

Statistical bulletin

# Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2021

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 2020 to September 2021 interview periods.



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## Notice

### 3 March 2022

A footnote, included in error, relating to records supplied to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by UK Finance has been removed from [Section 9](#).

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# 1 . Main points

Patterns of crime in the year ending September 2021 have been significantly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and government restrictions on social contact. There was significant variation in the level of restrictions in place across this time period and, at times, further variation across regions. This creates a challenge in isolating the level of impact that restrictions may have had on patterns of crime.

The number of incidents decreased for many types of crime during periods of national lockdowns. However, police recorded crime data show indications that over the last six months, certain offence types are returning to or exceeding the levels seen before the pandemic. This pattern has not yet emerged in the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW)<sup>1</sup> data, possibly reflecting the time lag in recording incidents via the survey.

Fraud and computer misuse offences do not follow the lockdown-related pattern of reduced victimisation, and increases in these offences more than offset the reductions seen for other types of crime.

Overall, Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates provide the best indicator of long-term trends in crime. Estimates from the TCSEW for the year ending September 2021 compared with the pre-coronavirus year ending September 2019<sup>2</sup> show:

- a 14% increase in total crime, driven by a 47% increase in fraud and computer misuse
- crime excluding fraud and computer misuse decreased by 14%, largely driven by an 18% decrease in theft offences

The TCSEW shows little change in total number of incidents of violence but a 27% decrease in the number of victims of violent crime. This is largely driven by falls in violence where the offender was a stranger<sup>3</sup>, where the number of victims has dropped by 50%, in part reflecting the closure of the night-time economy for several months of the year.

Police recorded crime data give more insight into lower-volume but higher-harm crimes that the survey does not cover or does not capture well. Compared with the year ending September 2020 they show:

- little change in the number of homicides, with 666 offences recorded (this is a 5% increase excluding the Grays lorry incident)
- a 9% decrease in the number of police recorded offences involving firearms
- a 10% decrease in offences involving knives or sharp instruments (knife-enabled crime)

Sexual offences recorded by the police were at the highest level recorded within a 12-month period (170,973 offences) in the year ending September 2021, a 12% increase from the same period in 2020. Rape accounted for 37% of these offences and the year ending September 2021 saw the highest recorded annual number of rape offences to date (63,136 offences).

Within these annual figures, the number of recorded sexual and rape offences were lower during periods of lockdown but there have been substantial increases since April 2021. However, caution is needed when interpreting the level of police recorded sexual offences. Changes in the figures may reflect a number of factors including the impact of high-profile cases and campaigns on victims' willingness to report incidents.

## Notes for: Main points

1. The Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) began data collection on 20 May 2020 to capture trends in crime while normal face-to-face interviewing was suspended.
2. The year ending September 2019 face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data are the latest that are based on a sample that is independent of the year ending September 2021 Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) and allow for comparison over time.
3. This is not indicative of levels of domestic abuse during the pandemic. Information on domestic abuse can be found in [Section 7](#).

## 2 . Overall estimates of crime

Crime estimates for the year ending September 2021 best reflect the current extent of crime experienced by the population resident in households ([Appendix Table A2](#)). However, new telephone-based survey (TCSEW) estimates are not directly comparable with previous survey (CSEW) estimates because of changes to the sample and questionnaire ([see Section 14](#)). Percentage changes and long-term trends are presented using figures adjusted for these differences ([Appendix Table A3](#)).

The Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) began data collection on 20 May 2020 to capture trends in crime while normal face-to-face interviewing was suspended following restrictions on social contact during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

According to TCSEW estimates, adults aged 18 years and over experienced 12.9 million offences in the year ending September 2021 ([Appendix Table A2](#)) including fraud and computer misuse. There were decreases across a range of individual crime types, particularly amongst theft offences. However, these were more than offset by rises in fraud and computer misuse offences ([see Section 9](#)), resulting in a 14% increase in overall levels of crime since the year ending September 2019.

Total crime excluding fraud and computer misuse decreased by 14% compared with the year ending September 2019. This was largely driven by an 18% decrease in theft offences ([Appendix Table A3](#)). These decreases were related to the coronavirus pandemic and government instructions to limit social contact.

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. Our [comparability report](#) has shown that TCSEW estimates can be directly compared with these long-term CSEW estimates when certain adjustments are applied ([Appendix Table A3](#)).

Further information on these changes is available in the [Measuring the data section](#).

Since the mid-1990s, there have been long-term falls in overall CSEW crime estimates (Figure 1). Long-term trends vary by crime types. For all headline figures, including a data time series, see [Appendix tables](#).

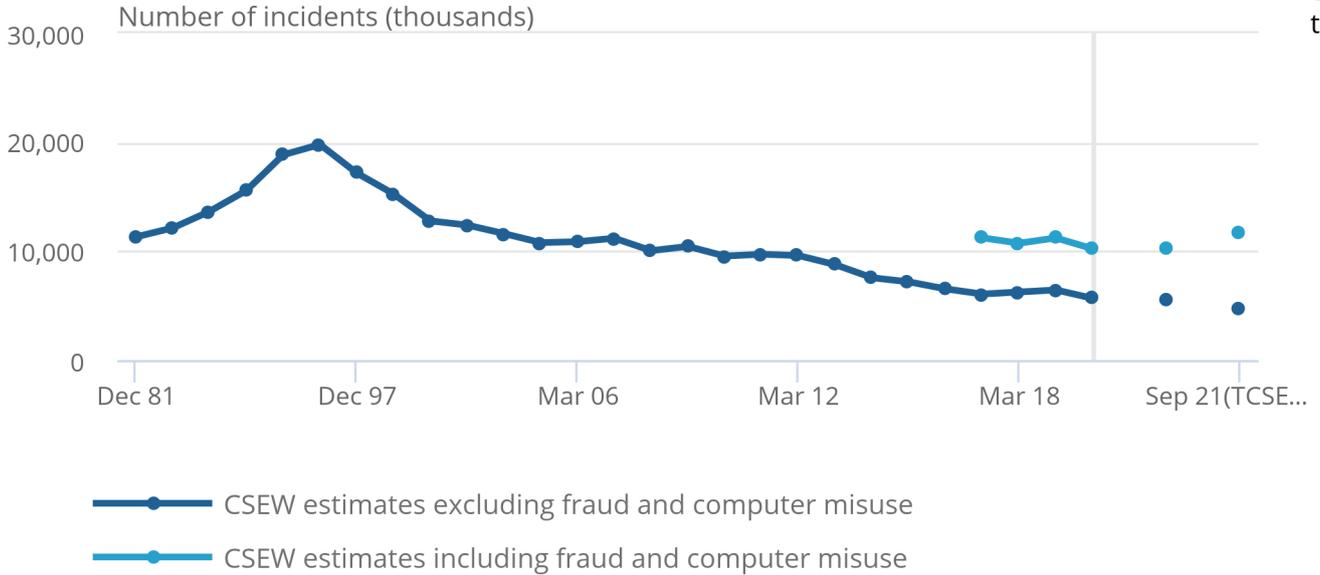
**Figure 1: Crime estimates from the CSEW December 1981 to March 2020, and TCSEW estimates for October 2020 to September 2021 interviews**

