



Home Office

Home Office Statistical Bulletin



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Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to September 2010

20 January 2011

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This Quarterly Update presents the most recent crime statistics from two different sources: the British Crime Survey (BCS) and police recorded crime. Neither source provides a total count of crime and each has its strengths and weaknesses. However, by presenting findings from the two series together we aim to present a balanced picture of trends in crime in England and Wales. For further information about the statistical sources refer to the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010).

The BCS results are based on interviews conducted over a rolling 12 month period. In this bulletin, results are from interviews conducted in the year ending September 2010. Recorded crime figures in this bulletin relate to crimes recorded by the police in the year ending September 2010.

MAIN POINTS

- Based on British Crime Survey (BCS) interviews in the year to September 2010, there was a decrease of five per cent in the number of incidents of BCS crime compared with the year ending September 2009. The number of crimes recorded by the police fell by seven per cent in the year ending September 2010 compared with a year earlier.
- BCS interviews in the 12 months to September 2010 showed that the risk of being a victim of crime was 21.4 per cent.
- In the year ending September 2010, there were decreases in all of the police recorded crime offence groups with the exception of sexual offences (which increased by 7%). The largest percentage falls were for criminal damage (down 18%) and offences against vehicles (down 14%).
- Levels of BCS violent crime showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year. Violence against the person offences recorded by the police fell by four per cent and robberies by five per cent.
- Numbers of BCS personal crimes showed a decrease of nine per cent compared with the previous year, mainly due to falls in theft from the person (down 18%) and other theft of personal property (down 12%).
- Levels of BCS household crime showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year. Within BCS household crime, there were falls in vehicle-related theft (down 15%) and vandalism (down 7%), while there was an increase in other household theft (up 16%).
- BCS burglaries showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year. Police recorded domestic burglaries fell by seven per cent and other burglaries by ten per cent.
- There was a six per cent fall in firearm offences recorded by the police compared with the previous 12 months.
- There was a decrease in the proportion of people with a high level of perceived anti-social behaviour in their local area compared with the year ending September 2009 (from 15% to 14%).
- BCS interviews showed that 52 per cent of people agreed that the police and local agencies were dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that mattered in their area, higher than the 50 per cent in the previous year.

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LEVELS OF CRIME

This Quarterly Update presents the most recent crime statistics from two different sources: the British Crime Survey (BCS) and police recorded crime. It focuses on the latest figures and short-term trends; longer-term trends can be found in 'Crime in England and Wales 2009/10' (Flatley *et al.*, 2010). It should be noted that in this Quarterly Update, six months of the data reported on overlap with the data contained in the annual bulletin (data for the months October 2009 to March 2010).

Based on British Crime Survey interviews in the year to September 2010, there was a decrease of five per cent in the numbers of incidents of BCS crime compared with the year ending September 2009. Numbers of BCS personal crimes showed a decrease of nine per cent but the apparent two per cent decrease in household crime was not statistically significant¹ (Figure 1 and Table 1).

The overall level of crime recorded by the police in the year ending September 2010 decreased by seven per cent compared with the previous year (Figure 2 and Table 2).

BCS interviews showed that the risk of being a victim of crime in the year ending September 2010 was 21.4 per cent. This level of risk of being a victim of crime remains at a 30-year low.

BCS interviews for the year to September 2010 showed no statistically significant change in the levels of violent crime compared with the year to September 2009; the apparent five per cent decrease was not statistically significant, and neither were the apparent decreases in the two sub-categories of BCS violence (violence with and without injury). The level of violence against the person² recorded by the police showed a four per cent fall compared with the previous year; violence with injury decreased by eight per cent and violence without injury fell by one per cent.

Police recorded robbery figures showed a five per cent fall from 78,578 to 74,584 offences in the year ending September 2010 compared with the previous year. The number of robberies involving knives also showed a fall, with three per cent fewer offences recorded (14,321 compared with 13,940 offences) in the year ending September 2010 (excluding West Midlands Police³) compared with the previous 12 months. More details are presented in Annex A.

There was a seven per cent rise in recorded sexual offences compared with the previous year, from 51,757 to 55,169. It is known that a high proportion of sexual offences are not reported to the police so caution should be used when looking at trends in these crimes. Additionally, since 2009 the police have reported taking some additional steps to improve their recording of sexual offences (for more information see Flatley *et al.*, 2010).

