

Statistical bulletin

Crime in England and Wales: year ending Sept 2016

Crime against households and adults, also including data on crime experienced by children, and crimes against businesses and society.



Contact:
John Flatley
crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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1 . Main points

Headline figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) produced on a consistent basis showed an estimated 6.2 million incidents of crime in the survey year ending September 2016; no statistically significant change compared with the previous year's survey.

Following an extension of the coverage of the survey, Experimental Statistics showed there were 3.6 million fraud and 2.0 million computer misuse offences for the first full year in which such questions have been included in the CSEW.

The inclusion of these new offences yields a new headline estimate of 11.8 million incidents of crime covered by the survey, but it will be another year before a comparable time series is available.

However, trend data on frauds referred to the police showed an annual rise of 3%. Other industry data on financial fraud, the vast bulk of which is unreported to the police, showed there were 1.9 million cases of frauds on UK-issued cards (an increase of 39% from the previous year).

Across all crime types covered, the police recorded 4.7 million offences in the year ending September 2016, an annual rise of 8%. Due to recording improvements affecting comparisons over time, this series is not currently a reliable measure of trends in crime.

CSEW estimates showed no statistically significant change in levels of violence compared with the previous survey, with the underlying trend fairly flat in recent years. While the police recorded an annual rise of 22% in Violence against the person offences, the volume increases were largely driven by changes in recording processes and the inclusion of additional harassment offences within the series.

However, there appeared to be genuine smaller increases in some of the lower volume but higher harm categories of police recorded violence including homicide and knife crime.

2 . Statistician's comment

"In its 35 year history the Crime Survey has charted changing trends in crimes experienced by the population. In the past burglary and theft of vehicles were the high volume crimes driving trends but their numbers have fallen substantially since then. When the CSEW started, fraud was not considered a significant threat and the internet had yet to be invented. Today's figures demonstrate how crime has changed, with fraud now the most commonly experienced offence. However, it should be emphasised that the new headline figures, including fraud and computer misuse, are not comparable with those from earlier years."

John Flatley, Crime Statistics and Analysis, Office for National Statistics, [@ONSJohnFlatley](#) on Twitter.

3 . What has changed within this publication?

Quarterly bulletins have adopted a new, shorter format since the [year ending December 2015 release](#), with the aim of making the main messages more accessible. Despite cutting down the commentary in these bulletins we have maintained the published level of detail in datasets and in order to ensure that none of the previously published information has been lost, all "former bulletin tables" continue to be published.

New questions on fraud and computer misuse were added to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) in October 2015. These questions have now been included within the CSEW for a full 12 months, with sufficient data having been gathered to form a new additional headline estimate of total CSEW crime. This estimate and others on fraud are produced as [Experimental Statistics](#) ([Tables A1 to A3](#) and [Tables E1 to E8](#)).

Experimental Statistics on fraud and cybercrime recorded by the police are also being published again alongside this bulletin, including:

- Action Fraud data at police force area level, based on victim residency; these are presented in [Table E14](#)
- police recorded crime data on offences that have been flagged as having an online element¹; these are presented in [Table E15](#)

Notes for: What has changed within this publication?

1. An offence should be flagged where the reporting officer believes that on the balance of probability, the offence was committed, in full or in part, through a computer, computer network or other computer-enabled device.

4 . Future publication plans

The briefing note [Improving Crime Statistics for England and Wales – progress update](#) provides an overview of our plans to improve the design, coverage and presentation of crime statistics in England and Wales over the next few years.

The main focus of the commentary in our statistical bulletins has always been on numbers of crimes. In the future, alongside continued commentary on numbers, we intend to give more prominence to crime rates to put numbers in the context of the population. We will be seeking further advice from the [National Statistician's Crime Statistics Advisory Committee](#) regarding the planned implementation of these presentational changes.

Following criticism of the methodology for handling high-frequency repeat victimisation in CSEW estimates, particularly with regard to violent crime, we commissioned an independent review of the current and alternative methods for addressing repeat victimisation. This review was published on 6 July 2016 alongside a user consultation seeking feedback on the review's recommendations. The consultation ran until 13 September 2016. In response our [proposed way forward](#) was published on 7 November 2016, along with a summary of the feedback received to the consultation, with plans to implement the new methodology and revise the back series by July 2018 at the latest. More information can be found in section 2 of the [User Guide for Crime Statistics](#).

We have recently published information regarding a new proposed crime measure called the "Crime Severity Score (CSS)". Based on police recorded crime, the CSS would be intended to supplement existing measures rather than replace them. It aims to take into account both the volume and the severity of offences, by weighting offences differently according to their severity. By "severity", we are intending to reflect the relative harm of an offence to society and the likely demands on the police, given that the police resource requirements are likely to be greater for offences that are more serious. We are keen to receive feedback from users on whether such a measure should be incorporated regularly within future "Crime in England and Wales" releases. [Details of the CSS](#) are available in an article published in November 2016, including details of how [feedback](#) can be provided.

We intend to continue developing the structure of our quarterly statistical bulletins in future editions. As part of this ongoing review we will be seeking your views on whether there is a continuing need for all of the data we publish and whether there are new requirements for data we are not currently producing. We will also be looking at opportunities to exploit new data sources to meet your needs for more detailed information on the nature of crime.

We would welcome any additional feedback on this new format or any aspect of our improvement programme at: crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk.

5 . Things you need to know about this release

A crime is an act harmful to an individual (or individuals), a community, society or the State and is punishable by law. Being an illicit activity, by its nature, it is impossible to measure in its entirety.

These Official Statistics draw on 2 main sources to measure crime levels and trends: the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime; neither of these sources can provide a complete picture and each have different strengths and limitations.

Crime Survey for England and Wales

The CSEW is a face-to-face victimisation survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a selected range of offences in the 12 months prior to the interview. For the population and offence types it covers, the CSEW generally provides the better measure of trends on a consistent basis over time, because it is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices. The methodology employed in the main count of crime has remained comparable since the survey began in 1981. It was also confirmed in December 2016 that the crime statistics produced by the CSEW retained their National Statistics “badge”.

The CSEW is able to capture a broad range of victim-based crimes experienced by those interviewed, not just those that have been reported to, and recorded by, the police. However, there are some high harm but relatively lower-volume offences, such as homicide and sexual offences, which are not included in its main estimates.

The survey now includes fraud and computer misuse; work that has been completed to address this particular gap is described in section 5.4 of the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#). Until such data are available for 2 complete survey years, commentary on trends will be based on CSEW crime excluding fraud and computer misuse offences.

The CSEW allows for the calculation of estimates based on a variety of different measures, including the number of incidents of crime, and the number of victims. Using population estimates it is also possible to calculate the corresponding number of incidents per 1,000 population (the incident rate) and the number of victims per 1,000 population (the prevalence or victimisation rate). All 4 measures have been included within this release. For some crime types, the numbers of victims will be lower than the numbers of incidents, as some victims experience repeat victimisation. This difference will vary by crime type due to differing levels of repeat victimisation.

Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime figures are restricted to a subset of notifiable offences that have been reported to and recorded by the police. Therefore, while the police recorded crime series covers a wider population and a broader set of offences than the CSEW (for example, residents of institutions, tourists and crimes against commercial bodies), it does not include crimes that do not come to the attention of the police or are not recorded by them. Police recorded crime is the principal source of subnational crime statistics and for higher harm, but lower volume, crimes that are not well-measured by a sample survey, and as such it is an important source for analysing trends in well-reported crimes, such as homicide and vehicle theft.

Following an [assessment of crime statistics](#) by the UK Statistics Authority, published in January 2014, the statistics based on police recorded crime data were found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. Police recorded crime is not currently considered a reliable measure of trends in crime for most crime types, since it is prone to changes in recording practices and police activity as well as changing behaviour in public reporting of crime. As a result, trends will not always reflect changing levels of criminal activity. Apparent increases in police recorded crime seen over the last 2 years may reflect a number of factors, including tightening of recording practice, process improvements, increases in reporting by victims and also genuine increases in the levels of crime. It is often difficult to disentangle these different factors. Further information is available in the “Quality and methodology” section of this release.

Time periods covered

The latest CSEW figures presented in this release are based on interviews conducted between October 2015 and September 2016, measuring peoples’ experiences of crime in the 12 months before the interview.

The latest recorded crime figures relate to crimes recorded by the police during the year ending September 2016 (between October 2015 and September 2016).

In this release:

- “latest year” (or “latest survey year”) refers to the year (or survey year) ending September 2016
- “previous year” (or “previous survey year”) refers to the year (or survey year) ending September 2015
- any other time period is referred to explicitly

6 . What is happening to trends in crime?

Crime Survey for England and Wales

Latest figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) show there were an estimated 6.2 million incidents of crime experienced by adults aged 16 and over based on interviews in the survey year ending September 2016. The apparent 5% decrease from 6.6 million incidents estimated in the previous year’s survey was not statistically significant. These estimates cover crimes against the person (for example, violence or theft from the person) and against households (for example, domestic burglary or criminal damage), but exclude fraud and computer misuse offences.

Data derived from the new fraud and computer misuse offence questions (which continue to be published as Experimental Statistics) show there were an additional estimated 5.6 million incidents of fraud and computer misuse offences in the latest year’s survey (3.6 million fraud and 2.0 million computer misuse offences).

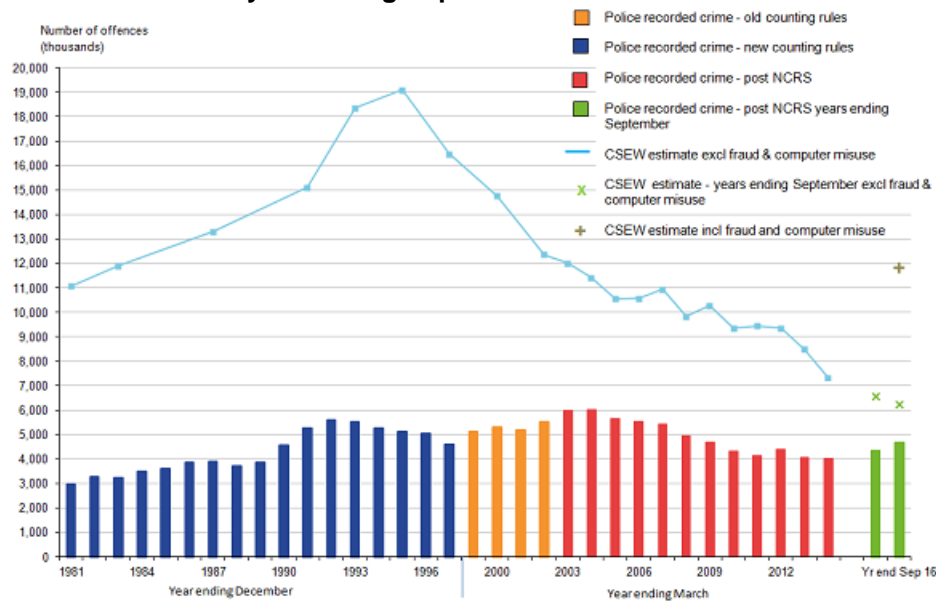
Adding fraud and computer misuse offences to the existing CSEW series indicates an estimated 11.8 million incidents of crime covered by the CSEW in the survey year ending September 2016. It should be emphasised that this combined estimate is not comparable with headline estimates from earlier years. For year-on-year comparisons and analysis of long-term trends it is necessary to exclude fraud and computer misuse offences, as data on these are only available for the latest year. It will not be until January 2018 that we will be able to release valid year-on-year comparisons of CSEW estimates including the new fraud and computer misuse figures based on a full year’s data.

Crime covered by the CSEW (excluding fraud and computer misuse offences) increased steadily from 1981, before peaking in 1995. After peaking, the CSEW showed marked falls until the survey year ending March 2005. Since then, the underlying trend has continued downwards, but with some fluctuation from year to year (Figure 1).

These figures relate to a broad range of victim-based crimes experienced by the resident household population. However, they exclude some high harm (but lower-volume) offences such as homicide and sexual offences as well as crimes against children.

CSEW estimates of crimes experienced by children aged 10 to 15 (published in [Appendix tables A9, A10, A11 and A12](#)) are not directly comparable with the main survey of adults, so are not included in the headline total. In the latest survey year, the CSEW estimated that around 12 in 100 children aged 10 to 15 were victims of at least 1 crime. A total of 780,000 crimes¹ were experienced by children; of this number, 52% were categorised as violent crimes² (404,000), 34% as thefts of personal property (265,000), 9% as criminal damage to personal property (67,000) and 6% as robbery (45,000). Given the small sample size for the 10-to-15-year old element of the CSEW, estimates can fluctuate over time, and as a result trends can be difficult to interpret. Detailed data are available from [Tables F21, F22 and F23](#).

Figure 1: Trends in Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime, year ending December 1981 to year ending September 2016



Figures for the year ending September 2016 CSEW showed that an estimated 6.7 million adults aged 16 and over were a victim of at least 1 crime³. The likelihood of being a victim of CSEW crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse) has fallen considerably over time; around 15 in 100 adults were victims in the latest survey year compared with around 23 in 100 a decade ago (in the survey year ending March 2006) and around 40 in 100 in 1995 (the peak survey year).

The victimisation rate estimated by the CSEW when fraud and computer misuse offences are included indicates that around 22 in 100 adults were victims of a crime in the latest survey year.

Police recorded crime

The police recorded 4.7 million offences⁴ in the year ending September 2016, an increase of 8% compared with the previous year. Of the 44 forces (including the British Transport Police), 40 showed an annual increase. These increases need to be seen in the context of the renewed focus on the quality of crime recording by the police, in light of the inspections of forces by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)⁵, the [Public Administration Select Committee \(PASC\) inquiry](#) into crime statistics and the [UK Statistics Authority's decision](#) to remove the National Statistics designation from police recorded crime statistics. This renewed focus is thought to have led to improved compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), leading to a greater proportion of reported crimes being recorded by the police.

