

Statistics update: The latest data on police recorded crime, youth victims of homicide and modern slavery

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

The May update includes the latest data on: levels of crime and violence reported by police; homicides as recorded in the Home Office's homicide index; and, child victims of modern slavery identified through the National Referral Mechanism.

May 2022

Statistics update (May 2022): The latest data on police recorded crime, youth victims of homicide and modern slavery

The latest police recorded crime figures show that violent crime now exceeds pre-pandemic levels. While overall levels of homicides fell during 2020/21, young people, particularly girls, have been disproportionately affected. And new figures on modern slavery show record numbers of young people being referred as potential victims to the National Referral Mechanism. We also summarise new analysis by the Department for Education on education-related characteristics of children who've committed offences.

Crime fell during the pandemic

1

Since lockdown measures ended crime has been rising

The total number of offences recorded by the police fell by 13% in 2020 compared to 2019. This includes homicides falling by 15%, robberies by 25%, and violence with injury by 9%.

However, offending has increased since lockdown restrictions were lifted

2

Victim-based crime reported by the police increased by 32% when comparing February and December 2021. Theft-related offences saw one of the largest increases, growing from around 93,000 to over 125,000.

Violent crime reported by the police now exceeds pre-Covid levels

3

From April to December 2019 there were 1.34m violent offences against the person. Over the same period in 2021, these offences were 1.59m, which is an increase of 19%. This includes homicides rising by 2%, violence with injury rising by 4%, and violence without injury rising by 11%.

Despite overall falls, victims aged 0-15 increased

4

Overall homicide fell during the first year of the pandemic, but child victims increased

The total number of homicide victims fell by 12% between 2019/20 and 2020/21 from 673 to 594. However, victims aged between 0-15 rose by 37% from 43 to 59.

Female victims saw the largest increases

5

Female victims of homicide aged 0-15 more than doubled, from 10 in 2019/20 to 24 in 2020/21. This resulted in the proportion of victims being girls increasing from 23% to 41%.

Many more referrals of young people who are suspected victims

6

There's growing evidence of the extent of child victims of modern slavery

The National Referral Mechanism reported 5,468 referrals of potential child victims in 2021. This is an increase of 9% from 5,028 in 2020 and significantly up from the 294 referrals in 2011.

And there are many more offences involving child victims

7

The police recorded 3,239 modern slavery offences involving child victims in 2020/21. This is an increase of 27% from the year before, where there were 2,547.

Since lockdown measures ended crime has been rising

Crime fell during the pandemic

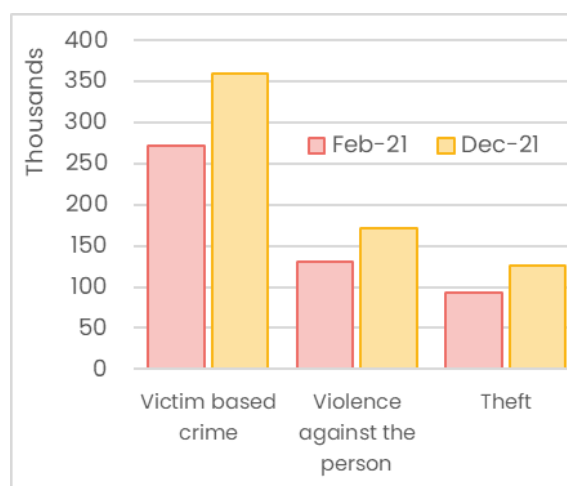
Police recorded crime figures show that crime fell during the Covid-19 pandemic. When comparing the total number of offences between 2019 and 2020, there were 13% fewer victim-based crimes recorded by the policeⁱ. Violent offences, such as homicides (-15%), robberies (-25%) and violence with injury (-9%), all fellⁱ. As reported in our February statistics update, proven offences by young people (-22%), including violent offences (-18%), also reduced during this periodⁱⁱ.

However, offending has increased since lockdown restrictions were lifted

By the end of February 2021, the 'stay at home' order had been lifted, and most day-to-day restrictions to slow the spread of Covid-19 had been removed. Since then, crime has been rising.

Police data shows that victim-based crime increased 32% when comparing February and December 2021, with over 87,000 additional offencesⁱ. This includes rises for violence against the person (+31%) and robberies (+37%)ⁱ. Theft-related offences saw one of the largest increases, from around 93,000, to over 125,000ⁱ.

