

Statistical bulletin

Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2018

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



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Release date:
25 April 2019

Next release:
18 July 2019

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1 . Main points

Over recent decades we have seen continued falls in overall levels of crime but in the last year there has been no significant change. However, it is important to look at individual crime types as the total figure hides variation both within and across crime types. We have seen a rise in overall theft but a mixed picture in different types of offences involving theft. There are also differences in the lower-volume but higher-harm types of violence, with increases in homicide and offences involving knives and sharp instruments but decreases in offences involving firearms.

Headline figures

We have seen an 8% increase in overall theft offences estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), which is mainly driven by a 20% increase in “other household theft”. There is a mixed picture when considering offences involving theft that are thought to be well-reported and accurately recorded by the police:

- a 2% increase in vehicle offences, due largely to a 9% increase in the subcategory of “theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle”
- an 11% increase in robbery
- a 3% decrease in burglaries

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

- a 6% increase¹ in the number of police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments
- a 6% increase in the number of homicides²
- a 2% decrease in the number of police recorded offences involving firearms

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

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

- a 12% increase in fraud offences
- a 28% decrease in computer misuse

Important points for interpreting figures in this bulletin

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

Notes for: Main points

1. This figure excludes Greater Manchester Police.
2. Excluding the London and Manchester terrorist attacks, the number of homicides increased by 12%.

2 . Latest figures

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

Table 1: What do the latest figures show?

	Figures for year ending December 2018, compared with previous survey year	Things to note
Computer misuse	28% decrease (to 976,000 offences) in computer misuse offences estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).	The CSEW is the best source for measuring the volume of computer misuse offences as it captures offences that go unreported. However, the current comparison is based on limited data points only, therefore caution must be taken in interpreting early trends.
Criminal damage and arson	14% increase in criminal damage to a vehicle estimated by the CSEW (to 811,000 offences).	Police recorded crime shows an 8% decrease in criminal damage to a vehicle. However, this offence type is not well reported to the police.
	21% decrease in arson and other criminal damage estimated by the CSEW (to 324,000 offences).	Arson offences recorded by the police decreased by 5%, which is consistent with findings from the CSEW.
Domestic abuse	According to the CSEW, there was no change in the proportion of adult victims of domestic abuse in the year ending March 2018 (6.1%). These are the latest data available.	Given the different factors affecting the reporting and recording of these offences, the police figures do not provide a reliable measure of current trends. The CSEW is the preferred source for the level of domestic abuse offences, but the latest data from the CSEW is for the year ending March 2018.
Fraud	12% increase in fraud offences estimated by the CSEW (to 3,648,000 offences).	The CSEW provides the best indication of the volume of fraud offences experienced by individuals as it captures the more frequent lower-harm cases that are likely to go unreported to the authorities. However, the current comparison is based on limited data points only, therefore caution must be taken in interpreting early trends.
Homicide	6% increase in police recorded homicide offences (from 690 to 732 offences).	Trends in homicide can be affected by events with multiple homicide victims, for example, the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester in 2017. Excluding these terrorist attacks, the number of homicides increased by 12% (from 655 to 732 offences).
Public order offences	19% increase in police recorded public order offences (to 438,286 offences).	A large part of this increase is likely to reflect improvements to recording practices. For example, incidents that may have previously been recorded as an anti-social behaviour incident may now be recorded as a public order offence. It is possible that genuine increases in public disorder may also have contributed to the rise.
Robbery	11% increase in police recorded robbery offences (to 82,566 offences).	<p>This increase is likely to reflect some real change in these crimes. Recording improvements are likely to have contributed, but the impact is thought to be less pronounced than for some other crime types.</p> <p>The CSEW does not provide a robust measure of short-term trends in robbery as it is a relatively low-volume crime.</p>
Sexual offences	According to the CSEW, there was an increase of 0.7 percentage points in the proportion of adults who experienced sexual assaults ¹ in the year ending March 2018 (to 2.7%). These are the latest data available.	Given the different factors affecting the reporting and recording of these offences, the police figures do not provide a reliable measure of current trends. The CSEW is the preferred source for the level of sexual offences, but the latest data from the CSEW is for the year ending March 2018.

Theft	8% increase in overall theft offences estimated by the CSEW (to 3,751,000 offences), mainly driven by a 23% increase in "theft from outside a dwelling".	The CSEW provides the better indication of overall trends in theft offences. It better captures more minor thefts, such as from outside a dwelling, which are less likely to be reported to the police.
	2% increase in vehicle offences recorded by the police (to 463,497 offences).	However, police recorded crime data can help identify short-term changes in individual offences. Vehicle offences and burglary offences are thought to be generally well-reported by victims and well-recorded by the police.
	3% decrease in burglary offences recorded by the police (to 424,846 offences).	
Violence	No change in overall violent offences estimated by the CSEW (1,355,000 offences).	The CSEW provides the better indication of overall trends in violent crime, giving a good measure of the more common but less harmful offences.
	2% decrease in police recorded offences involving firearms (to 6,525 offences).	Police recorded crime provides a better measure of the more harmful but less common offences. Such offences are not well-measured by the survey because of their relatively low volume.
	6% increase in police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (to 40,829 offences). This figure excludes Greater Manchester Police (GMP).	GMP have changed their methodology after identifying an undercount of crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument. Therefore, data for GMP are not comparable over this time period. Including GMP, there were 44,443 knife or sharp instrument offences.

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Any sexual assault including attempts and causing sexual activity without consent

3 . Statistician’s comment

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

“When we look at the overall level of crime, there has been no significant change over the last year. However, it is important to look at each crime type separately because the picture is very mixed. Even within crime types we have seen differences. Robbery and vehicle offences have increased whereas burglary has decreased. Lower-volume high-harm violence involving knives has risen, whereas offences involving firearms have decreased.”

4 . Things you need to know about this release

How do we measure crime?

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

Sources included

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

Crime Survey for England and Wales

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

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

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

All changes reported in this bulletin, based on the CSEW, are statistically significant at the 5% level unless stated otherwise. When we say that a change in crime is statistically significant, we are confident that the change indicated by the data would occur at least 19 times out of 20 if we carried out the same survey on different random samples of the population.

This bulletin is the second release of data following a change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW in January 2019. Repeat victimisation is defined as the same thing, done under the same circumstances, probably by the same people, against the same victim.

Since the survey began in 1981, “repeat” incidents have been limited to a total of five in survey estimates. This meant we could publish incident rates that were not subject to large fluctuation between survey years. Following criticism of this methodology, and an [independent review](#), we dropped the cap of five and replaced it with the 98th percentile.

The entire CSEW time series going back to 1981 has been revised. Data published in this bulletin are therefore not comparable with data published before January 2019.

More information on this change can be found in [Improving estimates of repeat victimisation derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) and a summary is published in a [slide pack](#).

Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime is the number of notifiable¹ crimes reported to and recorded by the police.

For types of crime that are well-reported and accurately recorded, police data can provide a valuable measure of trends. For example, offences such as thefts, are usually well reported because they require a crime reference number to be issued by the police, to support an insurance claim. However, in many situations, victims may be reluctant to report a crime to the police because it seems too trivial, or not worth reporting.

This means that not all crimes are reported to the police and that, for many crime types, police recorded crime statistics do not provide a reliable measure of crime levels or trends. However, these data provide an insight into the demands being made on the police and are useful in assessing how caseload has changed both in volume and nature over time.

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

However, due to wider concerns over the quality and consistency of crime recording, police recorded crime data were assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics in 2014 (now the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#)) and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics².

Since then, there has been an increased focus on improving recording practices, which has led to a greater proportion of reported crimes being recorded by the police³. For this reason, an increase in the number of crimes recorded by the police does not necessarily mean the level of crime has increased. [Inspection reports](#)⁴ from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) suggest that some offences are still significantly under-recorded by the police⁵. Despite this, the most recent [Annual Assessment from HMICFRS](#) recognises that police forces are making improvements to their recording practices.

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

Lancashire police force were unable to provide recorded crime data for November and December 2018. An estimated number of offences for Lancashire for this time period has therefore been used throughout this bulletin. This is thought to have a minimal impact on the overall figures presented. The figures for Lancashire will be revised in a future publication when the data are available.

Time periods covered

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

The latest recorded crime figures relate to crimes recorded by the police during the year ending December 2018 (January 2018 to December 2018). A "snapshot" of police recorded crime data for the year ending December 2018 was taken on 26 March 2019 to ensure the data do not change during the analysis period⁶.

In this release:

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

Our bulletins are produced every quarter, based on rolling data. This means that there is an overlap of data from one bulletin to the next. As a result, many findings do not change greatly between quarterly bulletins. Our last bulletin covered October 2017 to September 2018. This bulletin uses some of these data (from January 2018 to September 2018) and adds in new data from October to December 2018.

Useful crime terms

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

- homicide includes murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide
- we use the term firearms rather than guns; firearms include: shotguns, handguns, rifles, imitation firearms, unidentified firearms and other firearms
- mugging is an informal term for robbery, in this bulletin we use the term “robbery”
- cybercrimes (or online crimes) are offences that can be committed via a computer, computer network or other form of information and communications technology (ICT); they include computer misuse, some frauds that only occur online (for example, online shopping scams) and some non-fraud crimes (for example, online harassment)
- domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence and refers to crimes committed by either a partner, ex-partner or family member

There are also a number of common misconceptions around crime. Read [How much do you really know about crime?](#) and answer the questions to find out how accurate your perception of crime is.

Crime statistics and the wider criminal justice system

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

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

The current bulletin and other crime statistics

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

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

Notes for: Things you need to know about this release

1. The coverage of police recorded crime figures is defined by the [Notifiable Offence List](#).
2. The full assessment report can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority \(PDF, 220.9KB\)](#) website. Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) continue to be badged as National Statistics.
3. The [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#) report, published by HMICFRS in late 2014, led to police forces reviewing and improving their recording processes.
4. These reports were published between 2016 and 2019, and the most recent reports were published on 7 March 2019. Seven re-inspection reports have also been published.
5. Of the 32 published inspection reports, and seven re-inspection reports, two forces received a rating of “outstanding”, nine forces received a rating of “good”, with a further 13 rated as “requires improvement” and another eight as “inadequate”.
6. See Section 3.6 of the [User guide](#) for more information.

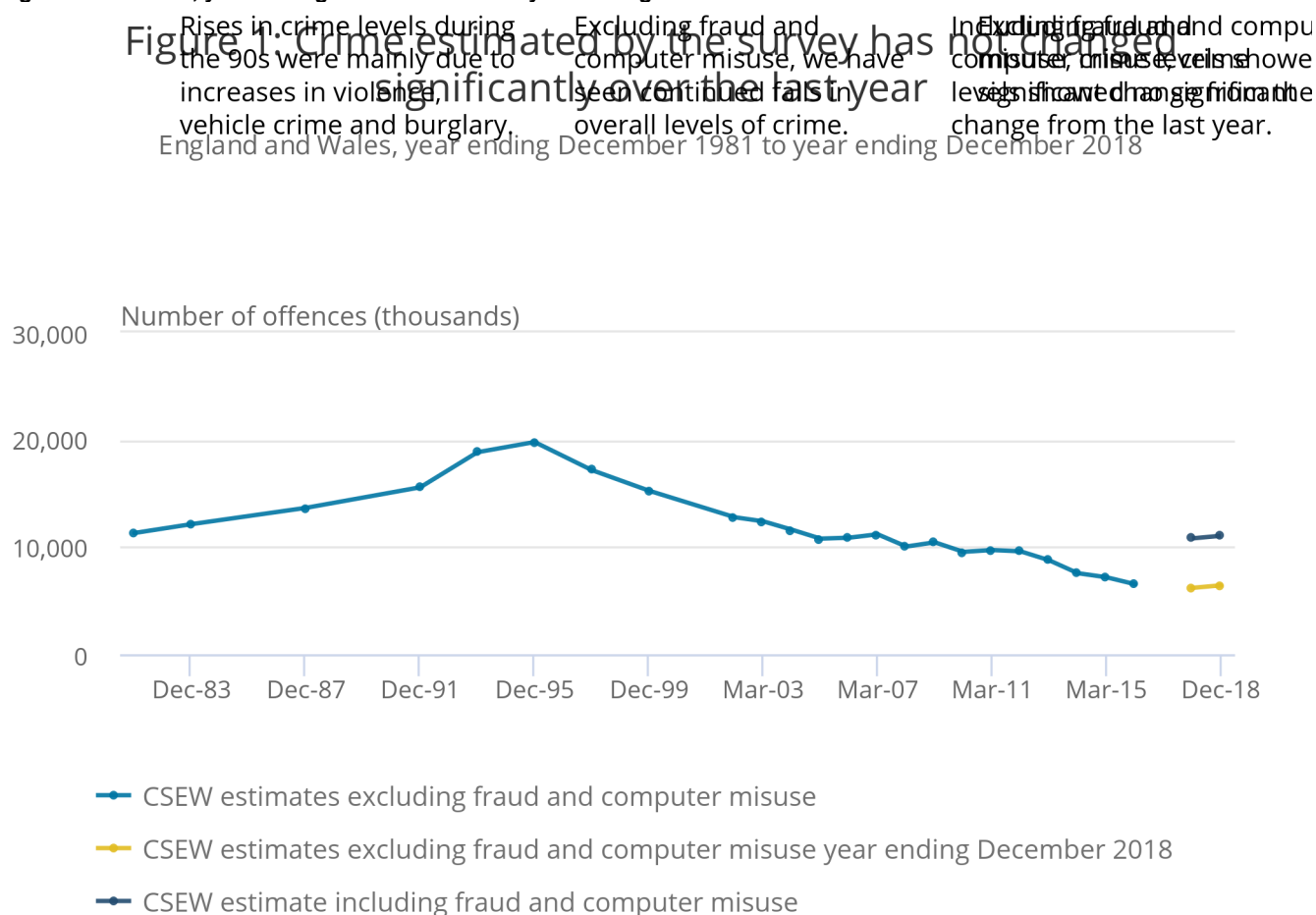
5 . Overview of crime

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

The latest estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending December 2018 show that there was no change in total crime (including fraud and computer misuse) compared with the previous year (11 million offences, Figure 1). The apparent 2% increase in total crime was not statistically significant. It is important to look at individual crime types as the total figure hides variation both within and across crime types.

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

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



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year (January to December); and from year ending March 2002 onwards the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that financial year (April to March). The latest two years relate to interviews carried out between January and December.
3. Data relate to adults aged 16 years and over or to households.
4. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. The questions were asked of half the survey sample initially, and have been asked of the full sample since October 2017. These offences need to be excluded when looking at changes over the long-term to make figures comparable.
5. In March 2018, the new CSEW estimates on fraud and computer misuse were assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation against the Code of Practice for Statistics and were awarded National Statistics status.

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

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

- computer misuse offences decreased by 375,000 offences (28%, to 976,000 offences), due largely to a 44% decrease in computer viruses
- fraud offences increased by 385,000 offences (12%, to 3.6 million offences); this is driven mainly by an increase in the “other fraud”¹ offence category, which more than doubled over the last year
- theft offences increased by 291,000 offences (8%, to 3.8 million offences); driven mainly by a 23% increase in “thefts from outside a dwelling”
- the overall volume of criminal damage has not changed (1.1 million offences), however, criminal damage to a vehicle increased by 14% (from 711,000 to 811,000 offences) and “arson and other criminal damage” decreased by 21% (from 409,000 to 324,000 offences)

All other main types of crime measured by the survey showed no statistically significant change in the number of offences (see [Appendix Table A1](#) for details).

