

Statistical bulletin

Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023

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

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Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Overall estimates of crime](#)
3. [Homicide](#)
4. [Knife or sharp instrument offences](#)
5. [Offences involving firearms](#)
6. [Violence](#)
7. [Domestic abuse and sexual offences](#)
8. [Theft offences](#)
9. [Fraud](#)
10. [Computer misuse](#)
11. [Anti-social behaviour](#)
12. [Future developments of the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#)
13. [Crime data](#)
14. [Glossary](#)
15. [Measuring the data](#)
16. [Strengths and limitations](#)
17. [Related links](#)

18. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

1 . Main points

The latest figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for those interviewed in the year ending March 2023 [note 1] showed that, compared with the year ending March 2020 (pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic), total crime decreased by 15%. Across the same period, estimates for individual crime types showed that:

- overall theft decreased by 20%; the largest reduction was seen in theft from the person (33%), but falls were also seen in "other theft of personal property" (31%), domestic burglary (30%) and vehicle-related theft (18%)
- criminal damage decreased by 33%
- fraud returned to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels (no significant change); this suggests previous increases in fraud may have been specific to the coronavirus pandemic period, rather than a sustained change in trends
- despite no significant change in fraud overall, there was a 549% increase in advance fee fraud (from 60,000 to 391,000 offences), while bank and credit account fraud decreased by 14% (to 2.1 million offences)

Police recorded crime does not tend to be a good indicator of general trends in crime, however, for some crime types it can give more insight into lower-volume but higher-harm offences, including those that the survey does not cover or capture well. For such crimes, there have generally been increases in the last year, though they remain below pre-coronavirus pandemic levels:

- police recorded robbery offences were 17% lower than the year ending March 2020 (pre-coronavirus pandemic), however, there was a 13% increase compared with the year ending March 2022
- police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments (excluding Devon and Cornwall Police) decreased by 7% to 50,489 offences compared with the year ending March 2020 (54,293 offences), but there has been a 5% increase since the year ending March 2022 (48,204 offences)
- the number of homicides decreased by 16% to 602 offences compared with the year ending March 2020 (720 offences) and by 14% since the year ending March 2022 (697 offences); homicide is a relatively low-volume offence therefore the numbers will fluctuate
- the number of offences involving firearms (excluding Devon and Cornwall Police) decreased by 2% (to 6,365 offences) compared with the year ending March 2020 (6,511 offences), but there was a 13% increase compared with the year ending March 2022 (5,639 offences); this rise was largely attributed to an increase in offences involving imitation firearms, which rose 19% since the year ending March 2022, and was the most prevalent principal weapon used in these offences in the last year

Police recorded sexual offences rose by 20% to 195,315 offences compared with the pre-coronavirus pandemic year ending March 2020 (163,358). When interpreting police recorded sexual offences, it is important to note that these figures may reflect several factors, including the impact of high-profile cases and campaigns on victims' willingness to report both recent and historical incidents. For a subset of forces supplying data to the Home Office Data Hub, 21% of all sexual offences in the year ending March 2023 had taken place over a year prior to the incident being recorded.

From data gathered by both the CSEW and police recorded crime to March 2023, post-pandemic trends are starting to emerge. Some crime types are returning to their pre-pandemic levels, while others may have been affected by changes in people's behaviour during the pandemic and the subsequent lifting of social restrictions. The CSEW remains the best estimate of long-term trends, although it is also important to note that additional caution must be taken when using these data. CSEW estimates have been temporarily suspended of their National Statistics status while we assess data quality since the pandemic. For more information, see the [Office for Statistics Regulation's Temporary suspension of National Statistics status for estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales note](#). Police recorded crime data are not a [National Statistic](#) as they are affected by changes in recording practice over time.

Notes for main points:

1. The year ending March 2023 refers to 12 months of data collection between April 2022 and March 2023. Data collected during this period include experiences of crime in the 12 months before the interview month, and therefore include crimes committed during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and as early as April 2021. Further information can be found in [Section 2.4 of our User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

2 . Overall estimates of crime

According to Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates for the year ending March 2023, people aged 16 years and over experienced 8.7 million offences. This was a 15% decrease compared with the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic year ending March 2020 (10.2 million offences).

The latest CSEW figures included in this release are based on interviews conducted between April 2022 and March 2023, measuring experiences of crime in the 12 months before the interview. This means crimes recorded on the survey could have occurred as far back as April 2021 and as recently as February 2023. Crime survey estimates are not currently designated as National Statistics and caution should be taken when using these data because of the potential impact of lower response rates on data quality.

Since the mid-1990s, there have been long-term falls in overall CSEW crime estimates (Figure 1). Long-term trends also vary by crime types. For more information see Table A1 in our [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#).

