

# Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland

## Update to 31 March 2020

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Police recorded crime has shown an overall downwards trend over the last sixteen years.

In 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020:

- There were 106,585 recorded offences in Northern Ireland, an increase of 5,731 (5.7%) when compared with the previous 12 months (2018/19).
- Nine of the eleven policing districts experienced a higher level of crime.
- Increased crime levels were seen in violence against the person offences, criminal damage and drug offences while certain theft offences including burglary and vehicle offences showed falling levels.



Northern Ireland  
Statistics and Research Agency



Keeping People Safe

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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.

# 1. Things you need to know about this release

## 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](#).

This release presents statistics relating to police recorded crime to 31 March 2020 (financial year 2019/20). Revisions have been applied to figures recorded in previous financial years.

All tables and charts in the bulletin, along with supplementary data, are available from the PSNI website in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

The next update covering the 12 months to 31 May 2020 will be published on 25 June 2020. A full [publication schedule](#) is available on the PSNI website.

### **NATIONAL STATISTICS STATUS**

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and as producers, it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

Police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland retained designation as National Statistics in February 2016 following a full [assessment](#) against the [Code of Practice](#).

Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Moved away from shared oversight to the introduction of a dedicated Crime Registrar post to oversee adherence to and implementation of Home Office requirements on process and quality.
- Reviewed and enhanced the format of the monthly bulletins.
- Enhanced the amount of information available to users in our annual trends publication, for example more detailed analysis on victims of crime.
- Provided a greater range of tables, pivot tables and charts within in our publications to enhance presentation of the information in a more user friendly way.
- Increased the range of information available through the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service ([NINIS](#)), with data made available for the first time through [Open Data NI](#).
- Continued to conduct regular consultation with internal and external users, for example via a customer satisfaction survey to obtain feedback and suggestions for improvements, with [results](#) published on the PSNI statistics website.

### **Strengths and Limitations of Police Recorded Crime Statistics and Alternative Measures of Crime**

While this update presents the level of crime recorded by the police, there is an alternative but complementary measure of crime, the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS) previously known as the Northern Ireland Crime Survey, which is published by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland. Each source of crime information has different strengths and limitations but can be looked at together to provide a more comprehensive picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone.

Details around the need for both recorded crime figures and the NISCS can be found in the Technical Annex of the bulletin [Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2018/19 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey](#). Both of these measures of crime inform public debate about crime and support the development and monitoring of policy.

Unlike the NISCS, police recorded crime figures do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police; they also exclude those crimes that are not recorded in order to comply with the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR). They do cover crimes against those aged under 16, organisations such as businesses, and crimes 'against the state' i.e. with no immediate victim (e.g. possession of drugs). It was estimated in 2018/19 that around 39 per cent of NISCS comparable crime was reported to the police in Northern Ireland although this varied for individual offence types.

Like any administrative data, police recorded crime statistics are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. These issues need to be taken into account when using these data.

### **Points to note in this bulletin**

**Revisions:** Revisions to figures for previous financial years are applied on an annual basis. For further details see Section 7. Background and Data Quality.

**Harassment (including malicious communications):** Recording of malicious communications started on 1st April 2017. A Home Office change introduced in April 2018 requires harassment to be recorded in addition to the most serious additional victim based offence. Both of these changes in recording practice, along with increasing awareness of the application of these rules in the recording process, will have contributed to increased levels recorded in the overall harassment classification.