Provisional figures⁴ for firearm offences recorded by the police show they account for 0.2 per cent of all recorded crime. There was a six per cent fall in firearm offences from 8,263 to 7,764 in the year to September 2010, compared with the previous year.

Levels of BCS burglaries showed no significant change based on interviews to September 2010 compared with the previous year (the apparent 9% increase was not statistically significant). This follows a ten per cent non-statistically significant decrease in the year to September 2009 estimates compared to those from the previous year, with the latest estimate returning to those levels seen in previous years. In contrast, police recorded crime figures showed a fall of seven per cent in domestic burglaries compared with the previous year. Other burglaries recorded by the police also fell, by ten per cent, over the same period.

¹ See Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010) for more information on statistical significance.

² Police recorded violence against the person does not include sexual offences or robbery.

³ Recording practice in West Midlands Police changed during the comparison period. See Annex A for further details.

⁴ These firearm offences cover those where a firearm is fired, used as a blunt instrument against a person, or used as a threat. These figures exclude offences involving air weapons.

BCS interviews for the year to September 2010 showed a 16 per cent increase in other household theft from the previous year. This increase was mainly driven by a 22 per cent increase in theft from outside the dwelling (theft from areas such as gardens and communal areas of flats; data not shown). Other components of other household theft showed no significant increase: theft in a dwelling (theft by someone entitled to be in the victim's dwelling, for example, a friend visiting) and burglary from non-connected buildings (such as garages or sheds).

Police recorded crime showed no percentage change in the overall category of other theft offences in the year ending September 2010 compared with a year earlier. This category includes offences such as theft from the person, shoplifting, cycle theft, and theft of unattended property.

Incidents of theft from the person, such as pick-pocketing, decreased by 18 per cent according to BCS interviews to September 2010 compared with the year to September 2009. There was a fall of two per cent in the number of offences of theft from the person recorded by the police.

There was a three per cent fall in recorded offences of bicycle theft. The apparent three per cent increase in BCS bicycle theft was not statistically significant.

BCS interviews for the year to September 2010 produced estimates for other theft of personal property that show a 12 per cent decrease compared to the previous year. This followed an 11 per cent (non-significant) increase reported in the year to September 2009 when compared to the year to September 2008, resulting in estimates returning to those levels seen in the previous years.

There was a fall of 15 per cent in the level of vehicle-related theft according to BCS interviews to September 2010 compared with the previous year. There was also a 14 per cent fall in police recorded offences against vehicles⁵ in the year ending September 2010 compared with the previous year.

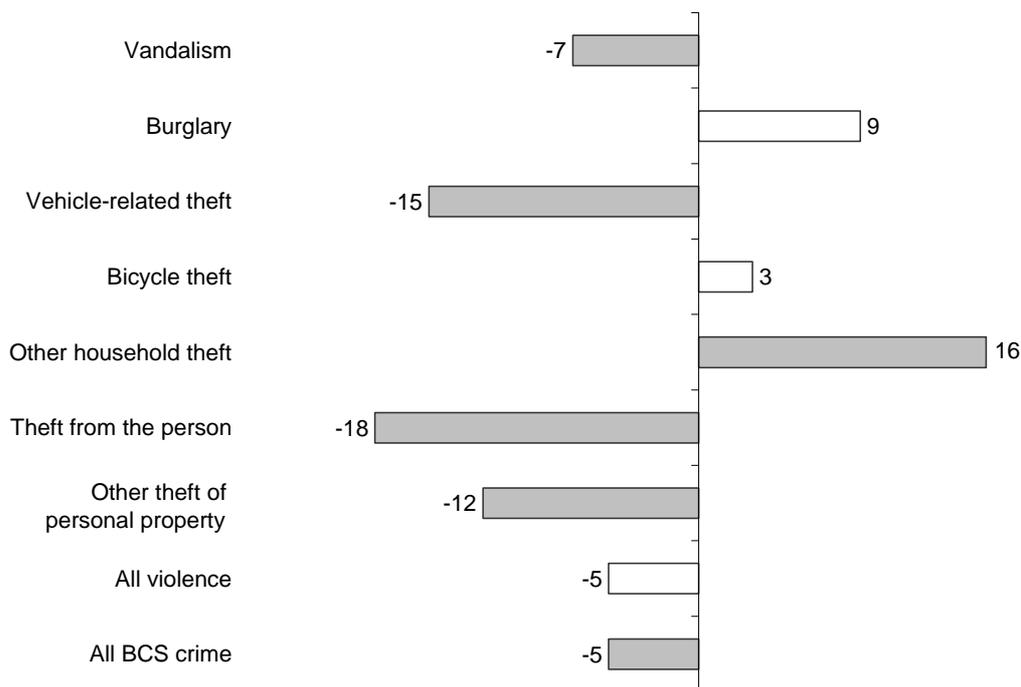
Both BCS and police recorded crime measures of criminal damage showed decreases, with police recorded crime being more marked. Based on BCS interviews to September 2010, vandalism decreased by seven per cent compared with the year to September 2009. Police recorded criminal damage fell by 18 per cent.

