

# Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland

Levels recorded since lockdown measures were introduced:

23<sup>rd</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 are currently subject to ongoing validation and quality assurance processes until publication of the financial year 2020/21 in May 2021; 2.3% of the records since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 have not yet been given a crime classification.

- In the ten weeks from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 compared with the same time period in 2019 overall police recorded crime has fallen by 24 per cent and crime has fallen across each of the main crime types, with the exception of possession of weapons offences. [Figure 1 & Table 1]
- In the first week of lockdown the overall crime level was three fifths (62 per cent) of the expected weekly average. In the week beginning 25<sup>th</sup> May the level reached 94 per cent and was comparable with some of the weekly totals seen prior to lockdown. [Figure 2]
- 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. [Figure 5]



Northern Ireland  
Statistics and Research Agency

Keeping People Safe



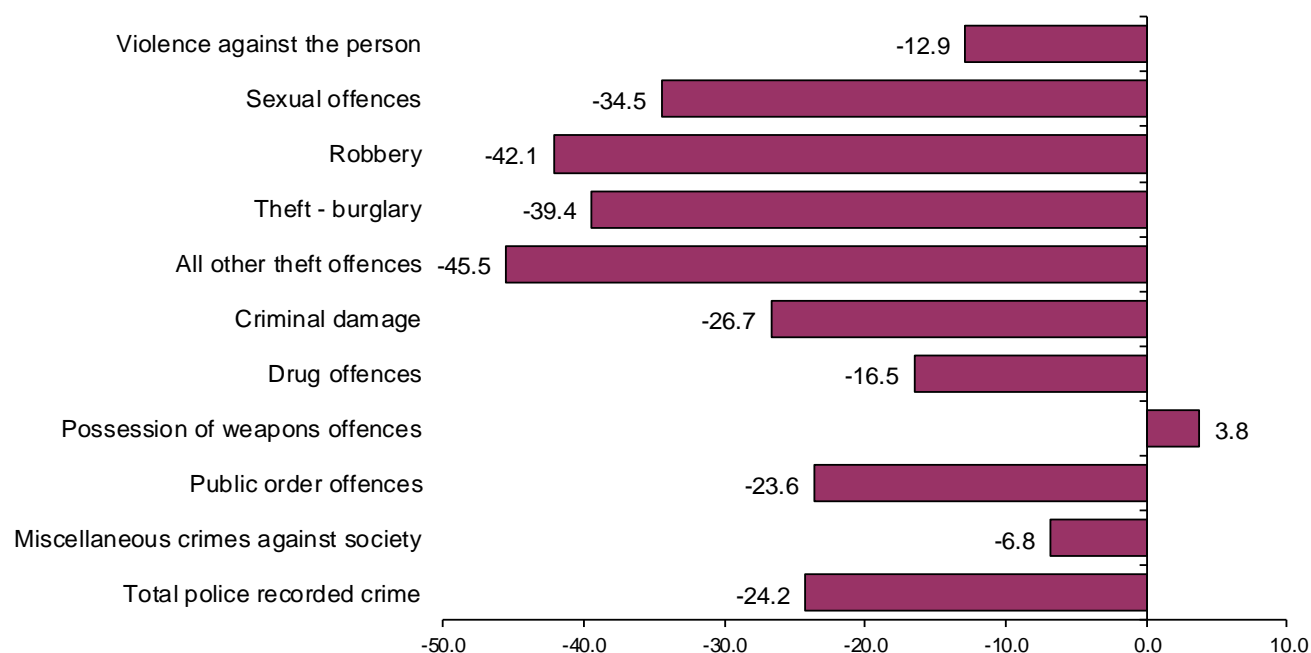
# 1. What has been happening to levels of police recorded crime since lockdown measures were introduced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020?