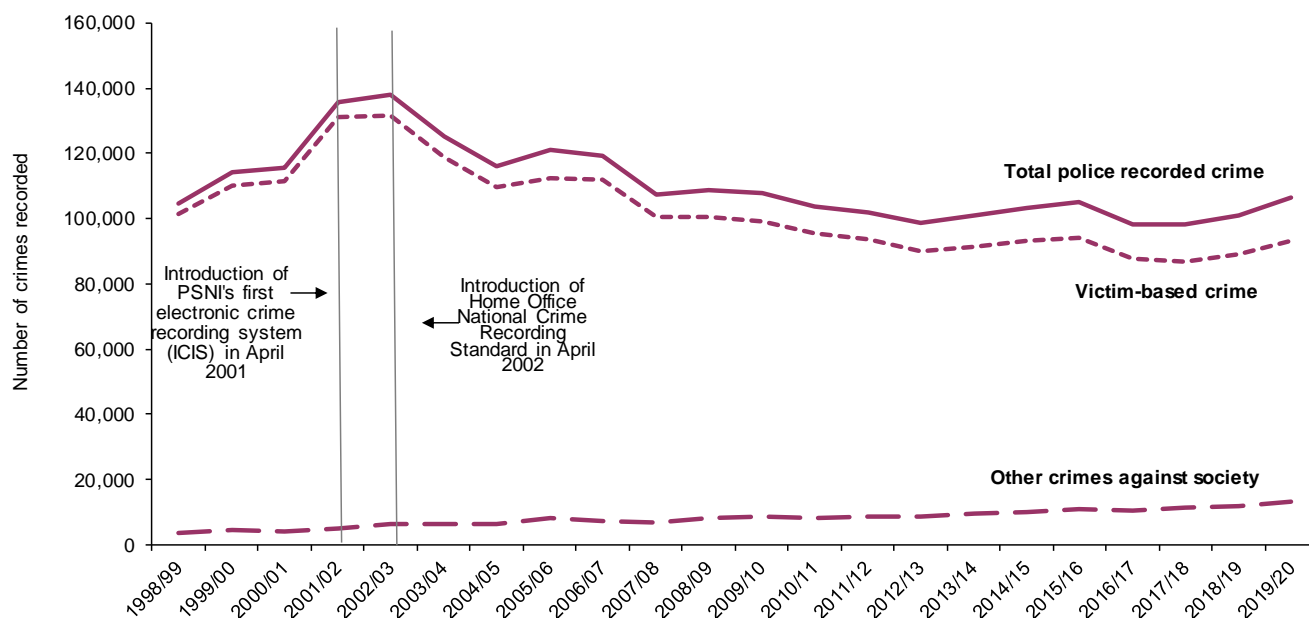
**Making off without payment:** PSNI worked with the Petrol Retailer's Association and Retail NI to introduce a pilot scheme (March 2017) where the petrol station deals with non payment of fuel through the Civil Debt Recovery process, allowing police to focus on those who are deliberately seeking to avoid paying for their fuel. Where a petrol station in the pilot area makes a report of MOWP to police this is still recorded as an offence as per HOCR guidance. Once police confirm no aggravating factors exist, there is no additional requirement for police intervention; however the strict cancellation criteria in the HOCR means that it is not possible to cancel such MOWP reports leading to an increase in the number of these offences remaining recorded. This pilot scheme was extended to all policing districts in March 2018 and may have contributed to the increase seen in the classification of 'All other theft offences' seen in 2018/19.

**Action Fraud:** Figures relating to fraud and cyber crime occurring in Northern Ireland and provided to PSNI are available in the accompanying [spreadsheet](#).

## 2. What is happening to levels of police recorded crime over the longer term?

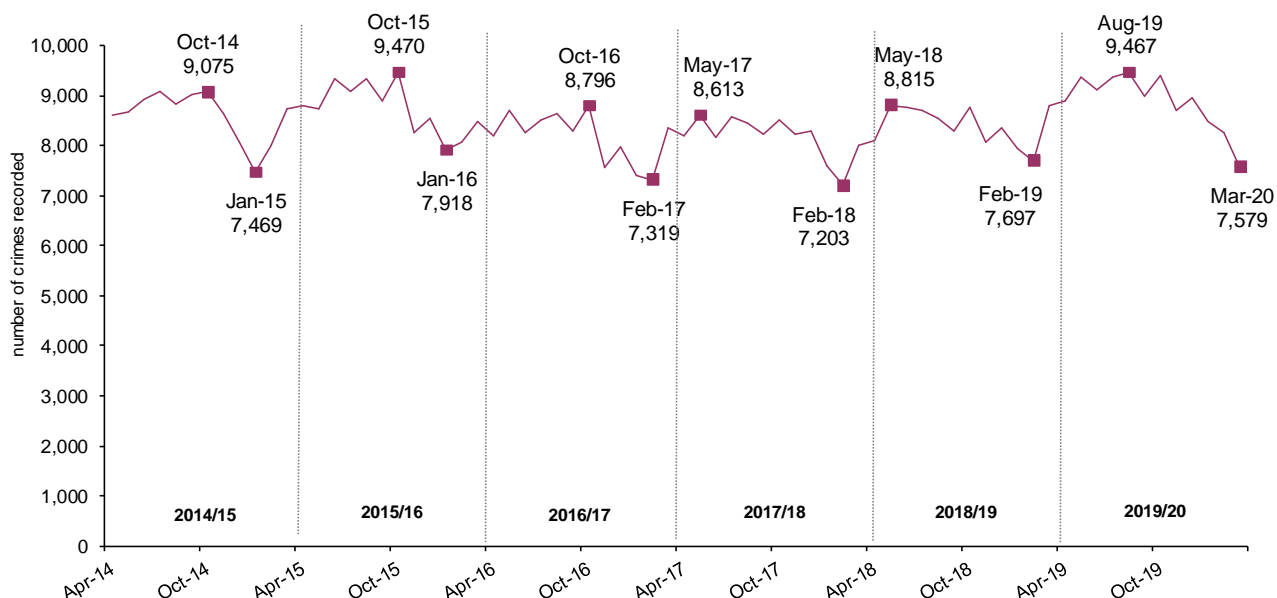
Police recorded crime moved in a generally downwards direction between 2002/03 and 2016/17, falling by nearly 30 per cent. Increases have been seen over the last three years and the level recorded in 2019/20 is 23 per cent lower than the peak in 2002/03. When considering the overall reduction in crime, falls in property crimes such as burglary, robbery, criminal damage and vehicle offences have contributed to this. Other crimes against society have moved in an upwards direction, with drug offences contributing to the majority of this rise.

