

Statistical bulletin

Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2020

Crime against households and adults using data from police recorded crime and the new Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales. Includes the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on crime and people's perceptions of crime during the October to December 2020 periods.



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1 . Main points

For the 12-month period to year ending December 2020:

- Estimates from the crime survey show that there were approximately 12 million offences;¹ this estimate cannot be compared directly with previous periods because of the way the survey is currently conducted.
- Total police recorded crime decreased by 8% to approximately 5.6 million offences, driven by falls during the periods of national lockdown, particularly April to June 2020 and mainly theft offences.
- There was an 11% fall in offences involving firearms and 9% fall in offences involving knives or sharp instruments (knife-enabled crime), driven by substantial decreases in the April to June 2020 period.
- The number of homicides decreased by 12%, however, when the single incident that took place in Grays, Essex, in October 2019, when the bodies of 39 migrants were found in a lorry is excluded, homicides show a 6% decrease (625 offences).
- There was a 15% increase in drug offences, driven by a large increase in April to June 2020, reflecting proactive police activity in crime hotspots.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and related lockdown restrictions have resulted in fluctuations in the level of crime in England and Wales, for example, for police recorded crime:

- Total offences decreased by 7% between July to September 2020 and October to December 2020.
- Comparing October to December 2020 with the same period the previous year, total offences were 9% lower (1.4 million), theft offences were 27% lower (354,746) and knife-enabled crime was 16% lower (11,041).

Statistician's comment

Commenting on today's figures, Sophie Sanders from the Office for National Statistics Centre for Crime and Justice said:

"There were fluctuations in the level of crime experienced in England and Wales throughout 2020. This is supported by findings from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey and police recorded crime data. Although a small proportion of these fluctuations will be the result of seasonal effects on crime trends, the majority can be attributed to the introduction and subsequent easing of national lockdown restrictions throughout the year.

"Most crime types have seen recorded offences fall year-on-year. The notable exceptions are drug offences, because of proactive police activity in crime hotspots during the first lockdown, while violence against the person also saw a small increase."

Notes for: Main points

1. Participants in the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales report on crimes experienced in the last 12 months, this covers the period from May 2019 to November 2020 depending on when interviews took place.

2 . New in this release

To improve data quality the Home Office and police forces have developed a new methodology for identifying recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments (knife-enabled crime). Figures referenced in this section use data from the new methodology for the first time and are therefore not comparable with those in previous releases.

The new methodology requires police forces to run their record-level crime data through the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDQIS) computer-assisted classification tool to identify crimes tagged as involving a knife or sharp instrument. Part of the implementation also involved changes to the coverage of the data collection. The tool was piloted with forces and shown to improve data quality and comparability.

Forces with the highest volumes of knife-enabled crime were prioritised for the roll-out, 12 forces have now switched to the NDQIS data collection methodology.¹ In the year ending March 2020 these forces accounted for 64% of the offences recorded by the police across England and Wales that involved a knife or a sharp instrument. It is planned that the new methodology will be rolled out to all forces in England and Wales over the next year. Estimates in this release include a combination of both new and old data collection methods.

For more information including the differences in data collection methods, please see the methodology note [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments, methodology changes](#) and [blog](#).

Notes for: New in this release

1. The 12 police forces that have now switched to the NDQIS data collection method are Derbyshire, Dyfed-Powys, Greater Manchester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Northamptonshire, South Wales, South Yorkshire, West Midlands, and West Yorkshire. Remaining police forces are still collecting these data using special collection.

3 . Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales

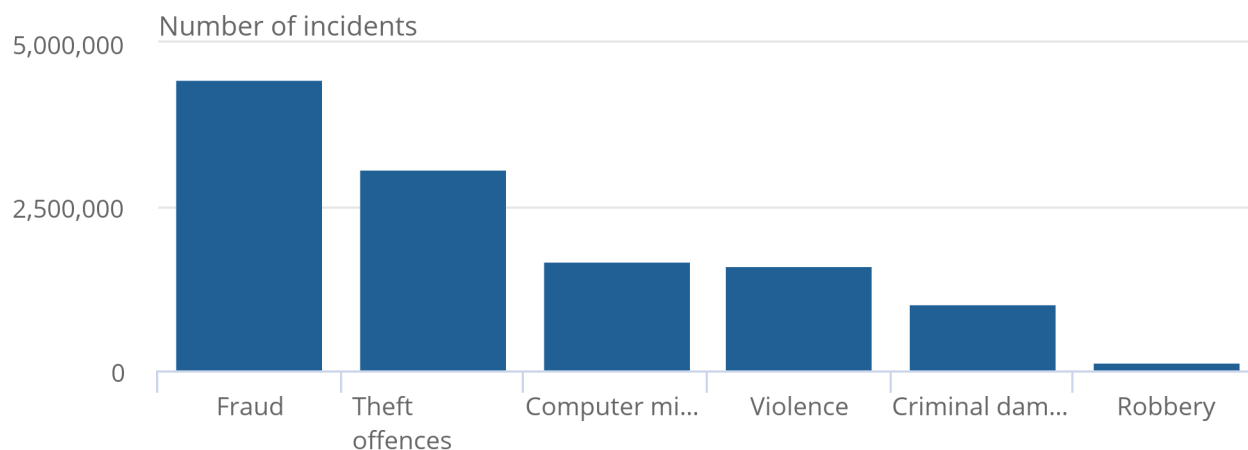
There were 12 million offences, including fraud and computer misuse, experienced by adults aged 18 years and over in the last 12 months to year ending December 2020.¹

Figure 1: TCSEW estimated 3.1 million theft offences in the last 12 months

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May and December 2020

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England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May and December 2020



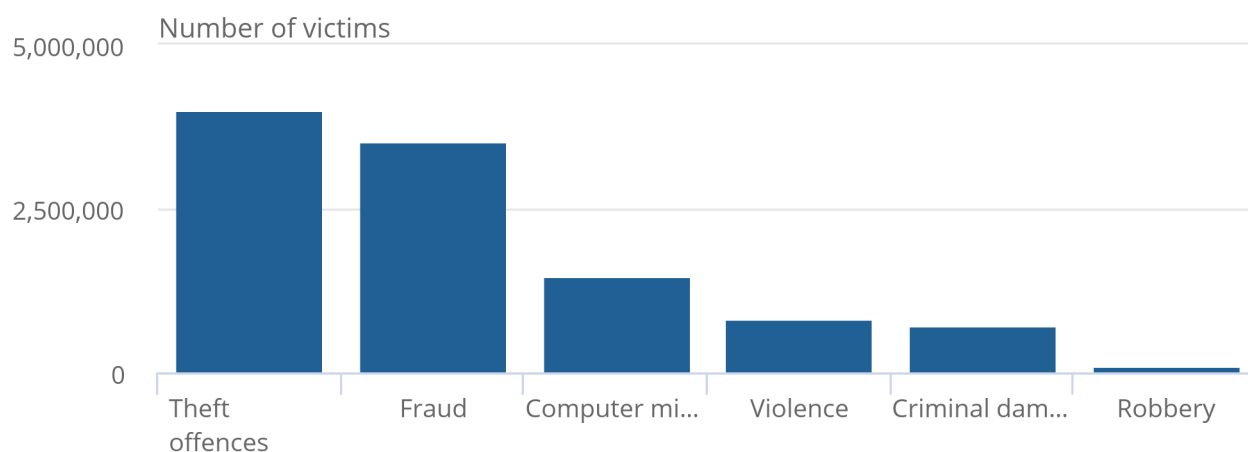
Source: Office for National Statistics - Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)

