



# Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland

## Update to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022

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In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022:

- There were 106,900 crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, an increase of 10,568 (11.0%) when compared with the previous 12 months.
- Crime levels in each of the months since May 2021 were higher than the same months in 2020. The largest increases were in January (24 per cent) and June (19 per cent), with the smallest increase in April (4 per cent). These changes should be seen in light of the Covid-19 lockdown measures first introduced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 which had an impact on the lower crime levels seen from that date through to February 2021.
- All policing districts experienced a higher level of crime.
- Higher crime levels were seen in violence against the person, sexual offences and theft offences.
- Lower crime levels were seen in robbery and burglary, criminal damage and all other crimes against society offences.



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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 PDF \(1MB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#).

This release presents statistics relating to police recorded crime to 30 April 2022. Figures were compiled on 23 May 2022; as of that date 99.6% of records for April 2022 have been validated and 0.4% have not yet been given a crime classification.

Changes can be expected to in-year figures each time they are published, as all records from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 are subject to ongoing validation and quality assurance processes until publication in May 2023.

All tables and charts in the bulletin, along with additional supplementary data, are available from the PSNI website in the [Crime spreadsheet for April 2022, 0.5MB \(opens in new window\)](#).

The next update covering the 12 months to 31 May 2022 will be published on 30 June 2022. The PSNI website has a full [publication schedule, 32KB \(opens in a new window\)](#).

## 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 [Statistics Authority assessment PDF \(0.32MB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) against the [Statistics Authority Code of Practice PDF \(0.42MB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#).

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, including making them accessible.
- 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 \(NINIS\) \(opens in a new window\)](#), with data made available through [Open Data NI \(opens in a new window\)](#).
- 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 [survey results \(opens in a new window\)](#) 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 [Northern Ireland Crime Survey User Guide \(opens in a new window\)](#). Both of these measures of crime inform public debate about crime and support the development and monitoring of policy.

[Findings from the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey \(opens in a new window\)](#) are available on the Department of Justice website.

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 2019/20 (the latest year available) that around 46 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 8. 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, have contributed to increased levels recorded in the overall harassment classification. The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 created a new Domestic Abuse offence which criminalises a course of abusive behaviour. Recording of this offence started on 21st February 2022, and has been included within the Harassment classification.

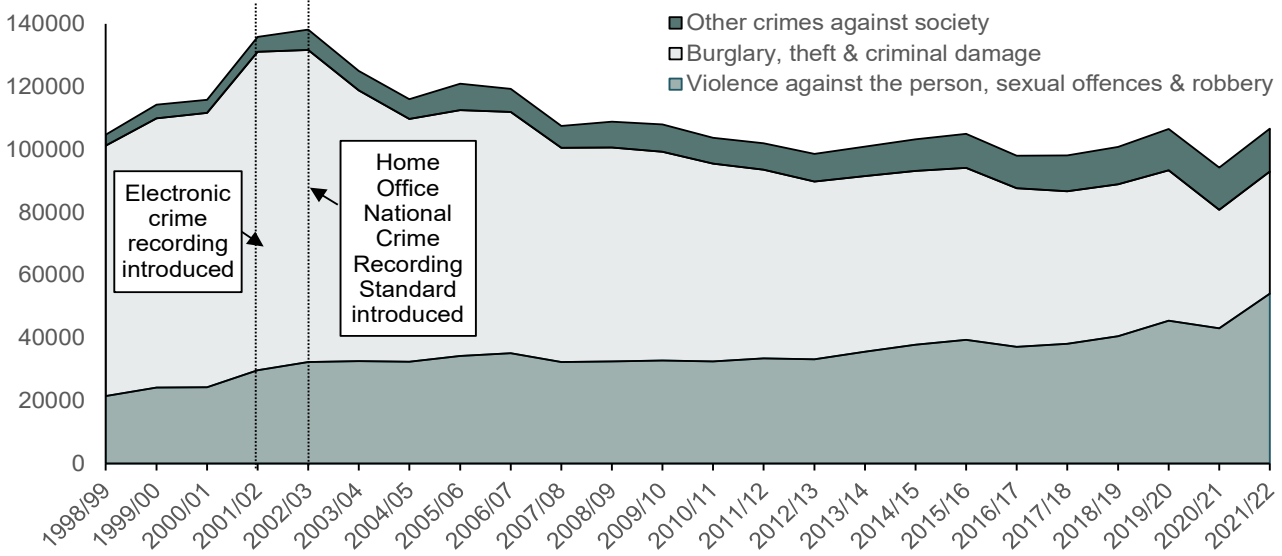
**Action Fraud:** Figures relating to fraud and cyber crime occurring in Northern Ireland and provided to PSNI are available in the [Crime spreadsheet for April 2022, 0.5MB \(opens in new window\)](#).

More detailed statistics are available through the publication [Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2020/21 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

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

The current police recorded crime data series is available back to April 1998. Police recorded crime increased from this point to 2002/03 (the highest level recorded in the data series) before moving in a generally downwards direction between 2002/03 and 2016/17 (the second lowest level recorded since 1998/99), falling by nearly 30 per cent. This was followed by increases over the three years to 2019/20 which showed an increase of 8.6 per cent when compared with 2016/17. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdown measures were introduced in Northern Ireland on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 which had a substantial impact on the level of police recorded crime during 2020/21. With a fall of 11.5 per cent compared with the previous year, 2020/21 is the lowest crime level recorded since 1998/99. The level of police recorded crime increased by 13.1 per cent in 2021/22, making this the highest in the last twelve years. [Figure 1]

**Figure 1 Trends in police recorded crime 1998/99 to 2021/22**



When considering the overall reduction in crime since 2002/03, falls in victim-based property crimes such as burglary, criminal damage and vehicle offences have contributed to this. The number of crimes which may involve an element of violence, injury or threat has shown a general increase since 1998/99 (violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery). Other crimes against society have also moved in an upwards direction, with drug offences contributing to the majority of this rise. [Figure 1]

**Figure 2 Trends in violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery 1998/99 to 2021/22**

Stacked area chart showing trends 1998/99 to 2021/22 for violence against the person (excluding harassment), harassment, sexual offences and robbery

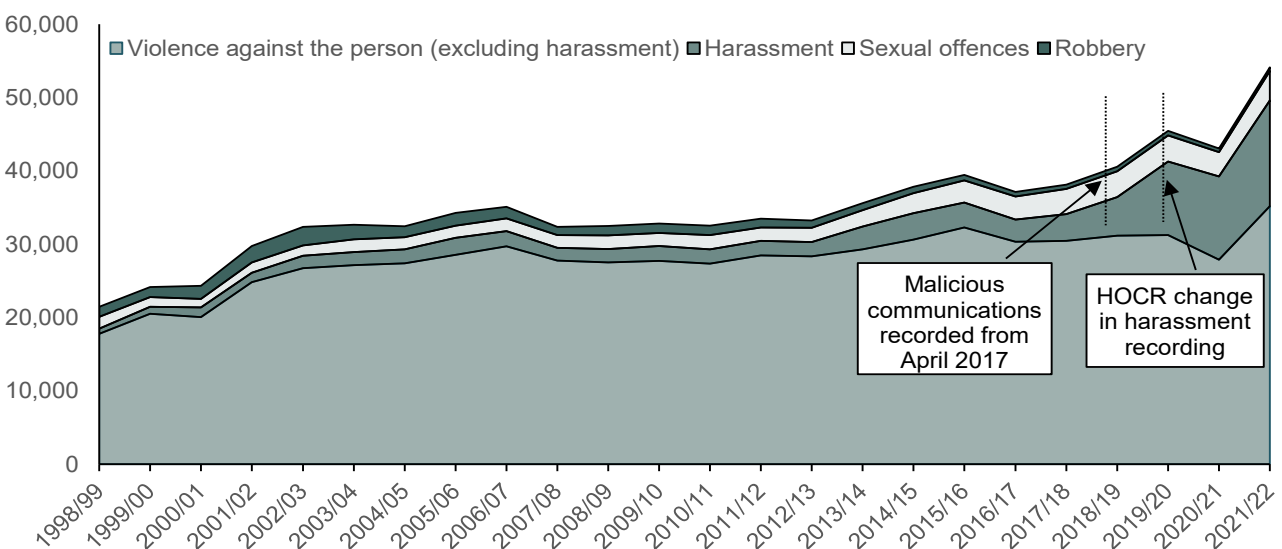


Figure 2 shows the overall increase in violence against the person offences and the more recent impact of changes in the recording of harassment. The introduction of malicious communications into the recorded crime data series

from April 2017 and a Home Office change resulting in the recording of more harassment offences from April 2018 means that in 2021/22 harassment represents 29% of violence against the person and 14% of overall recorded crime compared with 4% and less than 1% respectively in 1998/99 (further details on page 4). Sexual offences represented 3.8% of overall recorded crime in 2021/22 compared with 1.5% in 1998/99. Robbery shows a decreasing trend, representing 1.3% of overall recorded crime in 1998/99 and 0.4% in 2021/22.

