

Article

The nature of violent crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018

A summary of violent crime from the year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime.



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Release date:
7 February 2019

Next release:
To be announced

Correction

28 February 2019 13:15

A correction has been made to the percentage of CSEW violent incidents reported to the police. This was due to an error when implementing a methodological change. We have corrected this error. You can see all previous versions of this data on the previous versions page. We apologise for any inconvenience.

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1 . Main points

Trends in violent crime

Over the last two decades the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) has shown long-term reductions in estimates of violent crime. Victimization rates decreased from 4.7% of adults being a victim of violent crime in 1995 to 1.7% in the year ending March 2018. However, over the last four years levels of violent crime measured by the CSEW have remained fairly flat, indicating a change in the previous downward trend.

While the overall level of violent crime showed no change compared with the previous year, there is evidence of increases in some lower-volume, higher-harm violent offences recorded by the police.

The number of homicides recorded by the police showed a fourth consecutive annual rise in the year ending March 2018, following a long-term decline.

Police recorded crime and NHS data have also indicated rises in the number of offences involving knives or sharp instruments over the last four years. These offences tend to be concentrated in London and other metropolitan areas.

The nature of violent crime

Violent crime covers a broad range of offences and CSEW estimates indicate that over half (53%) of all violence measured by the survey resulted in no injury to the victim. In cases involving injury, most were assaults with minor injuries, such as scratches or bruises.

Younger adults were more likely to be victims of violent crimes than those in older age groups. This pattern was more pronounced for incidents where the perpetrator was a stranger or acquaintance compared with incidents of domestic violence.

Men were more likely to be victims of violent crime where the perpetrator was a stranger or acquaintance. However, women were more likely to be victims of domestic violence perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner, or other family member.

Over half (57%) of all violent incidents were experienced by repeat victims. This was most common among victims of domestic violence.

The CSEW showed that more than half of violent incidents in the last year (62%) did not come to the attention of the police.

About this release

This article focuses on newly released data on the nature of violent crime for the year ending March 2018. Contextual information on trends in violent crime is also presented. To ensure consistency with “nature of crime” data, these figures cover the period up to the year ending March 2018. It is important to note that these are not the latest figures on trends in violent crime. Figures covering later periods have been published in the [Crime in England and Wales](#) quarterly statistical bulletin.

2 . How is violent crime defined and measured?

Violent crime covers a wide range of offences from minor assaults (such as pushing and shoving), harassment and abuse (that result in no physical harm), through to wounding and homicide.

This article includes information on violent crime from two main sources:

- the year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)
- violent crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018 ¹

CSEW violent crime

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a face-to-face victimisation survey. People resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a selected range of offences in the 12 months prior to the interview. More information on the methodology can be found in the [Crime statistics Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

Violent crime statistics from the CSEW are presented under the overall category of “Violence”, which is then broken down into:

- violence with injury – consisting of wounding and assault with minor injury
- violence without injury – where the victim is punched, kicked, or pushed with no resulting injury

Additional breakdowns are also provided based on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (domestic, acquaintance, and stranger). Both actual and attempted assaults are included in CSEW figures.

This article presents estimates on violent crime from both the adult CSEW and an additional element of the survey that covers children aged 10 to 15 years. There are some important methodological differences between the adult and child survey in the way estimates of crime are derived. These differences mean that estimates are not comparable across these two elements of the survey. Minor incidents that are normal within the context of childhood behaviour and development can be categorised as criminal when existing legal definitions of offences are applied. See the [User guide](#) for more information.

The CSEW covers both crimes that are reported to the police and those that are not. Therefore, for the violent crimes it covers, the survey provides a reliable estimate of trends as a consistent methodology has been used to measure these crimes since the survey began in 1981.

However, not all violent crimes are covered by the CSEW. The survey does not cover homicide as it is based on the responses of victims. It also does not cover the population living in group residences (for example, halls of residence), and those not resident in households (for example, tourists). The CSEW is also not well-suited to measuring crimes that occur in relatively low volumes, for example, higher-harm violent crimes like gun and knife crime. Estimates of less frequently occurring crime types can be subject to substantial variability from one time period to another, making it difficult to interpret short-term trends.

Following a public consultation, in November 2016 we announced a [methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW](#). Data were first published implementing this change alongside the [Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2018](#) bulletin. The trends remain similar, however, the change has resulted in an increased estimated number of violent incidents across the entire time series. As the revised time series back to 1981 has now been published, these data are not comparable with data published in previous releases. For more information, see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).

All changes reported in this article, based on the CSEW, are statistically significant at the 5% level unless stated otherwise.

Police recorded violent crime

The other main source used in this bulletin is the number of violent crimes reported to and recorded by the police.

The coverage of police recorded violent crime is defined by the Notifiable Offence List². This includes a broad spectrum of offences, ranging from assault without injury and harassment, to offences such as homicide. There are some crimes that may involve some degree of violence but are not covered in this article, which focuses on victim-based offences. For example, public order offences recorded by the police may involve violence, but no specific victim is identified. See [Appendix Table A4, year ending September 2018](#) for police recorded figures on public order offences.

Police recorded crime figures are supplied to Office for National Statistics (ONS) (via the Home Office) by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police³. As with the CSEW, both actual and attempted assaults are included in the figures.

The police recorded crime series covers a broader set of offences and a wider population than the CSEW (for example, residents of institutions, tourists and crimes against commercial bodies). It is a better source of data for high-harm, but low-volume, violent crimes that are not well measured by a sample survey. However, police recorded crime statistics are affected by changes in recording practices and police activity, and cannot provide a full count of crime as not all crimes are reported to the police. Police recorded crime data have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Statistics and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics^{4,5}.

A renewed focus on the quality of crime recording by the police in recent years is thought to have led to improved compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), leading to a greater proportion of reported crimes being recorded by the police⁶.

Despite improvements made in the recording of violent crime in recent years, the [latest inspection reports](#)⁷ from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) suggest that these offences are still significantly under-recorded by the police⁸. For more information see Chapter 5 "Police recorded crime" in the [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#).

This means caution should be taken when interpreting police recorded crime trends. While they provide a useful measure of the level of crime-demand on the police, overall trends in police recorded violent crime do not currently provide a reliable measure of the most commonly occurring types of violent crime. However, police recorded crime data are thought to provide a more reliable indication of trends in relation to higher-harm but less common types of violence involving guns and knives. The occurrence of such crimes are not well measured by the CSEW and so the police figures provide the main source of data.

The Home Office are continuing to implement an improved data collection system called the Data Hub. This allows the police to provide more detailed information to the Home Office, such as characteristics of victims and associated aggravating factors of crimes. The migration to the Data Hub is ongoing and for police forces providing data via the Data Hub. A more in-depth analysis of police recorded violent crime is included in this article as Experimental Statistics in advance of all forces being able to do so.

Together, the CSEW and police recorded crime provide a fuller picture of violent crime than either source on its own and neither should be viewed in isolation.

Notes for: How is violent crime defined and measured?

1. The article does not include data on robbery or sexual offences with the exception of data on police recorded offences involving a knife or firearm. See [Nature of crime: robbery](#) dataset and [Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system](#) for more information.
2. The Notifiable Offence List includes all indictable and triable-either-way offences (which could be tried at a crown court) and a few additional closely related summary offences (which would be dealt with by a magistrate). For information on the classifications used for notifiable crimes recorded by the police, see Appendix 1 of the [User guide](#).
3. Police recorded crime figures are continually updated. At the time this release was published, the appendix tables published alongside [Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2018](#) provided the most up-to-date data on crime recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018.
4. The full assessment report can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website. Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) continue to be badged as National Statistics.
5. The National Statistics status of statistics about unlawful deaths based on the [Homicide Index](#) was restored in December 2016. The Home Office Homicide Index includes detailed statistical returns from the police on every homicide (murder, manslaughter and infanticide) recorded in each force area.
6. The [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#) report, published by HMICFRS in late 2014, found that violent offences had been substantially under-recorded (by 33% nationally) and led to police forces reviewing and improving their recording processes.
7. These reports were published between 2016 and 2019, and the most recent reports were published on 15 January 2019. Seven re-inspection reports have also been published.
8. Findings from the 30 inspections suggest that crime recording practices by police forces in England and Wales are, in general, improving. Five of the forces who received a rating of “inadequate” at initial assessment have since been re-inspected and their ratings improved (two forces to “outstanding”, two forces to “good” and one force to “requires improvement”).

3 . What is the extent of violent crime?

The year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 1.7% of adults aged 16 years and over were a victim of violent crime in the previous 12 months ¹ ([Appendix Table 3, year ending September 2018](#)²), equating to 1.4 million incidents of violence:

- 0.9% were a victim of violence without injury
- 0.5% were a victim of assault with minor injury
- 0.4% were a victim of wounding

Figures were similar to the previous year's survey.

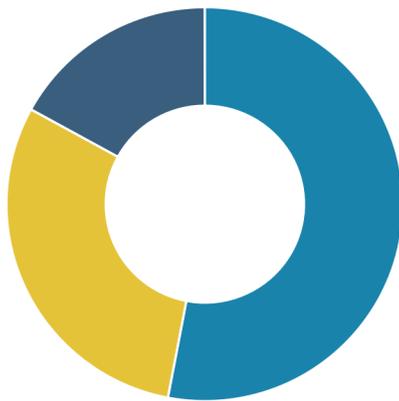
Just over half (53%) of all CSEW violent incidents in the last 12 months resulted in no injury to the victim (Figure 1). Of violent incidents involving injury, most of these were assaults with minor injuries, such as scratches or bruises.

Figure 1: Crime Survey for England and Wales shows over half of violent crimes result in no injury

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 1: Crime Survey for England and Wales shows over half of violent crimes result in no injury

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. Data relate to adults aged 16 years and over.