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 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

When compared with the same period the previous year, in the ten weeks since lockdown measures were introduced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020:

- Overall crime has fallen by 24 per cent.
- Violence against the person has fallen by 13 per cent.
  - Violence with injury has fallen by 26 per cent and violence without injury has fallen by 22 per cent.
  - 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 ten weeks 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 are roughly the same when compared with what has been recorded during an average ten week period over 12 months to 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 27 to 15.
- Theft offences have fallen by 44 per cent.
  - Burglaries are nearly two fifths lower.
  - Shoplifting is nearly three fifths lower.
  - Vehicle offences have fallen by 37 per cent.
- Criminal damage has fallen by 27 per cent.
- Drug offences have fallen by 17 per cent while public order offences have fallen by 24 per cent.

**Figure 1 Percentage change in the main police recorded crime types, 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar'20 to 31<sup>st</sup> May'20 compared with 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar'19 to 31<sup>st</sup> May'19**



**Table 1 Police recorded crime by crime type**

Crime type	Numbers and percentages			
	23rd Mar 2019		23rd Mar 2020	
	to 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2019 <sup>1</sup>	to 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2020 <sup>1,2</sup>	change	% change <sup>3</sup>
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>				
<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON</b>	7,480	6,516	-964	-12.9
<i>Homicide</i>	4	8	4	-
<i>Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving</i>	33	6	-27	-
<i>Violence with injury</i>	2,689	1,993	-696	-25.9
<i>Violence without injury</i>	3,340	2,596	-744	-22.3
<i>Harassment<sup>4</sup></i>	1,414	1,913	499	35.3
<b>SEXUAL OFFENCES</b>	705	462	-243	-34.5
<i>Rape</i>	215	134	-81	-37.7
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	490	328	-162	-33.1
<b>ROBBERY</b>	133	77	-56	-42.1
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	106	62	-44	-41.5
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	27	15	-12	-
<b>THEFT OFFENCES</b>	6,300	3,512	-2,788	-44.3
<i>Burglary</i>	1,274	772	-502	-39.4
<i>Theft from the person</i>	95	36	-59	-62.1
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	735	460	-275	-37.4
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	193	158	-35	-18.1
<i>Shoplifting</i>	1,328	554	-774	-58.3
<i>All other theft offences</i>	2,675	1,532	-1,143	-42.7
<b>CRIMINAL DAMAGE</b>	3,674	2,693	-981	-26.7
<b>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>				
<b>DRUG OFFENCES</b>	1,586	1,324	-262	-16.5
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	168	139	-29	-17.3
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	1,418	1,185	-233	-16.4
<b>POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES</b>	213	221	8	3.8
<b>PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES</b>	237	181	-56	-23.6
<b>MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>	530	494	-36	-6.8
<b>TOTAL POLICE RECORDED CRIME</b>	<b>20,858</b>	<b>15,803</b>	<b>-5,055</b>	<b>-24.2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 323 crimes in the current time period yet to be classified.

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

<sup>4</sup> 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?

