

Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland

Levels recorded since lockdown measures were introduced:

23rd March to 24th May 2020

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This is an exceptional release presenting police recorded crime statistics at Northern Ireland level in the period since Covid-19 lockdown measures were introduced on 23rd March. It is produced as an Official Statistic in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

All records from 1st April 2020 are currently subject to ongoing validation and quality assurance processes until publication of the financial year 2020/21 in May 2021; 3% of the records since 1st April 2020 have not yet been given a crime classification.

- In the nine weeks from 23rd March 2020 to 24th May 2020 compared with the same time period in 2019 overall police recorded crime has fallen by 27 per cent and crime has fallen across each of the main crime types.
- In the first week of lockdown the overall crime level was three fifths (62 per cent) of the expected weekly average, rising to more than four fifths (83 per cent) in the week beginning 18th May.
- Theft offences (excluding burglary) fell to three fifths of the expected weekly average during the first week of lockdown and have generally remained at this level in the weeks since then.



Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency



Keeping People Safe

1. What has been happening to levels of police recorded crime since lockdown measures were introduced on 23rd March 2020?

While crime levels remain lower than for the same period last year it should be noted that, with the exception of burglary, they are showing higher levels since 23rd March 2020.

When compared with the same period the previous year, in the nine weeks since lockdown measures were introduced on 23rd March 2020:

- Overall crime has fallen by 27 per cent.
- Violence against the person has fallen by 16 per cent.
 - Violence with injury has fallen by 30 per cent and without injury has fallen by more than a quarter.
 - Eight homicides have been recorded, compared with four in the same time period the previous year.
 - **Harassment:** In June 2019, increased compliance in recording offences within the harassment classification led to higher levels recorded from this date. This means that the two time periods being reported on within this release are not directly comparable and the increase shown in Table 1 should be viewed in this context. Crimes recorded within the harassment classification during the nine weeks 23rd March to 24th May 2020 are slightly lower when compared with what has been recorded during an average nine week period over 12 months to 22nd March 2020.
- Sexual offences have fallen by just over a third.
- Robberies are more than two fifths of the level seen in the previous year. Robbery of personal robbery has fallen by around two fifths, while robbery of business property has fallen from 26 to 15.
- Theft offences have fallen by 45 per cent.
 - Burglaries are more than two fifths lower.
 - Shoplifting is nearly three fifths lower.
 - Vehicle offences have fallen by 37 per cent.
- Criminal damage has fallen by just under 30 per cent.
- Drug offences have fallen by more than one fifth while public order offences have fallen by 27 per cent.

Figure 1 Percentage change in the main police recorded crime types, 23rd Mar'20 to 24th May'20 compared with 23rd Mar'19 to 24th May'19