The police recorded 1.4 million (1,395,877) violence against the person offences in the year ending March 2018³. This was an increase of 19% compared with the year ending March 2017 (1,170,390 offences). Of these:

- “violence without injury” accounted for 42% (586,098 offences)
- “violence with injury” accounted for 37% (512,631 offences)
- “stalking and harassment” accounted for 21% (295,696 offences)⁴
- “death or serious injury – unlawful driving” accounted for 0.05% (726 offences)
- “homicide” accounted for 0.05% (726 offences)

This article does not cover homicide in detail. Instead, a separate [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) article, which uses data from the Home Office Homicide Index, has been published alongside this one. The Homicide Index provides a greater level of detail about the nature of homicide offences recorded by the police than the police recorded crime data, and also provides additional information on victims and suspects.

Violent crimes against children

The year ending March 2018 CSEW estimated that 4.4% of children aged 10 to 15 years (423,000) were a victim of violent crime⁵ in the previous 12 months, showing no statistically significant change from the previous year’s survey. Children were more commonly victims of violence with injury than violence without injury (3.7% compared with 0.8%). Over three-quarters of children experiencing violence with injury (2.8% of children) were victims of assault with minor injury ([Appendix Table 11, year ending March 2018](#)).

The Home Office Data Hub provides data on child victims of violent crime recorded by the police. For the year ending March 2018, these data are available for 34 forces who supplied adequate data to the Data Hub. Children aged under 16 years were proportionally less likely to be victims of violent crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018; those aged under 16 years accounted for 19% of the population, but only 13% of victims of violent crime. Further breakdowns by age can be seen in Figure 8 in the “Which groups of people are most likely to be victims of violent crime?” section of this article or in [Appendix Table 11](#).

Notes for: What is the extent of violent crime?

1. “All violence” includes violence with injury (wounding, assault with minor injury), and violence without injury. For more information see Chapter 5.1 of the [User guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#).
2. Due to a change in methodology, please refer to the year ending March 2018 data in the year ending September 2018 published Appendix tables.
3. Police recorded crime figures are continually updated. At the time this release was published, the appendix tables published alongside [Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2018](#) provided the most up-to-date data on crime recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018.
4. Stalking and harassment was previously counted under “violence without injury” in police recorded crime statistics, but has been separated out into its own category since June 2017.
5. These are based on a “preferred measure” that takes into account factors identified as important in determining the severity of an incident such as the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator and the level of injury to the victim. See Chapter 2 of the [User guide](#) for further information.

4 . What are the long-term trends in violent crime?

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the best measure of long-term trends

For the population groups and offences it covers, the CSEW is the best source for assessing long-term trends in violent crime as the survey's methodology has remained consistent over the full time series.

CSEW violence peaked in 1995 and has fallen by more than two-thirds (68%) since (Figure 2). There was a sharp decline of 43% between the year ending December 1995 and the year ending March 2002 surveys (from 4.5 million to 2.6 million incidents).

More gradual decreases were seen between the year ending March 2002 and March 2014 surveys. Although not all years showed declines in the estimates of violent crime, the underlying trend has been downward. However, since then there has been no significant change in the level of CSEW violence and trends have remained fairly flat over the last four years.

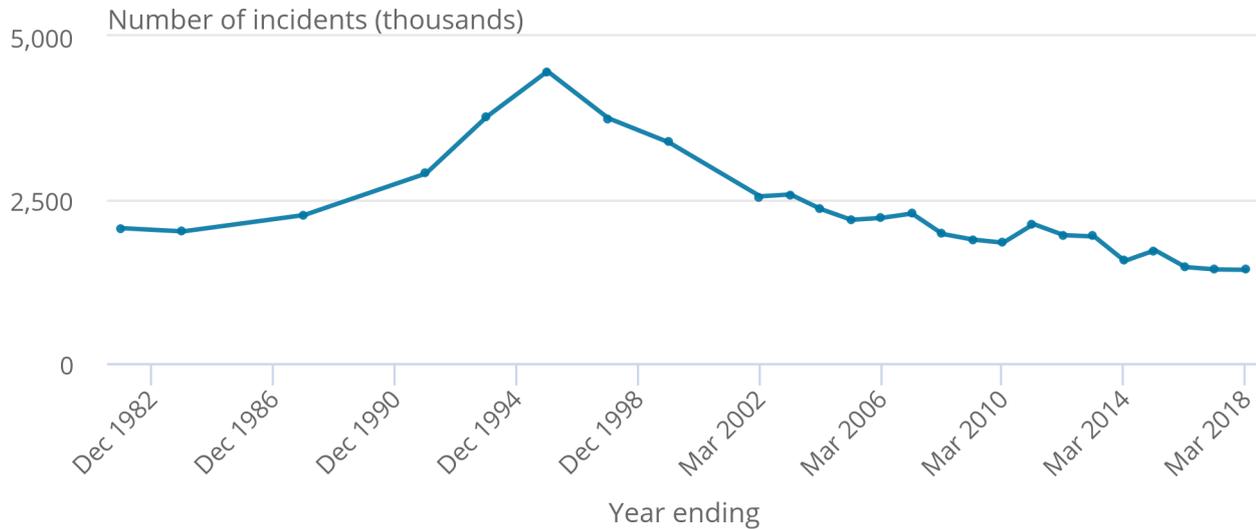
The latest figure (1.7%) is almost one-third of that estimated by the year ending December 1995 survey (4.7%). The largest decline over this period has been for assault with minor injury, which at 0.5% in the year ending March 2018 was around one-quarter of the rate in the year ending December 1995 (1.8%).

Figure 2: Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in estimates of violent crime but little change in recent years

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 2: Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in estimates of violent crime but little change in recent years

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published in previous releases. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. Prior to year ending March 2002, CSEW respondents were asked about their experience of crime in the previous calendar year, so year-labels identify the year in which the crime took place. Following the change to continuous interviewing, respondents' experience of crime relates to the full 12 months prior to interview (that is, a moving reference period), so year-labels from year ending March 2002 onwards identify the CSEW year of interview.

The longer-term reductions in violent crime shown by the CSEW are also reflected in the findings of research conducted by the [Violence and Society Research Group at Cardiff University](#). Their annual survey, covering a sample of hospital emergency departments and walk-in centres in England and Wales, shows that violence-related attendances in 2017 fell 39% since 2010. In addition, the most recent [admissions data for NHS hospitals](#) in England show a similar picture.

Assault admissions for the year ending March 2018¹ (28,179) are 33% lower than the year ending March 2008 (42,181 admissions).

Recording improvements have driven rises in violent crime recorded by the police

In contrast to the recent flat trend shown by the CSEW, police recorded violent crime has increased by 132% between the year ending March 2013 and the year ending March 2018, with 1,395,877 violent offences recorded in the latest year. This was the highest in a 12-month period since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002. However, these increases are thought to be driven largely by improvements in recording in response to concerns over the quality of police crime data². These concerns were highlighted in two Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection reports.

Firstly, the [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#) report, published by HMICFRS in 2014, showed that violence against the person offences had the highest under-recording rates across police forces in England and Wales. For more information see the [User guide to crime statistics](#).

The 2015 HMICFRS report, [Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse](#), then showed there had been an improved response by police to domestic abuse following an inspection in 2013.

Police recorded crime data cannot provide information on longer-term trends in violent crime, as major changes such as the introduction of the NCRS, and the expansion of the [Home Office Counting Rules \(HOCR\)](#) in April 1998³, mean that the volume of violent crime recorded before and after these dates is not comparable.

Notes for: What are the long-term trends in violent crime?

1. See "External causes" dataset in [Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2017-18](#) and [Hospital Episode Statistics, Admitted Patient Care – England, 2007-08](#) provided by NHS Digital. Assault admissions do not include sexual offences but include assault codes X85-Y04 and Y08 and Y09 from the dataset.
2. As part of an inquiry by the [Public Administration Select Committee \(PASC\) into crime statistics in late 2013](#), allegations of under-recording of crime by the police were made (in particular, concerns regarding the accuracy of police recorded crime data for sexual offences were raised). Due to wider concerns over the quality and consistency of crime recording, police recorded crime data were assessed against the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) in 2014 (now the Code of Practice for Statistics). They were found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. Since then, there has been an increased focus on improving recording practices, which has led to a greater proportion of reported crimes being recorded by the police.
3. The HOCR for recorded crime were expanded to include certain additional summary offences.

5 . What is happening to trends for different types of violent crime?

It is important to look across a range of data sources to understand trends in different types of violent crime.

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) violence provides a good measure of the most commonly occurring violent crimes

All types of CSEW violence¹ have followed a similar trend to overall violence, with large reductions since the mid to late 1990s. Woundings have shown the largest decrease (78%) since the peak in the year ending December 1995, while assaults with minor injury and violence without injury decreased by 73% and 59% respectively.