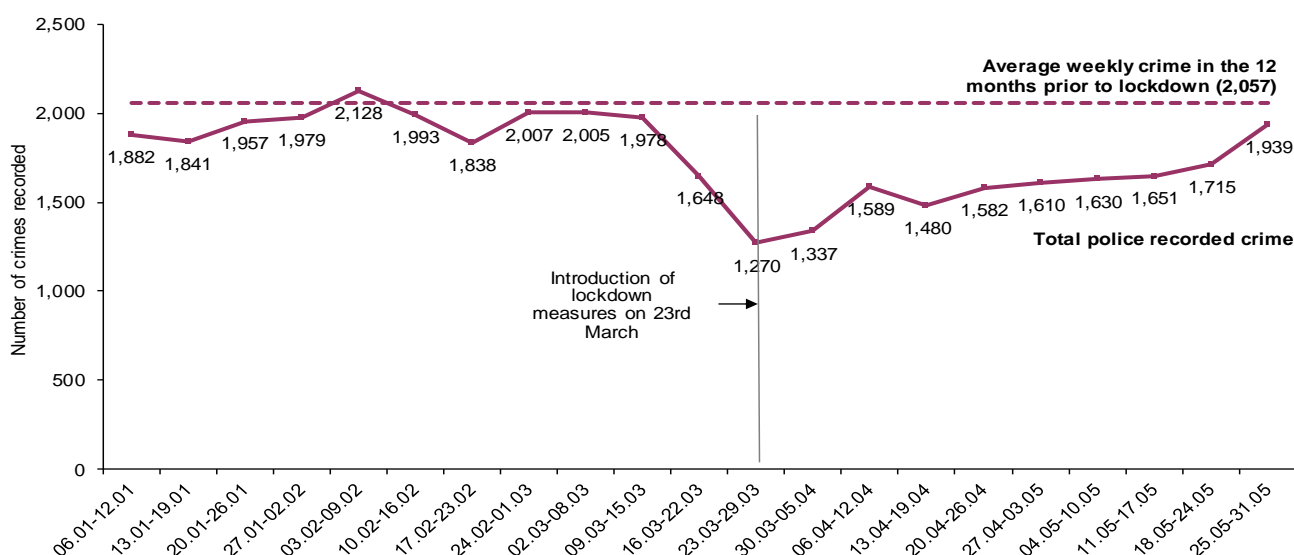
Figures 2 to 6 show the weekly totals since Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020 for the main crime types. These are compared with the average weekly levels recorded in the 12 months to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020, i.e. prior to the introduction of the lockdown measures on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please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

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

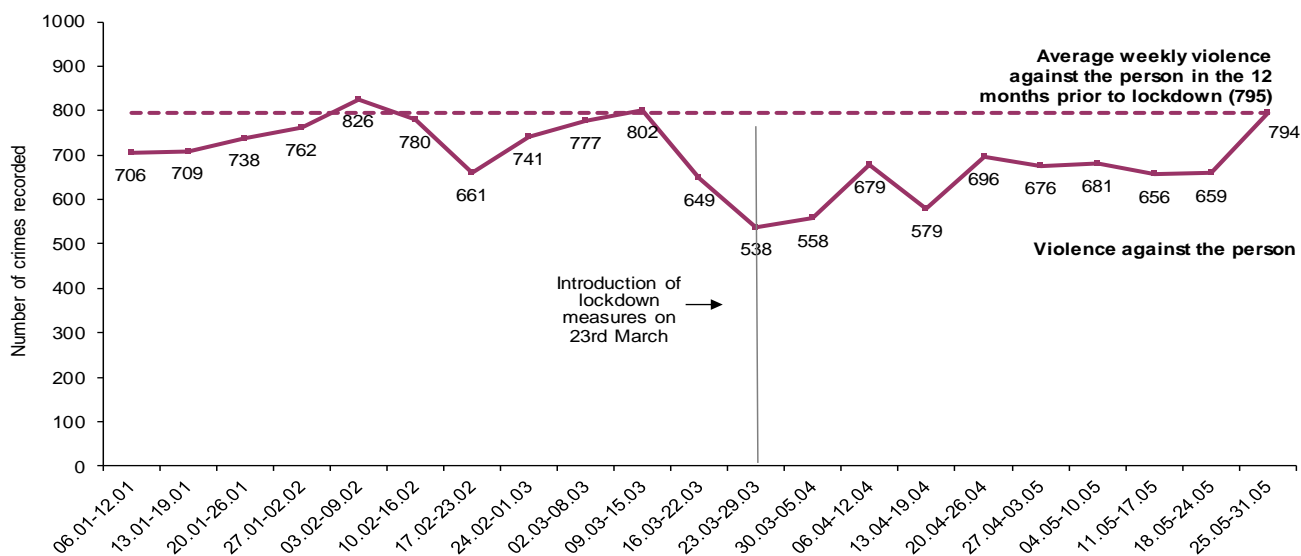
The week beginning 25<sup>th</sup> May is showing the highest weekly total for overall crime (Figure 2) since the lockdown measures were introduced, a level comparable with some of the weekly totals seen prior to lockdown. The number of crimes yet to be classified to a crime type (323) should be taken into account when looking at the latest totals for the crime classifications presented in Figures 3 to 6.

