



Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland

Update to 31st March 2026

Date of Publication:

14 May 2026


Frequency of Publication:

Quarterly

Issued by:

PSNI Statistics Branch
Lisnasharragh
42 Montgomery Road
Belfast
BT6 9LD

 statistics@psni.police.uk

 028 9065 0222 Ext. 24135

Web [PSNI Statistics](#)

In the 12 months from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026:

- There were 31,558 domestic abuse incidents in Northern Ireland, an increase of 1,824 (6.1 per cent) on the previous 12 months.
- The number of domestic abuse crimes rose to 18,748, an increase of 381 (2.1 per cent) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 16 domestic abuse incidents and 10 domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population.
- There were increases across all major offence classifications, with the exception of criminal damage and breach of non-molestation orders.
- The largest volume increase in domestic abuse crimes was seen within violence against the person which rose by 201 (1.4 per cent). Within this classification Violence with Injury fell by 2, Violence without injury decreased by 30 (-0.5%), and Stalking and Harassment increased by 233 (6.6%).
- Ten policing districts showed an increase in the number of domestic abuse incidents, and nine policing districts showed an increase in the number of domestic abuse crimes.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Contents..... | 2 |
| 1. Things you need to know about this release | 3 |
| 2. What is happening to levels of domestic abuse incidents and crimes over the longer term? | 5 |
| 3. What has been happening to levels of domestic abuse incidents and crimes more recently? | 7 |
| 4. What has been happening in policing districts? | 10 |
| 5. Background and Data Quality..... | 11 |

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

1. Things you need to know about this release

Coverage

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

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

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 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 [OSR website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) publishes figures on the levels and trends in police recorded domestic abuse incidents and crimes. As these figures only relate to those domestic abuse incidents reported to the police, they only provide an indication of the true extent of domestic abuse. The statistics are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Collation of this data started in 2004/05.

This release presents statistics relating to domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded by the police to 31st March 2026 (financial year 2025/26). Revisions have been applied to figures recorded in previous financial years.

All tables and charts in the bulletin, along with supplementary data, are available from the PSNI website in the [domestic abuse spreadsheet for March 2026 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The next update covering the 12 months to 30th June 2026 will be published on 27th August 2026. A full [publication schedule \(opens in a new window\)](#) is available on the PSNI website.

Domestic Abuse Definition

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

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

The following will assist in the application of this definition:

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

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

Police recorded crime data is a victim oriented approach to crime recording. A crime will be recorded as having a domestic abuse motivation where it meets the relevant definition provided above. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a crime being recorded. Where crimes with a domestic abuse motivation are recorded, they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics.

Further details of the background and recording practice in relation to police recorded crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#). An explanation of what constitutes an incident and a crime is provided in Section 3.1 of this guide, while reference to domestic abuse incidents and crimes is available in Section 6. These recording practices, methods of counting outcomes and allocation of crime types apply equally to crimes with a domestic abuse motivation.

Points to note in this bulletin

Revisions: Revisions to figures for previous financial years are applied on an annual basis in May.

Incidents and Crimes: Domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police are included in the domestic abuse incident count and therefore the two should not be added together.

Offences where a police officer becomes a crime victim whilst attending a domestic incident in the course of carrying out their duty are not included in the domestic abuse crime figures; however the incident that was attended by police will be recorded as domestic abuse incident.

Stalking and Harassment (including malicious communications):

1st April 2017: recording of malicious communications started.

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

1st May 2023: the Home Office introduced a further change in respect of these 'behavioural crimes' by reversing the requirement to record the most serious additional victim-based offence. This latest change 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/behaviour 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 offence will only be recorded when it is deemed to be the most serious offence.

