

## Article

# Sexual offences victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2025

Characteristics of victims of sexual offences based on data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime.

Contact:  
ONS Centre for Crime and  
Justice  
[crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk](mailto:crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk)  
+44 20 7592 8695

Release date:  
4 November 2025

Next release:  
To be announced

## Table of contents

1. [Other pages in this release](#)
2. [Main points](#)
3. [Understanding sexual offences](#)
4. [Sex](#)
5. [Age](#)
6. [Disability](#)
7. [Marital status](#)
8. [Occupation](#)
9. [Area](#)
10. [Relationship to perpetrator](#)
11. [Data on sexual offences in England and Wales](#)
12. [Glossary](#)
13. [Data sources and quality](#)
14. [Related links](#)
15. [Cite this statistical article](#)

# 1 . Other pages in this release

- [Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2025](#)
- [Sexual offences prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2025](#)
- [Nature of sexual assault by rape or penetration, England and Wales: year ending March 2025](#)
- [Redevelopment of sexual victimisation statistics: research update November 2025](#)

## 2 . Main points

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2025 shows:

- an estimated 3.0% of females (739,000) and 0.7% of males (162,000) aged 16 years and over experienced sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year
- a higher proportion of people aged 16 to 34 years were victims of sexual assault in the last year compared with those aged 35 years and over
- a higher proportion of full-time students were victims of sexual assault in the last year than those in any other occupation type
- a higher proportion of single people were victims of sexual assault in the last year than those with any other marital status

Sexual offences recorded by the police do not provide a reliable measure of trends over time, however, do provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police. Crimes recorded by the police in year ending March 2025 show the following:

- the victim was female in 82% of sexual offences
- for female victims of rape, the perpetrator (where known) was most likely to be an intimate partner (48%), whereas for male victims of rape, the perpetrator was most likely to be an acquaintance (33%) or “other family relative” (32%)

### 3 . Understanding sexual offences

Sexual offences are often hidden crimes that are not always reported to the police. Therefore, data held by the police can only provide a partial picture of the actual level of sexual assault experienced.

Improvements in police recording practices, the introduction of new offences, and increased reporting by victims have had a large impact on the trends in recent years. In contrast, one of the strengths of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is that it covers crimes that are not reported to the police. It therefore provides the best estimate of prevalence and provides important context to the police figures.

CSEW sexual assault estimates for year ending (YE) March 2025 and YE March 2024 are based on a half sample. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced sample sizes on the quality of the estimates.

The Home Office collects data on the number of sexual offences recorded by the police. Our [Sexual offences prevalence and victim characteristics tables](#) detail the police forces that provided data.

Sexual offences recorded by the police do not provide a reliable measure of trends over time. Improvements in police recording practices, introduction of new offences, and increased reporting by victims are likely to have contributed to increases in the level of offences in recent years. The figures do, however, provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police.

## 4 . Sex

For year ending (YE) March 2025, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 739,000 females and 162,000 males aged 16 years and over experienced sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year. This is a prevalence rate of approximately 3 in 100 females and 1 in 100 males (Figure 1).

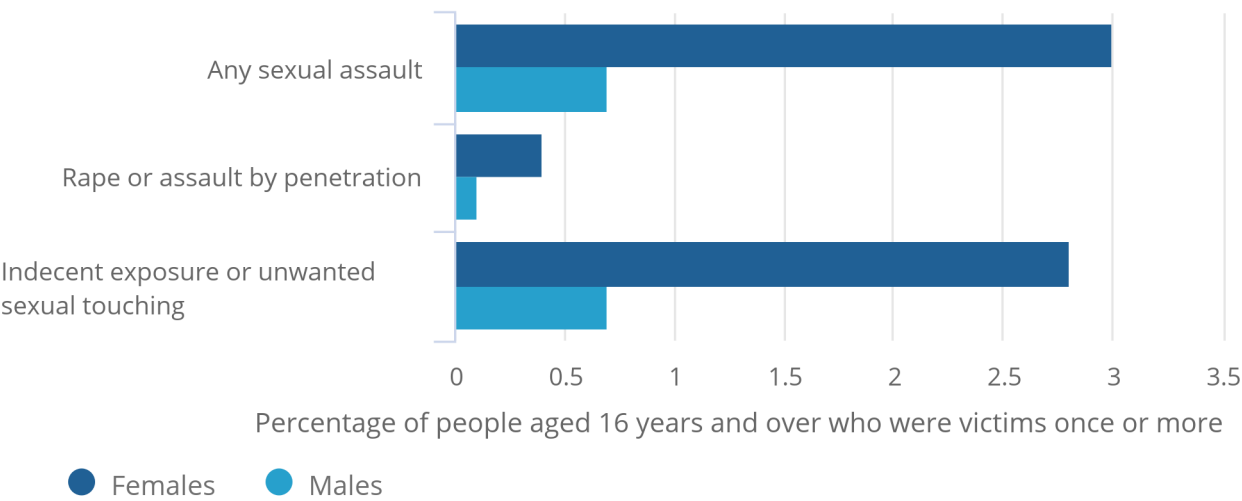
A significantly higher proportion of females were victims of any sexual assault in the last year than males (3.0% compared with 0.7%).

