

Statistical bulletin

# Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2021

Crime against households and adults using data from police recorded crime and the new Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales. Includes the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on crime and people's perceptions of crime during the January 2021 to December 2021 interview periods. See Section 12 for information on our upcoming user consultation on the future of the Crime Survey for England and Wales.



Contact:  
Meghan Elkin  
[crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk](mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk)  
+44 20 7592 8695

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# 1 . Main points

Patterns of crime over the last two years have been substantially affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and government restrictions on social contact. While periods of national lockdown have seen decreases in the incidence of many types of crime, fraud and computer misuse offences have not followed a lockdown-related pattern and have increased substantially.

Since restrictions were lifted following the third national lockdown in early 2021, police recorded crime data show indications that certain offence types are returning to or exceeding the levels seen before the pandemic. While violence and sexual offences recorded by the police have exceeded pre-pandemic levels, theft offences and robbery remain at a lower level despite increases over the last nine months.

Overall, Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates provide the best indicator of long-term trends in crime. Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) for the year ending December 2021 compared with the pre-coronavirus year ending December 2019 [note 1] show:

- an 18% increase in total crime, driven by a 54% increase in fraud and computer misuse offences
- a 15% decrease in theft offences

New TCSEW data provided insights into phishing, one of the main methods used for committing fraud. Although less than 1% of survey respondents who received a suspected phishing message provided personal details that criminals could use, the scale of phishing messages received every month is likely to translate into a high number of fraud offences.

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

- the number of homicides increased by 14% to 691 offences; this was driven by increases in the April to December 2021 period where levels returned to those seen before the pandemic
- a 4% decrease in the number of police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments (knife-enabled crime) and a 5% decrease in offences involving firearms; although these offences increased over the last nine months of the year, levels remained lower than before the pandemic

CSEW data on sexual assaults are not available for this release making interpreting trends in sexual offences challenging. Police recorded sexual offences rose by 22% to the highest annual figure recorded in England and Wales (183,587 offences). This includes the highest recorded annual number of rape offences to date (67,125 offences). Caution is needed when interpreting these figures as they may reflect a number of factors including the impact of high-profile cases and campaigns on victims' willingness to report incidents.

## Notes for: Main points

1. The year ending December 2019 face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data are the latest that are based on a sample that is independent of the year ending December 2021 Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW).

## 2 . Overall estimates of crime

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

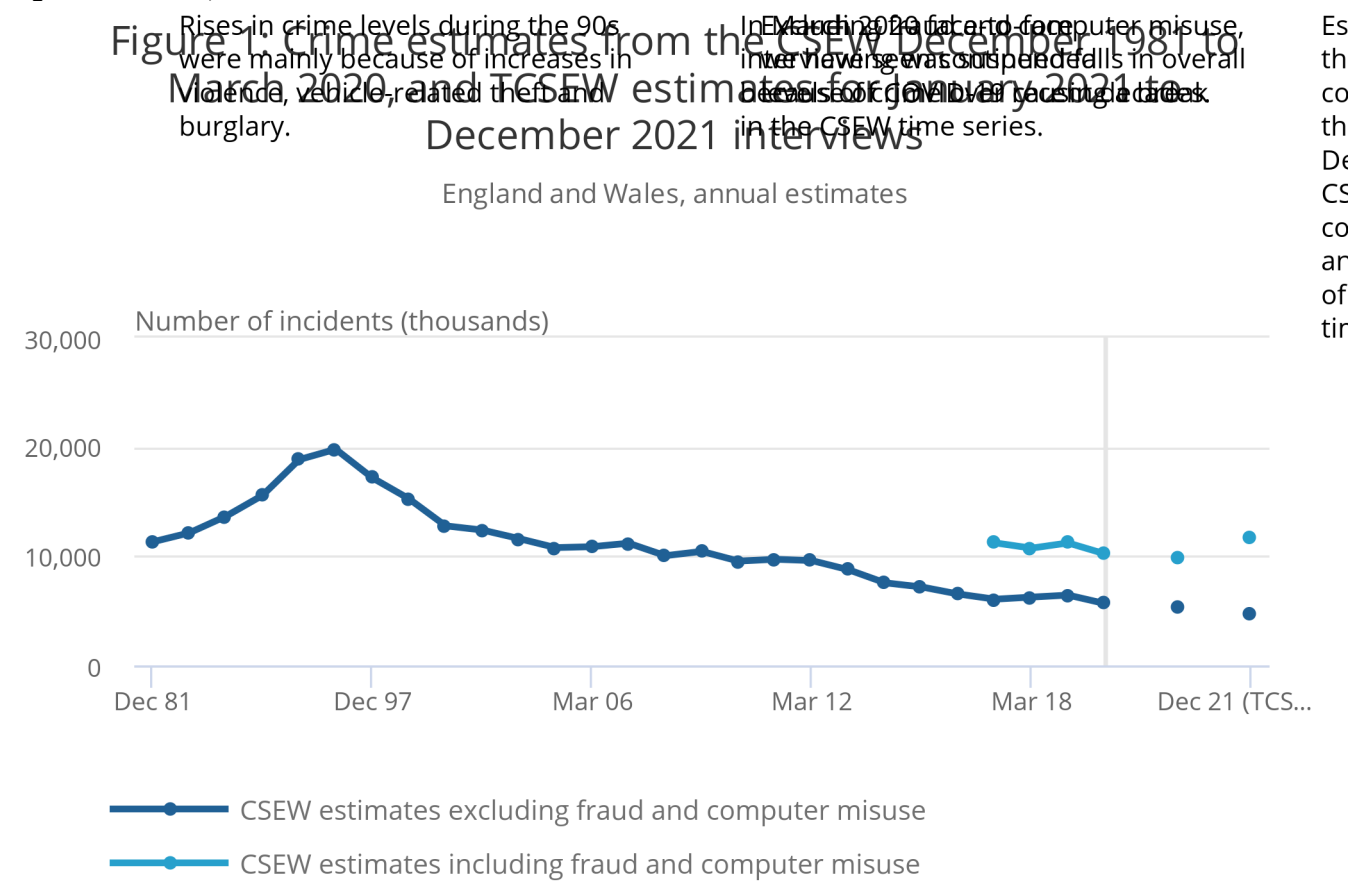
The Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) began data collection on 20 May 2020 to capture trends in crime while normal face-to-face interviewing was suspended because of restrictions on social contact during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