Drug offences recorded by the police fell by two per cent in the year ending September 2010 compared with the previous year. These recorded crime statistics are heavily influenced by policing priorities, and may reflect changes in the policing of drug crime more than real changes in its incidence. The BCS is used to monitor trends in drug use and figures are published annually (for more information see Hoare, 2010).

Fraud and forgery offences recorded by the police showed a one per cent fall in the year ending September 2010, compared with a year earlier. However, fraud offences are known to be substantially under-reported to the police and are not covered in the main BCS crime count. However, supplementary questions from the BCS together with figures supplied by the financial industry are now used in the annual crime statistics publication to provide a more comprehensive picture as to the scale and trend of fraudulent transactions (for more information see Flatley *et al.*, 2010).

⁵ Theft of and from a vehicle, aggravated vehicle taking and interfering with a motor vehicle.

Figure 1 Percentage change in BCS crime based on interviews in the year to September 2010 compared with the previous year



Changes in Figure 1 which are statistically significant at the 5% level are indicated by a fully shaded bar. Other apparent changes are not statistically significant at the 5% level. Statistical significance for the change in all BCS crime cannot be calculated in the same way as for other BCS figures (a method based on approximation is used). See Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010) for more information on statistical significance.

Figure 2 Percentage change in numbers of recorded crimes in the year to September 2010 compared with the previous year



Table 1 Number of crimes and risk of being a victim based on BCS interviews in the year to September 2010 compared with the previous year

| England and Wales, BCS | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| | Interviews from October 2008 to September 2009 ¹ | Interviews from October 2009 to September 2010 | % change between years ² | Statistically significant change ³ |
| <i>Number of incidents (000s) and percentage change⁴</i> | | | | |
| Vandalism | 2,454 | 2,271 | -7 | ** |
| Burglary | 652 | 710 | 9 | |
| Vehicle-related theft | 1,361 | 1,161 | -15 | ** |
| Bicycle theft | 495 | 507 | 3 | |
| Other household theft | 1,079 | 1,250 | 16 | ** |
| Household acquisitive crime | 3,587 | 3,629 | 1 | |
| ALL HOUSEHOLD CRIME | 6,041 | 5,899 | -2 | |
| <i>Unweighted base - household crime</i> | <i>45,220</i> | <i>45,062</i> | | |
| Theft from the person | 656 | 535 | -18 | ** |
| Other theft of personal property | 1,095 | 968 | -12 | ** |
| All violence | 2,137 | 2,032 | -5 | |
| <i>with injury</i> | <i>1,104</i> | <i>1,061</i> | <i>-4</i> | |
| <i>without injury</i> | <i>1,034</i> | <i>971</i> | <i>-6</i> | |
| Personal acquisitive crime | 2,050 | 1,787 | -13 | ** |
| ALL PERSONAL CRIME | 3,889 | 3,536 | -9 | ** |
| <i>Unweighted base - personal crime</i> | <i>45,182</i> | <i>45,011</i> | | |
| ALL BCS CRIME | 9,930 | 9,435 | -5 | ** |
| <i>Percentage risk of being a victim once or more and percentage point change⁵</i> | | | | |
| Vandalism | 6.9 | 6.3 | -0.6 | ** |
| Burglary | 2.3 | 2.4 | 0.1 | |
| Vehicle-related theft ⁶ | 6.0 | 5.3 | -0.7 | ** |
| Bicycle theft ⁷ | 4.1 | 4.1 | 0.0 | |
| Other household theft | 3.6 | 4.1 | 0.5 | ** |
| Household acquisitive crime | 11.2 | 11.4 | 0.1 | |
| ALL HOUSEHOLD CRIME | 16.7 | 16.3 | -0.4 | |
| <i>Unweighted base - household crime</i> | <i>45,220</i> | <i>45,062</i> | | |
| Theft from the person | 1.3 | 1.1 | -0.2 | ** |
| Other theft of personal property | 2.1 | 1.9 | -0.3 | ** |
| All violence | 3.1 | 3.0 | -0.1 | |
| <i>with injury</i> | <i>1.7</i> | <i>1.6</i> | <i>-0.1</i> | |
| <i>without injury</i> | <i>1.6</i> | <i>1.5</i> | <i>-0.1</i> | |
| Personal acquisitive crime | 3.8 | 3.4 | -0.5 | ** |
| ALL PERSONAL CRIME | 6.1 | 5.6 | -0.5 | ** |
| <i>Unweighted base - personal crime</i> | <i>45,182</i> | <i>45,011</i> | | |
| ALL BCS CRIME | 22.1 | 21.4 | -0.6 | |