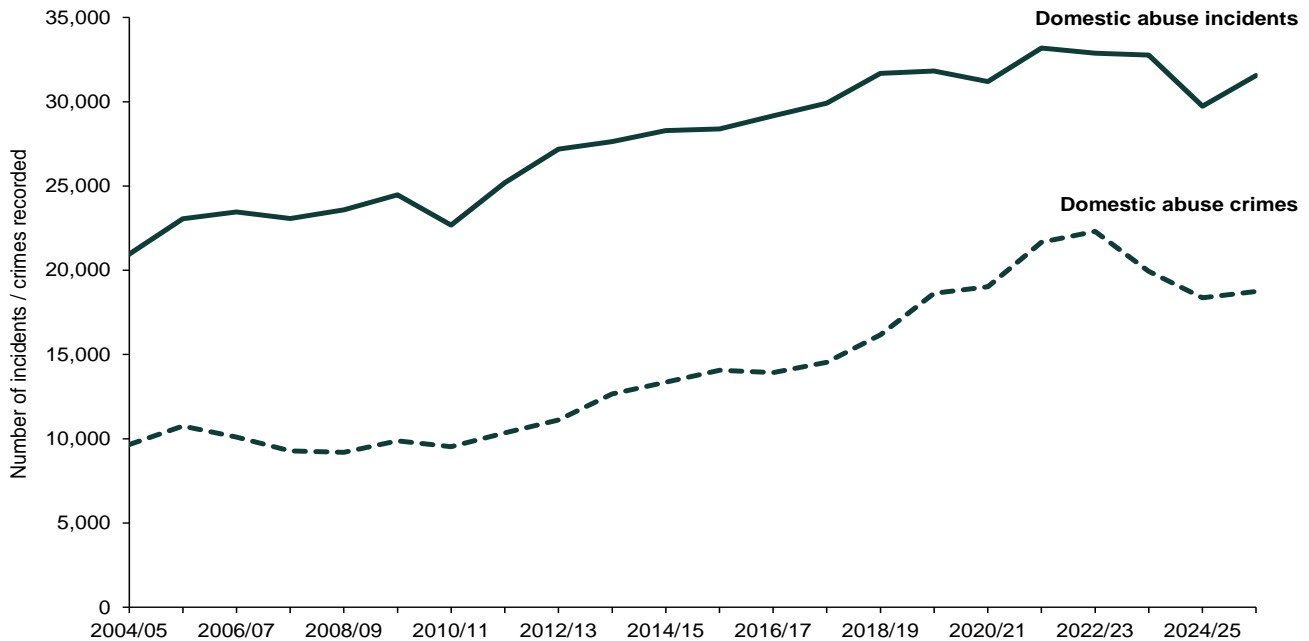
Controlling or Coercive Behaviour: The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 created a new Domestic Abuse Offence which criminalises a course of abusive behaviour (including coercive and controlling behaviour, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse and economic abuse). Recording of this offence started on 21st February 2022, and is included within the Stalking and Harassment classification. Further information on the Domestic Abuse Offence is available on the [Department of Justice website \(opens in a new window\)](#), and in Table 5 of the [domestic abuse spreadsheet for June 2025 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

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.

2. What is happening to levels of domestic abuse incidents and crimes over the longer term?

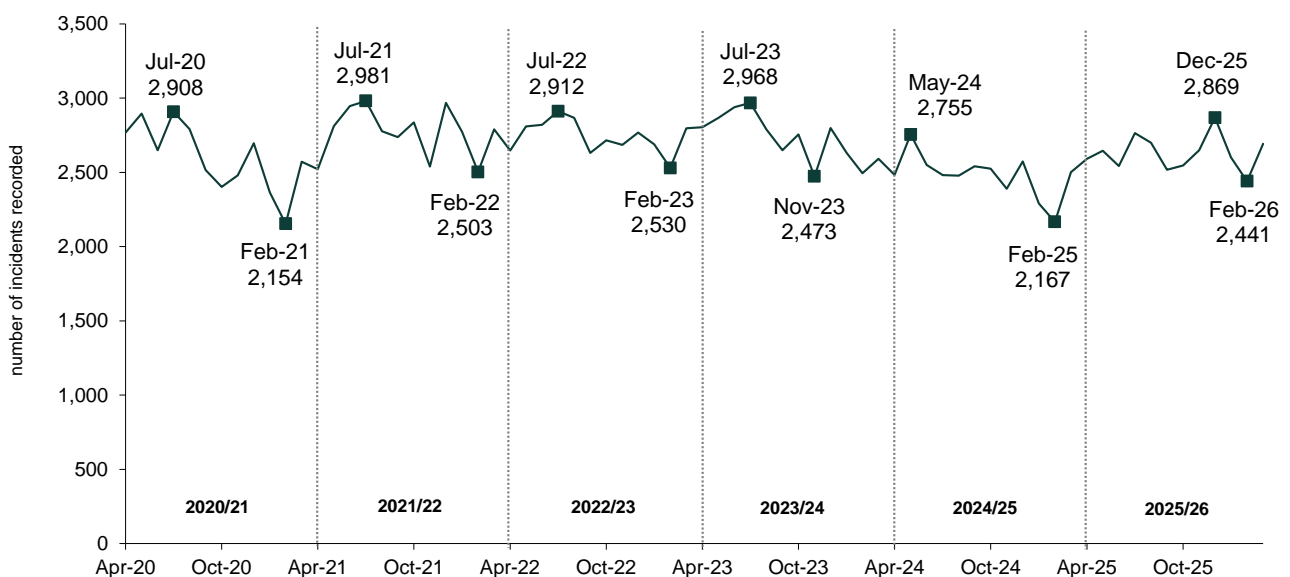
For most of the data series there has been a general increase in levels of domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded by the police. The number of domestic abuse incidents reached its highest level in 2021/22, more than one and a half times higher than the start of the series. The highest level of domestic abuse crimes was recorded in 2022/23, more than twice the level seen at the start of the data series. In 2023/24 and 2024/25 the number of domestic abuse incidents and crimes fell, before rising again in 2025/26. While lower than the highest levels of 2021/22 and 2022/23, domestic abuse incidents and domestic abuse crimes in 2025/26 remain higher than the start of the data series by one and a half times and two times respectively.