Most people are not victims of crime

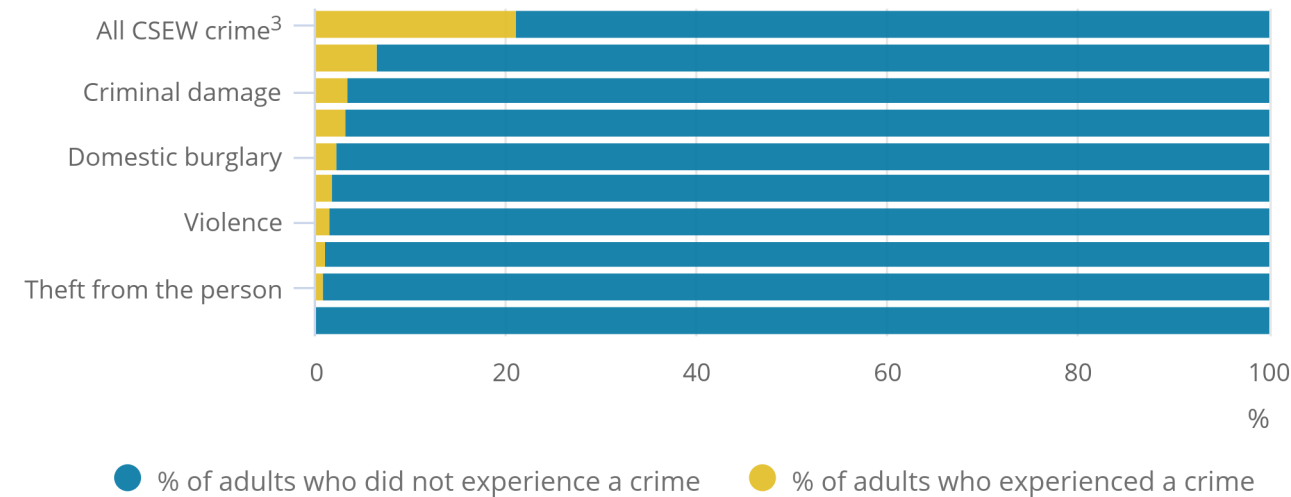
The latest survey estimates show that 2 in 10 adults experienced any of the crimes asked about in the survey in the previous 12 months², a figure that has remained stable in recent years. It is much more likely for an adult in England and Wales to experience fraud, than a violent offence (Figure 2).

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

England and Wales, year ending December 2018

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

England and Wales, year ending December 2018



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

Notes:

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

The likelihood of being a victim of crime has fallen considerably over the long-term. Around 40 in 100 adults were estimated to have been a victim of crime in 1995. This was before the survey included fraud and computer misuse in its coverage. Based on crimes comparable with those measured in the 1995 survey, 15 in 100 adults were victims of crime in the year ending December 2018.

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

Over the last year, police figures indicated rises in some higher-harm violent offences involving the use of weapons³. Recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments went up by 6% to 40,829⁴. This is consistent with an increasing trend over the last few years, however, the rate of increase has recently been getting smaller (18% in the year ending March 2018, 13% in the year ending June 2018 and 9% in the year ending September 2018)^{5,6}.

In contrast to the increase in offences involving knives and sharp instruments, offences involving firearms recorded by the police fell by 2% (to 6,525 offences). This decrease is smaller than we have observed previously (5% in the year ending June 2018 and 4% in the year ending September 2018) and follows an upward trend between 2014 and 2017 (Figure 3). These differences are thought to reflect genuine changes.

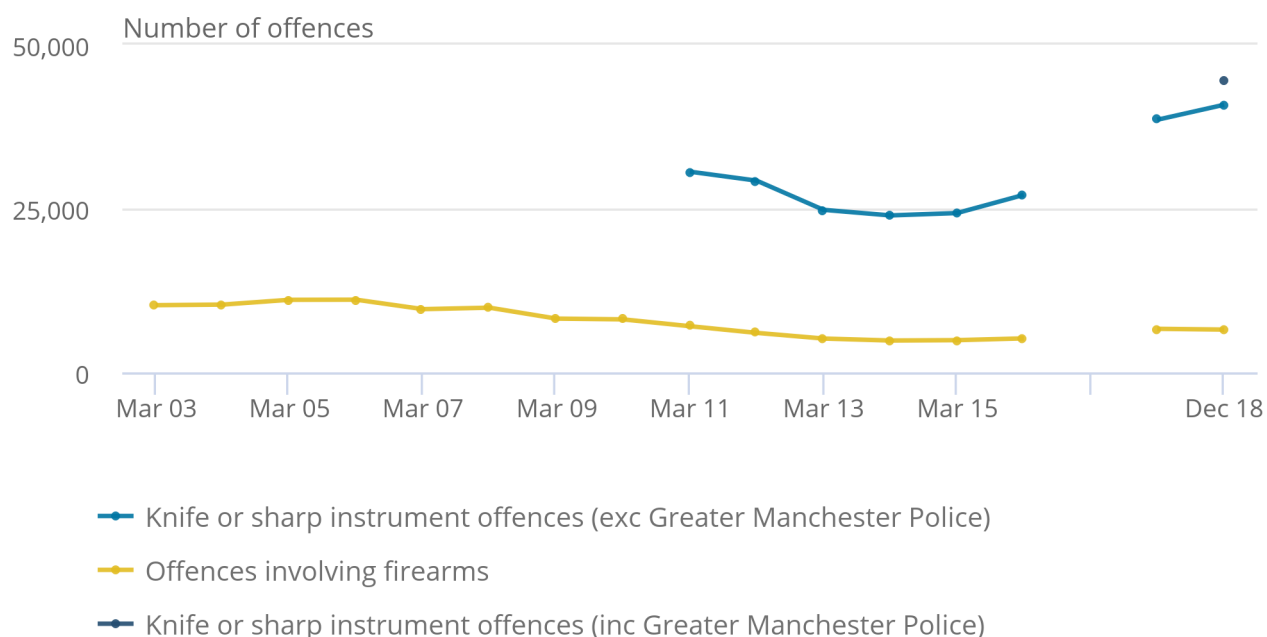
The total number of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the latest year (44,443 offences) includes all 44 police forces in England and Wales (including British Transport Police). However, data from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have been excluded from the time series due to undercounting of these crimes.

Figure 3: Continued rise in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument and a recent decrease in offences involving firearms

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

Figure 3: Continued rise in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument and a recent decrease in offences involving firearms

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via a special collection which includes the offences: homicide; attempted murder; threats to kill; assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm; robbery; rape; and sexual assault.
3. Police recorded crime statistics are based on data from 43 police forces in England and Wales. However, knife crime data from Greater Manchester Police are excluded from the time series due to a recent change in counting methods. The total including GMP is presented as a separate data point for the year ending December 2018. Previous data have not been revised and the data are therefore not comparable.
4. Data on offences involving a knife or sharp instrument began to be collected in April 2009; however, comparable data are only available from the year ending March 2011. The [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#) include data on offences involving a knife or sharp instrument going back to the year ending March 2009.
5. Data from Surrey Police include unbroken bottle and glass offences, which are outside the scope of this special collection; however, it is not thought that offences of this kind constitute a large enough number to impact on the national figure.
6. An audit of Thames Valley Police into the recording of knife and sharp instrument offences since the introduction of their new recording system in April 2014 has revealed that they were previously under-counting these offences. Data for the year ending March 2016 have been revised, but data for the year ending March 2015 have not.
7. Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Police forces have implemented new crime recording systems for offences involving the use of a knife sharp instrument, therefore data for the latest year may be under-recorded. It is expected that this will be revised in future publications.
8. Knife crime data from Northumbria police have been revised for the year ending December 2017 and the year ending December 2018. These revised data show an increase in the number of offences recorded. Data prior to this have not been revised.
9. Numbers differ from those previously published due to Sussex Police revising their figures to exclude unbroken bottles. Data for Sussex Police will be revised again in a future publication due to a number of recorded offences that involved a knife or sharp instrument not being identified as such. There is therefore currently an undercount of knife or sharp instrument offences for Sussex Police.
10. Firearms include: shotguns; handguns; rifles; imitation weapons such as BB guns or soft air weapons; other weapons such as CS gas, pepper spray and stun guns; and unidentified weapons. They exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.
11. South Wales Police have not supplied firearms data for April to December 2018. Although the number of these offences in this force is relatively low, this will have a small impact on the overall picture of offences involving firearms.
12. Data on firearms offences are provisional and have not been reconciled with police forces.

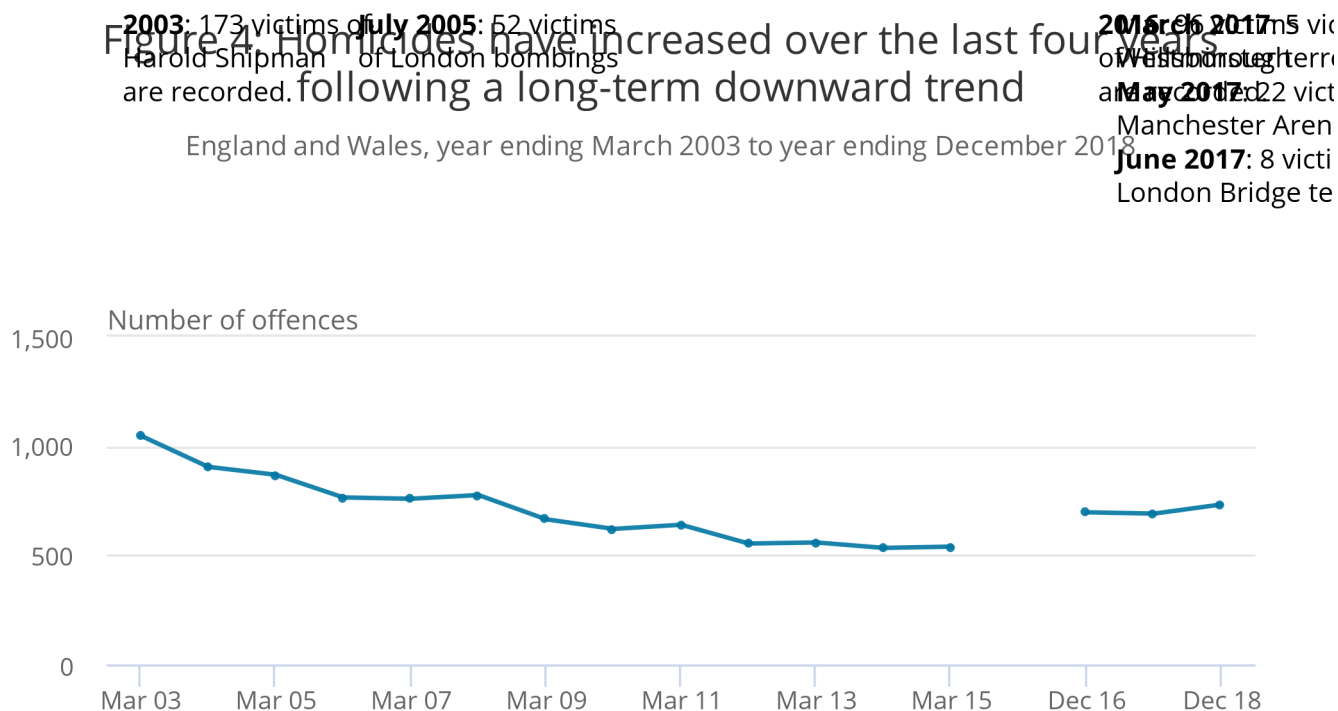
Further discussion about offences involving knives or sharp instruments can be found in [Offences involving knives or sharp instruments are still rising, while firearms offences decrease](#).

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

The total number of homicides recorded by the police rose by 6% in the last year (to 732 offences) ⁷. This continues an upward trend in homicides since March 2014, a change to the long-term decrease over the previous decade (Figure 4).

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

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data on homicide offences given in these police recorded crime data will differ from data from the Home Office Homicide Index, which are published annually by Office for National Statistics, last released as part of [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#). Police recorded crime data on homicide represent the recording decision of the police based on the available information at the time the offence comes to their attention. Homicide Index data take account of the charging decision and court outcome in cases that have gone to trial. It is not uncommon for offences initially recorded as murder by the police to be charged or convicted as manslaughter at court.
3. Some forces have revised their data and police recorded crime totals may not agree with those previously published.
4. Lancashire Police Force were unable to provide police recorded crime for November and December 2018. Therefore, totals for year ending December 2018 were produced using an estimate for these months.
5. The dates shown for the London and Manchester terrorist attacks in 2005 and 2017 correspond to when the events occurred, rather than when the homicides were recorded by the police.

Smaller increase in vehicle offences in the last year

Police recorded figures showed a 2% increase in vehicle offences in the year ending December 2018 (to 463,497 offences). These offences have been increasing since the year ending March 2015. The size of the annual increase is smaller than previously (the increase in the year ending March 2018 was 12%), however, it is too early to say whether this is the start of a more stable trend (Figure 5).

The increase in vehicle offences in the latest year is due largely to a 9% increase in the subcategory “theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle” (to 113,037 offences). Recent data from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) show an 11% rise in the number of motor insurance-settled claims relating to theft in the first nine months of 2018⁸. The subcategory “theft from a vehicle”, which accounts for more than half of vehicle offences, showed no change compared with the previous year, whereas “aggravated vehicle-taking” decreased by 7% after a continuous increasing trend since March 2015 (see [Appendix Table A4](#)).

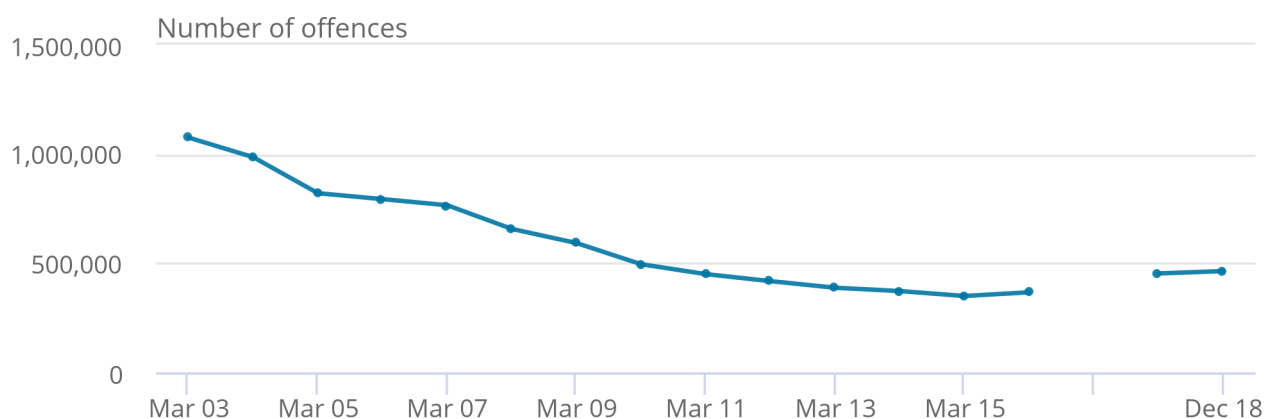
There was no change in vehicle-related theft offences estimated by the CSEW over the last year. However, we believe the recent increases in police recorded vehicle offences reflect genuine rises. These offences are thought to be generally well-reported by victims and well-recorded by the police. Therefore, the data can help identify short-term changes that would not be picked up by the CSEW.

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

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

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

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Lancashire Police Force were unable to provide police recorded crime for November and December 2018. Therefore, totals for year ending December 2018 were produced using an estimate for these months.

Robbery showing a genuine increase

The police also recorded an 11% rise in robbery (to 82,566 offences; Figure 6). The number of recorded robberies is disproportionately high in London, accounting for 40% of all recorded robberies. In comparison, London accounts for 16% of all recorded crimes in England and Wales⁹.