**Figure 1 Trends in police recorded crime since 1998/99**



Crime generally is higher in the months of March to September and lower in the November to February period, although more recently the monthly variation has lessened slightly.

**Figure 2 Police recorded crime each month April 2014 to March 2020, showing highest and lowest levels in each financial year**



More detailed statistics are available through the publication [Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2018/19](#).

The following crime classifications showed their highest levels in the 12 months to March 2020 (financial year 2019/20) since the start of the data series in 1998/99. [Table 1 and accompanying [spreadsheet](#) Table 11]

- **Violence against the person:** At 41,329 this is 4,904 (13.5 per cent) higher than the previous 12 months (2018/19) and, following a generally upwards trend throughout the data series, is more than twice the level recorded in 1998/99.
- **Violence without injury:** A change in recording practice in the Home Office Counting Rules means that Violence without injury is comparable from 2003/04 onwards. Since that year, Violence without injury has increased by 88.7 per cent to reach 17,652 offences recorded.
- **Harassment:** The Harassment time series has been impacted by the introduction of malicious communications recording which started on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and also a change in recording practice in the Home Office Counting Rules in April 2018 requiring harassment to be recorded in addition to the most serious additional victim based offence. Both of these changes have seen levels increase, particularly over the last 12 months where there was an increase of 4,788 (90.8 per cent) to 10,062 crimes recorded. The Harassment classification is the main contributor to the increase in overall police recorded crime in 2019/20. [for further details see Points to Note on page 3]
- **Sexual offences:** Sexual offences increased by 22 to reach 3,588, three times higher than the lowest level recorded in 2000/01. Rape offences have shown a fall in the last 12 months to 1,013 offences, the first decline in the level since 2012/13. However, the number of rape offences recorded in 2019/20 is more than four times higher than the lowest level recorded in 2000/01 (232 offences).
- **Drug offences:** The number of drug offences recorded increased by 793, to reach 7,843, more than seven times higher than the lowest level recorded in 2001/02.
- **Possession of weapons offences:** The number of possession of weapons offences increased by 42 to 1,103, three times higher than the level recorded in 1998/99.
- **Miscellaneous crimes against society:** Offences within this classification rose by 143 to 2,964, nearly twice the level recorded in 1998/99.

The following classifications recorded their lowest levels in the 12 months to March 2020 (financial year 2019/20) since the start of the data series in 1998/99. [Table 1 and accompanying [spreadsheet](#) Table 11]

- **Violence with injury:** As with violence without injury, a change in recording practice in the Home Office Counting Rules means that this classification is comparable from 2003/04 onwards. The latest figure of 13,431 shows a fall of 25.6 per cent when compared with the highest level of 18,042 which was recorded in 2006/07.
- **Burglary:** Levels of burglary were at their highest in 2002/03 with 18,531 offences recorded. There has since been an overall downwards trend and the latest figure of 6,078 is a third of the level seen in 2002/03.
- **Vehicle offences:** As with burglary, vehicle offences were at their highest in 2002/03 with 20,850 recorded. This peak was also followed by a mainly downwards trend and the latest figure of 3,272 is one sixth of the level recorded in 2002/03.

Other main classifications have shown the following trends [Table 1 and accompanying [spreadsheet](#) Table 11].

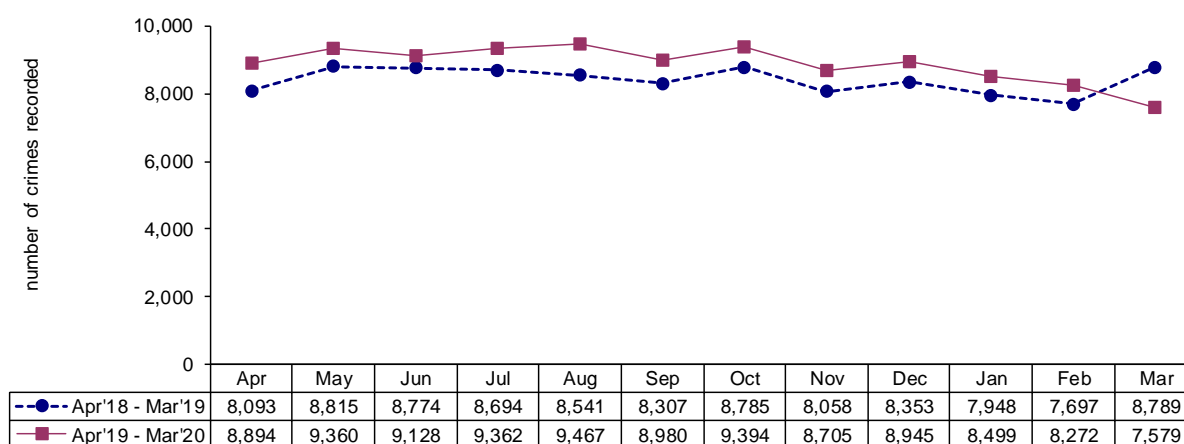
- **Robbery:** The number of robberies recorded in 2019/20 is the second lowest level in the data series and around one fifth of the level recorded in 2002/03.
- **Criminal damage:** Levels of criminal damage were at their highest in 2001/02 with 39,748 offences recorded. Following a sustained downwards trend since 2006/07 the latest figure of 18,701, which has risen almost 6 per cent from 2018/19, remains less than half of the peak experienced in 2001/02.