**Figure 3 Trends in burglary, theft and criminal damage offences 1998/99 to 2021/22**

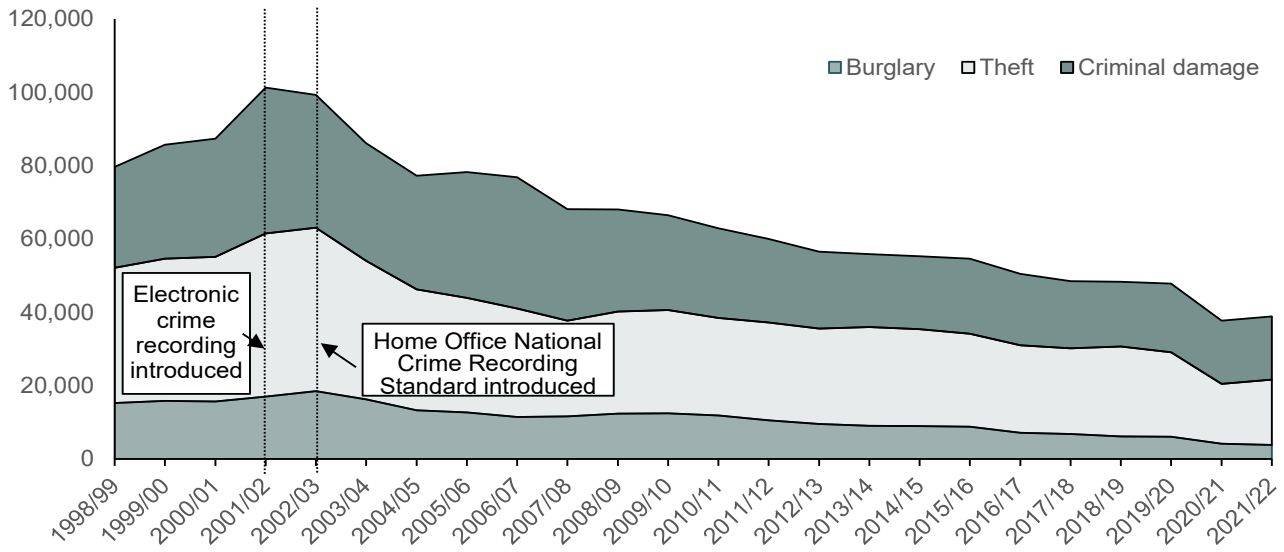


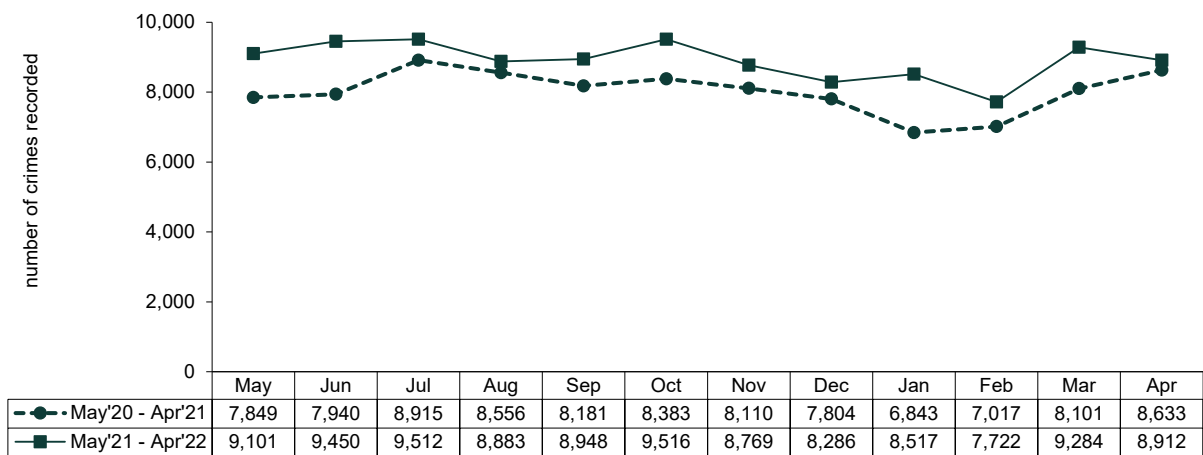
Figure 3 shows the falling trends in burglary, theft and criminal damage offences. At its highest level in 2002/03 burglary represented 13.4% of overall recorded crime; in 2021/22 it represents 3.6%. Both theft and criminal damage were at their highest levels in 2001/02 when they represented 32.8% and 29.3% of overall recorded crime respectively; in 2021/22 theft represents 16.7% of overall recorded crime and criminal damage represents 16.1% of overall recorded crime. It is worth noting that after Covid-19 lockdown measures were introduced in March 2020, falls in the number of burglary offences, theft offences and, to a lesser extent, criminal damage offences were greater and more sustained than for other crime classifications.

### 3. What has been happening to levels of police recorded crime over the last two years?

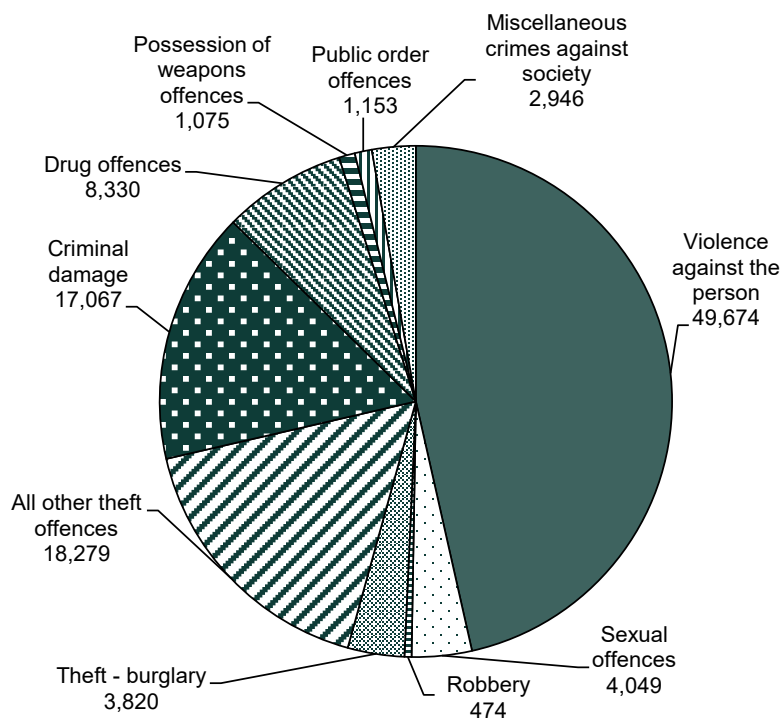
In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022:

- There were 106,900 crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, an increase of 10,568 (11.0 per cent) on the previous 12 months. [Table 1]
- There were 56 police recorded crimes per 1,000 population<sup>1</sup> compared with 51 crimes in the previous 12 month period.
- Lockdown measures in relation to Covid-19 were first introduced on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020 resulting in lower levels of crime. When compared with the previous year the level of crime was higher in each month from May 2021. When comparing each month, the largest increase was January 2022 with 1,674 (24.5 per cent) more offences compared with January 2021. Looking at the latest month, there were 297 (3.2 per cent) more offences recorded in April 2022 when compared with April 2021.