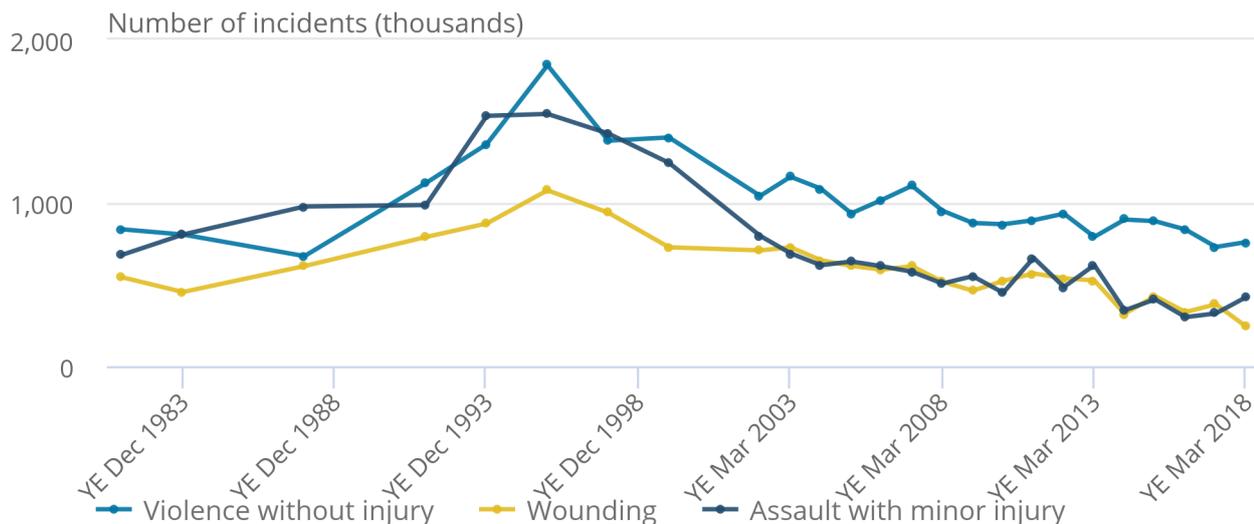
There has been no statistically significant change for any type of violence in the year ending March 2018 compared with the previous year (Appendix Table 1, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2018](#)²).

Figure 3: Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in all types of violent crime but little change in recent years

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 and year ending March 2018

Figure 3: Crime Survey for England and Wales shows long-term reductions in all types of violent crime but little change in recent years

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 and year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published in previous releases. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. Prior to year ending March 2002, CSEW respondents were asked about their experience of crime in the previous calendar year, so year-labels identify the year in which the crime took place. Following the change to continuous interviewing, respondents' experience of crime relates to the full 12 months prior to interview (that is, a moving reference period), so year-labels from year ending March 2002 onwards identify the CSEW year of interview.

Police recorded crime provides a better measure of less common but higher-harm types of violence

Ongoing work by police forces over the last four years to improve crime recording practices make interpreting trends in police recorded violence against the person offences difficult. These changes in recording practices are thought to have had a larger effect on relatively lower-harm types of violent crime, but to have had a lesser impact on higher-harm types of violence such as attempted murder, gun and knife crime. Police figures are thought to continue to provide a good measure of homicide offences.

Homicide and attempted murder

Based on data from the Home Office Homicide Index³ there were 726 offences currently recorded as homicide in the year ending March 2018. This is 20 more (3% increase) than in the previous year. Recent trends in homicide are affected by the recording of exceptional incidents with multiple victims such as the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester, and events at Hillsborough in 1989⁴. If these are excluded, then the number of homicides increased by 89, or 15%, from 606 to 695.

Homicide offences continued to make up 0.1% of all violence against the person offences and the rate of homicide in the population remains relatively low, at 12 homicides per 1 million people. Please see the [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) article for more information.

There was also a notable increase (69%) in the number of attempted murder offences (a volume increase of 552 offences) in the last year. This large increase was due to the terror attacks at Manchester Arena (235 offences) and in London (59 offences), which accounted for just under one-quarter of all attempted murder offences recorded by the police.

Offences involving firearms

Offences involving firearms encompass any notifiable offence recorded by the police where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument or been used as a threat. Firearm possession offences, where the firearm has not been used in the course of another offence, are not included in this analysis.

Offences involving firearms make up a small proportion of overall police recorded crime. In the year ending March 2018, they were used in approximately 0.2% of all police recorded offences (excluding fraud). This is a lower proportion than seen 10 years ago when firearms were used in approximately 0.4% of all police recorded offences.

After long-term falls in the number of recorded (non-air weapon) firearm offences, there have been rises seen over the last four years. There were 6,521 offences recorded in the year ending March 2018, a 2% rise compared with the previous year. This rise was smaller than in recent years (Figure 4). Levels of firearm offences are 41% lower than their peak in the year ending March 2006 (11,088 offences; [Weapons table 2](#)). It is also worth noting that the latest official statistics that cover a more recent period show a decrease in firearm offences. See the [Crime in England and Wales, year ending September 2018](#) bulletin for the latest figures.

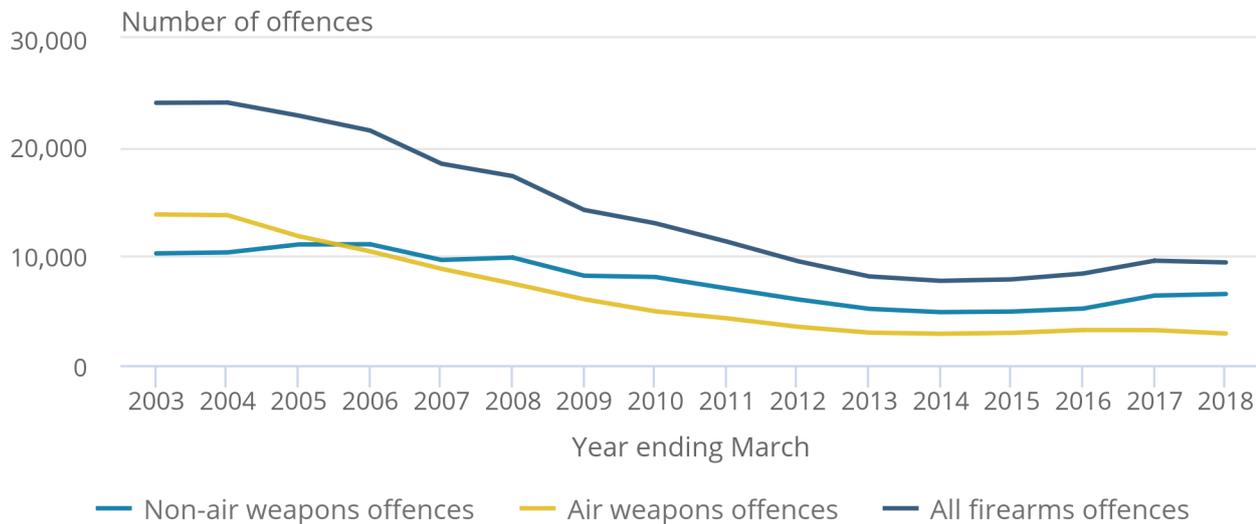
If air weapons are included there was a 2% decrease in firearm offences in the last year. This is because for the year ending March 2018, there was a 10% decrease in the air weapon category (from 3,203 offences to 2,898 offences).

Figure 4: Increases in the number of firearm offences recorded by the police in recent years following long-term reductions

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018

Figure 4: Increases in the number of firearm offences recorded by the police in recent years following long-term reductions

England and Wales, year ending March 2003 to year ending March 2018



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

Police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument

Information is also available, for selected crime types, on whether a recorded offence involved a knife or a sharp instrument. These cover the vast majority of offence types likely to involve a knife or sharp instrument. Knife possession offences, where the weapon has not been used in the course of another offence, are not included in this analysis.

The past four years have seen a rise in the number of recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, following a previously downward trend. Offences involving knives or sharp instruments rose by 17% compared with the previous year, from 34,569 offences to 40,469 offences⁴ ([Weapons table 14](#)). Of these offences, 18,936 (47%) were for assault with injury or assault with intent to cause serious harm and 17,319 (43%) were used in a robbery. This was the highest number since the year ending March 2011, the earliest point for which comparable data are available.

These increases are thought to reflect a real rise in the occurrence of knife or sharp instrument offences. However, it is thought that improvements in recording practices may have also contributed to the recent increases in these types of crime.

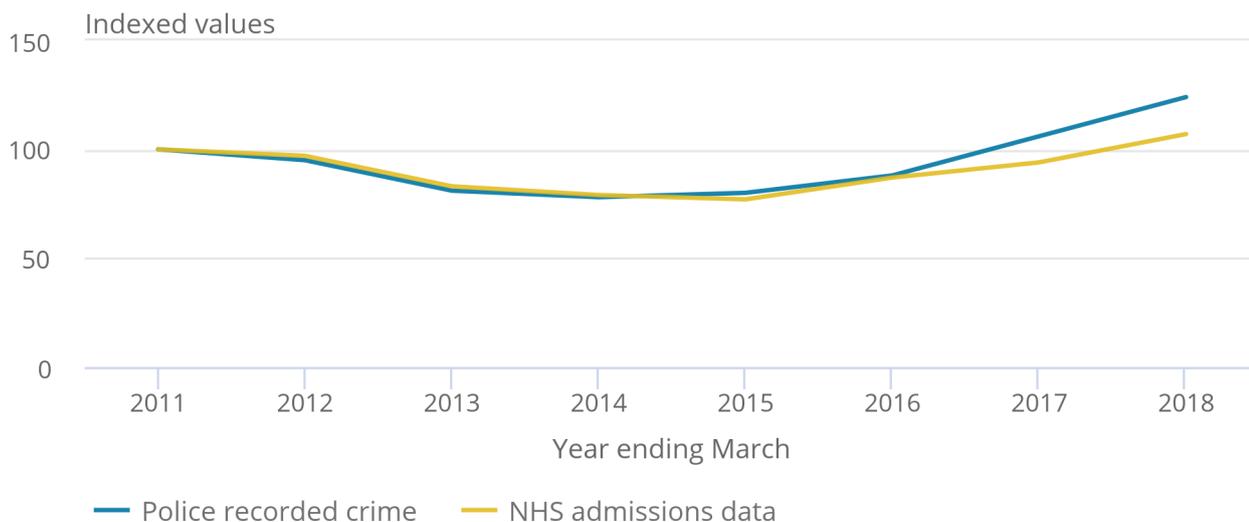
NHS data help to provide further insight into offences involving weapons. NHS hospitals in England reported 4,986 admissions for assault by a sharp object between April 2017 and March 2018, an increase of 15% in the last year.