In November 2015, HMIC wrote to all Chief Constables advising them that they would be commencing an unannounced programme of rolling inspections of crime recording on an ongoing basis. Reports on these inspections will be published on a rolling basis and can be found on the [HMIC website](#).

Police recorded crime increased during most of the 1980s and then fell each year from 1992 to 1997. Expanded coverage of offences in the police recorded crime collection, following changes to the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) in 1998 and the introduction of the NCRS in April 2002, saw general increases in the number of crimes recorded by the police. Following these changes, there was a near continual decline in police recorded crime between the years ending March 2004 and March 2014; the only exception being the year ending March 2012, when there was an increase following the transfer of responsibility for recording fraud offences to Action Fraud from individual police forces. Since the year ending March 2014 onwards, total police recorded crime has increased. However, it is thought this is principally owing to the renewed focus on the quality of crime recording by the police, resulting from a tightening of recording practice and process improvements, rather than an actual increase in crime coming to their attention.

Other related sources

Neither the CSEW nor police recorded crime figures provide a total picture of crime. Other sources of information help to provide a fuller picture, including administrative data on anti-social behaviour (ASB) and non-notifiable offences. In addition the Commercial Victimization Survey provides estimates of crime against business premises covered in its sample (the survey generally covers premises in 3 or 4 industrial sectors each year).

The CSEW showed that an estimated 29% of respondents reported experiencing or witnessing ASB in their local area in the latest survey year, similar to the 28% in the previous survey year. This estimate has remained at a similar level (between 27% and 30%) since the data were first collected in the survey year ending March 2012. Further information is available in [Figures F10 and F11 and Tables F24 and F25](#).

Police recorded crime also provides information on ASB; around 1.8 million incidents of ASB were recorded by the police (including the British Transport Police) in the latest year, a decrease of 2% compared with the previous year ([Figure F10](#)). These are incidents that may still be crimes in law, such as littering or dog fouling, but are not of a level of severity that would result in the recording of a notifiable offence. A review by HMIC in 2012 found that there was [a wide variation in the quality of decision-making associated with the recording of ASB](#). As a result, ASB incident data should be interpreted with caution.

In the year ending March 2016 (the latest period for which data are available⁶), there were 1.1 million convictions for non-notifiable offences⁷ that were not covered in police recorded crime or the CSEW. This was an increase of 3% from the year ending March 2015, continuing a pattern of similar rises recorded from the year ending December 2014 onwards, and is largely driven by increases in the numbers of defendants prosecuted for motoring offences, failure to pay for a motor vehicle licence and TV licence evasion⁸. In addition, there were 20,000 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND) issued in relation to non-notifiable offences for the year ending March 2016, a decrease of 25% from the year ending March 2015; the majority of these PNDs related to drunk and disorderly behaviour⁹. Further information is available in [Tables F26a and F26b](#).

The CSEW does not cover crimes against businesses and police recorded crime can only provide a partial picture (as not all offences come to the attention of the police). The [Commercial Victimization Survey](#) provides estimates of crime against selected business premises¹⁰ in England and Wales and gives some insight into the number of these crimes that go unreported to the police. However, it does not cover all industry sectors and the small sample sizes associated with individual sectors means that caution must be applied when comparing crime rates over time. In the survey year ending December 2015, businesses in the wholesale and retail sector experienced the highest levels of crime – an estimated 4.7 million incidents, a rate of around 12,000 incidents per 1,000 business premises, which is lower than the rate recorded for the previous year (13,000 incidents per 1,000 business premises in the year ending December 2014) ([Table F27](#)).

Notes for: What is happening to trends in crime?

1. The survey of children aged 10 to 15 only covers personal level crime (so excludes household level crime) and, as with the main survey, does not include sexual offences.
2. The majority (79%) of violent crimes experienced in the latest survey year resulted in minor or no injury, so in just over three-quarters of cases the violence is low level.
3. This estimate is higher than the estimated number of incidents given for the same time period. In calculating the number of victims of all CSEW crime, all adults resident in a household that had experienced one incident of crime against the household are counted as victims of the crime. Hence, the estimated number of adults who were victims of all CSEW crime is larger than that presented for the number of incidents.
4. The 4.7 million offences include fraud offences recorded by the police. Excluding fraud offences there were 4.1 million offences recorded by the police in the year ending September 2016, a 9% rise from last year.
5. Inspections included the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales and excluded the British Transport Police.
6. Due to anomalies identified in the Non-Notifiable Convictions data no information has currently been published later than the year ending March 2016.
7. Non-notifiable offences are offences dealt with exclusively by magistrates' courts or by the police issuing of a Penalty Notice for Disorder or a Fixed Penalty Notice. Along with non-notifiable offences dealt with by the police (such as speeding), these include many offences that may be dealt with by other agencies – for example: prosecutions by TV Licensing; or the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for vehicle registration offences.
8. Caution should be used when interpreting these provisional magistrates' court volumes, due to an apparent fall in the number of defendants proceeded against in extracts received for February and March 2016, which is being investigated.
9. A pilot scheme was implemented from early November 2014 in Leicestershire and Staffordshire police forces and from late November in West Yorkshire to reduce the types of out of court disposals available for adult offenders. In the pilot areas, the only out of court disposals available are community resolutions and conditional cautions.
10. This is a premises based survey; respondents were asked if the business at their current premises had experienced any of a range of crime types in the 12 months prior to interview.

7 . How have trends for individual crime types changed?

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that estimates for most individual offence categories did not show significant changes compared with the previous year, although the 9% decrease in total theft offences was statistically significant.

The latest decrease in total theft offences estimated by the CSEW reflects the long-term trend, with total theft offences now 69% lower than the peak in 1995 and at the lowest number recorded since the survey began in 1981. In the year ending September 2016, the 3.6 million theft offences estimated by the CSEW accounted for just under a third (30%) of all CSEW incidents including fraud and computer misuse.

The estimated number of "other household theft" incidents¹ in the latest survey year decreased to 617,000, down 16% (from 732,000 in the previous year) and is the main driver for the decrease in the total theft offence category. The estimated number of "bicycle theft" incidents in the latest survey year also decreased, down 23% to 282,000 (from 368,000 in the previous year) and continues the general downward trend seen for this offence category over the last 4 years.

This is the first time we have included fraud and computer misuse incidence rates, with the new estimate for fraud (8 in 100 adults) being measurably higher than the incidence rates for any other offence type measured by the CSEW. The incidence rate for computer misuse (4 in 100 adults) has been estimated at a similar level to that of criminal damage (5 in 100 adults) and vehicle-related theft (4 in 100 adults), whilst the robbery incidence rate estimated by the survey (less than 1 in 100 adults) falls substantially lower than incidence rates for all other offence types.

Table 1a: CSEW incidence rates and numbers of incidents for year ending September 2016 and percentage change¹

Offence group ²	Oct '15 to Sep '16		October 2015 to September 2016 compared with:			
			Jan '95 to Dec '95	Apr '05 to Mar '06	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Oct '14 to Sep '15
			Rate per 1,000 population ³	Number of incidents (thousands) ⁴	Number of incidents - percentage change and significance ⁵	
Violence	29	1,335	-65 *	-33 *	-30 *	4
with injury	13	616	-73 *	-43 *	-43 *	-8
without injury	16	719	-54 *	-20 *	-12	16
Robbery	3	142	-58 *	-53 *	-41 *	31
Theft offences ⁶	..	3,552	-69 *	-37 *	-31 *	-9 *
Theft from the person	8	366	-46 *	-35 *	-33 *	-16
Other theft of personal property	17	769	-63 *	-34 *	-21 *	4
Unweighted base - number of adults	36,724					
Fraud and computer misuse(ES) ^{7,8}	121	5,583	..	..	..	..
Fraud	79	3,617	..	..	..	..
Bank and credit account fraud	53	2,452	..	..	..	..
Non-investment fraud	20	939	..	..	..	..
Advance fee fraud	3	118	..	..	..	..
Other fraud	2	108	..	..	..	..
Computer misuse	43	1,966	..	..	..	..
Computer virus	28	1,300	..	..	..	..
Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)	14	667	..	..	..	..
Unweighted base - number of adults	17,862					
Domestic burglary	28	686	-71 *	-33 *	-34 *	-8
in a dwelling	20	488	-72 *	-32 *	-34 *	-6
in a non-connected building to a dwelling	8	198	-70 *	-35 *	-33 *	-11
Other household theft	25	617	-61 *	-24 *	-34 *	-16 *
Unweighted base - number of households	36,629					
Vehicle-related theft	44	831	-81 *	-50 *	-29 *	-7
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	29,333					
Bicycle theft	23	282	-57 *	-33 *	-45 *	-23 *
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	17,394					
Criminal damage	49	1,199	-64 *	-55 *	-44 *	-5

Unweighted base - number of households 36,629

ALL CSEW CRIME ⁶	..	6,228	-67 *	-41 *	-34 *	-5
ALL CSEW CRIME INCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE (ES) ^{7,8}	..	11,811	..	..	..	..

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix tables A1 and A2.
2. Section 5 of the User Guide provides more information about the crime types included in this table.
3. Rates for violence, robbery, theft from the person and other theft of personal property are quoted per 1,000 adults; rates for domestic burglary, other household theft, and criminal damage are quoted per 1,000 households; rates for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted per 1,000 vehicle-owning and bicycle-owning households respectively.
4. Data may not sum to totals shown due to rounding.
5. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.
6. It is not possible to construct a rate for all theft offences or CSEW crime because rates for household offences are based on rates per household, and those for personal offences on rates per adult, and the two cannot be combined.
7. Data on fraud and computer misuse are published as Experimental Statistics, which are in the testing phase and not yet fully developed. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development, and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.
8. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from October 2015. Estimates are based on approximately 17,800 cases gathered in the previous twelve months. The questions are currently asked of half the survey sample to test for detrimental effects on the survey as a whole and help ensure that the historical time series is protected.

Table 1b provides an alternative measure of crime based upon prevalence rates (the number of victims expressed as a percentage of all households or adults) and numbers of victims. For individual crime types, the numbers of victims will be lower than the numbers of incidents, as people or households can experience repeat victimisation. It is possible that due to repeat victimisation, there will be some differences in short-term trends between the measures based on numbers of incidents and numbers of victims.

Table 1b: CSEW prevalence rates and numbers of victims for year ending September 2016 and percentage change¹

Offence group ²	Oct '15 to Sep '16		October 2015 to September 2016 compared with:			
	Percentage, victims once or more ³	Number of victims (thousands) ⁴	Jan '95 to Dec '95	Apr '05 to Mar '06	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Oct '14 to Sep '15
			Numbers of victims - percentage change and significance ⁵			
Violence	1.8	826	-57 *	-29 *	-31 *	-2
with injury	0.9	404	-67 *	-41 *	-43 *	-11
without injury	1.0	446	-48 *	-17 *	-17 *	7
Robbery	0.3	123	-56 *	-47 *	-37 *	24
Theft offences ⁶	10.0	4,619	-64 *	-30 *	-29 *	-9 *
Theft from the person	0.7	341	-48 *	-33 *	-32 *	-15
Other theft of personal property	1.4	664	-60 *	-34 *	-21 *	1
Unweighted base - number of adults	36,724					
Fraud and computer misuse(ES) ^{7,8}	9.4	4,311	..	..	..	..
Fraud	6.3	2921	..	..	..	..
Bank and credit account fraud	4.3	2001	..	..	..	..
Non-investment fraud	1.8	820	..	..	..	..
Advance fee fraud	0.2	92	..	..	..	..
Other fraud	0.2	85	..	..	..	..
Computer misuse	3.4	1583	..	..	..	..
Computer virus	2.3	1064				
Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)	1.2	559	..	..	..	..
Unweighted base - number of adults	17,862					
Domestic burglary	2.2	537	-70 *	-31 *	-34 *	-9
in a dwelling	1.5	378	-71 *	-32 *	-36 *	-8
in a non-connected building to a dwelling	0.7	165	-70 *	-33 *	-31 *	-12
Other household theft	2.1	508	-53 *	-16 *	-31 *	-14 *
Unweighted base - number of households	36,629					
Vehicle-related theft	3.7	708	-76 *	-46 *	-27 *	-7
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	29,333					
Bicycle theft	2.1	255	-55 *	-29 *	-41 *	-23 *
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	17,394					
Criminal damage	3.7	891	-58 *	-48 *	-37 *	-2

Unweighted base - number of households	36,629					
ALL CSEW CRIME ⁹	14.6	6,741	-58 *	-32 *	-29 *	-6 *
ALL CSEW CRIME INCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE (ES) ^{7,8}	22.0	10,131	..	..	..	..

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix tables A3 and A8.
2. Section 5 of the User Guide provides more information about the crime types included in this table.
3. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person and other theft of personal property are quoted for adults; percentages for domestic burglary, other household theft, and criminal damage are quoted for households; percentages for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted for vehicle-owning and bicycle-owning households respectively.
4. Where applicable, numbers in sub-categories will not sum to totals, because adults/households may have been a victim of more than one crime.
5. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.
6. This is the estimated percentage/number of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal theft crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household theft crime.
7. Data on fraud and computer misuse are published as Experimental Statistics, which are in the testing phase and not yet fully developed. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development, and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.
8. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from October 2015. Estimates are based on approximately 17,800 cases gathered in the previous twelve months. The questions are currently asked of half the survey sample to test for detrimental effects on the survey as a whole and help ensure that the historical time series is protected.
9. This is the estimated percentage/number 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.