According to TCSEW estimates, adults aged 18 years and over experienced 12.8 million offences in the year ending December 2021 ([Appendix Table 2](#)). This was an 18% increase in estimated levels of crime compared with the year ending December 2019 ([Appendix Table 3](#)). There were decreases across a range of individual crime types, particularly theft offences. However, these were offset by rises in fraud and computer misuse offences resulting in an overall increase in crime estimates.

Since the mid-1990s, there have been long-term falls in overall Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) crime estimates when excluding fraud and computer misuse (Figure 1). In the year ending December 2021, crime excluding fraud and computer misuse decreased by 13% compared with the year ending December 2019. However, when including fraud and computer misuse the number of offences has increased compared with the year ending December 2019. Long-term trends also vary by crime types.

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

England and Wales, annual estimates



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

Notes:

1. Data from the TCSEW are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year; and from year ending March 2002 onwards the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that financial year.
3. TCSEW data presented here for 2021 are not comparable with CSEW estimates. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over or to households. TCSEW data relate to adults aged 18 years and over or to households. See [Appendix Table A3](#) for comparable data.
4. New questions on fraud and computer misuse were incorporated into the CSEW from October 2015. The questions were asked of half the survey sample from October 2015 until September 2017 and have been asked of a full sample from October 2017.

For the crime types and population it covers, the face-to-face CSEW is a better indicator of long-term trends than police recorded crime. It is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices. Our comparability report has shown that TCSEW estimates can be directly compared with these long-term CSEW estimates when certain adjustments are applied.

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

## Likelihood of victimisation

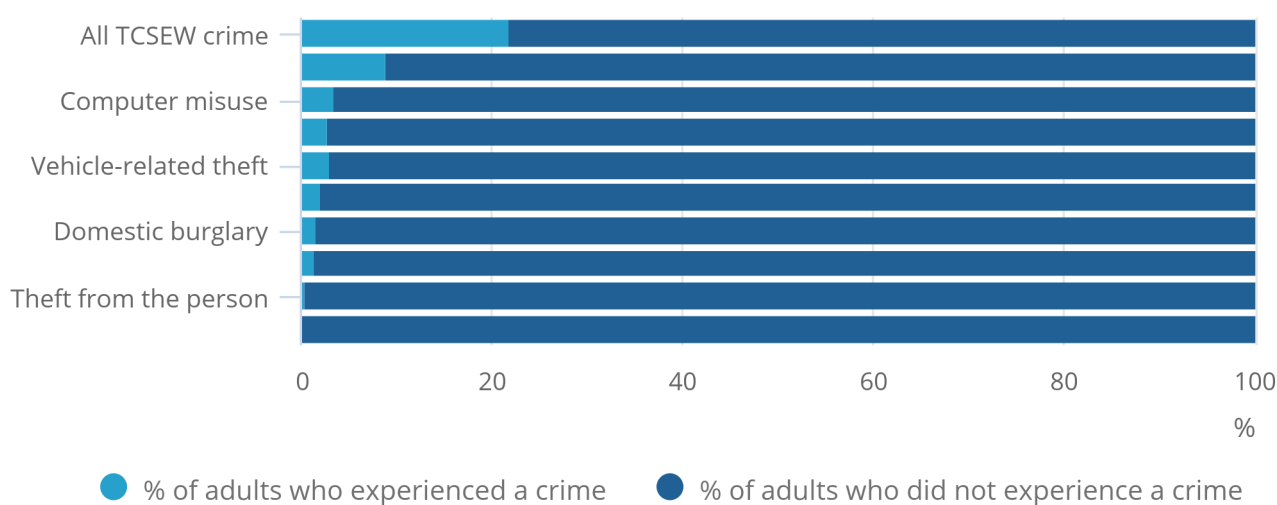
The latest estimates show that approximately 8 in 10 adults did not experience any of the crimes asked about in the TCSEW in the year ending December 2021 (Figure 2). The likelihood of being a victim of crime varies by crime type, with fraud having the highest proportion of victims (9%), followed by computer misuse (4%) and vehicle-related theft (3%).

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

England and Wales, January 2021 to December 2021 interviews

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

England and Wales, January 2021 to December 2021 interviews



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

**Notes:**

1. Data from the TCSEW are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person, fraud and computer misuse are quoted for adults. Percentages for domestic burglary and criminal damage are quoted for households. Percentage for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted for vehicle- or bicycle-owning households.
3. For all TCSEW crime, including fraud and computer misuse, this is the estimated percentage of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household crime.

The TCSEW also showed that the likelihood of being a victim of crime varied by demographic characteristics. For more information, see the [annual trend and demographic tables](#).

## Trends in police recorded crime

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

The police recorded 6 million crimes in England and Wales in the year ending December 2021. This was a similar level to the pre-coronavirus year ending March 2019 and an 8% increase compared with the year ending December 2020.

Total police recorded crime saw the lowest number of offences in the first quarter (January to March 2021) of the year ending December 2021 coinciding with a period of national lockdown. However, from April 2021 recorded crime returned to the levels seen before the pandemic (Figure 3).