**Figure 4 Police recorded crime May 2020 to April 2022**

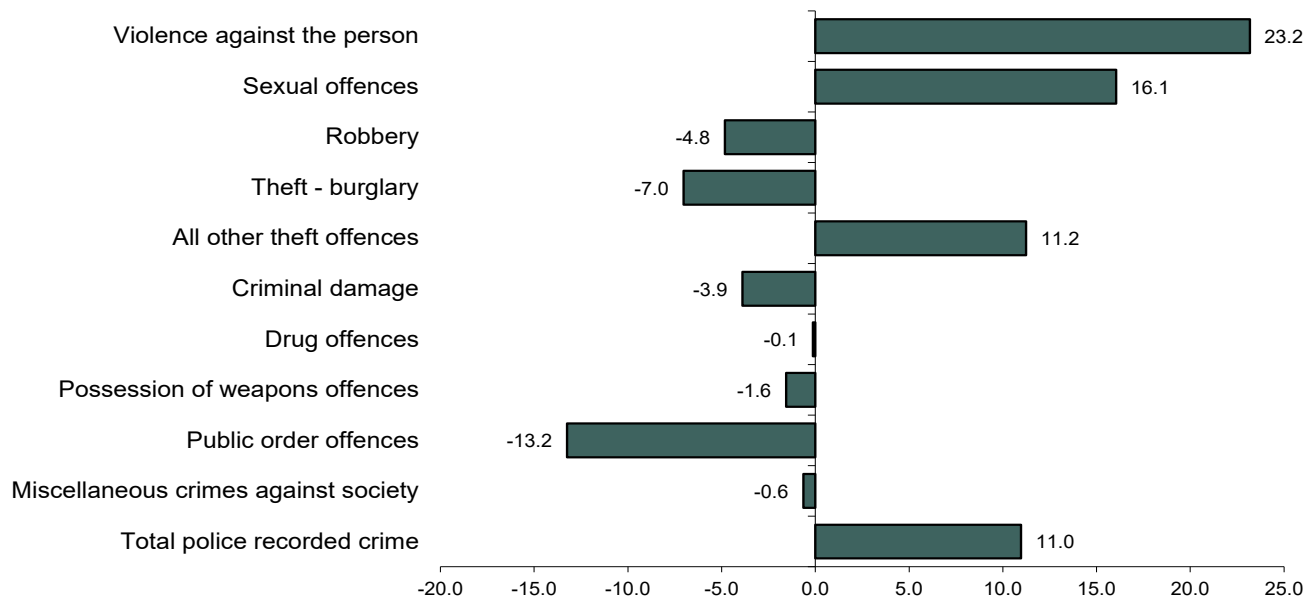


**Figure 5 Police recorded crime by crime type, May 2021 to April 2022**



<sup>1</sup> Crime per 1,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,895,510 for 2020, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. [Mid-year population estimates are available from the NISRA website \(opens in a new window\).](#)

**Figure 6 Percentage change in the main police recorded crime types, 12 months to April 2022 compared with the previous 12 months**



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

Crime type	Recorded crime May'20-Apr'21	Recorded crime May'21-Apr'22 <sup>1,2</sup>	change	% change <sup>3</sup>
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>				
<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON</b>	40,321	49,674	9,353	23.2
<i>Homicide</i>	18	24	6	-
<i>Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving</i>	101	132	31	30.7
<i>Violence with injury</i>	11,914	14,577	2,663	22.4
<i>Violence without injury</i>	16,563	20,616	4,053	24.5
<i>Harassment<sup>4</sup></i>	11,725	14,325	2,600	22.2
<b>SEXUAL OFFENCES</b>	3,489	4,049	560	16.1
<i>Rape</i>	1,074	1,235	161	15.0
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	2,415	2,814	399	16.5
<b>ROBBERY</b>	498	474	-24	-4.8
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	408	403	-5	-1.2
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	90	71	-19	-21.1
<b>THEFT OFFENCES</b>	20,541	22,099	1,558	7.6
<i>Burglary</i>	4,109	3,820	-289	-7.0
<i>Theft from the person</i>	205	255	50	24.4
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	2,461	2,616	155	6.3
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	701	715	14	2.0
<i>Shoplifting</i>	4,617	5,552	935	20.3
<i>All other theft offences</i>	8,448	9,141	693	8.2
<b>CRIMINAL DAMAGE</b>	17,759	17,067	-692	-3.9
<b>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>				
<b>DRUG OFFENCES</b>	8,339	8,330	-9	-0.1
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	1,073	1,040	-33	-3.1
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	7,266	7,290	24	0.3
<b>POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES</b>	1,092	1,075	-17	-1.6
<b>PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES</b>	1,329	1,153	-176	-13.2
<b>MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>	2,964	2,946	-18	-0.6
<b>TOTAL POLICE RECORDED CRIME</b>	<b>96,332</b>	<b>106,900</b>	<b>10,568</b>	<b>11.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Changes can be expected to in-year figures each time they are published, as records from 1st April 2022 are subject to ongoing validation and quality assurance processes until publication in May 2023.

<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.

<sup>3</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.

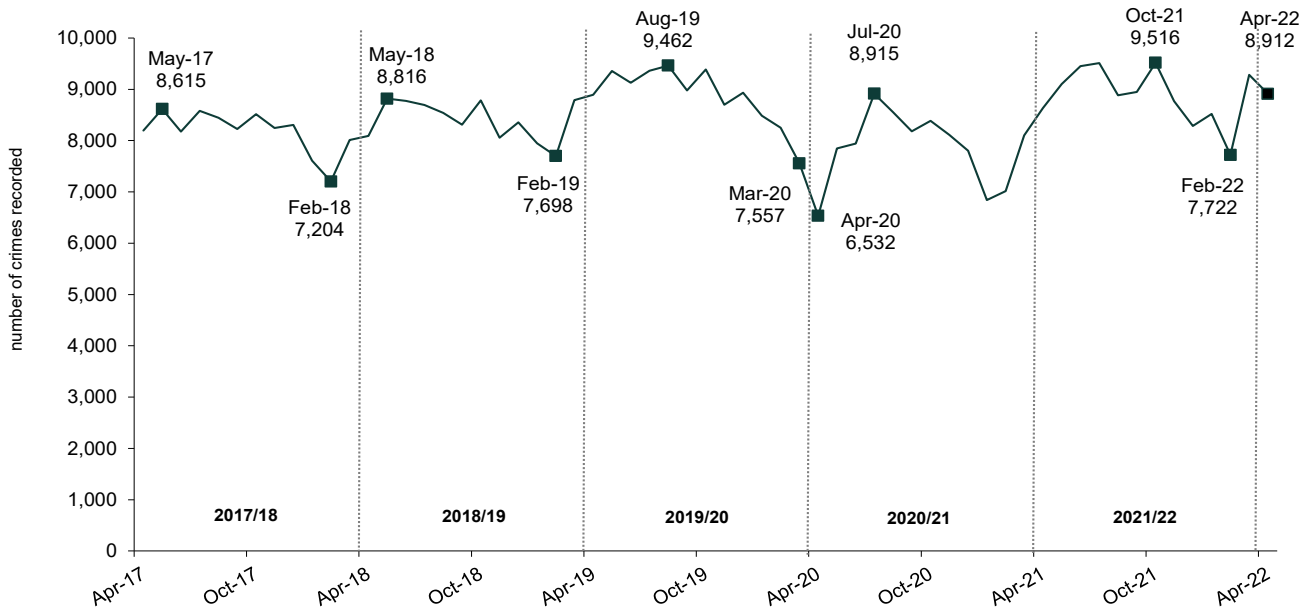
<sup>4</sup> The Harassment classification includes malicious communications offences, the recording of which started for the first time in Northern Ireland from 1st April 2017. A Home Office change introduced in April 2018 requires harassment to be recorded in addition to the most serious additional victim based offence. Both of these changes in recording practice should be considered in relation to increases in the overall harassment classification. [Points to note, page 3]