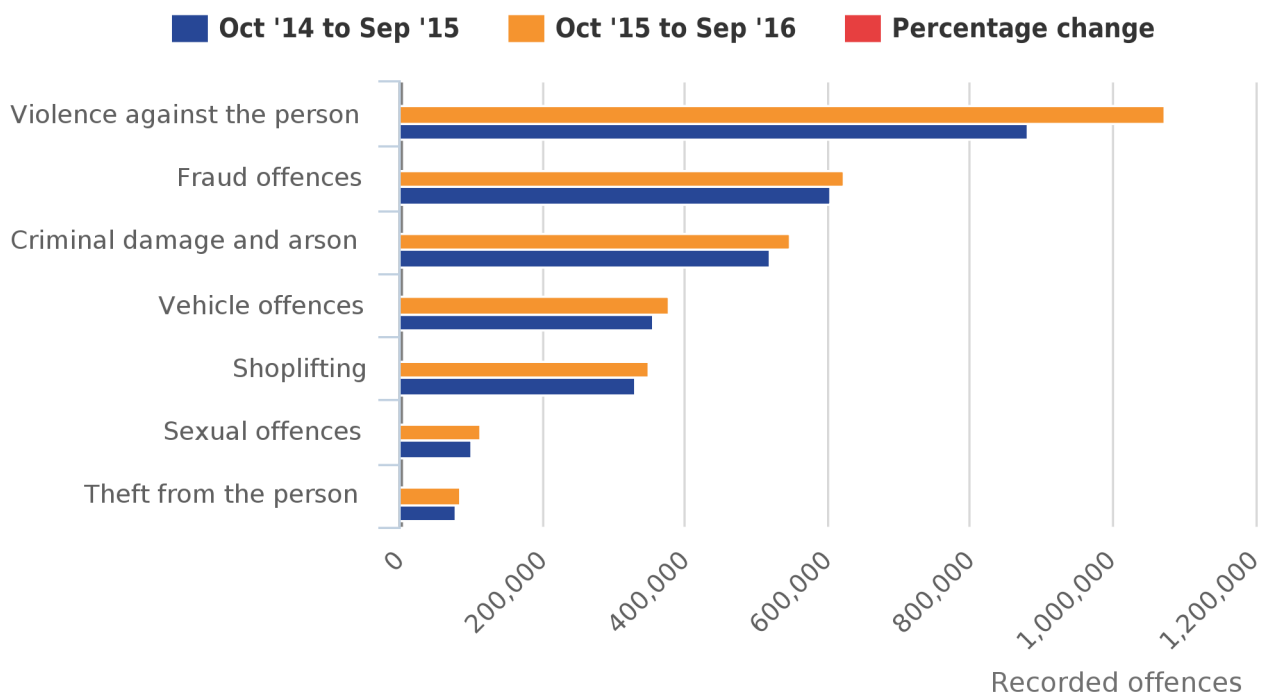
As shown in Table 2, the 8% increase² in the number of police recorded crimes in the latest year compared with the previous year was largely driven by increases in violence against the person offences (up 22%, from 882,921 to 1,075,511) and public order offences (up 32%, from 181,306 to 239,674). There were also increases in criminal damage and arson offences (up 5%, from 520,327 to 548,674), theft offences (up 2%, from 1,748,715 to 1,784,598) and sexual offences (up 12%, from 99,615 to 112,021). Improvements in crime recording practices and processes by the police and an increase in the willingness of victims to come forward and report offences (particularly sexual offences, of which 25% were non-recent offences³) are thought to be the main drivers of these increases.

While total theft offences recorded by the police have remained broadly level, there have been increases in the number of vehicle offences (up 6% to 376,670), theft from the person (up 6% to 85,095) and shoplifting (up 5% to 349,296), with slight decreases being recorded for bicycle theft (down 2% to 87,470) and all other theft offences (down 1% to 484,019). While the number of burglaries remained stable in comparison with the previous year (0% change at 402,048) (Table 2), there was a small increase in the number of domestic burglary offences (up 3% to 198,706).

There was a 3% increase in the number of fraud offences recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) in England and Wales (up to 622,731⁴) compared with the previous year. The increase was primarily due to the number of fraud offences referred by Cifas, which increased by 11,086 offences (4%), and by Financial Fraud Action UK, which increased by 9,093 offences (11%). In contrast, offences recorded by Action Fraud decreased by 1,698 offences (1%).

Figure 2 focuses on selected police recorded crime offences with notable changes in the latest year compared with the previous year.

Figure 2: Selected police recorded crime offences in England and Wales: volumes and percentage change between year ending September 2015 and year ending September 2016



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

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

Table 2: Police recorded crimes - rate, number and percentage change for year ending September 2016
1,2,3

Offence group	Oct '15 to Sep '16		Oct '15 to Sep '16 compared with:		
	Rate per 1,000 population	Number of offences	Apr '05 to Mar '06	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Oct '14 to Sep '15
			Number of offences - percentage change		
VICTIM-BASED CRIME	62	3,574,049	-27	-1	8
Violence against the person offences	19	1,075,511	28	62	22
Homicide	0	695	-9	9	22
Violence with injury ⁴	8	449,844	-17	22	12
Violence without injury ⁵	11	624,972	112	111	30
Sexual offences	2	112,021	86	108	12
Rape	1	37,813	162	138	13
Other sexual offences	1	74,208	62	95	12
Robbery offences	1	53,245	-46	-30	5
Robbery of business property	0	5,371	-39	-31	-1
Robbery of personal property	1	47,874	-46	-30	6
Theft offences	31	1,784,598	-35	-15	2
Burglary	7	402,048	-38	-23	-0
Domestic burglary	3	198,706	-34	-23	3
Non-domestic burglary	4	203,342	-41	-23	-3
Vehicle offences	7	376,670	-52	-16	6
Theft of a motor vehicle	2	88,496	-64	-25	13
Theft from a vehicle	4	241,382	-52	-23	2
Interfering with a motor vehicle	1	46,792	-34	56	11
Theft from the person	1	85,095	-31	-8	6
Bicycle theft	2	87,470	-23	-20	-2
Shoplifting	6	349,296	18	14	5
All other theft offences ⁶	8	484,019	-37	-23	-1
Criminal damage and arson	9	548,674	-53	-21	5
OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	8	476,395	-8	-1	14
Drug offences	2	141,714	-21	-39	-10
Trafficking of drugs	0	25,175	-0	-22	-5
Possession of drugs	2	116,539	-24	-42	-11
Possession of weapons offences	0	27,904	-30	6	19

Public order offences	4	239,674	8	38	32
Miscellaneous crimes against society	1	67,103	-10	40	16
<hr/>					
TOTAL FRAUD OFFENCES ⁷	11	622,731	..	..	3
<hr/>					
TOTAL RECORDED CRIME - ALL OFFENCES INCLUDING FRAUD ^{7,8}	81	4,673,175	-16	13	8
<hr/>					

Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded crime statistics based on data from all 44 forces in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police).
3. Appendix tables A4 and A7 provide detailed footnotes and further years.
4. Includes attempted murder, intentional destruction of viable unborn child, causing death by dangerous driving/careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs, more serious wounding or other act endangering life (including grievous bodily harm with and without intent), causing death by aggravated vehicle taking and less serious wounding offences.
5. Includes threat or conspiracy to murder, harassment, other offences against children and assault without injury (formerly common assault where there is no injury).
6. All other theft offences now includes all 'making off without payment' offences recorded since year ending March 2003. Making off without payment was previously included within the fraud offence group, but following a change in the classification for year ending March 2014, this change has been applied to previous years of data to give a consistent time series.
7. Total fraud offences cover crimes recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau via Action Fraud, Cifas and Financial Fraud Action UK. Action Fraud have taken over the recording of fraud offences on behalf of individual police forces. Percentage changes compared with earlier years are not presented, as fraud figures for year ending March 2006 and year ending March 2011 covered only those crimes recorded by individual police forces. Given the addition of new data sources, it is not possible to make direct comparisons with earlier years.
8. Since confirming their police recorded crime figures for publication, a small error has been found with Wiltshire's crime data. Therefore Wiltshire's total crime figures for the year ending September 2016 are currently underestimated by 490 offences. This affects various crime types and will be rectified next quarter.

Offences involving firearms⁵ increased by 7% (to 5,478 offences in the latest year) compared with the previous year (5,104 offences). This was largely driven by a 12% increase in offences involving handguns and partly by a 17% increase in offences involving shotguns and a 5% increase in offences involving imitation weapons (such as BB guns⁶). Increases in some categories are thought to reflect improvements in turnaround time for forensic processes leading to better firearm identification than previously. The latest rise follows a general downward trend in firearm offences, which remains 51% below its peak around a decade ago.

Offences that involved a knife or sharp instrument⁷ also showed an increase (11%, to 30,838 offences⁸) during the latest year. However, as with offences involving firearms, we have seen a general downward trend in this series over the longer-term, between the years ending March 2011 and March 2014, with the latest figures being 6% lower than those from around 5 years ago (year ending March 2011).

More detailed commentary on trends in violent offences, sexual offences, offences involving weapons and fraud offences is included in subsequent sections of this release. In addition, we are in the process of producing a series of overview articles, each focusing on a specific crime type, that will provide information on long-term trends, victim profiles and the nature of incidents (where available). The first of these, an overview on fraud statistics, was published alongside the quarterly report "Crime in England and Wales: Year ending March 2016"; articles on other crime and justice topics will be published in due course. In the meantime, the quarterly report [Crime in England and Wales: Year ending September 2015](#) contains further commentary on each crime type.

Notes for: How have trends for individual crime types changed?

1. "Other household theft" incidents includes "theft from a dwelling" and "theft from outside a dwelling".
2. This 8% increase in police recorded crime includes fraud offences recorded by the police. Excluding fraud offences there were 4.1 million offences recorded by the police in the year ending September 2016, a 9% rise from last year.
3. Non-recent offences are those that took place over 12 months before being reported.
4. This figure is taken from Table A4 and includes 2 fraud offences recorded by individual police forces (rather than via Action Fraud). The total fraud offences recorded in England and Wales reported in Table A5 differs slightly, as it excludes these 2 offences.
5. Firearms include shotguns; handguns; rifles; imitation weapons such as BB guns or soft air weapons; other weapons such as CS gas or pepper spray and stun guns; and unidentified weapons. These figures exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.
6. A type of air gun that fires spherical projectiles.
7. Only selected violent offences can be broken down by whether a knife or sharp instrument was used. These are: homicide; attempted murder; threats to kill; assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm; robbery; rape; and sexual assault.
8. Includes data from all police forces, including Thames Valley, who have reported that they had previously undercounted offences following the implementation of their new crime recording system; section 10 of this release has more information regarding this issue.

8 . Latest violent crime figures continue to present a complex picture

Violent crime covers a wide range of offences including minor assaults (such as pushing and shoving), harassment and abuse (that result in no physical harm) through to wounding and homicide. For the population and offences that it covers, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the better measure of trends in overall violent crime. The police recorded crime series is restricted to violent offences that have been reported to and recorded by the police. However, due to the renewed focus on the quality of crime recording by the police, this crime series is not currently believed to provide a reliable measure of trends, owing to the ensuing efforts of police forces to tighten recording practice and improve recording processes.

Main findings

Over the longer-term, levels of violent crime estimated by the CSEW have shown substantial falls. These declines continued until 2014, after which estimates of violence from the CSEW have been fairly flat for the past 2 years.

CSEW findings for the latest survey year show no change in levels of violence compared with the previous survey year (the apparent 4% increase was not statistically significant). Similar trends have also been demonstrated in accident and emergency department violence-related attendances and NHS hospital admissions for assault.

Violence against the person offences recorded by the police rose by 22% in the latest year and recorded levels are now at the highest seen in a 12-month period since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002.

Within the overall category of violence against the person, the expansion of the harassment category to include 2 additional offences¹ has accounted for around a third of the recent rise in violent crime. Improvements in crime recording practices as well as a possible rise in the proportion of violent crimes reported to the police (particularly in the case of domestic abuse) are also thought to have contributed to this rise. Alongside this, it is possible there have been small, but genuine, increases in some types of violent crime.

In the category of homicide, which also sits within violence against the person, the police recorded 695 offences in the latest year, 125 more than in the previous year (a 22% increase). However, this includes the 96 cases of manslaughter that resulted from the events in Hillsborough in 1989². Excluding those 96 cases of manslaughter, the increase in police recorded homicides is much lower, at 5%.

Crime Survey for England and Wales

CSEW violence includes incidents with and without injury and also covers attempted incidents.