Figure 2: TCSEW estimated 9.7 million adults were a victim of crime in the last 12 months

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May and December 2020

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England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May and December 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics - Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and related lockdown restrictions have resulted in fluctuations in the level of crime experienced in England and Wales during 2020. As a result of the small Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) sample size, measuring change in incidence between quarterly periods is affected by increased uncertainty around repeat incidents. The number of offences remained similar between quarterly periods January to September 2020 while the number of victims of total crime including fraud and computer misuse fluctuated.

Because of the change in data collection mode, there is a break in the CSEW data time series. TCSEW estimates are not directly comparable with those previously published from the face-to-face CSEW.

For the crime types and population it covers, the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a better indicator of long-term trends than police recorded crime. It is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices.

Since the mid-1990s, there have been long-term falls seen in overall CSEW crime estimates. Long-term trends vary by crime types. For all headline figures, including a data time series, see [Appendix tables](#).

Figure 3: Crime estimates by the CSEW December 1981 to March 2020, and TCSEW estimates for the year ending December 2020

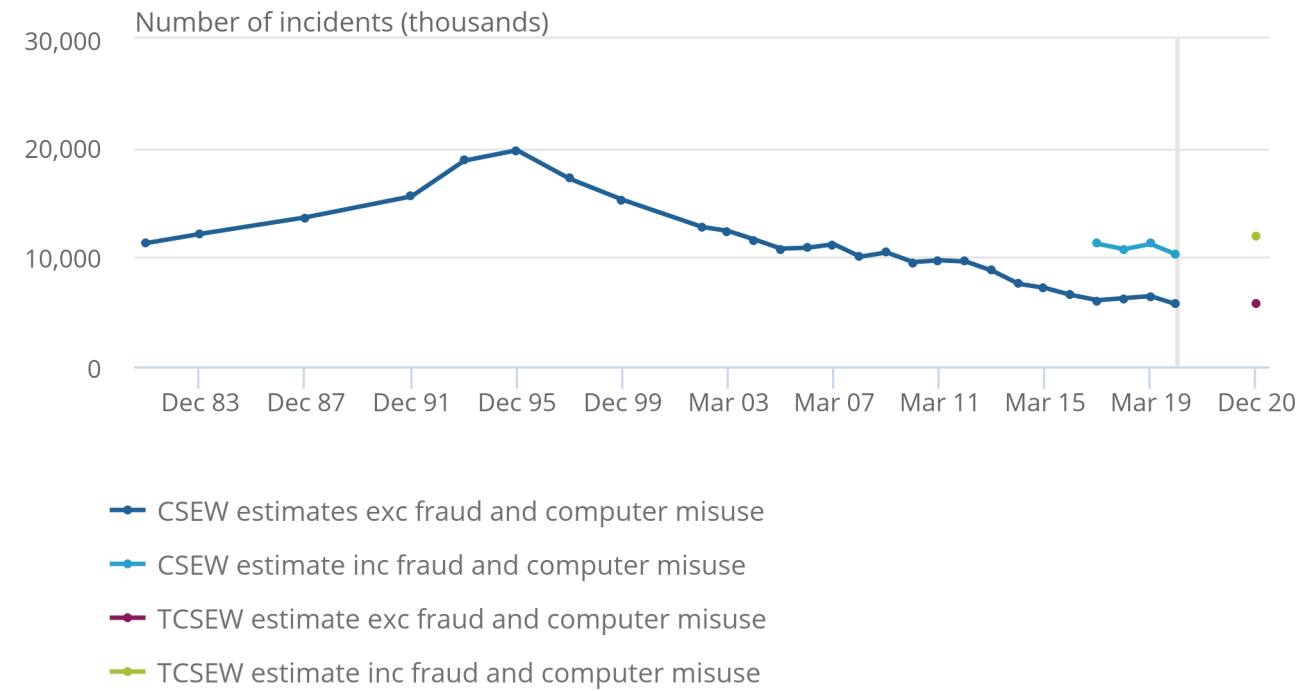
England and Wales, annual estimates

Figure 3: Crime estimates by the CSEW December 1981 to March 2020, and TCSEW estimates for the year ending December 2020

Rises in crime levels during the 90s were mainly due to increases in violence, vehicle-related theft and burglary.

Excluding March 2020 for computer misuse we have seen a slight increase over levels reported in the CSEW time series.

England and Wales, annual estimates



Source: Office for National Statistics - Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)

Notes:

1. Data on this chart refers to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year; 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.
2. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over or to households. TCSEW data relate to adults aged 18 years and over or to households.
3. New questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. The questions were asked of half the survey sample from October 2015 until September 2017 and have been asked of a full sample from October 2017.

Although not directly comparable, TCSEW annual estimates of total crime are similar to levels estimated by the face-to-face CSEW in recent years. We plan to investigate and report on the impact of the mode change and sampling biases in our next publication.

Notes for: Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales

1. Participants in the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales report on crimes experienced in the last 12 months, this covers the period from May 2019 to November 2020 depending on when interviews took place.

4 . Trends in police recorded crime

The police recorded 5.6 million crimes in England and Wales in the 12-month period to year ending December 2020, an 8% decrease from the previous year. This reduction was apparent across all regions of England and in Wales with decreases of between 3% and 14% in police recorded crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse).

Improvements to recording processes and practices by the police, expansions of the recorded crime collection to include new offences, variations in police activity, more victims reporting crime, and genuine increases in some types of crime, have made substantial contributions to rises in recorded crime over the last five years. This effect has been more pronounced for some crime types, and for many types of offence, these figures do not provide reliable trends in crime.

Theft offences fell by 26% in the year ending December 2020. There were falls in robbery offences (25% decrease), sexual offences (7% decrease) and criminal damage and arson (11% decrease) but there were rises in drug offences (15% increase) and a slight rise in violence against the person offences (2% increase).