Figure 1 Trends in domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police since 2004/05



Since the start of the data series domestic abuse incidents have tended to be higher in the months leading up to the summer, during the summer and in December. Between 2020/21 and 2023/24 the highest number of incidents were seen in July. In 2025/26 the highest level was recorded in December 2025, the first time that December has recorded the highest level since 2018. The 2,981 domestic abuse incidents recorded in July 2021 is the highest monthly figure since the start of the data series in 2004/05. Figure 2 shows the pattern of domestic abuse incidents between April 2020 and March 2026.

Figure 2 Police recorded domestic abuse incidents each month April 2020 to March 2026, showing highest and lowest levels in each financial



More detailed statistics from 2004/05 are available through the publication [Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2024/25 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Changes in recording practice since April 2017

Since April 2017 changes in Home Office recording practice have affected what is required to be recorded by police, primarily in respect of crimes classified to Violence Against the Person. The biggest changes have been made to the approach to conduct/behaviour crimes (such as stalking and harassment).

- In Northern Ireland the recording of malicious communications started in April 2017.
- Between 1st April 2018 and 30th April 2023, conduct/behaviour crimes were recorded in addition to the offence that was deemed to be most serious. In practice this meant that for some incidents which previously would have resulted in one offence being recorded, the requirement was for two offences to be recorded.
- From 1st May 2023 this requirement to ‘double count’ has been reversed. Where a conduct/behaviour crime is deemed to be the most serious offence, this will now be the only crime recorded. The approach from this date is therefore more similar to what was in place prior to 1st April 2018.
- The table below shows a breakdown of the classifications within Stalking and harassment, demonstrating the changing levels over the period 2017/18 to 2025/26. 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 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 8L Harassment | 875 | 1,137 | 1,874 | 1,905 | 2,668 | 2,820 | 2,505 | 2,360 | 2,669 |
| 8Q Stalking | - | - | - | - | - | 113 | 124 | 128 | 116 |
| 8R Malicious Communications | 157 | 505 | 1,669 | 1,977 | 1,910 | 1,280 | 433 | 284 | 203 |
| 8U Controlling or Coercive Behaviour | - | - | - | - | 97 | 916 | 741 | 745 | 762 |
| Stalking and Harassment Total | 1,032 | 1,642 | 3,543 | 3,882 | 4,675 | 5,129 | 3,803 | 3,517 | 3,750 |

New legislation introduced since 2016

13th May 2016 – Under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 it is an offence to disclose or threaten to disclose private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress. More than half of offences of this nature that have been recorded by the police have a domestic abuse motivation. These offences are classified within Sexual Offences.

21st February 2022 - The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 created a new Domestic Abuse Offence which criminalises a course of abusive behaviour (including coercive and controlling behaviour, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse and economic abuse). All offences of this nature have a domestic abuse motivation. These offences are classified to Stalking and Harassment.

26th April 2022 - The Protection from Stalking Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 created offences to provide protection from stalking and threatening or abusive behaviour. Around two thirds of stalking offences recorded by the police have a domestic abuse motivation. These offences are classified to Stalking and Harassment.

For further information on recording practice and legislative changes, please see ‘Points to Note’ on page 4.