### 3. What has been happening to levels of police recorded crime more recently?

In 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020:

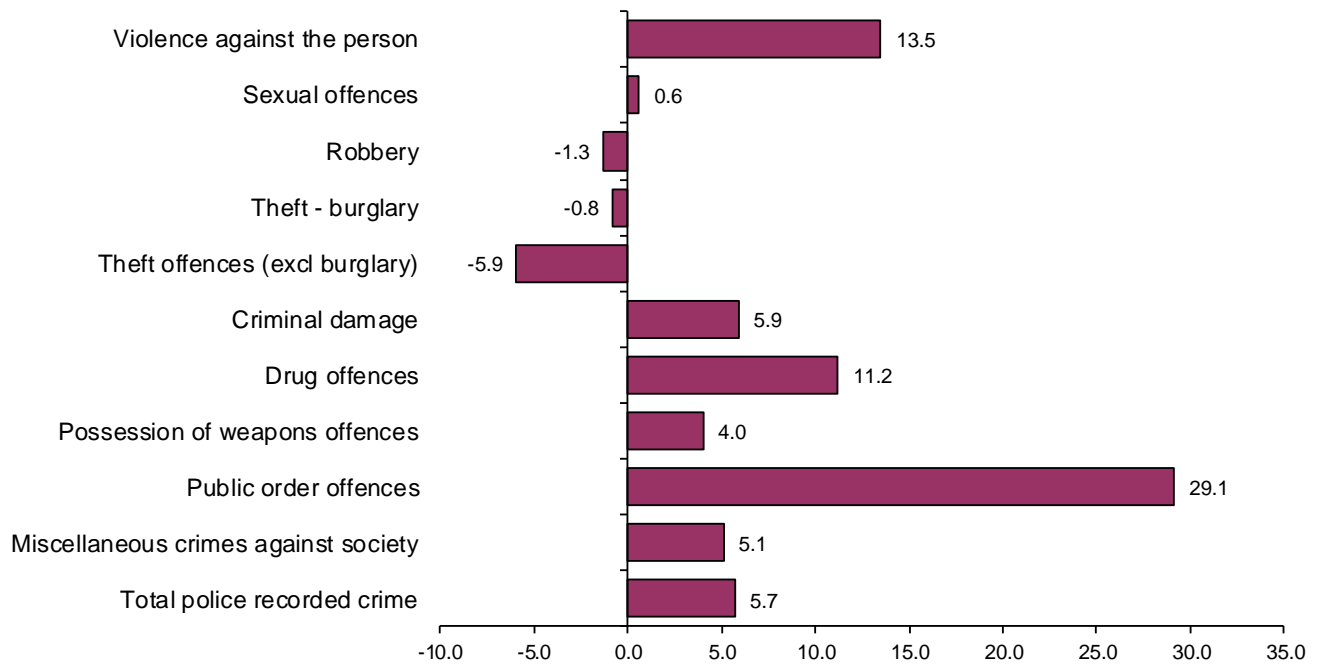
- There were 106,585 crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, an increase of 5,731 (5.7 per cent) compared with the previous 12 months (2018/19) and continuing the increase seen over the last few years.[Table 1 and Figure 1]
- There were 56 police recorded crimes per 1,000 population<sup>1</sup>, compared with 54 per 1,000 population in the previous 12 months.
- Increases were seen across violence against the person, sexual offences, criminal damage and other crimes against society [Table 1]:
  - Violence against the person increased by 13.5 per cent (4,904 offences). Within this overall classification violence with injury fell by 4.8 per cent while violence without injury rose by 4.6 per cent. An increase of 90.8 per cent (4,788 offences) in the harassment classification accounted for the majority of the overall increase in violence against the person offences. This should be seen in light of changes in recording practice within the harassment classification, further details of which are provided in the Points to Note on page 3.
  - Sexual offences increased by 0.6 per cent (22 offences). Within this classification rape offences fell by 7.4 per cent (81 offences) and other sexual offences increased by 4.2 per cent.
  - Shoplifting increased by 1.9 per cent (121 offences).
  - Criminal damage increased by 5.9 per cent (1,043 offences).
  - Drug offences showed an increase of 11.2 per cent (793 offences), the majority of which relates to an increase in drug possession offences.
- Falling crime levels were seen within most theft classifications, and also robbery [Table 1]:
  - The All other theft offences classification showed a fall of 9.3 per cent (1,210 offences) and vehicle offences fell by 10.6 per cent (389 offences).
  - Burglary fell by 0.8 per cent (48 offences).
  - Robbery offences fell by 8 (1.3 per cent).
  - The lockdown measures introduced in March in response to COVID 19 led to a lower level of crime recorded in March 2020.

