

Article

Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics: year ending March 2023

Risk of victimisation using Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data, including crime experiences of non-household populations using administrative data.

Contact:
CrimeStatistics@ons.gov.uk
crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk
+44 2075 928695

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1 . Main points

- Approximately one in six people aged 16 years and over (16.1%) reported experiencing a crime covered by the interviewer-led parts of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) in the year ending March 2023.
- The odds of being a victim of CSEW headline crime were approximately 1.5 times greater for disabled people and single-parent households compared with non-disabled people and those living in a household with no children, respectively, after adjusting for a range of other factors; for our definition of CSEW headline crime, see [Section 2: Understanding our crime data](#).
- People aged 55 years and over had decreased odds of experiencing CSEW headline crime compared with those aged 16 to 24 years; this association was partially reduced after adjusting for other factors, including spending time outside the home and visits to pubs or bars.
- People holding secondary school-level qualifications (GCSEs or equivalent) or no qualifications had decreased odds of being a victim of CSEW headline crime compared with people holding a degree, before and after adjusting for a range of factors.
- Although there were no differences by sex for being a victim of CSEW headline crime (captured in the interviewer-led parts of the survey), the prevalence of sexual assault, stalking and harassment (captured separately through standalone survey modules) were higher for women than men in the year ending March 2023.
- There are limited data on crimes against non-household populations; in England there were 173,280 Section 42 enquiries raised for an adult who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, a third (32%) of which were raised for adults residing in a care or nursing home (55,220).

Warning: CSEW headline crime captures a range of personal and household victim-based crime in the interviewer-led parts of the survey, including theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse and violence with or without injury. Experiences of sexual assault, stalking and harassment are presented separately in our statistics. Standalone survey modules are used to gather information from respondents about these highly sensitive crimes. Data are therefore captured and processed separately and are not directly comparable.

2 . Understanding our crime data

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a face-to-face victimisation survey where 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. For the population and offence types it covers, the CSEW generally provides the better measure of trends on a consistent basis over time compared with police recorded crime, because it is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices.

The CSEW captures a range of victim-based crimes experienced by those interviewed, not just those that have been reported to and recorded by the police. CSEW headline crime captures a range of personal and household victim-based crime in the interviewer-led parts of the survey, including theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse and violence with or without injury.

Experiences of sexual assault, stalking and harassment are presented separately in our statistics. Standalone survey modules are used to gather information from respondents about these highly sensitive crimes in a different way to other crimes. Therefore, the data are captured and processed separately and are not directly comparable.

In addition, the level of domestic violence reported in CSEW headline crime is prone to substantial under-reporting because many victims will not be willing to disclose such incidents in the context of an in-home, face-to-face personal interview. Our main measure of domestic violence is from the survey's domestic abuse self-completion module.

The survey excludes crimes against commercial or public sector bodies, tourists and non-household populations, such as care home residents and those who are homeless. As the CSEW is a victim survey, it also excludes crimes against society such as drug possession. For more information on the survey, see our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#).

To understand who is at increased risk of being a victim of CSEW headline crime, differences in estimates by a range of characteristics (selected demographics, socioeconomic indicators, household and area-level characteristics) were tested to see if they were statistically significant.

Where differences were found to be statistically significant, we conducted regression analyses to investigate the strength of associations between each characteristic and being a victim of crime in unadjusted models. For further details, see Model 1 of our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics dataset](#). As these characteristics are not necessarily independently related to victimisation, adjusted models were also constructed to measure the strength of associations after accounting for other factors (see Models 2 to 4). For further information on methodology and regression modelling, see [Section 7: Data sources and quality](#).

We present findings on the likelihood of CSEW headline victimisation in the household population in [Section 3: Crimes against the household population](#). We also present differences in the prevalence of sexual assault, stalking, harassment and domestic abuse, which are captured separately in the survey.