Trends in police recorded crime data for lower volume crimes (year ending December 2020) showed:

- the number of homicides decreased by 12%; this fall was partly because of the single incident that took place in the previous year, October 2019, when the bodies of 39 migrants were found in a lorry in Grays, Essex; excluding this incident from the previous year's homicide count (from 707 to 668 offences), the number of homicides shows a 6% decrease in the year ending December 2020 (625 offences)
- a 9% decrease in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments
- an 11% decrease in offences involving firearms

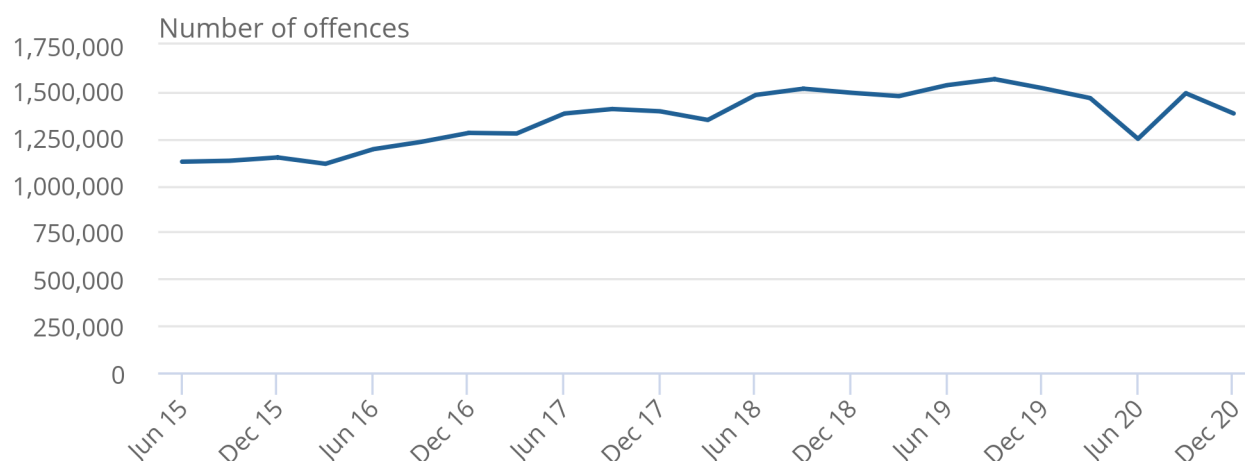
Total recorded crime, including fraud, has fluctuated over the year ending December 2020. Although a small proportion of these fluctuations will be the result of seasonal effects on crime trends, the majority can be attributed to the introduction and subsequent easing of national lockdown restrictions throughout the year.

Figure 4: Falls in police recorded crime during October to December 2020

England and Wales, quarterly figures (April to June 2015 to October to December 2020)

Figure 4: Falls in police recorded crime during October to December 2020

England and Wales, quarterly figures (April to June 2015 to October to December 2020)



Source: Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

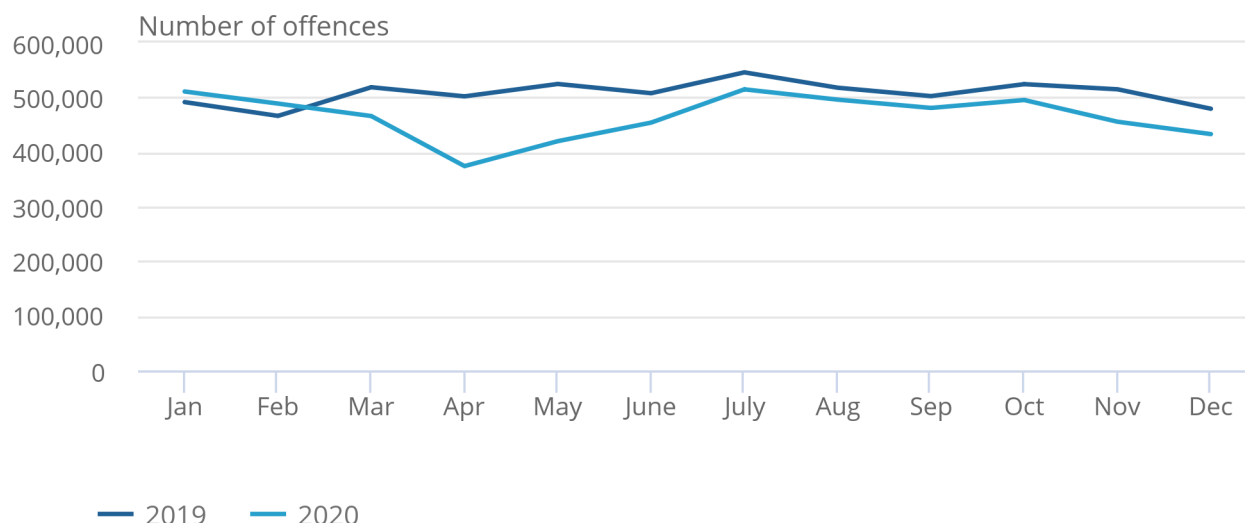
The annual decrease was mainly driven by substantial falls during the April to June 2020 period, by 15% (1,247,228 offences) as the first lockdown restrictions were introduced. Police recorded crime increased by 19% in July to September 2020 (1,490,697 offences) as lockdown restrictions gradually eased, however, offences recorded by the police fell by 7% in October to December 2020 (1,382,776 offences) as lockdown restrictions were reintroduced in this period. The number of offences recorded by the police in October to December 2020 remained 9% lower than that recorded in the same period in 2019 (1,517,709 offences).

Figure 5: Falls in police recorded crime during October to December 2020 compared with October to December 2019

England and Wales, monthly figures (January to December 2019 and January to December 2020)

Figure 5: Falls in police recorded crime during October to December 2020 compared with October to December 2019

England and Wales, monthly figures (January to December 2019 and January to December 2020)



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

For the months of October to December, the number of recorded offences remained lower in 2020 than their 2019 equivalents. Police recorded crime during this period reduced by 6% in October, 12% in November and 10% in December compared with the same months in 2019.

Although reductions in crime are likely to have been influenced by the lockdown, some differences may be the result of normal monthly variation within the crime types. Changes in police recording and police activity in response to the lockdown are also likely to have contributed, along with changes in the reporting of crime to the police.

For more detailed information on improvement in police recording practices prior to the coronavirus pandemic, see Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report on the [State of Policing 2019](#).

