



Police Service
of Northern Ireland



Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland

1998/99 to 2023/24

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PSNI Statistics Branch
Lisnasharragh
42 Montgomery Road
Belfast
BT6 9LD

 statistics@psni.police.uk

 028 9065 0222 Ext. 24135

Web [PSNI Statistics](#)



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

Things you need to know about this release

Coverage

Statistics on police recorded crime in Northern Ireland are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). They are recorded in compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules and further details of recording practices are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

This release presents statistics relating to police recorded crime between 1998/99 and 2023/24. Supplementary data are available from the PSNI website in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

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.

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

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

Details around the need for both recorded crime figures and the NISCS can be found in the [Northern Ireland Crime Survey User Guide \(opens in a new window\)](#). Both of these measures of crime inform public debate about crime and support the development and monitoring of policy.

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

Unlike the NISCS, police recorded crime figures do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police; they also exclude those crimes that are not recorded in order to comply with the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR). They do cover crimes against those aged under 16, organisations such as businesses, and crimes 'against the state' i.e. with no immediate victim (e.g. possession of drugs). It was estimated in 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.

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

Points to note in this bulletin

Stalking and Harassment (including malicious communications)

June 2016: Legislation on disclosing private sexual photographs and film with intent to cause distress (otherwise known as 'revenge porn') was introduced; these offences are included within 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 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.

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.

Controlling or coercive behaviour: The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 created a new Domestic Abuse offence which criminalises a course of abusive behaviour. Recording of this offence started on 21st February 2022, and is included within the Stalking and Harassment classification.

Stalking: The Protection from Stalking Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 created offences to provide protection from stalking and threatening or abusive behaviour. Recording of these offences started on 26th April 2022 and is included within the Stalking and Harassment classification.

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	5,853	5,874	4,078	1,920
8U Controlling or Coercive Behaviour	-	-	-	-	97	916	744
Stalking and Harassment Total	3,656	5,274	10,053	11,342	14,342	13,919	10,366

Action Fraud: In April 2015 Action Fraud took over responsibility for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 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 occurring in Northern Ireland are provided to PSNI on a monthly basis. As a result, this bulletin includes a section on Fraud (Section 6) which presents figures dating back to 1998/99 and shows whether the source is PSNI or Action Fraud. All other sections within the bulletin present figures on a comparable basis that exclude crimes recorded by Action Fraud, unless otherwise specified. These figures are also available in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Knife and Sharp Instrument Crime Revisions: Knife and sharp instrument figures have been revised to bring them into line with methodology changes in England and Wales. The main change made to these figures is the removal of 'broken bottle or glass' as a sharp instrument. The main impacts of this change are that levels are lower, with the majority of records removed being classified to actual bodily harm and grievous bodily harm offences. The overall levels are lower by between 7 per cent and 16 per cent with the number of records removed ranging from 47 to 137 between 2007/08 and 2023/24. As a result the proportion of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument is reduced by one percentage point in each year, with the exception of 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2020/21 which were unchanged.

Annual Revisions: Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year crime figures from 2015/16 onwards, as a result of the introduction of the wider outcomes framework in April 2015. These revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature will next be applied in May 2025. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the [Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Data Quality Revisions: Work to improve the completeness of victim gender details was completed following the publication of the police recorded crime monthly update to 31st March 2023/24. This work identified 75 crimes recorded between 2015/16 and 2021/22 that required cancellation, with 27 of these cancellations in 2020/21 and 32 in 2021/22. Therefore there will be slight differences between the figures published in this bulletin and those published in the monthly update to 31st March 2023/24.

Covid-19 restrictions: Following the introduction in March 2020 of restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, most classifications within overall police recorded crime fell. These restrictions, which were in place to varying degrees until February 2022, may have had an impact on crime levels and should be considered when comparing the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Conventions used in figures and tables

While the 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.

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

'..' indicates that data are not available.

The charts in this release are not all shown to same scale.

Population Rates

The population estimates used within this bulletin are the latest mid-year estimates available at time of compilation.

At the time of publication, the 2023 mid-year population estimate for Northern Ireland was available. However, the additional population breakdown for each policing district was unavailable.

Therefore the 2023 mid-year population estimate has been used for the 2023/24 Northern Ireland population rate, while the 2022 mid-year population estimates have been used for the 2023/24 population rate for each policing district.

The population estimates used within this bulletin and accompanying spreadsheet are available in Table 9.4 of the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Mid-year population estimates are available from the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Key Points

Covid-19 restrictions: Following the introduction in March 2020 of restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, most classifications within overall police recorded crime fell. These restrictions, which were in place to varying degrees until February 2022, may have had an impact on crime levels and should be considered when comparing the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Section 1 Overview

- In 1998/99 (the first year of the data series) there were 104,647 crimes recorded. This level increased each year to a peak of 138,132 in 2002/03. Police recorded crime moved in a generally downwards direction between 2002/03 and 2016/17, falling by nearly 30 per cent. This was followed by increases over the three years to 2019/20. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdown measures were introduced in Northern Ireland on 23rd March 2020. These had a substantial impact on the lower levels of police recorded crime seen during 2020/21, resulting in the lowest crime level recorded (94,198 offences). In 2023/24 there were 104,344 crimes recorded.
- In 2023/24 there were 54 crimes recorded per 1,000 population, compared with the peak of 81 crimes per 1,000 population in 2002/03.
- Between 1998/99 and 2023/24 the proportion of crime represented by robbery, theft (including burglary) and criminal damage fell from just over three quarters of all crimes recorded to two fifths of all crimes recorded, while the proportion of violence against the person and sexual offences increased from one in five to represent around half of all crimes recorded.

Section 2 Trends by Crime Type

- By 2015/16 violence against the person was nearly twice the level recorded in 1998/99, although numbers fell again in 2016/17. The level generally increased to reach a peak in 2022/23 of 49,992, the highest recorded, before falling to 44,143 in 2023/24 (-11.7%). Since 2018/19 Violence against the person has been impacted by changes in recording practice for the Stalking and Harassment classification. For further information see the Points to Note on page 3.
- There were 10 murders recorded in 2023/24, the lowest number since the start of the financial year data series in 1998/99. The lowest figure prior to this was 2016/17 when 13 murders were recorded. In the last ten years the number of murders has ranged from 10 in 2023/24 to 24 in 2018/19.
- The Stalking and Harassment time series has been impacted by the inclusion of Classification 8R Malicious Communications from 1st April 2017, the introduction of new legislation within Northern Ireland (8U Controlling or Coercive Behaviour from February 2022 and 8Q Stalking from April 2022) and changes in recording practice as applied by the Home Office Counting Rules in April 2018 (requiring harassment to be recorded in addition to the most serious additional victim based offence) and May 2023 (reversing this requirement). Further details and a table outlining the changing levels recorded across this period are available on page 3.
- Sexual offences reached the highest level recorded in 2022/23 at 4,214 offences, followed by a fall in 2023/24 to 4,090 offences; this latest figure is three and half times the lowest level recorded in 2000/01. Rape offences increased to their highest level in 2022/23 (1,267 offences), with 1,181 recorded in 2023/24, more than five times higher than the lowest level of 232 offences recorded in 2000/01. Sexual assaults also reached the highest level recorded in 2022/23 (1,924 offences) with 1,787 recorded in 2023/24, around three times the lowest level recorded in 2002/03.
- Burglary and robbery offences recorded their lowest levels in 2023/24 and 2021/22 respectively, with both around one fifth of the highest figure recorded in 2002/03. Theft offences have risen since the lowest level of 16,317 was recorded in 2020/21; the level in 2023/24 (21,975) is around half of the peak seen in 2001/02. Restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic were introduced in March 2020 and had an impact on each of these classifications. Although the theft classification has risen from the low in 2020/21, all of the main classifications within theft (with the exception of shoplifting) are at least 20 per cent lower in 2023/24 than 2019/20. In 2023/24 shoplifting reached the highest level recorded since the start of the data series; at 8,979 this is twice the lowest level of 4,464 which was recorded in 2020/21.
- Levels of criminal damage were at their highest in 2001/02 with 39,748 offences recorded. Following a sustained downwards trend since 2006/07 the latest figure of 15,252 in 2023/24 is the lowest recorded and is less than half of the peak experienced in 2001/02.
- The number of drug offences recorded peaked in 2022/23 (8,974) and even though there has been a small fall in 2023/24 to 8,872, it remains eight times higher than the lowest level recorded in 2001/02.
- The number of possession of weapons offences reached the highest level recorded in 2023/24 (1,334 offences). The level recorded in 2023/24 is almost four times higher than that recorded in 1998/99.

Section 3 Knife and Sharp Instrument Crime

- The proportion of selected violent and sexual offences involving knives or sharp instruments has remained at three per cent since 2015/16, with the exception of 2020/21 when it was four per cent. Prior to that the proportion was four per cent. Figures have been revised to bring them into line with methodology changes in England and Wales. For further information see the Points to Note on page 3.

Section 4 Online Crime

- Online crime accounted for four per cent of all crimes in 2023/24, with two such offences recorded per 1,000 population. Victims aged under 18 (accounting for 25 per cent of all victims) were most likely to be victims of online stalking and harassment or online sexual offences, while those aged 18+ (accounting for 75 per cent of all victims) were most likely to be victims of online stalking and harassment or online blackmail. Both females and males were most likely to be victims of online stalking and harassment, followed by online sexual offences for females and online blackmail for males. Females represented 49 per cent of online crime victims in 2023/24, down from 56 per cent in 2022/23.

Section 5 Alcohol Crime

- Since 2012/13 around one in five crimes recorded by police have been flagged with an alcohol motivation. Around half of all violence with injury offences (between 45 and 58 per cent) and two fifths of violence without injury offences (between 36 and 43 per cent) have been given an alcohol motivation. The proportion of violence against the person offences with an alcohol motivation has fallen from 47 per cent in 2012/13 to a low of 30 per cent in 2020/21; the proportion in 2023/24 is 35 per cent.

Section 6 Fraud

- In 2014/15 there were 1,896 offences recorded by PSNI within the 'Other Fraud' classification. From 1 April 2015 Action Fraud became responsible for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime previously recorded by PSNI, and recorded 2,230 frauds and cyber crimes during 2015/16. The level recorded by Action Fraud increased to 5,856 in 2020/21, it has since fallen to 5,400 recorded in 2023/24.

Section 7 Victims of Crime

- During 2023/24 around 66 per cent of all crimes had a person victim, three per cent a police officer victim, 17 per cent a business/organisation victim and 14 per cent were state-based.
- Of the crimes recorded in 2023/24 where there was a person victim, 13 per cent were crimes where the victim was aged under 18, 80 per cent where the victim was aged 18-64 and six per cent where the victim was aged 65 or over.
- In 2023/24 there were 21 crime victims under 18 per 1,000 of the population under 18, 49 crime victims aged 18-64 per 1,000 of the population aged 18-64 and 12 crime victims aged 65 or over per 1,000 of the population aged 65 plus.
- In 2023/24 ninety three per cent of victims who were under 18 at the time the offence occurred were victims of violence against the person or a sexual offence.
- The number of sexual offences recorded where the victim was under 18 at the time the offence was committed more than doubled between 2007/08 and 2023/24.
- Offences relating to sexual activity where the victim is under 16 trebled between the introduction of new sexual offence legislation in February 2009 and the peak of 618 offences recorded in 2016/17, with the largest increases occurring between 2013/14 and 2015/16. 2023/24 recorded the second highest level of 599.
- Close to a third of the sexual offences recorded during 2023/24 were reported to police when the victim was an adult (age 18 and over) but occurred when the victim was a child (age under 18).

Section 8 Outcomes

- There were 104,344 offences recorded in 2023/24 and 33,213 offences detected giving a sanction outcome rate of 31.8%, the highest recorded since the start of the data series in 1998/99.
- The charge / summons methods of disposal are the most frequently used sanction outcomes, accounting for 71 per cent of all outcomes in 2023/24. Community resolutions represent 23 per cent of all sanction outcomes, cautions (adult and juvenile) six per cent and penalty notices for disorder less than one per cent.

Section 9 Geographic Patterns of Crime

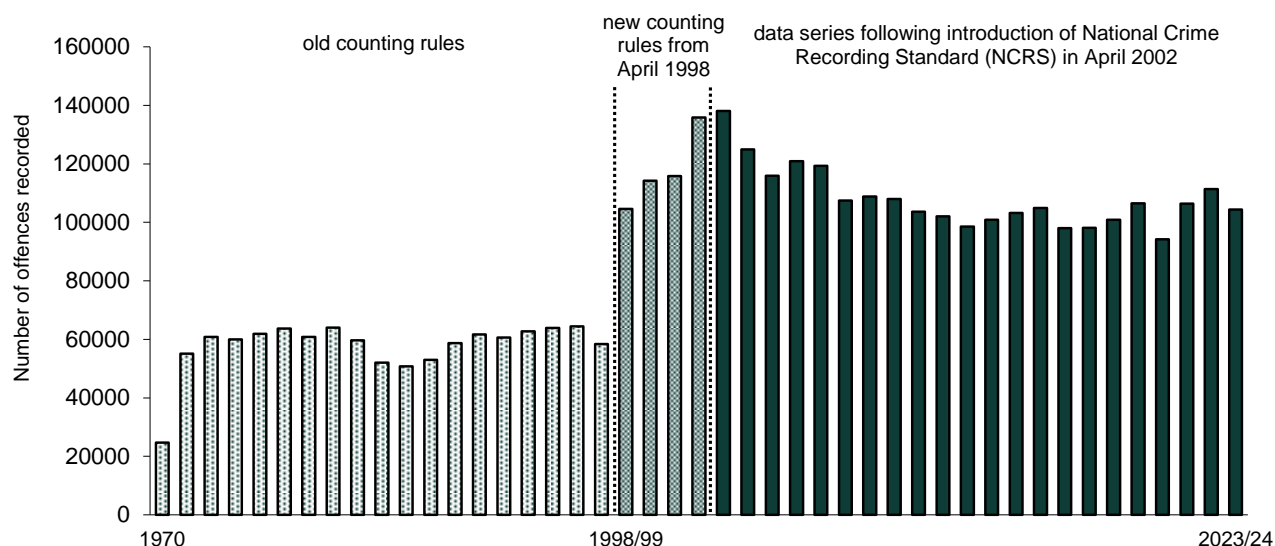
- In 2023/24 there were 96 crimes per 1,000 population in Belfast City and 74 per 1,000 population in Derry City & Strabane. Within the remaining districts the crime rates ranged from 33 per 1,000 population in Mid Ulster to 49 per 1,000 population in Newry, Mourne & Down.

Overview of Police recorded crime levels and rates

All tables referred to in the commentary of this section can be found in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

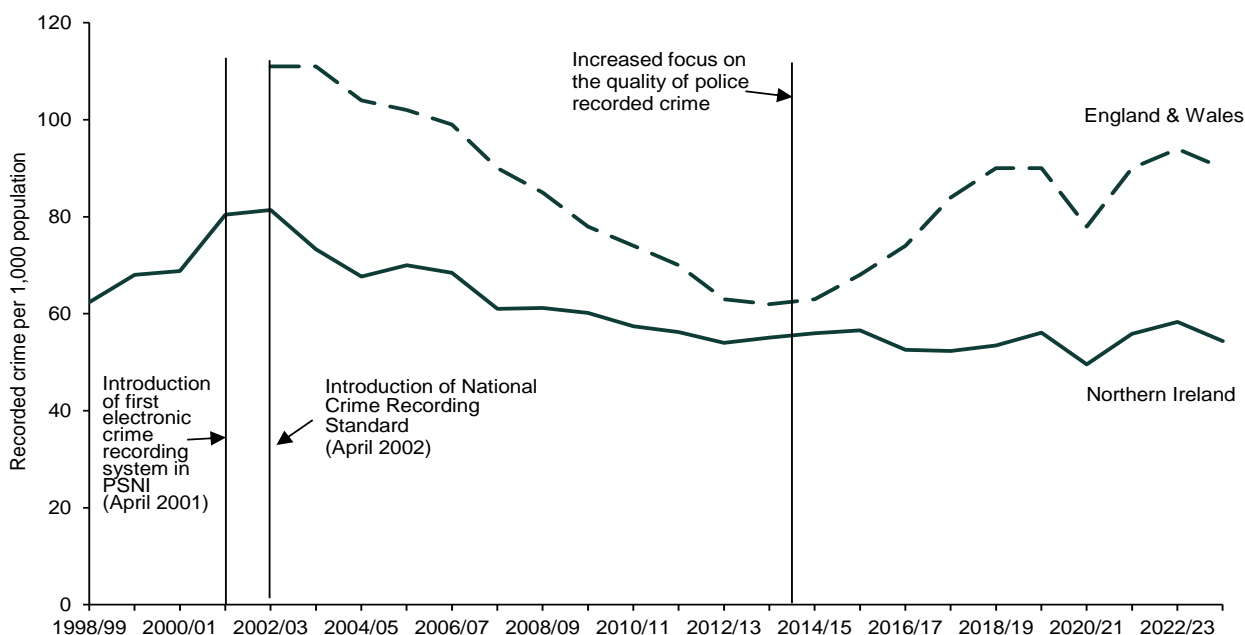
Crime levels: Comparable police recorded crime figures are available from 1998/99, the first year in which crimes were recorded under the current Home Office Counting Rules. In 1998/99 there were 104,647 crimes recorded with the level increasing each year to a peak of 138,132 in 2002/03. The lowest level of 94,198 was recorded in 2020/21; restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic were introduced in March 2020. Levels increased in both 2021/22 and 2022/23, with 2022/23 recording the highest crime level in sixteen years (111,411). The latest financial year has fallen to 104,344, the fifth lowest in the last ten years [Table 1.1]

Figure 1.1 Trends in police recorded crime, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



In 2002/03 there were 81 crimes per 1,000 population in Northern Ireland compared with 111 per 1,000 population in England & Wales. While this gap narrowed to a difference of seven crimes per 1,000 population during 2013/14 and 2014/15, it has diverged again with 2023/24 recording 54 crimes per 1,000 population in Northern Ireland compared with 90 per 1,000 population in England & Wales.

Figure 1.2 Police recorded crime per 1,000 population in Northern Ireland from 1998/99 and in England and Wales from 2002/03^{1, 2}



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

² England & Wales figures available through <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice>

Changes in distribution of main crime types

Police recorded crime on the basis of 'victim-based crime' and 'other crimes against society'. A description of each main crime type is provided in Appendix 1 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Victim-based crime includes the classifications of violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, theft offences (including burglary) and criminal damage offences. Other crimes against society includes drug offences, possession of weapons, public order offences and miscellaneous crimes against society.

The crime figures presented in this section exclude Action Fraud. An explanation of the changes introduced by Action Fraud is provided in the Points to Note on page 3.

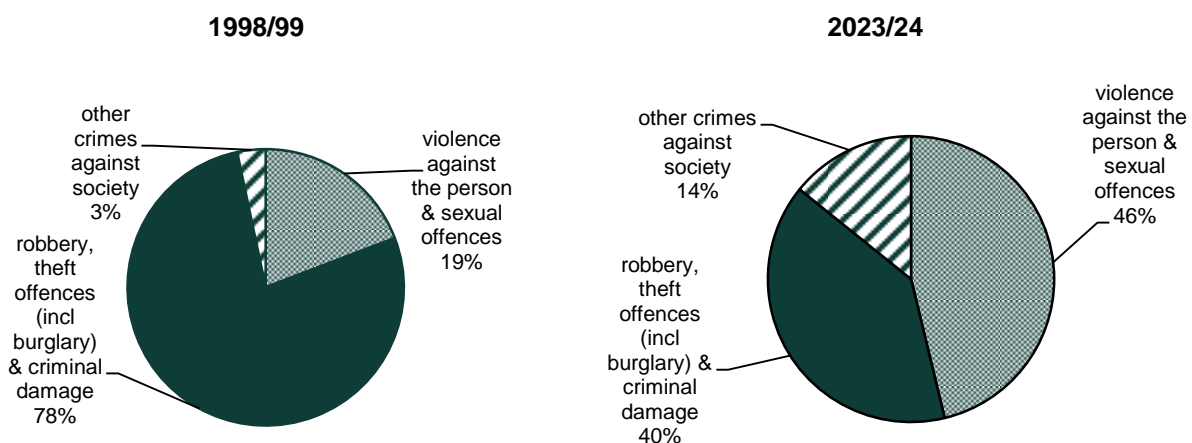
The detailed figures behind the charts in this section can be found in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#) [Table 2.2].

Change in the distribution of the main crime types: At the start of the data series in 1998/99 victim-based crime represented 97 per cent of all crime recorded. This proportion has gradually reduced since then to 86 per cent in 2023/24.

Decreases in crime have mainly been experienced within property-type offences (robbery, burglary, theft and criminal damage), while offences of violence against the person and sexual offences have shown an upwards trend.

An increase in the number of drug offences has influenced the rise in other crimes against society. Figure 1.3 below shows the impact of these changes on the crime profiles for 1998/99 and 2023/24.

Figure 1.3 Police recorded crimes by main crime type, a comparison of 1998/99 and 2023/24



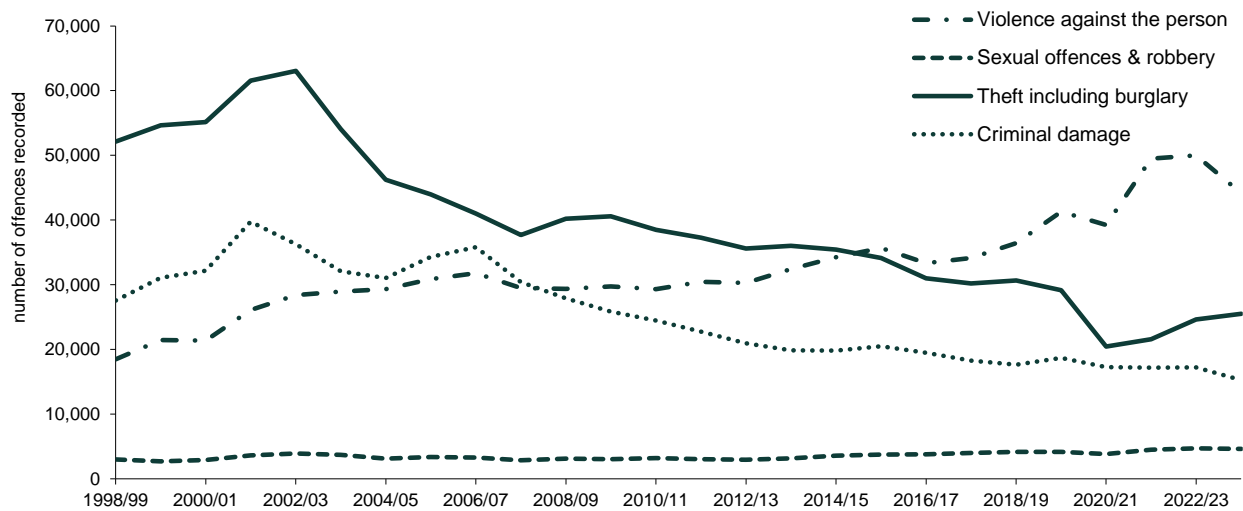
Following the introduction in March 2020 of restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, most classifications within overall police recorded crime fell. These restrictions, which were in place to varying degrees until February 2022, may have had an impact on crime levels and should be considered when comparing the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Figures 1.4 and 1.5 show the changing levels of the main crime types within victim-based crime and other crimes against society. The two charts are not shown to the same scale.

Victim-based crime

- In 1998/99 offences of theft (including burglary) represented more than half of all victim-based crimes, with criminal damage representing just over a quarter and violence against the person less than one in five victim-based crimes.
- By 2023/24 levels of theft, burglary and criminal damage were greatly reduced. At 49 per cent, violence against the person has overtaken theft (including burglary) to represent the largest overall victim-based crime classification. Theft (including burglary) currently represents 28 per cent of victim-based crimes with criminal damage representing 17 per cent.
- Between 1998/99 and 2013/14 robbery represented between one and two per cent of victim-based crimes. Since 2014/15 robbery has fallen below one per cent. Levels have generally fallen since 2002/03.
- Between 1998/99 and 2013/14 sexual offences represented between one and two per cent of victim-based crimes. This proportion reached four per cent in 2016/17 and remained at this level until 2023/24 where it reached five per cent.

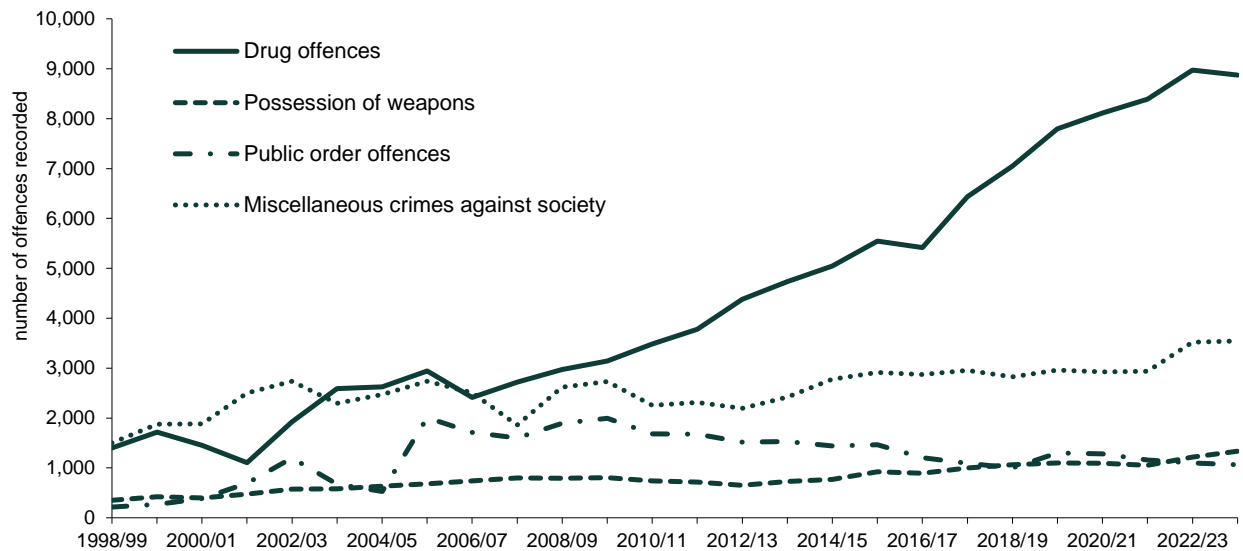
Figure 1.4 Victim based crime, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



Other crimes against society

- In 1998/99 the largest single classification within other crimes against society was miscellaneous crimes against society (43 per cent) followed by drug offences (40 per cent).
- In 2023/24 drug offences represented 60 per cent of other crimes against society, with miscellaneous crimes against society falling to 24 per cent.
- The trend for public order offences is only comparable from 2005/06, due to the introduction in that year of offences relating to breaches of anti-social behaviour, non-molestation and sex offender orders. While public order offences represented nearly a quarter of other crimes against society in 2005/06 the proportion has generally fallen to seven per cent other crimes against society in both 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- Since 1998/99 possession of weapon offences have represented between seven and eleven per cent of other crimes against society.

Figure 1.5 Other crimes against society, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



Section 2 further examines the individual classifications within these two main groupings.

¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

2. Trends in Police Recorded Crime by Crime Type

The detailed figures behind the charts in this section can be found in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#) Table 2.2. Trends within the main crime types are shown in figures 2.1 to 2.25.

Police recorded crime on the basis of 'victim-based crime' and 'other crimes against society'. A description of each main crime type is provided in Appendix 1 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Victim-based crime includes the classifications of violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, theft offences (including burglary) and criminal damage offences. Other crimes against society includes drug offences, possession of weapons, public order offences and miscellaneous crimes against society.