We present what is currently known about the experiences of two important non-household populations, care home residents and homeless people, in [Section 4: Experiences of the non-household population](#).

3 . Crimes against the household population

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that, in the year ending March 2023, 16.1% of people aged 16 years and over living in private households experienced a crime that was asked about in the interviewer-led parts of the survey. However, the likelihood of being a victim of CSEW headline crime varied by a range of personal and household characteristics, as well as where people lived.

Demographic characteristics

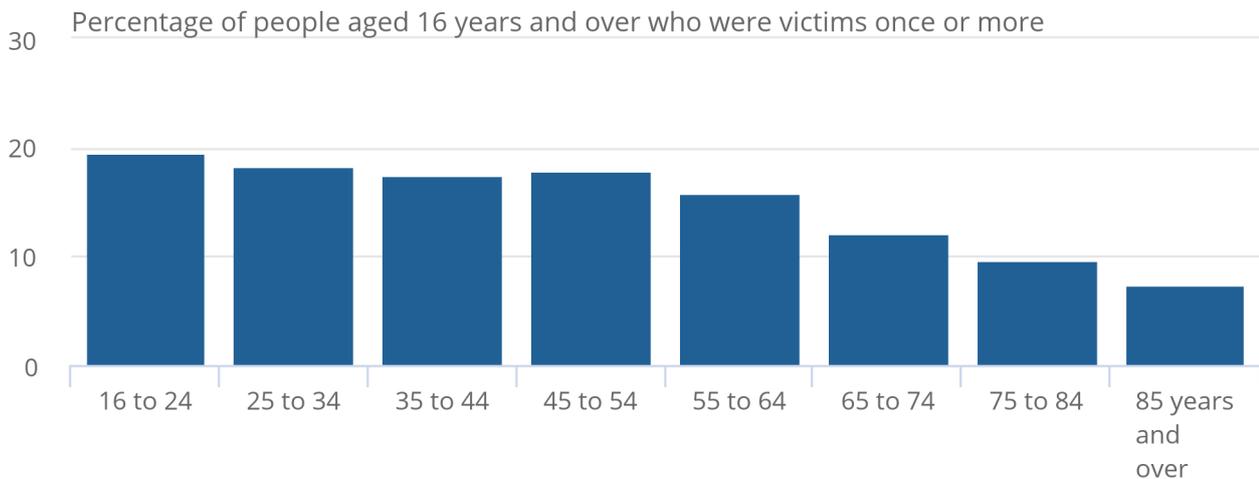
The prevalence of CSEW headline victimisation varied by age, ethnicity, marital status, disability, religion and sexual orientation (see Table 1). For example, the highest prevalence of victimisation by age group was in those aged 16 to 24 years (19.5%), with levels generally falling as age increased (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Prevalence of CSEW headline victimisation was lower in older age groups

England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 1: Prevalence of CSEW headline victimisation was lower in older age groups

England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 are not designated as National Statistics.

Analysis of the relationship between demographic characteristics and CSEW headline victimisation showed that:

- single people were more likely to be a victim of CSEW headline crime compared with people who were married or cohabiting, while those who were separated, divorced or widowed were less likely to be a victim compared with those who were married or cohabiting
- those identifying within "Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups" were more likely to be a victim of CSEW headline crime compared with those identifying within the "White" ethnic group
- those who identified as Christian or "Other" religion were less likely to be a victim of CSEW headline crime compared with those identifying with no religion
- people who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other were more likely to be a victim of CSEW headline crime compared with those identifying as heterosexual or straight

For further details, see Table 3 of our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics dataset](#).