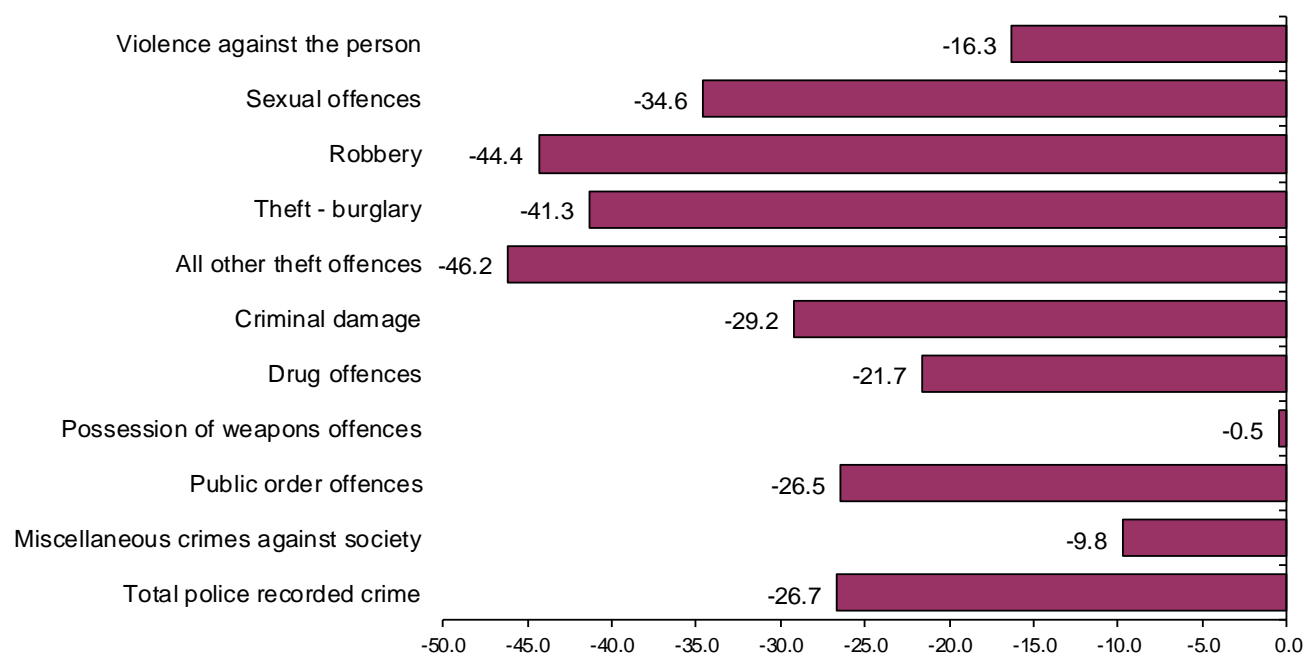


Table 1 Police recorded crime by crime type

Crime type	Numbers and percentages			
	23rd Mar 2019 to 24 th May 2019 ¹		23rd Mar 2020 to 24 th May 2020 ^{1,2}	
	Police recorded crime	change	% change ³	
VICTIM-BASED CRIME				
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	6,707	5,612	-1,095	-16.3
<i>Homicide</i>	4	8	4	-
<i>Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving</i>	31	6	-25	-
<i>Violence with injury</i>	2,409	1,679	-730	-30.3
<i>Violence without injury</i>	3,025	2,242	-783	-25.9
<i>Harassment⁴</i>	1,238	1,677	439	35.5
SEXUAL OFFENCES	630	412	-218	-34.6
<i>Rape</i>	192	120	-72	-37.5
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	438	292	-146	-33.3
ROBBERY	124	69	-55	-44.4
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	98	54	-44	-44.9
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	26	15	-11	-
THEFT OFFENCES	5,697	3,123	-2,574	-45.2
<i>Burglary</i>	1,164	683	-481	-41.3
<i>Theft from the person</i>	85	34	-51	-60.0
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	670	425	-245	-36.6
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	177	134	-43	-24.3
<i>Shoplifting</i>	1,177	491	-686	-58.3
<i>All other theft offences</i>	2,424	1,356	-1,068	-44.1
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	3,309	2,342	-967	-29.2
OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY				
DRUG OFFENCES	1,441	1,129	-312	-21.7
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	149	113	-36	-24.2
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	1,292	1,016	-276	-21.4
POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES	196	195	-1	-0.5
PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES	223	164	-59	-26.5
MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	482	435	-47	-9.8
TOTAL POLICE RECORDED CRIME	18,809	13,789	-5,020	-26.7

¹ Changes can be expected to in-year figures each time they are published. All records from 1st April 2019 are currently subject to ongoing validation and quality assurance processes.

² Individual crime types may not add to Total Police Recorded Crime as there will be some crimes yet to complete the validation process and be allocated to a crime classification. There are 304 crimes in the current time period yet to be classified.

³ '-' indicates that for offences recorded a percentage change is not reported because the base number of offences is less than 50.

⁴ An increase in compliance in relation to Home Office Counting Rules for recording harassment and malicious communications was seen from June 2019. This means that the figures for the two time periods are not directly comparable and the increase between the two time periods presented above should be seen in this context.