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

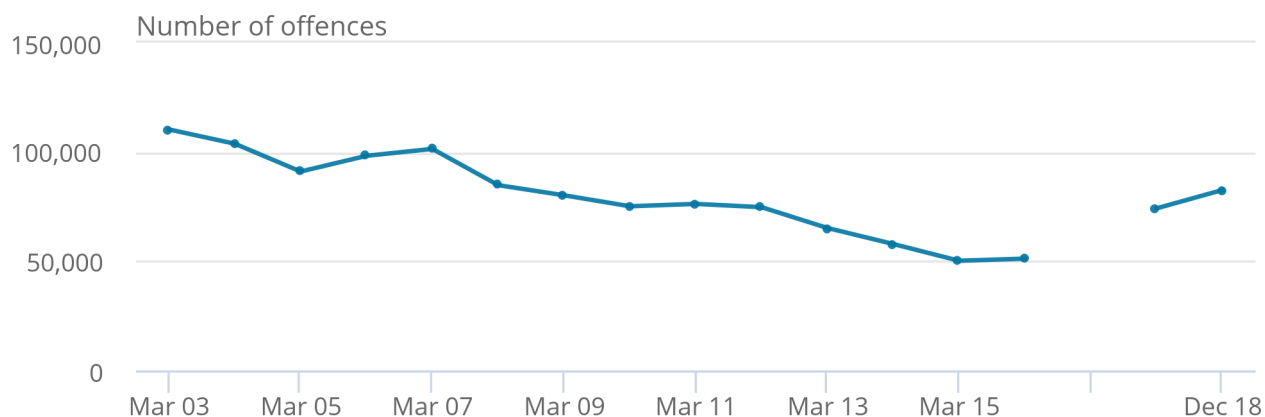
The CSEW shows no change in the volume of robbery offences over the last year. However, this is not surprising as the CSEW does not provide a robust measure of short-term trends in robbery due to it being a relatively low-volume crime.

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

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

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

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Lancashire Police Force were unable to provide police recorded crime for November and December 2018. Therefore, totals for year ending December 2018 were produced using an estimate for these months.

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

Table 2a: Crime Survey for England and Wales incidence rates and numbers of incidents for year ending December 2018 and percentage change^{1,2}

Offence group ³	Jan '18 to Dec '18		January 2018 to December 2018 compared with:		
			Jan '95 to Dec '95		Jan '17 to Dec '17
			Number of incidents - percentage change and significance ⁶		
	Rate per 1,000 population ⁴	Number of incidents (thousands) ⁵			
Violence	29	1,355	-70	*	-5
Robbery	4	175	-45	*	-0
Theft offences ⁷	:	3,751	-68	*	8 *
Theft from the person	10	467	-31	*	21
Other theft of personal property	15	716	-65	*	13
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,073	34,073			
Domestic burglary	27	669	-71	*	-2
Other household theft	27	662	-58	*	20 *
Unweighted base - number of households	34,006	34,006			
Vehicle-related theft	47	919	-79	*	-0
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	27,439	27,439			
Bicycle theft	26	317	-52	*	13
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	15,782	15,782			
Criminal damage	46	1,135	-66	*	1
Unweighted base - number of households	34,006	34,006			
All CSEW CRIME EXCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE ⁷	:	6,416	-68	*	4
Fraud and computer misuse ^{8,9}	99	4,625	..		0
Fraud	78	3,648	..		12 *
Computer misuse	21	976	..		-28 *
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,073	34,073			
All CSEW CRIME INCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE ^{7,9,10}	:	11,041	..		2

Source: office for National Statistics - Crime Survey for England and Wales

Notes:

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

2. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix tables A1 and A2.

3. Section 5 of the User Guide provides more information about the crime types included in this table.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

.. Denotes not available as data not collected.

Table 2b: Crime Survey for England and Wales prevalence rates and numbers of victims for year ending December 2018 and percentage change^{1,2}

			January 2018 to December 2018 compared with:		
Offence group ³	Jan '18 to Dec '18		Jan '95 to Dec '95		Jan '17 to Dec '17
	Percentage, victims once or more ⁴	Number of victims (thousands) ⁵	Numbers of victims - percentage change and significance ⁶		
Violence	1.7	817	-57	*	3
Robbery	0.3	151	-44	*	13
Theft offences ⁷	10.6	4,975	-61	*	8 *
Theft from the person	0.9	426	-35	*	19
Other theft of personal property	1.4	654	-61	*	15
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,073	34,073			
Domestic burglary	2.3	559	-68	*	-1
Other household theft	2.1	513	-52	*	13 *
Unweighted base - number of households	34,006	34,006			
Vehicle-related theft	4.0	781	-74	*	-0
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	27,439	27,439			
Bicycle theft	2.3	287	-49	*	10
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	15,782	15,782			
Criminal damage	3.4	837	-60	*	2
Unweighted base - number of households	34,006	34,006			
ALL CSEW CRIME EXCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE ⁸	15.0	7,009	-56	*	6 *
Fraud and computer misuse ^{9,10}	8.2	3,834	..		3
Fraud	6.6	3,078	..		12 *
Computer misuse	1.8	863	..		-22 *
Unweighted base - number of adults	34,073	34,073			
All CSEW CRIME INCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE ^{10,11}	21.1	9,882	..		6 *

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

Notes:

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

2. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix tables A3 and A8.

3. Section 5 of the User Guide provides more information about the crime types included in this table.

4. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person and other theft of personal property are quoted for adults; percentages for domestic burglary, other household theft, and criminal damage are quoted for households; percentages for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted for vehicle-owning and bicycle-owning households respectively.
 5. Where applicable, numbers in sub-categories will not sum to totals, because adults/households may have been a victim of more than one crime.
 6. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.
 7. This is the estimated percentage/number of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal theft crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household theft crime.
 8. This is the estimated percentage/number of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household crime.
 9. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. Up to the year ending September 2017 the questions were asked of half the survey sample. From October 2017 onwards the questions are being asked of a full survey sample.
 10. In March 2018 the new CSEW estimates on fraud and computer misuse were assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation against the Code of Practice for Statistics and were awarded National Statistics status.
 11. This combined estimate is not comparable with headline estimates from earlier years. For year-on-year comparisons and analysis of long-term trends it is necessary to exclude fraud and computer misuse offences, as data on these are only available for the latest year.
- .. Denotes not available.

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

For some crimes, an increase in the number of offences recorded by the police is unlikely to indicate a real rise in these types of crime. For the latest figures this relates to:

- violent crime, particularly violence without injury offences
- sexual offences
- stalking and harassment
- public order offences

It is thought that increases in these crime types largely reflect changes in reporting and recording practices. These are discussed in more detail in [What's happened to the volume of crime recorded by the police?](#)

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

Table 3: Police recorded crimes - rate, number and percentage change for year ending December 2018 ^{1,2,3}

Offence group	Jan '18 to Dec '18		January 2018 to December 2018 compared with:	
	Rate per 1,000 population	Number of offences	Apr '07 to Mar '08	Jan '17 to Dec '17
			Number of offences - percentage change	
Victim-based crime	75	4,424,831	2	6
Violence against the person offences	27	1,608,505	115	19
Homicide	0	732	-6	6
Death or injury - unlawful driving ⁴	0	770	75	5
Violence with injury ⁵	9	539,767	19	7
Violence without injury ⁶	11	658,714	173	17
Stalking and harrassment ⁷	7	408,522	649	46
Sexual offences	3	159,740	206	10
Rape	1	57,600	355	11
Other sexual offences	2	102,140	159	9
Robbery offences	1	82,566	-3	11
Theft offences	34	2,002,253	-17	-1
Burglary	7	424,846	-27	-3
Vehicle offences	8	463,497	-29	2
Theft from the person	2	99,418	-2	0
Bicycle theft	2	96,251	-7	-6
Shoplifting	6	374,895	29	-3
All other theft offences ⁸	9	543,346	-21	2
Criminal damage and arson	10	571,767	-44	-4
Other crimes against society	12	728,233	34	15
Drug offences	2	144,741	-37	7
Possession of weapons offences	1	44,294	19	21
Public order offences	7	438,286	101	19
Miscellaneous crimes against society	2	100,912	76	11
Total recorded crime - all offences excluding fraud and computer misuse	88	5,153,064	6	7
Total fraud and computer misuse offences ^{9,10,11}	12	675,952	..	6
Total recorded crime - all offences including fraud and computer misuse ⁹	99	5,829,016	..	7

Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

2. Police recorded crime statistics based on data from all 44 forces in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police). Lancashire Police Force were unable to provide police recorded crime for November and December 2018. Therefore, totals for year ending December 2018 were produced using an estimate for these months.

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Total fraud offences cover crimes recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau via Action Fraud, Cifas and Financial Fraud Action UK. Action Fraud have taken over the recording of fraud and computer misuse offences on behalf of individual police forces. Percentage changes compared with year ending March 2008 are not presented, as fraud figures covered only those crimes recorded by individual police forces. Given the addition of new data sources, it is not possible to make direct comparisons with years prior to year ending March 2012.

10. In October 2018, Action Fraud launched a new fraud and cyber-crime reporting service. The transition to the new system is not yet complete and there has been a pause in the data feed from Cifas to the NFIB. Although fraud continues to be recorded by Cifas, cases from October 2018 have not yet been 'referred' to the NFIB, therefore the Cifas figures and any NFIB totals presented in this bulletin and accompanying data tables are based on provisional data provided by Cifas. Once the issue has been resolved the NFIB will hold a full copy of the data, allowing Cifas figures to be treated as confirmed and recognised as 'referred' to the NFIB.

11. The latest increase in the number of fraud and computer misuse reports recorded by Action Fraud can in part be explained by a technical issue with their new fraud and cyber-crime reporting service introduced in October 2018, whereby during the coding of postcode information the system has been unable to allocate a force area to the fraud report. As a result some fraud and computer misuse offences with postcodes belonging to areas outside of England and Wales may have been included in the England and Wales figures. The figures will be revised in a future publication once the issue has been resolved.

Notes for: Overview of crime

1. "Other fraud" includes offences such as charity fraud, investment fraud or application fraud.
2. This figure excludes domestic abuse and sexual assault measured by the self-completion module of the survey. Any domestic violence reported in the face-to-face interview is included.
3. In this bulletin we discuss weapons offences as a whole, alongside violent offences. However, we note that sexual offences and robbery are defined as separate categories to that of violence.
4. Excludes Greater Manchester Police (GMP).
5. Excludes Greater Manchester Police (GMP).
6. These figures may differ from previously published data due to police recorded crime data being continually updated.
7. Excluding the London and Manchester terrorist attacks, the number of homicides increased by 12% (a volume rise of 77 homicides).
8. Based on [Driving on - motor insurers paying out a record amount to motorists](#).
9. Excluding fraud offences.

6 . No change in the most common types of violent crime, but an increase in homicides

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

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

Crimes involving weapons are discussed in [Offences involving knives or sharp instruments are still rising, while firearms offences decrease](#).

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

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

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

While the CSEW provides a good picture of the overall trend in violent crime, police recorded crime is a better measure of higher-harm but less common types of violence. As a victimisation survey, information on homicide² is not collected in the CSEW, so data from the police is the only available source for this crime type.

The police recorded 732 homicides in the year ending December 2018, a 6% rise compared with the previous year³ ([Table A4](#)). An upward trend in homicides seen over the last four years contrasts with the downward trend over the previous decade. Despite this, the rate of homicide in the population remains very low, at 12 homicides per 1 million people.

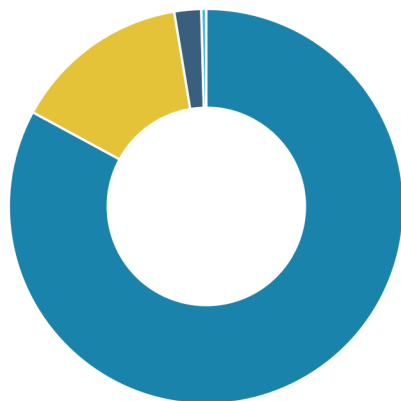
The latest increase in homicide is driven by a 5% increase in the number of murders (to 607) and a 2% increase in manslaughter (to 106). Murder represents more than 80% of the volume of homicides recorded by the police (Figure 7). This proportion has varied between 81%⁴ and 89% over the last decade. However, homicides initially classified as murders are susceptible to reclassification (as manslaughter, corporate manslaughter or infanticide) throughout the judicial process. As such, the breakdown of homicide offences initially recorded by the police is likely to differ from court outcomes data.

Figure 7: Most common type of homicide continues to be murder

England and Wales, year ending December 2018

Figure 7: Most common type of homicide continues to be murder

83% of homicide offences are murder offences
England and Wales, year ending December 2018



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data on homicide offences given in these police recorded crime data will differ from data from the Home Office Homicide Index, which are published annually by the ONS, last released as part of [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#). Police recorded crime data on homicide represent the recording decision of the police based on the available information at the time the offence comes to their attention. Homicide Index data take account of the charging decision and court outcome in cases that have gone to trial. It is not uncommon for offences initially recorded as murder by the police to be charged or convicted as manslaughter at court.
3. Some forces have revised their data and police recorded crime totals may not agree with those previously published.
4. Lancashire Police Force were unable to provide police recorded crime for November and December 2018. Therefore, totals for year ending December 2018 were produced using an estimate for these months.

The number of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument was involved decreased by 4% in the last year (to 261 offences^{5,6}). Of all recorded homicides in the latest data, around 4 in 10 involved a knife or sharp instrument (39%), which is the same proportion as last year ([Table P4](#)). For more information on selected violent and sexual crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument, see Table 4 in [Offences involving knives or sharp instruments are still rising, while firearms offences decrease](#).

Small increase in death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving in recent years

Offences recorded by the police related to death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving increased by 5% in the latest year ending December 2018 (to 770 offences). The number of these offences has fluctuated over the last few years.

The recent increase is driven by an 11% rise in “causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving” in the last year (to 606 offences). In contrast, there has been a 24% decrease in the subcategory “causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving” (to 109 offences). As with homicide offences, this category is thought to be well-recorded by the police.

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

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

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

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

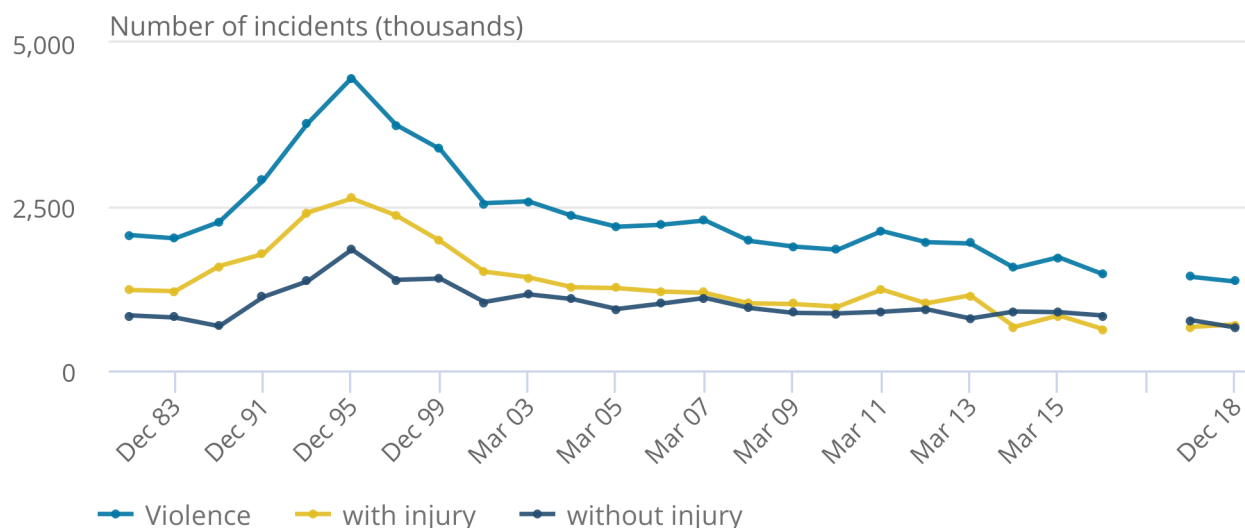
There were an estimated 1.4 million incidents of violence experienced by adults aged 16 years and over in the latest CSEW survey for the year ending December 2018. This figure has not changed significantly compared with last year. This continues a period of no change seen over the last four years, following long-term decreases since the peak in 1995 (Figure 8).