**Figure 1: A higher percentage of females than males were victims of sexual assault in the last year**

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2025

Figure 1: A higher percentage of females than males were victims of sexual assault in the last year

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2025



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

Notes:

1. Data for year ending (YE) March 2025 are based on a half sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.
2. The categories “any sexual assault” and “rape or assault by penetration” include attempts.

For YE March 2025, the CSEW estimated that a significantly higher proportion of females aged 16 years and over (25.6%, 6.3 million) experienced sexual assault (including attempts) since the age of 16 years compared with males (5.9%, 1.4 million). This was true for all types of sexual assault. For example, 7.3% of females (1.8 million) experienced rape (including attempts) since the age of 16 years, compared with 0.5% of males (129,000).

Following the removal of the upper age limit in October 2021 for survey respondents answering the self-completion module, when analysing data over time, we use the 16 to 59 years age range to give a comparable time series.

The prevalence of sexual assault experienced by males and females aged 16 to 59 years has not changed significantly in YE March 2025 compared with YE March 2024. In YE March 2025, 3.8% of females and 0.9% of males aged 16 to 59 years had experienced any sexual assault in the last year.

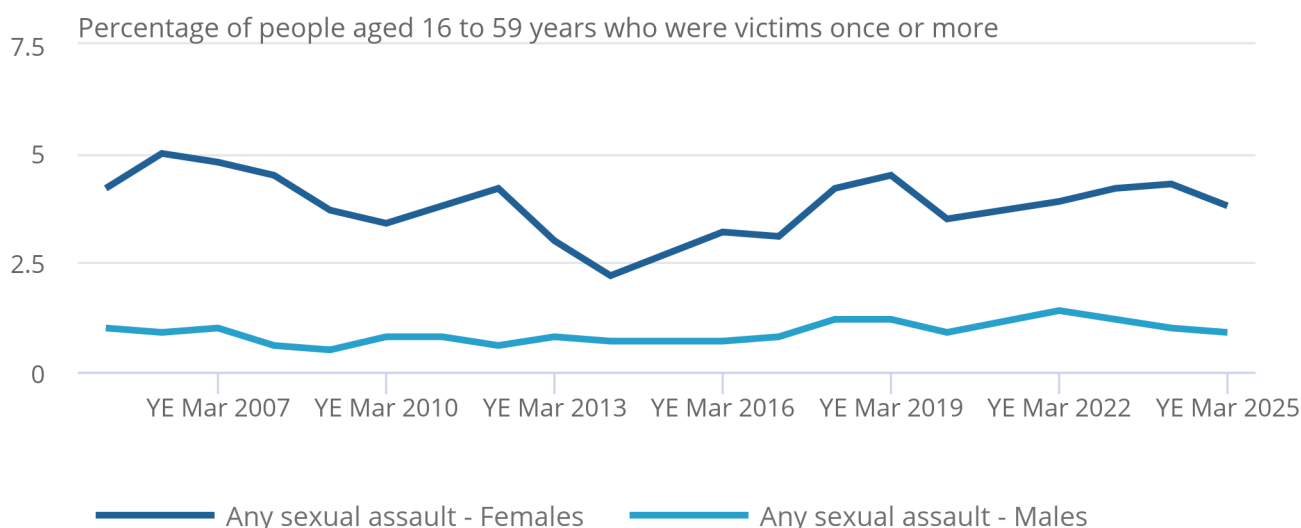
When looking at longer-term trends, the prevalence of sexual assault experienced by males aged 16 to 59 years has remained stable, whereas the prevalence for females fluctuated in earlier years but has remained more stable over the last five years (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: There was no significant change in the prevalence of sexual assault for both males and females in year ending March 2025, compared with year ending March 2024**

