

Compendium

# Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences : Year ending March 2015

Violent crime and sexual offences from the year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales and crimes recorded by police.



Contact:  
John Flatley  
crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk  
+44 (0)20 7592 8695

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# Overview of violent crime and sexual offences

Findings from analyses based on the year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales and crimes recorded by the police covering different aspects of violent crime.



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John Flatley  
crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk  
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# 1 . Main points

- Violent crime covers a wide spectrum of offences. Between the year ending December 1995 and the year ending March 2015 surveys, the number of CSEW violent crime incidents has fallen from 3.8 million to 1.3 million. However, there was no significant change in the number of violent incidents between the year ending March 2014 and the year ending March 2015.
- Improvements in crime recording processes by the police are thought to be the main driver of a 23% rise in the number of violence against the person offences recorded in the year ending March 2015 compared with the previous year.
- The number of sexual offences in the year ending March 2015 (88,106) was the highest figure recorded by the police since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in 2002. As well as improvements in recording practices, this is thought to reflect a greater willingness of victims to come forward to report such crimes. Estimates from the CSEW self-completion module show that there has been no significant change in the proportion of victims of sexual assault from the previous year.
- Violence without injury accounted for almost half (48%) of all CSEW violent incidents in the year ending March 2015, while the more serious crimes of assault with minor injury and wounding accounted for 27% and 24% respectively.
- Reflecting the overall downward trend in the volume of incidents measured by the CSEW, victimisation rates have declined over time. When CSEW violent crime was at its peak in 1995, 4.8% of adults aged 16 and over were a victim of violent crime, compared with 1.8% in the year ending March 2015.
- Consistent with previous years, the proportion of adult victims of violent crime varied by personal and household characteristics. For example, males were more likely to be a victim of violent crime than females, as were adults aged 16 to 24 compared with all other age groups. Adults in low income households were more likely to be a victim than those in higher income households.
- Similar to the previous year, 49% of violent incidents became known to the police, compared with 40% for all incidents of CSEW crime.

## 2 . Summary

This overview covers statistics on violent offences recorded by the police and those measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). It also discusses CSEW data contained within the 'Nature of Crime' tables published alongside this release, which provide more detailed information on the circumstances of such offences. In addition it shows how rates of victimisation vary by different personal and area characteristics.

## 3 . Introduction

Violent crime covers a wide range of offences, from minor assaults such as pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm through to serious incidents of wounding and homicide. Sexual offences include rape, sexual assault and unlawful sexual activity against adults and children, sexual grooming and indecent exposure.

Police recorded crime encompasses a full range of violent crimes and sexual offences, although is restricted to those crimes that have been reported to and recorded by them. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) covers crimes against the population of England and Wales resident in households, and crimes against those households. It covers a narrower range of offences than police recorded crime, although it provides a good measure of the volume of violent crime offences as it is able to capture offences experienced by respondents that have not been reported to or recorded by the police. Therefore reported volumes of CSEW violent crime are higher than those included in the police recorded crime collection. The CSEW does not include homicides or sexual offences in its headline estimates, although it does contain a separate self-completion module which asks 16 to 59 year old respondents about their experience of intimate violence (see the 'Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse' chapter of this release). The CSEW also does not cover the population living in group residences (for example, care homes or halls of residence) or other institutions, nor does it cover the population not resident in households (for example, tourists or visitors), or crimes against the commercial or business sector.

In 2009, the CSEW was extended to cover children aged 10 to 15, and, where appropriate, data for this age group are presented in this Overview chapter. Methodological differences between the adult and children's survey mean that direct comparisons cannot be made between the adult and child victimisation data.<sup>1</sup>

## CSEW violent crime

Violent crime statistics from the CSEW are presented under the overall category of 'Violence', and include offences involving violence with injury (wounding, assault with minor injury), and violence without injury. There are additional breakdowns for the offender-victim relationship.

Therefore, references to 'violent crime' and 'violence' within the CSEW-related text, figures and tables of this bulletin refer primarily to the CSEW crimes of wounding, assault with minor injury, and violence without injury.

## Police recorded violent crime

The coverage of police recorded crime is defined by the Notifiable Offence List<sup>2</sup>, which includes a broad range of violent offences, ranging from threats to kill, harassment, and assault without injury, to offences such as homicide<sup>3</sup>.

In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, statistics based on police recorded crime data have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Official 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. Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) continue to be badged as National Statistics.

Additionally, following an [inquiry by the Public Administration Select Committee \(PASC\)](#) into crime statistics in which allegations of under-recording of crime by the police were made<sup>4</sup>, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out an inspection of the integrity of police crime recording during 2014.

The final report on findings from the HMIC inspections, '[Crime-recording: making the victim count](#)', was published on 18 November 2014<sup>5</sup>. Based on an audit of a large sample of records, HMIC concluded that, across England and Wales as a whole an estimated 1 in 5 offences (19%) that should have been recorded as crimes were not. The greatest levels of under-recording were seen for sexual offences and violence against the person offences. Across England and Wales, an estimated 1 in 4 (26%) sexual offences and 1 in 3 (33%) violent offences that should have been recorded as crimes were not.

As a result of the renewed focus on the quality of crime recording by the police, caution should therefore be taken when interpreting police recorded crime trends. For more information see the 'Accuracy of the statistics' section in the statistical bulletin, [Crime in England and Wales, year ending March 2015](#). In addition to data on the number of offences recorded by the police, the Home Office Data Hub provides more detailed information about a crime by collecting record-level data on offences. Such details include characteristics of victims of offences and associated aggravating factors of crimes, and allow for a wider range of analyses to be carried out than is possible through the standard police data returns. For more information see the 'Experimental Statistics: New Data on Police Recorded Violent and Sexual Offences, year ending March 2015' section of this publication.

## Notes for introduction

1. See [Experimental statistics on victimisation of children aged 10 to 15](#) for more detail.
2. The Notifiable Offence List includes all indictable and triable-either-way offences (which could be tried at a crown court) and a few additional closely related summary offences (which would be dealt with by a magistrate). For information on the classifications used for notifiable crimes recorded by the police, see Appendix 1 of the [User Guide](#).
3. There are some crimes which are not captured in this bulletin, which may involve some degree of violence but which do not have a specific victim, for example, public order offences. See [Appendix table A4, year ending September 2015 \(851 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) for police recorded figures for public order offences.
4. Part of the evidence considered by PASC included analysis demonstrating a growing pattern of divergence between police recorded crime figures and CSEW estimates (see [Methodological note: Analysis of variation in crime trends](#)) which has questioned whether there may have been a 'gradual erosion of compliance' with the NCRS from 2007.
5. Separate [Crime data integrity force reports](#) for each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales were published on 28 August 2014.

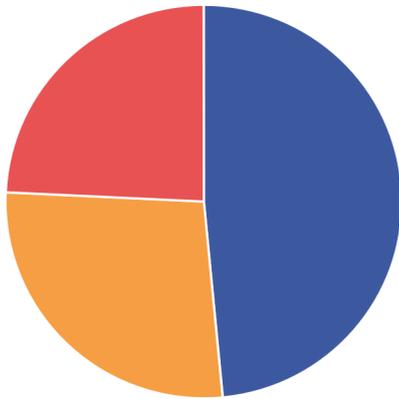
## 4 . Extent of violent crime

In the year ending March 2015 CSEW, it was estimated that there were 1.3 million incidents of violence against adults in England and Wales<sup>1</sup> ([Appendix Table A1, year ending March 2015 \(623 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). Violence without injury (where the victim is punched, kicked, pushed or jostled with no resulting injury) accounted for just under half (48%) of all CSEW violent incidents (Figure 1.1).

Violence with injury is broken down into assault with minor injury (where the victim is punched, kicked, pushed or jostled with resulting minor injury, such as scratches or bruises) which, similar to previous years, accounted for 27% of violent incidents, and wounding (where the incident results in severe or less serious injury<sup>2</sup>) which made up 24% of incidents.

**Figure 1.1: Types of violent crime, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 1.1: Types of violent crime, year ending March 2015  
Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

The CSEW also estimates the number of crimes against children aged 10 to 15 resident in households<sup>3</sup>. The year ending March 2015 CSEW estimated that there were 373,000 violent offences<sup>4</sup> against such children in England and Wales. This equates to 5.7% of children being a victim of violent crime in this period; with just under half of these, 2.8% of children, having experienced assault with minor injury ([Bulletin table 23, year ending March 2015](#)). As noted in Section 2.4 of the report on [Experimental statistics on victimisation of children aged 10-15](#), these data are not directly comparable with the data related to adults. The Home Office Data Hub provides record level data on child victims of police recorded violent crime (see the 'Experimental Statistics: New Data on Police Recorded Violent and Sexual Offences, year ending March 2015' section of this release).

There were 778,870 violence against the person offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2015<sup>5</sup>. Of these, 48% (374,159) were classified as violence with injury and 52% (404,174) as violence without injury. Importantly, police recording of a crime is based on the element of intent rather than outcome. Therefore incidents classified as violence with injury will include crimes based on the deliberate attempt of the offender to cause serious bodily harm, regardless of whether any injury was sustained by the victim. Data on homicide is available through 2 sources of data, the Home Office Homicide Index and the main recorded crime data return. Homicides accounted for 537 (0.1%) of the total violence against the person offences recorded in the year ending March 2015. Please see the 'Homicide' chapter of this publication for more information.

Over two-thirds of violence without injury offences<sup>6</sup> were classified as assaults without injury<sup>6</sup> (68%), with the remainder covering a range of offences, including harassments<sup>7</sup>, and threats to kill. From April 2014, a separate notifiable offence of stalking was introduced as a result of the [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#). Stalking offences were previously embedded within other categories, including harassment. This change in the law should therefore be taken into account when looking at trends in harassment ([Appendix Table A4, year ending September 2015 \(851 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

The majority of violence with injury offences recorded by the police (93%) were classified as assaults with injury. Assaults with intent to cause serious harm made up the majority of the remaining violence with injury offences (5%).

'High harm' violent crimes such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and modern slavery have received an increased focus recently, yet neither the CSEW or police recorded crime are good sources of data for these crimes. FGM offences that do come to the attention of the police are included within the category of 'assault with injury'. The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) have published [experimental statistics on Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)](#)<sup>8</sup>. These statistics have been collected by hospitals to obtain a better picture of the prevalence of FGM<sup>9</sup>, but only include cases that have surfaced as a result of a victim receiving medical treatment and will understate the true volume of such offences.

Modern slavery can take multiple forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour and domestic servitude. The [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) legislated to define it as a criminal offence in its own right and came into force on 31 July 2015. The Act makes provision "about slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and about human trafficking, including provision for the protection of victims; to make provision for an Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner; and for connected purposes".

Modern slavery was previously not classified as an individual offence, but recorded under trafficking for sexual exploitation, immigration offences, and other indictable or triable-either-way offences. Modern slavery is not included in the statistics for the year ending March 2015, but as of 1 April 2015 a separately identifiable offence of modern slavery was introduced under the category 'violence without injury'. For the most recent police recorded figures on modern slavery, see [Crime in England and Wales, year ending September 2015](#).

## **Notes for extent of violent crime**

1. 'All violence' includes violence with injury (wounding, assault with minor injury), and violence without injury. For more information see Chapter 5.1 of the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#).
2. For example, cuts, severe bruising, chipped teeth, bruising or scratches resulting in medical attention or any more serious injury.
3. These are based on a 'preferred measure' that takes into account factors identified as important in determining the severity of an incident such as the relationship of the victim to the offender and the level of injury to the victim. See Chapter 2.5 of the [User Guide](#) for further information.
4. With regard to CSEW violent crime against children aged 10 to 15, robbery is still included in the category of violence in the year ending March 2015 CSEW. However, in the latest quarterly publications for the year ending June 2015 and the year ending September 2015, robbery is now excluded from the category of 'Violence' to be consistent with the main survey.
5. Recorded crime figures presented in this release are those notified to the Home Office and that were recorded in the Home Office database on 3 December 2015, covering the financial year ending March 2015 – see [Appendix Table A4](#) for the full data table.
6. Assaults without injury offences are those where at the most a feeling of touch or passing moment of pain is experienced by the victim.
7. Harassment offences are those incidents where no other substantive notifiable offence exists, but when looked at as a course of conduct are likely to cause fear, alarm or distress.
8. Figures from the Health and Social Care Information Center on Female Genital Mutilation do not include figures for Wales and relate to activity in English foundation and non-foundation trusts including A&E departments.
9. Clinical staff must record in patient healthcare records when it is identified that a patient has undergone FGM. This applies to all NHS clinicians and healthcare professionals across the NHS. However, the requirement to submit the FGM Prevalence Dataset is only mandatory for Foundation and non-Foundation trusts, including Accident and Emergency departments. Other organisations (which may include GPs) may wish to provide an FGM Prevalence Dataset centrally, the [FGM Data Quality Note](#) contains further information.

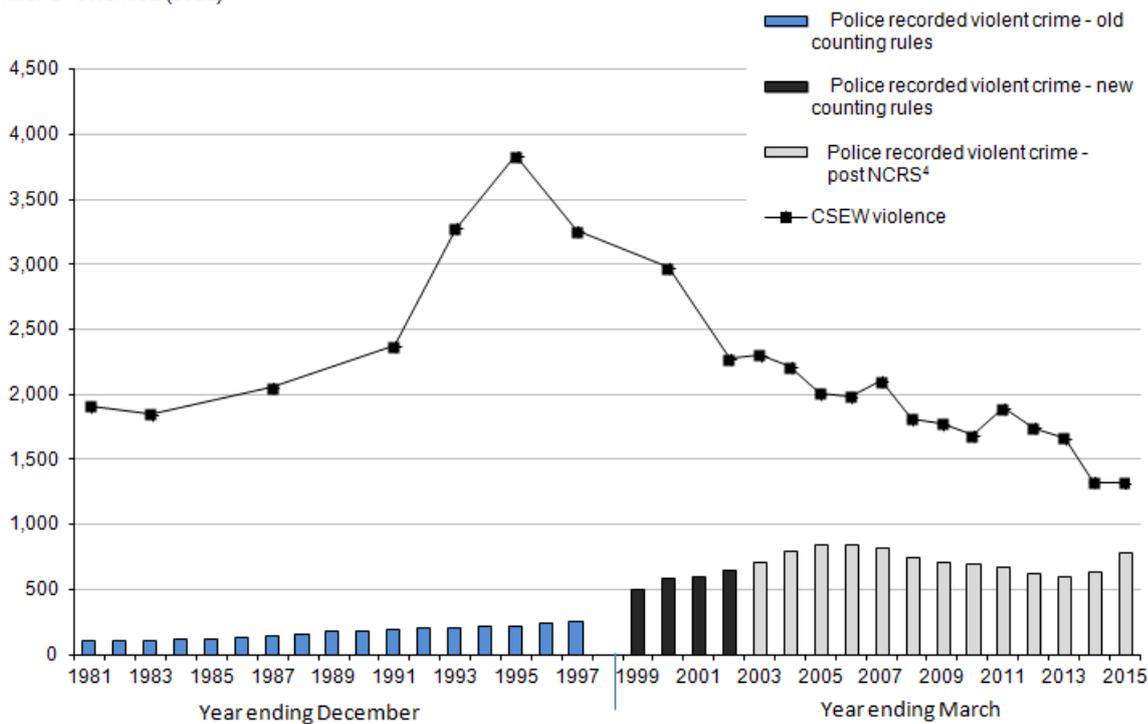
## 5 . Trends in violence

For the population groups and offences it covers, the CSEW is the best source for assessing long-term trends in violent crime as the survey's methodology has remained consistent over time.

The number of incidents of CSEW violence increased through most years of the 1980s before reaching a peak in 1995 (Figure 1.2). Between the year ending December 1995 and the year ending March 2002 surveys, the number of incidents of violent crime fell by 41%, from 3.8 million incidents to 2.3 million incidents, with more gradual decreases being recorded thereafter. The general trend over the last decade has been a continued period of modest annual decreases (though often not large enough to be statistically significant year on year). The cumulative effect of these changes has been statistically significant over the medium-term, with the estimated number of violent incidents having decreased by 26% between the year ending March 2009 and the year ending March 2015, to 1.3 million incidents. Most of this decrease was between the year ending March 2013 and the year ending March 2014 (20%). There was no significant change in the number of violent incidents between the year ending March 2014 and the year ending March 2015.

**Figure 1.2: Trends in police recorded violent crime and Crime Survey for England and Wales violent crime, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2015**

Number of offences (000s)



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

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics
2. The Home Office Counting Rules for police recorded crime were expanded in April 1998 to include certain additional summary offences and counts became more victim-based (the number of victims was counted rather than the number of offences). Figures before and after that date are not directly comparable.
3. A figure was also recorded using the previous Home Office Counting rules for the year ending March 1999, which has been presented in this chart in previous years. The number of offences or incidents (000s) recorded using the previous Home Office Counting Rules was 231.
4. The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced in April 2002, although some forces adopted NCRS practices before the standard was formally introduced. Figures before and after that date are not directly comparable.

Following changes in recording practices from the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002<sup>1</sup>, violence against the person offences recorded by the police rose to 845,673 offences in the year ending March 2005. Such major changes to the way that police record crime, including the expansion of the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) in April 1998<sup>2</sup>, mean that levels of police recorded crime cannot be compared across these recording changes.

Since 2005, the number of violent offences recorded by the police gradually fell to just over 600,000 offences in the year ending March 2013, followed by an increase to 778,870 offences in the year ending March 2015. While both the police recorded figures and the CSEW show reductions in violent crime between the year ending March 2008 and the year ending March 2013, the trends in the 2 sources were very different over this time period. Police recorded crime fell at a faster rate (20%) than that seen in the survey (8%), and then saw an increase of 30% in the last 2 years. The majority of this increase was between the year ending March 2014 and the year ending March 2015 (23%). The 30% increase has largely been driven by the police response to findings of 2 recent HMIC inspections.

Firstly, the [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#) report published by HMIC found that violence against the person offences had the highest under-recording rates across police forces in England and Wales.

Action taken by police forces to improve their compliance with the NCRS given the renewed focus on the accuracy of crime recording has resulted in an increase in the number of offences recorded. Evidence from the Metropolitan Police Service<sup>3</sup>, which shows an increase in the number of reports of violence being recorded as crimes, supports this point. For more information see the 'Accuracy of the statistics' section in the statistical bulletin, [Crime in England and Wales, year ending March 2015](#).

Secondly, it is likely that there has been an increase in the reporting of domestic abuse and subsequent recording of these offences by the police, as a result of improved response by police to domestic abuse following an [HMIC inspection](#) in 2013 on the handling of domestic abuse incidents.

The renewed focus on the quality of crime recording means that caution is needed when interpreting statistics on police recorded crime. While we know that it is likely that improvements in compliance with the NCRS have led to increases in the number of crimes recorded by the police (for example, violent crime and sexual offences), it is not possible to quantify the scale of this or assess how this effect and timing of improvements varied between different police forces.

Increases in police force area data may reflect a number of factors including improved recording practice<sup>4</sup>, increases in reporting by victims and also possibly some genuine increases in the levels of crime in some police forces.

## Notes for trends in violence

1. See Chapter 3.3 of the [User Guide](#) for further information.
2. The HOCR for recorded crime were expanded to include certain additional summary offences and counts became more victim-based (the number of victims was counted rather than the number of offences).
3. In evidence given by the Metropolitan Police Service to the [London Assembly Police and Crime Committee](#) on 13 November 2014 it was reported that the proportion of incidents of violence that were converted into recorded crimes rose from 40% to 75% between 2012 and 2014.
4. For further information on possible explanations of increasing police recorded crime levels see Chapter 3 of the [User Guide](#).

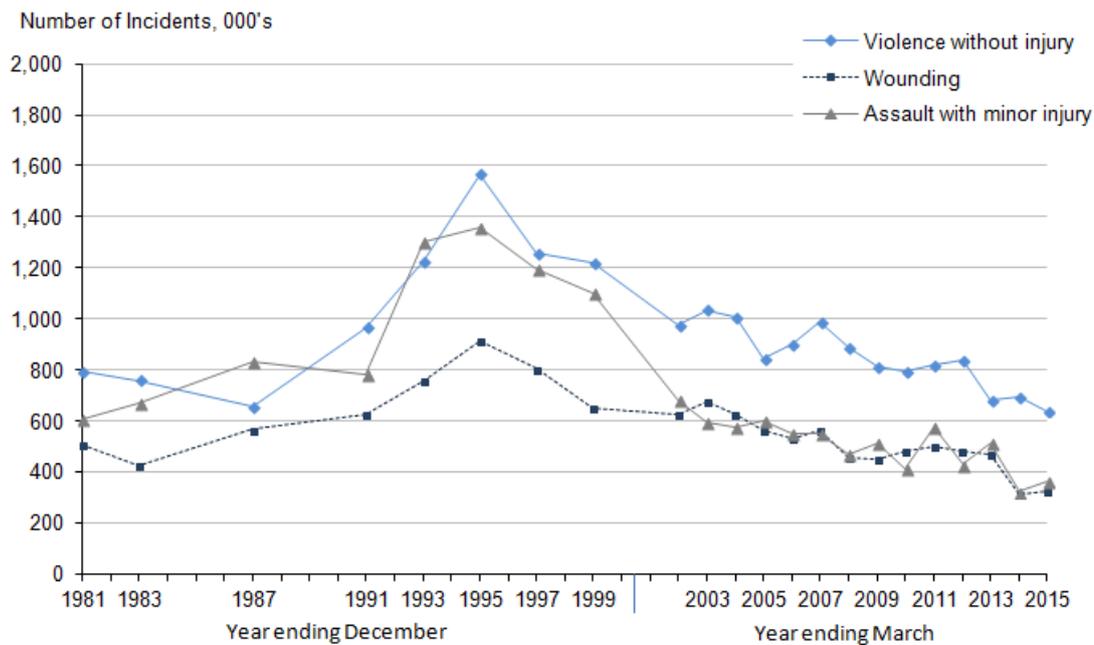
## 6 . Type of violence

Trends in CSEW violence by type of violence<sup>1</sup> show large reductions across all violent crime types between current estimates and those in the mid to late 1990s (Figure 1.3). Assaults with minor injury have decreased by 73% between the peak in the year ending December 1995 and the year ending March 2015, while wounding and violence without injury decreased by 65% and 59% respectively over the same time period.

There were an estimated 638,000 incidents of violence without injury in the year ending March 2015, the lowest since the survey began. There was no change from the previous year, with the apparent 8% decrease not statistically significant.

Wounding and assaults with minor injury saw non-significant rises in the same period, of 4% and 12% respectively. The estimates of the numbers of incidents remain among the lowest since the survey began.

**Figure 1.3: Trends in violence by type of violence, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2015  
Crime Survey for England and Wales**



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

Within the overall category of police recorded violence against the person, there were 374,159 offences of violence with injury in the year ending March 2015, an increase of 16% from the previous year. This follows a fluctuating trend since the year ending March 2003, where violence with injury peaked to 543,500 offences in the year ending March 2006, and then gradually declined before rising again from the year ending March 2014. The number of violence without injury offences has remained at a similar level over time, seeing minor year on year fluctuations since the year ending March 2003. There was a 30% increase in police recorded violence without injury between the year ending March 2014 and the year ending March 2015. The majority of the increase in violence without injury was made up of threats to kill and child abduction, which increased by 53% and 45% respectively. ([Appendix Table A4, year ending September 2015 \(851 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

The large increases between the year ending March 2014 and the year ending March 2015 are mostly a result of improved compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) rather than a genuine rise in violent crime<sup>2</sup>. It is thought that recording improvements are more likely to affect relatively less serious violent offences, which explains the larger increase in violence without injury compared with violence with injury. Evidence provided by the [National Police Chief's Council \(NPCC\)](#) states that, whilst police recorded violence against the person increased by 23%, in the year ending March 2015 the number of "calls for service" relating to violent crime rose by 1%. Calls for service refer to emergency and non-emergency calls from members of the public and referrals from partner agencies (such as education, health, and social services) for police to attend an incident or investigate a case. This, along with evidence from the CSEW, suggests that the rise in recorded violence against the person is largely due to process improvements rather than a genuine rise in violent crime.

## Notes for type of violence

1. See Chapter 5.1 of the [User Guide](#) for more information on the offences included in this breakdown.
2. The inspections took place over the period December 2013 to August 2014, which falls within the time period covered by this release. The current year covers the period April 2014 to March 2015 and the previous year covers the period April 2013 to March 2014.

## 7 . Relationship between victims and perpetrators of violence

Findings from the CSEW show that in the year ending March 2015, 43% of offences (563,000) were perpetrated by a stranger<sup>1</sup>, 36% (469,000) by an acquaintance<sup>2</sup>, and the remaining 20% (261,000) were categorised as domestic violence ([Appendix Table A6, year ending March 2015 \(623 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). Domestic violence here refers to incidents reported through the face-to-face interview questions<sup>3</sup>, however it is important to bear in mind that domestic violence measured this way is prone to under-reporting; therefore the figure mentioned above is likely to be an underestimation. Of those aged 16 to 59 who reported being victims of physical domestic abuse in the self-completion<sup>4</sup> module, only 14% also reported being a victim of domestic violence in the last 12 months in face-to-face interviews.

This measure of domestic violence is also impacted by the current method of dealing with high frequency repeat victimisation. CSEW estimates of the number of crimes only include the first 5 incidents in a 'series' of victimisations, that is, "the same thing, done under the same circumstances and probably by the same people". This restriction to the first 5 incidents in a series has been applied since the CSEW began in order to ensure that estimates are not affected by a very small number of respondents who report an extremely high number of incidents and which are highly variable between survey years.

A report by Walby et al. (2014) '[Mainstreaming domestic and gender-based violence into sociology and the criminology of violence](#)' included some analysis of the impact of the current method on the number of domestic violence incidents in a series. Preliminary analysis suggested that using unrestricted counts of high frequency victimisation would lead to unwelcome volatility in CSEW estimates.

['Is Violent Crime Increasing or Decreasing? A New Methodology to Measure Repeat Attacks Making Visible the Significance of Gender and Domestic Relations'](#) assesses the impact of counting all incidents over 3-year moving averages, rather than counting only the first 5 incidents in a series. We are currently looking at options for better reflecting the experiences of repeat victims of violent crime in the official statistics, and the analysis conducted by Walby et al. will be considered as part of this work.

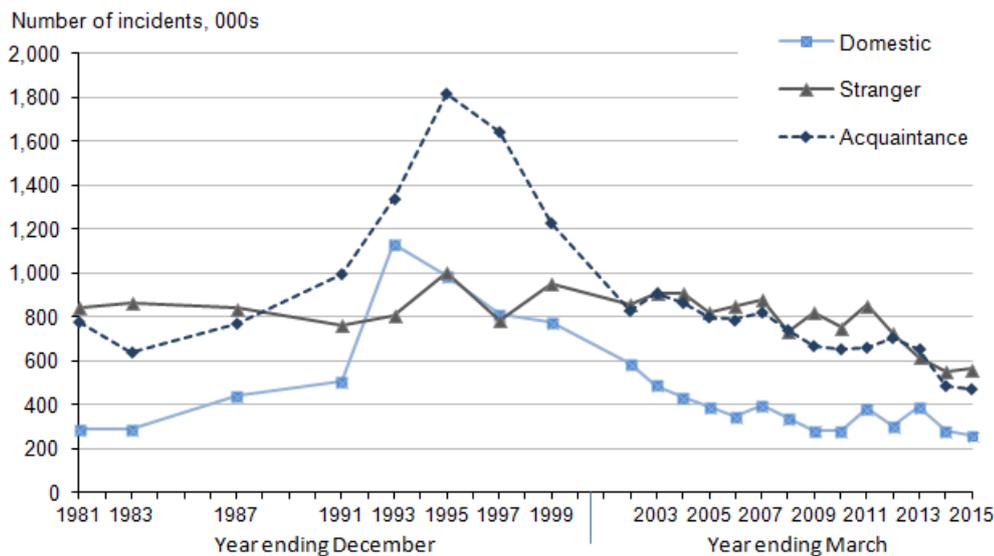
The separate self-completion section of the survey, collected on a comparable basis since the year ending March 2005, is the more complete measure of such crime and reveals higher levels of domestic abuse victimisation, and provides a greater level of detail (see the 'Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse' chapter of this release)<sup>5</sup>.

Incidents of CSEW domestic violence peaked at 1.1 million offences in the year ending December 1993, and have since fallen by 77% to 261,000 offences in the year ending March 2015. This showed no change from the previous year, the apparent 7% decrease was not statistically significant and follows a period of fluctuations since the year ending March 2006 (Figure 1.4).

CSEW acquaintance violence fell by 74% from the peak of 1.8 million offences in the year ending December 1995, to 469,000 offences in the year ending March 2015. There was no change in acquaintance violence between the year ending March 2014 and the year ending March 2015 (4% decrease was not significant). Acquaintance violence in particular is a large-volume offence, and its substantial changes seen since the mid 1990s have been an important driver of changes in overall violence.

Incidents of stranger violence have fallen by 44% from the peak of 1 million offences in the year ending December 1995, to 563,000 offences in the year ending March 2015. Similar to domestic violence and acquaintance violence, there was no statistically significant change in stranger violence (2% increase) from the previous year.

**Figure 1.4: Trends in violent crime by type of perpetrator, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**



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

**Notes:**

1. The year ending December 1991 estimates for domestic, acquaintance and stranger violence and mugging were calculated based on the estimate for all violence. Estimates for these individual categories could not be calculated using their individual incidence rates because the data used for calculating these rates were not collected for that year.

**Notes for relationship between victims and perpetrators of violence**

1. Stranger violence includes wounding and assaults in which the victim did not have any information about the offender(s), or did not know and had never seen the offender(s) before.
2. Acquaintance violence is comprised of wounding and assaults in which the victim knew one or more of the offenders at least by sight. It does not include domestic violence.
3. In a 'face-to-face' interview, an interviewer reads the questions out to the respondent and records the answers given.
4. Self-completion' means that the respondent reads the questions themselves and records their answers directly onto a laptop.
5. The self-completion module gives a more accurate picture of the extent of domestic abuse as it uses a broader definition that includes emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them. It is also thought that respondents are more willing to report domestic abuse in this self-completion module than in the face-to-face part of the survey.

**8 . Sexual offences**

There were 88,106 police recorded sexual offences in the year ending March 2015, an increase of 37% compared with the previous year. This is the highest figure recorded by the police and the largest annual percentage increase since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002.

Within the overall increase, the number of offences of rape increased by 41% to 29,234 offences, and the number of other sexual offences increased by 35% to 58,872 offences ([Appendix Table A4, year ending September 2015 \(851 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). Both rape and other sexual offences are at the highest level since the NCRS was introduced in April 2002.

The increase in police recorded sexual offences should be seen in the context of a number of high profile reports and inquiries which are thought to have resulted in police forces reviewing and improving their recording practices. These include:

- the investigation by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI)<sup>1</sup> in 2012, which highlighted the need to improve the recording and investigation of sexual offences
- concerns about the recording of sexual offences, for example, in evidence presented to the [Public Administration Select Committee \(PASC\)](#) inquiry into crime statistics<sup>2</sup>, and arising from other high profile cases
- the creation of the 'Independent Panel Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse', which was set up to consider whether, and the extent to which, public bodies and other non-state institutions have taken seriously their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse in England and Wales

[HMIC's inspection of crime recording](#), published in late 2014, concluded that across England and Wales an estimated 1 in 4 (26%) sexual offences that should have been recorded as crimes were not<sup>3</sup>.

The inspection also found that some police forces had poor processes for crime recording in specialist units responsible for investigations of rape and other sexual offences, or those more generally protecting vulnerable people, including children, mentally ill and infirm people. In some forces, such units were found to have standalone case management systems or mailboxes which were often used for referrals between specialist departments and partner organisations (such as health or social services). HMIC found records of crimes on these systems which had not made it onto the force's main crime recording system. Those that had not been recorded on the force's crime recording system would therefore not have fed through into official statistics. As forces have taken steps to improve their systems and recording processes, it is likely that proportionately more referrals are now appearing in the official statistics.

Previous increases in the number of sexual offences reported to the police were shown to have been related also to a rise in the reporting of historical (those that took place over 12 months before being reported) offences following 'Operation Yewtree', which began in 2012<sup>4</sup>. Feedback from forces indicates that both current and historical offences continued to rise in the year ending March 2015 compared with the previous year. However, the major contribution to this increase is believed to have come from current offences.

More information on sexual offending from across the crime and criminal justice system can be found in '[An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales](#)'. This is a joint publication compiled by the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and the Office for National Statistics which was published in January 2013, and used combined CSEW data from the year ending March 2010 to the year ending March 2012.

## Notes for sexual offences

1. [Forging the links: Rape investigation, HMIC and HMCPSI, 2012](#) has further information.
2. The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.
3. For more information see the 'Accuracy of the Statistics' section in the statistical bulletin, [Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending September 2014](#).
4. For more information see [Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending September 2013](#).

## 9 . Additional information on violent crime from the CSEW

The following sections of the Overview contain additional analysis from the CSEW including levels of victimisation, timing and location of incidents, reporting to the police, profile of offenders, impact on victims and use of weapons. Additional information on intimate personal violence can be found in the 'Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse' chapter of this publication.

### Levels of victimisation

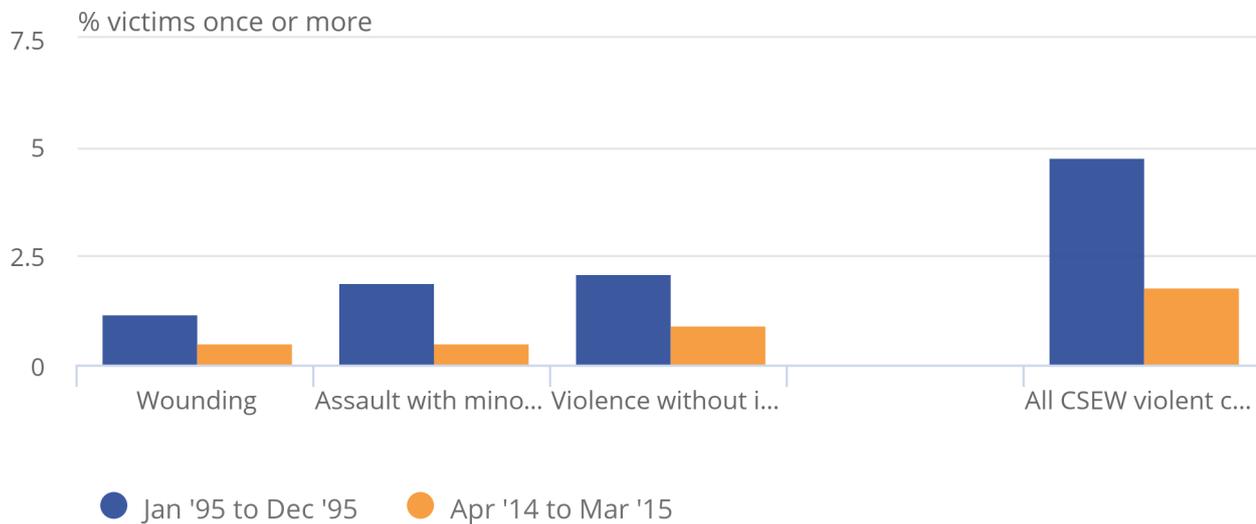
The CSEW provides victimisation rates for overall violence and for each individual type of violence. In the year ending March 2015, 1.8% of adults aged 16 and over were a victim of violent crime; 0.9% were a victim of violence without injury, 0.5% a victim of wounding, and 0.5% a victim of assault with minor injury (Figure 1.5). These figures have not changed from the previous year.

Victimisation rates for violent crime have fallen considerably since 1995 when crime was at its peak. The year ending December 1995 CSEW estimated that 4.8% of adults aged 16 and over were a victim of violence, more than double the figure for the year ending March 2015 survey (1.8%).

Victimisation rates for all types of CSEW violence have dropped by more than half between the year ending December 1995 and the year ending March 2015. The largest decline in the victimisation rates over this period is for assault with minor injury, which at 0.5% in the year ending March 2015 was a quarter of the rate in the year ending December 1995 (1.9%).

**Figure 1.5: Violent crime, victimisation of adults aged 16 and over, year ending December 1995 and year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 1.5: Violent crime, victimisation of adults aged 16 and over, year ending December 1995 and year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

In the year ending March 2015, the CSEW estimated that 5.2% of children aged 10 to 15 were a victim of violent crime, showing no significant change from the previous year. Children were more commonly victims of violence with injury than violence without injury (3.7% of children compared with 1.6%)<sup>1</sup> ([Appendix Table A9, year ending September 2015 \(851 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

## Notes for additional information on violent crime from the CSEW

1. Some methodological differences between the adult and children’s survey mean that direct comparisons cannot be made between the adult and child victimisation data.

## 10 . Repeat victimisation

For the year ending March 2015, the CSEW showed that 77% of victims of violence were victimised once, while 23% were victimised more than once. This repeat victimisation can be broken down further, with 10% victimised twice, and 14% victimised 3 times or more ([Annual Trend and Demographic Table D5, year ending March 2015 \(381.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). Although the level of repeat victimisation shows no change from the previous year (the fall from 27% was not statistically significant), the latest figure is the lowest since the survey began.

In the year ending December 1995 when CSEW violence peaked, 69% of violent incidents were experienced by repeat victims, compared with 52% in the year ending March 2015 ([Annual Trend and Demographic Table D7, year ending March 2015](#)). Between the year ending December 1995 and the year ending March 2015, the number of incidents of violence experienced by repeat victims decreased by 74%, compared with a decrease of 46% in the number of incidents experienced by those who were victimised once. The decrease in the volume of incidents of violence over this period has therefore been influenced more by the fall in repeat victimisations than the fall in one-off victimisations. This pattern (repeated across most crime types) is an important factor in considering the drop in crime since the mid-1990s. For more information on repeat victimisation for other crime types, see [Focus on Property Crime, 2012 to 13 \(Chapter 2\)](#).

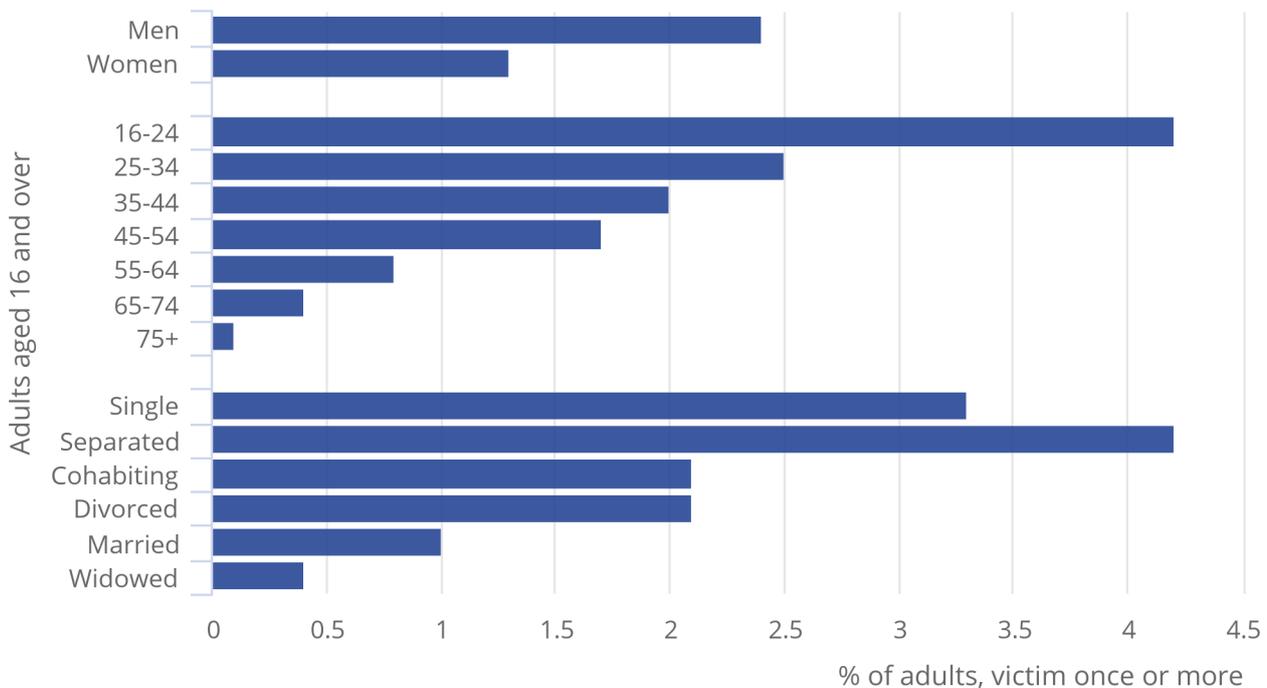
## 11 . Characteristics associated with being a victim

The proportion of adult victims of violent crime in the year ending March 2015 varied by certain personal and household characteristics (see [Appendix Tables 1.01 and 1.02](#) for a full breakdown). Many of the characteristics are closely associated, so caution is needed in the interpretation of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation. Separate analysis on the characteristics associated with being a victim of intimate personal violence is available in the 'Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse' chapter of this publication.