Violence against the person offences (Figure 3) in the week beginning 25<sup>th</sup> May are 135 higher than the previous week and higher than most of the weekly totals seen since early January 2020.

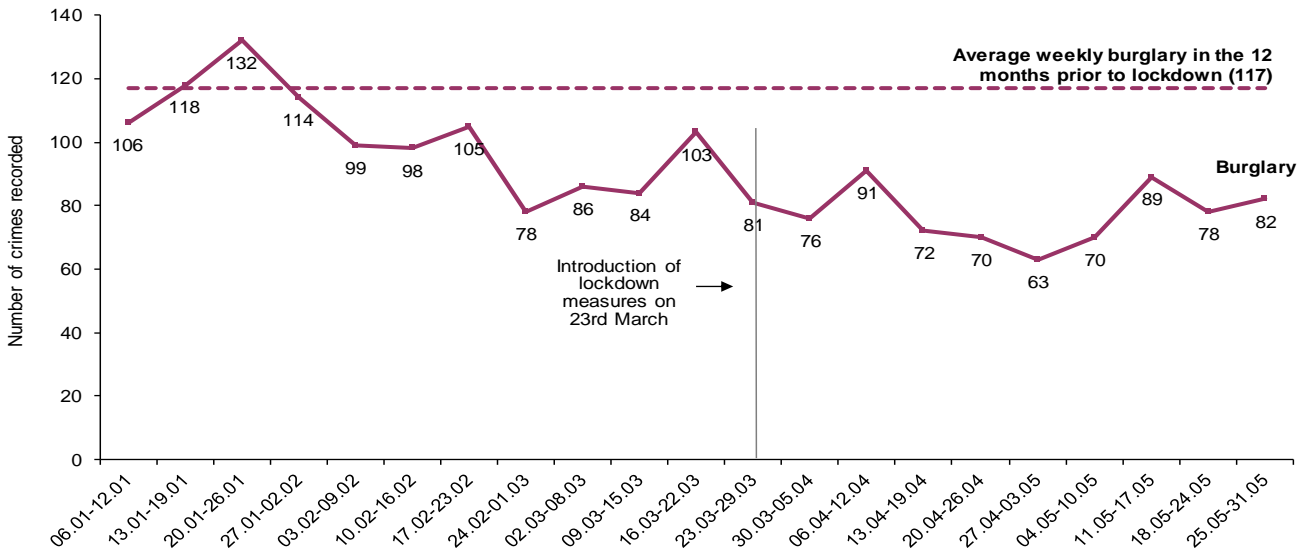
**Figure 2 Police recorded crime, weekly totals from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020 compared with the average weekly crime in the 12 months to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020**