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 to 59 years, by sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2025

**Figure 2: There was no significant change in the prevalence of sexual assault for both males and females in year ending March 2025, compared with year ending March 2024**

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 to 59 years, by sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2025



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

**Notes:**

1. The category “any sexual assault” includes attempts.
2. No data are available for year ending (YE) March 2021 because the Crime Survey for England and Wales was suspended because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
3. Data for YE March 2022 are not designated as accredited official statistics. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the potential effects of lower response rates on data quality.
4. Data for YE March 2023 are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.
5. Data for YE March 2024 and YE March 2025 are based on a half sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.

More detailed case-level data supplied from 39 police forces showed the victim was female in 82% of sexual offences recorded by the police in YE March 2025. Similarly, more victims of rape offences recorded by the police were female (90%) than male (10%). These figures were similar to those for the previous year.

## 5 . Age

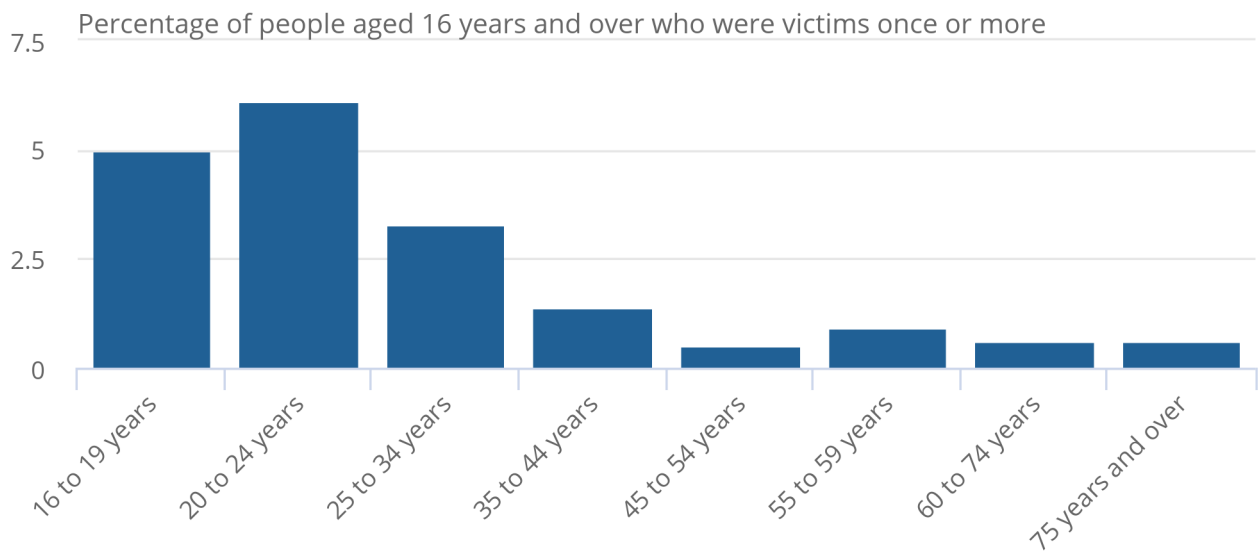
The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending (YE) March 2025 estimated that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years and 25 to 34 years (5.0%, 6.1% and 3.3%, respectively) were victims of sexual assault in the last year compared with those in other age groups (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: A higher percentage of people aged 16 to 34 years were victims of sexual assault in the last year than those aged 35 years and over**

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by age, England and Wales, year ending March 2025

Figure 3: A higher percentage of people aged 16 to 34 years were victims of sexual assault in the last year than those aged 35 years and over

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by age, England and Wales, year ending March 2025



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

Notes:

1. Data for year ending (YE) March 2025 are based on a half sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.

The CSEW does not ask those aged under 16 years about their experience of sexual assault. Separately, it has asked people to recall retrospectively their experience of sexual assault before the age of 16 years (see our [Abuse during childhood in England and Wales: March 2024 article](#) for more information). Information from the Home Office Data Hub can provide some insight into the victimisation of those aged under 16 years, however, this only includes cases reported to and recorded by the police.