1. BCS estimates based on interviews from October 2008 to September 2009 have been revised based on revised Labour Force Survey microdata and may vary slightly from previously published estimates. See Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010).

2. Percentage changes between years are calculated using rounded numbers.

3. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by a double asterisk. Statistical significance for change in all BCS crime cannot be calculated in the same way as for other BCS figures (a method based on approximation is being used). See Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010) for more information on statistical significance.

4. A percentage change of less than 0.5 is shown as 0.

5. A discrepancy may appear between trends in number of crimes and risk of being a victim (the proportion of the population victimised once or more) due to repeat victimisation.

6. Risk for 'vehicle-related theft' is based only on households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle. It includes theft of vehicles, theft from vehicles and attempted theft of and from vehicles.

7. Risk for bicycle theft is based only on households owning a bicycle.

8. For more information about the crime types included in this table, see Section 5 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics.

Table 2 Number of recorded crimes in the year to September 2010 compared with the previous year

| Numbers and percentage changes | | England and Wales, recorded crime¹ | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| Offence group | 12 months to September 2009 | 12 months to September 2010 | % change between years | |
| Violence against the person offences | 889,771 | 849,954 | -4 | |
| <i>Violence against the person - with injury²</i> | 416,028 | 383,018 | -8 | |
| <i>Violence against the person - without injury³</i> | 473,743 | 466,936 | -1 | |
| Sexual offences | 51,757 | 55,169 | 7 | |
| <i>Most serious sexual crime</i> | 41,262 | 44,721 | 8 | |
| <i>Other sexual offences</i> | 10,495 | 10,448 | 0 | |
| Robbery offences | 78,578 | 74,584 | -5 | |
| <i>Robbery of business property</i> | 9,166 | 7,872 | -14 | |
| <i>Robbery of personal property</i> | 69,412 | 66,712 | -4 | |
| Burglary offences | 572,813 | 524,414 | -8 | |
| <i>Burglary in a dwelling</i> | 280,806 | 262,012 | -7 | |
| <i>Burglary in a building other than a dwelling</i> | 292,007 | 262,402 | -10 | |
| Offences against vehicles ⁴ | 543,236 | 468,962 | -14 | |
| Other theft offences | 1,056,135 | 1,054,378 | 0 | |
| <i>of which:</i> | | | | |
| <i>Theft from the person</i> | 92,276 | 90,157 | -2 | |
| <i>Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle</i> | 112,128 | 109,294 | -3 | |
| Fraud and forgery offences | 152,722 | 150,535 | -1 | |
| Criminal damage offences | 900,003 | 740,891 | -18 | |
| TOTAL PROPERTY CRIME | 3,224,909 | 2,939,180 | -9 | |
| Drug offences | 238,837 | 234,841 | -2 | |
| Other miscellaneous offences | 70,458 | 69,634 | -1 | |
| TOTAL RECORDED CRIME - ALL OFFENCES | 4,554,310 | 4,223,362 | -7 | |
| <i>of which: Firearm offences⁵</i> | 8,263 | 7,764 | -6 | |

1. Police recorded crime statistics based on data from all 44 forces in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police).

2. Includes homicide, attempted murder, intentional destruction of viable unborn child, causing death by dangerous driving/careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs, more serious wounding or other act endangering life (including grievous bodily harm with and without intent), causing death by aggravated vehicle taking and less serious wounding offences.

3. Includes threat or conspiracy to murder, harassment, possession of weapons, other offences against children and assault without injury (formerly common assault where there is no injury).

