilot easing restrictions around emergency stop and search powers](#) was extended to all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

## 8 . Offences involving firearms

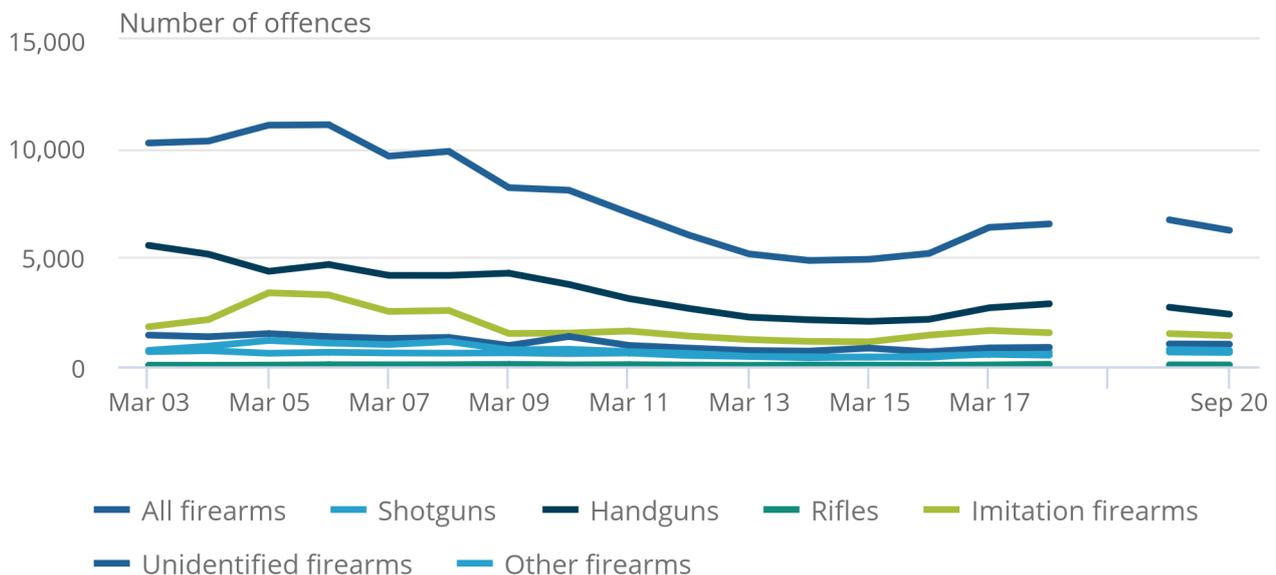
Firearms offences recorded by the police in England and Wales decreased by 7% in the year ending September 2020 compared with the previous year (to 6,242 offences). The biggest annual decreases were seen in offences involving handguns (from 2,708 to 2,391, 12%), imitation firearms (from 1,499 to 1,409, 6%), and other firearms (from 772 to 734, 5%, Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Crimes involving firearms show a small decrease compared with the previous year**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending September 2020

### Figure 10: Crimes involving firearms show a small decrease compared with the previous year

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending September 2020



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data are provisional and have not been reconciled with police forces.
3. Figures exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.

In April to June 2020, firearms offences fell by 15% compared with the previous quarter, January to March 2020 (1,508 offences to 1,287 offences). This fall in offences was most likely the result of national lockdown restrictions. In the most recent quarter, July to September 2020, firearms offences rose by 37% compared with April to June 2020 (1,287 offences to 1,760 offences). This was similar to levels seen in July to September 2019 (1,747 offences).

For data relating to offences involving weapons see [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#). For data relating to offences involving firearms see [Other related tables](#).

As part of the government's [Serious Violence Strategy \(PDF, 1.0MB\)](#) and action plan to tackle corrosive attacks, the Home Office began collecting data on selected offences that involved a corrosive substance on a mandatory basis from April 2019. Data for the year ending March 2020 showed that there were 619 violence against the person and robbery offences recorded by the police in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police)<sup>1</sup> that involved a corrosive substance.

## Notes for: Offences involving firearms

1. Following the implementation of a new IT system in July 2019, Greater Manchester Police have been unable to supply data for the period July 2019 to March 2020.

## 9 . Types of violence

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the best picture of the overall trend in violent crime and is a more reliable measure of long-term trends in domestic abuse, sexual assault, stalking and harassment. Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 1.4 million violent offences in the last 12 months to September 2020. Although not directly comparable with face-to-face CSEW estimates, the estimate for total violence is similar to that reported in recent years. No significant change in violence was reported by the TCSEW in July to September 2020, compared with the previous quarter, April to June 2020<sup>1</sup>.