England and Wales, annual estimates

Rises in crime levels during the 90s were mainly due to increases in violence, vehicle-related theft and burglary. In March 2020, fraud and computer misuse, in the CSEW time series. In March 2020, fraud and computer misuse, in the CSEW time series. In March 2020, fraud and computer misuse, in the CSEW time series.

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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 from the TCSEW are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Data on this chart refer 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.
3. TCSEW data presented here for 2021 are not comparable with CSEW estimates. 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. See [Appendix Table A3](#) for comparable data.
4. 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.

## Likelihood of victimisation

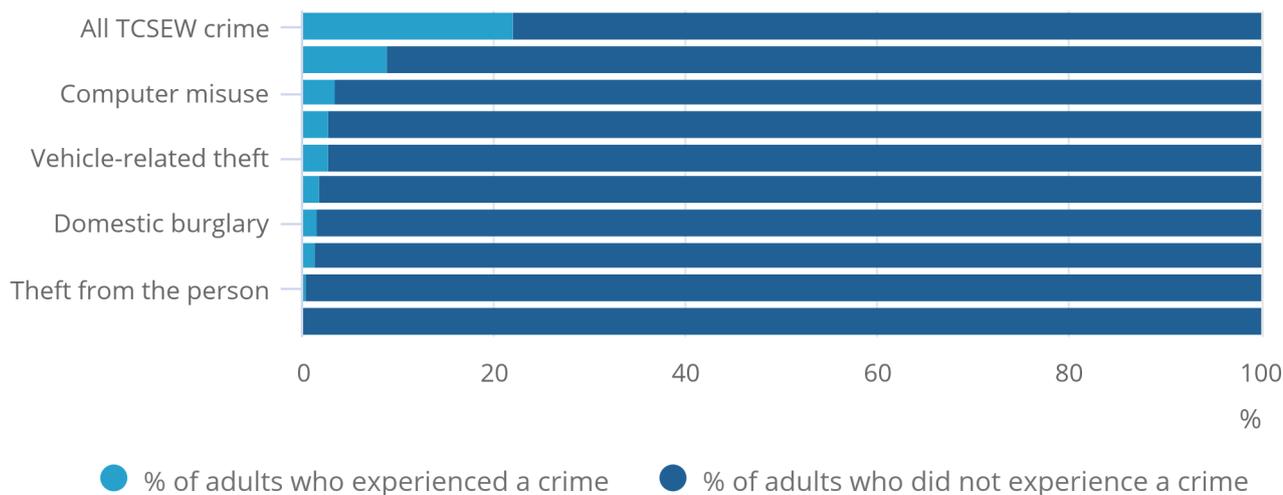
The latest estimates show that 8 in 10 adults did not experience any of the crimes covered by the TCSEW in the year ending September 2021 (Figure 2).

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

England and Wales, October 2020 to September 2021 interviews

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

England and Wales, October 2020 to September 2021 interviews



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

**Notes:**

1. Data from the TCSEW are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person, fraud and computer misuse are quoted for adults. Percentages for domestic burglary and criminal damage are quoted for households. Percentage for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted for vehicle- or bicycle-owning households.
3. For all TCSEW 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 TCSEW also showed that the likelihood of being a victim of crime varied by demographic characteristics. For more information, see the [annual trend and demographic tables](#).

## Trends in police recorded crime

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 each made substantial contributions to rises in recorded crime in recent years. This effect has been more pronounced for some crime types. For some types of offence these figures do not provide reliable trends in crime.

The police recorded 5.8 million crimes in England and Wales in the year ending September 2021; this is a 2% increase compared with the previous year. However, the number of offences fell 1% (to 4.9 million) when excluding fraud and computer misuse.

Police recorded crime has fluctuated across the year ending September 2021 and hides a lot of variation by crime type. Most of the fluctuations can be attributed to the introduction and subsequent easing of national lockdown restrictions throughout the year alongside more normal seasonal variations for some crime types.

Total police recorded crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse) in the year ending September 2021 saw the lowest levels of crime during the first part of the year compared with the two years prior. This coincides with the reintroduction of tighter restrictions on social contact and national lockdowns put in place. The number of offences recorded in a single month was lowest in February 2021 (333,740 offences), but began to rise from March 2021 onwards as national restrictions began to ease (Figure 3).

Compared with the previous year, recorded crime between July and September 2021 was 6% higher than the same period in 2020, reflecting a similar rise seen in the previous quarter (April to June 2021). This increase was likely a reflection of the national restrictions in place during these periods. Levels of crime between July and September 2021 have now returned to similar levels seen in July to September 2019.