Figure 1: Crime estimates from the CSEW years ending December 1981 to March 2023

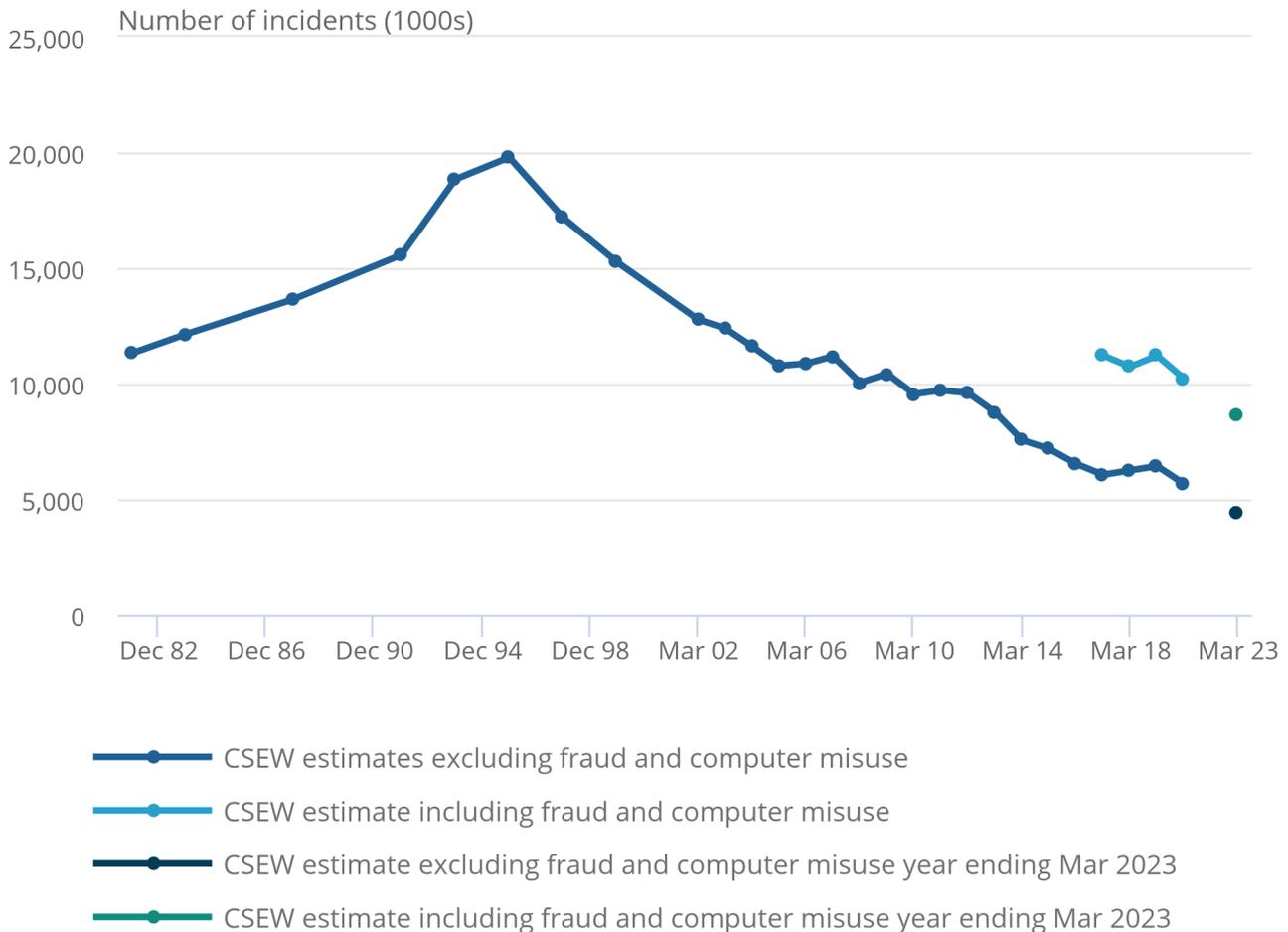
England and Wales, annual estimates

Figure 1: Crime estimates from the CSEW years ending December 1981 to March 2023

Rises in crime levels during the 90s were mainly because of increases in violence, vehicle crime and burglary

Excluding fraud and computer misuse, we have seen continued falls in overall levels of crime over recent decades

In March 2020, face-to-face interviewing was suspended because of COVID-19. There was a break in the CSEW time series



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

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 are not designated as [National Statistics](#).
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year; and from the year ending March 2002 onwards the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that year.
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.
4. There is a break in the CSEW time series because of the suspension of face-to-face interviewing between March 2020 and October 2021, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) data collected during this period are not directly comparable and not part of the main CSEW timeseries.

For the crime types and population it covers, the 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.

Likelihood of victimisation

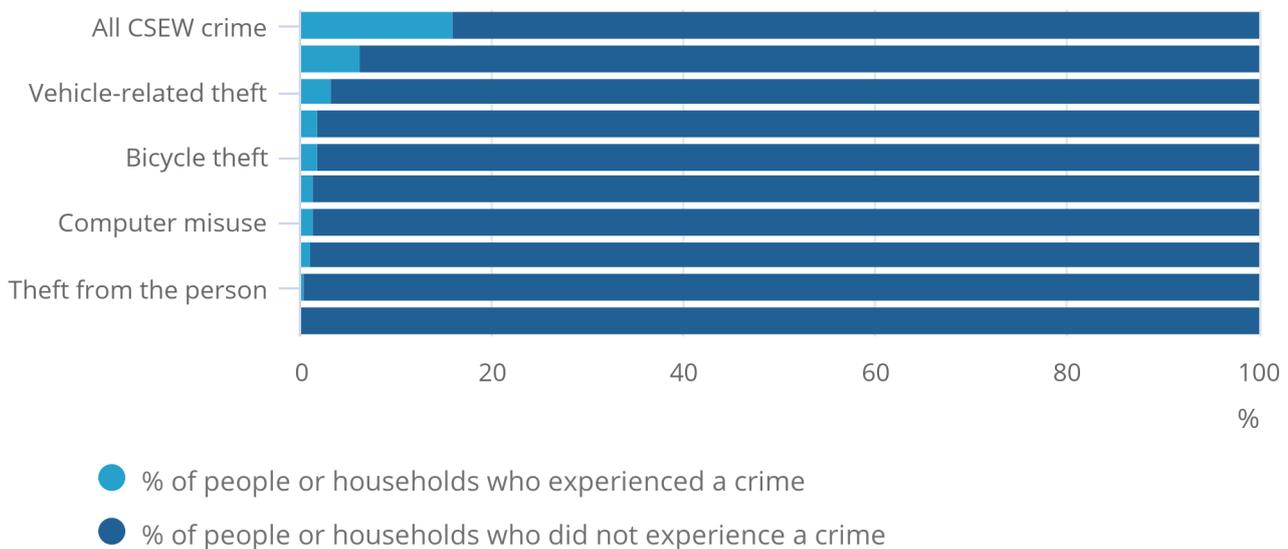
The latest CSEW year ending March 2023 estimates showed that approximately 5 in 6 people aged 16 years and over did not experience any of the crimes asked about in the survey (Figure 2). The likelihood of being a victim varied by crime type, with fraud having the highest likelihood of victimisation (6%), followed by vehicle-related theft (3%).

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

England and Wales, year ending March 2023

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

England and Wales, year ending March 2023



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

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 are not designated as [National Statistics](#).
2. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person, fraud and computer misuse are quoted for people aged 16 years and over. Percentages for domestic burglary and criminal damage are quoted for households. Percentages for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted for vehicle or bicycle owning households.
3. For all CSEW crime, including fraud and computer misuse, this is the estimated percentage of people aged 16 years and over 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.

Trends in police recorded crime

Police recorded crime levels in England and Wales during 2020 and 2021 were substantially affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and restrictions on social contact. In line with CSEW comparisons, police recorded crime levels are compared with pre-coronavirus pandemic levels in the year ending March 2020. Comparisons with the year ending March 2022 show patterns in crime since the easing of social restrictions earlier that year.

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 over 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. For further information see [Section 16, Strengths and limitations](#).

Police recorded crime in England and Wales in the year ending March 2023 exceeded pre-coronavirus pandemic levels. The 6.7 million crimes recorded were 11% higher compared with the year ending March 2020 (6.1 million offences). This overall increase was largely influenced by rises in the offence categories that are most subject to changes in reporting and recording practices. Therefore, these estimates should be treated with caution as they are unlikely to reflect a genuine increase in crime. The impact that government public health restrictions had during the coronavirus pandemic on levels of police recorded crime can be clearly seen when looking at quarterly figures (see Figure 3).