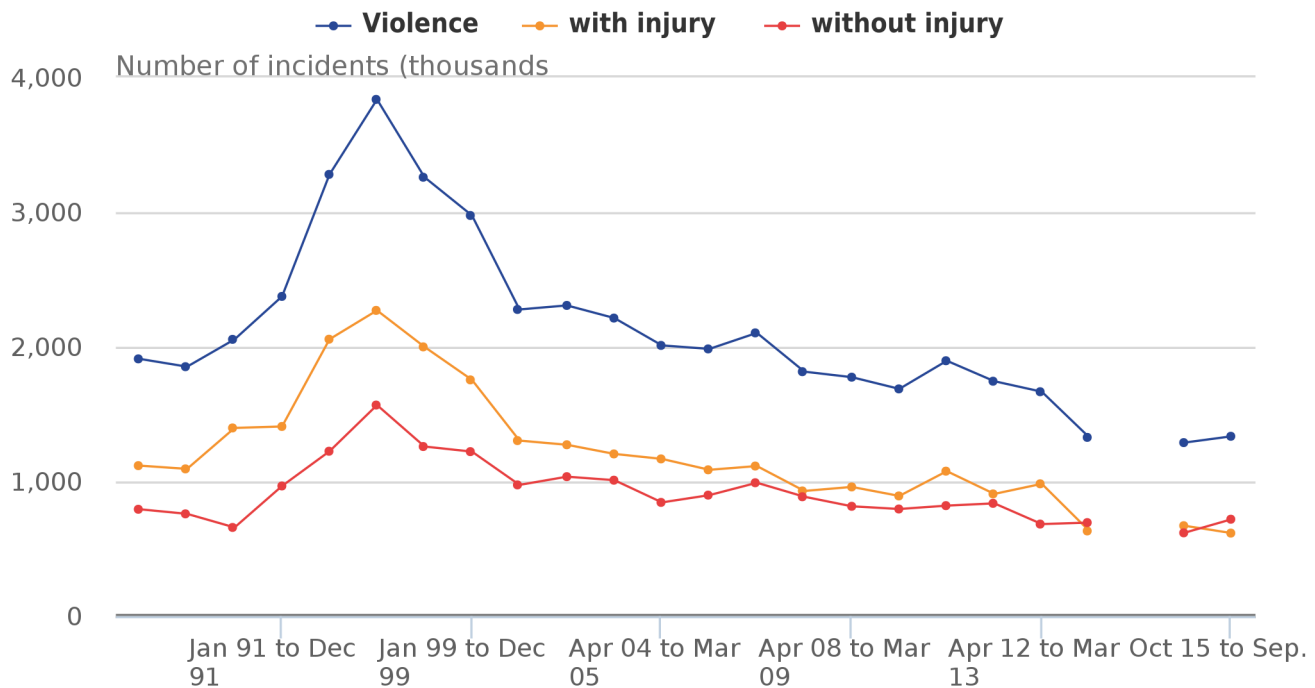
Latest CSEW data showed there were an estimated 1.3 million incidents of violence experienced by adults aged 16 and over in the latest survey year; no change from the previous survey year (the apparent 4% rise was not statistically significant). The apparent 8% decrease in the sub-category of “violence with injury” and apparent 16% increase in the sub-category of “violence without injury” were also not statistically significant (Figure 3); both, however, can show year-on-year fluctuation.

The estimated number of CSEW violence incidents rose sharply through the early 1990s (peaking in 1995) and then fell steeply until the survey year ending March 2002. Violence declined between the survey year ending March 2002 and survey year ending March 2014, but the last 2 survey years indicate a fairly flat trend.

Around 2 in every 100 adults were a victim of CSEW violent crime in the latest survey year, compared with around 3 in 100 adults in the survey year ending March 2006 and 5 in 100 adults in 1995 (the peak year).

Estimates of violence against 10 to 15 year olds, as measured by the CSEW, can be found in [Table F22](#).

Figure 3: Trends in Crime Survey for England and Wales violence, year ending December 1981 to year ending September 2016



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Prior to the year ending March 2002, CSEW respondents were asked about their experience of crime in the previous calendar year, so year-labels identify the year in which the crime took place. Following the change to continuous interviewing, respondents' experience of crime relates to the full 12 months prior to interview (ie a moving reference period). Year-labels for the year ending March 2002 onwards identify the CSEW year of interview.

Trends in violent crime, as shown by the CSEW, are also reflected in the most recent evidence available from research conducted by the Violence and Society Research Group at Cardiff University. Findings from their annual survey, covering a sample of hospital emergency departments and walk-in centres in England and Wales, show that [serious violence-related attendances in 2015 were broadly similar to the level recorded in 2014](#) following a declining trend seen in earlier years. Admissions data for NHS hospitals in England³ provide similar findings, with admissions for assault decreasing by less than 1% from the year ending March 2015 to the year ending March 2016.

Police recorded crime

Violent offences in police recorded data are referred to as “violence against the person” and include homicide, violence with injury and violence without injury⁴. As with the CSEW, both actual and attempted assaults are included in the figures. It should also be noted that the police recorded crime category of violence against the person also includes some offences, such as harassment and stalking, in which there is no physical assault involved.

Recent changes in recording practice make interpreting trends in violence against the person offences difficult. It is known that violent offences are more prone than some other offences to subjective judgement about whether or not to record a crime. The [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#) report, published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) on 18 November 2014, found that “violence against the person” offences had the highest under-recording rates across police forces in England and Wales. Nationally, an estimated 1 in 3 (33%) reports of violence that should have been logged as crimes were not recorded as such.

There was a 22% increase in the number of violence against the person offences recorded by the police in the latest year (up to 1,075,511) compared with the previous year. Part of this increase is due to the expansion of the harassment category to include 2 additional notifiable offences. Improvements in crime recording practices are also thought to be a main driver of this increase as well as a potential increase in the proportion of victims reporting crimes to the police, particularly in cases of domestic abuse. It is also possible there have been small, but genuine, increases in some types of violent crime.

The “violence without injury” sub-category showed an increase of 30% over the same period (up to 624,972 offences), while the “violence with injury” sub-category showed a smaller increase of 12% (up to 449,844 offences).

The increase in “violence without injury” is partially due to a 66% rise in harassment offences in the latest year compared with the previous year (up to 187,025 from 112,754). The rise in harassment is almost entirely the result of the expansion of this category in April 2015 to include 2 additional notifiable offences⁵ that were previously not included in the police recorded crime series. These are “Disclosure of private sexual photographs and films (including on the internet) with the intent to cause distress or anxiety” and “Sending letters (including emails) with intent to cause distress or anxiety”⁶; the latter is thought to account for 97% of these newly added offences⁷. It is estimated that these 2 additional notifiable offences made up a third of the overall 22% rise in violence against the person offences and just over two-fifths of the 30% increase in the “violence without injury” sub-category.

Taking out the 2 additional notifiable offences, based on data from 40 forces (from the Home Office Data Hub), the increase in harassment offences is estimated at around 13% (instead of 66%), the increase in “violence without injury” is estimated at around 18% (instead of 30%) and the increase in total violent offences is estimated at around 15% (instead of 22%).

Within “violence without injury” there is an increase in modern slavery offences, which have risen to 1,289 from the 326 recorded the previous year. This increase in modern slavery offences is in part due to an improved recording of modern slavery since the introduction of this new offence category in July 2015⁸. A recent report by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner was critical of the [ongoing under-recording of such offences](#) noting that whilst 884⁹ modern slavery offences were recorded in the year ending March 2016, there was over 3 times that number of referrals (3,146) to the National Referral Mechanism over the same period and that the number of recorded offences may still not fully reflect the true extent of modern slavery in England and Wales.

The increase in the “violence with injury” sub-category includes a 23% rise in the number of attempted murder offences (a volume increase of 141) in the latest year; these figures may also have been influenced by improvements in crime recording. Attempted murder rose in 30 of the 44 police forces (including the British Transport Police) in England and Wales, in the year ending September 2016. Prior to the recent improvements in recording practices, it is possible that some police officers may have been applying Crown Prosecution Service charging standards (guidelines on what charges should be brought against suspects) when deciding what type of crime to record rather than basing the decision on the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR), which require offences to be recorded in line with the criminal offence committed. Attempted murder is an important example of this potential issue, as offences may have previously been recorded (and charged) as another type of violent crime that is easier to prove in court, such as “assault with intent to cause serious harm”.

All but 1 police force recorded a rise in violence in the latest year compared with the previous year; Nottinghamshire Police recorded a 2% decrease. In percentage terms, the largest increase was reported by Northumbria Police, which recorded an additional 14,462 offences compared with the previous year (an increase of 95%, up to 29,617). Other large percentage increases included Durham Constabulary (up 73% to 12,235 offences), West Yorkshire Police (up 48%, to 58,153 offences), and Avon and Somerset Constabulary (up 45%, to 35,272 offences) ([Tables P1 and P3](#)).

Action taken by police forces to improve their compliance with the NCRS is likely to have resulted in the increase in the number of offences recorded¹⁰. It is thought that recording improvements are more likely to affect relatively less serious violent offences and could explain the larger increase in the sub-category “violence without injury” compared with “violence with injury”.

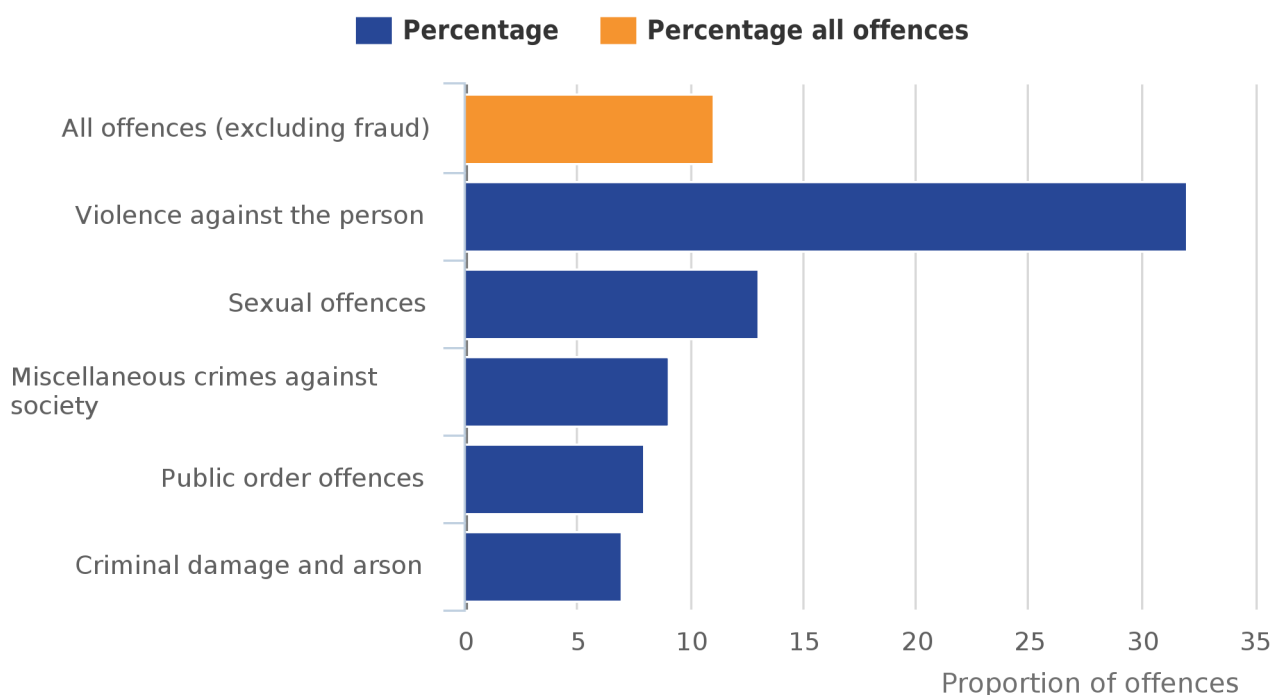
A number of forces have indicated that the rise in recorded violence is a result of a greater proportion of reports of crime being recorded rather than a genuine rise in violent crime. For example, data from the Metropolitan Police Service showed that while police recorded violence against the person increased by 10% in the latest year, the number of “calls for service” (for example, emergency and non-emergency calls from members of the public) relating to [violent crime increased by less than 1%](#) over the same period.

Domestic abuse

Another possible factor behind the rise in police recorded violent offences is an increase in the reporting of domestic abuse and the subsequent recording of these offences by the police. In 2015, an HMIC report detailed the [improvements in the police response to domestic abuse](#) that had taken place across England and Wales. It concluded that recent increases in the number of domestic abuse-related crimes were due, in part, to police forces improving their recording of domestic abuse incidents as crimes and to forces actively encouraging victims to come forward to report these crimes.

The Home Office has been collecting information from the police, since April 2015, on whether recorded offences are related to domestic abuse. Crimes should be “flagged” as being domestic abuse-related by the police if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse¹¹. Data for the year ending September 2016 showed that violence against the person offences were the most likely to be flagged, with 32% of such offences flagged as domestic abuse-related. The offence group with the next highest proportion of offences flagged was sexual offences (13%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Proportion of offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse-related, selected offence groups, year ending September 2016



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data are provisional and have not been reconciled with police forces.

At present, fewer than 2 years of data on offences flagged by the police as being domestic abuse-related are available and it is therefore not possible to compare levels of change over 2 years.

However, since the year ending March 2005, the CSEW has included a self-completion questionnaire module on intimate violence, for persons aged 16 to 59 only, which provides a measure of the proportion of people who have been victims of domestic abuse in this age group over time.

Most recent estimates from this self-completion section of the CSEW for the year ending March 2016 (published in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales, year ending March 2016](#) release) showed that the proportion of all adults aged 16 to 59 who had been victims of domestic abuse in the last year (including attempted offences) had remained the same as for the previous survey year (year ending March 2015; both 6.1%). Prior to this, changes in prevalence from year to year have been small and not statistically significant, although the cumulative effect of these changes over a number of years has resulted in a statistically significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2016 (6.1%) compared with the year ending March 2012 (7.0%), indicating a longer-term underlying downward trend ([Table S41](#)).

Data from the year ending March 2016 survey year showed that women, and especially younger women, were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than other demographic groups, for example, 11.9% of women aged 16 to 19 were victims, for the time period year ending March 2014 to year ending March 2016. In comparison, 6.1% of all adults and 6.9% of men aged 16 to 19 were victims of domestic abuse for the same time period.

Homicide

Unlike many other offences in the “violence against the person” category, the quality of recording of homicides is thought to be good.

The police recorded 695 homicides in the latest year, 125 more (22% increase) than in the previous year ([Tables F3a and F3b](#))¹². However, the 695 homicides recorded in the year ending September 2016 include the 96 cases of manslaughter that resulted from events in Hillsborough in 1989; excluding these cases the number of homicides increased by 5%.