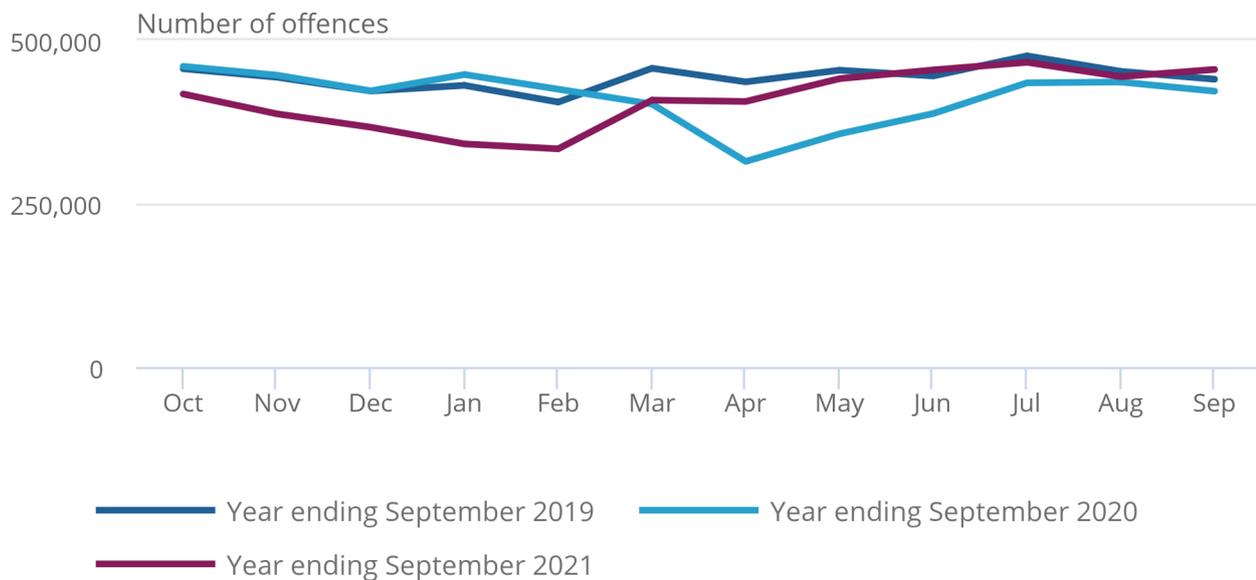
Total police recorded crime including fraud and computer misuse followed a similar but less pronounced pattern to crime that excludes these offences. Offences recorded by Action Fraud or referred to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) were 24% higher in the year ending September 2021 compared with the year ending September 2020.

**Figure 3: Police recorded crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse) fluctuated with changes in national lockdown restrictions**

England and Wales, monthly figures (October 2018 to September 2019, October 2019 to September 2020, and October 2020 to September 2021)

Figure 3: Police recorded crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse) fluctuated with changes in national lockdown restrictions

England and Wales, monthly figures (October 2018 to September 2019, October 2019 to September 2020, and October 2020 to September 2021)



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

Information on case outcomes can be found in [Home Office Crime outcomes in England and Wales](#).

Overview of main crime types<sup>1 2</sup>  
England and Wales

| Offence                           | Number of incidents/offences <sup>3</sup> | Annual % change | Comparison year | Source     |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| <b>Violence</b>                   | 1,846,000                                 | -2              | 2019            | TCSEW/CSEW |
| <b>Homicide</b>                   | 666                                       | -1              | 2020            | PRC        |
| <b>Knife or sharp instruments</b> | 46,239                                    | -10             | 2020            | PRC        |
| <b>Theft</b>                      | 2,950,000                                 | -18             | [s] 2019        | TCSEW/CSEW |
| <b>Burglary</b>                   | 258,594                                   | -21             | 2020            | PRC        |
| <b>Vehicle offences</b>           | 342,627                                   | -14             | 2020            | PRC        |
| <b>Robbery</b>                    | 61,486                                    | -18             | 2020            | PRC        |
| <b>Fraud</b>                      | 5,114,000                                 | 36              | [s] 2019        | TCSEW/CSEW |
| <b>Computer misuse</b>            | 1,869,000                                 | 89              | [s] 2019        | TCSEW/CSEW |

Source: Office for National Statistics – Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW), Home Office - Police recorded crime (PRC)

Notes

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales are published as Experimental Statistics, which are in the testing phase and not yet fully developed.
3. These estimates best reflect the current extent of crime but are not directly comparable with CSEW estimates because of changes to the TCSEW sample and questionnaire.
4. Presents our best estimate of percentage changes between TCSEW and CSEW with the use of comparable subsets of survey data with the following changes
5. Percentage changes for crime survey estimates are based on newly created comparable CSEW/TCSEW datasets.
6. [S]: this change is statistically significant at the 5% level.

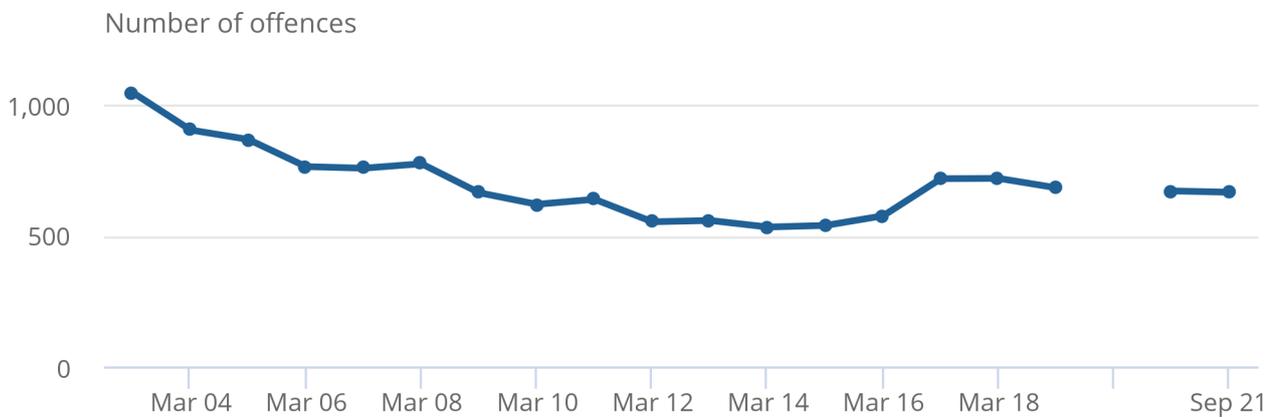
### 3 . Homicide

The police recorded 666 homicide offences in the year ending September 2021, a 1% decrease the previous year (671 offences). The year ending September 2020 included the Grays lorry incident, which involved the death of 39 people. Excluding this incident from the previous year’s homicide count, the number of homicides showed a 5% increase (from 632 to 666 offences) in the year ending September 2021.

**Figure 4: Homicide decreased by 1% in the latest year (5% increase excluding Grays lorry incident)**

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending September 2021

Figure 4: Homicide decreased by 1% in the latest year (5% increase excluding Grays lorry incident)



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. The dates shown for the London terrorist attacks in 2005 and 2017, and the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017, correspond to when the events occurred, rather than when the homicides were recorded by the police.
2. Data on homicide offences given in these police recorded crime data will differ from data from the Home Office Homicide Index.