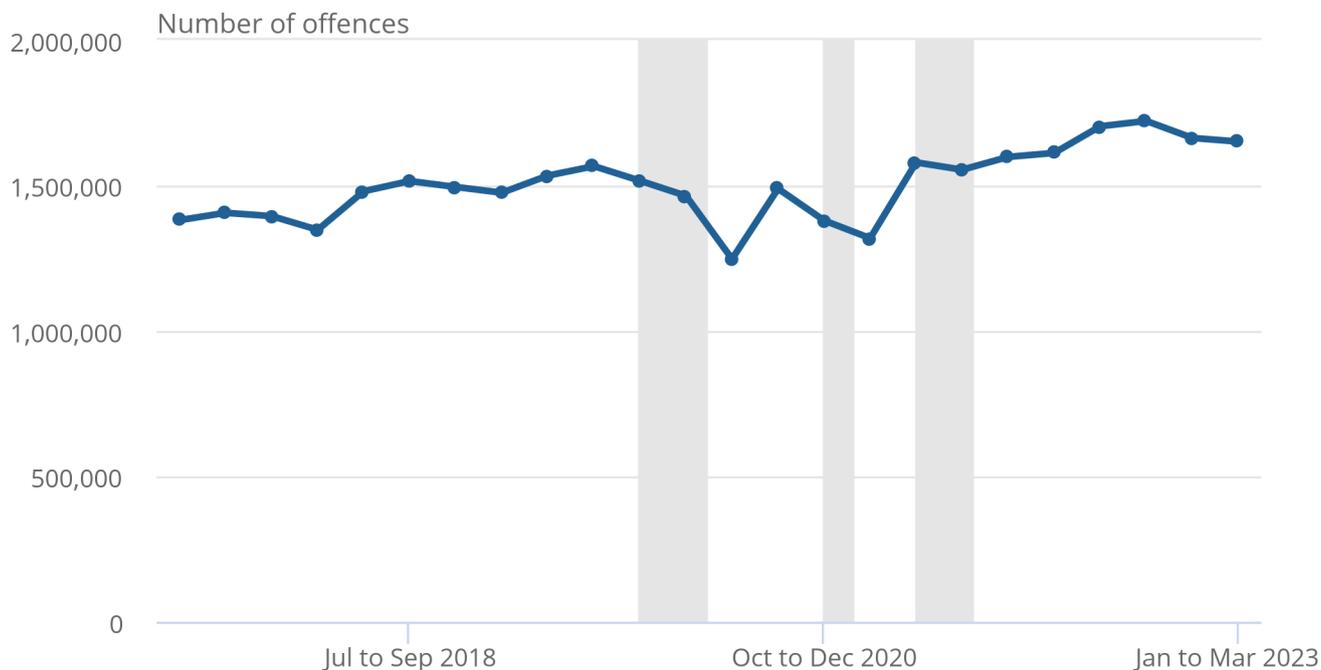
Police recorded crime includes crimes against people, households, and businesses in both residential and non-residential settings, such as non-domestic burglary, societal crimes such as drug taking, and crimes against children. Police recorded crime volumes are higher than those committed against individuals only.

Figure 3: Police recorded crime has exceeded pre-coronavirus pandemic levels

England and Wales, quarterly data (April 2017 to March 2023)

Figure 3: Police recorded crime has exceeded pre-coronavirus pandemic levels

England and Wales, quarterly data (April 2017 to March 2023)



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Following the implementation of a new IT system in November 2022, Devon and Cornwall Police have been unable to supply data for the period October 2022 to March 2023 for offences recorded by Action Fraud.

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

Crime survey and police recorded crime data can be used together to develop a more complete picture of crime (Table 1). The CSEW data showed a decrease in theft offences compared with the year ending March 2020. Police recorded crime also showed decreases in individual theft offences, such as burglary and vehicle offences, compared with the year ending March 2020.

Table 1: Overview of main crime types

England and Wales

Notes:

1. PRC and CSEW data for the year ending March 2023 are not designated as National Statistics.
2. CSEW data relate to people aged 16 years and over. PRC data relate to crimes against individuals (including children), households, businesses, and society.
3. Data on knife or sharp instrument offences exclude Greater Manchester Police for the whole timeseries back to the year ending March 2011 and exclude Devon and Cornwall Police for the years ending March 2020 to March 2023.
4. Estimates for theft are statistically significant at the 5% level. PRC figures are not subject to significance testing as they are not estimates but counts.

Download the data[.xlsx](#)

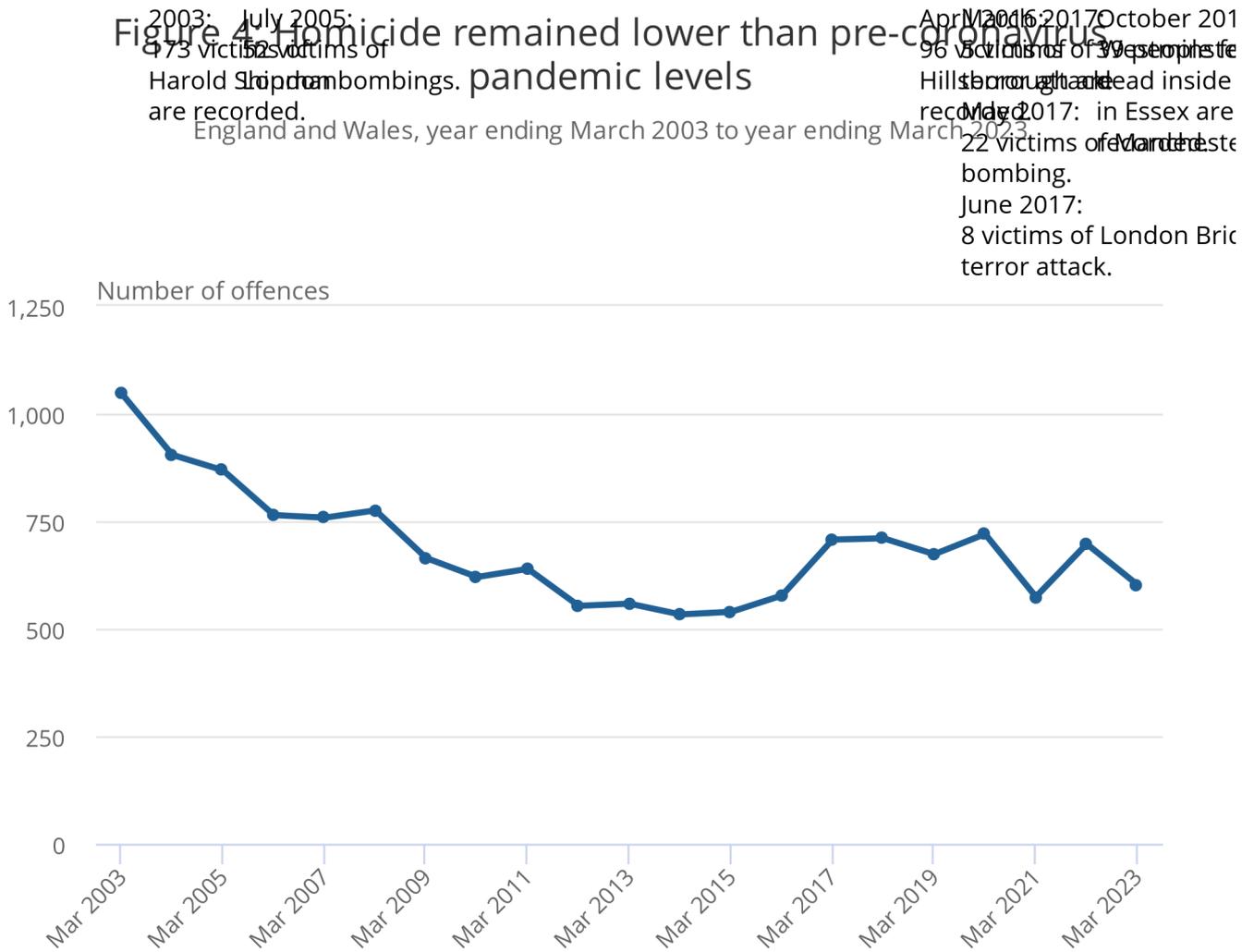
3 . Homicide

The police recorded 602 homicide offences in the year ending March 2023, a 14% decrease since the year ending March 2022 (697 offences). This was a 16% fall compared with the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic year ending March 2020 (720 offences) [note 1].

The rate of homicide in the population for the year ending March 2023 remained low at 10 per 1 million people, compared with 12 per 1 million people in the years ending March 2022 and March 2020.