- Men were more likely to be a victim of violent crime than women (2.4% of males compared with 1.3% of females<sup>1</sup>, Figure 1.6)<sup>2</sup>.
- Stranger violence showed the largest difference in victimisation between men and women (1.4% and 0.4% respectively).
- Women were more likely to be a victim of domestic violence than men (0.4% compared with 0.2%, [Appendix Table 1.03](#)).
- Adults aged 16 to 24 were more likely to be a victim of violent crime (4.2%) than any other age group.
- Separated adults were more than four times as likely to be a victim of violent crime (4.2%) than adults who were married/civil partnered (1.0%).
- Domestic violence was more common among separated adults (1.9%) compared with married/civil partnered adults (0.1%).
- Stranger violence was more likely to affect adults who were single (1.5%) than those who were married /civil partnered (0.6%).
- Adults of a mixed or multiple ethnic background were more likely to be a victim of violent crime (5.8%) than those from a White (1.8%), Asian/Asian British (1.2%) or Other ethnic group (1.2%).
- Full-time students were more likely to be a victim of violent crime (3.4%) than those in other occupations ([Appendix Table 1.03](#)).
- Renters were more likely to be a victim of a violent crime than home owners (2.7% of social renters and 3.0% of private renters compared with 1.2% of home owners, [Appendix Table 1.02](#)).
- Adults in low income households of less than £10,000 were more likely to be a victim of violence (3.3%) compared with those households with higher incomes.

**Figure 1.6: Characteristics associated with being a victim of violence, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 1.6: Characteristics associated with being a victim of violence, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

**Notes:**

1. See Section 7.3 of User Guide for definitions of personal characteristics.

The children's survey covering respondents aged 10 to 15 showed that boys were more likely than girls to have experienced violent crime (7.2% compared with 4.3%). See [Tables D3 and D4 of the Annual Trend and Demographic Tables, year ending March 2015 \(381.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) for more information.

**Notes for characteristics associated with being a victim**

1. This pattern is different for domestic violence and sexual violence. For more information please see the 'Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse' chapter of this publication.
2. These estimates contrast with police recorded data from the Home Office Data Hub, which found that the victim was female in 52% of violent offences and male in 48% of offences (see the 'Experimental Statistics: New Data on Police Recorded Violent and Sexual Offences, year ending March 2015' of this release for more detail).

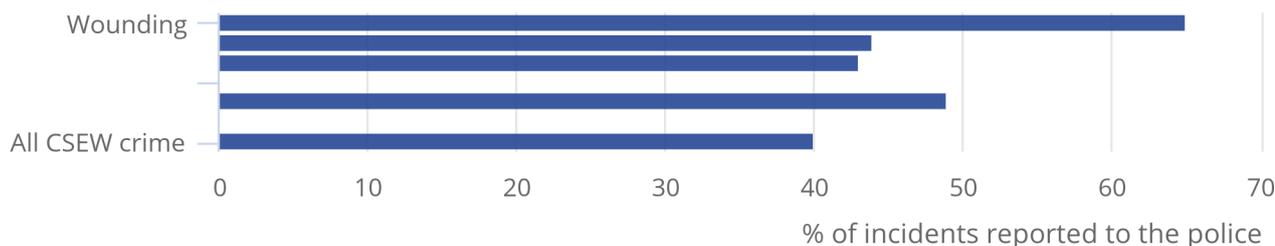
## 12 . Reporting to the police

In the year ending March 2015, the CSEW showed that the police came to know about 49% of violent incidents. This is similar to the figure for the previous year (50%), but shows a 7 percentage point increase from the year ending March 2012, where 42% of violent incidents became known to the police. This change, along with lower figures in earlier years, suggests that reporting rates have increased within the last few years ([Annual Trend and Demographic Table D8, year ending March 2015](#)). This latest reporting rate for violence compares with a reporting rate for all CSEW crime of 40%.

As in previous years, variations in reporting rates continue to occur by violence type, with the police coming to know about 44% of incidents of assault with minor injury or no injury in the year ending March 2015, compared with 65% of wounding incidents (Figure 1.7). This suggests that respondents are more likely to report more serious incidents to the police.

**Figure 1.7: Proportion of violent crime incidents reported to the police, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 1.7: Proportion of violent crime incidents reported to the police, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

In the year ending March 2015, the CSEW showed that 6% of violent incidents experienced by children aged 10 to 15 became known to the police ([Nature of Crime Table 4.5 \(132 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

## 13 . Timing of violent crimes

In the survey interview, victims of violent crime were asked about the circumstances of the incident, including when it happened. In the year ending March 2015, the CSEW indicated that the majority of violent incidents (57%) occurred in the evening or during the night (Table 1.1). Despite some year on year fluctuations, this figure was significantly lower than the year ending March 2014, where 68% of violent incidents occurred in the evening or during the night ([Nature of Crime Table 3.3 \(393 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Looking at the days of the week on which violent offences take place, for overall violence, 47% of incidents occurred during the week and 53% of incidents occurred at the weekend (Table 1.1). It is probable that most of the incidents occurring at the weekend took place on Friday or Saturday night. Information on police recorded crime for 28 forces from the Home Office Data Hub<sup>1</sup> supports this finding, with Friday and Saturday showing the highest proportion of violent crimes recorded between the hours of 9pm to 3am (39% and 41% of all weekend violent crime respectively). This is likely to reflect the greater influence of alcohol consumption on these particular days and times.

In the year ending March 2015, 92% of incidents of violence against children aged 10 to 15 occurred during the week and 8% of incidents occurred at the weekend. This highlights the different lifestyles of children compared with adults, and also reflects the fact that a large proportion of violent incidents against children (76%) occurred in and around school ([Nature of Crime Table 4.1 \(132 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

**Table 1.1: Timing of incidents for types of violent crime, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

England and Wales

Timing	% adults aged 16 and over/children aged 10 to 15				
	All Violence	Wounding	Assault with minor injury	Violence without injury	Violence against children aged 10 to 15
Morning/Afternoon <sup>1</sup>	43	40	53	39	..
Evening/Night <sup>2</sup>	57	60	47	61	..
Unweighted base - number of adults	582	142	146	294	
During the week	47	43	43	51	92
At the weekend <sup>3</sup>	53	57	57	49	8
Unweighted base - number of adults /number of children aged 10 to 15	574	142	144	288	142

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

Notes:

1. Morning is from 6am to noon; afternoon is from noon to 6pm.
2. Evening is from 6pm to midnight; night is from midnight to 6am.
3. Weekend is from Friday 6pm to Monday 6am.
4. .. Denotes 'not available'.

### Notes for timing of violent crimes

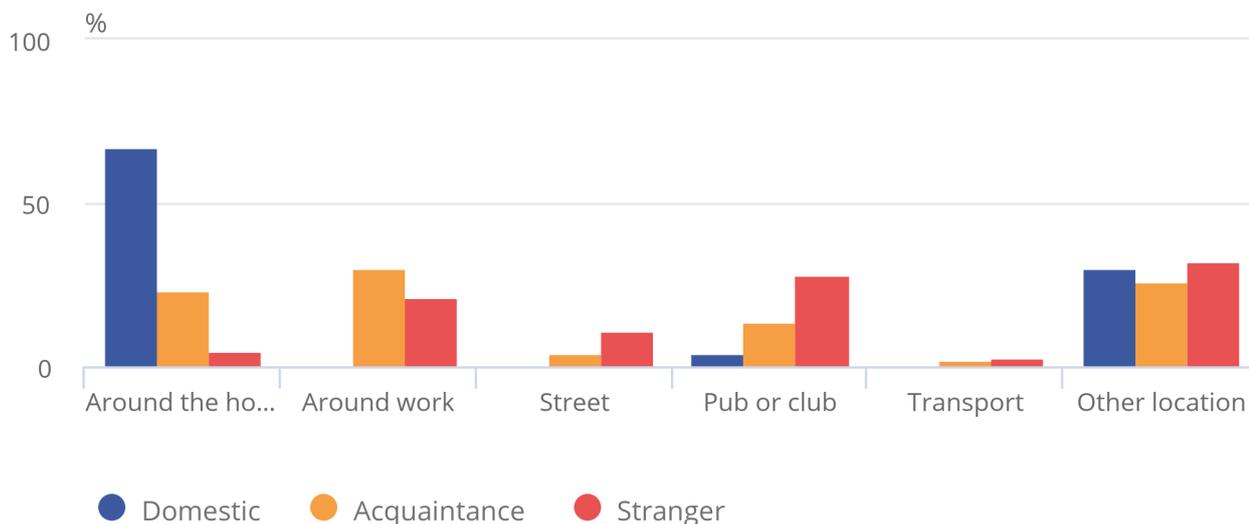
1. The Data Hub includes additional information provided by police forces, such as when an offence took place, as well as when it was recorded by the police.

## 14 . Where violent crimes happen

As in previous years, the CSEW shows that in the year ending March 2015, the location of where incidents of violent crime took place varied by the offender-victim relationship. The large majority of incidents of domestic violence occurred around the home (67%), compared with incidents of stranger violence which were most likely to occur in an 'other' location<sup>1</sup> (32%) and in pubs or clubs (28%); incidents of acquaintance violence were most likely to take place at work (30%) (Figure 1.8).

**Figure 1.8: Location of where incidents of violent crime occurred, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 1.8: Location of where incidents of violent crime occurred, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

**Notes:**

1. Includes home premises, whether inside/outside or garage/shed, home car park or nearby street to home.
2. Includes work premises, whether inside/outside or work garage/car parks.
3. Includes streets near work/college/sports ground/public entertainment/train or tube stations etc., subway, park/open spaces, waste grounds, and street markets.
4. Includes pub/club premises, whether inside or nearby street/car parks.
5. 'Other location' includes car parks, inside or grounds of a shop/supermarket, a school/college/university, a friends home, a place of entertainment, sports centre or somewhere else.

Looking at the location of these incidents split by type of violent crime ( [Nature of Crime Table 3.2 \(393 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)), incidents of wounding were equally likely to occur around the home or in a pub or club (19% each) but most commonly occurred in an 'other' location (38%). In comparison, assault with minor injury was most likely to occur around the home (30%). Incidents of violence without injury were more likely to happen at work than incidents of violence with injury (28% compared with 16%).

## Notes for where violent crimes happen

1. 'Other location' includes car parks, inside or grounds of a shop/supermarket, a school/college/university, a friend's home, a place of entertainment, sports centre or somewhere else.

## 15 . Profile of offenders involved in violent crimes

Victims of violent crime were able to provide some detail about the offender(s) in 98% of incidents ( [Nature of Crime Table 3.1 \(393 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). Offenders were most likely to be male, with males found to be the offender in over three-quarters of violent incidents (81%). Offenders were also most likely to be aged between 25 and 39, with the offender believed to belong to this age group in just under half of violent incidents (46%).

In 71% of violent incidents where the victim could provide some detail about the offender, a sole offender was believed to have been involved. For incidents with more than one offender, victims most commonly reported that 4 or more offenders were involved (14% of incidents). The number of offenders involved varies by type of violence. In the year ending March 2015, 95% of domestic violence incidents involved only one offender, whereas 71% of acquaintance violence incidents and 57% of stranger violence incidents involved only one offender. A quarter of violent incidents committed by a stranger involved 4 or more offenders.

In 42% of violent incidents the offender was a stranger; in 39% the offender was well known to the victim and in 19% the offender was known by sight or to speak to. In around half of incidents of wounding (45%) and assault with minor injury (52%), the offender was well known to the victim, compared with around a quarter of incidents of violence without injury (27%). The offender was a stranger in 52% of incidents of violence without injury, compared with 35% of wounding and 32% of assault with minor injury incidents.

According to the year ending March 2015 CSEW, victims believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol in just under half (47%) of all violent incidents, or an estimated 592,000 offences<sup>1</sup>. In nearly one-fifth (19%), or an estimated 241,000 violent incidents, the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of drugs. Although the number of incidents where the offender was believed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs has fallen over the last 10 years, the proportions of all violent incidents have remained similar. The number of incidents where the offender was under the influence of alcohol or drugs has decreased alongside a fall in the overall level of violent crime ( [Nature of Crime Table 3.11 \(393 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). See the 'Experimental Statistics: New Data on Police Recorded Violent and Sexual Offences, year ending March 2015' section of this release for information on alcohol-related police recorded violent crime.

In the year ending March 2015 CSEW, the victim was able to say something about the offender in 95% of violent incidents against children aged 10 to 15. Incidents of violence against children were most likely to be committed by someone known well to the victim (58% of incidents), with a small proportion of incidents (6%) being committed by strangers. In 78% of violent incidents against children, the offender was a pupil at the victim's school and in 8% of incidents the offender was a friend (including boyfriend/girlfriend). The offender of violent incidents against children aged 10 to 15 was most likely to be male (89% of incidents) and aged between 10 and 15 (86%) ( [Nature of Crime Table 4.3 \(132 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

## Notes for profile of offenders involved in violent crimes

1. Questions were asked if the victim was able to say something about the offender(s), which they could do in nearly all (98%) incidents. If there was more than one offender, victims were asked if any of the offenders were perceived to be under the influence. Questions were not asked if any offender was perceived to be under 10 years.

## 16 . Emotional impact

The CSEW also asks victims about the impact of the crime they had experienced (Nature of Crime Table 3.4). In 81% of violent incidents the respondent was 'emotionally affected', including 17% who were affected very much (Figure 1.9). The proportion of violent incidents where the victim was very much emotionally affected was lower than that of incidents of theft from a dwelling (21%) or theft of a vehicle (20%), but higher than other types of crime (for example, criminal damage, at 12%) (Nature of Crime Tables 6.4, 4.7 and 8.5, [Focus on Property Crime, 2014 to 2015](#)).

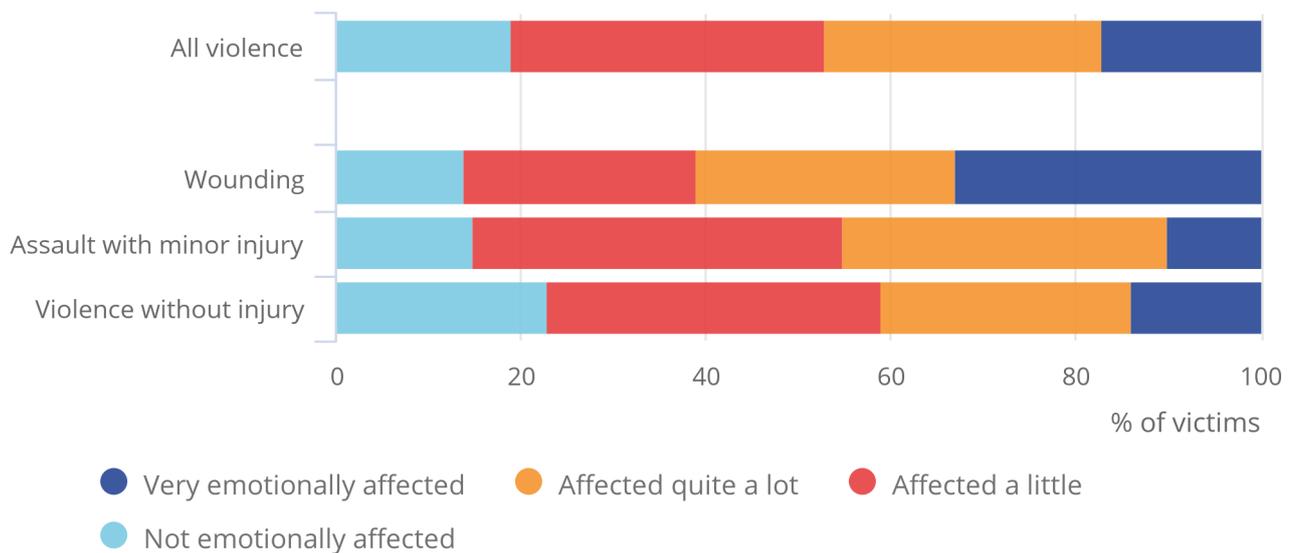
When this is broken down by type of injury, it can be seen that in incidents of wounding, 86% of victims were 'emotionally affected', compared with incidents of violence without injury (77%).

In terms of the severity of the emotional impact, wounding was, as expected, the type of violence where victims were most likely to report that they were very emotionally affected (33% of wounding incidents). Violence without injury was the crime type with the highest proportion of incidents where the victim stated that they were not emotionally affected at all (23%).

The most common forms of emotional reaction to violent crimes in the year ending March 2015 CSEW were anger (46%) and annoyance (45%)<sup>1</sup>. The emotional reaction was broadly similar across different types of injury ( [Nature of Crime Table 3.4 \(393 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) ).

**Figure 1.9: Emotional response to violent crime victimisation, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 1.9: Emotional response to violent crime victimisation, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales

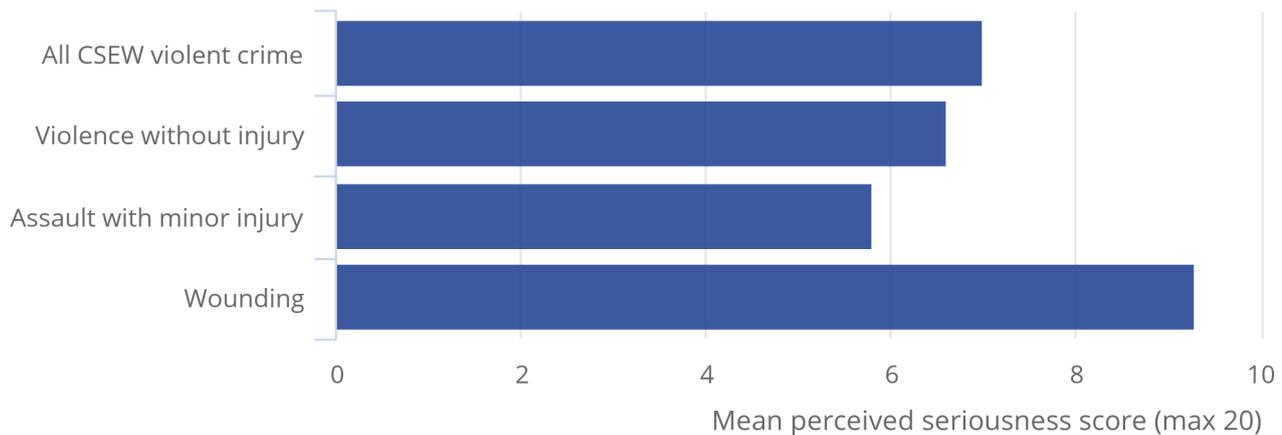


Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Victims of violence were asked to rate the seriousness of each incident on a scale of 1 to 20, and the means of these seriousness scores are represented by the bars in Figure 1.10<sup>2</sup>. As in previous years, wounding was considered to be a more serious violent crime (mean score 9.3) than assault with minor injury (mean score 5.8) and violence without injury (mean score 6.6). Looking in more detail at the seriousness scores in the year ending March 2015 ([Nature of Crime Table 3.5 \(393 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)), half of violence victims (55%) rated the incident in the least serious range (1 to 6), while 13% rated it in the most serious range (14 to 20).

**Figure 1.10: Mean perceived seriousness score of violent crime, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 1.10: Mean perceived seriousness score of violent crime, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

Victims aged 10 to 15 were also asked about their perceptions of the incident they experienced. Based on the year ending March 2015 survey, 12% of violence victims aged 10 to 15 thought the incident was ‘a crime’, 39% perceived it to be ‘wrong, but not a crime’, and 49% thought it ‘was just something that happens’. In addition, 58% of incidents were perceived by the victim to be part of a series of bullying incidents. In comparison, 44% of theft victims aged 10 to 15 perceived the incident to be a crime. This reflects the fact that the measure of violence against children aged 10 to 15 includes a large proportion of low level incidents which may involve a crime in law (for example, one child deliberately pushing over another with the intention of hurting them) but which may not be viewed as serious enough to amount to an offence (see report on [Experimental statistics on victimisation of children aged 10-15](#)).

## Notes for emotional impact

1. Respondents can report more than one emotion.
2. Respondents are asked to use this scale, with “1 being a very minor crime like theft of milk bottles from a doorstep, and 20 being the most serious crime of murder”.

## 17 . Use of weapons and injuries in CSEW violent crimes

According to the year ending March 2015 CSEW, a weapon was used in 18% of violent incidents ( [Nature of Crime Table 3.9 \(393 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). The use of a hitting implement (including sticks, clubs and other hitting implements) in violent incidents decreased from 6% in the year ending March 2014 to 2% in the year ending March 2015. The most commonly used weapon in the year ending March 2015 was a knife (used in 7% of violent incidents).

For more information on the use of weapons in violent incidents, please see the 'Recorded offences involving the use of weapons' chapter of this publication, which contains analysis of data collections on police recorded violent crime involving knives and firearms.

In the year ending March 2015 CSEW, victims sustained a physical injury in 52% of incidents of violence. This varied by type of violence, with 76% of incidents of domestic violence resulting in physical injury compared with 50% of acquaintance violence and 41% of stranger violence incidents. The most common type of injury in incidents of violence was minor bruising/black eye (33% of incidents). A lower proportion of incidents involved more serious injuries such as broken bones (4%), concussion or loss of consciousness (2%) or a broken nose (2%) ( [Nature of Crime Table 3.7 \(393 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

A weapon was used in 16% of incidents against children aged 10 to 15 in the year ending March 2015 ( [Nature of Crime Table 4.7 \(132 Kb Excel sheet\)](#))<sup>1</sup>.

The survey asks children about injuries sustained through violence. Based on the year ending March 2015 CSEW, 76% of victims aged 10 to 15 sustained an injury and 14% of victims received some form of medical attention as a result of the violent incident. Of those incidents where the victim aged 10 to 15 sustained an injury, minor bruising/black eye was the most common injury (65%), followed by marks on skin (21%) and scratches (17%). In 11% of violent incidents where the victim aged 10 to 15 sustained an injury, this was a serious injury <sup>2</sup> ( [Nature of Crime Table 4.6 \(132 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)).

### Notes for use of weapons and injuries in CSEW violent crimes

1. Figures are based on analysis of a small number of victims and should be interpreted with caution.
2. Serious injury includes facial/head injuries, broken nose, concussion, broken bones.

## 18 . Findings from the 2014 Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS)

The [2014<sup>1</sup> CVS<sup>2</sup> examined the extent of crime across 3 business sectors in England and Wales](#) in the previous 12 months<sup>3</sup>, including, among other crimes, the extent of assaults and threats. Assaults and threats were the most common crime among accommodation and food service premises, with 260,000 incidents making up 46% of all incidents against this sector. Additionally, 12% of premises in this sector had experienced at least one such incident. Victims of this crime experienced a high level of repeat victimisation, with an average of 18 incidents in the 12 months prior to interview.

Among the wholesale and retail sector, 10% of crimes experienced were assaults or threats (410,000 incidents), with 11% of premises having experienced this crime in the previous 12 months.

A lower proportion of premises in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector had experienced assault or threats in the previous 12 months (3%), with an average of 4 incidents per victimised premises. Such crimes accounted for 11% of all crimes against this sector.

The proportion of incidents of assaults and threats reported to the police ranged from 35% in the wholesale and retail sector to 42% in the accommodation and food sector, although this compares with much higher reporting rates across all sectors for burglary with entry, ranging between 68% (agriculture, forestry and fishing sector) to 95% (wholesale and retail sector).

## Notes for Findings from the 2014 Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS)

1. Results from the 2015 CVS will be published in April 2016.
2. Some of the offences covered in the CVS could also be picked up by the CSEW estimates and police recorded crime.
3. The CVS is a telephone interview, for which the 2014 survey was based on 4,180 interviews with respondents at premises in the three industry sectors of wholesale and retail; accommodation and food; and agriculture, forestry and fishing. Nearly half of these interviews were with respondents from the wholesale and retail sector. Between them, these three sectors accounted for just under one-third of all business premises in England and Wales in 2014.

## 19. Background notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Compendium

# Homicide

Findings from analyses based on the Homicide Index recorded by the Home Office covering different aspects of homicide.



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# 1 . Main points

- The Home Office Homicide Index showed there were 518 homicides (murder, manslaughter and infanticide) in the year ending March 2015 in England and Wales. This represents a decrease of 5 offences (1%) from the 523 recorded for the previous year.
- Over recent years, the number of currently recorded homicides has shown a general downward trend and the number for the year ending March 2015 (518) was the lowest since 1983 (482).
- In the year ending March 2015, there were 9.0 offences of homicide per million population. As in previous years, children under 1 year old had the highest rate of homicide (35.8 offences per million population) compared with other age groups, the highest since year ending March 2004 (42.8).
- With the exception of those aged under 1 year, adults generally had higher incidence rates of being a victim of homicide than children. For children aged 1 or over, homicide rates were higher for 1 to 4 year olds (4 per million) than for 5 to 15 year olds (2 per million).
- In the year ending March 2015, just under two-thirds of homicide victims (64%) were male, the lowest since 1996 (64%).
- There were differences between males and females in the pattern of relationships between victims and suspects. Women were far more likely than men to be killed by partners/ex-partners (44% of female victims compared with 6% of male victims), and men were more likely than women to be killed by friends/acquaintances (32% of male victims compared with 8% of female victims).
- In the year ending March 2015, there were 54 homicide victims aged under 16 years. Three-fifths of these victims were killed by a parent or step-parent (60%, or 31 offences).
- The most common method of killing continued to be by knife or other sharp instrument. In the year ending March 2015, there were 186 victims killed in this way, accounting for over 1 in 3 (36%) homicides.
- In the year ending March 2015, 21 homicide victims (4% of the total) were killed by shooting, 8 fewer than the previous year and the lowest number since 1980 (19 homicides).

## 2 . Summary

This chapter presents analyses of homicides recorded by the police in the year ending March 2015. The information comes from the Home Office Homicide Index, which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. The database is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset.

The data in this section are for the year ending March 2015, and [figures for the year ending September 2015](#) show that the number of homicides recorded has increased. These will be analysed in subsequent publications, as the police continue to populate the Homicide Index.

## 3 . Introduction

The term 'homicide' covers the offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide. Murder and manslaughter are common law offences that have never been defined by statute, although they have been modified by statute. In this bulletin the manslaughter category includes the offence of corporate manslaughter which was created by the [Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007](#) which came into force on 6 April 2008. The offence of infanticide was created by the [Infanticide Act 1922](#) and refined by the Infanticide Act 1938 (section 1).

Data presented in this chapter have been extracted from the Home Office Homicide Index which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset<sup>1</sup>. Data presented here are therefore more accurate than the homicide figures presented in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases<sup>2</sup>.

In accordance with the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#), statistics based on police recorded crime data (including figures from the Homicide Index) have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Official 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](#). Further information on the interpretation of recorded crime data is provided in the [User Guide](#).

Homicide Index data are based on the year when the offence was recorded, not when the offence took place or when the case was heard in court. While in the vast majority of cases the offence will be recorded in the same year as it took place, this is not always the case. The data refer to the position as at 13 November 2015, when the Homicide Index database was 'frozen' for the purpose of analysis<sup>3</sup>. The data will change as subsequent court hearings take place or as other information is received.

Caution is needed when looking at longer-term homicide trend figures, primarily because they are based on the year in which offences are recorded by the police rather than the year in which the incidents took place. For example, the 172 homicides attributed to Dr Harold Shipman as a result of Dame Janet Smith's inquiry took place over a long period of time but were all recorded by the police during the year ending March 2003. Also, where several people are killed by the same suspect, the number of homicides counted is the total number of victims killed rather than the number of incidents. For example, the victims of the Cumbrian shootings committed by Derrick Bird on 2 June 2010 are counted as 12 homicides rather than one incident in the year ending March 2011 data.

## Notes for introduction

1. For example, when the police initially record an offence as a homicide it remains classified as such unless the police or courts decide that a lesser offence, or no offence, took place. The offence would be reclassified on the Homicide Index as 'no longer recorded' but remain in the main police recorded crime collection as a homicide.
2. Provisional homicide figures published in the [Crime in England and Wales, Year ending March 2015](#) release showed 533 homicides recorded in the year ending March 2014 and 534 for the year ending March 2015. The corresponding figures from the Homicide Index were 523 and 518.
3. The Homicide Index is continually updated with revised information from the police as investigations continue and as cases are heard by the courts. The version used for analysis does not accept updates after it is 'frozen' to ensure the data do not change during the analysis period. See Section 3.1 of the [User Guide](#) for more information.

## 4 . Offences recorded as homicide

When the police initially record an offence as a homicide, it remains classified as such unless the police or courts decide that a lesser offence, or no offence, took place. In all, 530 deaths were initially recorded as homicides by the police in the year ending March 2015 and by 13 November 2015, 12 were no longer recorded as homicides<sup>1</sup>, giving a total of 518 offences currently recorded as homicides.

Homicides generally increased from the 1960s up to the early 2000s (the peak in the year ending March 2003 includes 172 homicides committed by Dr Harold Shipman). There has been a general downward trend since the year ending March 2003.

The total number of offences recorded as homicide in the year ending March 2015 was 518. This represents a decrease of 5 offences (1%) from the 523 recorded for the previous year, the lowest number since 1983, when 482 homicides were recorded.

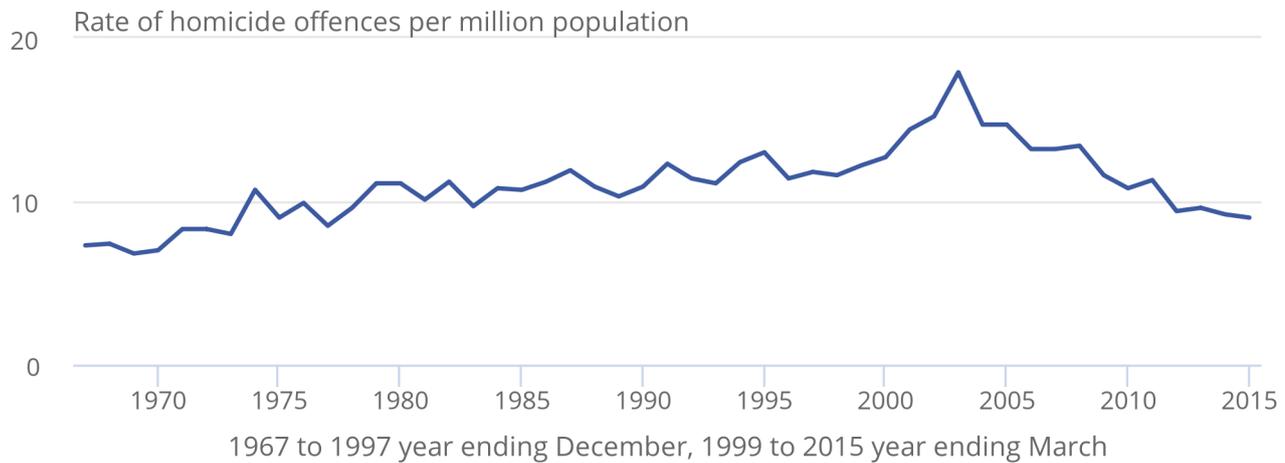
We also published more up-to-date figures on homicide from the main recorded crime return as part of our Crime Statistics in England and Wales series. [Figures for the year ending September 2015](#) show that there were 574 homicides recorded by the police, higher than the 518 currently recorded homicides in the year ending March 2015 shown here. These figures are from different sources, but show that homicide does appear to have increased in the months following the time period that this bulletin reports on.

There were 331 male victims of homicide in the year ending March 2015, down 3% from 340 in the previous year and continuing a generally downward trend. In contrast, the number of female homicide victims increased slightly, from 183 to 186 victims (a 3% increase), although the longer-term trend is slowly downward.

To put the actual number of homicides in context, incidence rates show the volume of offences as a proportion of the resident population. The incidence rate for homicide remains relatively low, with 9.0 homicides recorded per million population during the year ending March 2015, the lowest homicide rate since the late 1970s (for example, there were 8.5 homicides per million population in 1977). If the 172 homicides committed by Harold Shipman recorded in the year ending March 2003 are excluded from the analysis, homicide rates peaked in the year ending March 2002, at 15.2 offences per million population<sup>2</sup> (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1: The incidence rate per million population for homicide offences currently recorded by the police in England and Wales, year ending December 1967 to year ending March 2015**

Figure 2.1: The incidence rate per million population for homicide offences currently recorded by the police in England and Wales, year ending December 1967 to year ending March 2015



**Source: Homicide Index, Home Office**

**Notes:**

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Year ending December 1987 includes 15 victims of Michael Ryan.
3. Year ending March 2001 includes 58 Chinese nationals who suffocated in a lorry en route into the UK.
4. Year ending March 2003 includes 172 victims of Dr Harold Shipman.
5. Year ending March 2004 includes 20 cockle pickers who drowned in Morecambe Bay.
6. Year ending March 2006 includes 52 victims of the 7 July London bombings.
7. Year ending March 2011 includes 12 victims of Derrick Bird.

Compared with most other offences, homicides are relatively low-volume events, and year-on-year variations need to be interpreted with some caution. However, an analysis of trends (discussed in 'Statistical interpretation of trends in homicides' later in this chapter) shows the reduction in homicides in recent years was statistically significant and indicates a real fall in this offence rather than merely a consequence of random year-to-year variation.

## Notes for offences recorded as homicide

1. For example, following further investigation the police determined that the case was a suicide not a homicide.
2. In the year ending March 2003, the rate of homicide was 17.9 homicides per million population. If the 172 Harold Shipman homicides recorded that year are excluded, the rate would have been 14.6 offences per million population.

## 5 . Case outcomes

The circumstances surrounding a homicide may be complex and it can take time for cases to pass through the criminal justice system (CJS). Due to this, the percentage of homicides recorded in the year ending March 2015 (and, to a lesser extent, those recorded in earlier years) that have concluded at Crown Court is likely to show an increase when the next figures from the Homicide Index are published in 12 months' time. Conversely, the proportion of cases without suspects or with court proceedings pending is expected to decrease as police complete more investigations and as cases pass through the CJS (see 'Suspects' section within this chapter for further details).

Where there are multiple suspects in a homicide case they are categorised in the Homicide Index as either the principal or a secondary suspect. There is only ever 1 principal suspect per homicide victim. If there is any conviction information available then the suspect with the longest sentence or most serious conviction is determined to be the principal suspect. In the absence of any court outcome, the principal suspect is either the person considered by the police to be the most involved in the homicide or the suspect with the closest relationship to the victim.

As more than 1 person can be convicted for a single homicide, the number of people convicted will not necessarily be the same as the number of victims recorded. However, if the outcome of only the principal suspect in each case is examined (that is, 1 suspect per victim), this can provide a more direct comparison to the case outcome of each homicide.

Of the 518 cases currently recorded as homicide in the year ending March 2015, data on the case outcomes of the principal suspects at 13 November 2015 showed ([Appendix Table 2.02](#)):

- court proceedings had resulted in homicide convictions in 198 cases (38%)
- court proceedings were pending for 173 cases (33%)
- proceedings had been discontinued or not initiated or all suspects had been acquitted in 18 cases (3%)
- suspects had committed suicide in 28 cases (5%)
- no suspects had been charged in connection with 99 cases (19%)

These figures are similar to those published last year for the [year ending March 2014](#), with the exception of cases with no suspects (13%). Analysis of homicide suspects is included in the 'Suspects' section of this chapter.

## 6 . Victims

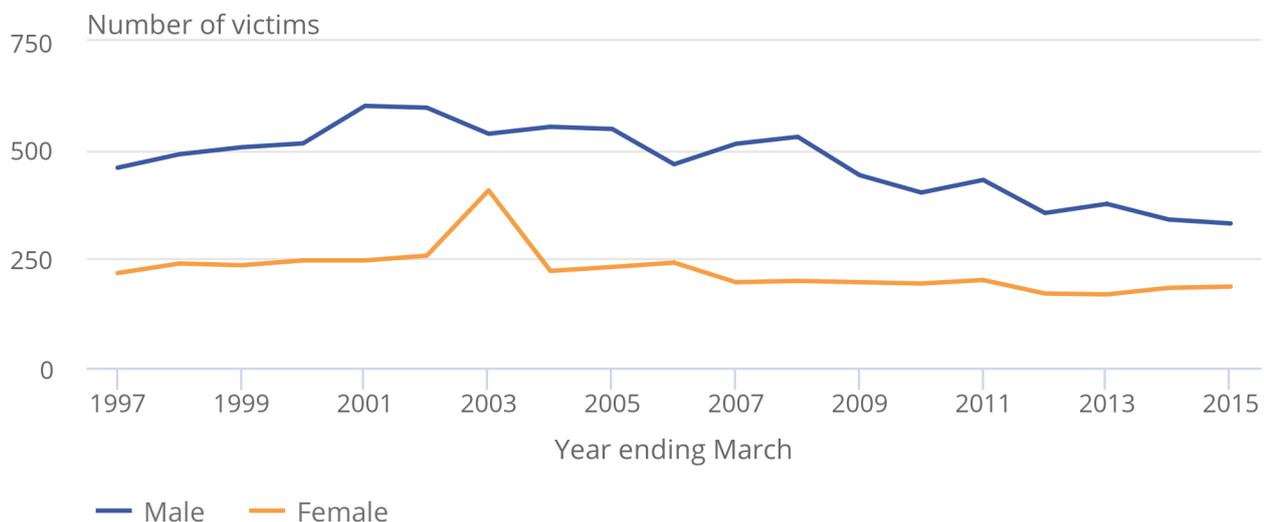
In the year ending March 2015, just under two-thirds of homicide victims were male (64%, 331 victims) and one-third were female (36%, 186 victims). The proportion of victims that were male was slightly lower than in previous years (68 to 69% of victims were male in the previous 5 years), and the lowest since 1996<sup>1</sup> (64%). Among the 25 victims aged under 1 year old, 64% were male, a higher percentage than in previous years.

Although there was a small decrease in the number of male victims in the year ending March 2015 compared with the previous year (down from 340 to 331; a 3% fall) and the number of female victims increased slightly from 183 to 186 (2%), the general trend remained flat (Figure 2.2).

In the year ending March 2015, the homicide rate for males (11.7 per million population) was almost twice that for females (6.4 per million population). The homicide rate has consistently been higher for males than for females, although the difference between the rates for men and women is much smaller than it used to be ([Appendix Table 2.03](#)). It should be noted that the nature of homicides differs between men and women, as discussed in the 'Relationship between victim and principal suspect' section of this chapter.

**Figure 2.2: Homicide offences currently recorded by the police in England and Wales by sex of victim, year ending March 1997 to year ending March 2015**

Figure 2.2: Homicide offences currently recorded by the police in England and Wales by sex of victim, year ending March 1997 to year ending March 2015



**Source: Homicide Index, Home Office**

**Notes:**

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Year ending March 2003 includes 42 male and 130 female victims of Dr Harold Shipman.
3. Year ending March 2012 includes 1 victim with unknown gender
4. Year ending March 2015 includes 1 victim with unknown gender.

### Notes for victims

1. Excluding year ending March 2003 which included 42 male and 130 female victims of Dr Harold Shipman.

## 7 . Method of killing

As in previous years, the most common method of killing for both male and female victims was by a knife or other sharp instrument, with 186 such homicides (36% of the total) recorded in the year ending March 2015 compared with 204 (39%) in the previous year ([Appendix Table 2.04](#)). This is the lowest number of homicides by knife or sharp instrument since 1993 (182). Although the absolute number of homicides committed by knives or sharp instruments has fallen over recent years, the proportion of homicides committed by this method has only fluctuated slightly from year-to-year as there has been a general downward trend in all homicides.

The second most common method of killing was 'kicking or hitting without a weapon', accounting for 95 homicides (18% of the total), a proportion that has remained roughly a fifth over the last decade. The majority (87%) of those killed in this way were male victims.

Twenty-one homicide victims were killed by shooting, 8 fewer than the previous year and the lowest number since 1980 (19 homicides).

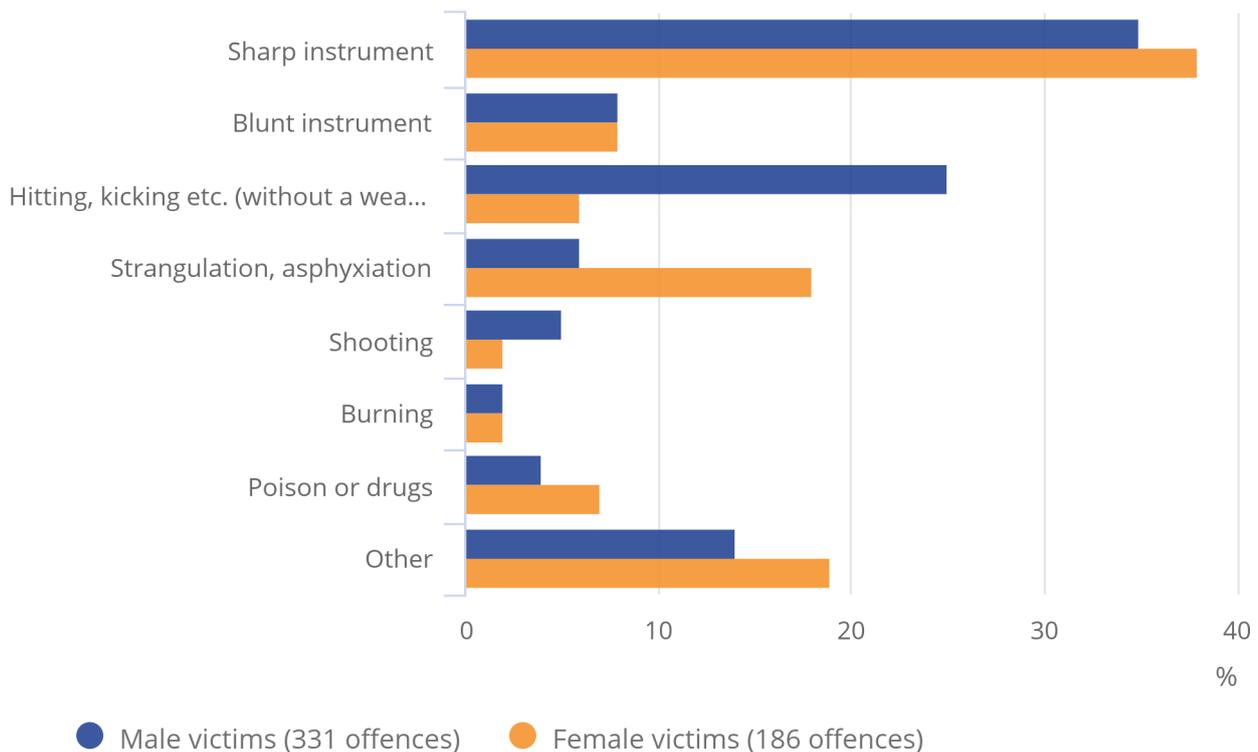
Similar proportions of male and female victims were killed by a sharp instrument or by a blunt instrument but there were differences in other methods between the sexes. For example, while hitting and kicking without a weapon was the second most common method for male victims, for female victims it was strangulation or asphyxiation (34 homicides in the year ending March 2015; 18% of female homicides). Differences in methods of killing by sex of victim are likely to reflect differences in victim/suspect relationships as discussed below (Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.3: Offences currently recorded as homicide by apparent method of killing and sex of victim, year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 2.3: Offences currently recorded as homicide by apparent method of killing and sex of victim, year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes:

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Includes all other apparent methods and where method is unknown.