Figure 1: Changes in select offences crime from February to December 2021



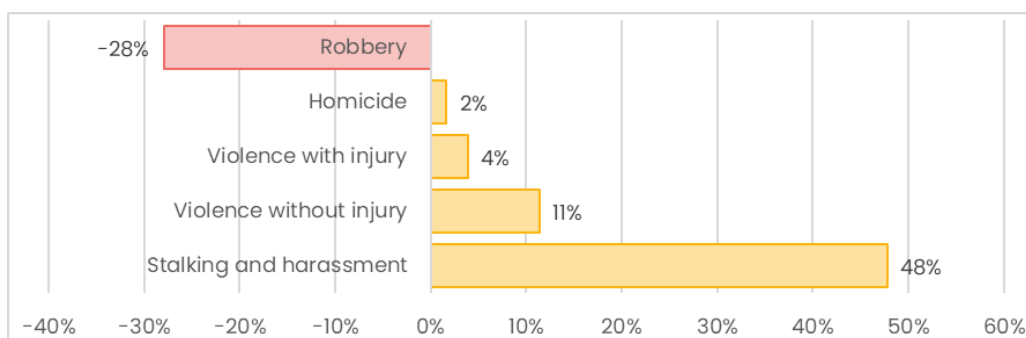
Violent crime reported by the police now exceeds pre-Covid levels

In the months leading up to the pandemic (between April and December 2019), there were 1.34m recorded violent offences against the person, of which 415,000 were for violence with injuryⁱ.

Despite the drop in crime during various national lockdowns, data from April to December 2021 shows that instances of many violent crimes have risen to even higher levels than before the pandemic. In this time period, there were more than 250,000 additional reports of violence against the person, an increase of 19% since 2019, of which more than 16,000 were for violence with injuryⁱ.

The most significant increase among offences that the police classify as violence against the person was for stalking and harassment, with 175,000 additional reported offences, an increase of 48%ⁱ. However, not all violent offences have returned to pre-Covid levels, such as robbery, which remains 28% lowerⁱ.

Figure 2: Percentage change in violent crimes - April-Dec 2019 to 2021



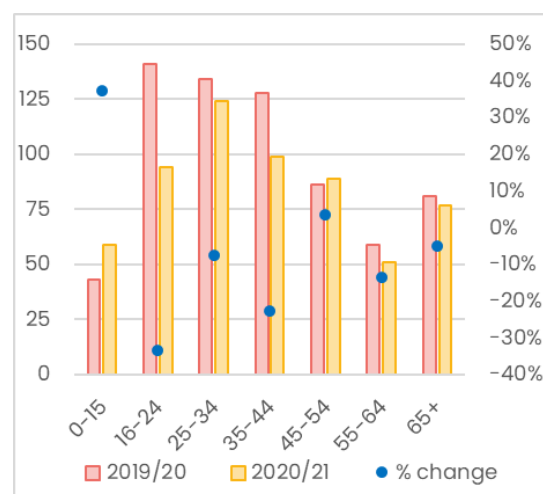
Overall homicide fell during the first year of the pandemic, but child victims increased

Despite overall falls, victims aged 0–15 increased

Recently the Home Office released the latest data from their homicide index for 2020/21 (the first full year of the pandemic), which contains detailed information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales.

These figures show that there were 594 victims of homicide between April 2020 and March 2021ⁱⁱ. This represents a decrease of 12% from the year before, where there were 673 between April 2019 and March 2020ⁱⁱⁱ. Despite the total number falling, victims aged between 0–15 rose by 37%, from 43 to 59ⁱⁱⁱ.

Figure 3: Percentage and actual change in homicide victims by age 2019/20 to 2020/21

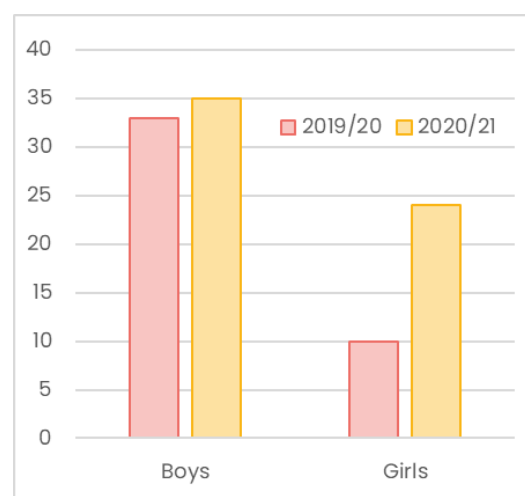


Female victims saw the largest increases

The most significant increase in child victims of homicide was among girls. Homicides of girls aged 0–15 more than doubled from 10 in 2019/20 to 24 in 2020/21ⁱⁱⁱ. This can be compared to an increase of 6% for boys, with an additional 2 victimsⁱⁱⁱ.

As a result of these increases, the proportion of victims aged 0–15 who were girls increased from 23% to 41%ⁱⁱⁱ. It's important to recognise that due to the small numbers of child victims, percentage changes year-on-year can be quite large. This means these recent increases might not be part of an emerging trend.