The crime figures presented in this section exclude Action Fraud. An explanation of the changes introduced by Action Fraud is provided in the Points to Note on page 3.

Following the introduction in March 2020 of restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, most classifications within overall police recorded crime fell. These restrictions, which were in place to varying degrees until February 2022, may have had an impact on crime levels and should be considered when comparing the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

2.1 Violence against the person

Violence against the person currently represents nearly half of all crimes recorded, compared with less than one fifth of all crime in 1998/99. The highest level of violence against the person offences was recorded in 2022/23 and is more than two and a half times the level recorded in 1998/99.

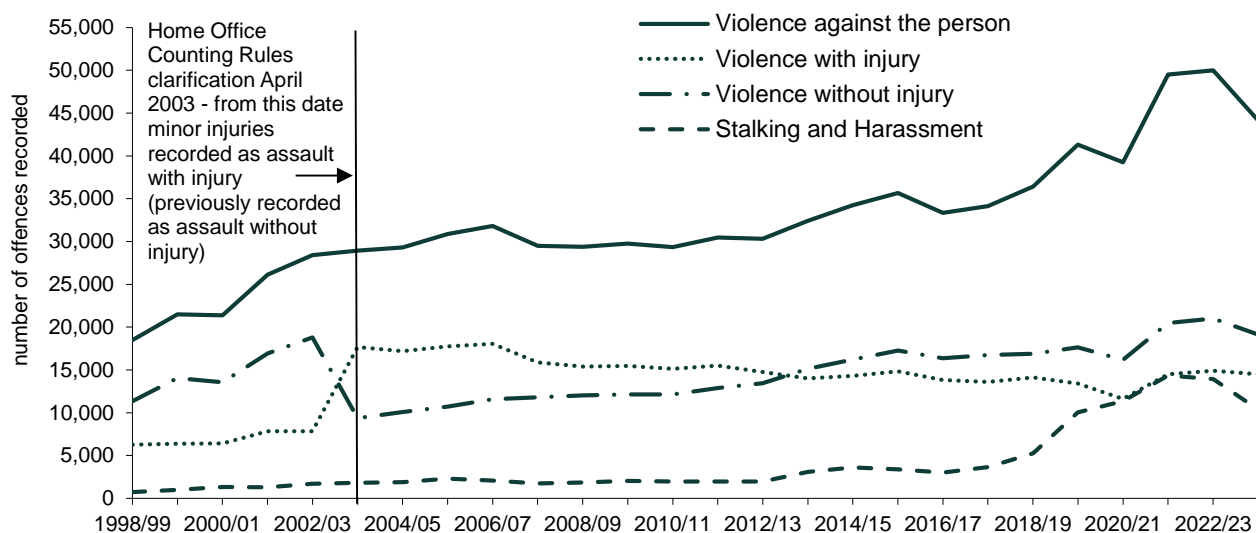
Violence against the person includes a wide range of offences from murder to minor assaults such as pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm. Even within the same classification the degree of violence used can vary considerably between incidents. Behavioural crimes such as stalking and harassment are also included.

The introduction of the ICIS crime recording system in April 2001 improved the capture of low level crime. This may have contributed to increases in Violence against the person offences seen between 2000/01 and 2001/02. Changes to the guidance on recording harassment has contributed to increases seen in more recent years.

Violence against the person is further split into the following classifications: homicide, death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving, violence with injury, violence without injury and stalking and harassment. Figure 2.1 shows a generally falling trend in violence with injury, and increasing trends in both violence without injury and stalking and harassment, alongside the overall increasing trend for violence against the person.

While violence with injury generally declined between 2006/07 and 2020/21, higher levels have seen since 2021/22 with 2022/23 recording the highest level in the last 11 years. Violence without injury reached the highest level in the data series in 2022/23, whilst stalking and harassment peaked in 2021/22. Details on recording changes which have influenced the changes in the stalking and harassment time series are provided in the Points to Note on page 3. Homicide offences and death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving are not displayed in Figure 2.1 due to the small levels recorded.

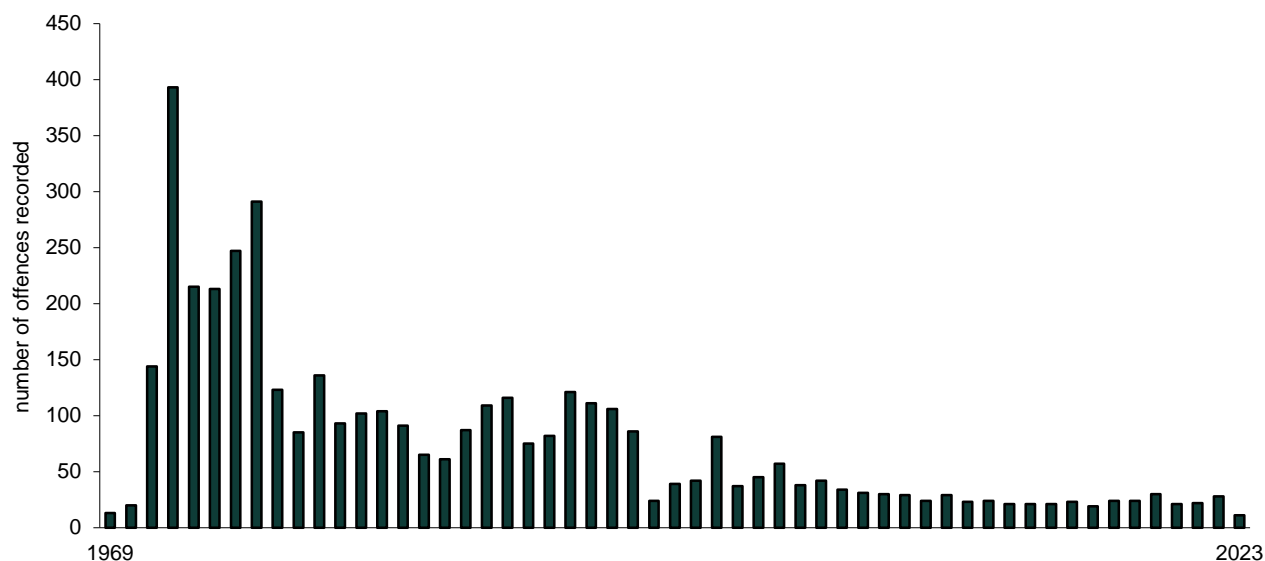
Figure 2.1 Violence against the person, a comparison of 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Figure 2.2 Homicides by calendar year, 1969 to 2023

The calendar year series is presented to show the most complete data series available.



Murder: In the financial year data series from 1998/99, the number of murders recorded was at its highest level in 1998/99 with 71 recorded, this includes the 29 persons killed in the Omagh bomb which occurred on 15 August 1998. There were 10 murders recorded in 2023/24; this is the lowest level recorded, the previous lowest level was 13 recorded in 2016/17.

Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving:

The number of these offences ranged from 33 in 2001/02 to 168 offences in 2015/16. The level fell by 71 from 164 offences in 2019/20 to 93 in 2020/21, the largest annual fall experienced since 1998/99. Similar levels have been seen in the latest three years, with 136 offences recorded in 2023/24. A time series is presented in Figure 2.24 along with dangerous driving offences, to provide a more complete picture.

2.1.2 Violence with and without injury

Violence with injury includes offence classifications such as attempted murder, assault with intent to cause serious harm and assault with injury. The largest volume of offences is seen in the assault with injury classification, which includes the offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH).

Violence without injury includes classifications such as threats to kill, assault without injury, kidnapping, cruelty to children/young persons & child abduction and modern slavery. Offences of assault without injury are the largest grouping recorded within this classification.

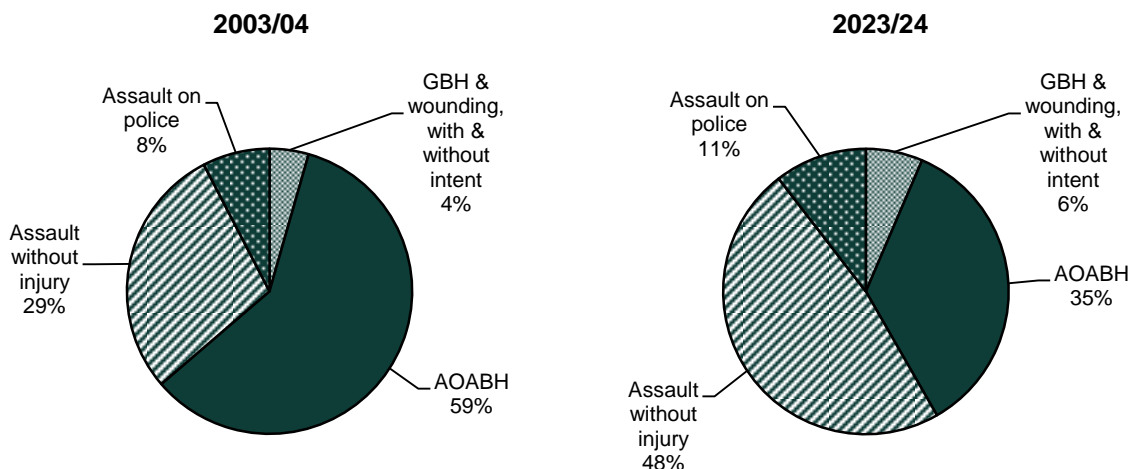
Clarifications made to the Home Office Counting Rules have introduced some discontinuities to the data series for violence with and without injury, as outlined below.

Recording of minor injuries, April 2003: As shown in figure 2.1, the violence with and without injury classifications are only directly comparable from 2003/04 onwards due to the following Home Office Counting Rules clarification. 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, these offences have been recorded as assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH). The impact of this was a large increase in violence with injury, particularly the classification 8N Assault with injury and a corresponding decrease in violence without injury, particularly classification 105A Assault without injury. However the overall trend for violence against the person was not impacted (see figure 2.1).

Recording of intent to cause serious injury, April 2008: Revised technical guidance was issued by the Home Office in April 2008 to ensure consistency of recording by all police forces for those assaults resulting in minor or no injury to a victim, but where the intent was to cause serious injury. The effect of this clarification was that some offences that would previously have been recorded as other types of assault were to be recorded as GBH with intent. The impact of this clarification was experienced mainly in 2008/09 and 2009/10.

Assaults: Taking into account the change in recording of minor injuries in April 2003, figure 2.3 shows the changing proportions of the various types of assault between 2003/04 and 2023/24, demonstrating the shift between classification 105A Assault without injury (from 29% to 48%) and assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH) (from 59% to 35%).

Figure 2.3 Comparison of assault offences^{1,2}, 2003/04 and 2023/24³



¹ Offences of GBH and wounding with intent fall within classification 5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm, while GBH and wounding sit within classification 8N Assault with injury.

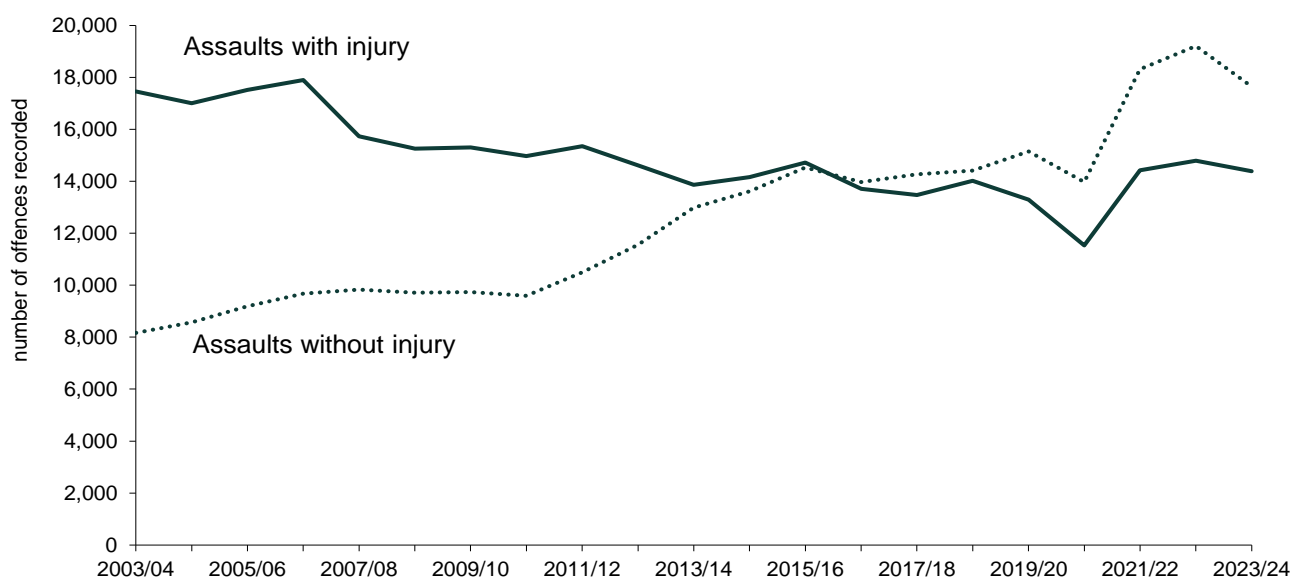
² Assault on police offences fall within classification 8S Assault with injury on a constable and classification 104 Assault without injury on a constable.

³ In 2023/24 AOABH includes non-fatal strangulation (introduced by legislation in June 2023 and Classification 8T Assault on an emergency worker which was introduced in 2019/20).

Figure 2.4 shows the trends in assaults with and without injury since 2003/04. Assaults with injury include classifications 5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm, 8N Assault with injury, 8S Assault with injury on a constable and 8T Assault on an emergency worker. Assaults without injury include classifications 105A Assault without injury and 104 Assault without injury on a constable.

There has been a general increase in levels of assaults without injury, with 2022/23 recording the highest level in the data series and more than twice the number seen in 2003/04. This is alongside decreasing levels of assault with injury (mainly offences of AOABH) which fell by a third between 2003/04 and 2020/21, before experiencing a sharp increase in 2021/22. The result of these trends is that assaults without injury, which represented just less than a third of all assaults in 2003/04, have accounted for at least half of all assaults since 2015/16.

Figure 2.4 Assaults with and without injury, 2003/04 to 2023/24¹

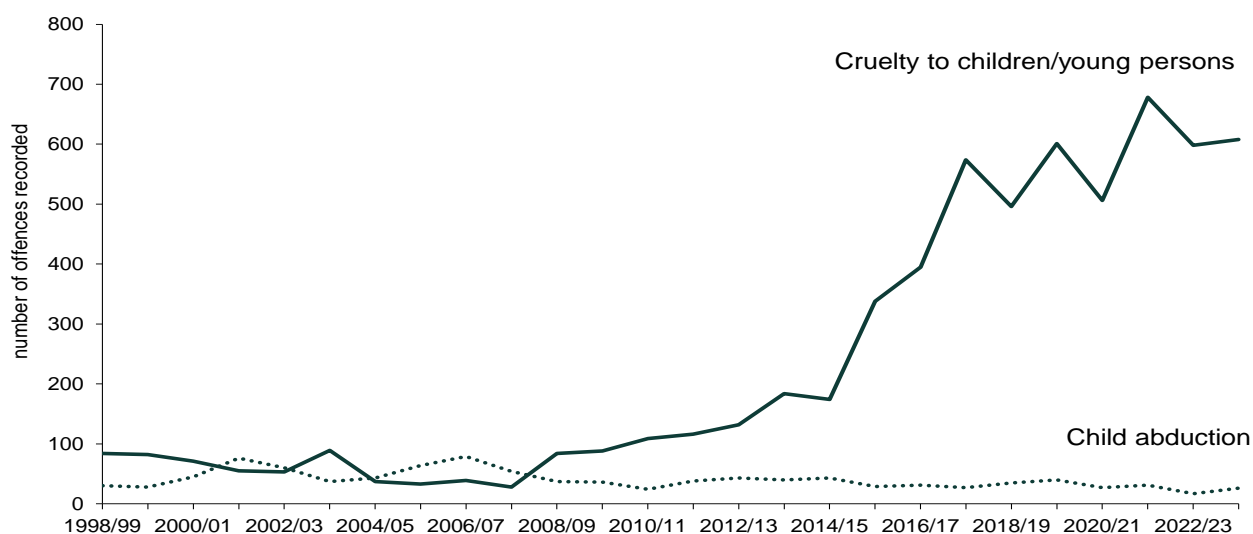


Cruelty to children/young persons and child abduction: As figure 2.5 shows, there was a sharp increase in offences of cruelty to children/young persons recorded in 2015/16, when levels increased from 174 to 338. A

¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

similar level of increase was seen in 2017/18 (from 395 to 574) and again in 2021/22 (from 506 to 678). The level in 2023/24 is similar to that seen in 2022/23 and 2019/20. Further analysis on victims under the age of 18 is provided in Section 7.3.

Figure 2.5 Cruelty to children/young persons and child abduction, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



Modern Slavery: This classification was created in 2015/16 to bring together offences relating to human trafficking, trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced/compulsory labour which were previously classified within sexual offences or within the general 'Other offences' classification. The first year for which offences were recorded was 2007/08. Between 2007/08 and 2013/14 levels ranged from zero to 12. The level rose to 27 in 2014/15 and has remained at a higher level since then, ranging from 21 in 2016/17 to 45 in 2021/22.

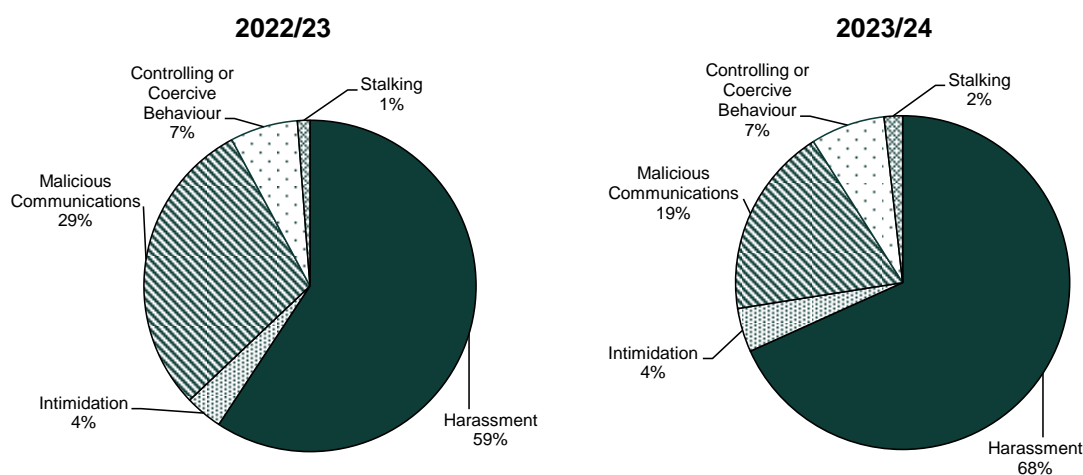
2.1.3 Stalking and Harassment

Stalking and Harassment includes the classifications of harassment, intimidation, malicious communications, controlling or coercive behaviour and stalking.

Changes to the Stalking and Harassment data series. The Points to Note on page 3 of this bulletin provides a comprehensive background to the recording and legislative changes which have had an impact on the stalking and harassment data series since April 2017.

In summary: recording changes introduced by the Home Office meant that between 1st April 2018 and 30th April 2023 there was some 'double counting' of offences for circumstances where an incident involved a conduct offence (Harassment, stalking, coercive or controlling behaviour) and another offence. This change resulted in an increase in the number of crimes required to be recorded. From 1st May 2023 this recording practice has been reversed, with a conduct/behaviour crime to be recorded only when it is deemed to be the most serious offence. This current approach is more similar to what was in place prior to 1st April 2018. The greatest impact of this most recent change can be seen in the malicious communications classification, where the number of offences recorded in 2023/24 is half the number recorded in 2022/23.

Figure 2.6 Profile of Stalking and harassment offences, 2022/23 and 2023/24



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Intimidation is an offence in legislation in Northern Ireland but not specifically recorded as such within England and Wales. It would be associated with the Northern Ireland security situation, involving offences such as intimidation-residence/occupation, person to leave employment or to do/refrain from doing any act. It is recorded within the 8L Harassment classification.

Intimidation carries a more severe penalty on indictment than harassment.

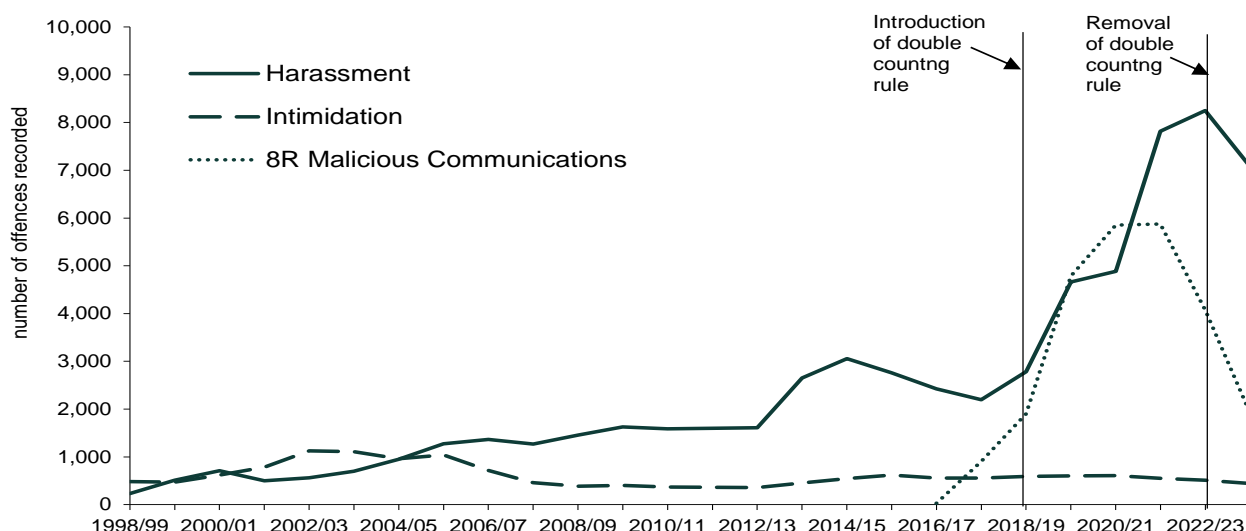
The trend in the overall stalking and harassment classification is shown in Figure 2.1. Higher levels were recorded between 2013/14 and 2016/17 before much greater increases were seen in each of the years 2017/18 to 2021/22. Levels have since decreased, with the level recorded in 2023/24 more similar to that previously seen in 2019/20. A full explanation of the recording and legislative changes affecting this classification is provided in the Points to Note on page 3 and the comments box on page 13.

Offences of intimidation were at their highest level between 2002/03 and 2005/06, before falling to the lowest level recorded in 2012/13. While the number of offences has risen since, the figure for 2023/24 is less than half of the level recorded in 2002/03.

The Domestic abuse offence was first recorded in February 2022, it now accounts for 7 per cent of the Stalking and harassment classification.

Figure 2.7 shows the harassment and intimidation data series since 1998/99, the introduction of malicious communications to the data series and the impact of the recording and legislative changes since April 2017.

Figure 2.7 Harassment, Intimidation and Malicious Communications, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



2.2 Sexual offences

Sexual offences currently represent around four per cent of all crimes recorded. The level of sexual offences in 2023/24 is three and half times higher than the lowest level recorded in 2000/01.

The classification of sexual offences is split into rape and other sexual offences. Among the offences included within other sexual offences are sexual assault, sexual activity, sexual grooming, exposure and voyeurism. Figure 2.8 shows the increases seen for rape, sexual assault and sexual activity offences, particularly over the last ten years.

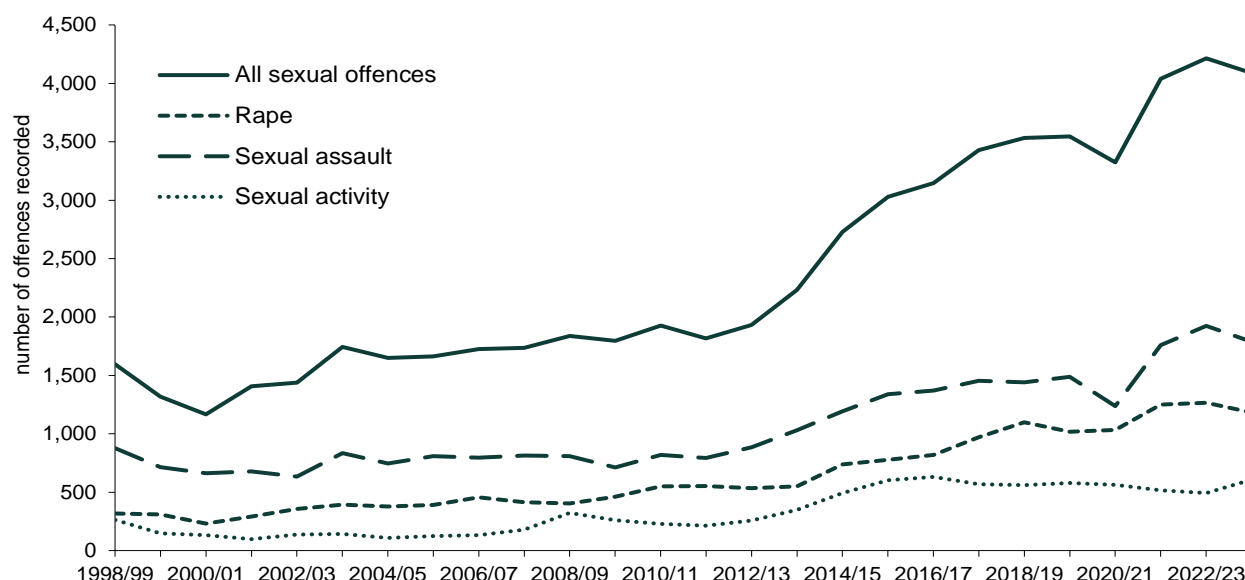
The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 was introduced in February 2009 and has altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences. While this has had an impact on the provision of comparable data series for sexual offences, the new legislation has brought the recording of sexual offences in Northern Ireland more into line with the legislation and recording of these offences in England and Wales.

Under the Home Office Counting Rules, offences which were reported to the police between February 2009 (implementation date of the new legislation) 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 the previous legislation should be recorded and detected as if committed today. Interpretation of the sexual offence data series should be considered in the context of these changes.

Many of the classification included within Other Sexual Offence ceased to apply with the introduction of the new sexual offence legislation.

¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Figure 2.8 Sexual offences, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



2.2.1 Rape offences

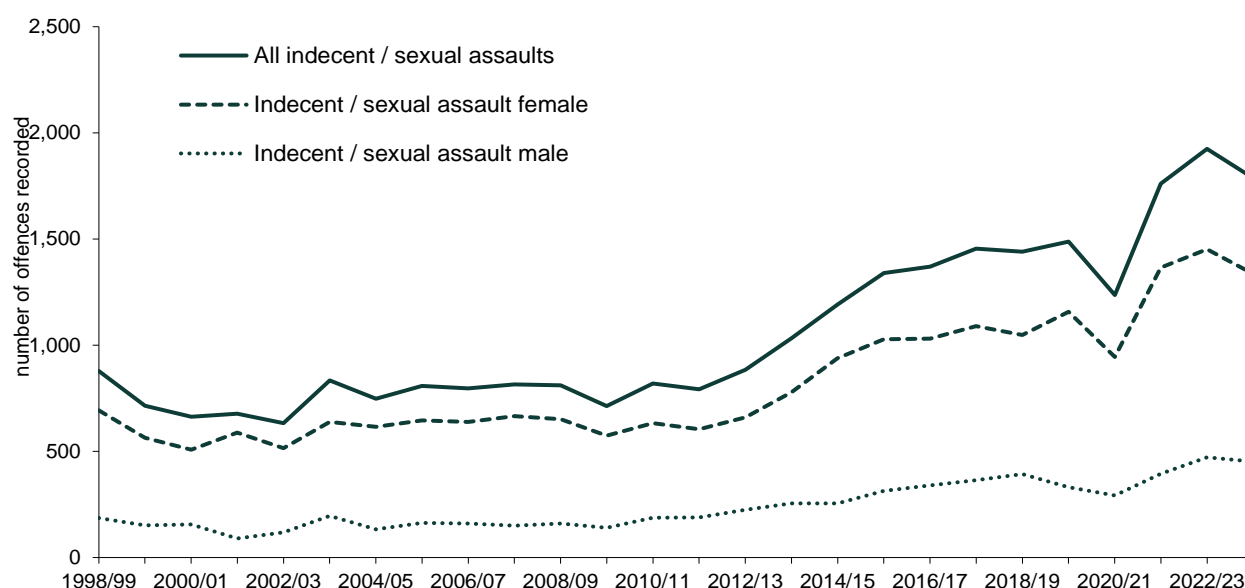
The number of rape offences has shown an increasing trend since 2000/01 with 2022/23 recording the highest level in the data series, more than five times that recorded in 2000/01. The largest single increase occurred between 2020/21 and 2021/22. Further background information on recording rape offences is provided below.