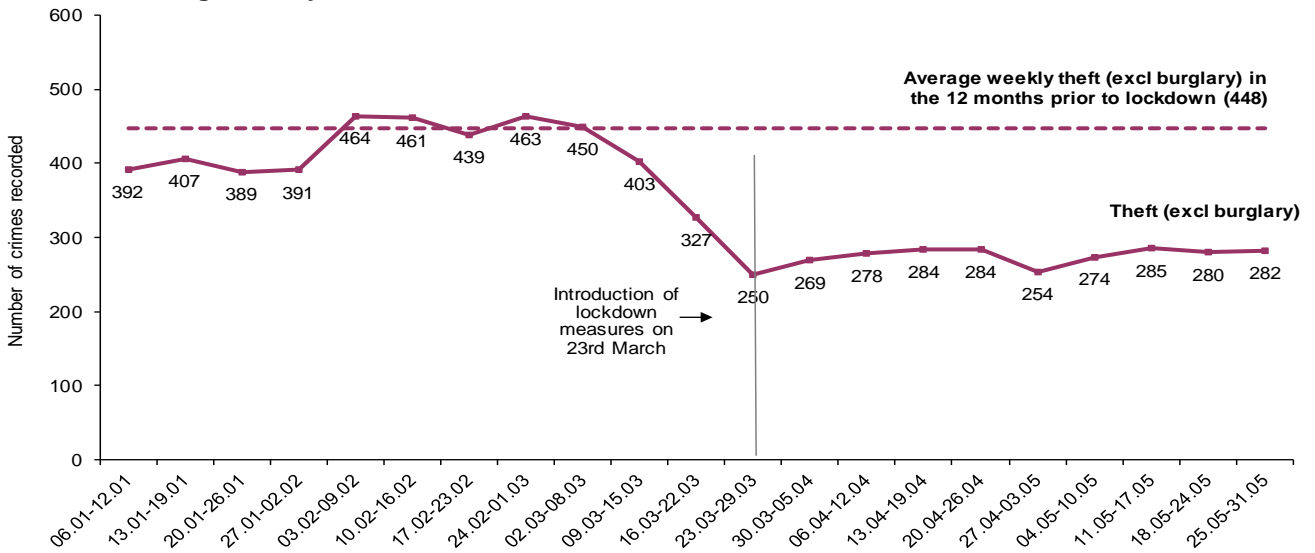
**Figure 3 Violence against the person, weekly totals from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020 compared with the average weekly crime in the 12 months to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020**



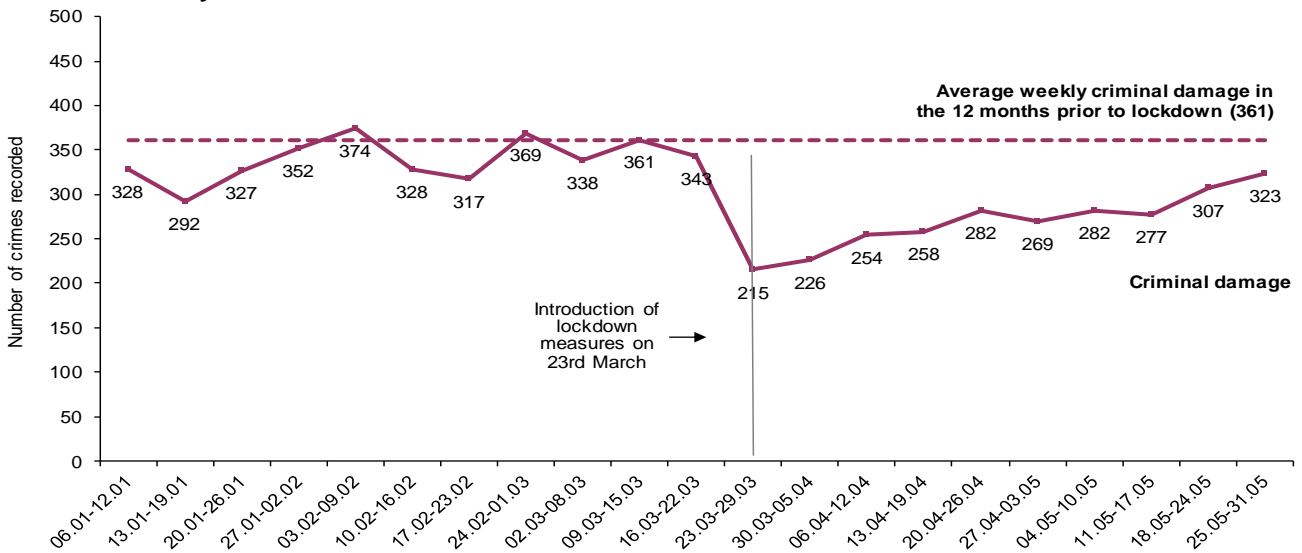
**Figure 4 Burglary, weekly totals from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020 compared with the average weekly crime in the 12 months to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020**



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



**Figure 6 Criminal damage, weekly totals from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020 compared with the average weekly crime in the 12 months to 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020; as of that date 97.7% of the records for 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 have been validated and 2.3% 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 25<sup>th</sup> June, after which the normal publication schedule will resume

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