Figure 4: 0–15 victims of homicide by gender 2019/20 to 2020/21



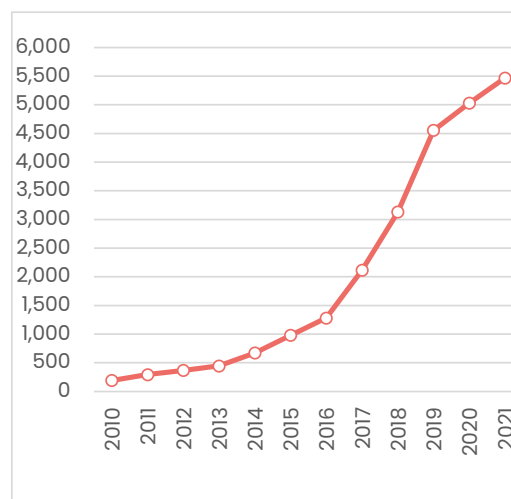
Growing evidence of more child victims of modern slavery

Many more referrals of young people who are suspected victims

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery^{iv} and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

In 2021 there were 5,468 referrals of potential child victims^v. This is an increase of 9% from 5,028 in 2020 and significantly up from 294 a decade ago in 2011^v. More than 9 out of every 10 of those referred were assessed to likely be a victim of modern slavery^v. It's unclear to what extent these numbers reflect increases in detection and reporting, or increased victimisation.

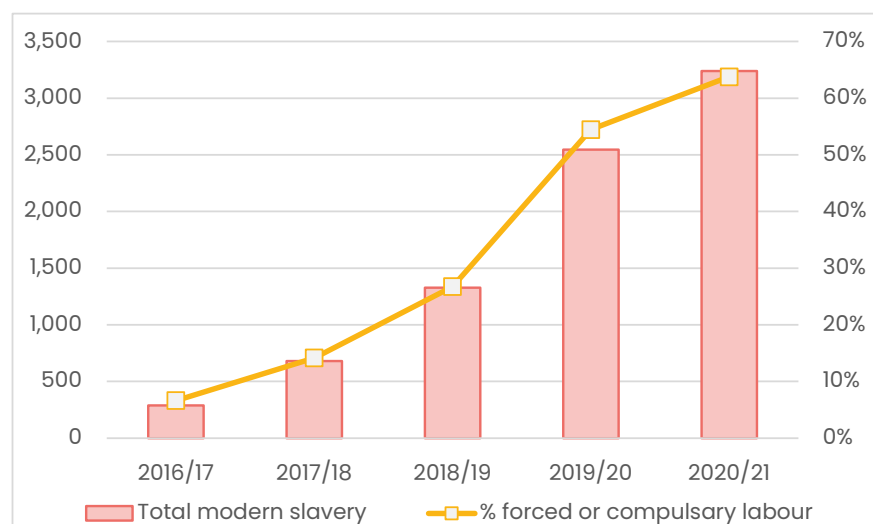
Figure 5: Under 18 referrals to the NRM



And there are many more offences involving child victims

Police data also shows a rise in detection and reporting of offences. The police recorded 3,239 modern slavery offences involving child victims in 2020/21^v. This is an increase of 27% from the year before, where there were 2,547, and significantly higher than 287 in 2016/17^v. These recent increases can largely be attributed to rises in the number of forced or compulsory labour offences. In 2016/17, this type of offence accounted for 7% of all modern slavery offences involving child victims, with 19 out of the total 287^v. However, in 2020/21, forced or compulsory labour accounted for 64% of the total victims (or 2,066 out of 3,239^v).

Figure 6: Child victims of modern slavery



A new report linking education and social care records with offending data

The Department for Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, have conducted a major new piece of data linking, which matches education and care records from all English state schools with offending records held in the Police National Computer. This is so that researchers and policymakers can better understand what drives violence. These records include more than 1.6m children and can't be used to identify or target any individual children.

The results of their first analysis of this data have recently [been published](#)^{vi}. Some of the main findings are:

Very few children have been cautioned or sentenced for an offence and even fewer were cautioned or sentenced for serious violence	5% of children had been cautioned or sentenced for an offence with 1% being cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence.
A large proportion of children who had been cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence did not have a previous offence.	61% had not been cautioned or sentenced for a previous offence.
Children who were cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence were more likely to have been suspended	82% of children who were either cautioned or convicted for a serious violence offence were once recorded as ever being suspended. However, only 6% of all suspended children were cautioned or convicted for a serious violence offence.
Children who were cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence were more likely to be recorded as a child in need	38% of children who were either cautioned or convicted for a serious violence offence were once recorded as being a child in need. However, only 6% of all children in need were cautioned or convicted for a serious violence offence.
Children who were cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence were more likely to have Special Educational Needs (SEN)	69% of children who were either cautioned or convicted for a serious violence offence were once recorded as having SEN. However, only 2% of all children with SEN were cautioned or convicted for a serious violence offence.

References

- i. [Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly data tables](#)
- ii. [February statistics update: What's happening to crime and violence?](#)
- iii. [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#)
- iv. [The Office for National Statistics, as part of their Child victims of modern slavery report, define modern slavery as "an umbrella term for all forms of slavery, human trafficking and exploitation." They define child victims as "anyone under the age of 18 years at the time of exploitation."](#)
- v. [Child victims of modern slavery in the UK: March 2022](#)
- vi. [Education, children's social care and offending: Descriptive Statistics](#)