Figure 6: Falls in police recorded theft offences and rises in drug offences during 2020 compared with 2019 average

England and Wales, January to December 2019 and January to December 2020

Notes:

1. Following the implementation of a new IT system in July 2019, Greater Manchester Police have been previously unable to supply data from the period of July 2019 to March 2020. Figures for Greater Manchester are now included in the national and regional totals for the months presented in this table. Comparisons made with previous versions of this table may display differences due to the exclusion of Greater Manchester in prior publications.
2. The index was calculated by dividing the number of police recorded incidents for each crime type and month by the average number of incidents for that crime type for the period January to December 2019. An index value of 100 is equivalent to the 2019 monthly average number of incidents; a value above 100 indicates an increase from the average while a value below 100 indicates a decrease.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Theft

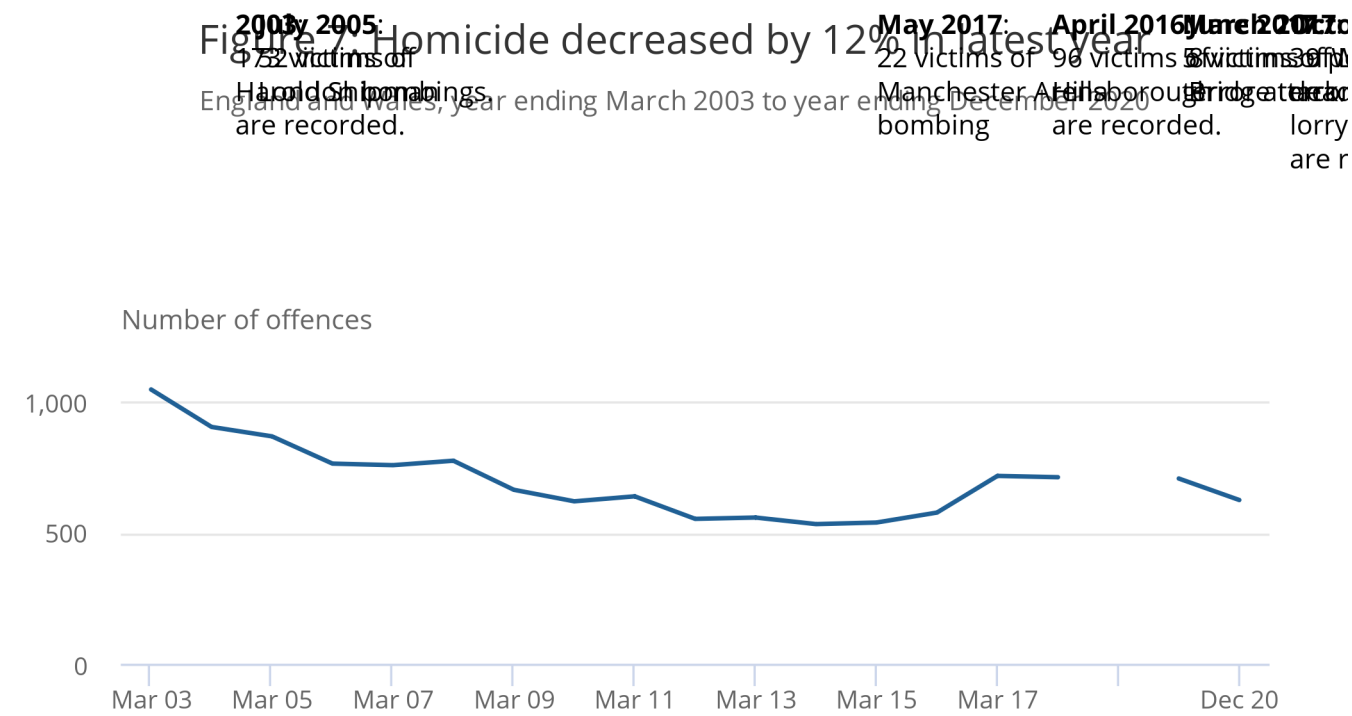
Recorded theft decreased by 26% in the year ending December 2020 compared with the previous year. This was driven by decreases in offences such as: theft from the person (42%), shoplifting (29%), burglary (24%) and vehicle offences (21%). Theft offences fell by 4% since the previous quarter, the July to September 2020 period.

Theft offences are driving the reduction in the overall police recorded crime for the latest year. This fall was most likely the result of national lockdown restrictions, with fewer shops being open and people spending more time in their homes.

5 . Homicide

Figure 7: Homicide decreased by 12% in latest year

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2020



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Some forces have revised their data and police recorded crime totals may not agree with those previously published.
2. The dates shown for the London terrorist attacks in 2005 and 2017 correspond to when the events occurred, rather than when the homicides were recorded by the police.
3. Data on homicide offences given in these police recorded crime data will differ from data from the Home Office Homicide Index.

The police recorded 625 homicide offences in the year ending December 2020. The size of the fall includes the single incident that took place in the previous year, October 2019, when the bodies of 39 migrants were found in a lorry in Grays, Essex. Excluding this incident from the previous year's homicide count (from 707 to 668 offences), the number of homicides show a 6% decrease (to 625 offences) in the year ending December 2020.

The figures include a 19% decrease (from 147 to 119 homicide offences) recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service in the latest year. The rate of homicide remains low at 11 per 1 million people in the year ending December 2020.

The number of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument (knife-enabled crime) was involved decreased from 269 to 237 offences in the year ending December 2020. Of all recorded homicides in the latest year, 37% were knife-enabled crimes.

For the latest headline figures relating to homicide and more detailed figures including data time series see [Appendix tables](#) and [Other related tables](#). For Police Force Area breakdowns see [Police Force Area data tables](#).

6 . Knife or sharp instrument offences

Police recorded crime provides a better measure than the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) of higher harm but less common types of violence, such as those involving a knife or sharp instrument (knife-enabled crime).

Because of the change in knife or sharp instrument data collection practices, police recorded crime figures referenced in this section are not directly comparable with those previously published.

There was a 9% decrease in knife-enabled crime recorded by the police in the year ending December 2020 (46,015 offences) compared with the previous year.

The annual decrease in knife-enabled crime can be largely attributed to the decrease seen in time periods affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown restrictions. In April to June 2020, offences recorded fell by 20% (from 12,431 to 9,901 offences) compared with the January to March period and fell by 13% in October to December 2020 (from 12,642 to 11,041 offences) compared with the July to September period.