Police recorded crime showed a 4% increase in violence against the person offences from 1,721,720 to 1,791,757 offences in the year ending September 2020. In the July to September 2020 period, violence against the person offences increased by 19% (to 496,842 offences) in comparison with the previous quarter, April to June 2020. This was also 9% higher than that reported in the same period (July to September) in 2019.

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

### Domestic abuse

Previous estimates from the CSEW showed that 5.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year in the year ending March 2020<sup>2</sup>.

Concerns around confidentiality and respondent safeguarding limit the types of questions asked in the TCSEW. This currently includes those relating to domestic abuse. We are, therefore, unable to provide an update on estimates of domestic abuse since the CSEW was suspended in March 2020.

There was a 10% increase in the total number of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police in the year ending September 2020 (842,813 offences) compared with the previous year. Unlike some other offences, the number of domestic abuse-related offences has not decreased during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Further information and data related to domestic abuse can be found in [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2020](#).

## Sexual assault

For the same reason as for domestic abuse, we are unable to provide TCSEW estimates on sexual assault for the year ending September 2020.

Previous estimates from the CSEW for the year ending March 2020<sup>3</sup> showed that 1.8% of adults aged 16 to 74 years had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences) in the latest year. This was a significant decrease compared with the previous year (2.4%).

The number of sexual offences recorded by the police showed a 6% decrease in the year ending September 2020 (to 153,136 offences) compared with the previous year. Lockdown restrictions in April to June 2020 largely contributed to the overall year-on-year decrease. As lockdown restrictions were eased, the number of sexual offences in July to September 2020 returned to a similar level to that recorded in the same period, July to September, in 2019.

In the year ending September 2020, rape, which accounted for 37% of all sexual offences recorded by the police, fell by 5%, to 56,152 offences. Prior to this decrease, the number of rape offences had been increasing annually, although the rate of increase had been slowing in recent years. This trend may reflect the diminishing impact of recording improvements as well as the effects of national lockdown restrictions.

For a subset of forces providing data to the Home Office Data Hub<sup>4</sup>, 23% of sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2020 were non-recent offences (those that took place more than 12 months before being recorded by the police). While non-recent offences were an important contributor to rises in police recorded sexual offences in previous years, in the latest year, reports of non-recent offences have decreased along with sexual offences overall.

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

For more detailed figures relating to violent crime including a data time series see [Appendix tables](#). CSEW data on the prevalence of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking can be found Table S42 in [Annual supplementary tables](#).

For information about Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and Inspections of police recorded crime and incident data quality see our [User guide](#).

## Stalking and harassment

Recorded stalking and harassment offences (excluding controlling and coercive behaviour<sup>5</sup>) increased by 15% in the year ending September 2020 compared with the previous year. This was driven by a substantial rise in stalking (from 23,543 offences to 64,265 offences). However, since April 2018 there has been a change to the Home Office Counting Rules whereby in a course of conduct amounting to either stalking, harassment or controlling and coercive behaviour, this offence will be recorded in addition to the most serious additional offence involving the same victim or offender. This is expected to cause an increase in offences recorded against harassment and stalking.

## Notes for: Types of violence

1. There is more uncertainty in TCSEW quarterly estimates compared with annual estimates as estimates of incidents will be based on a small sample and therefore subject to more variation. Quarterly estimates should be interpreted with caution.
2. We are unable to provide estimates on domestic abuse for year ending September 2020 as these questions are not asked in TCSEW because of the change in survey mode. These figures will not be updated until these questions are reinstated into the survey, when appropriate to do so.
3. We are unable to provide estimates on sexual assault for year ending September 2020 as these questions are not asked in TCSEW because of the change in survey mode. These figures will not be updated until these questions are reinstated into the survey, when appropriate to do so.
4. 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. Data not shown.
5. From April 2020, controlling and coercive behaviour was categorised under the stalking and harassment offence category. To allow for comparison with the previous year, controlling and coercive behaviour has been removed from overall stalking and harassment figures.

## 10 . Fraud

Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 4.4 million fraud offences in the last 12 months. Although not directly comparable with estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), the estimate for fraud is similar to that reported in recent years.

Police recorded fraud offences are reported to and collated by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) and two industry bodies, Cifas and UK Finance (who report instances of fraud where their member organisations have been a victim). Latest figures showed a similar number of fraud offences referred to the NFIB in the year ending September 2020 (730,765 offences) compared with the previous year (728,881 offences).