2. What are the weekly trends?

Figures 2 to 6 show the weekly totals since Monday 6th January 2020 for the main crime types. These are compared with the average weekly levels recorded in the 12 months to 22nd March 2020, i.e. prior to the introduction of the lockdown measures on March 23rd. Please note that these charts are not all shown to the same scale.

Falling crime levels can be seen from week beginning Monday 16th March, with the lowest level of overall crime recorded the following week. Easter fell between the 10th and 14th April and this may have had some influence on the slightly higher levels seen across some crime classifications in the week beginning 6th April compared with the following week.

The week beginning 18th May is showing the highest weekly total for overall crime (Figure 2). The number of crimes yet to be classified to a crime type (304) should be taken into account when looking at the latest totals for the crime classifications presented in Figures 3 to 6.

Figure 2 Police recorded crime, weekly totals from Monday 6th January 2020 compared with the average weekly crime in the 12 months to 22nd March 2020

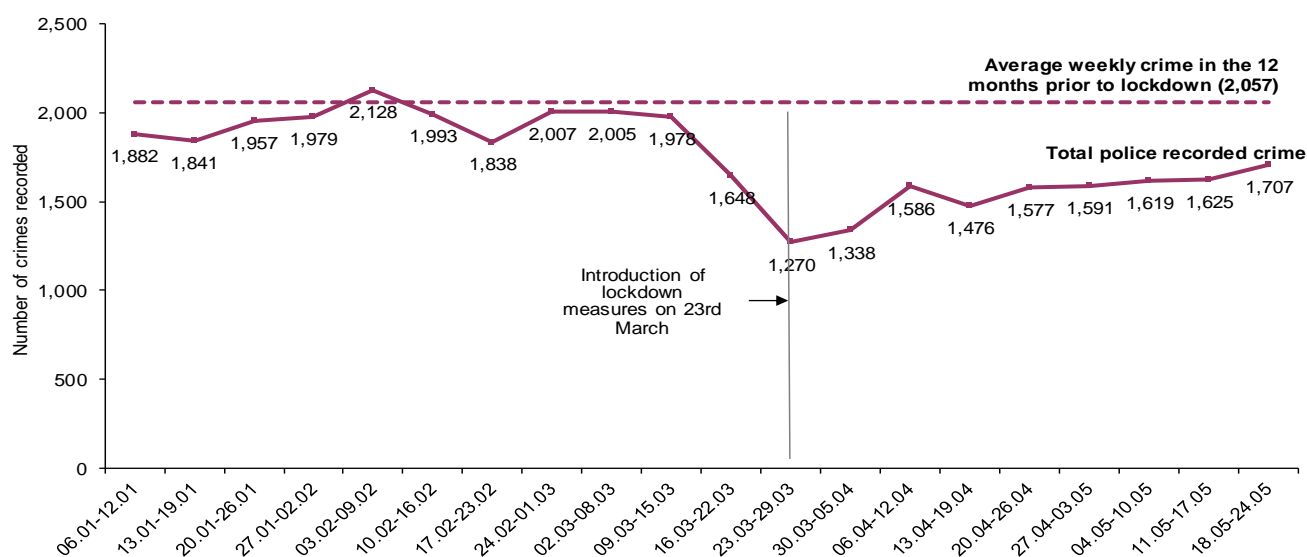


Figure 3 Violence against the person, weekly totals from Monday 6th January 2020 compared with the average weekly crime in the 12 months to 22nd March 2020