However, these associations were fully attenuated after adjusting for all selected demographic factors together (see Table 4 of our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics dataset](#)). Only two demographic characteristics were associated with CSEW headline victimisation before and after adjusting for these factors:

- disabled people were more likely to be a victim of CSEW headline crime compared with non-disabled people
- those aged 55 years and over were less likely to be a victim of CSEW headline crime than those aged 16 to 24 years

Figure 2: Disabled people were more likely to be a victim of CSEW headline victimisation than non-disabled people

Odds ratios for CSEW headline victimisation by demographic characteristics, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Notes:

1. Confidence intervals of 95% are displayed on the chart, see [Section 6: Glossary](#) for details.
2. Adjusted model includes ethnic group, marital status, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age and sex.

Although there were no differences in the likelihood of CSEW headline victimisation by sex, women were more likely to experience sexual assault, stalking, harassment and domestic abuse (which are captured in the survey separately).

In the year ending March 2023, 3.2% of women reported experiencing sexual assault compared with 0.9% of men. Similarly, 4.4% of women reported experiencing stalking compared with 2.4% of men (see our [Crime in England and Wales: Annual supplementary tables](#)).

More women (13%) than men (7.2%) also experienced at least one form of harassment (see our [Experiences of harassment prevalence and nature tables](#)), and women were more likely to experience any domestic abuse in the last 12 months (5.7%) compared with men (3.2%).

Similar to CSEW headline victimisation, these experiences were also more prevalent among younger age groups. For detailed information on victim characteristics of sexual assault, stalking, harassment, and domestic abuse, see:

- our [Sexual offences victim characteristics, England and Wales article](#)
- our [Stalking: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales dataset](#)
- our [Experiences of harassment in England and Wales bulletin](#)
- our [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales article](#)

Detailed record-level information for homicide is available in the Home Office Homicide Index and shows differences in victim characteristics, including sex, age and ethnicity. For example, around 7 in 10 of all homicide victims (71%) were male with around 3 in 10 being female (29%) in the year ending March 2023. For further details, see our [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2023 article](#).

Socioeconomic status and household characteristics

The prevalence of CSEW headline victimisation also varied by educational attainment, employment status, structure of household and tenure. For example, people with no qualifications were less likely to experience CSEW headline crime (9.1%) compared with people holding a degree (18.3%) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Prevalence of CSEW headline victimisation was lower for those with no qualifications

England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 3: Prevalence of CSEW headline victimisation was lower for those with no qualifications

England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 are not designated as National Statistics.

In unadjusted models:

- people holding secondary school level qualifications (GCSEs or equivalent) or no qualifications were associated with decreased odds of CSEW headline victimisation compared with people holding a degree
- being economically inactive (which includes retired people) was associated with decreased odds of CSEW headline victimisation compared with those who were economically active
- people living in single-parent households had increased odds of CSEW headline victimisation compared with people living in households without children
- those renting their property from a private landlord had increased odds of CSEW headline victimisation compared with those who had a mortgage or owned their own home

For further details, see Table 3 of our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics dataset](#).

These indicators remained associated with being a victim of CSEW headline crime after adjusting for selected socioeconomic and household characteristics together (see Table 4 of our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics dataset](#)).