Two of the three fraud reporting bodies, Action Fraud and UK Finance, reported increases in the latest year. Action Fraud reported a 4% rise (to 323,038 offences) and UK Finance reported a 23% rise (to 104,233 offences). Cifas, however, reported a 9% decrease (to 303,494 offences). These changes need to be interpreted in the context of differences in coverage and fraud types captured by each reporting body.

Additional fraud data collected by UK Finance provide a broader range of bank account and plastic card frauds than those referred for police investigation to the NFIB. In the latest year, UK Finance reported 2.8 million cases of frauds involving UK-issued payment cards, remote banking and cheques via their recording system, CAMIS. This is broadly stable from the previous year. Within plastic card frauds, there was a 61% increase in “remote banking” fraud (to 61,752 incidents). This increase reflects the greater number of people now regularly using internet, telephone and mobile banking, and the attempts by fraudsters to take advantage of this.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is likely to have had differential effects on trends in fraud offences as a result of lockdown restrictions. For example, data from Action Fraud showed a 27% increase in “online shopping and auctions” fraud in the latest year (to 77,670 offences), which could be accounted for by the increase in online shopping. The data also showed a 17% decrease in “other advance fee” fraud (to 26,080 offences), which could be attributed to a reduction in holiday fraud figures as fewer holidays were booked. However, it is too early to say whether this is evidence of a change to longer-term patterns.

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

## 11 . Computer misuse

Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 1.7 million computer misuse offences in the last 12 months to September 2020. Although not directly comparable with estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), the TCSEW estimate is similar to that reported in earlier years.

There were 29,094 offences referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) in the year ending September 2020, an increase of 36% from the year ending September 2019.

This increase was driven by large increases in the two highest-volume computer misuse types reported to Action Fraud. “Hacking – social media and email” saw a 53% increase from 9,298 to 14,241 offences and “computer viruses and malware” saw a 40% increase from 4,829 to 6,775 offences. This increase may correlate with the rise in the number of large-scale data breaches around the world. Data breaches included a lot of email and password combinations, enabling potential hacking of social media and email accounts, dependent on the public’s level of cyber-security standards and the likelihood of them using the same password and email for multiple accounts.

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

## 12 . Perception and nature of crime during the coronavirus pandemic

Figures presented in this section relate to findings from a new module of questions included in the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) around perceptions of crime, the police and anti-social behaviour during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Respondents were adults aged 18 years and over interviewed between June and November 2020.

### Worry about crime remained the same since the coronavirus outbreak<sup>1</sup>

The majority of adults reported in November 2020 that there had been no change in their level of worry during the pandemic about either crime in general (82%) or fraud (78%).

In November 2020, 37% of adults interviewed perceived crime to have fallen in England and Wales since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, although this proportion had decreased from 56% in June 2020 (see Figure 11).

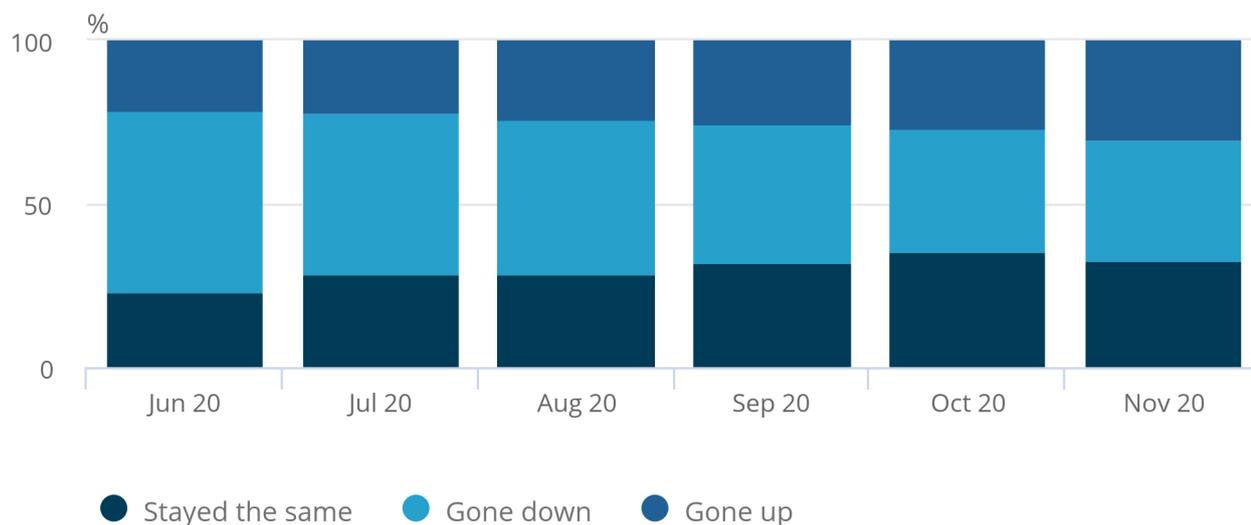
In November 2020, 25% of adults perceived crime to have fallen in their local area, a decrease from 41% in June 2020. The majority of adults interviewed, however, perceived crime in their local area to have stayed the same (60%).