In Northern Ireland, prior 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, in other words rape could be committed against a male.

The increase in the number of rape offences recorded during 2014/15 may in part be due to clarification received from the Home Office in relation to the issue of consent. This is an area that has been the subject of considerable debate from a crime recording perspective. [Crown Prosecution Service guidance](#) on the subject was issued to police forces which assisted with the application of the rules for recording rape offences set out by the Home Office.

2.2.2 Sexual assault

Figure 2.9 Female and male victims of sexual assault, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



Sexual assault offences have shown a sustained increase since 2012/13 (884 offences recorded), with the exception of falls of 14 in 2018/19, 252 in 2020/21 and 137 in 2023/24. The highest level of 1,924 was recorded in 2022/23, more than twice the level recorded in 2012/13.

¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

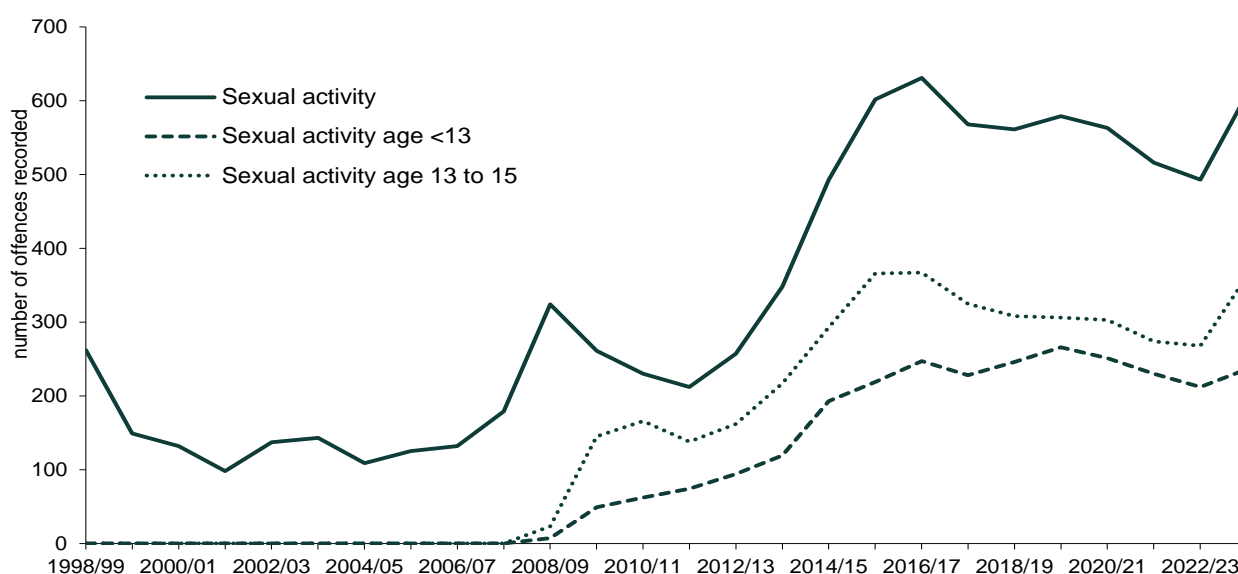
2.2.3 Sexual activity

A range of offences, including unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 14 or under 17, were in place prior to the introduction of The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 in February 2009. The offences now in place are sexual activity involving a child under 13 or under 16 and causing sexual activity without consent. Classification 70 Sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder has also been included in this larger category.

‘Sexting’ is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video on their mobile phone, computer or tablet; it can include ‘sexual chat’ and requests for pictures or images of a sexual nature.

There have been sharp increases in levels of sexual activity since 2012/13 (257 offences recorded), reaching a peak in 2016/17 (631 offences) before levels showed a general decline to 493 offences in 2022/23. A sharp increase has again been seen in 2023/24 (608 offences), the second highest level seen since the start of the data series. Some of the increases in sexual activity offences may be influenced by ‘sexting’. Figure 2.10 shows offences of sexual activity since 1998/99 and sexual activity under 13 and under 16 since 2009/10 (the first full year in which the legislation was in place). Section 4 provides information on online crime, including figures on both sexual offences and sexual activity with an online motivation. Section 7.3.2 provides information on sexual offences where the victim was under 18 at the time the offence was committed.

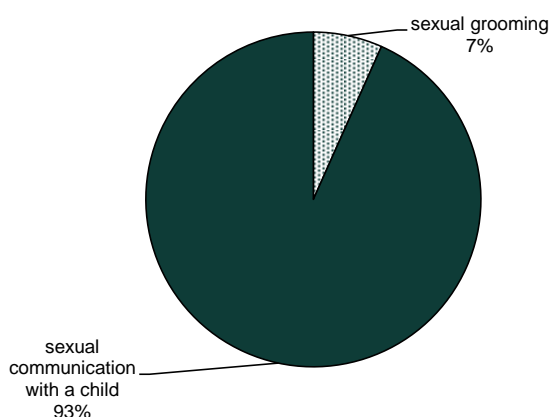
Figure 2.10 Sexual Activity offences, including victim age, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



2.2.4 Sexual grooming

Sexual grooming and sexual communication with a child: The first sexual grooming offences were recorded in 2004/05 and the offence of sexual communication with a child was introduced in 2015/16. While the overall classification increased by 152 offences from 34 in 2016/17 to 187 in 2017/18, much of the increase was 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 did not continue to the same extent into 2018/19 and the number of sexual grooming offences reverted to levels seen prior to 2017/18. There were 13 offences of sexual grooming and 182 offences of sexual communication with a child recorded in 2023/24, accounting for 7 per cent and 93 per cent of offences recorded in this classification respectively.

Figure 2.11 Profile of Sexual Grooming offences, 2023/24



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

2.2.5 Length of time between offence taking place and report to police for rape and sexual assault / sexual activity

Crimes are recorded based on the date the crime was reported to the police, rather than the date on which the offence occurred. For the majority of crimes, the reported date and the occurrence date are the same. However sexual offences are the main crime type where there can be a large gap between the date the offence occurred and the date the offence was then reported to the police.

Table 2.1 in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#) provides an indication of the delay in reporting rape and sexual assault/sexual activity offences. These figures are dependent on the accuracy of the date on which the offence occurred and, in many cases, this will have been so long prior to reporting the offence that the exact date cannot be remembered and in these cases an approximate year may be the best information able to be provided.

While the majority of rape and sexual assault/sexual activity offences are reported to police within 12 months of the date the offence occurred, up to two out of every five offences of this nature recorded by police are reported more than 12 months after the offence occurred; up to 46 per cent of rape offences and up to 38 per cent of sexual assault/sexual activity offences (see Figure 2.12 and Figure 2.13).

The focus on cases of historical sexual abuse (for example through the media, the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse in Northern Ireland Between 1922 and 1995 and other inquiries) may have an impact on the number of non-recent sexual offences reported.

Figure 2.12 Number of rape offences reported by length of time to report, latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2023/24

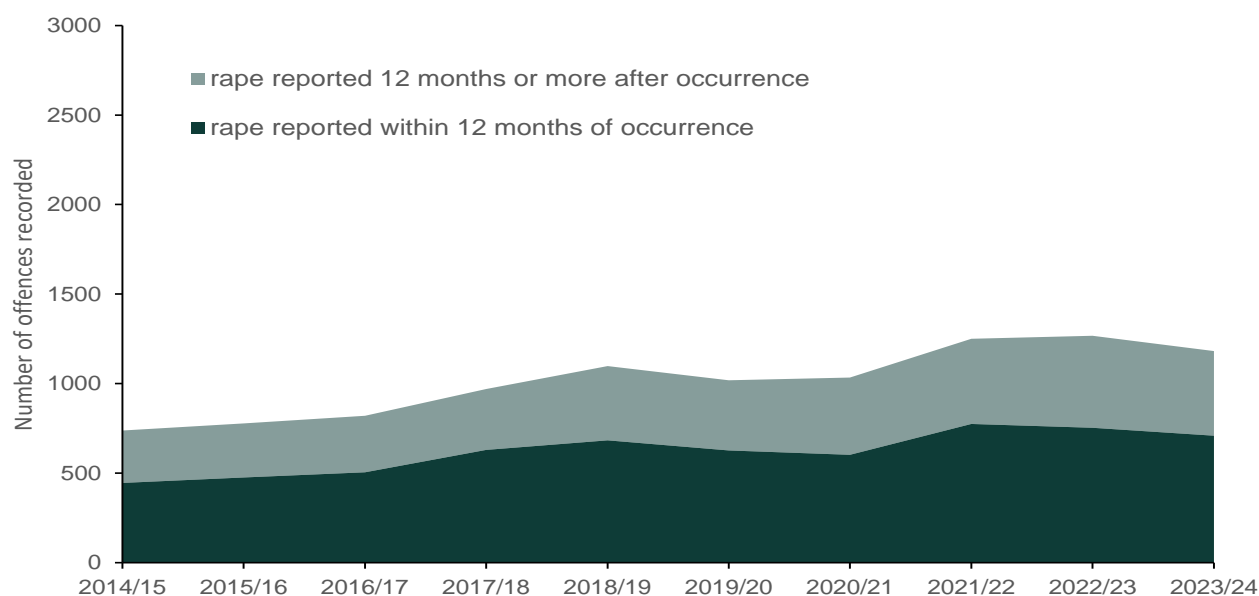
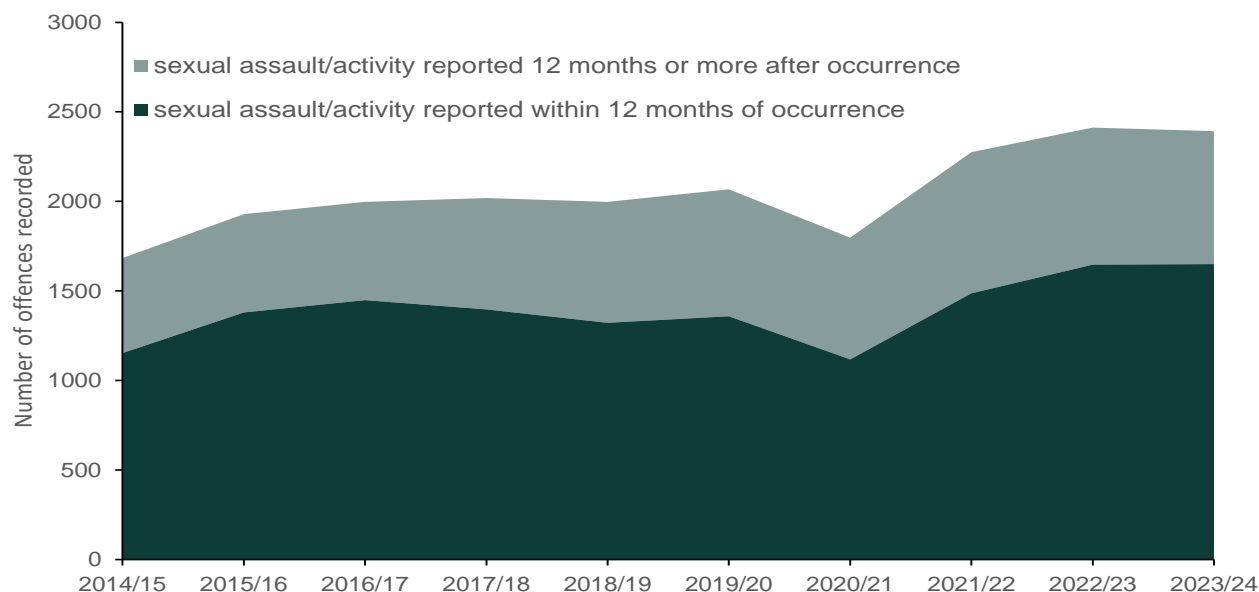


Figure 2.13 Number of sexual assault/sexual activity offences reported by length of time to report, latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2023/24



2.3 Robbery

Levels of robbery in 2023/24 are around one fifth of the level recorded in 2002/03 and are the fourth lowest recorded in the time series. At its highest level in 2002/03 robbery represented nearly two per cent of all crimes recorded; in 2023/24 this proportion is less than one per cent.

Robbery offences are split into those offences where the property stolen is business property and those where personal property is stolen. Robbery figures are also available according to whether the robbery was armed (i.e. involving a weapon of any type), those where a weapon was not involved and those robberies where a vehicle was hijacked.

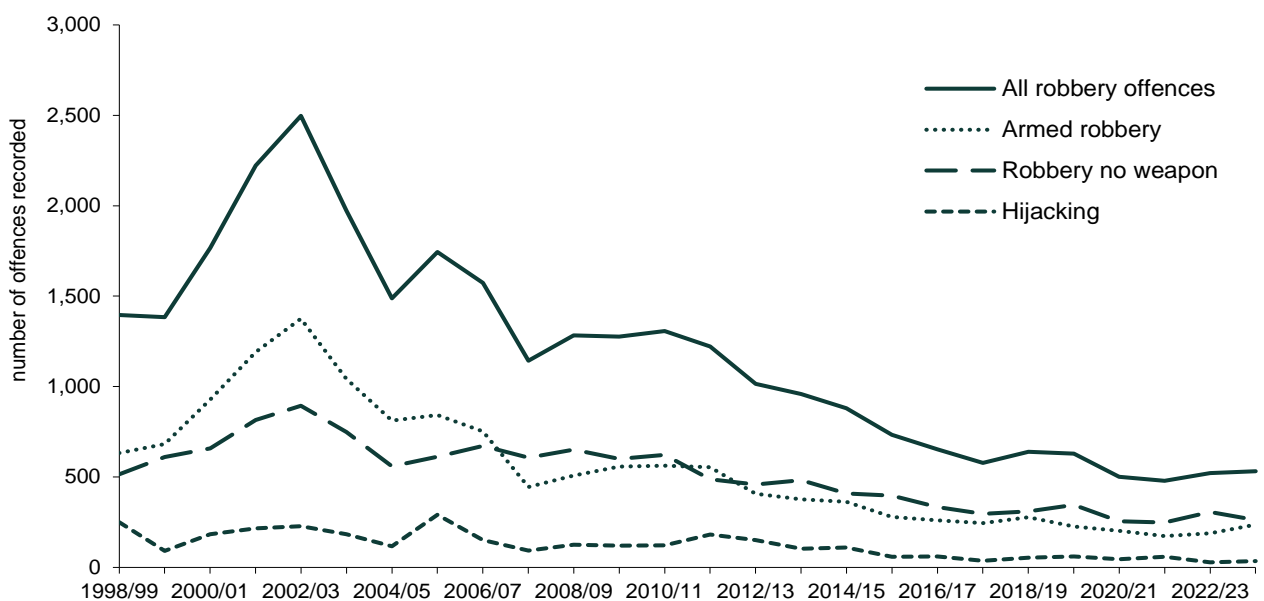
The profile of robbery in respect of personal and business property has changed over the course of the time series. In 1998/99 robbery was evenly split between robbery of personal and business property; in 2023/24 86 per cent of robberies are of personal property.

The change in profile has been less marked in relation to armed robbery, robbery with no weapon involved and hijacking. In 1998/99, 45 per cent of all robberies were armed, 37 per cent had no weapon involved and 18 per cent were hijackings. In 2023/24 these percentages were 44, 49 and 7 respectively.

Figure 2.14 Robbery of business and personal property, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



Figure 2.15 Armed robbery, robbery with no weapon involved and hijacking, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

2.4 Burglary

Changes to Home Office Counting Rules for Burglary: From 1 April 2017 the classifications within burglary have been changed from *domestic burglary* and *non-domestic burglary* to *burglary-residential* and *burglary-business & community*. This reflects a revised approach within the Home Office Counting Rules.

What constitutes a burglary does not change; however burglary-residential and burglary-business & community represent a new data series. For example sheds, garages, outhouses etc within the boundary of a dwelling are recorded under burglary-residential, while previously they may have been recorded as non-domestic burglary. Where such a building is used solely for business purposes, it will be recorded as burglary-business & community. The individual series for domestic burglary and burglary-residential cannot be combined together to create a continuous time series.

Burglary levels have shown an overall decline since 2002/03. In 2023/24 they are around one fifth of the level recorded in 2002/03 and are the lowest recorded in the time series. At its highest level burglary represented 13 per cent of all crimes recorded; in 2023/24 this proportion has fallen to three per cent.

Since the change in classification in April 17 as described above, up to four in five burglaries have been classified as Residential.

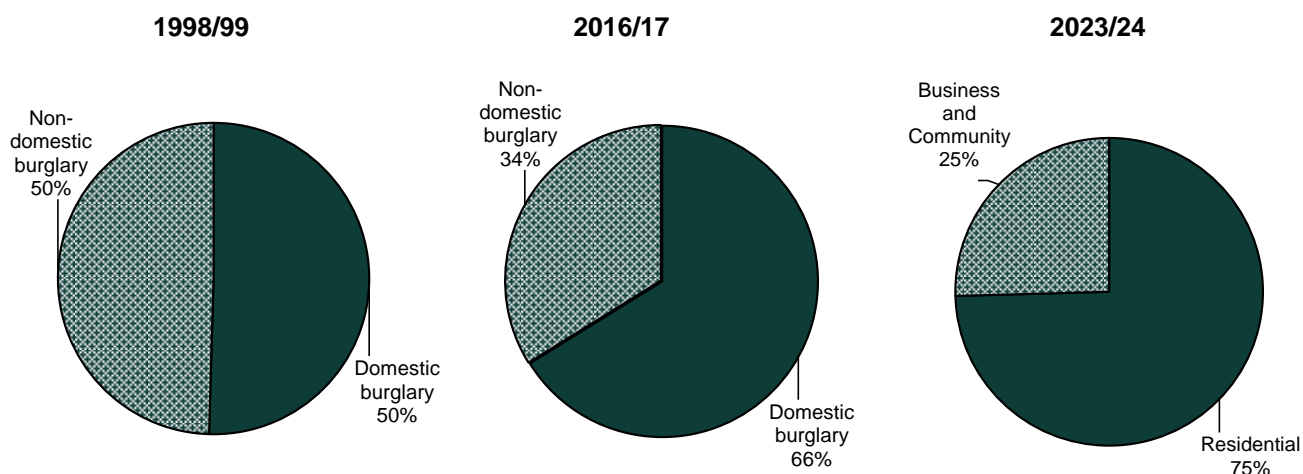
Prior to this classification change Domestic burglary accounted for around half of all burglaries in 1998/99 increasing to two thirds of burglary offences in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Figure 2.16 presents the changing burglary levels throughout the time series, while Figure 2.17 compares the profile at the start of the data series with 2016/17 (the latest comparable year) and the latest figures for 2023/24 under the revised approach.

Figure 2.16 Burglary, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



Figure 2.17 Profile of burglary offences, 1998/99 compared with 2016/17 and 2023/24



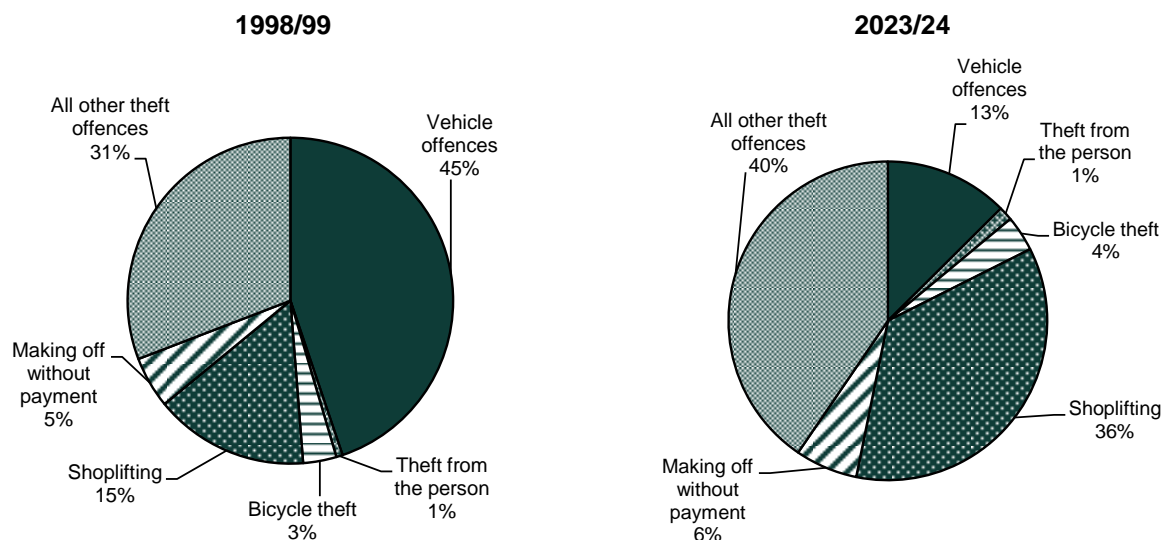
¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

2.5 Theft offences (excluding burglary)

Theft offences have shown an overall declining trend since 2001/02 and 2002/03. The highest level, which was recorded in 2001/02, is twice that seen in 2023/24. At their highest level, theft offences represented nearly one third of all crimes recorded. In 2023/24 this proportion has fallen to one in five crimes recorded.

The profile of classifications within theft has changed quite markedly since the start of the data series, most notably in respect of vehicle crime (45% of theft offences in 1998/99 compared with 13% in 2023/24) and shoplifting (15% in 1998/99 and 36% in 2023/24) as shown in Figure 2.18. Some factors affecting the theft data series are outlined below.

Figure 2.18 Profile of theft offences, 1998/99 compared with 2023/24



The introduction of the ICIS crime recording system in April 2001 improved capture of low level crime. This may have contributed to increases seen between 2000/01 and 2001/02, for example within theft from the person.

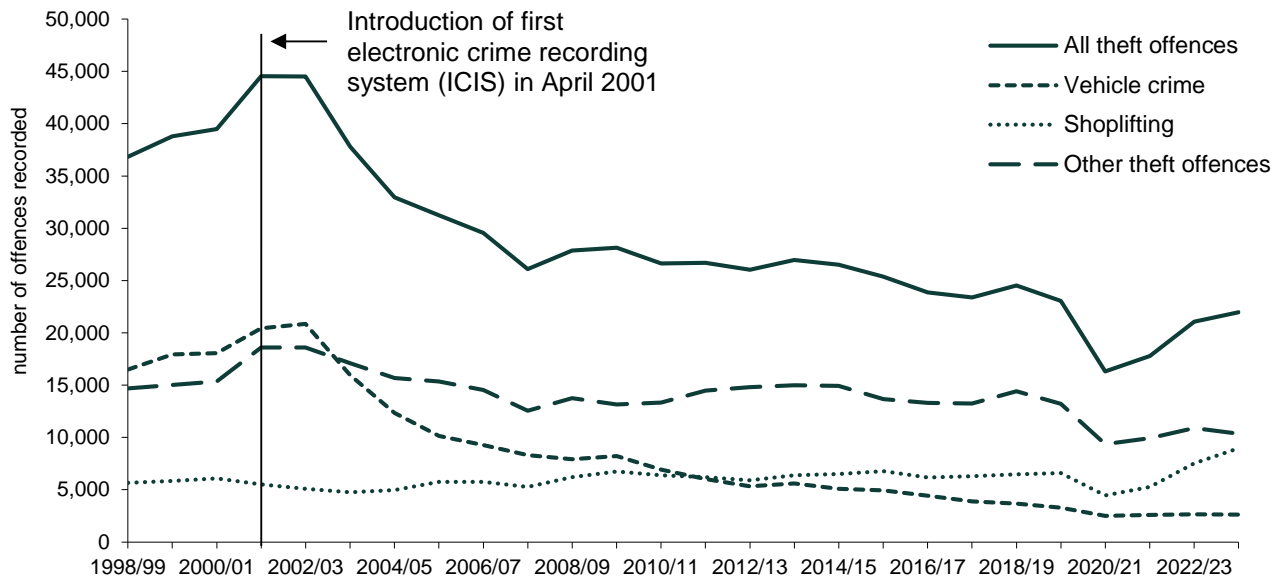
Offences against vehicles: From 1 April 2002, a clarification to the Home Office Counting Rules meant that most attempted thefts/unauthorised taking of motor vehicles previously recorded in theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle were to be recorded as vehicle interference. This resulted in a decrease in the number of offences of theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle between 2001/02 and 2002/03, with a corresponding increase in offences of interfering with a motor vehicle.

Making off without payment: The change in classifications implemented from April 2013 saw these offences move into the all other theft offences classification. The introduction of schemes such as Forecourt Watch may have had an impact on the number of offences of this nature recorded during the data series. A change in the Home Office Counting Rules, introduced in April 2014, made it more difficult for crimes of making off without payment to meet the criteria required allowing offences to be cancelled or removed from the crime figures. This may have contributed to a rise in making off without payment in 2014/15.

During 2017/18 PSNI introduced a pilot scheme covering two policing districts, in which 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. Each MOWP report is still recorded as a crime by police who will identify if there are any aggravating factors (eg false registration plate). If none exist there is no additional requirement for police intervention. However the strict crime cancellation criteria contained in the Home Office Counting Rules means that it is not possible to cancel such reports, thus leading to an increase in the number of these offences remaining recorded.

Figure 2.19 shows the main trends within theft offences since 1998/99. Restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic were introduced in March 2020 and had an impact on all theft classifications which showed lower levels in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20. Vehicle crime showed its largest fall since 2010/11, theft from the person showed its largest fall since 2005/06 and bicycle theft showed its largest fall since 2015/16. Both shoplifting and 'all other theft' offences showed their largest falls and recorded their lowest levels since the start of the data series in 1998/99. While levels have increased in 2023/24 they are, with the exception of shoplifting, still below the levels seen in 2019/20. Shoplifting recorded the highest level in the data series in 2023/24 (8,979), nearly twice the lowest level of 4,743 seen in 2003/04.