4. Includes aggravated vehicle taking, theft of and from a vehicle and interfering with a motor vehicle.

5. Firearm offences are provisional. Excludes offences involving the use of air weapons and offences recorded by British Transport Police. Includes crimes recorded by police where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument against a person or used as a threat.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

Based on BCS interviews in the year ending September 2010, the proportion of people with a high level of perceived anti-social behaviour in their local area showed a decrease compared with the previous year (from 15% to 14%). Of the seven indicators that make up the composite measure, five of them showed a decrease since the previous year: abandoned or burnt-out cars, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, teenagers hanging around, rubbish or litter lying around and vandalism or graffiti. The indicators for problems with noisy neighbours or loud parties and people using or dealing drugs showed no statistically significant change (Table 3).

Table 3 Anti-social behaviour indicators

| Percentages | England and Wales, BCS | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | Interviews from October 2008 to September 2009 ¹ | Interviews from October 2009 to September 2010 | Statistically significant change ² |
| | <i>Percentage</i> | | |
| High level of perceived anti-social behaviour³ | 15 | 14 | ** |
| | <i>Percentage saying very/fairly big problem in their area</i> | | |
| Abandoned or burnt-out cars | 5 | 4 | ** |
| Noisy neighbours or loud parties | 11 | 11 | |
| People being drunk or rowdy in public places | 25 | 24 | ** |
| People using or dealing drugs | 26 | 26 | |
| Teenagers hanging around on the streets | 28 | 26 | ** |
| Rubbish or litter lying around | 29 | 28 | ** |
| Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property | 25 | 22 | ** |
| <i>Unweighted base⁴</i> | <i>42,769</i> | <i>42,494</i> | |

1. BCS estimates based on interviews from October 2008 to September 2009 have been revised based on revised LFS microdata and may vary slightly from previously published estimates - see Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010).

2. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by a double asterisk. For more information on statistical significance, see Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010).

3. This measure is derived from responses to the seven individual anti-social behaviour strands reported in the table.

4. Unweighted base refers to high level of perceived anti-social behaviour. Bases for each individual strand will be similar.

Based on the BCS interviews during the 12 months to September 2010, the proportion of adults with a high level of worry about burglary, car crime and violent crime showed no significant change when compared to the previous 12 months; the apparent one percentage point decreases for car crime and violent crime were not statistically significant (Table 4).

Table 4 Worry about crime

| Percentages | England and Wales, BCS | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| | Interviews from October 2008 to September 2009 ¹ | Interviews from October 2009 to September 2010 | Statistically significant change ² |
| | <i>Percentage with high level of worry about³:</i> | | |
| Burglary | 10 | 10 | |
| Car crime | 11 | 10 | |
| Violent crime | 14 | 13 | |
| <i>Unweighted base⁴</i> | <i>11,282</i> | <i>11,263</i> | |

1. BCS estimates based on interviews from October 2008 to September 2009 have been revised based on revised LFS microdata and may vary slightly from previously published estimates - see Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010).

2. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by a double asterisk. For more information on statistical significance, see Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010).

3. For more information about the worry about crime measures in this table, see Section 6 of the User Guide.

4. Unweighted base refers to high levels of worry about burglary. Bases for violent crime will be similar but for car crime they will be slightly lower as these are based only on those residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

The proportion of people who thought that the police in their local area did a good or excellent job showed an increase in the 12 months to September 2010 compared with the same period in the previous year (from 55% to 57%) (Table 5).

BCS interviews in the year to September 2010 showed that 52 per cent of people agreed that the police and local council were dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that mattered in their area, an increase from 50 per cent in the 12 months to September 2009 (Table 5). There has been a related decrease in the proportion of people who disagree with this statement (from 20% in the year to September 2009 to 19% in the year to September 2010) while the proportion who neither agree nor disagree remained at 29 per cent (data not shown).

Based on interviews in the year to September 2010, 42 per cent of people were confident that the Criminal Justice System (CJS) as a whole is effective, an increase from 40 per cent in the year to September 2009. BCS interviews also showed that 61 per cent of people thought that the CJS as a whole is fair, up from 59 per cent in the previous year (Table 5).