Figure 8: The Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in violent crime but little change in recent years

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

Figure 8: The Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in violent crime but little change in recent years. After a long term downward trend, in recent years there has been little change in the number of incidents of violent crime. Compared to the latest CSEW for violence, there is no significant change.

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



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year (January to December); and from year ending March 2002 onwards the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that financial year (April to March). The latest two years relate to interviews carried out between January and December.
3. Data relate to adults aged 16 years and over.

Long-term reductions in violent crime supported by other data

The longer-term reductions in violent crime, as shown by the CSEW, are reflected in research conducted by the [Violence Research Group at Cardiff University \(PDF 653KB\)](#)⁷. Their annual survey covers a sample of hospital emergency departments, minor injury units and walk-in centres in England and Wales. Results showed that the number of violence-related attendances in 2018 was 41% lower than in 2010.

In addition, findings from the most recent [admissions data for NHS hospitals](#) in England showed that assault admissions for the year ending March 2018 were 33% lower than the year ending March 2008 (42,181 admissions). This is despite a short-term increase of 7% in assault admissions for the year ending March 2018⁸ compared with the year ending March 2017 (a volume increase of 1,729 to 28,179 admissions). This increase was driven largely by admissions for assault by a sharp object. More information on this can be found in [Offences involving knives or sharp instruments are still rising, while firearms offences decrease](#).

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

There is more detailed information on long-term trends and the circumstances of violence in [The nature of violent crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) and [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#). Other publications that discuss violent crime can be found via our [main crime and justice page](#).

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

1. There are some closely-related offences in the police recorded crime series, such as public order offences, that have no identifiable victim and are contained within the “other crimes against society” category.
2. Homicide includes the offences of murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide.
3. Excluding the London and Manchester terrorist attacks, the number of homicides increased by 12% (a volume rise of 77 homicides).
4. This excludes the year ending March 2017, when murders accounted for 71% of all homicides, which is an unusually low proportion over the past decade. This is due to the recording of the 96 Hillsborough manslaughter offences in that year.
5. Includes Greater Manchester Police. The recording of homicides involving a knife or sharp instrument was unaffected by their recording review in December 2017.
6. Data for Sussex Police will be revised in a future publication due to a number of police recorded offences that involved a knife or sharp instrument not being identified as such. There is therefore currently an under-count of knife or sharp instrument offences for Sussex Police.
7. Violence in England and Wales in 2018: An Accident and Emergency Perspective was published by Vaseekaran Sivarajasingam, Nicholas Page, Giles Green, Simon Moore and Jonathan Shepherd in April 2019.
8. [Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2017-18](#), [Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2016-17](#) and [Hospital Episode Statistics, Admitted Patient Care - England, 2007-08](#) provided by NHS Digital. See the “External Causes” datasets. Assault admissions do not include sexual offences but include assault codes X85 to Y04 and Y08 and Y09 from the dataset. The latest data were published on 20 September 2018.

7 . Offences involving knives or sharp instruments are still rising, while firearms offences decrease

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

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

Over recent years, some police force areas have encountered issues when identifying offences involving knives and sharp instruments. This has resulted in some forces revising their data, which has affected the numbers reported. Any affected figures are noted throughout this section.

Highest number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments¹ since recording began²

Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via a special collection³. Figures presented in this section are calculated based on this special collection. An offence is recorded as an offence involving a knife or sharp instrument when the weapon is present during the offence or the threat is believed to be real. The weapon doesn't necessarily have to be used. Although not all types of offences are included in this data collection, those selected are thought to cover most offences involving a knife or sharp instrument.

The police recorded 44,443 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the year ending December 2018⁴. However, recent trends in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument have been affected by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) data. A review identified undercounting of crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument. This occurred due to a technical issue with the identification and extraction of all relevant records from their crime recording system. GMP have now changed their methodology and data from December 2017 onwards have been revised. Previous data have not been revised and are likely to exclude relevant crimes, therefore data including GMP are not comparable over time. Figures including and excluding GMP can be found in [Table F3](#).

Excluding GMP, there was a volume rise of 2,287 offences (a 6% rise) to 40,829 offences (Table 4). This is the highest number since the year ending March 2011, the earliest point for which comparable data are available⁵. The past four years have seen a rise in the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, following an initial downward trend ([Figure 3](#)). The volume of knife crime offences has increased by 33% since the year ending March 2011.

Table 4: Selected violent and sexual offences involving a knife or sharp instrument recorded by the police in England and Wales, for selected periods for the year ending March 2011 to year ending December 2018 with percentage change ^{1,2,3},,,,,

January 2018 to December 2018 compared with:					
	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Jan '17 to Dec '17	Jan '18 to Dec '18	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Jan '17 to Dec '17
Selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument	Number of offences			Percentage change	
Attempted murder	217	369	368	70	<0.1
Threats to kill	1,352	2,848	3,244	140	14
Assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm	13,129	18,749	18,950	44	1
Robbery	15,377	15,725	17,402	13	11
Rape	240	420	464	93	10
Sexual assault ⁹	85	173	149	75	-14
Total selected offences	30,400	38,284	40,577	33	6
Homicide ¹⁰	220	258	252	15	-2
Total selected offences including homicide	30,620	38,542	40,829	33	6
Total selected offences inc Greater Manchester Police ¹¹	32,669	40,026	44,443	N/A	N/A
Rate per million population - selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument					
Total selected offences including homicide	577	693	730		

Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded knife and sharp instrument offences data are submitted via an additional special collection. Proportions of offences involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument presented in this table are calculated based on figures submitted in this special collection. Other offences exist that are not shown in this table that may include the use of a knife or sharp instrument.
3. Police recorded crime statistics based on data from 43 police forces in England and Wales. Data from Greater Manchester Police are excluded. This force reviewed their recording of knife or sharp instrument offences in December 2017. This revealed that they were under-counting these offences. Following this review, there has been a sharp increase in the number of knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by GMP in January to December 2018 compared with previous quarters. Previous data have not been revised and the data are therefore not comparable. Due to this, data from GMP have been excluded from the table.
4. Data from Surrey Police include unbroken bottle and glass offences, which are outside the scope of this special collection; however, it is not thought that offences of this kind constitute a large enough number to impact on the national figure.
5. Numbers differ from those previously published due to Sussex Police revising their figures to exclude unbroken bottles. Data for Sussex Police will be revised again in a future publication due to a number of recorded offences that involved a knife or sharp instrument not being identified as such. There is therefore currently an undercount of knife or sharp instrument offences for Sussex Police.
6. Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Police forces implemented a new crime recording system in May 2018 which may have led to the under-recording of knife or sharp instrument offences. Data will be revised in future publications.

7. Data from Northumbria police have revised for the last two years (for year to December 2017 and year to December 2018). These revised data show an increase in the number of offences recorded. Data prior to this have not been revised.

8. Changes to offence codes in April 2012 mean the category of assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm is not directly comparable with previous years. Appendix table A4 contains more details.

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

10. Homicide offences are those currently recorded by the police as at 27 February 2019 and are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available. These figures are taken from the detailed record level Homicide Index (rather than the main police collection for which forces are only required to provide an overall count of homicides, used in Appendix table A4). There may therefore be differences in the total homicides figure used to calculate these proportions and the homicide figure presented in Appendix table A4.

11. Includes homicides.

Excluding GMP, in the latest year the offences “assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm” accounted for almost half of all offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (46% or 18,950 out of 40,829 offences). Robberies accounted for a further 43% (17,402 out of 40,829 offences). Rape, attempted murder, sexual assault and homicide accounted for a very small proportion of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (3%, or 1,233 out of 40,829 recorded offences, Figure 9).

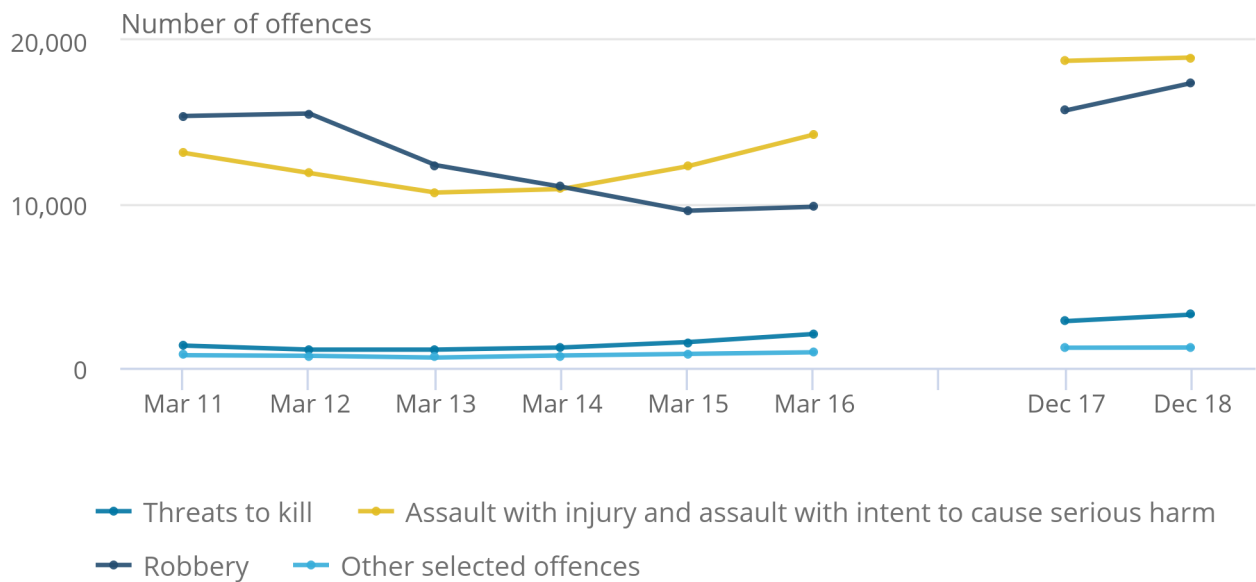
Excluding GMP, the volume of robberies involving a knife or sharp instrument has risen in recent years following a decreasing trend since 2011. An 11% increase in the year ending December 2018 is consistent with the overall increase in robbery during this period. The number of incidents of “assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm” involving knives increased by 1% over the last year, following larger increases seen since 2013 (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Crimes involving knives or sharp instruments are most often assaults with injury or assaults with intent to cause serious harm, and robberies

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

Figure 9: Crimes involving knives or sharp instruments are most often assaults with injury or assaults with intent to cause serious harm, and robberies

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences data are submitted via a special collection. This figure is based on this special collection. Other offences that are not shown in this chart may include the use of a knife or sharp instrument.
3. Police recorded crime statistics based on data from 43 police forces in England and Wales. Data from Greater Manchester Police are excluded. A review revealed that they were under-counting knife or sharp instrument offences. Following this review, there has been a sharp increase in the number of knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by GMP in January to December 2018 compared with previous quarters. Previous data have not been revised and the data are therefore not comparable.
4. Data from Surrey Police include unbroken bottle and glass offences, which are outside the scope of this special collection; however, it is not thought that offences of this kind constitute a large enough number to impact on the national figure.
5. An audit of Thames Valley Police into the recording of knife and sharp instrument offences since the introduction of their new recording system in April 2014 has revealed that they were previously under-counting these offences. Data for the year ending March 2016 have been revised, but data for the year ending March 2015 have not.
6. Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Police forces have implemented new crime recording systems, therefore, data for the latest year may be under-recorded. It is expected that this will be revised in future publications.
7. Data from Northumbria police have revised for the last two years (for year to December 2017 and year to December 2018). These revised data show an increase in the number of offences recorded. Data prior to this have not been revised.
8. Numbers differ from those previously published due to Sussex Police revising their figures to exclude unbroken bottles. Data for Sussex Police will be revised again in a future publication due to a number of recorded offences that involved a knife or sharp instrument not being identified as such. There is therefore currently an undercount of knife or sharp instrument offences for Sussex Police.
9. Other selected offences include rape, attempted murder, homicide and sexual assault.

Higher rates of knife crime seen in urban areas

Knife or sharp instrument offences tend to be concentrated in metropolitan areas. In the year ending December 2018, 33% of all crime involving a knife or sharp instrument happened in London (167 offences per 100,000 people). The highest rates after London were seen in Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and West Midlands (129, 118 and 111 offences per 100,000 population respectively). These areas saw higher rates than the England and Wales average of 76 offences per 100,000 population (Figure 10).

The majority of police forces (31 of the 43)⁶ recorded a rise in offences involving knives or sharp instruments in the year ending December 2018. The Metropolitan Police recorded a 1% increase in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments. This is smaller than the increases seen previously (22% in the year ending March 2018, 15% in the year ending June 2018 and 8% in the year ending September 2018). Over the last year, Merseyside had the largest rise in knife or sharp instrument offences⁷, with a 35% increase (to 1,231 offences). The largest decrease was in Essex, which had a 34% fall to 677 offences in the last year (Figure 10).

Although recent increases in recorded knife or sharp instrument offences reflect a real rise in the occurrence of these types of crime, improvements in recording practices are also a factor. Police forces that have revised their data following recording improvements have been noted throughout this section. It is possible that other recording improvements are also part of the increase.

Figure 10: Offence rates and changes in the volume of crimes involving knives or sharp instruments vary by Police Force Area

England and Wales, year ending December 2018

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. One police force (Surrey) include unbroken bottle and glass offences in their returns, which are outside the scope of this special collection. As such, data for these forces are not directly comparable with data for other forces.
3. Excludes Greater Manchester Police as their data for the year ending December 2018 are not comparable with previous data.
4. Data for Sussex Police will be revised in a future publication due to a number of recorded offences that involved a knife or sharp instrument not being identified as such. There is therefore currently an undercount of knife or sharp instrument offences for Sussex Police.
5. The changes presented are the percentage changes in the volume of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument over the last year.

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

[Download the data](#)

NHS data provide insight into offences involving knives or sharp instruments

[Admissions data for NHS hospitals](#) in England reported 4,986 admissions for assault by a sharp object between April 2017 and March 2018⁸, an increase of 15% compared with the year ending March 2017.

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

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

Possession of an article with a blade or point also rose

Police recorded “possession of an article with a blade or point” offences rose, by 20%, to 20,958 offences in the year ending December 2018. This rise is consistent with increases seen over the last five years and is the highest figure since the year ending March 2009, the earliest point for which comparable data are available⁹. This figure can often be influenced by increases in targeted police action in relation to knife crime, which is most likely to occur at times when rises in offences involving knives are seen.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) have published provisional 2018 figures on [knife and offensive weapon sentencing for England and Wales](#). These figures cover cautions and convictions for possession of a knife or offensive weapon. This includes offences involving threatening with one of these types of weapon. The MoJ figures show that the criminal justice system formally dealt with the highest number of knife and offensive weapon offences since 2009. While these figures are not directly comparable with those presented in this bulletin, they do reflect the increases seen in police figures.

Decrease in offences involving firearms following recent increases

Recorded offences involving firearms^{10,11}, decreased by 2% (to 6,525¹²) in the year ending December 2018 compared with the previous year (6,641 offences). The fall in offences is in contrast with recent years where there has been a rising trend.

This overall decrease was driven by a fall in the number of offences involving less harmful weapons such as imitation firearms¹³ (down 20% to 1,296). However, there have also been small falls in more harmful weapon categories such as shotguns (down 2% to 651).