Figure 2.19 Theft offences, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



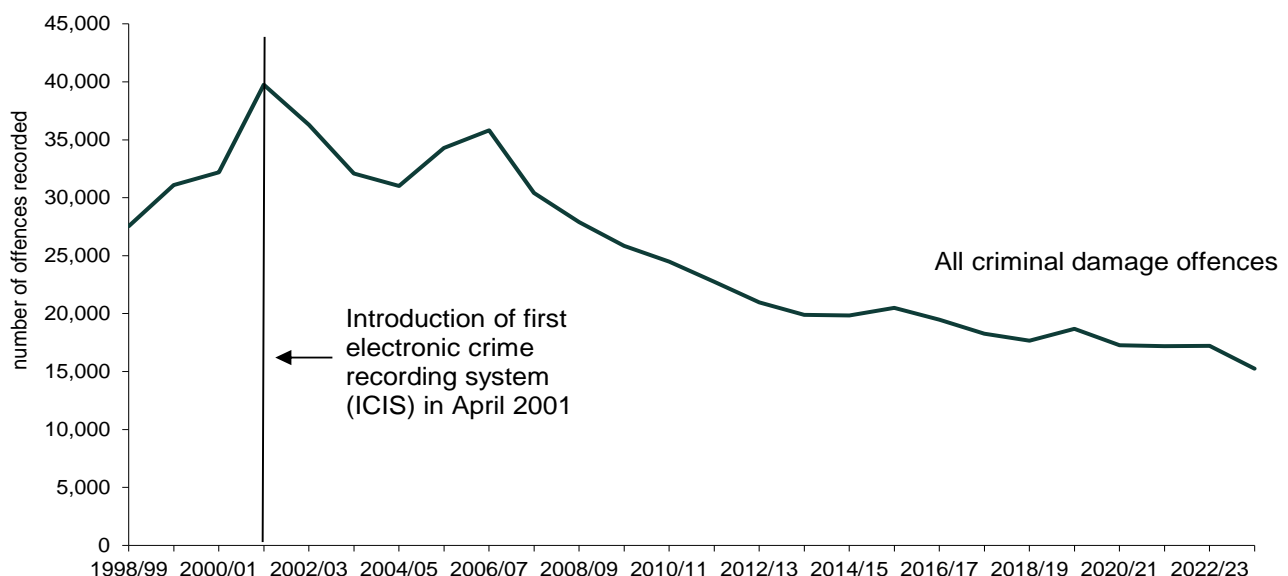
Blackmail: Prior to 2015/16 levels ranged between 14 in 2000/01 and 77 in 2014/15. Following a sharp rise to 223 in 2015/16, levels have continued to move in an upwards direction to reach a peak of 1,099 offences in 2023/24, nearly five times the level in 2015/16. These recent increases may be linked to online crime. In 2014/15 a quarter of the blackmail offences were flagged as having an online element. This rose to around half of all blackmail offences in 2015/16 and 2017/18, approximately two thirds in 2016/17, 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, more than three quarters in 2021/22 and nearly nine in ten in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Further details are available in Section 4 Online Crime.

2.6 Criminal damage offences

The latest overall criminal damage figure is the lowest recorded in the data series and is less than half of the peak recorded in 2001/02. At its highest level criminal damage represented nearly thirty per cent of all crimes recorded. In 2023/24 this proportion has fallen to 15 per cent. Criminal damage – residential, criminal damage to a vehicle and arson recorded their lowest levels in 2023/24. Criminal damage to a building – business and community recorded the lowest levels in 2018/19.

The introduction of the ICIS crime recording system in April 2001 improved capture of low level crime. This may have contributed to the largest single increase in criminal damage offences seen between 2000/01 and 2001/02. Offences of arson not endangering life account for nearly ninety per cent of all arson offences recorded. Prior to the introduction of ICIS in 2001/02, there were very few offences of arson endangering life recorded. This may have been affected by the process of classifying offences which then improved with the ICIS crime recording system.

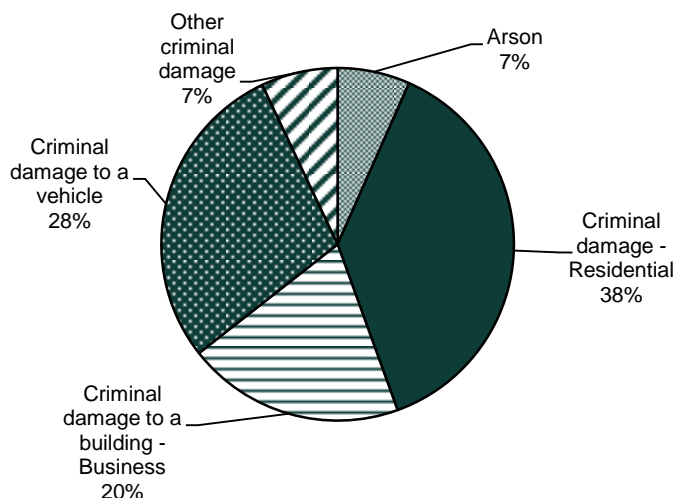
Figure 2.20 Criminal damage offences, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

The profile of classifications within criminal damage has remained relatively similar throughout the data series. Figure 2.21 shows the current breakdown of criminal damage classifications, with criminal damage - residential representing 38% and criminal damage to a vehicle representing 28% of all criminal damage offences.

Figure 2.21 Criminal damage by type of damage, 2023/24



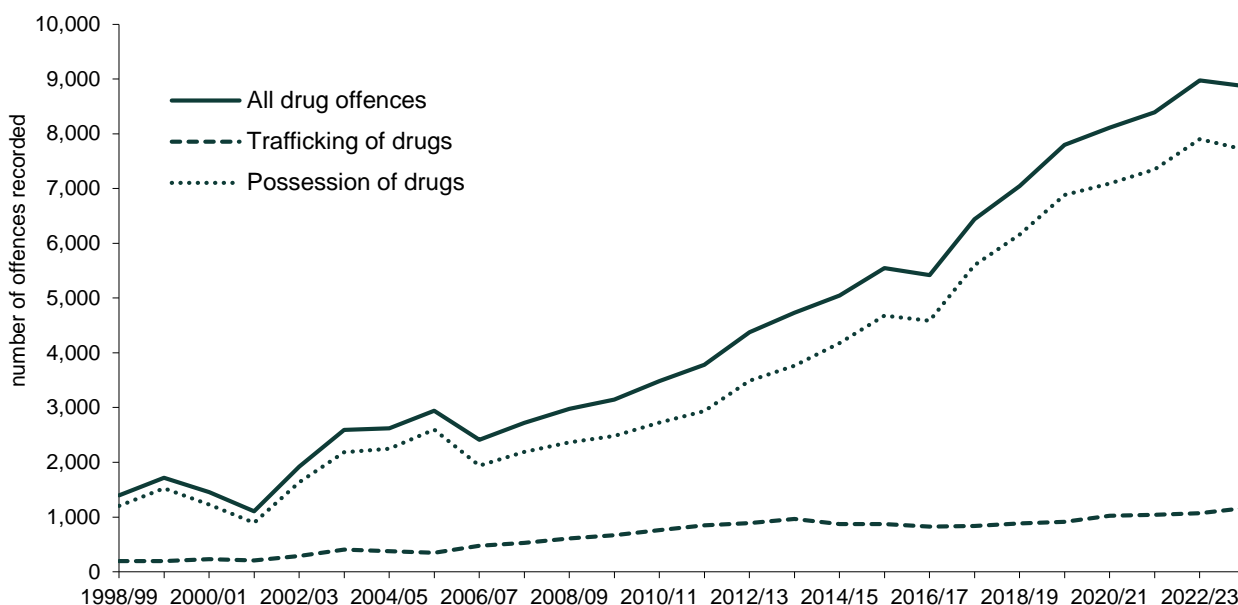
2.7 Drug offences

The number of drug offences recorded during 2022/23 (8,974) is the highest to date. While the level has fallen by 102 offences to 8,872 in 2023/24, this latest figure remains more than eight times higher than the lowest level recorded in 2001/02. Drug offences currently represent around three fifths of Other Crimes Against Society and around nine per cent of all crimes recorded.

The recording of drug offences by police is particularly dependent on police activities and priorities (see Section 2.1 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#)).

Cannabis was reclassified from a Class B to a Class C drug in January 2004 and was subsequently reclassified back to a Class B drug in January 2009. From 2004/05 additional information on drug type was collated enabling drug possession offences to be split into possession of cannabis and possession of other controlled drugs.

Figure 2.22 Trafficking of drugs and possession of drug offences, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹

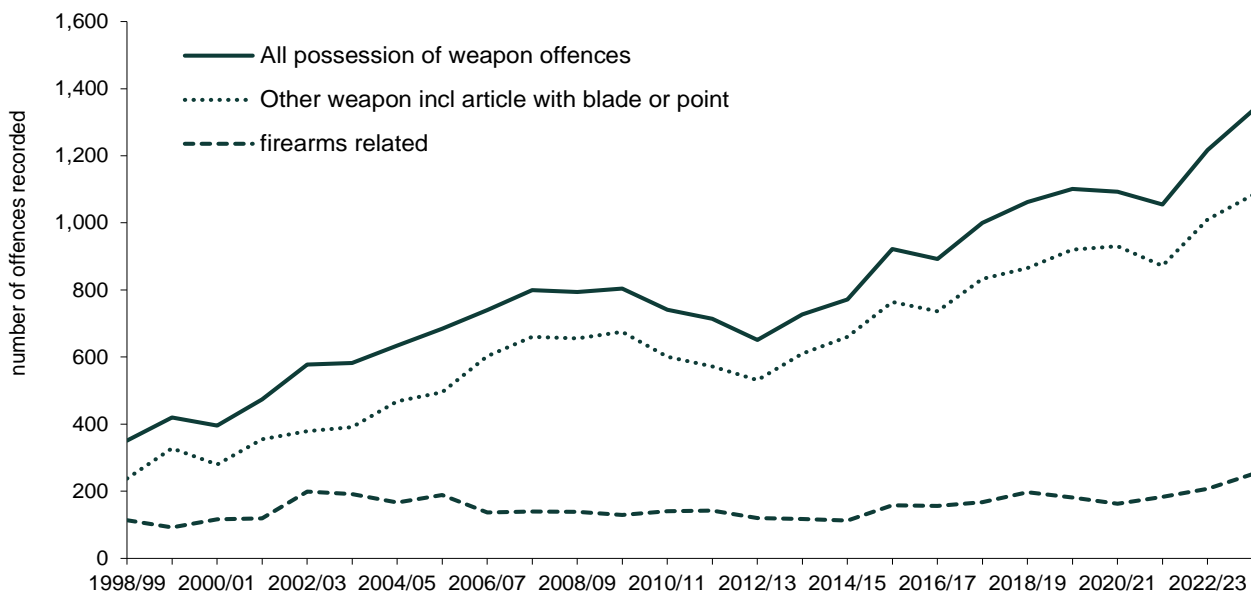


¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

2.8 Possession of weapons offences

Since 1998/99 these offences have represented between seven per cent and eleven per cent of Other Crimes Against Society and up to one per cent of all crimes recorded. The number of firearms offences of possession and possession with intent has remained fairly consistent throughout the data series, with all years prior to 2022/23 recording fewer than 200 offences. The remaining weapon possession offences, including articles with a blade or point, have shown a generally increasing trend with the level recorded in 2023/24 being the highest recorded to date and more than four times the lowest level recorded in 1998/99.

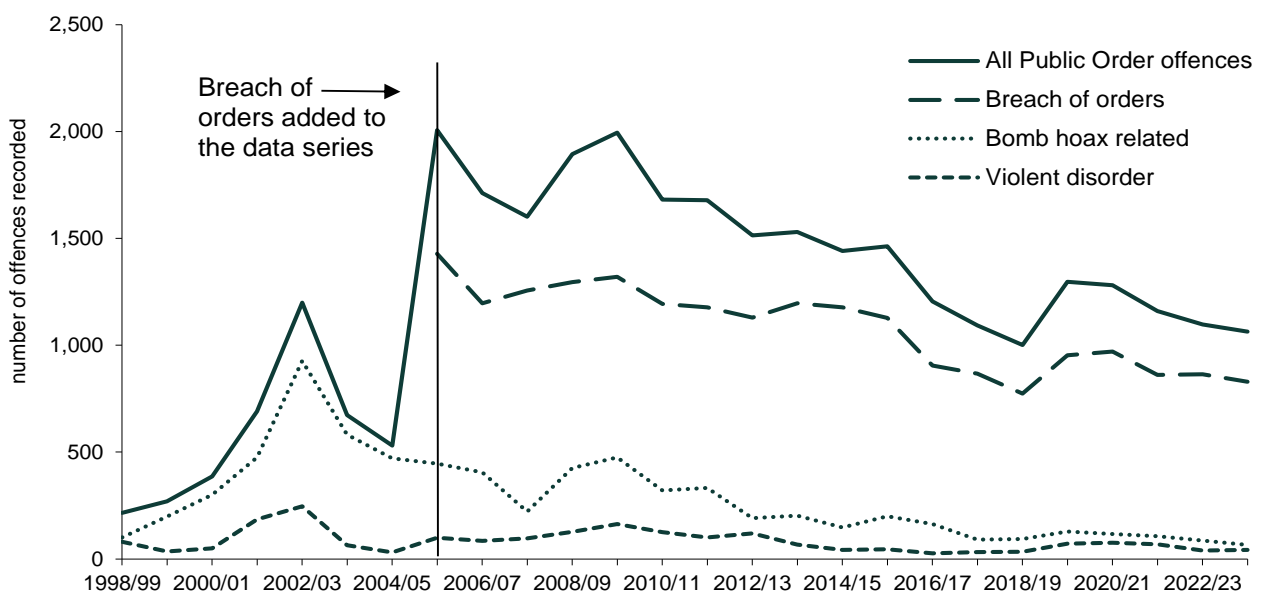
Figure 2.23 Possession of weapons offences, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



2.9 Public Order Offences

This classification contains offences such as violent disorder, breaches of orders, bomb hoax related offences and offences under anti-terrorist legislation. In 2005/06 offences relating to breaches of anti-social behaviour orders, non-molestation orders and sex offender orders were added to the data series, resulting in an additional 1,400 offences being recorded in that financial year. Breach of orders have since accounted for at least two thirds of all Public Order offences. Following the highest levels of public order offences recorded in 2005/06 (2,007 offences) and 2009/10 (1,995 offences), levels fell to 1,002 in 2018/19. Public Order offences accounted for nearly a quarter of Other Crimes Against Society in 2005/06 falling to seven per cent in 2022/23 and 2023/24; they represent up to two per cent of all crimes recorded.

Figure 2.24 Public Order offences, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

2.10 Miscellaneous crimes against society

There is a wide range of offence types included within this classification, such as dangerous driving, forgery offences, handling stolen goods, going equipped for stealing, threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage, perverting the course of justice and obscene publications/protected sexual material.

Since 2018/19 offences of threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage has been the largest classification within miscellaneous crimes against society, with 922 offences recorded in 2023/24.

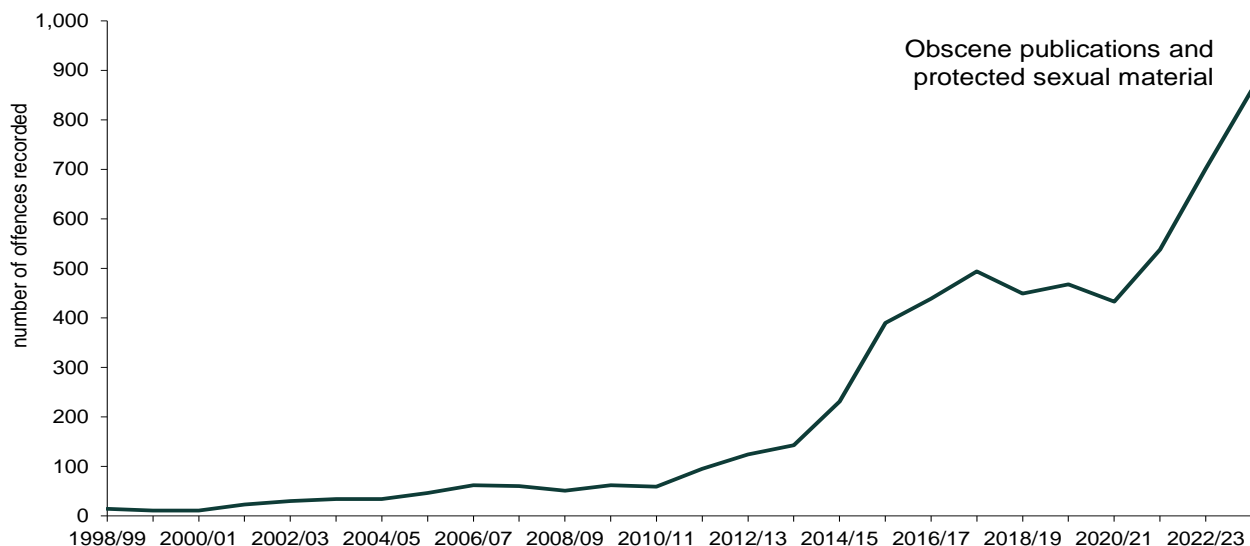
Dangerous driving: This is currently the third largest classification within miscellaneous crimes against society, with the highest level of 865 recorded in 2009/10 and 571 offences recorded in 2023/24. Although the general rule for recording a crime is to do so on report of the crime [on the balance of probability that a crime has occurred], dangerous driving offences are only recorded when investigation confirms that the offence is made out. Improved processes for capturing police charges and recommendations made by the Public Prosecution Service may have contributed to the increases experienced prior to 2010/11. While offences of causing death or serious injury related to dangerous driving are classified to violence against the person, they have been included in Figure 2.25 to provide a more complete picture.

Figure 2.25 Dangerous driving and offences causing death or serious injury by unlawful driving, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



Obscene publications and protected sexual material: The increases seen in this classification, in particular between 2014/15 (231 offences) and the highest level recorded in 2023/24 (859 offences) are also evident in a rise in obscene publications offences flagged with an online crime motivation (further details available in Section 4 Online Crime). Increases seen from 2012/13 to 2016/17 may also be linked to the rise in offences of sexual activity through 'sexting' (further details available in Section 2.2 Sexual Offences, Section 4 Online Crime and Section 7.3 Victim under 18).

Figure 2.26 Obscene publications and protected sexual material, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

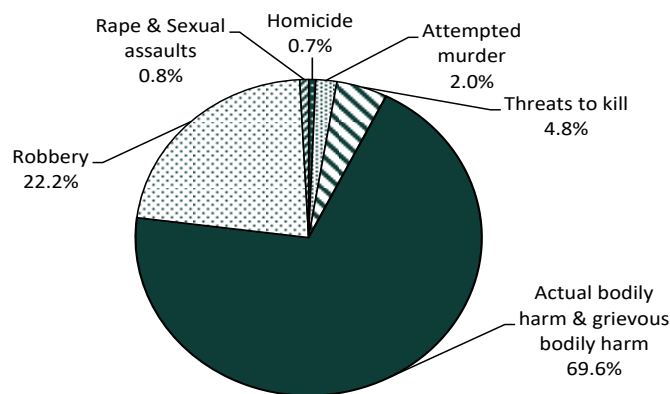
3. Knife and Sharp Instrument Crime

Since April 2007 the Home Office has collected additional data from police forces on offences involving knives and sharp instruments, where a sharp instrument is any object that pierces the skin (or in the case of a threat is capable of piercing the skin). Knives and sharp instruments are taken to be involved in an incident if they are used to stab or cut, or as a threat. Offence coverage is for the following selected offences; homicide, attempted murder, threats to kill, actual and grievous bodily harm, robbery, rape and sexual assaults. PSNI has compiled knife and sharp instrument data for each financial year since 2007/08 based on the definitions used by the Home Office. Figures have been revised to bring them into line with methodology changes in England and Wales, the main change made to the figures is the removal of 'broken bottle or glass' as a sharp instrument, see points to note on page 3 for further details.

The figures behind these charts in this section can be found in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The number of selected violent and sexual offences involving knives and sharp instruments has shown a general downwards trend since 2007/08 and represents between 3 and 4 per cent of those selected offences. The highest level of 845 offences was recorded in 2009/10, with the lowest level of 609 recorded in 2023/24.

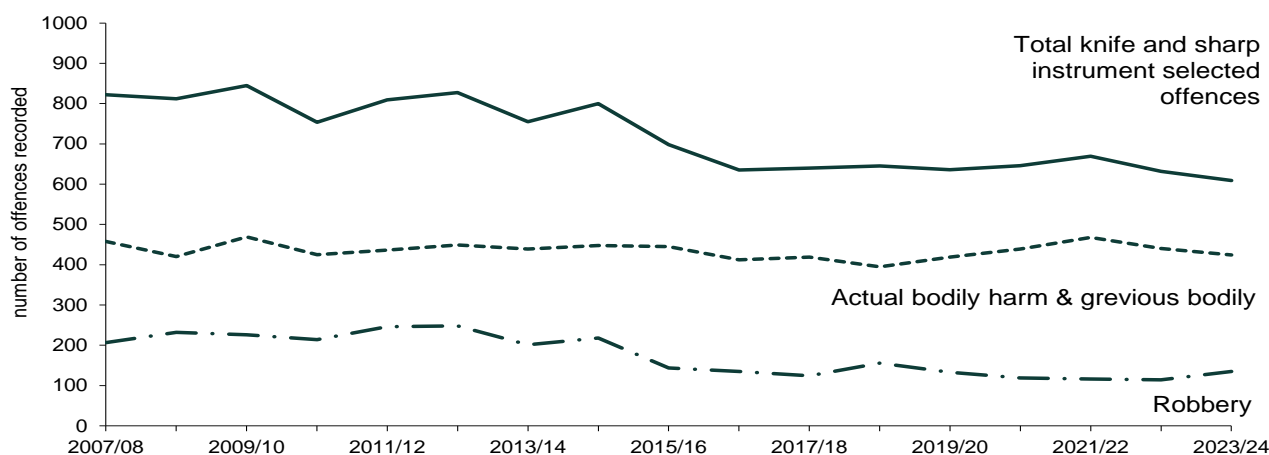
Figure 3.1 Profile of selected violent and sexual offences recorded by the police involving knives and sharp instruments by crime type in Northern Ireland, 2023/24



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

Homicide includes murder, manslaughter, infanticide and corporate manslaughter. **Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm** includes 5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm, 8N Assault with injury, 8S Assault with injury on a constable. **Rape & sexual assaults** includes indecent assault on a male/female (classifications 17/20) and sexual assault on a male/female (classifications 17A/17B/20A/20B), as well as 19A-19H Rape.

Figure 3.2 Selected violent and sexual offences recorded by the police involving knives or sharp instruments by crime type in Northern Ireland, 2007/08 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

4. Online Crime

Home Office Definition and guidance: Online crime (formerly cyber crime) is identified through the use of a 'flag' on the crime recording system.

Online flag definition: An offence should be flagged where any element of the offence was committed online or through internet-based activities (e.g. through email, social media, websites, messaging platforms, gaming platforms or smart devices).

Purpose: This flag is to help understand the volume and nature of offences committed online. It refers to any crime committed either in full, or in part, through use of online methods or platforms. The online crime flag helps provide a national and local picture of how internet and digital communications technology are being used to commit crimes, and an understanding of the prominence of certain crimes that are happening online, compared to offline. The flag will help us prioritise spending and direct appropriate resources to tackle online crimes, e.g. in terms of technology, training, digital forensics capacity, and staff. It also gives an insight into the scale and nature of online crime, and can help enhance the development of policies to tackle them and protect victims.

Coverage: The first complete financial year for which online crimes are available is 2014/15. As Action Fraud took over responsibility for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime previously recorded by PSNI from 1 April 2015, the figures provided here exclude Action Fraud.

Data quality: While crimes included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules, the identification of an online crime 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 an online motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch. As Online Crime has not been assessed as a National Statistic it is being presented here as an Official Statistic.

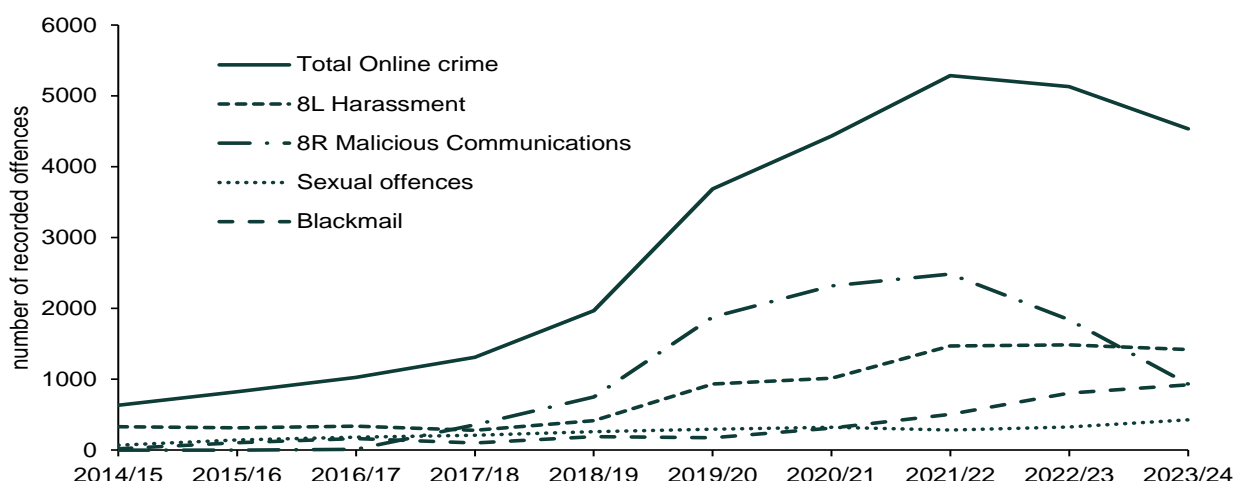
Tables 4.1 to 4.3 in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#) provide online crime figures from 2014/15.

Comparison of 2023/24 with the baseline year 2014/15: Online crime accounted for 0.6% of all crimes in 2014/15, rising to around 5 per cent in each year 2020/21 to 2022/23 and (4 per cent in 2023/24). In terms of population rates there was less than one online crime per 1,000 population in 2014/15 increasing to two per 1,000 population in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and three in 2021/22 and 2022/23. As the level of online crime has fallen in 2023/24, the rate has decreased again to two per 1,000 population.

Figure 4.1 shows the increase in the main crime types flagged as online, and the influence of introducing the recording of malicious communications offences during 2017/18 within the stalking and harassment classification. The change in the overall stalking and harassment classification, increasing from 332 in 2014/15 to 3,957 in 2021/22 before falling to 2,395 in 2023/24, should be considered in light of recording changes (see Points to Note on page 3). Between 2019/20 and 2021/22 online malicious communications accounted for around half of all online crime. In 2023/24 online malicious communications has fallen by almost half from the previous year, and now accounts for one in five online crimes.

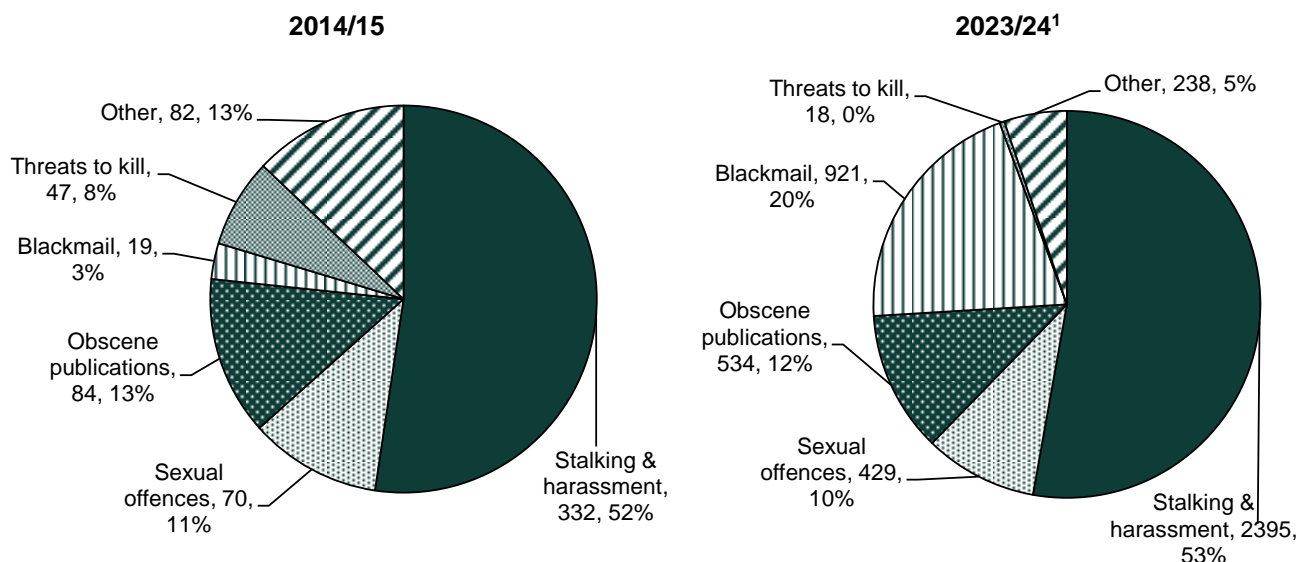
Figure 4.2 demonstrates the change in distribution of offence types between 2014/15 and 2023/24. The changing pattern is seen particularly in relation to blackmail which accounted for only three percent of online crime in 2014/15 and now represents one in five online crimes in 2023/24. Sexual offences, blackmail and obscene publications have shown increases between 2014/15 and 2023/24 of 359, 902 and 450 respectively.

