

Article

Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2025

Analysis of record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales, held within the Home Office Homicide Index.

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1 . Main points

- There were 522 victims of homicide recorded in year ending (YE) March 2025, 8% lower than the previous year (566 victims) and the lowest number recorded since YE March 2015 (504).
- The homicide rate was 8.6 homicides recorded per million population during YE March 2025, the lowest rate since 1977.
- The number of male victims (366) decreased by 10% (from 408), while the number of female victims (155) remained similar to the previous year (158).
- There were 34 homicides where the victim was a teenager (aged 13 to 19 years), this was 32 fewer than the previous year (66) and the lowest recorded since YE March 2013 (31); this decrease reflected a decline in sharp instrument homicides, from 54 to 22 offences in this age group.
- The homicide rate for those in the Black ethnic group was 36.8 victims per million population over the three-year period to YE March 2025, over four times higher than for the White ethnic group (7.7 victims per million population).
- The number of knife or sharp instrument homicides has decreased by a fifth (21%) from 261 to 205 victims in YE March 2025 compared with the previous year; this was the lowest number recorded since YE March 2015 when 186 offences were recorded.
- There were 111 domestic homicides in YE March 2025, slightly lower than the previous year (117) and of these victims, 75 were women and 36 were men; 67 were killed by a partner or ex-partner.

2 . Trends in homicide

As homicide is a relatively low-volume offence, there tend to be fluctuations in numbers from year to year. This is especially true where data have been broken down further for analyses of sub-groups of the population. Figures should therefore be interpreted with caution.

There were 522 victims of homicide in year ending (YE) March 2025, 44 fewer (an 8% decrease) than the previous year (566 victims; [Appendix table 1](#)).

This was the lowest number of homicides since YE March 2015 when 504 were recorded.

The number of homicides decreased in most regions across England and in Wales, but there were increases in the East of England (from 40 to 56) and the South East (from 50 to 63) regions. Numbers can fluctuate from year-to-year at the regional level.

Longer-term trends in homicide

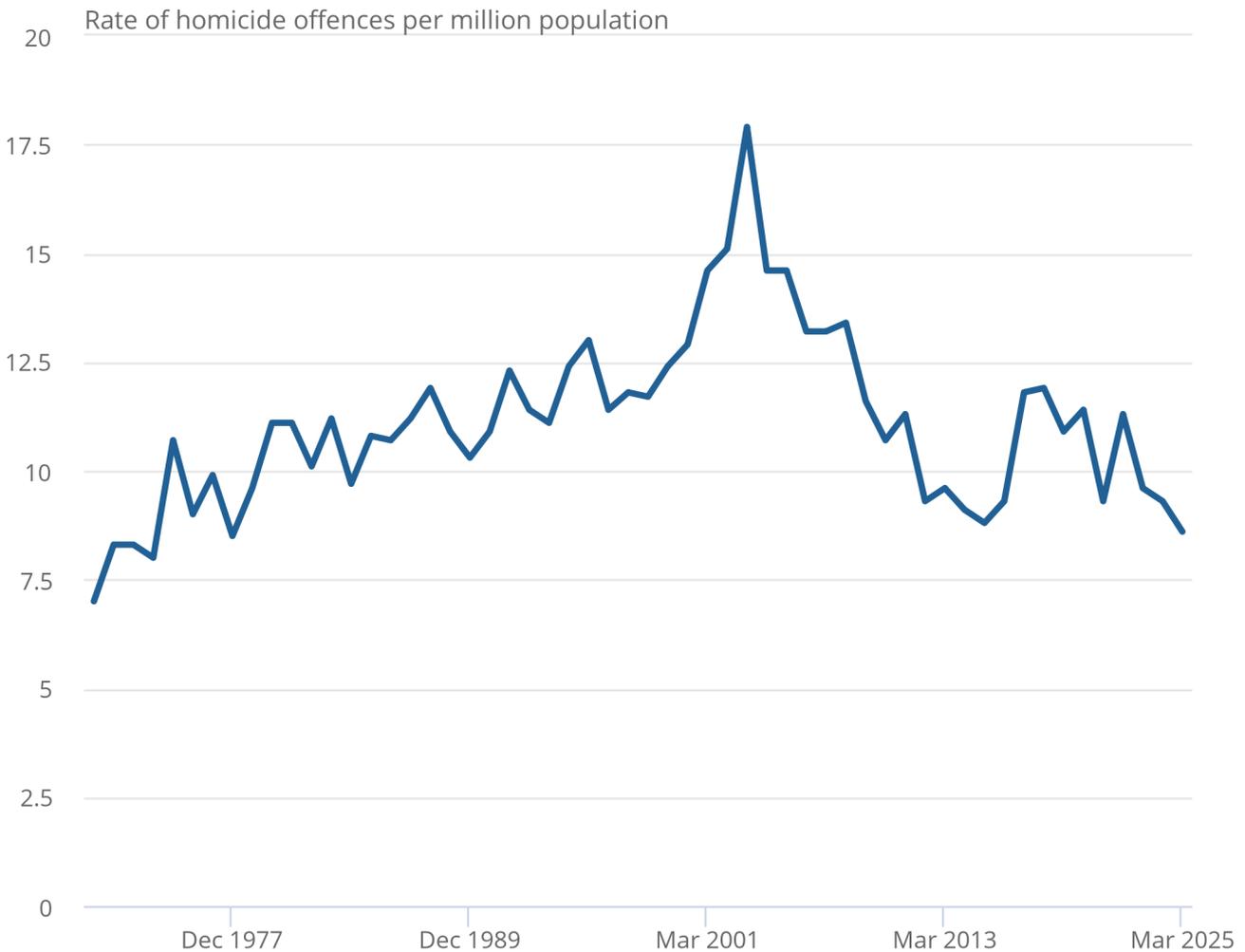
Compared with most other crimes, the homicide rate remains very low, with 8.6 homicides recorded per million population during YE March 2025, the lowest rate since 1977 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The homicide rate was the lowest it has been since 1977