The rate of homicide in England and Wales remained at 11 per 1 million people in the year ending September 2021.

The number of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument was involved increased from 256 to 276 offences in the year ending September 2021. Of all recorded homicides in the latest year, the method of killing by knife or sharp instrument was 42% of offences, an increase from 39% in the previous year.

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](#).



## 4 . 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).

Figures referenced in this section are not directly comparable with those previously published because of a change in knife or sharp instrument data collection practices.

There was a 10% decrease in knife-enabled crime recorded by the police in the year ending September 2021 (46,239 offences) compared with the previous year. This was driven by a 20% decrease in robbery offences to 16,601.

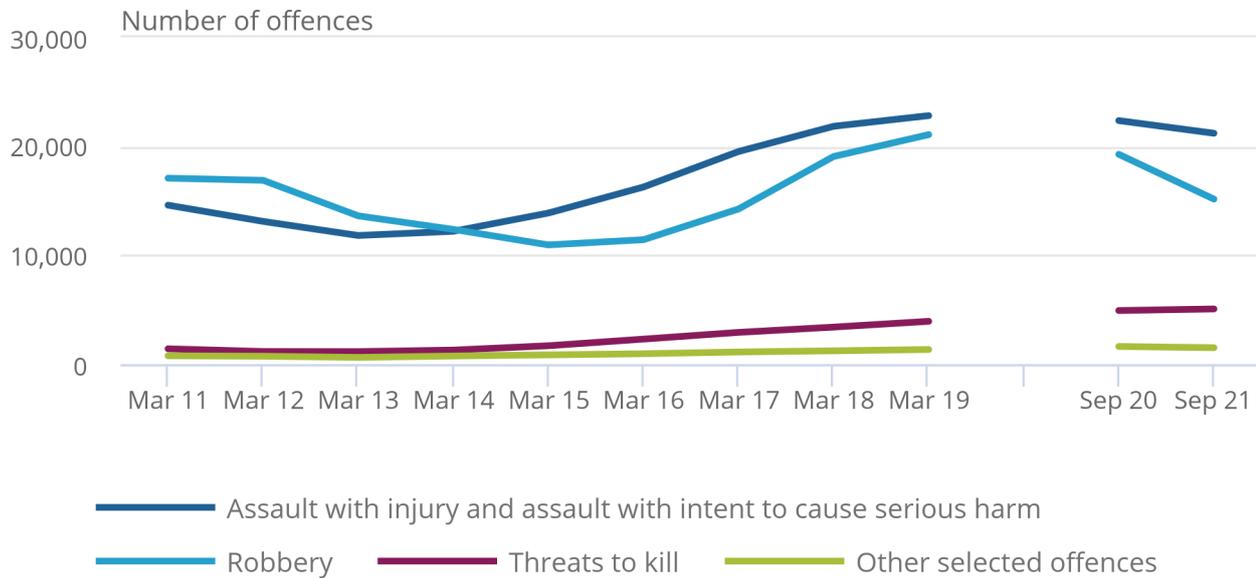
The largest decreases in total knife-enabled crime were seen in October to December 2020 and January to March 2021 with offences down by 16% and 22% compared with respective periods in the previous year. Both these periods coincided with national lockdowns and the highest levels of restrictions on social contact. Police recorded data in the last six months show an increase in knife-enabled crime following the ease of lockdown restrictions, however, levels are still below those seen before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

**Figure 5: Knife-enabled crime decreased in the latest year driven by a decrease in robbery offences**

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending September 2021

Figure 5: Knife-enabled crime decreased in the latest year driven by a decrease in robbery offences

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending September 2021



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. 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.

Knife or sharp instrument offences are concentrated in urban areas<sup>1</sup>. For the three police force areas (PFAs) with the highest volume of knife-enabled crime we have seen:

- a 17% decrease in the Metropolitan Police PFA<sup>2</sup>
- an 8% decrease in the West Midlands PFA
- a 2% increase in Greater Manchester PFA

Police recorded “possession of article with a blade or point”<sup>3</sup> offences increased by 5% to 22,542 in the year ending September 2021. This could have been influenced by increases in targeted police action.

The Home Office and police forces have continued to roll out a new methodology for identifying recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments (knife-enabled crime). Thirty-three forces have now switched to the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDQIS) data collection methodology<sup>4</sup>. The aim is to roll out the new methodology 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](#).

## Other sources of data

The latest available provisional admissions data for NHS hospitals in England and Wales reported a 12% decrease in admissions for assault by a sharp object in the year ending September 2021 (to 4,005 admissions).

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. Thirty-three police forces have now switched to the NDQIS data collection method. Remaining police forces are still submitting knife or sharp instrument offences data via a 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. The 33 forces that have switched to the NDQIS data collection method are: Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, City of London, Cleveland, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Devon and Cornwall, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, North Wales, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. Remaining police forces are still submitting knife and sharp instrument offences data via a special collection.

