

RECORDED CRIME IN NORTHERN IRELAND

2003 / 2004



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Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 2003/04

Summary

Overall Crime

- A total of 127,953 offences were recorded during 2003/04 compared with 142,496 in 2002/03. This represents a decrease of 10.2%.
- The overall clearance rate was 27.4%, 4.4 percentage points higher than that achieved in the previous year.

Violent Crime (i.e. offences against the person, sexual offences & robbery)

- There was a slight increase of 314 (+1.0%) in the number of violent crimes recorded during 2003/04. This was mainly due to an increase of 1,474 (+7.0%) in those assaults where there is slight injury or no injury at all (AOABH, common assault and aggravated assault), and also to an increase of 311 (+21.2%) across the majority of the sexual offence categories.
- Robbery showed an overall decrease of 524 (-21.0%), with ordinary robbery falling by 145 (-16.2%) and armed robbery falling by 333 (-24.2%).
- The violent crime clearance rate rose from 48.2% to 54.1%.

Burglary

- Overall, burglary offences fell by 2,270 (-12.2%). Domestic burglary fell by 1,181 (-11.7%) while non-domestic burglary fell by 1,092 (-13.0%).
- The clearance rate for domestic burglary increased from 9.7% to 11.1%, with similar increases for non-domestic burglary from 9.0% to 12.1%.

Theft

- Theft offences fell by 6,220 (-14.8%). Within this class there were decreases across the majority of categories. In particular there were large decreases in the number of thefts associated with motor vehicles.
- Vehicle crime, which is comprised of theft from motor vehicles and theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle, fell by 2,675 (-17.2%) while vehicle tampering/interference fell by 2,213 (-41.8%). However within vehicle crime theft from motor vehicles increased by 366 offences (+5.1%), while theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle fell by 3,041 (-36.2%).
- The clearance rate for all theft offences increased from 14.0% to 15.9%.
- Vehicle crime clearance rates rose from 7.5% to 9.3%.

Criminal Damage

- Offences of criminal damage fell by 4,169 (-11.4%).
- Within criminal damage the number of criminal damage/malicious damage offences fell by 3,624 (-10.8%). Petrol bombing offences showed a reduction of 114 (-55.1%) and the number of arson offences fell by 462 (-17.8%).
- The clearance rate for all criminal damage offences rose from 13.0% to 15.2%.

Fraud and Forgery

- Fraud and forgery offences fell by 2,528 (-28.7%).
- Within fraud and forgery there were decreases of 1,361 (-31.5%) in deception offences, 455 (-15.7%) in making off without payment, 361 (-49.2%) in forgery and counterfeiting offences and 351 (-40.9%) in other fraud offences.
- The clearance rate for fraud and forgery offences increased from 28.4% to 32.4%.

Offences Against the State

- Offences against the State showed a decrease of 479 (-27.0%), largely due to a fall of 436 (-39.2%) in the number of other offences against the public order.
- There was an increase of 8.3 percentage points in the clearance rate, from 33.4% to 41.6%.

Other Notifiable Offences

- Other notifiable offences showed an increase of 809 (+34.3%), mainly due to a rise of 665 (+34.6%) in the number of drug offences and of 120 (+43.5%) in the number of dangerous driving offences.
- The clearance rate for all drug offences rose from 68.0% to 71.6%.
- The overall clearance rate for other notifiable offences rose from 67.4% to 71.0%.