Historically, the number of homicides increased from around 300 per year in the early 1960s to over 800 per year in the early years of this century, which was at a faster rate than population growth over that period. Over the past decade, the volume of homicides has generally decreased while the population of England and Wales has continued to grow. The rate of homicide has fallen by just under a third (30%) between the year ending March 2006 and the year ending March 2016, from 14 homicides per million of the population to 10 homicides per million. For the latest year (year ending September 2016) the rate is 12 homicides per million. Excluding the 96 Hillsborough cases, the rate remains at 10 homicides per million population.

There is more detailed information on trends and the circumstances of violence in [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: Year ending March 2015](#). Information on violent crimes such as modern slavery, and female genital mutilation (FGM) is available in the “Violent crime” section of the [Crime in England and Wales: Year ending September 2015](#) release.

Hate crime

Hate crime is not a notifiable offence in itself but covers any offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, as having been motivated (entirely or partially) by a hostility or prejudice to a personal characteristic or perceived personal characteristic, such as ethnicity or religion. Hate crime is therefore not listed as a separate offence and does not appear as a distinct category within recorded crime figures but counted separately where the notifiable offence has been “flagged” as a hate crime¹³.

The latest figures relating to “hate crime” were published by the Home Office on 13 October 2016. According to [Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2015/16](#) there were 62,518 crimes recorded by the police in the year to March 2016 in which 1 or more hate crime strands were deemed to be a motivating factor. This was an increase of 19% compared with the 52,465¹⁴ hate crimes recorded in the year ending March 2015, with over three-quarters (79%) of the latest figure recorded as race hate crimes. As discussed earlier in this section, part of the increase may be the result of action taken by police forces to improve their compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), especially for violence against the person and public order offences. This, together with a greater awareness of hate crime and improved willingness of victims to come forward, is likely to be a factor in the increase in hate crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2016 compared with the previous year.

Although the Home Office publication covers hate crimes recorded by the police between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016, an annex to the publication examines levels of hate crime (specifically racially or religiously aggravated offences) around the EU referendum on 23 June 2016. The annex showed a sharp increase in the number of racially or religiously aggravated offences recorded by the police following the EU referendum, before falling back to pre-referendum levels. The number of racially or religiously aggravated offences recorded by the police in July 2016 was 41% higher than in July 2015.

Notes for: Latest violent crime figures continue to present a complex picture

1. "Disclosure of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause distress or anxiety" and "Sending letters with intent to cause distress or anxiety".
2. The 96 offences of manslaughter were recorded in the year ending June 2016 figures, and not in 1989, due to the result of the recent [inquest](#) into the events
3. [NHS Hospital Episode Statistics, Admitted Patient Care - England, 2014-15](#); [NHS Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2015-16](#). Assault admissions exclude sexual assault but include assault codes X85-Y04 and Y08-Y09.
4. There are some closely-related offences in the police recorded crime series, such as public order offences, that have no identifiable victim and are contained within the "Other crimes against society" category.
5. The 2 additional harassment offences are included within all 4 quarters (12 months data) for the latest year (ending September 2016) while the comparator year data (ending September 2015) only includes these additional offences in two quarters. In future quarterly releases, the comparator year will begin to include the additional harassment offences in more quarters and we therefore expect to see the extent of the increase in the "violence without injury" subcategory lessen.
6. In addition to letters, this offence also covers electronic communications such as emails, text messages and those sent via social media.
7. Based on data from 40 forces supplied via the Home Office Data Hub
8. This new offence category includes offences previously included under other offence types. More information can be found in the attached notes to [Appendix table A4](#).
9. Figures for the year ending March 2016 have been revised slightly since publication of the report from 884 modern slavery offences to 880.
10. The inspections took place over the period December 2013 to August 2014.
11. Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
12. Homicide includes the offences of murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide. Figures from the Homicide Index for the time period April 2014 to March 2015, which take account of further police investigations and court outcomes, were published in [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: Year ending March 2015](#) on 11 February 2016.
13. The five monitored strands are: disability, gender identity, race, religion/faith and sexual orientation.
14. Figure differs to that previously published (52,528) due to small changes in the volume of crimes identified by forces as hate crimes.

9 . CSEW sexual offences unchanged and rise in police recorded offences slowing

Main findings

The most recent estimates from the self-completion questionnaire module in the CSEW on intimate violence (for the year ending March 2016) showed that the proportion of adults aged 16 to 59 who had been victims of sexual assaults in the last year (including attempted offences) had not statistically significantly changed between the year ending March 2016 (2.0%, equivalent to 645,000 victims) and the year ending March 2015 (1.7%).

There was an increase of 12% in sexual offences recorded by the police in the latest year (up to 112,021 offences) compared with the previous year. It is not thought that police recorded crime data currently provide a reliable indication of trends in sexual offences. The increases are believed to have resulted in part from an improvement in the recording of sexual offences by the police, with police forces also reporting an increased willingness of victims to come forward and report these crimes.

Crime Survey for England and Wales

Due to the small number of sexual offences identified in the face-to-face interview section of the CSEW, estimates of the volume of incidents are prone to fluctuation and therefore not included in the main CSEW estimate of crime. Since the year ending March 2005, the CSEW has included a self-completion module on intimate violence, for persons aged 16 to 59 only, which provides an improved measure of the proportion of people in this age group who have been victims of sexual offences. The upper age limit of 59 for the self-completion module may be increased or removed entirely from April 2017 following [new development work](#).

The most recent headline estimates from this self-completion section of the CSEW, from the year ending March 2016 (published in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales, year ending March 2016](#) release) showed that the proportion of all adults aged 16 to 59 who had been victims of sexual assaults in the last year (including attempted offences) had not significantly changed between the latest survey year (2.0%) and the previous survey year (1.7%). These figures have remained at around 2.0% since the survey year ending March 2009, albeit with some year-on-year fluctuation ([Table S41](#)).

Data from the year ending March 2016 survey year showed that women and especially younger women, were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than other demographic groups (for example, 11.9% of women aged 16 to 19 were victims, for the time period year ending March 2014 to year ending March 2016). In comparison, 6.1% of all adults and 6.9% of men aged 16 to 19 were victims of domestic abuse for the same time period.

Detailed findings from the self-completion module for the previous CSEW year are available in [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: Year ending March 2015](#); detailed findings for the latest CSEW year are planned for release in the "Year ending March 2016" edition on 9 February 2017.

Police recorded crime

There was an increase of 12% in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police in the latest year compared with the previous year (up to 112,021; [Tables F6a and F6b](#)). Sexual offences have reached the highest volume recorded since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002. The rate of year-on-year increases, however, is slowing; it was 14% in the year ending June 2016 and the latest increase is considerably less steep than the increase seen in the year ending September 2015 (36%).

Police recorded rape increased by 13% (to 37,813 offences) compared with the previous year, while other sexual offences increased by 12% (to 74,208). Offence categories that directly relate to sexual offences against children¹ contributed just under a third (31%) to the total increase in the number of sexual offences recorded by the police.

Between the year ending March 2008 and the year ending March 2013, the trend in sexual offences was broadly flat with small increases recorded in some years. Since the year ending March 2013, police recorded sexual offences have risen consistently. In the year ending March 2014, the increases were generally driven by a rise in the recording of non-recent offences (those that took place more than 12 months before being recorded by the police), whereas the increases seen throughout the previous and latest years (particularly the most recent quarters) have been largely due to a rise in current offences (those that took place within 12 months of being recorded by the police)².

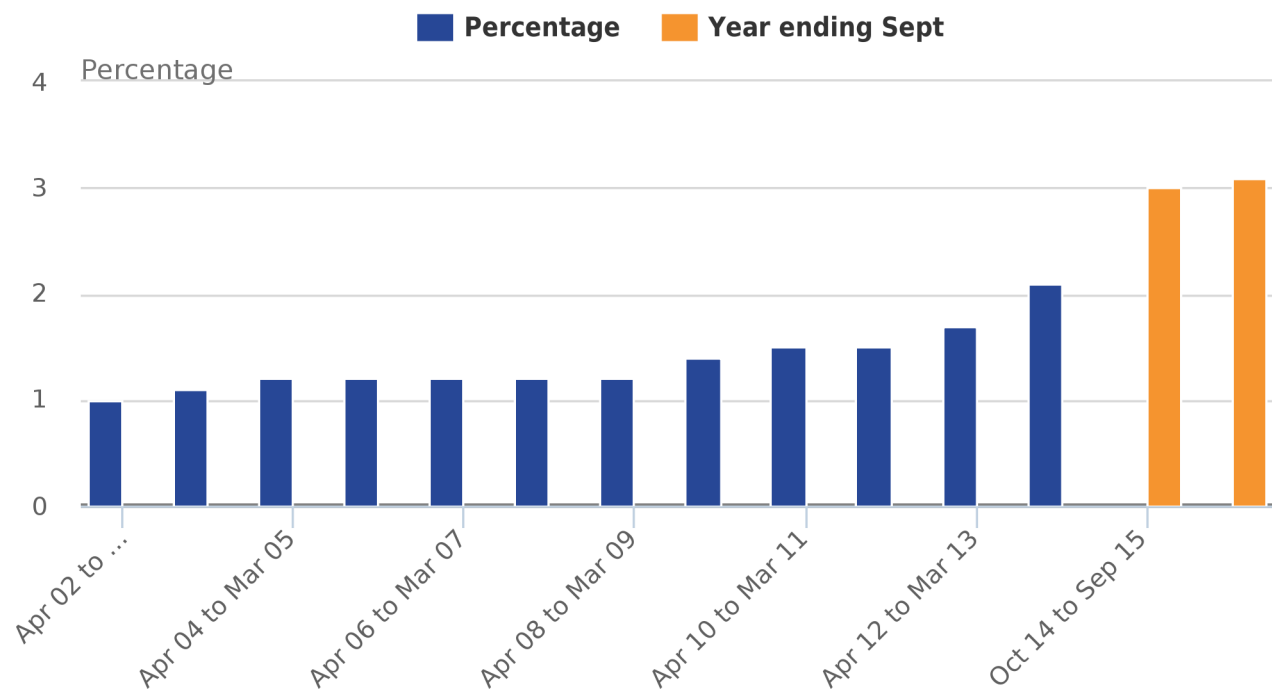
Overall, the increases are believed to have resulted from both an improvement in the recording of sexual offences by the police and an increased willingness of victims to come forward and report these crimes to the police and hence we feel these data do not currently provide a reliable indication of trends in sexual offences.

The [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#) report, published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in late 2014, found that sexual offences had been substantially under-recorded (by 26% nationally) and led to police forces reviewing and improving their recording processes³. Additionally the high-profile coverage of sexual offences and the police response to reports of non-recent sexual offending (for example, through Operation Yewtree which began in 2012) are likely to have had an effect on the willingness of victims to come forward and report offences of this nature.

More recently this includes the high-profile coverage of historical child sexual offence allegations by former footballers which are currently being investigated (with the BBC reporting that [a dedicated NSPCC sexual abuse helpline received 860 calls within its first 3 days](#)). Whilst these allegations surfaced after the time period that is being reported in this year ending September 2016 bulletin and would not have affected the sexual offences figures for the latest year, such high profile reporting is likely to have an ongoing influence on the victims’ willingness to come forward.

Police recorded sexual offences represent a small proportion of all victim-based crime (excluding fraud; 3.1% in the latest year) and therefore changes do not impact on the overall victim-based police recorded crime trend. Figure 5 illustrates that there have been almost continual year-on-year increases in the proportion of police recorded victim-based crime comprising sexual offences since the year ending March 2003 (1.0%), with the only exception being the year ending March 2007 (1.2%). These increases have become more pronounced over the last 4 years (more than doubling over this period, from 1.5% in the year ending March 2012 to 3.1% in the latest survey year).

Figure 5: Police recorded sexual offences as a proportion of victim-based crime in England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending September 2016



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

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

More information on interpreting longer-term trends in these offences can be found in [An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales](#) and [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: Year ending March 2015](#).

Notes for: CSEW sexual offences unchanged and rise in police recorded offences slowing

1. This includes “Rape of a male / female child under 16”, “Rape of a male / female child under 13”, “Sexual assault on a male / female child under 13”, “Sexual activity involving a child under 13 / under 16” and “Abuse of children through sexual exploitation”.
2. Based on findings from the Home Office Data Hub; these were discussed in detail in Crime in England and Wales, period ending March 2014.
3. More information can be found in Crime in England and Wales: Year ending September 2015.

10 . Police recorded offences involving weapons rise

Some of the more serious offences in the police recorded crime data (violence against the person, robbery and sexual offences) can be broken down by whether or not a knife or sharp instrument was involved ¹.

Data are also available for police recorded crimes involving the use of firearms (that is, if a firearm is fired, used as a blunt instrument, or used as a threat).

As offences involving the use of weapons are relatively low in volume, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is not able to provide reliable estimates for numbers of such incidents.

Main findings

In the latest year, the police recorded an 11% increase in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, compared with the previous year. While it is difficult to be certain what has driven this rise as these figures can be influenced by a wide range of factors, the available evidence suggests improvements in recording practices as well as an actual rise in knife crime are both likely to have contributed.

Offences involving firearms in the latest year also increased, by 7% compared with the previous year.

Offences involving knives or sharp instruments²

In the latest year, the police recorded 30,838 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, an 11% increase ³ compared with the previous year (27,739, Table 3). The past 2 years have seen a rise in the number of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument recorded. However, there was a general downward trend in this series recorded between the year ending March 2011 and year ending March 2014, with the latest figures being 6% lower than in the year ending March 2011.

The majority of the offence groups for which data are collected showed increases, including a 14% increase in “attempted murder” and a 35% increase in “threats to kill” involving a knife or sharp instrument. The category of “assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm” showed the largest rise in terms of volume of offences (from 14,310 to 16,143, up 13%).