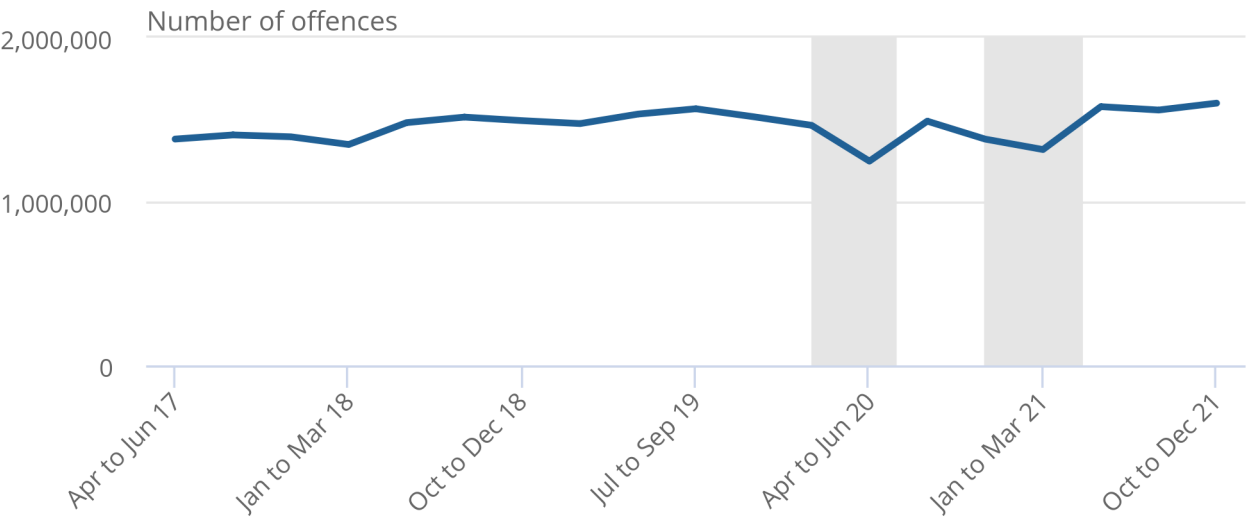
**Figure 3: Police recorded crime has returned to similar levels seen before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**

England and Wales, quarterly data (April 2017 to December 2021)

Figure 3: Police recorded crime has returned to similar levels seen before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

England and Wales, quarterly data (April 2017 to December 2021)

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Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

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

Crime survey and police recorded crime data can be used together to develop a more complete picture of crime (Table 1). The TCSEW data showed increases in fraud and computer misuse and decreases in theft offences compared with the year ending December 2019. Police recorded crime also showed decreases in individual theft offences, such as burglary and vehicle offences, compared with the year ending December 2020.



Overview of main crime types [note 1, 2]  
England and Wales

Offence	Number of incidents [note 3]	Annual % change [note 4,5,6]	Comparison year	Source
<b>Violence</b>	1,789,000	-8	2019	TCSEW/CSEW
<b>Homicide</b>	691	14	2020	PRC
<b>Knife or sharp instruments</b>	46,950	-4	2020	PRC
<b>Theft</b>	2,910,000	-15	[s] 2019	TCSEW/CSEW
<b>Burglary</b>	258,185	-14	2020	PRC
<b>Vehicle offences</b>	348,481	-6	2020	PRC
<b>Robbery</b>	62,354	-9	2020	PRC
<b>Fraud</b>	5,189,000	41	[s] 2019	TCSEW/CSEW
<b>Computer misuse</b>	1,841,000	104	[s] 2019	TCSEW/CSEW