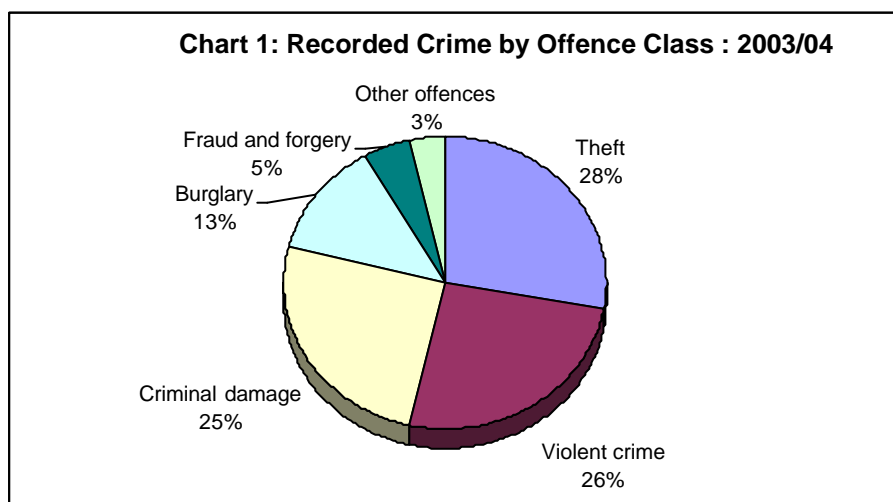


Table 1: Recorded Crime: Offences Recorded and Cleared 2002/03 and 2003/04

	Total offences recorded				Total offences cleared		% Clearance rate		
	2002/03	2003/04	change	% change	2002/03	2003/04	2002/03	2003/04	Change in % pts ³
Offences against the person (class 1)									
Murder	42	26	-16	-38.1	28	21	66.7	80.8	+14.1
Manslaughter	3	6	+3	+100.0	0	4	0	66.7	+66.7
Infanticide	0	1	+1	-	0	0	0	0	0.0
Attempted murder	235	121	-114	-48.5	68	67	28.9	55.4	+26.4
Threat or conspiracy to murder	898	986	+88	+9.8	497	626	55.3	63.5	+8.1
Causing death by dangerous driving	31	25	-6	-19.4	30	30	96.8	120.0	+23.2
Wounding with intent/GBH with intent	475	402	-73	-15.4	166	157	34.9	39.1	+4.1
Wounding/GBH	842	797	-45	-5.3	266	329	31.6	41.3	+9.7
AOABH ¹	4,953	15,187	+10,234	+206.6	1,876	7,459	37.9	49.1	+11.2
Common assault ¹	14,619	6,253	-8,366	-57.2	7,681	4,488	52.5	71.8	+19.2
Aggravated assault	1,486	1,092	-394	-26.5	979	830	65.9	76.0	+10.1
Assault on police	1,951	1,951	0	0.0	1,621	1,756	83.1	90.0	+6.9
Obstructing police ²	878	0	-878	-100.0	795	50	90.5	- ²	- ²
Intimidation	1,186	1,184	-2	-0.2	122	154	10.3	13.0	+2.7
Harassment	562	701	+139	+24.7	389	425	69.2	60.6	-8.6
Explosives offences endangering life	64	42	-22	-34.4	7	19	10.9	45.2	+34.3
Firearms offences endangering life	111	80	-31	-27.9	46	36	41.4	45.0	+3.6
Other offences against the person	119	128	+9	+7.6	47	57	39.5	44.5	+5.0
Totals	28,455	28,982	+527	+1.9	14,618	16,508	51.4	57.0	+5.6
Sexual offences (class 2)									
Rape	317	354	+37	+11.7	143	182	45.1	51.4	+6.3
Attempted rape	40	41	+1	+2.5	25	28	62.5	68.3	+5.8
Buggery	45	34	-11	-24.4	28	20	62.2	58.8	-3.4
Unlawful carnal knowledge of a girl under 14 years	1	10	+9	+900.0	2	2	200.0	20.0	-180.0
Unlawful carnal knowledge of a girl 14 years and under 17 years	43	58	+15	+34.9	22	34	51.2	58.6	+7.5
Indecent assault on a female	231	287	+56	+24.2	110	130	47.6	45.3	-2.3
Indecent assault on a female child	284	351	+67	+23.6	173	215	60.9	61.3	+0.3
Indecent assault on a male	34	46	+12	+35.3	18	17	52.9	37.0	-16.0
Indecent assault on a male child	84	150	+66	+78.6	47	91	56.0	60.7	+4.7
Indecency between males	15	17	+2	+13.3	3	15	20.0	88.2	+68.2
Indecent exposure	289	360	+71	+24.6	73	136	25.3	37.8	+12.5
Indecent conduct towards a child	33	24	-9	-27.3	16	16	48.5	66.7	+18.2
Other sexual offences	53	48	-5	-9.4	25	18	47.2	37.5	-9.7
Totals	1,469	1,780	+311	+21.2	685	904	46.6	50.8	+4.2

Table 1: Recorded Crime: Offences Recorded and Cleared 2002/03 and 2003/04 continued