The majority of police forces (35 of the 44) recorded a rise in offences involving knives and sharp instruments compared with the previous year. The largest contributor to the total rise was the Metropolitan Police (accounting for 15% of the increase). Data for police force areas are published in the Home Office’s [knife crime open data table](#)⁴.

Table 3: Selected violent and sexual offences involving a knife or sharp instrument recorded by the police, year ending March 2011 to year ending September 2016 and percentage change ^{1,2,3,4,5,6}

England and Wales

	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Apr '11 to Mar '12	Apr '12 to Mar '13	Apr '13 to Mar '14	Oct '14 to Sep '15	Oct '15 to Sep '16	Oct '15 to Sep '16 compared with previous year
	Number of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument						Percentage change
Attempted murder	240	246	198	248	309	352	14
Threats to kill	1,462	1,183	1,188	1,317	1,880	2,529	35
Assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm ⁷	13,941	12,621	11,343	11,551	14,310	16,143	13
Robbery	16,438	16,417	13,194	11,910	10,569	11,133	5
Rape	258	237	190	261	353	342	-3
Sexual assault ⁸	93	72	88	97	124	134	8
Total selected offences	32,432	30,776	26,201	25,384	27,545	30,633	11
Homicide ⁹	237	211	195	204	194	205	6
Total selected offences including homicide	32,669	30,987	26,396	25,588	27,739	30,838	11
	Rate per million population - selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument						
Total selected offences including homicide	587	552	467	449	483	533	

Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded crime statistics based on data from all 44 forces in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police).
3. Police recorded knife and sharp instrument offences data are submitted via an additional special collection. Proportions of offences involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument presented in this table are calculated based on figures submitted in this special collection. Other offences exist that are not shown in this table that may include the use of a knife or sharp instrument.
4. Data from Surrey Police include unbroken bottle and glass offences, which are outside the scope of this special collection; however, it is not thought that offences of this kind constitute a large enough number to impact on the national figure.
5. Numbers differ from those previously published due to Sussex Police revising their figures to exclude unbroken bottles.
6. An audit of Thames Valley Police into the recording of knife and sharp instrument offences since the introduction of their new recording system in April 2014 has revealed that they were previously under-counting these offences. Data for the year ending March 2016 have been revised, but data for the year ending March 2015 have not; it is likely that the percentage changes presented are slightly higher than they would be once the year ending March 2015 data are revised.
7. Changes to offence codes in April 2012 mean the category of assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm is not directly comparable with previous years. Appendix table A4 contains more details.

8. Sexual assault includes indecent assault on a male/female and sexual assault on a male/female (all ages).

9. Homicide offences are those currently recorded by the police as at 1 December 2016 and are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available. They include the offences of murder, manslaughter, infanticide and, as of year ending March 2013, corporate manslaughter. These figures are taken from the detailed record level Homicide Index (rather than the main police collection for which forces are only required to provide an overall count of homicides, used in Appendix table A4). There may therefore be differences in the total homicides figure used to calculate these proportions and the homicide figure presented in Appendix table A4.

In the last 2 years, there has been a reversal of the previously downward trend in the knife offence series, though the pattern varies by offence type. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that increases in some violent offences may have been influenced by improved compliance with recording standards. In particular some offences previously were more likely to be recorded according to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) charging standard rather than the Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). For example, they might have been recorded (and charged) as another type of violent crime that is easier to prove in court, such as “assault with intent to cause serious harm”. It is possible that the latest 14% increase in attempted murders involving a knife or sharp instrument may have been influenced by these improvements.

While in the past offences involving a knife were generally not thought to be prone to changes in recording practices, some forces have suggested that recording practice improvements may have been a factor driving the recent increases.

However, there has also been some indication, particularly in relation to the more serious offences involving an injury to the victim, that the latest rise may represent a real change to the downward trend seen in recent years. Evidence of such a rise can be seen in admissions data for NHS hospitals in England⁵, which showed a 13% increase in admissions for assault by a sharp object, from 3,590 in the year ending March 2015 to 4,054 in the year ending March 2016. More recent data from the London Ambulance Service (for the year ending July 2016, compared with the year ending July 2015) also shows a 3% rise in ambulance calls for service resulting from assaults involving a knife injury⁶.

Police recorded “possession of an article with a blade or point” offences also rose by 16% to 12,345 offences in the latest year. This rise is consistent with increases seen over the last 3 years, but levels remain below those seen a decade ago. This figure can often be influenced by increases in targeted police action in relation to knife crime, which is most likely to occur at times when rises in offences involving knives are seen.

Taking everything into account, it suggests the picture is a complex one, with rises in offences involving knives reflecting both improvements in recording practices but also a genuine rise in knife crime in some areas. We will continue to work with police forces and others to understand these trends.

Further analysis on offences involving knives or sharp instruments has been published in [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: Year ending March 2015](#).

Offences involving firearms

Similar to the breakdown of offences involving knives or sharp instruments, statistics are available for police recorded crimes involving the use of firearms⁷. Firearms are taken to be involved in an offence if they are fired, used as a blunt instrument against a person, or used as a threat. [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: Year ending March 2015](#) has more detailed information on trends and the circumstances of offences involving firearms, including figures based on a broader definition of the types of firearm involved⁸.

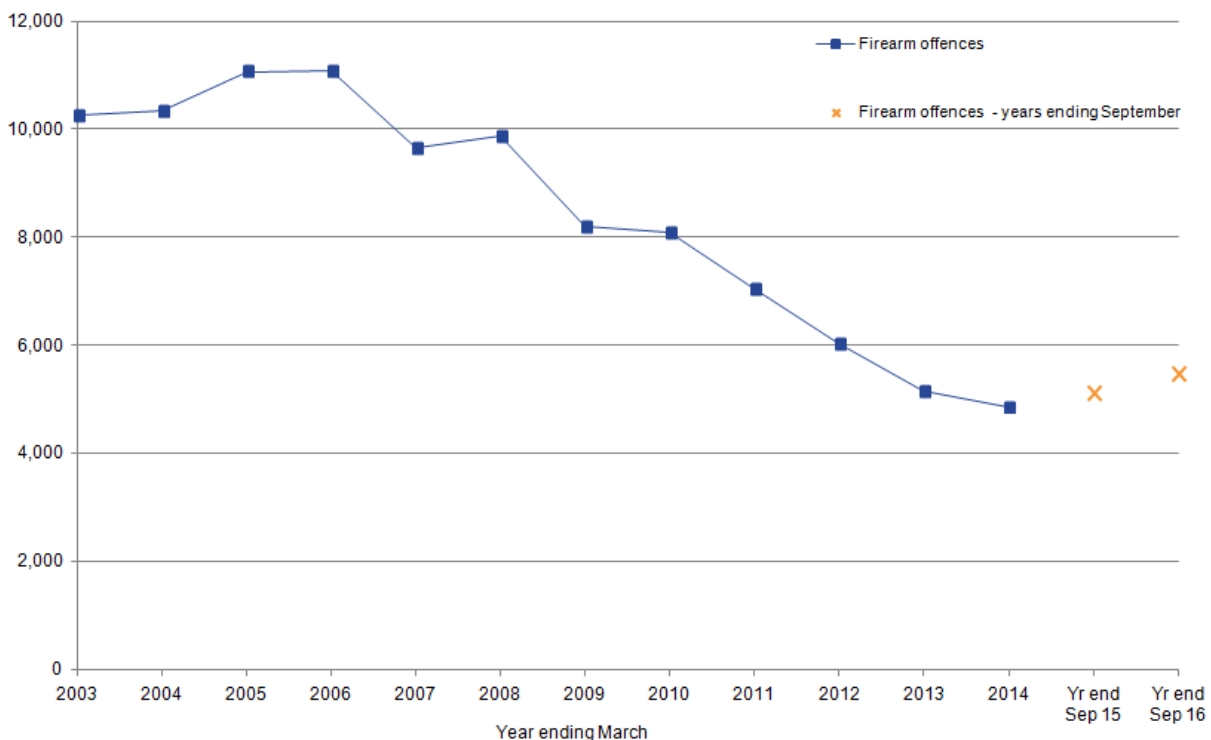
Offences involving firearms in the latest year increased by 7% (to 5,478 offences) compared with the previous year. This was mainly driven by a 12% increase in offences involving handguns (rising from 2,120 to 2,365), and partly by a 17% increase in offences involving shotguns (from 402 to 469) and a 5% increase in offences involving imitation weapons (such as BB guns⁹; from 1,345 to 1,408)¹⁰.

The recent increase in offences involving handguns is driven by increases in a small number of mainly urban forces and follows a long-term downward trend, with the number of these offences down by 57% since the year ending March 2003. It is thought the recent increase in handgun offences in part reflects improvements in turnaround time for forensic processes leading to better firearm identification than previously. This can be seen in a corresponding fall in the number of offences involving unidentified firearms, which fell by 6% (from 755 to 706) ([Table F8](#)).

The recent increase in overall firearm offences also comes after a general downward trend, with the overall level being 51% below its peak (in the year ending March 2006; Figure 6).

Recent increases have also been reflected in admissions data for NHS hospitals in England¹¹, which showed increases in all 3 measured firearm discharge categories¹² and an overall increase of 27% in admissions resulting from assault by firearm discharge, from 86 admissions in the year ending March 2015 to 109 admissions in the year ending March 2016. Data from the London Ambulance Service showed a more modest rise of 4% from 123 to 128 ambulance calls for service resulting from assaults involving a gun injury (for the year ending July 2016, compared with the year July 2015; this overlaps with the first 10 months of the crime figures reported in this bulletin)¹³. Given the small numbers involved and the nature of these data they will only reflect trends in a small sub-set of the most serious offences.

Figure 6: Trends in police recorded crime in England and Wales involving the use of firearms, year ending March 2003 to year ending September 2016



Notes for: Police recorded offences involving weapons rise

1. These are: homicide; attempted murder; threats to kill; assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm; robbery; rape; and sexual assault.
2. A sharp instrument is any object that pierces the skin (or in the case of a threat, is capable of piercing the skin), for example a broken bottle.
3. An audit into the recording of knife and sharp instrument offences by Thames Valley Police has revealed that they had been under-counting these offences since the introduction of their new recording system in April 2014. Data for year ending March 2016 were revised, but data for the previous year (ending March 2015) were not.
4. This source excludes homicides committed using a knife or sharp instrument.
5. [NHS Hospital Episode Statistics, Admitted Patient Care - England, 2014-15](#); [NHS Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2015-16](#)
6. [Monthly Ambulance Service Incidents, Ward, July 2016](#), contains details of London Ambulance Service incidents, between August 2015 and July 2016, by type of injury.
7. Firearms include shotguns; handguns; rifles; imitation weapons such as BB guns or soft air weapons; other weapons such as CS gas or pepper spray and stun guns; and unidentified weapons. These figures exclude conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.
8. The broader definition of firearms includes conventional air weapons, such as air rifles.
9. A type of air gun that fires spherical projectiles.
10. It is not always possible to identify the type of firearm used. The police will record which type of weapon has been used in an offence given the evidence available (such as descriptions given by victims or witnesses). Some imitation weapons are so realistic that they are indistinguishable from a real firearm. In the absence of sufficient information to classify the firearm the police will record the weapon as an "unidentified firearm".
11. [NHS Hospital Episode Statistics, Admitted Patient Care - England, 2014-15](#); [NHS Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2015-16](#)
12. Firearm discharge admissions categories are: "assault by handgun discharge", "assault by rifle, shotgun and larger firearm discharge" and "assault by other and unspecified firearm discharge".
13. [Monthly Ambulance Service Incidents, Ward, July 2016](#), contains details of London Ambulance Service incidents, between August 2015 and July 2016, by type of injury.

11 . What's happening to trends in fraud?

The extent of fraud is difficult to measure because it is a deceptive crime; victimisation is often indiscriminate, covering organisations as well as individuals. Some victims of fraud may be unaware they have been a victim of crime, or that any fraudulent activity has occurred for some time after the event. Others might be unwilling to see themselves as victims or reluctant to report the offence to the authorities, feeling embarrassed that they have fallen victim. The level of fraud reported via administrative sources is thought to significantly understate the true level of such crime.

While the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates will include crimes that have not been reported to the authorities, being a household survey, the CSEW only seeks to capture fraud where an individual has been a victim. Compared with victims of other crime types it is also more likely that some victims of fraud, especially very elderly and vulnerable victims who may have suffered significant financial losses, may not have the confidence to allow an interviewer into their home to conduct an interview.

Main findings

Based on Experimental Statistics from new CSEW fraud and computer misuse questions, adults aged 16 and over experienced an estimated 5.6 million fraud and computer misuse incidents in the 12 months prior to interview; 3.6 million of these were fraud incidents and 2.0 million were computer misuse incidents.

In the latest year, there was a 3% increase in the number of fraud offences recorded by the police in England and Wales (up to 622,731¹ offences) compared with the previous year.

Other industry data² from Financial Fraud Action UK showed 1.9 million cases of frauds on UK-issued cards, cheque fraud and remote banking fraud (internet, telephone and mobile banking), an increase of 39% from the previous year. The vast majority of such cases were not referred to the police due to there being insufficient intelligence value to aid in investigating and detecting fraud.

Crime Survey for England and Wales

New questions on fraud and computer misuse were introduced onto half of the survey sample from October 2015 and are published as [Experimental Statistics](#)³. Previously fraud and computer misuse estimates had been reported on separately but are now incorporated for the first time within headline CSEW estimates since they are based on a full year's data. Year-on-year trends will not be available until January 2018.