3. What has been happening to levels of domestic abuse incidents and crimes more recently?

In the 12 months from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026:

- There were 31,558 domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police in Northern Ireland, showing an increase of 1,824 (6.1 per cent) on the previous 12 months.
- The number of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police rose to 18,748, an increase of 381 (2.1 per cent) on the previous 12 months.
- There were 16 domestic abuse incidents and 10 domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population¹, compared with 15 domestic abuse incidents and 10 domestic abuse crimes recorded during the previous 12 months.
- Levels rose across all major offence classifications, with the exception of criminal damage and breach of non-molestation orders. [Table 1]
- The largest volume increase in domestic abuse crimes was seen within Violence against the person which showed an increase of 201 (1.4 per cent). Within this classification, Violence with injury fell by 2, Violence without injury decreased by 30 (-0.5%), and Stalking and Harassment rose by 233 (6.6%). The largest percentage increase of 16.0 per cent was within Sexual offences.
- The number of domestic abuse incidents was higher in each month when compared with the equivalent months in the previous 12 month period, with the exception of May, June and September 2025. The number of domestic abuse crimes shows a similar pattern when compared with the equivalent months in the previous 12 month period, with the exception of April, May, September and October 2025. [Figures 3 & 4]

Figure 3 Domestic Abuse incidents recorded by the police April 2024 to March 2026

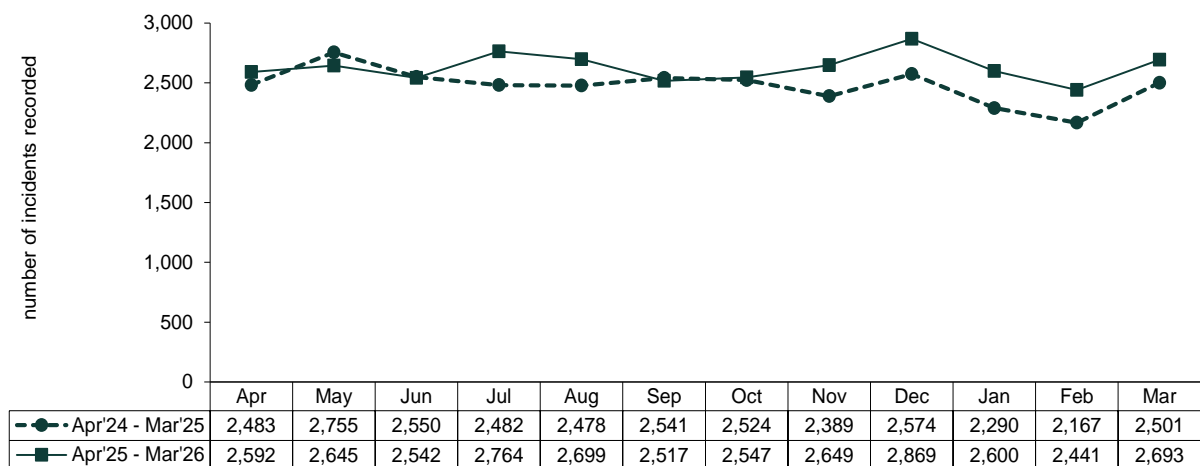
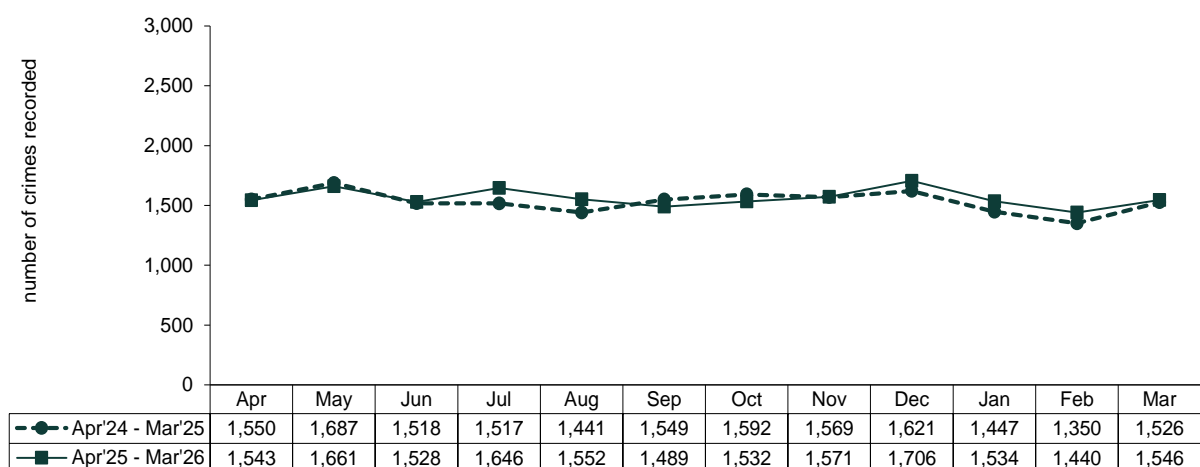