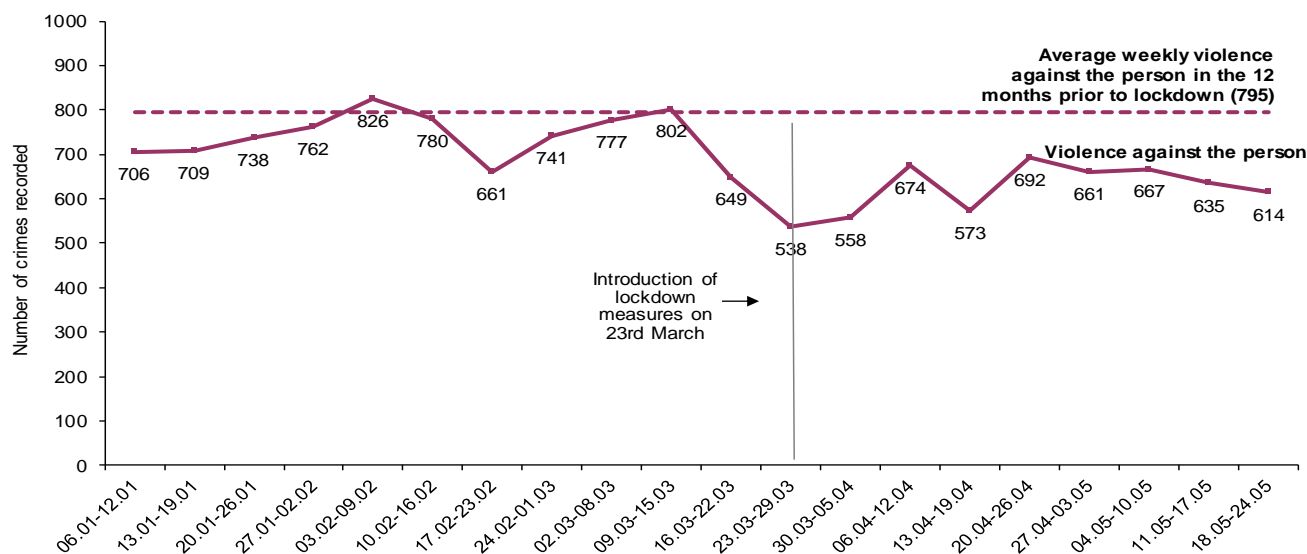


Figure 4 Burglary, weekly totals from Monday 6th January 2020 compared with the average weekly crime in the 12 months to 22nd March 2020

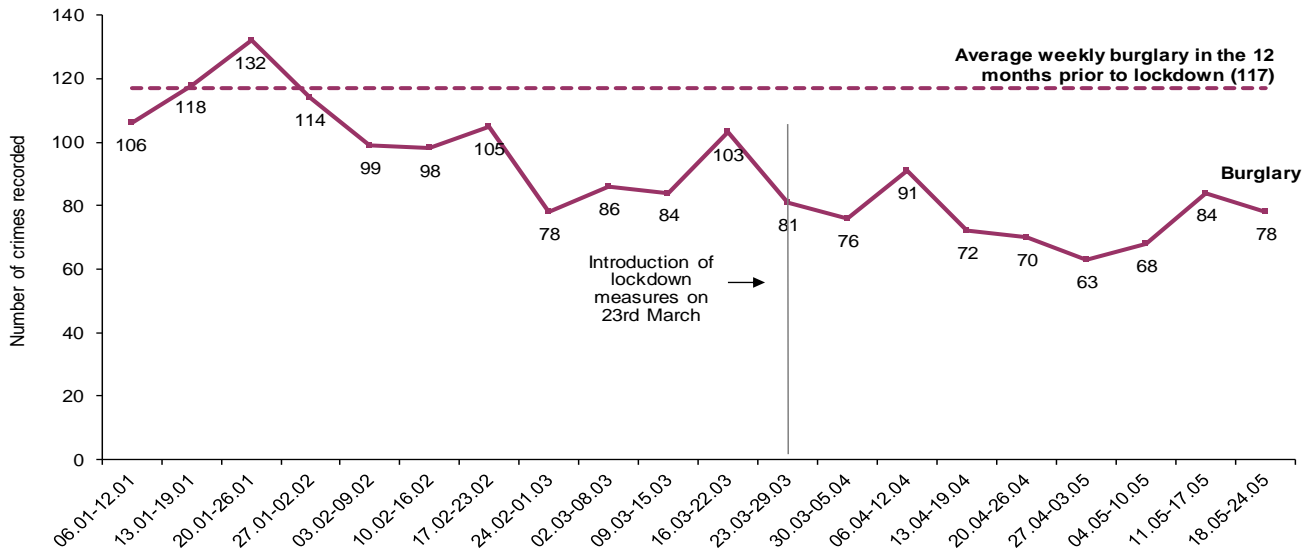


Figure 5 Theft (excluding burglary), weekly totals from Monday 6th January 2020 compared with the average weekly crime in the 12 months to 22nd March 2020