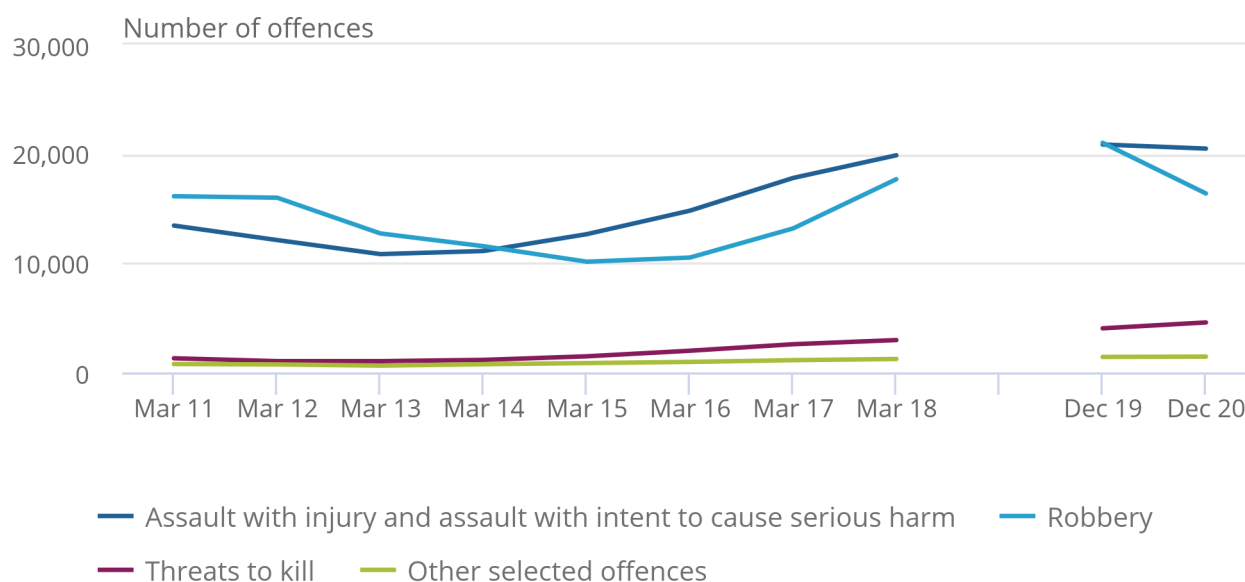
The last quarter of 2020 saw a 16% fall in offences recorded, when compared with the same period in 2019 (from 13,219 to 11,041 offences). The decrease in knife-enabled crime was driven mainly by the 29% decrease in knife-enabled robbery offences in the same period (from 6,257 to 4,452 offences).

Figure 8: Knife enabled crime decreased in the latest year driven by decrease in robbery offences

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending December 2020

Figure 8: Knife enabled crime decreased in the latest year driven by decrease in robbery offences

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending December 2020



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Greater Manchester Police reviewed their recording of offences involving knives or sharp instruments in December 2017 which revealed that they were under-counting these offences. Previous data were not revised at the time and therefore data from Greater Manchester Police are excluded to allow for comparison over time.
2. An adjustment has been made to data prior to the year ending March 2020 for police forces who are now using the NDQIS tool and the total for England and Wales. As more police forces switch to the NDQIS tool, historical data for these forces and for England and Wales will continue to be updated. For more information on the adjustment to the time series and the differences in data collection methods, please see the methodology note [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments: methodology changes](#).
3. Other selected offences include rape, attempted murder, homicide, and sexual assault.

The change in the number of knife or sharp instrument offences between years ending December 2019 and 2020, vary by Police Force Area.¹ For example:

- London² saw a 21% decrease
- Greater Manchester saw a 4% increase
- West Midlands saw an 8% decrease

Other sources of data

The latest available provisional admissions data for NHS hospitals in England reported 853 admissions for assault by a sharp object between October and December 2020. This was a decrease of 29% compared with the same period in 2019 and can be attributed to national lockdown restrictions.

There is a decrease in “assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm” (7%) offences involving knives or sharp instruments recorded by the police in October to December 2020, compared with 2019.

Police recorded “possession of an article with a blade or point”³ offences similarly fell by 10% to 21,056 offences in the year ending December 2020. Trends in this offence have often been influenced by increases in targeted police action, such as the recent rise in stop and searches.⁴ Although stop and searches are regularly used, they are used more often following rises in knife-enabled crime.

For data relating to knife-enabled crime see [Other related tables](#), for geographic breakdowns see [Police Force Area data tables](#) and for sharp instrument homicides see [Appendix tables: homicide in England and Wales](#). Data related to stop and searches can be found in the Home Office publication [Police powers and procedures](#).

Notes for: Knife or sharp instrument offences

1. Data cannot be compared across all police forces because of changes in data collection methods. Twelve police forces have now switched to the NQDIS data collection method. These are Derbyshire, Dyfed-Powys, Greater Manchester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Northamptonshire, South Wales, South Yorkshire, West Midlands, and West Yorkshire. Remaining police forces are still collecting these data using special collection. For more information, please see the methodology note [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments: methodology changes](#).
2. Includes the Metropolitan and City of London Police Force Areas.
3. Offences of “possession of an article with a blade or point” are covered separately by a specific recorded crime category, which is the specific crime of possessing an article with a blade or point illegally.
4. In August 2019, [a pilot easing restrictions around emergency stop and search powers](#) was extended to all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

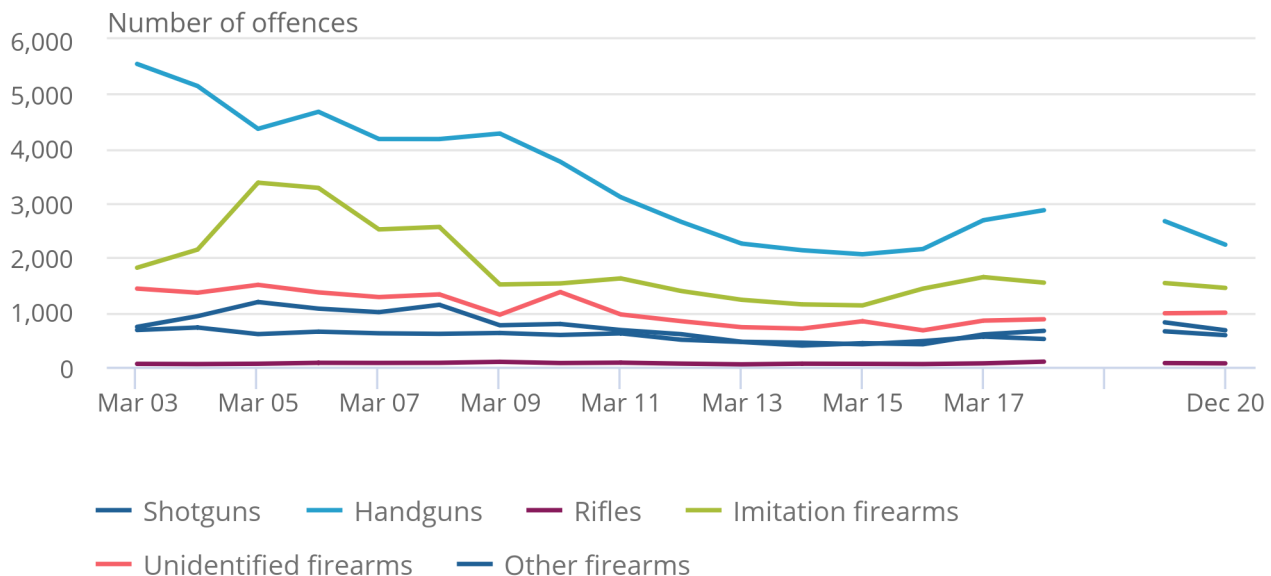
7 . Offences involving firearms

Figure 9: Crimes involving firearms show an 11% decrease compared with the previous year

England and Wales year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2020

Figure 9: Crimes involving firearms show an 11% decrease compared with the previous year

England and Wales year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2020



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. 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.
2. Firearms data are provisional. Excludes offences involving the use of conventional air weapons, such as air rifles and offences recorded by British Transport Police. Includes crimes recorded by police where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument against a person or used as a threat.
3. Most police forces have made data quality and recording improvements which means data from earlier years are not directly comparable with recent years. Some forces have also revised data, which means data may not match earlier publications.
4. Imitation firearms include replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons which fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons.
5. Other firearms include CS gas and pepper spray, stun guns and other weapons.