## 8 . Relationship between victim and principal suspect

Data on relationship of victim to principal suspect for the year ending March 2015 show similar findings to previous years. There were differences between males and females in the pattern of relationships between victims and suspects. Female victims (68%) were more likely than male victims (52%) to have been acquainted with the principal suspect ([Appendix Table 2.05](#); Figure 2.4)<sup>1</sup>.

In particular, women were far more likely than men to be killed by partners/ex-partners (44% of female victims compared with 6% of male victims), and men were far more likely than women to be killed by friends or acquaintances (32% of male victims and 8% of female victims) or strangers (31% of male victims compared with 12% of female victims).

**Figure 2.4: Relationship of victim to principal suspect by sex of victim, year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 2.4: Relationship of victim to principal suspect by sex of victim, year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes:

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.

To account for differences by age in victim relationships to principal suspect, the analysis in the next 2 sections reports on victims aged 16 and over and victims aged under 16 separately.

## Victims aged 16 years and over

There were large differences in the victim-suspect relationship between men and women. In the year ending March 2015, just under half (49%) of female victims aged 16 or over were killed by their partner/ex-partner<sup>2</sup> (81 offences). This is 5 percentage points lower than that found in the year ending March 2014 (54%) but broadly similar to the year ending March 2013 and continues a general downward trend since year ending March 2009.

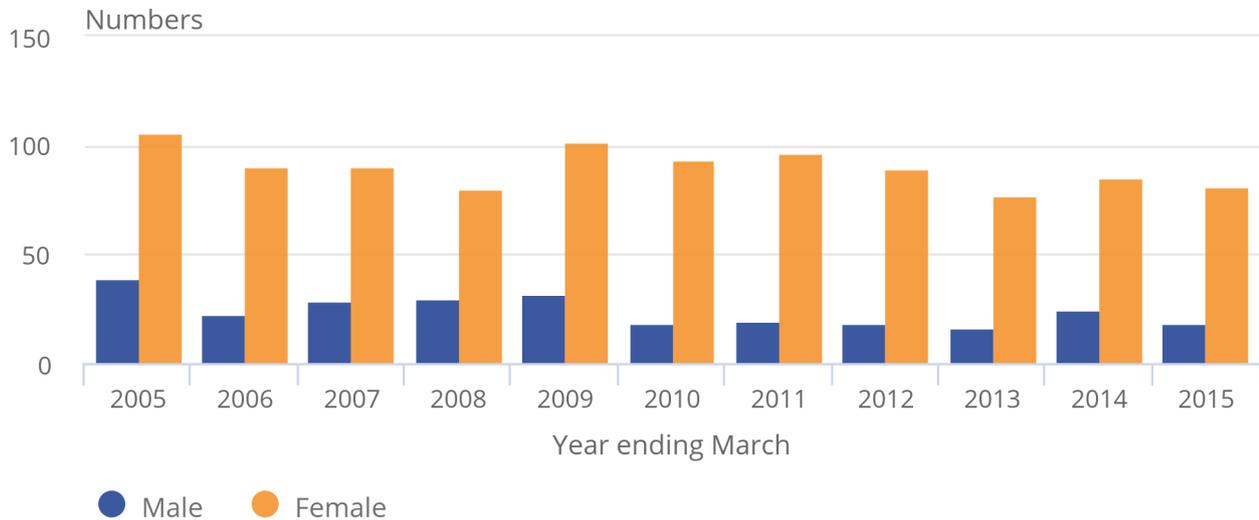
In contrast, only 6% of male victims aged 16 or over were killed by their partner/ex-partner in the year ending March 2015 (19 offences), a percentage that is similar to previous years ([Appendix Table 2.06](#), Figure 2.5).

**Figure 2.5: Number of homicide victims aged 16 and over killed by partner/ex-partner, by sex of victim, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 2.5: Number of homicide victims aged 16 and over killed by partner/ex-partner, by sex of victim, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes:

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.

Just over one-third (36%) of male victims aged 16 or over were killed by a friend/acquaintance in the year ending March 2015 (similar to that found in the year ending March 2013, 39%, but lower than the year ending March 2014 figure of 43%) although there is some fluctuation in the series. In contrast, female adult victims were less likely than men to be killed by a friend/acquaintance, at 8% of homicides in the year ending March 2015 (13 offences).

In the year ending March 2015, around 1 in 3 male victims (102 males, 34%) and around 1 in 8 female victims (21 females, 13%) aged 16 and over were killed by strangers.

## Victims aged under 16 years

In the year ending March 2015, there were 54 victims under 16 years of age, compared with 47 victims in the previous year.

Of the 518 offences currently recorded as homicide in the year ending March 2015, 10% involved victims under the age of 16, a similar proportion to the year ending March 2014 (9%, [Appendix Table 2.03](#)). In previous years, a higher percentage of female victims were aged under 16 than male victims, but in the year ending March 2015, there was little difference in this pattern between males and females (10% of currently recorded male homicide victims and 11% of female homicide victims were aged under 16).

As in previous years, the majority of victims aged under 16 were acquainted with the principal suspect (65%, 35 offences), and in all but 4 of these cases they were killed by a parent or step-parent (Figure 2.6).

Proportionally few homicides of those aged under 16 are committed by strangers. The victim was known to have been killed by a stranger in 3 offences in the year ending March 2015 (6%). This has varied between 1 and 9 offences in each year over the last decade.

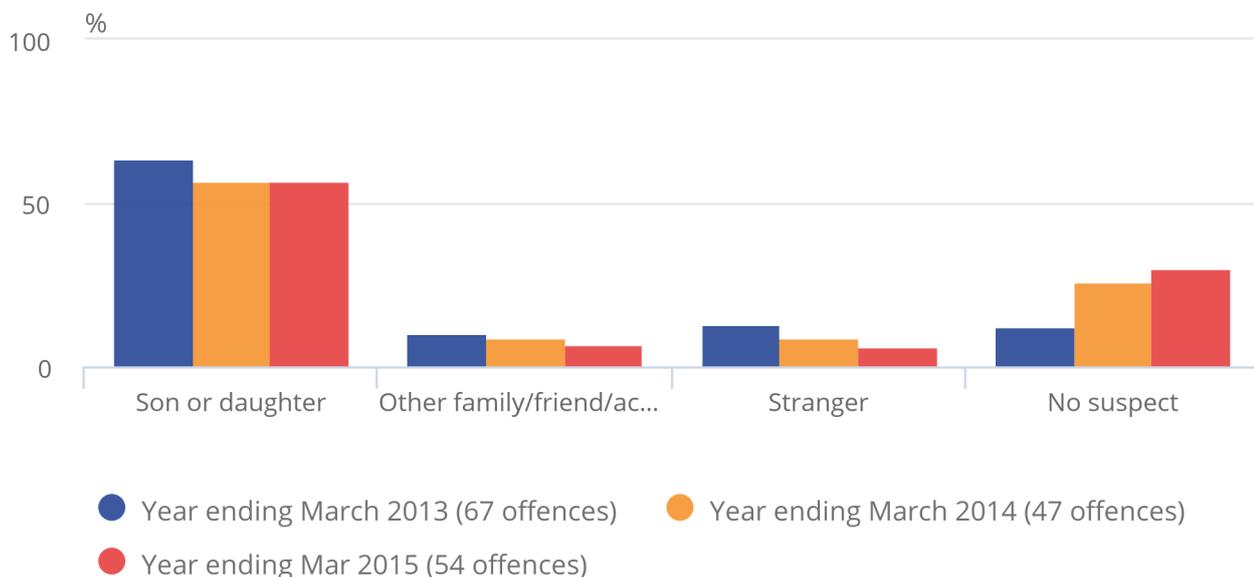
As of 13 November 2015, there were 16 victims aged under 16 (30%) for whom no suspect had been identified, a higher proportion than among adult victims (17%). This number is likely to fall as police investigations continue<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 2.6: Victims under 16 years of age, by relationship of victim to principal suspect, year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2015**

**England and Wales**

Figure 2.6: Victims under 16 years of age, by relationship of victim to principal suspect, year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2015

England and Wales



**Source: Homicide Index, Home Office**

**Notes:**

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Figures are likely to change as cases progress through the courts and more information becomes available.

## Notes for relationship between victim and principal suspect

1. The relationship between victim and principal suspect is not always known and, for the purposes of this analysis, such cases have been included in the 'stranger' category. Stranger category includes: business associate, police/prison officer killed in the course of duty, stranger (terrorist/contract killing and other) and where there is insufficient information about the suspect to determine relationship to victim.
2. Partner/ex-partner includes the sub-categories 'spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse /ex-cohabiting partner/ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, adulterous relationship, lover's spouse or emotional rival'.
3. For example, Table 2.07 in the [year ending March 2014](#) release showed that for homicides of victims aged under 16 recorded in the year ending March 2014, there were 15 for whom there was no suspect. This had fallen to 12 by the time the Homicide Index was frozen for analysis on 13 November 2015. ( [Appendix Table 2.07](#)).

## 9 . Circumstances of the homicides

About a half (48%, or 247 offences) of all homicide cases in the year ending March 2015 resulted from a quarrel, a revenge attack or a loss of temper. This proportion was higher where the principal suspect was known to the victim (59%), compared with when the suspect was unknown to the victim (33%). A further 7% (35 offences) were attributed to irrational acts<sup>1</sup> and 4% of homicides (19 offences) occurred during furtherance of theft or gain. As at 13 November 2015, the apparent circumstances were not known for 17% of homicides (87 offences) recorded in the year ending March 2015 ( [Appendix Table 2.08](#)). This figure is likely to decrease as the police carry out further investigations.

### Notes for circumstances of the homicides

1. These figures for irrational acts do not account for all homicides committed by mentally disturbed people, as offences with an apparent motive (for example, during a quarrel or robbery) are instead included under the respective circumstance. Higher overall totals for homicides committed by mentally disturbed people are quoted elsewhere (National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness).

## 10 . Location of the homicides

Over a half (56%, or 289 offences) of all homicide cases in the year ending March 2015 occurred in a house or a dwelling. Around a fifth (19% of homicides, 96 offences) occurred in a street, footpath or alleyway and 6% took place in an open outdoor area (33 offences)<sup>1</sup>.

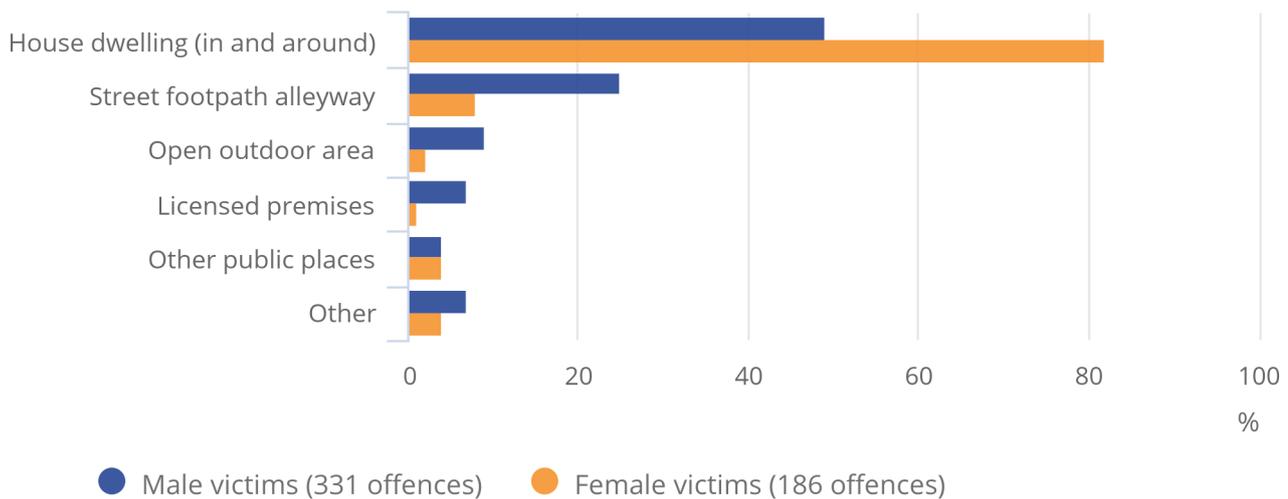
The pattern was different for males and females, reflecting differing victim-suspect relationships ( [Appendix Table 2.09](#), Figure 2.7). The majority of female homicides (82%, 152 offences) took place in or around a house or dwelling or residential home compared with 49% of male homicides (161 offences). A quarter of male homicides took place in a street, path or alleyway (82 offences) compared with only 8% of female homicides (14 offences).

**Figure 2.7: Offences currently recorded as homicide by location of homicide and sex of victim, year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 2.7: Offences currently recorded as homicide by location of homicide and sex of victim, year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes:

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. 'House, dwelling (in and around)' includes residential homes.
3. 'Other' includes all other locations including unknown.

### Notes for location of the homicides

1. 'Open outdoor area' here includes the category from the Homicide Index and car parks.

## 11 . Focus on domestic homicides

This section looks in more detail at the characteristics of the victims of domestic homicides. 'Domestic' on the Homicide Index includes the following categories: spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse/ex-cohabiting partner/ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, adulterous relationship, lover's spouse, emotional rival<sup>1</sup>, son/daughter or parent (including step and adopted relationships), brother/sister and other relatives.

Due to the relatively low volume of homicides there can be considerable year-to-year variability, and so this analysis combines data for a 3-year period (year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2015) to provide more robust results. Figures in this section are compared with homicides where the relationship was not 'domestic', and excludes those aged under 16 years old.

There was little difference in the average age of domestic homicide victims by sex, with the average age for males being 47 and for females 46. However, male victims of domestic homicides were slightly older on average than non-domestic male homicide victims (47 compared with 39 years old). In contrast, female victims of domestic homicides were on average the same age as female non-domestic homicide victims (both 46 years old) ([Appendix Table 2.10](#)).

Over three-quarters (77%) of female domestic homicide victims were killed by a partner/ex-partner, with the remaining 23% killed by a family member. For male homicides, there was a much more even split, with around a half (51%) of victims killed by a partner/ex-partner and the other half (49%) killed by a family member.

Male victims of domestic homicides were more likely to be White (84%) than male victims of non-domestic homicides (77%). Among females, victims of domestic homicides were less likely to be White (76% compared with 86% of female victims of non-domestic homicides), and more likely to be Asian (12%, compared with 7% of female non-domestic homicide victims).

The method of killing showed a different pattern among male victims of domestic homicide compared with non-domestic male homicide victims:

- 60% of male victims of domestic homicide were killed with a sharp instrument, compared with 41% for non-domestic male victims aged 16 and over
- 12% of male victims of domestic homicide were killed by hitting or kicking without a weapon, compared with 28% of non-domestic male homicide victims aged 16 and over

The difference was less marked for women, where 45% of domestic homicide victims were killed with a sharp instrument, compared with 43% of non-domestic female homicide victims aged 16 and over. Conversely, 23% of female victims of domestic homicide were killed by strangulation (72 victims), compared with 6% (5 victims) of non-domestic female homicide victims aged 16 and over.

The majority (97%) of the female domestic homicide victims were killed by a male suspect, whereas among men, only around a third of domestic homicide victims were killed by a female suspect. Among non-domestic adult homicides, 94% of male and 89% of female victims aged 16 or over were killed by a male suspect.

## Notes for focus on domestic homicides

1. "Emotional rival" is defined as those instances where 2 persons come to know or meet each other through their association or knowledge of a third person, and where their emotional or sexual interest in this third person brings them into direct conflict with each other.

## 12 . Homicide risk for different age groups

Analysis and commentary in this section focuses on data combined from the last 3 years (the year ending March 2013 to the year ending March 2015) to allow a more detailed breakdown of age groupings, including by sex (Figure 2.8; [Appendix Table 2.11](#)).

Previous analysis of Homicide Index figures has consistently shown that children under the age of 1 have the highest rate of homicide per million population ([Appendix Table 2.03](#)) and the analysis here shows that they were disproportionately represented, accounting for 4% of homicide victims but only 1% of the population ([Appendix Table 2.11](#)).

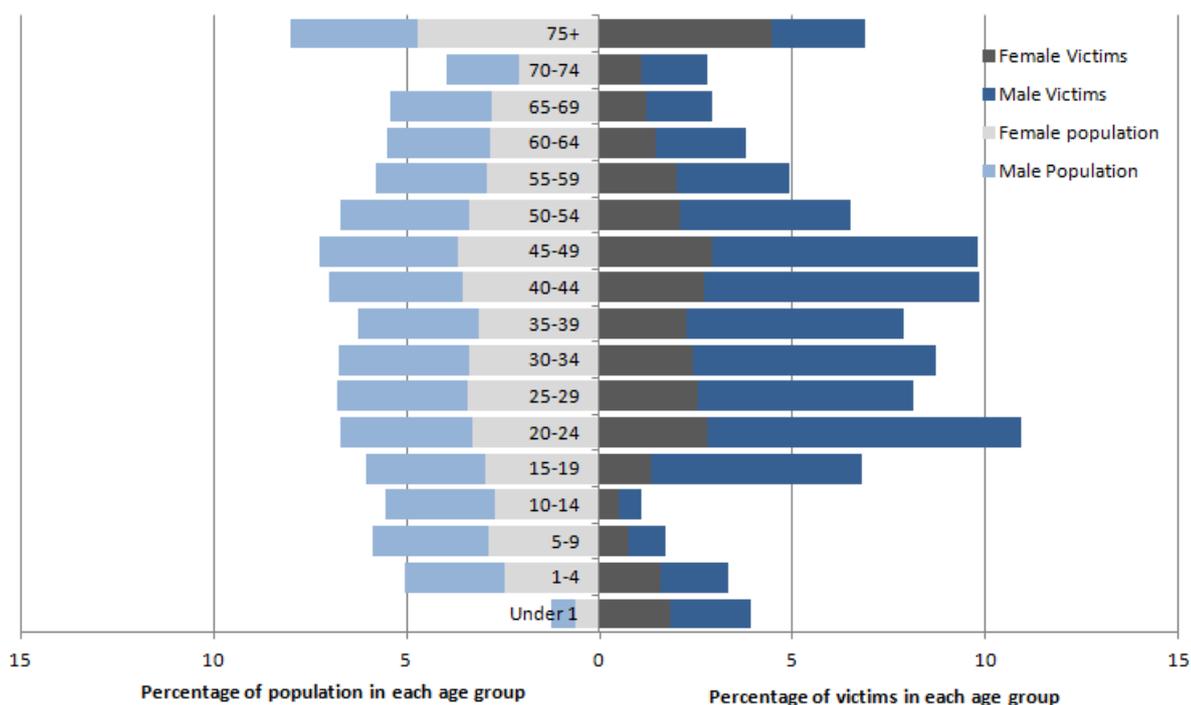
Victims aged between 20 and 49 years old also formed a disproportionately large number of victims compared with the population profile, particularly so for those in the 20 to 24 years age group. While 7% of the population were aged 20 to 24, this age group accounted for 11% of homicide victims (173 victims).

The relatively high incidence rate among 20 to 24 year olds was largely due to the higher incidence rate amongst males in this age group. While 7% of the male population were aged 20 to 24, this age group accounted for 12% of male homicide victims (129 victims).

There was a disproportionately high number of female victims aged 75 and over compared with the population profile (13% of female homicide victims were aged 75 and over, whereas 9% of the female population was in this age group). Conversely, male victims were less likely to be aged 75 and over (4%) compared with the population profile (7% were in this age group).

A disproportionately small number of victims were in the age groups 5 to 9 years and 10 to 14 years. For example, while 6% of the population were aged 10 to 14 years old, this age group accounted for only 1% of homicide victims (17 victims).

**Figure 2.8: Age and gender profile of currently recorded homicide victims compared with population, combined years, year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2015**



Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes:

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.

Additional analysis has previously been conducted on the ethnicity, sex, age and method of killing of victims and their inter-relationships. Differences were found in the sex and age profile and method of killing by ethnicity and the results are discussed in [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2012/13](#).

## 13 . Drug and alcohol-related homicides

This is the first time information on drug and alcohol-related<sup>1</sup> homicides has been included in this publication. The variables used in this section have not been subject to the same level of quality assurance with police forces as other variables, and so should be used with caution. As the number of drug and alcohol-related homicides fluctuate from year to year, analysis and commentary in this section focuses on data combined from the last 3 years (the year ending March 2013 to the year ending March 2015). The section is based on all victims and suspects.

In the combined years ending March 2013 to March 2015, a third (33%) of the homicide victims were reported to have been under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit drugs<sup>2</sup> at the time of the homicide: 24% had been drinking alcohol, 3% had been taking an illicit drug, and 7% were under the influence of both. This proportion was higher among male victims (44% were under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit drugs) than female victims (14%).

Around two-fifths (39%) of homicide suspects were reported by the police to have been under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs at the time of the homicide (43% of male suspects and 27% of female suspects). Overall, 25% of homicide suspects had been drinking alcohol, 4% had been taking an illicit drug, and 10% were under the influence of both ([Appendix Table 2.12](#)).

There are several other drug-related fields on the Homicide Index ([Appendix Table 2.13](#)). Around a fifth (22%) of homicide victims were known to be drug users, and 1 in 11 (9%) were known to be drug dealers. These proportions were even higher among suspects: around a third (35%) were known to be drug users and around 1 in 7 (15%) were known to be drug dealers. These proportions were generally higher among males than females.

In 4% of homicide offences, the victim and principal suspect<sup>3</sup> were both drug dealers, and in 13% of homicide offences they were both drug users (data not shown).

Suspects who were drug dealers or drug users were more likely than other suspects to shoot their victim (17% of drug dealers and 9% of drug users compared with 3% of non-dealers or non-users, data not shown).

In a small proportion of cases, the police flagged the suspects' motive as 'obtaining drugs' (3%) or 'stealing drug proceeds' (3%) ([Appendix Table 2.13](#)).

The proportion of homicide victims and suspects that were drug users is higher than estimates of drug use for the wider population. Figures from the [Drug Misuse, findings from the 2014 to 2015 CSEW](#) publication shows that, according to the year ending March 2015 survey, 8.6% of respondents aged 16 to 59 reported any drug use in the last year.

### Notes for drug and alcohol-related homicides

1. Information on drug and alcohol use is recorded by the police from toxicology reports, witness statements and suspect's confession.
2. Illicit drugs include all controlled drugs (class A-C) under Schedule 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (and subsequent amendments).
3. In order to look at the victim and suspect information together, only the data for the principal suspect is used.

## 14 . Suspects

## Definition of homicide suspect

For the purposes of the Homicide Index, a suspect in a homicide case is defined as:

(i) a person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide <sup>1</sup> and charged with homicide; or

(ii) a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest/being charged

More than 1 suspect may be charged per homicide victim and in some cases no suspect is ever charged (Table 2.1). Due to this, the number of suspects is not the same as the number of offences. It should also be noted that the number of cases with no suspect will reduce as the police continue their investigations.

**Table 2.1: Number of suspects for initially recorded homicide victims, year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

	Apr '12 to Mar '13		Apr '13 to Mar '14		Apr '14 to Mar '15	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
No suspects charged	65	9	57	8	99	15
One	354	49	361	49	330	50
Two	138	19	118	16	114	17
Three or more	169	23	207	28	114	17
All initially recorded homicides	726	100	743	100	657	100

Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes:

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics
2. As at 13 November 2015; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available.

In total, there were 558 suspects as at 13 November 2015 relating to the 530 homicides initially recorded in the year ending March 2015 ([Appendix Table 2.15](#)). Of these:

- court proceedings had concluded for 285 suspects (51% of all suspects)
- court proceedings were pending for 244 suspects (44%)
- 27 suspects had committed suicide or died (5%)
- the remaining 2 suspects had no proceedings taken on advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions

For those suspects where proceedings had concluded, 90% were male (257 suspects), 9% were female (26 suspects) and in 1% (2 cases) the homicides were corporate manslaughter (data not shown).

Among male suspects:

- just under half (48%) of those indicted for a homicide offence and with a court outcome were convicted of murder
- a third (33%) were convicted of manslaughter
- 12% were acquitted or their proceedings were discontinued
- 7% had another outcome<sup>2</sup>.

For females indicted for homicide with an outcome:

- 17% were convicted of murder
- 42% were convicted of manslaughter
- 4% were convicted of a lesser offence
- A third (33%) were acquitted or had their proceedings discontinued
- 4% had another outcome<sup>2</sup>

In the 3 years from the year ending March 2013 to the year ending March 2015, 83% of suspects indicted for homicide (murder, manslaughter or infanticide) with a court outcome were found guilty of homicide and 11% were acquitted ([Appendix Table 2.16](#)). Similar criminal justice statistics produced by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in their publication [Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly, December 2014](#) show that the conviction ratio (the number of convictions within a given period divided by the number of prosecutions in the same period) for homicide offences in 2014 was 88%<sup>3</sup>. This is a relatively high conviction ratio and, for example, compares with 68% for violence against the person offences, and 73% for burglary offences.

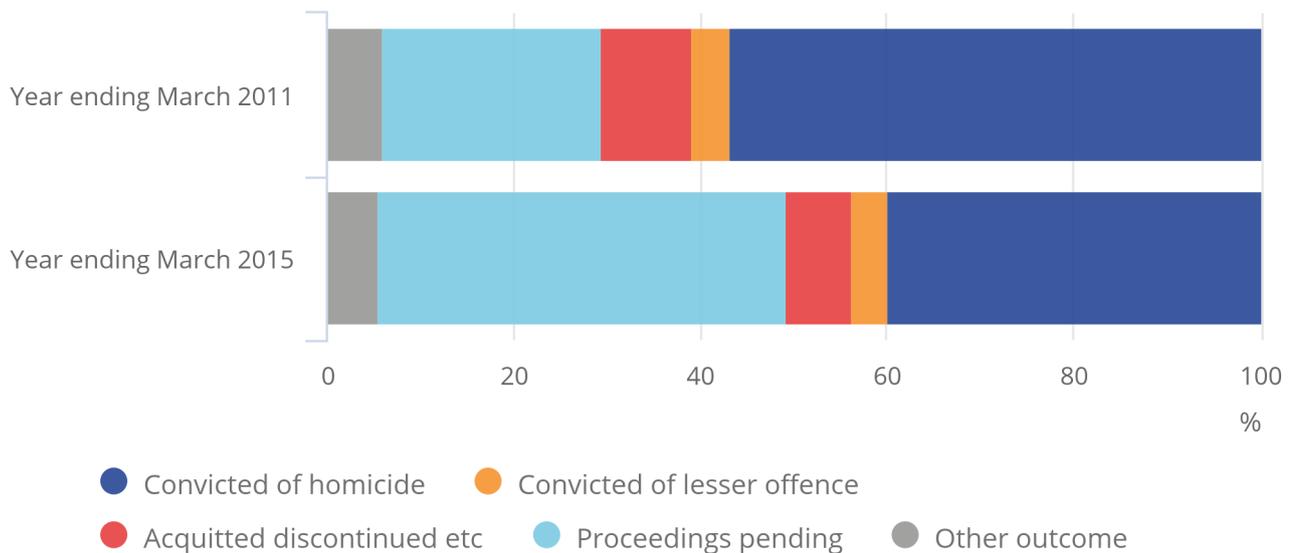
The case outcomes for suspects of homicides recorded in the year ending March 2015 (Figure 2.9) are likely to change as cases progress through the criminal justice system (CJS) and more information becomes available. As such, cases from previous years are more likely to have concluded at court. This is illustrated in Figure 2.9 which shows the court outcomes for all suspects of homicides recorded in the year ending March 2011 and the year ending March 2015. While court proceedings were pending for 44% of the suspects in homicides recorded in the year ending March 2015, proceedings were pending for only 23% of the cases recorded in the year ending March 2011. Conversely, 40% of the suspects of homicides recorded in the year ending March 2015 had been to court and been convicted of homicide compared with 57% of those recorded in the year ending March 2011.

**Figure 2.9: Current outcomes for suspects of homicides recorded in year ending March 2011 and March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 2.9: Current outcomes for suspects of homicides recorded in year ending March 2011 and March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes:

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. As of 13 November 2015.
3. Includes suspect unfit to plead, proceedings concluded with other outcome, suspect committed suicide or died and the cases where no court proceedings were taken.

### Notes for suspects

1. The homicide may no longer be recorded as such if all the suspects were acquitted.
2. 'Other outcome' includes suspect unfit to plead, proceedings concluded with other outcome, suspect committed suicide or died and the cases where no court proceedings were taken.
3. It is worth noting that offenders found guilty in a given year may have been proceeded against in previous year.

## 15 . Previous homicide convictions

The Homicide Index shows that in the year ending March 2015 there were 3 convictions for homicide offences for suspects who had a previous conviction for homicide. As more cases are concluded at Crown Court, this figure may change. For homicide offences recorded in the year ending March 2014, there were 6 people convicted of homicide who had a previous conviction for homicide ([Appendix Table 2.18](#)).

For homicide offences recorded between the year ending March 2005 and the year ending March 2015 in total, 48 people who were convicted of a homicide offence had a previous conviction for homicide (less than 1%). Of these 48 offences, the second conviction was for murder in 41 cases ([Appendix Table 2.19 2](#)).

## 16 . International homicide comparisons

A number of international organisations, including Eurostat, have attempted to collate international homicide statistics. There are issues surrounding the comparability of international homicide data including:

- different definitions of homicide between countries, although definitions vary less than for some other types of crimes
- differing points in criminal justice systems at which homicides are recorded, for instance, when the offence is discovered or following further investigation or court outcome
- the figures are for completed homicides (that is, excluding attempted murder) but, in some countries, the police register any death that cannot immediately be attributed to other causes as homicide

Caution should therefore be taken in comparing homicide rates across countries.

Figures published by [Eurostat](#) show that police recorded intentional homicide offences consistently decreased across EU member states from 2008 to 2013.

The [Scottish Government](#) publish annual homicide figures, and the most recently published report shows that there were 59 victims of homicide (11 homicides per million population) in Scotland in the year ending March 2015, one fewer than the 60 victims (also 11 per million) in the previous year. This was the lowest number of homicides since 1976, the first year for which comparable data are available.

The [Police Service of Northern Ireland](#) publish monthly figures on homicides, and the financial year trends release shows that there were 24 homicide offences recorded by the police in Northern Ireland in the year ending March 2015, continuing a general downward trend.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) publish a [Global Homicide Handbook](#) which gives a comprehensive overview of intentional homicide across the world. The most recent of these was published in 2014, and showed that the global average homicide rate stands at 62 per million population, but Southern Africa and Central America had rates over 4 times higher than that (above 240 victims per million population). Meanwhile, with rates some 5 times lower than the global average, Eastern Asia, Southern Europe and Western Europe were the sub-regions with the lowest homicide levels.

## 17 . Statistical interpretation of trends in homicide

The number of homicides recorded by the police fluctuates from year to year and there is interest in knowing the extent to which these fluctuations in the level of homicides represent an indication of a real underlying trend as opposed to random year-to-year variation. Using data for London between April 2004 and March 2007, [London murders: a predictable pattern?](#) found that homicides in London have a predictable level of fluctuation over time, which allowed them to apply statistical techniques for analysis.

It should be noted that the discussion in this section is related to the statistical properties of the data, and it should not be interpreted as saying that small changes in the numbers of homicides are not of concern.

This section presents analyses of homicide incidents, defined as incidents where the same person (or a group of persons) is suspected of committing one or more related homicides. The numbers therefore differ from the total number of recorded homicides presented above (the focus of analysis is on such incidents as it is not possible to statistically model multiple homicides that relate to one case and were recorded on the same day; for that reason the homicides attributed to Dr Harold Shipman and the 7 July London bombings are, for example, each treated in this analysis as one incident). Although each incident is highly related to socio-economic characteristics of the suspect and the victim and independent from other incidents, over a period of time, the probabilities of homicide incidents happening can be closely modelled by a Poisson distribution . This can be used to test whether any change in the numbers of incidents per year is statistically significant, or what can be termed within the range of expected 'natural variation' of the data.

### Expected homicide incidents per day

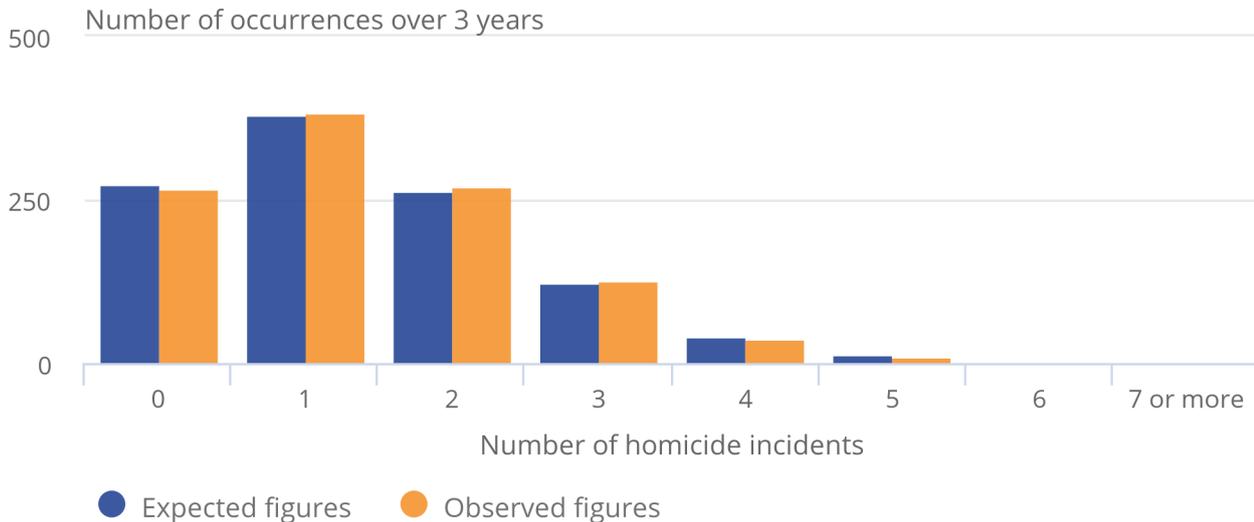
Between April 2012 and March 2015, the police recorded 1,521 independent homicide incidents in England and Wales. The observed number of homicide incidents on a daily basis closely matches the expected number under the Poisson distribution<sup>1</sup> (Figure 2.10). For example, from knowing there was an average of 1.39 incidents a day, we would predict over the time period of 1,095 days that there would be 122 days on which there would be exactly 3 independent incidents. This is close to the observed number of 127 days, indicating that the occurrence of these apparent 'clusters' is not as surprising as one might anticipate. A statistical test (2) shows no significant difference between the expected and observed figures. Thus, the observed figures are in fact Poisson distributed. This allows for calculation of the number of days on which it would be expected that no incidents or one incident occurs and so on.

**Figure 2.10: Observed and expected number of homicide incidents recorded on a day, combined data years ending March 2013 to March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 2.10: Observed and expected number of homicide incidents recorded on a day, combined data years ending March 2013 to March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes:

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. As of 13 November 2015.

## Trend analysis

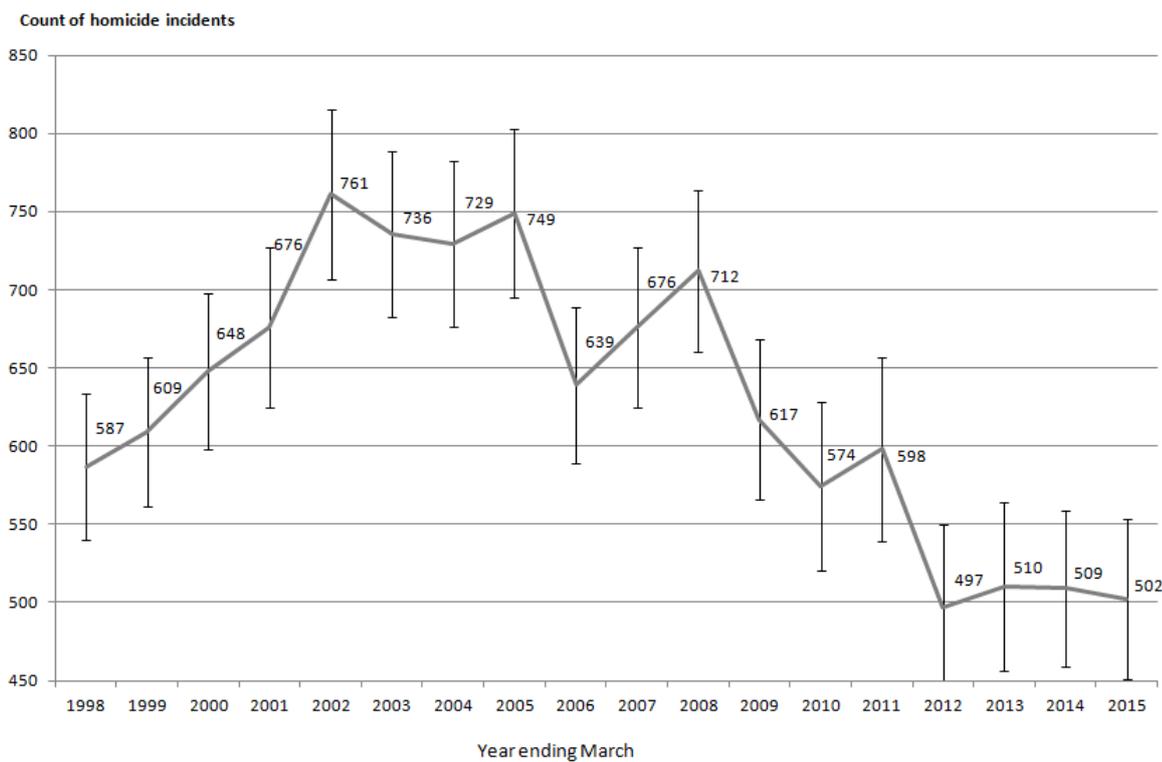
Furthermore, knowing that homicide incidents are statistically distributed allows the application of statistical techniques in order to assess longer-term trends. Figure 2.11 shows the number of homicide incidents since the year ending March 1998. For each year, the observed count is given along with a 95% confidence interval on the Poisson error. The interval represents the range of values one would expect to measure 95% of the time if the underlying risk of homicide remained unchanged. These confidence intervals can be used as a rough approximation to determine whether the number of homicide incidents in any 2 years are statistically different from one another. If the confidence intervals do not overlap, one can infer there has been a significant change in the underlying risk of homicide. However, it is possible for the confidence intervals to overlap and for there still to be a statistically significant change in the number of homicide incidents. In order to measure the significance more accurately, it is appropriate to use a statistical test.

As has been shown previously, the Poisson distribution can be applied to the number of homicide incidents per year and the number of these incidents is large enough to approximate the normal distribution. Therefore a statistical test (in this case a Z-test) can be used to determine if the counts in each year are statistically significantly different from one another at the 95% confidence level (that is, whether there has been a true change in the underlying risk).

Based on this statistical test, one can assess that the number of homicide incidents recorded in the year ending March 2015 was statistically significantly lower at the 95% level than the number recorded in every year shown in Figure 2.11 up to year ending 2009 and has remained stable since year ending March 2012. This means the risk of becoming a victim of homicide was, in fact, lower for the year ending March 2015 compared with those earlier years.

**Figure 2.11: Homicide incident trend analysis, year ending March 1998 to year ending March 2015**

**England and Wales**



Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

**Notes:**

1. Homicide Index data are not designated as National Statistics
2. As of 13 November 2015

Many of the short-term fluctuations seen from year to year in the number of homicide incidents are not statistically significant and appear to arise as natural statistical variation in the data. In looking at homicide data the degree of natural variation needs to be considered in interpreting trends and also when looking at year-to-year changes.

**Notes for statistical interpretation of trends in homicide**

1. The Poisson distribution expresses the probability of the number of events occurring in a given period of time if these events occur with a known average rate and independently from each other.

## 18. Background notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Compendium

# Offences involving the use of weapons



Contact:  
John Flatley  
[crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk)  
+44 (0)20 7592 8695

Release date:  
11 February 2016

Next release:  
To be announced

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# 1 . Main points

- In the year ending March 2015, there were 7,866 offences in which firearms were involved, a 2% increase compared with the previous year. This is the first increase in offences involving firearms in 10 years. Offences involving knives or sharp instruments also rose by 2% over the same period (to 26,374).
- There were 19 fatalities resulting from offences involving firearms in the year ending March 2015; 10 fewer than the previous year and the lowest since the series began in 1969.
- People aged between 15 and 34 made up a disproportionate number of those seriously or fatally injured from offences involving firearms (70% of the total, while constituting just 26% of the population).
- Of the 26,374 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, 10,270 (39%) were used in a robbery and 13,488 (51%) as part of assault with injury or assault with intent to cause serious harm offences.
- Findings from year ending March 2015 CSEW show that 5.8% of 10 to 15 year olds and 4.5% of 16 to 29 year olds said they knew someone who carried a knife for their own protection.