Table 5 Confidence in the police and CJS

| Percentages | England and Wales, BCS | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| | Interviews from October 2008 to September 2009 ¹ | Interviews from October 2009 to September 2010 | Statistically significant change ² |
| | <i>Percentage agreeing³</i> | | |
| Police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in the local area | 50 | 52 | ** |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 43,973 | 43,767 | |
| Police in the local area doing a good or excellent job | 55 | 57 | ** |
| Police are dealing with the things that matter to people in the community | 55 | 57 | ** |
| <i>Unweighted base⁴</i> | 44,340 | 44,023 | |
| | <i>Percentage confident⁵</i> | | |
| The CJS as a whole is effective | 40 | 42 | ** |
| The CJS as a whole is fair | 59 | 61 | ** |
| <i>Unweighted base⁶</i> | 43,741 | 43,408 | |

1. BCS estimates based on interviews from October 2008 to September 2009 have been revised based on revised LFS microdata and may vary slightly from previously published estimates - see Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010).

2. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by a double asterisk. For more information on statistical significance, see Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010).

3. Percentage saying they 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree'.

4. Unweighted base refers to police doing a good or excellent job. Base for the other measure will be similar.

5. Percentage saying they are 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'.

6. Unweighted base refers to effectiveness of the CJS. Base for the other measure will be similar.

NOTES

The latest British Crime Survey (BCS) figures are based on interviews with adults aged 16 or over resident in households in England and Wales conducted between October 2009 and September 2010 (BCS year ending September 2010) and incidents experienced by survey respondents in the 12 months prior to their interview. BCS results for the year ending September 2010 are compared with the results from the interviews in the year ending September 2009.

The BCS now also covers personal crimes against children aged 10 to 15 and experimental statistics were released recently for user consultation (Millard and Flatley, 2010). This consultation has closed, but final decisions have not yet been taken on whether to combine the results with those for adults. Therefore this publication is limited to respondents aged 16 and over. Further information about the BCS and access to recent publications can be found at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html>.

The BCS fieldwork was carried out by TNS-BMRB Social Research. In the year ending March 2010, the BCS had a nationally representative sample of 44,638 adults with a response rate of 76 per cent.⁶ The survey is weighted to adjust for possible non-response bias and to ensure the sample reflects the profile of the general population. Being based on a sample survey, BCS estimates are subject to a margin of error. Unless stated otherwise, all changes in BCS estimates described in the main text are statistically significant (Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010)).

For more information on statistical significance and confidence intervals for BCS data, see Section 8 of the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics (Home Office, 2010).

Recorded crime figures relate to crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in the 12 months to September 2010. Unlike the BCS, they do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police or those that the police decide not to record, but they do cover crimes against those aged under 16 and businesses.

Police recorded crime figures have been subject to a data reconciliation process with individual forces but remain provisional as forces can revise figures during the financial year. The annual National Statistics on police recorded crime at police force level are published after a fuller reconciliation and quality assurance process has been completed by the Home Office Statistics Unit in liaison with individual police forces. The figures are published as part of the annual bulletin in July.

Additional data

This bulletin shows recorded crime data for the 12 months to September 2010. National recorded crime data for individual quarters are also available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb0211prctab.xls>.

Figures at police force area level are also published alongside this quarterly bulletin at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb0211pftabs.xls>. These statistics cover a range of recorded crime offence groups and BCS findings on confidence and perceptions.

Recorded crime figures on a rolling 12 month basis going back to 2002/03 are also available at police force and local authority area level, at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/soti.html>.

⁶ Based on BCS interviews achieved during the year ending March 2010. The response rate for the year ending September 2010 cannot be calculated as finalised response figures are not yet available.

ANNEX A: VIOLENT AND SEXUAL OFFENCES INVOLVING THE USE OF KNIVES AND OTHER SHARP INSTRUMENTS

The knife and sharp instrument offences data reported in this bulletin exclude West Midlands Police unless otherwise stated. See 'Note on recording' for more information.

Knife and sharp instrument offences in the 12 months to September 2010 fell by six per cent compared with the previous 12 months (from 31,243 to 29,288). This is largely due to falls in the number of GBH and ABH offences and robberies involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument, which fell by ten per cent (from 14,914 to 13,357) and three per cent (from 14,321 to 13,940) respectively. These offence groups accounted for 93 per cent of the recorded knife and sharp instrument offences in this latest 12 month period.

The relatively low number of homicides, attempted murders, rapes and sexual assaults which involve the use of a knife or sharp instrument means that care should be taken when comparing these figures. Provisional data show that there were 202 knife or sharp instrument homicides in the 12 months to September 2010, the same figure as that recorded in the previous twelve months. Over the same period, the number of knife or sharp instrument attempted murders decreased by 55 offences, from 267 to 212.