In October to December 2020, offences involving firearms fell by 19% compared with the previous quarter, July to September 2020 (1,761 offences to 1,422 offences). This fall in offences was most likely the result of national lockdown restrictions during the October to December 2020 period. Further, firearms offences fell by 16% in October to December 2020 compared with October to December 2019.

For data relating to offences involving weapons see [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#). For data relating to offences involving firearms see [Other related tables](#).

8 . Types of violence

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the best picture of the overall trend in violent crime and is a more reliable measure of long-term trends in domestic abuse, sexual assault, stalking and harassment.

Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 1.6 million violent offences in the last 12 months to December 2020. Although not directly comparable with face-to-face CSEW estimates, the estimate for total violence is similar to that reported in recent years.

Police recorded crime showed a 2% increase in violence against the person offences (from 1,749,471 to 1,783,512 offences) in the year ending December 2020. In October to December 2020, violence against the person offences decreased by 11% (438,819 offences) in comparison with the previous quarter, July to September 2020 (495,247 offences).

There were 588,973 stalking and harassment offences recorded in the year ending December 2020. Data are not comparable with the previous year because of changes in Home Office Counting Rules.¹

Concerns around confidentiality and respondent safeguarding limit the types of questions asked in the TCSEW. This currently includes those relating to domestic abuse and sexual assault, which we are unable to provide an update on since the CSEW was suspended in March 2020.

Sexual offences and domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police do not provide a reliable measure of trends in these types of crime. Improvements in police recording practices and increased reporting by victims have contributed to increases in recent years, although this effect is thought to be diminishing. The figures do, however, provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police.

Domestic abuse

Previous estimates from the CSEW showed that 5.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year in the year ending March 2020.

There was a 7% increase in the total number of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police in the year ending December 2020 (839,077 offences) compared with the previous year. Domestic abuse-related offences have risen by 2% in the October to December 2020 period (to 205,348 offences) compared with October to December 2019 (201,158 offences). Unlike some other offences, the number of domestic abuse-related offences in the latest year has not decreased during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Further information and data related to domestic abuse can be found in [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2020](#).

Sexual assault

Previous estimates from the CSEW for the year ending March 2020 showed that 1.8% of adults aged 16 to 74 years had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences) in the latest year. This was a decrease compared with the previous year (2.4%).

The number of sexual offences recorded by the police showed a 7% decrease in the year ending December 2020 (151,059 offences) compared with the previous year. Sexual offences fell by 4% in the October to December 2020 period compared with October to December 2019.

In the year ending December 2020, rape, which accounted for 37% of all sexual offences recorded by the police, fell by 6% (55,632 offences). Prior to this decrease, the number of rape offences had been gradually increasing annually. This trend may reflect the diminishing impact of recording improvements as well as the effects of national lockdown restrictions.

Further data related to sexual offences can be found in the [Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2020](#) publication.

For more detailed figures relating to violent crime including a data time series see [Appendix tables](#).

CSEW data on the prevalence of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking can be found in Table S42 in [Annual supplementary tables](#).

For information about Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and Inspections of police recorded crime and incident data quality see our [User guide](#).

Notes for: Types of violence

1. From April 2020 changes to the Home Office Counting Rules means controlling and coercive behaviour was categorised under the stalking and harassment offence category and all cases where a course of conduct is reported between a victim and their former partner must be recorded as stalking unless the police are satisfied that the matter amounts to harassment in law only. This is expected to cause an increase in offences recorded against stalking therefore data for year ending December 2020 are not comparable with previous years.

9 . Fraud

Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 4.5 million fraud offences in the last 12 months to December 2020. Although not directly comparable with estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), the estimate for fraud is similar to that reported in recent years.

Reported fraud offences are recorded and collected by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) and two industry bodies, Cifas and UK Finance (who report instances of fraud where their member organisations have been a victim). Latest figures showed a similar number of fraud offences in the year ending December 2020 (754,592 offences) compared with the previous year (743,380 offences).

In the year ending December 2020, UK Finance reported [2.9 million cases of fraud](#) involving UK-issued payment cards, remote banking, and cheques via their recording system, CAMIS. This shows a 4% increase compared with the previous year (2.8 million). There was a 68% increase in “remote banking” fraud (73,640 incidents). This increase reflects the greater number of people now regularly using internet, telephone and mobile banking, and the attempts by fraudsters to take advantage of this.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is likely to have had differential effects on trends in fraud offences because of lockdown restrictions. For example, data from Action Fraud showed a 38% increase in “online shopping and auctions” fraud in the latest year (86,984 offences), which could be accounted for by the increase in online shopping because of the closure of shops during national lockdown restrictions. The data also showed a 68% decrease in “ticket” fraud (2,532 offences), which could be attributed to cancellation of music gigs and festivals. However, it is too early to say whether this is evidence of a change to longer-term patterns.

For the latest headline figures relating to fraud and for more detailed figures including a data time series see [Appendix tables](#) and [Other related tables](#) and [Police Force Area tables](#).

10 . Computer misuse

Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 1.7 million computer misuse offences in the last 12 months to December 2020. Although not directly comparable with estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), the TCSEW estimate is similar to that reported in earlier years.

There were 29,651 offences referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by Action Fraud in the year ending December 2020, an increase of 28% from the year ending December 2019.

This increase was driven by large increases in the two highest-volume computer misuse types reported to Action Fraud. “Hacking – social media and email” saw a 26% increase from 11,101 to 14,004 offences and “computer viruses and malware” saw a 30% increase from 5,536 to 7,192 offences. This increase may correlate with the rise in the number of large-scale data breaches around the world. Data breaches included a lot of email and password combinations, enabling potential hacking of social media and email accounts, dependent on the public’s level of cyber-security standards and the likelihood of them using the same password and email for multiple accounts.