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

Notes

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

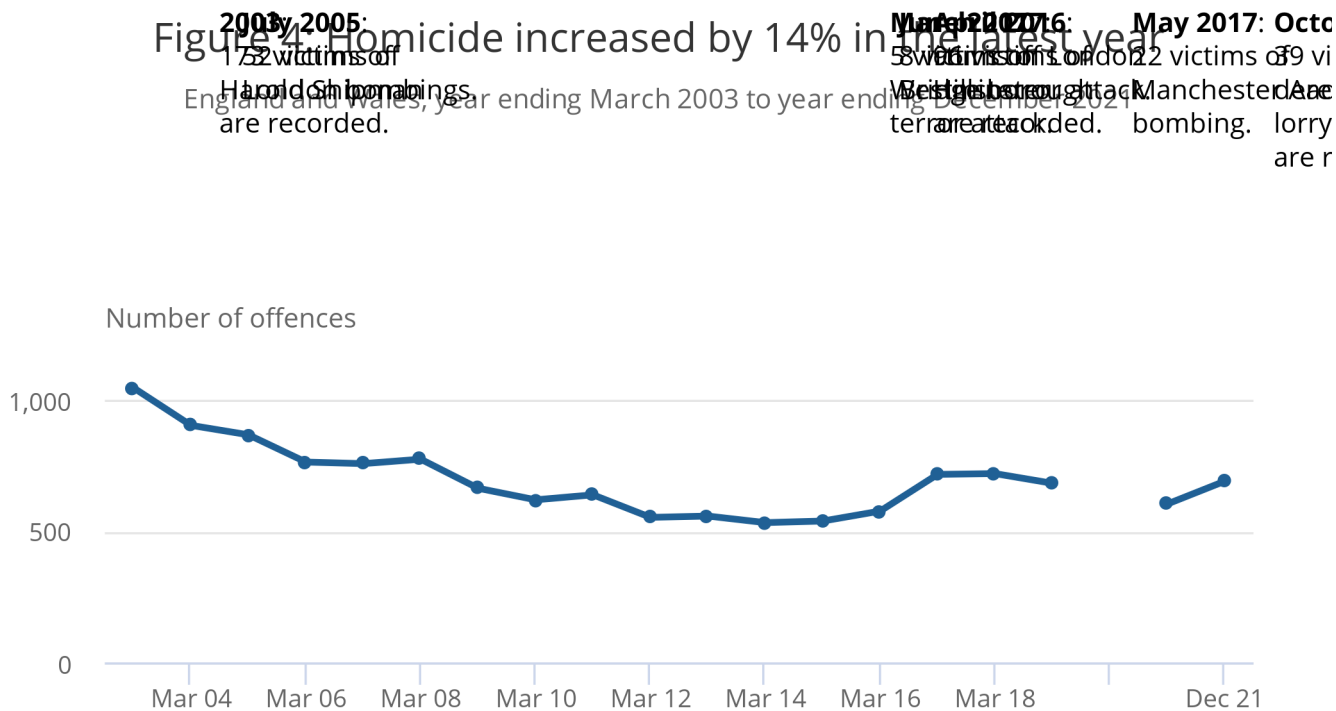
### 3 . Homicide

The police recorded 691 homicide offences in the year ending December 2021, a 14% increase compared with the year ending December 2020 (604 offences). This was similar to the number of offences recorded in the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) year ending March 2019 (683 offences). Within this annual figure, the number of homicides was lower during periods of lockdown but there have been increases since April 2021.

The rate of homicide in the population remains low at 12 per 1 million people in the year ending December 2021 compared with 10 per 1 million people in the year ending December 2020.

**Figure 4: Homicide increased by 14% in the latest year**

**England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending December 2021**



**Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime**

**Notes:**

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

Of all recorded homicides in the year ending December 2021, the proportion of homicides where a knife or sharp instrument was the method of killing increased to 44% compared with 39% in the year ending December 2020.

For the latest analysis of information on homicide offences held within the Home Office Homicide Index, see [our Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2021 article](#).



## 4 . Knife or sharp instrument offences

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

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

Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police saw a 4% decrease to 46,950 offences in the year ending December 2021, from 49,152 in the year ending December 2020. This was driven by a 15% decrease in robbery offences to 16,228.

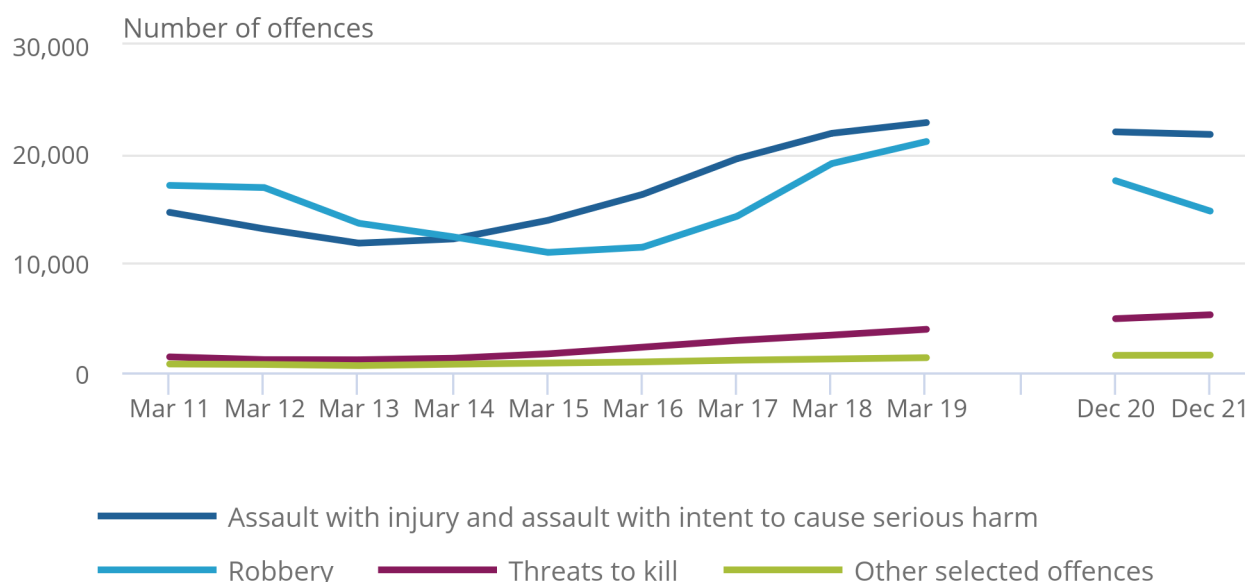
Levels of knife-enabled crime were lower during periods of lockdown but returned to pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) levels in the April to December 2021 period. Despite this, knife-enabled crime was still 10% lower in the year ending December 2021 compared with the pre-coronavirus year ending March 2019.

## Figure 5: Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police decreased for the second consecutive year

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

### Figure 5: Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police decreased for the second consecutive year

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

#### Notes:

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

Patterns of knife or sharp instrument offences vary across police force areas [note 1]. For the three police force areas (PFAs) with the highest volume of knife-enabled crime we have seen:

- a 14% increase in the Greater Manchester PFA
- an 11% decrease in the West Midlands PFA
- a 7% decrease in the Metropolitan Police PFA

Police recorded “possession of article with a blade or point” [note 2] offences increased by 10% to 23,287 in the year ending December 2021. This could have been influenced by increases in targeted police action.

The Home Office and police forces have continued to roll out a new methodology for identifying recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments (knife-enabled crime). Thirty-six forces have now switched to the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDIQS) data collection methodology [note 3]. It is aimed that the new methodology will be rolled out to all forces in England and Wales over the next year. Estimates in this release include a combination of both new and old data collection methods.

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

## Other sources of data

The latest provisional admissions data for NHS hospitals in England and Wales reported a 6% decrease in admissions for assault by a sharp object in the year ending December 2021 (to 4,026 admissions) compared with the year ending December 2020.

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

## Notes for: Knife or sharp instrument offences

1. Data cannot be compared across all police forces because of changes in data collection methods. Thirty-six police forces have now switched to the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDIQS) data collection method. Seven remaining police forces are still submitting knife or sharp instrument offences data via a special collection (North Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Mercia, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire). For more information, please see the methodology note [Police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments: methodology changes](#)
2. Includes the Metropolitan and City of London Police Force Areas.
3. Offences of “possession of an article with a blade or point” are covered separately by a specific recorded crime category, which is the specific crime of possessing an article with a blade or point illegally.