	Total offences recorded				Total offences cleared		% Clearance rate		
	2002/03	2003/04	change	% change	2002/03	2003/04	2002/03	2003/04	Change in % pts ³
Burglary (class 3)									
Domestic Burglary (Total)	10,125	8,944	-1,181	-11.7	987	995	9.7	11.1	+1.4
Burglary in a dwelling	10,042	8,899	-1,143	-11.4	962	976	9.6	11.0	+1.4
Aggravated burglary in a dwelling	83	45	-38	-45.8	25	19	30.1	42.2	+12.1
Non-Domestic Burglary (Total)	8,409	7,317	-1,092	-13.0	754	882	9.0	12.1	+3.1
Burglary in a building other than a dwelling	8,405	7,313	-1,092	-13.0	752	881	8.9	12.0	+3.1
Aggravated burglary other than in a dwelling	4	4	0	0.0	2	1	50.0	25.0	-25.0
Going equipped	125	128	+3	+2.4	104	115	83.2	89.8	+6.6
Totals	18,659	16,389	-2,270	-12.2	1,845	1,992	9.9	12.2	+2.3
Robbery (class 4)									
Robbery	894	749	-145	-16.2	107	100	12.0	13.4	+1.4
Armed robbery	1,375	1,042	-333	-24.2	200	156	14.5	15.0	+0.4
Hijacking	228	182	-46	-20.2	27	29	11.8	15.9	+4.1
Totals	2,497	1,973	-524	-21.0	334	285	13.4	14.4	+1.1
Theft (class 5)									
Theft, one person from another	1,624	1,288	-336	-20.7	84	63	5.2	4.9	-0.3
Theft in a dwelling	896	846	-50	-5.6	205	230	22.9	27.2	+4.3
Theft by an employee	367	323	-44	-12.0	221	172	60.2	53.3	-7.0
Theft of pedal cycles	815	860	+45	+5.5	44	45	5.4	5.2	-0.2
Shoplifting	5,075	4,743	-332	-6.5	2,690	2,461	53.0	51.9	-1.1
Vehicle Crime	15,550	12,875	-2,675	-17.2	1,172	1,195	7.5	9.3	+1.7
Comprised of:									
Theft from motor vehicles	7,140	7,506	+366	+5.1	240	347	3.4	4.6	+1.3
Theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicles	8,410	5,369	-3,041	-36.2	932	848	11.1	15.8	+4.7
Vehicle tampering/interference	5,300	3,087	-2,213	-41.8	201	226	3.8	7.3	+3.5
Handling of stolen goods	317	360	+43	+13.6	266	295	83.9	81.9	-2.0
Other thefts	11,967	11,309	-658	-5.5	984	972	8.2	8.6	+0.4
Totals	41,911	35,691	-6,220	-14.8	5,867	5,659	14.0	15.9	+1.9
Fraud and forgery (class 6)									
Deception	4,321	2,960	-1,361	-31.5	1,213	960	28.1	32.4	+4.4
Forgery and counterfeiting	733	372	-361	-49.2	147	121	20.1	32.5	+12.5
Making off without payment	2,889	2,434	-455	-15.7	475	558	16.4	22.9	+6.5
Other frauds	858	507	-351	-40.9	666	391	77.6	77.1	-0.5
Totals	8,801	6,273	-2,528	-28.7	2,501	2,030	28.4	32.4	+3.9

Table 1: Recorded Crime: Offences Recorded and Cleared 2002/03 and 2003/04 continued

