

Statistics update: The latest data on crime and violence affecting young people

This is our first regular statistics update, looking at the latest data on crime and violence affecting young people.

It includes: young people in the criminal justice system since the start of the pandemic; levels of crime and violence reported by police and the Office for National Statistics; and experimental statistics from the telephone operated crime survey of England and Wales.

February 2022

Statistics update - what's happening to crime and violence?

During the pandemic, the number of youth first time entrants to the youth justice system fell by the largest amount in eight years. Most types of offences, including violent crimes, were down. However, as restrictions have eased, police report rises in violence and robberies. And, despite falling arrests and stop and search numbers, some 10-17 year olds remain disproportionately affected.

The number of children in the criminal justice system fell

1

Proven offences by young people fell significantly during the pandemic

The number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system fell 20% in 2020/21, the largest fall in the past eight years. There was on average 560 young people in custody, a fall of 28%.

Violent crimes by young people decreased

2

Proven offences by young people fell 22%, and 18% for violent offences specifically. Offences involving weapons were also down 910, a 21% fall.

The North East reported the largest falls in youth convictions and cautions

3

All regions reported reductions in young people being convicted or cautioned. The North East had the highest percentage reduction, at 39%.

The average time from offence to completion at court increased

4

But courts were affected

Covid-19 restrictions limited court activity, with the average time from offence to sentencing or acquittal increasing by seven weeks to 219 days.

Bail increased as the use of remand changed

5

With court time limited, the use of bail increased. The number of young people being placed on unconditional bail and bail supervision rose 7% and 43% respectively.

Crime rates are still lower than pre-Covid-19 levels

6

More recently crimes have increased

Crime remains lower than in 2018/19, with over 250,000 fewer victim-based crimes between October to September recorded by the police, compared to 2020/21.

But crime has increased since the 'stay at home' order ended

7

Victim-based crime reported by the police rose 13% between March and September 2021. Violence against the person was up 12% and robberies 29%.

Boys and young people from certain ethnic backgrounds remain overrepresented

8

Some young people were disproportionately affected

There were 19% fewer arrests of young people aged 10-17. However, disproportionality remains high, with 85% of arrests being boys. Around 30% of young people who were arrested are from Black, Asian and mixed ethnic backgrounds in 2020/21, despite accounting for 18% of the population.

And there was a similar pattern among children who were stopped and searched

9

Stop and search shows a similar pattern, with high levels of disproportionality despite falling numbers. In 2020/21, 91% were on boys and 34% on young people from Black, Asian and mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Proven offences by young people fell significantly during the pandemic

Youth Justice Board (YJB) data shows continued falls in the number of young people in the youth justice system over the pandemic.

In 2020/21, first time entrants fell 20%, the second largest annual fall in the past decade¹. The youth custody population was also down, falling to 560, the lowest level in the past 10 years¹. Proven offending also fell, with around 38,500 in 2020/21, a reduction of 22% compared to 2019/20¹.

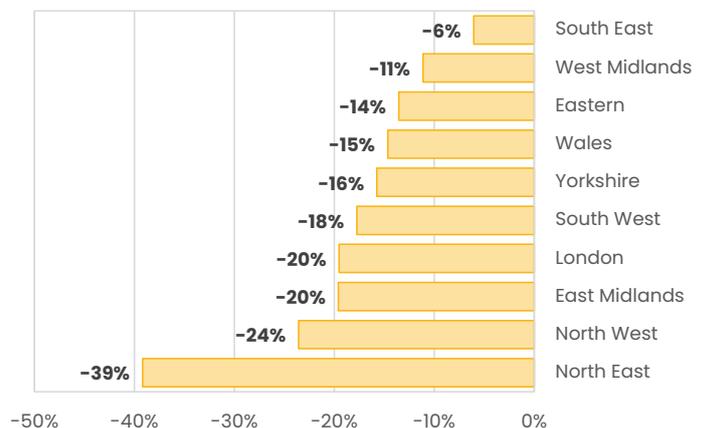
On violence specifically, proven offences fell 18%, with 2,656 fewer instances¹. This was also the case for crimes involving weapons, with 21% fewer convictions or cautions in 2020/21, compared to the year before¹. Despite falls, the share of offences that are violent rose, with roughly a third of all proven offences by young people involving violence in 2020/21, compared to one in five a decade ago¹.

All regions across England and Wales reported falls in the number of young people being convicted and cautioned. The North East reported the biggest reduction of 39%, compared to falls of 24% in the North West and 20% in the East Midlands and London².