Homicide rate, England and Wales, year ending (YE) December 1970 to YE March 2025

Figure 1: The homicide rate was the lowest it has been since 1977

Homicide rate, England and Wales, year ending (YE) December 1970 to YE March 2025



Source: Homicide Index from the Home Office

Notes:

1. YE December 1987 includes 15 victims of Michael Ryan.
2. YE ending March 2001 includes 58 Chinese nationals who suffocated in a lorry on the way into the UK.
3. YE ending March 2003 includes 173 victims of Doctor Harold Shipman.
4. YE ending March 2004 includes 20 cockle pickers who drowned in Morecambe Bay.
5. YE ending March 2006 includes 52 victims of the 7 July London bombings.
6. YE ending March 2011 includes 12 victims of Derrick Bird shooting.
7. YE ending March 2017 includes 96 victims of Hillsborough and four victims of the Westminster Bridge attack.
8. YE ending March 2018 includes 31 victims of the terrorist attacks that involved multiple victims, including the Manchester Arena bombing, and the London Bridge attack. It also includes 11 victims from the Shoreham air crash.
9. YE ending March 2020 includes 39 human trafficking victims who were found dead in a lorry in Essex.
10. Homicide Index data are based on the year when the offence was recorded as a crime, not when the offence took place or when the case was heard in court.

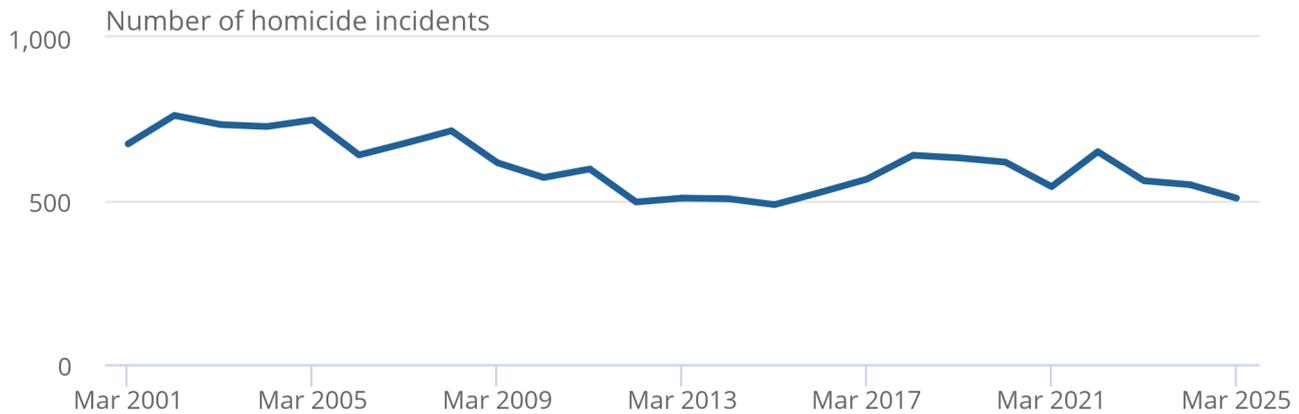
Homicide trends can be affected by single incidents involving multiple victims. In YE March 2025, there were 508 separate homicide incidents, 41 fewer than the previous year (549 homicide incidents) ([Appendix table 2](#)). This was the lowest number of incidents since 488 in YE March 2015. Figure 2 shows the number of separate homicide incidents, rather than number of victims, as an alternative picture on trends.

Figure 2: The number of homicide incidents has fallen compared with the previous year

Number of homicide incidents, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2001 to YE March 2025

Figure 2: The number of homicide incidents has fallen compared with the previous year

Number of homicide incidents, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2001 to YE March 2025



Source: Homicide Index from the Home Office

The number of incidents recorded in YE March 2025 was not [statistically significantly](#) different than the previous year, although it was significantly lower than YE March 2022.

Further information on the methodology used to test statistical significance can be found in [Section 12: Data sources and quality](#).

3 . Variations in homicide victimisation by personal characteristics

Demographic factors discussed in this section are not necessarily independently related to homicide. Although sex, age and ethnicity are important features in homicide, there are likely to be many other important factors. For example, socioeconomic indicators at the individual and neighbourhood level have also been shown to be related to the risk of being a victim using data from the Homicide Index. See the [College of Policing report: Patterns and trends in homicide in England and Wales and their implications for policing](#).

Sex

As in previous years, the majority of homicide victims in year ending (YE) March 2025 were male, making up 7 in 10 of all victims (70%) with 3 in 10 being female (30%). However, there continued to be important distinctions between the sexes in their risk of being victims of different types of homicide.

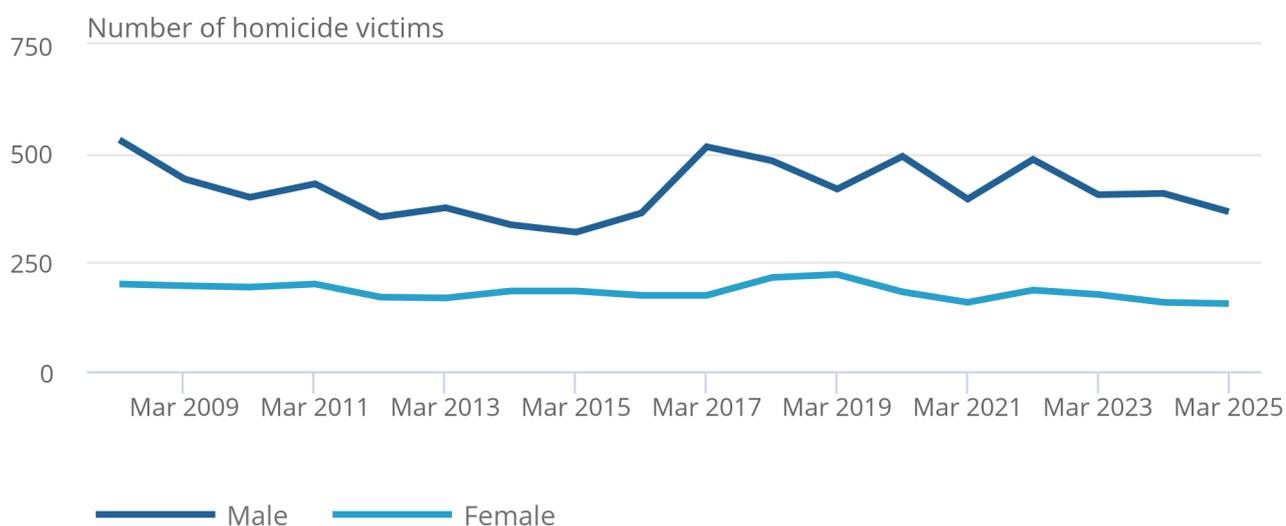
There were 366 male victims in YE March 2025, a decrease of 10% (from 408), the lowest number of male victims since YE March 2016 (363). The number of female victims (155) remained similar to the previous year (158) (Figure 3) and was the lowest annual total since electronic records began in 1977.