	Total offences recorded				Total offences cleared		% Clearance rate		
	2002/03	2003/04	change	% change	2002/03	2003/04	2002/03	2003/04	change in % pts ³
Criminal damage (class 7)									
Arson	2,598	2,136	-462	-17.8	141	200	5.4	9.4	+3.9
Petrol bombing offences	207	93	-114	-55.1	10	5	4.8	5.4	+0.5
Explosives offences	77	42	-35	-45.5	3	5	3.9	11.9	+8.0
Criminal damage / Malicious damage offences	33,462	29,838	-3,624	-10.8	4,485	4,530	13.4	15.2	+1.8
Other criminal damage offences	227	293	+66	+29.1	133	186	58.6	63.5	+4.9
Totals	36,571	32,402	-4,169	-11.4	4,772	4,926	13.0	15.2	+2.2
Offences against the state (class 8)									
Offences under anti-terrorism legislation	21	26	+5	+23.8	14	21	66.7	80.8	+14.1
Firearms offences	161	162	+1	+0.6	48	51	29.8	31.5	+1.7
Offences under the Public Order (NI) Order	478	429	-49	-10.3	382	361	79.9	84.1	+4.2
Other offences against the public order	1,111	675	-436	-39.2	147	105	13.2	15.6	+2.3
Totals	1,771	1,292	-479	-27.0	591	538	33.4	41.6	+8.3
Other notifiable offences (class 9)									
Blackmail	39	51	+12	+30.8	11	16	28.2	31.4	+3.2
Kidnapping and false imprisonment	74	80	+6	+8.1	22	21	29.7	26.3	-3.5
Drug offences (Total)	1,924	2,589	+665	+34.6	1,308	1,853	68.0	71.6	+3.6
Trafficking offences	291	405	+114	+39.2	203	314	69.8	77.5	+7.8
Non-Trafficking offences	1,633	2,184	+551	+33.7	1,105	1,539	67.7	70.5	+2.8
Dangerous driving	276	396	+120	+43.5	232	320	84.1	80.8	-3.2
Other notifiable offences	49	55	+6	+12.2	20	41	40.8	74.5	+33.7
Totals	2,362	3,171	+809	+34.3	1,593	2,251	67.4	71.0	+3.5
Violent Crime (Classes 1, 2 and 4)	32,421	32,735	+314	+1.0	15,637	17,697	48.2	54.1	+5.8
Grand Total (all classes)	142,496	127,953	-14,543	-10.2	32,806	35,093	23.0	27.4	+4.4

¹ Prior to April 2003, offences where the victim received minor injuries (eg bruising or minor abrasions) were recorded as common assault. From April 2003 assaults with minor injuries previously recorded as common assault are now recorded as assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH). This accounts for the large increase in AOABH offences and the large fall in common assault offences between 2002/03 and 2003/04.

² From April 2003 the offence of obstructing police is no longer recordable. While 50 offences of obstructing police that were recorded during 2002/03 were cleared during 2003/04, it is not considered appropriate to provide a clearance rate for 2003/04.

³ While the clearance rates are rounded to one decimal place, the clearance rates change in % pts is calculated on the unrounded clearance rates and then rounded to one decimal place.

Table 2: Recorded Crime: Offences Recorded and Cleared by District Command Unit 2002/03 and 2003/04

	Total offences recorded				Total offences cleared		% Clearance rate		
	2002/03	2003/04	change	% change	2002/03	2003/04	2002/03	2003/04	Change in % pts ¹
Antrim	3,957	3,495	-462	-11.7	604	652	15.3	18.7	+3.4
Ards	4,969	4,310	-659	-13.3	1,287	1,201	25.9	27.9	+2.0
East Belfast	8,429	6,351	-2,078	-24.7	1,395	1,767	16.6	27.8	+11.3
North Belfast	12,137	9,698	-2,439	-20.1	1,899	1,942	15.6	20.0	+4.4
South Belfast	18,389	15,267	-3,122	-17.0	2,917	3,034	15.9	19.9	+4.0
West Belfast	6,346	5,431	-915	-14.4	1,253	1,072	19.7	19.7	0.0
Carrickfergus	2,211	1,822	-389	-17.6	557	604	25.2	33.2	+8.0
Castlereagh	4,221	3,561	-660	-15.6	668	771	15.8	21.7	+5.8
Larne	1,925	1,722	-203	-10.5	659	699	34.2	40.6	+6.4
Lisburn	8,558	8,675	+117	+1.4	1,796	1,934	21.0	22.3	+1.3
Newtownabbey	6,671	6,259	-412	-6.2	1,011	1,384	15.2	22.1	+7.0
North Down	5,849	5,060	-789	-13.5	1,249	1,419	21.4	28.0	+6.7
Urban Region	83,662	71,651	-12,011	-14.4	15,295	16,479	18.3	23.0	+4.7
Armagh	2,967	2,712	-255	-8.6	1,032	1,070	34.8	39.5	+4.7
Ballymena	4,594	4,328	-266	-5.8	1,385	1,588	30.1	36.7	+6.5
Ballymoney	1,294	953	-341	-26.4	473	351	36.6	36.8	+0.3
Banbridge	2,624	2,465	-159	-6.1	1,011	915	38.5	37.1	-1.4
Coleraine	4,676	4,813	+137	+2.9	1,329	1,443	28.4	30.0	+1.6
Cookstown	1,894	1,892	-2	-0.1	569	849	30.0	44.9	+14.8
Craigavon	6,406	6,386	-20	-0.3	1,390	1,474	21.7	23.1	+1.4
Down	5,245	4,568	-677	-12.9	1,313	1,344	25.0	29.4	+4.4
Dungannon & South Tyrone	2,840	2,536	-304	-10.7	984	1,055	34.6	41.6	+7.0
Fermanagh	2,539	2,625	+86	+3.4	747	725	29.4	27.6	-1.8
Foyle	7,888	7,902	+14	+0.2	1,937	2,302	24.6	29.1	+4.6
Limavady	1,979	2,075	+96	+4.9	595	692	30.1	33.3	+3.3
Magherafelt	1,673	1,710	+37	+2.2	509	632	30.4	37.0	+6.5
Moyle	989	1,005	+16	+1.6	351	316	35.5	31.4	-4.0
Newry & Mourne	5,517	5,074	-443	-8.0	1,347	1,403	24.4	27.7	+3.2
Omagh	3,162	2,798	-364	-11.5	1,335	1,249	42.2	44.6	+2.4
Strabane	2,547	2,460	-87	-3.4	1,204	1,206	47.3	49.0	+1.8
Rural Region	58,834	56,302	-2,532	-4.3	17,511	18,614	29.8	33.1	+3.3
Grand Total	142,496	127,953	-14,543	-10.2	32,806	35,093	23.0	27.4	+4.4