Figure 5: Recent rises in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument seen in both the number of crimes recorded by the police and in NHS hospital admissions

England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2018

Figure 5: Recent rises in offences involving a knife or sharp instrument seen in both the number of crimes recorded by the police and in NHS hospital admissions

England and Wales, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2018



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime and NHS Digital - Hospital Episode Statistics

Notes:

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

As expected, the absolute number of police recorded knife or sharp instrument offences is considerably higher than hospital admissions for assault by sharp object. Hospital admissions data capture the most serious offences, and for the large majority of knife offences recorded by the police the victim does not require hospital treatment. However, between the year ending March 2009 and the year ending March 2014, trends in hospital admissions for assault with sharp objects and police recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments have shown consistent trends (Figure 5).

Death or serious injury – unlawful driving

Offences related to death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving decreased by 5% in the latest year to March 2018 (to 726 offences), compared with the previous year (766 offences). The fall in offences is in contrast with recent years where there has been an upward trend. Within the death or serious injury – unlawful driving offences category, around three-quarters of offences (75%, 545 offences) were classified as causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving. Causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving accounted for a further 18% of these offences (129 offences).

Notes for: What is happening to trends for different types of violent crime?

1. See Chapter 5.1 of the [User guide](#) for more information on the offences included in this breakdown.
2. Due to a change in methodology, please refer to the year ending March 2018 data in the time series data presented in the quarterly crime statistics bulletin for the year ending September 2018.
3. The Home Office Homicide Index which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset and is therefore the preferred source for homicide statistics. Data presented refer to the position as at 4 December 2018, when the Homicide Index database was “frozen” for the purpose of analysis.
4. The 96 offences of manslaughter from Hillsborough and crimes related to four of the victims of the Westminster Bridge attack were recorded in the year ending March 2017. The 22 victims from the Manchester Arena bombing, the eight victims from the London Bridge attack, and one further victim of the Westminster Bridge attack were recorded in the year ending March 2018.

6 . How are victims and perpetrators related?

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) violence can be broken down by the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, enabling the categorisation of stranger, acquaintance, or domestic violence. The definition of domestic violence in the CSEW refers to incidents reported through the face-to-face interview that were perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner, or a family member.

The level of domestic violence reported in this way is prone to significant under-reporting because many victims will not be willing to disclose such incidents in the context of a face-to-face personal interview. Of those aged 16 to 59 years who reported being victims of physical domestic abuse in the CSEW self-completion module¹ on intimate violence, only 12.2% also reported being a victim of domestic violence in the face-to-face interview. Therefore, the measures of domestic violence reported in this section are an under-estimation of the true extent of this type of violence and as a result, the proportions of violence perpetrated by strangers² and acquaintances³ will be over-estimated. More information can be found in Chapter 2 of the [User guide to crime statistics](#).

In the year ending March 2018 CSEW, the most common perpetrators of violent crime were acquaintances (44%, 629,000 offences), with 38% of offences (542,000) perpetrated by a stranger, and the remaining 17% (249,000 offences) categorised as domestic violence (Figure 6). These figures have fluctuated over recent years, with acquaintance violence accounting for the largest proportion of offences in some years and stranger violence accounting for the largest proportion in others. The year ending March 2018 CSEW showed that:

- incidents of stranger violence had fallen by 49% from the peak of 1 million offences in the year ending December 1995 to an estimated 542,000 offences in the year ending March 2018 (Figure 6)
- in recent years, stranger violence has shown the largest reduction in number of incidents, decreasing by 39% from 895,000 in the year ending March 2011
- CSEW acquaintance violence fell by 70% from the peak of 2.1 million offences in the year ending December 1995 to an estimated 629,000 offences in the year ending March 2018 (Figure 6), being an important driver of changes in overall violence
- there was no statistically significant change in the year ending March 2018 for domestic, stranger or acquaintance violence compared with the previous year

The [Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending March 2018](#)⁴ article provides further information of both physical and non-physical domestic abuse using the self-completion module of the CSEW. The number of victims of domestic abuse estimated using this element of the CSEW has fallen from around 2.3 million victims in the year ending March 2012 to 2.0 million in the year ending March 2018.

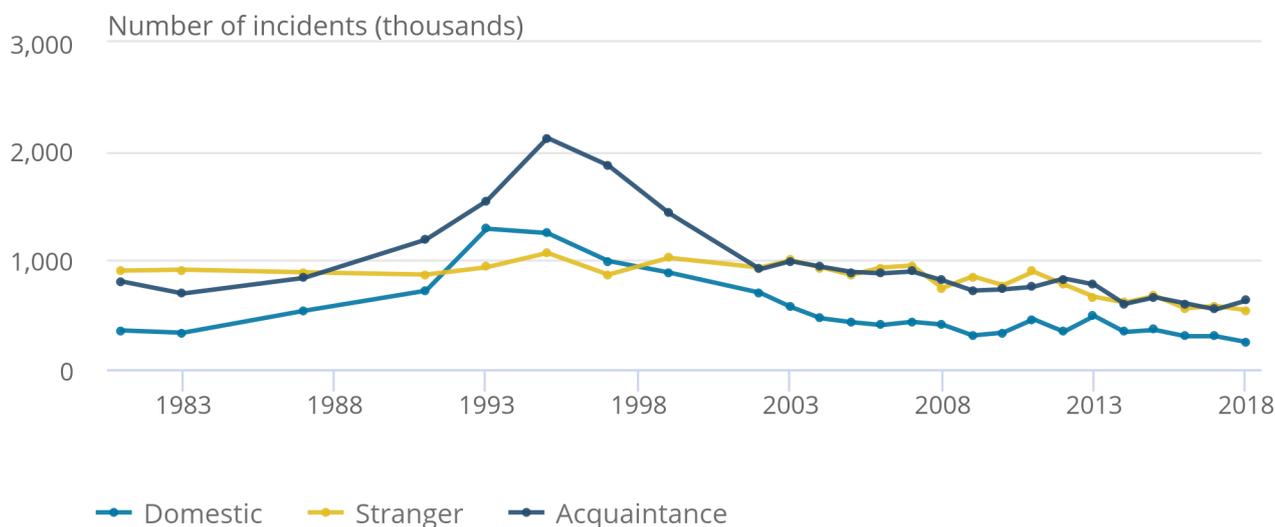
One-third (33%) of violence recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018 was domestic abuse-related (458,711 offences).

Figure 6: Stranger, acquaintance and domestic violence have shown declines since the mid-1990s

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2018

Figure 6: Stranger, acquaintance and domestic violence have shown declines since the mid-1990s

England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. Following a methodological change to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, these data are not comparable with data published in previous releases. For more information see [Improving victimisation estimates derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
2. Prior to year ending March 2002, CSEW respondents were asked about their experience of crime in the previous calendar year, so year-labels identify the year in which the crime took place. Following the change to continuous interviewing, respondents' experience of crime relates to the full 12 months prior to interview (that is, a moving reference period), so year-labels from year ending March 2002 onwards identify the CSEW year of interview.

Relationship between victims and suspects from the Home Office Data Hub

Analysis of the relationship between victims and suspects of violent offences recorded by the police⁵ shows that, a greater proportion of violent offences against women were committed by an intimate partner⁶ or family member compared with men. For female victims, over one-third (34%) of suspects were intimate partners (compared with 14% of male victims), and 18% were another family member (compared with 14% of male victims), as shown in Figure 7.

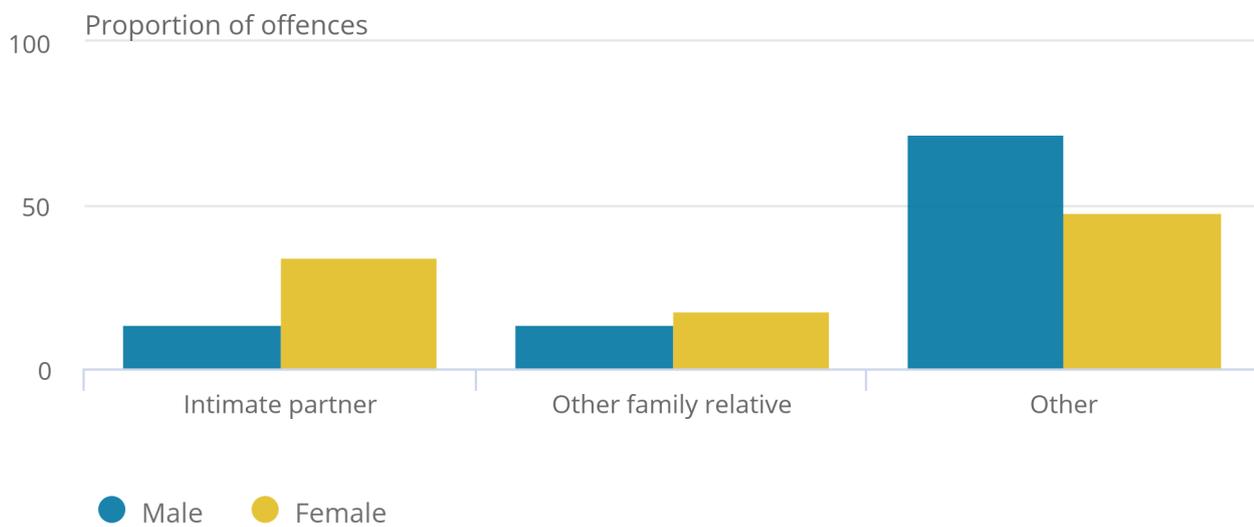
However, “other”⁷ relationships between the victim and suspect were most common, particularly for offences against men (72% compared with 48% against women). Further analysis, using a subset of forces⁸, identified that for relationships classified as “other” the victim and suspect were acquaintances in 47% of offences, were strangers in 21% of offences, and had an unknown relationship (mainly because a suspect had not been identified) in 30% of offences ([Appendix Table 13](#)).

Figure 7: The suspects of violence against the person offences were most likely to be in "other" relationships with the victim

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 7: The suspects of violence against the person offences were most likely to be in “other” relationships with the victim

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded crime data are based on 35 forces that provided data via the Home Office Data Hub or in a manual return. Data have not been reconciled with forces.