Figure 4.1 Online crime, 2014/15 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Figure 4.2 Numbers and percentages of online crime by type of offence, 2014/15 and 2023/24



¹ The Stalking and harassment total in 2023/24 includes offences of malicious communications which were first recorded in 2017/18, controlling or coercive behaviour first recorded in 2021/22 and stalking which was first recorded in 2022/23.

4.1 Online Crime Victim Age and Gender Profile

In the paragraphs below, changes in online stalking and harassment as a proportion of all online crime should be considered in light of the stalking and harassment recording changes outlined in the Points to Note, page 3.

Victim age and gender were applicable or known in four out of five online crimes recorded in 2023/24. For the vast majority of records where age and gender information were unavailable, the offence is regarded as a 'state-based' offence (an offence generally recorded on the basis of one crime for each offender or group of offenders) and therefore victim age and gender are not applicable.

Victim Age: During 2023/24 and where victim age was available, 25 per cent were under 18 and 75 per cent were aged 18+.

Victim under 18: Between 2014/15 and 2018/19 victims aged under 18 were most likely to be victims of online sexual offences, with such offences accounting for between half and three quarters of all online crimes during this time period. Since 2019/20 victims aged under 18 have been most likely to be victims of online stalking and harassment, with these offences accounting for between two in five and three in five of all online crimes. In 2023/24 online stalking and harassment accounted for 39 per cent of all online crime, while sexual offences accounted for 38 per cent, compared with 52 per cent and 26 per cent respectively in 2022/23. The number of online blackmail offences where the victim was under 18 has increased from 3 in 2014/15 to 227 in 2022/23 and 213 in 2023/24.

Victim aged 18+: Those aged 18+ are most likely to be victims of online stalking and harassment, accounting for between 58 per cent and 91 per cent of all online crime. Online blackmail accounts for between 4 per cent and 26 per cent of all online crime where the victim is aged 18+. In 2023/24 there were 1,993 online stalking and harassment offences (70 per cent of all online crime and a decrease on the 2,817 recorded in 2022/23), with 703 online blackmail offences (25 per cent of all online crime and an increase on the 591 recorded in 2022/23).

Victim Gender: Where victim gender was available, females represented 49 per cent of online crime victims in 2023/24 (down from 56 per cent in 2022/23) while male victims represented 51 per cent in 2023/24 (up from 44 per cent in 2022/23).

Female victims: Females are most likely to be victims of online stalking and harassment, accounting for between 54 per cent and 88 per cent of all online crime (80 per cent in 2023/24). Online sexual offences with a female victim represent between 7 per cent and 32 per cent of all online crime (12 per cent in 2023/24).

Male victims: Males are also most likely to be victims of online stalking and harassment, accounting for between 30 per cent and 82 per cent of all online crime. Online blackmail offences with a male victim represent between 9 per cent and 44 per cent of all online crime. In 2023/24 online stalking and harassment with a male victim accounted for 45 per cent of all online crime, while online blackmail with a male victim accounted for 44 per cent (compared with 57 per cent and 36 per cent respectively in 2022/23).

5. Alcohol Crime

Home Office Definition and guidance: Alcohol crime is identified through the use of a 'flag' on the crime recording system.

Alcohol-related crime definition: The alcohol flag should be applied where it is perceived by the victim or any other person that the effects of alcohol consumption on the offender or victim was an aggravating factor.

Purpose: The aim is to provide the number of crimes directly attributable to alcohol to assist in assessing the impact of alcohol on crime and policing, improve transparency and provide improved information on the scale of the problem.

Coverage: During 2012/13 a baseline was established for those crimes where alcohol was a contributory factor.

Data quality: While crimes included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules, the identification of an alcohol crime 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 an alcohol 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. As Alcohol Crime has not been assessed as a National Statistic it is being presented here as an Official Statistic.

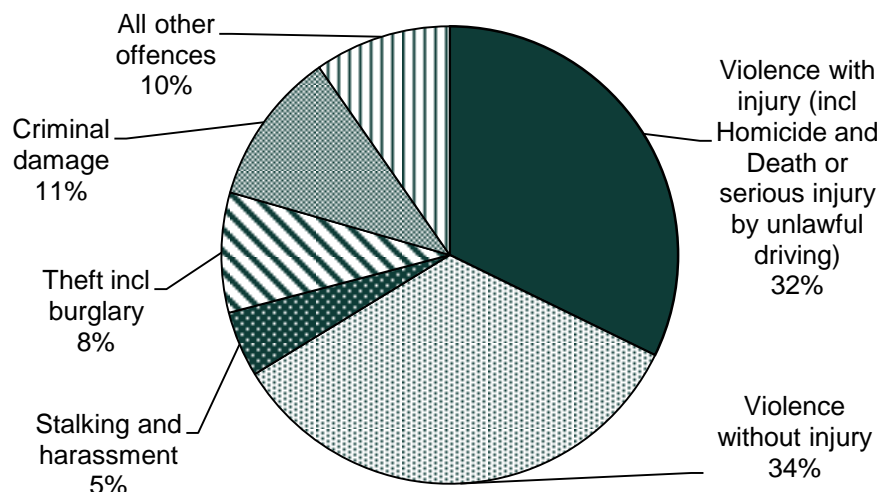
Tables 5.1 and 5.2 in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#) provide alcohol-related crime figures from 2012/13.

Trends in alcohol-related crime: Since the start of the data series, around one in five crimes recorded by the police have been flagged with an alcohol motivation, ranging from 17,277 such offences in 2020/21 to 23,905 offences in 2022/23. The crime types where the highest levels and proportions of alcohol motivation have been identified are those within violence against the person (47.1% of all violence against the person offences in 2012/13 falling to a low of 30.1% in 2020/21). Sexual offences with an alcohol motivation represented 20.2% of all sexual offences in 2012/13, generally falling to 14.3% in 2020/21, although this has since increased with a proportion of 17.6% recorded in 2023/24. Possession of weapons offences with an alcohol motivation represent around a quarter of all possession of weapons offences.

The proportion of violence against the person offences with an alcohol motivation was at its highest in 2012/13 and has since fallen in most years. For violence with injury (including homicide and death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving) the proportion has fallen from 57.5% in 2013/14 to 44.7% in 2020/21 (48.3% in 2023/24); levels have also fallen in most years from 8,453 in 2012/13 to 5,254 in 2020/21 (7,066 in 2023/24).

The levels in respect of violence without injury saw a general fluctuation in levels up to 2020/21 ranging from 5,718 in 2012/13 to 6,632 in 2018/19. The level increased to 8,266 in 2022/23, with 7,470 recorded in 2023/24. The proportion has generally fluctuated, recording 42.5% in 2012/13 and 35.5% in 2020/21. The proportion in 2023/24 is 39.0%.

Figure 5.1 Alcohol-motivated crime by type of crime 2023/24



6. Fraud

From 1 April 2015 Action Fraud became responsible for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1 April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and cyber crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. While this means that these fraud and cyber offences are no longer recorded by PSNI, Action Fraud figures relating to fraud and cyber crime occurring in Northern Ireland are provided to PSNI on a monthly basis.

Offences previously recorded within the fraud and forgery classification and which continue to be recorded by all police forces are:

Making off without payment – now included in the 'all other theft' classification;

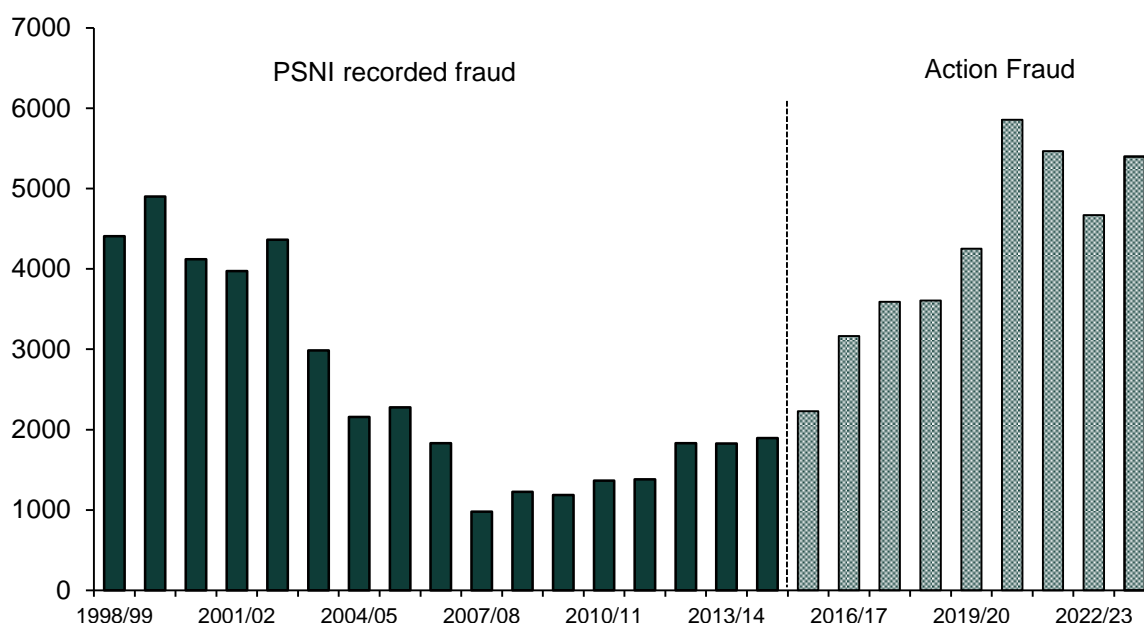
Possession of items for use in fraud, other forgery, possession of false documents and fraud/forgery etc associated with vehicle or driver records – now included in miscellaneous crimes against society.

Within the police recorded crime data series (1998/99 to 2014/15), the recording of fraud and forgery offences was impacted by a change to offences of fraud by false representation, where counting changed from a 'per fraudulent transaction' to a 'per account basis' from January 2007. There were also some new offences introduced under the Fraud Act 2006 which came into force in January 2007. However it is known that incidents of fraud were under-reported to the police and this should be considered when interpreting this data series.

Table 6.1 in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#) shows the data series for the 'other fraud' classification as recorded by PSNI and Action Fraud, with further details on frauds recorded by Action Fraud during 2023/24 available in table 6.2.

There were 1,896 fraud offences recorded by PSNI in 2014/15. Since Action Fraud became responsible for recording fraud offences in 2015/16, levels have generally increased from 2,230 to 5,856 recorded in 2020/21, the level in 2023/24 is 5,400.

Figure 6.1 Fraud recorded by PSNI and Action Fraud¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

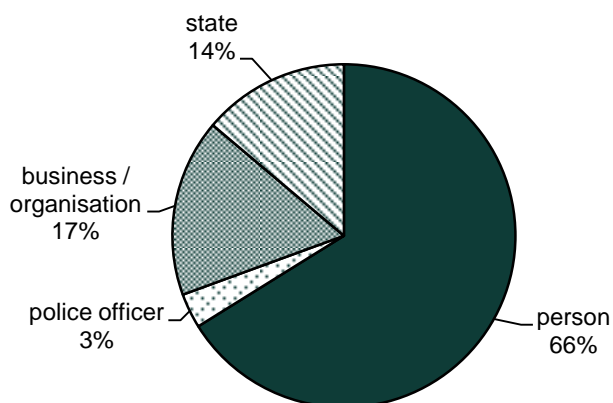
7. Victims of Crime

The Home Office has identified offences as being victim-based, state-based or victim and state-based. State-based offences are those for which no member of the public or business/organisation is a victim. For victim-based offences, the victim can be a member of the public (referred to here as person victim), a police officer who was the victim of a crime in the course of carrying out their duty, or a business or organisation.

The detailed figures behind the charts and referenced in the commentary in this section can be found in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#) Tables 7.1 to 7.6. A detailed breakdown of victim age and gender is also available through age and gender pivot tables in this spreadsheet which allow manipulation of data by age band, gender, crime type and financial year.

The introduction of the NICHE system in 2007/08 has enabled a breakdown of crime by the type of victim to be provided from this date. Each of the financial years since 2007/08 shows a similar picture, with Figure 7.1 showing the breakdown for 2023/24 (66% person victim, 3% police officer, 17% business/organisation and 14% state-based).

Figure 7.1 Crimes recorded by type of victim, 2023/24



Details relating to the age of the victim at the time the offence was committed are also available dating back to 2007/08 for all relevant crime types and for person victims (police officer victims are not included in these figures).

7.1 Age profile 2023/24: age of victim

Thirteen percent of victims were persons aged under 18, 80 per cent were aged 18-64 and six per cent were aged 65 or over. Age information was unavailable for less than one per cent of all person victims. Figure 7.2 compares the age profile of crime victims to that of the Northern Ireland population for 2023/24.

Figure 7.2 Age profile of crime victims compared with Northern Ireland population profile, 2023/24

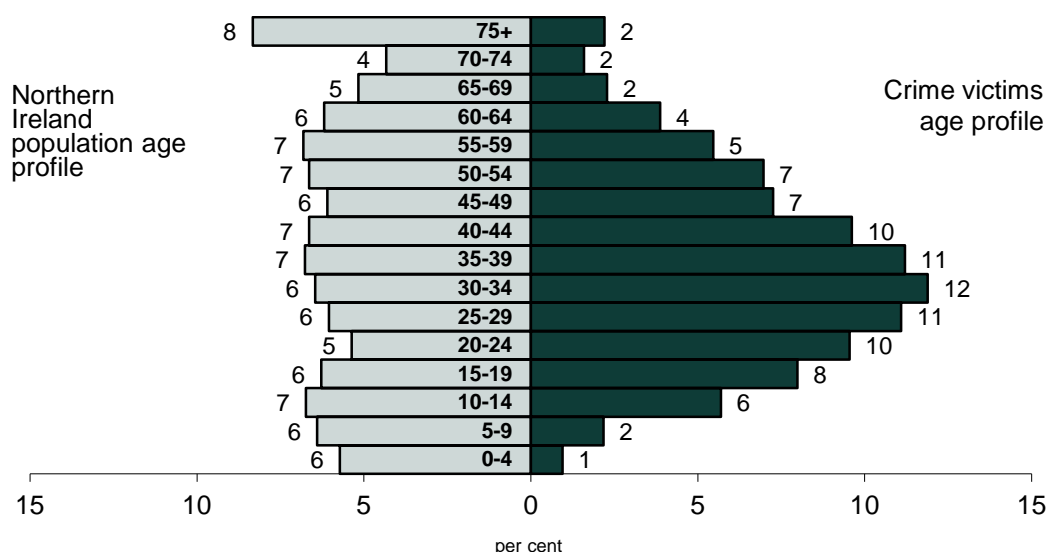


Figure 7.3 shows how the nature of crime changes across the three main age bands of under 18, 18 to 64 and 65 plus. In 2023/24, 93 per cent of those aged under 18 were victims of violence against the person and sexual

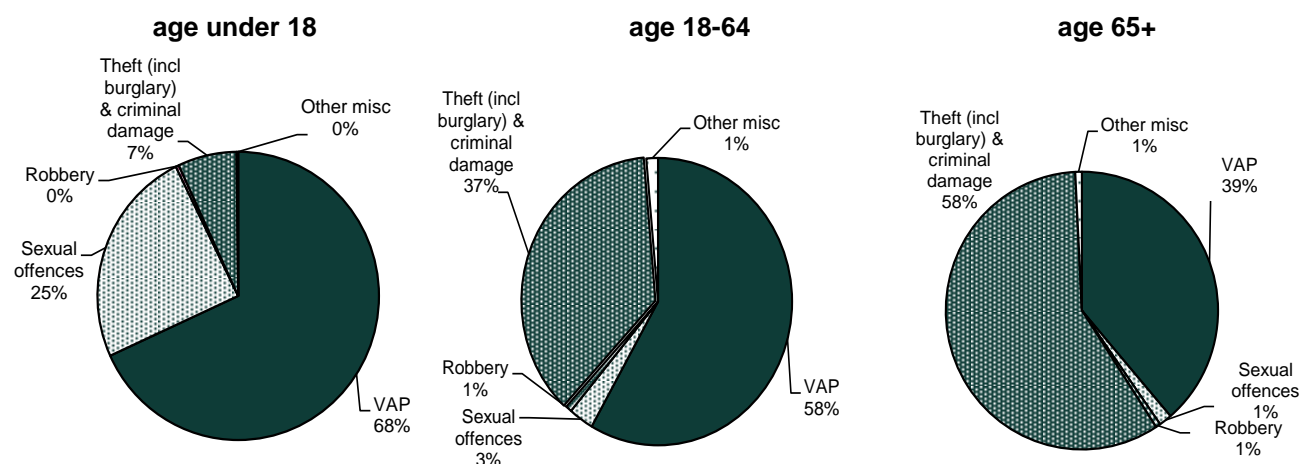
offences, compared with around three fifths of victims aged 18 to 64 and two fifths of victims aged 65 plus. In contrast, 7 per cent of those aged under 18 were victims of theft, burglary and criminal damage compared with more than a third of victims aged 18 to 64 and almost three fifths of victims aged 65 plus.

Crime rates victim aged under 18: There were 21 crime victims under 18 per 1,000 of the population under 18. The rate per 1,000 of the under 18 population for violence against the person was 14, while the rate for sexual offences was five.

Crime rates victim aged 18-64: There were 49 crime victims aged 18-64 per 1,000 of the population aged 18-64. The rate per 1,000 of the population aged 18-64 for theft (including burglary) and criminal damage was 18 and for violence against the person the rate was 28. The rate was one for sexual offences and less than one for robbery.

Crime rates victim aged 65+: There were 12 crime victims aged 65 or over per 1,000 of the population aged 65+. The rate per 1,000 of the 65+ population for theft (including burglary) and criminal damage was 7, while the rate for violence against the person offences was five.

Figure 7.3 Percentage of victims by age band in each main crime type, 2023/24

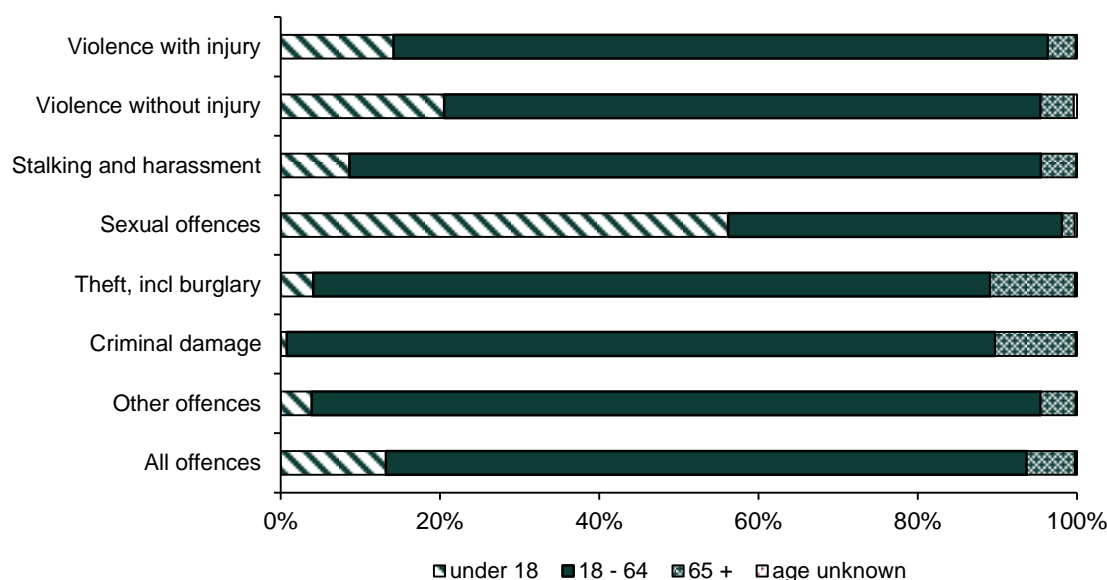


7.2 Age profile 2023/24: type of crime

Figure 7.4 presents the 2023/24 age profile for each of the main crime types. Section 7.3.1 provides further information on violence against the person offences where the victim was under 18 by age and gender.

The proportion of victims of sexual offences under the age of 18 at the time the offence was committed (56 per cent) stands out when compared with other main crime classifications, such as 15 per cent of victims aged under 18 for violence against the person. Section 7.3.2 provides some extra context around this figure, looking at age and gender details as well as at the age the victim was at the time they made the report to police.

Figure 7.4 Proportion of crime victims by age band for the main crime types¹, 2023/24



¹ Violence with injury includes homicide and Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving

7.3 Victim under 18

The majority of victims who were under 18 at the time the offence occurred were victims of violence against the person or a sexual offence. This section looks at the trends occurring within these classifications. [Tables 7.2 and 7.3]

Trends in the classification relating to obscene publications are also presented. These offences are recorded as state-based offences, meaning that victim age is not available. However the legislation for these offences can determine if the offence was committed against a person under the age of 18. [Table 7.4]

7.3.1 Violence against the person offences (victim under 18 at time offence was committed)

Figure 7.5 shows the trends within the main classifications, noting generally falling levels of assault with injury (with the exception of more recent increases in 2021/22 and 2022/23), higher levels of assault without injury since 2015/16, increasing levels of cruelty to children offences in more recent years and the impact of changes in stalking and harassment recording practice (including the recording of malicious communications since 2017/18) (see Points to Note on page 3).

Figure 7.5 Violence against the person offences where the victim was under 18 at the time the offence was committed, by type of offence, 2007/08 to 2023/24¹

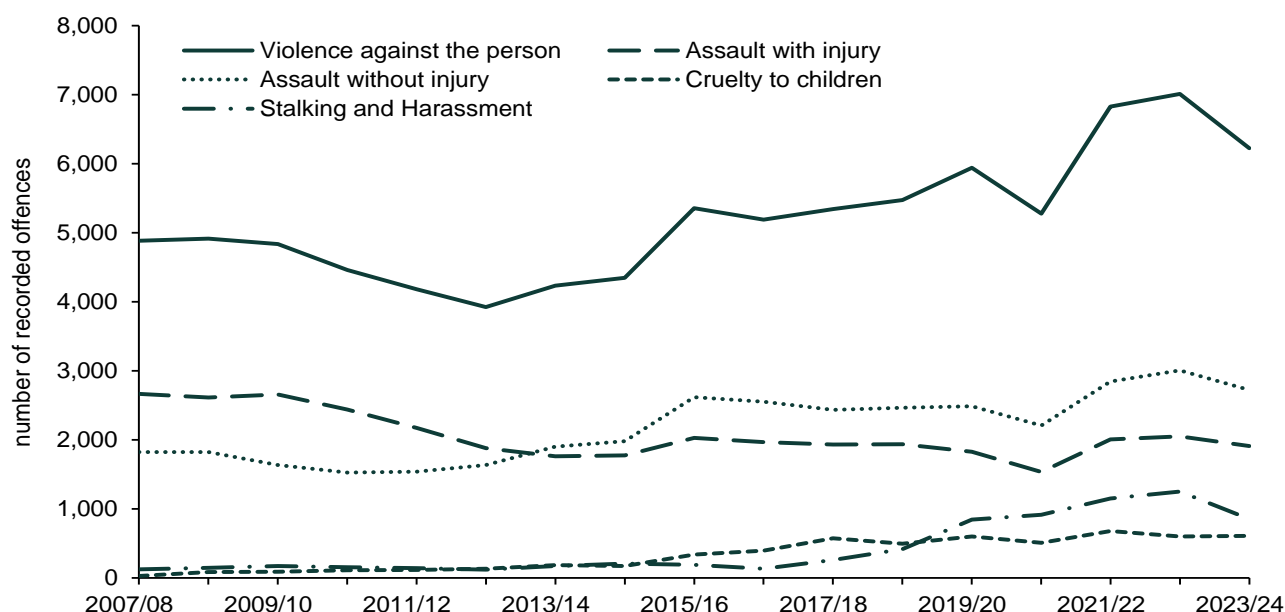
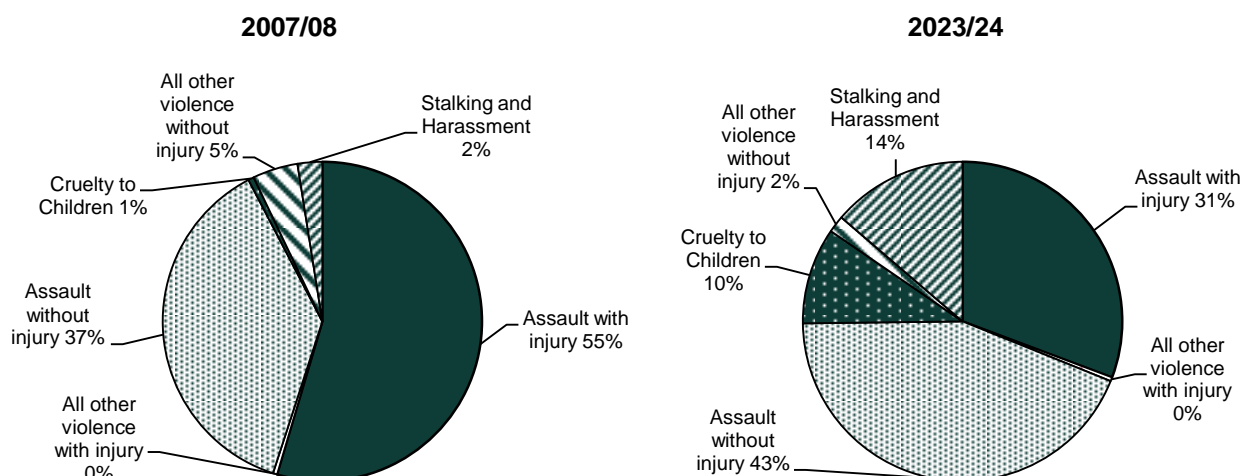


Figure 7.6 compares the profile of violence against the person offences for 2007/08 and 2023/24. Assault with injury represented 55 per cent of these offences in 2007/08, falling to 31% in 2023/24. Assault without injury has replaced assault with injury to become the predominant offence recorded within this classification. Recorded offences of cruelty to children and young persons represented one per cent of violence against the person in 2007/08 and currently represents ten per cent. Stalking and Harassment accounted for two per cent of these offences in 2007/08 and fourteen per cent in 2023/24.