Figure 3: The number of male homicide victims has decreased in the latest year, while the number of female victims was similar to last year

Number of homicide victims, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2008 to YE March 2025

Figure 3: The number of male homicide victims has decreased in the latest year, while the number of female victims was similar to last year

Number of homicide victims, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2008 to YE March 2025



Source: Homicide Index from the Home Office

Notes:

1. YE March 2017 includes 89 male and seven female victims of the Hillsborough disaster.
2. YE March 2017 includes one female and three male victims of the Westminster Bridge attack.
3. YE March 2018 includes 21 female and 10 male victims of terrorist attacks that involved multiple victims, and 11 male victims of the Shoreham air crash.
4. YE March 2020 includes 30 male and nine female victims whose bodies were found in a lorry in Essex.
5. The number of male and female victims will not add up to the total number of homicide victims for YE March 2025 as one victim was recorded as being of unknown sex.

For both male and female victims, where a suspect had been charged, most suspects were male. This was the case for 90% (104) of female victims and 91% (230) of male victims ([Appendix table 34](#)).

The latest annual homicide rate for male victims (12.3 per million population) was over twice that for female victims (5.0 per million population) ([Appendix table 4](#)).

Age

The most common age-group for victims of homicides recorded in YE March 2025 was those aged 35 to 44 years (90 victims) (Figure 4).

As in previous years, while volumes were relatively small, children aged under 1 year had the highest rate of homicide for a single year of age (31.6 per million population, 19 victims) ([Appendix table 4](#)).

The largest decrease was among those aged 16 to 24 years, who saw a 41% decrease from 106 to 63 offences. The largest increase was seen for victims aged 75 years and older, which more than doubled (from 27 to 57 victims). Trends by age group can fluctuate because of low numbers.

Figure 4: Levels of homicide were lower compared with the previous year for most age-groups

Number of homicide victims, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2015 to YE March 2025

Notes:

1. YE March 2017 includes 96 victims of Hillsborough and four victims of the Westminster Bridge attack.
2. YE March 2018 includes 31 victims of the terrorist attacks that involved multiple victims, including the Manchester Arena bombing, and the London Bridge attack. It also includes 11 victims from the Shoreham air crash.
3. YE March 2020 includes 39 human trafficking victims who were found dead in a lorry in Essex.

Teenage homicides

There were 34 homicides in YE March 2025 where the victim was a teenager (aged 13 to 19 years), almost half the number (66) recorded the previous year and the lowest recorded since YE March 2013 (31). This decrease reflected a decline in sharp instrument homicides, from 54 to 22 offences.

In around two-thirds (65%) of these offences, the method of killing was with a knife or sharp instrument ([Appendix table 10](#)). This compared with 39% for all homicide victims. See [Section 5: The most common methods of killing](#) for more detail on sharp instrument (including knives) homicides.

Ethnicity

Seven out of ten (367 or 70%) homicide victims in YE March 2025 were from the White ethnic group (based on the ethnicity identified by the investigating officer). This compared with 82% of people identifying as being in the White ethnic group at the time of the last Census of Population in England and Wales in 2021. This was a similar number compared with the previous year (363).

There were 73 victims identified as being from the Black ethnic group in YE March 2025, accounting for 14% of all victims. This was almost four times higher than the 4% of people identifying as being in the Black ethnic group in Census 2021. The number of Black victims fell by 25% (a fall of 24 victims) compared with YE March 2024; this is the lowest number of Black victims since YE March 2016. The largest fall within this group was among male victims aged 16 to 24 years (down from 33 to 21).

There were 39 victims in the Asian ethnic group (7% of all victims). This was a similar proportion to the 9% of people identifying as being in the Asian ethnic group in Census 2021. The number of Asian victims was 11 fewer than the previous year (50) ([Appendix table 6](#)).

There were clear differences in the age-profile of victims between different ethnic groups. For YE March 2025, over a quarter of Black victims (29%) were aged 16 to 24 years, whereas this was a much lower proportion for White victims (7%) (Figure 5; [Appendix table 5](#)). This will partly reflect the different age distributions of ethnic groups in the population. For further information see our [Ethnic group by age and sex, England and Wales: Census 2021 article](#).

