



Police Service
of Northern Ireland



User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland

incorporating incidents and crimes with a domestic or hate motivation,
and anti-social behaviour incidents


Date of Publication:

29 November 2024

Issued by:

PSNI Statistics Branch
Lisnasharragh
42 Montgomery Road
Belfast
BT6 9LD

 statistics@psni.police.uk

 028 9065 0222 Ext. 24135

Web [PSNI Statistics](#)



Contents

Contents.....	1
1. Introduction	3
2. Uses and user engagement	4
2.1 Key users of Northern Ireland Police Recorded Crime and associated Statistics	4
2.2 Uses made of Northern Ireland Police Recorded Crime and associated Statistics	4
2.3 User consultation.....	5
2.4 Related information available from the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey	5
2.5 Other sources of Northern Ireland crime and related data.....	5
2.6 National and international comparisons	5
3. Police Recorded Crime – definitions and methodology.....	6
3.1 Definitions	6
3.2 Data Collection	6
3.3 Crime Recording Rules	7
3.4 Police Recorded Crime Classifications	8
3.5 Police Recorded Crime Outcomes	9
3.6 Revisions policy.....	11
3.7 Data management.....	11
3.8 Data availability	12
3.9 Conventions used in figures and tables	12
3.10 Population estimates	12
4. Police Recorded Crime – oversight, compliance and quality assurance	13
4.1 Oversight and Compliance	13
4.2 Quality Assurance	14
5. Comparison of Police Recorded Crime with Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS)	16
6. Incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation	17
6.1 Background and definitions	17
6.2 What is a domestic abuse incident or domestic abuse crime as recorded by the police?	17
6.3 Quality assurance.....	18
7. Incidents and crimes with a hate motivation.....	19
7.1 Background and definitions	19

7.2 What is a hate motivated incident or hate motivated crime as recorded by the police?	20
7.3 Quality assurance	20
8. Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents	22
8.1 Background and definitions	22
8.2 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour from the Northern Ireland Safe Community	23
8.3 Quality assurance	23
Appendix 1 Police Recorded Crime Classification List.....	24
VICTIM-BASED OFFENCES	24
OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	30
‘OTHER FRAUD’ AND INTRODUCTION OF ACTION FRAUD WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND	31
Appendix 2 Description and Categorisation of Crime Outcomes	32

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. Introduction

This document is designed to be a useful reference guide with explanatory notes regarding the issues, classifications and definitions which are key to the production and presentation of the following statistics within Northern Ireland:

- Police recorded crime statistics (including crime outcomes)
- Domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded by the police
- Incidents and crimes recorded by the police with a hate motivation
- Anti-social behaviour incidents recorded by the police

These statistics 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 produced in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#). Police recorded crime statistics are designated as an Accredited Official Statistic.

Accredited Official Statistics

[Accredited Official Statistics](#)¹ are official statistics that have been independently reviewed by Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and confirmed to comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Producers of accredited official statistics are legally required to ensure they maintain compliance with the Code. Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

These accredited official statistics (Police recorded crime in Northern Ireland) were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in February 2016. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'.

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards by emailing statistics@psni.police.uk. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the [Office for Statistics Regulation website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

¹ From 7 June 2024 the Accredited Official Statistics badge replaced the National Statistics badge.

Publication and Availability

Publication dates are pre-announced on the [Gov.uk Statistics: release calendar \(opens in a new window\)](#). They are also made available via the [publication schedule \(opens in a new window\)](#) on the PSNI website.

[Police recorded crime \(opens in a new window\)](#) is published on a monthly basis. A detailed trends bulletin is published annually. An annual bulletin covering outcomes of crimes recorded by the police is published separately.

[Domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded by the police \(opens in a new window\)](#) are published quarterly, with a detailed trends bulletin published annually.

[Incidents and crimes recorded by the police with a hate motivation \(opens in a new window\)](#) are published quarterly, with a detailed trends bulletin published annually.

[Anti-social behaviour incidents recorded by the police \(opens in a new window\)](#) are published on a monthly basis.

2. Uses and user engagement

The Code of Practice for Statistics is based on the three pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value. As part of the Value pillar (producing statistics that support society's needs for information), PSNI publish information about users' experiences of statistical services, data quality and the format and timing of reports. Any interaction with key users of PSNI statistics usually falls into one of the three groups highlighted below:

- Engagement with users through meetings or correspondence.
- User Surveys – the key users of PSNI statistics are surveyed to ascertain what they think about the service they receive.
- Consultation exercises regarding proposed changes to statistical outputs or processes.

Users of these statistics can ask to be notified of publications as they are released. Users are also encouraged to contact us with any comments or suggestions for improvements. Information on the user engagement strategy and accessibility of publications can be found in the [PSNI Official Statistics documentation, PDF 491KB \(opens in a new window\)](#).

2.1 Key users of Northern Ireland Police Recorded Crime and associated Statistics

The key users of the police recorded crime statistics, statistics on incidents and crimes with a domestic or hate motivation and anti-social behaviour statistics fall into three main groups:

- Officers and staff within PSNI
- Oversight bodies & wider government
- Academia, specific interest groups, media and the general public

2.2 Uses made of Northern Ireland Police Recorded Crime and associated Statistics

Based on awareness of existing uses of the statistics and through responses received from User Surveys, the following examples provide an insight to the main uses made of this range of statistics.

Performance monitoring/ effectiveness of policing

- These statistics are an important indicator of police workload. Monitoring through reports provided within PSNI and also through reports, as required, to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. At a more local level, policing districts work in collaboration with Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) who also make use of these statistics to identify changing or emerging trends in their local area.

Policy making/ policy monitoring

These statistics routinely feed in to both Assembly and Parliamentary Questions, and policy development. Some recent policy developments where these statistics have made a contribution are:

- Department of Justice – development and monitoring of domestic abuse legislation and stalking legislation
- [Marrinan Review, independent review of hate crime legislation, published December 2020 \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- [Gillen Review into serious sexual offences, published May 2019 \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- PSNI's [Violence Against Women and Girls strategy \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Media related, Commercial interest and Personal interest

- Local and national media make use of these statistics to inform the public.
- Freedom of Information requests; the information requested can be very wide-ranging and the level of detail requested may not always be held.

To facilitate academic research

- Requests are also received from academics and students requesting data to assist them in completing projects and presentations.

To aid decisions on resource allocation

- Some agencies and special interest groups are dependent on funding that is sometimes linked to crime levels in their area. Hence these groups are keen to be provided with statistics, often for more detailed geographic areas or perhaps for very local areas which are not covered by a standard geography.

2.3 User consultation

Details on how the level of service to suppliers and users is maintained on an ongoing basis are available in [PSNI Official Statistics documentation, PDF 491KB \(opens in a new window\)](#) Section 6 Customer service and user engagement. A range of consultations have been undertaken in relation to police recorded crime statistics. These are outlined in sections 3.4 and 3.5 of this guide.

2.4 Related information available from the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey

The [Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey \(NISCS\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) (formerly known as the Northern Ireland Crime Survey) is published by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland (DoJ) and is an alternative but complementary measure of crime to police recorded crime. Perceptions of anti-social behaviour are also available from the NISCS.

2.5 Other sources of Northern Ireland crime and related data

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 only those and only those incidents and crimes with an associated grid reference can be mapped.

Figures are available for a range of geographic areas through the [NISRA Data Portal \(opens in a new window\)](#) and are updated on an annual basis.

2.6 National and international comparisons

There will be differences across jurisdictions in how police recorded crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic and hate motivations are recorded, compiled and presented, for example legislative differences and differences in definitions. Users should consult reference guides and metadata before making direct comparisons.

England and Wales:

[Police Recorded Crime in England & Wales \(opens in a new window\)](#), incorporating anti-social behaviour, is produced by The Office for National Statistics and is available from their Crime and Justice web page.

[Domestic Abuse in England & Wales \(opens in a new window\)](#) is produced by The Office for National Statistics.

[Hate Crime in England & Wales 2023-24 \(opens in a new window\)](#) is produced by The Home Office.

Scotland: [Law and order - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Ireland: [Crime and Justice - CSO - Central Statistics Office.](#)

International:

PSNI Recorded crime statistics may feature in both Eurostat and UN publications:

[United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems \(opens in a new window\)](#)

[Eurostat \(opens in a new window\)](#); PSNI crime statistics are available up to 2018.

3. Police Recorded Crime – definitions and methodology

3.1 Definitions

Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime data present an aggregated count of each offence reported to police:

- where the offence is included within the **Home Office notifiable offence list** and
- where the **Home Office National Crime Recording Standard** and the **Home Office Counting Rules** have been applied.

The [Home Office notifiable offence list \(opens in a new window\)](#) includes all offences that could possibly be tried by jury (these include some less serious offences, such as minor theft that would not usually be dealt with this way) plus a few additional closely related summary offences dealt with by magistrates' courts, such as assault without injury.

The [National Crime Recording Standard \(NCRS\) and the Home Office Counting Rules \(HOCR\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) ensure consistency in police crime recording practice by providing a national standard for the recording and classifying of notifiable offences by police forces in England and Wales. While the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Home Office, the same recording practices are followed and applied within Northern Ireland. However differences in legislation between the two jurisdictions must be taken into account when making comparisons between police recorded crime statistics for England & Wales and those for Northern Ireland.

Where a person has been subject to more than one offence in a single report made to police, it is **generally** the case that only the most serious crime is recorded (as per HOCR guidance). For example:

- if a person is assaulted and their car is damaged, only the assault will be recorded.
- if a house is burgled and the owner's car and other items are stolen, only the burglary will be recorded.

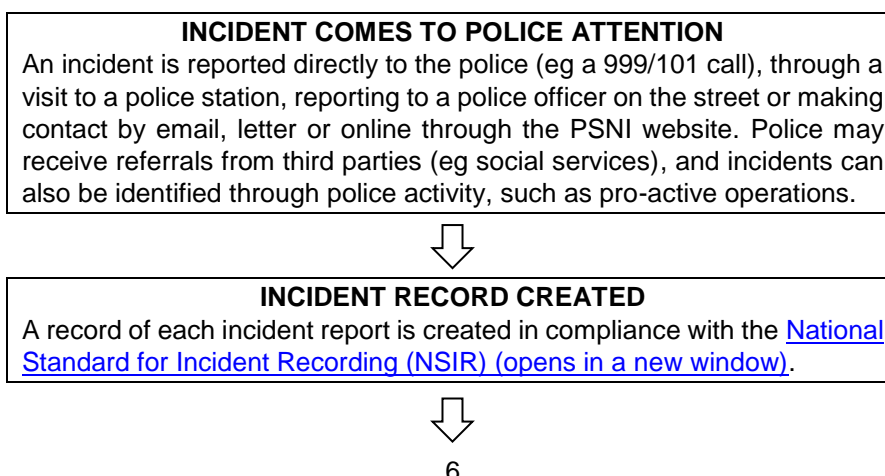
3.2 Data Collection

Police recorded crime statistics are administrative data sourced from NICHE, PSNI's record management system, which has the purpose of custody processing, occurrence management and case management. Further information is available [PSNI Official Statistics documentation \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The crime recording process starts at the point at which an incident comes to the attention of police. This may be through a call for service from a member of the public, an incident being referred to the police by another agency, or being identified by the police directly (for example, officers encountering an incident while on patrol).

All incidents reported to the police are recorded in accordance with the [National Standard for Incident Recording \(NSIR\) \(opens in a new window\)](#), which sets out a common approach to be followed in classifying the broad range of calls for service the police receive from the general public. In many cases these incidents may be offences in law, such as disorderly behaviour or many road traffic offences, but they are not of a level of severity that would result in the recording of a notifiable offence (as described above). Incidents of anti-social behaviour are another example of reports made to police that do not result in the recording of a notifiable offence. Thus, incidents of this nature are not included in the police recorded crime dataset.

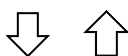
The basic process, from call for service to statistical publication, goes through the following main stages:



CRIME REPORT DEALT WITH BY POLICE
Where police attend the scene, the officer will call in the details of the circumstances to a centralised unit for input onto the occurrence management system.
Where police are not required to attend, the caller will provide sufficient details to a call taker who will arrange for the details to be input.



CRIME RECORDING AND CRIME OUTCOMES
Once the details have been input onto the occurrence management system they are passed to a team who ensure crimes are identified and correctly recorded through application of the [National Crime Recording Standard \(NCRS\) and the Home Office Counting Rules \(HOCR\) \(opens in a new window\)](#).
A crime outcome may be assigned to each crime where a sanction has been taken against an offender, on completion of an investigation, or where there are no further investigative opportunities.



QUALITY ASSURANCE CHECKS
Outstanding reports are followed up on a daily basis.
A suite of quality assurance checks have been designed to identify and correct data inconsistencies and to minimise under- and over-recording of crime. They are completed on a priority basis either daily, monthly or as required.
Crimes may be cancelled in accordance with the guidance in the Home Office Counting Rules.



PROVISION OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION
Crimes that have been 'validated' according to the HOCR are extracted each month in order to compile the police recorded crime publications that are available through the [PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).
As quality assurance checks are conducted on an ongoing basis, the monthly police recorded crime publications are provisional and subject to change each time they are published (further details in 3.6 revisions policy).

3.3 Crime Recording Rules

As police recorded crime statistics are sourced from administrative data, they are affected by the rules governing the recording of the 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. When examining trends in police recorded crime data presented in statistical bulletins it is important to consider the commentary which will explain any caveats associated with the data.

The Home Office Counting Rules and National Crime Recording Standard

Police recorded crime statistics are affected by changes in reporting and recording practices:

- In April 1998 the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) were expanded to include certain additional summary offences resulting in counts becoming more victim-based (the number of victims was counted rather than the number of offences);
- In April 2002, the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced across England & Wales and Northern Ireland, although some forces adopted key elements of the standard earlier and compliance with the standard continued to improve in the years following its formal introduction. In April 2001, a year prior to the introduction of the NCRS, the Police Service of Northern Ireland introduced a new electronic crime recording system which improved data collection and coverage. As a result, more low level crime was identified and included within the Northern Ireland police recorded crime statistics and the subsequent introduction of NCRS in April 2002 did not have a large impact.

The NCRS was devised by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in collaboration with Home Office statisticians. It was designed to ensure greater consistency between forces in recording crime and to take a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording with the police being required to record any allegation of crime unless there was credible evidence to the contrary.

Both of these changes resulted in an increase in the number of crimes recorded. Certain offences, such as the more minor violent crimes, were more affected by these changes than others. All of these factors need to be considered when looking at the trends in recorded crime.

Like any administrative data, risks to the quality and integrity of police recorded crime data exist at some stages of the operational and decision-making processes used in the collection. The main areas of risk are:

- **Whether a crime is recorded** - When an incident comes to the attention of the police there is a decision made about whether a crime has been committed.
- **Whether a crime is correctly classified** - When the police have judged that a crime has occurred, the type of crime should be classified according to the HO CR.
- **Cancelled crimes** – a crime may be cancelled or ‘no crime’d’ after it has been recorded if it meets specific circumstances set out in the HO CR, for example where a crime is considered to have been recorded in error or where additional verifiable information becomes available at a later stage that determines no crime was committed (for further information see the “General rules” section of the HO CR). Cancelled crimes relate to crimes already recorded and are therefore distinct from incident reports that are not recorded as crimes in the first place.

3.4 Police Recorded Crime Classifications

Changes to crime classifications

The structure of the classifications used to compile recorded crime may change; the main occasions where this has occurred are outlined below.

Alignment of PSNI classifications with England and Wales: During 2010/11 an exercise was conducted to more closely align the crime recording classifications used in PSNI publications with those used for police recorded crime figures in England and Wales. This was in order to improve comparability of police recorded crime across Northern Ireland and England and Wales, while taking into account legislative differences between the two jurisdictions. The realigned crime classification was introduced within PSNI in April 2011.

Crime classifications consultation November 2011: In November 2011 PSNI’s Statistics Branch ran a consultation exercise about proposed changes to reduce the overall number of crime classifications. This was in line with a similar exercise conducted by the Home Office in England and Wales. This resulted in a reduction in the number of crime classifications from 148 to 126 and these changes were introduced in April 2012.

Crime classifications consultation December 2012: The focus of the consultation launched in December 2012 was on dividing police recorded crimes between two broad categories to distinguish between crimes with a specific identifiable victim (referred to as “victim-based crime”) and those which do not normally have a direct victim and are more likely to be recorded as a result of proactive enforcement by the police and other authorities (referred to as “other crimes against society”). This consultation followed a similar exercise conducted by The Office for National Statistics (ONS) in respect of police recorded crime in England and Wales and resulted in a change to the previous classification system implemented from 1st April 2013.

Impact of classifications on crime trends

Long-term trends in police recorded crime across the range of offence types can be influenced by a number of factors, such as changes in recording practice over time and changes in the levels of public reporting of such incidents.

Changes to the Home Office Counting Rules introduced in April 1998 expanded the offence coverage of police recorded crime; in Northern Ireland this change nearly tripled the level of violence against the person and increased total recorded crime levels by 42 per cent. Much of the violence against the person increase resulted from a widening of the offence coverage to include assaults with little or no physical injury and offences of harassment (again with no injury).

The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced by the Home Office in April 2002 and, again, resulted in increased recording. However the impact of NCRS was lessened within PSNI by the introduction of

an integrated crime information system within PSNI a year earlier in April 2001, which improved the capture of lower level crimes.

Recorded Crime Classification List

Crime recording classifications are used to represent all individual offences that are notifiable to the Home Office. In general, attempting, conspiring, aiding, abetting, causing or permitting a crime is classified under the heading of the crime itself. In certain cases it is shown separately, for example murder is classified to Homicide, attempted murder is classified to violence with injury and conspiracy to murder is classified to violence without injury.

Police recorded crime covers all indictable and triable-either-way offences. Additionally, a few closely associated summary offences are included. The crimes on this list are termed notifiable offences and their listing is referred to as the notifiable offence list.

Most of the offences listed are defined in terms of legal offences (that is, sections of Acts). A comprehensive list of these offences, together with important legal definitions and explanatory notes, appears in the [Home Office Counting rules for recorded crime \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The Police Service of Northern Ireland does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Home Office and does not provide them with any returns on police recorded crime. Offences in Northern Ireland legislation are broadly similar to those in England and Wales, allowing the recorded crime list and classification to be applied. However there are differences in legislation between the two jurisdictions which mean that some classifications may be available in one jurisdiction but not the other.

All crime is split between two primary offence groups: victim-based crimes and other crimes against society. Victim-based crimes are those with a specific identifiable victim; other crimes that do not normally have a direct victim are referred to as “other crimes against society”.

Victim-based crime includes violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, total theft offences (including burglary), and criminal damage.

Other crimes against society includes drug offences possession of weapons offences, public order offences and miscellaneous crimes against society.

A list of the police recorded crime classifications and any impact classification changes have had on the police recorded crime time series (as well as the related domestic abuse and hate motivation series) is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

3.5 Police Recorded Crime Outcomes

Crime outcomes show the action taken in relation to each crime recorded. The current outcomes framework was developed by the Home Office following a consultation launched in October 2012, with PSNI launching a similar consultation in December 2012. This framework was introduced within England & Wales from 1st April 2014 and within Northern Ireland from 1st April 2015. The framework was introduced to:

- **strengthen police discretion** by recognising the full range of possible disposals, including community resolutions, rather than incentivising police officers to pursue a particular outcome because it is perceived as ‘better’ than others; this will empower officers to exercise their professional judgement to ensure that offenders are dealt with by the most appropriate disposal available, in the knowledge that no one outcome is favoured over others – the emphasis should shift from hitting targets to appropriateness
- **promote a more victim-oriented approach**, focused on providing a better service to victims of crime by removing perverse incentives for forces to record and pro-actively pursue certain crimes on the basis of locally-set detection targets, and encouraging police officers to consider the needs of victims, and the potential for engaging them in the process
- **further increase transparency** in policing, and trust in national statistics, by providing the public with a richer picture of crime, and how it is dealt with in their area; this broader set of information can be used as a tool by which the public can hold the police to account, and as a basis for constructive engagement between communities, the police, and police and crime commissioners; by giving every crime an outcome, we will help the public understand – and therefore support or challenge – police activity

Police recorded crime outcomes recording practice

Sanction outcomes are applied where a person is formally dealt with by police by means of a charge, summons, offence taken into consideration, formal out-of-court disposal or informal out-of-court disposal.

Non-sanction outcomes are applied where no formal action is taken by police against a suspect.

Between 1998/99 and 2006/07 a range of 'administrative disposals' were in place which were subsequently discontinued in that form by the Home Office with the introduction of tighter guidance on the application of outcomes.

The only non-sanction outcome available between 2007/08 and 2014/15 was 'prosecution prevented or not in the public interest'. Under Home Office guidance this outcome was only able to be applied to the more serious 'indictable only' offences during this time period.

Since the introduction of the current framework within PSNI in April 2015, the 'prosecution prevented or not in the public interest' outcome can be applied to any offence. The current framework also introduced outcomes to reflect investigations which do not result in a sanction due to evidential difficulties, or where the investigation is completed without a suspect being identified.

Each crime recorded by the police can have only one outcome assigned, regardless of the number of suspects identified in relation to that crime. For example, if six offenders are involved in a robbery and all are arrested and charged, then this counts as one outcome. Alternatively if only one of the six is identified and charged while the other five remain unidentified and at large, this also counts as one outcome for the robbery.

Therefore, as crime outcomes are counted on the basis of crimes rather than suspects or offenders, these figures cannot be used to provide comment on suspects or offenders.

Further details on recording crime outcomes can be found in Section H of the HOCR general rules document, available through the [Home Office Counting Rules \(opens in a new window\)](#). Please note that the terminology and processes in these rules refer to what is in place in England and Wales (e.g. for Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales, replace with Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland). There will be differences between the criminal justice processes outlined in the outcomes section of Counting Rules and those that are in place within Northern Ireland, affecting both volumes and the length of time between the report being made to police and the outcome being assigned.

A description/categorisation of each police recorded crime outcome is available in [Appendix 2](#).

Police recorded crime outcomes data quality

'Sanction' outcomes are applied on the basis of charge sheets, PPS directions (summonses issued), signed caution forms, PND notices and community resolution forms. They are checked for compliance by the PSNI's Statistics Branch and validated in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules.

Crimes resulting in no formal action being taken by police against a suspect will also have the outcome assigned according to the Home Office Counting Rules. The correct application of these outcomes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch. However basic quality checks are conducted to ensure records have the essential elements completed, allowing inclusion in the crime outcomes data.

Presentation of police recorded crime outcomes

The statistics published in the Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Annual Trends and Monthly Update bulletins are designated as National Statistics (unless otherwise specified). The statistics in the Outcomes of Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland bulletin are published as Official Statistics.

A sanction outcomes data series is available from 1998/99, with the exception of community resolution notices and penalty notices for disorder which were introduced in Northern Ireland during 2012.

A non-sanction outcomes data series is available from 2015/16, with the exception of outcomes for diversionary, educational or intervention activity which were introduced from 2020/21.

There are two ways of presenting crime outcomes:

- crime outcome rates; and
- outcomes which have since been assigned to police recorded crimes.

Crime Outcome Rates

Basis for presentation: The number of crimes detected in a defined period as a percentage of the number of crimes recorded in that same period. In other words these are two separate data sets with no direct link between crime and outcome, although there will be a great degree of overlap between them.

Calculation example: 104,344 crimes recorded during 2023/24 with 33,213 crimes detected by means of a sanction outcome and 64,114 crimes resulting in no formal action during 2023/24. This gives a sanction 'outcome rate' of 31.8% and an 'outcome rate' of 61.4% for crimes resulting in no formal action. It is possible to show an outcome rate of more than 100 per cent. Please note that adding together both sanction and non-sanction outcome rates will not provide a meaningful total.

Strengths: Volumes of outcomes recorded in a particular time period provide a useful indication of police activity in understanding how crimes are resolved. As the outcome rate is based on what has been detected during the time period it is not impacted by the lag time for a crime to result in an outcome.

Limitations: These outcome rates are described by the Home Office as illustrative rather than true rates that can be influenced by changes in crime volumes. Where crime volumes increase or decrease markedly from one year to the next, it is likely that any outcome rate will react more slowly.

Outcomes which have since been assigned to police recorded crimes

Basis for presentation: The number of crimes recorded in a defined period and how they have since been resolved, ie the crime is directly linked to its associated outcome.

Calculation example: This calculation is based on all crimes having the potential to be allocated an outcome. 104,344 crimes recorded during 2023/24 of which 31,745 have since been assigned a sanction outcome and 60,630 have since been given an outcome relating to no formal action. The percentage of crimes with a sanction outcome since assigned is 30.4% and 58.1% for crimes that have since resulted in no formal action; 11.5% have no outcome. The percentage of crimes assigned an outcome can increase over time until it reaches 100%, although this level of completeness is unlikely.

Strengths: This presentation is the best way of understanding how crimes recorded in a specified time period have been resolved, with such analysis repeated over time as investigations are completed and outcomes are assigned. It gives a more complete picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime.

Limitations: The proportion of crimes not yet assigned an outcome is a main consideration when looking at outcomes covering a more recent time period with those for an earlier time period, for example 11.5% in 2023/24 compared with 1.2% in 2015/16.

3.6 Revisions policy

The police recorded crime figures and the figures relating to incidents and crimes with a domestic or hate motivation are a by-product of a live administrative system that is continually being updated with incidents that are logged as crimes and subsequently investigated, and with incidents that are being subsequently identified as having a domestic or hate motivation:

- Some incidents initially recorded as a crime may, on further investigation, be found not to be a crime (described as “cancelled records”). Crime reports that are cancelled are removed from the police recorded crime statistics.
- Some offences may change category, for example, from theft to robbery.
- Some crimes may not be fully processed on the crime recording system by the time the data to be used for publication is extracted. These records will appear in subsequent updates, with all outstanding crimes identified and actioned for the bulletin covering the full financial year to 31st March.

In-year revisions: Bulletins covering any twelve month periods from the end of April through to the end of February are provisional and subject to slight revision until the publication covering the full financial year to the end of March is published. This means that previously published totals for each month, crime type and policing district from 1st April each year can change in each subsequent publication during that financial year. The scale of revisions in respect of police recorded crime is provided in each monthly bulletin.

Where revisions are undertaken for specific data quality reasons, details will be outlined in the affected publications.

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 a Home Office change implemented within PSNI from April 2015 to apply outcomes to all crimes. These revisions mainly take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature are applied in the release published in May of each year.

The general principle for any revision will be that when data are found to be in error, both the data and any associated analysis that has been published will be revised in line with our revisions policy available in the [PSNI Official Statistics documentation \(opens in a new window\)](#).

3.7 Data management

The Northern Ireland police recorded crime statistics are compiled by statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) who are seconded to PSNI. They are co-located within PSNI and are given access to PSNI's internal systems, once they have been appropriately vetted and trained. Collaboration with operational colleagues is in place to address specific areas where expert and professional knowledge may

be required, including IT colleagues and subject area leads. Any concerns or issues within specific areas are fed back when required through established channels. Access to systems and data extracts enables Statistics Branch to produce bulletins for publication and to respond to ad hoc requests for information. Further information is available in Section 3 Data protection and confidentiality of the [PSNI Official Statistics documentation \(opens in a new window\)](#).

3.8 Data availability

Information that is published in the series of bulletins covering police recorded crime, incidents and crimes with a domestic/hate motivation and anti-social behaviour have been examined to make sure they meet the quality and completeness appropriate for publication. Data are published at levels for which disclosure issues have been considered, including the geographic level at which the information is produced, the length of time period covered and victim characteristics. Further information is available in Section 3 Data protection and confidentiality, Statistical disclosure control of the [PSNI Official Statistics documentation \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Any requests for types of data not included in the bulletins are assessed and responded to on a case by case basis. Where there is potential for placing additional data on the website, this will be taken forward. Where there are requests for types of information that would require additional processes to be put in place for gathering this information, these will be forwarded within PSNI for a decision on whether there is a business requirement to collect information in this format.

3.9 Conventions used in figures and tables

'-' indicates that for offences recorded a percentage change is not reported because the base number of offences is less than 50. For offences detected this indicates that an outcome rate cannot be calculated as there were no offences recorded.

'..' indicates that data are not available.

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

Charts may not all be shown to same scale.

Disclosure control may be applied to some tables in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Where this applies cells have been merged or suppressed in order to ensure the identity of individuals/organisations or any private information relating to them is not revealed. '**' indicates a cell has been suppressed.

3.10 Population estimates

Where population estimates are used within these publications, they are based on the mid-year population estimates as [published by NISRA \(opens in a new window\)](#). Police recorded crime statistics and incidents/crimes with a domestic abuse motivation are presented per 1,000 population, while incidents/crimes with a hate motivation are presented per 10,000 population.

Population rates will be calculated on the latest mid-year estimates available at time of compilation.

Population rates for police data covering the 2023/24 financial year are based on 2023 mid-year estimates, those for 2022/23 are based on 2022 mid-year estimates etc.

Further details on population estimates for Northern Ireland are available through the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#). A methodology paper and background quality report are part of the release of each set of mid-year population estimates.

4. Police Recorded Crime – oversight, compliance and quality assurance

4.1 Oversight and Compliance

National Statistics Designation (now referred to as Accredited Official Statistics)

In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority published its assessment of the police recorded crime statistics in England & Wales, noting “accumulating evidence that suggests the underlying data on crimes recorded by the police may not be reliable”. As a result, the Authority removed the National Statistics designation from the England & Wales police recorded crime data. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) continues to publish and provide commentary on police recorded crime data.

As a result of these concerns, the Authority commenced an assessment of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland in June 2014. In addition to this assessment, 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 19th 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 per cent with a confidence interval of +/-2 per cent;
- 98 per cent of crimes correctly classified; and
- 84 per cent recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed under the Home Office Counting Rules.

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 \(Police Service of Northern Ireland\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) was published on 28th May 2015. This report judged that the police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland could remain designated as a National Statistic in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (subject to requirements). The Letter of Confirmation of continued designation as National Statistics was issued by the Authority on 18th February 2016.

The PSNI response to the recommendations made in each report is available on the [PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

In June 2024 the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) introduced the new accredited official statistics badge to denote official statistics that have been independently reviewed the OSR and judged to meet the standards in the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#). The new badge replaces the National Statistics badge.

Crime recording oversight

Each police force has a Force Crime Registrar (FCR) who monitors the application of the HOCR and has a final arbiter role with respect to crime recording decisions. A nationally agreed crime data quality assurance manual (DQAM) has been developed for use by FCRs. This DQAM is subject to regular review. A national data quality working group meets regularly to consider specific issues, to advise Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on inspection activity and to support FCRs in the development of local risk-based audits.

Within PSNI the role of FCR is undertaken by the Service Crime Registrar (SCR), which became a dedicated role in January 2018 (previously the role was undertaken by the Head of Statistics Branch). The SCR reports directly to the Deputy Chief Constable. General oversight of crime recording occurs through quality assurance at local level and compliance audits by the SCR. A centralised crime recording process is in place within PSNI, with two contact management centres, a single crime input team and three crime validation teams. This approach promotes consistency across the service. Where the Service Crime Registrar becomes aware of local practices that have the potential to conflict with crime-recording policies they will be addressed directly by the SCR if appropriate, or elevated to senior management for action.

At a national level, ongoing consultation on the formulation and development of the policy on crime recording is provided through working groups comprising members of the Home Office, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), police force regional representatives and representatives of the National Police Chief’s Council (NPCC), Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Any significant changes proposed by these groups in recording will be considered by the independent [National Statistician Crime Statistics Advisory Committee \(NSCSAC\) \(opens in a new window\)](#), established following a recommendation in the [National Statistician’s Review of Crime Statistics for England and Wales \(opens in a new window\)](#) in 2011 – who will advise the National Statistician (the government’s principal adviser on official statistics). The PSNI SCR is a member of the North West Regional Group of FCRs which

reports to the National Crime Recording Technical Working Group, which is chaired by the National Crime Registrar.

Crime Recording Compliance Audits

Compliance audits form a major part of the work of the Service Crime Registrar and incorporate a range of products, from a series of annual audits examining both crime and incident records, to more focussed audits in areas of concern and to ensure compliance with new legislation. With the appointment of a Deputy Service Crime Registrar and an Auditor in 2022 the capacity to undertake audits has been enhanced.

The compliance rates presented below are estimates which are arrived at through examining a sample of records for each audit.

Compliance Audits 2004 to 2012: Audits of crime recording compliance conducted between 2004 and 2008 indicated compliance ranging from 94% to 96%. In 2009/10 the average compliance rate was 96.5%, in 2010/11 the average compliance rate was 97.6% and in 2011/12 it was 91%. These audits identified that the types of crimes most commonly missed were low level crimes such as minor assaults, harassment, minor theft and minor criminal damage.

Compliance Audit 2014: Following the high profile media coverage of the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) report "*Caught red-handed: Why we can't count on Police Recorded Crime statistics*" in late 2013, PSNI's Statistics Branch completed a crime recording compliance audit in February 2014, examining whether incidents reported to the police resulted in a crime being appropriately recorded. Overall crime recording compliance was 93%, crime classification accuracy was 97%, correct identification of victims was 98% and timeliness (recording within the 72 hour limit allowed under HOCR) was 73%. As identified in previous audits, missed crimes tended to be less serious crimes such as harassment type offences, criminal damage, theft and assault without injury. While offences such as robbery and burglary were much less likely to be missed, there were some incidents where sexual offences were reported to police but a crime was not recorded.

HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity Audit September 2014: PSNI does not fall under the direct remit of the Home Office and is not included in the crime data integrity audits conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). However in light of the crime recording data quality issues in England & Wales mentioned previously, HMICFRS were invited to conduct a crime data integrity audit within PSNI during September 2014. The main findings in relation to data quality were:

- a crime recording accuracy rate of 97 per cent with a confidence interval of +/-2 per cent;
- 98 per cent of crimes correctly classified; and
- 84 per cent recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed under the Home Office Counting Rules.

Compliance Audits 2018 to 2023: Audits conducted by the Service Crime Registrar identified 90% crime recording compliance in 2018, 97% in 2019, 92% in 2020, 95% in 2021, 91% in 2022 and 92% in 2023. The 2023 audit also indicated that 92 per cent of crimes were correctly classified, 81 per cent had a crime created within 24 hours of reporting and 33 per cent were HOCR compliant within 24 hours. Failures in crime recording accuracy were primarily due to the under recording of assault and theft offences.

HMIC inspection report published 1st May 2024: the main finding from [a second inspection of crime data integrity between November 2023 and January 2024 \(opens in a new window\)](#) was that PSNI has maintained its crime-recording accuracy since the previous data integrity audit in September 2014, with a crime-recording accuracy rate of 96 percent, confidence interval of +/-2 per cent.

4.2 Quality Assurance

The NISRA statisticians seconded to PSNI work closely with the Service Crime Registrar, in doing so they maintain awareness of changes to recording processes, the HOCR and implementation of new legislation that may each have an impact on the published statistics. Furthermore, as PSNI covers the entire region of Northern Ireland, the quality assurance processes and resulting statistics benefit from the centralised crime recording process described on pages 6 and 7.

As there are a number of risks associated with the data collection process, NISRA statisticians have developed and implemented a suite of crime data quality checks and, where possible, have embedded processes within the crime recording system designed to identify and minimise crime under-recording. As a result, the PSNI's crime data quality is managed by a combination of crime recording process design and a range of data quality checks.

Quality assurance processes and checks fall into two main groups; those that are undertaken by staff in Occurrence & Case Management Teams (OCMTs) and those that are undertaken by staff in PSNI's Statistics Branch.

Quality assurance checks (Occurrence & Case Management Teams)

The main role of OCMT staff in respect of crime recording is to ensure each crime is correctly identified and recorded through application of the [National Crime Recording Standard \(NCRS\) and the Home Office Counting Rules \(HOCR\) \(opens in a new window\)](#). These staff also have a role in identifying potential missed crimes and following these up with investigating officers. To assist them in this task PSNI's Statistics Branch have developed a risk based approach to identifying potentially missed crimes; this is an automated process where incidents that have been allocated certain NSIR codes by the Contact Management Centre are automatically flagged to OCMT staff for assessment. If the incident details suggest a crime should be recorded, but none has yet appeared on the system, the OCMT will follow up with the investigating officer. If there are no details within the incident to suggest a crime has occurred, OCMT staff will update the record to that effect.

Quality assurance checks (Statistics Branch)

Staff within the PSNI's Statistics Branch undertake a series of data quality checks on an ongoing basis in order to identify and correct inconsistencies within the data and to minimise any under-recording or over-recording of crime. A risk based approach has been applied to the running of these data quality checks, with priority given to those that have the greatest impact on the quality of the published police recorded crime figures.

Priority 1 checks are carried out on a daily basis to maximise the accuracy of figures which are updated each day for internal performance monitoring;

Priority 2 checks are run on a monthly basis and identify potential missed crimes and crime outcomes;

Priority 3 checks are run on a monthly basis and are designed to improve data quality, for example:

- essential checks to ensure that victim age, victim gender or injury level matches the offence that has been recorded;
- desirable checks which identify records where the location, property or weapon details may be inconsistent with the recorded offence;
- non-essential checks which may identify missing or potentially incorrect information but which would not have a direct impact on the quality of the published recorded crime figures.

A 'validated' crime is one that has been input onto the crime recording system and checked for compliance with HOCR. At this stage the crime is available for inclusion in the police recorded crime figures, and only staff in Statistics Branch have the ability to either reclassify or cancel. As a result, inaccuracies identified through the quality assurance process outlined above are corrected directly on the crime recording system by Statistics Branch staff. The quality assurance checks are regularly reviewed to confirm that they continue to be sufficient to cover the range of data quality issues that exist. Should individual checks no longer be required they will be removed from the process. Additional checks will be introduced by NISRA statisticians should a new data quality issue be identified.

5. Comparison of Police Recorded Crime with Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS)

Strengths and limitations

The [Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey \(NISCS\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) (formerly known as the Northern Ireland Crime Survey) is published by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland (DoJ) and is an alternative but complementary measure of crime to police recorded crime. 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 Safe Community 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.

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).

Police recorded crime statistics are important for showing the mix of crimes dealt with and recorded by the police. They are an important measure of activity locally and a source of operational information to help identify and address local crime problems, at a lower geographical level than is possible using the NISCS. Police recorded crime statistics also provide more reliable information on less common crimes, such as robbery, and are currently the only source of data on homicides and offences against those not resident in households.

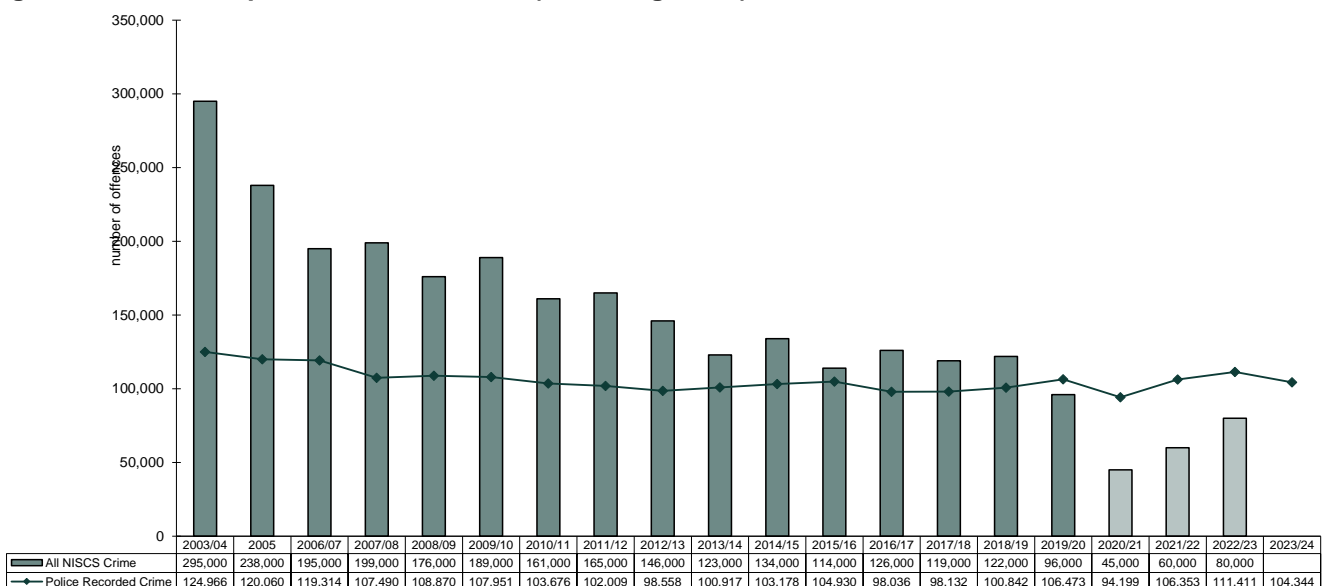
Like any administrative data, police recorded crime statistics are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without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

It was estimated in 2022/23 (the latest year available) that around 35 per cent of NISCS comparable crime was reported to the police in Northern Ireland although this varied for individual offence types. Further information is available in the DoJ Experience of Crime and Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey publications.

Comparison of police recorded crime and NISCS

Figure 5.1 compares trends in police recorded crime and levels identified through the NISCS. Since 2003/04 the NISCS estimates have been based on a rolling 12 month recall period (ie the full calendar year preceding interview) which effectively covers a spread of 23 months in a single NISCS year. This makes it difficult to directly compare the NISCS figures with any specific set of annual recorded crime figures and should be taken into account when considering this chart. In addition, since 2020/21 NISCS has been conducted as a telephone survey and there are a range of reasons why 2020/21 and subsequent years cannot be compared with previous years; further details are available in a [DoJ document 'Things you need to know' \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Figure 5.1 Trends in police recorded crime (excluding fraud) and all NISCS Crime since 2003/04



6. Incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation

6.1 Background and definitions

PSNI publish statistics on the levels and trends in police recorded domestic abuse incidents and crimes, with data in its current format available from 2004/05. While PSNI compiled statistics on domestic abuse prior to 2004/05, the method of data collection and definitions of crimes and crime types was not comparable and so these figures are not made available by PSNI's Statistics Branch.

Domestic abuse incidents and crimes are published as Official Statistics, with publications produced in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

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.

The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 created a new Domestic Abuse Offence which criminalises a course of abusive behaviour (including coercive and controlling behaviour, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse and economic abuse). Recording of this offence started on 21st February 2022. Further information on the Domestic Abuse Offence is available on the [Department of Justice website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Domestic abuse incident and crime statistics are used widely within PSNI as management information and to inform PSNI policy and operational guidance. They are also used by government departments and other voluntary and statutory agencies to inform debate and policy development regarding domestic abuse in Northern Ireland.

It is widely accepted that there is under-reporting of domestic abuse incidents to the police and so these publications only provide an indication of the true extent of domestic abuse.

Survey and research findings in relation to domestic abuse are available on the [Statistics and Research page of the Department of Justice website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

6.2 What is a domestic abuse incident or domestic abuse crime as recorded by the police?

Where the circumstances of a report to police meets the domestic abuse definition, an incident will be recorded and flagged as having a domestic abuse motivation. Any crimes identified within the incident that meet the domestic abuse definition will be flagged as having a domestic abuse motivation. For example, where a police officer is assaulted while attending a domestic incident in the course of carrying out their duty, this assault will be recorded as a crime but will not be flagged as domestic abuse as it does not meet the definition. However the incident itself, and any other crimes that may have occurred which meet the definition will be flagged accordingly.

Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the required level of severity. Some domestic abuse incidents will result in multiple crimes being recorded. As domestic abuse crimes are included in the incident count, the two should not be added together.

When a crime with a domestic abuse motivation is recorded, it is classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and forms a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics. In other words crimes with a domestic abuse motivation are subject to the police recorded crime and police crime outcome recording and quality assurance practices outlined in Sections 3 and 4 of this guide.

6.3 Quality assurance

The identification of a domestic abuse motivation is derived from a motivation 'tick box' on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime.

As crimes with a domestic abuse motivation are included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland, they are covered by the 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 Home Office Counting Rules, as discussed in section 4 of this guide.

While the correct application of each domestic abuse motivation is **not** quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, a range of quality assurance processes are routinely conducted to improve completeness and accuracy including:

- Identifying incidents or crimes where application of the domestic abuse motivation may have been missed and adding the motivation if appropriate.
- Removing the domestic abuse motivation from an incident or crime where it has been incorrectly applied.

7. Incidents and crimes with a hate motivation

7.1 Background and definitions

PSNI publish statistics on the levels and trends in police recorded hate incidents and crimes, with six strands of hate motivation monitored; Race, Sexual Orientation, Sectarianism, Faith/religion (non-sectarian), Disability and Transgender Identity. The definition for each of these motivations is provided below, along with an explanation of the perception test.

Data in its current format available is from 2004/05 for race and sexual orientation hate motivations and from 2005/06 for sectarian hate motivation. While collation of hate motivations started in 2005/06 for both faith/religion and disability motivations and in 2006/07 for transgender identity motivation, improvements were made to the data quality assurance process for these hate motivations in 2009/10 meaning that data for these motivations prior to 2009/10 should be regarded with caution.

PSNI compiled statistics on race and sexual orientation motivations prior to 2004/05. However the method of data collection and definitions of crimes and crime types was not comparable and so these figures are not made available by PSNI's Statistics Branch.

Incidents and crimes with a hate motivation are published as Official Statistics, with publications produced in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Definitions

Race

A racial group can be defined as a group of persons defined by reference to race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins (this includes UK National origins i.e. Scottish, English, Welsh and Irish) and references to a person's racial group refer to any racial group into which he/she falls. Racial group includes the Irish Traveller community.

Sexual Orientation (previously referred to as 'Homophobia')

Sexual orientation can be defined as an individual's preference for a particular sex (be it the opposite or the same), or an individual's view of their own sexuality. The sexual orientation motivation can be defined as a fear or dislike directed towards lesbian, gay or bisexual people, or a fear or dislike directed towards their perceived lifestyle, culture or characteristics.

Sectarianism

The term 'sectarian', whilst not clearly defined, is a term almost exclusively used in Northern Ireland to describe incidents of bigoted dislike or hatred of members of a different religious or political group. It is broadly accepted that within the Northern Ireland context an individual or group must be perceived to be Catholic or Protestant, Nationalist or Unionist, or Loyalist or Republican. However sectarianism can also relate to other religious denominations, for example, Sunni and Shi'ite in Islam.

Faith/Religion (non-sectarian)

A faith or religious group can be defined as a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief. This would include Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and different sects within a religion. It also includes people who hold no religious belief at all.

Disability (or Disablity)

Any disability including physical or sensory disability, learning disability, long-term illness and mental health.

Transgender Identity (previously referred to as 'Transphobia') Removed from bulletins

Includes people who are transgender and those who hold the gender recognition certificate under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

The Perception Test

Evidence is not the test when reporting a hate incident; when an incident or crime has been reported to police by the victim or by any other person and they perceive it as being motivated by prejudice or hate, it will be recorded and investigated as a hate incident or crime. The perception of the victim, or any other person is the defining factor in determining whether an incident is a hate incident, or in recognising the hostility element of a hate crime. Perception-based recording refers to the perception of the victim, or any other person. It would not be appropriate to record a crime or incident as a hate crime or hate incident if it was based on the perception of a person or group who had no knowledge of the victim, crime or the area, and who may be responding to media or internet stories or who are reporting for a political or similar motive. The other person could, however, be one of a number

of people, including: police officers or staff; witnesses; family members; civil society organisations who know details of the victim, the crime or hate crimes in the locality, such as a third-party reporting charity; a carer or other professional who supports the victim; someone who has knowledge of hate crime in the area – this could include many professionals and experts such as the manager of an education centre used by people with learning disabilities who regularly receives reports of abuse from students; a person from within the group targeted with the hostility, e.g. a Traveller who witnessed racist damage in a local park.

These hate motivated incident and crime statistics are used widely within PSNI as management information and to inform PSNI policy and operational guidance. They are also used by government departments and other voluntary and statutory agencies to inform debate, policy development and legislation aimed at tackling hate crime in Northern Ireland.

It is widely accepted that there is under-reporting of hate motivated incidents to the police and so these publications only provide an indication of the true extent of these occurrences.

7.2 What is a hate motivated incident or hate motivated crime as recorded by the police?

Hate crime is defined as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic. PSNI also use the principles of this definition to record non-crime hate incidents (see 'Hate Incident or Hate Crime' below).

The victim of a hate crime will be recorded as the person to whom the hostility or prejudice is displayed, even if they do not have the personal characteristic targeted but are connected to someone who has, for example a parent who is harassed because they have a child with a disability. In some cases the personal characteristic may be incorrectly perceived by the person displaying the hostility or prejudice.

Hate Incident or Hate Crime?

Where the circumstances of a report to police meets at least one of the hate motivation definitions, a hate incident will be recorded and flagged. Any crimes identified within the incident that meet the required hate definition will also be flagged as having a hate motivation. Not all hate motivated incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the required level of severity.

Some hate incidents will result in multiple crimes being recorded and some may have more than one type of hate motivation attributed to the incident. Due to the potential for double counting, the six hate motivation strands should not be added together and presented as overall hate incidents or hate crimes.

As hate-motivated crimes are included in the incident count, hate-motivated crimes and hate-motivated incidents should not be added together.

Where crimes with a hate motivation are recorded, they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics. In other words crimes with a hate motivation are subject to the police recorded crime and police crime outcome recording and quality assurance practices outlined in Sections 3 and 4 of this guide.

As there may be more than one crime recorded within an individual incident, it is possible for the number of crimes with a particular hate motivation to be higher than the number of incidents with that motivation.

7.3 Quality assurance

The identification of a hate motivation is derived from a motivation 'tick box' on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime.

The method of identifying hate crimes in England & Wales is similar to that within PSNI, through use of a flag as part of the crime recording process to identify the relevant motivation(s). However in England & Wales there are some offences in the main police recorded crime collection which have a specific racially or religiously motivated element. These are defined by statute and constitute a set of offences which are distinct from their non-racially or religiously aggravated equivalents. As police in England & Wales can identify other general offences as hate crimes, the total number of race or religious hate crimes will be greater than the number of police recorded racially or religiously aggravated offences. These specific racially or religiously aggravated offences do not exist within Northern Ireland.

As crimes with a hate motivation are included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland, they are covered by the 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 Home Office Counting Rules, as discussed in section 4 of this guide.

While the correct application of each hate motivation is **not** quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, a range of quality assurance processes are routinely conducted to improve completeness and accuracy including:

- Identifying incidents or crimes where application of the hate motivation may have been missed and adding the relevant hate motivation if appropriate.
- Removing the hate motivation from an incident or crime where it has been incorrectly applied.
- Additional in depth checks on incidents and crimes within those hate motivation strands where misinterpretation of the definition has been identified.

8. Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents

8.1 Background and definitions

The term “anti-social behaviour” (ASB) was formalised in the late 1990s to describe a wide range of the nuisance, disorder and crime that affects people’s daily lives.

Anti-social behaviour incident statistics have been collated by PSNI since 2006/07 in accordance with the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR) which was introduced in April 2006. In many cases these incidents may still be crimes in law, such as littering or dog fouling, but they are not of a level of severity that would result in the recording of a notifiable offence. Thus, they are not included in the main police recorded crime collection.

Figures relating to ASB can be considered alongside those on police recorded (notifiable) crime to provide a more comprehensive view of the crime and disorder that comes to the attention of the police. However police recorded ASB only relates to those anti-social behaviour incidents reported to the police, and may exclude those incidents reported to other agencies, such as local councils. As such, they only provide an indication of the true extent of reported anti-social behaviour.

ASB incidents recorded by the police are published as Official Statistics, with publications produced in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Between April 2006 and March 2011, ASB incidents were split into fourteen different incident types, and these categories were used as the basis on which ASB incident levels were reported. Following Home Office national guidance introduced on 1 April 2011, the emphasis was changed from merely recording and responding to incidents, to identifying those vulnerable individuals, communities and environments most and risk and therefore in needs of a response before problems escalate. There are now three categories of ASB:

- personal
- nuisance
- environmental

Personal

Personal ASB includes incidents that are perceived as either deliberately targeted at an individual or group, or having an impact on an individual or group, rather than the community at large.

It includes incidents that cause concern, stress, disquiet and/or irritation, through to incidents that have a serious impact on people’s quality of life.

At one extreme of the spectrum it includes minor annoyance; at the other end it could result in risk of harm, deterioration of health and disruption of mental or emotional well-being, resulting in an inability to conduct normal day-to-day activities through fear and intimidation.

Nuisance

Nuisance ASB incidents are where an act, condition, thing, or person causes trouble, annoyance, irritation, inconvenience, offence or suffering to the local community in general rather than to individual victims. It includes incidents where behaviour goes beyond the conventional bounds of acceptability and interferes with public interests including health, safety and quality of life.

Just as individuals will have differing expectations and levels of tolerance, communities will have different ideas about what behaviour goes beyond being tolerable or acceptable.

Environmental

The environmental ASB category deals with the interface between people and places; it includes incidents where individuals and groups have an impact on their surroundings, including natural, built and social environments.

This category is about encouraging reasonable behaviour while managing and protecting the various environments so that people can enjoy their own private spaces, as well as shared and public spaces.

While the national guidance and incident types for recording anti-social behaviour changed from 1 April 2011, the overall levels before and after this change appear to be sufficiently comparable for a time series of figures recorded under both the previous and the current guidance to be produced. However it should be noted that the figures prior to 1 April 2011 now exclude the incident type ‘Hoax Calls to Emergency Services’, which was one of the fourteen incident types in use between 2006/07 and 2010/11. Incidents of this nature were removed from

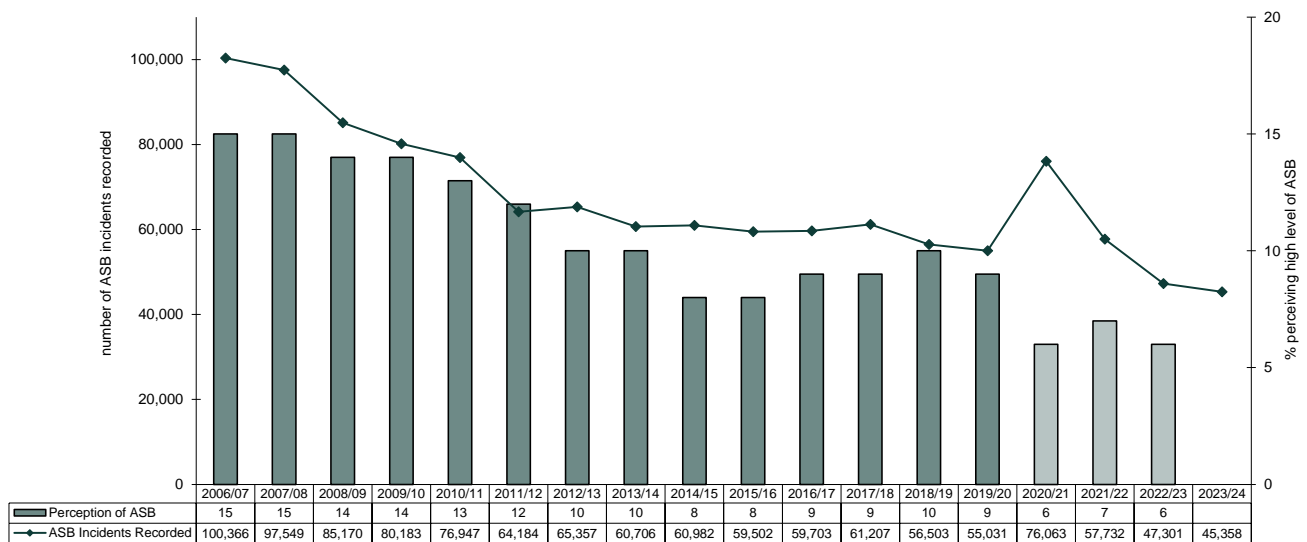
the Anti-Social Behaviour category and placed in the Public Safety and Welfare category from the start of April 2011. This incident type was removed from figures prior to 1 April 2011 to maintain data comparability of overall ASB.

8.2 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour from the Northern Ireland Safe Community

Respondents to the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey are asked to rate how much of a problem different types of anti-social behaviour are in their area. The latest available figures covering the period April 2022 to March 2023 show that 6% of respondents perceived a high level of anti-social behaviour in their area. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, changes were made to the survey’s methodology to the extent that figures for 2020/21 and subsequent years must be considered separately from previous figures in the data series, 2003/04 to 2019/20. For this reason the Perception of ASB data points from 2020/21 are presented differently to the previous data series.

Further information on these findings and the changes made to the survey is available from the [Findings from the Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Surveys \(opens in a new window\)](#) on the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland website.

Figure 8.1 Levels of anti-social behaviour incidents recorded by the police and percentage perceiving high level of anti-social behaviour as identified through the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey, 2006/07 to latest available



8.3 Quality assurance

As anti-social behaviour incidents are extracted from an operational system whose primary function is to prioritise and respond to calls for service from members of the public, the data will always be subject to change. Incidents of anti-social behaviour are not individually checked for compliance with the National Standard for Incident Recording by the PSNI’s Statistics Branch. However the Service Crime Registrar conducts audits of anti-social behaviour incidents as required. Common types of errors in the application of incident closure codes identified through the audit process are fed back to relevant staff.

Appendix 1 Police Recorded Crime Classification List

VICTIM-BASED OFFENCES

Violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, theft (including burglary) and criminal damage (crimes with a specific identifiable victim)

VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON

Violence against the person is grouped into five high-level categories – Homicide, Death or serious injury by unlawful driving, Violence with injury, Violence without injury and Stalking and Harassment.

Homicide

1 Murder

4.1 Manslaughter

4.10 Corporate manslaughter

Where an organisation is deemed responsible for a person's death. This offence differs from the basic HOOCR rule of recording based on the initial report to police and is only recorded once an inquest concludes with a verdict of unlawful killing or the PPS authorise a charge (or direct that it is not in the public interest to do so).

4.2 Infanticide

Applied to infants under 12 months killed by the mother while of disturbed mind.

Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving

These offences differ from the basic HOOCR rule of recording based on the initial report to police and are only recorded once the investigation confirms the offence is made out, ie a person is charged or PPS recommend prosecution.

4.4 Causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving

4.6 Causing death or serious injury by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs

4.8 Causing death or serious injury by careless or inconsiderate driving

4.9 Causing death or serious injury by driving: unlicensed drivers etc

37.1 Causing death by aggravated vehicle taking

Violence with injury

2 Attempted murder

4.3 Intentional destruction of viable unborn child

4.7 Causing or allowing death of a child or vulnerable person

5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm

Includes offences of grievous bodily harm (GBH) with intent and wounding with intent. These offences are recorded where there is clear evidence of a deliberate attempt to inflict serious bodily harm regardless of level of injury sustained.

5E Endangering life

This classification is additionally split within PSNI to provide a data series for explosives offences and firearms/ammunition offences.

8N Assault with injury

This classification is further split:

- Grievous bodily harm or Wounding - where injury may result in permanent disability; more than minor permanent disfigurement; broken bones; fractured skull; compound fractures; substantial loss of blood; internal injury; lengthy treatment or serious psychiatric injury (based on expert evidence); and shock (when accompanied by expert psychological evidence)
- Assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH) – injuries ranging from grazes, scratches and reddening of the skin to simple broken nose or broken finger. Also includes non-visible injury causing more than a passing moment of pain or discomfort which has an adverse impact on the victim.
- Poisoning to aggrieve
- Non-fatal strangulation - The Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 created the offence of 'Non-fatal strangulation', recording commenced 26th June 2023.

8P Racially or religiously-aggravated assault with injury

The legislation behind these racially or religiously-aggravated offences does not exist within Northern Ireland and therefore this classification does not apply. Records are instead classified to 8N Assault with injury and are included in the racist and faith/religion hate crime strands.

8S Assault with injury on a constable

Where a police officer was the victim of GBH/wounding with intent, GBH, Wounding or AOABH in the course of their duty.

8T Assault with injury on an emergency worker (other than a constable)

Within Northern Ireland these offences are classified to 8N Assault with injury (where the injury is minor) and 105A Assault without injury (where no injury has been sustained).

Violence without injury

3A Conspiracy to murder

3B Threats to kill

Where an individual fears that the offender's threat is real and may be carried out.

11A Cruelty to children/young persons

13 Child abduction

14 Procuring illegal abortion

36 Kidnapping

104 Assault without injury on a constable

Where, in the course of their duty, a police officer was the victim of an assault where no injury was caused.

105A Assault without injury

Offences where, at the most, a feeling of touch or passing moment of pain is experienced by the victim. Summary offences, closely associated with actual bodily harm (see classification 8N). Includes, amongst other offences, common assault and aggravated assault. From 1 April 2003 only includes assaults involving no injury, please note that this change was introduced a year earlier in England and Wales on 1 April 2002.

105B Racially or religiously-aggravated assault without injury

The legislation behind these racially or religiously-aggravated offences does not exist within Northern Ireland and therefore this classification does not apply. Records are instead classified to 105A Assault without injury and are included in the racist and faith/religion hate crime strands.

106 Modern slavery

Includes offences such as holding a person in slavery or servitude, requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour and arranging/facilitating travel of another person with a view to exploitation.

Stalking and harassment

8L Harassment

Harassment offences are those incidents where no other substantive notifiable offence exists, but when looked at as a course of conduct are likely to cause fear, alarm or distress. Within Northern Ireland this classification is further split into harassment and intimidation offences.

8M Racially or religiously-aggravated harassment

The legislation behind these racially or religiously-aggravated offences does not exist within Northern Ireland and therefore this classification does not apply. Records are instead classified to 105A Assault without injury and are included in the racist and faith/religion hate crime strands.

8Q Stalking

Stalking legislation was introduced in Northern Ireland on 27th April 2022, through the Protection from Stalking Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. Offences of "stalking" and of "threatening and abusive behaviour" are recorded from this date.

8R Malicious communications

The recording of malicious communications offences started for the first time in Northern Ireland from 1st April 2017. This classification also includes offences relating to 'revenge porn'; new legislation on disclosing private sexual photographs and film with intent to cause distress was introduced in June 2016.

8U Controlling or coercive behaviour

The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021 introduced the "domestic abuse offence" within Northern Ireland on 21st February 2022, enabling the recording of abusive behaviour occurring on two or more occasions against an intimate partner, former partner or close family member, ie within the definition of domestic abuse used in Northern Ireland and where abusive behaviour includes controlling or coercive behaviour, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse and economic abuse.

Changes in recording practice that have had an impact on the violence against the person time series

- **AOABH and violence without injury:** Prior to April 2003, offences where the victim received minor injuries (e.g. bruising or minor abrasions) were recorded as assault without injury. Since April 2003 assaults with minor injuries have been recorded as assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH). This accounts for the large increase in AOABH offences and the large fall in assault without injury offences between 2002/03 and 2003/04. The Home Office introduced this change for England & Wales a year earlier, in April 2002.
- **Wounding with intent and GBH with intent:** In April 2008 the Home Office issued clarification to police forces on how to record offences of wounding with intent/GBH with intent for those assaults resulting in minor or no injury to a victim, but where the intent was to cause serious injury. This revised technical guidance was issued to ensure that these offences were recorded in a consistent manner by all police forces. The effect of this clarification was that some offences that would previously have been recorded as other types of assault are now recorded as GBH with intent. While the clarification was introduced in 2008/09, PSNI continued to experience the impact of this during 2009/10. The majority of police forces in England and Wales experienced similar increases in these offences as a result of this clarification.

- **Stalking and harassment:**

On 1st April 2018 the Home Office introduced a change requiring harassment to be recorded in addition to the offence deemed to be most serious. The changes in recording practice introduced in April 2017 and April 2018, along with increasing awareness of the application of these rules in the recording process, contributed to increased levels recorded in the overall Stalking and Harassment classification, particularly since 2018/19.

On the 1st May 2023 the Home Office introduced a further change in respect of these ‘behavioural crimes’ by reversing the requirement to record the most serious additional victim-based offence. This latest change has had the greatest impact on malicious communications offences, with fewer such offences required to be recorded.

In practice these changes meant that between 1st April 2018 and 30th April 2023 there was some ‘double counting’ of offences when an incident involved a conduct offence (Harassment, stalking, coercive or controlling behaviour) and another offence, which would have led to an increase in the number of crimes recorded. From 1st May 2023, this practice was reversed, and the current approach is more similar to the period prior to 1st April 2018, where a conduct/behaviour crime will only be recorded when it is deemed to be the most serious offence.

The table below shows a breakdown of the classifications within Stalking and harassment, demonstrating the changing levels over the period 2017/18 to 2023/24. 8R Malicious Communications shows the most notable changes in levels recorded across this time period.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
8L Harassment	2,751	3,372	5,266	5,489	8,371	8,756	7,517
8Q Stalking	-	-	-	-	-	169	185
8R Malicious Communications	905	1,902	4,787	5,854	5,874	4,078	1,920
8U Controlling or Coercive Behaviour	-	-	-	-	97	916	744
Stalking and Harassment Total	3,656	5,274	10,053	11,343	14,342	13,919	10,366

SEXUAL OFFENCES

Sexual offences are grouped into two high-level categories, Rape and Other sexual offences.

Rape

19A-19H Rape

This classification is further split into offences of rape and attempted rape.

Up to 2003/04 the offence of rape could only be committed against a female. However the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 redefined the offence so that buggery without consent would constitute an offence of rape (i.e. rape could then be committed against a male).

Other sexual offences

16 Buggery

Offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Figures in this classification are available for the time period 1998/99 to 2009/10.

17 Indecent assault on a male

Offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Figures in this classification are available for the time period 1998/99 to 2009/10 and are further split into age 17+ and age <17.

17A Sexual assault on a male aged 13 and over

17B Sexual assault on a male child under 13

18 Gross indecency between males

Offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Figures in this classification are available for the time period 1998/99 to 2009/10.

20 Indecent assault on a female

Offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Figures in this classification are available for the time period 1998/99 to 2009/10 and are further split into age 17+ and age <17.

20A Sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over

20B Sexual assault on a female child under 13

21 Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 14

Offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Figures in this classification are available for the time period 1998/99 to 2009/10.

21 Sexual activity involving a child under 13

- 22 Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 17**
Offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Figures in this classification are available for the time period 1998/99 to 2009/10.
- 22B Sexual activity involving a child under 16**
- 22A Causing sexual activity without consent**
- 23 Incest or familial sexual offences**
- 25 Abduction of a female**
- 70 Sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder**
- 71 Abuse of children through sexual exploitation**
- 73 Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature**
Originally introduced in Northern Ireland through the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- 74 Gross indecency with a child**
- 88A Sexual grooming**
Sexual grooming was originally introduced in Northern Ireland through the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This is further split into sexual communication with a child, which was introduced in legislation in February 2016. Similar legislation was introduced in England and Wales in 2017.
- 88C Other miscellaneous sexual offences**
- 88D Unnatural sexual offences**
- 88E Exposure and voyeurism**
This is further split, providing exposure and voyeurism separately. Voyeurism was originally introduced in Northern Ireland through the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Changes in recording practice that have had an impact on the sexual offences time series

- **The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008:** This was introduced in February 2009 and altered the definitions of some categories of sexual offence, so comparisons around this time should be made with caution. Similar legislation, The Sexual Offences Act 2003, was introduced in England and Wales in May 2004.
- Under the Home Office Counting Rules, offences which were reported to the police between February 2009 and March 2010 but which were committed prior to February 2009 were recorded under the previous legislation wherever possible. However in April 2010 this guidance was changed so that historic allegations committed under previous legislation should be recorded and detected as if committed today.
- Even though the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 was introduced in February 2009, Sections 57-59 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 continue to apply in respect of trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- **Sexual grooming:** Much of the increase in classification 88A Sexual Grooming during 2017/18 can be attributed to the activity of Online Child Sexual Abuse Activist Groups (more commonly known as paedophile hunters) who engage by posing as a child under 16. This activity has had an impact on the number of attempted offences recorded within this classification; the increase in attempted sexual grooming and attempted sexual communication with a child accounts for more than two thirds of the overall increase.

ROBBERY

The main elements of the offence of robbery (Section 8 of the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969) are stealing and the use or threat of force immediately before doing so, and in order to do so. Any injuries resulting from this force are not recorded as additional offences of violence. As with violence against the person, robberies cover a wide range of seriousness from armed bank robberies to muggings for mobile phones or small amounts of money.

- 34A Robbery of business property**
Where the goods stolen belong to a business or other corporate body regardless of the location of the robbery, with the exception of items such as mobile phones, laptop computers and pagers if robbed from the person.
Further split into armed robbery, ordinary robbery and hijacking (the taking of a vehicle).
- 34B Robbery of personal property**
Where the goods stolen belong to an individual or group of individuals rather than a corporate body, regardless of the location of the robbery.
Further split into armed robbery, ordinary robbery and hijacking (the taking of a vehicle).

THEFT OFFENCES

Theft offences include burglary, vehicle offences, theft from the person, bicycle theft, shoplifting and other theft offences.

Burglary

The main elements of police recorded burglaries (as defined by the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969) are entry (or attempted entry) to a building as a trespasser with intent to:

- steal property from it (including stealing or attempting to steal)
- inflict grievous bodily harm
- commit unlawful damage to property whilst inside.

Burglary also includes aggravated burglary (Section 10 of the same Act), which is defined as a burglary where the burglar is in possession of a weapon at the time.

28A Burglary in a dwelling

28B Attempted burglary in a dwelling

29 Aggravated burglary in a dwelling

30A Burglary in a building other than a dwelling

30B Attempted burglary in a building other than a dwelling

31 Aggravated burglary in a building other than a dwelling

Classifications 28A, 28B, 29, 30A, 30B and 31 were in place prior to April 2017.

28E Burglary - Residential

28F Attempted burglary - Residential

29A Aggravated burglary - Residential

30C Burglary – Business & Community

30D Attempted burglary – Business & Community

31A Aggravated burglary – Business & Community

Classifications 28E, 28F, 29A, 30C, 30D and 31A have been in place since April 2017. Since 2023/24 classifications 28E, 28F and 29A are further split into ‘home’ and ‘unconnected building’.

Changes in recording practice that have had an impact on the burglary time series

- Prior to April 2017 burglary offences were classified to domestic burglary (burglary in a dwelling) and non-domestic burglary (burglary in a building other than a dwelling).
- Since April 2017 burglary offences have been classified to either Residential Burglary or Business & Community Burglary, reflecting a revised approach within the Home Office Counting Rules.
- What constitutes a burglary does not change. However crimes recorded under this revised approach represent a new data series, meaning that 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.
- The main distinction with the revised approach is that 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. Any building not directly connected to a dwelling was previously counted as non-domestic burglary. This change was introduced to draw together burglaries to the main dwelling house and those to other buildings that are part of the overall residential property. Where such a building is used solely for business purposes, it is recorded as burglary-business & community.
- The [Home Office Counting Rules \(HOCR\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) documentation provides further detail on the classifications for burglary-residential and burglary-business & community, along with guidance based on the type of premises and their habitation status.

Vehicle offences

37.2 Aggravated vehicle taking

Part of Article 172 of the Road Traffic Northern Ireland Order 1981. Applies to offences of unauthorised vehicle taking (see classification 48) with additional aggravating factors of dangerous driving, or causing an accident involving injury or damage. The offence of aggravated vehicle taking was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2004.

45 Theft from a vehicle

48 Theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicle

Unauthorised taking of motor vehicle (part of Article 172 of the Road Traffic Northern Ireland Order 1981; also known as taking without consent or TWOC) is a summary offence. It is closely associated with theft of a motor vehicle because at the time of recording it may not be known whether the intention is to permanently deprive the owner. A car taken as part of a robbery is included in the robbery (hijacking) classification.

126 Interfering with a motor vehicle

Summary offences, closely associated with theft of or from vehicles. The [Home Office Counting Rules \(HOCR\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) contain detailed guidance for forces on distinguishing between these offences and criminal damage, where a vehicle is reported damaged.

Changes in recording practice that have had an impact on the vehicle crime time series

- From 1st April 2002, a change in the Home Office Counting Rules meant that most attempted thefts/unauthorised taking of motor vehicles previously recorded in Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle are now recorded as Vehicle interference.

Theft from the person

- 39 Theft from the person
Includes snatch theft, but if this involves the use or threat of force (e.g. if the victim resists), then it is recorded as robbery

Bicycle theft

- 44 Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle
Includes taking a pedal cycle without consent (Article 172 of the Road Traffic Northern Ireland Order 1981)

Shoplifting

- 46 Shoplifting

All other theft offences

All the offences listed here, unless shown otherwise, form the legal offence of theft (Section 1 of the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969), which is defined as a person dishonestly appropriating property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it.

- 35 **Blackmail**
- 40 **Theft in a dwelling other than from automatic machine or meter**
- 41 **Theft by an employee**
- 42 **Theft of mail**
- 43 **Dishonest use of electricity**
- 47 **Theft from automatic machine or meter**
- 49 **Other theft**
- 49A **Making off without payment**

Changes in recording practice that have had an impact on the 'other theft' offences time series

- **Making off without payment:** From April 2014 a change was introduced in the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) making it more difficult for crimes of making off without payment (MOWP) to meet the criteria allowing offences to be removed from the crime figures (ie for the crime to be cancelled). This may have contributed to the increase seen in this classification between 2013/14 and 2014/15. Such cancellations occur mainly where police intervention confirms there are no aggravating factors present (eg false registration plate) and there is no intent to avoid 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. A recent audit of crime recording resulted in clearer guidance and a greater number of reports which may have been recorded as a making off without payment offence being recorded by Action Fraud. This has resulted in fewer making off without payment offences recorded from October 2020.

ARSON AND CRIMINAL DAMAGE

Criminal damage results from any person who, without lawful excuse, destroys or damages any property belonging to another, intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged. Damage which is repairable without cost, or which is accidental, is not included in police recorded crime statistics.

56A Arson endangering life

56B Arson not endangering life

Not all malicious fires that the police record are included here. If the owner of the property set alight is wounded, then a crime of violence is recorded. If a stolen vehicle is subsequently burnt out, it is recorded as a vehicle theft. An additional arson offence is recorded only if there is evidence that the arsonist is unconnected with the vehicle thief.

58A Criminal damage - Residential

58B Criminal damage to a building – Business and Community

58C Criminal damage to a vehicle

58D Other criminal damage

58J Racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage

The legislation behind these racially or religiously-aggravated offences does not exist within Northern Ireland and therefore this classification does not apply. Records are instead classified to the relevant

criminal damage classification (58A-58D) and are included in the racist and faith/religion hate crime strands.

Changes in recording practice that have had an impact on the criminal damage time series

- Classification 58A-D Criminal damage (to 06/07 only) contains explosives and petrol bombing offences for which information prior to 2007/08 is not available, meaning it is not possible for these offences to be classified to dwelling, building other than a dwelling, vehicle or other.

OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY

Drug offences, possession of weapons offences, public order offences and miscellaneous crimes against society (crimes that do not normally have a direct victim)

DRUG OFFENCES

Offences are primarily under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, and are recorded on the basis of one crime for each offender or group of offenders.

Trafficking of drugs

92A Trafficking in controlled drugs

Possession of drugs

92B Possession of controlled drugs

(in use to 2003/04 only)

92C Other drug offences

Various offences, mostly under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, including permitting premises to be used for unlawful purposes; failure to comply with notice requiring information relating to prescribing, supply etc. of drugs; supply of intoxicating substance; and supply etc. of articles for administering or preparing controlled drugs.

92D Possession of controlled drugs (excluding cannabis)

92E Possession of controlled drugs (cannabis)

Changes in recording practice that have had an impact on the drug offences time series

- **Cannabis** was classified as a Class B drug until 29 January 2004 when it was reclassified to a Class C drug. Cannabis was then reclassified back to a Class B drug on 26 January 2009. The systems from which the crime figures were extracted did not record the type of Class B or Class C drug until the first cannabis reclassification took place. Therefore it is not possible to provide a complete data series separately identifying cannabis possession offences.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES

These offences are recorded provided the weapon has not been used during the commission of another notifiable offence. They are recorded on the basis of one crime for each offender or group of offenders.

10A Possession of firearms with intent

10B Possession of firearms offences

10C Possession of other weapons

10D Possession of article with blade or point

81 Other firearms offences

Public Order offences

52A Violent disorder

Further split into Riot and Violent disorder. These offences are recorded on the basis of one crime for each incident of riot or violent disorder.

66 Other offences against the State and public order

Further split into bomb hoax related offences, breach of anti-social behaviour order, breach of non-molestation order, breach of sex offender orders etc, breach of other order, offences under anti-terrorist legislation and any remaining 'other' offences not otherwise classified.

Changes in recording practice that have had an impact on the public order offences time series

- Offences of breach of anti-social behaviour order, breach of non-molestation order and breach of sex offender orders etc were added to the data series in 2005/06.

Miscellaneous crimes against society

Unless otherwise indicated, these offences are recorded on the basis of one crime for each offender or group of offenders.

- 15 **Concealing an infant close to birth**
One crime is recorded for each child
- 24 **Exploitation of prostitution**
One crime for each prostitute exploited
- 26 **Bigamy**
One crime for each bigamous marriage
- 27 **Soliciting for the purpose of prostitution**
Further split of Paying for sexual services
- 33 **Going equipped for stealing, etc**
- 33A **Possession of items for use in fraud**
- 38 **Profiting from or concealing knowledge of the proceeds of crime**
- 54 **Handling stolen goods**
- 59 **Threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage**
- 60 **Forgery or use of false drug prescription / 61 Other forgery**
- 61A **Possession of false documents**
- 67 **Perjury**
- 69 **Offender Management Act**
- 76 **Aiding suicide**
- 79 **Perverting the course of justice**
- 80 **Absconding from lawful custody**
- 83 **Bail offences**
- 86 **Obscene publications, etc. and protected sexual material**
- 95 **Disclosure, obstruction, false or misleading statements etc**
- 99 **Other offences**
- 802 **Dangerous driving**
One crime is recorded for each driver. This offence differs from the basic HOCR rule of recording based on the initial report to police and is only recorded once the investigation confirms the offence is made out, ie a person is charged or PPS recommend prosecution.
- 814 **Fraud, forgery etc associated with vehicle or driver records**

Changes in recording practice that have had an impact on the miscellaneous crimes against society time series

- The reclassification exercise conducted during 2010/11 identified that, within Northern Ireland, offences of soliciting for the purposes of prostitution had not been identified as notifiable offences. This omission has since been rectified and these offences are included in the recorded crime figures from April 2011.
- New offences (possession of items for use in fraud, fraud by failing to disclose information and fraud by abuse of position) were introduced under the Fraud Act 2006 which came into force in January 2007.
- Offences of profiting from or concealing knowledge of the proceeds of crime were added to the data series from 1st April 2003.
- While the Offender Management Act offences which are included in the notifiable offence list do not extend to Northern Ireland, offences which do extend to Northern Ireland and are similar in nature are recorded in this classification.
- Offences classified within 95 Disclosure, obstruction, false or misleading statements etc were added to the series from 1 April 2002.

'OTHER FRAUD' AND INTRODUCTION OF ACTION FRAUD WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND

'Other fraud' is a classification that sits outside the two broad categories of victim-based crime and other crimes against society. Offences within this classification were recorded by police until 1st April 2015 when Action Fraud took on responsibility for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1st 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 in Northern Ireland are provided to PSNI on a monthly basis. This means that fraud offences recorded by PSNI are only available for the years 1998/99 to 2014/15.

Appendix 2 Description and Categorisation of Crime Outcomes

Please note: Some outcome methods used within England and Wales are not available for use within Northern Ireland, or are administered differently; these are identified below. Where the same outcome methods apply across both jurisdictions (apart from those indicated), the criminal justice processes behind the application of these methods may differ, affecting both volumes and the length of time between the report being made to police and the outcome being assigned.

Charge/summons¹

Taken into consideration¹

Out-of-court (formal)¹

- Juvenile caution
- Adult caution
- Penalty Notice for Disorder

Out-of-court (informal)¹

- Cannabis/Khat warning (this option is not available within Northern Ireland; the outcomes most likely to be used in these circumstances fall within out-of-court (formal) and Community Resolution)
- Community Resolution

Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest^{2,3}

- Offender died before proceedings^{2,3}
- Not in the public interest, PPS (in England & Wales this would be the CPS)^{2,3}
- Not in the public interest, police (this outcome method is not available within Northern Ireland, public interest decisions can only be made by PPS)³
- Prosecution prevented – suspect under age (named suspect identified but is below the age of criminal responsibility)³
- Prosecution prevented – suspect too ill (named suspect identified but is too ill (physical or mental health) to prosecute³
- Prosecution prevented – victim/key witness dead/too ill (named suspect identified but victim or key witness is dead or too ill to give evidence)³
- Prosecution time limit expired³

Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)³

- Evidential difficulties named suspect identified – the crime is confirmed and the victim supports police action but evidential difficulties prevents further action

Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)³

- Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect not identified – the crime is confirmed but the victim declines or is unable to support further police action to identify the offender
- Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect identified – the victim does not support (or withdraws support from) police action

Investigation complete – no suspect identified³

- Crime investigated as far as reasonably possible – case closed pending further investigative opportunities becoming available

Action undertaken by another body/agency³

- Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the action to be taken

Diversionsary, educational or intervention activity³

- Diversionsary, educational or intervention activity, resulting from the crime report, has been undertaken and it is not in the public interest to take any further action. This outcome method was established by the National Police Chief's Council for collection on a voluntary basis in April 2019. It was first used in PSNI in 2020/21.

Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest³

- Further investigation, resulting from the crime report, which could provide evidence sufficient to support formal action being taken against the suspect is not in the public interest – police decision (from January 2016). This outcome method is not available within Northern Ireland, public interest decisions can only be made by PPS.

National Fraud Intelligence Bureau filed³

A crime of fraud has been recorded but has not been allocated for investigation because the assessment process at the NFIB has determined there are insufficient lines of enquiry to warrant such dissemination. This outcome method is not included in any tables as it applies to fraud offences recorded by NFIB only. From 1 April 2015 Action Fraud became responsible for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime previously recorded by PSNI.

¹ These outcomes are termed 'sanction outcomes' and refer to those crimes where formal action is taken by police.

² Between 2007/08 and 2014/15 'indictable only' offences in relation to 'Offender died before proceedings' and 'Not in the public interest, PPS' were considered 'sanction outcomes'; Since the introduction of the current outcome framework within PSNI in April 2015, the 'prosecution prevented or not in the public interest' outcome can be applied to any offence and all such outcomes are presented as 'non sanction outcomes'.

³ Outcomes where no formal action is taken by police.