## 4. What are the trends in police recorded crime?

Crime is generally higher in the months of March to September and lower in the November to February period. Figure 7 shows this crime pattern between 2017/18 and 2021/21. Lockdown measures in relation to Covid-19 were introduced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 and had an impact on the number of crimes recorded, mostly from this date through to February 2021, also shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7 Police recorded crime each month April 2017 to April 2022, showing highest and lowest levels in each financial year**



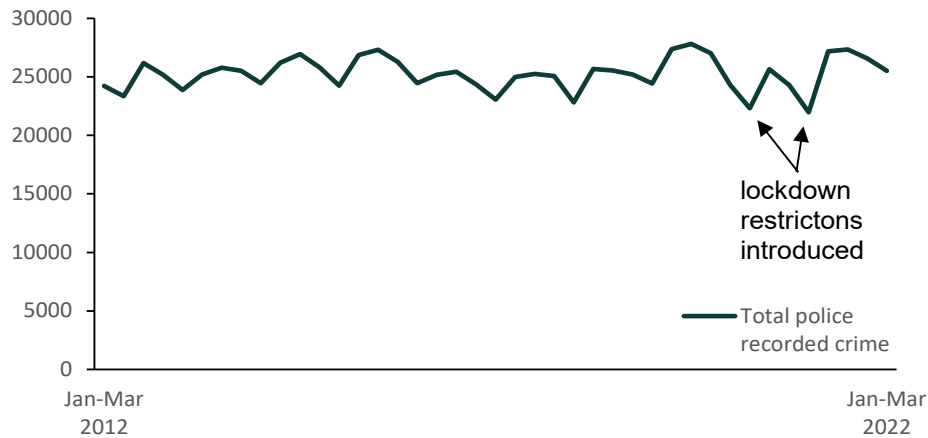
Figures 8 to 23 present crime trends over the last ten years (on a quarterly basis) along with more recent monthly trends. These charts are not all shown to the same scale. Please note that in figures 10 and 11, the Violence with Injury figures include the classifications of Homicide and Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving.

Monthly data for the latest 24 months are available from the PSNI website in the [Crime spreadsheet for April 2022, 0.5MB \(opens in new window\)](#).

A dataset providing monthly data since 2008/09 is available on the [OpenDataNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#) and is updated with in-year data on a quarterly basis (updates in late July, October, January and May).

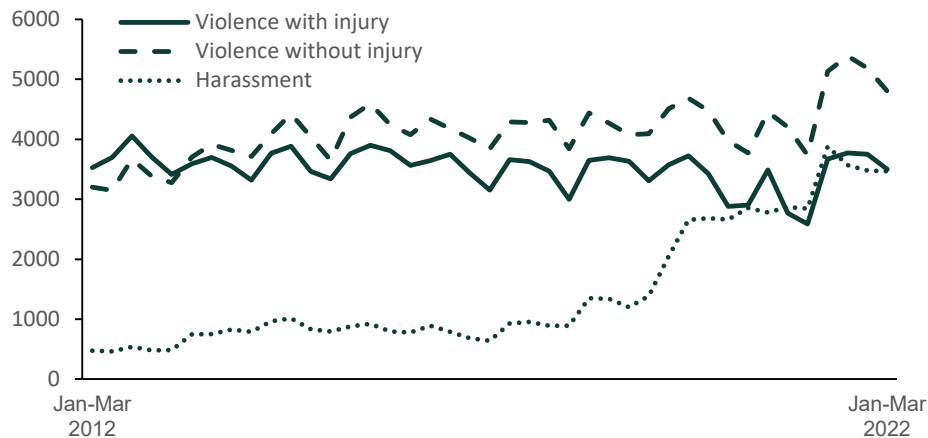
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdown measures were first introduced in Northern Ireland on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, with measures re-introduced at the end of December 2020. These measures had a substantial impact on the lower levels of police recorded crime seen during 2020/21. The impact tended to be greater on victim-based crimes, with crimes against society being less affected. As of 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022, all Covid-19 legal restrictions were replaced by guidance.

**Figure 8 Total police recorded crime, quarterly since January to March 2012**



While overall police recorded crime has fluctuated over the last 10 years without showing any real trend, lower crime levels were seen following the introduction of Covid 19 pandemic lockdown measures introduced in March 2020. Levels in the most recent three quarters have returned to those seen prior to March 2020.

**Figure 10 Violence against the person, quarterly since January to March 2012**

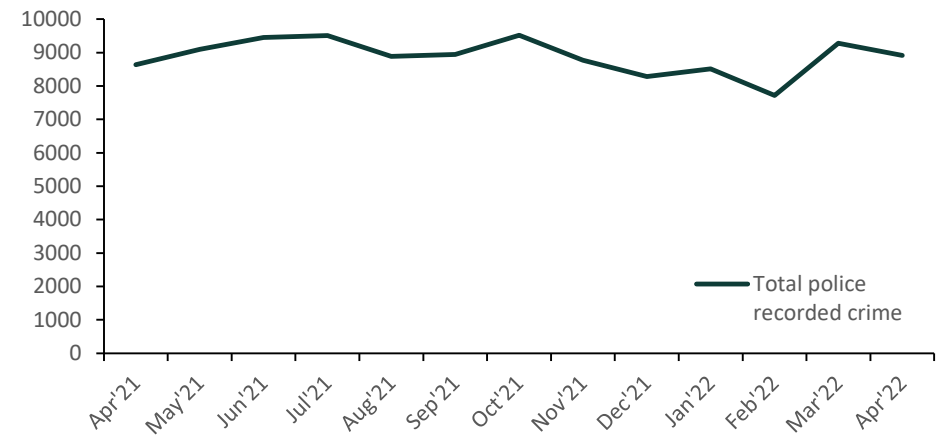


Violence with injury has generally declined, although the Apr21-Jun'21 quarter showed a sharp increase. The level subsequently remained similar through the remainder of 2021/22.

Violence without injury has generally increased, particularly in the Apr'21 to Jun'21 quarter.

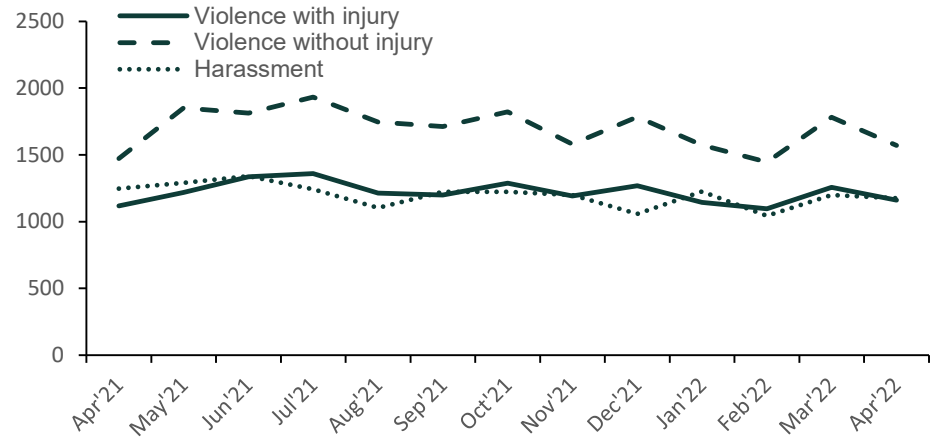
Harassment has increased following the inclusion of malicious communications in the data series from April 2017 and a Home Office change to the recording of harassment from April 2018; further details on pages 3 and 4.