## Figure 11: Proportion of adults who perceive crime levels to have fallen nationally has decreased

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between June 2020 and November 2020

### Figure 11: Proportion of adults who perceive crime levels to have fallen nationally has decreased

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between June 2020 and November 2020



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

#### Notes:

1. These data are published as Experimental Statistics.

## Around a fifth of adults experienced or witnessed local anti-social behaviour in the previous three months, while half witnessed breaches in government restrictions

Across the six interview months, the majority of people perceived anti-social behaviour (ASB) levels in their local area to have stayed the same during the pandemic period (between 65% and 71%). Of those interviewed between June 2020 and November 2020, between 19% and 26% reported having personally experienced or witnessed ASB locally in the last three months.

Across the six interview months, around half of adults reported noticing others breaching virus restrictions in their local area since the start of the coronavirus outbreak<sup>1</sup> (between 50% and 54%). Of these, between 3% and 8% reported the breach to the police. For all six interview months, the main reason for not reporting was that it was considered too trivial.

In July to September 2020, incidents of ASB recorded by the police (excluding Greater Manchester Police and British Transport Police) were 22% higher than that recorded in July to September 2019. This increase may reflect the reporting of breaches to public health restrictions, as most police forces include breaches reported to them by members of the public as an ASB incident.

Data from the NPCC (National Police Chiefs' Council) present [Fixed Penalty Notices issued by police](#) for breaches of government regulations during the lockdown period. The data show that 20,223 notices were recorded as having been issued in England and Wales between Friday 27 March and Monday 19 October 2020.

## **Public perceptions of police and their response to the coronavirus pandemic remained largely positive**

Across the six interview months, around two-thirds of adults gave the police a positive rating for the work they were doing in their local area, with around half saying they were doing a good job (between 49% and 53%). In addition, between 83% and 92% of adults were satisfied with the way local police were responding to the coronavirus pandemic (fairly satisfied, 63% to 68%; very satisfied, 16% to 28%).

## **Majority of children aged 10 to 15 years were reported by parents to not have had a negative online experience within the previous month**

Parents with children aged 10 to 15 years living in their households were asked questions about online experiences on behalf of their child. Respondents were interviewed during the months of September to November 2020.

The majority of parents reported that their 10- to 15-year-old goes online to watch videos or television (90%) or for studying or homework (91%)<sup>2</sup>.

Three-quarters (75%) of parents reported that, at the time of interview, they knew what their child was doing online or who they were in contact with online all or most of the time. More than four in five parents (84%), at the time of interview, knew where their child was going and who they were meeting with when they went out by themselves, all or most of the time.

The majority of parents said their child had not had any negative online experiences in the previous month that they were aware of (85%) or had any negative experiences while out and about (94%).

A smaller proportion had reported negative experiences, with 8% of parents reporting that their child had nasty messages sent to them or posted about them online, and 4% had been threatened or verbally abused while out and about.

For more detailed figures relating to estimates from the TCSEW see [Coronavirus and crime tables](#).

### **Notes for: Perception and nature of crime during the coronavirus pandemic**

1. The reference period referred to in the module includes but is not specific to the lockdown period and is therefore open to some interpretation by respondents as to when the start of the outbreak was.
2. Due to questionnaire changes, this question was only asked of respondents interviewed in November 2020.

## 13 . Crime data

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

Dataset | Released on 3 February 2021

Long-term trends in Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) crime estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) and police recorded crime, by offence type.

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

Dataset | Released on 3 February 2021

Information from a new module of questions included in the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) around perceptions of crime, the police and anti-social behaviour during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Data on children's online activity are also presented.