Figure 7.6 Percentage of victims aged under 18 at the time the offence was committed: violence against the person offences, 2007/08 and 2023/24

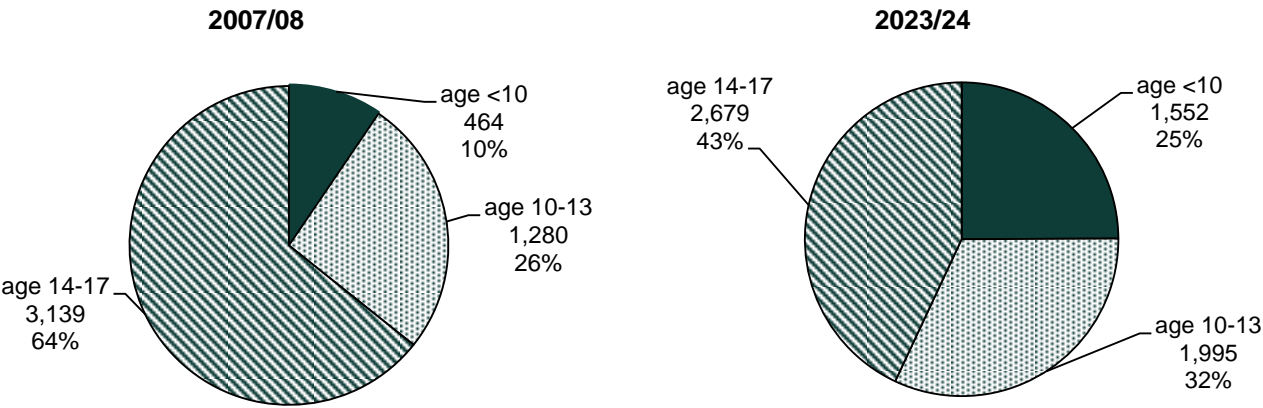


¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Figure 7.7 shows the changes in the profile and levels of violence against the person offences recorded in 2007/08 and 2023/24 where the victim is under 18. Figure 7.8 shows these details for the latest ten years 2014/15 to 2023/24 by victim gender. [Tables 7.5 and 7.6, which provide the full time series from 2007/08]

Victim age: Victims aged under 10 at the time the offence was committed accounted for ten per cent of victims under 18 in 2007/08, increasing to 25 per cent in 2023/24, with levels in 2023/24 more than three times higher. In 2007/08 victims aged 14 to 17 represented nearly two thirds of victims under 18, falling to 43 per cent in 2023/24; levels fell by 15 per cent between the two time periods. While there was less proportional change seen in the 10 to 13 age band between the two time periods, levels were around 1.5 times higher in 2023/24

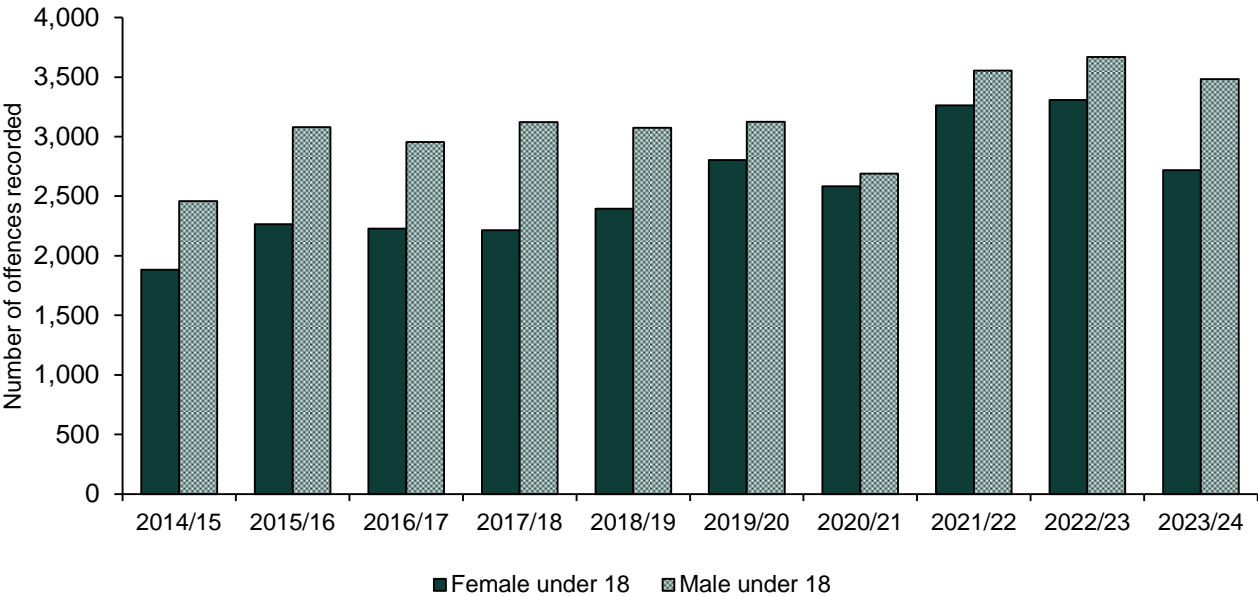
Figure 7.7 Number and percentage of violence against the person victims under 18 by age band, 2007/08 and 2023/24



Victim Gender: Female victims under 18 represented 38 per cent of all victims under 18 in 2007/08 and 44 per cent in 2023/24. In 2023/24 there were six female victims under the age of 18 per 1,000 of the population under 18.

Male victims under 18 represented 62 per cent of all victims under 18 in 2007/08 and 56 per cent in 2023/24. In 2023/24 there were eight male victims under the age of 18 per 1,000 of the population under 18.

Figure 7.8 Number of violence against the person offences recorded by victim gender (where victim was also under 18 at time of offence), latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24¹



7.3.2 Violence against the person where victim was 18 or over at time of reporting but under 18 at time of offence

Crimes are recorded based on the date the crime was reported to the police, rather than the date on which the offence occurred. For the majority of crimes the reported date and the occurrence date are the same, in other words the age of the victim at the time the offence was committed is that same as the time of report to police. However there are occasions where there can be a large gap between the date the offence occurred and the date the offence was then reported to the police.

¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Within the violence against the person classification the victim was under 18 at both time of offence and date of report to police in at least 97 per cent of offences recorded. Those offences where the victim was under 18 at time of offence and over the age of 18 at time of report to police were mainly found within classification 11A Cruelty to Children/Young Persons.

7.3.3 Sexual offences (victim under 18 at time offence was committed)

Figure 7.9 shows the generally increasing trends between 2007/08 and 2023/24 where the victim was under 18 at the time the offence was committed, for each of the main sexual offence classifications of rape, sexual assault and sexual activity. Although the number of sexual activity offences recorded has generally declined since 2016/17, there has been a sharp increase in 2023/24. Rape recorded the highest number of offences in 2021/22, at 527 and sexual assaults reached the highest level in 2022/23 at 1,124.

Figure 7.9 Sexual offences where the victim was under 18 at the time the offence was committed, by type of offence, 2007/08 to 2023/24¹

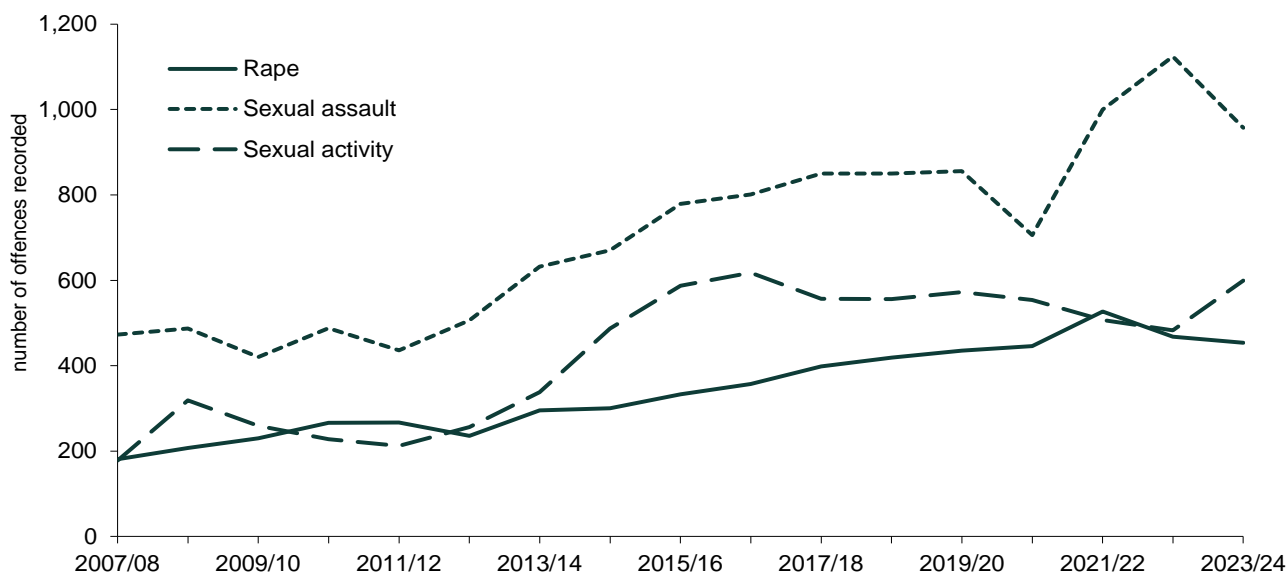
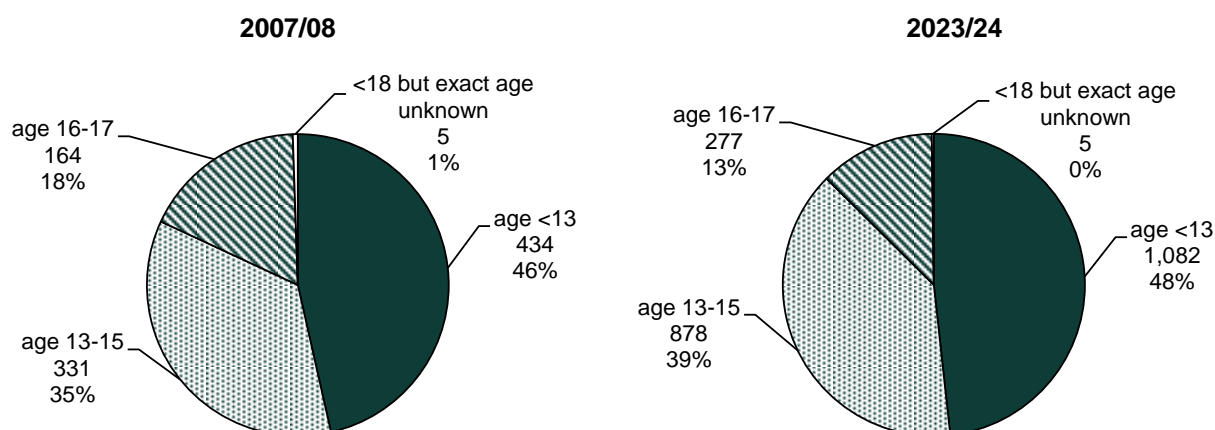


Figure 7.10 shows the changes in the profile and levels of sexual offences recorded in 2007/08 and 2023/24 where the victim is under 18. Figure 7.11 shows these details for each of the latest ten years 2014/15 to 2023/24 by victim gender. [Tables 7.5 and 7.6, which provide the full time series from 2007/08]

Victim age: The number of offences where the victim was under 16 at the time the offence was committed more than doubled between 2007/08 (765 offences) and 2023/24 (1,960 offences). Offences relating to sexual activity (where the victim is under 16) trebled between the introduction of new sexual offence legislation in February 2009 and the peak of 618 offences recorded in 2016/17, with the largest increases occurring between 2013/14 and 2015/16. In the latest year sexual activity has increased by 25 per cent and is the second highest, with 599 offences recorded. Some of the increases may be influenced by 'sexting', which is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video on their mobile phone, computer or tablet and which can include 'sexual chat' and requests for pictures or images of a sexual nature.

Figure 7.10 Number and Percentage of sexual offence victims under 18 at time offence committed by age band, 2007/08 and 2023/24

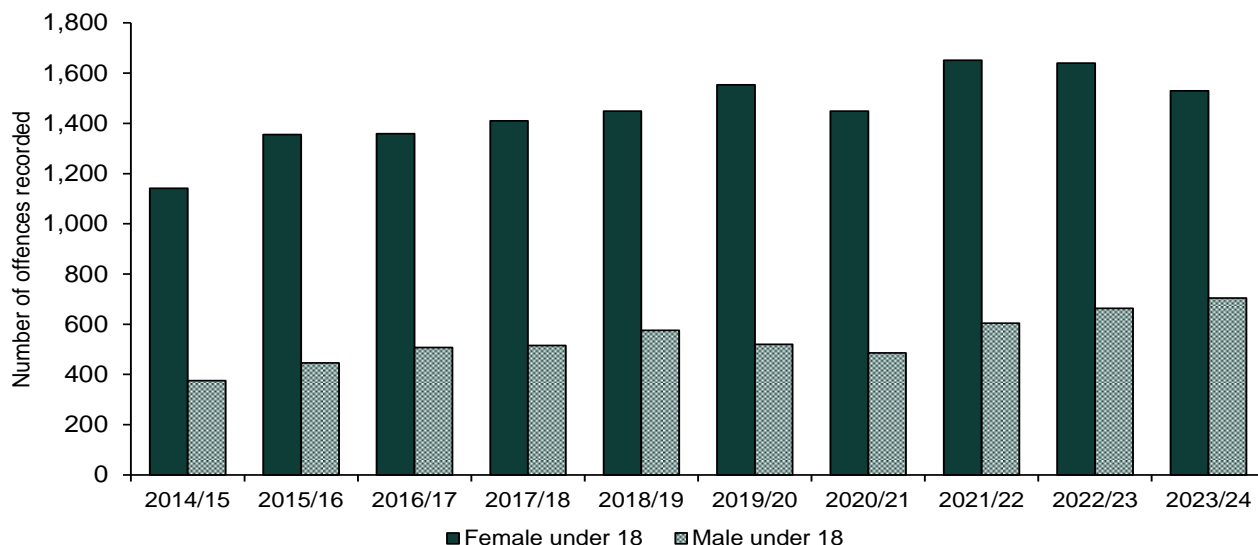


¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Victim gender where victim under 18: Female victims represented 83 per cent of all victims under 18 in 2007/08 and 68 per cent in 2023/24. In 2023/24 there were four female victims per 1,000 of the population under 18.

Male victims under 18 represented 17 per cent of all victims under 18 in 2007/08 and 31 per cent in 2023/24. In 2023/24 there were two male victims under the age of 18 per 1,000 of the population under 18.

Figure 7.11 Number of sexual offences recorded by victim gender (where victim was also under 18 at time of offence), latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2023/24¹



7.3.4 Sexual offences where victim was 18 or over at time of reporting but under 18 at time of offence

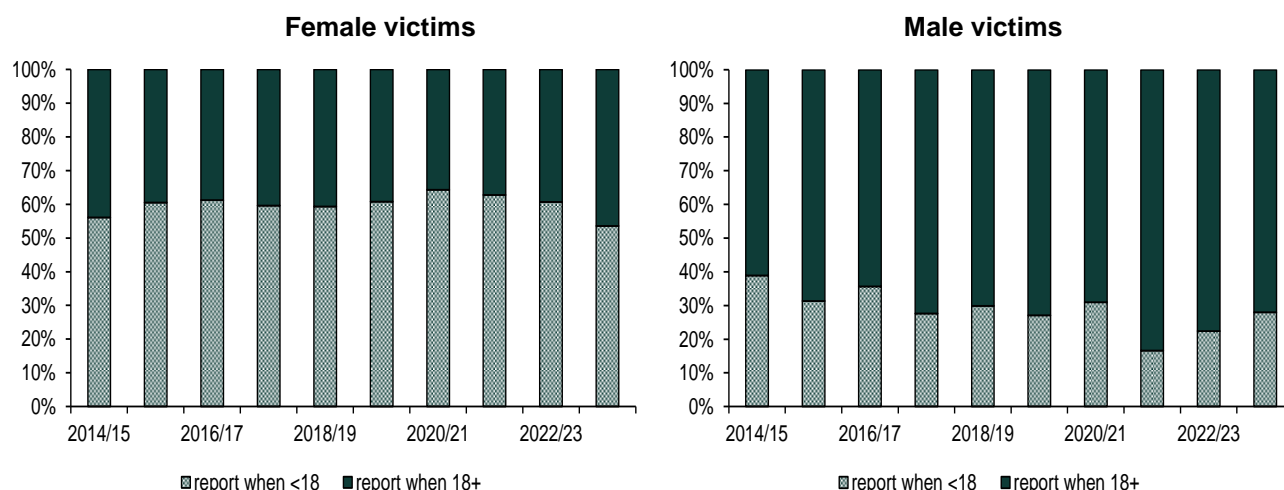
Crimes are recorded based on the date the crime was reported to the police, rather than the date on which the offence occurred. For the majority of crimes the reported date and the occurrence date are the same, in other words the age of the victim at the time the offence was committed is that same as the time of report to police. However sexual offences are the main crime type where there can be a large gap between the date the offence occurred and the date the offence was then reported to the police.

Within the sexual offences classification the victim was under 18 at both time of offence and date of report to police in 61 per cent to 82 per cent of offences recorded since 2007/08.

Up to two in five sexual offences occurred when the victim was under 18 but were reported to police when the victim was 18 or over. In respect of rape offences this ranged from one in four rape offences reported in 2008/09 to around half of all rape offences reported in 2013/14 (50%) and 2023/24 (52%). For indecent/sexual assault on a male the range was between one in five reports in 2007/08 and more than two thirds of reports in 2022/23. The proportions were lower for indecent/sexual assault on a female ranging from one in five reports in 2008/09 to nearly half of all reports in 2013/14. When looking at reports of sexual activity, up to 14 per cent of those occurring when the victim was under 18 were reported to police when the victim was 18 or over.

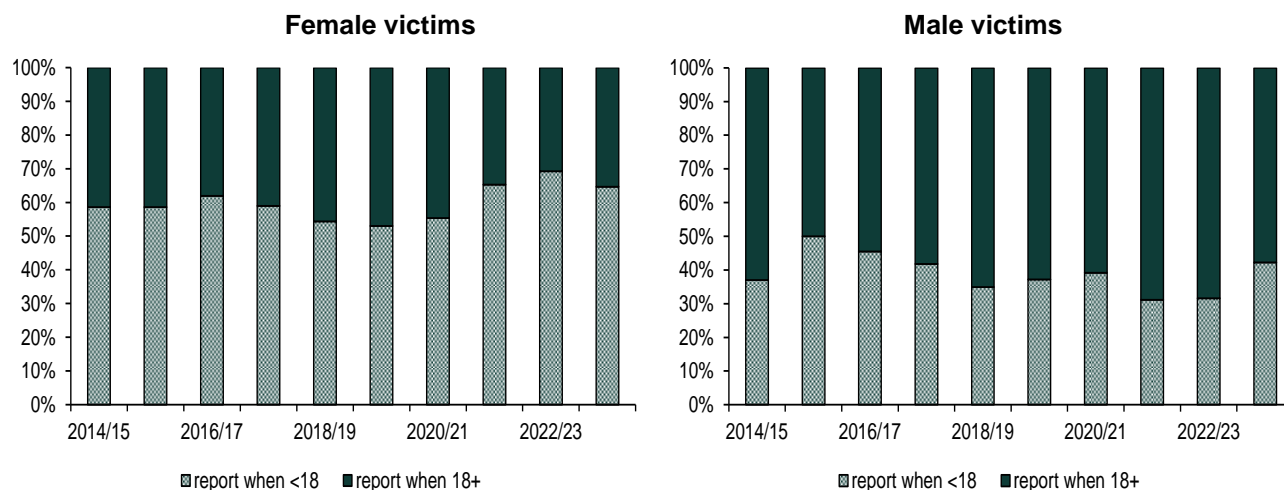
Figures 7.12 and 7.13 present the reporting patterns over the latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24 for offences of rape and sexual assault and highlight the differing patterns of reporting by male and female victims.

Figure 7.12 Rape offences victim under 18 at time of offence, percentage reporting to police when aged under 18 or when aged 18 and over, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

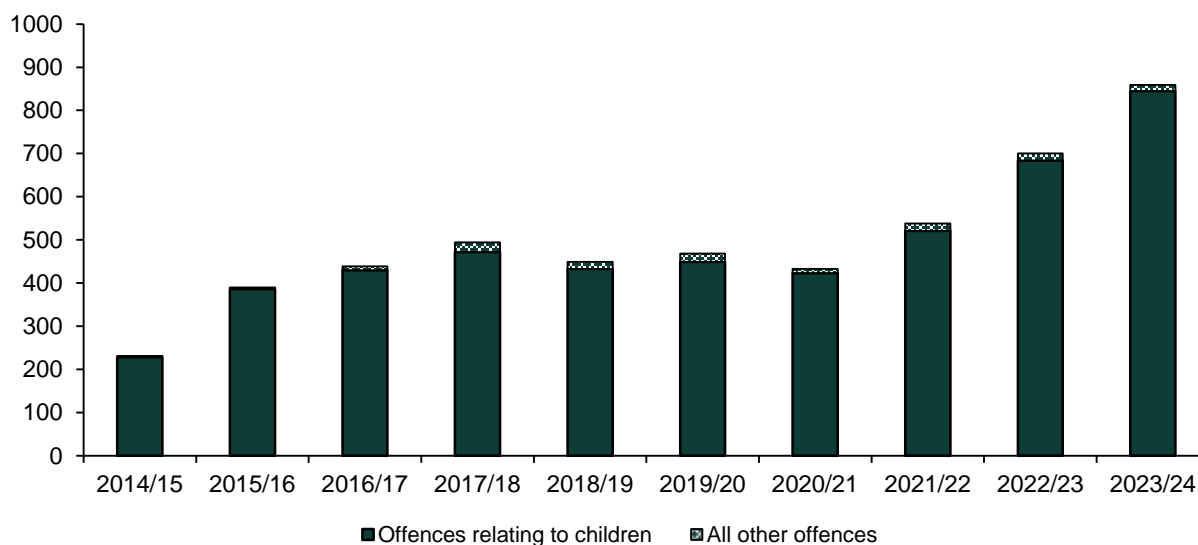
Figure 7.13 Sexual assault offences victim under 18 at time of offence, percentage reporting to police when aged under 18 or when aged 18 and over, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24



7.3.5 Obscene Publications and Protected Sexual Material

These offences are recorded as state-based offences, meaning that victim age is not available. However the legislation for these offences can determine if the offence was committed against a person under the age of 18, as shown in Figure 7.14 below. At least 96 per cent of these offences relate to children. Levels have been at their highest in more recent years. Between 2016/17 and 2023/24 the number of offences relating to children have ranged between 430 and 845. [Table 7.4 provides the full time series from 2007/08]

Figure 7.14 Obscene Publications and Protected Sexual Material offences, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

8. Crime Outcomes

Guidance around the recording and presentation of crime outcomes is available in Section 3.5 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Figure 8.1 shows the trend in the overall outcome rate since 1998/99. Northern Ireland experienced a drop in the overall outcome rate between 2000/01 and 2001/02, most likely influenced by the introduction of the ICIS system within PSNI. This system improved the capture of low level crimes such as criminal damage which tend to be harder to detect. In April 2006, a higher evidential standard was adopted within the PSNI following the establishment of the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland and this resulted in a fall in the overall rate between 2005/06 and 2006/07. From April 2007 some of the methods allowed for claiming outcomes that did not result in a sanction against the offender were discontinued altogether, and in 2007/08 the overall outcome rate within Northern Ireland fell to its lowest level in the data series. The outcome rate has increased since 2007/08 to reach 31.8% in 2023/24, bearing in mind that that community resolutions were included as an outcome method from 2011/12 and penalty notices for disorder were introduced in June 2012.

All tables referred to in the commentary of this section can be found in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Figure 8.1 Outcome rates, 1998/99 to 2023/24¹

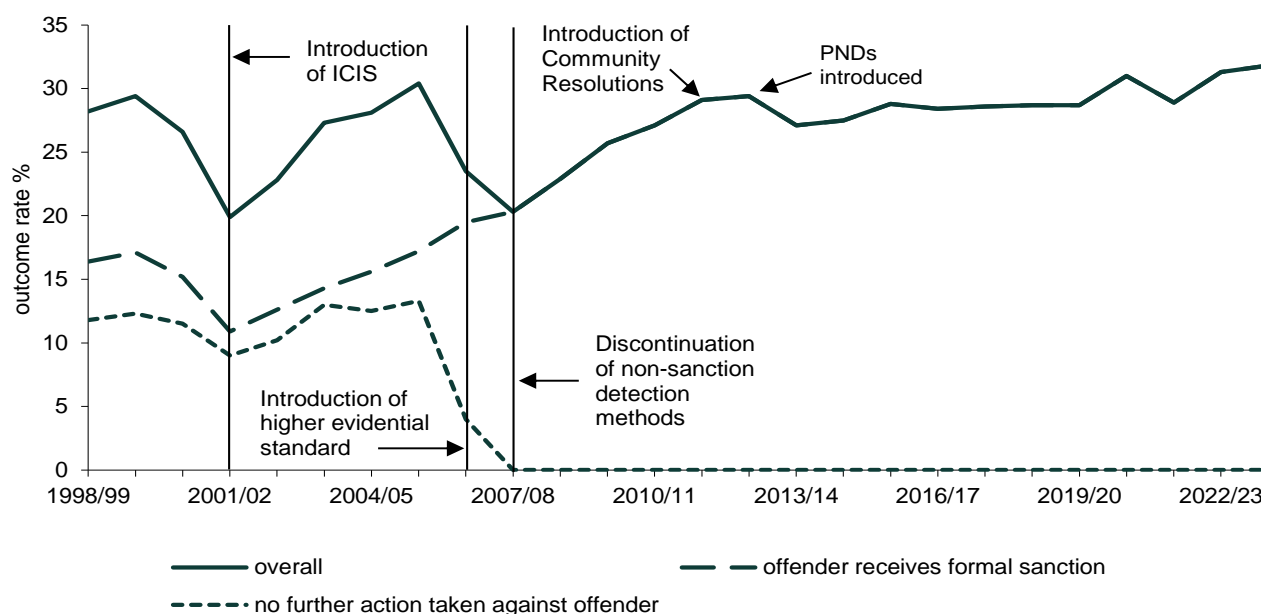
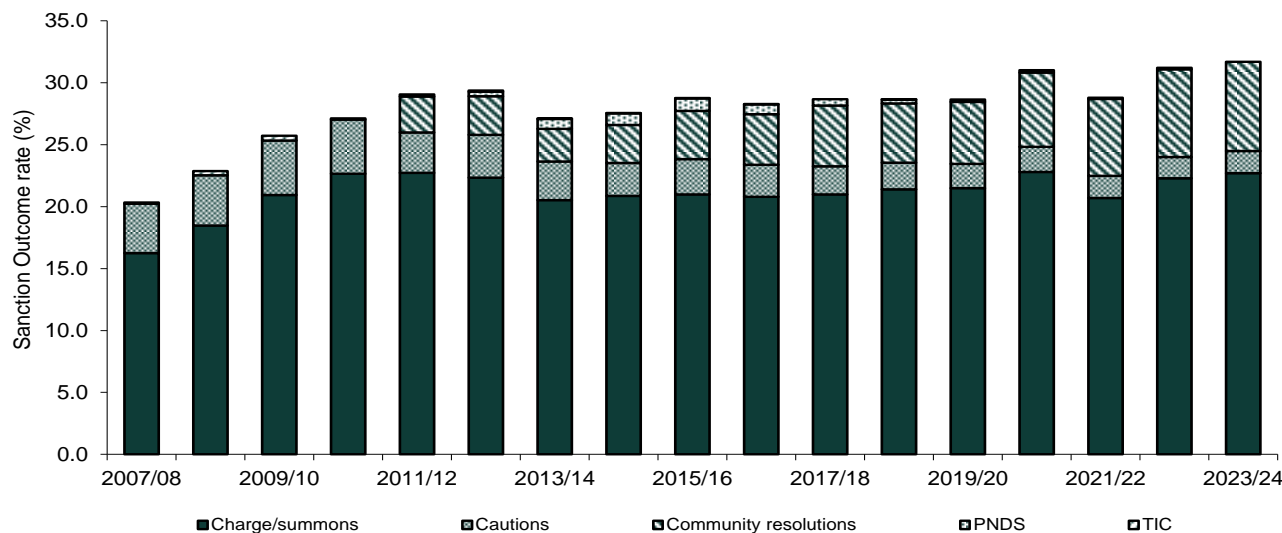


Figure 8.2 illustrates the use of sanction outcomes since 2007/08.