**Figure 3 Police recorded crime April 2018 to March 2020**

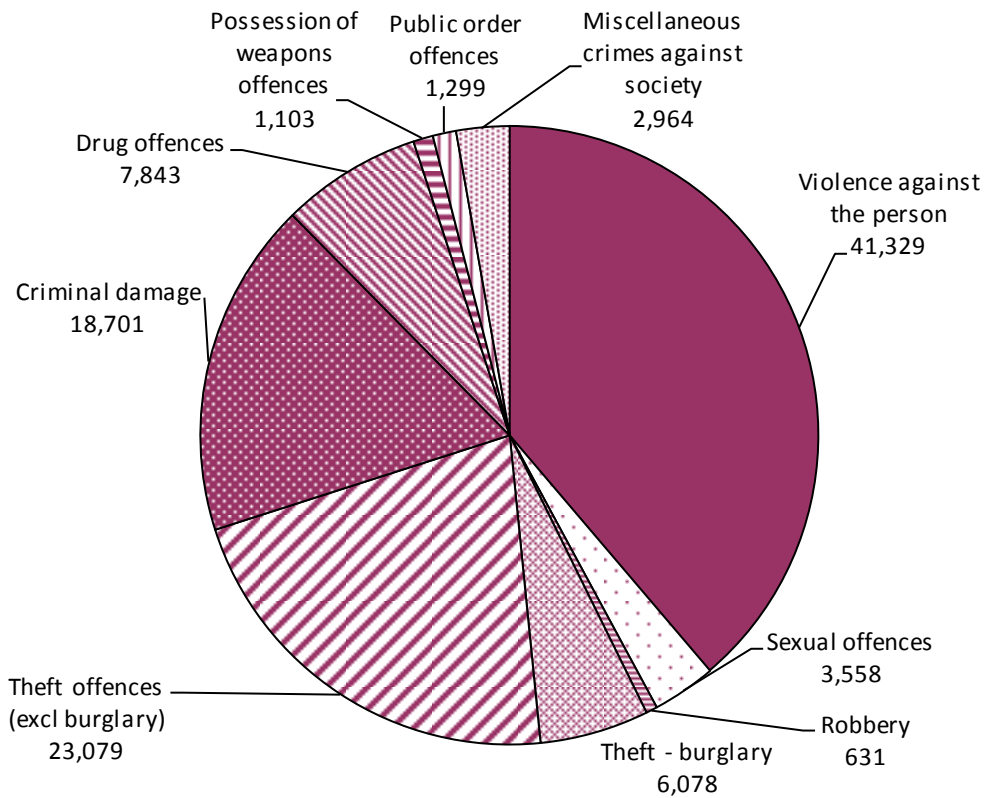


<sup>1</sup> Crime per 1,000 population for 2019/20 based on the 2019 mid-year population estimate of 1,893,667, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. Mid-year population estimates are available from the [NISRA website](#).

**Figure 4 Percentage change in the main police recorded crime types, 12 months to March 2020 compared with the previous 12 months**



**Figure 5 Police recorded crime by crime type, April 2019 to March 2020**





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

Crime type	Numbers and percentages			
	Police recorded crime			
	Apr'18 to Mar'19	Apr'19 to Mar'20	change	% change <sup>1</sup>
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>				
<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON</b>	36,425	41,329	4,904	13.5
<i>Homicide</i>	29	20	-9	-
<i>Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving<sup>2</sup></i>	138	164	26	18.8
<i>Violence with injury<sup>2</sup></i>	14,110	13,431	-679	-4.8
<i>Violence without injury<sup>3</sup></i>	16,874	17,652	778	4.6
<i>Harassment<sup>3</sup></i>	5,274	10,062	4,788	90.8
<b>SEXUAL OFFENCES</b>	3,536	3,558	22	0.6
<i>Rape</i>	1,094	1,013	-81	-7.4
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	2,442	2,545	103	4.2
<b>ROBBERY</b>	639	631	-8	-1.3
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	498	512	14	2.8
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	141	119	-22	-15.6
<b>THEFT OFFENCES</b>	30,658	29,157	-1,501	-4.9
<i>Burglary</i>	6,126	6,078	-48	-0.8
<i>Theft from the person</i>	499	475	-24	-4.8
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	3,661	3,272	-389	-10.6
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	833	882	49	5.9
<i>Shoplifting</i>	6,464	6,585	121	1.9
<i>All other theft offences</i>	13,075	11,865	-1,210	-9.3
<b>CRIMINAL DAMAGE</b>	17,658	18,701	1,043	5.9
<b>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>				
<b>DRUG OFFENCES</b>	7,050	7,843	793	11.2
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	889	923	34	3.8
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	6,161	6,920	759	12.3
<b>POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES</b>	1,061	1,103	42	4.0
<b>PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES</b>	1,006	1,299	293	29.1
<b>MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>	2,821	2,964	143	5.1
<b>TOTAL POLICE RECORDED CRIME</b>	<b>100,854</b>	<b>106,585</b>	<b>5,731</b>	<b>5.7</b>

<sup>1</sup> '-' indicates that for offences recorded a percentage change is not reported because the base number of offences is less than 50. '..' indicates that data are not available.