Figure 4 Domestic Abuse crimes recorded by the police April 2024 to March 2026



¹ Crime per 1,000 population based on mid-year population estimate of 1,927,855 for 2024, the latest mid-year estimate available at time of compilation. Mid-year population estimates are available from the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Domestic abuse homicide: In the 12 months from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 there were eleven homicides with a domestic abuse motivation recorded by the police, five higher than the level of domestic abuse homicides recorded in the previous 12 months¹. Seven of the victims were female and four were male, compared with six female victims and no male victims during the previous 12 months. Ten domestic abuse homicides were murder offences and one was a manslaughter offence. A further breakdown of these domestic abuse homicides by victim age as well as gender is available in the [Police Recorded Crime Monthly Update to 31st March 2026 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Figure 5 Percentage change in the main crime types for police recorded domestic abuse crime, 12 months to March 2026 compared with the previous 12 months

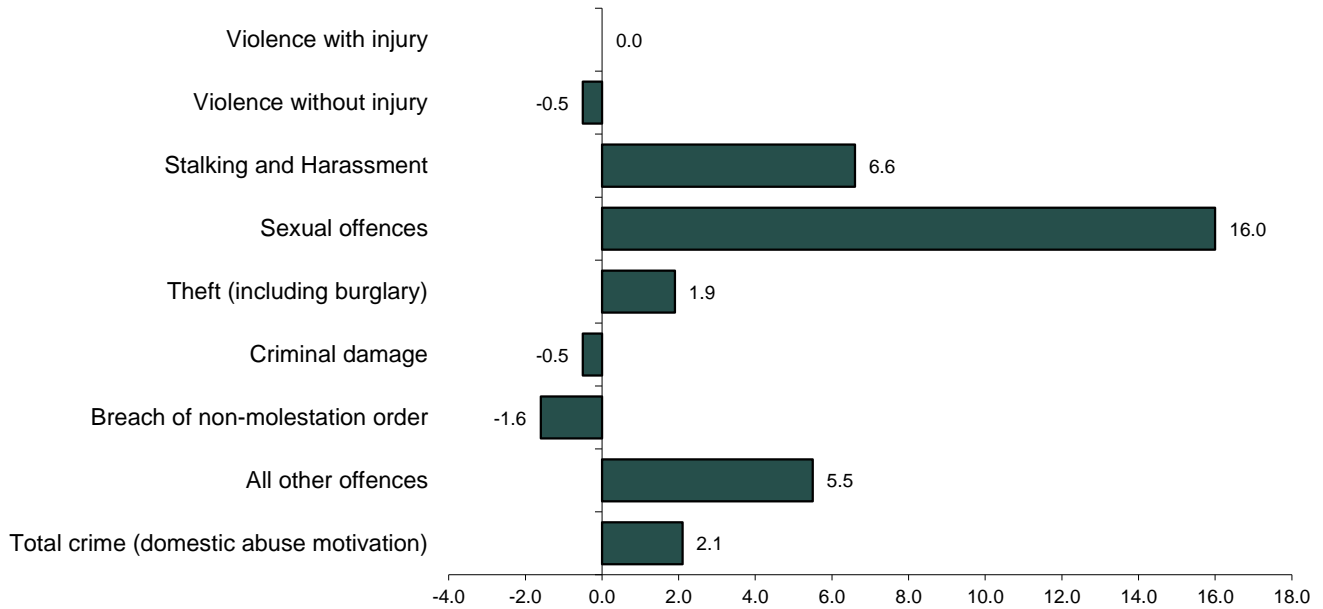
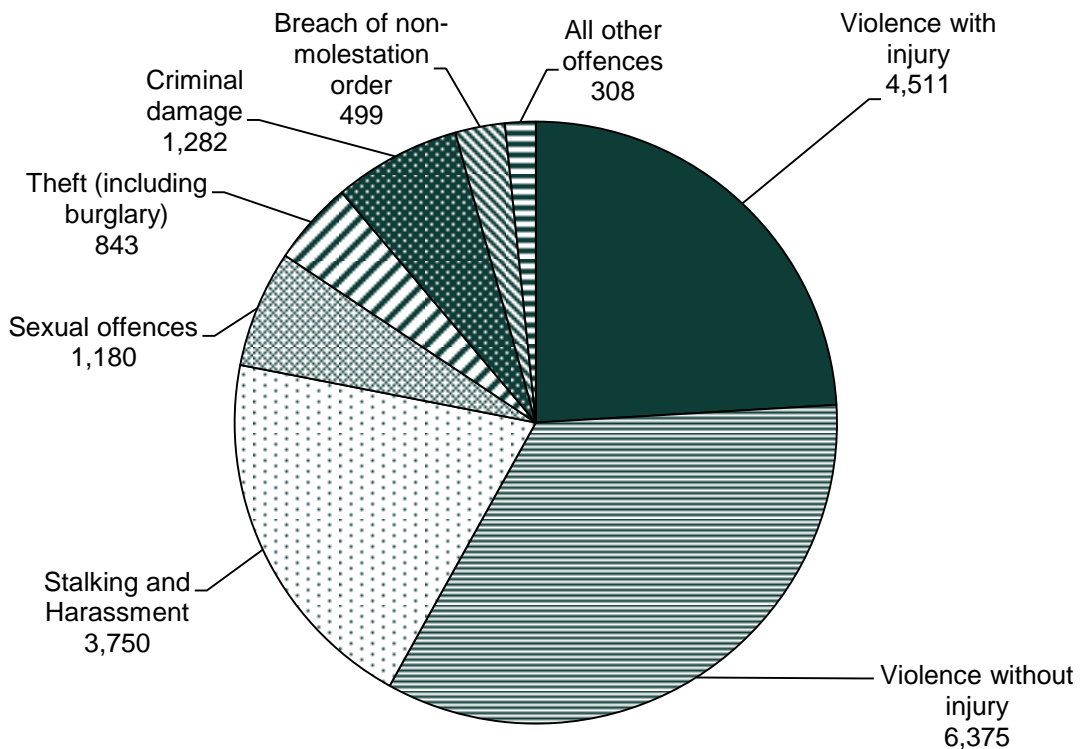