## 5 . Offences involving firearms

Police recorded offences involving firearms are at their lowest level since the year ending March 2016 at 5,682 (Figure 6). This was a 5% decrease compared with the year ending December 2020 (5,983 offences) and a 17% decrease compared with the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) year ending March 2019 (6,882 offences).

Broken down by type of weapon, there was a 17% and 23% decrease in offences using handguns (to 1,865 offences) and shotguns (to 445 offences) respectively, while there was a 26% increase in offences using imitation firearms (to 1,819 offences).

**Figure 6: Police recorded firearms offences are at their lowest level since the year ending March 2016**

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

Figure 6: Police recorded firearms offences are at their lowest level since the year ending March 2016

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



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

**Notes:**

1. Excludes offences involving the use of conventional air weapons, such as air rifles and offences recorded by British Transport Police. Includes crimes recorded by police where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument against a person or used as a threat.
2. Imitation firearms include replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons which fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons.

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

## 6 . Violence

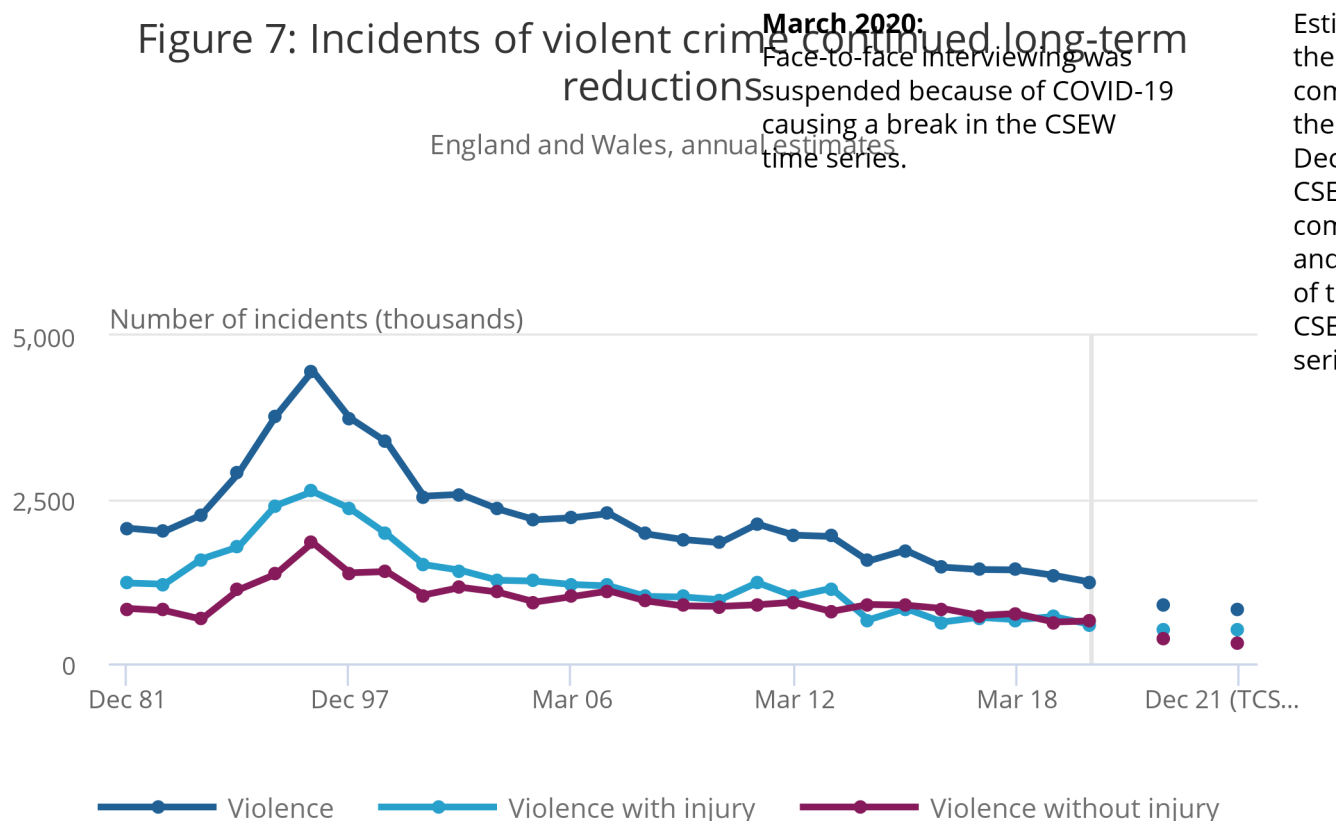
The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the best picture of the overall trend in violent crime.

Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 1.8 million violent offences in the year ending December 2021.

Using a comparable dataset adjusted for changes in the sample and questionnaire between the CSEW and TCSEW, there was no [statistically significant](#) change in the total number of violent incidents, or the number of victims compared with the year ending December 2019 (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Incidents of violent crime continued long-term reductions**

England and Wales, annual estimates



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

**Notes:**

1. Data from the TCSEW are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year; and from year ending March 2002 onwards the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that financial year.
3. TCSEW data presented here for 2021 are not comparable with CSEW estimates. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over, or to households. TCSEW data relate to adults aged 18 years and over, or to households. See [Appendix Table A3](#) for comparable data.



Police recorded crime data in the year ending December 2021 showed increases in violence with injury (8% increase to 530,374) and violence without injury (11% increase to 773,878) compared with the year ending December 2020.

The increases in police recorded violence with injury offences are reflected in research conducted by the [Violence Research Group at Cardiff University](#). An estimated 146,856 people attended emergency units in England and Wales for treatment of violence-related injury in the year ending December 2021 [note 1]. This is a 23% increase compared with the year ending December 2020 (119,111 people).