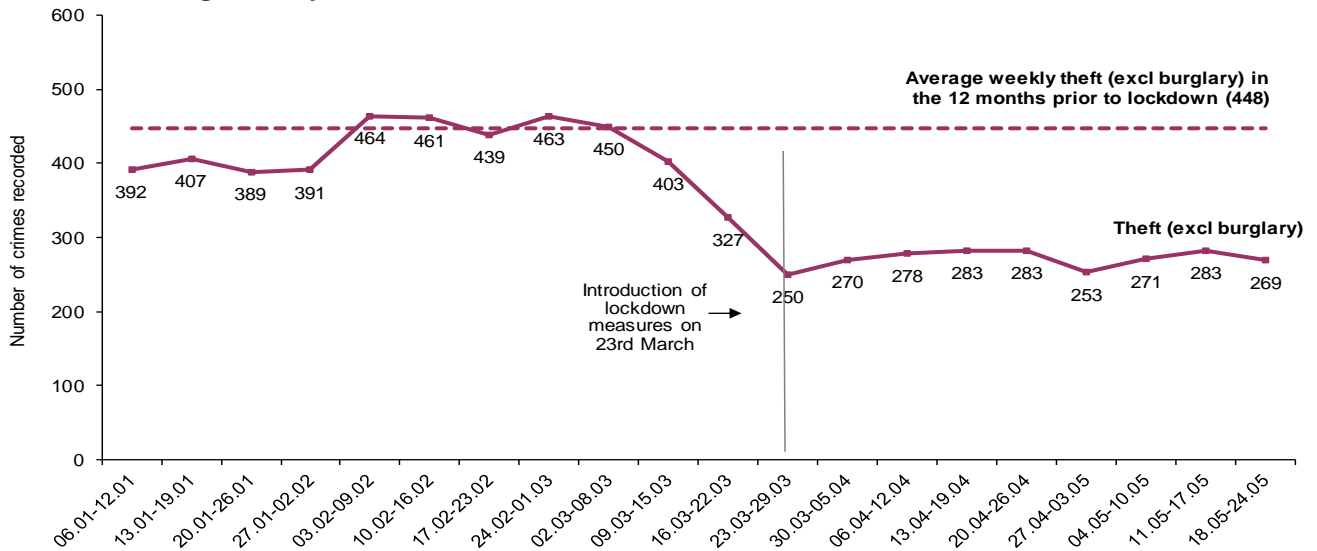
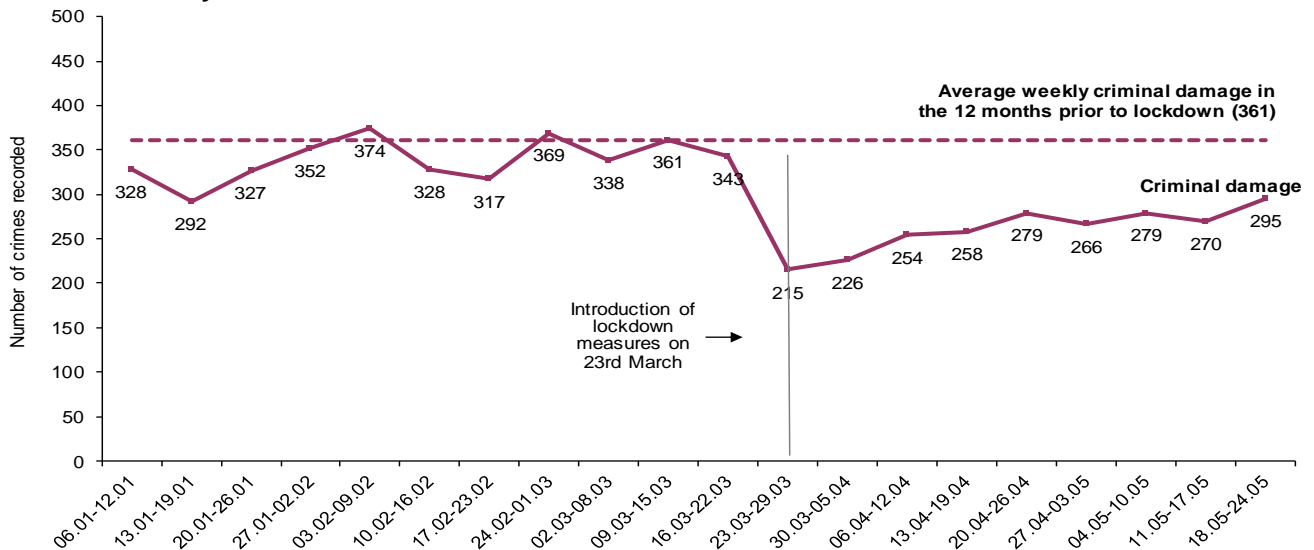