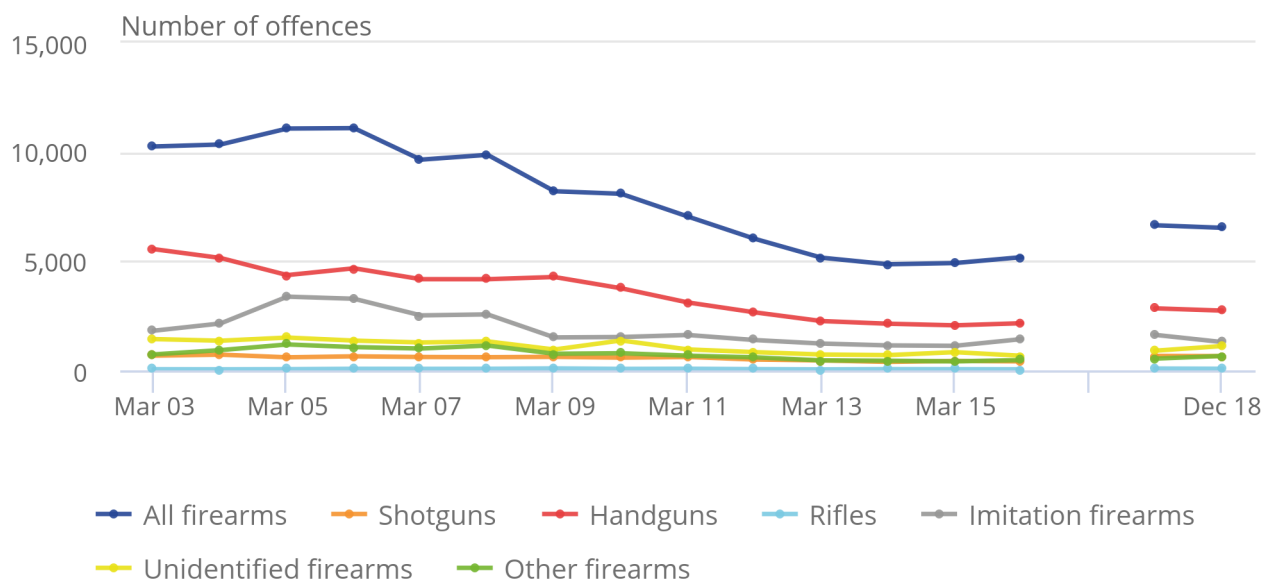
There were large increases in unidentified and “other” firearms (24% and 23% respectively) but these were balanced by the larger volume decreases seen in offences involving imitation firearms and handguns ([Table F2](#), Figure 11).

Figure 11: The recent fall in crimes involving firearms is driven by a decrease in imitation firearm offences

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

Figure 11: The recent fall in crimes involving firearms is driven by a decrease in imitation firearm offences

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. More explicit guidelines for the classification of weapons introduced on 1 April 2004 may have increased the recording of firearm offences, particularly those committed by imitation weapons.
3. Data are provisional and have not been reconciled with police forces.
4. South Wales Police have not supplied firearms data for April to December 2018. Although the number of these offences in this force is relatively low, this will have a small impact on the overall picture of offences involving firearms.
5. Imitation firearms include replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons which fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons.
6. Other firearms include CS gas / pepper spray, stun guns and other weapons.
7. Figures exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.

Further analysis on offences involving knives or sharp instruments and offences involving firearms, including figures based on a broader definition of the types of firearm involved¹⁴, can be found in [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#). However, this refers to the year ending March 2018. These data show that “violence against the person”, which includes homicides and attempted murder, accounted for almost a third (27%) of total offences involving a firearm in the year ending March 2018. Criminal damage and arson, and robberies accounted for a further 26% and 18% respectively.

Notes for: Offences involving knives or sharp instruments are still rising, while firearms offences decrease

1. A sharp instrument is any object that pierces the skin (or in the case of a threat, is capable of piercing the skin), for example, a broken bottle.
2. Excluding Greater Manchester Police.
3. This special collection includes the offences: homicide; attempted murder; threats to kill; assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm; robbery; rape; and sexual assault.
4. A number of offences recorded by Sussex Police that involved a knife or sharp instrument were not identified as such. There is therefore currently an undercount of these offences for Sussex Police. The figures will be revised in a future publication when the data are available.
5. Data on offences involving a knife or sharp instrument began to be collected in April 2009; however, comparable data are only available from the year ending March 2011. The [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#) include data on offences involving a knife or sharp instrument going back to the year ending March 2009.
6. Excludes Greater Manchester Police due to a technical issue that resulted in undercounting of crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument. GMP have now changed their methodology and data from December 2017 onwards have been revised. However, data for earlier periods have not been revised and are likely to exclude relevant crimes that were recorded in GMP. Due to these changes, data for GMP are not comparable over this time period.
7. Excluding Greater Manchester Police.
8. [Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2017 to 2018](#) and [Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2016 to 2017](#) provided by NHS Digital. See the “External Causes” datasets. ‘Assault by a sharp object’ is code X99. The latest data were published on 20 September 2018.
9. The offences “Possession of firearms with intent”, “Possession of other weapons” and “Possession of article with blade or point” were introduced from 1 April 2008 and had previously been recorded as classification “Possession of weapons”.
10. Firearms include: shotguns; handguns; rifles; imitation weapons such as BB guns or soft air weapons; other weapons such as CS gas or pepper spray and stun guns; and unidentified weapons. These figures exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.
11. Offences involving a firearm include: if a firearm is fired, used as a blunt instrument, or used as a threat.
12. South Wales Police have not supplied firearms data for April to December 2018. Although the number of these offences in this force is relatively low, this will have a small impact on the overall picture of offences involving firearms.
13. Imitation firearms include 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.
14. The broader definition of firearms includes conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.

8 . A mixed picture for property crimes

In this section we look into both the long-term and short-term trends in theft, robbery ¹, burglary, and criminal damage and arson.

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

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

However, in the latest year, the CSEW showed an 8% increase in the overall number of theft offences compared with the previous year (to 3,751,000 offences; Figure 12, [Table A1](#)). This follows a decreasing trend since the year ending March 2012.

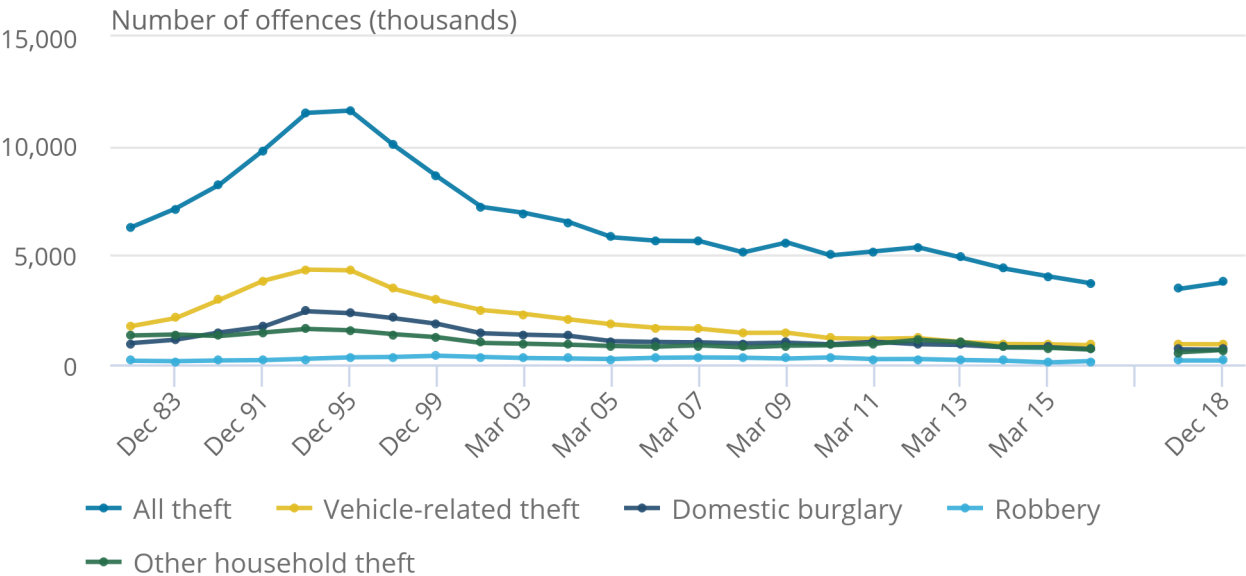
The increase is driven largely by a 20% increase in the volume of “other household theft” (to 662,000 offences). This category includes theft from a dwelling, which has seen no change, and theft from outside a dwelling, which has increased by 23%² (an additional 112,000 offences since the year ending December 2017). Theft from outside a dwelling include thefts of items such as wheelie bins, “For Sale” signs, and caravans or parts of a caravan parked outside a dwelling.

Figure 12: Increase in overall theft offences measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales driven by increase in other household theft

Year ending December 1981 to year ending December 2018

Figure 12: Increase in overall theft offences measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales driven by increase in other household theft

Year ending December 1981 to year ending December 2018



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published before January 2019. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year (January to December); and from year ending March 2002 onwards the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that financial year (April to March). The last two data points refer to the 12 months interview period between January and December.
3. As robbery is not a type of theft, it does not contribute to the measure of all theft.

A more mixed picture for theft offences recorded by the police

Theft is thought to be relatively well-reported to the police as victims often require a crime reference number to be issued by the police, to support an insurance claim. However, more minor thefts such as thefts from outside a dwelling are less likely to be reported to the police given the low value of the items stolen. This helps explain why police recorded theft decreased by 1% in the latest year, in contrast to the increase seen in the CSEW. This overall decrease hides some variation across the different types of theft.

Smaller increase in vehicle offences

Police recorded vehicle offences increased by 2% (to 463,497) in the year ending December 2018, continuing the rising trend seen over the last three years. However, the increase has reduced each quarter over the last year (12% in the year ending March 2018, 7% in the year ending June 2018 and 3% in the year ending September 2018). This is due mainly to a gradual decrease in “aggravated vehicle taking”, which has fallen by 7% (to 5,443 recorded offences) in the last year.

In contrast to the decrease in aggravated vehicle taking, there was a 9% increase seen in “theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle” (to 113,037 recorded offences). Recent rises are also evident in the number of motor insurance claims relating to theft³.

The CSEW has shown a continuous decreasing trend in vehicle-related theft offences over the past decade. However, in the last year, there was no change in the volume of these offences. Despite the short-term rise in vehicle-related thefts recorded by the police not being reflected in the CSEW, we believe that the recent rises recorded by the police reflect a genuine increase. Vehicle offences tend to be relatively well-reported by the public and recorded by the police, and as such police recorded data can help identify short-term changes.

Genuine increase in robbery

Rises in police recorded robbery offences were evident in the latest year (up 11% to 82,566 offences; Figure 13). This increase is likely to reflect a real change in these crimes because they tend to be relatively well-reported by the public. Recording improvements are also likely to have contributed to this rise, but the impact is thought to be less pronounced than for some other crime types. The CSEW does not provide a good measure of robbery. As such, this police recorded rise is not reflected in the survey, which shows no change in the volume of robberies in the last year.

Fall in burglary recorded by the police

Recent rises in police recorded burglary offences (6% in the year ending March 2018 and 3% in the year ending March 2017) have not continued in the latest year. Figures for the year ending December 2018 show that the number of burglary offences recorded by the police decreased by 3% (to 424,846 offences; Figure 13). In the year ending September 2018, burglary offences decreased by 1%. However, it is too early to say whether this recent fall is evidence of a change to the longer-term pattern.

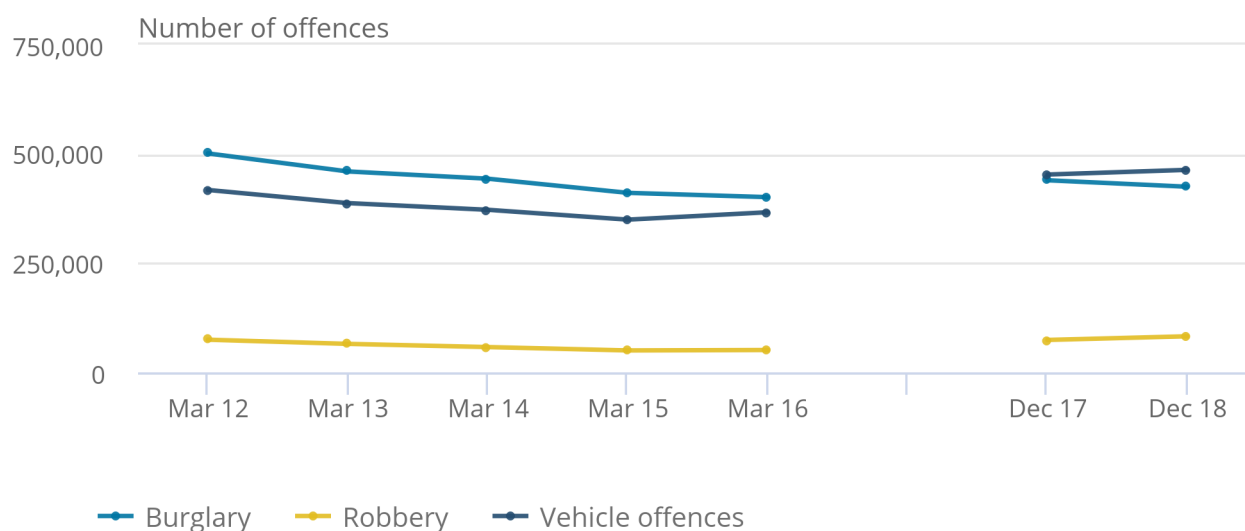
We believe this crime type is less affected by the impact of recording improvements than other types of crime, as it is generally well-reported by victims and well-recorded by the police. CSEW domestic burglary has remained stable since the year ending March 2017 and showed no change in the latest year.

Figure 13: Fall in police recorded burglary but rises in police recorded robbery and vehicle offences

England and Wales, year ending March 2012 to year ending December 2018

Figure 13: Fall in police recorded burglary but rises in police recorded robbery and vehicle offences

England and Wales, year ending March 2012 to year ending December 2018



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Lancashire Police Force were unable to provide police recorded crime for November and December 2018. Therefore, totals for year ending December 2018 were produced using an estimate for these months.

An increase in metal theft offences

The latest police recorded data available on metal theft show that there was a 25% increase in metal theft offences in the year ending March 2018 (to 16,552 offences). This follows a decreasing trend since the year ending March 2013. Nearly half of these metal theft offences (46%⁴) were infrastructure related⁵. Infrastructures that are particularly vulnerable to metal theft are railway networks, construction sites, abandoned houses and graveyards. A third of all metal theft offences (29%) have been recorded in Cleveland, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, West Midlands and Thames Valley police force areas.

This large increase in metal theft is likely to be due to growing demands and rising prices of metal.

Further analysis on metal theft can be found in [Nature of crime: Property crime tables \(Table 17\)](#).

A mixed picture for criminal damage

The overall volume of criminal damage in the CSEW has not changed over the last year (1.1 million offences), due to some conflicting changes in the sub-categories of this type of crime. This includes a 14% increase in “criminal damage to a vehicle” in the year ending December 2018 compared with the previous year (to 811,000 offences from 711,000 offences).

This follows a sustained period of decrease over the last 20 years. However, it is too early to say whether this recent rise is evidence of a change to the longer-term pattern. The latest figure is similar to the level seen in the year ending March 2016 and is less than half the volume it was in the year ending December 1995 (1.8 million offences).

In contrast to the increase in criminal damage to a vehicle, the sub-category “arson and other criminal damage” decreased by 21% (to 324,000 offences) in the last year. This continues the decreasing trend seen since 1995 and is the lowest number of offences estimated by the CSEW since 1981.