Area level characteristics

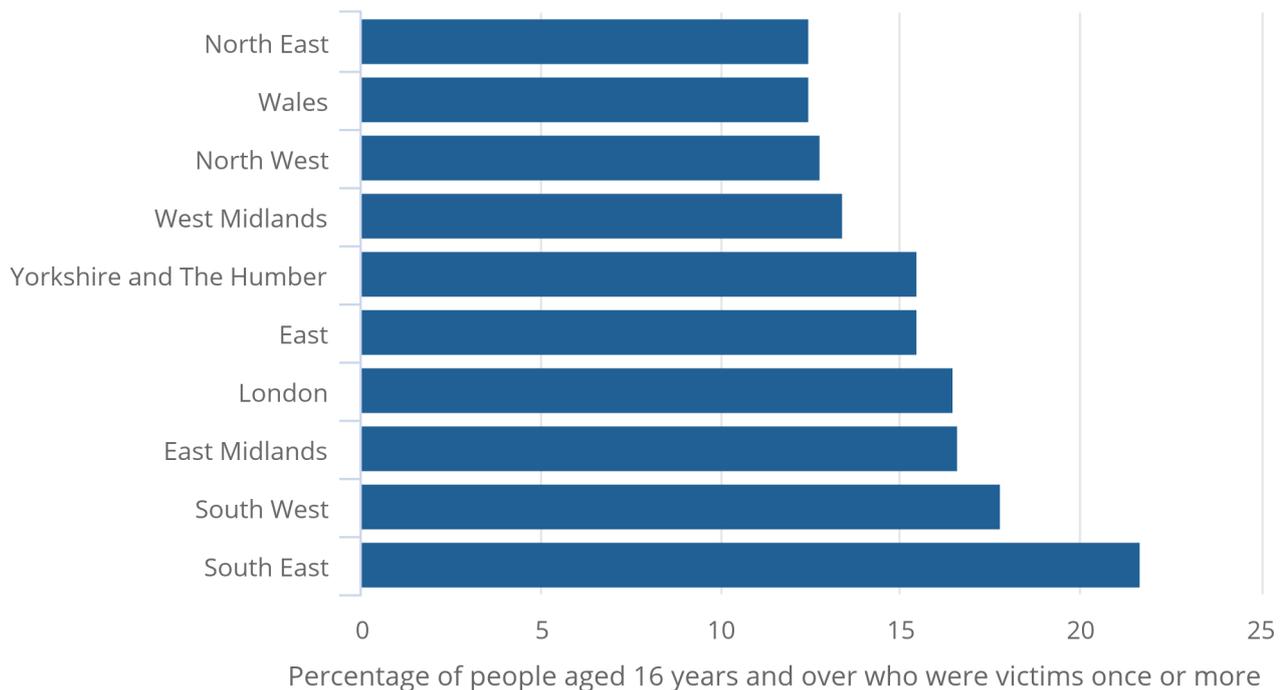
The prevalence of victimisation varied by region, with the highest prevalence of CSEW headline victimisation in the South East (21.7%), South West (17.8%) and East Midlands (16.6%). (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Prevalence of CSEW headline victimisation was highest in the South East region

England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 4: Prevalence of CSEW headline victimisation was highest in the South East region

England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 are not designated as National Statistics.

Main indicators associated with Crime Survey for England and Wales headline victimisation

Individual characteristics and indicators are not independently related to being a victim of crime covered by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and are likely to influence each other. Further regression analyses were conducted using the indicators that were associated with being a victim of CSEW headline crime in Model 2, including age, sex, disability, educational attainment, employment status, household structure, tenure, region and output area classification. For further details, see [Section 7: Data sources and quality](#).

In the fully adjusted model, the following individual and household characteristics remained associated being a victim of CSEW headline crime in the last year:

- there was a 57% increase in the odds of CSEW headline victimisation for disabled people compared with non-disabled people
- living in a single-parent household was associated with a 42% increase in the odds of CSEW headline victimisation compared with living in a household with no children
- holding no educational qualifications was associated with approximately half the odds of CSEW headline victimisation compared with holding a degree
- being economically inactive was also associated with lower odds of CSEW headline victimisation compared with being employed
- all age groups from aged 25 to 34 years and over had decreased odds of CSEW headline victimisation compared with those aged 16 to 24 years, except for those aged 45 to 54 years

For further details, see Table 5, Model 3 of our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics dataset](#).

The increased risk of CSEW headline victimisation for disabled people and single-parent households is well documented and likely reflects increased targeting of these groups by perpetrators. The decreased risk of CSEW headline victimisation for those with lower educational attainment is largely because of the lower prevalence of acquisitive crime (theft and fraud offences) within these groups. Given that educational attainment is highly correlated with other socioeconomic indicators, such as household income, this association could reflect differing levels of material goods and possessions across these groups.