## 2 . Summary

This chapter presents analyses of offences involving weapons recorded by the police in the year ending March 2015, specifically of firearms and knives or other sharp instruments. The firearms data collection covers any notifiable offence involving firearms while coverage of the knives or sharp instruments data is limited to 7 of the most serious violent and sexual offences. Analysis is also carried out on knife carrying by young people, using data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

The data in this section are for the year ending March 2015. [Figures for the year ending September 2015](#) show that the number of offences involving weapons, especially knives or sharp instruments, has increased. These increases will be analysed in subsequent publications.

## 3 . Offences involving the use of firearms: Introduction

Information is available from the police on whether a firearm is used during any recorded notifiable offence<sup>1</sup>. If a firearm had been used, the Home Office receive additional data about the circumstances of that offence<sup>2</sup>.

'Offences involving firearms' encompass any notifiable offence recorded by the police where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument or been used as a threat. Firearm possession offences, where the firearm has not been used in the course of another offence, are not included in this analysis. These offences are published in [Appendix Table A4 in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly release](#).

The different types of firearms included in this section mirror those covered by the [Firearms Act 1968](#) and the associated amendments to the Act. These are:

- firearms that use a controlled explosion to fire a projectile - this category includes handguns, shotguns and rifles -these types of weapon are often used in more serious offences, and tend to account for most of the fatalities and more serious injuries that arise
- imitation firearms - this category includes replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons which fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons - while injuries can occur from offences involving these weapons, they are less common and tend to be less serious
- air weapons- the majority of offences which involve air weapons relate to criminal damage - while air weapons can cause serious injury (and sometimes fatalities), by their nature they are less likely to do so than firearms that use a controlled explosion

Firearms that use a controlled explosion and imitation firearms are combined for the purposes of some analyses in this section, creating 2 broad categories: non-air weapons and air weapons.

Although information is collected on the type of weapon used in an offence, it is not always possible to identify the firearm. For example, some imitation weapons are so realistic that they are indistinguishable from a real firearm. The police will record which type of weapon has been used in an offence given the evidence available. The categorisation of the weapon may also depend on descriptions given by victims or witnesses. If the police do not have sufficient information about the type of firearm used in the offence (for example, if the weapon was not recovered, or if the firearm was concealed during the offence), then the police will record the weapon as an “unidentified firearm”.

In accordance with the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#), statistics based on police recorded crime data have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Official 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](#).

## Notes for offences involving the use of firearms: Introduction

1. Notifiable offences cover those that could possibly be tried by a jury (these include some less serious offences, such as minor theft that would not usually be dealt with in this way) plus a few additional closely related offences, such as assault without injury.
2. The overall firearm offence figures reported here differ from those in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases for 2 reasons; firstly because these data contain air weapon offences, whereas the quarterly releases exclude these offences, and secondly because data in the quarterly releases are provisional and are not reconciled with police forces before publication.

## 4 . Offences involving the use of firearms - Prevalence and trends

Offences involving firearms make up a small proportion of overall recorded crime. In the year ending March 2015, they were used in approximately 0.2% of all police recorded offences, the same proportion seen for the last 4 years ([Appendix Table 3.01](#)). Ten years ago, in the year ending March 2005, firearms were used in approximately 0.4% of all police recorded offences. More detail on the use of firearms as a proportion of selected offence types is included in the ‘Types of offences where firearms are used’ section later in this chapter.

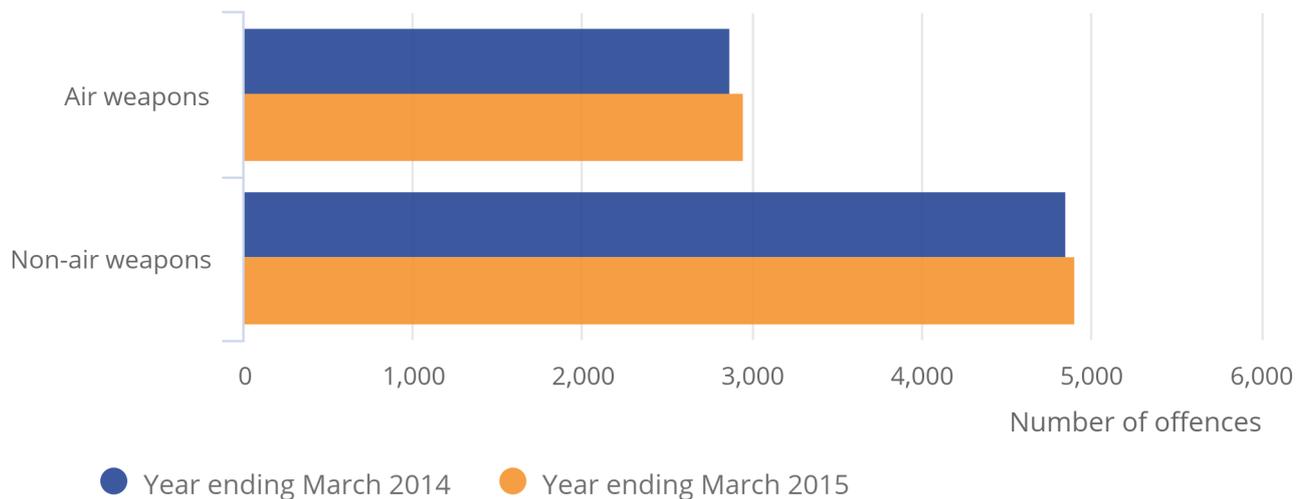
In the year ending March 2015, the police recorded 7,866 offences involving a firearm, an increase of 2% compared with the previous year (7,729 offences). This is the first increase in offences involving firearms in 10 years. There were increases in both air weapon (3%) and non-air-weapon (1%) offences over the last year (Figure 3.1; [Appendix Table 3.02](#)).

**Figure 3.1 Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, year ending March 2014 and year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 3.1 Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, year ending March 2014 and year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Air weapon percentage change = 3%, Non-air weapons percentage change = 1%.

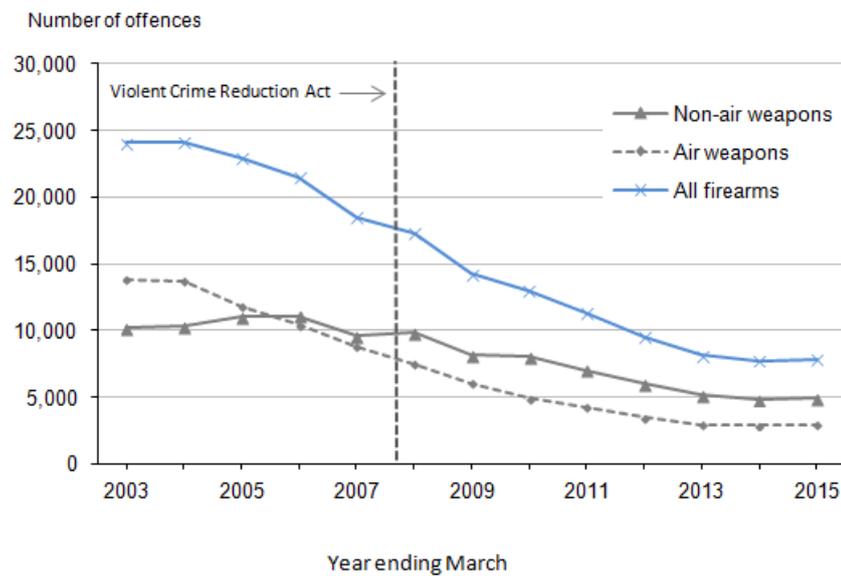
Up until the recent 2% rise, the number of offences involving firearms has been falling year-on-year since its peak in the year ending March 2004 (when 24,094 offences were recorded). The latest figure of 7,866 offences represents a fall of two-thirds (67%) since then (Figure 3.2):

- the number of offences involving air weapons has fallen by 10,868 offences (79%) since the year ending March 2003, when the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced, from 13,822 to 2,954 offences
- non-air weapon offences have fallen by more than half since the year ending March 2003 (a decrease of 5,336 offences) to 4,912 offences - non-air weapon offences peaked later (at 11,088 offences in the year ending March 2006) than those involving air weapons

The small percentage increase in offences involving firearms this year could in part be due to improvements in the police recording of crime. This follows the inspections of forces by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), the [Public Administration Select Committee \(PASC\)](#) inquiry into crime statistics, and the UK Statistics Authority's decision to remove the National Statistics designation from recorded crime. This renewed focus has led to improved compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), contributing to the increase in overall police recorded violence. However, offences involving firearms are likely to have been less affected by changes in recording practices than overall police recorded crime, so part of the increase could be due to a genuine increase in crime. While there is an increase seen in overall offences involving firearms over the last year, offences involving the more serious types of weapon (handguns, shotguns and rifles combined) has fallen slightly, by 1%, with increases seen in offences involving less serious firearms, such as air weapons, imitation firearms and unidentified firearms. For more information on these recording changes see the Overview chapter of this release.

**Figure 3.2: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2015**

**England and Wales**



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. The Violent Crime Reduction Act, introduced in October 2007, made it illegal to import firearms and tightened the rules for the manufacture and sale of certain types of weapons.

The type of weapon used in offences involving firearms has changed over the last decade. In the year ending March 2005, non-air weapons constituted 48% of offences involving firearms while 52% were air weapons. By the year ending March 2010, the proportion of offences involving non-air weapons had increased to 62%, with a corresponding fall in air weapons to 38%. Since the year ending March 2010, the proportions have remained similar. This reflects the relatively steeper fall in air weapon offences over this time period compared with non-air weapons ([Appendix Table 3.03](#)).

## 5 . Individual weapon types: Non air-weapons

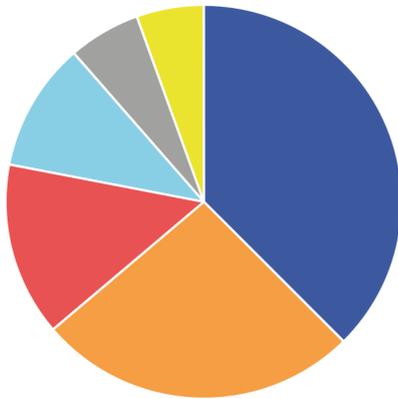
In the year ending March 2015, handguns were used in 26% (2,062) of offences involving firearms, making them the most commonly used firearm after air weapons (Figure 3.3). Imitation weapons were used in 14% (1,123) of offences involving firearms, while in 11% (833) of offences the type of firearm used was unidentified.

**Figure 3.3: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by type of principal weapon, year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 3.3: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by type of principal weapon, year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

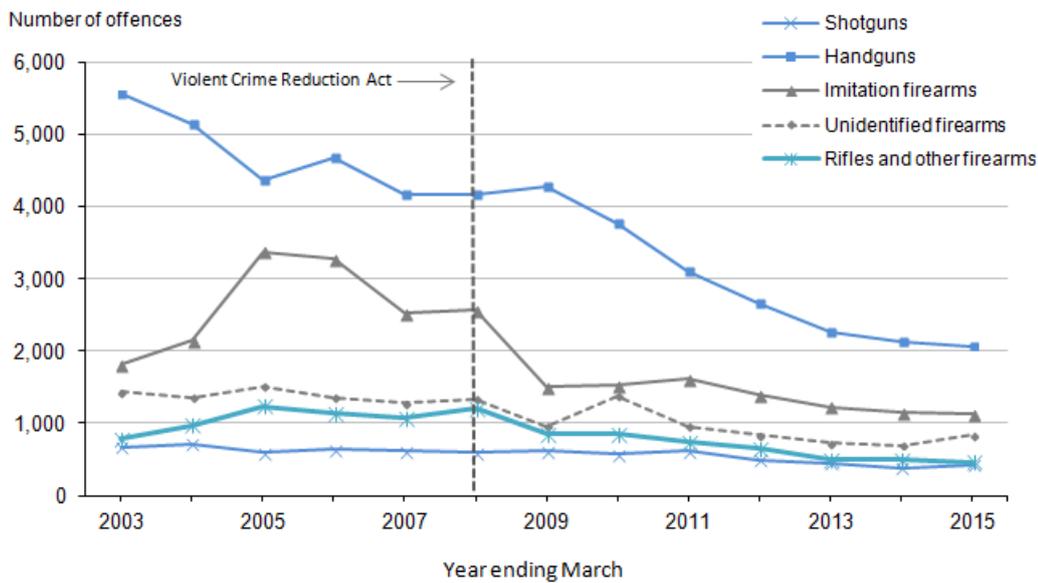
1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

Over the longer-term, there have been steep falls in all of these weapon types (Figure 3.4). Offences involving handguns have fallen from a peak of 5,549 in the year ending March 2003 to 2,062 in the year ending March 2015, a fall of almost two-thirds (63%). The number of imitation weapon offences peaked later, at 3,373 in the year ending March 2005, but have since fallen by two-thirds (67%) to 1,123 in the year ending March 2015. The number of offences involving unidentified firearms also peaked in the year ending March 2005 (1,500 offences) and has fallen by 44% since then, to 833 in the year ending March 2015.

In the year ending March 2015, shotguns were used in 5% (431) of offences involving firearms recorded by police. The trend in shotgun offences differs to that for other non-air weapons, with falls not seen until recent years (Figure 3.4). Between the year ending March 2005 and year ending March 2011, there were around 600 shotgun offences per year. From the year ending March 2011 to the year ending March 2014, the number of shotgun offences fell each year, falling by 37% overall in this period to 387. The number of these type of offences increased by 11% in the most recent year, to 431.

**Figure 3.4: Offences recorded by the police in which non-air weapons were reported to have been used, by type of principal weapon, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2015**

**England and Wales**



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

**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 affected the recording of firearm offences committed using handguns, imitation weapons, and other weapons.
3. The Violent Crime Reduction Act introduced in October 2007 made it illegal to import or sell imitation firearms and tightened the rules for the manufacture and sale of certain types of air weapon.
4. Imitation firearms include weapons such as BB guns and soft air weapons, which can fire small plastic pellets at low velocity.
5. Rifles and other firearms includes starting guns, prohibited firearms (including CS gas) and other firearms.

In contrast to the national picture, where handguns are used in 26% of offences involving firearms, the proportion of offences involving handguns is higher in some of the major metropolitan areas. For example, handguns were used in over 50% of offences involving a firearm recorded by the Merseyside and West Midlands police forces. Air weapons were used in a small minority of offences recorded by these forces (less than 10% in each force, data not shown).

## 6 . How firearms were used

The data collection on offences involving firearms includes information on how the weapon was used; either being fired, used as a threat or as a blunt instrument. In the year ending March 2015, of the 7,866 offences recorded by the police, the firearm was ([Appendix Table 3.03](#)):

- fired in 55% of cases (4,302 offences) - this has fallen from 70% in the year ending March 2005
- used as a threat in 43% of cases (3,357 offences) - this has increased since the year ending March 2005, when firearms were used as a threat in 27% of all offences involving a firearm
- used as a blunt instrument in 3% of cases (207 offences) - this is the same proportion as in the year ending March 2005

The likelihood of a weapon being fired varied considerably by weapon type (Figure 3.5; [Appendix Table 3.03](#)):

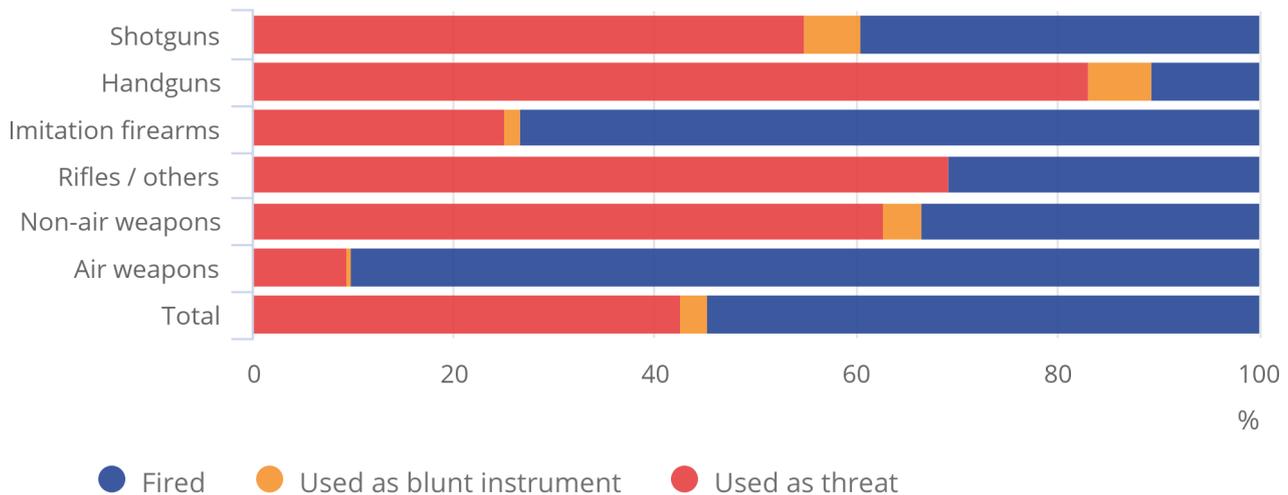
- air weapons were fired in 90% of the 2,954 offences in which they were involved (2,665 offences) and were therefore the most likely weapon to be fired of the main firearm categories - this may reflect that air weapon offences largely do not come to the attention of police unless the weapon is fired and that air weapons are less likely to be used in more serious offences compared with some other weapon types - almost three quarters (74%) of offences involving air weapons were criminal damage offences, compared with just 7% of non-air weapon offences ([Appendix Table 3.08](#)):
- in contrast, handguns were fired in just 10% of the 2,062 offences in which they were used (216 offences) - in 83% of offences they were used as a threat and in 6% as a blunt instrument
- shotguns were used in 431 recorded offences and, of these, in 39% of offences they were fired and in 55% were used to threaten

**Figure 3.5: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by type of principal weapon and weapon usage, year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 3.5: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by type of principal weapon and weapon usage, year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Imitation firearms include weapons such as BB guns and soft air weapons, which can fire small plastic pellets at low velocity.
3. Rifles/others includes starting guns, supposed/type unknown, prohibited firearms (including CS gas) and other firearms.

In the year ending March 2005, firearms were fired in 70% of offences in which they were involved; by the year ending March 2009 the proportion had fallen to 56%. The proportion has remained relatively stable since the year ending March 2009 to the year ending March 2015 ([Appendix Table 3.03](#)). This change is largely due to the fall in offences involving air weapons, which have fallen by a greater percentage than offences involving non-air weapons. Air weapons have consistently been more likely to be fired in an offence in which they were involved (in around 90% of offences) compared with non-air weapons.

## 7 . Injuries sustained in offences involving firearms

In the year ending March 2015, there were 1,340 injuries as a result of offences involving firearms ( [Appendix Table 3.05](#)). This represents a 6% fall on the previous year (1,433 offences) and is the lowest number of injuries sustained due to offences involving firearms since 1972, when there were 1,130 injuries<sup>1</sup>.

### Severity of injuries sustained

Injuries sustained as a result of offences involving firearms are graded as being “slight”, “serious” (that is, requiring a stay in hospital or involving fractures, concussion, severe general shock, penetration by a bullet or multiple shot wounds) or “fatal”. In line with the large falls in the number of offences involving firearms recorded by the police since the year ending March 2003, there have been substantial decreases in all types of injury sustained resulting from these offences over this period:

- there were 19 fatalities resulting from firearms offences in the year ending March 2015, this compares with 29 recorded in the previous year and is the lowest annual number since the series began in 1969 - as in previous years, fatal injuries continue to constitute less than 1% of the total number of firearm offences
- serious and slight injuries have both fallen by approximately two-thirds between the year ending March 2003 and the year ending March 2015 (serious injuries from 572 to 183; slight injuries from 3,903 to 1,138) - serious injuries have remained at 2% to 3% of total firearm offences, and are currently at their lowest level since the year ending March 2003. Slight injuries have fluctuated between 14% and 21% since the year ending March 2003 - hence, while firearm offences have increased by 2% over the last year, the proportion of offences resulting in a serious injury are at a historically low level

### Injuries by severity and weapon used

The seriousness of injuries sustained from offences involving firearms varies according to the type of weapon used. This is to be expected given the range of mechanisms and projectiles associated with individual weapons (for example, air propulsion/controlled explosion; bullet/pellet) and variations in the circumstances and offences in which they are used (Table 3.1, [Appendix Table 3.04](#)).

As expected, the use of non-air weapons was much more likely to result in injury than air weapons. Overall, 52% of offences in which these weapons were fired resulted in an injury (1% were fatal, 8% were serious and 43% were slight). In contrast, air weapons were the least likely weapon to cause a fatal or serious injury. In the year ending March 2015, there were no fatalities resulting from the use of air weapons and only 1% of offences in which the weapon was fired resulted in serious injury (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, by type of firearm and injury sustained when weapon was fired, year ending March 2015 [1]**

England and Wales

Weapon type	Number of offences	Fired	Percentages <sup>2</sup>			
			% of those fired:			
			Fatal injury	Serious injury <sup>3</sup>	Slight injury	No injury
Shotguns	431	39	5	23	12	61
Handguns	2,062	10	5	16	18	62
Imitation firearms <sup>4</sup>	1,123	73	0	2	54	44
Rifles/others <sup>5</sup>	1,296	33	0	9	46	45
Non-air weapons	4,912	33	1	8	43	48
Air weapons	2,954	95	0	1	9	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,866</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>74</b>

Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Percentages may not sum due to rounding.
3. A serious injury is one which necessitated a stay in hospital or involves fractures, concussion, severe general shock, penetration by a bullet or multiple shot wounds.
4. Imitation firearms include weapons such as BB guns and soft air weapons, which can fire small plastic pellets at low velocity.
5. Includes starting guns, supposed/type unknown, prohibited firearms (including CS gas) and other firearms.

## Injuries to police officers

It is possible to identify how many victims of injuries sustained as a result of firearms offences were on-duty police officers. In the year ending March 2015, there were 5 injuries sustained by on-duty police officers, of which 1 was a serious injury and 4 were slight injuries. In general, the number of injuries sustained by police officers as a result of offences involving firearms is lower now than that seen 10 years ago (Table 3.2).

Since the year ending March 2005, 54% of offences where a police officer sustained a serious or slight injury were committed with CS gas or pepper spray. This reflects the fact that police officers in an operational role carry CS gas spray and in some offences this has been used against the officer.

**Table 3.2: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used, in which a police officer on duty was injured by a firearm (excluding air weapons), by type of injury, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2015 [1]**

England and Wales

Year	Total	Fatal injury	Number of offences	
			Serious injury <sup>2</sup>	Slight injury
Apr '02 to Mar '03	12	0	1	11
Apr '03 to Mar '04	14	1	3	10
Apr '04 to Mar '05	23	0	2	21
Apr '05 to Mar '06	23	1	6	16
Apr '06 to Mar '07	21	0	3	18
Apr '07 to Mar '08	24	1	3	20
Apr '08 to Mar '09	9	0	1	8
Apr '09 to Mar '10	17	0	1	16
Apr '10 to Mar '11	9	0	1	8
Apr '11 to Mar '12	8	0	1	7
Apr '12 to Mar '13	4	2	0	2
Apr '13 to Mar '14	5	0	1	4
Apr '14 to Mar '15	5	0	1	4

Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. A serious injury is one which necessitated a stay in hospital or involves fractures, concussion, severe general shock, penetration by a bullet or multiple shot wounds.

## Notes for injuries sustained in offences involving firearms

1. There have been a number of changes to how offences involving firearms have been recorded by the police between 1972 and the present, so these figures are not directly comparable. However, changes in recording have tended to increase the number of offences recorded.

## 8 . Types of offences where firearms are used

The most common offence types in which firearms are used are violence against the person, robbery and criminal damage, accounting for 78% of firearms offences in the year ending March 2015. Overall, the numbers of these offences involving firearms have decreased between the year ending March 2005 and the year ending March 2015 (Figure 3.6, [Appendix Table 3.08](#)):

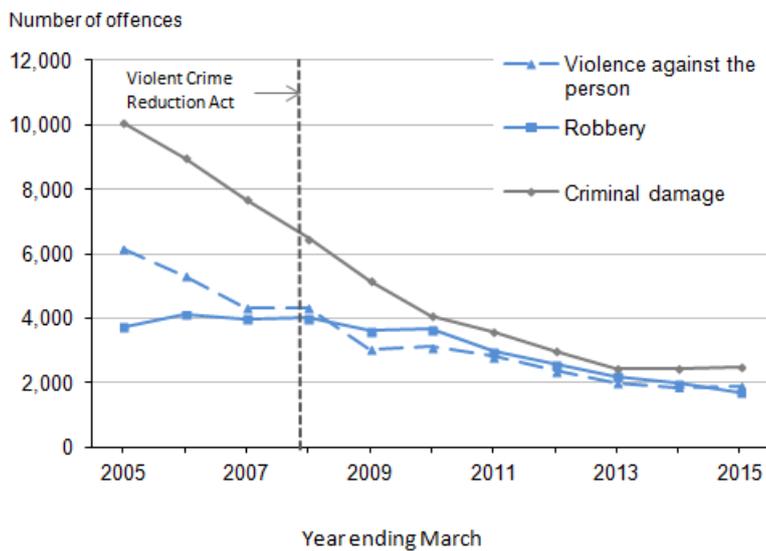
Violence against the person offences involving firearms have decreased by over two thirds (69%) between the year ending March 2005 (when they peaked) and the year ending March 2015 (from 6,139 to 1,908 offences). In the last year, violence against the person offences involving firearms increased by 2%. Over the same period, overall police recorded violence against the person increased by 23%<sup>1</sup>.

Between the year ending March 2014 and the year ending March 2015 there was a 13% fall in robbery offences involving firearms, mirroring the 13% fall in overall police recorded robbery. The number of robberies involving a firearm remained steady between the year ending March 2004 and the year ending March 2008 at around 4,000 offences a year, before beginning to decline. Since the year ending March 2010, the rate of decline has increased and between the year ending March 2010 and the year ending March 2015 there was a 53% fall in the number of robberies involving a firearm (from 3,663 offences to 1,716)

Criminal damage offences involving firearms have shown the greatest fall over the last decade. Between the year ending March 2003 and the year ending March 2013 the number of recorded offences fell by 78%. However, from the year ending March 2013 to the year ending March 2015, the figures increased by 4% due to an increase in criminal damage offences involving air weapons. The increase in the year ending March 2014 was the first time the number of criminal damage offences had not decreased since the introduction of the NCRS and contrasts with the continued falls in overall criminal damage recorded by police over the same period ([Crime in England and Wales, Year ending March 2015](#)).

**Figure 3.6: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used by selected offence type, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2015**

**England and Wales**



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Prior to the year ending March 2005 air weapon offences were recorded as homicide, attempted murder, other violence against the person, robbery, burglary, criminal damage or other offences. Unlike non-air weapons, data on the specific offences that constitute these groups is not held therefore the correction relating to 'other violence against the person' offences can only be applied to air weapon data from the year ending March 2005 onwards.
3. The Violent Crime Reduction Act introduced in October 2007 made it illegal to import or sell imitation firearms and tightened the rules for the manufacture and sale of certain types of air weapon.

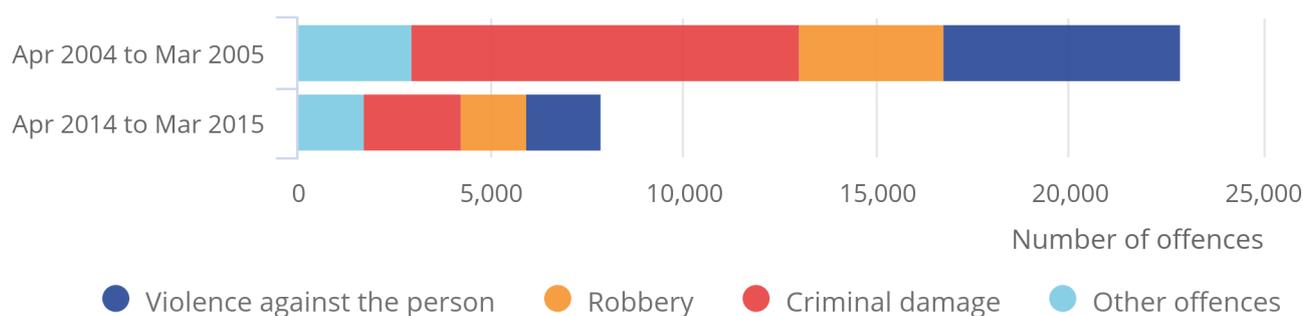
There has also been a change in the types of offences that have involved a firearm since the year ending March 2005. While there have been falls in firearm offences for all crime types, there has been an increase in the proportion of firearm offences which were robberies (16% to 22%) and a corresponding decrease in criminal damage offences (44% to 32%) (Figure 3.7, [Appendix Table 3.09](#)).

**Figure 3.7: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used by selected offence type, year ending March 2005 and year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 3.7: Offences recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been used by selected offence type, year ending March 2005 and year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

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

## Notes for types of offences where firearms are used

1. See the 'Overview' chapter of this publication for more detail on the increase in overall police recorded violence.

## 9 . Robberies involving a firearm

According to police recorded crime figures for the year ending March 2015, 89% of all robberies were of personal property and the remaining 11% were of business property ([Appendix Table A4: Crime in England and Wales, Year ending March 2015 \(623 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)). However, among robberies involving a firearm, 60% involved personal property and 40% business property in the year ending March 2015. In this period, only 2% of personal robberies involved the use of a firearm, compared with 12% of robberies of business property (data not shown).

Information is available on where the robberies involving firearms took place. In the year ending March 2015, of the 1,716 recorded robbery offences involving a firearm, 31% were committed in shops and garages (534 offences), 29% of offences (493) were committed on public highways and 18% were committed in a residential location (301 offences) (Figure 3.8, [Appendix Table 3.10](#)):

- robberies involving a firearm on public highways and shops and garages have been broadly decreasing since the year ending March 2003, from 3,452 offences to 1,027 in the year ending March 2015
- robberies involving a firearm committed in residential premises and 'other' areas have fluctuated considerably since the year ending March 2003 - the 301 robberies committed on residential premises in the year ending March 2015 is 8% (21 offences) higher than the number recorded in the year ending March 2003 but is well below the year ending March 2011 peak of 693 offences
- in the year ending March 2015, the police recorded 76 robberies of banks, building societies and post offices which involved a firearm, 17% lower than the number recorded in the previous year (92 offences) and 84% lower than the year ending March 2003 figure (464 offences)

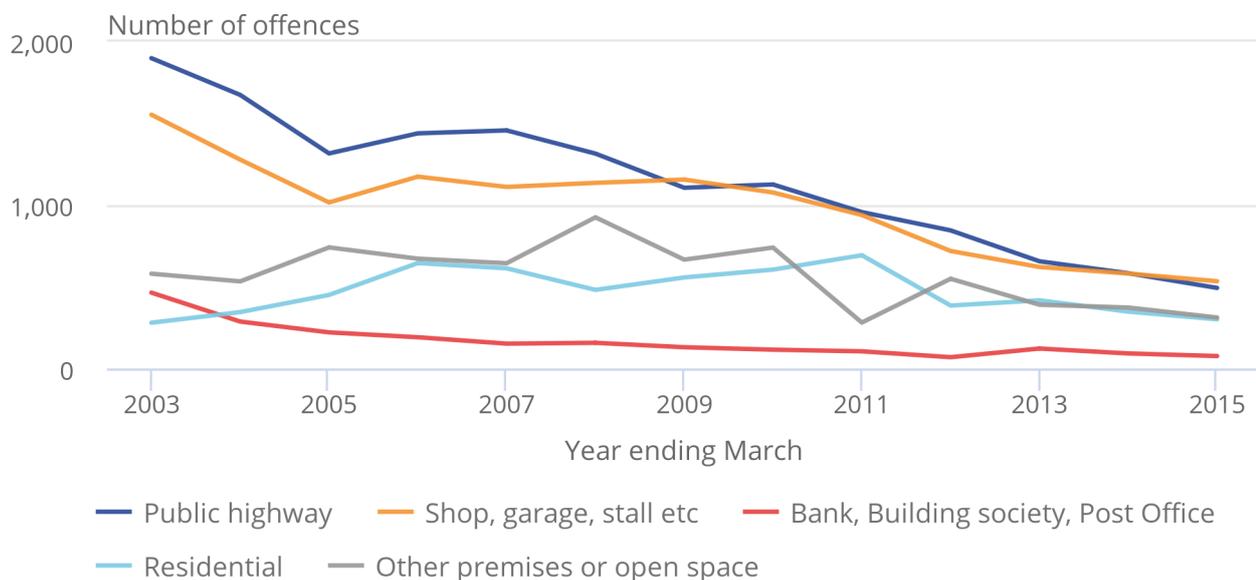
In the year ending March 2015, 61% of robberies involving firearms were committed with a handgun, 25% involved another type of firearm and in 15% of offences the firearm was unidentified ([Appendix Table 3.11](#)). In the majority of offence types involving firearms, a handgun was the most commonly used firearm.

**Figure 3.8: Number of robberies in which firearms were reported to have been used, by location of offence, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2015**

**England and Wales**

Figure 3.8: Number of robberies in which firearms were reported to have been used, by location of offence, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2015

England and Wales



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

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. These crimes are classified as robberies but are mostly break-ins where firearms have been used immediately before or at the time of stealing items from a residential property, and in order to steal these items. If firearms are used instead in the getaway, the crime is classified as a burglary.

## 10 . Geographical distribution of firearm offences

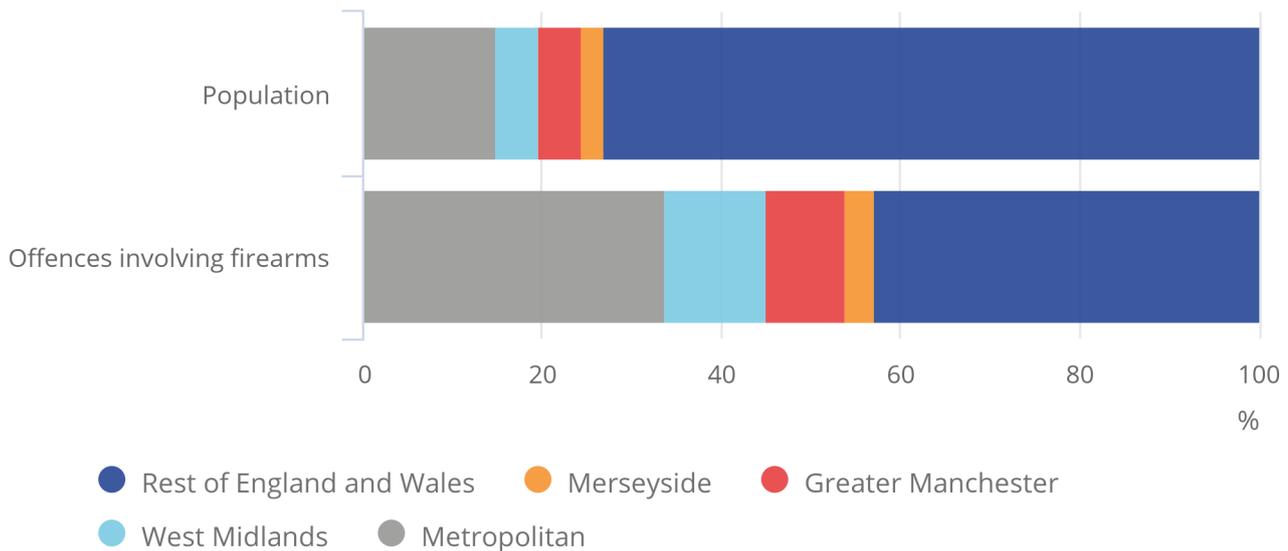
As in previous years, offences involving the use of non-air weapons (which tend to be used in more serious offences) are geographically concentrated. Just under 3 in every 5 (57%) offences recorded in the year ending March 2015 occurred in 4 police force areas: Metropolitan, West Midlands, Greater Manchester and Merseyside, all of which cover large urban areas. In comparison, just over a quarter (27%) of the population of England and Wales reside in the areas covered by these 4 forces (Figure 3.9, [Appendix Table 3.12](#)).

In the year ending March 2015, there were 9 firearm offences per 100,000 people in England and Wales. For the 4 urban forces mentioned above the rates were <sup>1</sup>:

- 20 per 100,000 in the West Midlands police force area
- 19 per 100,000 in the Metropolitan police force area
- 16 per 100,000 in the Greater Manchester police force area
- 12 per 100,000 in the Merseyside police force

**Figure 3.9: Proportion of firearm offences, excluding air weapons, in four police force areas and the rest of England and Wales, compared with population profile of those forces, year ending March 2015**

Figure 3.9: Proportion of firearm offences, excluding air weapons, in four police force areas and the rest of England and Wales, compared with population profile of those forces, year ending March 2015



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. The population figures are based on mid-2014 estimates from the Office for National Statistics.

**Notes for geographical distribution of firearm offences**

1. Population estimates are based on number of people resident in each police force area while number of offences recorded may include those committed against non-residents, for example people who travel into the city to work. This could partly explain the differences in rates between those areas with large non-resident populations (for example, cities) and those with lower non-resident populations.

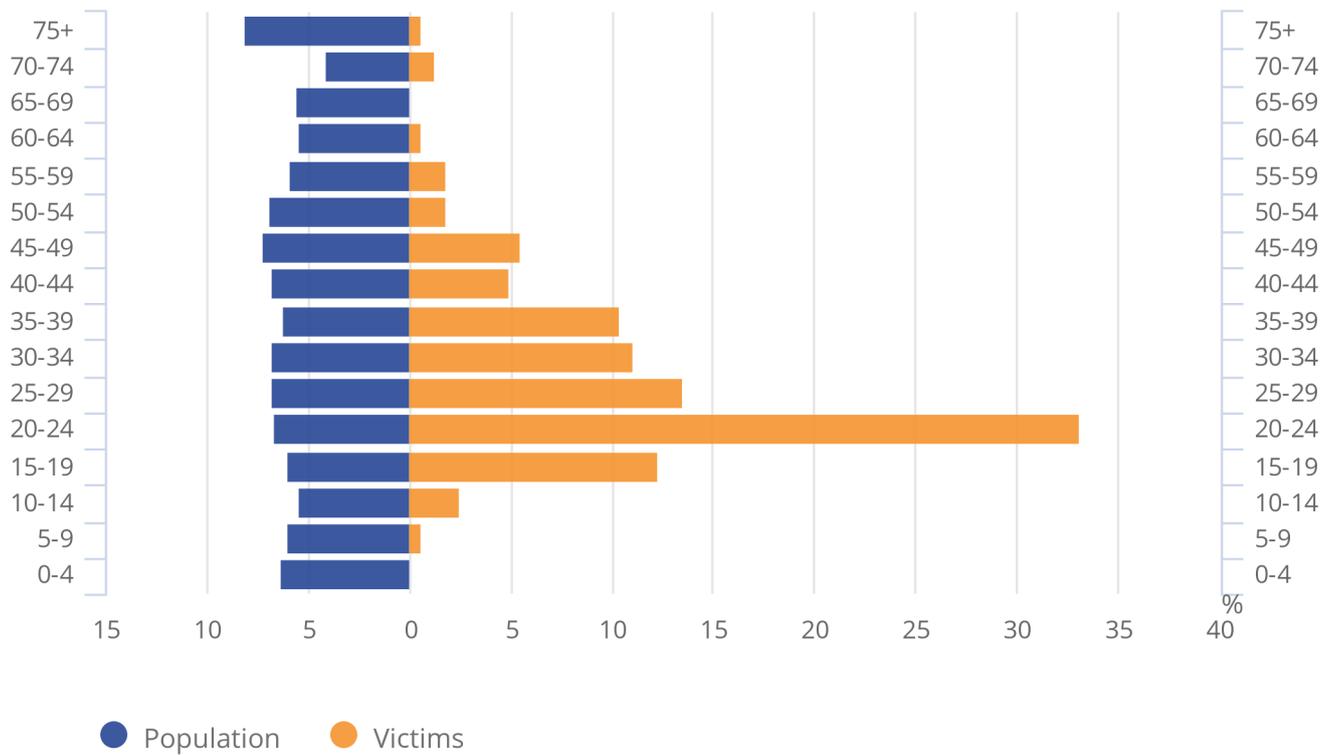
**11 . Firearm offences by victim characteristics**

As in previous years, in the year ending March 2015 there was variation in the risk of being a victim of an offence involving a non-air weapon by age<sup>1</sup> ([Appendix Table 3.13](#)):

- of the non-air weapon offences in which the age of the victim was known (91% of all instances), 55% of victims were aged between 15 and 34 even though this age group makes up only 26% of the population of England and Wales
- people aged 60 years and over were less likely to become victims, accounting for 5% of victims of non-air weapon offences but comprising 23% of the population
- when the analysis is restricted to victims who were seriously or fatally injured (163 victims for whom age was known) the difference is even more pronounced: 15 to 34 year olds formed 70% of victims (of which 33% were 20 to 24 year olds), while 2% of victims were aged 60 years or over (Figure 3.10)

**Figure 3.10: Age profile of fatally or seriously injured firearm victims, excluding air weapons, compared to population profile for England and Wales, year ending March 2015**

Figure 3.10: Age profile of fatally or seriously injured firearm victims, excluding air weapons, compared to population profile for England and Wales, year ending March 2015



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

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Excludes 2 cases where victim age was unknown.
3. The population figures are based on mid-2014 estimates from the Office for National Statistics.

Of the 4,107 (84%) offences involving non-air weapons in which victim ethnicity was recorded <sup>1</sup>, 67% of victims were White (2,756 offences), 15% were Asian (635), 14% were Black (568) and 4% (148) were from other minority ethnic groups ([Appendix Table 3.14](#)).