**Figure 9 Total police recorded crime, monthly since April 2021**



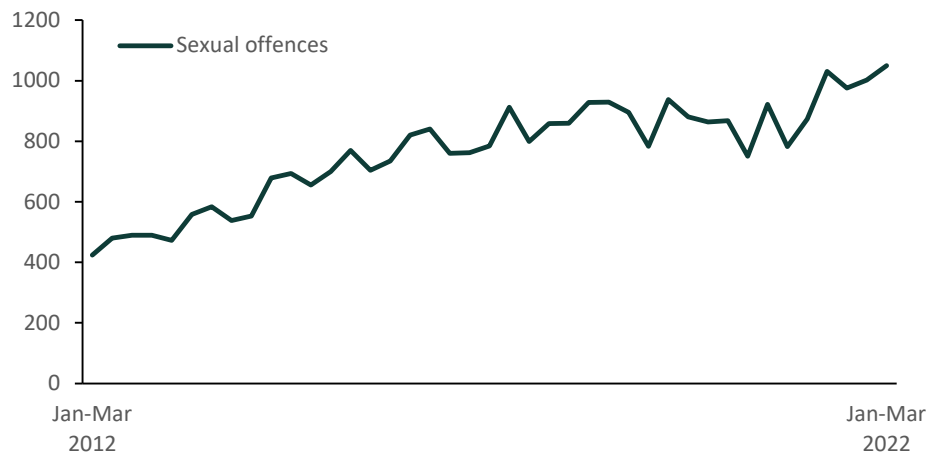
Offences recorded in latest month compared with:	previous month	same month last year	same month 10 years ago
Total recorded crime (8,912)	-4.0% (-372)	+3.2% (+279)	+16.3% (+1,248)

**Figure 11 Violence against the person, monthly since April 2021**



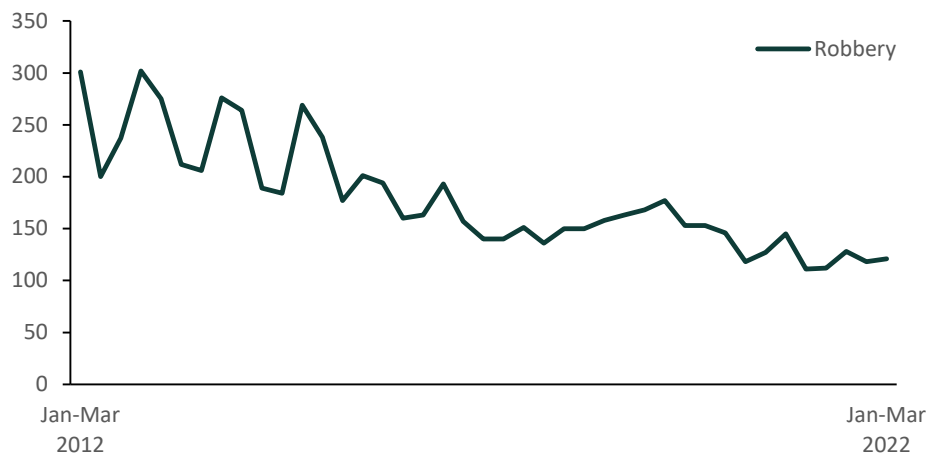
Offences recorded in latest month compared with:	previous month	same month last year	same month 10 years ago
Violence with injury (1,161)	-7.6% (-95)	+3.9% (+44)	-0.2% (-2)
Violence without injury (1,576)	-11.6% (-206)	+7.1% (+105)	+59.4% (+587)
Harassment (1,178)	-1.8% (-22)	-5.6% (-70)	+631.7% (+1,017)

**Figure 12 Sexual offences, quarterly since January to March 2012**



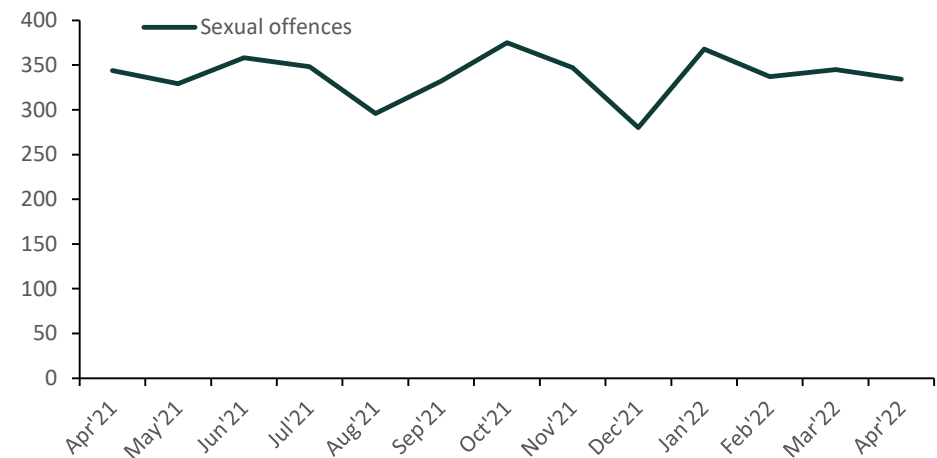
Sexual offences have shown an upwards trend, with the most recent quarter (Jan-Mar'22) showing the highest quarterly figure over the last ten years (and also since the start of the data series).

**Figure 14 Robbery offences, quarterly since January to March 2012**



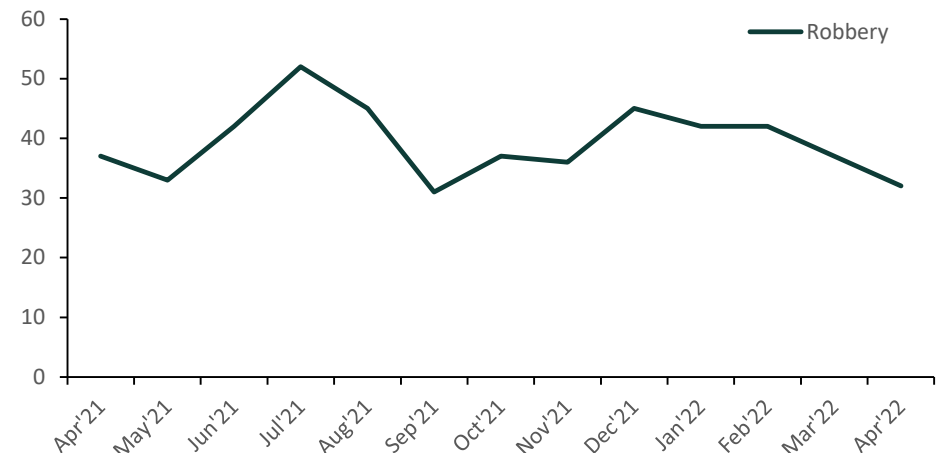
Robbery offences have declined over the last ten years and the first two quarters of 2021 (Jan'21-Mar'21 and Apr'21-Jun'21) showed the lowest quarterly figures during this time period (and also since the start of the data series).

**Figure 13 Sexual offences, monthly since April 2021**



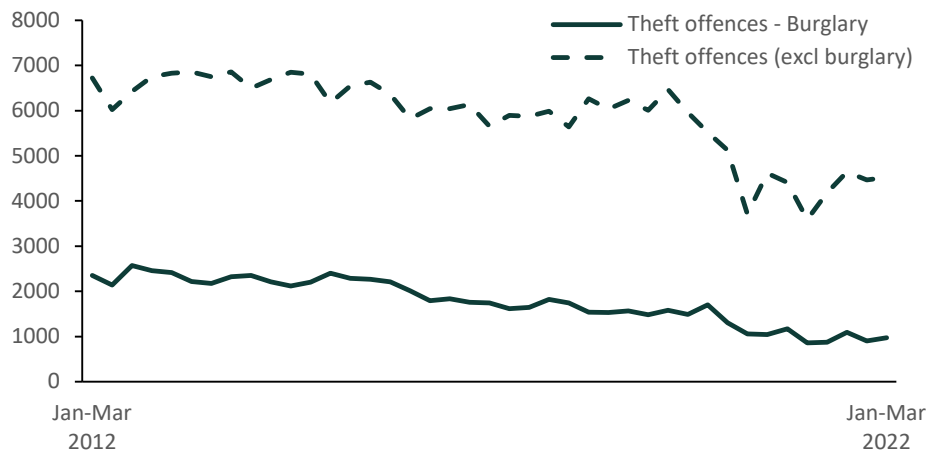
Offences recorded in latest month compared with:	previous month	same month last year	same month 10 years ago
Sexual offences (334)	-3.2% (-11)	-2.9% (-10)	+107.5% (+173)