<sup>2</sup> Offences relating to causing death or serious injury by unlawful driving were previously included in the Violence with injury classification. These offences are now presented in their own classification within the Home Office Counting Rules.

<sup>3</sup> Offences relating to Harassment were previously included in the Violence without injury classification and are now presented in their own classification within the Home Office Counting Rules. The Harassment classification includes malicious communications offences, the recording of which started for the first time in Northern Ireland from 1st April 2017. A Home Office change introduced in April 2018 requires harassment to be recorded in addition to the most serious additional victim based offence. Both of these changes in recording practice, along with increasing awareness of the application of these rules in the recording process, will have contributed to increased levels recorded in the overall harassment classification. [Points to note, page 3]

## 4. What has been happening in policing districts?

When comparing the current and previous 12 months, nine policing districts showed an increase in the number of crimes recorded. [Table 2 and accompanying [spreadsheet](#)]

**Figure 6 Percentage change in police recorded crime by policing district, 12 months to March 2020 compared with the previous 12 months**



**Table 2 Police recorded crime by policing district**

Policing district	Numbers and percentages			
	Police recorded crime			
	Apr'18 to Mar'19	Apr'19 to Mar'20	change	% change
Belfast City	32,742	33,996	1,254	3.8
<i>East</i> <sup>1</sup>	5,898	5,860	-38	-0.6
<i>North</i> <sup>1</sup>	9,082	9,728	646	7.1
<i>South</i> <sup>1</sup>	11,600	12,140	540	4.7
<i>West</i> <sup>1</sup>	6,162	6,268	106	1.7
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	7,144	6,753	-391	-5.5
Ards & North Down	6,378	5,869	-509	-8.0
Newry, Mourne & Down	7,921	8,619	698	8.8
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	9,450	10,577	1,127	11.9
Mid Ulster	4,754	5,407	653	13.7
Fermanagh & Omagh	4,492	4,701	209	4.7
Derry City & Strabane	8,395	9,927	1,532	18.2
Causeway Coast & Glens	6,087	6,662	575	9.4
Mid & East Antrim	6,735	7,121	386	5.7
Antrim & Newtownabbey	6,756	6,953	197	2.9
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>100,854</b>	<b>106,585</b>	<b>5,731</b>	<b>5.7</b>

<sup>1</sup> Belfast City policing district has four local policing teams based in Lisburn Road (South), Tennent Street (North), Strandtown (East) and Woodbourne (West).

## 5. Knife and sharp instrument crime recorded by the police in Northern Ireland

Since April 2007 the Home Office has collected additional data from police forces on offences involving knives and sharp instruments, where a sharp instrument is any object that pierces the skin (or in the case of a threat is capable of piercing the skin), e.g. a broken bottle. Knives and sharp instruments are taken to be involved in an incident if they are used to stab or cut, or as a threat. Offence coverage is for a group of selected offences, as detailed in tables 3 and 4 below.

**Please note:** the records used to provide the figures in tables 3 and 4 are identified from an operational crime recording system and, as such, may be subject to change where more up-to-date weapon information becomes available.

Knife and sharp instrument crime figures are updated on a quarterly basis, with the latest figures published in July, October, January and May of each year. Comparable figures, published by England & Wales, are available through <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice>.

**Table 3 Selected violent and sexual offences involving knives or sharp instruments<sup>1</sup> by crime type, 2014/15 to 31 March 2020**

Selected offence type	Numbers					
	Number of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument					
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	12 months to Mar'20
Homicide	3	8	3	7	7	7
Attempted murder	41	31	20	39	23	32
Threats to kill	80	65	60	49	65	45
Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm <sup>2</sup>	573	538	484	534	515	495
Robbery	216	142	133	130	155	133
Rape / sexual assaults <sup>3</sup>	11	5	7	4	2	7
<b>Total selected offences</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>719</b>

**Table 4 Proportion of selected violent and sexual offences recorded by the police involving knives or sharp instruments<sup>1</sup> by offence type in Northern Ireland, 2014/15 to 31 March 2020 (i.e. 35 per cent of all homicides in 12 months to Mar '20 involved knives or sharp instruments)**

Selected offence type	Percentages					
	Number of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument <sup>4</sup>					
	2014/15 (%)	2015/16 (%)	2016/17 (%)	2017/18 (%)	2018/19 (%)	12 months to Mar'20
Homicide	13	36	17	26	24	35
Attempted murder	35	31	24	41	36	35
Threats to kill	3	3	3	3	4	3
Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm <sup>2</sup>	4	4	4	4	4	4
Robbery	25	19	20	23	24	21
Rape / sexual assaults <sup>3</sup>	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total selected offences</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

<sup>1</sup> A sharp instrument is any object that pierces the skin (or in the case of a threat, is capable of piercing the skin), eg a broken bottle. The knife and sharp instrument figures presented here are based on weapon details taken from a live operational system and are therefore subject to change.