In comparison with the findings from the CSEW, police recorded crime data show a 4% decrease in criminal damage and arson (to 571,767 offences). This was driven by an 8% decrease in criminal damage to a vehicle (to 218,515 offences) and a 10% decrease in criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling (to 49,353 offences).

The differences in criminal damage to a vehicle between the CSEW and police recorded crime could be partly explained by a relatively low reporting rate for this type of offence. According to figures from the CSEW for the year ending March 2018, less than one-third of incidents of criminal damage to a vehicle reported the offence to the police (27%). This proportion is lower than the average reporting rate for all CSEW crime (38%, [Crime in England and Wales: Annual Trend and Demographic Tables, Table D8](#)).

Notes for: A mixed picture for police recorded property crimes

1. Robbery, which is theft (or attempted theft) involving the use or threat of force, is included in this section as it is a property crime, but it is not included in the “all theft” category.
2. Excludes theft of bicycles or milk bottles.
3. Based on [Driving on - motor insurers paying out a record amount to motorists](#).
4. Some police forces did not record infrastructure-related offences and non-infrastructure-related offences separately, resulting in this proportion (46%) being based on a smaller base (16,291 metal theft offences).
5. Infrastructure-related metal theft includes the removal of metal that has a direct impact on the functioning of an infrastructure, building or machinery, for example, railway cabling.

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

This section focuses on our most recent findings about fraud. These cover a range of fraudulent activities including bank and credit account fraud, consumer and retail fraud, and advance fee fraud ¹.

The recorded crime series incorporates fraud offences collated by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from three reporting bodies: Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) and two industry bodies, Cifas and UK Finance² (who report instances of fraud where their member organisations have been a victim³).

In addition, new questions on fraud were introduced into the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from October 2015. However, when we changed our methodology in January 2019 (see [Things you need to know about this release](#) for more information), only the data for the years ending March 2017 and March 2018 were revised. Therefore, we are unable to provide the full three-year time series for fraud and can only make comparisons based on the latest two years. As this comparison is based on two data points only, caution must be taken in drawing conclusions about trends at this early stage.

CSEW provides the best indication of the volume of fraud offences

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

Contrasts in findings between the CSEW and the data collated by the NFIB may be explained, in part, by differences in the coverage of the two sources. The number of incidents estimated by the CSEW is substantially higher than the number of incidents referred to the NFIB. This is because the survey captures a large volume of lower-harm cases that are less likely to have been reported to the authorities. The CSEW estimated 3.6 million incidents of fraud for the year ending December 2018 compared with 0.7 million incidents referred to the NFIB ^{4,5} (see [Appendix Tables A1 and A5](#)).

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

As a result, fraud offences referred to the authorities make up a relatively small proportion of the overall volume of fraud. This is supported by findings from the CSEW, which suggests that less than one in five incidents of fraud (19%) are reported by the victim to either the police or to Action Fraud ([Table E5. year ending March 2018](#)).

Increase in fraud measured by CSEW

Findings for the year ending December 2018 CSEW estimated that the number of fraud incidents (3.6 million) increased by 12% from the previous survey year.

The increase was driven by a 27% rise in “consumer and retail fraud” (to 1 million offences) and a 118% increase in “other fraud”⁶ (to 135,000 offences). The increase in “other fraud” is partly driven by a change to the coding of this category⁷. This change, however, does not account for any of the increase in overall fraud, as it only affects the classification of offences within the fraud category rather than the volume of fraud offences. There was no significant change in “bank and credit account fraud” and “advance fee fraud” (Table 5).

Table 5: Crime Survey for England and Wales fraud – number of incidents for year ending December 2017 and year ending December 2018 with percentage change^{1,2,3}

England and Wales		Adults aged 16 and over	
Offence group	Jan '17 to Dec '17	Jan '18 to Dec '18	Percentage change and significance ⁴
	Number of incidents (thousands)		
Fraud	3,263	3,648	12 *
Bank and credit account fraud	2,327	2,433	5
Consumer and retail fraud ⁵	813	1,031	27 *
Advance fee fraud	61	50	-19
Other fraud	62	135	118 *
Unweighted base - number of adults	20,974	34,073	

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

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

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

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

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

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

Over half of fraud incidents for the latest survey year were thought to be cyber-related⁸ (54% or 2 million incidents; [Table E2](#)). This is a similar proportion to previous years.

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

Recorded crime also shows an increase in fraud offences

The recorded crime series showed a 6% increase in the total number of fraud offences referred to the NFIB⁹ in the year ending December 2018 (675,952 offences) compared with the previous year (638,619 offences).

Some differences were apparent when looking at the separate reporting bodies – Action Fraud reported a 12% rise¹⁰ (to 306,126), Cifas reported a 5% rise (to 296,896 offences) and UK Finance reported a 12% fall (to 72,930 offences). However, these need to be interpreted in terms of differences around coverage and the main types of fraud captured by each reporting body ([see Appendix Table A5](#))¹¹.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published [Fraud: Time to choose \(PDF, 1.13MB\)](#) in April 2019, a report on their inspection of the police response to fraud. The inspection found variation across forces in their handling and investigation of fraud cases allocated to them by NFIB.

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

The latest number of fraud offences referred to the NFIB by UK Finance showed a fall from the previous year. However, additional data collected by UK Finance via their CAMIS system ¹² provide a broader range of bank account and plastic card frauds than those referred for police investigation to the NFIB.

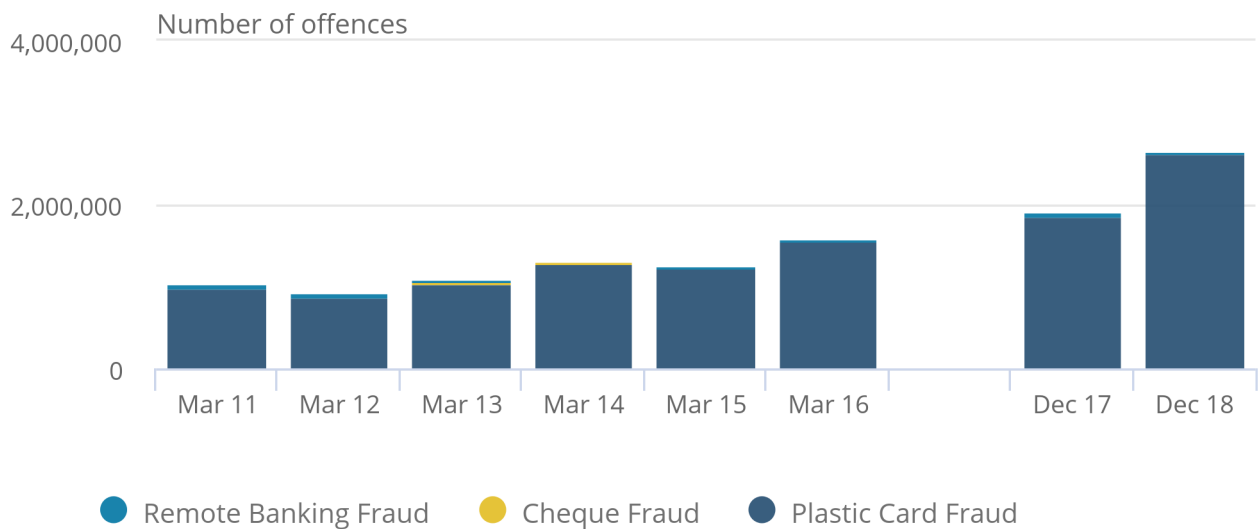
In the latest year, UK Finance reported 2.7 million cases of frauds (excluding authorised push payments) involving UK-issued payment cards, remote banking and cheques via CAMIS. This is an increase of 39% from the previous year ([Table F4](#)), driven largely by a 40% rise in plastic card fraud. This is a much larger increase than that seen in the year ending December 2017 (3% increase, Figure 14).

Figure 14: CAMIS data show an increase in plastic card fraud reported to UK Finance over recent years

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

Figure 14: CAMIS data show an increase in plastic card fraud reported to UK Finance over recent years

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



Source: UK Finance

Notes:

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

These data are able to capture card fraud not reported to the police for investigation¹³. They therefore provide a better picture of the scale of bank account and plastic card fraud identified by financial institutions in the UK. The data also help to supplement the CSEW, possibly giving a better indication of short-term trends and helping to bridge the gap between the broad coverage provided by the survey and the narrower focus of offences referred to the NFIB.

Most of the additional offences covered in the CAMIS data fall into the category of "remote purchase fraud"¹⁴ and fraudulent incidents involving lost or stolen cards. These account for a high proportion of plastic card fraud that is not included in the NFIB figures.

Most of the latest increase in plastic card fraud reported via CAMIS was due to “remote purchase fraud”, which rose by 47% (a volume increase of 651,244 offences) from the previous year (to 2,050,275 offences). CAMIS figures indicate that remote purchase fraud has consistently accounted for around three-quarters of all plastic card fraud reported to UK Finance. The increase in remote purchase fraud is thought to be due to a number of high-profile data breaches affecting UK cardholders in 2018, and lower-profile attacks, with criminals using the stolen data to make unauthorised purchases online.

The increase in plastic card fraud is also driven by “Card ID theft” offences¹⁵, which have more than doubled (from 29,139 to 63,791 offences) since December 2017. The main component of “Card ID theft” is data obtained by fraudsters through methods including phishing emails, scam texts and the theft of mail from external mail boxes and multi-occupancy buildings.

The number of “lost or stolen cards” also increased by 24% compared with the previous year (a volume increase of 84,925 offences). This increase is thought to be related to a rise in distraction thefts and courier scams¹⁶. Distraction thefts are where fraudsters steal cards in shops and at cash machines, and courier scams are where victims are tricked into handing over their cards on the doorstep.

Authorised push payment fraud offences nearly doubled over the last year

Authorised push payment (APP) fraud refers to cases where victims are tricked into sending money directly from their account to an account that the fraudster controls. APP was included for the first time in the CAMIS data for the year ending December 2017. These new data were produced in response to investigations by the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) into a [super-complaint](#) received from the consumer group Which? in 2016¹⁷.

In the year ending December 2018, there were 84,624 cases of APP fraud reported to UK Finance, a 93% increase since December 2017. This large increase is due mainly to improved identification and reporting processes following new Best Practice Standards for banks and building societies introduced by UK Finance in January 2018.

APP fraud can often involve significant sums of money and have adverse financial and emotional consequences for the victim. Unlike most other frauds, victims of APP fraud authorise the payment themselves and this means that they have no legal protection to cover them for losses. UK Finance reported that £354.3 million was lost in total through such scams in 2018¹⁸. In the majority of cases (92%), victims lost savings on personal accounts, losing an average of approximately £2,920 and the remainder were businesses, who lost on average approximately £19,660 per case.

Notes for: Increase in the volume of fraud offences in the last year

1. A full definition of terms is provided in the [User guide](#).
2. For further information on these sources and their strengths and weaknesses, please see Section 5.4 of the [User guide](#) and also the [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics](#) article.
3. A full breakdown of the types of fraud offences referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud, Cifas and UK Finance in the latest year is presented in [Table A5](#) and a definition of terms is provided in the [User guide](#).
4. This figure excludes computer misuse offences.
5. In October 2018, Action Fraud launched a new fraud and cyber-crime reporting service. The transition to the new system is not yet complete and there has been a pause in the data feed from Cifas to the NFIB. Although fraud continues to be recorded by Cifas, cases from October 2018 have not yet been “referred” to the NFIB, therefore the Cifas figures and any NFIB totals presented in this bulletin and accompanying datasets are based on provisional data provided by Cifas. Once the issue has been resolved the NFIB will hold a full copy of the data, allowing Cifas figures to be treated as confirmed and recognised as “referred” to the NFIB.

6. "Other fraud" includes offences such as charity fraud, investment fraud or application fraud.
7. A small change has been implemented to the coding of sub-categories of "Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)" and "Other fraud". As a result, these latest estimates will show small differences compared with previous publications. Within the coding of offences relating to "Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)" there were found to be a small number of cases with no evidence that a victim's personal information had been stolen online. Looking in more detail at these, in some cases respondents report receiving new bank cards that they hadn't ordered, or new accounts in their name that they hadn't set up. Such cases are now coded as "application frauds" within the "other fraud" category.
8. Based on whether the internet or any type of online activity was related to any aspect of the offence.
9. In October 2018, Action Fraud launched a new fraud and cyber-crime reporting service. The transition to the new system is not yet complete and there has been a pause in the data feed from Cifas to the NFIB. Although fraud continues to be recorded by Cifas, cases from October 2018 have not yet been "referred" to the NFIB, therefore the Cifas figures and any NFIB totals presented in this bulletin and accompanying datasets are based on provisional data provided by Cifas. Once the issue has been resolved the NFIB will hold a full copy of the data, allowing Cifas figures to be treated as confirmed and recognised as "referred" to the NFIB.
10. The latest increase in the number of fraud reports recorded by Action Fraud can in part be explained by a technical issue with their new fraud and cyber-crime reporting service introduced in October 2018, whereby during the coding of postcode information the system has been unable to allocate a force area to the fraud report. As a result some frauds with postcodes belonging to areas outside of England and Wales may have been included in the England and Wales figures. The figures will be revised in a future publication once the issue has been resolved.
11. For further information on these sources and their strengths and weaknesses, please see Section 5.4 of the [User guide](#) and also the [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics](#) article.
12. For more information on UK Finance and CAMIS, please see Section 5.4 of the [User guide](#) and also the [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics](#) article.
13. The CAMIS system contains cases where it has been judged that there is no evidential value and no hope of identifying the offender. CAMIS data include those cases referred by UK Finance to the NFIB.
14. Remote purchase fraud refers to frauds where, in the vast majority of cases, card details have been fraudulently obtained through unsolicited emails or telephone calls or digital attacks, such as malware and data hacks, and then used to undertake fraudulent purchases over the internet, phone or by mail order.
15. "Account takeover" has been renamed to "Card ID theft" to more accurately reflect the data captured in this category, which includes third party application fraud and account takeover. Figures continue to be comparable with previously published figures.
16. Further information on trends in payment industry fraud based on industry data collated by UK Finance is available in [Fraud the Facts 2019](#).
17. Following the super-complaint, the PSR, the [Financial Conduct Authority \(FCA\)](#) and the [payments industry](#) (represented by UK Finance) have developed an ongoing programme of work to reduce the harm to consumers from APP scams. For more information see the [report and consultation](#) published on 7 November 2017, explaining the work the PSR, the FCA and the payments industry have undertaken in the preceding year.
18. Data reported by UK Finance article [Fraud the Facts 2019](#).

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

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

Data on computer misuse crime are available from two sources:

- new questions introduced into the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) in October 2015
- offences referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre)²

From the new CSEW questions, we have estimates for the last three years. However, when we changed our methodology in January 2019 (see [Things you need to know about this release](#) for more information), only the data for the years ending March 2017 and March 2018 were revised. Therefore, we are unable to provide the full three-year time series for computer misuse and can only make comparisons based on the latest two years. As this comparison is based on two data points only, caution must be taken in drawing conclusions about trends at this early stage.

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

Action Fraud data on computer misuse represent only a small fraction of all computer misuse crime, as many incidents are not reported. The CSEW is able to capture some of these unreported offences. This can be seen by the large difference in volume of computer misuse offences between the two sources – 976,000 offences estimated by the CSEW compared with 23,683 offences referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud.

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

Fall in computer viruses drives decrease in CSEW computer misuse

In the year ending December 2018, the CSEW estimated that computer misuse offences decreased by 28% from the previous year (down to 976,000 offences; Table 6). This decrease was largely owing to a fall in “computer viruses” (down 44% to 471,000 offences).

Incidents involving “unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)” did not change from the previous year (506,000 offences).