Figure 6 Police recorded domestic abuse crime by crime type, April 2025 to March 2026



¹ Homicide consists of the offences of murder, manslaughter, infanticide and corporate manslaughter.

Table 1 Domestic incidents and crimes recorded by the police

| | Apr'24 to Mar'25 | Apr'25 to Mar'26 | Change | % Change |
|--|------------------|------------------|--------------|------------|
| Incidents | 29,734 | 31,558 | 1,824 | 6.1 |
| Violence Against the Person Offences | 14,435 | 14,636 | 201 | 1.4 |
| <i>Violence with injury (including homicide and death or serious injury by unlawful driving)</i> | 4,513 | 4,511 | -2 | 0.0 |
| <i>Violence without injury</i> | 6,405 | 6,375 | -30 | -0.5 |
| <i>Stalking and Harassment</i> | 3,517 | 3,750 | 233 | 6.6 |
| Sexual offences | 1,017 | 1,180 | 163 | 16.0 |
| Theft (including burglary) | 827 | 843 | 16 | 1.9 |
| Criminal damage | 1,289 | 1,282 | -7 | -0.5 |
| Breach of non-molestation order | 507 | 499 | -8 | -1.6 |
| All other offences | 292 | 308 | 16 | 5.5 |
| Total crimes (domestic abuse motivation) | 18,367 | 18,748 | 381 | 2.1 |