Notes for: How are victims and perpetrators related?

1. “Self-completion” means that the respondent reads the questions themselves and records their answers directly onto a laptop.
2. Stranger violence includes wounding and assaults in which the victim did not have any information about the perpetrator(s), or did not know and had never seen the perpetrator(s) before.
3. Acquaintance violence is comprised of wounding and assaults in which the victim knew one or more of the perpetrators at least by sight. It does not include domestic violence.
4. The self-completion module uses a broader definition of domestic abuse, including emotional or financial abuse and threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them, rather than just physical violence.
5. Based on 35 police forces where sufficient data were available on the Data Hub for the year ending March 2018.
6. “Intimate partner” refers to all partner and ex-partner relationships, not just where the couple were married or in a civil partnership, but also including co-habiting partners and those considered in a relationship.
7. “Other” relationship comprises other sexual relationships such as casual sexual partners, acquaintances, strangers and cases where the relationship status has not been identified or is unknown.
8. Based on 17 forces who provided detailed relationship data via the Data Hub at a disaggregated level.

7 . Levels of repeat victimisation

Repeat victimisation is defined as the experience of being a victim of more than one crime of the same type within the last 12 months. In the year ending March 2018 survey, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that 74% of victims of violence were victimised once, while 26% were repeat victims in the previous 12 months (18% victimised twice, 7% victimised three times or more; [Annual Trend and Demographic Table D5](#)).

The level of repeat victimisation showed no significant change from the previous year’s survey, but has significantly decreased by 14 percentage points since 1995 ([Appendix Table 8](#)).

The latest estimates showed that 57% of violent incidents were experienced by repeat victims, compared with 74% in the year ending December 1995 (when CSEW violence peaked; [Annual Trend and Demographic Table D7](#)).

In the year ending March 2018, a higher proportion of victims of domestic violence measured by the CSEW were repeat victims (34%) compared with stranger violence (15%). However, these proportions fluctuate considerably from year to year ([Annual Trend and Demographic Table D6](#)).

The most common type of violence to be experienced on a repeated basis is domestic violence, which is not well measured by the face-to-face interview of the CSEW. Therefore, the analysis can only be used to draw conclusions about the repeat victimisation of domestic violence captured by this source¹, which may only provide a partial picture.

Notes for: Levels of repeat victimisation

1. See the “How are victims and perpetrators related?” section of this article for more information.

8 . Which groups of people are most likely to be victims of violent crime?

The year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that victimisation of violent crime varied by certain personal and household characteristics (see [Appendix Tables 1 to 4](#) for a full breakdown). Many of the characteristics are closely associated with each other, so caution is needed in the interpretation of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation.

While the CSEW provides good estimates of prevalence for most crime types, for domestic violence incidents the self-completion module of the survey is the preferred measure. See [Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) for a breakdown of characteristics of victims of domestic abuse taken from the self-completion module of the CSEW.

Sex

Men were more likely to be victims of CSEW violent crime than women (2.3% of men compared with 1.2% of women¹, [Appendix table 1](#)). This was true for all types of violence, with the exception of domestic violence, which showed no significant difference. The year ending March 2018 CSEW showed that:

- stranger violence showed the largest difference in victimisation between men and women (1.4% compared with 0.4% respectively)
- 0.8% of men and 0.6% of women experienced acquaintance violence

However, estimates of domestic abuse derived from the self-completion module of the CSEW show that women were more likely to be victims of this kind of violence than men; there is a significant difference between women and men (7.9% of women were victims in the last year compared with 4.2% of men).

Data from the Home Office Data Hub show that in the year ending March 2018, more violence against the person offences recorded by the police had female victims (53%) than male victims (47%). This is notably different from the CSEW for the same period, which estimated that 65% of victims of violence were male, with 35% being female (data not shown). A likely reason for the difference between the sources is that females are more commonly the victims in cases of domestic abuse, which accounts for around one-third of violence recorded by the police. While the CSEW provides good estimates of most crime types, the main face-to-face interview underestimates the number of domestic violence incidents (see the "[How are victims and perpetrators related?](#)" section of this article for more information).

The breakdown of male and female victims differed by the type of violence recorded by the police, with females accounting for a larger proportion of victims of violence without injury than males (57% compared with 43% respectively). However, males accounted for a larger proportion of victims of violence with injury than women (55% compared with 45% respectively, Figure 8).

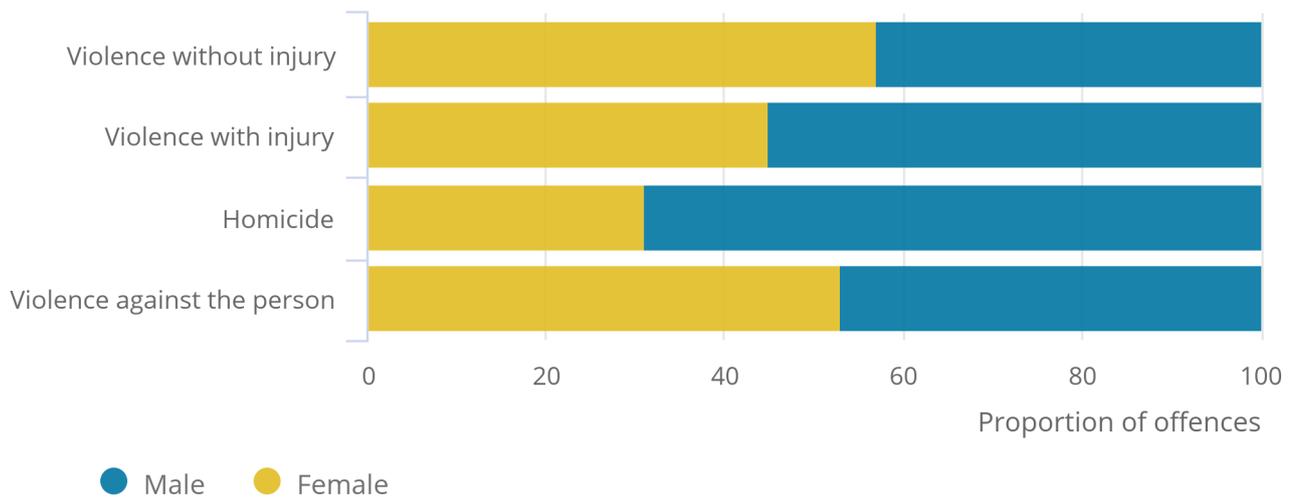
Figures from the Home Office Homicide Index for the year ending March 2018 show that 69% of homicide victims were male and 31% were female. More information on homicide offences can be found in [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#).

Figure 8: Most victims of homicide and violence with injury offences were men, but victims of violence without injury were more likely to be women

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 8: Most victims of homicide and violence with injury offences were men, but victims of violence without injury were more likely to be women

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime and Homicide Index

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics. In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, figures from the Homicide Index have been re-assessed against the Code of Practice for Statistics and found to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded crime data are based on 35 forces that provided data via the Home Office Data Hub or in manual return. Data have not been reconciled with forces.
3. Figures for homicide are for all police forces in England Wales (including British Transport Police) and are taken from the Home Office Homicide Index.

Age

CSEW estimates indicate that adults aged 16 to 24 years were more likely to be victims of violence (4.0%) than those in older age groups ([Appendix Tables 1 and 3](#)). This was particularly pronounced for stranger violence (2.0%) and acquaintance violence (2.0%).

Information from the Home Office Data Hub on the age of victims of police recorded violence, taken from 34 forces, shows that younger adults were also more likely to be victims of violent crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018 (Figure 9). For example, while those aged 20 to 29 years made up around 13% of the population², they were victims in 26% of violence against the person offences recorded by the police. Older people and the very young were less likely to be victims. For example, those aged 80 years or over were victims in less than 1% of violent offences but made up around 5% of the population. Those aged under 10 years accounted for 12% of the population but only 4% of victims.

Figure 9: Younger adults were more likely to be victims of violent crimes recorded by the police

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



Source: Home Office Data Hub

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded crime data are based on 34 forces that provided data via the Home Office Data Hub or in manual return. Data have not been reconciled with forces.
3. Population figures are based on the ONS population estimates for England and Wales.

Other characteristics of victims of CSEW violence

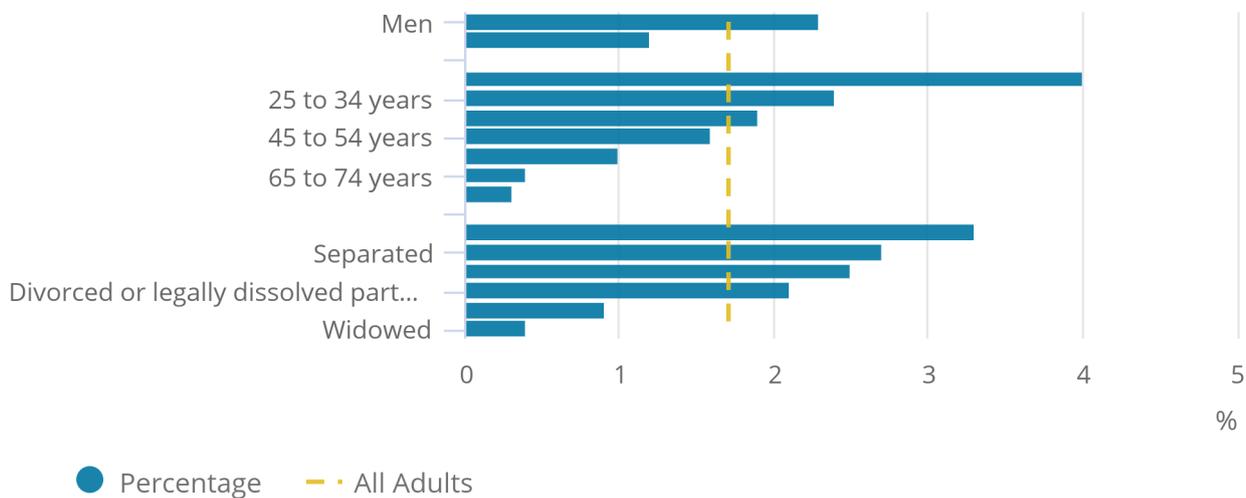
- Those who were single (3.3%) were more likely than adults of other marital statuses to be victims of violent crime, except for those who were separated (2.7%) where there was no significant difference.
- Separated adults (2.7%) were more likely to be victims of violence than adults that were married (0.9) or widowed (0.4%).
- Single adults with children (3.0%) were more likely to be victims of violence than those living with other adults and children (1.5%) and adults living with no children (1.8%).
- Adults living in more deprived areas were more likely to be victims (2.2%) than those living in the least deprived areas (1.4%) and other output areas³(1.7%).
- Renters (2.5% social and 3.0% private) were more likely to be victims of violent crime than home owners (1.1%).
- Adults living in urban areas (1.8%) were more likely than those living in rural areas (1.4%) to be victims of violent crime ([Appendix Table 2](#)).