**Figure 15 Robbery offences, monthly since April 2021**



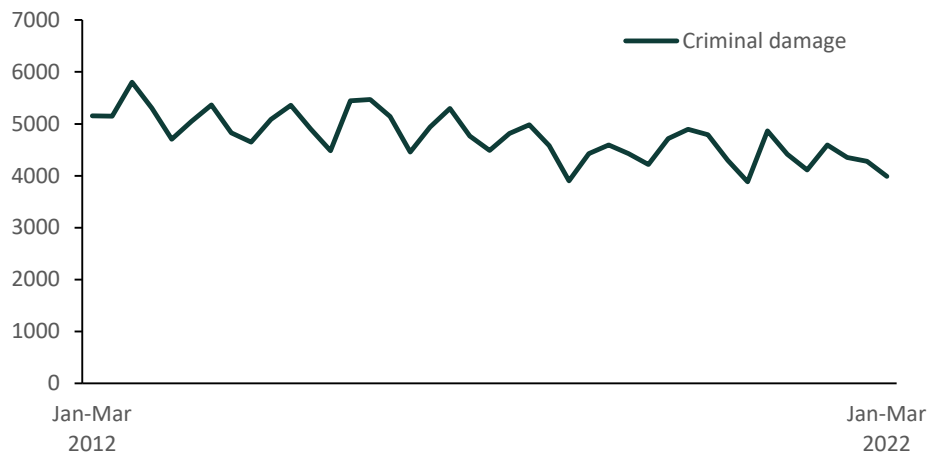
Offences recorded in latest month compared with:	previous month	same month last year	same month 10 years ago
Robbery (32)	-13.5% (-5)	-13.5% (-5)	-49.2% (-31)

**Figure 16 Theft offences, quarterly since January to March 2012**



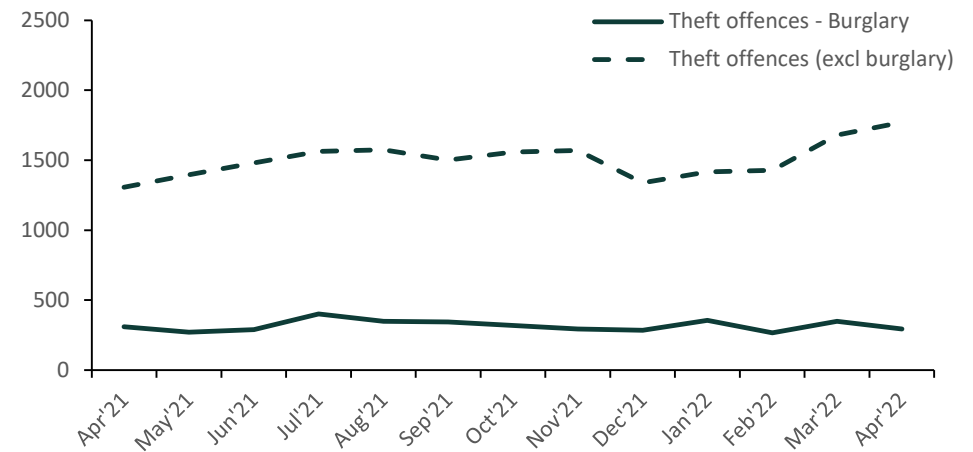
Burglary and other theft offences have shown downward trends over the last ten years. The burglary levels for the first two quarters of 2021 are the lowest seen during this time period (and also since the start of the data series). Other theft offences were at their lowest level in the quarter Apr'20-Jun'20 but showed a sharp increase in the Jul'21-Sep'21 quarter, remaining around this level through the most recent two quarters. Levels have not returned to those seen prior to the introduction of Covid 19 restrictions in March 2020.

**Figure 18 Criminal damage offences, quarterly since January to March 2012**



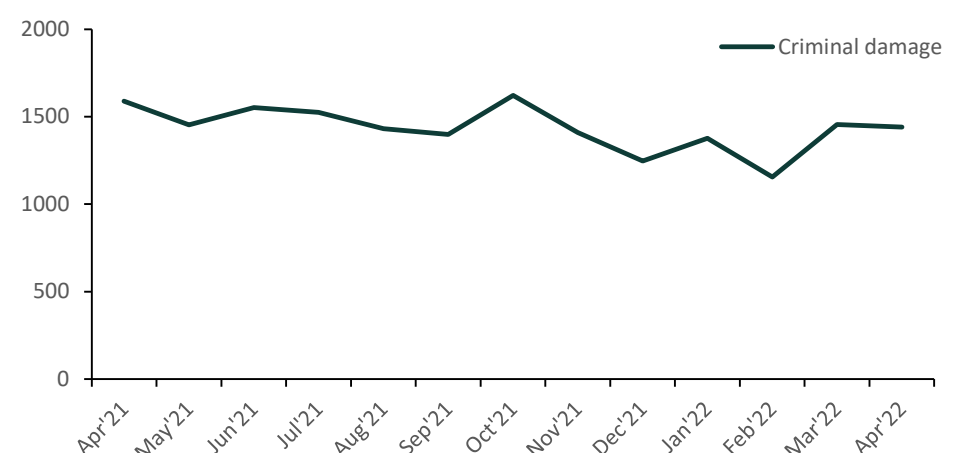
Criminal damage offences have shown a more gradual decline over the last ten years. The Jan'22–Mar '22 quarter is the second lowest quarter in the data series.

**Figure 17 Theft offences, monthly since April 2021**



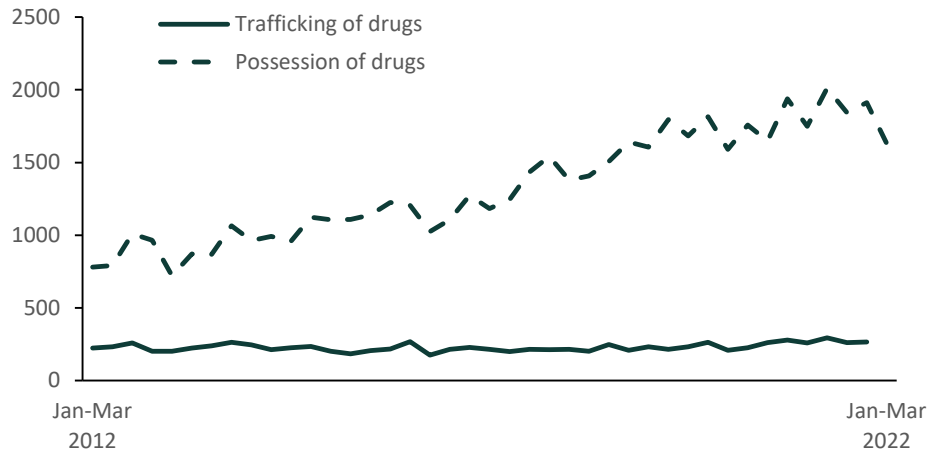
Offences recorded in latest month compared with:	previous month	same month last year	same month 10 years ago
Burglary (295)	-15.7% (-55)	-5.1% (-16)	-56.3% (-380)
Theft (1,772)	+5.5% (+92)	+35.6% (+465)	-11.6% (-232)