Table 6: Crime Survey for England and Wales computer misuse – numbers of incidents for year ending December 2017 and year ending December 2018 with percentage change^{1,2,3}

England and Wales			Adults aged 16 and over
Offence group	Jan '17 to Dec '17	Jan '18 to Dec '18	Percentage change and significance ⁴
Number of incidents (thousands)			
Computer misuse	1,351	976	-28 *
Computer virus	843	471	-44 *
Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)	508	506	-0
Unweighted base - number of adults	20,974	34,073	

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

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

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

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

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

Increase in incidents of computer misuse reported to Action Fraud

All “computer misuse crime”³ referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud increased by 9% in the latest year⁴ ending December 2018 (up to 23,683 offences). This rise was less pronounced than that seen in the year ending December 2017 (36%), due in part to a notable decrease of 33% over the latest year in computer viruses (down to 5,303 offences).

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

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

- “hacking – extortion”, up 277% to 3,793 offences
- “hacking – social media and email”, up 18% to 9,033 offences
- “hacking – personal”, up 13% to 3,996 offences over the last year

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

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

1. A full definition of terms is provided in the [User guide](#).
2. For further information on these sources and their strengths and weaknesses, please see Section 5.4 of the [User guide](#) and also the [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics](#) article.
3. Computer misuse crime covers any unauthorised access to computer material, as set out in the Computer Misuse Act 1990.
4. The latest increase in the number of fraud reports recorded by Action Fraud can in part be explained by a technical issue with their new fraud and cyber-crime reporting service introduced in October 2018, whereby during the coding of postcode information the system has been unable to allocate a force area to the fraud report. As a result some frauds with postcodes belonging to areas outside of England and Wales may have been included in the England and Wales figures. The figures will be revised in a future publication once the issue has been resolved.

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

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

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

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

The number of offences recorded by the police has shown a mixed picture over time

The volume of crimes recorded by the police increased between the 1980s and the early 1990s, with changes to recording rules and processes resulting in additional rises between 1998 and 2004. This was followed by a decline in the number of crimes recorded by the police during the 2000s and early 2010s. Since 2014, the total number of crimes recorded by the police have increased. While year-on-year increases have grown in recent years, the latest increase (7%; Figure 15) is smaller than the previous year (13%).

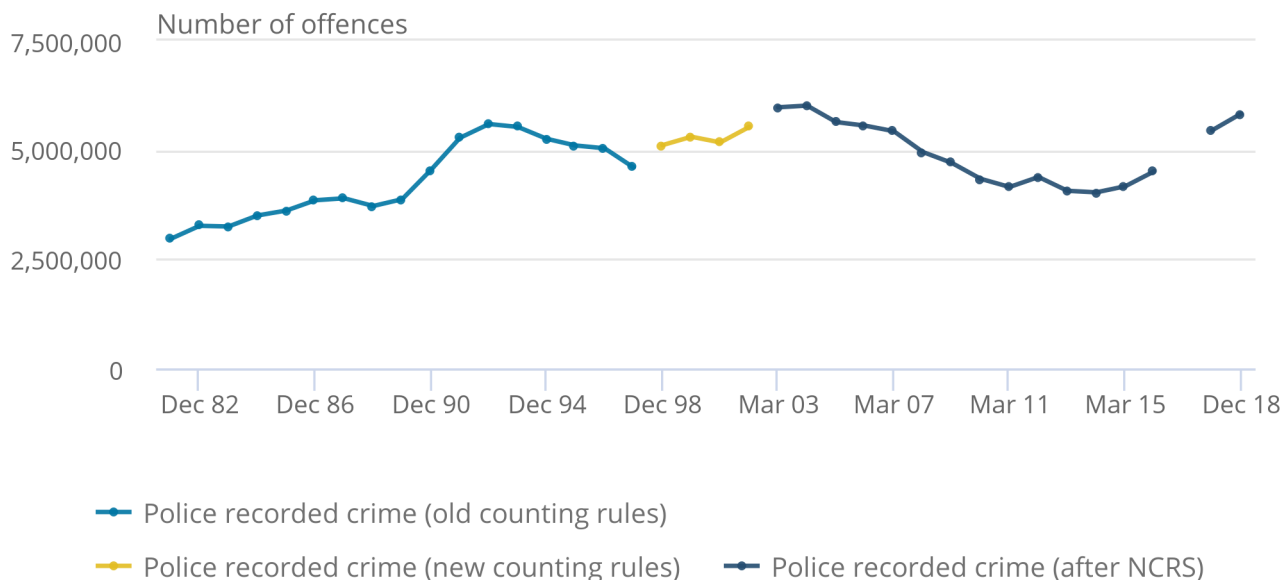
Figure 15: The volume of police recorded crime has increased over recent years

England and Wales, December 1981 to year ending December 2018

Figure 15: The volume of police recorded crime has increased over recent years

England and Wales, December 1981 to year ending December 2018

2002: Introduction of National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS).
2012: Introduction of independent crime designations HMRC and HMRC.



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. From the year ending March 2012 onwards, police recorded crime data have included offences from additional sources of fraud data.
3. Some forces have revised their data and police recorded crime totals may not agree with those previously published.
4. Lancashire Police Force were unable to provide police recorded crime for November and December 2018. Therefore, totals for year ending December 2018 were produced using an estimate for these months.

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

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

It is not possible to estimate how much each factor accounts for, but the first two factors are believed to have the largest impact on violent and sexual offences. [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#), published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in November 2014, showed that violence against the person and sexual offences had the highest under-recording rates nationally (33% and 26%, respectively).

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

Recording improvements have had a big impact on police recorded violence

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

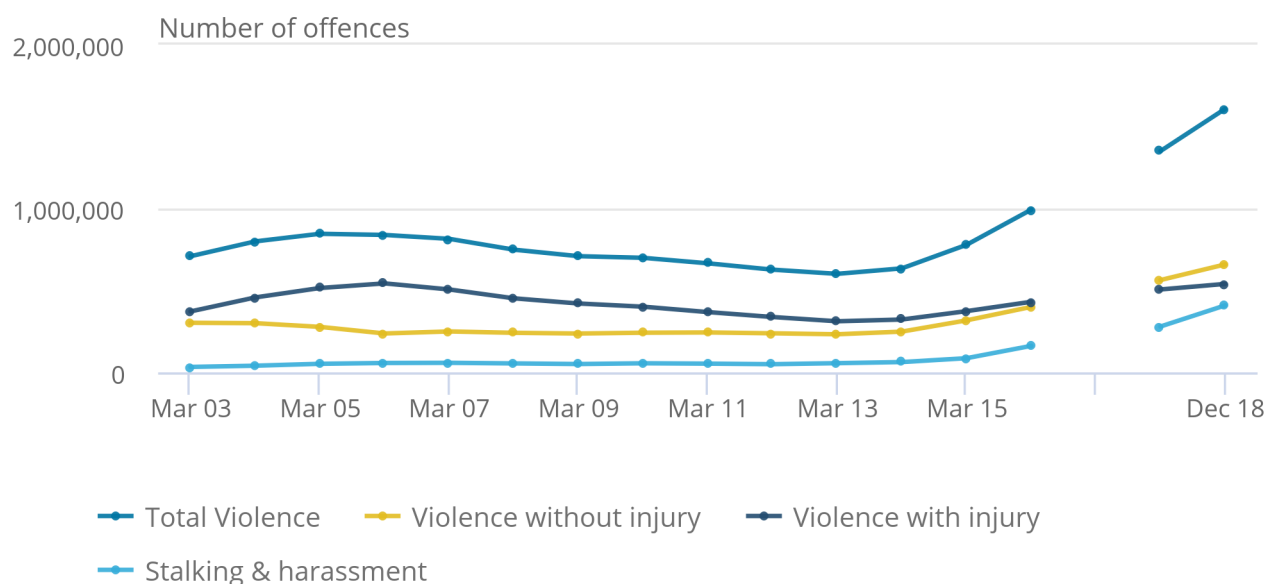
In 2014, HMICFRS found that violent offences were more prone than other offences to subjective judgement about whether to record a crime. Since then, these offences have been one of the three main categories of crime focused on in the subsequent rolling programme of HMICFRS inspections.

Figure 16: The volume of violent crime being recorded by the police has increased over the last few years

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

Figure 16: The volume of violent crime being recorded by the police has increased over the last few years

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data on homicide and death or serious injury - unlawful driving data are not included in this figure due to the relatively low number of offences.
3. Lancashire Police Force were unable to provide police recorded crime for November and December 2018. Therefore, totals for year ending December 2018 were produced using an estimate for these months.

Evidence of improvements in recording since 2014 can be found in the more recent [Crime Data Integrity \(CDI\) inspections](#) carried out by HMICFRS¹ in the last two years. Findings from the 32 inspections suggest that crime recording practices by police forces in England and Wales are, in general, improving. Five of the forces who received a rating of “inadequate” at initial assessment have since been re-inspected and their ratings improved (two forces to “outstanding”, two forces to “good” and one force to “requires improvement”). However, the level and speed of improvement varies across the country and some forces have further work to do to ensure reports of crime, in particular violent crime, are recorded correctly. In March 2019, eight forces were rated as “inadequate”, two of which stayed “inadequate” after re-inspection.

It is therefore likely that the increases in police recorded violence as a result of improved recording could continue for some time. It is also possible that there have been some genuine increases in crime among the less serious categories at the same time as ongoing improvements to recording. Further CDI inspection reports will be published periodically as the programme continues.

In June 2018, HMICFRS published their annual report, [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2017](#). This summarises the progress of police forces to improve their recording practices, based on the ongoing CDI programme.

Larger increase in violence without injury than violence with injury

The “violence without injury” subcategory accounted for 41% of all violence recorded by the police and showed a larger increase in the latest year ending December 2018 (up 17% to 658,714 offences), than the “violence with injury” subcategory (up 7% to 539,767 offences; Figure 16).

Almost 9 in 10 “violence without injury” offences² recorded by the police in the year ending December 2018 were classified as “assaults without injury”³ (86%; 569,318 offences). This category showed a 16% increase (of 80,288 offences) compared with the previous year, which contributed to 84% of the increase in “violence without injury” offences. Smaller contributions were seen for:

- threats to kill (up 7,473 offences; 8% of the increase)
- cruelty to children or young persons (up 2,574 offences; 3% of the increase)
- assault without injury on a constable (up 2,159 offences; 2% of the increase)

Most of the 7% increase in the “violence with injury” subcategory was a result of an increase in “assault with injury” (72% of the increase). “Assault with injury on a constable” accounted for 13% of the increase (up 4,491 offences) and “assault with intent to cause serious harm” accounted for a further 14% of the increase (up 4,873 offences).

There was a 23% decrease in attempted murder offences in the latest year (to 1,031 offences). This is due to the large number of attempted murder offences recorded in the previous year from the Manchester (235 offences) and London terrorist attacks (59 offences).

Stalking and harassment accounted for half of the increase in violence

The stalking and harassment⁴ subcategory rose by 46% compared with the previous year (Figure 16). This accounted for 50% of the change in violence recorded by the police (a volume increase of 128,681 offences). It is likely that recording improvements are an important factor in this rise, particularly in relation to malicious communication offences due to improved compliance in recording of these offences since they were introduced in April 2015. Malicious communication offences increased by 74% in the last year and accounted for nearly half (48%) of all stalking and harassment offences.

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

The latest [joint inspection](#)⁵ conducted by HMICFRS and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) found that stalking was not always recorded accurately by the police and in some of these cases, stalking was recorded as harassment. These findings suggest that we cannot currently be confident about the accuracy of the recorded crime figures for the separate categories of stalking or harassment.

Rise in violence in all police force areas

All police forces recorded a rise in violence in the latest year ending December 2018 compared with the previous year. Changes varied by police force area ranging from an increase of 3.2% (in Avon and Somerset) to 70.1% (in Lincolnshire, [Table P2](#)). These increases will reflect recording improvements and the extent of such effects differs across police forces ([Tables P1 and P2](#)).

Public order offences show a smaller increase than previously

Public order offences cover a range of incidents including “causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress”. These offences are not covered by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and can be influenced by changes in police activity and recording practices.

Latest police recorded figures show that public order offences increased at a slower rate in the last year compared with previous years. An increase of 19% (to 438,286 offences) was seen in the latest year, following a 42% increase in the year ending December 2017. This is due to a smaller increase (22%) in recorded offences of “public fear, alarm, and distress” compared with the previous year (50%). However, these offences still accounted for 75% of all public order offences, a proportion that has been relatively stable over the past two years.

“Racially or religiously aggravated public fear, alarm or distress” offences also increased at a smaller rate (6% rise to 43,128 offences) compared with previous years (19% rise in the year ending December 2017 and 17% rise in the year ending December 2016).

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

Police recorded domestic abuse continues to rise

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

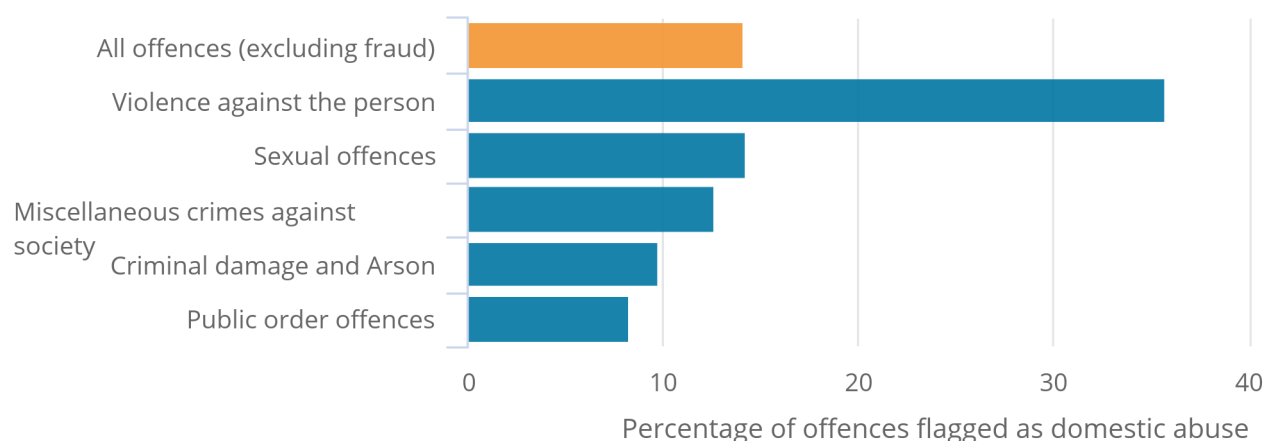
Since April 2015, crimes should be “flagged” as being domestic abuse-related by the police if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse⁶.

Figure 17: The crime type of "violence against the person" has the highest proportion of domestic abuse-flagged offences

England and Wales, year ending December 2018

Figure 17: The crime type of "violence against the person" has the highest proportion of domestic abuse-flagged offences

England and Wales, year ending December 2018



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

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

In the year ending December 2018, there was an increase in the total number of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police (up 25% to 714,848). As well as general improvements in recording, the police may have improved their identification of which offences are domestic abuse-related and more victims may be coming forward to report these crimes. Given the different factors affecting the reporting and recording of these offences, we feel the police figures do not currently provide a reliable indication of current trends.

In comparison, figures from a self-completion module in the CSEW have shown little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years. However, the cumulative effect of these changes has resulted in a small, significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2018 (6.1%), compared with the year ending March 2005 (8.9%). This indicates a gradual, longer-term downward trend ([Table S36](#)).

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

Increase in recording of coercive behaviour

Included in the rise in domestic abuse-related crimes are offences of [controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship](#)⁷. This became a new criminal offence as part of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and came into force on 29 December 2015. Of the 43⁸ forces for which data were available, 9,053 offences of coercive control were recorded in the year ending March 2018⁹. Data for the previous year showed that 38 forces recorded a total of 4,246 coercive control offences. This increase is likely to be due to police forces increasing their use of the new law over the last year.