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

Dataset | Released on 3 February 2021

Firearms, knife and sharp instrument offences, fraud, offences flagged as domestic abuse-related, corruption, child sexual abuse and child exploitation. Data tables also include information on anti-social behaviour, perceptions, non-notifiable incidents and crimes against business. The data contained in these tables are from the following sources: police recorded crime, fraud data from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and UK Finance CAMIS database, figures from the Ministry of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics and the Commercial Victimization Survey.

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

Dataset | Released on 3 February 2021

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

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

Dataset | Released on 3 February 2021

Data from Home Office police recorded crime broken down into quarterly and monthly time periods.

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

Dataset | Released on 3 February 2021

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

## 14 . Glossary

### Computer misuse

Computer misuse is when fraudsters hack or use computer viruses or malware to disrupt services, obtain information illegally or extort individuals or organisations.

### Criminal damage

Criminal damage results from any person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property belonging to another, intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged.

## Fraud

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

## Overall theft offences

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

## Robbery

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

## Violent crime

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

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

## 15 . Measuring the data

In response to the developing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we are working to ensure that we continue to publish vital statistics on crime during the lockdown period. For more information on how we are measuring crime during the pandemic see our [Quality and Methodology Information report](#) and [blog](#).

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

Estimates from the TCSEW are derived from telephone interviews conducted with household residents in England and Wales aged 18 years and over between 20 May and 30 November 2020 inclusive. In order to maximise the sample available, the TCSEW was designed to operate as a panel survey, re-interviewing respondents at three-monthly intervals. Respondents are those who had previously participated in the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) in the last two years<sup>1</sup> and who had agreed to being re-contacted for research purposes. Participants who take part in the TCSEW are asked to participate in future waves of the survey so that we can continue to measure crime whilst the CSEW remains suspended. As a result, figures may be subject to revision as more data is collected. A total of 19,426 interviews were completed during this data collection period.

We provide TCSEW crime estimates for a 12-month reporting period as well as for quarterly periods. We have made comparisons between the estimated number of incidents and victims in July to September 2020 with those in April to June 2020 and January to March 2020. This provides the best indication of change in crime levels throughout the implementation of lockdown restrictions during 2020. The sample size on which these quarterly estimates are produced will, however, be substantially lower than the standard CSEW sample. There will be more uncertainty in TCSEW quarterly estimates compared with annual TCSEW estimates and they should, therefore, be interpreted with caution.

The TCSEW operation closely replicates that of the face-to-face CSEW, however, because of restrictions on interview length<sup>2</sup> and sensitivities around the topic, the TCSEW contains a reduced number of questions. These include questions about respondents' experiences of a broad range of offences over the previous 12 months, as well as a short module specific to the pandemic period relating to their perceptions of crime, the police and anti-social behaviour. Questions in this module are likely to be adapted over the coming months as circumstances change.

Following ethical guidelines, questions from the more sensitive self-completion modules of the face-to-face CSEW are not included in the telephone-operated survey. As a result, estimates are not available in relation to sexual assault, partner abuse, abuse during childhood, and the preferred measure of domestic abuse and domestic violence. Further information on domestic abuse during the pandemic can be found in the [Domestic abuse during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic, England and Wales: November 2020](#) article.

The TCSEW does not collect data from children aged 10 to 15 years, as the procedure for conducting telephone interviews with more than one member of a household would be complex and add considerable time to the length of the household interview. However, we have included proxy measures for parents with 10- to 15-year-olds living in their households as part of the COVID-19-specific module in order to collect information about children's online activities. Where there is more than one child aged 10 to 15 years living in the household, the respondent is asked to answer in relation to the child with the most recent birthday.

The TCSEW uses population estimates derived from population projections for two purposes, in calibration weighting and in calculating the estimated number of crimes. The projections used do not account for unusual events (for example, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic) that affect the size and structure of the population. While we expect the impact of this on the TCSEW estimates to be minimal, some caution should be applied when interpreting the data.

As we are collecting data in a new survey mode, the survey estimates are presented within this release as [Experimental Statistics](#). The Office for Statistics Regulation, on behalf of the UK Statistics Authority, has [reviewed these statistics](#) against several important aspects of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and regards them as consistent with the Code's pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value. All survey estimates presented in this release, including crime estimates for the January to March 2020 period, are calculated using data collected in the new telephone-operated survey. These estimates are not directly comparable with those previously published from the face-to-face CSEW.

## Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime data are supplied to us by the Home Office, who are responsible for the collation of recorded crime data supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales<sup>3</sup>, plus the British Transport Police. These data are supplied to the Home Office on a monthly basis for each crime within the [notifiable offence list](#).