**Figure 19 Criminal damage offences, monthly since April 2021**



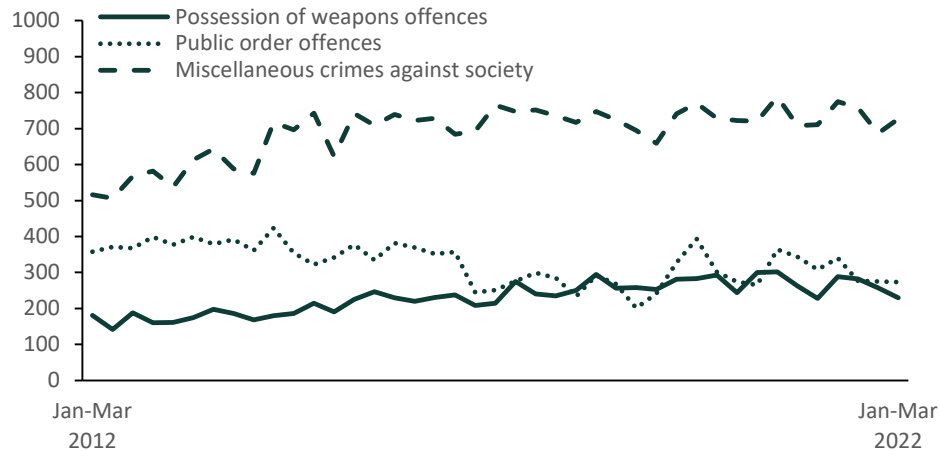
Offences recorded in latest month compared with:	previous month	same month last year	same month 10 years ago
Criminal damage (1,440)	-1.1% (-16)	-9.4% (-149)	-16.4% (-282)

**Figure 20 Drug offences, quarterly since January to March 2012**



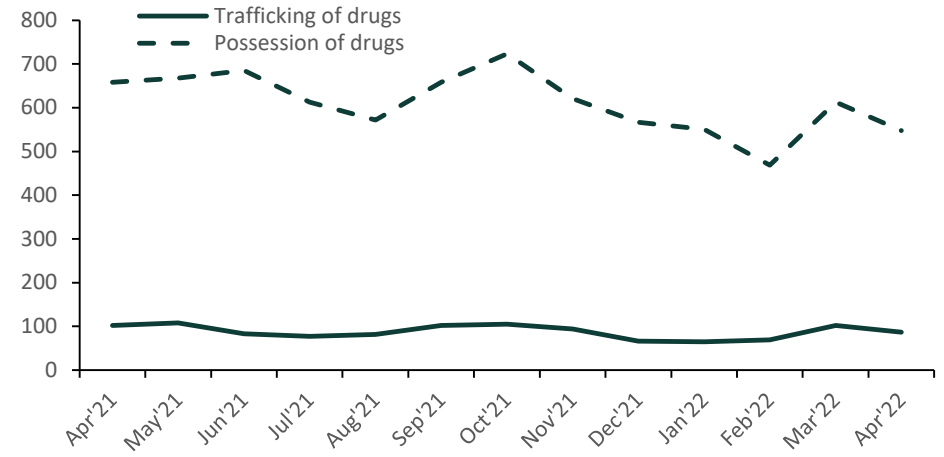
Drug possession offences have shown a steady increase over the last ten years, with the Apr'21-Jun'21 quarter being the highest recorded in that time period (and also since the start of the data series). Drug trafficking offences have shown a relatively flat trend over the last ten years.

**Figure 22 Other crimes against society, quarterly since January-March 2012**



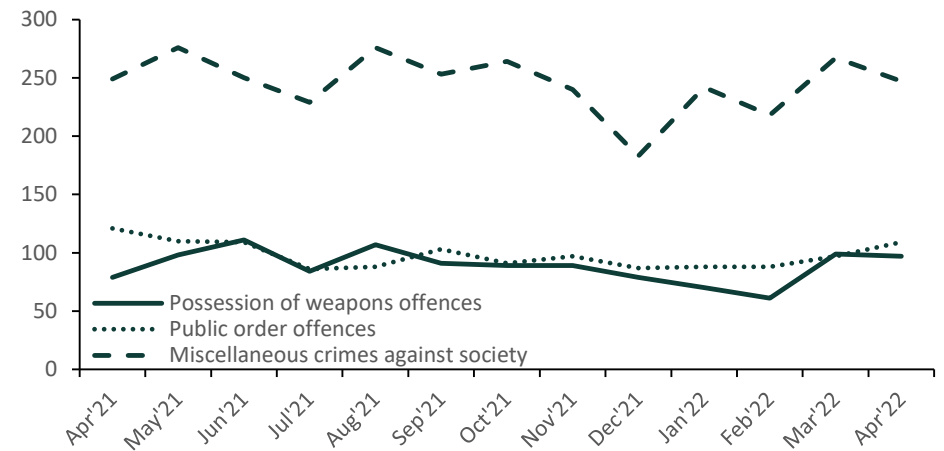
Possession of weapons offences and miscellaneous crimes against society have shown generally increasing trends over the last ten years. Public order offences fell to a lower level during 2012/13 and remained relatively stable until 2017/18 when levels dropped again. Increasing levels have been seen since then but have not reached the same levels seen at the start of the ten year period.

**Figure 21 Drug offences, monthly since April 2021**



Offences recorded in latest month compared with:	previous month	same month last year	same month 10 years ago
Drug trafficking (87)	-14.7% (-15)	-14.7% (-15)	13.0% (+10)
Drug possession (550)	-10.3% (-63)	-16.4% (-108)	+95.7% (+269)

**Figure 23 Other crimes against society, monthly since April 2021**

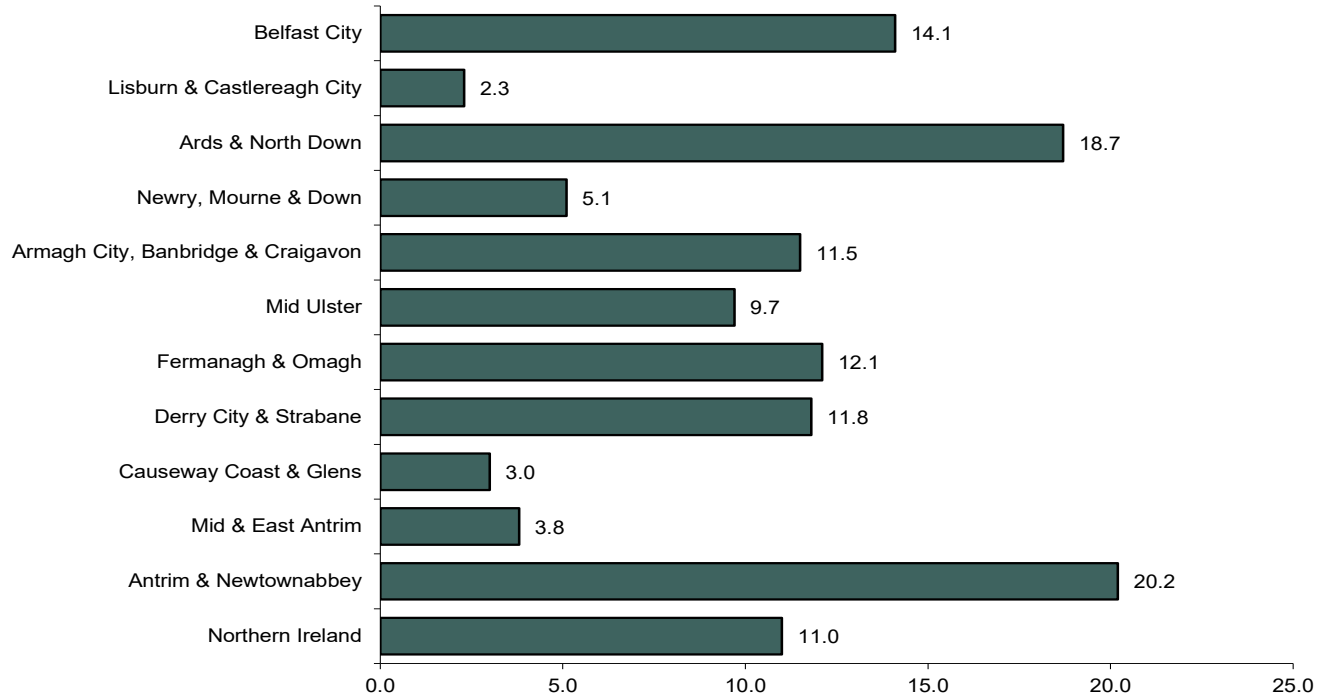


Offences recorded in latest month compared with:	previous month	same month last year	same month 10 years ago
Possession of weapons (97)	-2.0% (-2)	+22.8% (+18)	+131.0% (+55)
Public order (109)	+12.4% (+12)	-9.9% (-12)	-12.1% (-15)
Miscellaneous crimes (248)	-7.1% (-19)	-0.4% (-1)	22.8% (+46)

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

When comparing the current and previous 12 months, all of the policing districts showed an increase in the number of crimes recorded. [Table 2 and [Crime spreadsheet for April 2022, 0.5MB \(opens in new window\)](#)].