## 5 . Offences involving firearms

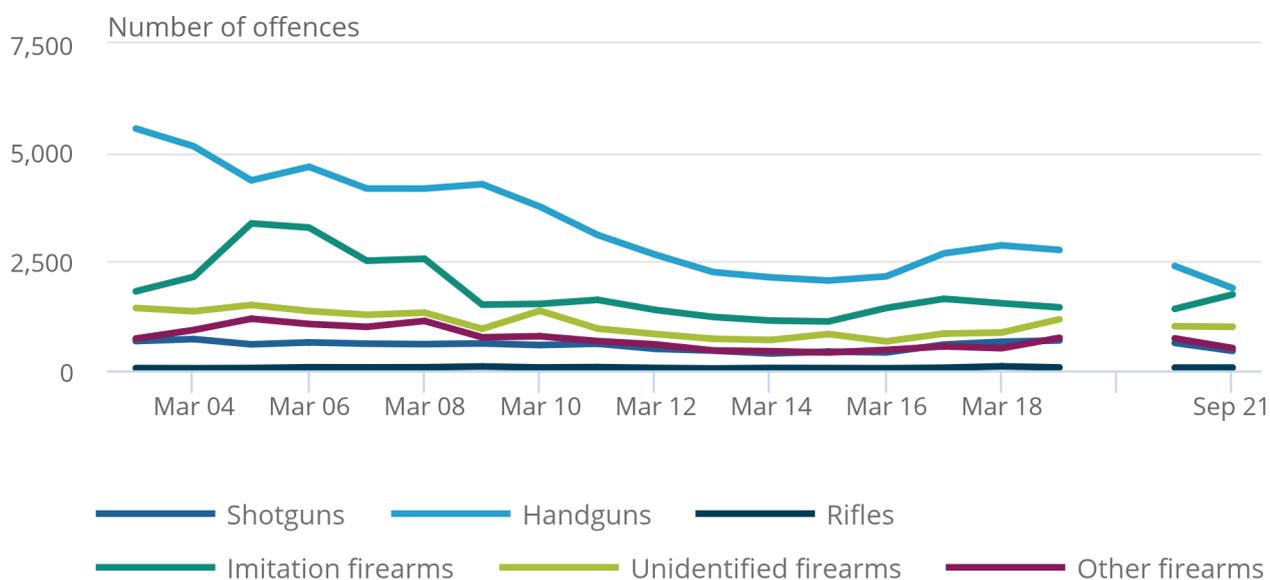
Police recorded offences involving firearms decreased by 9% to 5,653 offences in the year ending September 2021 compared with 6,244 offences in the previous year. This decrease may be related to national lockdown restrictions that occurred throughout the year. Offences involving firearms have not returned to levels seen before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and are at their lowest level since the year ending March 2016.

**Figure 6: Crimes involving firearms show a 9% decrease compared with the previous year**

England and Wales year ending March 2003 to year ending September 2021

### Figure 6: Crimes involving firearms show a 9% decrease compared with the previous year

England and Wales year ending March 2003 to year ending September 2021



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. 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.

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](#).

## 6 . Violence

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the best picture of the overall trend in violent crime.

Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 1.8 million violent offences in the year ending September 2021 ([Appendix Table A2](#)). Using a comparable dataset adjusted for changes in the sample and questionnaire between the CSEW and TCSEW ([see Appendix Table A3](#)), there was no significant change in total violent incidents compared with the year ending September 2019.

**Figure 7: The CSEW shows long-term reductions in violent crime**

England and Wales, annual estimates

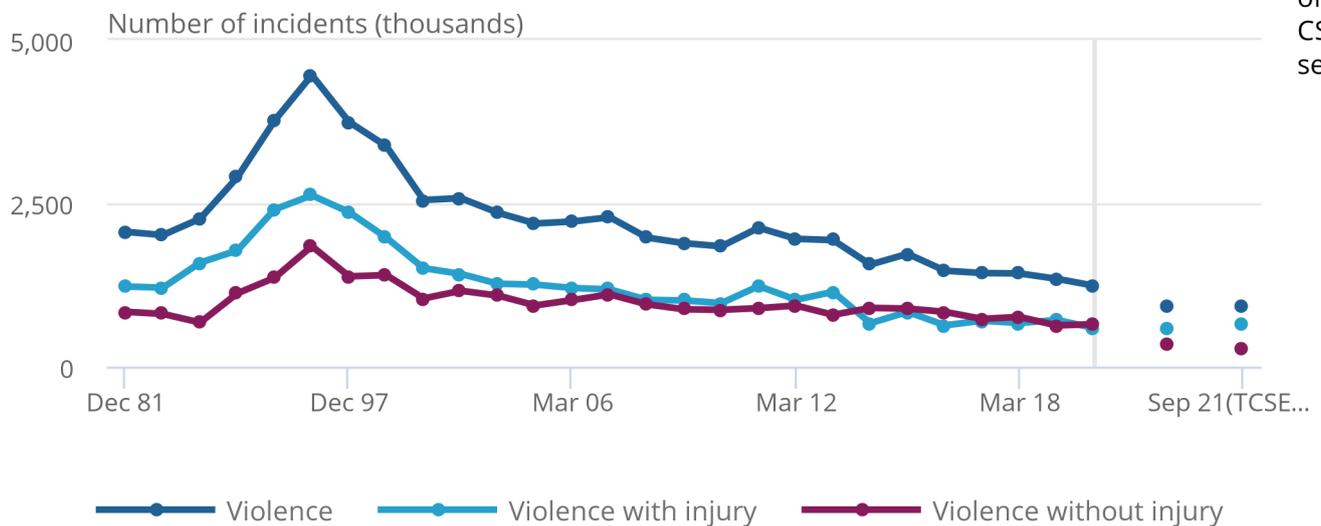
Figure 7: The CSEW shows long-term reductions in violent crime

England and Wales, annual estimates

March 2020:

Face-to-face interviewing was suspended owing to COVID-19 causing a break in the CSEW time series.

Estimate of the number of violent incidents in the CSEW time series.



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

Notes:

1. Data from the TCSEW are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Data on this chart refer 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.
3. TCSEW data presented here for 2021 are not comparable with CSEW estimates. 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. See [Appendix Table A3](#) for comparable data.

Although the TCSEW indicated no change in the total number of violence incidents, there was a 27% decrease in the number of victims compared with the year ending September 2019. ([Appendix Table A3](#)). This was largely driven by falls in the prevalence of violence where the offender was a stranger. This likely reflects a decrease in violence taking place in public spaces during national lockdown restrictions. However, there has been a large but non-significant increase in acquaintance violence<sup>1</sup>. These estimates of violence are not indicative of levels of domestic abuse during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic since the TCSEW was not able to produce such estimates.

Police recorded crime data showed a 3% decrease in violence with injury, to 499,880 offences, but a 3% increase in violence without injury (736,185 offences) in the year ending September 2021.

Overall, total police recorded violence was 8% higher than the previous year. Much of this increase was driven by a rise in the number of stalking and harassment offences, which increased 21% (excluding controlling and coercive behaviour)<sup>2</sup> in the year ending September 2021. This may be caused by improvements made by police forces in identifying and recording stalking and harassment offences together with an increased confidence in victims coming forward to report these offences.

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

### **Notes for: Violence**

1. Acquaintance violence includes victims who knew one or more offenders, at least by sight; it does not include domestic violence (between partners, ex-partners or family members).
2. From April 2020, controlling and coercive behaviour was categorised under the stalking and harassment offence category. To allow for comparison with the previous year, controlling and coercive behaviour has been removed from overall stalking and harassment figures.