By way of comparison, 2012 population estimates (based on the [2011 Census](#)) indicate that 86% of the population of England and Wales were White, 8% were Asian, 3% were Black and the remaining 3% were of other ethnicities. Black and Asian people are therefore over-represented and White people under-represented as victims of such offences. However, it should be noted that these results have not been age-standardised and there is a relationship between age and being a victim of offences involving firearms. In addition, the age profile of the population varies by ethnicity, for example the Black ethnic group has a younger age profile than White.

Finally, there are also likely to be important socio-economic factors in offences involving firearms that cannot be examined using police recorded crime data. There is evidence from other studies that suggests that ethnicity is just one of many factors in violent incidents in general. [The social patterning of deaths due to assault in Scotland, 1980-2005: population-based study](#), for example, investigated Scottish homicides between 1980 and 2005, and concluded that “contextual influences of the neighbourhood of residence might be more important than individual characteristics in determining the victims of assault”.

Of the 4,448 offences involving a firearm, excluding air weapons, where the sex of the victim was recorded, 70% of victims were male and 30% were female (data not shown). These proportions have remained relatively consistent over the last 10 years.

## Notes for firearm offences by victim characteristics

1. Age breakdowns are not available for all air weapons offences.

## 12 . Offences involving knives or sharp instruments

### Introduction

Seven of the more serious types of offence in the police recorded crime data (homicide, threats to kill, assault with injury/assault with intent to cause serious harm, robbery, attempted murder, rape and sexual assault) can be broken down by whether or not a knife or sharp instrument was involved<sup>1</sup>. Reporting is limited to these 7 offences to reduce the burden on police forces. They cover the vast majority of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, there are very few knives or sharp instruments involved in other offence types. Statistics on offences recorded by the police involving a knife or sharp instrument are also published on a quarterly basis in the [Crime in England and Wales releases](#).

Unlike the data for firearms, the police do not provide detailed information at an offence level in this collection. For this reason it is not possible to analyse victim characteristics or the particular type of sharp instrument used.

### Notes for offences involving knives or sharp instruments

1. A sharp instrument is any object that pierces the skin (or in the case of a threat, is capable of piercing the skin), for example a broken bottle.

## 13 . Offences involving knives or sharp instruments - prevalence and trends

In the year ending March 2015, knives or other sharp instruments were involved in a total of 26,374 offences recorded by the police, an increase of 2% compared with the previous year (25,975). This increase is the first rise in the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument since the comparable series began in the year ending March 2009.

It is generally thought that these categories of offence are less likely to be influenced by changes in recording practice than less serious violent crime, and thus the rise is likely to represent a real change in the downward trend seen in recent years. However, there was a 15% rise in the overall number of these 7 selected offences recorded by the police over the same period ([Crime in England and Wales, Year ending March 2015](#)). This 15% rise is in part likely to be due to improvements in police recording of crime (see the 'Overview' chapter of this release for further information). Other evidence, albeit focused on the most serious knife-related crimes relating to hospital admissions for assault with a sharp instrument have shown little change in the past year, following declines in previous years (see 'Hospital admissions for assault with knives or sharp instruments' section later in the chapter). Taken together, the above suggests the picture is a complex one, with potential contributors to the reported rise in knife crime being improvements in recording processes, a genuine rise in knife crime, and a more proactive police response to it.

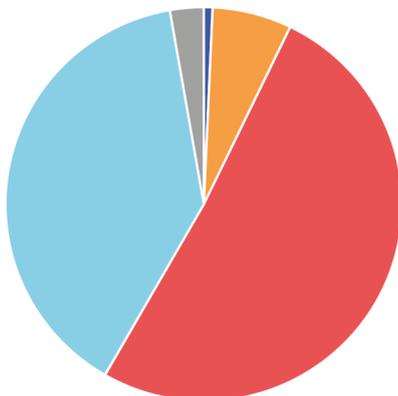
In the year ending March 2015, around 90% of knife or sharp instrument offences were either robbery (10,270 offences, 39%) or assault with injury/assault with intent to cause serious harm offences (13,488 offences, 51%). Homicides involving a knife or sharp instrument made up around 1% of the total number of knife or sharp instrument offences (Figure 3.11).

**Figure 3.11: Offences recorded by police in which a knife or sharp instrument was used, year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 3.11: Offences recorded by police in which a knife or sharp instrument was used, year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime and Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. 'Other offences' includes: attempted murder, rape and sexual assault.

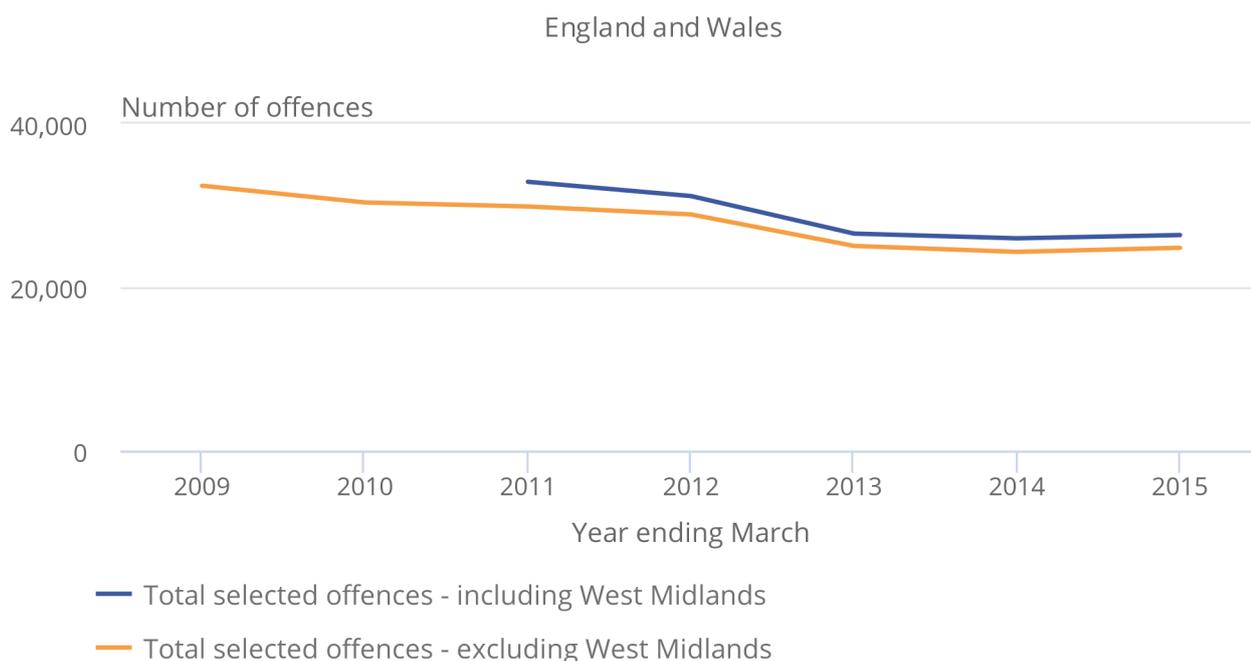
Before the year ending March 2011, there were known inconsistencies in knife or sharp instrument recording practices between police forces. West Midlands police force included unbroken bottle and glass offences in their returns but have excluded these offences in line with other forces since the year ending March 2011<sup>1</sup>. As such, the data since the year ending March 2011 are not comparable with those from earlier years. One force (Surrey) continues to record offences involving unbroken bottles and glass in its knife or sharp instrument returns; however, the estimated number of such offences is small enough that it is not likely to impact on national trends. Thus, the years from the year ending March 2011 onwards are broadly comparable, while in order to extend the time series further back it is necessary to exclude West Midlands.

In the 4 years from the year ending March 2011 to the year ending March 2015, the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument fell 20% from 32,889 to 26,374 (Figure 3.12). Most of this decrease occurred between the year ending March 2012 and the year ending March 2013 where the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument fell by 15%, from 31,148 to 26,552 (Figure 3.12). The 2% increase seen in the most recent year is the first rise in the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the comparable period from year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2015.

**Figure 3.12: Number of police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, including and excluding West Midlands PFA, year ending March 2009 to year ending March 2015**

**England and Wales**

Figure 3.12: Number of police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, including and excluding West Midlands PFA, year ending March 2009 to year ending March 2015



**Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office, and Homicide Index, Home Office**

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Offences included in figures are those listed in Figure 3.11.

Despite the large reduction over the 4 years for which there are complete police force area data, the proportion of police recorded crimes for the 7 selected offences in which a knife or sharp instrument was used has fallen only slightly, from 7% in the year ending March 2011 to 5% in the year ending March 2015 ( [Crime in England and Wales, Year ending March 2015](#)). This is because the equivalent offences that did not involve a knife or sharp instrument have also been falling, but at a slower rate.

## Notes for offences involving knives or sharp instruments - prevalence and trends

1. See Chapter 5 of the [User Guide](#).

## 14 . Geographical distribution of offences involving knives or sharp instruments

The Metropolitan Police recorded 37% (9,680 offences) of all knife or sharp instrument offences in England and Wales in the year ending March 2015. This figure is equivalent to 113 offences per 100,000 population, around 2 and a half times the rate of England and Wales as a whole (46 offences per 100,000 population). In forces other than the Metropolitan Police, as with offences involving firearms, those covering urban areas typically recorded more offences involving knives or sharp instruments and had higher offence rates per 100,000 population than those covering rural areas ([Appendix Table 3.17](#))<sup>10</sup>.

## Notes for geographical distribution of offences involving knives or sharp instruments

1. Population estimates are based on number of people resident in each police force area while number of offences recorded may include those committed against non-residents, for example people who travel into the city to work. This could partly explain the differences in rates between those areas with large non-resident populations (for example, cities) and those with lower non-resident populations.

## 15 . Hospital admissions for assault with knives or sharp instruments

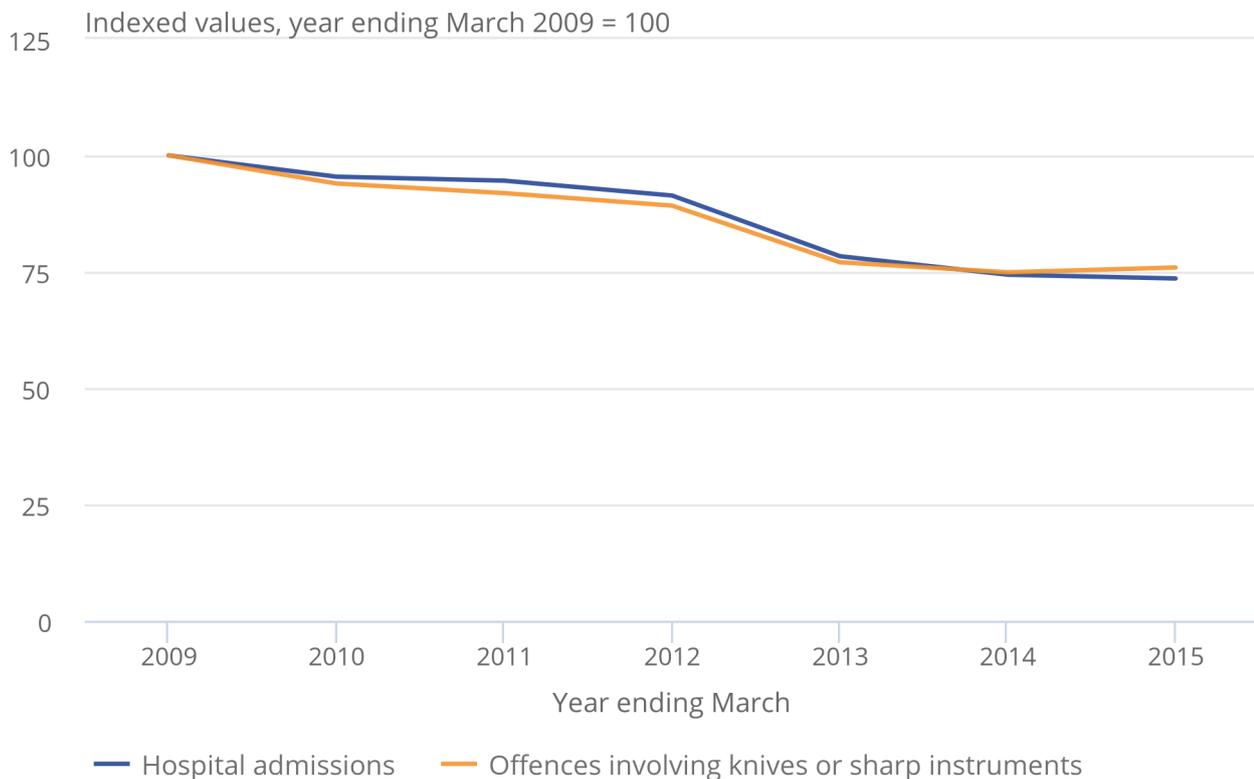
Further information on trends in offences involving knives or sharp instruments for England is available from '[Provisional Monthly Hospital Episode Statistics for Admitted Patient Care, Outpatients and Accident and Emergency Data – April 2015](#)'.

Between the year ending March 2014 and the year ending April 2015, hospital admissions for assault with sharp instruments fell by 1% (40 admissions) to 3,614. This follows a period of steady decline between the year ending March 2007 and the year ending March 2014 from 5,720 to 3,654; a fall of 36% over this period ( [Appendix Table 3.18](#)).

As expected, the absolute number of recorded knife crime offences is considerably higher than hospital admissions. Hospital admissions due to offences involving knives and sharp instruments can be expected to be restricted to more serious stabbings and wounding. However, between the year ending March 2009 and the year ending April 2015, trends in hospital admissions for assault with sharp instruments and police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments have tracked each other very closely. Both fell sharply between the year ending March 2012 and the year ending March 2013 before remaining steady over the last 2 years (Figure 3.13). This provides further evidence that changes in the number of knife crime offences are not likely to be due to changes in recording practices.

**Figure 3.13: Indexed admissions to NHS hospitals with injuries from assault with a sharp object and police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, England, year ending March 2009 to year ending April 2015**

Figure 3.13: Indexed admissions to NHS hospitals with injuries from assault with a sharp object and police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, England, year ending March 2009 to year ending April 2015



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office, and Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

**Notes:**

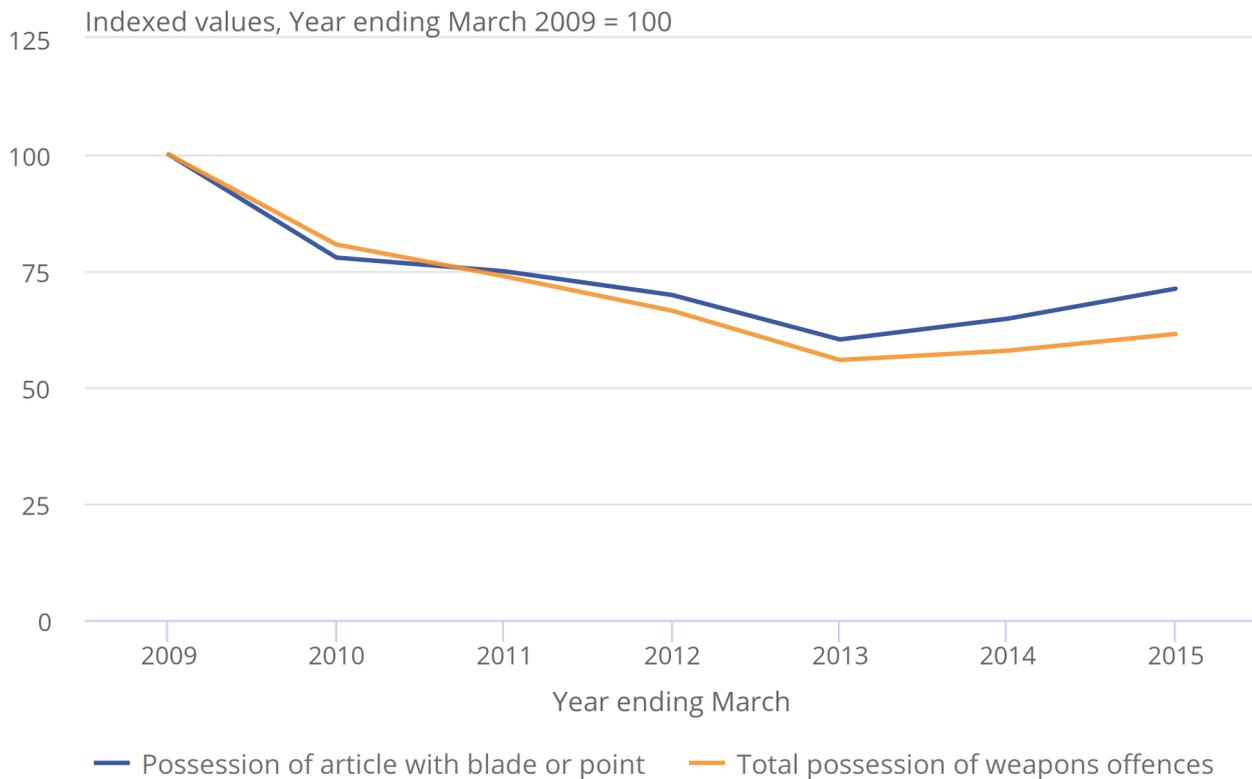
1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. All Welsh PFAs and West Midlands PFA are excluded.

## 16 . Possession of knives or sharp instruments

The number of offences of possession of an article with a blade or sharp point recorded by the police increased by 10% between the year ending March 2014 and the year ending March 2015 (9,050 to 9,951) ([Appendix Table A4; Crime in England and Wales, Year ending March 2015](#)). This latest increase follows a downward trend since the year ending March 2009, when the offence classification to specifically record possessions of article with blade or point was introduced. This figure can often be influenced by increases in targeted police action in relation to knife crime. The latest figure of 9,951 remains 29% below the recorded number of possessions of article with blade or point in year ending March 2009 (13,985) (Figure 3.14).

**Figure 3.14: Indexed trends of possession of article with blade or point offences and total possession of weapons offences, England and Wales, year ending March 2009 to year ending March 2015**

Figure 3.14: Indexed trends of possession of article with blade or point offences and total possession of weapons offences, England and Wales, year ending March 2009 to year ending March 2015



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

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

## 17 . Knife carrying in 10 to 15 year olds and 16 to 29 year olds (CSEW)

This section presents findings from questions on knife-carrying from the self-completion <sup>1</sup> module of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending March 2015. These questions were asked of 10 to 15 year olds and 16 to 29 year olds. The questions were first asked in the year ending March 2012 survey for 10 to 15 year olds but were not asked in the adult survey until the year ending March 2014.

Firstly, respondents were asked whether they knew anyone who carried a knife for their own protection, for example, in case they got into a fight. According to the year ending March 2015 survey, 5.8% of 10 to 15 year olds said they knew someone who carried a knife for their own protection, a percentage that has not changed significantly over time<sup>2</sup> (Table 3.3). A similar percentage (4.5%) of 16 to 29 year olds said they knew someone who carried a knife, the same percentage as the previous year.

Secondly, respondents were asked whether they had personally carried a knife, in the last 12 months, for their own protection, in case they got into a fight for example. According to the year ending March 2015 survey, a very small proportion (0.5% of 10 to 15 year olds, and 0.6% of 16 to 29 year olds) said they personally carried a knife.

**Table 3.3 Prevalence of knife carrying, 10-15 years old and 16-29 year olds, year ending March 2012 to year ending March 2015 Crime Survey of England and Wales**

	%			
	Apr '11 to Mar '12	Apr '12 to Mar '13	Apr '13 to Mar '14	Apr '14 to Mar '15
<b>10-15 year olds</b>				
Know someone who carries a knife	5.2	5.1	4.3	5.8
Has personally carried a knife in the last 12 months	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.5
Unweighted base - number of children aged 10 to 15 <sup>2</sup>	3,915	2,866	2,917	2,358
<b>16-29 year olds</b>				
Know someone who carries a knife	:	:	4.5	4.5
Has personally carried a knife in the last 12 months	:	:	0.6	0.6
Unweighted base - number of adults aged 16 to 29 <sup>2</sup>			2,567	2,315

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

Notes:

1. These questions were first asked in the survey for 10-15s in the year ending March 2012 and for 16-29s in the year ending March 2014.
2. Includes don't know/don't want to answer.
3. : indicates that the CSEW question was not asked in that particular year.

### Notes for knife carrying in 10 to 15 year olds and 16 to 29 year olds (CSEW)

1. 'Self-completion' means that the respondent reads the questions themselves and records their answers directly onto a laptop.
2. Although the estimate for the year ending March 2014 is significantly lower than the preceding year, as the estimate is also significantly lower than the subsequent year, it is thought that this is an outlier to the series.

## 18. Background notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Compendium

# Intimate personal violence and partner abuse



Contact:  
John Flatley  
[crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk)  
+44 (0)20 7592 8695

Release date:  
11 February 2016

Next release:  
To be announced

## Correction

### 16 March 2016 11:37

A correction has been made to the 'Attitudes to partner abuse' section of Chapter 4: Intimate personal violence and partner abuse. This was due to a small error when the wrong age groups were provided in the commentary and the wrong axis label was used in Figure 4.15. You can see the original data here. We apologise for any inconvenience.

### 21 November 2018 12:21

Errors have occurred in section 13 due to a methodological issue. We have corrected these errors. You can see all previous versions of this data on the previous versions page. We apologise for any inconvenience.

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# 1 . Summary

This chapter presents findings from the year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) self-completion module on intimate violence which is asked of adults aged 16 to 59. The module covers experience of emotional, financial and physical abuse by partners or family members, as well as sexual assaults and stalking by any person. In the year ending March 2015, the module additionally focused on the nature of partner abuse, findings from which are presented here.

## 2 . Main points

The CSEW estimates that 8.2% of women and 4.0% of men reported experiencing any type of domestic abuse in the last year (that is, partner / ex-partner abuse (non-sexual), family abuse (non-sexual) and sexual assault or stalking carried out by a current or former partner or other family member). This is equivalent to an estimated 1.3 million female victims and 600,000 male victims.

There were 6.5% of women and 2.8% of men who reported having experienced any type of partner abuse in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.1 million female victims and 500,000 male victims.

Overall, 27.1% of women and 13.2% of men had experienced any domestic abuse since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 4.5 million female victims and 2.2 million male victims.

The decline in domestic abuse for all victims between the year ending March 2005 and the year ending March 2009 CSEW surveys was statistically significant. However, the current figure (6.1% for both men and women combined) continues a fairly stable trend seen since the year ending March 2009.

Women were more likely than men to have experienced intimate violence across all headline types of abuse asked about, for example, 2.7% of women and 0.7% of men had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year.

## 3 . Introduction

This chapter includes headline findings from the year ending March 2015 self-completion module of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) on the extent of, and trends in, intimate violence among men and women aged 16 to 59 resident in households in England and Wales. Intimate violence is a collective term used here to refer to a number of different forms of physical and non-physical abuse consisting of partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault and stalking. The term reflects the intimate nature either of the victim-offender relationship or of the abuse itself.

A self-completion module<sup>1</sup> on intimate violence was included in the CSEW in 2001 and then on a continuous basis since April 2004<sup>2</sup>. The use of self-completion on laptops allows respondents to feel more at ease when answering questions on sensitive issues due to increased confidence in the privacy and confidentiality of the survey. The self-completion module is currently restricted to respondents aged 16 to 59. The age range has previously been reviewed<sup>3</sup>, however, because testing found that a high proportion of respondents aged between 60 and 69 (around a quarter) requested help from the interviewer to fill in the self-completion module, the age range was not extended. This will be reviewed again in the near future as part of a wider review of statistics on intimate personal violence.

In the year ending March 2011 CSEW, a split sample experiment was started to test a set of alternative questions on intimate violence. This was prompted by the extension of the survey to cover 10 to 15 year olds in 2009, where anecdotal feedback from interviewers suggested that the explicit language in some of the IPV (Intimate Personal Violence) questions, which are asked just before the interviewer seeks parental permission to carry out the child survey, may have led to a higher than anticipated parental refusal rate. The split sample experiment tested the use of less explicit language in the questions and assessed the ease of answering the questions as a respondent. For more information see the section on 'Prevalence of intimate personal violence – trends'.

## Notes for introduction

1. 'Self-completion' means that the respondent reads the questions themselves and records their answers directly onto a laptop
2. The 2001 module differed from the one used since the year ending March 2005 and therefore the year ending March 2005 is used as a baseline for trends.
3. The review looked at extending the age range to 69.
4. More details are available from the [GOV.UK website](#).

## 4 . Definitions of abuse in the intimate violence self-completion module

Intimate violence is the collective term used to describe domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking. Categories used in the presentation of these statistics are defined as follows:

- domestic abuse: this category combines partner abuse (non-sexual), family abuse (non-sexual) and sexual assault or stalking carried out by a current or former partner or other family member - this broadly matches the Government's definition of domestic violence and abuse<sup>1</sup>
- non-sexual abuse by a partner: physical force, emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them carried out by a current or former partner
- non-sexual abuse by a family member: physical force, emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them carried out by a family member other than a partner (father/mother, step-father/mother or other relative)
- sexual assault: rape or assault by penetration including attempts ('serious'), indecent exposure or unwanted touching ('less serious') carried out by any person
- stalking: 2 or more incidents (causing distress, fear or alarm) of receiving obscene or threatening unwanted letters, emails, text messages or phone calls, having had obscene or threatening information about them placed on the internet, waiting or loitering around home or workplace, or following or watching by any person, including a partner or family member<sup>1</sup>.

On 29 December 2015 the government introduced a new criminal offence of domestic abuse of "[coercive and controlling behaviour](#)". The new law captures coercive control through psychological and emotional abuse that stops short of physical violence. The CSEW has attempted to measure some elements of such non-physical abuse since April 2004 by asking if the respondent has experienced the following behaviours by a partner / ex-partner or family member:

- prevented you from having your fair share of the household money
- stopped you from seeing friends and relatives
- repeatedly belittled you to the extent that you felt worthless

Figures for this category of non-physical abuse (emotional, financial), are presented in the appendix tables for both non-sexual abuse by a partner and family member categories.

There are 2 headline measures of intimate violence in the CSEW: one relates to experiences since the age of 16 and the other is limited to those experiences in the 12 months prior to interview. As well as questions on experience of intimate violence, the CSEW self-completion module also includes a set of questions asking victims for further details about the nature of the incidents they experienced. These questions usually focus on partner abuse or sexual assault in alternate survey years<sup>2</sup>. The questions in the year ending March 2015 CSEW focused on the nature of partner abuse and as a result this bulletin also includes analyses of these questions, including information about the context of victimisation and whether or not incidents came to the attention of the police and others.

## Notes for definitions of abuse in the intimate violence self-completion module

1. In the new questions (from the year ending March 2013 survey onwards), the definition of stalking has been changed to be in line with the legal definition of 2 or more incidents that was introduced in April 2013.
2. In the year ending March 2016 survey an alternative set of questions was included which focus on childhood experience of abuse.

## 5 . Reporting

The under-reporting of crime to the police is known to be particularly acute for intimate violence offences. One of the strengths of the CSEW is that it covers many crimes that are not reported to the police. Estimates of the prevalence of domestic violence (a narrower definition than domestic abuse, which excludes non-physical abuse and threats) based on face-to-face<sup>1</sup> CSEW interviews are regularly published<sup>2</sup>. However, this crime type is particularly liable to under-reporting due to the unwillingness of some victims to disclose such incidents in the context of a face-to-face interview. The prevalence of domestic abuse in the self-completion module is higher than the prevalence of domestic violence in the face-to-face interview. This is likely to be due to both:

- the increased reporting of sensitive issues expected on account of the greater confidentiality provided by self-completion methods
- the broader definition of domestic abuse used in the self-completion module<sup>3</sup>

Comparing those who reported physical domestic abuse in the self-completion module with those who reported the similar category of domestic violence in the face-to-face interview provides evidence that respondents are more likely to report sensitive issues in the self-completion module. Of those aged 16 to 59 who reported being victims of physical domestic abuse<sup>4</sup> in the self-completion module, 14% reported being a victim of domestic violence in the last 12 months in face-to-face interviews (14% for women and 13% for men).

Findings from the self-completion module are supplemented with some high level findings from the face-to-face module in this chapter. The self-completion module provides a more complete measure of intimate violence victimisation and, as there are several differences in the coverage of the self-completion and face-to-face figures, care should be taken when making comparisons between the two.

The small number of sexual offences identified in face-to-face CSEW interviews and the likelihood of under-reporting means that figures are too unreliable to report and these data are excluded from the headline CSEW estimates. Therefore the self-completion module is the only source for estimates on these crimes.

## Notes for reporting

1. In a 'face-to-face' interview, an interviewer reads the questions out to the respondent and records the answers given.
2. See Appendix Table A3 of [quarterly crime statistics publications](#).
3. Mainly that the self completion definition of domestic abuse includes emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them.
4. Victims of force by a partner or family member and victims of any sexual assault by a partner or family member in the last year.

## 6 . Prevalence of intimate violence - extent

The self-completion module on intimate violence includes questions covering experiences since the respondent was 16 (treated here as a measure of adult lifetime prevalence) and in the 12 months prior to interview (treated here as a measure of recent experience).

As in previous years, women were more likely than men to have experienced intimate violence across all the headline types of abuse asked about ([Appendix Table 4.01](#)). This is in contrast to findings on overall violent crime victimisation (from the face-to-face survey) in which men, particularly young men, were more likely to have experienced violent crime<sup>1</sup>. However, it is known that in these overall violence estimates from the face-to-face interview, that domestic violence is substantially under-estimated (see Introduction). If domestic violence was accurately captured by the face-to-face interview, it would increase the overall estimate of violent incidents, with the increase occurring more for women than for men.

### Intimate violence experienced since the age of 16

Latest estimates showed that for each of the categories of abuse, women had significantly higher prevalence compared with men. As in previous years, women were twice as likely to have experienced any domestic abuse since the age of 16 (27.1%) than men (13.2%) ([Appendix Table 4.01](#); Figure 4.1).

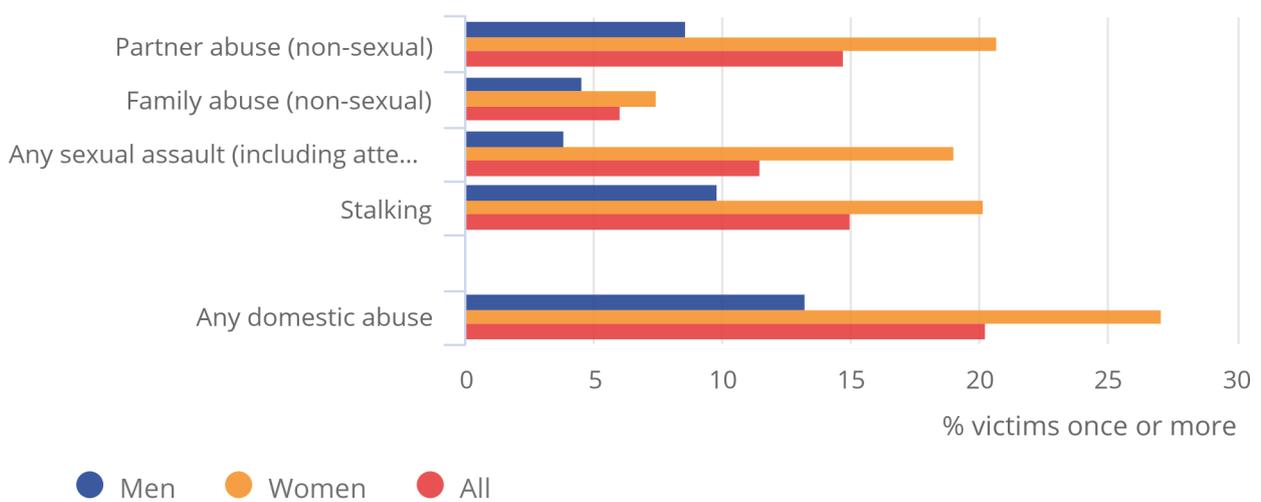
The year ending March 2015 CSEW showed that ([Appendix Table 4.01](#)):

- 27.1% of women and 13.2% of men reported being a victim of any domestic abuse since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 4.5 million female victims and 2.2 million male victims aged 16 to 59 ([Appendix Table 4.02](#))
- for women, the most commonly experienced types of intimate violence since age 16, covered by the survey, were non-sexual partner abuse (20.7%), stalking (20.2%) and sexual assault (19.0%)
- for men, the most commonly experienced types of abuse were stalking (9.8%) and non-sexual partner abuse (8.6%) ([Appendix Table 4.01](#); Figure 4.1)
- the largest difference between men and women was for experience of sexual assault (including attempts), with women (19.0%) being 5 times as likely as men (3.8%) to have experienced it since the age of 16 ([Appendix Table 4.01](#) and Figure 4.1)

Looking across all the sub-categories of intimate violence, estimates for females were significantly higher than estimates for males. The sub-category of threats within partner abuse shows the largest difference between males and females. Women were over 4 times as likely to be a victim of threats as men, with 14.1% of females and 3.2% of males experiencing this type of abuse since the age of 16. This is compared with all non-sexual partner abuse, where women were over twice as likely to experience this abuse (20.7% for females and 8.6% for males).

**Figure 4.1: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence since the age of 16, by sex and headline category, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.1: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence since the age of 16, by sex and headline category, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

## Intimate violence experienced in the last year

Respondents who had reported at least 1 incident of being a victim of intimate violence since they were 16 were asked whether they had been a victim in the last year. Women were twice as likely as men to have been a victim in the last year (8.2% compared with 4.0%), which is consistent with the difference in adult lifetime prevalence (27.1% compared with 13.2%).

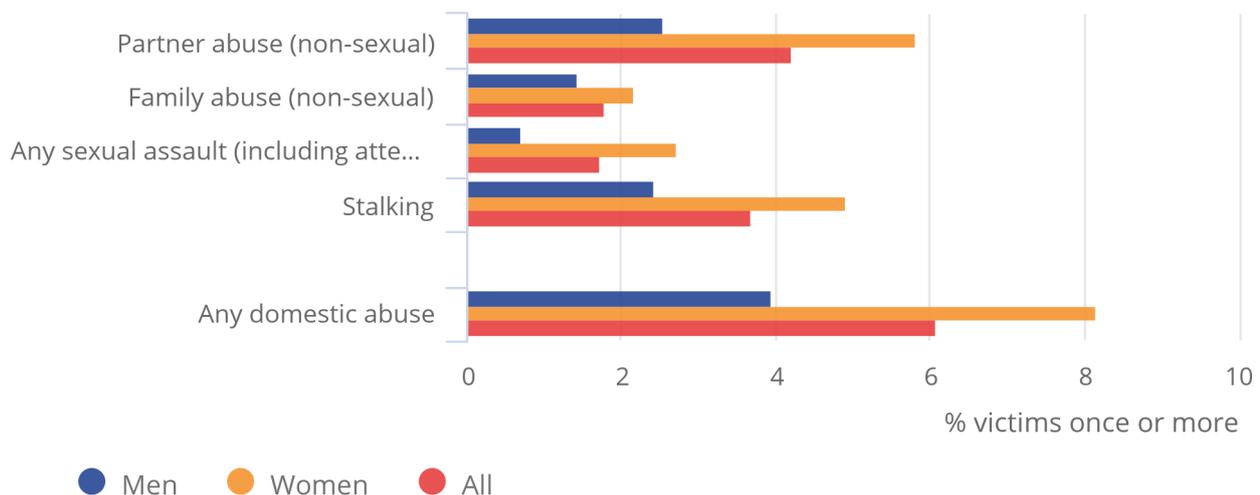
The year ending March 2015 CSEW showed that ([Appendix Tables 4.01 and 4.03](#); Figure 4.2):

- 8.2% of women and 4.0% of men reported having experienced any type of domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.3 million female victims and 600,000 male victims aged between 16 and 59
- in the last year, non-sexual partner abuse and stalking were the most common forms of the separate types of intimate violence - twice as many women as men reported having experienced non-sexual partner abuse (5.8% of women and 2.5% of men) and stalking (4.9% of women and 2.4% of men)
- of the separate types of intimate violence sub-categories, non-sexual family abuse had the smallest difference between the prevalence experienced by men compared with women (1.4% and 2.2% respectively) - however, this difference was still statistically significant.
- in the last year, 2.7% of women and 0.7% of men had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) - the majority of these were less serious sexual assault, which includes indecent exposure and unwanted sexual touching
- around 4 times as many women as men had experienced less serious sexual assault (2.4% of women compared with 0.6% of men) - less than 0.1% of men had experienced serious sexual assault (including attempts) compared with 0.7% of women, and less than 0.1% of men had experienced serious sexual assault (excluding attempts) compared with 0.4% of women

For all headline measures and sub-categories of abuse experienced in the last year, the prevalence for women was significantly higher compared with men. This pattern is broadly similar to patterns seen in previous years. The sub-category of threats within partner abuse shows the largest difference between males and females. Women were over 3 times as likely to be a victim in the last year as men, with 2.9% of females and 0.8% of males experiencing this type of abuse. This is compared with all partner abuse, where women were over twice as likely to experience this abuse (5.8% for females and 2.5% for males).

**Figure 4.2: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by sex and headline category, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.2: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by sex and headline category, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

## Police recorded domestic abuse incidents

An additional source of information on domestic abuse is available from the police. The police supply data to the Home Office on the number of domestic abuse incidents they have dealt with in their force area<sup>2</sup>. This collection is wider than police recorded crime – not all domestic abuse incidents will be recorded as notifiable offences as defined by the Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime. Domestic abuse incidents are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality<sup>3</sup>.

In the year ending March 2015, the police recorded 943,628 domestic abuse incidents ([Appendix Table 4.08](#))<sup>4</sup>. It is known that only a small proportion of domestic abuse incidents are reported to the police. These figures are therefore not directly comparable with the estimates from the CSEW, which will include information on domestic abuse that was not reported to the police. Furthermore, CSEW estimates relate to the number of victims rather than the number of incidents.

While incidents are recorded under the National Standard for Incident Recording<sup>5</sup> in accordance with the same 'victim focused' approach that applies for recorded crime, it was previously reported that there were substantial variations between police forces in how they record domestic abuse incidents, and 2 forces were unable to supply data in previous years. The number of police recorded domestic abuse incidents has been increasing in recent years; it is thought that this increase is due to more victims coming forward and police forces improving their recording of these incidents.

One of the recommendations from a HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspection in March 2014 stated that “data collected on domestic abuse needs to be consistent, comparable, accessible and accurate so that it can be used to monitor progress”. In response to this the Home Office, since April 2015, has been collecting data from police forces on the number of recorded crimes that are domestic abuse-related. These data have been collected based upon the governmental definition of domestic abuse as stated above. Data on domestic abuse incidents are also being collected as part of this new collection. The first 2 quarters of data are published for the first time in the ‘Experimental Statistics: Domestic abuse offences recorded by the police, April to September 2015’ section of this release. The [latest report by HMIC on the police response to domestic abuse](#), published in December 2015, states that the variation between forces in domestic abuse related crimes is quite small, with all forces reporting that between 8% and 12% of recorded crimes were flagged as domestic abuse. This suggests that police are improving their identification of crimes that are domestic abuse-related.

## Notes for prevalence of intimate violence - extent

1. Overall violent crime in the CSEW is measured as part of the face-to-face interview. For estimates of victimisation from the face-to-face interview see [Appendix Tables 1.01 to 1.04](#).
2. These figures are not National Statistics.
3. Police domestic abuse incident data follow the government definition of domestic abuse. This definition changed in September 2012 to include those aged 16 and 17. The CSEW figures are restricted to respondents aged 16 to 59.
4. Data exclude British Transport Police.
5. The police record domestic abuse incidents in accordance with the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR); for further details, see Chapter 5 of the [User Guide](#).

## 7 . Prevalence of intimate violence - trends

A split sample experiment to test new questions was conducted for the IPV module <sup>1</sup> as a result of a review prompted by the extension of the survey to cover 10 to 15 year olds in 2009. From April 2013, the new questions were used for the whole sample for the first time. Estimates calculated from the new questions are not directly comparable with estimates calculated from the original questions published in previous bulletins. Where estimates have been calculated from the original questions, an adjustment has been applied to make the estimates as comparable as possible across the time series. More information on the new questions and how the adjustment has been calculated can be found in the [methodological note: split sample for intimate personal violence \(497 Kb Pdf\)](#).

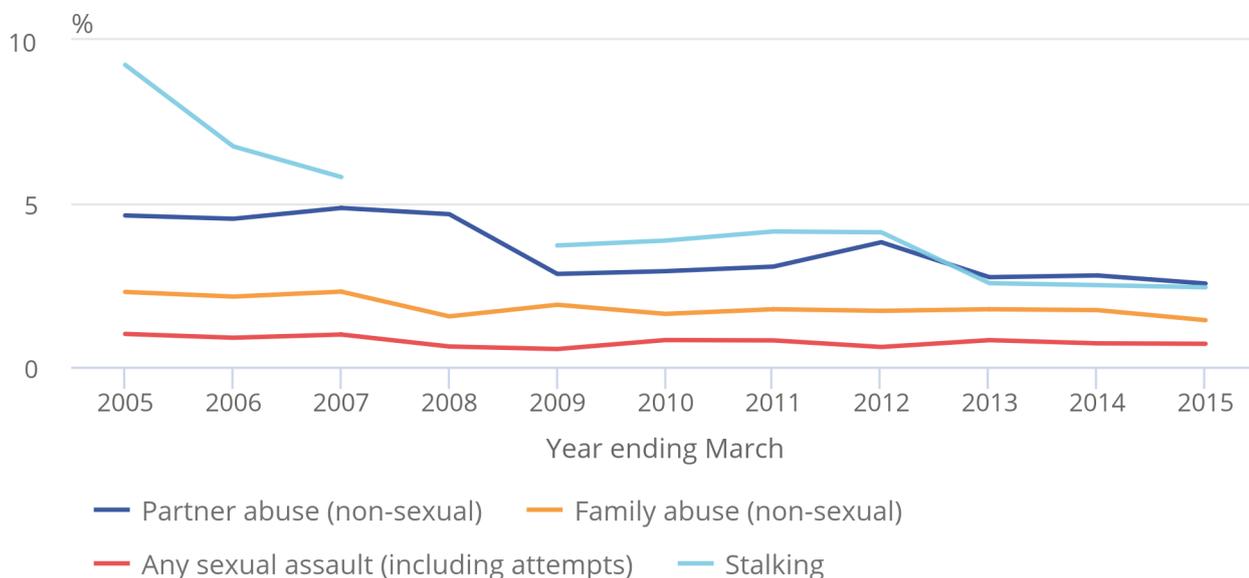
The year ending March 2015 CSEW self-completion module shows that 6.1% of adults aged 16 to 59 experienced domestic abuse in the last year, the lowest estimate since the series began.