Violence with injury was still lower than the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) year to March 2019 (549,647 offences) but levels of violence without injury had exceeded those seen in the year ending March 2019 (679,161 offences).

Overall, police recorded violence increased by 13% from 1,780,556 to 2,017,307 in the year ending December 2021 compared with the previous year. The highest increase was seen in stalking and harassment offences, which rose by 19% to 673,129 (excluding controlling and coercive behaviour [note 2]). This increase may be caused by improvements made by police forces in identifying and recording stalking and harassment offences together with an increased confidence in victims coming forward to report these offences.

### **Notes for: Violence**

1. Estimate of emergency unit attendance in England and Wales is based on 37,475 people who were treated for violence-related injuries at 74 hospital sites.
2. From April 2020, controlling and coercive behaviour was categorised under the stalking and harassment offence category. To allow for comparison with the previous year, controlling and coercive behaviour has been removed from overall stalking and harassment figures.

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

Domestic abuse-related crimes and sexual offences recorded by the police do not provide a reliable measure of trends in these types of crime. Improvements in police recording practices and increased reporting by victims have contributed to increases in recent years. The figures do, however, provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides a more reliable measure of long-term trends in domestic abuse, sexual assault, stalking and harassment. Questions related to these offences were removed from the survey with the move to telephone interviewing from May 2020 because of concerns around confidentiality and respondent safeguarding. As a result, CSEW estimates for these offences are not available for this release.

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

### **Domestic abuse**

The police recorded 895,782 offences (excluding fraud) flagged as domestic abuse-related in the year ending December 2021. This represents a 7% increase from 839,376 offences in the previous year and a 20% increase from 746,219 offences in the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) year ending March 2019. This included 712,584 violence against the person offences flagged as domestic abuse-related, a 7% increase compared with the year ending December 2020.

Some of this increase may reflect improvements seen in reporting over the last few years. Given this and the absence of domestic abuse survey estimates, we cannot conclude whether there has been an increase in the number of victims of domestic abuse.

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



## Sexual offences

High levels of non-reporting combined with changes in reporting trends can have a significant impact on sexual offences recorded by the police. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the number of police recorded sexual offences was well below the number of victims estimated by the crime survey, with fewer than one in six victims of rape or assault by penetration reporting the crime to the police.

The latest figures may reflect a number of factors, including the impact of high-profile incidents, media coverage and campaigns on people's willingness to report incidents to the police, as well as a potential increase in the number of victims.

Sexual offences recorded by the police were at the highest level recorded within a 12-month period (183,587 offences) in the year ending December 2021, a 22% increase from the same period in 2020 (Figure 8). Within these annual figures, the number of recorded sexual offences were lower during periods of lockdown but there have been substantial increases since April 2021.

Of all sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending December 2021, 37% (67,125) were rape offences. This was a 21% increase from 55,592 in the year ending December 2020. Other sexual offences increased by 22% to 116,462 compared with 95,156 the previous year.

**Figure 8: Police recorded rape and sexual offences were the highest on record in the year ending December 2021**

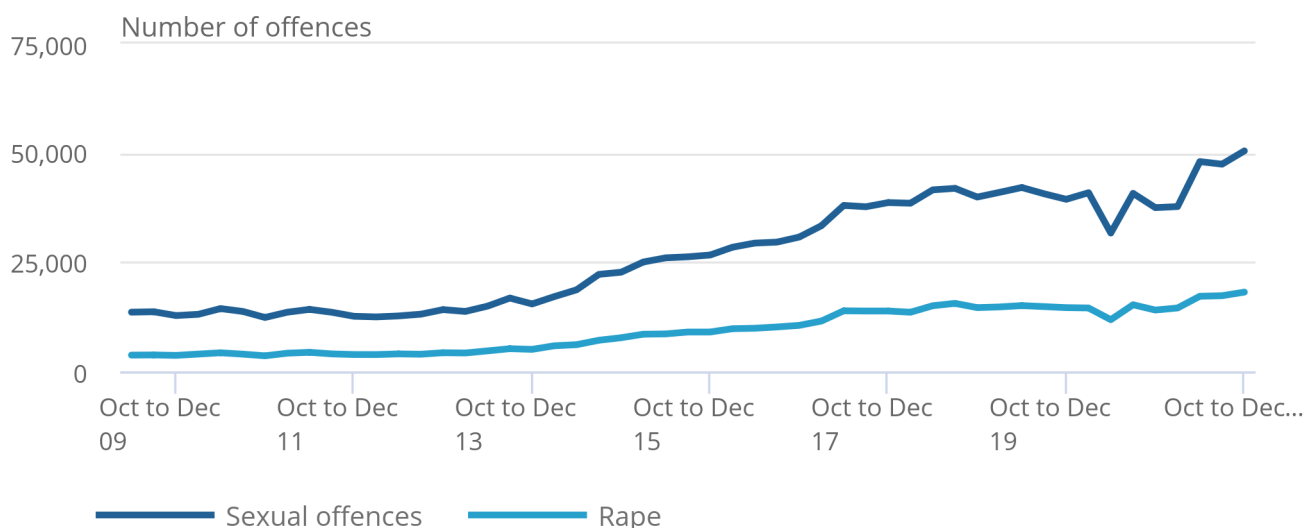
England and Wales quarterly data from April 2009 to December 2021

Figure 8: Police recorded rape and sexual offences were the highest on record in the year ending December 2021

October 2012 November 2014  
Operation Yewtree Publication of HMICFRS  
launched. Reports highlighting the  
issues in recording  
practices for sexual offences.

Periods of  
lockdown  
Covid-19

England and Wales quarterly data from April 2009 to December 2021



Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

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

CSEW data on the prevalence of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking for the year ending March 2020 can be found in Table S42 in [Annual supplementary tables](#).