## **7 . Domestic abuse and sexual offences**

Domestic abuse-related crimes and sexual offences 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. The figures do, however, provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides a more reliable measure of long-term trends in domestic abuse, sexual assault, stalking and harassment. Questions related to these offences had to be suspended with the move to telephone interviewing from May 2020.

## Domestic abuse

Police recorded crime data, in isolation, do not provide a measure of prevalence to understand the true extent of domestic abuse. Therefore, figures presented in this release should be interpreted with caution.

The police recorded 872,911 offences (excluding fraud) flagged as domestic abuse-related in the year ending September 2021. This represents a 5% increase from 835,319 offences in the same period in the previous year. This included 694,385 violence against the person offences flagged as domestic abuse-related, a 5% increase compared with the year ending September 2020.

Some of this increase may reflect improvements seen in reporting over the last few years. Following the suspension of the CSEW, we were unable to draw upon analysis from the crime survey as we cannot collect survey data on domestic abuse. This is because of concerns around confidentiality and respondent safeguarding, which limit the types of questions asked via the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales.

Given this, we cannot conclude whether there has been an increase in the number of victims of domestic abuse. However, data from victim services suggest that experiences of domestic abuse may have intensified during periods of national lockdown and that victims faced difficulties in safely seeking support under these conditions.

Further information and data related to domestic abuse can be found in [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2021](#).

## Sexual offences

Police recorded data need to be treated with caution, particularly in the absence of survey data. High levels of non-reporting combined with changes in reporting trends can have a significant impact on sexual offences recorded by the police. Prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the number of police recorded sexual offences was well below the number of victims estimated by the crime survey, with fewer than one in six victims of rape or assault by penetration reporting the crime to the police.

The latest figures may reflect a number of factors, including the impact of high-profile incidents, media coverage and campaigns on people's willingness to report incidents to the police, as well as a potential increase in the number of victims. The overall trend is also currently difficult to disentangle from the impact of lockdowns. Offences recorded by the police dropped noticeably during the spring 2020 lockdown before rebounding to previous levels in the July to September 2020 quarter. The winter 2020 to 2021 lockdowns saw a smaller reduction in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police but a greater level of increase in these offences in the subsequent quarters.

The number of sexual offences recorded by the police showed a 12% increase in the year ending September 2021 (170,973 offences) compared with the same period in the previous year. This is the highest number of sexual offences recorded within a 12-month period, driven by noticeable increases since April 2021. The period July to September 2021 saw the second-highest recorded quarterly figure (47,643 offences), following the highest recorded figures in April to June 2021 (48,131 offences) (see Figure 8).

Rape accounted for 37% of all sexual offences recorded by the police. The number of rape offences in the year ending September 2021 was the highest recorded annual figure to date (63,136 offences). This was driven by a large increase across the last six months of the year, with 17,189 offences recorded in April to June 2021, followed by a further increase to 17,419 offences in July to September 2021. This is the highest number of rape offences recorded within a quarter in England and Wales.

**Figure 8: July to September 2021 had the highest quarterly police recorded rape offences although sexual offences overall reached the highest level in the previous quarter**

England and Wales quarterly data from April 2009 to September 2021

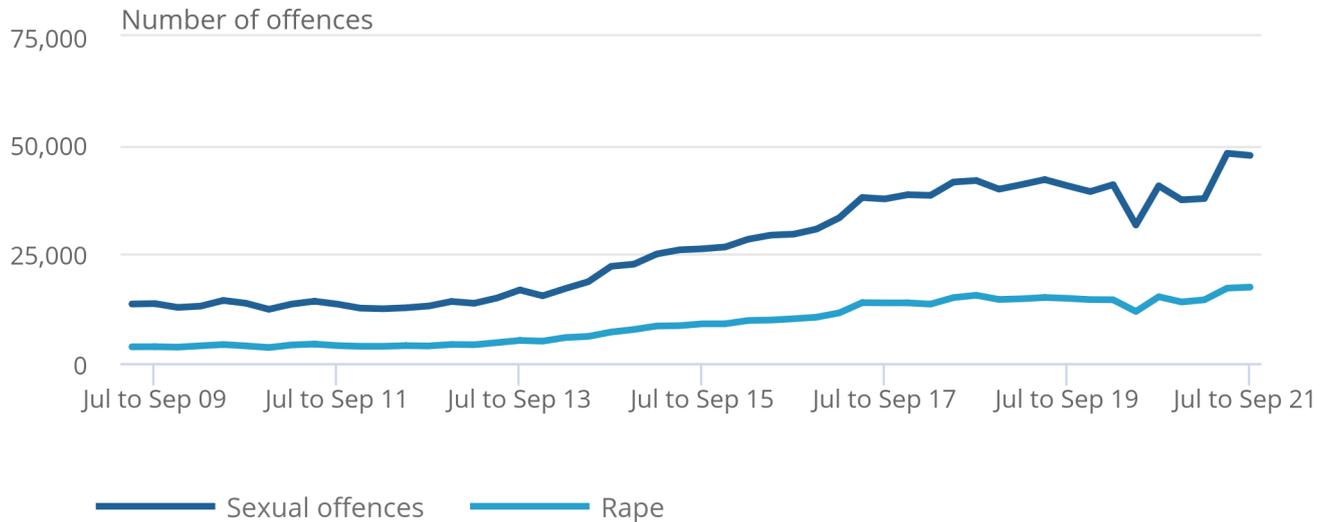
Figure 8: July to September 2021 had the highest quarterly police recorded rape offences although sexual offences overall reached the highest level in the previous quarter

October 2012  
Operation Yewtree launched

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

Periods of lockdown  
Covid-19

England and Wales quarterly data from April 2009 to September 2021



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Operation Yewtree is the police investigation into allegations of sexual abuse, launched in the wake of the Jimmy Savile scandal.

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

CSEW data on the prevalence of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking for the year ending March 2020 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) inspections of police recorded crime and incident data quality see our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: Measuring crime during the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

## 8 . Theft offences

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is the most reliable indicator for long-term trends in the more common types of crime experienced by the general population, such as theft. However, police recorded crime data can give reliable indications of trends in some offences involving theft (for example, domestic burglary) and may provide a better measure of short-term trends.

There were 3 million incidents of theft estimated by the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) for the year ending September 2021 ([Appendix Table A2](#)). This was an 18% decrease compared with the year ending September 2019 ([Appendix Table A3](#)). This large fall was seen across most sub-categories, with the largest fall of 53% seen in the “theft from the person” offence, followed by a 26% decrease in vehicle-related offences and a 23% decrease in bicycle theft offences.