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

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

There was an increase of 10% in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending December 2018 compared with the previous year (up to 159,740; Figure 18, [Table A4](#)). This is a smaller increase than in recent years (25% in the year ending December 2017). Within the overall increase:

- police recorded rape increased by 11% (to 57,600 offences), compared with 31% in the year ending December 2017
- other sexual offences increased by 9% (to 102,140 offences), compared with 22% in the year ending December 2017

The increase in sexual offences against children¹⁰ contributed around one-fifth (22%) to the total increase in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police.

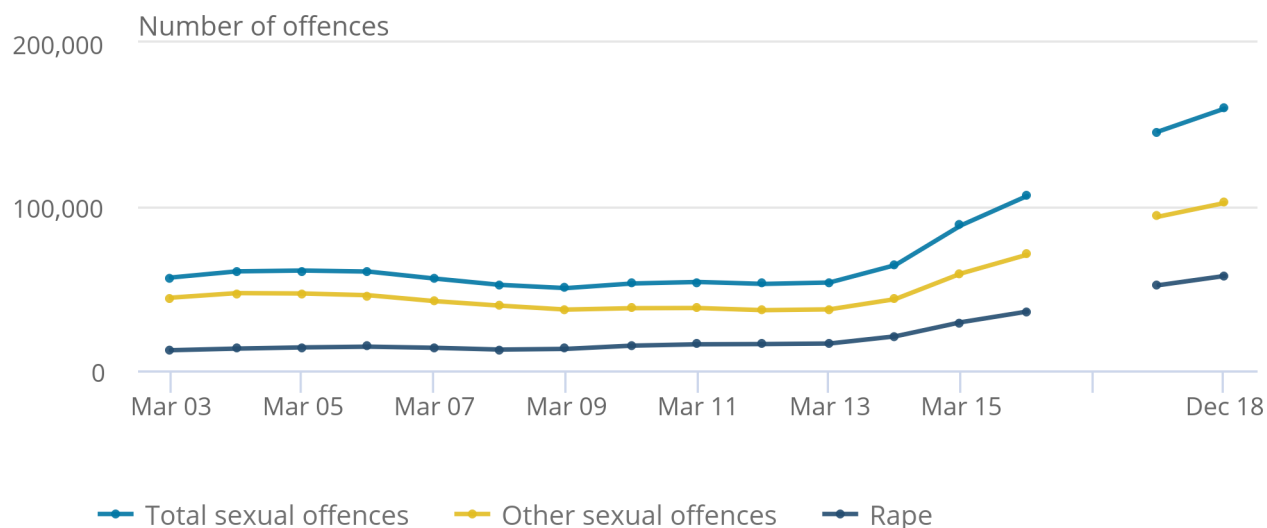
Figure 18: Police recorded sexual offences are at their highest volume since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in 2002

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

Figure 18: Police recorded sexual offences are at their highest volume since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in 2002

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

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime are not designated as National Statistics.
2. The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.
3. Lancashire Police Force were unable to provide police recorded crime for November and December 2018. Therefore, totals for year ending December 2018 were produced using an estimate for these months.

The continued rise since March 2014 is due mainly to improvements made by the police in the recording of sexual offences. More recent [Crime Data Integrity inspections](#) carried out by HMICFRS¹¹ indicate that there is evidence of improvements in the recording of sexual offences made by forces since 2014. However, the level of improvement varies between forces and some have further work to do to ensure that all reports of sexual offences are recorded correctly.

An increased willingness of victims to come forward and report these crimes to the police is also thought to have contributed to the increase. High-profile coverage of sexual offences and social media campaigns, such as Operation Yewtree and #metoo, has led to increased public awareness of these types of crimes. This may mean people are now more likely to report such offences to the police.

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

For a subset of forces providing data to the Home Office Data Hub ¹², 25% of sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending December 2018 were non-recent offences (those that took place more than 12 months before being recorded by the police). Non-recent offences increased by 7% compared with the year ending December 2017, in line with the overall increase over the same period. While non-recent offences remain an important contributor to the latest rise in sexual offences (25%), the rise was due mainly to increases in recent offences (those that took place within 12 months of being recorded by the police).

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

Estimates from the CSEW for the year ending March 2018 showed that 2.7% of adults aged 16 to 59 years had been victims of sexual assaults in the last year (including attempted offences), a small but statistically significant increase compared with the previous year's estimate (2.0%, [Table S36](#)).

This was driven by an increase in our estimates for how many women had been victims of indecent exposure or unwanted sexual touching in the last year ([Table S35](#)). From the year ending March 2018 survey data, we estimated that 3.8% of women aged 16 to 59 years were victims of indecent exposure or unwanted sexual touching in the last 12 months, an increase of 1.2 percentage points compared with the previous year's estimate. Given increased public awareness of these types of crimes recently, it is possible that people are now more likely to report these crimes in the survey than they were previously. Therefore, it is difficult to tell whether the rise reflects a genuine increase in these types of sexual offences.

More information on interpreting longer-term trends in these offences can be found in [Sexual offences in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#); however, this does not include the most recent statistics for the year ending December 2018. The [Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system](#) release also provides more information on sexual offending in England and Wales, bringing together a range of official statistics from across the crime and criminal justice system.

New data will help us measure sexual offences against children

A further change to police recording practices is to flag offences where children have been sexually abused or exploited. New experimental statistics for the year ending March 2018 showed the police flagged 55,061 crimes as involving child sexual abuse ¹³ and 15,045 as involving child sexual exploitation ¹⁴. As with flagging for domestic abuse, the data quality for these figures is variable across police forces but is expected to improve over time. A breakdown of these data across police force areas is available in Other related tables.

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

1. These reports were published between 2016 and 2019, and the most recent reports were published 7 March 2019. Seven re-inspection reports have also been published.
2. Stalking and harassment offences are no longer included within the category of “violence without injury”.
3. Assaults without injury offences are those where at the most a feeling of touch or passing moment of pain is experienced by the victim.
4. Stalking and harassment offences have moved out of the subcategory of “violence without injury” and are now in a separate subcategory along with the notifiable offence of malicious communications. These are “disclosure of private sexual photographs and films (including on the internet) with the intent to cause distress or anxiety” and “sending letters (including emails) with intent to cause distress or anxiety”. These were added to the notifiable offence list in April 2015.
5. [Living in fear – the police and CPS response to harassment and stalking](#) inspection report was published in July 2017.
6. Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 years and over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
7. This offence is constituted by behaviour on the part of the perpetrator, which takes place “repeatedly or continuously”. The victim and alleged perpetrator must be “personally connected” at the time the behaviour takes place. The behaviour must have had a “serious effect” on the victim, meaning that it has caused the victim to fear violence will be used against them on “at least two occasions”, or it has had a “substantial adverse effect on the victims’ day to day activities”. The alleged perpetrator must have known that their behaviour would have a serious effect on the victim, or the behaviour must have been such that he or she “ought to have known” it would have that effect.
8. British Transport Police are not able to provide data.
9. Data not shown.
10. This includes “rape of a male or female child under 16 years”, “rape of a male or female child under 13 years”, “sexual assault on a male or female child under 13 years”, “sexual activity involving a child under 13 years or under 16 years” and “abuse of children through sexual exploitation”.
11. These reports were published between 2016 and 2019, and the most recent reports were published on 7 March 2019. Seven re-inspection reports have also been published.
12. The Home Office Data Hub is a live database that allows police forces to provide the Home Office with record-level information on every crime recorded in a year.
13. Child sexual abuse is defined as “forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (for example, masturbation, kissing, rubbing, touching outside of clothing and so on). They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)”.
14. Child sexual exploitation is defined as “a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 years into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology”.

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

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

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

CSEW estimated 1 in 10 children aged 10 to 15 years were victims of crime

CSEW estimates of crimes experienced by children aged 10 to 15 years ([Appendix Tables A9, A10, A11 and A12](#)) are not directly comparable with the main survey of adults, so are not included in the headline totals. However, estimates are presented to provide a better understanding of victimisation experiences among children resident in households. The CSEW estimated that around 1 in 10 children aged 10 to 15 years were victims of at least one crime in the latest year. A total of 845,000 crimes ¹ were estimated to have been experienced by children aged 10 to 15 years:

- 57% were violent crimes (479,000), with the majority of these being low-level violence ²
- 27% were thefts of personal property (228,000)
- 13% were criminal damage to personal property (114,000)
- 3% were robbery (24,000)

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

Increase in anti-social behaviour estimated by the CSEW

The CSEW estimated that 37% of adult respondents experienced or witnessed anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local area in the latest survey year, an increase from the previous year (32%). This is the highest percentage since the data were first collected in the year ending March 2012. Further information is available in [Tables F8 and F9](#).

Around 1.4 million incidents of ASB were recorded by the police ³ (including the British Transport Police⁴) in the latest year, a decrease of 16% from the previous year ([Figure F1 and F2](#)). These are incidents that may still be crimes in law, such as littering or dog fouling, but are not severe enough to result in the recording of a notifiable offence and therefore are not included in the main police recorded crime series.

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

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

In the year ending September 2018 (the latest period for which data are available), there were 1.1 million convictions for non-notifiable offences⁵ that were not covered in police recorded crime or the CSEW. This is similar to the number seen in the previous year.

In addition, 11,000 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) were issued in relation to non-notifiable offences for the year ending September 2018, a decrease of 21% from the previous year⁶. The majority of these PNDs related to drunk and disorderly behaviour. Further information is available in [Tables F10a and F10b](#).

Wholesale and retail businesses experienced the highest levels of crime

As the CSEW is a survey of the population resident in households, it traditionally has not covered crimes against businesses⁷. Additionally, the police recorded crime series can only provide a partial picture of crimes against the business community as not all offences come to the attention of the police. The [Commercial Victimisation Survey](#) (CVS) provides estimates of crime against selected business premises⁸ covered in its sample and gives some insight into the number of these crimes that go unreported to the police.

The 2017 CVS⁹ showed that businesses in the wholesale and retail sector experienced the highest levels of crime – an estimated 8.1 million incidents, a rate of around 23,000 incidents per 1,000 business premises ([Table F11](#)). However, care must be taken when comparing crime rates over time, based on CVS data. This is because the CVS does not cover all industry sectors (the survey generally covers premises in three or four industrial sectors each year) and sample sizes associated with individual sectors are small.

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

1. The survey of children aged 10 to 15 years only covers personal-level crime (so excludes household-level crime) and, as with the main survey, does not include sexual offences.
2. 77% of violent crimes experienced in the latest survey year resulted in minor or no injury.
3. Cheshire Police were unable to provide ASB figures for March 2018 to December 2018.
4. It is not possible to look at longer trends in ASB including British Transport Police, as data are only available from the year ending March 2013.
5. Non-notifiable offences are offences dealt with exclusively by magistrates' courts or by the police issuing a Penalty Notice for Disorder or a Fixed Penalty Notice. Along with non-notifiable offences dealt with by the police (such as speeding), these include many offences that may be dealt with by other agencies – for example, prosecutions by TV Licensing, or the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for vehicle registration offences.
6. A pilot scheme was implemented from November 2014 in Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire police forces to reduce the types of out-of-court disposals available for adult offenders, including limiting their use of Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND). In the pilot areas, the only out-of-court disposals available are community resolutions and conditional cautions. Since the pilot ended in November 2015, these three forces have continued with their limited use of out-of-court disposals and some other forces have also adopted similar policies. This is likely to have been a factor in the declining number of PNDs issued.
7. Although the recent extension to cover fraud against adult resident in households includes incidents where the victim has been fully (or partially) reimbursed by their financial provider.
8. This is a premises-based survey; respondents were asked if the business at their current premises had experienced any of a range of crime types in the 12 months prior to interview.
9. Data from the 2017 CVS are the latest data available.

13 . New and upcoming changes

[Improving crime statistics for England and Wales – progress update](#) provides an annual overview of our plans to improve the design, coverage and presentation of crime statistics in England and Wales over the next few years. In addition, this section provides further detail about changes to the publication of police recorded crime data, and changes to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

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

This bulletin is the second release of data following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW. The first release including this change was published on 24 January 2019. More information on this methodological change and the impact on CSEW estimates can be found in the [Things you need to know about this release](#) section of this release.

New classification of corruption-related offences

A new classification of recorded crime that identifies a sub-set of notifiable offences related to corruption has been produced to help monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (see [Table F6](#)). These initially include the following:

- 99/7 Offences of bribing another person contrary to section 1 of the Bribery Act 2010
- 99/8 Offences relating to being bribed contrary to section 2 of the Bribery Act 2010
- 99/9 Bribery of a foreign public official contrary to section 6 of the Bribery Act 2010
- 99/10 Failure of a commercial organisation to prevent bribery contrary to section 7 of the Bribery Act 2010
- 99/12 Misconduct in a public office

As with other types of crime, it is recognised that the recorded crime series will not provide a good measure of the full extent of criminality as not all offences come to the attention of the police. We recognise the limitations of this data and therefore are seeking feedback from users. In particular, we would welcome feedback on the following issues:

- Is this new classification useful?
- Does the current definition include all relevant offences in the recorded crime series?
- What other data sources could be used to assess the reliability of these statistics?

Users can send feedback via CrimeStatistics@ons.gov.uk.

Crime Severity Score

[Experimental Statistics](#) on a [Crime Severity Score](#) (CSS) have been released alongside this bulletin. The CSS was developed as an additional measure to supplement existing Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics on crime. The measure weights different types of crime according to severity, with more serious crimes carrying a higher weight to better reflect the level of harm to society and demand on the police caused by crime. [Initial research outputs](#) based upon the CSS were published in November 2016.

Recorded crime data at police force area, Community Safety Partnership and local authority level

We are considering ceasing the publication of the following three sets of tables:

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

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

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

As part of this proposed change, we would continue to provide [breakdowns of police recorded crime figures by Community Safety Partnership \(CSP\) area](#). These are currently published annually, but we intend to start publishing them alongside each quarterly crime statistics bulletin.

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

If you have any comments about the suggested change to the publication of CSP datasets, please get in touch at crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk.

14 . Quality and methodology

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Crime Survey for England and Wales	Police recorded crime
Strengths	Strengths
Large nationally representative sample survey that provides a good measure of long-term crime trends for the offences and the population it covers (that is, those resident in households)	Has wider offence coverage and population coverage than the CSEW
Consistent methodology over time	Good measure of offences that are well-reported to and well-recorded by the police
Covers crimes not reported to the police and is not affected by changes in police recording practice; therefore, is a reliable measure of long-term trends	Primary source of local crime statistics and for lower-volume crimes (for example, homicide)
Coverage of survey extended in 2009 to include children aged 10 to 15 years resident in households	Provides whole counts (rather than estimates that are subject to sampling variation)
Independent collection of crime figures	Time lag between occurrence of crime and reporting results tends to be short, providing an indication of emerging trends
Limitations	Limitations
Survey is subject to error associated with sampling and respondents recalling past events	Excludes offences that are not reported to, or not recorded by, the police and does not include less serious offences dealt with by magistrates' courts (for example, motoring offences)
Potential time lag between occurrence of crime and survey data collection means that the survey is not a good measure of emerging trends	Trends can be influenced by changes in recording practices or police activity as well as public reporting of crime
Excludes crimes against businesses and those not resident in households (for example, residents of institutions and visitors)	Not possible to make long-term comparisons due to fundamental changes in recording practice introduced in 1998 and the year ending March 2003 ²
Headline estimates exclude offences that are difficult to estimate robustly (such as sexual offences) or that have no victim who can be interviewed (for example, homicides and drug offences)	There are concerns about the quality of recording – crimes may not be recorded consistently across police forces and so the true level of recorded crime may be understated
Previously excluded fraud and cybercrime ¹	

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

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

2. Section 3.3 of the User Guide has more information

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

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

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

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