<sup>2</sup> Includes 5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm, 8N Assault with injury and 8S Assault with injury on a Constable.

<sup>3</sup> Includes indecent assault on a male/female (classifications 17/20) and sexual assault on a male/female (classifications 17A/17B/20A/20B), as well as 19A-19H Rape.

<sup>4</sup> The proportion of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument shown may differ from previously published figures as the total number of offences used for calculating the proportion may have been revised

## 6. Online Crime and Alcohol Crime recorded by the police in Northern Ireland

### Online Crime<sup>2</sup>

Online crime (formerly cyber crime) is identified through the use of a 'flag' on the crime recording system. Its aim is to help provide a national and local picture of the extent to which the internet and digital communications technology are being used to commit crimes. An offence should be flagged where the reporting officer believes that on the balance of probability the offence was committed, in full or in part, through a computer, computer network or other computer-enabled device. A baseline for online crime was established in 2014/15. Further details are available in Section 4 of the [Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2018/19](#).

Over the last 12 months there were 19 offences of online crime per 10,000 population, accounting for 3.5 per cent all crimes recorded compared with 10 per 10,000 population and 2.0 per cent of all crime in the previous 12 months.

The increase in online harassment should be seen in light of changes in recording practice within the harassment classification, further details of which are provided in the Points to Note on page 3.

**Table 5 Online crime in Northern Ireland, 2015/16 to 31 March 2019**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	12 months to Mar'20	Numbers change
Violence against the person	378	407	711	1,218	2,868	1,650
<i>Of which Harassment</i>	316	348	639	1,166	2,813	1,647
Sexual offences	142	184	210	261	298	37
<i>Of which Sexual Communication with a child</i>	18	9	54	79	126	47
Burglary, robbery, theft and criminal damage	114	180	104	208	181	-27
Other crimes against society	192	256	286	282	344	62
<i>Of which 86 Obscene publications, etc. and protected sexual material</i>	125	181	202	207	211	4
<b>Total recorded crime - all offences</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>1,027</b>	<b>1,311</b>	<b>1,969</b>	<b>3,691</b>	<b>1,722</b>

### Alcohol Crime<sup>2</sup>

Alcohol crime is identified through the use of a 'flag' on the crime recording system. Its aim is to provide the number of crimes directly attributable to alcohol to assist in assessing the impact of alcohol on crime and policing. The alcohol flag should be applied where it is perceived by the victim or any other person that the effects of alcohol consumption on the offender or victim was an aggravating factor. A baseline for alcohol crime was established in 2012/13. Further details are available in Section 5 of the [Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2018/19](#).

**Table 6 Alcohol crime in Northern Ireland, 2015/16 to 31 March 2020**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Numbers & Percentages 12 months to Mar'20
Number of offences recorded					
Violence against the person	14,256	13,445	13,725	14,240	13,867
All other offences	5,501	5,565	5,714	6,247	6,427
<b>Total recorded crime - all offences</b>	<b>19,757</b>	<b>19,010</b>	<b>19,439</b>	<b>20,487</b>	<b>20,294</b>
Alcohol-related crime as a percentage of all recorded crime					
Violence against the person	40.0	40.3	40.2	39.1	33.6
All other offences	7.9	8.6	8.9	9.7	9.8
<b>Total recorded crime - all offences</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>19.0</b>

<sup>2</sup> As Online Crime and Alcohol Crime have not been assessed as National Statistics, they are being presented here as Official Statistics.

## 7. Background and Data Quality

### Data collection and data accuracy

Police recorded crime figures in Northern Ireland are recorded in compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules. A comprehensive validation and quality assurance process has been set in place to ensure that the numbers and types of crimes being recorded meet the standards set down in these rules. Details of the data quality checks and processes that PSNI has in place are available in section 4 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland](#).

**Completeness of in-year data:** Within year, police recorded crime figures are subject to a validation and quality assurance process.

**Validation** – a crime has been recorded and allocated a crime classification.

**Quality assurance** – ongoing data quality checks to improve accuracy and completeness of records in respect of crime classification, victim details, dates, location, sanction outcomes.

### Extent of in-year changes to the police recorded crime figures in the update to 29 February 2020, which was first published 26 March 2020

	As published 26 Mar 2020	As published 15 May 2020	Scale of change		Numbers & Percentages	
			Number	%	% change between years	
					As published 26 Mar 2020	As published 15 May 2020
Financial Year to date: April to February 2020	99,099	99,006	-93	-0.1%	7.6%	7.5%
12 Months March to February 2020	107,888	107,795	-93	-0.1%	7.8%	7.7%

**Annual Revisions:** Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year crime figures from 2015/16 onwards, as a result of the introduction of the wider outcomes framework in April 2015. These revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature will next be applied in May 2021. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the [Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime](#).

