

Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update July 2022

Latest update on the progress being made to improve crime statistics for England and Wales.

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Release date:
21 July 2022

Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Introduction

The type and nature of crime is constantly evolving. One of our challenges is making sure we keep up to date with latest trends and provide the best overview of crime from all available sources.

Measuring crime over the last two years has been challenging because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and requirements to limit social contact at various times. We adapted both our data collection and the presentation of our statistics in response to the pandemic.

In the last year we have:

- continued to collect data through our Telephone Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)
- restarted face-to-face interviewing with the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)
- launched a [consultation on our plans for the transformation of the CSEW](#) in order to make survey data collection more resilient to unforeseen future events
- explored the feasibility of online surveying as part of a multimodal approach to survey data collection
- continued to improve our statistics related to violence against women and girls, including redeveloping domestic abuse questions and developing new questions on experiences of harassment

This work has allowed us to continue publishing our regular crime bulletins and continue to make improvements to our statistics as the type and nature of crime evolve. In the last year we have implemented both user feedback and Office for National Statistics (ONS)-led improvements including:

- continuing to report on [Crime in England and Wales](#) using data from the TCSEW in our quarterly bulletins
- publishing articles on [the lasting impact of violence against women and girls](#) and how domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system as part of our annual [domestic abuse compendium](#)
- publishing articles on [victimisation and its relationship to drug use, common mental disorder and well-being, child victims of modern slavery](#) and [perceptions of personal safety and harassment](#)
- publishing research updates on the redevelopment of crime statistics including the [redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics](#), [sourcing data on child victims of modern slavery](#), collating data on [the impact of crime on victims and society](#), [the feasibility of a survey measuring child abuse](#) and upcoming work on [subnational statistics](#)

Over the coming year we will continue the work we have started on improving crime statistics. This update outlines our current plans for improving crime statistics over the next 12 months, however, these may be liable to change as we remain responsive to emerging priorities.

2 . Crime survey development

The Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) allowed us to continue measuring crime during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and we provided crime estimates based on the TCSEW for the year ending June 2020 to the year ending March 2022.

Data collection for the TCSEW ended on 31 March 2022 and the face-to-face CSEW recommenced on 4 October 2021. Face-to-face interviewing also resumed on the crime survey for children aged 10 to 15 years on 1 April 2022, after being paused during the pandemic.

Survey data published from the year ending June 2022 onwards will be based on the face-to-face CSEW but will not initially be badged as a National Statistic. Their status as a National Statistic will be suspended until sufficient interviews are achieved. This is likely to be for the release published in July 2023.

Restarting face-to-face interviewing with the CSEW has allowed us to return to collecting more detailed information on the nature of crime and data on sensitive topics, such as domestic abuse and sexual assault via the CSEW self-completion module.

We recognise the importance of these data and work is continuing on how we can further develop the crime survey for future use. This includes:

- starting our ambitious plans to increase the sample size of the survey using a combination of increased face-to-face interviewing and telephone interviewing; this will allow for more granular estimates and greater analysis of important sub-populations
- moving to a multimodal panel design approach in order to make survey data collection more resilient to unforeseen future events; this will involve conducting face-to-face interviews with respondents and following them up after 12 months with a telephone interview
- continuing to explore the feasibility of online surveying for both adults and children as part of a multimodal approach to survey data collection and assessing the impacts of multimodal approaches on statistical coherence and comparability
- continuing questionnaire development to improve crime statistics including domestic abuse, experiences of harassment, fraud and computer misuse, and crimes against children

User consultation

A [user consultation on the future transformation work on the CSEW](#) was launched on 26 May 2022. This consultation covers the planned redesign of the CSEW as well as sections on violence against women and the 10- to 15-year-olds crime survey.

Our aim is to ensure that the Crime Survey continues to reflect the evolving needs of policy-makers, citizens and data users. The CSEW is a vital source of evidence in the crime debate, and it is critical that the survey continues to provide high quality statistics on crime in a cost-effective way.

The consultation remains open until 21 August 2022 and we are encouraging responses from everyone interested in crime statistics, including from government, policing bodies, victim groups, voluntary groups and charities, civil society organisations and academia. A response to the consultation will be published by 30 November 2022.

3 . Changes to existing publications

Quarterly bulletin

While crime estimates in our [quarterly crime bulletins](#) from the year ending June 2020 to the year ending March 2022 have been based on the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW), we have now restarted face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) interviewing. We expect the following changes to be made in our quarterly publications.