A similar pattern was seen in police recorded theft offences, which decreased by 14% in the year ending September 2021 compared with the same period in the previous year, from 1.6 million to 1.4 million offences. This was driven by decreases in offences such as: burglary (21%), theft from the person (20%), vehicle offences (14%) and shoplifting (13%). However, there was a 9% increase in metal theft offences (to 19,044) recorded by the police in England and Wales for the year ending March 2021 following improved recording of catalytic converter theft by the Metropolitan Police.

Police recorded robbery offences decreased by 18% in the year ending September 2021 compared with the same period in the previous year, from 75,159 to 61,486 offences.

All these falls were likely to be driven by national lockdown restrictions, with non-essential shops and the night-time economy being closed and people spending more time in their homes. However, police recorded crime data indicate theft offences such as theft of a motor vehicle and bicycle theft are starting to return to levels seen before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic ([see Other related tables](#)).

For the latest headline figures relating to theft and for more detailed figures, including data time series, see [Appendix tables](#) and our latest [Property crime tables](#).

**Figure 9: The CSEW shows long-term reductions in theft offences**

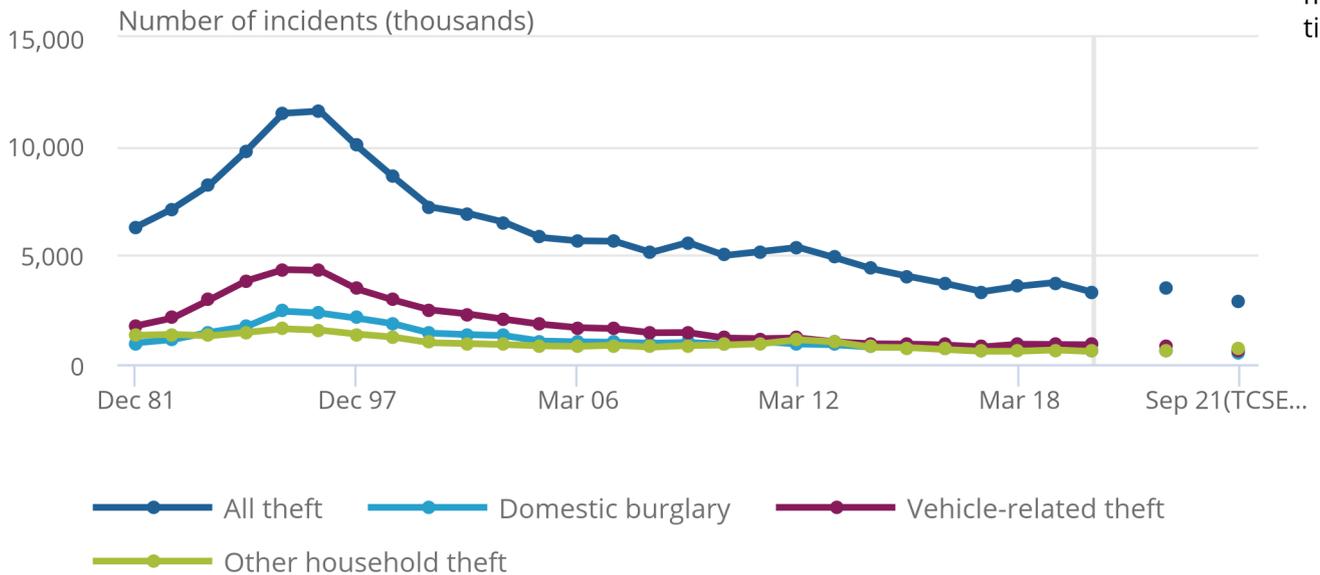
England and Wales, annual estimates

Figure 9: The CSEW shows long-term reductions in theft offences

England and Wales, annual estimates

March 2020: Face-to-face interviewing was suspended because of COVID-19 causing a break in the CSEW time-series.

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

**Notes:**

1. Data from the TCSEW are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Data on this chart refer 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.
3. TCSEW data presented here for 2021 are not comparable with CSEW estimates. 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. See [Appendix Table A3](#) for comparable data.

## 9 . Fraud

Fraud estimates do not follow the trend of falling victimisation seen in other crime types over the lockdown periods. Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 5.1 million fraud offences in the year ending September 2021 ([Appendix Table A2](#)). This is a 36% increase compared with the year ending September 2019 ([Appendix Table A3](#)).

This included large increases in “advance fee fraud”, “consumer and retail fraud” and “other fraud” and may indicate fraudsters taking advantage of behaviour changes related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, such as increased online shopping and increased savings. For example, advance fee fraud offences included scams where victims transferred funds to fraudsters for postal deliveries; other fraud included investment opportunity scams. A minority (26%) of these offences resulted in loss of money or property, with no or only partial reimbursement.

Fraud offences reported to the police are recorded and collected by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from Action Fraud and two industry bodies, Cifas and UK Finance. Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) reported a 27% rise in fraud offences (to 413,417 offences) compared with the year ending September 2020. The data showed a 42% increase in “financial investment fraud” offences in the last year (from 15,702 to 22,372 offences) and an 18% rise in “advance fee payments” (from 43,555 to 51,407 offences).

NFIB data showed referrals from Cifas (who report instances of fraud where their member organisations have been victims) increased 5% (to 319,512 offences) compared with the year ending September 2020 while UK Finance reported a 49% increase (to 155,757 offences).

Many cases recorded separately by UK Finance (via a fraud reporting database called CAMIS) are not reported to the NFIB because they hold insufficient information to be of value from an intelligence perspective. UK Finance reported a 5% increase in fraud incidents (to 3.2 million incidents) in CAMIS. There was a 53% increase in remote banking fraud (to 94,757 incidents), which reflects the greater number of people now regularly using internet, telephone and mobile banking, and the attempts by fraudsters to take advantage of this.

For the latest headline figures relating to fraud and for more detailed figures, including a data time series, see [Appendix tables](#), [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 1.9 million computer misuse offences in the year ending September 2021 ([Appendix Table A2](#)). This was an 89% increase compared with the year ending September 2019, largely driven by a 161% increase in “Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)” offences ([Appendix Table A3](#)). This included victims’ details being compromised via large-scale data breaches, and victims’ email or social media accounts being compromised. Our most recent [Nature of fraud and computer misuse tables](#) reported that 54% of victims were not impacted at all by such incidents.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) also reported a 17% increase in “Hacking – personal” offences referred by Action Fraud (from 4,498 to 5,258 offences). See [Appendix Table A5](#).