Figure 4: Homicide remained lower than pre-coronavirus pandemic levels

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2023



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

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.

Of all recorded homicides in the year ending March 2023, the proportion of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument was the method of killing was 39%. This was similar to the year ending March 2022 (40%).

For the latest analysis on homicide offences held within the Home Office Homicide Index, see our [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2022 article](#).

Notes for homicide:

1. The year ending March 2020 included the incident where 39 migrants were found dead inside a lorry.

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.

Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police in the year ending March 2023 remained 7% lower (50,489 offences) than pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels in the year ending March 2020 (54,293 offences). This is mainly because the number of knife-enabled robbery offences was 18% lower in the year ending March 2023 (19,733 offences) than in the year ending March 2020 (24,153 offences). Despite the overall decrease in knife-enabled crime recorded by the police, knife-enabled threats to kill increased by 24% (to 6,021 offences) in the year ending March 2023 compared with the year ending March 2020 (4,858 offences). All figures exclude Devon and Cornwall Police. For further information see [Section 16, Strengths and limitations](#).

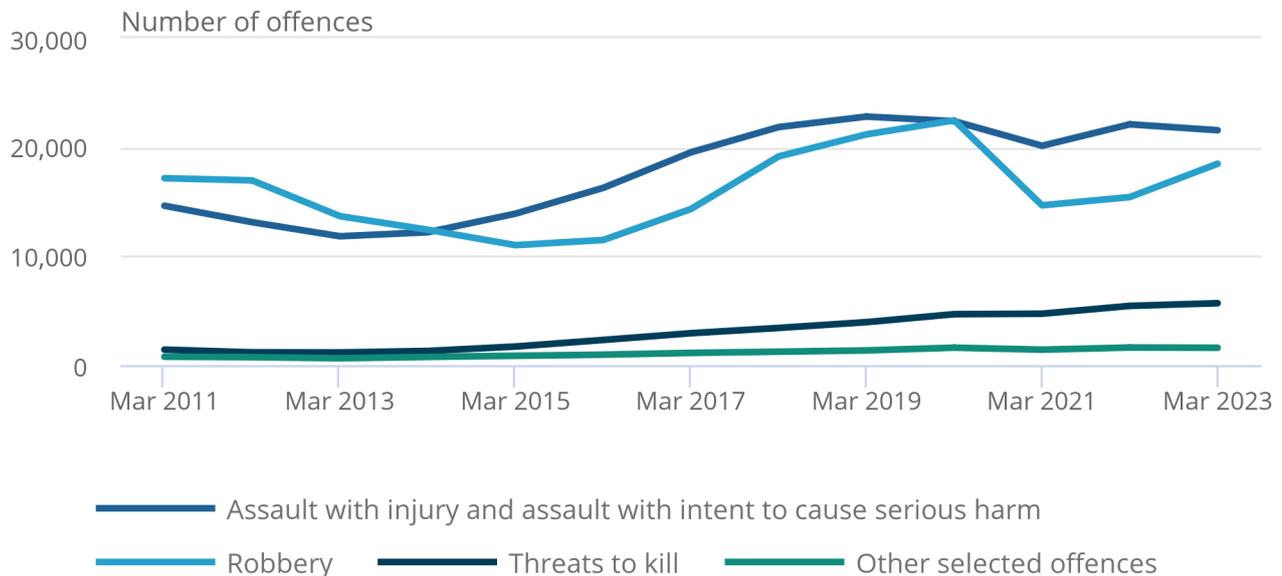
Although lower than pre-pandemic, the year ending March 2023 (50,489 offences) knife-enabled crime was 5% higher than the year ending March 2022 (48,204 offences), following the lifting of government restrictions on social contact earlier that year. Knife-enabled homicide decreased by 15% to 234 offences, down from 275 offences in the year ending March 2022. All figures exclude Devon and Cornwall Police.

Figure 5: Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police remained lower than pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, but increased by 5% in the last year

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2023

Figure 5: Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police remained lower than pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, but increased by 5% in the last year

England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police), year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2023



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

1. Greater Manchester Police conducted a review of their recording of offences involving knives or sharp instruments in December 2017 that 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. Figures for Devon and Cornwall Police are not included in the National and Regional totals for the years ending March 2020 to March 2023.
3. 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 our methodology [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments: methodology changes](#).
4. Other selected offences include rape, attempted murder, homicide, and sexual assault.

The latest 5% increase (excluding Devon and Cornwall Police) in knife or sharp instrument offences compared with the year ending March 2022 can be broken down by Police Force Area (PFA) [note 1]. The Metropolitan, West Midlands and Greater Manchester PFAs were the three areas with the highest volume of knife-enabled crime. Compared with the year ending March 2022, knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service increased by 16% to 12,755 offences in the year ending March 2023. The West Midlands PFA saw an increase of 16% to 5,188 offences, while levels in the Greater Manchester PFA decreased by 13% to 3,197 offences. Compared with the pre-coronavirus pandemic year ending March 2020, knife-enabled crime recorded in the Metropolitan PFA decreased by 13% and in the West Midlands PFA it increased by 3%. In contrast, knife-enabled crime recorded in the Greater Manchester PFA was broadly similar with the pre-coronavirus pandemic levels.

Police recorded "possession of article with a blade or point" offences [note 2] were 20% higher in the year ending March 2023 (28,013 offences) than the year ending March 2020 (23,276 offences). This was also a 13% increase compared with the year ending March 2022 (24,799 offences). This could have been influenced by targeted police action to tackle knife crime.

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). For more information, including the differences in data collection methods, please see our [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments: methodology changes](#) and our [Improving data collection for knife enabled crime in England and Wales blog](#).

Other sources of data

The latest provisional admissions data for NHS hospitals in England and Wales showed a continued decrease in the number of admissions for assault by a sharp object in the year ending March 2023 (3,780 admissions). This was 21% lower than the pre-coronavirus pandemic year ending March 2020 (4,769 admissions) and 10% below the year ending March 2022 (4,185 admissions).

Data related to stop and searches can be found in the [Home Office's Police powers and procedures England and Wales statistics publication](#).

Notes for knife or sharp instrument offences

1. Data cannot be compared across all police forces because of changes in data collection methods. Currently 40 police forces have switched to the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDQIS) data collection method. Three remaining police forces and the British Transport Police are still submitting knife or sharp instrument offences data through a special collection (Staffordshire, West Mercia, and Gloucestershire). For more information, please see our [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments: methodology changes](#).
2. Offences of "possession of an article with a blade or point" are covered separately by a specific recorded crime category.

5 . Offences involving firearms

The police recorded 6,365 offences involving firearms in the year ending March 2023 (Figure 6). This shows an increase of 13% compared with the year ending March 2022 (5,639 offences) during which some social restrictions were still in place in the early part of the year. However, there was a 2% decrease compared with the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic year ending March 2020 (6,511 offences). All figures exclude Devon and Cornwall Police. For further information see [Section 16. Strengths and limitations](#).