Based on new questions, adults aged 16 and over experienced an estimated 3.6 million incidents of fraud (Table 4), with just over half of these (53%; 1.9 million incidents) being cyber-related⁴.

The most common types of fraud experienced were "Bank and credit account" fraud (2.5 million incidents; 68% of the total), followed by "Non-investment" fraud – such as fraud related to online shopping or fraudulent computer service calls (0.9 million incidents; 26% of the total).

In addition, adults experienced an estimated 2.0 million computer misuse incidents; around two-thirds (66%; 1.3 million incidents) of these were computer virus-related and around one-third (34%; 0.7 million incidents) were related to unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking).

Table 4: CSEW fraud and computer misuse – numbers of incidents for year ending September 2016 (Experimental Statistics)^{1,2}

Offence group	Number of incidents (thousands)
Fraud	3,617
Bank and credit account fraud	2,452
Non-investment fraud	939
Advance fee fraud	118
Other fraud	108
Computer misuse	1,966
Computer virus	1,300
Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)	667
Unweighted base - number of adults	17,862

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Experimental Statistics are those which are in the testing phase and not yet fully developed. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development, and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.

2. New victimisation questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. Initial estimates are based on the approximately 17,800 cases gathered between October 2015 and September 2016. The questions are currently asked of half the survey sample to test for detrimental effects on the survey as a whole and help to ensure that the historical time series is protected.

Further findings from the new CSEW fraud and computer misuse questions are presented in Tables E1 to E8, which have been updated to reflect the full year's worth of data available for the year ending September 2016. These include the following.

There was typically less variation for fraud than other types of crime in the rate of victimisation across different groups in society, although some personal and household characteristics were associated with being a victim of fraud, for example, those in higher income households and individuals in managerial and professional occupations. This differs from other crime types such as violence and property crimes⁵ (Experimental tables E3 and E4).

The large majority of victims of fraud had been a victim only once (85%), with repeat victimisation (within the same 12 month crime reference period) more common among victims of bank and credit account fraud (14%) than non-investment fraud (9%) (Experimental table E5).

Two-thirds of fraud incidents involved initial loss of money or goods to the victim (66%), independent of any reimbursement received⁶. This equates to an estimated 2.4 million offences, compared with 1.2 million incidents of fraud involving no loss (Experimental table E1).

Where money was taken or stolen from the victim, in just under two-thirds of incidents the victim lost less than £250 (61%) (Experimental table E2).

Incidents of bank and credit account fraud were more likely to result in initial loss to the victim (73%, equivalent to 1.8 million) than other types of fraud. In the majority of these incidents, the victim received a full reimbursement, typically from their financial services provider (83%).

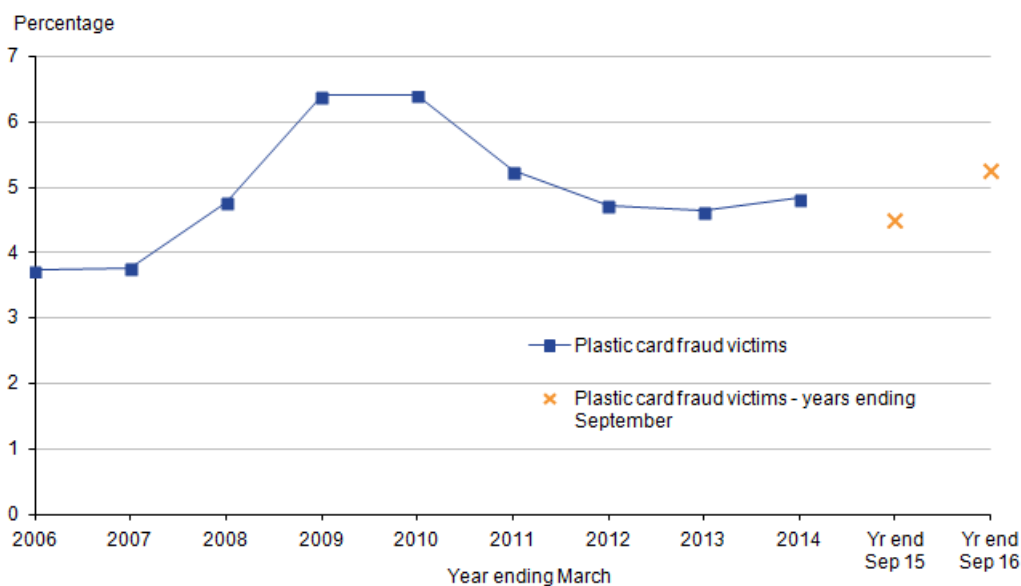
The extent of cyber crime⁷ varied by type of offence, with three-quarters of non-investment frauds indicated by victims to have involved the use of the internet in some way (75%), compared with less than half of all bank and credit account frauds (45%) (Experimental table E8).

Additional [User Guide tables](#) (UG3a, UG4a, UG5a and UG6a) provide 95% confidence intervals around fraud and computer misuse estimates, for incidents of crime and victimisation by age and sex, for the year ending September 2016.

In addition to these new data covering a wide spectrum of fraud, for the last decade, the survey has included a supplementary module of questions on plastic card (bank and credit card) fraud, which continue to be produced.

The results from this supplementary module show a statistically significant increase in the percentage of plastic card owners who were victims of card fraud in the previous year, increasing from 4.5% in the year to September 2015 to 5.3% in the year to September 2016. This follows a relatively stable trend in levels of plastic card fraud measured by this module over the last few years. The current estimate is now at the same level as the estimate for the year ending March 2011 (Figure 7). Data from these questions provide an indication of whether an individual has been a victim of plastic card fraud, but do not provide any information on the number of times this occurred or the scale of any loss that may have been experienced. The significant rise recorded by this supplementary module is consistent with rises in industry data referred to by Financial Fraud Action UK (FFA UK) and Cifas, which is discussed further in the next section.

Figure 7: Proportion of Crime Survey for England and Wales plastic card users who had been a victim of plastic card fraud in the last year, year ending March 2006 to year ending September 2016



At this early stage, the existing estimates from the supplementary module on plastic card fraud and from the new Experimental Statistics on bank and credit account fraud (4.3% of all adults, equivalent to 4.7% of plastic card owners) appear broadly similar. Given that these types of offence comprise just over two-thirds (68%) of the new fraud estimate, trends in plastic card fraud from the supplementary module give an indication of recent trends in fraud in the absence of a back series from the new questions.

Recorded fraud offences

The police recorded crime series incorporates offences reported to Action Fraud (the national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) as well as those reported to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) by 2 industry bodies: Cifas and FFA UK. The volume of such incidents referred to NFIB is substantially lower than the estimates from the new CSEW fraud and computer misuse questions. However, while the survey provides a better indication of the threat of such crimes, it will tend to be dominated by lower-harm cases than the administrative data, which will tend to be focused on cases at the more serious end of the spectrum.

In the latest year, there was a 3% increase in the number of fraud offences recorded in England and Wales (up to 622,731⁸ offences) compared with the previous year ([Tables 18a and 18b](#)); this was largely owing to offences referred by Cifas, which increased by 4% (up to 294,740), and to offences referred by FFA UK, which increased by 11% (up to 95,159). In contrast, fraud offences recorded by Action Fraud decreased by 1% (down to 232,832) compared with the previous year.

Victims of fraud may report incidents to Action Fraud via an online reporting tool or via a telephone helpline. In July 2015, the company that was contracted to provide the call centre service went into administration. This led to an immediate downscaling of the call centre operation. A new contractor, who was due to take over the Action Fraud call centre in April 2016, was asked to take over operations early in August 2015. Following the previous call centre service contractor going into administration in July 2015, Action Fraud recorded lower than normal monthly volumes of fraud offences between the period of July 2015 to April 2016. Subsequent to this period, figures started to return to levels seen prior to the contractual issues.

As volumes have recovered in recent months and because some of the lower volume months now form part of the comparator year (year to September 2015), the size of the decrease in Action Fraud recorded offences has fallen to 1% compared with the decrease of 6% seen in last quarter's bulletin. Latest trends will have been influenced by the changes in the operation of the Action Fraud call centre and thus figures should be interpreted with caution. We expect the effect on the Action Fraud data will continue over the next few quarters.

One of the largest increases in the separate categories of fraud referred to the NFIB in the latest year was seen in "Banking and credit industry" fraud (up 8% to 368,060). This was caused by the volume increase in offences reported to the NFIB by all 3 reporting bodies: Cifas, FFA UK, and Action Fraud. Cifas increased by 8% to 244,116 offences, followed by FFA UK, up 11% to 95,159 offences and Action Fraud, up 9% to 28,785. The 8% rise reported by Cifas is lower than the rate of increase reported in recent quarters since a spike in "Cheque, plastic card and online bank account fraud (not PSP)" recorded in summer 2015 has now fallen into the comparator year; the spike being the result of a sudden (and continuing) rise in the number of fraudulent bank accounts being opened using stolen identities of innocent parties. Offences reported to the NFIB via FFA UK also saw a noticeable increase of 11% compared to the previous year. The major part of this increase results from bulk reporting of new intelligence feeds by FFA UK members in October 2015 increasing the volumes reported to NFIB.

Several major categories of fraud saw decreases in the latest year; for example, "Insurance fraud" fell by 13% for the year ending September 2016 following a period of increase. This reduction is largely due to a decrease in the number of such offences reported by Cifas, although it is too early to say at this stage if this is a genuine reduction or simply the recording activity of Cifas members.

Other decreases were seen for "Advance fee payments" fraud, which fell by 17% (equivalent to 6,822 offences), "Telecom industry fraud (misuse of contracts⁹)", which fell by 10% (equivalent to 4,763 offences), "Non-investment fraud", which fell by 4% (equivalent to 3,989 offences) and "Computer misuse crime", which fell by 10% (equivalent to 1,568 offences) compared with the previous year.

The fall in several of these fraud types, including "Advance fee payments", "Financial investments" fraud and "Non-investment fraud" is in contrast with the increase that was last recorded in these categories in the year ending September 2015. Data on these types of fraud come solely from reports to Action Fraud and therefore the changes seen may be related to the reduction in the capacity of the Action Fraud call centre since August 2015 rather than a real change in the level of these frauds.

A full breakdown of the types of fraud offences referred to the NFIB by Action Fraud, Cifas and FFA UK in the latest year is presented in [Table A5](#).

Concerning offences recorded by Action Fraud, unlike other crime types (for which recorded crime data are submitted by individual police forces) subnational breakdowns have only been available from the year ending March 2016. This reflects both Action Fraud's role as the national reporting centre for fraud and the fact that such offences often cross geographical boundaries and can be difficult to pin down to geographic territories.

Following work conducted by the Home Office and Action Fraud, a police force area breakdown of Action Fraud data based on where the individual victim resides, or in the cases of businesses where the business is located, has now been produced. These data are published as Experimental Statistics and presented in [Table E9](#). In contrast with most other crimes, the latest data show there was generally less variation in rates of fraud by police force area, although rates for forces in southern England were slightly higher than those among forces in Wales or northern England.

Further details on the different categories of fraud and how data on them are collected are available in Section 5.4 of the [User Guide](#).

Card and bank account fraud not reported to the police

Data referred to the NFIB by Cifas and FFA UK are known to exclude a significant volume of card and bank account fraud. Cifas do not collect information on some types of plastic card fraud, including “Remote purchase” frauds (those frauds where the cardholder and card are not present at the point of sale, such as use of the card online, over the phone or by mail order), fraud resulting from cards being lost or stolen, or ATM fraud. While

FFA UK does collect this information, it only refers crimes to the NFIB in cases where there is intelligence value for the police to aid in investigating and detecting fraud. FFA UK does, however, collect information from its members on a broader range of bank account and plastic card frauds than those referred to the NFIB using a system referred to as CAMIS and data from this source are shown in [Table F20](#)¹⁰. While these figures are at UK level only, they offer a broader picture of the scale of bank account and plastic card fraud. It is important to note that these data also include those cases referred by FFA UK to the NFIB (presented in [Table F18a](#)) and many of them will also be included in the CSEW; for example, individual account holders whose bank has also referred the incident to the NFIB.

In the latest year, FFA UK reported 1.9 million cases of frauds on UK-issued cards, cheque fraud and remote banking fraud (internet, telephone and mobile banking)¹¹, an increase of 39% from the previous year. This compares with the 11% increase in the level of these frauds that were reported by FFA UK to the NFIB. The cases reported to the NFIB are those with intelligence value to the police and are less likely to include incidences of “Remote purchase” fraud, which was one of the main drivers in the overall increase in FFA UK data from CAMIS.

The FFA UK [January to June 2016 fraud update](#) attributed recent rises to “the growth of impersonation and deception scams and complex online attacks” where the methods target customers’ personal and financial details, including card data, to facilitate fraud” including remote purchase fraud. The report also comments on the increase in fraud relating to lost and stolen cards suggesting that “intelligence from FFA UK members suggests there have been more incidents at ATMs, through distraction thefts and entrapment. Courier scams, in which a scammer visits the victim’s house to collect either cash or a bank card, also continue to play a role”.

In general, the FFA UK figures have been consistent with those shown by the CSEW trend in plastic card fraud, with levels peaking around 2008 to 2010, followed by falls in subsequent years that were likely to be related to the introduction of chip card technology.

While the latest CSEW rise in the prevalence of plastic card fraud (from 4.5% to 5.3%) is statistically significant and mirrors the latest rise in plastic card fraud observed in FFA UK data from CAMIS, the prevalence of plastic card fraud measured by the survey is similar to that seen 5 years ago (5.3% in year ending March 2011), compared with a 93% increase across the same time period for plastic card fraud recorded via CAMIS.

Further information on trends in payment industry fraud based on industry data collated by FFA UK is available in [Fraud the Facts 2016](#).