Data supplied from 38 police forces showed that in YE March 2025, females aged 10 to 39 years were disproportionately more likely to be victims of sexual offences in the police data than other age groups. For example, while 6% of the female population were aged 15 to 19 years, this age group accounted for 21% of police recorded sexual offences where the victim was female (Figure 4).

Males aged 1 to 24 years were disproportionately more likely to be victims of sexual offences in the police data. For example, while 6% of the male population were aged 10 to 14 years, this age group accounted for 27% of police recorded sexual offences (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Females aged 15 to 19 years and males aged 10 to 14 years were most likely to be victims of sexual offences, according to police recorded crime**

Distribution of victims of sexual offences by age and sex, police recorded crime (38 forces), year ending March 2025

**Notes:**

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as accredited official statistics.
2. Police recorded crime data based on 38 forces that provided data through the Home Office Data Hub. Data have not been reconciled with forces.



## 6 . Disability

The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that a significantly higher percentage of people aged 16 years and over with a disability were victims of sexual assault in the last year than those without, for year ending March 2025 (3.1% compared with 1.6%, Figure 5).

**Figure 5: A higher percentage of people with a disability were victims of sexual assault than those without a disability**

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by disability, England and Wales, year ending March 2025

Figure 5: A higher percentage of people with a disability were victims of sexual assault than those without a disability

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by disability, England and Wales, year ending March 2025



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

Notes:

1. Data for year ending (YE) March 2025 are based on a half sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.
2. The definition of disability used is consistent with the core definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. A person is considered to have a disability if they have a long-standing illness, disability or impairment, which causes difficulty with day-to-day activities.

## 7 . Marital status

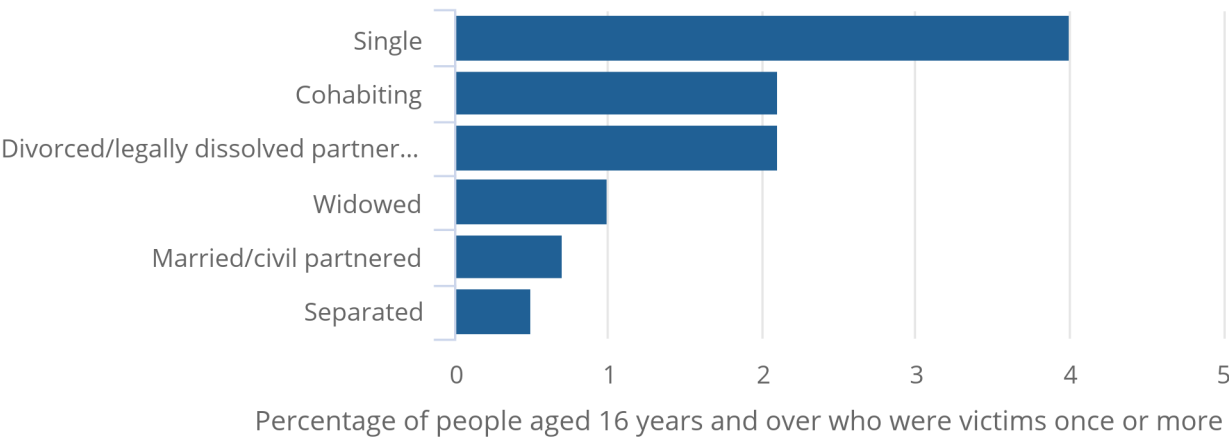
For year ending March 2025, the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 4.0% of people aged 16 years and over who were single experienced sexual assault; this was significantly higher than people with any other marital status (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: A higher percentage of single people were victims of sexual assault in the last year than those with any other marital status**

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by marital status, England and Wales, year ending March 2025

Figure 6: A higher percentage of single people were victims of sexual assault in the last year than those with any other marital status

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by marital status, England and Wales, year ending March 2025



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

Notes:

1. Data for year ending (YE) March 2025 are based on a half sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.
2. Marital status may have changed as a result of the abuse.