For the period covering the years ending March 2005 to March 2007, the CSEW estimated that between 8.8% and 9.0% of adults experienced some form of domestic abuse in the last 12 months. The level decreased significantly to 6.5% in the year ending March 2009<sup>2</sup> and has been followed by a period of stability where estimates have ranged between 6.5% and 7.0%. The year ending March 2015 figure of 6.1% continues this fairly stable trend and represents the equivalent of an overall fall from around 2.7 million victims in the year ending March 2005 to 2.0 million victims per year according to the year ending March 2015 CSEW ( [Appendix Table 4.06](#) ).

Overall, between the survey years ending March 2005 and March 2007, domestic abuse experienced by women ranged from 11.0% to 11.5%. Since the year ending March 2010, the level has made small but consistent declines which resulted in a statistically significant change between the year ending March 2005 and the year ending March 2015. Domestic abuse experienced by men in the last year also saw a decrease between the survey years ending March 2007 and March 2009 (6.5% to 4.2%). Since then the prevalence has fluctuated between 4.0% and 4.9%. For both women and men, the latest estimates are the lowest figures recorded since the year ending March 2005 baseline. A time series for the 4 main categories (see 'Definitions of abuse' section above) that make up domestic abuse can be found in Figures 4.3 and 4.4.

**Figure 4.3: Percentage of men aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by headline category, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.3: Percentage of men aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by headline category, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

**Notes:**

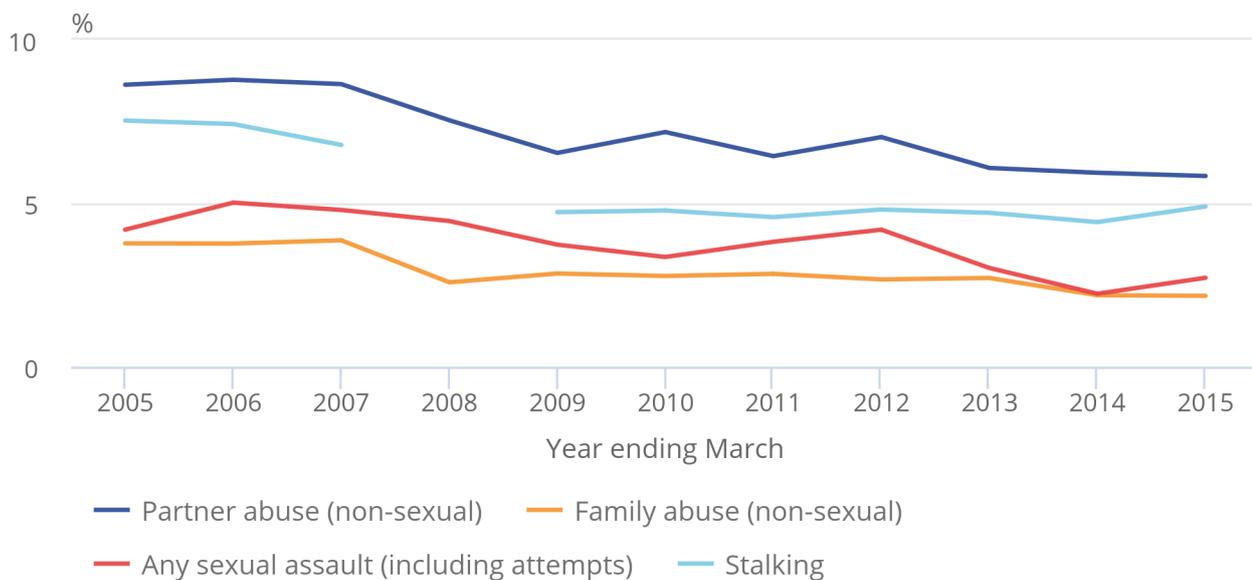
1. The stalking time series excludes a data point for the year ending March 2008 survey due to comparable questions on stalking not being included that year.
2. In the year ending March 2012 survey the stalking question was changed to separately ask about receiving emails and an additional behaviour added of putting personal, obscene or threatening information about you on the internet.
3. The definition of stalking changed in the year ending March 2013 survey to be in line with the legal definitions by referring to at least two incidents.

Of the headline measures, stalking has shown the largest decrease in prevalence over the series (9.2% to 2.4% for men and 7.5% to 4.9% for women) ([Appendix Table 4.04](#), Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4).

The latest estimates for all headline categories showed no significant change compared with the previous year. The apparent increases in any sexual assault (from 1.5% to 1.7%) and stalking (from 3.5% to 3.7%) and the apparent decreases in family abuse (from 2.0% to 1.8%) and partner abuse (from 4.4% to 4.2%) were not statistically significant.

**Figure 4.4: Percentage of women aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by headline category, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.4: Percentage of women aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by headline category, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

**Notes:**

1. The stalking time series excludes a data point for the year ending March 2008 due to comparable questions on stalking not being included that year.
2. In the year ending March 2012 the stalking question was changed to separately ask about receiving emails and an additional behaviour added of putting personal, obscene or threatening information about you on the internet.
3. The definition of stalking changed in the year ending March 2013 to be in line with the legal definitions by referring to at least two incidents.

**Notes for prevalence of intimate violence - trends**

1. For CSEW survey years ending March 2011 to March 2013.
2. The next survey year for which estimates are available.

## 8 . Intimate violence in the last year by personal characteristics

In addition to women being more likely than men to have experienced intimate violence in the last year, victimisation varied by other personal characteristics ([Appendix Tables 4.10 and 4.11](#)). Many of these characteristics will be closely associated (for example, marital status and age) so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effects of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation.

Multivariate analysis performed on year ending March 2010 CSEW data found that the characteristics that were most closely associated with domestic abuse were use of any drug in the last year, marital status, having a long-term illness or disability and the respondent's sex ([Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2009/10: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2009 to 10](#)). Other variables such as household structure, age, tenure, occupation, household income, alcohol consumption and number of visits to a nightclub in the last month were also important.

### Age

Latest estimates showed that among both men and women, the prevalence of intimate violence was highest amongst younger age groups and decreased with age. Those aged 55 to 59 were least likely to be a victim of intimate violence (2.0% for men and 5.4% for women). Women aged between 16 and 19 and between 20 and 24 were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse (12.6% and 8.9% respectively) compared with those aged between 55 and 59 (5.4%) (Figure 4.5).

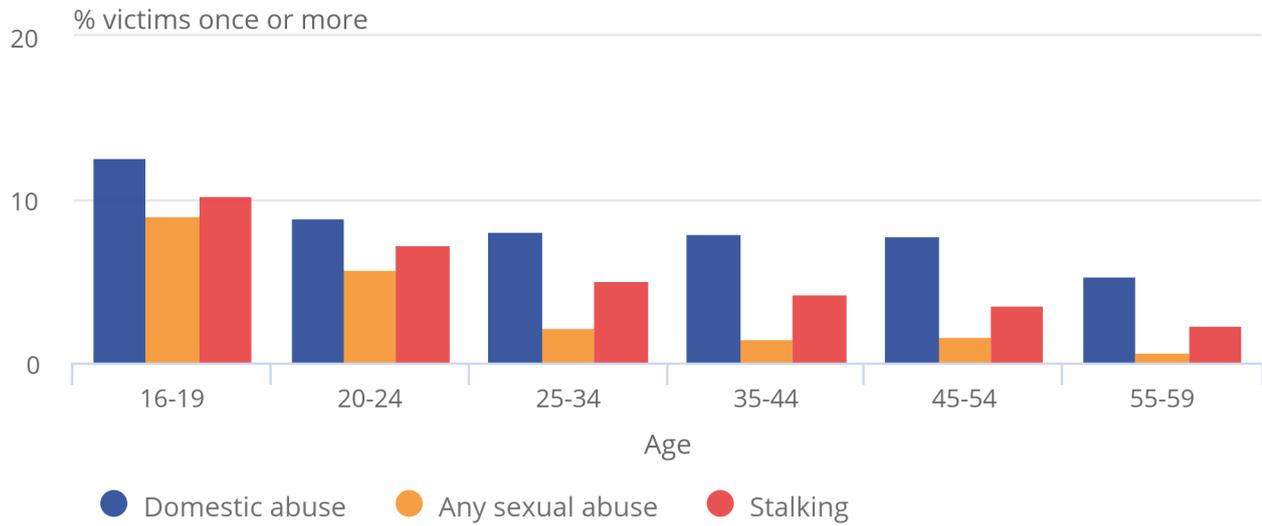
Similarly, younger men were also more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than older men (Figure 4.6). Those aged between 16 and 19 (6.6%) and between 20 and 24 (5.0%) were more likely than those aged between 55 and 59 (2.0%) to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year ([Appendix Table 4.10](#)).

Young women were also more likely to be victims of any sexual assault in the last year, with the prevalence of sexual abuse decreasing with age. Around 9.0% of women aged between 16 and 19 were a victim of any sexual abuse in the last year, significantly higher compared with women aged 25 to 34 (2.2%), 35 to 44 (1.6%), 45 to 54 (1.7%) and aged 55 to 59 (0.6%). The only age group which was not statistically significant when comparing with women aged 16 to 19 was women aged 20 to 24 (5.8%).

Stalking showed a similar trend, with young women most likely to be a victim and those aged 55 to 59 least likely to be a victim. Women aged between 16 and 19 and aged between 20 and 24 were more likely to be victims of stalking (10.3% and 7.2% respectively) compared with all other age groups.

**Figure 4.5: Percentage of women aged 16 to 59 who were victims of intimate violence, in the last year by age and type of abuse, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

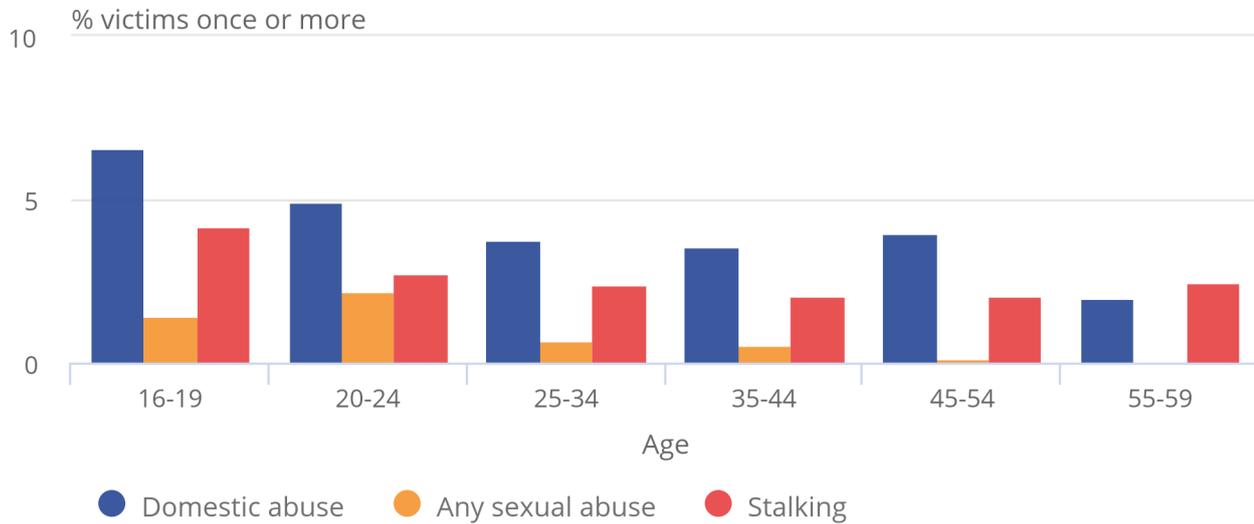
Figure 4.5: Percentage of women aged 16 to 59 who were victims of intimate violence, in the last year by age and type of abuse, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

**Figure 4.6: Percentage of men aged 16 to 59 who were victims of intimate violence, in the last year by age and type of abuse, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.6: Percentage of men aged 16 to 59 who were victims of intimate violence, in the last year by age and type of abuse, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



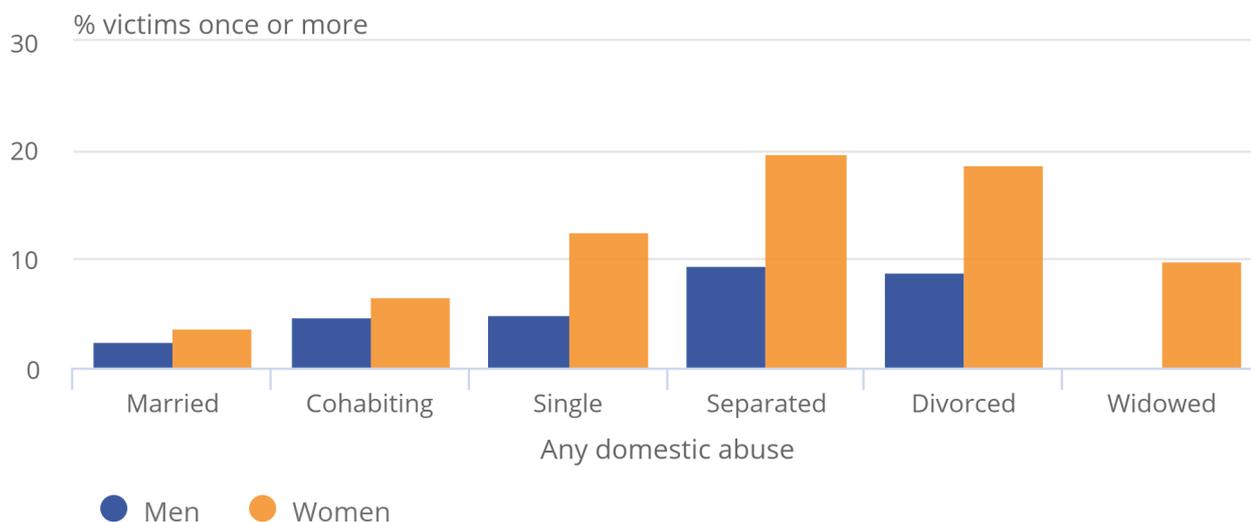
Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

## Marital status

Women who were separated had the highest prevalence of any domestic abuse in the last year (19.8%) compared with other marital status groups (such as married/civil partnered (3.6%) or cohabiting (6.6%)). Married/civil partnered men were less likely to experience any domestic abuse (2.4%) compared with all other marital status groups (Figure 4.7). The percentage of widowed women who were a victim of domestic abuse in the last year was higher in the year ending March 2015 than in previous years, however, this is based on a small number of respondents, therefore it is too early to draw any conclusions on whether this is a real increase in the prevalence for this demographic group.

**Figure 4.7: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who were victims of domestic abuse in the last year, by marital status and sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.7: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who were victims of domestic abuse in the last year, by marital status and sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

Notes:

1. Data for widowed men not shown as the unweighted base is less than 50.

The pattern was slightly different for sexual assault, with single women (5.7%) being more likely to be victims compared with those who were married/ civil partnered (0.8%), cohabiting (1.4%) or divorced<sup>1</sup> (3.5%).

### Long-term illness or disability

Both women and men with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year (16.0% and 8.8% respectively), compared with those without a long-term illness or disability (6.8% and 3.2% respectively). This pattern was consistent across the sub-categories of domestic abuse, with the exception of sexual assault where there was no significant difference. The largest percentage point difference occurred within the sub-category of partner abuse for female victims, where 11.1% of women with a long-term illness or disability were estimated to be a victim of partner abuse compared with 4.9% of women without a long-term illness or disability.

## Education

Women with a degree or diploma were less likely than women with other qualifications or no qualifications to be a victim of any domestic abuse in the last year (6.3% of women with a degree or diploma compared with 10.3% of women with 'A level or equivalent qualifications', 9.4% of those with 'GCSE or equivalent qualifications', and 10.0% of women with no qualifications).

## Visits to a nightclub in the last month

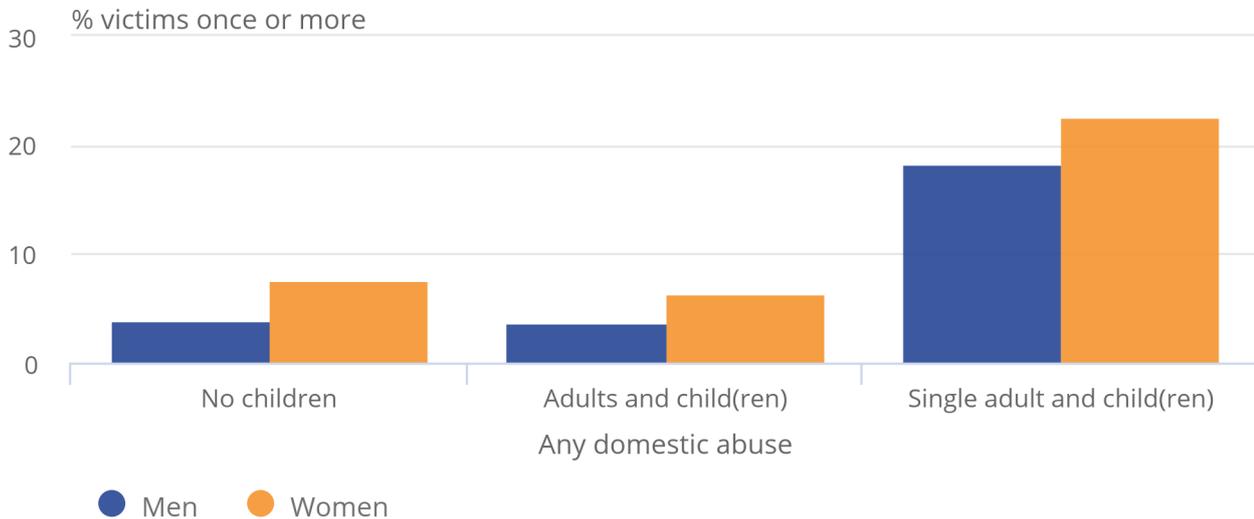
Women who said they visited nightclubs at least once in the last month were more likely than those who said they never visited a nightclub to have been victims of sexual assault. The number of times they visited nightclubs may be closely associated with age which may be the main driver of this finding. The biggest difference was for women visiting nightclubs once a week or more, where 16.6% were estimated to be victims of sexual assault compared with 2.0% of those that did not visit nightclubs.

## Household structure

Just over 1 in 5 women living in lone parent households were victims of domestic abuse in the last year (22.6%) compared with around 1 in 15 of those living in a household with other adults and children (6.3%) or a household with no children (7.6%). The pattern was similar for men, with an estimated 18.3% of men from lone parent households experiencing domestic abuse compared with 3.7% of men living in a household with other adults and children and 4.0% living in a household with no children (Figure 4.8). For both men and women this pattern is driven by the high proportion of victims living in lone parent households experiencing partner abuse (17.0% for men and 18.8% for women) ([Appendix Table 4.11](#)).

**Figure 4.8 Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who were victims of domestic abuse in the last year, by household structure and sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.8 Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who were victims of domestic abuse in the last year, by household structure and sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



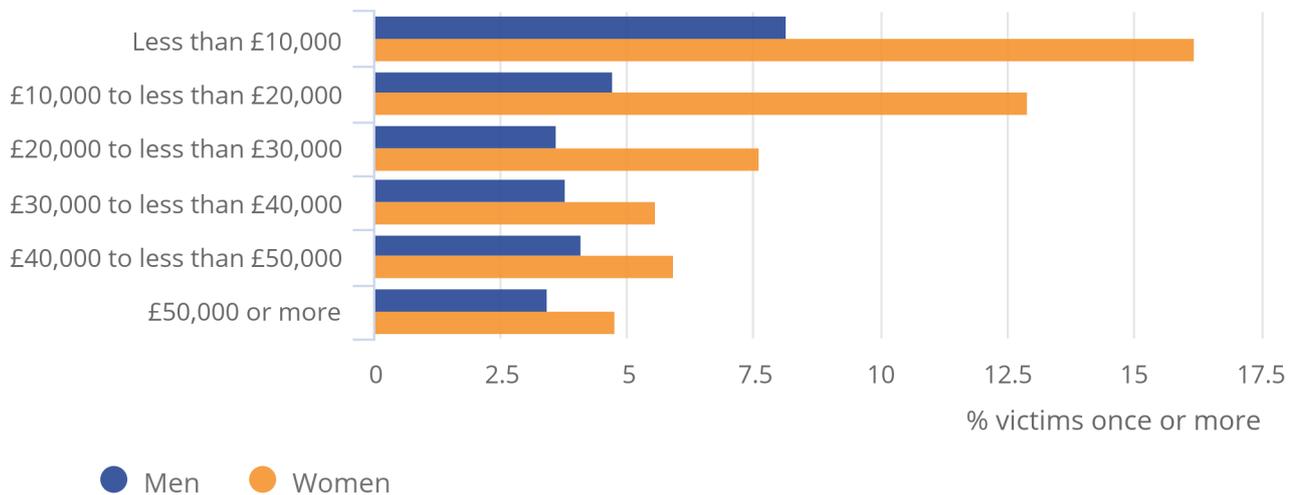
Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

## Household income

Women living in the lowest income households (less than £10,000) were much more likely than those within higher household income brackets to have experienced any domestic abuse in the last year. Over 3 times as many women in the lowest income bracket had experienced any domestic abuse compared with those in the highest household income bracket of £50,000 and over (16.2% compared with 4.8%). The same pattern appeared for men, where 8.1% of men in the lowest income households experienced any domestic abuse compared with 3.4% in the highest household income bracket (Figure 4.9).

**Figure 4.9: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who were victims of domestic abuse in the last year by household income and sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.9: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who were victims of domestic abuse in the last year by household income and sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

## Physical disorder

Women living in areas where there was a high level of physical disorder<sup>2</sup> were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year (11.6%) than women living outside these areas (7.9%). The prevalence of domestic abuse for men was not statistically different between these 2 area types. However, both men and women who lived in the 20% most deprived areas of England and Wales were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse: 11.1% of women and 4.8% of men living in these areas were estimated to have been victims of any domestic abuse compared with 5.6% of women and 3.0% of men living in the 20% least deprived areas of England and Wales ([Appendix Table 4.11](#)).

## Number of types of abuse

Additional analysis has been carried out showing the number of types of abuse suffered by victims of any domestic abuse in the last year ([Appendix Table 4.12](#)). Due to the relatively small number of victims of the different types of domestic abuse interviewed in any one year, the analysis for this section has been completed on a 3 year dataset from the year ending March 2013 to the year ending March 2015.

It was found that 72% of domestic abuse victims suffered one type of abuse. The most common type of abuse suffered was partner abuse, with 46% of victims experiencing this type of abuse in the last year. Over one-quarter (28%) of victims of domestic abuse suffered more than one type of abuse, with partner abuse and stalking the most commonly experienced combination (10% of victims of domestic abuse). Female victims were more likely to experience more than 1 type of abuse than male victims (31% compared with 23%). For victims experiencing 3 types of abuse (6%), partner abuse and family abuse and stalking was most commonly experienced (3% of victims). Less than 1% of victims of domestic abuse suffered all 4 types of abuse (partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault, and stalking).

## Notes for intimate violence in the last year by personal characteristics

1. This category includes those who have legally dissolved partnerships.
2. Physical disorder is a measure based on the interviewer's assessment of the level of (a) vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage to property; (b) rubbish and litter; and (c) homes in poor condition in the area.

## 9 . Sexual assault and stalking by relationship to offender

The survey module on intimate violence asks whether respondents have experienced sexual assault or stalking by a partner/ex-partner or a family member. The question refers to all experiences of abuse since the age of 16, rather than the most recent. This means that respondents may report abuse from multiple offenders. Due to the low number of male sexual assault victims interviewed in any one year, the analysis for this section has been completed on a 3 year dataset from the year ending March 2013 to the year ending March 2015.

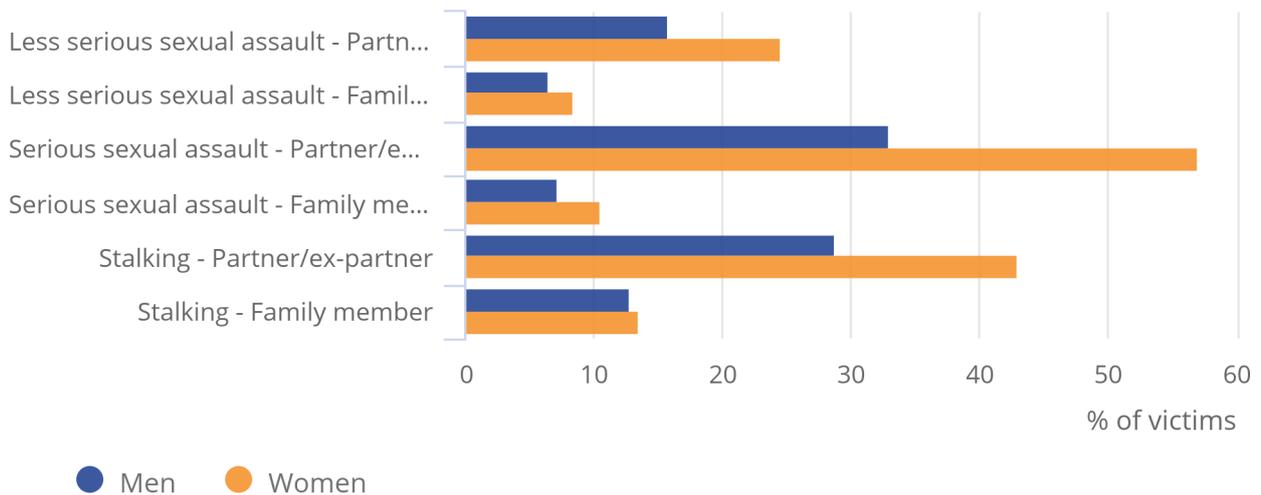
It is not possible to establish the victim-offender relationship for all types of abuse experienced by each respondent from the questions asked<sup>1</sup>. While it is possible to tell if a respondent has experienced abuse from a partner/ex-partner and a family member, it is not possible to tell whether or not they have also experienced abuse by another offender, such as a friend, acquaintance or stranger. For this reason, the results presented here (Figure 4.10, [Appendix Table 4.09](#)) are as a percentage of all victims, that is, all respondents who have experienced that type of abuse, irrelevant of the type of relationship with the offender.

In over half (57%) of serious sexual assaults on women since the age of 16, the offender was a partner or ex-partner in at least one incident. In contrast, the proportion of less serious sexual assaults experienced by women since the age of 16, where the offender was a partner or ex-partner in at least one incident was lower (24.6%).

The percentage of victims who reported that the offender was a partner was significantly higher for women compared with men. There was no significant difference between men and women for the percentage reporting that they had been abused by a family member in each of the 3 types of abuse asked about.

**Figure 4.10: Victim-offender relationship for sexual assault or stalking experienced since age 16, by sex for age 16 to 59, year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.10: Victim-offender relationship for sexual assault or stalking experienced since age 16, by sex for age 16 to 59, year ending March 2013 to year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

Notes:

1. Figures are the percentage of victims who reported experiencing each type of offence by the relationship described.
2. These data is based on combined data from year ending March 2013 and year ending March 2015.

**Notes for sexual assault and stalking by relationship to offender**

1. Previous versions of the CSEW questionnaire allowed estimates for stranger and other known (who wasn't a partner/ex-partner or family member) to be derived.

**10 . Nature of partner abuse – types of abuse**

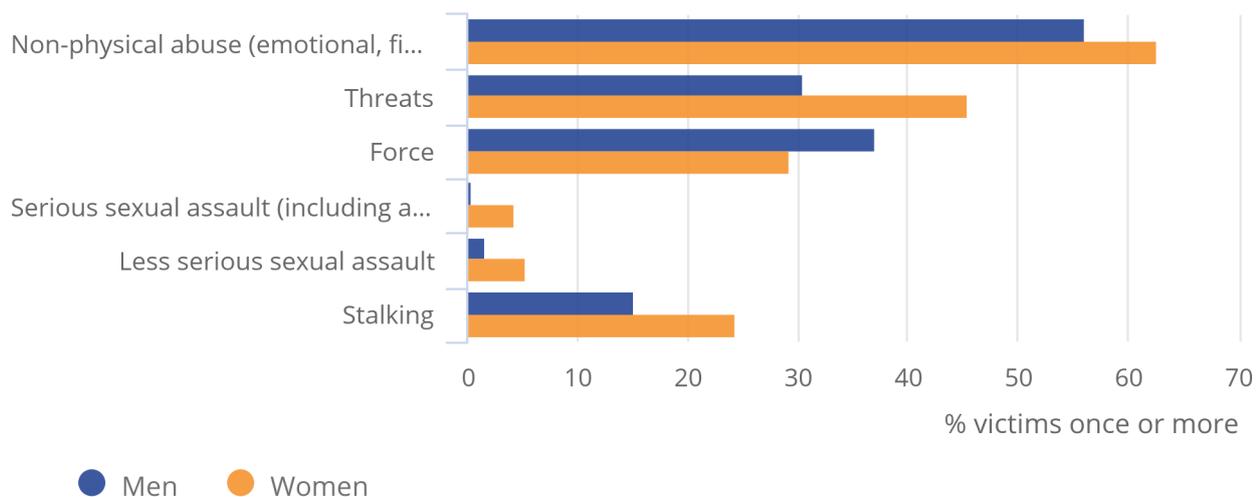
Further questions were asked in the year ending March 2015 CSEW to provide more detail on the circumstances of partner abuse experienced in the past year.

Female partner abuse victims were more likely to experience non-physical abuse (emotional, financial) (63%) than to experience physical abuse such as force (29%), or threats (45%). Male partner abuse victims were also more likely to experience non-physical abuse (56%) than force (37%), or threats (31%) ( [Appendix Table 4.13](#); Figure 4.11).

Female victims of partner abuse reported a higher level of 'threats' than men (45% and 31% respectively; Figure 4.6). Female victims of partner abuse also experienced higher levels of sexual assault than men (7% and 2% respectively) (Appendix Table 4.13). There was no significant difference between female and male victims in prevalence of experiences of force or non-physical abuse.

**Figure 4.11: Type of partner abuse experienced by partner abuse victims in the last year, by sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.11: Type of partner abuse experienced by partner abuse victims in the last year, by sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

**Notes:**

1. Respondents are asked to select all types of abuse they have experienced in the last year.

The definition of stalking applied in the CSEW covers a wider range of actions and behaviours than the legal definition, and includes being followed, being sent unwanted messages that were obscene or threatening and having personal property interfered with. The CSEW asks respondents about typical behaviours associated with stalking rather than the term itself. This ensures that actions and behaviours experienced are picked up by the survey rather than the respondent's interpretation of them.

Female partner abuse victims were more likely to have experienced stalking than male victims (24% compared with 15%). Between the year ending March 2009 and the year ending March 2015, the percentage of male partner abuse victims experiencing stalking had declined from 37% to 15%. For female victims the decrease has been smaller, with 40% of partner abuse victims experiencing stalking in the year ending March 2009 compared with 24% in the year ending March 2015. These figures capture the percentage of partner abuse victims experiencing stalking and not the number of times that they experience such incidents. The decrease in the proportion of partner abuse victims experiencing stalking is likely to be affected by a change in the definition of stalking in the CSEW in April 2012 where the definition changed from '1 or more incidents' to '2 or more incidents'.

## 11 . Partner abuse - repeat victimisation

For both female and male victims of partner abuse, the most common response when asked about how many times they had experienced abuse<sup>1</sup> was 'Don't wish to answer' (50% for females and 43% for males; [Appendix Table 4.15](#)). Combining this response with the 'Don't know' response category shows that nearly 70% of respondents did not provide an answer to this question; therefore the figures should be interpreted with caution as it is likely that this reduces the estimate of the proportion of victims who were victimised more than once.

For male and female victims of partner abuse, there was no significant difference between being abused once or more than once (18% and 14% respectively for males and 17% and 16% respectively for females). The level of repeat victimisation is not statistically different between men and women. It is likely that any differences between men and women are being masked by the high percentage of 'Don't wish to answer' and 'Don't know' responses. Information on the number of times victims were abused by type of abuse experienced and by sex is available in [Appendix Table 4.16](#).

Information from the face-to-face module of the CSEW shows that 70% of domestic violence victims suffered 1 victimisation, 15% of victims experienced 2 victimisations and 16% of victims experienced 3 or more victimisations within the 12 month reference period. The 30% of victims of domestic violence who experienced more than one victimisation attributed to over half (60%) of domestic violence incidents estimated by the CSEW [Appendix Table 4.14](#).

### Notes for partner abuse - repeat victimisation

1. Respondents are given range categories to respond to how many times they had experienced abuse rather than giving a single number of incidents.

## 12 . Heavily victimised groups of partner abuse

Using the demographic breakdowns in Appendix Tables 4.10 and 4.11, a small number of groups of heavily victimised individuals were identified and some further analysis was carried out to see if these groups were more likely to: suffer from particular types of partner abuse, suffer from repeat victimisation, report any physical injuries or other effects, or tell someone about their experience of partner abuse [Appendix Table 4.37](#). Due to small numbers of individuals from these heavily victimised groups being interviewed in any one year, a 3 year dataset from the year ending March 2013 to the year ending March 2015 was used to carry out this analysis<sup>1</sup>.

### Marital status

Women who were separated were more likely to experience non-physical partner abuse or threats than women who were not separated. Women who were separated were also more likely to experience partner abuse more than once than those who were not separated. Looking at the effects felt as a result of the partner abuse, women who were separated were more likely to experience other effects from the abuse, specifically mental or emotional problems. This heavily victimised group were also more likely to tell someone known personally, tell someone in an official position or tell a support organisation than women who were not separated.

### Household structure

Lone parent women were more likely to experience threats, force or stalking than women who had no children or were in a 2 parent household. Women who were lone parents were also more likely to experience partner abuse more than once. This group were also more likely to experience mental or emotional problems as a result of the abuse and were more likely to tell anyone about their experience of partner abuse.

## Age

Women who were aged 16 to 24 were less likely to experience non-physical abuse than women aged over 25, however they were more likely to experience sexual assault or stalking than women aged over 25. The 16 to 24 age group were more likely to experience difficulty in other relationships and to stop trusting people as a result of the abuse, and were less likely to receive medical attention for their injuries or other effects. Women from this age group were also less likely to tell someone in an official position and less likely to tell someone from a support organisation about their experience.

## Long-term illness or disability

Women with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to experience non-physical abuse and serious sexual assault than women without a disability. They were also more likely to experience other effects as a result of their abuse specifically, mental or emotional problems, difficulty in other relationships and trying to kill themselves. Women with a disability were more likely to tell someone in an official position or a support professional/organisation about their abuse.

## Notes for heavily victimised groups of partner abuse

1. The nature of partner abuse module was asked in the survey year ending March 2013 and survey year ending March 2015 (with the nature of serious sexual assault asked in the survey year ending March 2014), therefore the 3 year dataset includes 2 years of data for nature of partner abuse.

## 13 . Effects of partner abuse and medical support

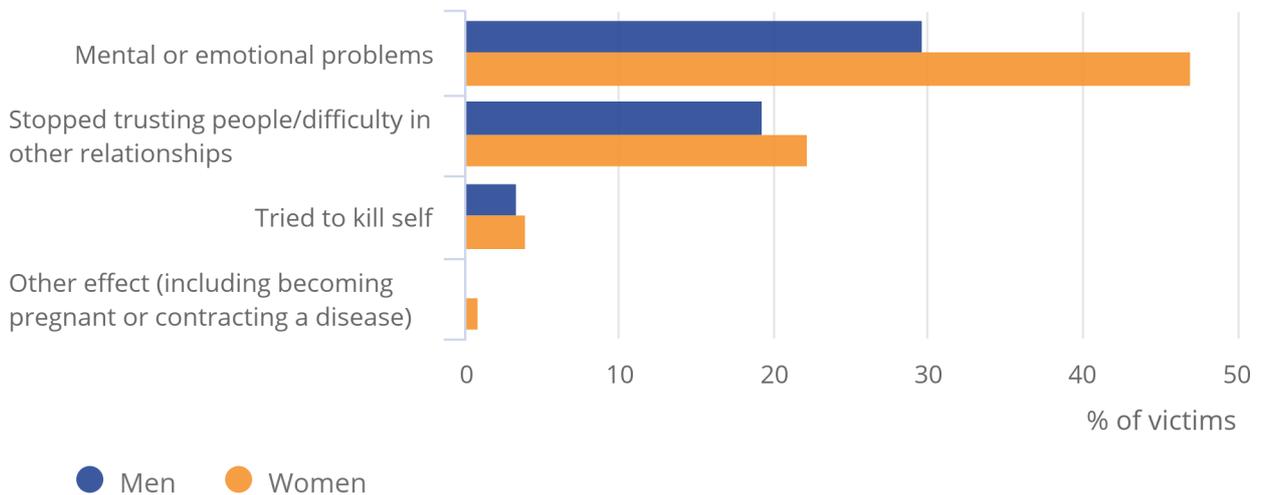
The CSEW intimate violence module also asks partner abuse victims questions on physical injury and other, non-physical, effects experienced as a result of the abuse. These questions were asked of any abuse experienced in the last 12 months. ([Appendix Table 4.17](#)).

The majority of partner abuse victims (75%) did not sustain a physical injury as a result of the abuse, and for those that did sustain an injury, these were often relatively minor injuries. This is in the context that over half of partner abuse victims (61%) reported experiencing non-physical abuse ([Appendix Table 4.13](#)). A quarter (25%) of partner abuse victims reported that they sustained some sort of physical injury. The most common type of injuries sustained were minor bruising or black eye (17%) and scratches (12%). There were no significant differences between the prevalence of physical injury for male and female victims (29% and 23% respectively).

Victims were presented with a list of other non-physical effects<sup>1</sup> and were asked if they had sustained any of these as a result of the abuse. Female victims were more likely than male victims to report that they had sustained non-physical effects (51% compared with 37%; [Appendix Table 4.17](#)). For both male and female victims, the category most likely to be reported was 'mental or emotional problems' (30% of male victims and 47% of female victims) followed by 'stopped trusting people or difficulty in other relationships' (19% of male and 22% of female victims) (Figure 4.12).

**Figure 4.12: Non-physical effects felt as a result of the partner abuse experienced in the last year, by sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.12: Non-physical effects felt as a result of the partner abuse experienced in the last year, by sex, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

Partner abuse victims who had sustained a physical injury or had experienced other effects as a result of the abuse were also asked if they had received medical attention ([Appendix Table 4.18](#)). Around a third (32%) of partner abuse victims who had experienced any physical injury or other effects received some sort of medical attention.

Victims who had received medical attention were also asked where they received it; with the majority (84%) doing so at a GP/doctor's surgery, 13% had gone to a hospital's Accident and Emergency department and 28% to a specialist mental health or psychiatric service<sup>2</sup>.

Using the 3 year combined dataset<sup>3</sup> for the year ending March 2013 to the year ending March 2015, additional analysis was carried out on victims who received medical attention. It was found that of those victims who received medical attention, 73% were female and 27% were male. Looking at the type of effects felt by those who received medical attention, 51% experienced non-physical effects, 44% experienced both a physical injury and other effect and 5% had experienced a physical injury ([Appendix Table 4.18](#)).

### Notes for effects of partner abuse and medical support

1. Such as “mental or emotional problems” or “stopped trusting people/difficulty in other relationships”.
2. Figures do not add to 100 as respondents can give more than one answer.
3. The nature of partner abuse module was asked in the survey year ending March 2013 and survey year ending March 2015 (with the nature of serious sexual assault asked in the survey year ending March 2014), therefore the 3 year dataset includes 2 years of data for nature of partner abuse.

## 14 . Nature of partner abuse - influence of alcohol and illicit drugs

Victims of partner abuse in the last year were also asked whether they thought the offender (or offenders) was under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs at the time of the incident. In addition, they were asked whether they (the victim) were under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs at the time of the incident. For those who had experienced more than one incident, only the most recent incident was asked about.

Victims were more likely to report that they believed the offender was under the influence of alcohol (17%) rather than illicit drugs (10%) ([Appendix Table 4.20](#)). Female victims were more likely than male victims to perceive that the offender was under the influence of drugs (12% compared with 3%). There were no statistically significant differences between the proportions of female and male victims perceiving the offender to be under the influence of alcohol (18% of female victims compared with 15% of male victims).

Victims were more likely to report that the offender was under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs than they themselves. However, 7% of victims reported that they were under the influence of alcohol and 1% reported that they were under the influence of illicit drugs the last time they suffered abuse. There was no statistically significant difference between the male and female victims with regards to reporting whether they were under the influence of alcohol or under the influence of illicit drugs.

Caution should be taken interpreting these figures due to the relatively large proportion of ‘don’t know’ or ‘don’t want to answer’ responses for some of these questions. This was particularly the case for the question on whether the offender or the respondent were under the influence of alcohol (21% and 17% respectively).

## 15 . General alcohol and drug consumption

Also included in the self-completion module is a section on drugs misuse and alcohol consumption that includes questions on the level of the respondents’ general alcohol consumption, frequency of drunkenness and illicit drug-taking. This section focuses on alcohol consumption and drug-taking in general and any association with partner abuse.

