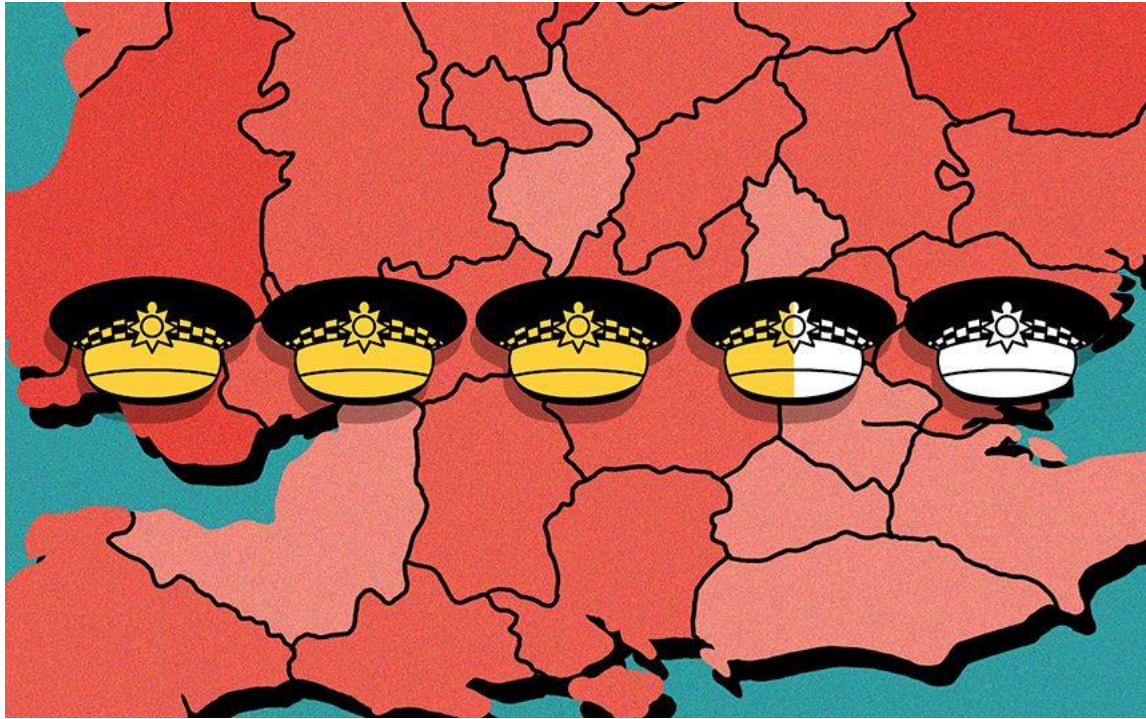


Just one in 100 thieves being charged in parts of Britain - How good is your police force at solving crime?



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In some areas, as few as one in 100 offences end up in someone being charged or summoned to court for five major crimes.

These crimes, which include rape, theft from a vehicle and theft from the person, have seen charge rates fall in recent years - meaning that more criminals are potentially being left on our streets.

Of the 23 crime offence categories listed by the Home Office, 13 have national charge rates standing at lower than 10 per cent. These charge rates vary massively across the country, revealing areas in which surprisingly low numbers of offences lead to a charge or court summons.

The interactive below reveals how many crimes your police force solve, and how that compares to the rest of the country across 23 offences.

The tool above allows you to see how many offences were recorded by each police force, as well as showing how many charges or court summons were brought forward

by the force. The charge rate is the number of charges or summons, as a proportion of the total number of offences.

It also shows the number of offences ending with no suspect identified. In cases like this police deem the crime to have been investigated "as far as reasonably possible" based on the evidence available with the case then closed "pending further investigative opportunities becoming available".

Sussex Police - Proportion of crimes ending in a charge or summons (%)

Overall Avg 7.8%

100% = 114,927

Cases closed = 8,919

Ending in a charge or court summons = 8,919

Ending with no suspect identified = 55,046

Tens of thousands of thieves escaping justice

Tens of thousands of thieves are escaping justice with as few as one in 500 thefts being solved by police in parts of Britain, a *Telegraph* analysis has found.

Home Office data shows that just one in 500 thefts (0.2 per cent) resulted in a charge in Suffolk, the lowest rate, followed by 0.3 per cent in Gloucestershire and City of London and 0.6 per cent in Warwickshire for the year 2018/19.

Even in two of the biggest constabularies in Britain - the Metropolitan Police (0.9 per cent) and Greater Manchester Police (0.9 per cent) - fewer than one in 100 thefts from a person are being solved as stretched officers are forced to prioritise more serious crimes.

Police chiefs admit they are having to "screen out" high-volume, "low harm" crimes such as shoplifting, pickpocketing and other thefts unless there is CCTV, witnesses, forensics or stolen property worth at least £50.

The disclosure comes as The Telegraph can reveal a private security service is mounting the UK's first private prosecutions for theft and other "minor" crimes because it claims the police have "given up" taking them to court.

The private firm, which provides neighbourhood beat bobbies for residents, firms and shops, is setting up a new prosecution unit after its teams apprehended shoplifters, pickpockets and drug dealers only to be told by police to release them without investigating or charging them.

My Local Bobby, which was set up by former senior Met police officers, already patrols central and north London, funded by local businesses, shops and residents and has mounted its first test case involving a shoplifter whom police refused to prosecute.

Personal theft charge rate falls from 2.6 to 1.3 per cent

The police data shows that since 2014/15, the proportion of personal theft offences resulting in a charge have halved from 2.6 per cent to 1.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2019/20. They account for more than 350,000 offences a year.

The overall figures mask wide variations with the forces at the top of the table achieving charging rates 20 times those at the bottom with Cumbria on 4.3 per cent, Derbyshire 4.7 per cent and Dyfed-Powys on 5.1 per cent.

Simon Kempton, the Police Federation's lead on operational policing, said the disparities likely reflected the varying priorities of chief police officers, who had to make "hard" decisions on resourcing to ensure victims in high-profile crimes such as child abuse and protection were safeguarded.

"What gets stripped is erroneously called low level crime where no-one is being hurt. There is a temptation to move resources away from that area. That means you are far less likely to identify criminals and far less likely to bring them to justice," he said.

"That has a knock-on effect on the confidence that people have in the police and our ability to do the job."

A Home Office spokesman said: "We expect the police to take all crimes seriously. It is the responsibility of Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners to make sure criminal cases are investigated properly and set priorities which reflect the concerns of the people they serve."

It said it would be recruiting 20,000 extra officers over the next three years "to make sure the police have the resources they need to tackle crime and keep our communities safe. This would include 6,000 by the end of March 2021 across all 43 forces."