Figure 1. Number of first time entrants to the youth justice system



Figure 2. Percentage change in convictions and cautions by region



¹ Youth justice statistics: 2020 to 2021 supplementary tables

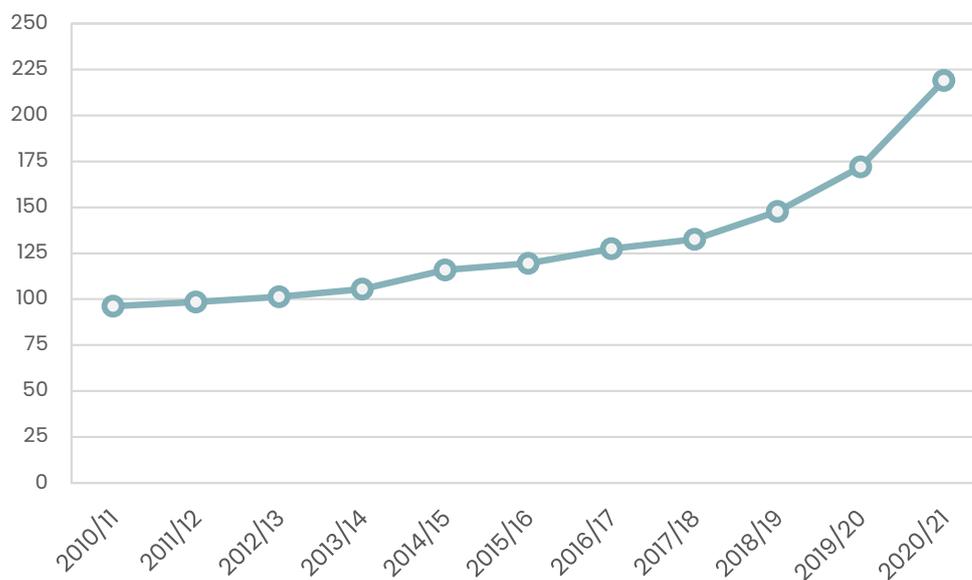
² Youth justice statistics: 2020 to 2021 local level open data

But courts were affected

The YJB data also shows that, during the national lockdowns, many courts limited their activities or closed entirely, leading to a backlog in cases. This led to the average time from offence to sentencing or acquittal for youth criminal cases to rise 27%, from 172 to 219 days, an increase of around seven weeks¹. This follows a wider trend, as the period from offence to sentencing or acquittal has more than doubled since 2010/2011¹.

Another consequence of the pandemic was the changes to the use of remand. Due to the limited court activity and backlog in cases, courts were more likely to use bail and other forms of community intervention, instead of remanding children to a local authority or youth detention accommodation. During Covid-19, the use of bail increased, with the number of young people being placed on unconditional bail and bail supervision rising 7% and 43% respectively¹.

Figure 3. Average days taken from offence to sentencing or acquittal at court



More recently crime has increased

Crime remains lower than in 2018/19, with over 250,000 fewer victim-based crimes between October to September recorded by the police, compared to 2020/21³. There were big falls for robberies, which were 26% lower over the period³. When surveyed, households also reported lower crime. The number of victims of violent crimes were 27% lower between 2018/19 and 2020/21, while there were 43% fewer victims of robberies over the same period.

However, since the 'stay-at-home' order ended in March 2021, offending has increased across England and Wales. Victim-based crime reported by the police rose 13% between March and September 2021⁴. Violent offending has also increased, with recorded rises of 12% for violence against the person and 29% for robberies⁴.

Whilst total reported crimes remain lower than pre-Covid-19 levels, the gap has been reducing. In September 2021, there were only 200 fewer victim-based crimes compared to September 2019³. Comparing March 2021 and March 2019, the gap was nearly 60,000³. Violence offences reported by the police exceeded the levels in September 2019, by over 33,000 offences³. This was largely driven by increases in stalking and harassment³.

Other police data, such as that from the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime, also shows a narrowing of the gap in violent offences, with recent monthly figures now being comparable to levels of violence in 2019.