For the latest headline figures relating to computer misuse and for more detailed figures see [Appendix tables](#) and [Other related tables](#).

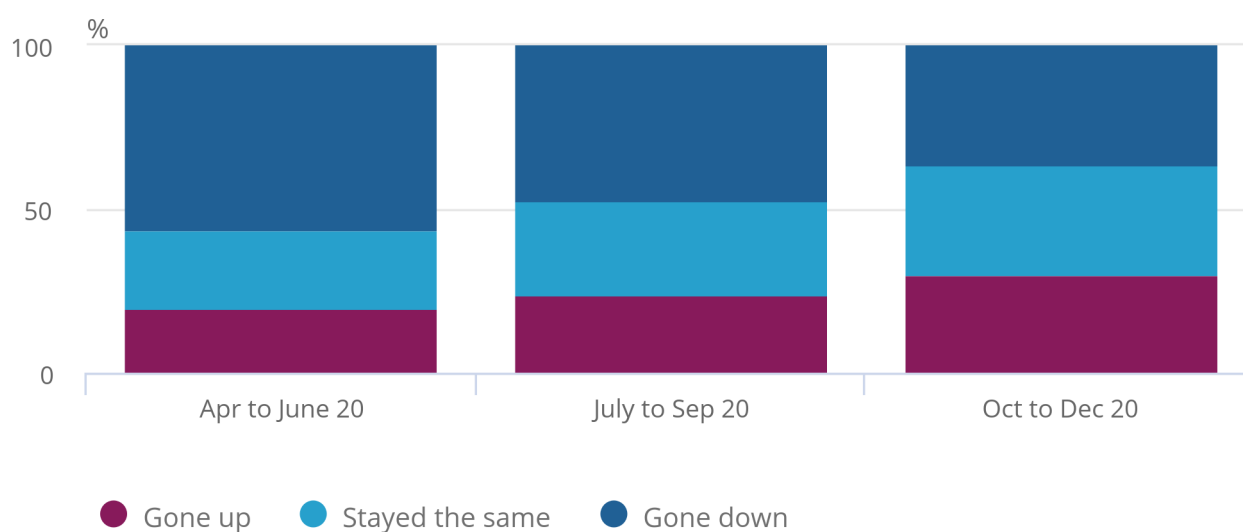
11 . Perception and nature of crime during the coronavirus pandemic

Figure 10: Proportion of adults who perceive crime levels to have fallen nationally has decreased

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May 2020 and December 2020

Figure 10: Proportion of adults who perceive crime levels to have fallen nationally has decreased

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May 2020 and December 2020



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

In October to December 2020, 24% of adults perceived crime to have fallen in their local area, a decrease from 33% between July and September 2020. The majority of adults interviewed, however, perceived crime in their local area to have stayed the same (60%), since the start of the coronavirus outbreak.¹

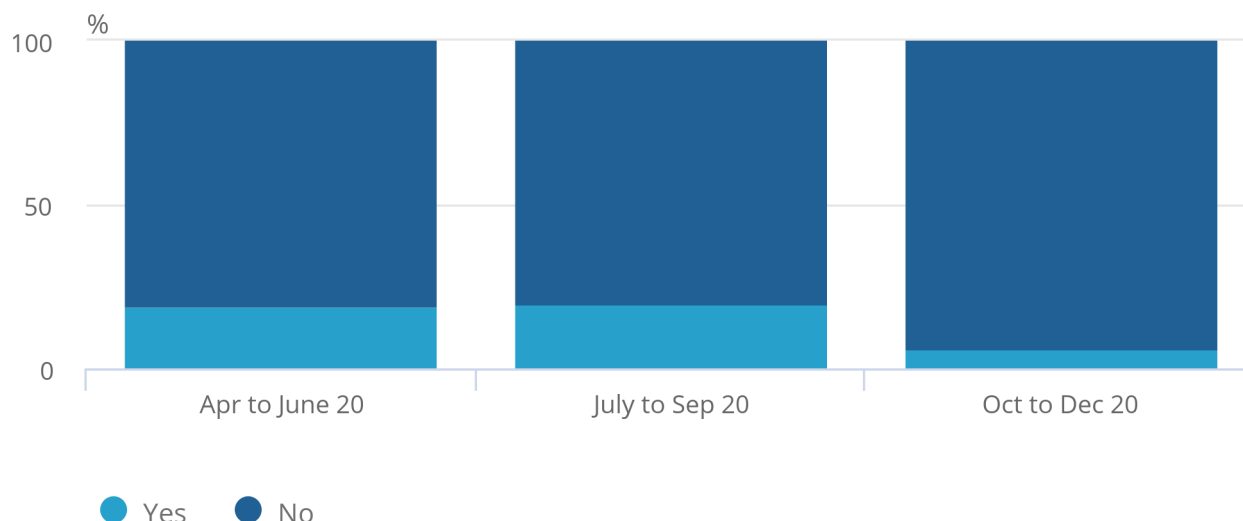
The majority of adults reported in December 2020 that there had been no change in their level of worry about either crime in general (83%) or fraud (77%) during the coronavirus outbreak.¹

Figure 11: The proportion of adults who had personally experienced or witnessed anti-social behaviour in the past three months, has decreased

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May 2020 and December 2020

Figure 11: The proportion of adults who had personally experienced or witnessed anti-social behaviour in the past three months, has decreased

England and Wales, based on interviews conducted between May 2020 and December 2020



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

In October to December 2020, most adults (71%) perceived anti-social behaviour (ASB) levels in their local area to have stayed the same since the start of the coronavirus outbreak¹. This is a 3% increase compared with the July to September 2020 period. Most adults (84%) said that ASB was not a big problem in their local area, and 94% of adults had not experienced or witnessed ASB in the past three months.

Over the past nine months, around half of adults reported noticing others breaching virus restrictions in their local area since the start of the coronavirus outbreak¹ (50% in the October to December 2020 period). Of these, 7% reported the breach to the police. The main reason for not reporting a breach was because it was considered too trivial or not worth reporting.

In October to December 2020, incidents of ASB recorded by the police (excluding West Midlands² and British Transport Police) were 41% higher than those recorded in October to December 2019. This increase may reflect the reporting of breaches to public health restrictions, as most police forces include breaches reported to them by members of the public as an ASB incident.

In October to December 2020, 52% of adults said that the police were doing a good job. Adults were mostly fairly satisfied (67%) or very satisfied (18%) with the way the police were responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

For more detailed figures relating to estimates from the TCSEW see [Coronavirus and crime tables](#).

Notes for: Perception and nature of crime during the coronavirus pandemic

1. The reference period referred to in the module includes but is not specific to the lockdown period and is therefore open to some interpretation by respondents as to when the start of the outbreak was.
2. West Midlands Police have not been able to supply ASB data from April 2020 onward.