Figure 8.2 Sanction outcome rates by method of disposal, 2007/08 to 2023/24



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

The sanction outcome rate for 2023/24 (31.8%) is the highest since the start of the series in 1999/00. Figure 8.3 shows increases in the sanction outcome rates between 2022/23 and 2023/24 for the main crime classifications with the exception of robbery, burglary and all other theft offences.

Figure 8.3 Percentage point change in the main recorded crime type sanction outcome rates, 2023/24 compared with 2022/23

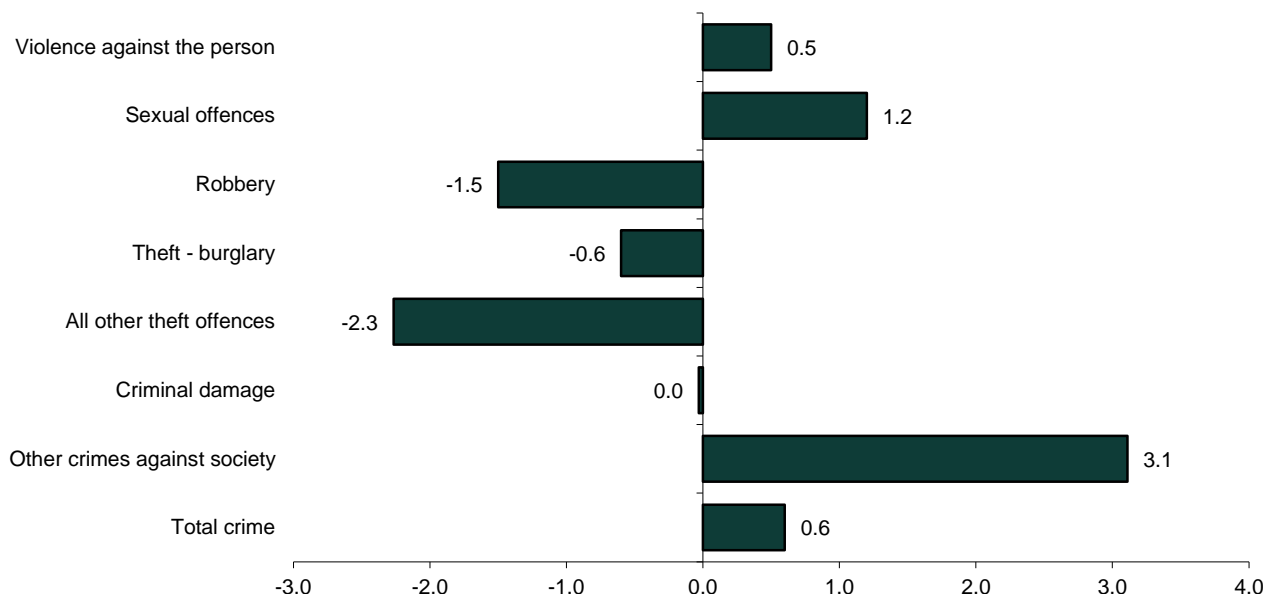
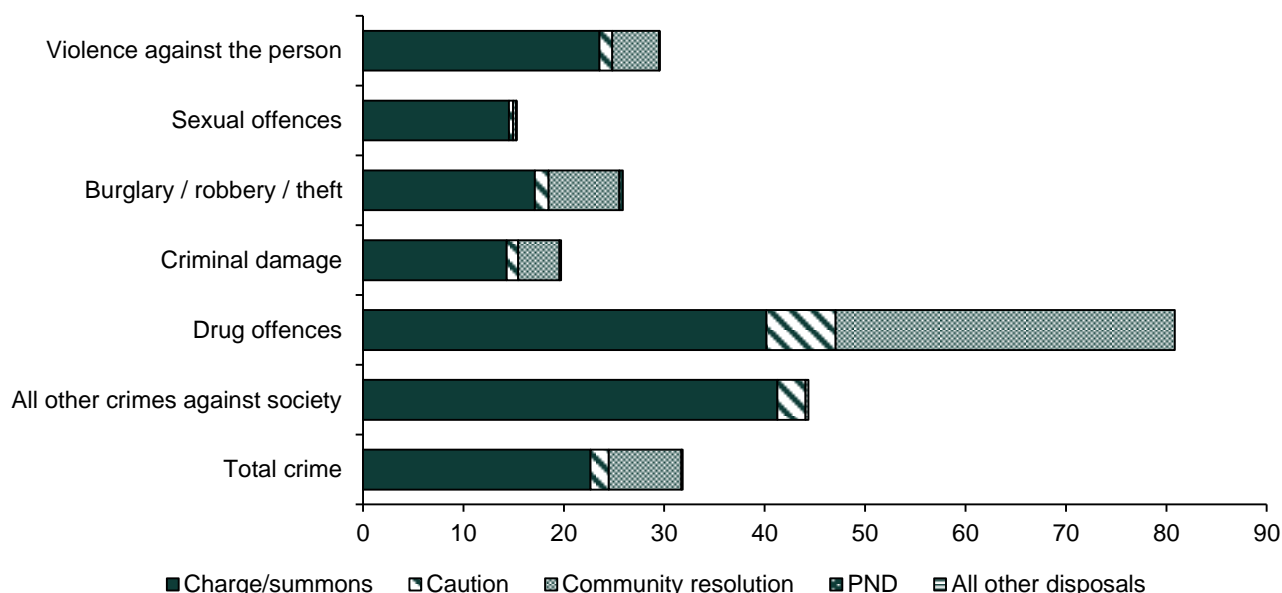


Figure 8.4 shows how the sanction outcome rate for 2023/24 is split between the main disposal methods for each offence group. The majority of crimes are dealt with by means of charge/summons with an outcome rate of 22.7%. The community resolution outcome rate is 7.2% while for cautions it is 1.8%. The nature of drug offences means they have the highest sanction outcome rate of all the main crime classifications and also show a different profile. In 2023/24 drug offences had an overall sanction outcome rate of 80.8% split into a charge/summons outcome rate of 40.2%, a community resolution outcome rate of 33.8% and a caution outcome rate of 6.9%.

Figure 8.4 Sanction outcome rates by method of disposal and offence group, 2023/24



A full break down of all outcomes (including non-sanction outcomes) for recorded crimes from 2015/16 is available in Section 4 of the publication [Outcomes of Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2015/16 to 2023/24 \(opens in a new window\)](#). This includes outcomes which did not result in a sanction, for example those where there were evidential difficulties and those where the investigation was completed with no suspect identified.

Trends in sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24

Figures 8.5 to 8.10 show the trends in crimes, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates for violence against the person, sexual offences, burglary/robbery/theft, criminal damage, drug offences and all other crimes against society. These charts are not all shown to the same scale. However they demonstrate how changing volumes of crimes and sanction outcomes can have an impact on the sanction outcome rate. [Tables 2.2, 8.2 (numbers) and 8.2 (rates), which provide the full time series]

These charts also demonstrate the difference in sanction outcome rates across these crime classifications. The ease with which an offender may be identified can be seen when looking at the high sanction outcome rates for drug offences compared with those for property crime. Differences are also evident when comparing sanction outcome rates for violence against the person with those for sexual offences.

Figures 8.5 and 8.6 show increasing levels of offences recorded alongside fluctuating sanction outcome rates, particularly in respect of sexual offences.

Figure 8.5 Violence against the person; crimes recorded, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24¹

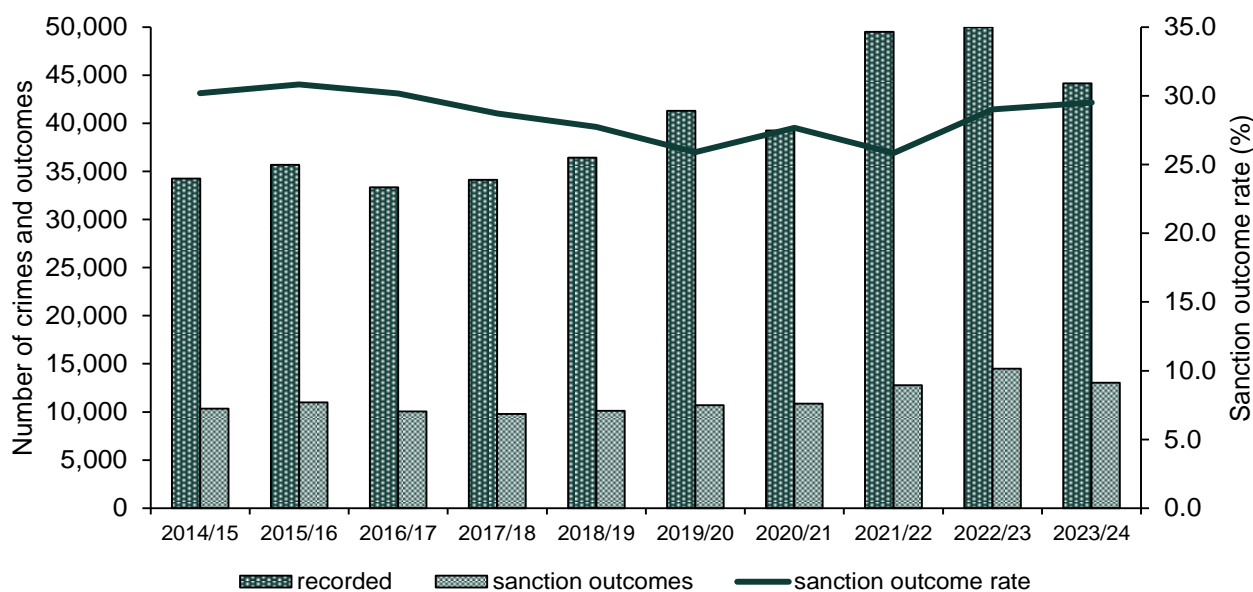
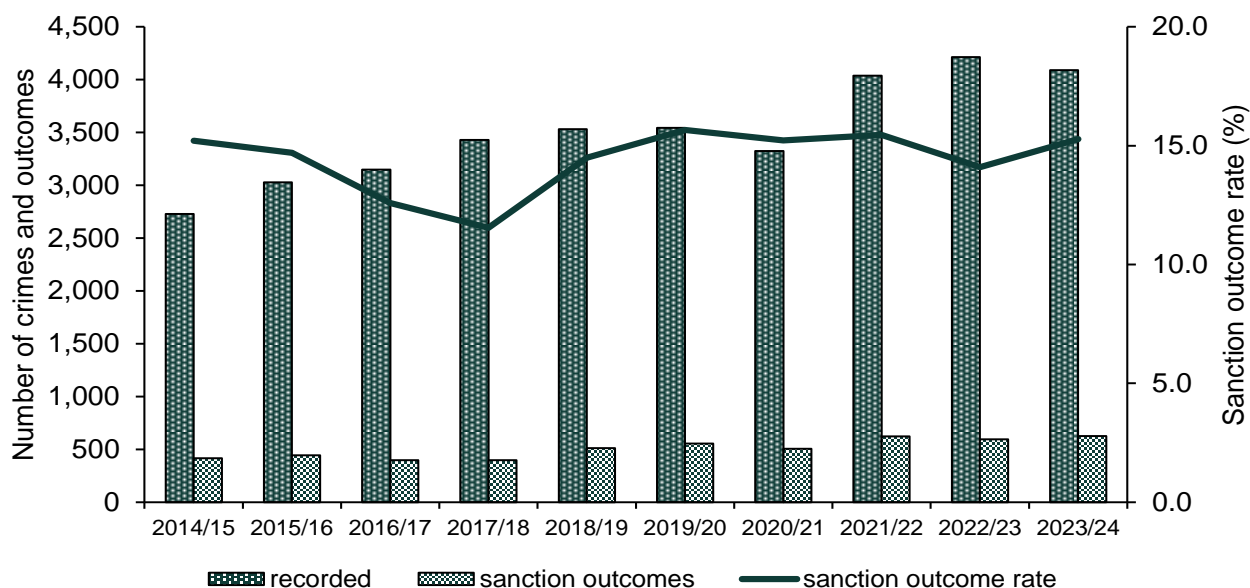


Figure 8.6 Sexual offences; crimes recorded, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Figures 8.7 and 8.8 are shown to the same scale for crimes, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates. They demonstrate the low volumes of sanction outcomes when compared with the level of crime recorded, particularly for offences of burglary, robbery and theft. The increases in the sanction outcome rates can also be seen in the context of lower levels of burglary, robbery and theft offences since 2020/21 and falling levels of criminal damage offences.

Figure 8.7 Burglary, robbery and theft; crimes recorded, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24¹

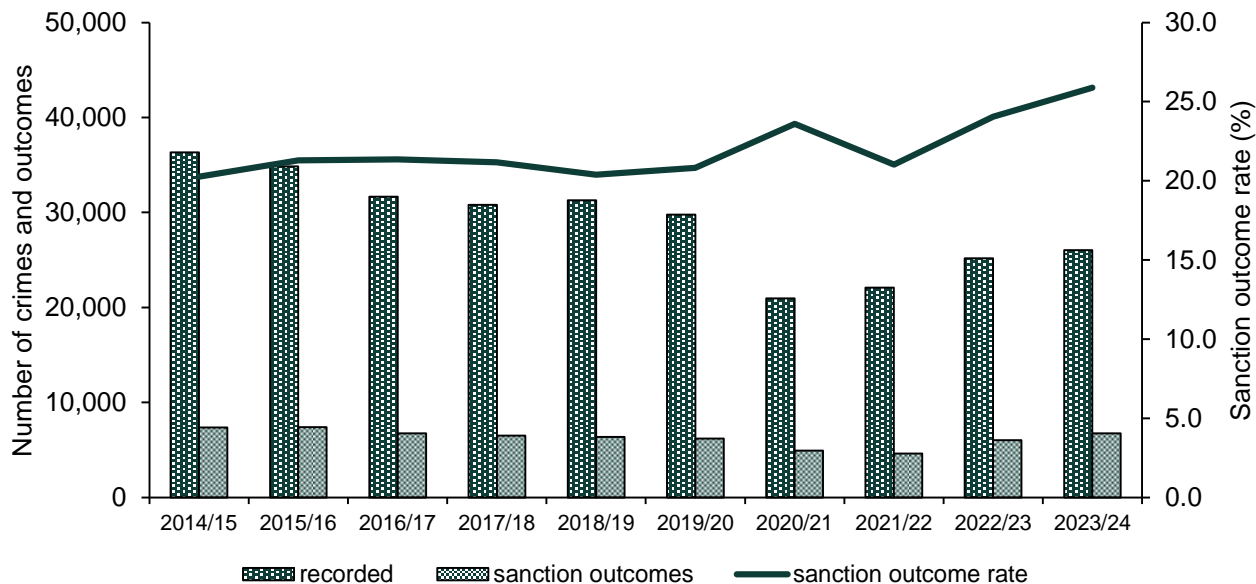
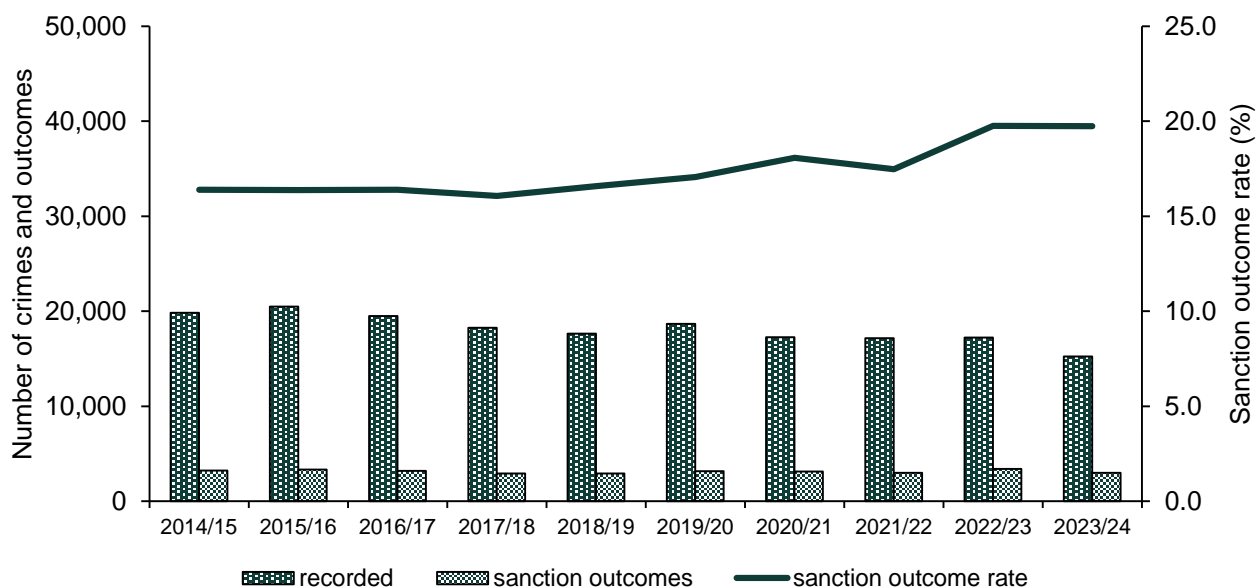


Figure 8.8 Criminal damage; crimes recorded, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Figures 8.9 and 8.10 are not shown to the same scale for crimes, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates. These crime types are recorded as state-based offences and show higher volumes of sanction outcomes and higher sanction outcome rates than for victim-based offences. The higher levels of sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates are seen particularly in relation to drug offences.

Figure 8.9 Drug offences; crimes recorded, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24¹

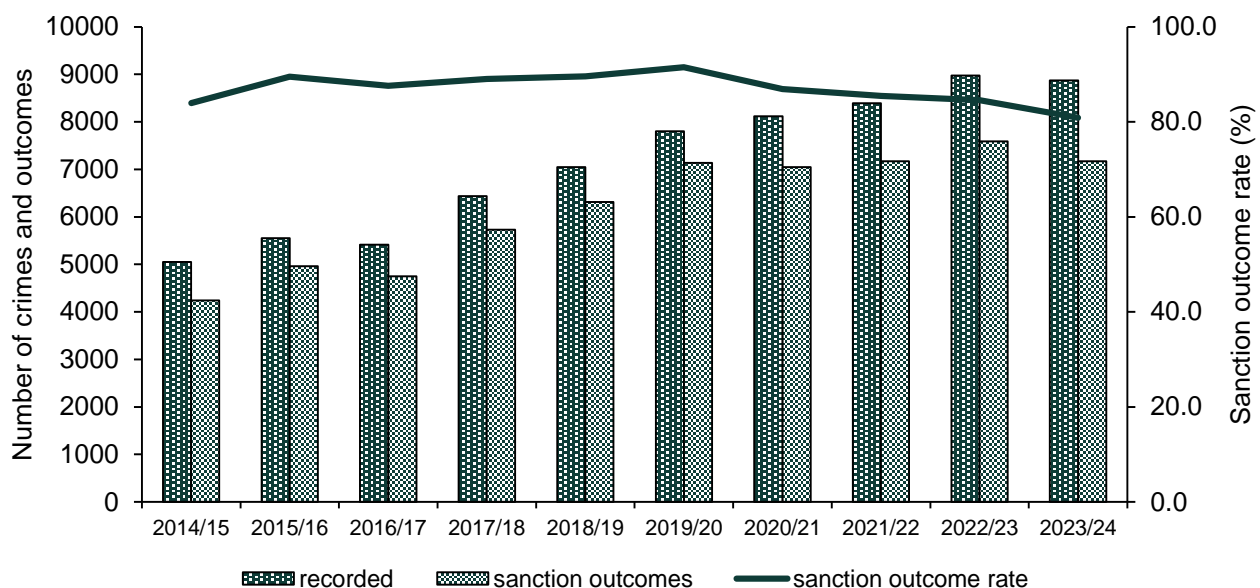
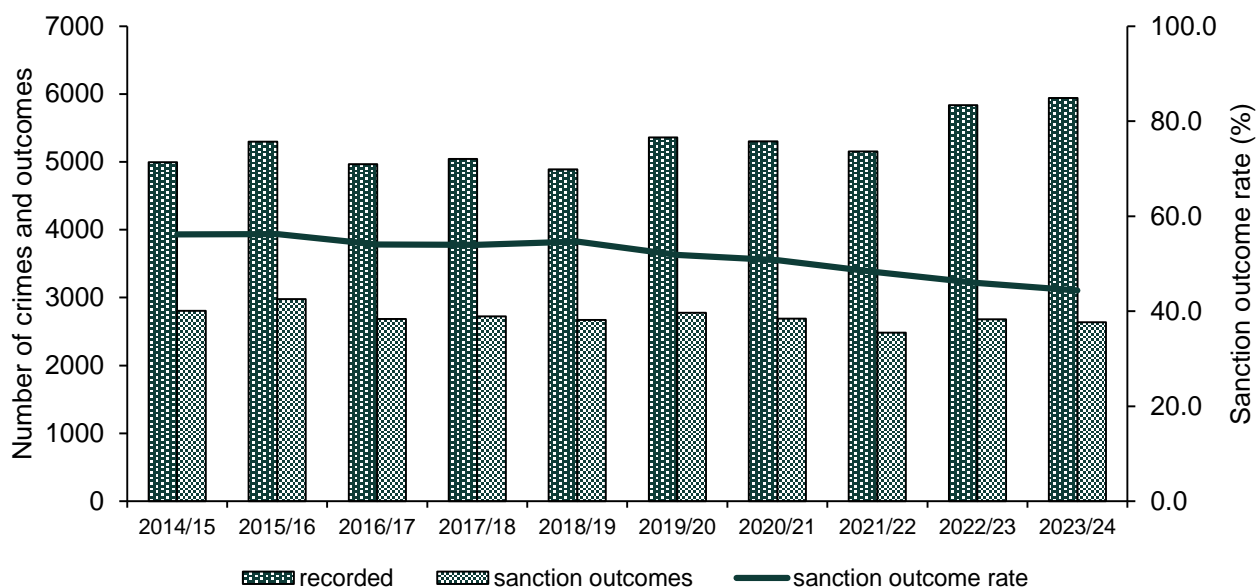


Figure 8.10 All other crimes against society; crimes recorded, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2014/15 to 2023/24¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

9. Geographic patterns of crimes

As a general rule crimes are geographically recorded by the police based on the location in which the incident occurred. This section provides details on recorded crime, outcome rates and population rates for each policing district within Northern Ireland.

As part of the Review of Public Administration which came into effect on 1 April 2015, PSNI moved from eight to eleven policing districts, with the new policing model becoming fully operational at the end of September 2015.

The level of geographic information required to allocate crime records to the new boundaries was insufficient for the financial years 1998/99 to 2000/01. For this reason, comparison of crime at policing district level is only available for the financial years dating back to 2001/02.

While being only one policing district, Belfast City accounts for approximately one third of all crime recorded in Northern Ireland. It includes four local policing teams based in Lisburn Road (South), Tennent Street (North), Strandtown (East) and Woodbourne (West). Figures for each of these local policing teams are provided in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#) to assist with district level comparisons.

Care should be taken when comparing crime rates at policing district level as some of the differences between districts may reflect variations in their composition, such as the degree of urbanisation, level of deprivation and the balance between the resident population, day-time population and night-time economy. Where there is an increased day-time population or night-time economy relative to the resident population, the number of crimes relative to the real population of potential victims may be over-represented.

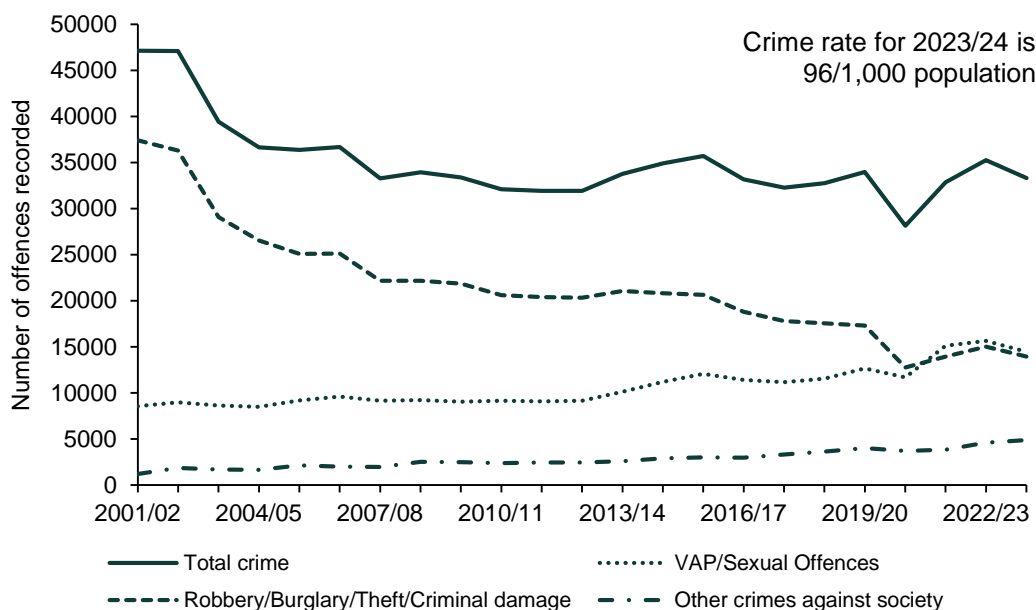
While tables 9.1 to 9.3 in the [Annual trends police recorded crime spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#) provide policing district figures at the overall crime level, figures are also available by crime type, age and month in the pivot tables which accompany this report.

The following additional geographic breakdowns of crime are available through the [NISRA Data Portal](#); Ward 2014, District Electoral Area (DEA) 2014, Local Government District (LGD) 2014, Assembly Area (AA), Health & Social Care Trust (HSCT), and Urban/Rural.

Provisional management information drawn from police recorded crime figures and 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 bulletin as they have been extracted from the police administrative system on different dates, and also require a grid reference in order to be mapped.

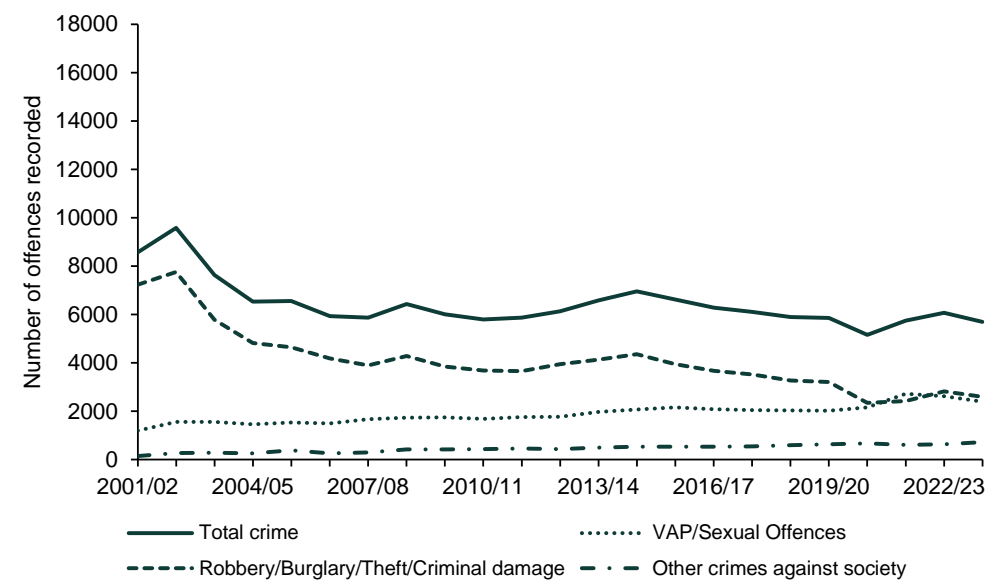
At the time of publication, the 2023 mid-year population estimate for Northern Ireland was available. However, the additional population breakdown for each policing district was unavailable. Therefore the 2023 mid-year population estimate has been used for the 2023/24 Northern Ireland population rate and the 2022 mid-year population estimates have been used for the 2023/24 population rate for each policing district.