## 8 . Theft offences

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

There were 2.9 million incidents of theft estimated by the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) for the year ending December 2021 ([Appendix Table 2](#)). This was a 15% decrease compared with the year ending December 2019 ([Appendix Table 3](#)). This large fall was seen across most sub-categories, with a 42% decrease in “theft from the person” offences, followed by a 30% decrease in bicycle theft offences and a 21% decrease in vehicle-related theft offences.

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

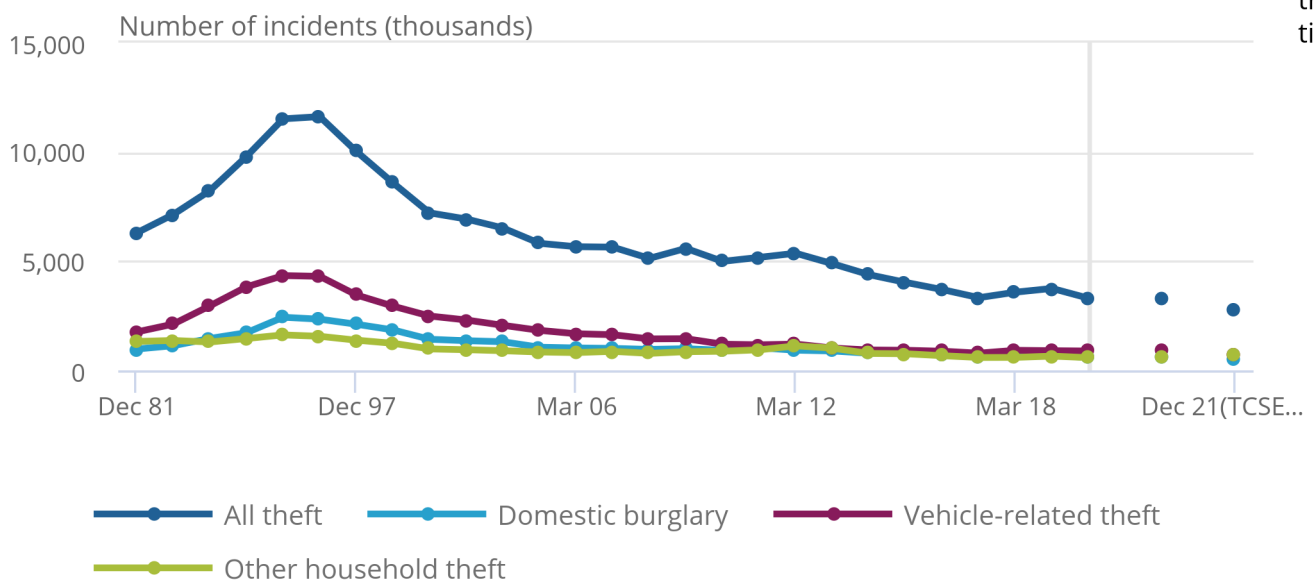
England and Wales, annual estimates

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

England and Wales, annual estimates

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

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

### Notes:

1. Data from the TCSEW are published as Experimental Statistics.
2. Data on this chart refer to different time periods: 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year; and from year ending March 2002 onwards the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that financial year.
3. TCSEW data presented here for 2021 are not comparable with CSEW estimates. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 years and over or to households. TCSEW data relate to adults aged 18 years and over or to households. See [Appendix Table A3](#) for comparable data.

Police recorded theft offences decreased by 3% to 1.4 million in the year ending December 2021. This decrease was seen across most subcategories: burglary (14%), bicycle theft (8%) and vehicle offences (6%).

Although levels of theft offences increased after restrictions related to the third national lockdown were lifted, recorded theft in the year ending December 2021 remained lower than the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) year ending March 2019 (approximately 2 million offences).

Police recorded robbery decreased for the second year to 62,354 offences; this was a 9% decrease compared with the year ending December 2020. This follows the trend of consecutive annual increases seen from the year ending March 2015 to the year ending March 2020. The largest decreases were seen in the London and South East regions, which saw 18% and 20% falls, respectively.

## 9 . Fraud

Fraud estimates do not follow the trend of falling victimisation seen in other crime types. Estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) showed that there were 5.2 million fraud offences in the year ending December 2021 ([Appendix Table 2](#)), a 41% increase compared with the year ending December 2019 ([Appendix Table 3](#)).

Large increases were seen in “advance fee fraud” and “consumer and retail fraud”. This may indicate fraudsters taking advantage of behavioural changes related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, such as increased online shopping. For example, advance fee fraud offences included scams where victims transferred funds to fraudsters for postal deliveries.

Phishing is one of the main methods used to commit fraud. Approximately half (53%) of TCSEW respondents reported receiving an email, text or social media message that may have been phishing in the last month ([Coronavirus and Crime Table 7](#)).

Of those who had received phishing messages, 56% had received messages from fraudsters pretending to be delivery companies, 34% from banks, building societies or other financial institutions, and 28% from e-commerce companies. Where respondents had received phishing messages, 3% replied or clicked on a link in the message. Of those who replied or clicked on a link, 14% provided personal information that could be used by fraudsters (equivalent to less than 1% of respondents who received a phishing message).

Fraud offences reported to the police are recorded and collected by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) from Action Fraud and two industry bodies, Cifas and UK Finance. Action Fraud (the public-facing national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) reported a 15% rise in fraud offences (to 400,763 offences) compared with the year ending December 2020. The data showed a 29% increase in “financial investment fraud” offences in the last year (to 22,683 offences) and a 12% rise in “advance fee payments” (to 51,667 offences).

NFIB data showed referrals from UK Finance and Cifas (who report instances of fraud where their member organisations have been victims) increased by 78% (to 190,327 offences) and 10% (to 329,442 offences), respectively, compared with the year ending December 2020. These trends need to be interpreted in the context of differences in coverage and fraud types captured by each reporting body.