## 8 . Occupation

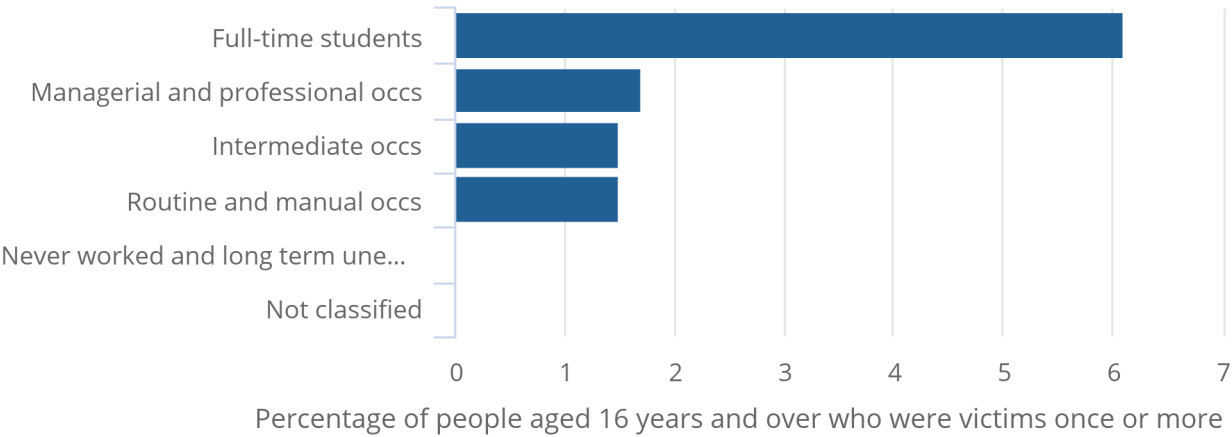
For year ending March 2025, the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that, of people aged 16 years and over, a higher proportion of full-time students were victims of sexual assault within the last year than those with any other occupation type (Figure 7). It is likely that some of the differences seen by occupation type are also linked to age.

**Figure 7: A higher percentage of students than those in any other occupational group were victims of sexual assault in the last year**

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by occupational group, England and Wales, year ending March 2025

Figure 7: A higher percentage of students than those in any other occupational group were victims of sexual assault in the last year

Prevalence of sexual assault in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by occupational group, England and Wales, year ending March 2025



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

Notes:

1. Data for year ending year ending (YE) March 2025 are based on a half sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.
2. The estimates for “Never worked and long-term unemployed” and “Not classified” are unavailable because of disclosure constraints.

# 9 . Area

Although the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed no significant differences by region, police recorded crime data by region showed that the highest rates of sexual offences in year ending March 2025 were recorded in the North East, and Yorkshire and The Humber regions (3.9 per 1,000 population) (Figure 8). The lowest rates were recorded in London and the East of England regions (3.0 per 1,000 population).

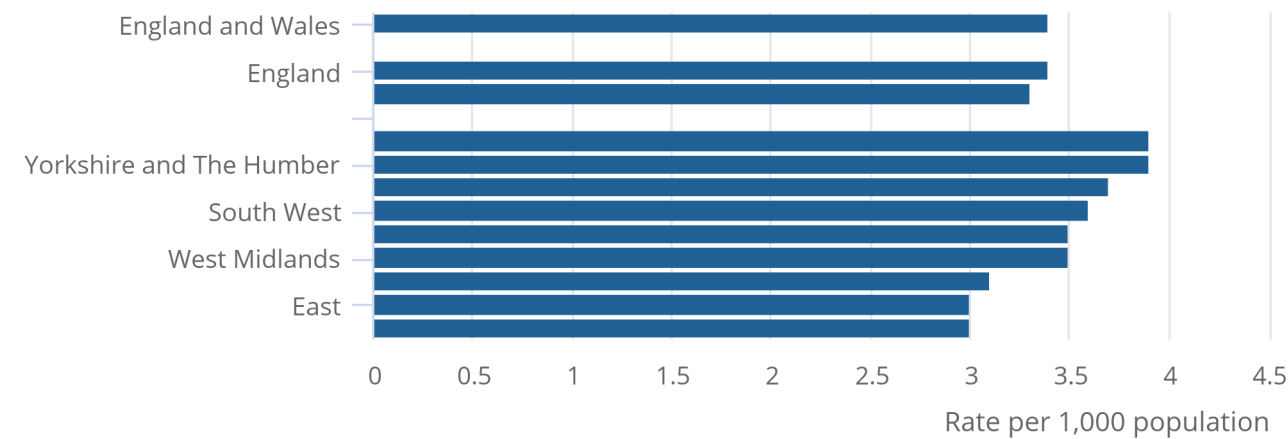
Sexual offences recorded by the police do not provide a reliable measure of trends, however, do provide a good measure of the crime-related demand on the police. Although the data may reflect regional differences in the rates of sexual offences, they could also reflect regional differences in the reporting of sexual offences to the police and police recording practices.