Year ending March 2022 (published July 2022):

- main crime estimates based on TCSEW
- domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking estimates based on six months of CSEW data

Year ending June 2022 (published October 2022):

- all crime estimates based on nine months of CSEW data

Year ending March 2023 (published July 2023):

- all crime estimates based on CSEW data
- crime data from the 10- to -15-year-olds survey will be included

Domestic abuse

This year's domestic abuse compendium will follow a similar format to the year ending March 2021 publication. It will contain police recorded crime data as well as information from across the criminal justice system and victim services. It will also include further domestic abuse prevalence estimates from the CSEW.

Other regular publications

Some of our regular publications for the year ending March 2022 will have reduced content because of limited survey data. These include:

- Nature of crime tables
- Property crime tables
- Nature of violent crime in England and Wales
- Drug misuse in England and Wales

Survey data for the year ending March 2023 is expected to have a sufficient sample size so that we can publish all our regular publications.

We will review our publication plans throughout the year based on availability of data and level of priority.

4 . Research and development work

Violence against women and girls

Our violence against women and girls (VAWG) programme contains several research strands, including work on domestic abuse, harassment and crimes against children. We aim to publish a summary of the recent work we have done on VAWG before the end of the financial year (March 2023). This will include an update on our work with the Department for Health and Social Care to investigate insights available from administrative healthcare data.

In addition, we will be publishing the first iteration of a VAWG data tool in September 2022 for consultation. We will be seeking views on how the tool could be used, and what additional data should be included.

Domestic abuse

To improve the collection of data on domestic abuse, we have been undertaking a user engagement, research and testing programme to redevelop the domestic abuse questions within the self-completion section of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

Following our evaluation of the [findings and recommendations from the research undertaken by the University of Bristol](#) last year, we awarded a further research contract to a consortium led by the University of Bristol in autumn 2021 to take this work forward. The focus of this research was to:

- develop a draft set of survey questions to measure domestic abuse prevalence, which have been cognitively tested
- further investigate the use of alternative survey modes to ask respondents about their experiences of domestic abuse

This research is now complete and we are evaluating the proposed set of questions and recommendations. We aim to publish a summary of the work alongside the domestic abuse compendium publication later this year. We will continue to carry out further stakeholder engagement throughout the rest of the year. The new set of survey questions to measure domestic abuse prevalence will be finalised in early 2023 and will be included on the survey on a split-sample basis from April 2023.

Harassment

We are continuing to develop our statistics to measure harassment. Analysis from data collected on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) was published in August 2021 in [Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment](#). This was [updated in May 2022](#) following a repeat iteration of the survey questions.

New questions measuring harassment have been added to the CSEW from April 2022. These measures will be reviewed based on analysis of the first six months of data collected and further refined in April 2023. We expect to publish our first set of statistics based on these new questions by July 2023.

Crimes against children

We have been undertaking user engagement to inform the development of the 10- to 15-year-olds CSEW. In October 2021, we launched a stakeholder survey to understand user requirements for data on crimes against children and crime-related topics. In response to user feedback we are reviewing the content of the 10 to 15s CSEW to ensure we continue to meet evolving user needs for data on children. We are planning to develop new questions to measure children's experience of sexual harassment.

We are also commissioning research to redevelop the existing gangs and knife-carrying questions asked of children and young adults on the CSEW to improve the relevance of the data collected. We will continue to carry out further stakeholder engagement throughout the year to ensure the questions developed meet user needs. We aim to include the new questions on the survey from April 2023.

Data on experiences of abuse during childhood were last collected in the CSEW in 2018 to 2019. We are undertaking user engagement to review and develop this module of questions for inclusion in the survey from April 2023 to March 2024.

Our feasibility study, to determine whether a national survey could provide an effective source of data on the current scale and nature of child abuse remains ongoing. In April 2022, we published a [progress update](#), which concluded phase one of this research. We found there was no fundamental reason not to conduct the proposed survey. However, we identified significant challenges that need to be addressed in phase two, including the development of an appropriate safeguarding process and questionnaire. We aim to tender out this element of phase two in the autumn.

Crimes against non-household populations

As part of our plans to make crime and justice statistics more inclusive we are reviewing how we can improve crime statistics on non-household populations that are not captured by the CSEW. We plan to explore how we can make better use of other available data sources to complement CSEW and police recorded crime data. The first stage of this work will be to review the existing data and engage with stakeholders so that we can prioritise areas of further work.