Belfast City¹

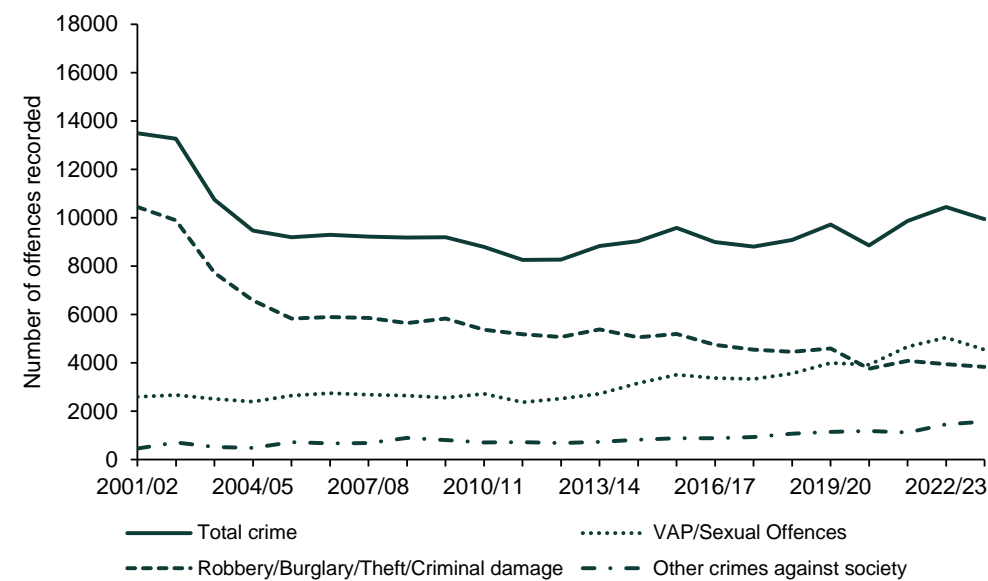


¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

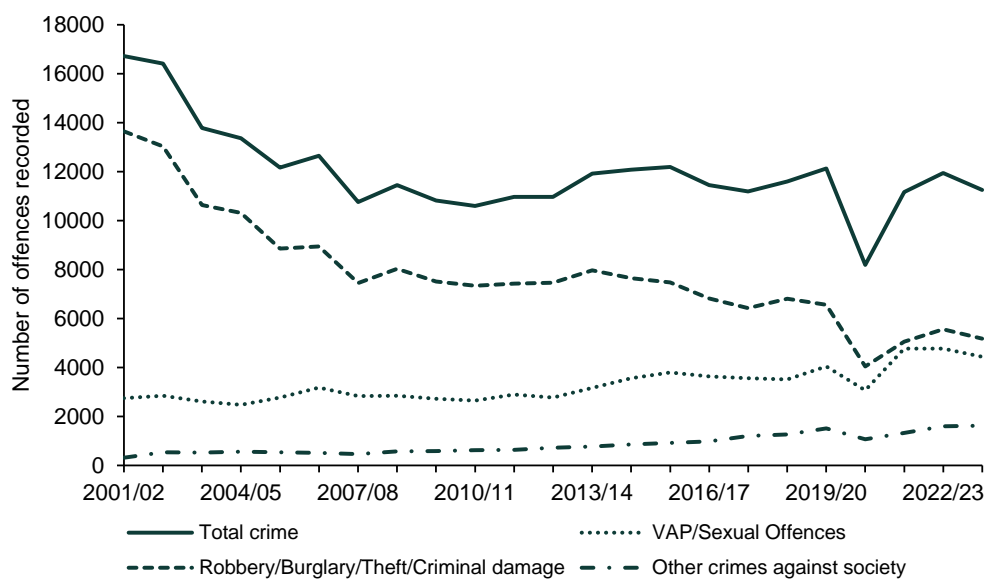
East Belfast (Strandtown)¹



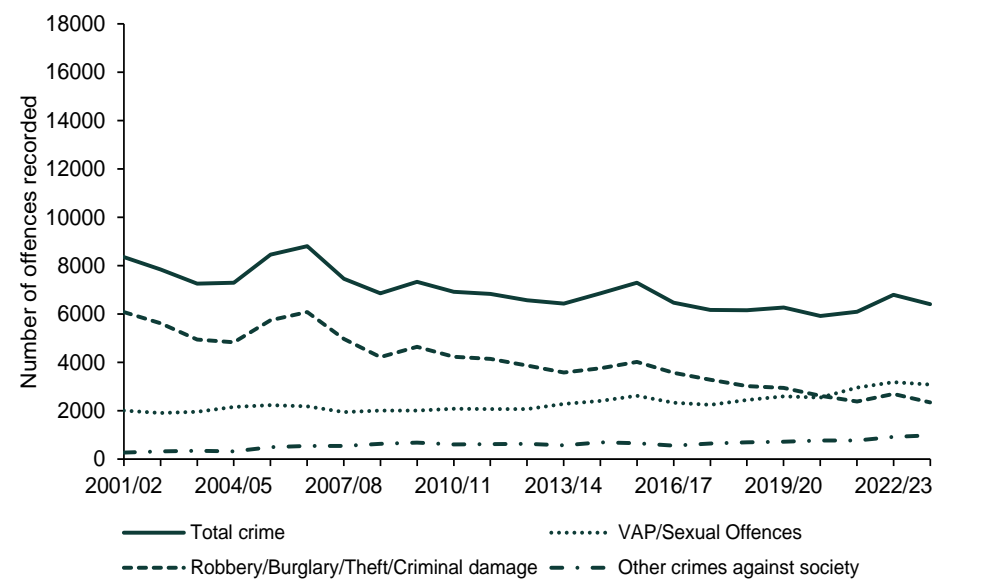
North Belfast (Tennent Street)¹



South Belfast (Lisburn Road)¹

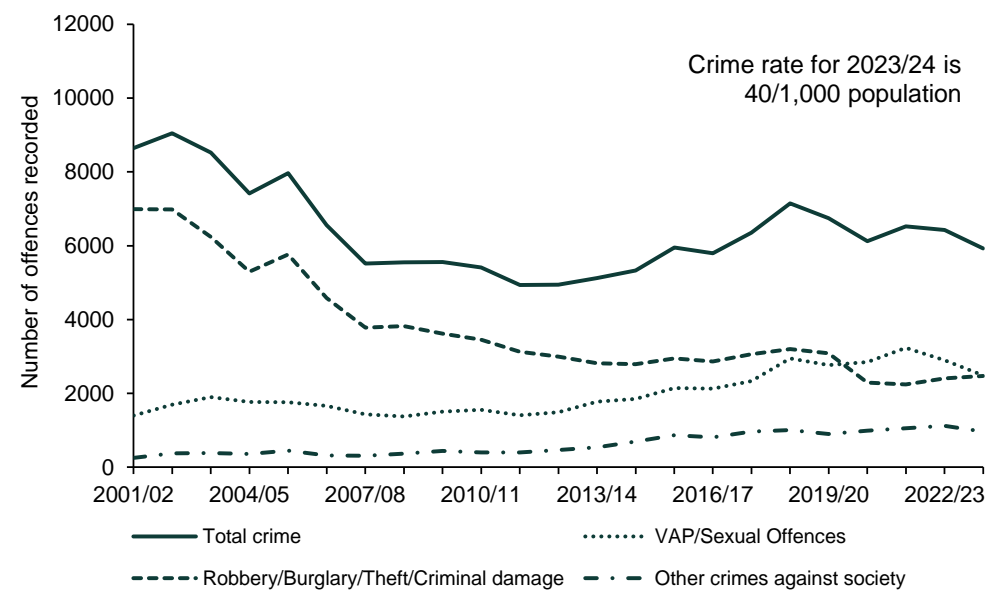


West Belfast (Woodbourne)¹

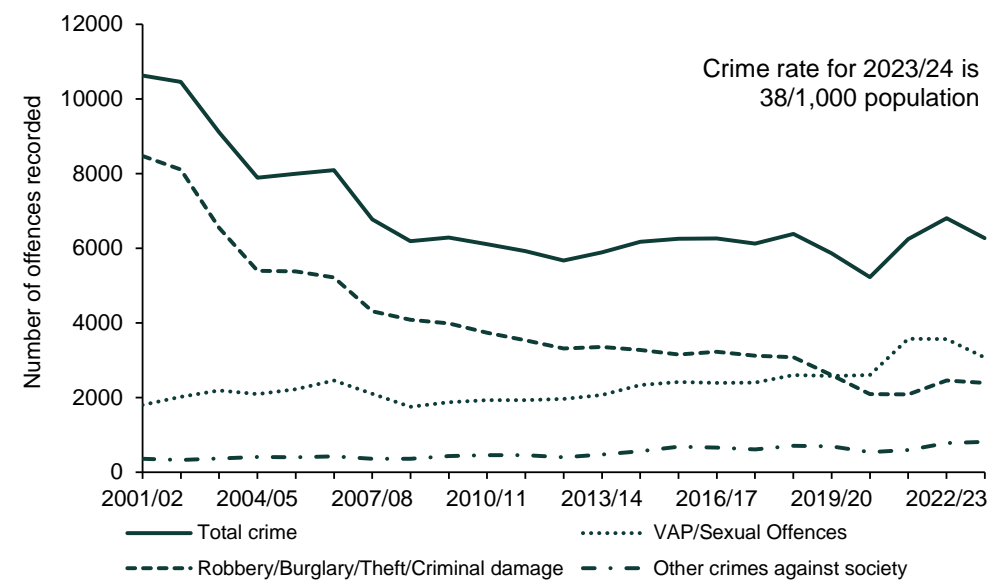


¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

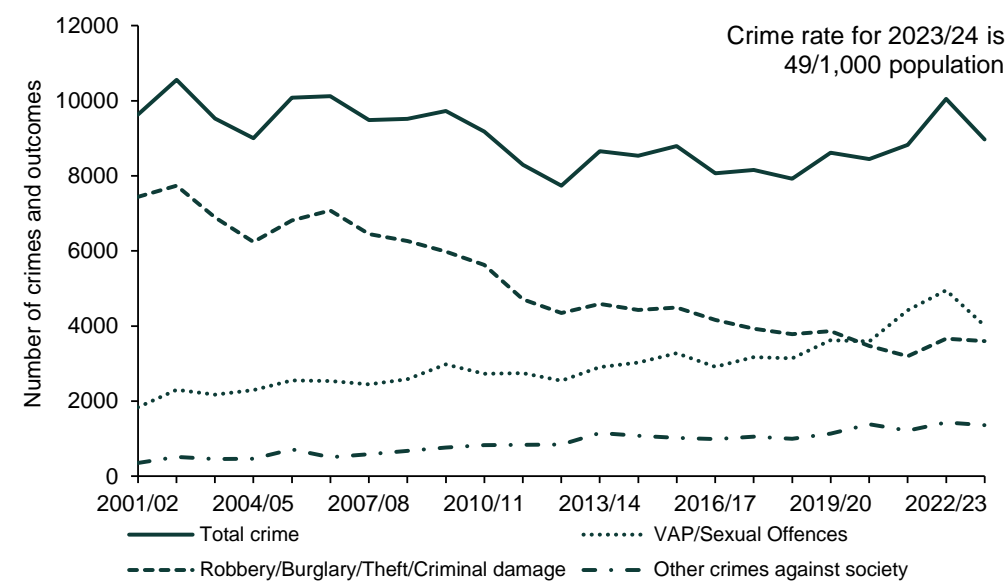
Lisburn & Castlereagh City¹



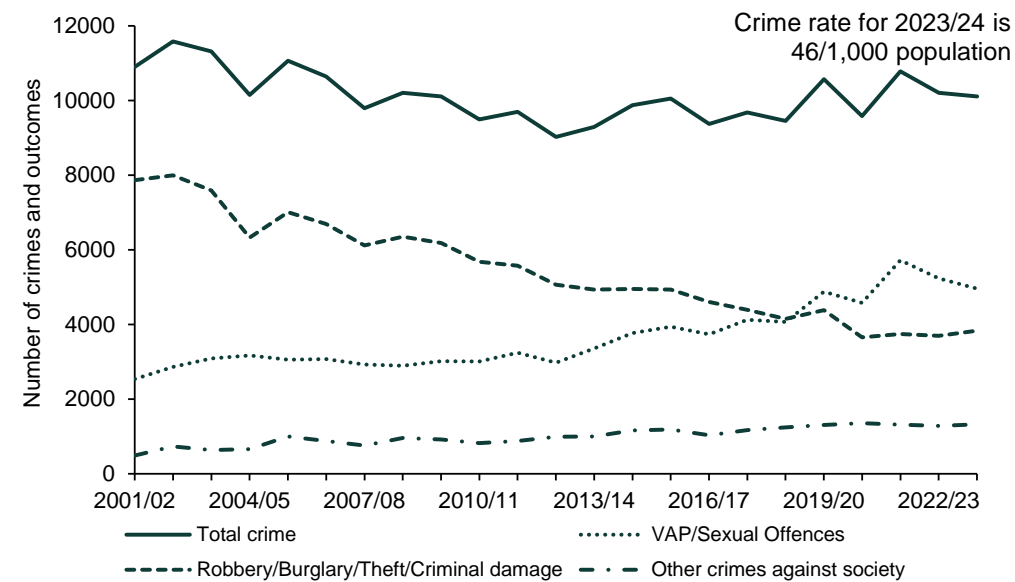
Ards & North Down¹



Newry, Mourne & Down¹

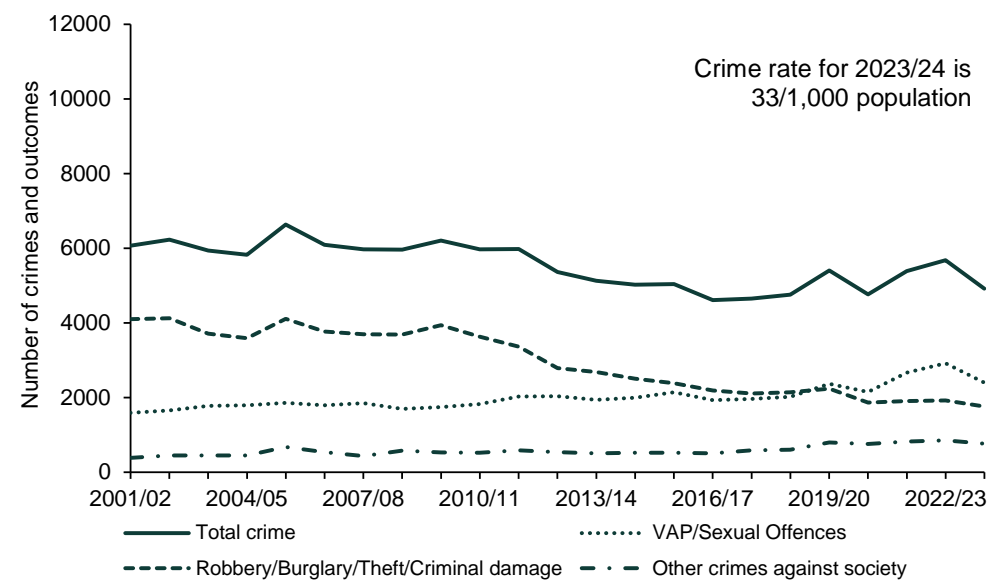


Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon¹

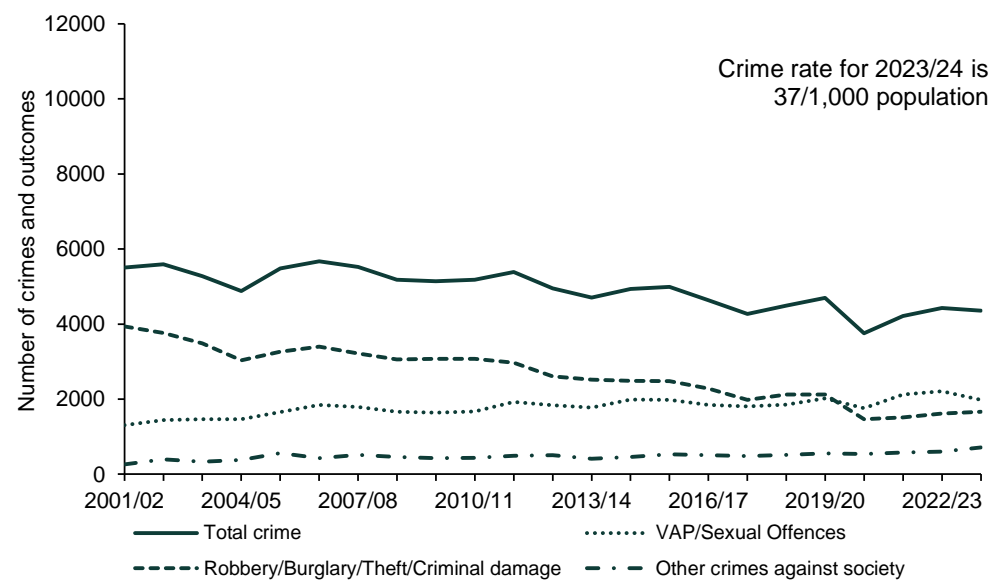


¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

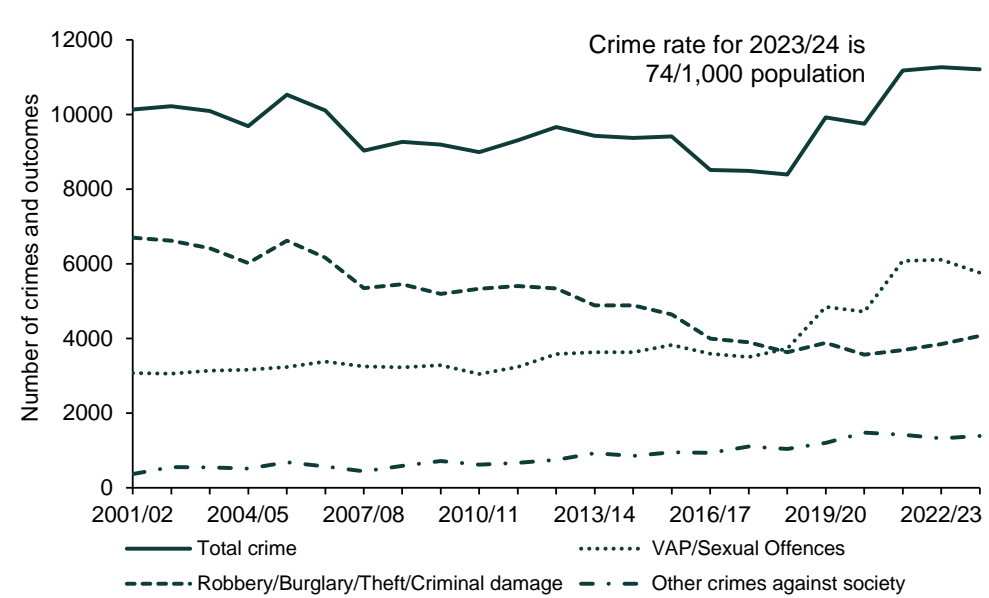
Mid Ulster¹



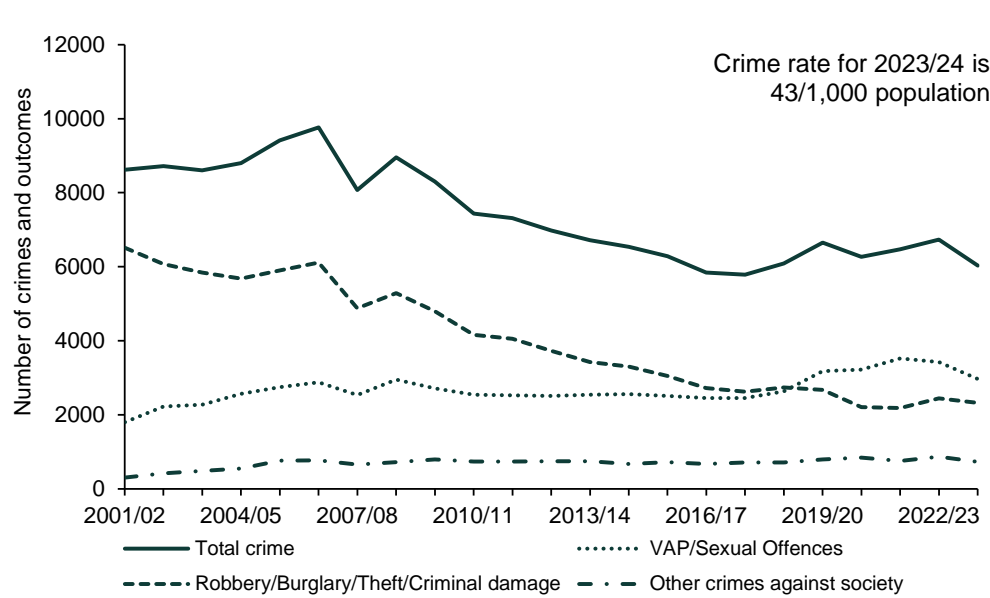
Fermanagh & Omagh¹



Derry City & Strabane¹

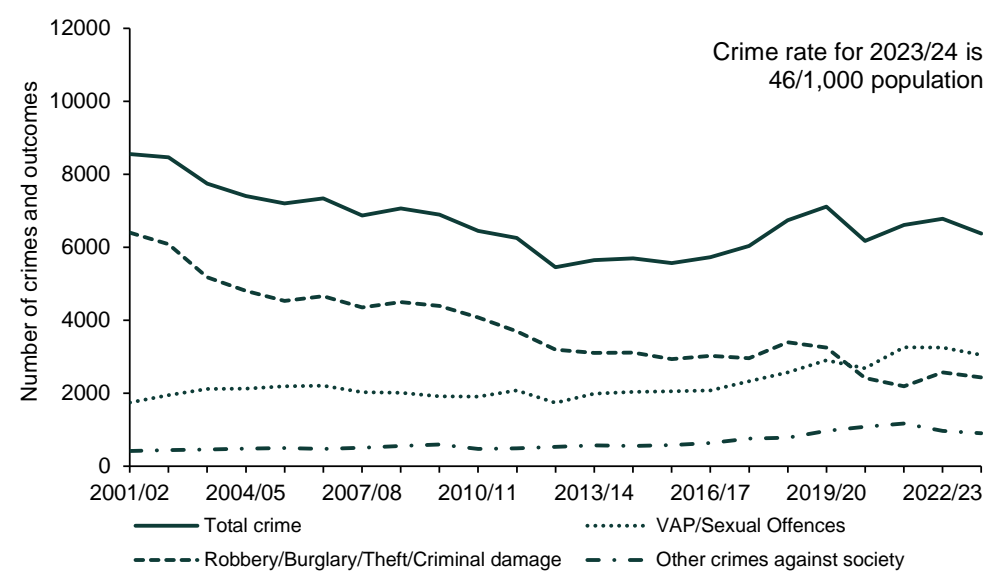


Causeway Coast & Glens¹

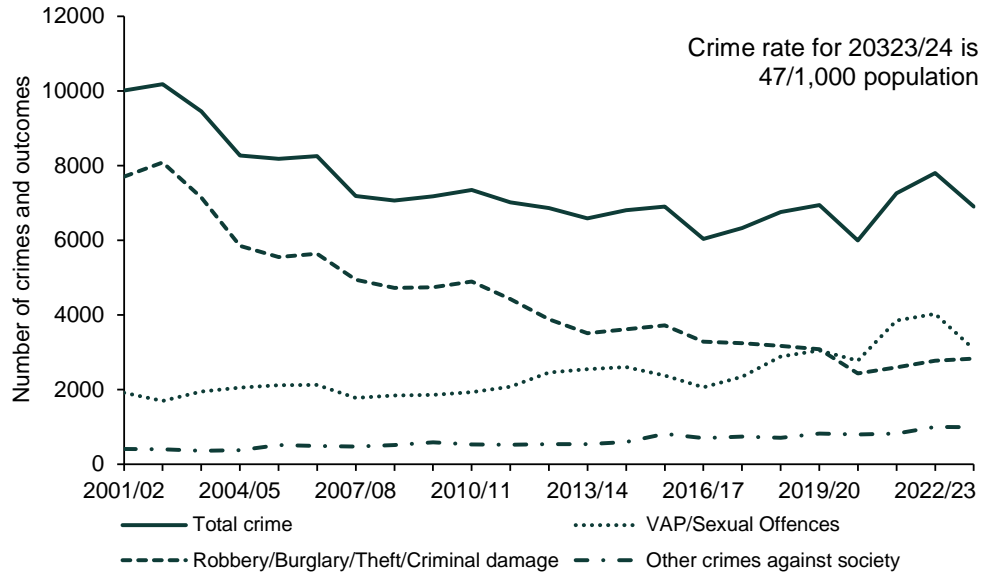


¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Mid & East Antrim¹



Antrim & Newtownabbey¹



¹ Varying degrees of Covid-19 restrictions were in place between March 2020 and February 2022.

Appendix 1. Background and Data Quality

1. Data collection and data quality

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

There are a range of factors that can have an impact on the recorded crime data series. For example changes to existing legislation, the introduction of new legislation and clarifications or changes to the Home Office Counting Rules can all cause discontinuities to the data series. As far as possible these factors are identified in the commentary or table footnotes within this bulletin and accompanying spreadsheets.

Internal Audit 2023: Results from the 2023 Internal Audit showed that the crime recording accuracy had changed from 91 per cent in 2022 to 92 per cent in 2023. Crime recording accuracy in previous years was 90% in 2018, 97% in 2019, 92% in 2020 and 95 in 2021. The 2023 audit indicated that 92 per cent of crimes were correctly classified. The Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR), which govern crime recording, state that crimes should be recorded within 24 hours; the audit showed that 81% 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.

2 Further Information

Crime Statistics User Guide

The [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#) 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, incidents and crimes with a domestic or hate motivation and anti-social behaviour statistics. The guide provides background information on:

- definitions and methodology
- recording practices, data collection, compliance and quality assurance;
- revisions policy and data availability
- uses and user engagement

Changes to crime classifications: A list of the police recorded crime classifications and any impact classification changes have had on the police recorded crime time series is provided in Appendix 1 of the user guide.

Police Recorded Crime Outcomes: Section 3.5 of the user guide provides the background to the compilation and presentation of crime outcomes, with Appendix 2 listing the disposal methods available within Northern Ireland.

Oversight and compliance: Section 4 provides details on the Accredited Official Statistics Designation, as well as the structures in place to manage crime recording compliance.

Additional data available to accompany this release

This release provides an overview of crimes recorded by the police for each financial year since the start of each data series. 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 in the [police recorded crime section of the PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The PSNI website has a [crime statistics archive](#) containing information relating to crime figures dating back to 1968.

Related information available on the PSNI website

[Police Recorded Crime Statistics monthly updates \(opens in a new window\)](#): These statistics are updated on a monthly basis.

[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 2023/24 was published on 29 November 2024.

[Anti-Social Behaviour Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#): These statistics are updated on a monthly basis.

[Domestic Abuse Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#): These statistics are updated on a quarterly basis (in August, November, February and May), with a more comprehensive trends publication made available annually.

[Hate Motivation Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#): These statistics are updated on a quarterly basis (in August, November, February and May), with a more comprehensive trends publication made available annually.

[Drug Seizure Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#): These statistics report on numbers of drug seizure incidents, quantities of drugs seized and drug related arrests.