**Figure 8: The North East, and Yorkshire and The Humber regions had the highest rates of sexual offences recorded by the police**

Rate of sexual offences recorded by the police, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2025

Figure 8: The North East, and Yorkshire and The Humber regions had the highest rates of sexual offences recorded by the police

Rate of sexual offences recorded by the police, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2025



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

- 1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as accredited official statistics.
- 2. Based on mid-2023 ONS population estimates for England and Wales.

## 10 . Relationship to perpetrator

Case-level data supplied by 24 police forces for year ending March 2025 showed that the victim-perpetrator relationship for female rape victims was most likely an intimate partner (48%), but an acquaintance for other sexual offences (32%). In comparison, male victims of rape or other sexual offences were most likely to be acquaintances (33% for rape and 35% for other sexual offences) or “other family relative” of the perpetrator (32% for rape and 26% for other sexual offences).

The proportions were lower for victims of rape or other sexual offences where the victim-perpetrator relationship was a stranger. For rape offences, this was 13% of male victims and 9% of female victims, and for other sexual offences, the proportion was 14% for both male and female victims.

For more information on victim-perpetrator relationship for rape or sexual assault by penetration (including attempts) see our [Nature of sexual assault by rape or penetration article](#).

## 11 . Data on sexual offences in England and Wales

[Sexual offences prevalence and victim characteristics](#)

Dataset | Released 4 November 2025

Numbers, prevalence, types and victim characteristics, based on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime.

## 12 . Glossary

### Sexual assault

In the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), the term “sexual assault” is used to describe all types of sexual offences measured by the survey. It includes rape or assault by penetration (including attempts), and indecent exposure or unwanted sexual touching.

In police recorded crime figures, the term “sexual assault” refers to one type of sexual offence, that is, the sexual touching of a person without their consent.

### Sexual offence

In police recorded crime figures, “sexual offences” cover a broader range of offences than are measured by the CSEW, including:

- rape
- sexual assault
- sexual activity with minors
- sexual exploitation of children
- other sexual offences

There are a number of different offence codes used for rape and sexual assault, depending on the age and sex of the victim.

## 13 . Data sources and quality

Further quality and methodology information can be found in our [Sexual offences in England and Wales overview](#).

### Crime Survey for England and Wales

Sexual assault, as measured in the self-completion section of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), combines the following different types of abuse:

- rape (including attempts)
- assault by penetration (including attempts)
- indecent exposure
- unwanted sexual touching

The CSEW collects information on whether respondents have experienced these types of assault. If they have, they are then asked if the assault was carried out by:

- a partner (including a former partner)
- a family member other than a partner

The CSEW term “sexual assault” differs from the term “sexual assault” used in police recorded crime data.

CSEW data for year ending (YE) March 2024 and YE March 2025 are based on a half sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.

More information about the CSEW can be found in our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#).

### How the police measure sexual assault

The Home Office collects data on the number of sexual offences recorded by the police. These data have a wider coverage than the CSEW, for example including residents of institutions. Police recorded data on sexual offences are grouped into four main categories:

- rape
- sexual assault
- sexual activity with minors
- other sexual offences

Some data tables provided by the Home Office combine the last three categories to create an “Other sexual offences” category. This category covers a broader range of offences than the CSEW, for example, sexual exploitation of children, incest and sexual grooming.

The CSEW uses the term “sexual assault” to describe all types of sexual offences measured by the survey, whereas police recorded crime refers to one specific type of sexual offence – the sexual touching of a person without their consent.

## 14 . Related links

[Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system](#)

Article | Released 13 December 2018

An overview of sexual offending in England and Wales, using a range of National Statistics and official statistics from across the crime and criminal justice system.

[Developing a combined measure of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking, England and Wales: July 2025](#)

Article | Released 24 July 2025

Method for producing a combined measure of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking from the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2024](#)

Bulletin | Released 27 November 2024

Figures on domestic abuse from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, police recorded crime and other organisations.

## 15 . Cite this statistical article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 4 November 2025, ONS website, article, [Sexual offences victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2025](#)