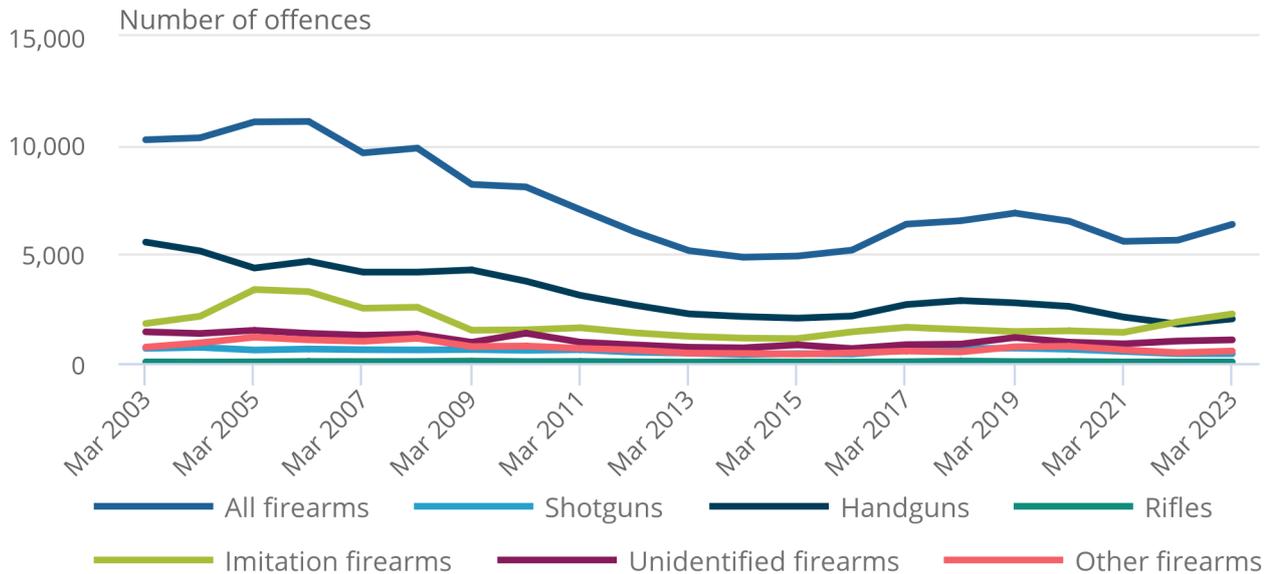
Offences involving firearms can be broken down by type of weapon. In the year ending March 2023, all firearms offences remained below pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, except for those using imitation firearms, which rose 52% to 2,252 from 1,478 offences, and those in which the type of firearm was unidentified, which increased by 11% to 1,063 from 959 offences. The largest decreases in the volume of offences were seen in the use of shotguns (to 425 offences), handguns (to 2,026 offences), and other firearms (to 549 offences). This represents a 33% decrease for shotguns, a 22% decrease for handguns and a 29% fall for other firearms compared with the year ending March 2020. All figures exclude Devon and Cornwall Police.

Figure 6: Overall, police recorded firearms offences are broadly similar to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels

England and Wales year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2023

Figure 6: Overall, police recorded firearms offences are broadly similar to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels

England and Wales year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2023



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

1. 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.
2. Imitation firearms include replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons that fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons.
3. Other firearms include CS gas and pepper spray, stun guns and other weapons.
4. Figures for Devon and Cornwall Police are not included in the National and Regional totals for the years ending March 2020 to March 2023.

For data relating to offences involving weapons, see our [Offences involving the use of weapons: data tables](#). For data relating to offences involving firearms, see our [Crime in England and Wales: 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 CSEW for the year ending March 2023 showed that there were 1.0 million violent offences. Although not a statistically significant change compared with the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic year ending March 2020 (1.2 million offences), this is in line with a general downward trend in violent crime since its peak in 1995 and represents a significant fall when compared with year ending March 2019. Across all violent offences, wounding decreased by 54% (to 158,000 offences) in the year ending March 2023 compared with the year ending March 2020 (341,000 offences).

Figure 7: The number of incidents of violent crime remained broadly similar to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels

England and Wales, annual estimates

Figure 7: The number of incidents of violent crime remained broadly similar to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels

England and Wales, annual estimates

In March 2020 face-to-face interviewing was suspended because of COVID-19, leading to a break in the CSEW time series.



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

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 are not designated as [National Statistics](#).
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 year.
3. There is a break in the CSEW time series because of the suspension of face-to-face interviewing between March 2020 and October 2021, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) data collected during this period are not directly comparable and not part of the main CSEW time series.

Police recorded violence should be interpreted with caution as increases may reflect improvements made by police forces in identifying and recording offences, as well as an increase in victims reporting incidents. Police recorded violence does not provide reliable trends in crime but are a better indicator of police activity.

Overall, the police recorded 2.1 million offences of violence against the person in the year ending March 2023. This was a 20% rise compared with the pre-coronavirus pandemic year ending March 2020 (1.8 million offences) and a slight increase (1%) compared with the year ending March 2022. Violence with injury was 6% higher (573,791 offences) than levels recorded in the year ending March 2020 (540,870 offences). In addition, violence without injury increased by 14% to 828,673 offences compared with the year ending March 2020 (728,265 offences).

There were 709,388 stalking and harassment offences in the year ending March 2023. This was a 43% increase compared with the year ending March 2020 (495,034 offences) and a slight fall (1%) from year ending March 2022. There have generally been increases since the year ending March 2012, though this was partially influenced by changes in Home Office Counting Rules and improved recording practices across this period.

In published crime statistics, violent crime as measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime differ. This includes large volume crimes such as stalking and harassment, which the survey does not publish in its main estimates of crime but are in the police figures. In the year to March 2023, stalking and harassment accounted for a third (34%) of all police recorded violence. For more information, see Section 4 of our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

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 and sexual offences than police recorded crime data.

The crime survey estimates for domestic abuse and sexual assault for the year ending March 2023 are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates. For more information, see Section 2.1 of our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

Domestic abuse

Estimates from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 showed that 4.4% of people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the last year.

Following the removal of the upper age limit for survey respondents completing the self-completion modules in October 2021, when analysing data over time, we use the 16 to 59 years age range to give a comparable time series. The CSEW for the year ending March 2023 estimated that 5.1% of people aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This was a significant decrease compared with the year ending March 2020 (6.1%), a year largely unaffected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The police flagged 889,441 recorded offences as domestic abuse-related in the year ending March 2023. This represented little change compared with the year ending March 2022 (889,311 recorded offences) but a 14% increase from 777,726 recorded offences in the year ending March 2020. This included 702,604 violence against the person offences flagged as domestic abuse-related in the year ending March 2023, a 15% rise compared with the year ending March 2020 (610,024 offences). This also included 32,721 sexual offences flagged as domestic abuse-related in the year ending March 2023, a 32% increase compared with the year ending March 2020 (24,743 offences). Some of this continued increase may reflect increased reporting by victims over the last few years. All figures exclude Devon and Cornwall Police. For further information see [Section 16. Strengths and limitations](#).

Further information and data related to domestic abuse can be found in our [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2022 bulletin](#). The next [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview](#) is due to be published in November 2023.

Sexual offences

Estimates from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 showed that 2.1% of people aged 16 years and over had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences) in the last year.

Following the removal of the upper age limit for survey respondents completing the self-completion modules in October 2021, when analysing data over time, we use the 16 to 59 years age range to give a comparable time series. The CSEW for the year ending March 2023 estimated 2.7% of people aged 16 to 59 years had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences) in the last year. There was no significant change compared with the year ending March 2022 (2.7%) or the year ending March 2020 (2.2%).