After additional adjustments for behaviours, the decreased odds for CSEW headline victimisation in those aged 55 to 64 years were fully attenuated, while associations were partially attenuated for older age groups. For further details, see Table 5, Model 4 of our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics dataset](#). This suggests that the relationship between older age and decreased risk of CSEW headline victimisation may partly be explained by differences in spending time outside the home and time spent visiting pubs or bars.

Figure 5: The relationship between older age and decreased risk of CSEW headline victimisation is partly explained by differences in behaviours

Odds ratios for CSEW headline victimisation by selected characteristics, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Notes:

1. Confidence intervals of 95% are displayed on the chart, see [Section 6: Glossary](#) for details.
2. Adjusted model includes age, sex, disability, educational attainment, employment status, household structure, tenure, region and output area classification, time spent outside the home, and time spent visiting pubs and bars.

4 . Experiences of the non-household population

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) was designed to measure crimes against people aged 16 years and over living in private households, which covers approximately 98% of the population in England and Wales. This excludes non-household populations, such as those living in care homes, halls of residence, refuges, and homeless people.

Non-household groups constitute a small proportion of the total population (approximately 1.7% of the population in England and Wales), therefore, their exclusion is likely to have minimal impact on national estimates. For more information, see our [Household and resident characteristics, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#).

However, understanding the crime experience of non-household populations is important because a lack of data on these groups reduces their visibility and results in additional challenges in policy making.

For the purposes of this publication we have, for the first time, focused on the data available for two of the largest groups that are likely to differ in their experience of crime compared with the household population: care home residents and homeless people.

Crime experiences of care home residents

According to [Census 2021](#), there were an estimated 344,000 care home residents in England and Wales. Most of the care home population is aged 65 years and over (82% in [2011 Census](#)), and approximately two-thirds of care home residents have dementia according to [Dementia UK's update document \(PDF 1.209KB\)](#).

Data from the NHS Digital Safeguarding Adults Collection showed that, in the year ending March 2023 in England, there were 173,280 concluded Section 42 enquiries raised for an adult who may be at risk of abuse or neglect (see [Section 6: Glossary](#)). This is a 7% increase from the previous year (161,925). A third (32%) of the enquires were raised for adults residing in a care or nursing home (55,220).

The most frequent types of abuse within the concluded Section 42 enquiries were neglect and acts of omission (71,305), physical abuse (41,615), and psychological abuse (28,430). This was slightly different in care home settings with neglect and acts of omission (34,010), physical abuse (16,855) and organisational abuse (6,945), which refers to neglect and poor care practice within a specific care setting, being the most common types of abuse identified.

More Section 42 safeguarding enquiries involved people aged 65 years and over (82,810) compared with those aged 18 to 64 years (53,905). Enquiries also involved more women than men (79,735 compared with 56,565, respectively).

For more information, see our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics: admin data tables](#).

Crime experiences of the older population

In the year ending March 2023, there were 4,090 callers to Hourglass, a charity that supports older victim-survivors of abuse and their families across the UK. The number of callers increased by 2.7% compared with the previous year.

Most of the abuse occurred in the callers' own homes (83.5%), followed by care homes (6.8%) and hospitals (3.7%). The most common type of abuse experienced by the callers was economic or financial abuse (37.8%), followed by domestic abuse (34.5%) and psychological abuse (30.4%).

For more information, see our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics: admin data tables](#).

Crime experiences of homeless people

In England, 278,110 households were assessed as either being at risk of homelessness or already homeless in April 2021 to March 2022, according to the [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' \(DLUHC's\) Statutory Homelessness Annual Report](#). These are people who have approached local authorities for support and are recognised as being statutory homeless. These figures exclude non-statutory homeless people such as those who are "hidden homeless" (see [Section 6: Glossary](#)).