**Figure 24 Percentage change in police recorded crime by policing district, 12 months to April 2022 compared with the previous 12 months**



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

Policing district	Recorded crime May'20-Apr'21	Recorded crime May'21-Apr'22 <sup>1,2</sup>	change	% change
Belfast City	28,856	32,939	4,083	14.1
<i>East</i> <sup>3</sup>	5,267	5,829	562	10.7
<i>North</i> <sup>3</sup>	9,138	9,738	600	6.6
<i>South</i> <sup>3</sup>	8,362	11,357	2,995	35.8
<i>West</i> <sup>3</sup>	6,089	6,015	-74	-1.2
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	6,302	6,446	144	2.3
Ards & North Down	5,363	6,364	1,001	18.7
Newry, Mourne & Down	8,578	9,016	438	5.1
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	9,700	10,815	1,115	11.5
Mid Ulster	4,887	5,359	472	9.7
Fermanagh & Omagh	3,802	4,264	462	12.2
Derry City & Strabane	9,980	11,159	1,179	11.8
Causeway Coast & Glens	6,365	6,561	196	3.1
Mid & East Antrim	6,360	6,598	238	3.7
Antrim & Newtownabbey	6,139	7,379	1,240	20.2
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>96,332</b>	<b>106,900</b>	<b>10,568</b>	<b>11.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Changes can be expected to in-year figures each time they are published, as records from 1st April 2022 are subject to ongoing validation and quality assurance processes until publication in May 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Individual policing districts may not add to Northern Ireland total as there will be some crimes yet to complete the validation process and be allocated to a policing district.

<sup>3</sup> Belfast City policing district has four local policing teams based in Lisburn Road (South), Tennent Street (North), Strandtown (East) and Woodbourne (West).

## 6. Homicide in Northern Ireland

**Table 3 Homicides recorded by the Police**

	May'20 to Apr'21	May'21 to Apr'22
Murder	17	19
Manslaughter	1	4
Corporate Manslaughter	0	1
Infanticide	0	0
<b>Homicide</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>

**Table 4 Homicides by age and gender recorded by the Police**

	May'20 to Apr'21	May'21 to Apr'22
Female <18	0	1
Female 18+	8	5
Male <18	0	2
Male 18+	10	16
<b>All Homicides</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>

**Table 5 Homicides with a domestic abuse motivation by age and gender recorded by the Police**

	May'20 to Apr'21	May'21 to Apr'22
Female <18	0	1
Female 18+	6	4
Male <18	0	1
Male 18+	1	4
<b>All Homicides with a domestic abuse motivation<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>

<sup>1</sup> All domestic homicides in the period were murder offences, with the exception of one manslaughter offence in the period May'21 to Apr'22.

Homicide statistics from 2007/08 are available in the [Crime spreadsheet for April 2022, 0.5MB \(opens in new window\)](#).

Further Domestic Abuse statistics are available in the [Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Bulletin - March 2022 PDF \(586KB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#).

### Domestic Abuse Definition

The PSNI has adopted the definition of domestic violence and abuse as outlined in the 2016 Northern Ireland Government Strategy 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland' as:

'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member'.

The following will assist in the application of this definition:

- (a) 'Incident' means an incident anywhere and not confined to the home of one of the partners/family members;
- (b) 'Family members' include mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or stepfamily.
- (c) 'Intimate partners' means there must have been a relationship with a degree of continuity and stability. The relationship must also have had (or reasonably supposed to have had) a sexual aspect, such as in the relationship between husband and wife or between others generally recognised as a couple including same sex couples.

## 7. 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 for England & Wales, are available in the [Crime bulletins for England & Wales \(opens in a new window\)](#).

**Table 6 Number of selected violent and sexual offences involving knives or sharp instruments<sup>1</sup> by crime type, 2017/18 to 2021/22**

Selected offence type	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Homicide	7	7	7	6	9
Attempted murder	39	23	32	23	29
Threats to kill	49	65	45	58	47
Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm <sup>2</sup>	534	515	495	485	542
Robbery	130	155	133	118	115
Rape / sexual assault <sup>3</sup>	4	2	7	3	4
<b>Total selected offences</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>746</b>

**Table 7 Proportion of selected violent and sexual offences recorded by the police involving knives or sharp instruments<sup>1,4</sup> by offence type in Northern Ireland, 2017/18 to 2021/22 (i.e. 38 per cent of all homicides in the 12 months to 31 March 2022 involved knives or sharp instruments)**

Selected offence type	2017/18 (%)	2018/19 (%)	2019/20 (%)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)
Homicide	26	24	35	27	38
Attempted murder	41	36	35	35	50
Threats to kill	3	4	3	4	4
Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm <sup>2</sup>	4	4	4	4	4
Robbery	23	24	21	24	24
Rape / sexual assaults <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total selected offences</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.



## 8. 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 PDF \(1MB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#).

**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.

The total police recorded crime figure at the Northern Ireland and Policing District levels cover all records identified as crimes, including those that have not yet been allocated a crime classification. However individual crime types may not add to the total police recorded crime figure because of those crimes yet to be allocated a crime classification.

For the financial year to date (April 2022) 99.6% of records have been validated and 0.4% have not yet been given a crime classification.

Changes can be expected to in-year figures each time they are published, as all records from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 are subject to ongoing validation and quality assurance processes until publication in May 2023.

**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 2023. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the [Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime \(opens in a new window\)](#).

**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 \(opens in a new window\)](#). 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 (now called the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey) 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 PDF \(1MB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#).

**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 \(opens in a new window\)](#). 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 HOOR.

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) assessment was concluded after the publication of the HMIC report; [the UKSA assessment report Number 301 Statistics on Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland \(Police Service of Northern Ireland\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) 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.

**Internal Audit 2021:** Results from the 2021 Internal Audit showed that the crime recording accuracy had increased from 92 per cent in 2020 to 95 per cent in 2021. Crime recording accuracy in previous years was 90% in 2018 and 97% in 2019. The 2021 audit also indicated that 96 per cent of crimes were correctly classified and 86 per cent had a crime created within 72 hours. The Home Office Counting Rules, which govern crime recording, state that crimes should be recorded within 24 hours; the audit showed that 72% had a crime created within 24 hours of reporting. Failures in crime recording accuracy remain primarily due to the under recording of harassment offences.

## 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.

## Additional data available to accompany this release

This release provides an overview of police recorded crime in the 12 months to April 2022. A range of additional tables are available on the PSNI website to supplement the information contained in this bulletin. This data is available in [excel spreadsheet format \(opens in a new window\)](#) and [open document spreadsheet format \(opens in a new window\)](#).

A dataset providing monthly data since 2008/09 is available on the [OpenDataNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#) 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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) The latest publication covering financial years 1998/99 to 2020/21 was published on 19 November 2021.

[Crime Outcomes \(opens in a new window\)](#) 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 2020/21 was published on 19 November 2021.

Further details on Police Recorded Crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics PDF \(1MB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#), and in the [Police Recorded Crime Statistics Quality Report PDF \(293KB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#). 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 \(opens in a new window\)](#), with survey results available on the Department of Justice website

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

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 \(opens in a new window\)](#). 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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) are included within the publications on Crime in England and Wales, which are available from the Crime and justice webpage.

Copies of other PSNI publications are available from the [PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).