High levels of non-reporting combined with changes in reporting trends can have a significant impact on sexual offences recorded by the police. The crime survey can provide important context to the police figures, for example CSEW estimates showed that fewer than one in six victims of rape or assault by penetration reported the crime to the police (Table 13 of our [Nature of sexual assault by rape or penetration, England and Wales dataset](#)). The CSEW also indicates that 57% of victims of rape or assault by penetration (including attempts) since the age of 16 years stated that the perpetrator was a partner or ex-partner (for more information see our [Sexual offences prevalence and victim characteristics, England and Wales dataset](#)).

In the year ending March 2023, there were 195,315 sexual offences recorded by the police, which was a 20% increase from the year ending March 2020 (Figure 8). However, there was little change compared with the year ending March 2022 (193,559). Within these figures, the number of recorded sexual offences was lower during periods of lockdown but there have been substantial increases since April 2021.

Of all sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2023, 35% (68,949) were rape offences (a subcategory of sexual offences). This was a 16% increase from 59,191 in the year ending March 2020, but a 1% fall compared with the year ending March 2022 (69,973). Other sexual offences increased by 21% to 126,366 offences compared with the year ending March 2020 (104,167).

The latest sexual offences figures may reflect several factors, including the impact of high-profile incidents, media coverage, changes to operational processes, and campaigns on people's willingness to report both recent and historical incidents to the police, as well as a potential increase in the number of victims. For a subset of forces supplying data to the Home Office Data Hub, 21% of all sexual offences, and 24% of adult rape offences, in the year ending March 2023 had taken place over a year prior to the incident being recorded.

Figure 8: Police recorded rape and sexual offences remained higher than pre-coronavirus pandemic levels in the year ending March 2023

England and Wales quarterly data from April 2010 to March 2023

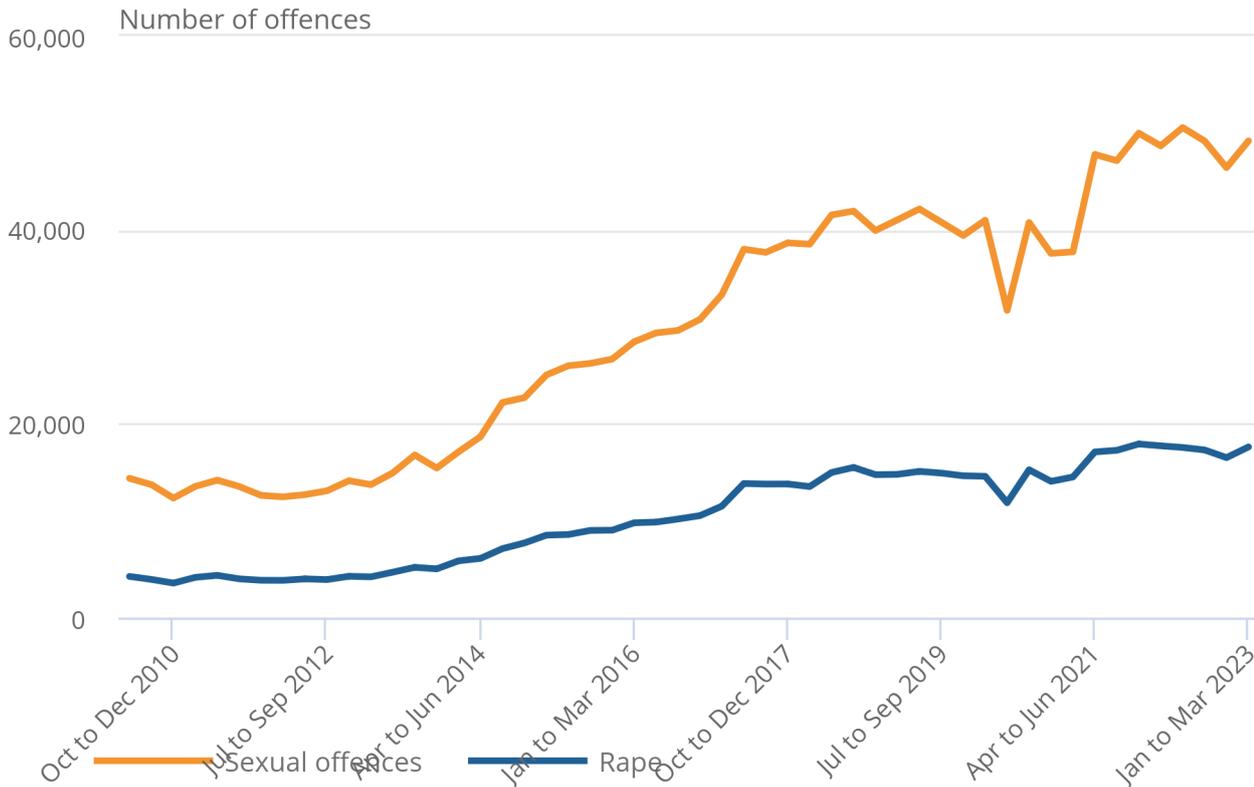
Figure 8: Police recorded rape and sexual offences remained higher than pre-coronavirus pandemic levels in the year ending March 2023

October 2012: Operation Yewtree launched

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

Periods of national lockdown during coronavirus

England and Wales quarterly offences from April 2010 to March 2023



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

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 our [Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2022 bulletin](#).

CSEW data on the prevalence of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and stalking for the year ending March 2023 can be found in Tables S40 to S42 of our [Crime in England and Wales: Annual supplementary tables, year ending March 2023](#).

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, burglary) that are well-reported to the police and can provide a better measure of short-term trends.

There were 2.7 million incidents of theft estimated by the CSEW for the year ending March 2023. This was a 20% decrease compared with the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic year ending March 2020 (3.3 million offences). This large fall was seen across most sub-categories, including theft from the person (33%), "other theft of personal property" (31%), domestic burglary (30%) and vehicle-related theft (18%).

"Neighbourhood" crime, defined in the [Home Office's Beating crime plan](#), includes robbery and selected theft offences (theft from the person, domestic burglary, and vehicle-related theft). The CSEW estimated that there was a 26% decrease in the number of "neighbourhood" crime incidents compared with the year ending March 2020.