Figure 10: Younger and single adults were characteristics associated with a higher likelihood of being a victim of violence

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 10: Younger and single adults were characteristics associated with a higher likelihood of being a victim of violence

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. See Chapter 7.3 of the User guide for definitions of personal characteristics.

For children aged 10 to 15 years, boys were more likely than girls to have experienced violent crime (5.8% compared with 3.0% respectively). See Tables D3 and D4 of the [Annual Trend and Demographic Tables, year ending March 2018](#) for more information.

Notes for: Which groups of people are most likely to be victims of violent crime?

1. This pattern is different for domestic abuse and sexual assault. For more information please see [Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) and [Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system](#).
2. Based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) England and Wales population estimates.
3. This is based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measure of those living in the 20% most deprived and 20% least deprived output areas.

9 . What do we know about perpetrators of violent crimes?

- Victims of violent crime interviewed in the year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) were able to provide some detail about the perpetrator(s) in 98% of incidents ([Nature of crime, violence](#)). The following profiles are based on the victims' recollection and perception of the perpetrator(s):
- perpetrators were most likely to be male, being reported to be so in around three-quarters of violent incidents (74%)
- perpetrators were most likely to be aged between 25 and 39 years, with the perpetrator believed to belong to this age-group in 38% of violent incidents
- in 74% of violent incidents a sole perpetrator was reported to have been responsible, with four or more perpetrators involved in 11% of incidents and two perpetrators involved in 8% of incidents
- 35% of incidents of stranger violence involved more than one perpetrator, compared with 27% of incidents of acquaintance violence and only 2% of domestic violence incidents
- incidents involving four or more perpetrators accounted for 10% of acquaintance violence and 19% of stranger violence, but less than 1% of domestic violence

Victims aged 10 to 15 years were able to say something about the perpetrator in 92% of violent incidents in the year ending March 2018 CSEW:

- incidents of violence against children were most likely to be committed by someone known well to the victim (56% of incidents), with a small proportion being committed by strangers (8%)
- the perpetrator was a pupil at the victim's school in 86% of violent incidents, and was a friend (including boyfriend or girlfriend) in 13% of incidents
- the perpetrator was most likely to be male (62% of incidents) and aged between 10 and 15 years (78%; [Nature of crime tables, children aged 10 to 15 violence](#)).

Involvement of alcohol in violent crime

Victims believed the perpetrator(s) to be under the influence of alcohol in 39% (561,000) of violent incidents¹. In 21% (305,000) of violent incidents, the victim believed the perpetrator(s) to be under the influence of drugs ([Nature of crime, violence](#)). Characteristics of perpetrators of alcohol-related violent crime can be found in [Appendix Table 7](#).

Information on the involvement of alcohol as a factor in violent crime is also available from the Home Office Data Hub, which contains a field where police forces can identify whether the offence was “alcohol-related”.

Analysis for alcohol-related violent offences is based on 35 forces providing data using the alcohol-related aggravating factor flag in the Data Hub. These forces accounted for around 84% of violence against the person offences in England and Wales in the year ending March 2018, and include the Metropolitan Police, who alone recorded 14% of violence against the person offences in England and Wales in this year.

The analysis may not be representative of all forces in England and Wales and data have not been reconciled with forces and are therefore subject to revision. The Home Office continue to work with police forces to ensure the consistency and comparability of the victim information they supply to the Home Office.

In the year ending March 2018, 14% of violence against the person offences were flagged by the police as alcohol-related. The corresponding figure (as published last year) for the year ending March 2017 was 16%, however, the two years are not directly comparable as a different set of police forces were used in each year.

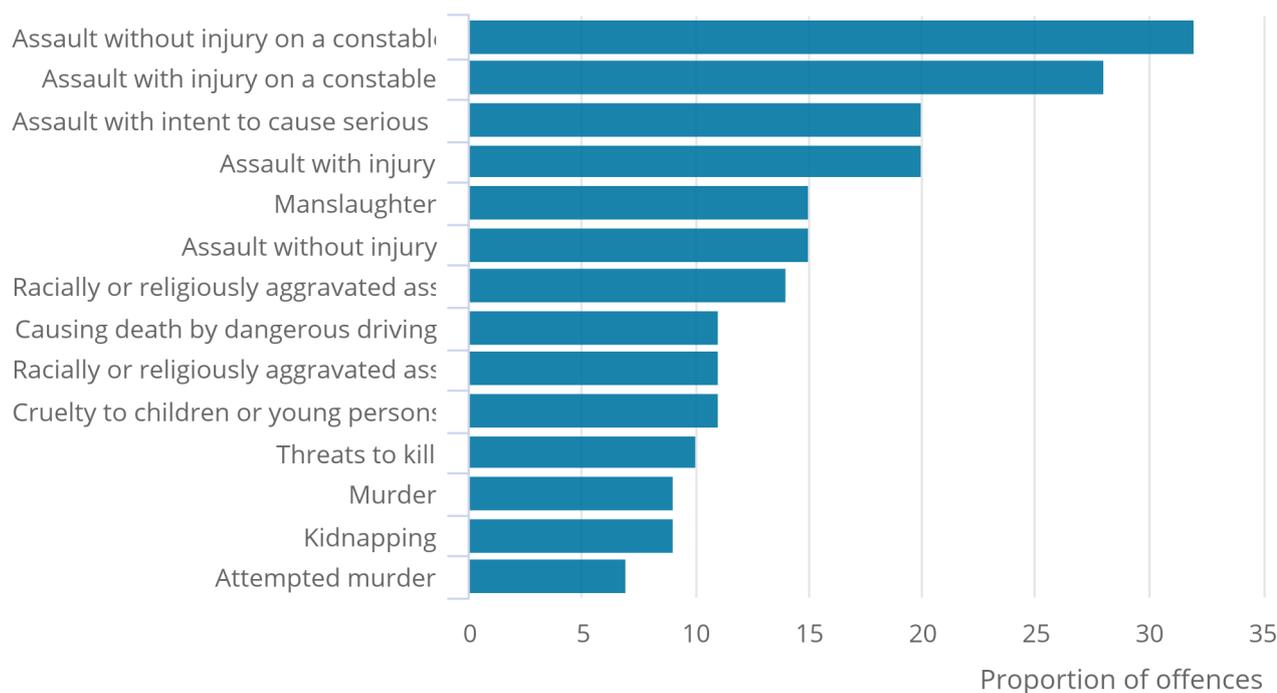
The offence of “assault without injury on a constable” had the highest proportion of offences that were alcohol-related (32%), although it only accounted for 1% of all violent offences. “Assault with injury” (20% of which were flagged as alcohol-related) and “assault without injury” (15% of which were flagged as alcohol-related) were more common offences and respectively accounted for 33% and 36% of all police recorded violence. Violent offences most likely to be flagged as alcohol-related are shown in Figure 11^{2,3}.

Figure 11: Proportion of selected violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were “alcohol-related”, Home Office Data Hub (35 forces)

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 11: Proportion of selected violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were “alcohol-related”, Home Office Data Hub (35 forces)

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



Source: Home Office Data Hub

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Police recorded crime data are based on 35 forces that provided data via the Home Office Data Hub or in manual return. Data have not been reconciled with forces.
3. There are some violent offences with a high proportion of alcohol-related offences that have been excluded from this analysis due to very low volumes.
4. Selected violence against the person offences were those offences with the highest proportion of the alcohol-related flag.
5. Recording an alcohol-related factor for crimes was optional for forces in this year but a standard definition for usage was introduced in April 2016.

Notes for: What do we know about perpetrators of violent crimes?

1. Questions were asked if the victim was able to say something about the perpetrator(s), which they could do in nearly all (98%) incidents. If there was more than one perpetrator, victims were asked if any of the perpetrators were perceived to be under the influence. Questions were not asked if any perpetrator was perceived to be aged under 10 years.
2. There are some violent offences with a high proportion of alcohol-related offences that have been excluded from this analysis due to very low volumes.
3. Selected violence against the person offences were those offences with the highest proportion of the alcohol-related flag.

10 . How much violent crime is reported to the police?

In the year ending March 2018, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 38% of violent incidents were reported to the police ([Table D8, year ending March 2018](#)). This estimate showed no change from the previous year (42%); the apparent 4 percentage points fall was not statistically significant. This latest reporting rate for violence is similar to the reporting rate for all CSEW crime (38%).

The rates at which violent crimes were reported to the police also varied according to the victim to offender relationship. 42% of incidents where the offender was an acquaintance were reported to the police. This compares with 39% of stranger violence incidents and 27% of domestic violence incidents.