The TCSEW provides a better indication of the volume of computer misuse offences experienced by the adult population as it captures incidents that go unreported to the police. This can be seen by the large difference in the volume of computer misuse offences between the two sources, which also cannot be compared because of differences in coverage.

For the latest headline figures relating to computer misuse and for more detailed figures see [Appendix tables](#) and [Other related tables](#). Additionally, the [Nature of crime: fraud and computer misuse tables](#) hold more in-depth information about these offences from year ending March 2021 data.

## 11 . Anti-social behaviour

The Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that 26% of adults personally witnessed or experienced anti-social behaviour in their area in the last 12 months.

Estimates from the TCSEW showed that 47% of adults noticed individuals breaching virus restrictions in their local area since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic began. Of these, 7% reported the breach to the police.

TCSEW includes a measure of harassment that covers adults experiencing being insulted, called names, threatened or shouted at in public spaces. These estimates showed that 7% of adults experienced these types of harassment in the year ending September 2021. Where a specific perceived reason for the harassment was given, the most common was because of the coronavirus pandemic (27%). This included experiences related to social distancing and lockdown restrictions.

The most common non-coronavirus-related perceived reason for these experiences was their education, income level or job (10%), followed by race or ethnicity (6%).

The police recorded 1.7 million incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the year ending September 2021, a 9% decrease compared with the year ending September 2020. Anti-social behaviour was particularly high early on in the year, with the highest number of incidents recorded in January to March 2021 (448,776 offences), which is likely to reflect the reporting of breaches to public health restrictions. This was offset by continued decreases in April to June 2021 (419,128 offences) and July to September 2021 (356,833 offences).

## 12 . Crime data

[Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#) Dataset | Released on 27 January 2022 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 on 27 January 2022 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, and feelings of safety and experiences of harassment. Data on children's online activity are also presented.

[Crime in England and Wales: Other related tables](#) Dataset | Released on 27 January 2022 Firearms, knife and sharp instrument offences, offences involving a corrosive substance, hospital admissions for assault with sharp objects, fraud, offences flagged as domestic abuse-related, corruption, child sexual abuse and child exploitation. Data tables also include information on anti-social behaviour, perceptions, and non-notifiable incidents. The data contained in these tables are from the following sources: police recorded crime, NHS hospital admissions data, fraud data from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and UK Finance CAMIS database and figures from the Ministry of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics.

[Crime in England and Wales: Police force area data tables](#) Dataset | Released on 27 January 2022 The number of police recorded crimes, percentage change from previous year and rate per 1,000 population by offence group, firearms, knife and sharp instrument, fraud and computer misuse and anti-social behaviour offences by police force area.

[Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly data tables](#) Dataset | Released on 27 January 2022 Data from Home Office police recorded crime broken down into quarterly and monthly time periods.

## 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, either 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. See the “Glossary” section of [Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#) for definitions of the different fraud types.

## 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: Measuring crime during the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

# 14 . Measuring the data

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

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates continue to provide important information in relation to longer-term trends in crime from year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2020. TCSEW provides estimates of crime for the year ending September 2021.

Estimates from the TCSEW are derived from a total of 37,332 telephone interviews conducted with household residents in England and Wales aged 18 years and over between 1 October 2020 and 30 September 2021. The sample was formed from respondents who had previously participated in the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) in the last two years. TCSEW estimates cannot be compared with estimates for the year ending September 2020 because of overlapping reporting periods for some respondents. Therefore, TCSEW estimates are compared with the year ending September 2019 CSEW estimates throughout this bulletin.

[Appendix Table A2](#) presents TCSEW crime for the year ending September 2021. These estimates best reflect the current extent of crime but are not directly comparable with CSEW estimates because of changes to the TCSEW sample and questionnaire.

Findings from our [comparability study](#) showed that TCSEW estimates are comparable with CSEW estimates after certain adjustments are applied. Comparable datasets were created with the following changes:

- the population of study is restricted to those aged 18 years and over
- overlapping data periods must not be used for the main estimates of crime
- incidents derived from the threat and harassment screener question must be removed from both the current and comparator years for the main estimates of crime

All direct comparisons between the year ending September 2021 TCSEW estimates and the year ending September 2019 CSEW estimates are made with the use of these comparable datasets. An additional table, [Appendix Table A3](#), presents percentage changes between these estimates. Estimates presented in [Appendix Table A3](#) will be lower than those presented in [Appendix Table A2](#) and underestimate the extent of crime.

Further information is available in the [comparability study](#) and [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: measuring crime during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

As we are collecting data in a new survey mode, the telephone-operated 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 9 December 2021 (for data up to the end of September 2021).

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](#).

## 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)

Although the TCSEW was set up in a short timeframe in response to developing world events, findings from our [comparability study](#) showed that TCSEW estimates are comparable with CSEW estimates with the use of newly created comparable datasets. However, TCSEW estimates cannot be compared with the year ending September 2020 CSEW estimates because of overlapping reporting periods for some respondents.

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

## 16 . Related links

[Guide to finding crime statistics](#) Methodology | Released 22 July 2021 A guide that directs you on where best to find different crime statistics.

[Property crime tables](#) Dataset | Released 27 January 2022 Annual data from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) and metal theft offences recorded by the police, including demographic and offence type breakdowns and time series data.

[Nature of crime: fraud and computer misuse](#) Dataset | Released 27 January 2022 Annual data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). Data are included on the impact on the victim, contact with offenders, financial loss and experiences with computer viruses. Also includes data from the telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales showing nature of fraud data for May 2020 to March 2021.

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2021](#) Bulletin | Released 24 November 2021 Figures on domestic abuse from police recorded crime and a number of different organisations.

[Statistics relating to knife or sharp instrument offences in England and Wales](#) Database | Released 22 July 2021 Experimental database bringing together all official statistics relating to knife or sharp instrument offences in England and Wales.

[Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2020](#) Bulletin | Released 18 March 2021 Figures on sexual offences from the year ending March 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales and crimes recorded by police.

[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 (CSEW).

[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 Victimization 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)