## 10 . Computer misuse

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

Estimates from the TCSEW showed that computer misuse offences doubled in the year ending December 2021 (to 1.8 million offences) compared with the year ending December 2019. The biggest increase was seen in “Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)” offences. This included victims’ details being compromised via large-scale data breaches, and victims’ email or social media accounts being compromised. This increase may correlate with the rise in the number of large-scale data breaches around the world.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) also reported a 6% increase in “Hacking – personal” offences referred by Action Fraud (from 4,915 to 5,187 offences) for the year ending December 2021 compared with the previous year.

[Our Nature of crime: fraud and computer misuse datasets](#) hold more in-depth data about these offences from the year ending March 2021.

## 11 . Anti-social behaviour

The police recorded 1.5 million incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the year ending December 2021. This was a 25% decrease compared with the year ending December 2020.

Levels of ASB incidents were particularly high in the year ending December 2020 because of people reporting breaches of virus restrictions in their local area since the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The number of ASB incidents in the year ending December 2021 was similar to that of the pre-coronavirus year ending March 2019.

The Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TSCEW) showed that 24% of adults personally witnessed or experienced anti-social behaviour in their area in the last 12 months.

The TCSEW includes a measure of harassment that covers adults’ experiences of being insulted, called names, threatened or shouted at in public spaces. Estimates showed that 7% of adults experienced these types of harassment in the year ending December 2021. Where a specific perceived reason for the harassment was given, the most common was because of the coronavirus pandemic (21%), followed by education, income level or job (8%).

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

In the next few months we will be running a user consultation regarding the future transformation work on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). This consultation will cover future questionnaire content, sample design and modal changes. There will also be sections on violence against women and the 10- to 15-year-olds crime survey. If you would like to review the proposed changes and provide feedback on the recommendations, please [subscribe to Office for National Statistics email alerts](#) where you will be notified when the consultation is made available.

## 13 . Crime data

[Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#) Dataset | Released on 28 April 2022 Long-term trends in Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) crime, estimates from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) and police recorded crime, by offence type.

[Crime in England and Wales: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and crime tables](#) Dataset | Released on 28 April 2022 Information from a new module of questions included in the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) around perceptions of crime, the police and anti-social behaviour during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and feelings of safety and experiences of harassment. Data on children's online activity are also presented.

[Crime in England and Wales: Other related tables](#) Dataset | Released on 28 April 2022 Firearms, knife and sharp instrument offences, offences involving a corrosive substance, hospital admissions for assault with sharp objects, fraud, offences flagged as domestic abuse-related, corruption, child sexual abuse and child exploitation. Data tables also include information on anti-social behaviour, perceptions, and non-notifiable incidents. The data contained in these tables are from the following sources: police recorded crime, NHS hospital admissions data, fraud data from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and UK Finance CAMIS database and figures from the Ministry of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics.

[Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables](#) Dataset | Released on 28 April 2022 The number of police recorded crimes, percentage change from previous year and rate per 1,000 population by offence group, firearms, knife and sharp instrument, fraud and computer misuse and anti-social behaviour offences by police force area.

[Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly data tables](#) Dataset | Released on 28 April 2022 Data from Home Office police recorded crime broken down into quarterly and monthly time periods.

## 14 . Glossary

### Computer misuse

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

### Criminal damage

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

### Fraud

Fraud involves a person dishonestly and deliberately deceiving a victim for personal gain of property or money or causing loss or risk of loss to another. The majority of incidents fall under the legal definition of "Fraud by false representation" – where a person makes a representation that they know to be untrue or misleading (for example, banking and payment card frauds and dating scams). Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) estimates cover a broad range of fraud offences, including attempts, involving a loss and incidents not reported to the authorities. See the "Glossary" section of [our Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2019 article](#) for definitions of the different fraud types.

### Overall theft offences

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



## Robbery

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

## Violent crime

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

More information and further definitions can be found in the “offence type” section of [our User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: Measuring crime during the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

# 15 . Measuring the data

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

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

Estimates from the TCSEW are derived from a total of 37,332 telephone interviews conducted with household residents in England and Wales aged 18 years and over between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2021. The sample was formed from respondents who had previously participated in the face-to-face CSEW in the last two years. TCSEW estimates cannot be compared with estimates for the year ending December 2020 because of overlapping reporting periods for some respondents. Therefore, TCSEW estimates are compared with the year ending December 2019 CSEW estimates throughout this bulletin.

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

Findings from [our comparability study](#) showed that TCSEW estimates are comparable with CSEW estimates after certain adjustments are applied. All direct comparisons between the year ending December 2021 TCSEW estimates and the year ending December 2019 CSEW estimates are made with the use of these comparable datasets. An additional table, [Appendix Table A3](#), presents percentage changes between these estimates. Estimates presented in [Appendix Table A3](#) will be lower than those presented in [Appendix Table A2](#) and underestimate the extent of crime.

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

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

## Police recorded crime

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

The recorded crime figures are collated via a live administrative system that is continually being updated as forces submit data. The data represent a “snapshot” of the live database taken on 11 March 2022 (for data up to the end of December 2021).

Figures may differ slightly from those published in subsequent bulletins for the same period, although this does not mean that the figures previously published were inaccurate at the time that they were reported. Police recorded crime data are not designated as [National Statistics](#).

For more information on how we are measuring crime during the pandemic, see [our Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

## 16 . Strengths and limitations

### Police recorded crime

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 17 . Related links

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

[Victimisation and its relationship to drug misuse, common mental disorder and well-being in England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#) Article | Released 3 March 2022 An overview of drug misuse, symptoms of common mental disorder and personal well-being in adults who reported being a victim of crime in the last year. Data are from the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales.

[Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#) Article | Released 10 February 2022 Analyses of information held within the Home Office Homicide Index, which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales.

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

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

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

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

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