Research reported in [The Lancet's Homelessness and police-recorded crime victimisation: a nationwide, register-based cohort study](#) shows that homeless people are at increased risk of experiencing crime compared with non-homeless people, especially violent crime. Rough sleepers are at particular risk of experiencing crime. Findings from the [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Rough sleeping questionnaire \(2020\)](#) reported that two-thirds of respondents in England had been a victim of crime (65%) within the last six months. The most common experiences of crime included theft, verbal abuse, threats, robbery, and violence.

5 . Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics data

[Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics](#)

Dataset | Released 6 March 2024

Risk of experiencing Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) headline crime for people aged 16 years and over by selected characteristics. CSEW data tables.

[Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics: admin data tables](#)

Dataset | Released 6 March 2024

Data from NHS England on enquiries raised for abuse and neglect, and data from Hourglass on calls received concerning abuse and neglect of older people.

6 . Glossary

Confidence intervals

Confidence intervals use the standard error to derive a range in which we think the true value is likely to lie. A confidence interval gives an indication of the degree of uncertainty of an estimate and helps to decide how precise a sample estimate is. It specifies a range of values likely to contain the unknown population value.

These values are defined by lower and upper limits. The width of the interval depends on the precision of the estimate and the confidence level used. A greater standard error will result in a wider interval; the wider the interval, the less precise the estimate is.

CSEW headline crime

A victim of crime is someone who, when responding to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), had experienced at least one personal crime or had been a resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household crime in the last 12 months, regardless of whether they reported these incidents to the police. Household crimes may have happened to anyone in the household, while personal crimes are only counted if they relate to the individual being interviewed.

It captures a range of victim-based crime in the interviewer-led parts of the survey including theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse, and violence with or without injury. Experiences of sexual assault, stalking and harassment are presented separately in our statistics. Standalone survey modules are used to gather information from respondents about these highly sensitive crimes. It does so in a different way to other crimes and the data are captured and processed separately.

Hidden homeless

Hidden homeless refers to people who may be experiencing homelessness, but their situation is not "visible", either on the streets or in official statistics. This includes people who might:

- choose not to approach local authorities for assistance
- approach local authorities but do not receive a response that meets their needs
- find an alternative solution outside of the formal system of housing support and provision
- not necessarily identify as homeless

For further information, see our ["Hidden" homelessness in the UK: evidence review article](#).

Odds ratio

An odds ratio for a particular group describes the relative difference in the likelihood of an outcome in that group compared with a reference category, which in this analysis was based on majority count. An odds ratio higher than 1 indicates a greater likelihood of that outcome, while an odds ratio less than 1 indicates a lower likelihood.

Section 42 enquiries

Section 42 enquiries are raised where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult has needs for care and support and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and that as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. For further information, see [NHS Digital's guidance](#).

Statutory homeless

Statutory homeless refers to when a household is legally defined as homeless and the local authority has a duty to house them. To be legally defined as homeless you must either lack a secure place in which you are entitled to live or not reasonably be able to stay. This means that a household who is defined as statutory homeless may be currently living in a home but at risk of losing it, rough sleeping or living in temporary accommodation. For further details, see [Crisis UK's About homelessness web page](#).

7 . Data sources and quality

Crime Survey for England and Wales

Data included in the analysis for crimes against the household population were sourced from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). For more detailed information about the crime survey, see our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#).

Crime estimates for the year ending March 2023 are produced from data collected between April 2022 to March 2023. Asking respondents about crimes in the previous 12 months to the interview, the current CSEW estimates continue to include crimes committed during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic period (as far back as April 2021), as well as more recent crimes. Estimates are derived from a total of 31,183 interviews conducted with household residents in England and Wales who were aged 16 years and over.

CSEW estimates for the year ending March 2022 onwards are not designated as National Statistics. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the potential impact of lower response rates on data quality. For more information, see the [Office for Statistics Regulation's Temporary suspension of National Statistics status for estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales note](#).

Further quality and methodology information (QMI) is available in our [Crime in England and Wales QMI](#).