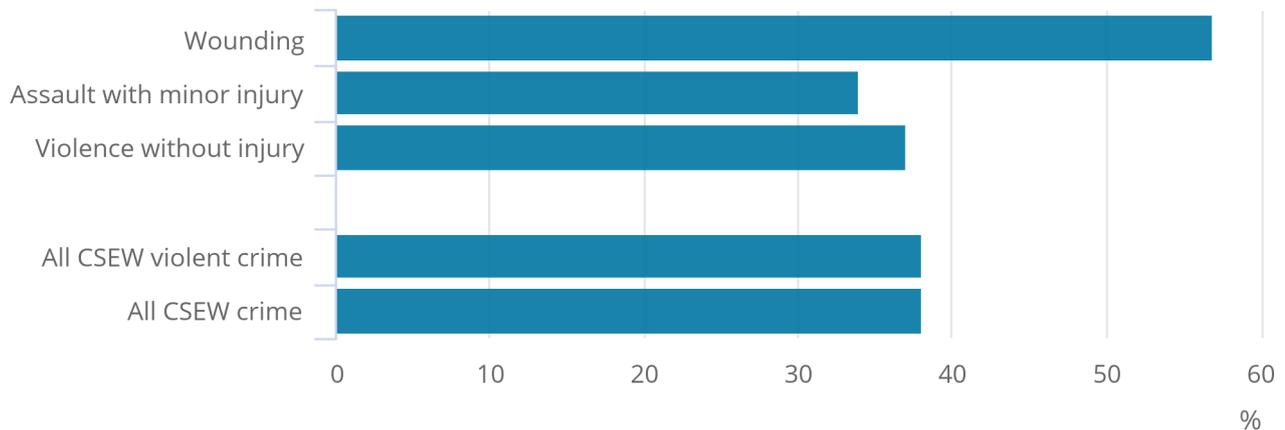
As in previous years, reporting rates continue to vary by type of violence, with 57% of wounding incidents in the latest survey year being reported to the police, compared with 37% of incidents with no injury and 34% and of incidents of assault with minor injury (Figure 12). This indicates that, as might be expected, respondents are more likely to report more serious incidents to the police.

Figure 12: Wounding offences were most likely to have been reported to the police compared with offences resulting in minor injury or no injury

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 12: Wounding offences were most likely to have been reported to the police compared with offences resulting in minor injury or no injury

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. Incidents that were reported to the police also includes those incidents that the police came to know about in another way, for example, they arrived at the scene.
2. "All CSEW violent crime" includes wounding and assault with minor injury or without injury, attempted assault and wounding or assault with a sexual motive.

In the year ending March 2018, the CSEW showed that 10% of violent incidents experienced by children aged 10 to 15 years were reported to the police ([Nature of crime tables, children aged 10 to 15 violence](#)). This figure is likely to reflect the relative low severity of violent incidents experienced by children.

11 . When do violent crimes occur?

In the year ending March 2018, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that more than half of violent incidents (54%) occurred in the evening or during the night ([Nature of crime, violence](#)). This trend has remained at a stable level over the previous four years, showing no significant change. However, there has been a significant decrease since the year ending March 2008, when 65% of incidents occurred in the evening and 35% occurred in the day.

More than half of violent incidents (56%) occurred during the week, with 44% occurring during the shorter period of the weekend (Table 1). Timing of alcohol-related violent crime can be found in [Appendix Table 5](#).

Table 1: Timing of incidents for types of violent crime
Year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales

| Timing | Percentage adults aged 16 years and over or children aged 10 to 15 years | | | | |
|--|--|----------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | All violence | Wounding | Assault with minor injury | Violence without injury | Violence against children aged 10 to 15 years |
| Morning and afternoon ¹ | 46 | 32 | 45 | 51 | .. |
| Evening and night ² | 54 | 68 | 55 | 49 | .. |
| Unweighted base - number of adults | 582 | 130 | 153 | 299 | |
| During the week | 56 | 39 | 48 | 66 | 97 |
| At the weekend ³ | 44 | 61 | 52 | 34 | 3 |
| Unweighted base - number of adults or number of children aged 10 to 15 years | 567 | 126 | 149 | 292 | 150 |

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

Notes

1. Morning is from 6am to noon; afternoon is from noon to 6pm. [Back to table](#)
2. Evening is from 6pm to midnight; night is from midnight to 6am. [Back to table](#)
3. Weekend is from Friday 6pm to Monday 6am. [Back to table](#)
4. .. Denotes 'not available' [Back to table](#)

In the year ending March 2018, 97% of incidents of violence against children aged 10 to 15 years occurred during the week and 3% of incidents occurred at the weekend. This highlights the different lifestyles of children compared with adults, and also reflects that a large proportion of violent incidents against children (86%) occurred in or around school ([Nature of crime tables, children aged 10 to 15 violence](#)).

12 . Where do violent crimes occur?

Similar to previous years, the location of incidents of Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) violent crime varied by the victim-perpetrator relationship.

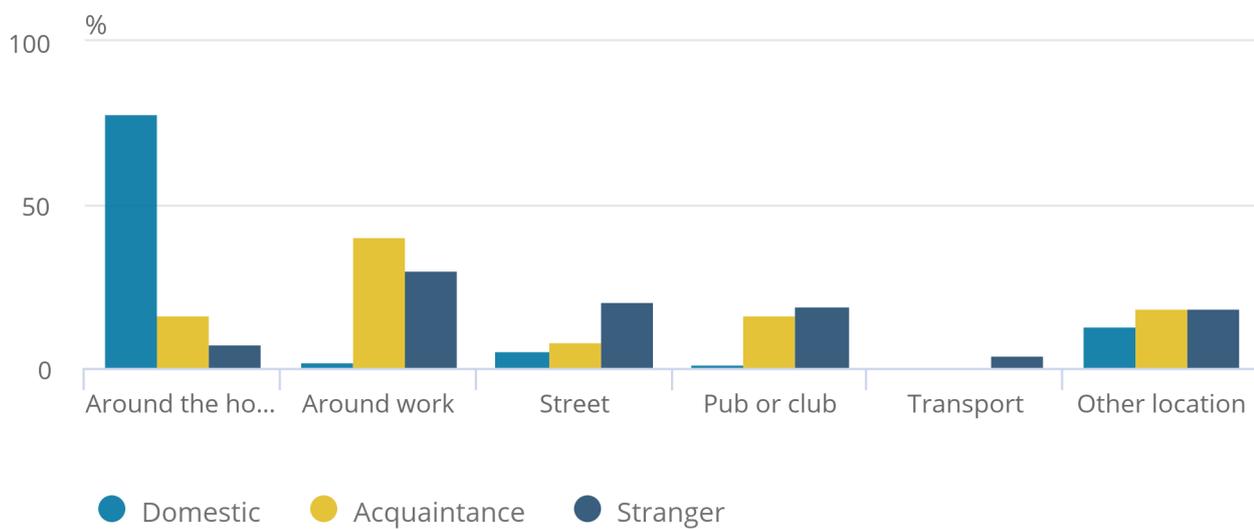
As expected, the large majority of incidents of domestic violence¹ occurred around the home (78%), whereas incidents of stranger violence were most likely to occur either around work (30%) or in the street (21%). Incidents of acquaintance violence were most likely to take place at work² (40%, Figure 13). Figure 13 provides analysis of the location of these incidents split by type of violence ([Nature of crime, violence](#)).

Figure 13: Incidents of domestic violence were most likely to occur around the home, while incidents of acquaintance violence were most likely to take place at work

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 13: Incidents of domestic violence were most likely to occur around the home, while incidents of acquaintance violence were most likely to take place at work

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. Includes home premises, whether inside or outside, garage or shed, home car park or nearby street to home.
2. Includes work premises, whether inside or outside or work garage or car parks.
3. Includes streets near work, college, sports ground, public entertainment, train or tube stations and others, subway, parks or open spaces, waste grounds, and street markets.
4. Includes pub or club premises, whether inside or nearby street or car parks.
5. "Other location" includes car parks, inside or grounds of a shop or supermarket, a school, college, university, a friend's home, a place of entertainment, sports centre or somewhere else.

Incidents of wounding were most likely to occur around the home (25%). For assault with minor injury and violence without injury, incidents of violence were more likely to happen at work (34% and 27% respectively).

Information on the location of alcohol-related violent crime can be found in [Appendix Table 6](#).

Notes for: Where do violent crimes occur?

1. As measured in the face-to-face section of the CSEW.
2. For more information see the Health Safety Executive [Violence at work](#) report using CSEW data.

13 . The use of weapons in violent crime

A weapon was used in 19% of violent incidents according to the year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW; [Nature of crime, violence](#)). Weapons were used in a higher proportion of incidents of violence without injury (24%) than incidents of violence with injury (13%). Knives and other stabbing implements¹ were used in 6% of violent incidents. Weapons that fell under the category of “other” were used in a similar proportion (6%) of violent incidents. The “other” category encompasses a broad range of objects that could be used as a weapon, including household items used as improvised weapons.

The most common types of weapon used in stranger violence were knives and stabbing implements (used in 9% of violent incidents). An “other” weapon² was the most common for both domestic (6%) and for acquaintance (8%) violence.

A hitting implement was the most common weapon used for wounding (7%), a knife and stabbing implement was most common for assault with minor injury (4%) and an “other” weapon³ was most common for violence without injury (9%).

As offences involving the use of weapons are relatively low in volume, the CSEW is not able to provide a reliable measure of trends in the number of violent incidents involving a weapon. This is where police recorded crime can provide additional insight for these offences. As part of the police recorded crime data, information is available on whether or not a firearm or a knife or a sharp instrument was used in an offence. Such crimes are believed to be relatively well-recorded by the police.

Statistics on offences recorded by the police involving firearms or involving a knife or sharp instrument are also published on a quarterly basis in the [Crime in England and Wales](#) release. The latest data in this publication include data up to the year ending September 2018.