For the purposes of this release, data on police recorded crime have been provided in a monthly and quarterly format to enable comparisons to be made over the pandemic period. The recorded crime figures are collated via a live administrative system that is continually being updated as forces submit data. The data represent a "snapshot" of the live database taken on 11 December 2020 (for data up to the end of September 2020).

Only high-level crime categories are presented for England and Wales as a whole. Figures may differ slightly from those published in subsequent bulletins for the same period, although this does not mean that the figures previously published were inaccurate at the time that they were reported.

In addition, although reductions in crime are likely to have been influenced by the lockdown, some differences may be the result of normal monthly variation within the crime types. Changes in police recording and police activity in response to the lockdown are also likely to have contributed, along with changes in the reporting of crime to the police. Police recorded crime data are not designated as [National Statistics](#). Details of concerns over the quality of these data are in the UK Statistics Authority's [most recent assessment report](#).

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

## Notes for: Measuring the data

1. Between 1 May 2018 and 29 February 2020 inclusive.
2. On average the face-to-face survey lasted around 45 minutes whereas the industry standard for telephone surveys is a maximum of 30 minutes in length.
3. Because of issues with their data supply following the implementation of new force IT systems, data from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) was excluded from previous releases. For this release, data from GMP is included in figures unless otherwise stated.

# 16 . Strengths and limitations

## Police recorded crime

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

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

Data on police recorded crime have been provided in a monthly format. These data may be subject to revision in future quarterly releases.

## Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) sample interviewed each month has been designed to be as representative and accurate as possible given practical limitations such as time and cost constraints. The survey covers crimes not reported to the police and is not affected by changes in police recording practice; therefore, it is a reliable measure of long-term trends. It is also important to note that because of the change in survey mode, from face-to-face to telephone interviews, it is not possible to directly compare estimates in this publication with previous findings from the CSEW.

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

It is also important to consider differing interpretations by respondents of the reference period referred to in the TCSEW questions. Respondents are asked to consider experiences and perceptions “since the start of the virus outbreak”. This includes but is not specific to lockdown periods and respondents’ interpretation of the starting point of the pandemic may differ. Furthermore, throughout the developing coronavirus pandemic, government restrictions and regulations have been continually changing. This will affect and impact interpretation of responses over time.

Results from sample surveys are always estimates, not precise figures. This can have an impact on how changes in the estimates should be interpreted, especially for short-term comparisons. As the number of people available in the sample gets smaller, the variability of the estimates that we can make from that sample size gets larger. Because of the relatively small sample size for the TCSEW, estimates for less frequently occurring crime types will be less reliable and prone to more volatility than for larger aggregated crime totals, making it difficult to detect short-term trends.

Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, victim incident counts for each crime type have been capped at the 98th percentile. Given that the TCSEW commenced in May 2020, we have decided to apply the caps to incident counts that were applied to CSEW estimates for year ending March 2020. We will review caps for TCSEW data for the year ending March 2021 publication. For more information see [Crime in England and Wales QMI](#) and [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).

## 17 . Related links

### [Guide to finding crime statistics](#)

Methodology | Released 17 July 2020

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

### [Coronavirus and crime in England and Wales: August 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 26 August 2020

Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on crime and people's perceptions of crime during the April and May 2020 period of national lockdown, using data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales telephone survey and Home Office police recorded crime.

### [Nature of crime tables: year ending March 2020](#)

Dataset | Released 3 September 2020

Annual data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). Data include when incidents happened, information about offenders, the victim's perception of the incident. Available for: violence, criminal damage, personal and other theft, bicycle theft, other household theft, vehicle-related theft, robbery, burglary and fraud and computer misuse.

### [Property crime tables](#)

Dataset | Released 3 September 2020

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

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

Bulletin | Released 5 March 2020

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

### [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 25 November 2020

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

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

Article | Released 13 February 2020

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

### [Drug misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2020](#)

Article | Released 9 December 2020

An overview of the extent and trends of illicit drug use for the year ending March 2020. Data are from the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

### [Online bullying in England and Wales: year ending March 2020](#) Article | Released 16 November 2020

Estimates of the prevalence and nature of online bullying among children using data from the 10- to 15-year-olds' Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

### [Childhood vulnerability to victimisation in England and Wales: year ending March 2017 to year ending March 2019](#)

Bulletin | Released 5 November 2020

Victimisation and negative behaviours of children aged 10 to 15 years living in a household with an adult who reported experiencing domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental ill-health (the so-called "toxic trio" factors) based on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).