Figure 6 Criminal damage, weekly totals from Monday 6th January 2020 compared with the average weekly crime in the 12 months to 22nd March 2020



3. Background and Data Quality

Coverage

Statistics on police recorded crime in Northern Ireland are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). They are recorded in compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules and further details of recording practices are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics](#).

Figures were compiled on 2nd June 2020; as of that date 97% of the records for 1st April to 24th May 2020 have been validated and 3% have not yet been given a crime classification. Normally at least 98% of records would be validated and classified by the time figures are published.

Finalised figures covering the 12 months to 31 March 2020 (financial year 2019/20) were published on 15 May 2020. A full [publication schedule](#) is available on the PSNI website.

Schedule for publications until 25th June, after which the normal publication schedule will resume

13 th May	Weekly update covering 23 rd March to 3 rd May
15 th May	Publication of financial year 2019/20
20 th May	Weekly update covering 23 rd March to 10 th May
27 th May	Weekly update covering 23 rd March to 17 th May
3 rd June	Weekly update covering 23 rd March to 24 th May
10 th June	Weekly update covering 23 rd March to 31 st May
17 th June	Weekly update covering 23 rd March to 7 th June
25 th June	Monthly update covering the 12 months to 31 st May

Web links to other information you may be interested in

Police Recorded Crime Statistics Annual Trends: The latest publication covering financial years 1998/99 to 2018/19 was published on 8 November 2019 and can be accessed through: <https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/>

Crime Outcomes: The latest publication presenting the wider outcomes framework within PSNI and summarising the outcomes that have been assigned to crimes recorded by the police between 2015/16 and 2018/19 was published on 29 November 2019. The publication can be accessed through: <https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/>

Further details on Police Recorded Crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland](#), and in the [Police Recorded Crime Statistics Quality Report](#). These are reference guides with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications which are key to the production and presentation of police recorded crime statistics.

Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey: Results from this survey are available on the Department of Justice website: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/safe-community-survey-publications>

NINIS: Figures are available for a range of additional geographic areas through the [Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System \(NINIS\)](#). These figures are updated on an annual basis.

Crime Mapper: Provisional management information drawn from police anti-social behaviour and crime figures, published at street level each month, is available through the [police crime mapping website](#). The figures on the crime mapping website will differ from those provided in this release as they have been extracted from the police administrative system on different dates, and also require a grid reference in order to be mapped.

Police Recorded Crime in England & Wales: Police recorded crime figures are included within the publications on Crime in England and Wales, which are available from the Crime and justice webpage: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice>.

Copies of other PSNI publications are available from the PSNI website: <https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/>

We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided on the cover page.