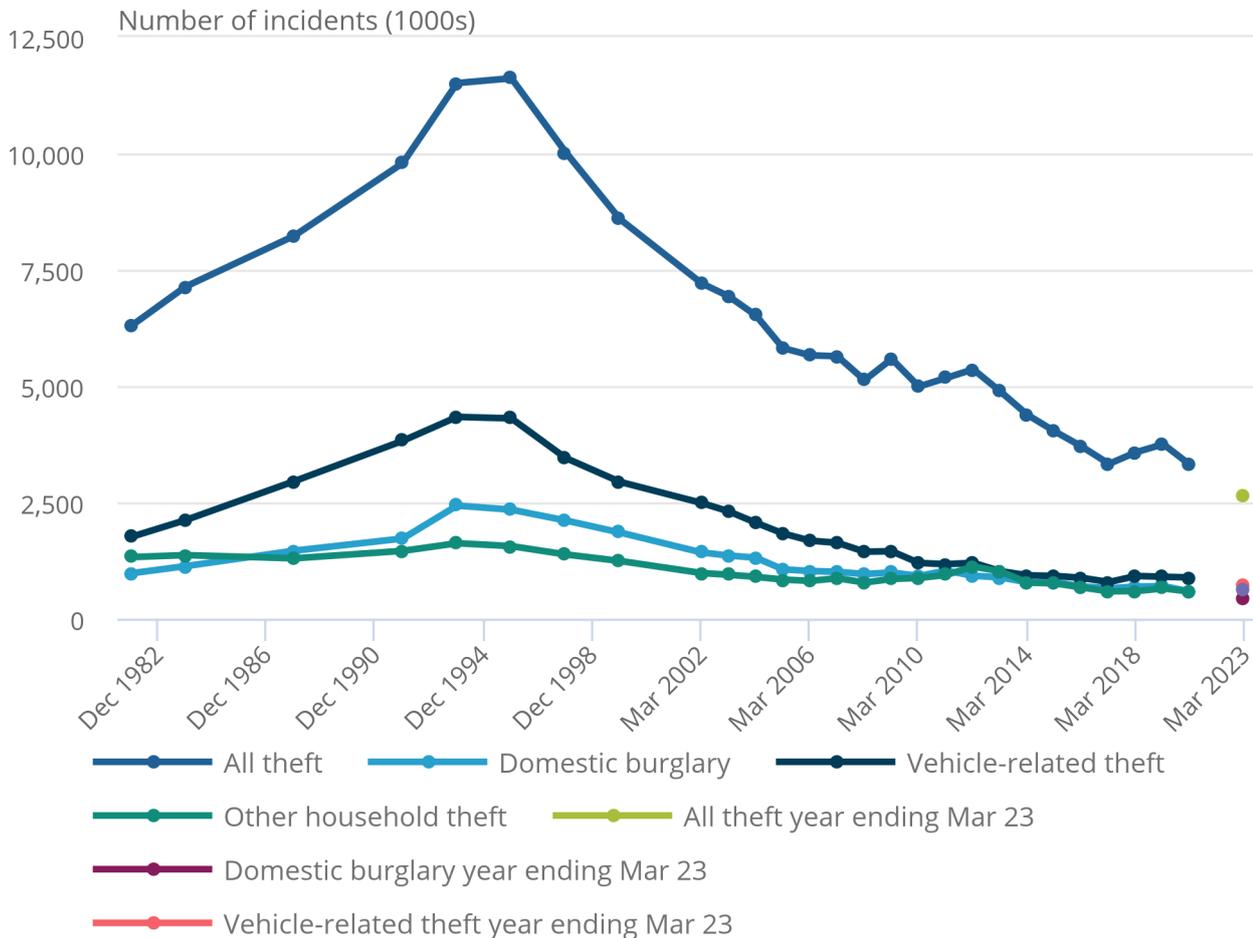
Figure 9: The CSEW shows long-term reductions in theft offences

England and Wales, annual estimates

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

England and Wales, annual estimates

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



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

Notes:

1. Data from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 are not designated as [National Statistics](#).
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 year.
3. There is a break in the CSEW time series because of the suspension of face-to-face interviewing between March 2020 and October 2021, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) data collected during this period are not directly comparable and not part of the main CSEW time series.

As with CSEW data, police recorded theft offences in the year ending March 2023 remained below pre-coronavirus pandemic levels. Overall, theft offences were 11% lower (1.7 million offences) than in the year ending March 2020 (1.9 million offences). This included a 28% decrease in all burglary offences (to 275,919 offences) [note 1]. However, levels of theft have increased in the last year, a 15% increase in total theft compared with the year ending March 2022 (1.5 million offences). This rise was seen across most subcategories, including theft from the person (28%), shoplifting (24%) and all other theft offences (19%).

Police recorded robbery increased by 13% (to 75,265 offences) in comparison with the year ending March 2022 (66,328 offences) but remained 17% lower than in the year ending March 2020 (90,195 offences).

Notes for theft offences:

1. Police recorded crime data have a wider offence coverage than CSEW. Police recorded burglary includes both residential and non-residential burglary, such as those committed against a business premises, and therefore differs from the residential burglary captured by the Crime Survey.

9 . Fraud

Estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending March 2023 showed that there were 3.5 million fraud offences. This was not a significant change compared with the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic year ending March 2020 (3.7 million offences). Within fraud offences, bank and credit account fraud decreased by 14% (from 2.5 million to 2.1 million offences), and advance fee fraud increased (from 60,000 to 391,000 offences) compared with the year ending March 2020. This may indicate fraudsters taking advantage of behavioural changes during the coronavirus pandemic, as shown in our [How our spending has changed since the end of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) restrictions publication](#). For example, advance fee fraud offences included scams where victims transferred funds to fraudsters for postal deliveries.

Previous estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that levels of fraud increased during the coronavirus pandemic, as shown in our [Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2022 article](#). CSEW estimates for the year ending March 2023 have shown that total fraud has now returned to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels. As we found no differences in estimates of fraud between the CSEW and TCSEW in our [Update to comparability between the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales and the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales article](#), this trend is likely to be genuine and the increase in fraud was specific to the period of the coronavirus pandemic, rather than a sustained change in trends.

Fraud offences investigated by the police are recorded and collected by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from Action Fraud and two industry bodies, Cifas and UK Finance. Data from Action Fraud exclude Devon and Cornwall Police because of a system change affecting their ability to provide accurate data. UK Finance and Cifas are not affected by this issue. For further information see [Section 16, Strengths and limitations](#).

Police recorded fraud increased by 15% to 1.1 million offences in the year ending March 2023 compared with the year ending March 2022 (1.0 million offences) [note 1]. However, this increase needs to be interpreted in the context of differences in coverage and fraud types captured by each reporting body as well as administrative changes [note 2].

The increase in police recorded fraud was mainly influenced by a rise in offences reported by UK Finance [note 3], who showed a 57% increase (to 460,537 offences) compared with the year ending March 2022 (293,560). This was a result of an increase in reporting from their existing members because of engagement from UK Finance. Cifas also reported a 11% increase in fraud (to 371,340 offences) compared with the year ending March 2022 (335,233).

Notes for fraud:

1. Police recorded fraud data presented in this section exclude Devon and Cornwall Police for offences recorded by Action Fraud.
2. The UK Finance figures and NFIB totals presented in this bulletin and accompanying data tables are supplemented by provisional data provided by UK Finance. This is because of inconsistencies in the data collection process affecting a small percentage of the records supplied by UK Finance. The NFIB and UK Finance are working to ensure that all referrals from this period are processed, at which point the need for provisional data will be removed.
3. UK Finance is responsible for coordinating activities on fraud prevention in the UK payments industry, and it represents members from retail banks, card payment acquirers in the UK, and credit, debit and charge card issuers.

10 . Computer misuse

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides a better indication of the volume of computer misuse offences experienced by people aged 16 and over than those reported to the police, 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.

Estimates from the CSEW for the year ending March 2023 showed that there were 745,000 offences of computer misuse. There was no significant change compared with the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic year ending March 2020 (876,000 offences). However, there was a 66% decrease in computer virus offences (to 123,000 offences) in the year ending March 2023 compared with the year ending March 2020 (360,000 offences).