Offences involving firearms

The different types of firearms included in this section mirror those covered by the [Firearms Act 1968](#) and the associated amendments to the Act. These are:

- firearms that use a controlled explosion to fire a projectile: this category includes handguns, shotguns and rifles
- imitation firearms: this category includes replica weapons, as well as low-powered weapons that fire small plastic pellets, such as BB guns and soft air weapons
- air weapons: the majority of offences that involve air weapons relate to criminal damage; while air weapons can cause serious injury (and sometimes fatalities), by their nature they are less likely to do so than firearms that use a controlled explosion

Firearms that use a controlled explosion and imitation firearms are combined for the purposes of some analyses in this section, creating two broad categories: non-air weapons and air weapons.

The type of weapon used in offences involving firearms has changed over the last decade. In the year ending March 2006, non-air weapons constituted 52% of offences involving firearms while 48% were air weapons. By the year ending March 2010, the proportion of offences involving non-air weapons had increased to 62%, with a corresponding fall in air weapons to 38%.

Between the year ending March 2010 and the year ending March 2016, the proportion of air weapons has remained similar, fluctuating between 37% and 38%. However, in the last two years there has been a drop in the proportion of air weapon offences, with 33% in the year ending March 2017 and 31% for the year ending March 2018.

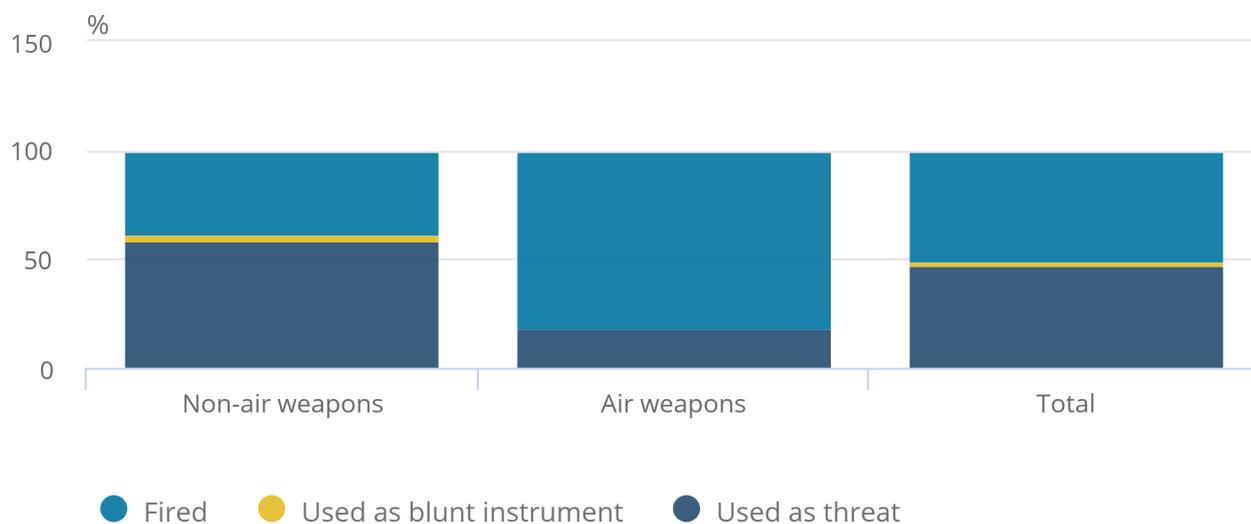
Of all the offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018 in which a firearm was used, the firearm was fired in 51% of cases (4,824 offences), used as a threat in 47% of cases (4,384 offences) and used as a blunt instrument in 2% of cases (211 offences).

Figure 14: Firearms were fired in half of all police recorded crime firearm cases

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 14: Firearms were fired in half of all police recorded crime firearm cases

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

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

Firearms were reported to be used in 4% of homicides and 2.7% of attempted murder, assault with intent to cause serious harm and endangering life offences. The severity of injuries sustained from offences involving firearms varies according to the type of weapon used ([Weapons Table 4](#)). This is to be expected given the range of mechanisms and projectiles associated with individual weapons and variations in the circumstances and offences in which they are used.

As in previous years, in the year ending March 2018 there was variation in the risk of being a victim of an offence involving a non-air weapon by age. Of the non-air weapon offences in which the age of the victim was known (87% of all instances):

- 55% of victims were aged between 15 and 34 years, while this age-group made up only 26% of the total population of England and Wales
- people aged 60 years and over were less likely to be victims, accounting for 6% of victims of non-air weapon offences but comprising 24% of the population

Offences involving a knife or sharp instrument

The police recorded 40,469 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the year ending March 2018, a 17% increase compared with the previous year (from 34,569 offences). This is the highest number since the year ending March 2011, the earliest point for which comparable data are available⁴.

The offences “assault with injury” and “assault with intent to cause serious harm” accounted for around half (47%) of total selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, and robberies accounted for a further 43%. Of all the offences in this dataset, robberies had the largest rise in volume in comparison with the last year (up 34% to 17,319 offences).

In the year ending March 2018 there were 285 homicides involving a knife or sharp instrument, a volume increase of 73 offences (34%) compared with the previous year. See [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) for further information.

Information based on crimes recorded by the police indicate that offences involving a knife or sharp instrument tend to be concentrated in London and other metropolitan areas.

For more information on these offences, see the [Offences involving the use of weapons: year ending March 2018 data tables](#), which contain information on crime involving knives and firearms.

Knife-carrying

A self-completion module of the CSEW asks 10- to 15-year-olds and 16- to 29-year-olds about knife-carrying⁵. These estimates should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively small sample within these age groups, and the fact that knife-carrying is very rare amongst the general population. While they provide a useful indication of the prevalence of knife-carrying, it is unlikely that short-term changes in the relatively small numbers of people carrying knives would be accurately measured by the CSEW.

The year ending March 2018 survey estimated that 6.5% of 10- to 15-year-olds knew someone who carried a knife for their own protection, a percentage that has not showed much variation over time ([Appendix Table 9](#)). A similar percentage (5.7%) of 16- to 29-year-olds knew someone who carried a knife.

Less than 1% of respondents aged between 10 and 29 years (0.5% of 10- to 15-year-olds and 0.7% of 16- to 29-year-olds) indicated that they personally carried a knife. Again, over time this has not showed much variation.

The police recorded crime series includes information on the number of offences of “possession of an article with a blade or point”. These rose by 28% to 18,257 offences in the latest year. This rise is consistent with increases seen over the last five years and this is the highest figure since the series began in the year ending March 2009. This figure can often be influenced by increases in targeted police action in relation to knife crime, which is most likely to occur at times when rises in offences involving knives are seen.

Notes for: The use of weapons in violent crime

1. Includes screwdrivers and other stabbing implements.
2. Includes axes, swords, cleavers, dogs, and other weapons.
3. Includes axes, swords, cleavers, dogs, and other weapons.
4. Police recorded knife and sharp instrument offences data are submitted via an additional special collection. Proportions of offences involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument presented in this table are calculated based on figures submitted in this special collection. Other offences exist that are not shown in this table that may include the use of a knife or sharp instrument.
5. The questions were first asked in the year ending March 2012 survey for 10 to 15 year olds but were not asked of 16 to 29 year olds until the year ending March 2014.

14 . Injuries resulting from violent crime

Victims sustained a physical injury in 47% of incidents of violence in the year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW; [Nature of crime, violence](#)). This varied by perpetrator, with 63% of incidents of domestic violence¹ resulting in physical injury compared with 42% of acquaintance violence incidents and 44% of stranger violence incidents.

The most common type of injury experienced was minor bruising or black eye (33% of violent incidents). More serious injuries such as concussion or loss of consciousness (2%) or broken bones (1%) were less common ([Nature of Crime Table](#)).

Incidents of violent crime experienced by children were more likely to result in injury, with victims aged 10 to 15 years sustaining an injury in 92% of incidents in the year ending March 2018 CSEW. Victims received some form of medical attention as a result of the violence in 27% of incidents. Of those incidents where the victim aged 10 to 15 years sustained an injury, minor bruising or black eye was the most common injury (66%), followed by scratches (20%) and severe bruising (11%). In 3% of violent incidents where the victim aged 10 to 15 years sustained an injury, this was a serious injury² ([Nature of crime tables, children aged 10 to 15 violence](#)).

Notes for: Injuries resulting from violent crime

1. Figures relate to domestic violence estimates from face-to-face CSEW interviews.
2. Serious injury includes facial or head injuries, broken nose, concussion, broken bones and eye or facial injuries caused by acid, paint, sand, and so on, thrown in the face.

15 . Proposed changes to data tables in future releases

We are considering making changes to future releases of the “nature of crime” tables and would like to seek views on the proposals outlined in this section.

These tables are currently based on Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) interviews carried out over the course of one year. We are exploring using an extended survey period (most likely three years) to produce these tables in the future. This would improve the reliability of estimates as they would capture information from a greater number of crime incidents. For example, in recent years information presented on the nature of injuries resulting from stranger violence has been based on interviews with around 100 victims captured in a single year of survey data. Using three years’ worth of data would increase this to around 300 victims. Increasing the number of incidents used to derive these figures would improve the reliability of estimates for all types of crime covered in these tables, particularly those that occur in relatively low volumes.

Nature of crime data based on a single year of interviews often show little change from year-to-year. The real value of these data tables is the insight they provide into changes over the medium- and long-term. Given the nature of a sample survey, where there are short-term changes seen in the data these can be difficult to interpret as they may reflect the inherent variability of the survey sample from one period to the next. The use of three years’ worth of survey data would help to minimise the effect of sample variability and provide a clearer indication of real trends.

If we are to make this change, we will also need to review the frequency with which we release these tables. If we were to use a three-year dataset, to avoid presenting overlapping time periods, we propose that these would be published every three years.

We would welcome views on these proposed changes. Please email these to crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk.