



Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland

Update to 31st December 2023

Date of Publication:

29 February 2024


Frequency of Publication:

Quarterly

Issued by:

PSNI Statistics Branch
Lisnasharragh
42 Montgomery Road
Belfast
BT6 9LD

 statistics@psni.police.uk

 028 9065 0222 Ext. 24135

Web [PSNI Statistics](#)

In the 12 months from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023:

- There were fewer hate incidents recorded across each hate motivation strand when compared with the previous twelve months, with the exception of race and faith/religion incidents.
- There were small increases in the number of race, faith/religion and transgender identity crimes, and larger decreases in the number of sexual orientation, sectarian, and disability crimes, when compared with the previous twelve months.
- There were 99 more race incidents and 1 more race crime recorded.
- There was a decrease of 165 sectarian incidents, while the number of crimes fell by 178. Sexual orientation incidents and crimes fell from 433 to 394 and from 308 to 243 respectively.
- Disability incidents decreased from 144 to 103 and crimes fell from 118 to 64.
- Faith/religion incidents rose from 43 to 67 and crimes increased from 31 to 45.
- Transgender identity incidents fell from 69 to 66, while the number of transgender identity crimes rose from 37 to 41.

Contents

Contents.....	1
1. Things you need to know about this release	2
2. Levels of hate motivated incidents and crimes – overall summary	5
3. What is happening to levels of race incidents and crimes over the longer term?	6
4. What has been happening to levels of race incidents and crimes more recently?	7
5. Race incidents and crimes - what has been happening in policing districts?	9
6. What are the ethnicities and nationalities of race crime victims?	10
7. What is happening to levels of sexual orientation incidents and crimes over the longer term?	11
8. What has been happening to levels of sexual orientation incidents and crimes more recently?	12
9. Sexual orientation incidents and crimes - what has been happening in policing districts?	14
10. What is happening to levels of sectarian incidents and crimes over the longer term?	15
11. What has been happening to levels of sectarian incidents and crimes more recently?	16
12. Sectarian Incidents and crimes - what has been happening in policing districts?	18
13. Attacks on symbolic premises	19
14. Background and Data Quality	20

We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided on the cover page.

1. Things you need to know about this release

Coverage

This bulletin is an Official Statistics publication meaning it complies with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) as follows:

- Trustworthiness: the statistics are impartial, independent and released in an open and transparent manner in accordance with a pre-announced publication schedule
- Quality: the statistics are produced using robust and relevant data sources which undergo continuous quality improvement and assurance checks
- Value: the statistics strive to meet user needs informed by ongoing feedback, providing sufficient detail which is widely accessible.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) publishes figures on the levels and trends in police recorded incidents and crimes with a hate motivation. As these figures only relate to those hate motivated incidents reported to the police, they only provide an indication of the true extent of hate motivations. The 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). Collation of this data started in 2004/05.

This release presents statistics relating to hate motivated incidents and crimes recorded by the police to 31 December 2023. Figures were compiled on 23 February 2024. Changes can be expected to in-year figures each time they are published, as all records from 1st April 2023 are subject to ongoing validation and quality assurance processes until publication in May 2024.

All tables and charts in the bulletin, along with supplementary data, are available from the PSNI website in the [hate motivations spreadsheet for December 2023 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The next update covering the 12 months to 31 March 2024 will be published on 16 May 2024. A full [publication schedule \(opens in a new window\)](#) is available on the PSNI website.

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).

Hate Incident or Hate Crime?

Police recorded crime data is a victim oriented approach to crime recording. A crime will be recorded as having a hate motivation where it meets the relevant definition provided above. 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 level of severity that would result in a crime being recorded. Where crimes with a hate abuse motivation are recorded, they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics.

Further details of the background and recording practice in relation to police recorded crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#). An explanation of what constitutes an incident and a crime is provided in Section 3.1 of this guide, while reference to hate motivated incidents and crimes is available in Section 7. These recording practices, methods of counting outcomes and allocation of crime types apply equally to crimes with a hate motivation.

The victim of the 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.

Within PSNI there are six strands of hate motivation that are monitored; Race, Sexual orientation, Sectarianism, Faith/religion (non-sectarian), Disability and Transgender Identity. The definition for each of these motivations is provided on the next page, with an explanation of the perception test:

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.

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 Disablist)

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

Transgender Identity (previously referred to as 'Transphobia')

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

Points to note in this bulletin

In-year figures are provisional: changes can be expected to in-year figures each time they are published, as records from 1st April 2023 are subject to ongoing validation and quality assurance processes until publication in May 2024. Revisions to figures for previous financial years are applied on an annual basis in May.

Incidents and multiple motivations: A small number of incidents will have more than one type of hate motivation attributed to the incident. Due to this potential for double counting, the six hate motivation strands should not be added together and presented as overall hate incidents and crimes.

Crimes: 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.

Incidents and Crimes: Hate-motivated crimes and hate-motivated incidents should not be added together as crimes for each motivation strand are included in the incident count for each hate motivation strand.

Sexual Orientation and Transgender Identity Motivations: The language used to describe the Sexual Orientation and the Transgender Identity motivations has been updated in this bulletin. No changes have been made to the data captured by these motivations. Please see above section 'Hate Motivation Definitions' for more information.

Disclosure control has been 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.

Stalking and Harassment (including malicious communications):

1st April 2017: recording of malicious communications started.

1st April 2018: the Home Office introduced a change requiring harassment to be recorded in addition to the most serious additional victim-based offence. 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.

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 will have the greatest impact on malicious communications offences, with fewer such offences required to be recorded.

2. Levels of hate motivated incidents and crimes – overall summary

In the 12 months from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023:

- The number of incidents recorded fell across four of the six hate motivations (sexual orientation, sectarian, disability, and transgender identity) when compared with the previous 12 months.
- The number of crimes recorded decreased across three of the six motivations (sexual orientation, sectarian, and disability) when compared with the previous 12 months.
- Incidents with a race motivation and crimes with a faith/religion motivation showed the largest increases (99 more race incidents and 14 more transgender identity crimes).
- Incidents and crimes with a sectarian motivation showed the largest decrease, with 165 fewer incidents and 178 fewer crimes.

Table 1 Overall summary of hate motivated incidents and crimes

	Incidents Jan'22-Dec'22	Incidents Jan'23-Dec'23	Incidents Change	Crimes Jan'22-Dec'22	Crimes Jan'23-Dec'23	Crimes Change
Race	1,218	1,317	99	856	857	1
Sexual Orientation	433	394	-39	308	243	-65
Sectarian	1,252	1,087	-165	925	747	-178
Disability	144	103	-41	118	64	-54
Faith/Religion	43	67	24	31	45	14
Transgender Identity	69	66	-3	37	41	4

The rest of this bulletin looks in more detail at race, sexual orientation and sectarian motivations, with further tables on these strands of hate motivation available in the [hate motivations spreadsheet for December 2023 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

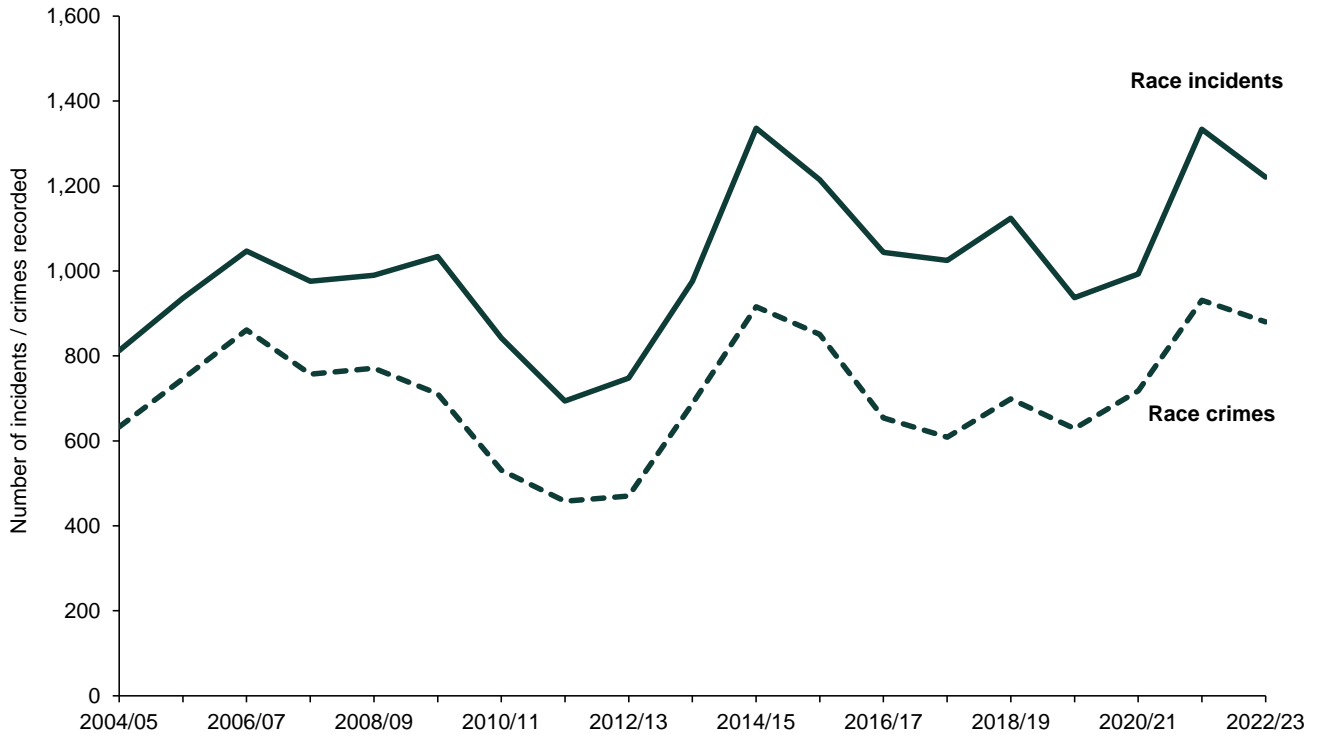
Additional figures on disability, faith/religion and transgender identity motivations are available in the accompanying spreadsheet Table 1 and Table 21.

A more detailed analysis of all hate motivation strands is available through the publication [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2022/23 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

3. What is happening to levels of race incidents and crimes over the longer term?

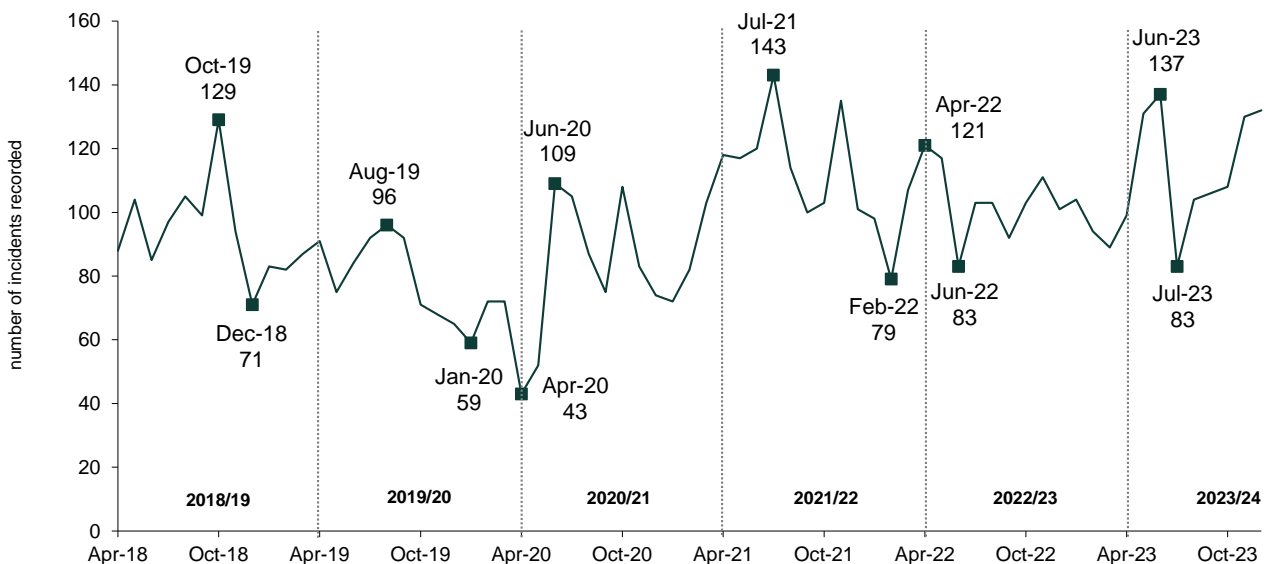
Following a decline in levels of race incidents and crimes between 2009/10 and 2011/12 increases were seen each year between 2011/12 and 2014/15. While levels subsequently trended downwards between 2014/15 and 2019/20, there was a sharp rise in the number of race incidents and crimes between 2020/21 and 2021/22. The number of race incidents and crimes fell back in 2022/23, but each remains the third highest level in the data series.

Figure 1 Trends in race incidents and crimes recorded by the police since 2004/05



Prior 2019/20, race incidents reached their highest levels around September or October each year, with the lowest levels recorded between December and February. Since 2019/20 there has more variation in monthly levels of race incidents, with the highest and lowest levels spread out across the year. In 2022/23 levels peaked in April and May and the lowest level was recorded in June. Figure 2 shows the pattern of race incidents over the last five financial years and the emerging pattern in the current financial year 2023/24.

Figure 2 Police recorded race incidents each month April 2018 to December 2023, showing highest and lowest levels in each financial year



4. What has been happening to levels of race incidents and crimes more recently?

In the 12 months from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023:

- There were higher levels of race incidents and race crimes recorded when compared with the previous 12 months. [Table 2]
- There were 1,317 race incidents recorded by the police in Northern Ireland, 99 higher than for the previous 12 months. [Table 2]
- The number of race crimes recorded by the police was 857, an increase of 1 on the previous 12 months. [Table 2]
- There were 7 race incidents and 4 race crimes per 10,000 population¹, compared with 6 race incidents and 4 race crimes in the previous 12 months.
- Racist crimes represented 0.8% of all police recorded crime.
- There was a decrease of 42 in violence against the person offences, while offences of theft, burglary and criminal damage rose by 48. All other offences decreased from 21 to 16. [Table 2]

Figure 3 Race incidents recorded by the police, January 2022 to December 2023

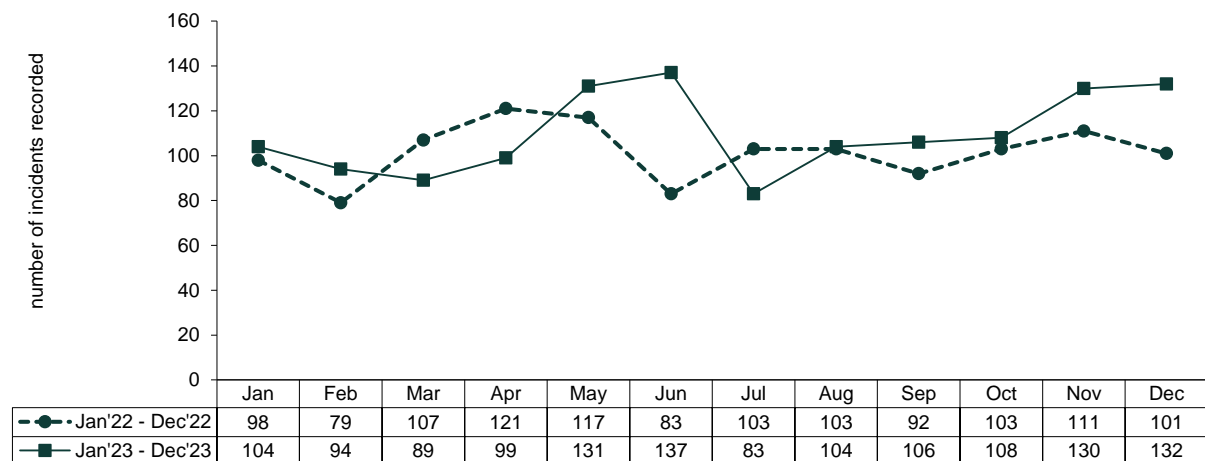
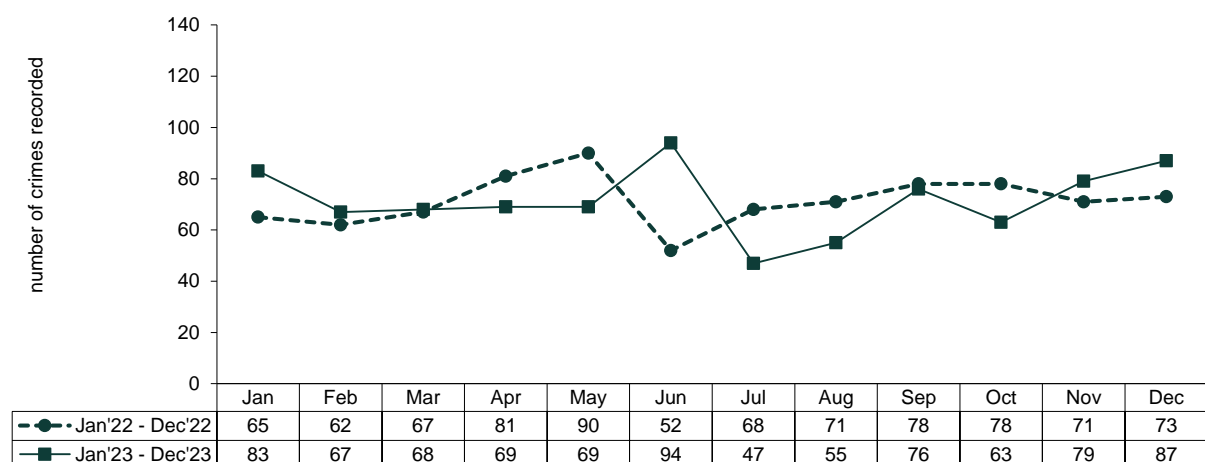


Figure 4 Race crimes recorded by the police, January 2022 to December 2023



¹ Crime per 10,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,910,543 for 2022, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. Mid-year population estimates are available from the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Table 2 Race incidents and crimes recorded by the police

	Jan'22-Dec'22	Jan'23-Dec'23
Incidents	1,218	1,317
Violence Against the Person Offences	573	531
Theft (including burglary) & criminal damage	262	310
All other offences	21	16
Total crimes (race motivation)	856	857

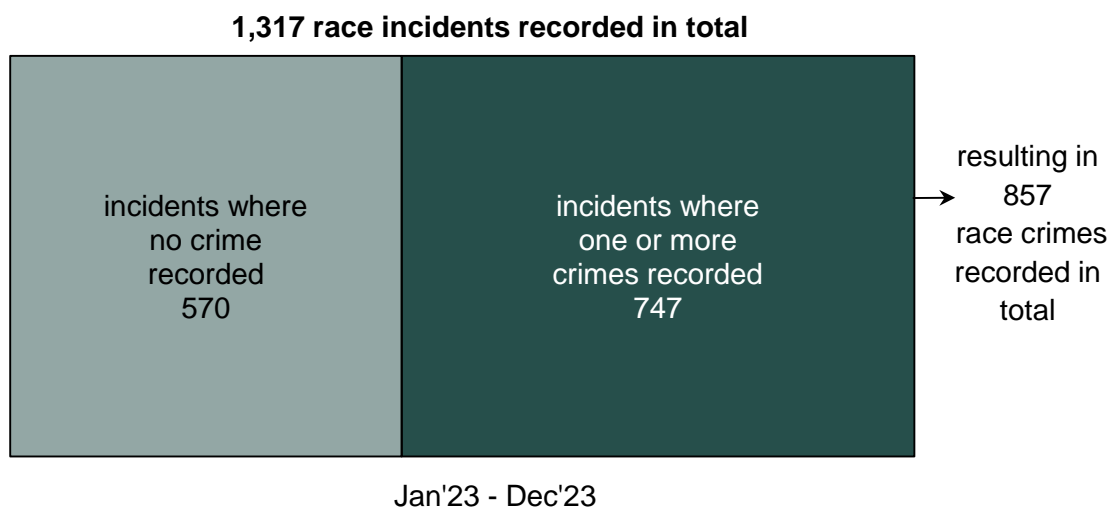
What is the difference between a race incident and race crime recorded by the police?

Not all race incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a race crime being recorded. Some race incidents will result in multiple crimes being recorded. **Race crimes are included in the incident count and the two should not be added together.**

Figure 5 shows how race incidents are broken down into those with and without crimes.

In the twelve months to 31st December 2023 there were 1,317 incidents recorded by the police where there was a race motivation. Of these, there were 570 incidents which did not involve a crime (i.e. incidents where the circumstances did not amount to an offence being committed). The remaining 747 incidents involved one or more crimes (amounting to 857 race crimes in total). Around two in five incidents recorded in this time period did not result in a crime being recorded.

Figure 5 Racist incidents and crimes



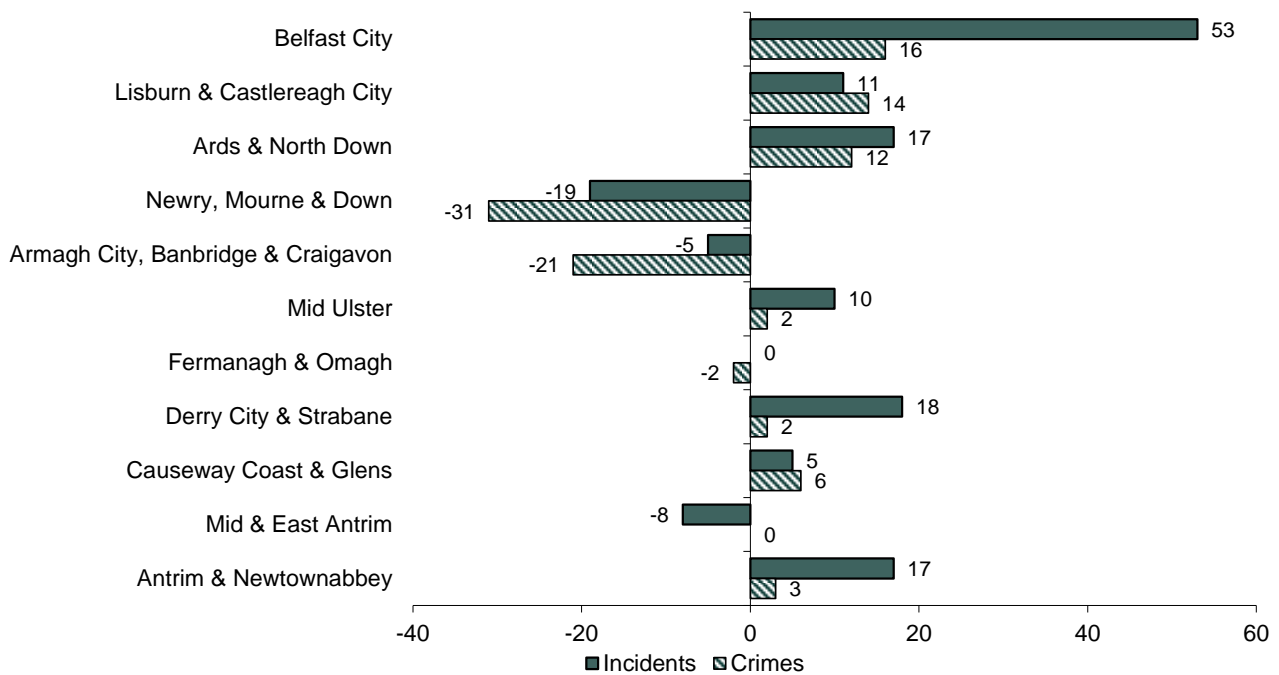
5. Race incidents and crimes - what has been happening in policing districts?

When comparing the current and previous 12 months, seven policing districts showed an increase in the number of race incidents and seven showed an increase in the number of race crimes. Belfast City policing district which, between January and December 2023, accounted for around half of all race incidents and crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, showed an increase in both incidents (53) and crimes (16). [Table 3]

Table 3 Race incidents and crimes recorded by the police, by policing district

Policing district	Incidents Jan'22-Dec'22	Incidents Jan'23-Dec'23	Incidents change	Crimes Jan'22-Dec'22	Crimes Jan'23-Dec'23	Crimes change
Belfast City	562	615	53	400	416	16
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	57	68	11	28	42	14
Ards & North Down	67	84	17	29	41	12
Newry, Mourne & Down	81	62	-19	63	32	-31
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	106	101	-5	76	55	-21
Mid Ulster	46	56	10	34	36	2
Fermanagh & Omagh	37	37	0	23	21	-2
Derry City & Strabane	81	99	18	65	67	2
Causeway Coast & Glens	43	48	5	24	30	6
Mid & East Antrim	71	63	-8	49	49	0
Antrim & Newtownabbey	67	84	17	65	68	3
No district assigned	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	1,218	1,317	99	856	857	1

Figure 6 Change in police recorded race incidents and crimes by policing district, 12 months to December 2023 compared with the previous 12 months



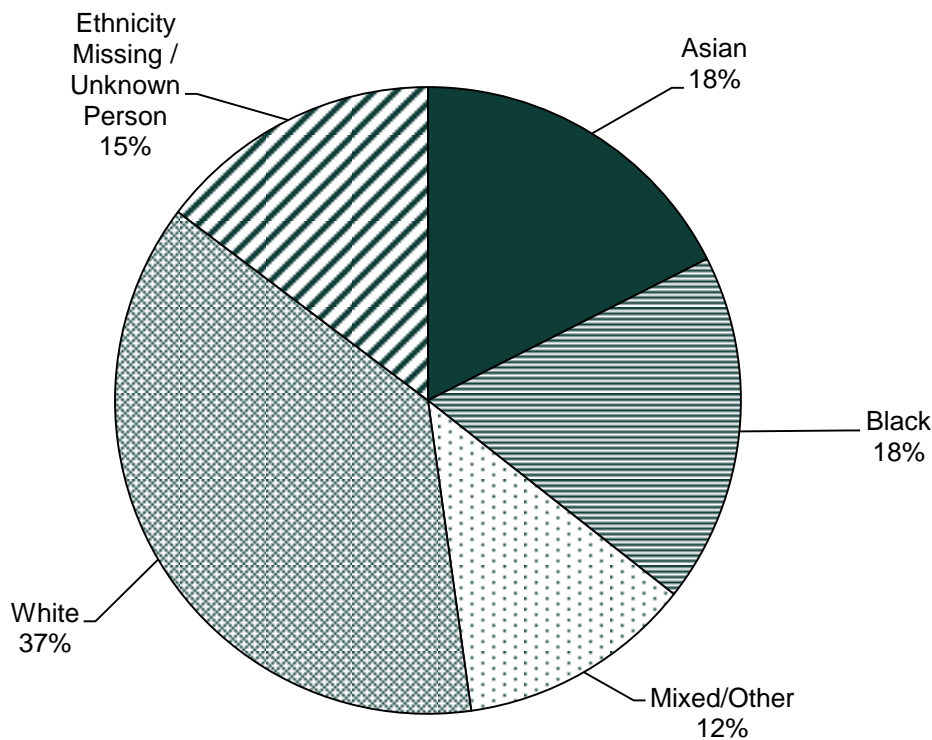
6. What are the ethnicities and nationalities of race crime victims?

Ethnicity: Different ethnicity classifications have been used within the PSNI crime recording systems since 2007/08. Table 12 in the [hate motivations spreadsheet for December 2023 \(opens in a new window\)](#) reflects race crimes by the ethnicity of the victim grouped by Asian, Black, Mixed/Other and White ethnicities. The historic classifications that are no longer available for selection on the NICHE system are separately identified. These may still be identified in the data where the victim details were recorded while the historic classifications were in use.

Nationality: Table 13 in the [hate motivations spreadsheet for December 2023 \(opens in a new window\)](#) shows the nationalities of victims of race crime. These figures are based on nationality only and do not take into account the victim's ethnicity.

Ethnicity and Nationality combined: Not all victims of the same nationality have the same ethnicity. This is particularly evident for those victims of race crimes who identify their nationality as UK and Ireland. Table 14 in the [hate motivations spreadsheet for December \(opens in a new window\)](#) shows the most frequently recorded victim nationalities for each ethnicity. This makes it possible to see, for example, the number of victims with UK and Ireland nationality who have Asian, Black or White ethnicity. This can also be seen in relation to a number of other nationalities.

Figure 7 Ethnicity of victims of race crimes, January 2023 to December 2023

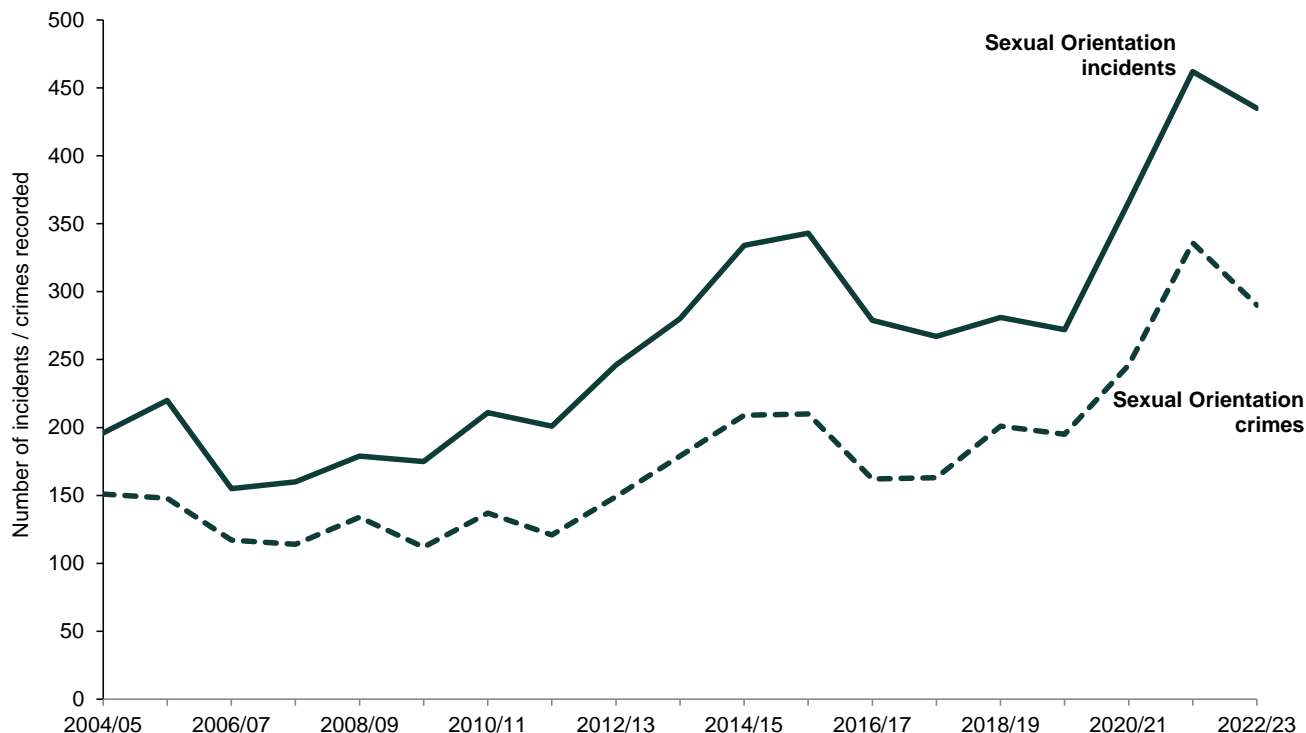


In 2023 PSNI reviewed all race crimes from 2021/22 and 2022/23 where the ethnicity or nationality of the victim was missing. In over 90 per cent of cases the ethnicity or nationality details could be identified and each record was updated accordingly. Following the completion of this exercise the proportion of race crimes where the victim's ethnicity was missing fell from 25% in both 2021/22 and 2022/23 to 2%, and the proportion of crimes where the victim's nationality was missing fell from 29% in 2021/22 and 28% 2022/23 to 2% in both years. In the 12 months to 31st December, the proportion of crimes where the victim's ethnicity was missing was 15% and the proportion where the victim's nationality was missing was 16%.

7. What is happening to levels of sexual orientation incidents and crimes over the longer term?

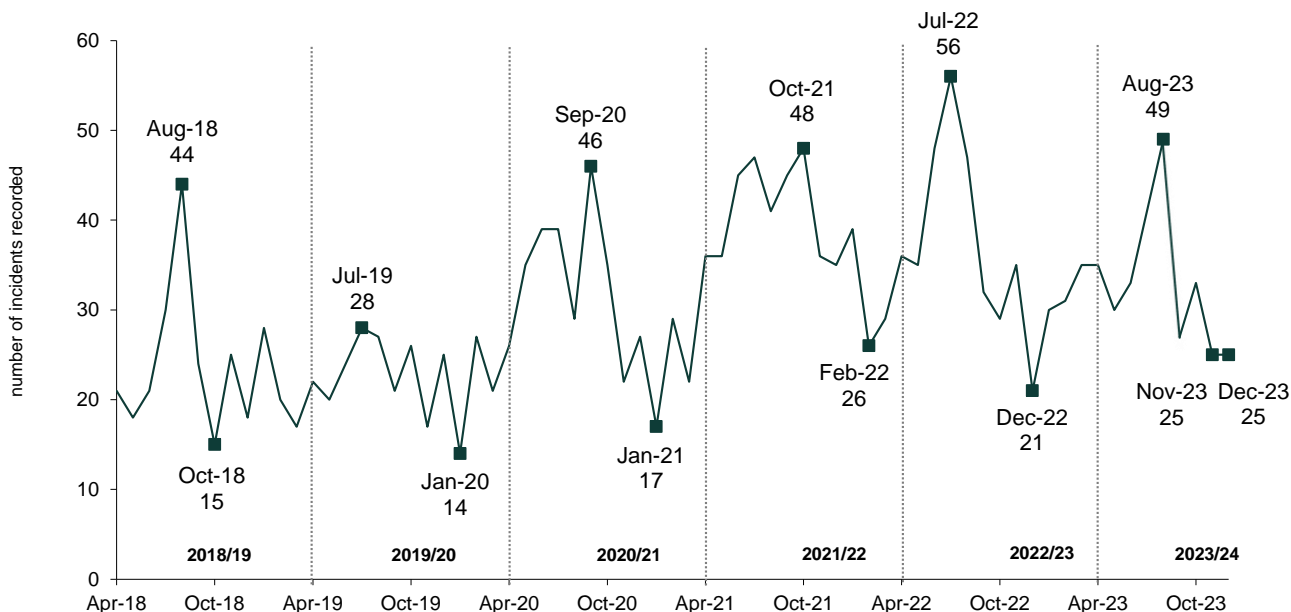
Sexual orientation motivated incidents and crimes generally increased between 2006/07 and 2015/16, while the period between 2016/17 and 2019/20 recorded levels that fell below those seen in 2015/16. There was a sharp increase in the number of sexual orientation motivated incidents and crimes in 2020/21 and 2021/22, followed by a decrease in the latest financial year, 2022/23. Despite this fall, both incidents and crimes recorded their second highest levels since the data series began in 2004/05.

Figure 8 Trends in sexual orientation incidents and crimes recorded by the police since 2004/05



Sexual orientation incidents tend to reach a peak between May and September while lower levels tend to be seen between October and February. More than 40 incidents were recorded in each month June 2021 to October 2021, rather than a single month showing a 'peak' as seen in some previous years. Figure 9 shows the pattern of sexual orientation incidents over the last five financial years and the emerging pattern in the current financial year 2023/24.

Figure 9 Police recorded sexual orientation incidents each month April 2018 to December 2023, showing highest and lowest levels in each financial year



8. What has been happening to levels of sexual orientation incidents and crimes more recently?

In the 12 months from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023:

- There were 394 sexual orientation incidents recorded by the police in Northern Ireland, 39 fewer than the previous 12 months. [Table 4]
- The number of sexual orientation crimes recorded by the police was 243, a decrease of 65 on the previous 12 months. [Table 4]
- There were 2 sexual orientation incidents and 1 sexual orientation crimes per 10,000 population², compared with 2 sexual orientation incidents and 2 sexual orientation crimes in the previous 12 months.
- Sexual orientation crimes represented 0.2% of all police recorded crime.
- There was a decrease of 55 in violence against the person offences, while offences of theft, burglary and criminal damage fell by 7. All other offences decreased from 10 to 7. [Table 4]

Figure 10 Sexual orientation incidents recorded by the police, January 2022 to December 2023

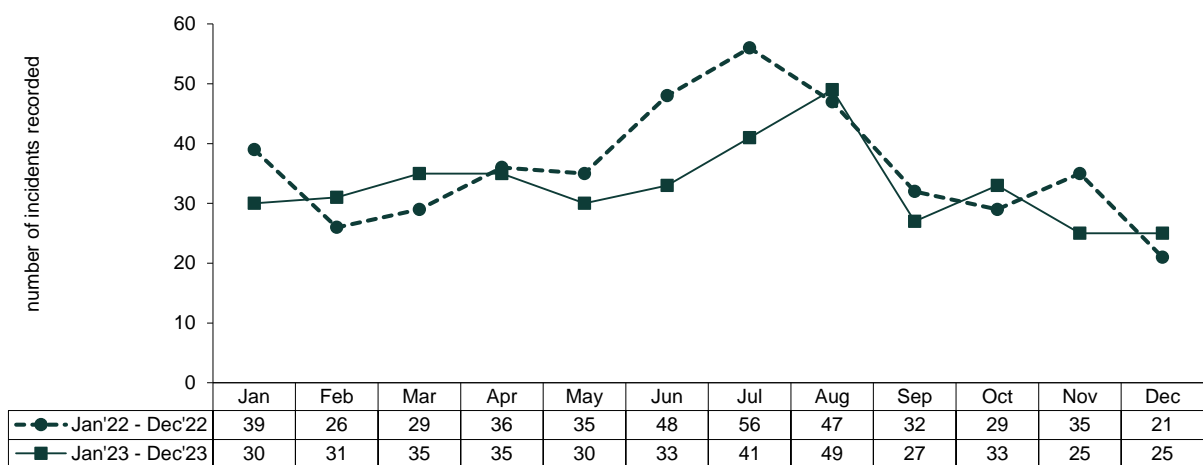
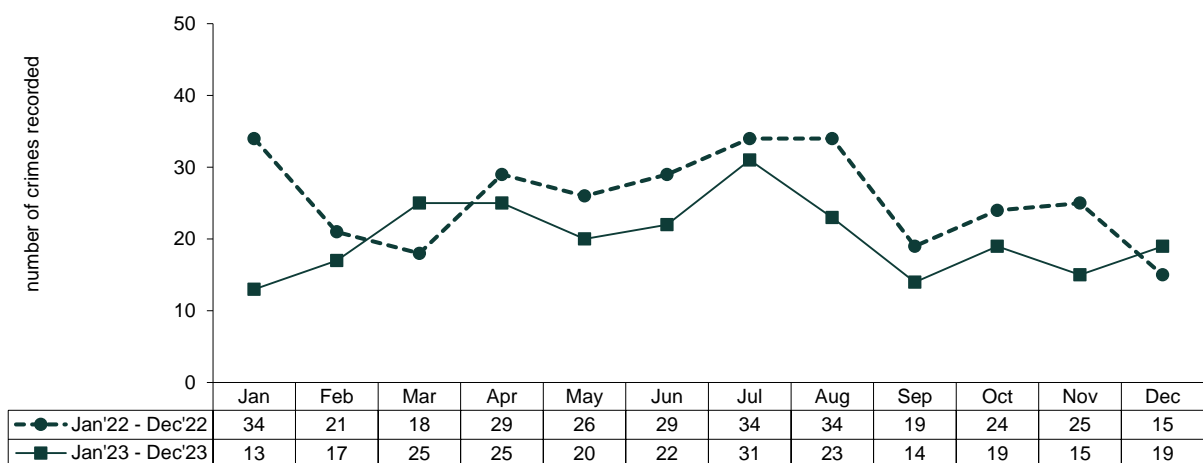


Figure 11 Sexual orientation crimes recorded by the police, January 2022 to December 2023



² Crime per 10,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,910,543 for 2022, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. Mid-year population estimates are available from the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Table 4 Sexual orientation incidents and crimes recorded by the police

	Jan'22-Dec'22	Jan'23-Dec'23
Incidents	433	394
Violence Against the Person Offences	253	198
Theft (including burglary) & criminal damage	45	38
All other offences	10	7
Total crimes (sexual orientation motivation)	308	243

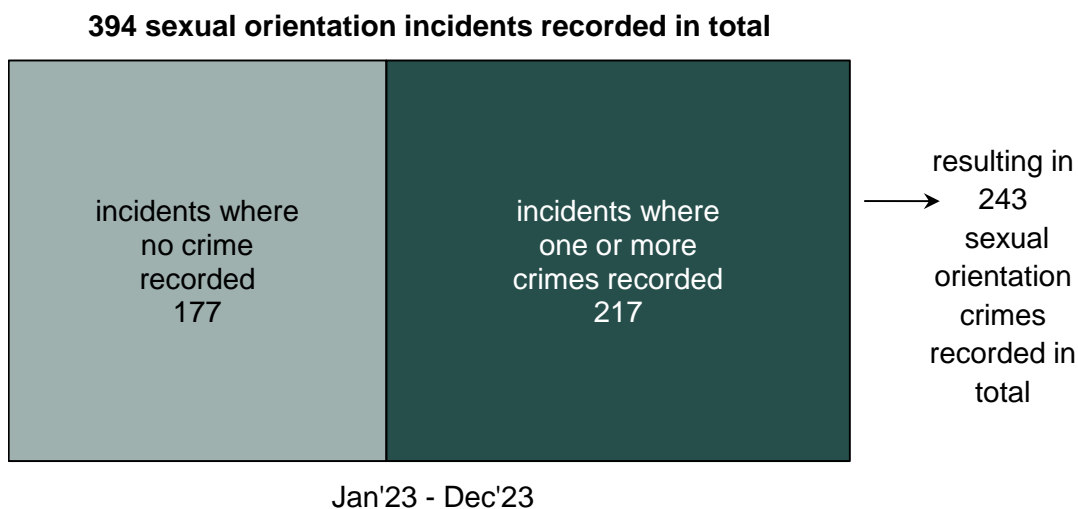
What is the difference between a sexual orientation incident and sexual orientation crime recorded by the police?

Not all sexual orientation incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a sexual orientation crime being recorded. Some sexual orientation incidents will result in multiple crimes being recorded. **Sexual orientation crimes are included in the incident count and the two should not be added together.**

Figure 12 shows how sexual orientation incidents are broken down into those with and without crimes.

In the twelve months to 31st December 2023 there were 394 incidents recorded by the police where there was a sexual orientation motivation. Of these, there were 177 incidents which did not involve a crime (i.e. incidents where the circumstances did not amount to an offence being committed). The remaining 217 incidents involved one or more crimes (amounting to 243 sexual orientation crimes in total). Around two fifths of incidents recorded in this time period did not result in a crime being recorded.

Figure 12 Sexual orientation incidents and crimes



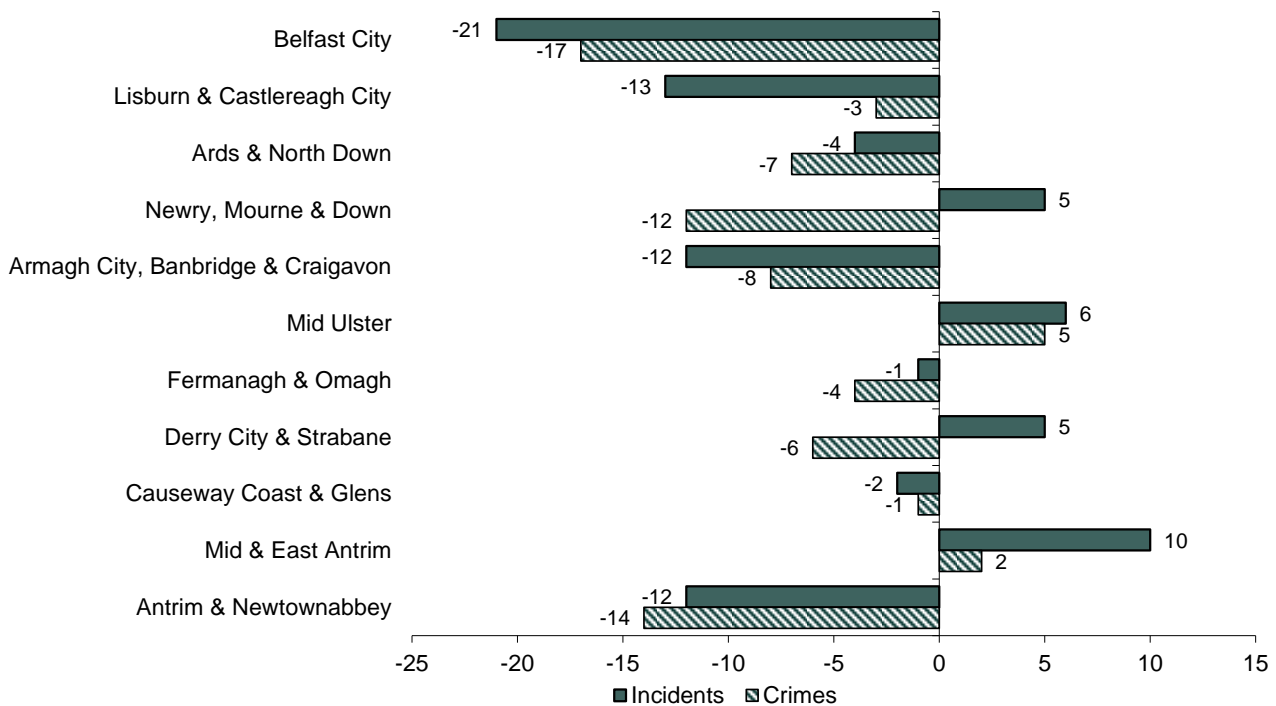
9. Sexual orientation incidents and crimes - what has been happening in policing districts?

When comparing the current and previous 12 months, seven policing districts showed a decrease in the number of sexual orientation incidents and nine policing districts showed a decrease in sexual orientation crimes. Belfast City policing district, which accounts for around two fifths of sexual orientation incidents and crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, showed a decrease of 21 incidents and 17 crimes. [Table 5]

Table 5 Sexual orientation incidents recorded by police by policing district

Policing district	Incidents Jan'22-Dec'22	Incidents Jan'23-Dec'23	Incidents change	Crimes Jan'22-Dec'22	Crimes Jan'23-Dec'23	Crimes change
Belfast City	189	168	-21	118	101	-17
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	28	15	-13	13	10	-3
Ards & North Down	20	16	-4	14	7	-7
Newry, Mourne & Down	27	32	5	34	22	-12
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	40	28	-12	25	17	-8
Mid Ulster	11	17	6	10	15	5
Fermanagh & Omagh	17	16	-1	11	7	-4
Derry City & Strabane	37	42	5	35	29	-6
Causeway Coast & Glens	22	20	-2	14	13	-1
Mid & East Antrim	13	23	10	8	10	2
Antrim & Newtownabbey	29	17	-12	26	12	-14
No district assigned	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	433	394	-39	308	243	-65

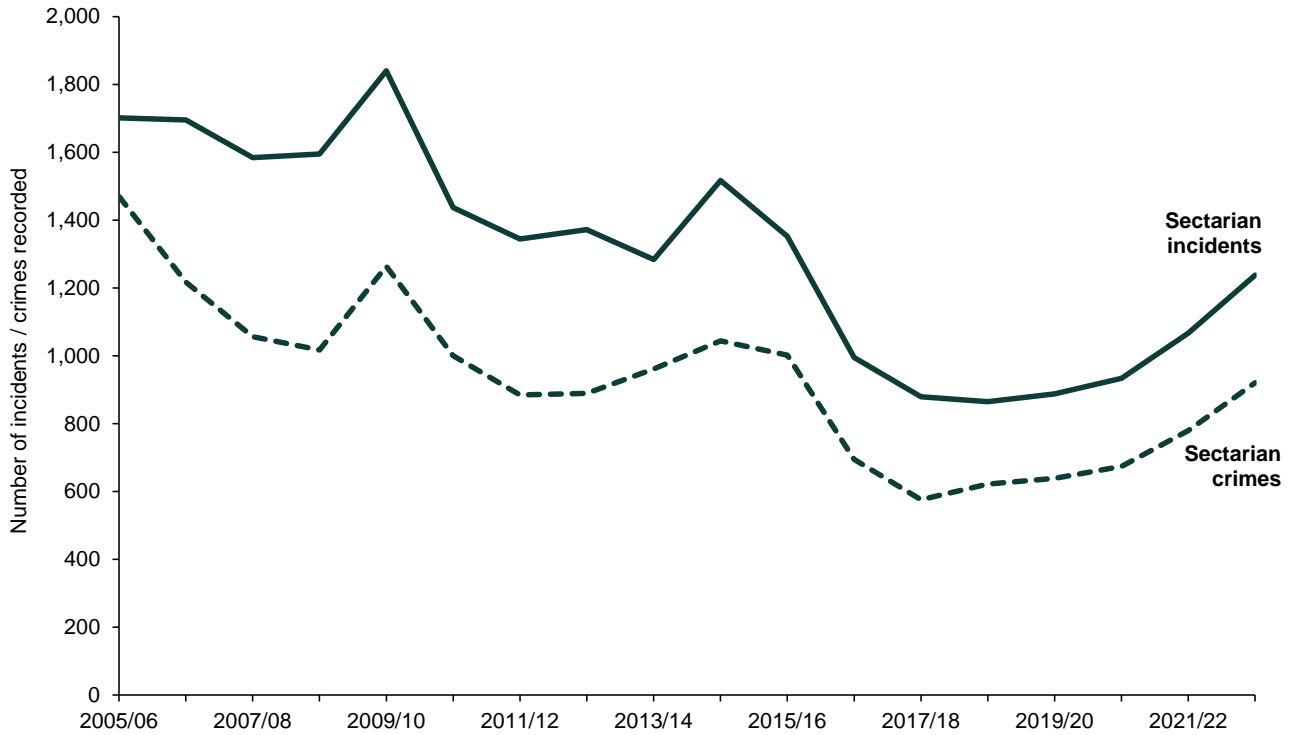
Figure 13 Change in police recorded sexual orientation incidents and crimes by policing district, 12 months to December 2023 compared with the previous 12 months



10. What is happening to levels of sectarian incidents and crimes over the longer term?

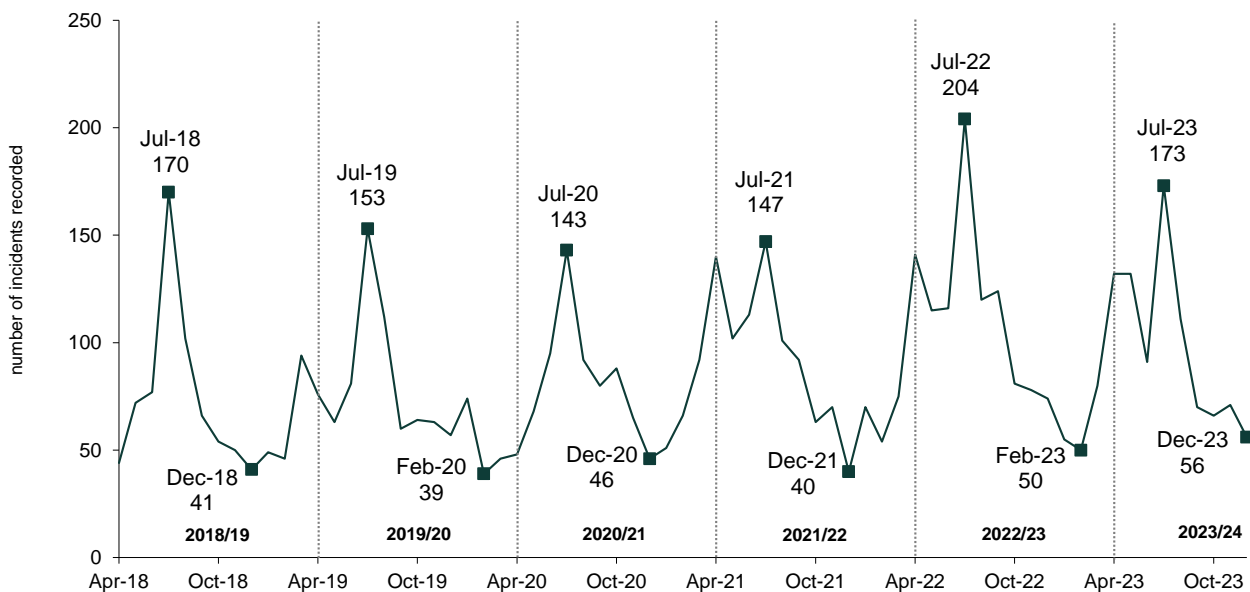
The number of sectarian incidents was at its highest level in 2009/10 with 1,840 incidents recorded. Levels generally fell between 2009/10 and 2018/19, which was the lowest financial year figure in the data series and less than half of the peak level recorded in 2009/10; the number of incidents has increased in each year since 2018/19. The number of sectarian crimes fell to its lowest level in 2017/18. While levels have since increased in each subsequent financial year, the crime level recorded in 2022/23 is 37 per cent lower than the highest level which was recorded in 2005/06.

Figure 14 Trends in sectarian incidents and crimes recorded by the police since 2004/05



Sectarian incidents tend to peak in July of each year and such levels may be closely linked to unrest during this period. The lowest levels tend to be recorded between October and February. Figure 15 shows the pattern of sectarian incidents over the last five financial years and the emerging pattern in the current financial year 2023/24.

Figure 15 Police recorded sectarian incidents each month April 2018 to December 2023, showing highest and lowest levels in each financial year



11. What has been happening to levels of sectarian incidents and crimes more recently?

In the 12 months from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023:

- There were 1,087 sectarian incidents recorded by the police in Northern Ireland, a decrease of 165 on the previous 12 months. [Table 6]
- The number of sectarian crimes recorded by the police fell to 747, a decrease of 178 on the previous 12 months. [Table 6]
- There were 6 sectarian incidents and 4 sectarian crimes per 10,000 population³, compared with 7 sectarian incidents and 5 sectarian crimes per 10,000 population in the previous 12 months.
- Sectarian crimes represented 0.7% of all police recorded crime.
- There was a decrease of 137 in violence against the person offences, while offences of theft, burglary and criminal damage fell by 37. All other offences decreased from 32 to 28. [Table 6]

Figure 16 Sectarian incidents recorded by the police, January 2022 to December 2023

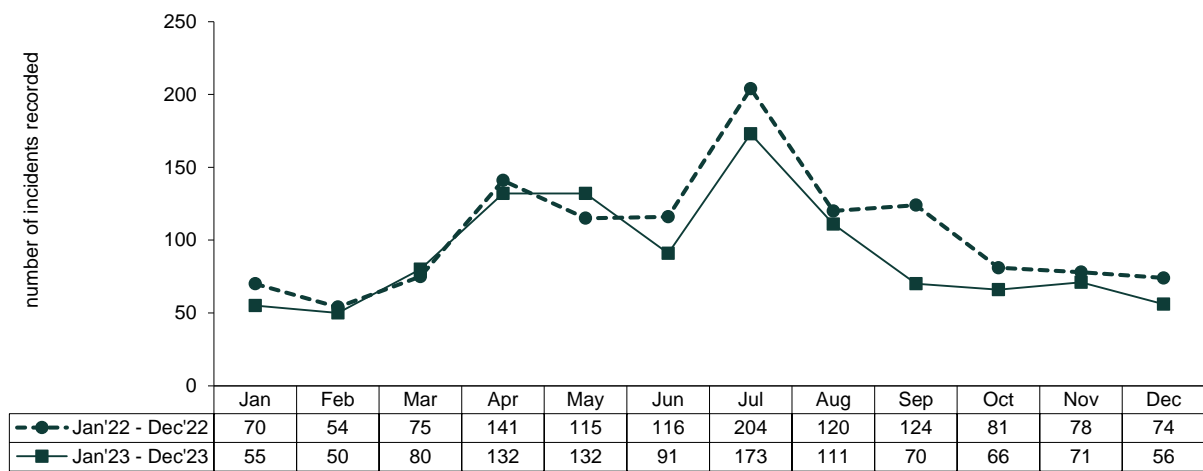
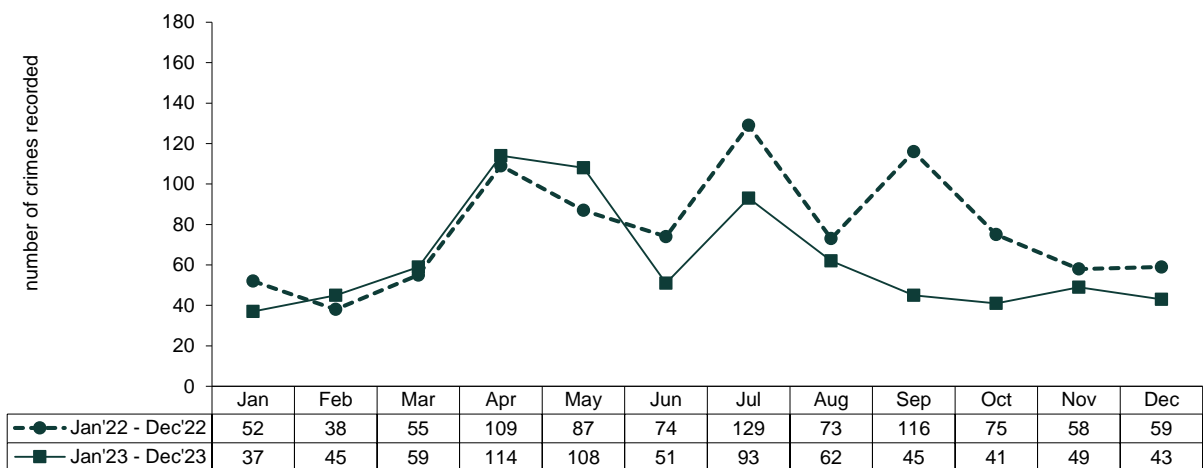


Figure 17 Sectarian crimes recorded by the police, January 2022 to December 2023



³ Crime per 10,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,910,543 for 2022, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. Mid-year population estimates are available from the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Table 6 Sectarian incidents and crimes recorded by the police

	Jan'22-Dec'22	Jan'23-Dec'23
Incidents	1,252	1,087
Violence Against the Person Offences	498	361
Theft (including burglary) & criminal damage	395	358
All other offences	32	28
Total crimes (sectarian motivation)	925	747

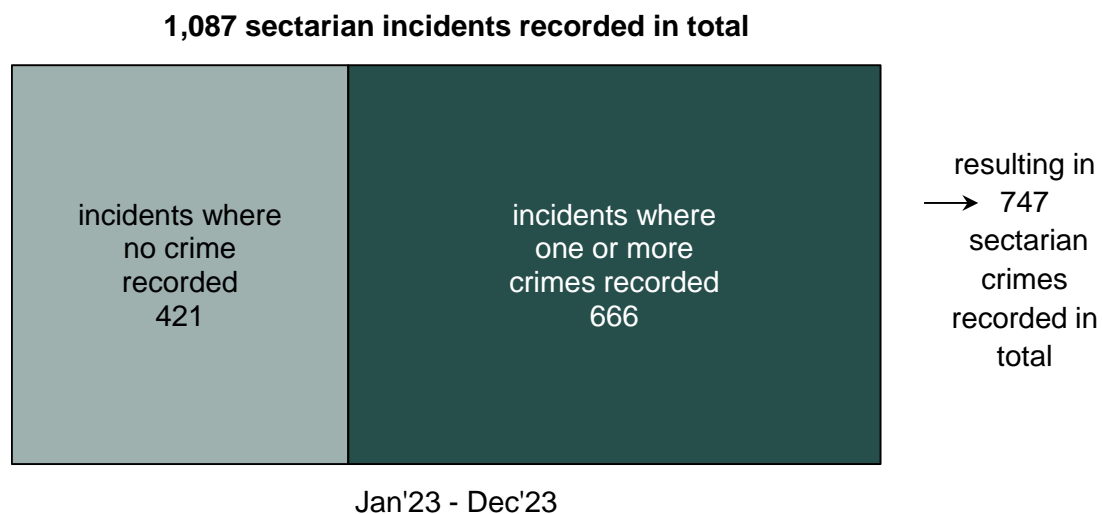
What is the difference between a sectarian incident and sectarian crime recorded by the police?

Not all sectarian incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a sectarian crime being recorded. Some sectarian incidents will result in multiple crimes being recorded. Sectarian crimes are included in the incident count and the two should not be added together.

Figure 18 shows how sectarian incidents are broken down into those with and without crimes.

In the twelve months to 31st December 2023 there were 1,087 incidents recorded by the police where there was a sectarian motivation. Of these, there were 421 incidents which did not involve a crime (i.e. incidents where the circumstances did not amount to an offence being committed). The remaining 666 incidents involved one or more crimes (amounting to 747 sectarian crimes in total). Around two in five of all incidents recorded in this time period did not result in a crime being recorded.

Figure 18 Sectarian incidents and crimes



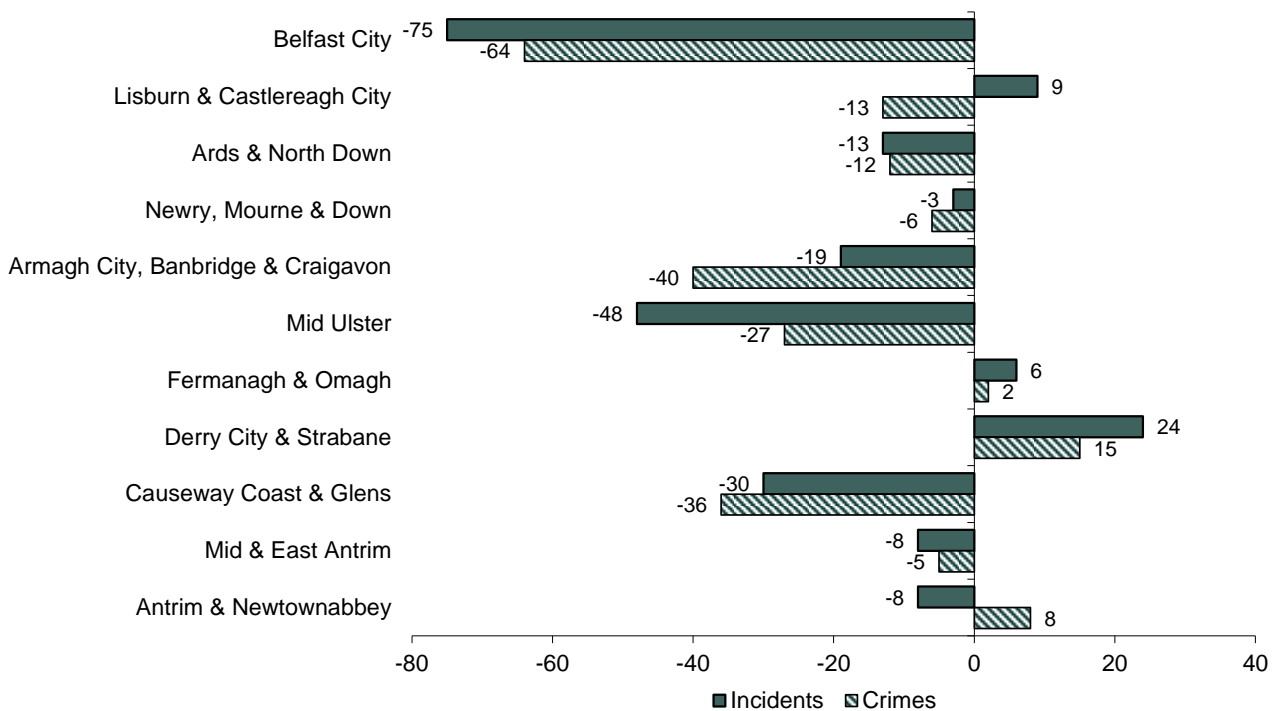
12. Sectarian Incidents and crimes - what has been happening in policing districts?

When comparing the current and previous 12 months, eight policing districts showed a decrease in the number of sectarian incidents and eight showed a decrease in sectarian crimes. Belfast City policing district, which accounts for around three in ten of all sectarian incidents and crimes recorded in Northern Ireland during this time period, recorded 75 fewer incidents (298) and 64 fewer crimes (210). [Table 7]

Table 7 Sectarian incidents recorded by police by policing district

Policing district	Incidents Jan'22-Dec'22	Incidents Jan'23-Dec'23	Incidents change	Crimes Jan'22-Dec'22	Crimes Jan'23-Dec'23	Crimes change
Belfast City	373	298	-75	274	210	-64
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	68	77	9	59	46	-13
Ards & North Down	56	43	-13	33	21	-12
Newry, Mourne & Down	68	65	-3	55	49	-6
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	124	105	-19	101	61	-40
Mid Ulster	142	94	-48	103	76	-27
Fermanagh & Omagh	46	52	6	35	37	2
Derry City & Strabane	135	159	24	100	115	15
Causeway Coast & Glens	90	60	-30	75	39	-36
Mid & East Antrim	48	40	-8	28	23	-5
Antrim & Newtownabbey	102	94	-8	62	70	8
No district assigned	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	1,252	1,087	-165	925	747	-178

Figure 19 Change in police recorded sectarian incidents and crimes by policing district, 12 months to December 2023 compared with the previous 12 months



13. Attacks on symbolic premises

Attacks on symbolic premises are recorded where a crime has a sectarian motivation, where the premises is the intended target of the attack, and where the premises are one of the following; a church or chapel, a GAA or Ancient Order of Hibernians Hall, an Orange Hall or Apprentice Boys Hall, or a school. These figures are a subset of sectarian motivated crimes.

Table 8 Attacks on Symbolic Premises

Type of Symbolic Premises	Jan'22-Dec'22	Jan'23-Dec'23
Church or Chapel	4	*
GAA or Ancient Order of Hibernians Hall	*	*
Orange or Apprentice Boys Hall	18	7
School	*	*

* Cell suppression has been applied to ensure that the identity of individuals/organisations or any private information relating to them is not revealed.

14. Background and Data Quality

Data collection and data accuracy

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 correct application of a hate motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, but audits and data quality checks are routinely conducted in an attempt to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected. Crimes with a hate motivation are included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland and these crimes are recorded in compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules. A comprehensive validation and quality assurance process has been set in place to ensure that the numbers and types of crimes being recorded meet the standards set down in these rules. Details of the data quality checks and processes that PSNI has in place are available in section 4 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Annual Revisions: Revisions to previously published annual data in respect of hate motivated crimes were applied for the first time to financial year figures released in May 2018. The revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. The revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature will next be applied in May 2024. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the [Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime \(opens in a new window\)](#).

How the data is used

Hate motivation statistics have been collated by PSNI in their current format since 2004/05. They are used widely within PSNI as management information and to inform policy and performance. The figures are also used by government departments and other voluntary and statutory agencies to inform debate and policy development regarding hate crime in Northern Ireland.

Additional data available to accompany this release

This release provides an overview of hate motivated incidents and crimes recorded by the police in the 12 months to December 2023. Additional Tables are available on the PSNI website to supplement the information contained in this bulletin. The data is available in both excel spreadsheet and open document spreadsheet formats on the [hate motivation section of the PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Web links to other information you may be interested in

Further details on Police Recorded Crime statistics, including those with a hate motivation, are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#). This is a reference guide with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications which are key to the production and presentation of police recorded crime statistics.

Hate Motivation Annual Trends in Northern Ireland: Annual figures on incidents and crimes with a hate motivation recorded by the police from 2004/05 to 2022/23 are available in the publication [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2022/23 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

[Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#): These statistics are updated on a monthly basis; an annual trends bulletin is also published.

[Crime Outcomes \(opens in a new window\)](#): The latest publication presenting the wider outcomes framework within PSNI and summarising the outcomes that have been assigned to crimes recorded by the police between 2015/16 and 2022/23 was published on 24 November 2023. The publication includes a section on outcomes relating to hate motivated crimes.

[NISRA Data Portal \(opens in a new window\)](#): Access to a range of geographic areas for hate motivated incidents and crimes recorded by the police (annual totals only) is available through the NISRA Data Portal. These figures are updated on an annual basis.

Hate Crime in England & Wales: [Hate Crime in England & Wales 2022-23 \(opens in a new window\)](#) is published by the Home Office. There are some key differences in presentation of hate crime within England & Wales compared with Northern Ireland that should be considered. Further details are provided in Section 9 of the Annual Trends bulletin (see link above).

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