This was a marked change compared with findings from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) for the year ending March 2022, where we reported an 89% increase in computer misuse offences compared with the year ending March 2020. While some of the reported increase in TCSEW estimates were likely to be genuine, our [Update to comparability between the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales and the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales article](#) showed that part of this increase can be explained by survey bias. These new estimates from the CSEW provide our best estimate of the current level of computer misuse and suggest any real increase measured by the TCSEW was likely specific to the coronavirus pandemic period.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) record computer misuse offences and refer those with good investigative leads to the police for further investigation. The NFIB reported an 8% decrease in computer misuse offences referred by Action Fraud (from 28,189 to 26,024 offences) for the year ending March 2023 compared with the year ending March 2022.

11 . Anti-social behaviour

Estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending March 2023 showed that 34% of people had experienced or witnessed some type of anti-social behaviour (ASB). This was a 6% decrease compared with the pre-pandemic year ending March 2020.

The police recorded 1.0 million incidents of ASB in the year ending March 2023. This was a 25% decrease compared with the year ending March 2020 (1.4 million incidents) and a 20% fall compared with the year ending March 2022 (1.3 million incidents).

Alongside measuring experiences, the CSEW also asks questions around individuals' perceptions of ASB in their local area, resulting in both a general measure and a more specific measure based on a number of types of ASB. Since the year ending March 2013, the trends across both measures have remained consistent, with little change year on year. However, the scales of these measures are different.

The CSEW for the year ending March 2023 estimated that 22% of people perceived ASB to be a fairly or very big problem in their local area (general measure) compared with 8% of people who perceived their local area had a high level of ASB (based on a number of types of ASB). More information on ASB can be found in [Section 5.7 of our User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

12 . Future developments of the Crime Survey for England and Wales

Last year we consulted on the [Redesign of the Crime Survey for England and Wales \(CSEW\)](#) and published two research reports on the transforming the Crime Survey for online data collection.

The purpose of the consultation was to update survey data users on the methodological redesign of the CSEW, including a new panel design with multi-modal waves and to provide the opportunity to comment on survey content. For more details see our [Consultation response: Redesign of the Crime Survey for England and Wales \(PDF, 558KB\)](#).

For more information on the research reports, please see [Kantar's work package reports](#) A: Developing and testing an online version of the CSEW questionnaire, and Work package B: Exploring the use of an online survey to measure crime among children and young people.

13 . Crime data

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

Dataset | Released 20 July 2023

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

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

Dataset | Released 20 July 2023

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

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

Dataset | Released 20 July 2023

Trends in Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) crime experienced by people aged 16 and over and children aged 10 to 15 years and Home Office police recorded crime, by offence type. Also includes trends in offender relationship of CSEW violence. Because of the suspension of the face-to-face CSEW on 17 March 2020, owing to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, data tables from the year ending June 2020 to the year ending March 2022 shown in this workbook also include data from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW).

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

Dataset | Released 20 July 2023

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.

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

Dataset | Released 20 July 2023

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 anti-social behaviour offences by Police Force Area.

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

Dataset | Released 20 July 2023

Data from Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and Home Office police recorded crime broken down into quarterly time periods.

[Crime in England and Wales: Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area](#)

Dataset | Released 20 July 2023

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.

14 . 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. This includes 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). Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) 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 our [Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2022 article](#) for definitions of the different fraud types.

Overall theft offences

CSEW 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 our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

15 . Measuring the data

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates continue to provide important information in relation to longer-term trends in crime from the year ending December 1981 to the year ending March 2023.

The face-to-face CSEW was suspended on 17 March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. A telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) was designed to continue measuring crime while the face-to-face CSEW was suspended. TCSEW data collection took place between 20 May 2020 and 31 March 2022.

Face-to-face CSEW interviewing for people aged 16 years and over resumed on 4 October 2021. Crime estimates for the year ending March 2023 are produced from data collected between April 2022 to March 2023. Asking respondents about crimes in the previous 12 months to the interview, the current CSEW estimates continue to include crimes committed during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic period (as far back as April 2021) as well as more recent ones.

Estimates are derived from a total of 31,183 interviews conducted with household residents in England and Wales aged 16 years and over. CSEW estimates can be compared with the year ending March 2020 estimates throughout this bulletin, the last time period for which CSEW data were published before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Face-to-face interviewing for children aged 10 to 15 years resumed in April 2022 with 1,309 interviews conducted in the year ending March 2023. The first crime prevalence estimates for children aged 10 to 15 years are published alongside this bulletin. However, crime incidence estimates are not available because of the impact of lower response rates on data quality.

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

Our [Appendix Table A1](#) presents CSEW crime for the year ending March 2023. These estimates best reflect the current extent of crime and are directly comparable with the main CSEW time-series estimates.

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

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 their [notifiable offence list](#). The recorded crime figures are collated through a live administrative system that is continually being updated as forces submit data. The data represent a "snapshot" of the live database taken on 13 June 2023 (for data up to the end of March 2023).

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](#).

16 . Strengths and limitations

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) includes crimes that are not reported to, or recorded by the police, but is limited to crimes against people resident in households and does not cover all crime types.

The CSEW is a better indicator of long-term trends for the crime types and population it covers, than police recorded crime, because it is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices. The victimisation methodology and the crime types included in the main count of crime have remained comparable since the CSEW began in 1981.

Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime has wider offence coverage and population coverage than the CSEW. 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 or over time.

For more information, see our [Crime in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

Issue with Devon and Cornwall Police recorded crime data

Following the implementation of a new IT system in November 2022, Devon and Cornwall Police have been unable to supply data for the period, October 2022 to March 2023 for the following offences: knife or sharp instruments, firearms, those flagged as domestic abuse-related and those recorded by Action Fraud.

Violent crime

In published crime statistics, violent crime as measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime differ. This includes large-volume crimes such as stalking and harassment, which the survey does not publish in its main estimates of crime but are in the police figures. For more information, see Section 4 of our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

17 . Related links

[Improving crime statistics for England and Wales - progress update July 2023](#)

Methodology | Released 20 July 2023

Latest update on the progress being made to improve crime statistics for England and Wales.

[Guide to finding crime statistics](#)

Methodology | Released 20 July 2023

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

[Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 23 March 2023

Data on sexual offences from the year ending March 2022 Crime Survey for England and Wales, police recorded crime, and victim services.

[Update to Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) data dashboard](#)

Data | Released 8 March 2023

The VAWG data dashboard includes charts showing different abuse types and links to related articles and the associated data tables.

[Transforming children's crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#)

Article | Released 1 March 2023

Progress update on our transformation of the Children's Crime Survey for England and Wales.

[Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2022](#)

Article | Released 9 February 2023

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.

[Update to comparability between the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales and the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales](#)

Methodology | Released 27 October 2022

An update to the assessment into the comparability of estimates produced from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) and the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), analysing comparable data collected in both surveys from October 2021 to March 2022.

[Crime in England and Wales QMI](#)

Methodology | Released 20 July 2023

Quality and Methodology Information for crime levels and trends in England and Wales, detailing the strengths and limitations of the data, methods used, and data uses and users.

[Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2022](#)

Article | Released 26 September 2022

Summary of the various sources of data for fraud and computer misuse and what these tell us about victims, circumstances and long-term trends.

[The nature of violent crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2022](#)

Article | Released 9 November 2022

An overview of the extent of violent crime in England and Wales, including long-term trends, use of weapons and victim characteristics.

[Drug misuse in England and Wales: year ending June 2022](#)

Article | Released 15 December 2022

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

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 25 November 2022

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

18 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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