**Variations in crime trends: crime survey data and police recorded crime figures in England & Wales and Northern Ireland.** An analysis of variation in crime trends looking at comparable crime categories between the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and the police recorded crime series for England and Wales was conducted by the Office for National Statistics. This was initially published in January 2013, with updated analysis available in the User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales Chapter which can be accessed through the ONS website in [Crime and justice methodology - User guides](#). This work identified a divergence in the trends between the two sets of figures, with the police recorded crime figures showing larger falls in crime. This raised questions about the quality of the police recorded crime figures and was one of the issues that led to the UK Statistics Authority removing the National Statistics designation from the police recorded crime figures in England and Wales.

The trends identified by ONS were not reflected in Northern Ireland; the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) showed crime falling at a greater rate than the police recorded crime statistics. Further details of the Northern Ireland analysis can be found on page 6 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland](#).

**Data audit and assessment of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland:** In light of the crime recording issues in England & Wales and Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) were invited to conduct a crime data integrity audit within PSNI during September 2014, similar to those they conducted in England & Wales during 2014. The outcome of the audit was published on 19 March 2015 in the report [Crime data integrity – inspection of the Police Service of Northern Ireland](#). The main findings in relation to data quality were:

- a crime-recording accuracy rate of 97 percent with a confidence interval of +/-2 percent;
- 98 percent of crimes correctly classified; and
- 84 percent recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed under HOCR.

The UK Statistics Authority assessment was concluded after the publication of the HMIC report; the Authority's [assessment report Number 301 Statistics on Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland \(Police Service of Northern Ireland\)](#) was published on 28 May 2015. This report judged that the police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland can be designated as National Statistics. A letter of confirmation as National Statistics was published in February 2016.

## Changes to crime classifications

**Introduction of Action Fraud within Northern Ireland:** From 1 April 2015 Action Fraud became responsible for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1 April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and cyber crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. While this means that these fraud and cyber offences are no longer recorded by PSNI, Action Fraud figures relating to fraud and cyber crime occurring in Northern Ireland are provided to PSNI on a monthly basis. As a result, this release contains a short section on the recording of fraud which presents Action Fraud figures covering the last two years. All other sections within the bulletin present figures on a comparable basis that exclude crimes recorded by Action Fraud, unless otherwise specified.

**Recent Changes to Home Office Counting Rules for Burglary:** From 1 April 2017 the classifications within burglary have been changed from *domestic burglary* and *non-domestic burglary* to *burglary-residential* and *burglary-business & community*. This reflects a revised approach within the Home Office Counting Rules. What constitutes a burglary does not change; however burglary-residential and burglary-business & community represent a new data series. For example sheds, garages, outhouses etc within the boundary of a dwelling are recorded under burglary-residential, while previously they may have been recorded as non-domestic burglary. Where such a building is used solely for business purposes, it will be recorded as burglary-business & community. The individual series for domestic burglary and burglary-residential cannot be added together to create an overall figure. The same applies to non-domestic burglary and burglary-business & community. A detailed breakdown of the burglary classifications is available in the [spreadsheet](#) which accompanies this bulletin.

### Burglary Definitions from 1 April 2017

**Burglary Classification Residential:** The classification of residential burglary includes all buildings or parts of buildings that are within the boundary of, or form a part of, a dwelling and includes the dwelling itself, vacant dwellings, sheds, garages, outhouses, summer houses and any other structure that meets the definition of a building. It also includes other premises used for residential purposes such as houseboats, residential care homes and hostels. Where an outbuilding **within such a boundary but not forming part of the dwelling building**, such as a garage or workshop is used solely for business purposes this should be recorded as burglary – business and community. Where both a dwelling house and an outbuilding used for business purposes (**belonging to the same victim**) are subject of a burglary at the same time, then only the residential burglary is to be recorded.

**Burglary Classification Business & Community:** The classification of business and community burglary includes all buildings or parts of buildings that are used **solely and exclusively for business purposes** or are otherwise entirely outside the classification of residential burglary such as a place of worship. Where an outbuilding is **within the boundary of a dwelling, but not forming part of the dwelling building**, such as a garage or workshop and is used solely for business purposes this should be recorded as burglary – business and community. Where both a dwelling house and an outbuilding used for business purposes (**belonging to the same victim**) are subject of a burglary at the same time then only the residential burglary is to be recorded.

**Malicious Communications:** The recording of malicious communications offences commenced for the first time in Northern Ireland from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and are classified to Harassment which sits within Violence Against the Person. Also included within malicious communications offences are those relating to 'revenge porn'; new legislation on disclosing private sexual photographs and film with intent to cause distress was introduced in June 2016.

## Additional data available to accompany this release

This release provides an overview of police recorded crime in the 12 months to 31 March 2020 (financial year 2019/20). A range of additional tables are available on the PSNI website to supplement the information contained in this bulletin. This data is available in both [excel spreadsheet](#) and [open document spreadsheet](#) formats.

A dataset providing monthly data since 2008/09 is available on the [OpenDataNI website](#) and is updated with in-year data on a quarterly basis (updates in late July, October, January and 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 (previously known as the Northern Ireland Crime 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/>