Notes for: What’s happening to trends in fraud?

1. This figure is taken from [Table A4](#) and includes 2 fraud offences recorded by the police. This differs slightly from the total recorded fraud offences reported in [Table A5](#), which exclude these 2 offences.
2. This refers to information that FFA UK collects from its members on a broader range of bank account and plastic card frauds than those referred to the NFIB, using a system referred to as CAMIS. Data from this source are shown in [Table F20](#).
3. These data build upon the findings from the field trial of the newly developed survey questions – which can be found in the methodological note: [CSEW Fraud and Cyber-crime development: Field trial – October 2015](#). These findings should not be directly compared with the published experimental statistics as methodological refinements were made following the trial.
4. Based on whether the internet or any type of online activity was related to any aspect of the offence.
5. Some of the characteristics may be closely associated with each other, so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effect of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation (for example employment and household income are closely related).
6. This refers to both money taken or stolen by the fraudster as well as any additional costs or charges as a consequence of the fraud, for example, bank charges, repair costs, replacement costs, etc.
7. Cyber crimes defined by the CSEW represent cases where the internet or any type of online activity was related to any aspect of the offence.
8. This figure is taken from [Table A4](#) and includes 2 fraud offences recorded by the police. The total fraud offences recorded in England and Wales reported in [Table A5](#) differs slightly, as it excludes these 2 offences.
9. Frauds within the telecoms sector that are reported to Cifas are subject to a lot of fluctuation as they use a batch reporting system whereby they submit multiple reports in one go, which can refer to incidents occurring over a period of time.
10. FFA UK publish data on the volume of incidents of frauds on all payment types (including “Remote purchase”), alongside data on financial fraud losses by the value of losses to customers. Latest figures for 2015 are available in their report 2015: Financial Fraud Figures published in March 2016.
11. It is important to note that number of cases relates to the number of accounts defrauded, rather than the number of victims.

12 . Quality and methodology

Data sources – coverage and coherence: Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW; previously known as the British Crime Survey) is a face-to-face survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of crime in the 12 months prior to the interview. It covers both children aged 10 to 15 and adults aged 16 and over, but does not cover those living in communal establishments (such as care homes, student halls of residence and prisons), or crimes against commercial or public sector bodies.

The CSEW is able to capture a broad range of victim-based crimes¹ experienced by those interviewed, not just those that have been reported to, and recorded by, the police. It covers a broad range of victim-based crimes experienced by the resident household population. However, there are some serious, but relatively low-volume offences, such as homicide and sexual offences, which are not included in its main estimates. Although, at the end of the main interview there is a self-completion element (via a tablet computer), where adults aged 16 to 59 are asked about their experience of domestic abuse and sexual violence, and these results are reported separately².

A major strength of the CSEW has been its ability to compare crime types over time and for this reason the CSEW has changed little over the last 30 years. However, the way in which criminals are operating is changing and they can now take advantage of new technologies, such as the internet, to both expand the scope of existing crime types and develop new ones. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in fraud and cybercrime. As questions aimed at identifying fraud and other cyber offences were not part of the original survey design, it had not previously been possible to include these new offences in the main estimate of CSEW crime.

To address this issue, new questions relating to fraud and computer misuse were introduced onto half the survey sample from October 2015. Sufficient data have now been gathered to produce estimates of fraud and computer misuse and these are published within the "Crime in England and Wales" release again this quarter, after being published first in the year ending March 2016 quarterly bulletin and again in the year ending June 2016 quarterly bulletin. Details regarding the process in obtaining these new fraud and computer misuse estimates are available in the "[CSEW Fraud and Cyber Crime Field trial](#)".

Since it began, the CSEW has been conducted by an independent (from government or the police) survey research organisation using trained interviewers to collect data from sampled respondents; the interviewers have no vested interest in the results of the survey. For the crime types and population groups it covers, the CSEW has a consistent methodology and is unaffected by changes in levels of public reporting to the police, recording practice or police activity. As such, the survey is widely seen to operate as an independent reality-check of the police figures. The independence of the survey has been further strengthened by the transfer of responsibility from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in April 2012.

The CSEW has a higher number of reported offences than police recorded crime as the survey is able to capture all offences by those interviewed, not just those that have been reported to the police and then recorded. However, it does cover a narrower range of offences than the police recorded crime collection.

In 2009, the CSEW was extended to cover children aged 10 to 15 and this release also incorporates results from this element of the survey. However, the main analysis and commentary is restricted to adults and households due to the long time series for which comparable data are available.

The CSEW has a nationally representative sample of around 35,000 adults and 3,000 children (aged 10 to 15 years) per year. The response rates for the survey year ending March 2016 were 72% for adults and 66% for children. The survey is weighted to adjust for possible non-response bias and to ensure the sample reflects the profile of the general population.

Data sources – coverage and coherence: Police recorded crime and other sources

Police recorded crime figures are restricted to a subset of notifiable offences that have been reported to and recorded by the police. Therefore, while the police recorded crime series covers a wider population and a broader³ set of offences than the CSEW, it does not include crimes that do not come to the attention of the police or are not recorded by them.

Police recorded crime figures are supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police, via the Home Office, to us. Data on fraud are sourced from Action Fraud, the UK's national fraud reporting centre; Cifas, the UK-wide fraud and financial crime prevention service; and Financial Fraud Action UK, who co-ordinate fraud prevention activity for the financial services industry.

Police recorded crime is the principal source of subnational crime statistics and for relatively serious, but low volume, crimes that are not well measured by a sample survey. It covers victims (including, for example, residents of institutions and tourists as well as the resident population) and sectors (for example, commercial bodies) excluded from the CSEW sample. Recorded crime has a wider coverage of offences, for example, covering homicide, sexual offences and crimes without a specific, identifiable victim (referred to as “Other crimes against society”) not included in the main CSEW crime count. Police recorded crime also provides good measures of well-reported crimes, but does not cover any crimes that are not reported to, or discovered by, the police. It is also affected by changes in reporting and recording practices. Like any administrative data, police recorded crime will be affected by the rules governing the recording of data, by the systems in place and by operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources.

As well as the main police recorded crime series, there are additional collections providing detail on offences involving the use of knives and firearms, which are too low in volume to be measured reliably by the CSEW.

Strengths and limitations of the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime

Crime Survey for England and Wales	Police recorded crime
Strengths	Strengths
Large nationally representative sample survey that provides a good measure of long-term crime trends for the offences and the population it covers (that is, those resident in households)	Has wider offence coverage and population coverage than the CSEW
Consistent methodology over time	Good measure of offences that are well-reported to the police
Covers crimes not reported to the police and is not affected by changes in police recording practice; therefore is a reliable measure of long-term trends	Primary source of local crime statistics and for lower-volume crimes (for example, homicide)
Coverage of survey extended in 2009 to include children aged 10 to 15 resident in households	Provides whole counts (rather than estimates that are subject to sampling variation)
Independent collection of crime figures	Time lag between occurrence of crime and reporting results tends to be short, providing an indication of emerging trends
Limitations	Limitations
Survey is subject to error associated with sampling and respondents recalling past events	Excludes offences that are not reported to, or not recorded by, the police and does not include less serious offences dealt with by magistrates’ courts (for example, motoring offences)
Excludes crimes against businesses and those not resident in households (for example, residents of institutions and visitors)	Trends can be influenced by changes in recording practices or police activity
Headline estimates exclude offences that are difficult to estimate robustly (such as sexual offences) or that have no victim who can be interviewed (for example, homicides and drug offences)	Not possible to make long-term comparisons due to fundamental changes in recording practice introduced in 1998 and the year ending March 2003 [5]
Previously, excluded fraud and cybercrime[4]	There are concerns about the quality of recording – crimes may not be recorded consistently across police forces and so the true level of recorded crime may be understated

Accuracy of the statistics: Crime Survey for England and Wales

Since the CSEW is based on a sample of the population, estimates have a margin of quantifiable and non-quantifiable error associated with them. Non-quantifiable error includes:

- when respondents have recalled crimes in the reference period that actually occurred outside that period (“telescoping”)
- crimes that did occur in the reference period that were not mentioned at all (either because respondents failed to recall a fairly trivial incident or, conversely, because they did not want to disclose an incident, such as a domestic assault)
- respondents saying they reported crimes to police when they did not (a “socially desirable” response)
- some incidents reported during the interview being miscoded (‘interviewer or coder error’)

Unless stated otherwise, all changes in CSEW estimates described in the main text are statistically significant at the 5% level. Since the CSEW estimates are based on a sample survey, it is good practice to publish confidence intervals alongside them; these provide a measure of the reliability of the estimates and can be found in the [User Guide tables](#). Further information on statistical significance can be found in Chapter 8 of the [User Guide](#).

Accuracy of the statistics: Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime figures are a by-product of a live administrative system that is continually being updated as incidents are logged as crimes and subsequently investigated. The police return provisional figures to the Home Office on a monthly basis and each month they may supply revised totals for previously supplied months. The Home Office Crime and Policing Statistics team undertake a series of validation checks on receipt of the data and query outliers with forces who may then re-submit data. Details of these validation checks are given in Section 3.3 of the [User Guide](#), and the differences in data published between the current and preceding publications can be found in [Table QT1a](#).

Police recording practice is governed by the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). The HOCR have existed in some form since the 1920s, with substantial changes in 1998. The NCRS was introduced in April 2002 following a critical report from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in 2000 (Povey, 2000), which showed that there was a problem with differing interpretation of the HOCR that resulted in inconsistent recording practices across forces.

Following an [assessment of crime statistics](#) by the UK Statistics Authority, published in January 2014, the statistics based on police recorded crime data have been found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics.

In their report, the UK Statistics Authority set out 16 requirements that needed addressing for the statistics to meet National Statistics standards. We are working in collaboration with the Home Office Crime and Policing Statistics team and HMIC to address these requirements. A [summary of actions](#) taken in response to these requirements is available.

Full details on the history of the assessment and auditing of the quality and accuracy of police recorded crime statistics carried out in recent years is given in Section 3.3 of the [User Guide](#). Since the UK Statistics Authority assessment decision, HMIC have undertaken an inspection of the integrity of police recorded crime (carried out between December 2013 and August 2014), which reviewed a total of 10,267 reports of crime recorded between November 2012 and October 2013 across all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

The final report on findings from the HMIC inspections, [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#), was published on 18 November 2014 and separate [crime data integrity force reports](#) for each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales were published on 27 November 2014.

HMIC concluded that, across England and Wales as a whole, an estimated 1 in 5 offences (19%) that should have been recorded as crimes were not. The greatest levels of under-recording were seen for violence against the person offences (33%) and sexual offences (26%). However, there was considerable variation in the level of under-recording across the different offence types investigated. For other crime types: an estimated 14% of criminal damage and arson offences that should have been recorded as crimes were not; 14% of robbery offences; 11% of burglary offences; and 17% of other offences (excluding fraud)⁶.

In November 2015, HMIC wrote to all Chief Constables advising them that they would be commencing an unannounced programme of rolling inspections of crime recording on an ongoing basis. Reports on these inspections will be published on a rolling basis and can be found on the [HMIC website](#).

The renewed focus on the quality of crime recording means that caution is needed when interpreting statistics on police recorded crime. While we know that it is likely that improvements in compliance with the NCRS have led to increases in the number of crimes recorded by the police, it is not possible to quantify the scale of this, or assess how this effect varied between different police forces. In volume terms, police recorded crime for England and Wales as a whole has increased by 8% in the latest year compared with the previous year and 40 police forces (including the British Transport Police) have recorded overall increases in levels of crime.

Apparent increases in police force area data may reflect a number of factors, including tightening of recording practice, increases in reporting by victims and also genuine increases in the levels of crime. It is thought that incidents of violence are more open to subjective judgements about recording and thus more prone to changes in police practice. A number of forces have also shown large increases in sexual offences, which are thought to reflect both a greater willingness among victims to report such crimes and improved compliance with recording standards for sexual offences.

More information regarding the coverage, coherence and accuracy of the CSEW and police recorded crime can be found in the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#), the [Crime Statistics Quality and Methodology Information report](#) and (for CSEW only) the [CSEW technical report](#).

Notes for: Quality and methodology

1. Victim-based crimes are those offences with a specific identifiable victim. These include the CSEW categories of "Violence", "Robbery", "Theft offences", "Criminal damage" (and recently "Fraud" and "Computer misuse") and the police recorded crime categories of "Violence against the person", "Sexual offences", "Robbery", "Theft offences" and "Criminal damage and arson".
2. [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: Year ending March 2015](#) has more detailed information.
3. The coverage of police recorded crime is defined by the Notifiable Offence List, which includes all indictable and triable-either-way-offences (offences which could be tried at a Crown Court) and a few additional closely related summary offences (which would be dealt with by magistrates' courts). Appendix 1 of the [User Guide](#) has more information on the classifications used for notifiable crimes recorded by the police.
4. From 1 October 2015, the offence coverage of the CSEW was extended to include fraud experienced by the adult population. Estimates from these new questions were published for the first time in the 'Crime in England and Wales, year ending March 2016' release.
5. Section 3.3 of the [User Guide](#) has more information.
6. The range of crime recording accuracy for each of the crime types listed was +/-3. For more information, see section 7.51 of the HMIC publication [Crime Recording Making the Victim Count](#).

13. Background notes

1. The Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases are produced in partnership with the Home Office who collate and quality assure the police recorded crime data presented in the bulletins. Home Office colleagues also quality assure the overall content of the bulletin.
2. [National Statistics](#) are produced to high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
3. The [UK Statistics Authority](#) has designated this statistical bulletin as a National Statistics output, in accordance with the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#) and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.
4. However, statistics based on police recorded crime data have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. The [full assessment report](#) can be found on the UK Statistics Authority website.