These results should be interpreted with caution as many other influencing characteristics (such as age) may be closely associated with alcohol consumption and taking illicit drugs. Multivariate analysis performed on the year ending March 2010 CSEW data found that, among other factors, illicit drug use in the last year was associated with a higher risk of domestic abuse and a higher risk of sexual assault. However, frequency of alcohol consumption was found not to be a statistically significant characteristic with regards to sexual assault victimisation and was not included in the logistic regression for domestic abuse ([Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2009 to 10: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2009 to 10](#)).

Any connections presented here between alcohol consumption, drunkenness, illicit drug-taking and partner abuse may be explained, in part, by the age of the adults. Secondly it should be noted that it is not possible to tell a direction of causality. Young adults (aged between 16 and 24) consumed alcohol more frequently, were drunk more frequently and were more likely to take illicit drugs ('[Drugs Misuse: Findings from the 2014 to 15 Crime Survey for England and Wales](#)'). Young adults were also more likely than older adults to be a victim of partner abuse when viewed in isolation of other effects ([Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2009 to 10: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2009 to 10](#)). These 2 points may offer some explanation as to why there was an apparent association between alcohol, illicit drugs and partner abuse victimisation. However, when focusing on those aged between 16 and 24, similar patterns with regards to alcohol consumption, illicit drug use and partner abuse emerge as for those aged between 25 and 59 ([Appendix Tables 4.22 to 4.23](#)).

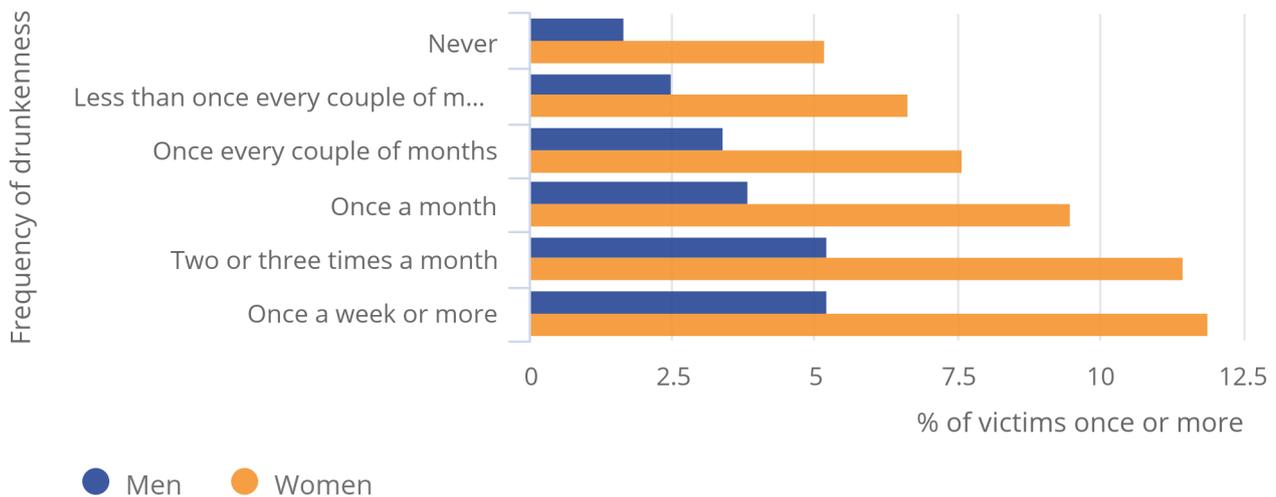
Caution should be taken when making inferences about the relationship between alcohol consumption, illicit drug-taking and partner abuse victimisation. The victims' alcohol consumption and illicit drug use may affect or be affected by their experience of partner abuse.

Adults aged between 16 and 59 were more likely to have experienced partner abuse if they reported having been drunk once a week or more (7%) than if they had reported having been drunk less than once every couple of months (5%). Around 3 times as many adults aged between 16 and 59 who had taken illicit drugs in the last year reported being a victim of partner abuse compared with those who hadn't taken drugs in the last year (11% compared with 4%) ([Appendix Table 4.21](#)).

For all frequencies of drunkenness in the last 12 months, women were more likely than men to be a victim of partner abuse. This is a different finding to the year ending March 2013, where women who reported getting drunk once every couple of months or less than once every couple of months were more likely to be a victim of partner abuse. For all other categories the difference between male and female prevalence was not significantly different. Examining the prevalence by age shows no significant differences between the 16 to 24 and 25 to 59 age groups (Figure 4.13).

**Figure 4.13: Prevalence of partner abuse victimisation in the last year, by sex and the frequency of drunkenness, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.13: Prevalence of partner abuse victimisation in the last year, by sex and the frequency of drunkenness, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

## 16 . Partner abuse - leaving shared accommodation

As part of the suite of follow-up questions on the nature of partner abuse, adults aged 16 to 59 who have experienced partner abuse in the last year were asked if they shared accommodation with their abusive partner, if so whether they left that shared accommodation and other information about the shared accommodation. If the victim has had more than one abusive partner, these questions were asked of the most recent abusive partner ([Appendix Tables 4.24 to 4.27](#)).

Around a fifth (19%) of partner abuse victims that reported abuse in the last year stated that they currently shared, or had previously shared, accommodation with their abusive partner. Of these victims, 42% reported leaving the accommodation because of the abuse, even if it was for only one night. The proportion of those that left the accommodation because of the abuse were similar for male and female victims. Of those who left the shared accommodation, 65% spent their first night with relatives, while staying with friends or neighbours was the next most likely destination (18%).

Reasons mentioned most frequently for not leaving the shared accommodation were 'presence of children' (54%), 'love or feelings for partner' (36%) and 'never considered leaving' (32%) ([Appendix Table 4.25](#)). These findings are generally similar for previous years.

## 17 . Sources of support for partner abuse victims

In the CSEW, victims of partner abuse were also asked who they had spoken to about the abuse they had experienced ([Appendix Table 4.28](#)). For the purpose of analysis, these have been split into 3 types of support: someone known personally to them (for example, a friend or relative), someone in a professional organisation (for example, police, health professionals or a local council department) or someone in another support organisation (for example, Victim Support or a helpline).

The majority (81%) of victims told someone about the partner abuse that they suffered, with women (88%) being more likely to tell someone than men (61%). Both female and male victims were most likely to tell someone they knew personally about the abuse (80% and 55%) with victims most commonly telling a family member or relative (59% of women and 44% of men), followed by telling a friend or a neighbour (43% women and 28% men).

Just over a third (37%) of all victims of partner abuse told someone in an official position about the abuse. Women were nearly twice as likely as men to tell such an individual (43% and 23% respectively), and were more than twice as likely as men to tell the police (26% and 10% respectively).

Women were more likely to tell other support professionals or organisations than men (32% and 14% respectively). This included female victims being more likely to tell victim support (7% compared with 3%) or a helpline (4% compared with 2%) than male victims. These findings are broadly similar to those in the year ending March 2013 CSEW<sup>1</sup>.

### Notes for sources of support for partner abuse victims

1. See [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2012 to 13](#).

## 18 . Police and the criminal justice system

Respondents who answered that they had been a victim of partner abuse were asked questions surrounding issues on reporting the abuse to the police and the courts (Figure 4.14; [Appendix Tables 4.30 to 4.32](#)).

For victims of partner abuse, 21% had reported the abuse to the police. For those that did not report the abuse, the most common reasons given were the abuse was too trivial or not worth reporting (43%), it was a private, family matter and not the business of the police (37%), and the victim didn't think the police could help (25%). The proportion of victims who told the police about the partner abuse they experienced has stayed the same over time, with 23% of victims reporting the partner abuse in the year ending March 2011 and 21% of victims reporting to the police in year ending March 2015 (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Proportion of victims who told the police about the partner abuse experienced in the last 12 months, by sex, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

England and Wales

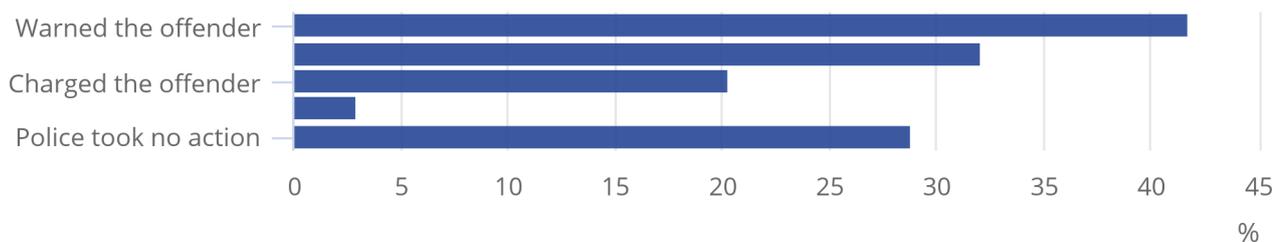
	%		
	Year ending March		
	2011	2013	2015
Men	10	10	10
Women	29	27	26
All	23	22	21
Unweighted base - number of adults	850	682	660

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

In incidents where the police came to know about the abuse, respondents were asked what actions were taken by the police. The police took some sort of action in 71% of cases. The most common action taken by the police was to warn the offender (42%) or arrest the offender (32%). In 20% of cases the offender was charged. These results are similar to findings from the year ending March 2013 CSEW.

**Figure 4.14: What action was taken by the police when told about the partner abuse, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.14: What action was taken by the police when told about the partner abuse, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

In those cases where the police had taken some action against the offender, the respondent reported that around a third (31%) of these cases came to court. For the cases that did not go to court, 39% said that the police or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decided not to take further action, 33% of the respondents said that they, the victim, decided not to take further action, and 28% said that there was some other reason for the case not coming to court.

Victims who told the police about the partner abuse they experienced were asked how satisfied they were with the outcome, whether they felt safer as a result of the outcome and how helpful they found the police ( [Appendix Table 4.33](#)). Around two-thirds (68%) were either very satisfied (28%) or fairly satisfied (40%) with their experience with the police and CPS. Just under half (47%) felt safer as a result of the action, while nearly a quarter felt less safe (23%).

Around two-thirds (69%) found the police either very helpful (34%) or fairly helpful (35%). While the rest of respondents found them either slightly helpful (17%) or not at all helpful (14%).

## 19 . Presence of children in partner abuse victimisations

Households with at least one child under the age of 16, respondents are asked if any children in the household saw or heard what happened during the most recent partner abuse victimisation. In 46% of cases of partner abuse there was at least 1 child under the age of 16 living in the household. Of those cases where children were present in the household, in 20% of cases the children saw or heard what happened, in 62% of cases the respondent stated that the children did not see or hear what happened, and in 18% of cases the respondent didn't know whether the children saw or heard what happened or didn't wish to answer ( [Appendix Table 4.27](#)).

## 20 . Attitudes to partner abuse

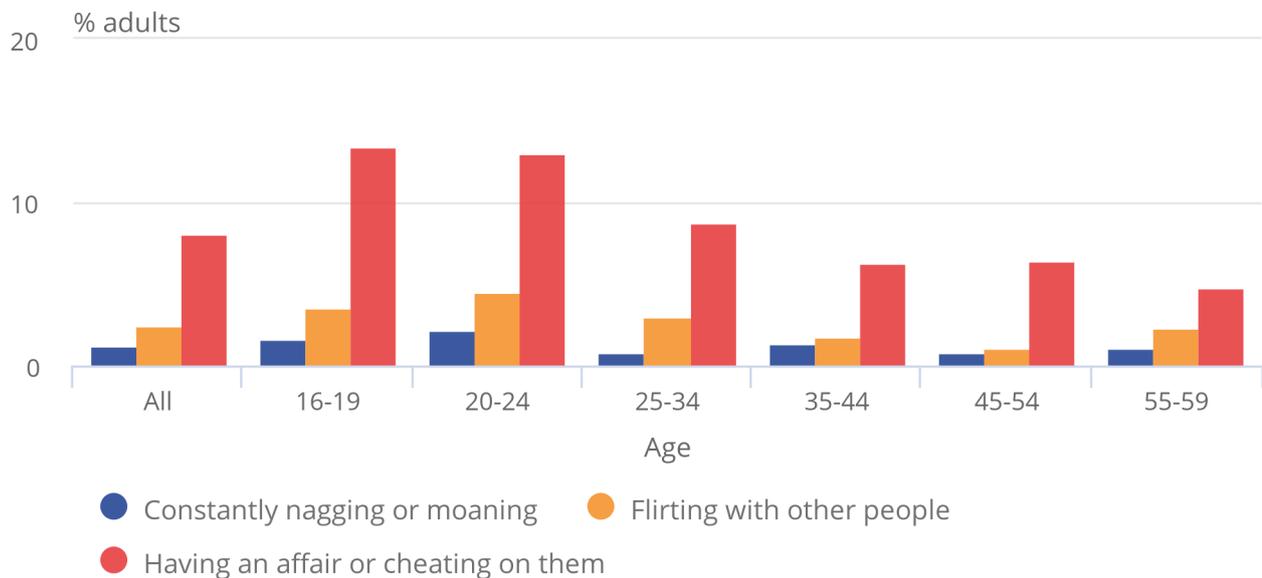
In addition to questions about experience of partner abuse, questions were included in the survey to gauge public attitudes towards such violence. All adults aged 16 to 59 were asked in the self-completion section of the interview about their attitudes towards partner violence, including whether they thought it was acceptable to hit or slap their partner in response to various behaviours ( [Appendix table 4.36 and 4.37](#)).

In response, 77% of respondents felt that it was always unacceptable to hit or slap their partner in response to their partner having an affair, whereas less than 1 in 10 of respondents felt that it is mostly or sometimes acceptable (8%). Respondents in the younger age groups were more likely to think that it was acceptable at least some of the time than older age groups. Those aged between 16 and 19 (13%) and those aged between 20 to 24 (13%) were most likely to think that it was acceptable and those aged between 55 and 59 were least likely to think that it was acceptable (5%) (Figure 4.15).

For each of the 3 behaviour categories, there was no statistically significant difference between the total percentage of men and women who felt that to hit or slap their partner was acceptable at least sometimes.

**Figure 4.15: Percentage who say it is always, mostly or sometimes acceptable for someone to hit or slap their partner in response to different behaviours, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales**

Figure 4.15: Percentage who say it is always, mostly or sometimes acceptable for someone to hit or slap their partner in response to different behaviours, year ending March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales



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

## 21. Background notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

# Experimental Statistics 1: New data on police recorded violent and sexual offences, year ending March 2015



Contact:  
John Flatley  
crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk  
+44 (0)20 7592 8695

Release date:  
11 February 2016

Next release:  
To be announced

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# 1 . Main points

- Females were victims in 52% of violence against the person offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2015, with 48% of victims being male. Half of violence against the person offences against female victims (50%) were domestic abuse-related; in contrast for males only 16% of violence was domestic abuse-related.
- The proportion of police recorded violence against the person offences was highest among younger age groups and declined with age. For example, 16% of victims were aged 20 to 24, while this age group comprised just 7% of the population. Those aged 90 or over experienced less than 1% of violence against the person offences.
- Females made up the large majority of victims of rape and other sexual offences (89% and 83% respectively of victims were women or girls).
- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of female victims of rape offences and over three-quarters (78%) of female victims of other sexual offences recorded by the police were aged under 30. Male victims of rape and other sexual offences were even more likely to be aged under 30 (88% and 84% respectively).
- Around 1 in 5 (19%) police recorded violence against the person offences were identified as alcohol-related in the year ending March 2015.
- Within violence against the person, the offence of assault without injury on a constable had the highest proportion of offences that were alcohol-related (36% of offences recorded by the police).
- A greater number of police recorded alcohol-related violent offences took place in the evening, especially on Friday and Saturday, compared with non alcohol-related violence which occurs more uniformly throughout the day.

## 2 . Summary

These experimental statistics present new data on violent and sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2015, broken down by age of the victim at the time the offence took place and sex of the victim. It also includes new information on the involvement of alcohol as a factor in violence and sexual offences and analysis of the date and time of when such crimes took place. These analyses are based on a sub-set of forces that were able to supply such detailed data to the Home Office Data Hub and are published as experimental statistics in advance of all forces being able to do so.

## 3 . Introduction

Police recorded crime figures are notifiable offences that have been reported to and recorded by the 44 police forces in England and Wales (including British Transport Police). The police recorded crime collection has traditionally been based on the submission of aggregate returns from forces at the offence level. The Home Office has been working with forces to extract more detailed record level data from force crime recording systems. The Home Office Data Hub collects such record level crime data from the police, which allows for a wider range of analyses to be carried out than previously. The Home Office are continuing to develop and implement this system across all 44 police forces in England and Wales.

We present a first cut of selected information, from a sub-set of forces, on violent and sexual offences as experimental statistics in order to demonstrate to users the range of analyses possible in future and to seek feedback to inform the future presentation of crime statistics. It should be noted that this analysis may not be representative of all forces in England and Wales and data have not been reconciled with forces and are therefore subject to revision.

Data for age and sex of victims of violent and sexual offences in the year ending March 2015 are taken from 13 police forces who supplied data of sufficient quality<sup>1</sup> for all fields for the analysis in this section. Additional analysis provided on the involvement of alcohol as a factor in violence against the person and sexual offences recorded by the police, in the year ending March 2015, are taken from 27 police forces. The Data Hub also has the ability to capture the date and time of when a crime took place. Analysis of this information using 21 forces that provided violence against the person and sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2015 that were identified as 'alcohol-related' is provided. This is the first year these data have been published and the Home Office will be working with police forces to ensure the consistency and comparability of their victim information.

## Notes for introduction

1. Sufficient data quality deemed when a high proportion of violent and sexual offences recorded by the police force included the necessary information such as date of birth, event start date and sex, and potentially flagged as alcohol-related where appropriate in order to carry out the analysis.

## 4 . Violent offences by age and sex of the victim

In the year ending March 2015, the victim was female in 52% of violence against the person offences recorded by the police and male in 48% of offences. This differs from the CSEW, which estimated that the majority of victims (61%) were male, with 39% being female (data not shown). Between April to September 2015, half of violent offences for female victims were domestic abuse-related (50%), while in contrast, 16% of violent offences for male victims were domestic abuse-related (see 'Experimental Statistics: Domestic Abuse Offences Recorded by the Police' for more information). It is known that the face-to-face interview of the CSEW underestimates the number of domestic violence incidents (see the 'Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse' chapter of this release for more information<sup>1</sup>). As the CSEW headline measures underestimate domestic violence and the majority of domestic violence victims are female, this is likely to be the reason for the lower proportion of female victims in the CSEW compared with police recorded crime.

Analysis of reporting rates of violence by sex show that this is not a large factor in the difference between the sources. In the year ending March 2015 CSEW, women reported 51% of violent incidents to the police, a slightly higher proportion than men (48%).

Violence against the person offences can be separated into those offences which resulted in an injury and those where no injury was suffered by the victim (Figure 5.1). Females made up a large share of victims of police recorded violence without injury (59% compared with 41% male victims). The reverse was true for violence with injury (54% of victims were male and 46% female).

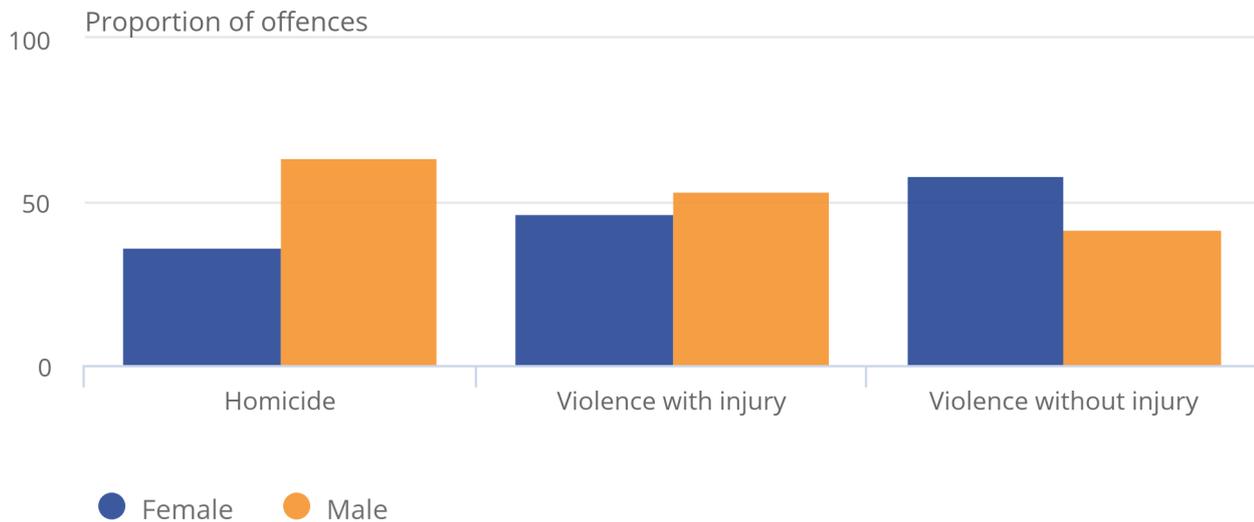
Figures for homicide by sex of victim are also shown in Figure 5.1. These figures are taken from the Homicide Index and refer to all police forces in England and Wales as well as the British Transport Police. In the year ending March 2015, 64% of homicide victims were male and 36% were female. More information on homicide offences can be found in the Homicide chapter of this release.

**Figure 5.1: Proportion of violence against the person offences, by sex of victim, Home Office Data Hub (13 forces) and Homicide Index, year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 5.1: Proportion of violence against the person offences, by sex of victim, Home Office Data Hub (13 forces) and Homicide Index, year ending March 2015

England and Wales



Source: Home Office Data Hub and Homicide Index, Home Office

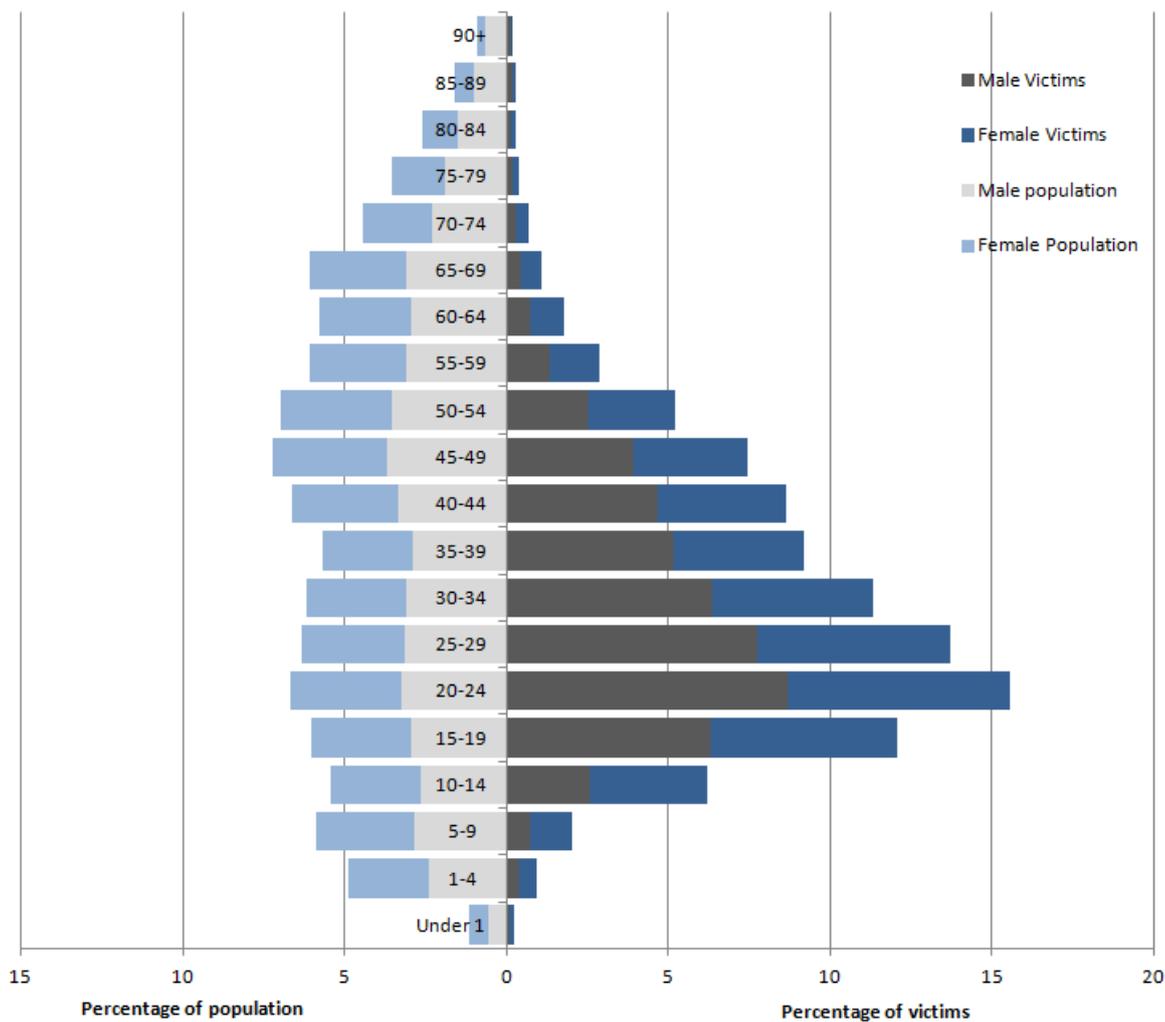
Notes:

1. Police recorded crime statistics are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data based on 13 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub.
3. Figures for Homicide are for all police forces in England and Wales and the British Transport Police and are taken from the Home Office Homicide Index.

Information is also available on the age of victims of police recorded crimes. These figures show that younger adults were more likely to be victims of violent crime. For example, while those aged 20 to 24 made up around 7% of the population<sup>2</sup>, they were victims in 16% of violence against the person offences. Within this age group, 56% of victims were female and 44% were male (Figure 5.2). Similarly, victims aged 15 to 19 (12% of all violent offences, 6% of the population) and victims aged 25 to 29 (14% of all violent offences, 6% of the population) were also more likely to be victims of violence against the person offences recorded by the police compared with their population profile.

**Figure 5.2: Proportion of violence against the person offences, by age and sex of the victim, Home Office Data Hub (13 forces), year ending March 2015**

England and Wales



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime statistics are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data based on 13 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub
3. Population figures based on the population of the 13 forces used for analysis.

### Notes for violent offences by age and sex of the victim

1. The prevalence of domestic abuse reported in the self-completion module is far higher than the prevalence of domestic violence reported in the face-to-face interview. This is likely to be due to the increased reporting of sensitive issues on account of the greater confidentiality provided by self-completion methods.
2. Population figures based on the 13 forces used for this analysis.

## 5 . Sexual offences by age and sex of the victim

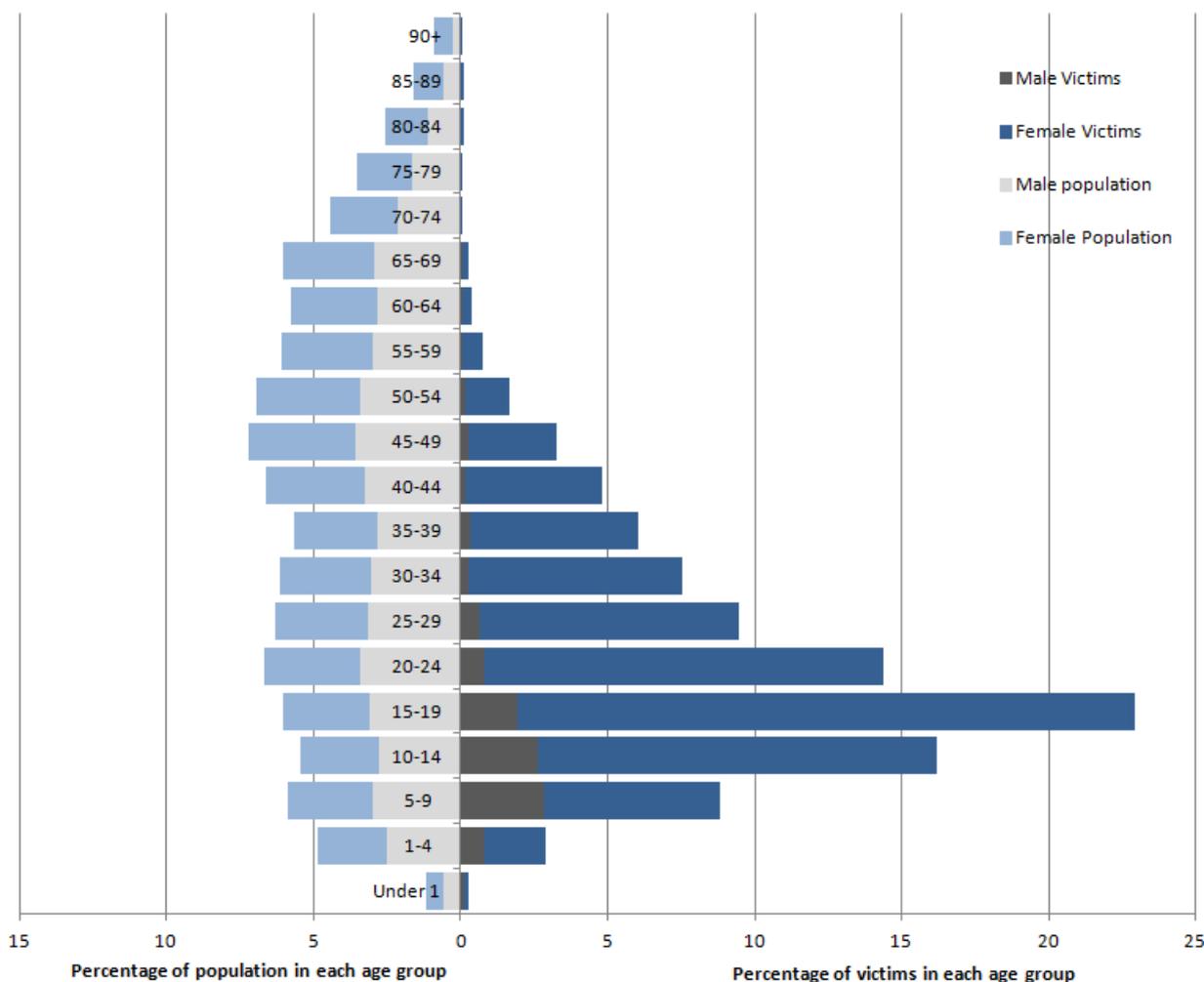
Data from all forces showed that a large majority of victims of rape offences (90%) were female in the year ending March 2015 ([Appendix Table A4 \(1.59 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) , [Crime in England and Wales, year ending March 2015](#)). Figures for the selected forces from the Home Office Data Hub data show a similar proportion (89%).

There were also differences in the age profile of rape victims. Victims were most likely to be aged 15 to 19 years, accounting for nearly a quarter (23%) of rape offences recorded by the police, although this age group only made up around 6% of the population (Figure 5.3). This was followed by victims aged 10 to 14 years (16% of rapes, 5% of the population) and victims aged 20 to 24 years (14% of rape offences, 7% of the population).

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of female rape victims were aged under 30, while females in this age group comprise 35% of the population. Male victims of rape offences were even more likely to be aged under 30 (88% of rape offences; 38% of the population). Children aged under 16 also account for a large proportion of rape offences recorded by the police. Just under a third (30%) of female rape victims were aged under 16, with the majority (60%) of male rape victims being aged under 16. In all age groups, women were far more likely to be victims of rape recorded by the police than men.

**Figure 5.3: Proportion of rape offences, by age and sex of the victim, Home Office Data Hub (13 forces), year ending March 2015**

England and Wales



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime statistics are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data based on 13 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub.
3. Population figures based on the population of the 13 forces used for analysis.

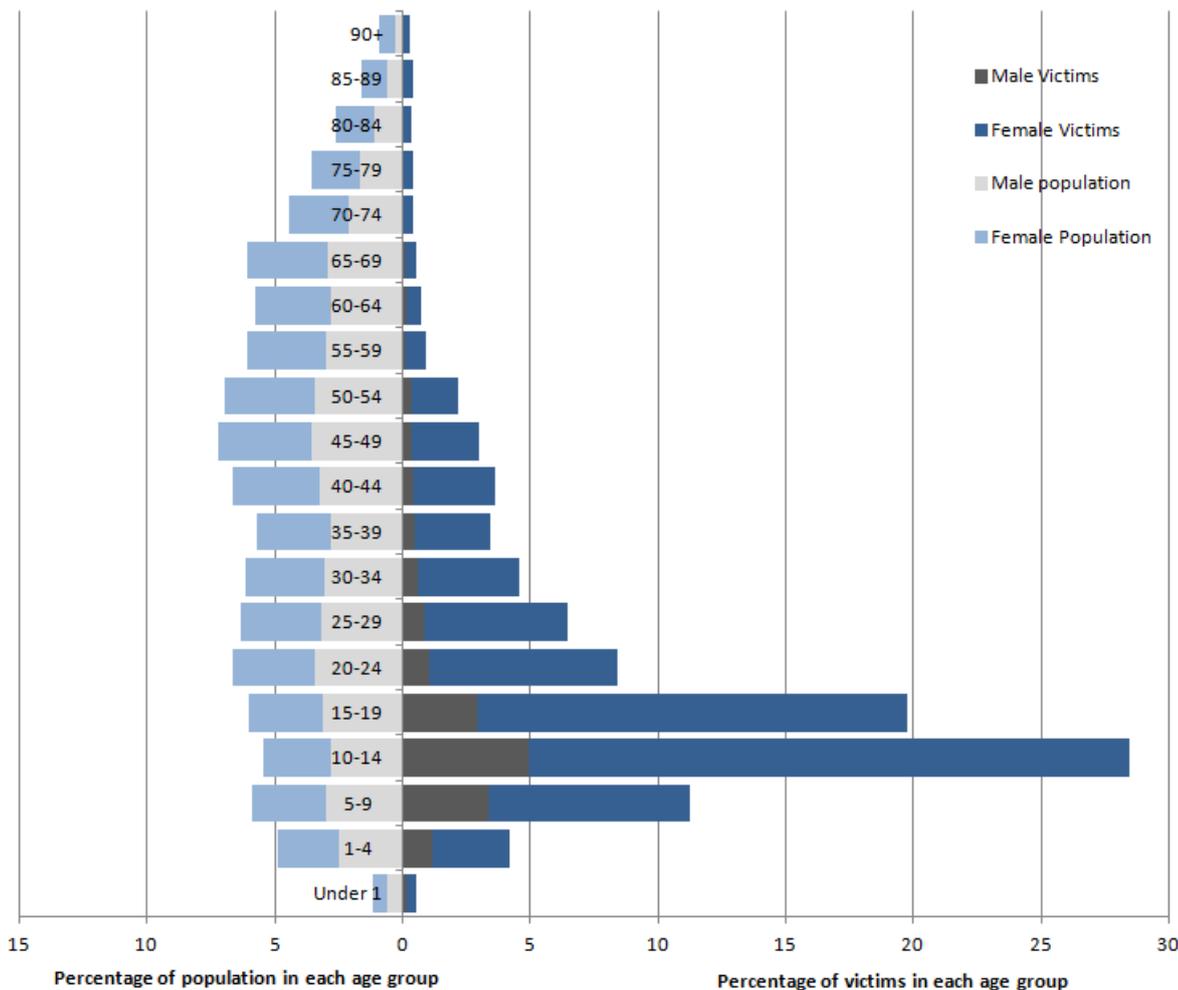
Police recorded sexual offences are broken down into rape offences and other sexual offences (which includes offences such as sexual assaults, grooming, sexual exploitation etc.). Victims of other sexual offences are again far more likely to be female, with 83% of such offences committed against female victims and 17% of offences against males. The distribution of victims across sex and age groups for other sexual offences is similar to the distribution for rape offences (Figure 5.4).

While rape victims were most likely to be in the 15 to 19 year age group, victims of other sexual offences were slightly younger, with both males and females more likely to be aged 10 to 14 years than any other age group. In the year ending March 2015, 28% of victims of other sexual offences recorded by the police were aged 10 to 14 years, but this age group accounted for only 5% of the population. In this age group, females were victims in 83% of other sexual offences with 17% of victims being male. Just under half (47%) of these offences against 10 to 14 year olds were for sexual activity involving a child, with a further 41% for sexual assaults.

Over three-quarters (78%) of female victims of other sexual offences recorded by the police were aged under 30, while females in this age group comprised 35% of the population. Male victims of other sexual offences were even more likely to be aged under 30 (84% of offences; 38% of the population). Children aged under 16 also accounted for a large proportion of other sexual offences recorded by the police. Half (50%) of female victims and the majority (62%) of male victims were aged under 16. In all age groups, women were far more likely to be victims of other sexual offences recorded by the police than men.

**Figure 5.4: Proportion of 'other sexual offences', by age and sex of the victim, Home Office Data Hub (13 forces), year ending March 2015**

England and Wales



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime statistics are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data based on 13 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub.
3. Population figures based on the population of the 13 forces used for analysis.

## 6 . Alcohol-related violent and sexual offences

Information on the involvement of alcohol as a factor in violent and sexual offences is available from the Home Office Data Hub. As the law does not specifically define alcohol-related offences, the aggregate police recorded crime data collection does not separately identify this type of crime. However, the Data Hub contains a field where police forces can identify a given set of aggravating factors related to an offence and one of these factors is whether the offence was 'alcohol-related'. It was not mandatory for forces to populate this field in the year ending March 2015.

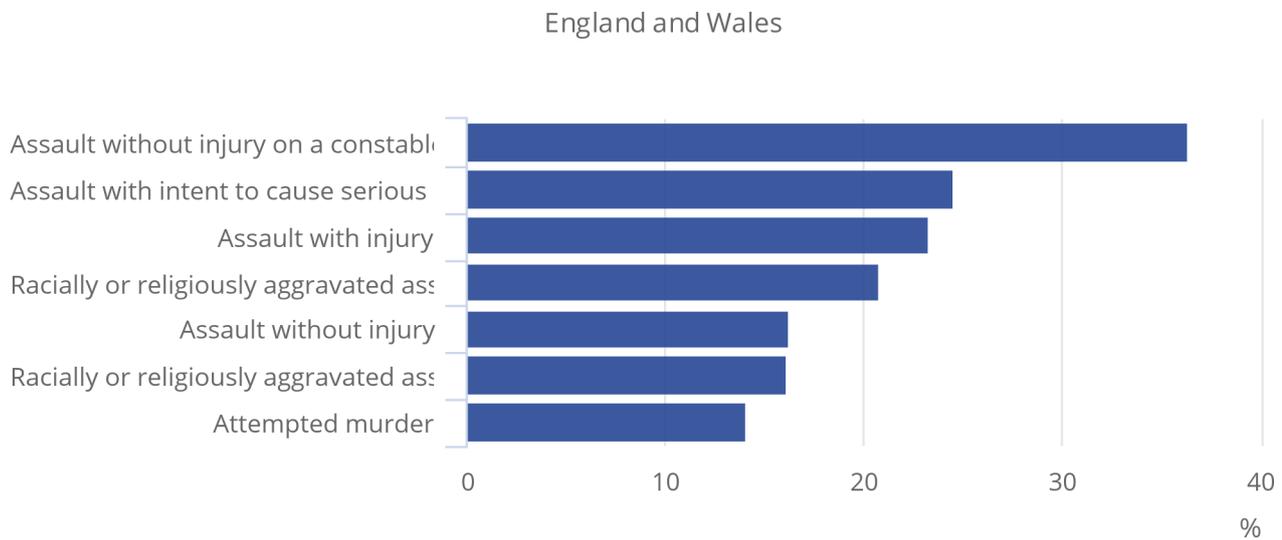
Analysis for alcohol-related violence presented here is based on 27 forces providing data using the alcohol aggravating factor flag, and is subject to continuing quality assurance<sup>1</sup>. These forces account for almost three-quarters (74%)<sup>2</sup> of the violence against the person offences in England and Wales and include data from the Metropolitan Police, who alone record around a fifth of offences in England and Wales

The data show that around 1 in 5 (19%) violence against the person offences were flagged as being alcohol-related. The offence of assault without injury on a constable had the highest proportion of offences that were alcohol-related (36% of offences). However, this offence only accounted for 2% of police recorded violence in the year ending March 2015. Although assault with injury and assault without injury had lower proportions of offences that were alcohol-related (23% and 16% respectively), as they are more common offences and respectively accounted for 44% and 34% of all police recorded violence, they accounted for the highest number of alcohol-related offences. Violence offences with the highest proportions that are flagged as alcohol-related are shown in Figure 5.5.

**Figure 5.5: Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police which were 'alcohol-related', offences with the highest proportion of the 'alcohol-related' flag, Home Office Data Hub (27 forces), year ending March 2015**

England and Wales

Figure 5.5: Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police which were 'alcohol-related', offences with the highest proportion of the 'alcohol-related' flag, Home Office Data Hub (27 forces), year ending March 2015



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime statistics are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data based on 27 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub.