Figure 4. Household victims of violent offences

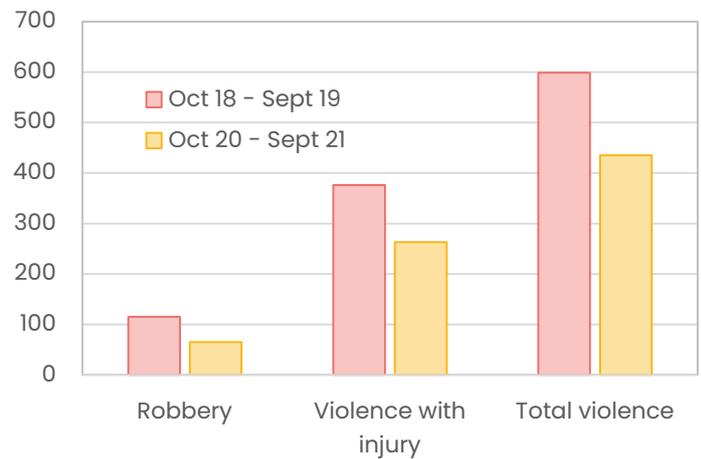
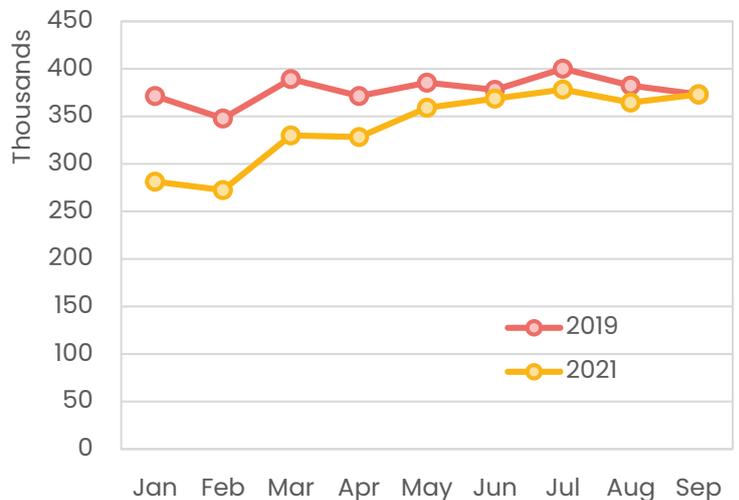


Figure 5. Victim-based crime recorded by the police



³ Crime in England and Wales: Police recorded crime quarterly data tables

⁴ Based on experimental statistics using the Crime Survey of England and Wales and the Telephone-operated Crime Survey of England and Wales within the Police recorded crime quarterly data tables

Some young people were disproportionately affected

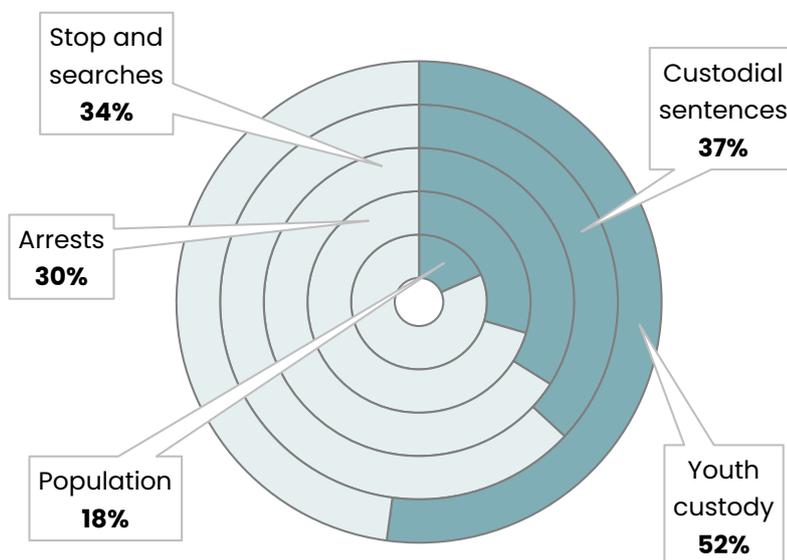
There were 19% fewer arrests of young people aged 10-17 when compared to pre-Covid-19 levels. However, disproportionality remains high. Boys continue to be overrepresented in arrest figures, making up 85% of arrests⁵. This is an increase from previous years, when 84% of arrests in 2020/21 were of boys, up from 82% in 2010/11⁵.

Almost a third of young people arrested were from Black, Asian and mixed ethnic backgrounds, despite accounting for 18% of the population⁶. This is even higher than in previous years, where the number of Black, Asian and mixed ethnic young people accounted for 28%-31% of arrests⁵.

Data on stopped and searches of young people shows a similar pattern. Young people from Black, Asian and mixed ethnic backgrounds accounted for 34% of stop and searches. More than 9 out of every 10 searches were of boys⁵.

Figure 6. Disproportionality across youth offending (2020/21)

These figures shows offending rates for children from Black, Asian and mixed ethnic backgrounds.



⁵ Police powers and procedures: Stop and search and arrests

⁶ Population estimates based on the 2011 census