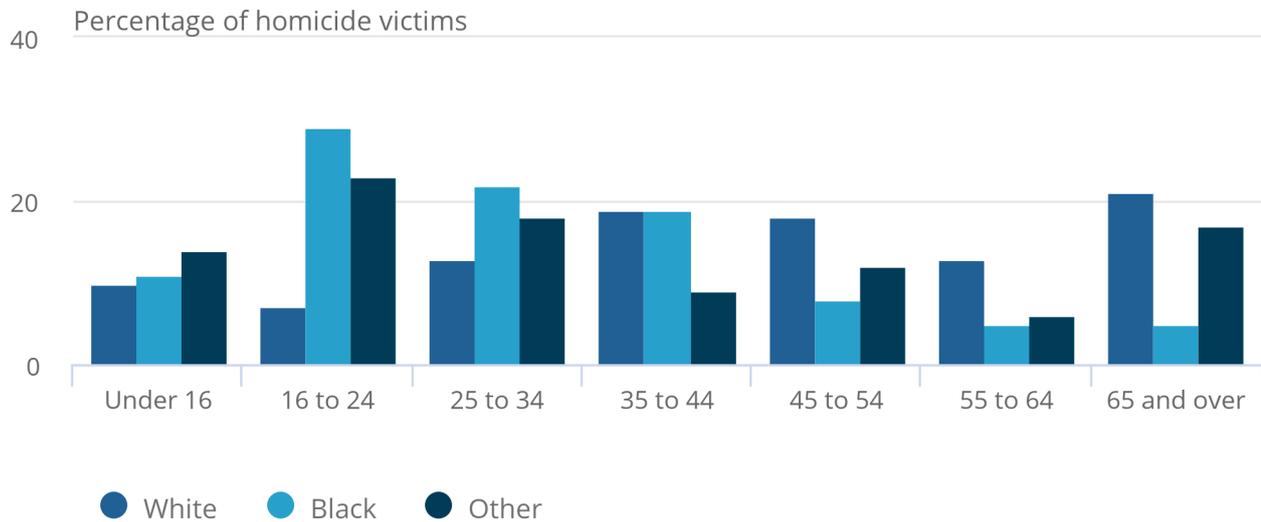
Accounting for different population sizes, those from the Black ethnic group had the highest rates of victimisation ([Appendix table 7](#)). In the three years to YE March 2025, average rates per million population were over four times higher for Black people (36.8 per million population) than those from the White ethnic group (7.7), and over three times higher than for Asians (10.6).

Figure 5: Over a quarter of Black homicide victims were aged between 16 and 24 years

Percentage of homicide victims, by age and ethnicity, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2025

Figure 5: Over a quarter of Black homicide victims were aged between 16 and 24 years

Percentage of homicide victims, by age and ethnicity, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2025



Source: Homicide Index from the Home Office

Notes:

1. Officer-identified classification.
2. From 1 April 2021, ethnicity categories were changed on the Homicide Index to be consistent with Office for National Statistics (ONS) census groupings. To enable a time series, "Other" has been grouped to include Asian (Indian subcontinent), Asian, Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups and any other ethnic group. Previous ethnicity data can be found in our [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2021 article](#).

4 . The relationship between victims and suspects

As in previous years, there were important differences between adult and child victims in their relationship with suspects. Among adult victims, there were also different patterns in the relationships with suspects between men and women.

Adult victims

Adult female victims (defined as those aged 16 years and over) were most commonly killed by a partner or ex-partner (40%) or a family member (16%) in year ending (YE) March 2025. For adult males, the suspected killer was more commonly a friend or acquaintance (20%) or a stranger (18%) (Figure 6).

In 29% of adult male homicides and 23% of adult female homicides, no suspect had been charged at the time of analysis (this includes homicide offences where all suspects have been acquitted). These numbers will fall as police investigations continue ([Appendix table 15](#)).

There were 111 domestic homicides in YE March 2025, slightly lower compared with YE March 2024 (117) and similar to YE March 2023 (110). Over two-thirds of victims of domestic homicide were women (68%) and almost a third were men (32%).

Of the 111 domestic homicides, 67 victims were killed by a partner or ex-partner (down from 71), 24 by a parent, or son or daughter (down from 27) and 20 by another family member, a similar number to last year (19).

Of all adult female victims, over half (56%) were a result of domestic homicides (75). Of these 75 female victims, all but four were killed by a male suspect ([Appendix table 34](#)).

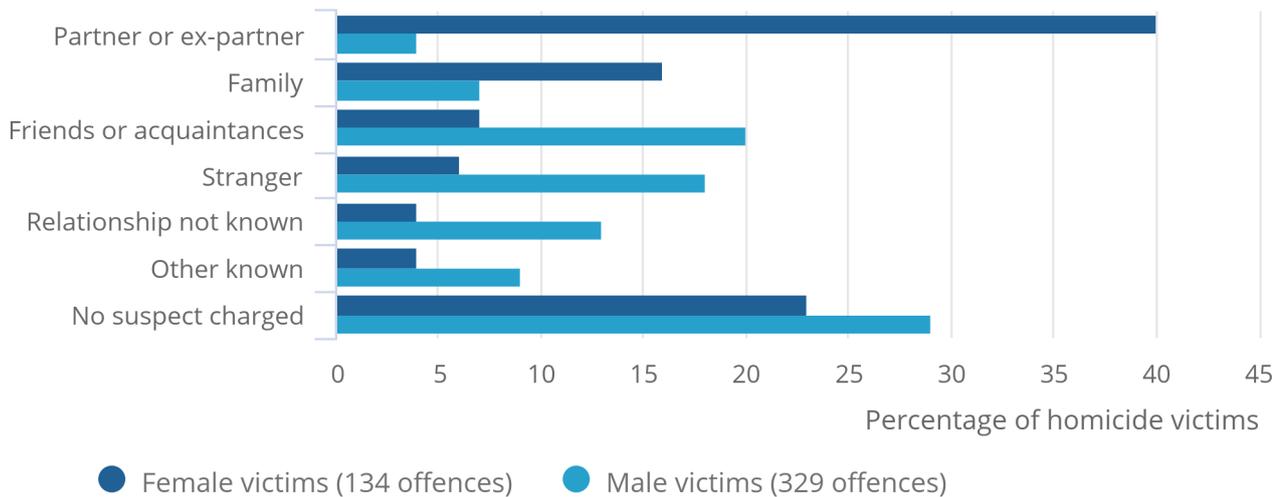
In contrast, males were much less likely to be the victim of a domestic homicide, with 11% (36) of male homicides being domestic-related in YE March 2025.

Figure 6: The most common suspect for female homicide victims aged 16 years and over was a partner or ex-partner or ex-partner

Relationship of homicide victims aged 16 years and over to principal suspect, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2025

Figure 6: The most common suspect for female homicide victims aged 16 years and over was a partner or ex-partner

Relationship of homicide victims aged 16 years and over to principal suspect, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2025



Source: Homicide Index from the Home Office

Notes:

1. Partner or ex-partner includes boyfriend or girlfriend, common-law spouse or cohabiting partner, ex-spouse, ex-common-law spouse or ex-cohabiting partner, ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend, spouse (including civil partner), adulterous relationship.
2. Other known includes business associate, casual sexual partner criminal associate, emotional rival, prostitute or client, carer, health worker or patient, customer or client.
3. No suspect charged includes homicide offences where all suspects have been acquitted at court.
4. For the purposes of the Homicide Index, a suspect in a homicide case is defined as either: a person who has been charged with a homicide offence, including those who were subsequently convicted and those awaiting trial or a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or died by suicide.

Child victims

There were 59 victims of homicide aged under 16 years in YE March 2025; 37 boys, 21 girls and one child recorded as being of unknown sex. This was the highest number recorded since YE March 2019 (when there were 64).

As of 5 December 2025, there were 24 victims aged under 16 years (41%) for whom no suspect had been charged (this includes homicide offences where all suspects have been acquitted). This number will fall as police investigations continue. For example, for YE March 2024, 43% of victims aged under 16 years had no suspect charged as of 6 December 2024; this had fallen to 28% by 5 December 2025 and the proportion where the suspect was a parent or step-parent had increased from 43% to 55%.

As in previous years, the most common suspect for child victims, where recorded, was a parent or step-parent (24%, 14 offences).

It remained relatively uncommon for those aged under 16 years to be killed by a stranger, with eight such offences in YE March 2025.

Further information on suspect characteristics is provided in [Section 8: Suspects in homicide cases](#).

5 . The most common methods of killing

Sharp instrument (including knives)

As in previous years, the most common method of killing, for both male and female victims, was by a sharp instrument (including knives; 39%) (Figure 7). Excluding the victims of Hillsborough, over the last decade the proportion of homicide offences committed by a sharp instrument has fluctuated between 37% and 46% each year.

There were 205 homicides committed using a knife or other sharp instrument recorded in year ending (YE) March 2025, a 21% decrease compared with the previous year (261). This was the lowest number since YE March 2015 when 186 such offences were recorded ([Appendix table 8](#)).

The decrease in sharp instrument homicides was because of a fall in male victims (from 206 to 150 offences). The number of female victims was the same as the previous year (55 offences).

The number of White homicide victims killed by a sharp instrument (132) was similar to the previous year (133), whereas the number of Black victims decreased from 66 to 45 victims, the lowest number since YE March 2016 (41). Of these 45 Black homicide victims, around half (23) were aged under 25 years ([Appendix table 12](#)).

The most commonly used sharp instrument was a kitchen knife (95 homicides) in YE March 2025, down 11% on the previous year (107). Information on other types of sharp instrument can be found in [Appendix table 9](#).

Other methods of killing

The second most common method of killing was by "kicking or hitting", accounting for 111 homicides (21% of the total). As in previous years, the majority (85%) of victims killed in this way were male.

One in six (17%) female victims were killed by "strangulation, asphyxiation" (26 victims). In contrast, a much smaller proportion of male victims (4%; 14) were killed this way. These figures reflect the different nature and circumstances of homicides by sex of victim.

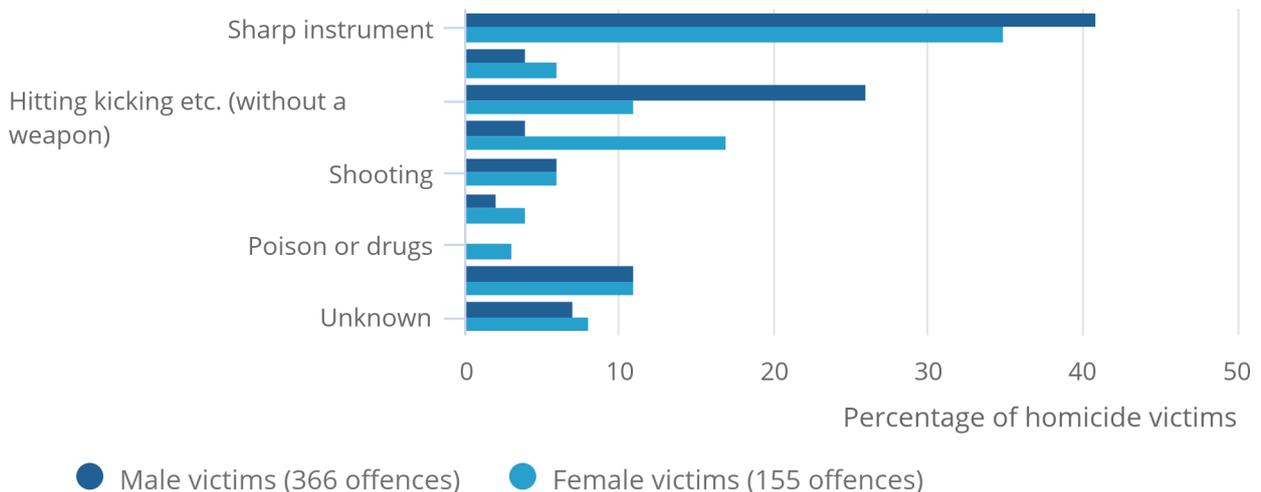
There were 32 homicide victims killed by shooting in YE March 2025 (6% of all homicides), 10 more than the previous year.

Figure 7: Use of a sharp instrument was the most common method of killing in homicide offences

Percentage of recorded homicides, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2025

Figure 7: Use of a sharp instrument was the most common method of killing in homicide offences

Percentage of recorded homicides, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2025



Source: Homicide Index from the Home Office

Notes:

- "Other" includes explosion, motor vehicle, drowning and other methods of killing.

6 . Circumstances and location of homicides

Circumstances of homicide

Around half (51%, 266 offences) of all homicide cases were thought to have resulted from a quarrel, a revenge attack or a loss of temper in year ending (YE) March 2025. This was a similar proportion compared with previous years. This proportion was higher where the principal suspect was known to the victim (59%), compared with when the suspect was unknown (44%) ([Appendix table 18](#)).

Furtherance of theft or gain accounted for 5% of homicides (27 offences) and 4% (22 offences) occurred during irrational acts.

As of 5 December 2025, the apparent circumstances were not known for 17% of homicides (89 offences) recorded in YE March 2025. This proportion was similar to the previous year and is likely to decrease as the police complete investigations.

Location of homicides

Homicides were most likely to have taken place in a residential setting (Figure 8). There were 294 victims killed in these settings in YE March 2025, down from 300 the previous year and the lowest annual total since records on location of the homicide began.

The number of victims killed in a street, path or alleyway gradually increased between YE March 2015 and YE March 2024, but with considerable fluctuation between years. However, there was a 21% decrease in these offences in YE 2025, from 160 to 127 ([Appendix table 19](#)).

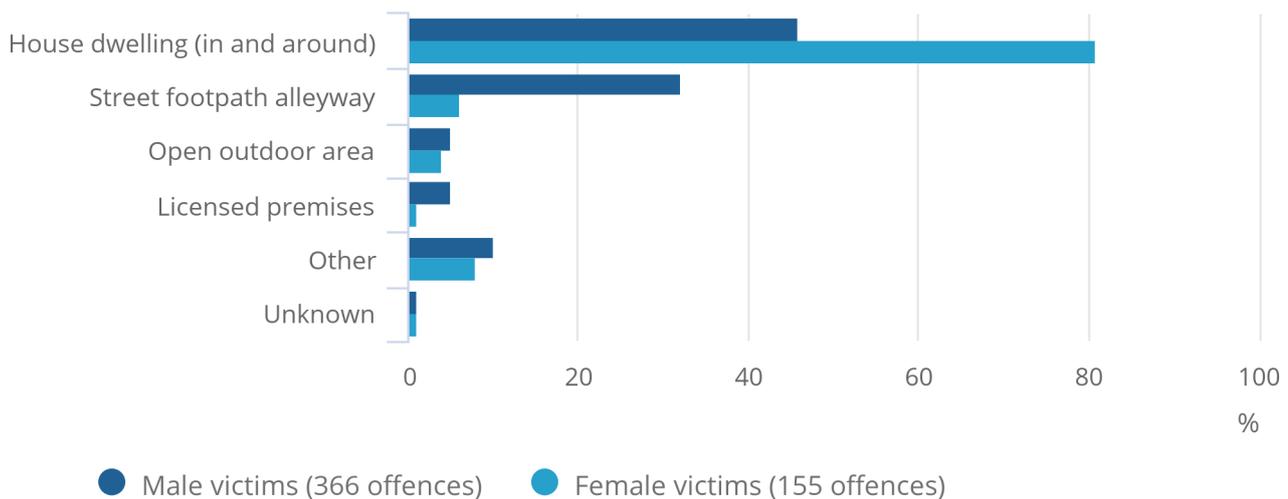
The patterns in homicide location for female and male victims reflect differing victim-suspect relationships and circumstances described earlier ([Appendix table 19](#)).

Figure 8: Female homicide victims were most likely to be killed in or around a house or dwelling, and male victims in public places

Percentage of recorded homicides, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2025

Figure 8: Female homicide victims were most likely to be killed in or around a house or dwelling, and male victims in public places

Percentage of recorded homicides, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2025



Source: Homicide Index from the Home Office

Notes:

1. "House, dwelling (in and around)" includes residential homes.
2. "Other" includes all other locations, including other public places.

7 . Drug- and alcohol-related homicides

In the three years to year ending (YE) March 2025, over a third (35%) of homicide victims were thought to be under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit drugs at the time of the homicide.

The proportion under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit drugs was higher among male (41%) than female victims (22%), similar to previous years.

The figures for suspects were similar to those for victims. Around a third (34%) of homicide suspects were recorded by the police to have been under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs at the time of the homicide ([Appendix table 20](#)).

Around 3 in 10 (31%) victims were known to be drug users, and 15% to be drug dealers. These proportions were higher among suspects, with half (51%) known to be drug users and over a quarter (29%) to be drug dealers. In a small proportion of cases, the police identified the suspect's motive as "obtaining drugs" (7%) or "stealing drug proceeds" (5%) ([Appendix table 21](#)).

The proportion of homicides that have involved drug users or dealers, or have been related to drugs in any way, increased over the last decade, from 42% in YE March 2015 to 57% in YE March 2024. However, in the latest year, the volume of such homicides has decreased by 18%, from 325 to 268. The proportion also fell, down to 51%, the lowest figure since YE March 2020 (50%) ([Appendix table 22](#)).

An alternative way of categorising homicides that involved illicit drugs into three groups: systemic, economic compulsive, and/or psychopharmacological can be found in [Appendix table 23](#) (See [Section 11: Glossary for definitions](#)). In YE March 2025, 136 (26% of total homicides) met the criteria for one or more of these categories. Of these:

- 76 homicides (15% of total homicides) were systemic homicides
- 26 homicides (5% of total homicides) were economic compulsive homicides
- 74 homicides (14% of total homicides) were psychopharmacological homicides

These categorisations are based on the Goldstein tripartite framework. See our [Measuring drug-related homicide methodology: February 2024](#) for more information.

8 . Suspects in homicide cases

Homicide cases are often complex and can take considerable time to reach an outcome in court.

Last year's article reported that in year ending (YE) March 2024, 23% of homicide cases had no suspects charged as of 6 December 2024 when data were extracted from the Homicide Index for analysis. This has since fallen to 17% (as of 5 December 2025) as police have had more time to conclude investigations. This number will fall further in future years.

Table 1: Number of suspects for initially recorded homicide victims, year ending (YE) March 2023 to YE March 2025

	Numbers and percentages as at 5 December 2025					
	Apr 2022 to Mar 2023	Apr 2023 to Mar 2024	Apr 2024 to Mar 2025	Apr 2022 to Mar 2023	Apr 2023 to Mar 2024	Apr 2024 to Mar 2025
	Number			Percentage		
No suspects charged	96	96	134	16	17	26
One suspect	338	337	294	58	59	56
Two suspects	50	61	37	9	11	7
Three or more suspects	70	58	41	12	10	8
Suspects acquitted [note 1]	29	19	18	5	3	3
All initially recorded homicides	583	571	524			

Source: Homicide Index from the Home Office

Notes

1. Figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts or as further information becomes available.

Investigative and court outcomes

In total, there were 527 suspects charged as at 5 December 2025 relating to the 524 homicides initially recorded in YE March 2025 ([Appendix table 27](#)).

Court proceedings had concluded for 315 suspects (60% of all suspects) and 12 had died (2% of all suspects). Court proceedings were pending for 199 suspects (38% of all suspects).

In the three years to YE March 2025, 81% of suspects indicted for homicide, where we have information on a court outcome, were found guilty of homicide, 14% were acquitted and 3% were convicted of a lesser offence ([Appendix table 28](#)).

The case outcomes for suspects of homicides recorded in YE March 2025 ([Appendix table 28](#)) will change as cases progress through the criminal justice system and more information becomes available.

Age, sex and ethnicity of convicted suspects

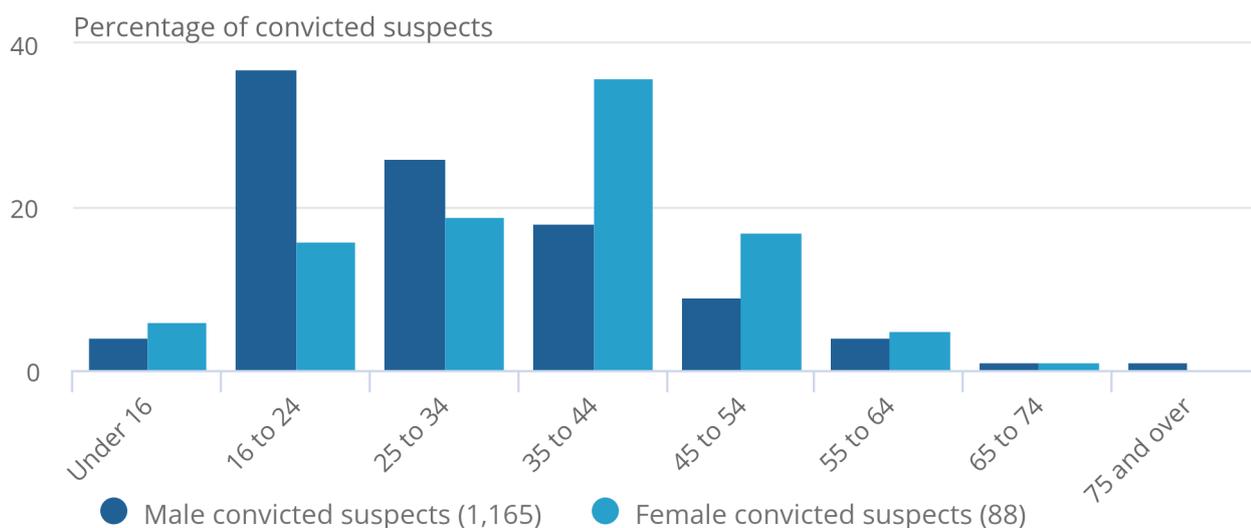
For the three years to YE March 2025, most suspects convicted of homicide were male (1,165 or 93%). Figure 9 shows the age-profile of those convicted of homicide.

Figure 9: Male suspects convicted of homicide show a younger age profile than female suspects

Percentage of convicted suspects, England and Wales, three years combined: year ending (YE) March 2023 to YE March 2025

Figure 9: Male suspects convicted of homicide show a younger age profile than female suspects

Percentage of convicted suspects, England and Wales, three years combined: year ending (YE) March 2023 to YE March 2025



Source: Homicide Index from the Home Office

For the three years to YE March 2025, when looking at the principal suspect of a homicide offence, around 6 in 10 (61%) of those convicted were identified as White. This was a lower representation than in the general population (around 82%), based on Census 2021 population figures.

Around a quarter (24%) of suspects were identified as Black, six times higher than their representation in the general population (4%). Around 1 in 12 (8%) suspects were identified as Asian, a similar proportion to that seen in the general population ([Appendix table 33](#)). Differences in these figures are likely to be related to the ethnicity of the population differing by age, region and socioeconomic factors, which have not been taken into account.

9 . International homicide comparisons

There are issues surrounding the comparability of international homicide data, therefore caution should be taken in comparing homicide rates across countries (see [Section 12: Data sources and quality](#)).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) published an updated [Global study on homicide 2023](#), which showed that the global homicide rate was 58 per million population in 2021. The Americas and Africa, at 150 and 127 per million population, respectively, were the regions with the highest average homicide rates in 2021. In this context, England and Wales had a relatively low rate of homicide (8.6 per million population) in year ending (YE) March 2025.

Latest published [homicide data from UNODC](#) show that the United States had a homicide rate of 58 per million population in 2023.

Latest [homicide figures from Eurostat](#) show that the homicide rates in 2023 for the EU and European Economic Area (EEA) ranged from 0.0 per million population in Liechtenstein to 42.0 per million population in Latvia.

Compared with countries in the EU, the UK nations had middling homicide rates. The [Scottish Government annual homicide figures](#) showed that the rate of homicides in Scotland was 8.1 per million population in YE March 2025, lower than the previous year (10.4). They recorded 45 victims, which was the lowest since comparable records began in 1976. The [Police Service of Northern Ireland homicide figures](#) show there were 16 homicides recorded by the police in Northern Ireland in YE March 2025, an increase of 3 compared with the previous year and a rate of 8.3 per million population.

10 . Data on homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2025

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

Dataset | Released 5 February 2026

Findings from the analyses based on the Homicide Index recorded by the Home Office, including long-term trends, sex of the victim, apparent method of killing and relationship to victim.

11 . Glossary

Domestic homicide

Homicides are recorded to be "domestic" when the relationship between a victim aged 16 years and over and the perpetrator falls into one of the following categories:

- spouse
- common-law spouse
- cohabiting partner
- boyfriend or girlfriend
- ex-spouse
- ex-cohabiting partner or ex-boyfriend or girlfriend
- adulterous relationship
- son or daughter (including step and adopted relationships)
- parent (including step and adopted relationships)
- brother or sister
- other relatives

Drug-related homicide

Information on drug and alcohol use is recorded by the police from toxicology reports, and suspect and witness statements. Drug-related homicides can be categorised as:

- systemic homicides are those arising from the fact that prohibition of drugs creates an illegal market, in which grievances cannot be reconciled through normal judicial channels so they may be settled through violence
- economic compulsive homicides arise if illicit drug users have to steal to fund their drug use; as a result, it is possible that a homicide may occur in the act of robbery or burglary
- psychopharmacological homicides occur as a result of the psychological effects that drugs have on those who take them such as increased aggression or disinhibition

Homicide incident

A homicide incident can involve one or more victims but is only counted as one incident, while Homicide Index statistics are based on the number of victims. Therefore, homicide incident trend data are not affected by mass fatality homicides such as terrorist attacks.

Homicide offences

A collective term referring to the offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide. Murder and manslaughter are common law offences that have never been defined by statute, although they have been modified by statute. The manslaughter category includes the offence of corporate manslaughter, which was created by the [Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007](#) and came into force on 6 April 2008.

The offence of infanticide was created by the [Infanticide Act 1922](#) and refined by the [Infanticide Act 1938](#) (Section 1). Infanticide is defined as the killing of a baby aged under 1 year by their mother while the balance of her mind was disturbed as a result of giving birth.

Homicide suspect

For the purposes of the Homicide Index, a suspect in a homicide case is defined as either: a person who has been charged with a homicide offence, including those who were subsequently convicted and those awaiting trial, or a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died, including by suicide.

Where there are multiple suspects, they are categorised in the Homicide Index as either the principal or a secondary suspect. The suspect with the longest sentence or most serious conviction is determined to be the principal suspect. In the absence of any court outcome, the principal suspect is either the person considered by the police to be the most involved in the homicide or the suspect with the closest relationship to the victim.

12 . Data sources and quality

Data presented have been extracted from the Home Office Homicide Index, which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. Statistics based on the Home Office Homicide Index are accredited official statistics and were [independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation](#) in 2016. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and should be labelled [accredited official statistics](#).

The Home Office Homicide Index contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. These figures provide much more detail about the nature and circumstances of homicide offences than the main police recorded crime dataset. However, the level of detail in the Homicide Index means that these data take longer to collect and analyse. Headline figures, covering a more recent period, on the number of recorded homicides are published as part of our quarterly [Crime in England and Wales bulletin](#).

The Homicide Index is continually updated with revised information from the police as investigations continue and as cases are heard by the courts. The version used for analysis does not accept updates after it is "frozen" to ensure the data do not change during the analysis period. The data in this article refer to the position as at 5 December 2025.

Homicide Index data are based on the year when the offence was recorded as a crime, not when the offence took place or when the case was heard in court. While in the majority of cases the offence will be recorded in the same year as it took place, this is not always so. Caution is therefore needed when looking at longer-term homicide trends. For example, the 173 homicides attributed to Doctor Harold Shipman as a result of Dame Janet Smith's inquiry took place over a long period of time but were all recorded by the police during year ending (YE) March 2003.

Furthermore, where several people are killed by the same suspect, the number of homicides counted is the total number of victims killed rather than the number of incidents. For example, the 39 victims of human trafficking found in a lorry in Grays, Essex, in October 2019 are counted as 39 individual homicides.

When the police initially record an offence as a homicide, it remains classified as such unless the courts decide that a lesser offence, or no offence, took place. In all, 524 deaths were initially recorded as homicides by the police in YE March 2025. By 5 December 2025, two were no longer recorded as homicide.

Three-year averages are used to calculate homicide rates by ethnicity because of the low numbers of victims in some groups. Rates are based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 Census estimates. The Other ethnicities category reported in this article includes Asian and Mixed or multiple ethnicities, to enable population statistics to match the categories in the Homicide Index.

The Poisson distribution can be applied to the number of homicide incidents per year, with the number of these incidents being large enough to approximate the normal distribution. A statistical test (in this case a Z-test) can be used to determine if the counts in each year were [statistically significantly](#) different from one another at the 95% confidence level (that is, whether there has been a true change in the underlying risk). Further information on this methodology can be found in Section 11 of our [Focus on violent crime and sexual offences, England and Wales: year ending March 2016 article](#).

Home Office statisticians undertake regular data quality exercises with police forces on suspect information, cancelled crimes and court outcomes for historical data. Information on these areas published in the tables may therefore differ from recent years, with data now being more complete.

Homicide figures differ between countries and are not directly comparable for various reasons, including:

- different definitions of homicide between countries
- differing points in the criminal justice systems at which homicides are recorded, for instance, when the offence is discovered or following further investigation or court outcome

Figures for England and Wales are for completed homicides (that is excluding attempted murder) but, in some countries, the police register any death that cannot immediately be attributed to other causes as homicide.

Further information on the Homicide Index can be found in our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#).

13 . Related links

[Measuring drug-related homicide methodology: February 2024](#)

Methodology | Released 8 February 2024

Information on how Goldstein's tripartite framework has been applied to drug-related homicides using Home Office Homicide Index data.

[Guide to finding crime statistics](#)

Methodology | Released 28 July 2025

Crime statistics are produced by multiple departments across government. The aim of this guide is to collate the main sources of crime statistics, broken down by potential areas of interest, to provide a more efficient way to find the crime statistics needed.

[User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2025](#)

Methodology | Released 5 November 2025

Quarterly statistics on crime levels and trends in England and Wales, including detailed information on datasets used to compile our crime statistics.

[Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2025](#)

Bulletin | Released 29 January 2026

Crime against households and adults using data from police recorded crime and the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

14 . Cite this article

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