This analysis explores personal, household and geographical area characteristics and their association with being a victim of CSEW headline crime. Research was conducted prior to analysis to determine which characteristics should be used in this analysis and was based on their known association with victimisation and availability in CSEW. To understand the relationship between these selected characteristics and victimisation, a Pearson's chi-square test was conducted to assess differences in estimates for total crime (including fraud and computer misuse) to see if they were statistically significant.

Where statistically significant differences were found, logistic regression was used. This measures the size and strength of the relationship between two variables, while holding all other variables in the model equal. Unadjusted models were constructed first to provide an estimate of the overall relationship between each characteristic and being a victim of CSEW headline crime (see Model 1 of our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics dataset](#)). Adjusted models were then built to measure the strength of associations after accounting for other factors (Models 2 to 4):

- Model 2a included ethnic group, marital status, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age and sex
- Model 2b included highest qualification, respondent's employment status, age and sex
- Model 2c included structure of household, tenure, age and sex
- Model 2d included output area classification, region, age and sex
- Model 3 included all statistically significant variables from models 2a to 2d (disability, highest qualification, respondent's employment status, structure of household, tenure, output area classification, region) and age and sex
- Model 4 included the same variables as Model 3 and the following behaviours: hours out of home on an average weekday and number of evening visits to a pub or bar in the last month

Although logistic regression can determine the strength of the relationship between one variable and another, it cannot determine causality.

The results of our logistic regression analysis are expressed as odds ratios, which is the ratio between two sets of odds (the probability of an event occurring divided by the probability of the event not occurring). The odds ratios in this article represent how a range of characteristics at the individual, household and geographical level relate to odds of being a victim of CSEW headline crime.

Only differences that are [statistically significant](#) at the 5% level are described within this article, unless it is specifically stated that they are not significant. In the tables these changes are identified by P-values.

Although our logistic regression analysis covers a range of characteristics, our models can only partially explain the differences in victimisation between people. Many factors that impact on being a victim of crime are not quantified in our data sources or included in our models. In addition, there are likely to be differences by individual crime types that are not explored as part of this analysis.

Administrative data sources

To provide insight into crime experiences of non-household populations, we sourced data from [NHS England](#) and [Hourglass](#). Hourglass data are not classified as official statistics.

NHS England

NHS England are the statutory custodian for health and care data for England. They produce a wide range of statistical publications and dashboards, such as the [Safeguarding Adults collection](#) used in this publication. The Safeguarding Adults data can be used to understand trends in volumes of safeguarding concerns raised and enquiries conducted. For further details, see the [Safeguarding Adults data quality key information](#).

Hourglass

Hourglass delivers the UK's only helpline dedicated to supporting older victim-survivors of abuse and their families. Callers can receive expert advice and support, as well as signposting to other local and national organisations. They also produce research and other work aiming at ensuring safer ageing.

Data presented from Hourglass are sample data under specific parameters. They represent the number of callers but do not include interactions from text message, instant messages, emails, or in-person contact. These data can be used to understand trends in the volume of helpline calls to Hourglass.

8 . Related links

[Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 25 January 2024

Crime against households and people aged 16 years and over, using data from police recorded crime and the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

[Crime in England and Wales: Annual Trend and Demographic Tables](#)

Dataset | Released 20 July 2023

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showing breakdowns of victimisation over time and by various demographic characteristics.

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

Dataset | Released 20 July 2023

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) on perceptions of the police, criminal justice system, crime and anti-social behaviour, and prevalence of intimate personal violence.

[Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#)

Article | Released 24 November 2023

Characteristics of victims of domestic abuse based on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime.

[Sexual offences victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2022](#)

Article | Released 23 March 2023

Characteristics of victims of sexual offences based on data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime.

[Incorporating data on crimes experienced by care home residents into crime statistics](#)

Article | Released 1 December 2023

Exploring how to better incorporate data on crimes against care home residents into our crime statistics.

9 . Cite this article

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