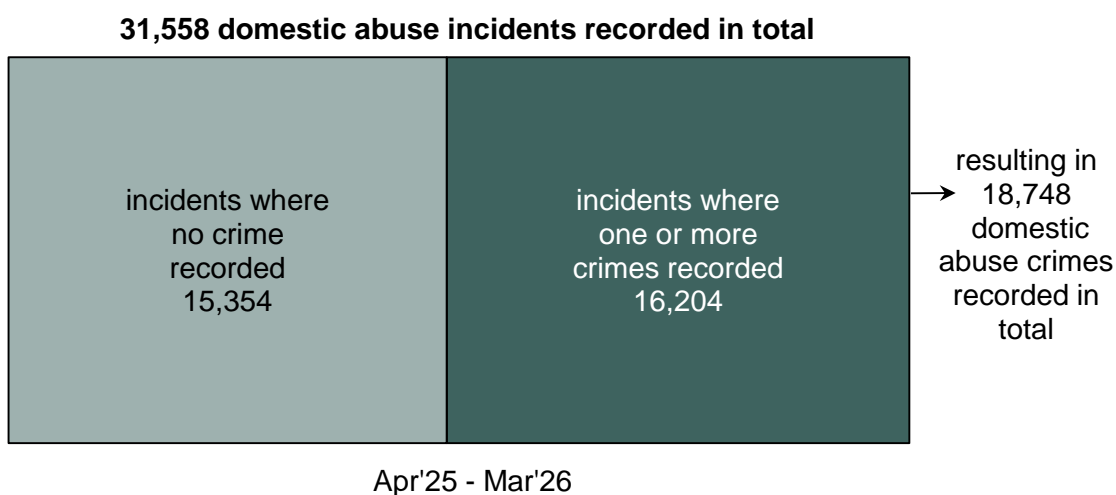
What is the difference between a domestic abuse incident and crime recorded by the police?

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

Figure 7 shows how domestic abuse incidents are broken down into those with and without crimes.

In the twelve months to 31st March 2026 there were 31,558 incidents recorded by the police where there was a domestic abuse motivation. Of these, there were 15,354 incidents which did not involve a crime (i.e. incidents where the circumstances did not amount to an offence being committed). The remaining 16,204 incidents involved one or more crimes (amounting to 18,748 domestic abuse crimes in total). Just under half of recorded incidents in this time period did not result in a crime being recorded.

Figure 7 Domestic Abuse incidents and crimes



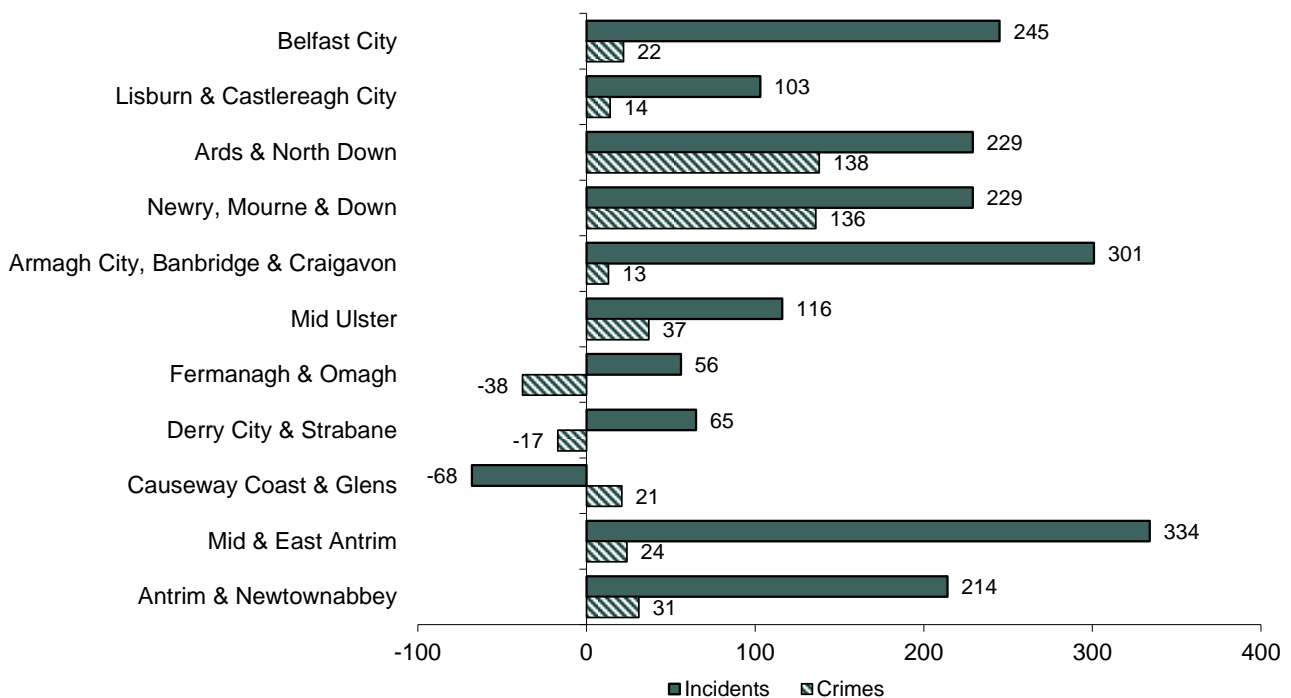
4. What has been happening in policing districts?