12 . Crime data

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

Dataset | Released 13 May 2021

Long-term trends in Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) crime, estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) and police recorded crime, by offence type.

[Crime in England and Wales: Coronavirus and crime tables](#)

Dataset | Released 13 May 2021

Information from a new module of questions included in the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) around perceptions of crime, the police and anti-social behaviour during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Data on children's online activity are also presented.

[Crime in England and Wales: Other related tables](#)

Dataset | Released 13 May 2021

Firearms, knife and sharp instrument offences, fraud, offences flagged as domestic abuse-related, corruption, child sexual abuse and child exploitation. Data tables also include information on anti-social behaviour, perceptions, non-notifiable incidents and crimes against business. The data contained in these tables are from the following sources: police recorded crime, fraud data from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and UK Finance CAMIS database, figures from the Ministry of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics and the Commercial Victimisation Survey.

[Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables](#)

Dataset | Released 13 May 2021

The number of police recorded crimes, percentage change from previous year and rate per 1,000 population by offence group, and firearms and knife, sharp instrument and fraud offences by Police Force Area.

[Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly data tables](#)

Dataset | Released 3 February 2021

Data from Home Office police recorded crime broken down into quarterly and monthly time periods.

[Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area](#)

Dataset | Released 13 May 2021

Recorded crime figures for Community Safety Partnership areas, which equate in the majority of instances to local authorities. Contains the number of offences for the last two years, percentage change between these two time periods and rates per 1,000 population for the latest year.

13 . Glossary

Computer misuse

Computer misuse is when fraudsters hack or use computer viruses or malware to disrupt services, obtain information illegally or extort individuals or organisations.

Criminal damage

Criminal damage results from any person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property belonging to another, intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged.

Fraud

Fraud involves a person dishonestly and deliberately deceiving a victim for personal gain of property or money or causing loss or risk of loss to another. The majority of incidents fall under the legal definition of “Fraud by false representation” – where a person makes a representation that they know to be untrue or misleading (for example, banking and payment card frauds and dating scams). Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) estimates cover a broad range of fraud offences, including attempts, involving a loss and incidents not reported to the authorities.

Overall theft offences

Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) theft offences include all personal and household crime where items are stolen, including theft from the person; other theft of personal property, domestic burglary, vehicle-related theft, and bicycle theft.

Robbery

Robbery is an offence in which force, or the threat of force, is used either during or immediately prior to a theft or attempted theft. Mugging is an informal term for robbery. In this bulletin, we use the term “robbery”.

Violent crime

Violent crime covers a range of offence types from minor assaults, such as pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm, to murder. This includes offences where the victim was intentionally stabbed, punched, kicked, pushed or jostled, as well as offences where the victim was threatened with violence, regardless of injury.

More information and further definitions can be found in the “offence type” section of the [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#).

14 . Measuring the data

Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)

Estimates from the TCSEW are derived from a total of 26,465 telephone interviews conducted with household residents in England and Wales aged 18 years and over between 20 May and 31 December 2020.

We provide estimates for a 12-month reporting period. In the [Appendix tables](#) and [previous bulletins](#), comparisons can be made between the estimated number of incidents and victims in July to September 2020 with those in April to June 2020 and January to March 2020. Estimates for the period October to December 2020 will be provided in [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#).

As we are collecting data in a new survey mode, the survey estimates are presented within this release as [Experimental Statistics](#).

Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime data are supplied to us by the Home Office, who are responsible for the collation of recorded crime data supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police. These data are supplied to the Home Office on a monthly basis for each crime within the [notifiable offence list](#).

The recorded crime figures are collated via a live administrative system that is continually being updated as forces submit data. The data represent a “snapshot” of the live database taken on 31 March 2021 (for data up to the end of December 2020).

Figures may differ slightly from those published in subsequent bulletins for the same period, although this does not mean that the figures previously published were inaccurate at the time that they were reported. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics. For more information on how we are measuring crime during the pandemic see our [Quality and Methodology Information report](#) and [blog](#).

15 . Strengths and limitations

Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime has wider offence coverage and population coverage than the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW). It is the primary source of local crime statistics and is a good measure of offences that are well-reported to and well-recorded by the police, including lower volume crimes (for example, homicide). In addition, the time lag between occurrence of crime and reporting results tends to be short, providing an indication of emerging trends.

Police recorded crime excludes offences that are not reported to, or not recorded by, the police. Trends can be influenced by changes in recording practices, or police activity and public reporting of crime, making it difficult to make long-term comparisons. There are also concerns about the quality of recording and that crime is not recorded consistently across police forces.

Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)

The TCSEW is only able to explore crime trends from June 2019 onwards as data collection began on 20 May 2020. We have kept the structure of the TCSEW questionnaire as similar as possible to the face-to-face CSEW questionnaire. However, the changes in survey mode and sample design that were necessary because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic mean that crime estimates from the TCSEW may not be directly comparable with long-term trends from the face-to-face CSEW.

For more information see our [Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

16 . Related links

[Guide to finding crime statistics](#)

Methodology | Released 17 July 2020

A guide that directs you on where best to find different crime statistics.

[Coronavirus and crime in England and Wales: August 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 26 August 2020

Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on crime and people's perceptions of crime during the April and May 2020 period of national lockdown, using data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales telephone survey and Home Office police recorded crime.

[Nature of crime tables: year ending March 2020](#)

Dataset | Released 3 September 2020

Annual data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). Data include when incidents happened, information about offenders, the victim's perception of the incident. Available for: violence, criminal damage, personal and other theft, bicycle theft, other household theft, vehicle-related theft, robbery, burglary and fraud and computer misuse.

[Property crime tables](#)

Dataset | Released 3 September 2020

Annual data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and metal theft offences recorded by the police, including demographic and offence type breakdowns and time series data.

[Child abuse in England and Wales: March 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 5 March 2020

Statistics and research on child abuse in England and Wales, bringing together a range of different data sources from across the government and the voluntary sector.

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 25 November 2020

Figures on domestic abuse from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, police recorded crime and a number of different organisations.

[Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2020](#)

Article | Released 25 February 2021

Analyses of information held within the Home Office Homicide Index, which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales.

[Drug misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2020](#)

Article | Released 9 December 2020

An overview of the extent and trends of illicit drug use for the year ending March 2020. Data are from the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

[Online bullying in England and Wales: year ending March 2020](#)

Article | Released 16 November 2020

Estimates of the prevalence and nature of online bullying among children using data from the 10- to 15-year-olds' Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

[Childhood vulnerability to victimisation in England and Wales: year ending March 2017 to year ending March 2019](#)

Bulletin | Released 5 November 2020

Victimisation and negative behaviours of children aged 10 to 15 years living in a household with an adult who reported experiencing domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental ill-health (the so-called "toxic trio" factors) based on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).