The number of sexual assaults involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument has decreased by 16 offences, from 102 offences in the 12 months to September 2009 to 86 offences in the 12 months to September 2010. The numbers of rapes and threats to kill involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument have increased across this period, by nine offences and 45 offences respectively.

The proportion of selected violent offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the 12 months to September 2010 is six per cent, the same as for the previous 12 month period.

Table A1 provides the latest figures at the national level (excluding West Midlands Police, unless otherwise stated).

Note on recording

In 'Crime in England and Wales 2009/10' (Flatley *et al.*, 2010), it was reported that four forces were unable to separate unbroken bottle and glass offences from their data returns to the Home Office, which are outside the scope of this collection. From April 2010, West Midlands (one of these four forces) have improved their recording practices and now exclude these unbroken bottle and glass offences.⁷ This change affects national trends, so data for West Midlands have been omitted from Table A1, unless otherwise stated. This change has no effect on the main counts of violence against the person with injury published in the main part of this Quarterly Update.

It was previously estimated that the inclusion of unbroken bottle and glass offences by the four forces resulted in national knife and sharp instrument figures being overstated by about three per cent.⁸ This estimate was produced by collecting additional information from police forces. Using these previously collected data, it can be estimated that the overstatement from the three forces that include unbroken bottle and glass offences in their returns is around one per cent.

⁷ Prior to April 2010, four forces included unbroken bottle and glass offences in their returns. These were: West Midlands, Surrey, Sussex and British Transport Police. Since April 2010, West Midlands now exclude these offences from their returns.

⁸ This estimate was based on analysis of data from the April to June 2009 period. The overstatement of around three per cent was largely due to the inclusion of unbroken bottle and glass offences within the ABH and GBH categories. The use or threat of an unbroken bottle or glass was less common for other offence types.

Table A1 Number and proportion of selected violent and sexual offences involving knives or sharp instruments recorded by the police in the 12 months to September 2010, compared with the previous 12 months (excluding West Midlands unless indicated¹)

| Selected offence type | England and Wales, Recorded crime | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|-----------|---|-----------------------------|
| | Number of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument | | % change | Proportion of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument | |
| | 12 months to September 2009 | 12 months to September 2010 | | 12 months to September 2009 | 12 months to September 2010 |
| Attempted murder | 267 | 212 | -21 | 48 | 45 |
| Threats to kill | 1,427 | 1,472 | 3 | 16 | 15 |
| Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm ² | 14,914 | 13,357 | -10 | 4 | 4 |
| Robbery | 14,321 | 13,940 | -3 | 20 | 21 |
| Rape | 212 | 221 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Sexual assaults ³ | 102 | 86 | -16 | 0 | 0 |
| Total selected offences⁴ | 31,243 | 29,288 | -6 | 6 | 6 |
| Homicide ⁵ | 202 | 202 | 0 | 35 | 35 |
| Total selected offences including homicide⁴ | 31,445 | 29,490 | -6 | 6 | 6 |
| <i>including West Midlands¹</i> | <i>34,932</i> | <i>32,449</i> | <i>..</i> | <i>..</i> | <i>..</i> |

1. Data exclude West Midlands except for final total showing data 'including West Midlands', as indicated in the table. West Midlands included unbroken bottle and glass offences in their returns until April 2010 but now exclude these offences in line with most other forces (see 'Note on recording'). As such, their data are not comparable across this period.

2. Includes wounding or carrying out an act endangering life.

3. Includes indecent assault on a male/female and sexual assault on a male/female (all ages).

4. Three police forces include unbroken bottle and glass offences in their returns, which are outside the scope of this special collection. As such, data for these forces are not directly comparable to data for other forces. The three forces are: Surrey, Sussex and British Transport Police.

5. Includes provisional figures for April 2010 to September 2010. For October 2008 to March 2010, offences are those currently recorded by the police as at 28 September 2010 and are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available. Data for all years are reported in 'Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2009/10'.

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Further information

Copies of other Home Office publications are available from the Research Development and Statistics internet pages: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/>

For further information about Home Office crime statistics and crime statistics publications, including the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime, please e-mail crimestats.rds@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or write to Home Office Statistics, 5th Floor, Peel Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

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