When comparing the current and previous 12 months, ten policing districts showed an increase in the number of domestic abuse incidents, and nine policing districts showed an increase in the number of domestic abuse crimes. Belfast City policing district, which accounts for more than a quarter of all domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, showed a 3.0% increase in the number of incidents and a 0.4% increase in the number of crimes.

Table 2 Domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded by the police, by policing district

| Policing district | Incidents Apr'24 to Mar'25 | Incidents Apr'25 to Mar'26 | Incidents change | Crimes Apr'24 to Mar'25 | Crimes Apr'25 to Mar'26 | Crimes change |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Belfast City | 8,084 | 8,329 | 245 | 5,146 | 5,168 | 22 |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh City | 1,668 | 1,771 | 103 | 985 | 999 | 14 |
| Ards & North Down | 2,085 | 2,314 | 229 | 1,276 | 1,414 | 138 |
| Newry, Mourne & Down | 2,578 | 2,807 | 229 | 1,582 | 1,718 | 136 |
| Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon | 3,259 | 3,560 | 301 | 1,878 | 1,891 | 13 |
| Mid Ulster | 1,723 | 1,839 | 116 | 1,022 | 1,059 | 37 |
| Fermanagh & Omagh | 1,575 | 1,631 | 56 | 768 | 730 | -38 |
| Derry City & Strabane | 2,870 | 2,935 | 65 | 1,886 | 1,869 | -17 |
| Causeway Coast & Glens | 1,966 | 1,898 | -68 | 1,136 | 1,157 | 21 |
| Mid & East Antrim | 1,968 | 2,302 | 334 | 1,381 | 1,405 | 24 |
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 1,958 | 2,172 | 214 | 1,307 | 1,338 | 31 |
| No district assigned | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Northern Ireland | 29,734 | 31,558 | 1,824 | 18,367 | 18,748 | 381 |

Figure 8 Change in police recorded domestic abuse incidents and crimes by policing district, 12 months to March 2026 compared with the previous 12 months



5. Background and Data Quality

Data collection and data accuracy

Data: The identification of a domestic abuse motivation is derived from a motivation ‘tick box’ on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime. The correct application of a domestic abuse 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. Domestic abuse crimes are included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland and these crimes are recorded in compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules. A comprehensive validation and quality assurance process has been set in place to ensure that the numbers and types of crimes being recorded meet the standards set down in these rules. Details of the data quality checks and processes that PSNI has in place are available in section 4 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Annual Revisions: Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year domestic abuse 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 2027. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the [Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime \(opens in a new window\)](#).

How the data is used

Domestic abuse statistics have been collated by PSNI in their current format since 2004/05. They are used widely within PSNI as management information and to monitor performance on domestic abuse related targets against the Policing Plan. The figures are also used by government departments and other voluntary and statutory agencies to inform debate and policy development regarding domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. Furthermore it is widely accepted that there is under-reporting of domestic abuse incidents to the police.

Additional data available to accompany this release

This release provides an overview of domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded by the police in the 12 months to March 2026. Additional Tables are available on the PSNI website to supplement the information contained in this bulletin. The data is available in both [excel spreadsheet and open document spreadsheet formats on the PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Web links to other information you may be interested in

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

[Domestic Abuse Annual Trends in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#): Annual figures on domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded by the police from 2004/05 to 2024/25.

[Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#): The latest publications, along with those that have been archived.

[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 2024/25 was published on 14 May 2026. The publication includes a section on outcomes relating to domestic abuse crimes.

[Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey \(opens in a new window\)](#), with survey results available on the Department of Justice website

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

[Domestic Abuse in England & Wales \(opens in a new window\)](#): Publications are available for information on domestic abuse in England & Wales. There are some key differences in how the definition of domestic abuse is applied within England & Wales compared with Northern Ireland that should be considered. Further details are provided in Section 7 of the Annual Trends bulletin (see link above).

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