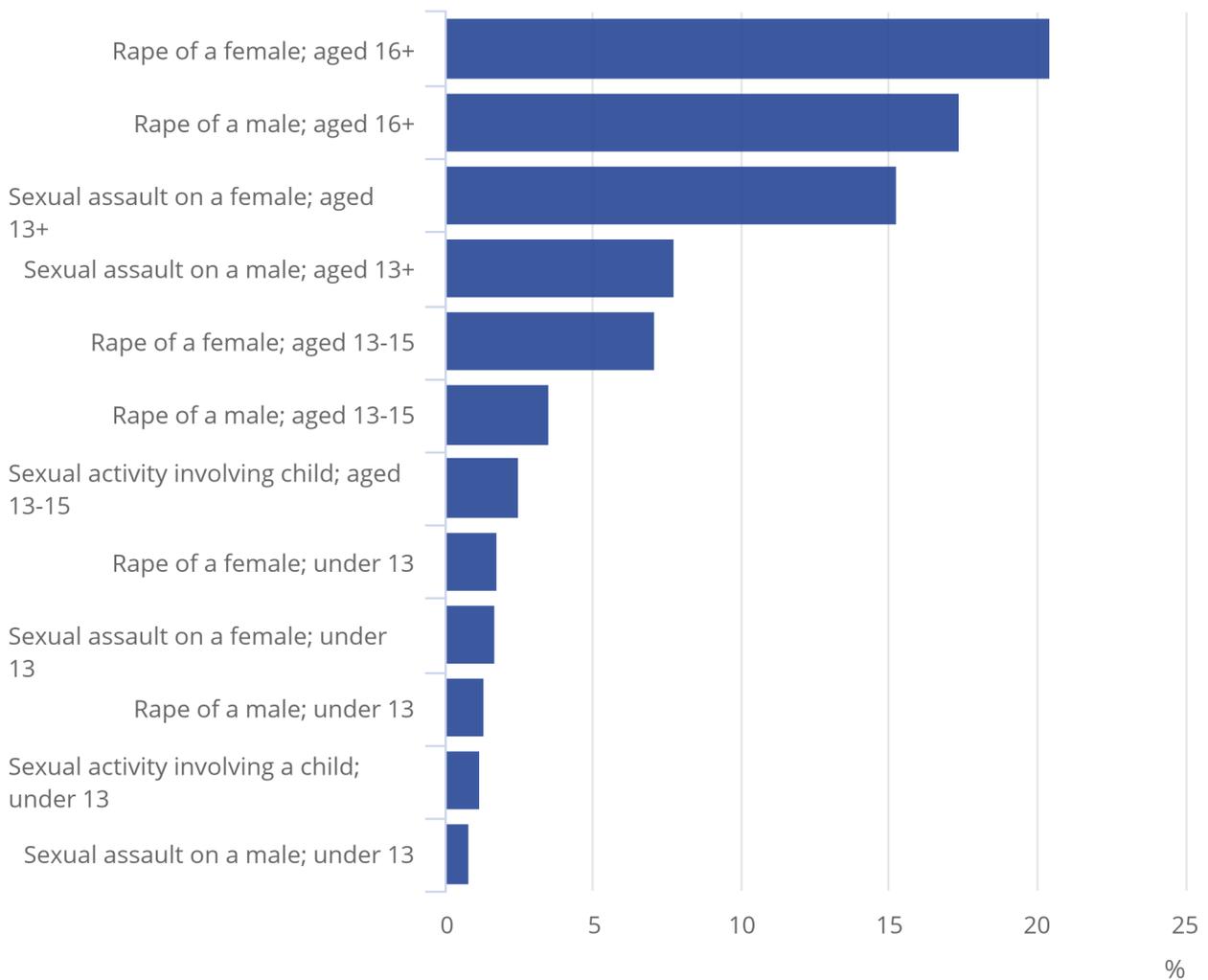
Similar analysis was also carried out for alcohol-related sexual offences, using data from 26 police forces. These 26 forces account for 56% of police-recorded sexual offences in the year ending March 2015. These data show that 10% of sexual offences were flagged as 'alcohol-related'. Within sexual offences, rape of female victims aged 16 or over had the highest proportion (21%) of offences that were alcohol-related (Figure 5.6).

**Figure 5.6: Proportion of sexual offences recorded by the police which were 'alcohol related', selected sexual offences, Home Office Data Hub (26 forces), year ending March 2015.**

England and Wales

Figure 5.6: Proportion of sexual offences recorded by the police which were 'alcohol related', selected sexual offences, Home Office Data Hub (26 forces), year ending March 2015.

England and Wales



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

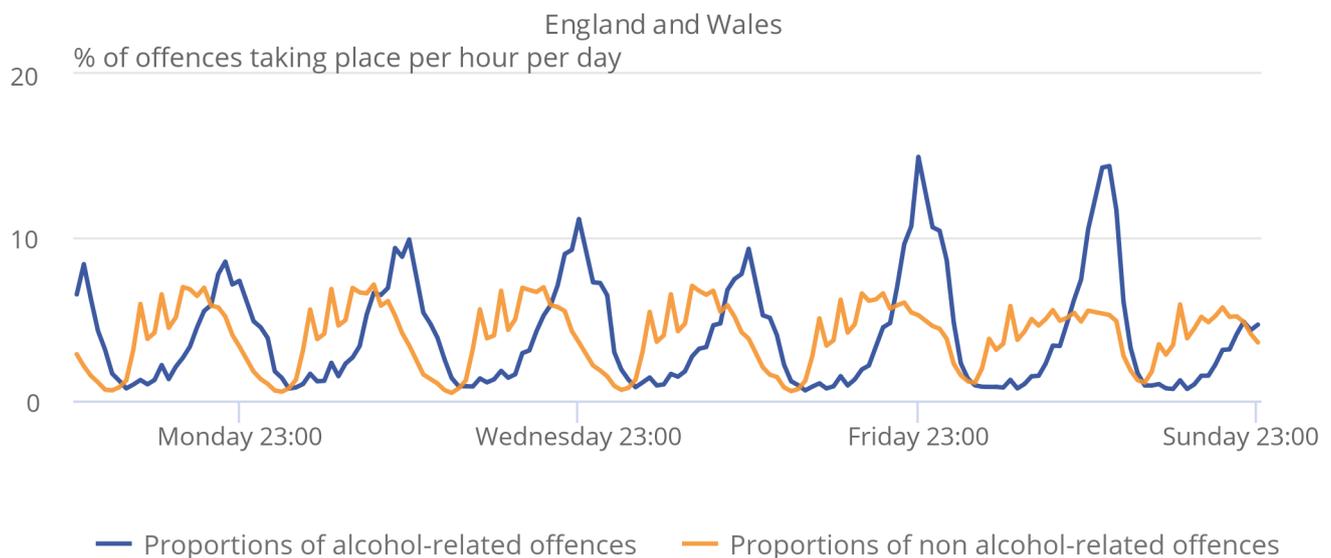
1. Police recorded crime statistics are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data based on 26 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub.

The Home Office Data Hub can also capture the day and time when an offence took place and analysis shows, as expected, that more alcohol related violence and sexual offences took place in the evening than during the day, especially on Friday and Saturday evenings. This is in sharp contrast with non alcohol-related offences which primarily occur during the day, particularly on weekdays. The analysis for violence offences is based on 21 police forces<sup>3</sup>, including the Metropolitan police, the largest force in terms of population and number of crimes recorded (see Figure 5.7). See the Overview chapter of this release for CSEW data on the timing of violent crimes.

**Figure 5.7 Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were identified as 'alcohol-related' and 'non alcohol-related', by day and time of offence, Home Office Data Hub (21 forces), year ending March 2015**

**England and Wales**

Figure 5.7 Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were identified as 'alcohol-related' and 'non alcohol-related', by day and time of offence, Home Office Data Hub (21 forces), year ending March 2015



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime statistics are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data based on 21 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub.
3. The data shown may partially be influenced by officer shift patterns.
4. It is likely that the times of certain offences were approximated by police forces. Additionally, due to technical difficulties in reliably sourcing data for midnight offences, data at 12am have been estimated by averaging volumes at 11pm and 1am.

**Notes for alcohol-related violent and sexual offences**

1. Quality assurance for this analysis involves establishing which forces are using the 'alcohol related' flag on their offences and how usage compares across forces. It should be noted that this flag is not mandatory and has no set definition.
2. Based upon [Table P1 in Crime in England and Wales, Year ending March 2015 \(316.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#).
3. This analysis utilised an additional data field on the time of the occurrence of the crime. Six of the 27 forces used in Figure 5.5 did not provide adequate data in this field and were thus excluded.

## 7. Background notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Compendium

# Experimental Statistics 2: Domestic abuse offences recorded by the police, April to September 2015

Findings from analyses based on the Home Office Data Hub covering different aspects of domestic abuse offences recorded by the police.



Contact:  
John Flatley  
[crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk)  
+44 (0)20 7592 8695

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To be announced

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# 1 . Main points

- In the 6 month period April to September 2015, the police recorded 206,815 offences that were flagged as being domestic abuse related, accounting for 11% of all police recorded crimes recorded during this period.
- Over three-quarters of these offences (77%) were for violence against the person (160,259 offences).
- A third (33%) of violence against the person offences were domestic abuse related, the highest proportion for any offence group.
- Based on data collected from a subset of forces, in violence against the person offences where the victim was a woman, one half (50%) were domestic abuse related. This compares with 16% of violent offences being domestic abuse related when the victim was male.
- The proportion of violent offences that were domestic abuse related was highest for women aged 20 to 34 (60%). This proportion declined with age for women, with those aged 75 or over experiencing the lowest proportion of domestic abuse related violence (29%).
- In contrast, the proportion of violence offences that were domestic abuse related for male victims increased with age, with the highest proportion for men being for those aged 75 and older (24%).

## 2 . Summary

These experimental statistics provide new analysis of police recorded offences that have been flagged as being domestic abuse related. The collection of domestic abuse crimes from police forces began in April 2015, therefore data in this section do not relate to the same time period as the main chapters in Focus on: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, year ending March 2015, and instead relate to the first 6 months of the collection (April to September 2015). They are presented as experimental statistics to highlight emerging and new analyses.

## 3 . Introduction

The police recorded crime series is based on the Notifiable Offence List<sup>1</sup>. As domestic abuse is not a specific criminal offence, offences that are domestic abuse related will have been recorded under the respective offence that has been committed, for example, assault with injury. This means that while domestic abuse is part of the recorded crime series, it has not previously been possible to provide figures on how many crimes are domestic abuse related. To counter this, the Home Office has been collecting new data since April 2015 from the 43 police forces in England and Wales and the British Transport Police on whether offences are domestic abuse related. This data collection also responds to a recommendation in the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report [Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse](#), published in March 2014.

While police forces would have been recording whether offences are domestic abuse related for their own intelligence needs prior to April 2015, this is the first time that these data have been collected as part of the data that the police provide to the Home Office on a mandatory basis.

Data presented within this experimental statistics section relate to offences recorded by the police between April and September 2015, rather than the year ending March 2015.

Crimes are "flagged" as being "domestic abuse related" by the police if the offence meets the cross-governmental definition of domestic violence and abuse. The definition is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling<sup>2</sup>, coercive<sup>3</sup>, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Provisional headline data from the police have previously been published in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases<sup>4</sup>. These data, for April to September 2015, have now been reconciled with police forces. However, given that this is the first year of the collection further work will be conducted with police forces to ensure the consistency and comparability of domestic abuse related data before subsequent, more complete publications of the data become routine.

## Notes for Introduction

1. The Notifiable Offence List includes all indictable and triable-either-way offences (which could be tried at a crown court) and a few additional closely related summary offences (which would be dealt with by a magistrate). For information on the classifications used for notifiable crimes recorded by the police, see Appendix 1 of the [User Guide](#).
2. Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
3. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
4. Data for April to June 2015 was published in the [Crime Statistics, year ending June 2015](#) release; data for April to September 2015 was published in the [Crime in England and Wales, year ending September 2015](#).

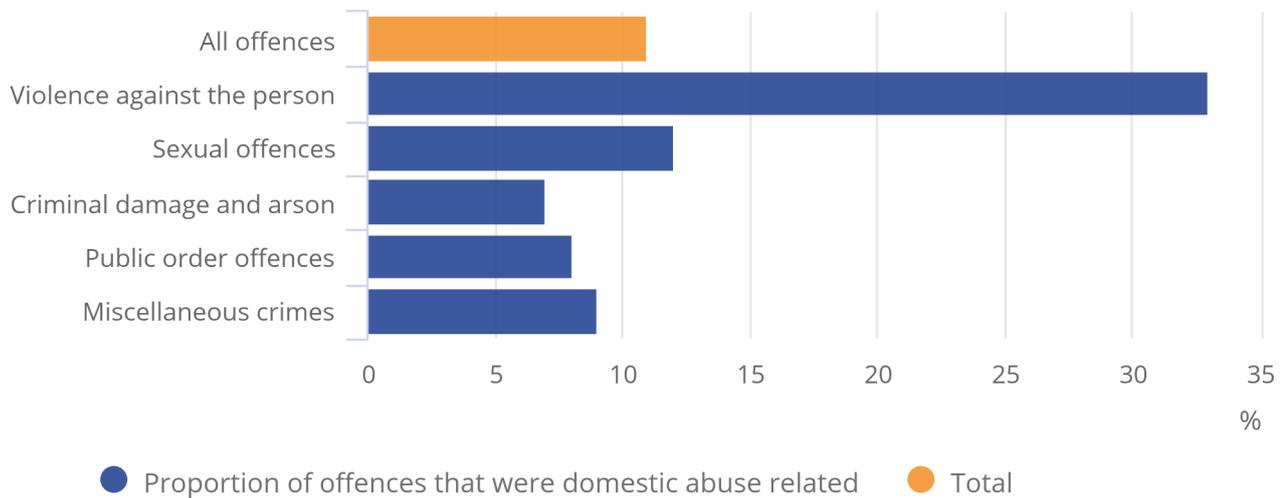
## 4 . Domestic abuse related offences

In the period April to September 2015, the police forces of England and Wales and British Transport Police recorded 206,815 offences that were domestic abuse related. Of these, 160,259 offences (77% of the total) were for violence against the person offences, 18,761 (9%) were for criminal damage and arson, 8,375 (4%) were for public order offences, 6,220 (3%) were for sexual offences and the remaining 13,200 were for various other notifiable offences (data not shown).

Overall, 11% of all offences recorded by the police were flagged as domestic abuse related. Violence against the person offences were the most likely to be domestic abuse related comprising a third (33%) of violence offences in the 6 month period. The offence group with the next highest proportion of offences being domestic abuse related was sexual offences (12%; Figure 6.1).

**Figure 6.1: Proportion of offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse related, selected offence groups, April to September 2015**

Figure 6.1: Proportion of offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse related, selected offence groups, April to September 2015



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

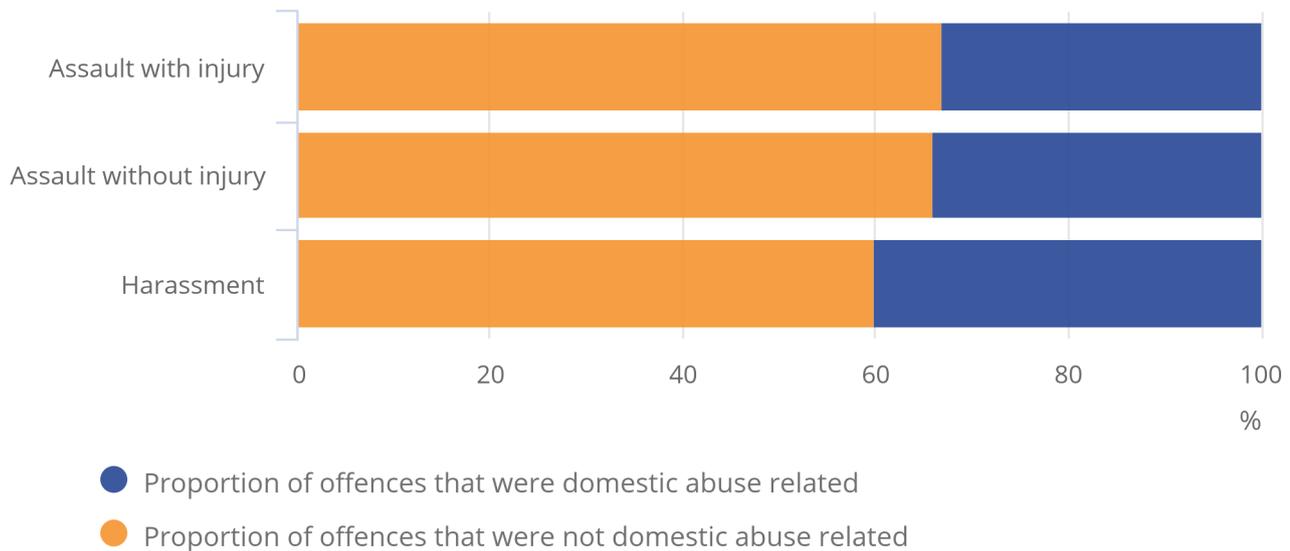
Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Domestic abuse related offences are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

As stated previously, violence against the person offences were most likely to be domestic abuse related. The proportion of offences which were domestic abuse related for the 3 most commonly recorded violence against the person offences<sup>1</sup> are shown in Figure 6.2.

**Figure 6.2: Proportion and number of offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse related, selected offence groups, April to September 2015**

Figure 6.2: Proportion and number of offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse related, selected offence groups, April to September 2015



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Domestic abuse related offences are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

For other (smaller volume) offences within violence against the person (data not shown):

- there were 3,998 offences of threats to kill that were domestic abuse related (47% of the offences recorded)
- there were 2,176 offences of assault with intent to cause serious harm that were domestic abuse related (19%)
- 1,133 offences of domestic abuse related stalking (56%)

Information on the number of homicide offences that are domestic abuse related (for the year ending March 2015) can be found in the Homicide chapter.

Sexual offences had the second highest proportion of offences being domestic abuse related (after violence against the person), at 12%. Analysis in 'Experimental Statistics: New data on police recorded violent and sexual offences' shows that the majority of victims of these sexual offences will be female, with women and girls accounting for 89% of rape victims and 83% of other sexual offences in the year ending March 2015.

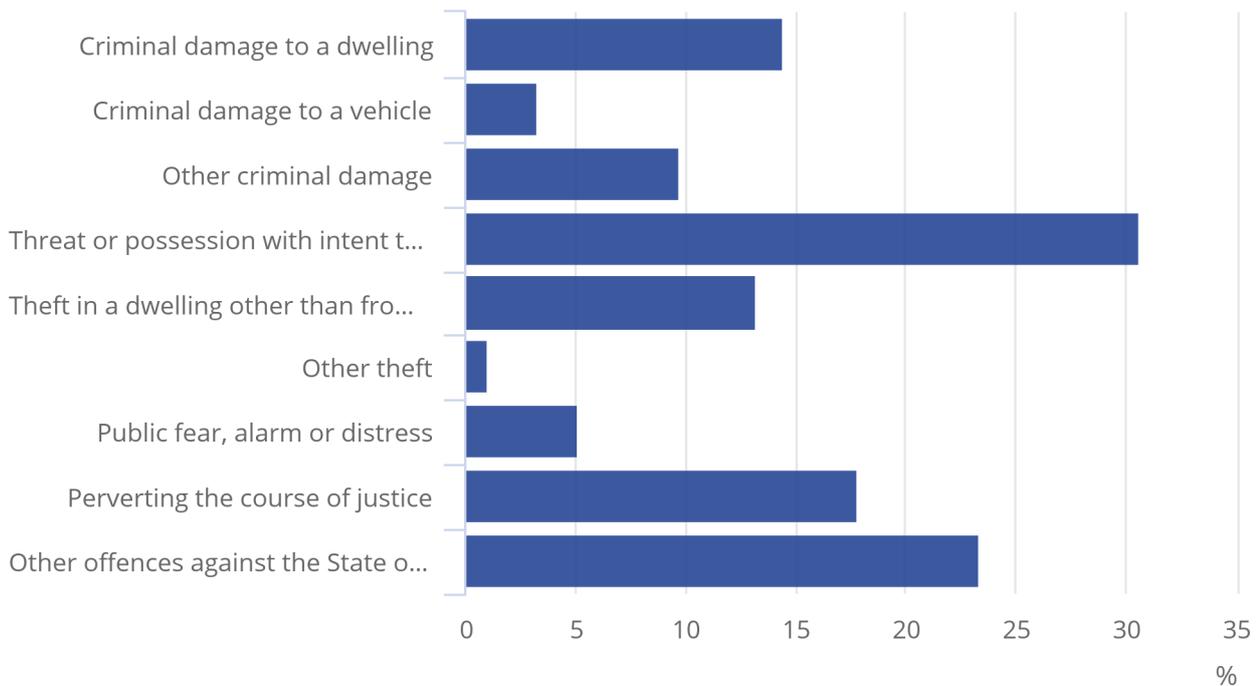
The majority of domestic abuse related sexual offences were either for rape of a female aged 16 and over (4,191 offences; 67%) or sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over (1,189 offences; 19%). In terms of proportions, 38% of rape of a female aged 16 and over and 9% of sexual assaults on a female aged 13 and over were offences that were domestic abuse related (data not shown).

Rapes and sexual assaults of males were less likely to be domestic abuse related than female rapes and sexual assaults. Of the 647 rapes of a male aged 16 and over recorded by the police in April to September 2015, 9% of these offences (57) were domestic abuse related. For sexual assaults on males aged 13 and over, 5% were domestic abuse related (84 of the 1,684 offences).

Across the other offence groups, there were a number of other crime types that either had a relatively high volume, or a high proportion, of offences that were domestic abuse related (Figure 6.3). For example, there were 8,924 criminal damage to a dwelling offences in April to September 2015 which were domestic abuse related, which accounts for 14% of all criminal damage to a dwelling offences. There were fewer threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage offences (1,940), but a higher proportion of these offences were domestic abuse related (31%).

**Figure 6.3: Proportion and number of offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse related, selected offences, April to September 2015**

Figure 6.3: Proportion and number of offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse related, selected offences, April to September 2015



**Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office**

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Domestic abuse related offences are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

**Notes for domestic abuse related offences**

1. Assault with injury, assault without injury and harassment account for 90% of recorded violence against the person offences.

## 5 . Domestic abuse related offences by police force area

Information on the number of domestic abuse related offences recorded by the police by police force area can be found in the appendix tables accompanying this release ([Appendix Table 6.01](#)). This table shows that the proportion of violence against the person offences that were domestic abuse related is relatively similar between most forces, with 40 of the 44 forces reporting between 26% and 39% of violence against the person offences as being domestic abuse related.

Information is also provided on rates per population for domestic abuse offences. For England and Wales, there were 4 domestic abuse related offences per 1,000 population recorded by the police in April to September 2015 ([Appendix Table 6.02](#)).

## 6 . Further information on police recorded domestic abuse

The Home Office are continuing to implement an improved data collection system called the Data Hub which streamlines the process by which forces submit data. The Home Office Data Hub replaces the old system of aggregate returns with automated capturing of record level crime data via direct extracts from forces' own crime recording systems. This allows the police to provide more detailed information to the Home Office enabling a greater range of analyses to be carried out. The migration to the Data Hub is ongoing and for forces providing data via the Data Hub, it is possible to exploit this richer data and conduct a more in depth analysis of police recorded offences that were flagged as domestic abuse related.

Violent and sexual offences flagged as domestic abuse related have been analysed alongside the age and sex of victims. There were 12 forces<sup>1</sup> that supplied data of sufficient quality for these variables and are therefore included in the analysis in this section. These 12 forces account for 23% of crime recorded in England and Wales. It should be noted that the analysis therefore may not be representative of all forces in England and Wales. However, for these 12 forces, the proportion of violence against the person offences that were flagged as domestic abuse related was 32%, similar to the 33% for all the forces that have supplied headline police recorded domestic abuse data to the Home Office.

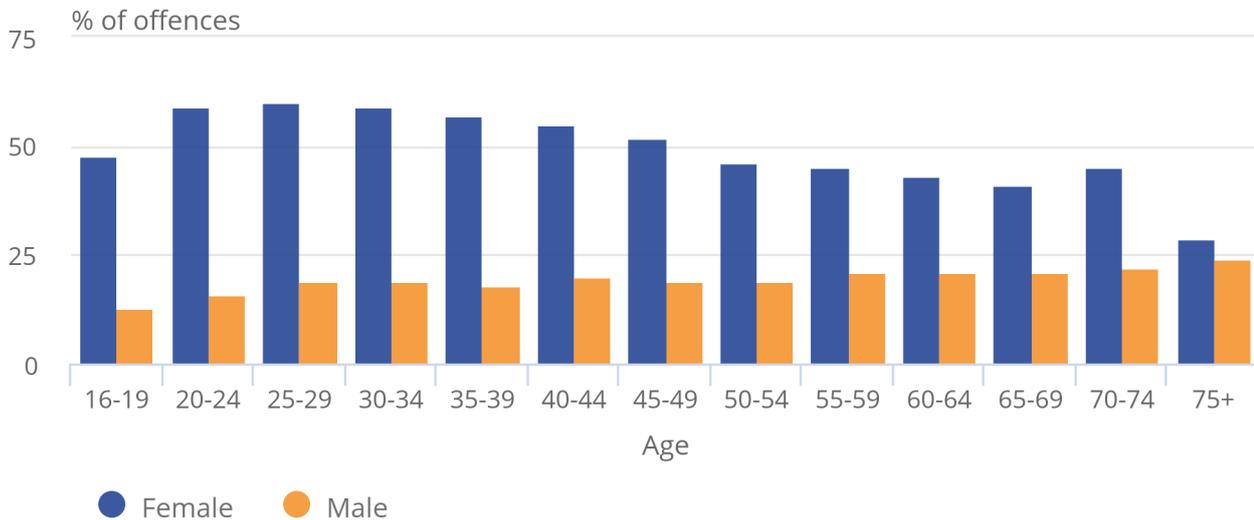
Information from the Home Office Data Hub for April to September 2015 shows that for these 12 forces, half (50%) of violence against the person offences where the victim was a woman were flagged as domestic abuse related compared with 16% of offences where the victim was a man (data not shown). This mirrors findings from the 'Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse' chapter, where women were more likely to be the victim of domestic abuse than men.

For women, as the age of the victim increases, the proportion of offences that were domestic abuse related tends to decline. For women aged 20 to 34, around 60% of all police recorded violence was domestic abuse related, compared with 29% for those aged 75 and older (Figure 6.4). It is important to note that the actual number of offences for both domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse decreases by age.

In contrast, for male victims the proportion of violent offences that were domestic abuse related tends to increase with age, from 13% for 16 to 19 year old men to 24% for those aged 75 and over. This is partly due to the large decline in non-domestic abuse related violence by age for males, which declines at a faster rate than domestic abuse related violence. Therefore, the proportion of offences that are domestic abuse related increases with age for male victims.

**Figure 6.4: Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse related, by sex of victims, April to September 2015 (12 forces)**

Figure 6.4: Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse related, by sex of victims, April to September 2015 (12 forces)



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

1. Data based on 12 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub.
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
3. Domestic abuse related offences are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Information from the Home Office Data Hub also shows that women aged 20 to 34 were disproportionately more likely to be victims of domestic abuse related violence offences recorded by the police when compared with their population profile, particularly so for those in the 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 years age groups. For example, while 8% of the female population were aged 20 to 24, this age group accounted for 18% of police recorded domestic abuse offences (Figure 6.5).

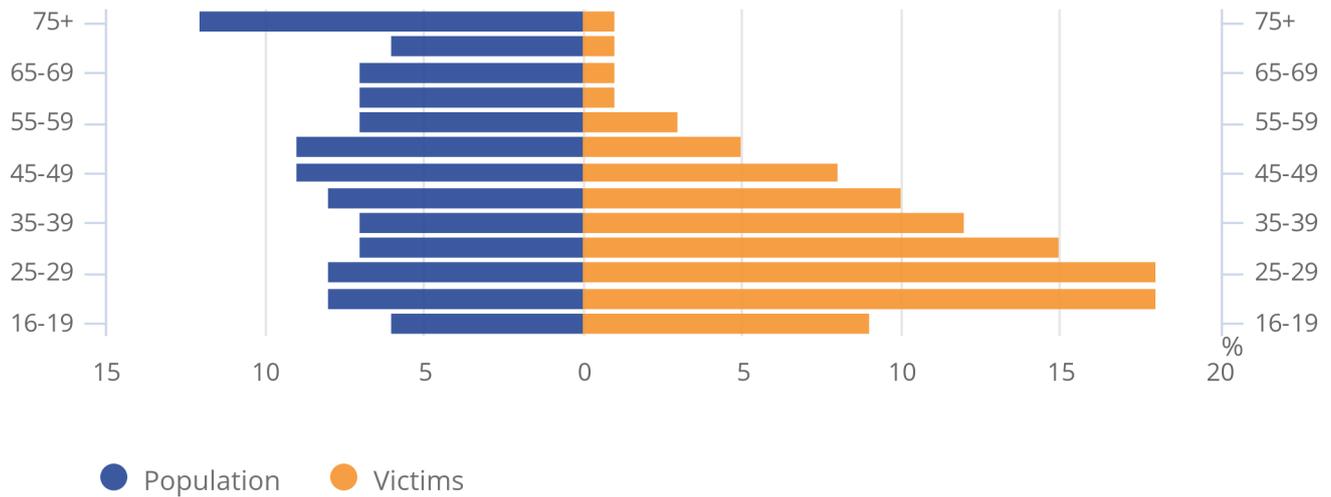
Men aged 20 to 34 were also disproportionately more likely to be victims when compared with their population profile, but not to the same extent (Figure 6.6). These patterns are similar to those shown for age groups in the 'Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse' chapter of this release ([Appendix Table 4.10](#)).

**Figure 6.5: Proportion of female domestic abuse related violence against the person offences by age compared to population, April to September 2015 (12 forces)**

England and Wales

Figure 6.5: Proportion of female domestic abuse related violence against the person offences by age compared to population, April to September 2015 (12 forces)

England and Wales



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

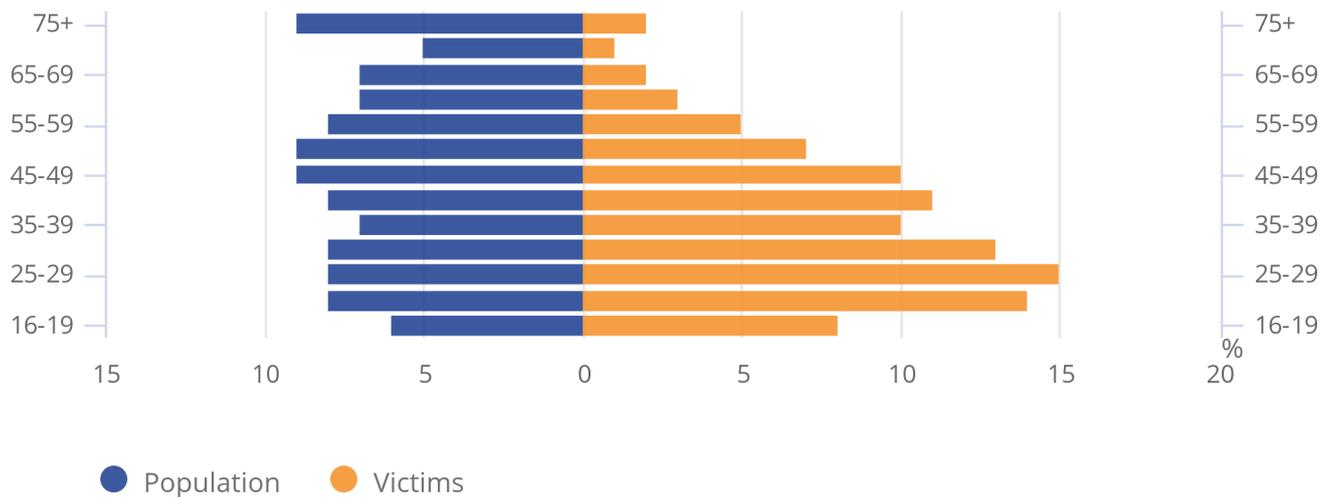
1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Domestic abuse related offences are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
3. Data based on 12 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub.
4. The population figures are based on mid-2014 estimates from the Office for National Statistics.

**Figure 6.6: Proportion of male domestic abuse related violence against the person offences by age compared to population, April to September 2015 (12 forces)**

England and Wales

Figure 6.6: Proportion of male domestic abuse related violence against the person offences by age compared to population, April to September 2015 (12 forces)

England and Wales



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Domestic abuse related offences are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
3. Data based on 12 forces that provided accurate data via the Home Office Data Hub.
4. The population figures are based on mid-2014 estimates from the Office for National Statistics.

### Notes for further information on police recorded domestic abuse

1. The 12 forces were Bedfordshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Devon and Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Staffordshire and Suffolk.

## 7. Background notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Compendium

## Data sources: further information

Data sources and references used in the Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, year ending March 2015.



Contact:  
John Flatley  
[crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk)  
+44 (0)20 7592 8695

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To be announced

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# 1 . Data sources – further information

For detailed information about the statistical sources used here, refer to the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#) (ONS, 2016<sup>1</sup>).

## Notes:

1. This User Guide is the standard source of information on both police recorded crime figures and the CSEW.

# 2 . The Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a face-to-face victimisation survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a selected number of offences in the 12 months prior to the interview. It covers both children aged 10 to 15 and adults aged 16 and over, but does not cover those living in group residences (such as care homes, student halls of residence and prisons), or crimes against commercial or public sector bodies. Respondents are interviewed in their own homes by trained interviewers using a structured questionnaire that is administered on a laptop computer using specialist survey software. The questions asked do not use technical terms or legal definitions, but are in plain English.

The information collected during the interview is later reviewed by a team of specialist coders employed by the survey contractors (currently TNS-BMRB) who determine whether or not what was reported amounts to a crime in law and, if so, what offence has been experienced. This “offence coding” aims to reflect the Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime that govern how the police record offences reported to them.

Since it began, the CSEW has been conducted by an independent (from government or the police) survey research organisation using trained interviewers to collect data from sampled respondents. The interviewers have no vested interest in the results of the survey. For the crime types and population groups it covers, the CSEW has a consistent methodology and is unaffected by changes in levels of public reporting to the police, recording practice or police activity. As such, the survey is widely seen to operate as an independent reality-check of the police figures. The independence of the survey has been further strengthened by the transfer of responsibility from the Home Office to ONS in April 2012.

The CSEW is able to capture all offences experienced by those interviewed, not just those that have been reported to, and recorded by, the police. It covers a broad range of victim-based crimes experienced by the resident household population. However, the CSEW has necessary exclusions from its main count of crime (for example, homicide, crimes against businesses and other organisations, and drug possession). The survey also excludes sexual offences from its main crime count given the sensitivities around reporting this in the context of a face-to-face interview. However, at the end of the main interview there is a self-completion set of questions (where respondents record their responses directly onto a computer), where adults aged 16 to 59 are asked about their experience of domestic abuse and sexual violence, and these results are reported separately.

Since the survey started in 1982 (covering crime experienced in 1981) a core module of victimisation questions has asked about a range of offences experienced either by the household (such as burglary) or by the individual respondent (such as robbery). The methodologies employed have remained unchanged since the survey started enabling a consistent measure of crimes committed against individuals to be created over the last 30 years. One such methodology involves the estimates only including the first 5 incidents in any series of repeat crimes in order to ensure that estimates are not affected by respondents who report an extremely high number of crimes which may be variable between years. With recent attention placed on this methodology (with only the first 5 incidents included), we have initiated a programme of work to investigate the effect of the methodology on a range of crime types and whether increasing the number of incidents counted would improve the estimates. Further information on the programme of work being conducted by us in relation to this is available in the methodological note ‘ [High frequency repeat victimisation in the Crime Survey for England and Wales \(100.1 Kb Pdf\)](#) ’

Since the survey is based on a sample of the population, estimates have a margin of quantifiable and non quantifiable error associated with them. Non quantifiable includes:

- when respondents have recalled crimes in the reference period that actually occurred outside that period (“telescoping”)
- crimes that did occur in the reference period that were not mentioned at all (either because respondents failed to recall a fairly trivial incident or, conversely, because they did not want to disclose an incident, such as a domestic assault)
- respondents saying they reported a crime to the police when they did not (a “socially desirable” response)
- some incidents reported during the interview being miscoded (“interviewer/coder error”)

The CSEW has a nationally representative sample of around 35,000 adults and 3,000 children (aged 10 to 15 years) per year. The response rates for the survey in the year ending March 2015 were 70% and 60% respectively. The survey is weighted to adjust for possible non-response bias and to ensure the sample reflects the profile of the general population. Being based on a sample survey, CSEW estimates are subject to a margin of error. Unless stated otherwise, all changes in CSEW estimates described in the main text are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level. For more information on statistical significance and confidence intervals for CSEW data, see Section 8 of the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#) (ONS, 2016).

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) continue to be badged as National Statistics.

### **3 . Police recorded crime**

In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, statistics based on police recorded crime data have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics<sup>1</sup>. The full assessment report can be found on the UK Statistics Authority website.

Police recorded crime figures are supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police, via the Home Office, to ONS. The coverage of police recorded crime is defined by the Notifiable Offence List<sup>2</sup>, which includes a broad range of offences, from murder to minor criminal damage, theft and public order offences. However, there are some, mainly less serious offences, that are excluded from the recorded crime collection. These ‘non-notifiable’ crimes include many incidents that might generally be considered to be anti-social behaviour, but that may also be crimes in law (including by-laws) such as littering, begging and drunkenness. Other non-notifiable offences include driving under the influence of alcohol, parking offences and TV licence evasion. These offences are not covered in either of the main 2 series and are separately reported on in this release to provide additional context.

Police recorded crime is the primary source of sub-national crime statistics and for relatively serious, but low volume, crimes that are not well measured by a sample survey. It covers victims (including, for example, residents of institutions and tourists as well as the resident population) and sectors (for example, commercial bodies) excluded from the CSEW sample. Recorded crime has a wider coverage of offences, for example covering homicide, sexual offences, and crimes without a specific, identifiable victim (referred to as “other crimes against society”) not included in the main CSEW crime count. Police recorded crime also provides good measures of well-reported crimes, but does not cover any crimes that are not reported to, or discovered by, the police. It is also affected by changes in reporting and recording practices. Like any administrative data, police recorded crime will be affected by the rules governing the recording of data, by the systems in place, and by operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources.

As well as the main police recorded crime series, there are additional collections providing detail on offences involving the use of knives and firearms, which are too low in volume to be measured reliably by the CSEW.

During 2014, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out a national inspection of crime data integrity. Audits of crime and incident data were carried out between December 2013 and August 2014, looking at crimes recorded between November 2012 and October 2013 across all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

The final report on findings from the HMIC inspections, '[Crime-recording: making the victim count](#)', was published on 18th November 2014 and separate [crime inspection force reports](#) for each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales were published on 27th November 2014. HMIC concluded that, across England and Wales as a whole an estimated one in five offences (19%) that should have been recorded as crimes were not. The greatest levels of under-recording were seen for violence against the person offences (33%) and sexual offences (26%), however there was considerable variation in the level of under-recording across the different offence types investigated (for example, burglary; 11%).

The [report outlines several recommendations to strengthen recording practices](#) in forces. More detail can be found in the [User Guide](#).

## Notes for Police recorded crime

1. The full assessment report on Crime Statistics in England and Wales can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website.
2. For more details see the '[Future dissemination strategy for the publication of National Statistics on Crime in England and Wales](#)'.

## 4 . Homicide Index

The Home Office Homicide Index is a database which contains detailed record-level information including victim and suspect details and the circumstances of the offence, for each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset. Data presented in this release therefore differ slightly from the homicide figures presented in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases.

While the Homicide Index is covered by the de-designation of all data based on police recorded crime, Home Office and ONS statisticians do not have significant concerns about the accuracy of recording of homicides. However, ONS accepts that there is currently insufficient evidence to provide that assurance. The ONS will work with partners to obtain fuller information on the quality of the Homicide Index and will request a re-assessment by the UK Statistics Authority in due course.

## 5 . Firearms

Information is available from the police on whether a firearm is used during any recorded notifiable offence. If a firearm had been used, the Home Office receive additional data about the circumstances of that offence. Offences involving the use of firearms relate to any crime recorded by the police where a firearm has been discharged, used as a blunt instrument or in a threat. Firearm possession offences, where the firearm has not been used, are not included. Firearms covered by the Firearms Act 1968 include handguns, shotguns, rifles, imitation weapons, air weapons and some other weapon types such as CS gas and pepper sprays.

## 6 . Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) 10 to 15 year olds

Since January 2009, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) has asked children aged 10 to 15 resident in households in England and Wales about their experience of crime in the previous 12 months. The questionnaire has been refined since its inception with the most recent data published in [Crime in England and Wales, year ending September 2015](#). Violence accounts for a large proportion of the crimes experienced by 10 to 15 year olds. Methodological differences mean that [direct comparisons cannot be made between the adult and child data](#) (Millard and Flatley, 2010). Children are not asked the questions about intimate violence reported that are reported on in Chapter 4 of this release.

## 7. Additional sources

NHS hospital admissions are collated from Hospital Episodes Statistics (HES). They include patient-level data on hospital admissions (inpatient episodes), outpatient appointments, and Accident and Emergency attendances. Inpatient episodes have been collected since 1989.

The data include specific information about the patient, such as age, gender and ethnicity; clinical information about diagnoses, operations and consultant specialties; administrative information, such as time waited, and dates and methods of admission and discharge; and geographical information such as where the patient was treated and the area in which they live. The external cause data includes specific codes for assault by various means (for example: sharp object, blunt object, handgun discharge, etc.).

While the inpatient data are unaffected by police enforcement activity, in contrast to police recorded crime data, and are generally considered to be complete and robust, there are three key caveats to their use. First, it should be remembered that HES data relates to hospital activity not individuals. For example, apparent reductions in activity may be due to procedures being undertaken in outpatient settings and therefore no longer being included in admitted patient data. Second, the admissions data do not include cases where someone came to Accident and Emergency with a violence-related injury but was not admitted (for example, minor injuries) or refused treatment. Third, there are potential recording differences in the external cause coding between Trusts. For example, injury information could be missing from the admission episode record and added later to a subsequent episode record. In addition, the coding is dependent on the clinician's judgement about the underlying cause of the admission, which may be difficult to ascertain.

## 8. Background notes

1. The Focus On releases are produced in partnership with the Home Office.
2. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
3. Next quarterly publication: 21 April 2016.
4. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

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