¹ While the clearance rates are rounded to one decimal place, the clearance rates change in % pts is calculated on the unrounded clearance rates and then rounded to one decimal place.

Police Recording of Crime

Recorded Crime figures (sometimes referred to as notifiable offences) detail those crimes and offences (including attempts) recorded by the police which are deemed to be indictable or triable-either-way. Certain closely associated summary offences are also counted in the recorded crime figures.

- **Indictable offences** are those more serious crimes which are tried on indictment in the Crown Court by a judge and jury.
- **Triable-either-way offences** are those offences which, under certain circumstances, are triable either summarily in a magistrates court or on indictment in the Crown Court.
- **Summary offences** are less serious and are tried in a Magistrates Court before a resident magistrate with no jury.

The number of crimes recorded by the police is dependent on two factors:

- Whether the victim or a representative of the victim brings that crime to the attention of the police or on the crime coming to the attention of the police through some other means (such as the police officer being present at the time).
- Whether that incident is determined as being a recordable offence within the categories laid down by the Home Office in the official counting rules.

Clearances (or detections as they may alternatively be known) are, broadly speaking, those crimes that have been 'cleared up' by the police. Crimes are counted as 'cleared or detected' in accordance with strict counting rules issued by the Home Office. They are counted on the basis of crimes rather than offenders. For example, if six offenders are involved in a robbery and are all arrested and charged, then this counts as one clearance. Alternatively if only one of the six is identified and charged while the other five remain unidentified and go free, this also counts as one clearance. In this respect clearance data differs from conviction data as conviction data counts offenders while clearance data counts crimes.

The following methods of clearance involve a formal sanction:

- Charging or issuing a summons to an offender
- Issuing a caution to the offender
- Having the offence accepted for consideration in court
- The offender is a juvenile who is dealt with by means of an informed warning or restorative caution

Offences not involving a formal sanction but still regarded as 'cleared up' are those where the police take no further action for the following reasons:

- Offender, victim or essential witness is dead or too ill
- Victim refuses or is unable to give evidence
- Offender is under the age of criminal responsibility
- Police or DPP decides that no useful purpose would be served by proceeding
- Time limit of six months for commencing prosecution has been exceeded

Violent Crime - Violent crime comprises three main offence groupings: offences against the person, sexual offences and robbery. What violent crime offences have in common is that they involve actual violence or the threat of violence. The degree of violence varies considerably, even between incidents in the same classification. The large majority of incidents categorised as violent crime do not actually involve any significant injury to the victim, although some of the crimes not resulting in injury may still be traumatic for their victims eg threats to kill.