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Home Office Statistical Bulletin



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Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to December 2010

20 April 2011

06/11

ISSN 1759-7005

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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 fuller picture of 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 December 2010. Recorded crime figures in this bulletin relate to crimes recorded by the police in the year ending December 2010.

MAIN POINTS

- Based on British Crime Survey (BCS) interviews in the year to December 2010, there was a decrease of three per cent in the number of incidents of BCS crime compared with the year ending December 2009. The number of crimes recorded by the police fell by six per cent in the year ending December 2010 compared with a year earlier.
- In the year ending December 2010, there were decreases in all police recorded crime offence groups except sexual offences and other theft offences (which increased by 3% and 1% respectively). The largest percentage falls were for criminal damage (down 17%) and offences against vehicles (down 12%).
- 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 six per cent and robberies by one per cent.
- Numbers of BCS personal crimes showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year. However, within the personal crime category there were falls in levels of acquisitive crime (down 14%) and other theft of personal property (down 12%).
- Levels of BCS household crime showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year. This masked some changes within this category, with a fall in vehicle-related theft (down 9%) and an increase in domestic burglary (up 14%). Police recorded domestic burglaries and other burglaries both fell by seven per cent and there was a fall of 12 per cent in offences against vehicles.
- There was a seven per cent fall in firearm offences recorded by the police compared with the previous 12 months.
- BCS interviews in the 12 months to December 2010 showed that the risk of being a victim of the crime the survey covers was 21.4 per cent (not a statistically significant difference from the previous year).
- The BCS also showed 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 December 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 51 per cent in the previous year.

This statistical bulletin is a National Statistics output produced to the highest professional standards and free from political interference. It has been produced by statisticians working in the Home Office Statistics Unit under the direct line management of a Chief Statistician, who reports to the National Statistician with respect to all professional statistical matters.

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. Neither source provides a total count of crime and each has its strengths and weaknesses. The Update 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, three months of the data reported on overlap with the data contained in the annual bulletin (data for the months January 2010 to March 2010).

Based on British Crime Survey interviews in the year to December 2010, there was a decrease of three per cent in the numbers of incidents of BCS crime compared with the year ending December 2009. Neither the number of BCS personal crimes nor the number of BCS household crimes showed a statistically significant change compared with the previous year (the apparent seven per cent decrease in personal crimes was not statistically significant¹) (Figure 1 and Table 1). The overall level of crime recorded by the police in the year ending December 2010 decreased by six per cent compared with the previous year (Figure 2 and Table 2).

In general, police recorded crime shows continuing reductions across most crime categories, while the BCS results, though down overall, are more varied. It is too early to tell whether the recent trend of both series showing similar patterns may be changing. This will be investigated in more detail in 'Crime in England and Wales 2010/11' to be published in July 2011.

BCS interviews in the year ending December 2010 showed that the risk of being a victim of the crime the survey covers was 21.4 per cent (not a statistically significant difference from the previous year). This level of risk of being a victim of crime remains at a 30-year low.

BCS interviews for the year to December 2010 showed no statistically significant change in the levels of violent crime compared with the year to December 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 six per cent fall compared with the previous year; violence with injury decreased by nine per cent and violence without injury fell by three per cent.

Police recorded robbery figures showed a one per cent fall from 76,244 to 75,123 offences in the year ending December 2010 compared with the previous year. However, the number of robberies involving knives showed a rise with three per cent more offences recorded (14,279 compared with 13,908 offences) in the year ending December 2010 (excluding West Midlands Police³) compared with the previous 12 months. More details are presented in Annex A.

There was a three per cent rise in recorded sexual offences compared with the previous year, from 53,091 to 54,602. There was a rise of six per cent in most serious sexual crime while other sexual offences fell by nine per cent. This is the sixth consecutive quarterly bulletin to show a rise in sexual offences, though there are signs this rise may be slowing. Since 2009 the police have reported taking additional steps to improve their recording of sexual offences, and it is also known that a high proportion of sexual offences are not reported to the police. For these reasons caution should be used when looking at trends in these crimes (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 seven per cent fall in firearm offences from 8,148 to 7,616 in the year to December 2010, compared with the previous year.

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.

Levels of domestic burglaries estimated from the BCS showed an increase of 14 per cent based on interviews to December 2010 compared with those in 2009. This follows a 12 per cent decrease the year before, with the latest estimate returning to the levels estimated from 2008 interviews. In contrast, police recorded crime figures showed a fall of seven per cent in domestic burglaries compared with the previous year, continuing the falls of earlier years; other burglaries recorded by the police also fell by seven per cent compared with the previous year.

BCS interviews for the year to December 2010 showed no change in other household theft from the previous year (the apparent eight per cent increase was not statistically significant). Police recorded crime showed a one per cent increase in the overall category of other theft offences in the year ending December 2010 compared with a year earlier. This category includes offences such as theft from the person, shoplifting, bicycle theft, and theft of unattended property. It should be noted that the BCS showed that the risk of being a victim of other household theft has risen statistically significantly, to four per cent.

Incidents of theft from the person, such as pick-pocketing, showed no change according to BCS interviews to December 2010 compared with the year to December 2009 (the apparent five per cent decrease was not statistically significant). There was a fall of one per cent in the number of offences of theft from the person recorded by the police. BCS interviews for the year to December 2010 produced estimates for other theft of personal property that show a 12 per cent decrease compared to the previous year.

There was a five per cent fall in recorded offences of bicycle theft. The apparent 12 per cent increase in BCS bicycle theft was not statistically significant.

There was a fall of nine per cent in the level of vehicle-related theft compared with the previous year according to BCS interviews to December 2010. There was also a 12 per cent fall in police recorded offences against vehicles⁵ in the year ending December 2010 compared with the previous year.

Police recorded crime measures of criminal damage showed a marked decrease for the year to December 2010, falling by 17 per cent. The apparent five per cent fall in BCS estimates of vandalism was not statistically significant compared with the year to December 2009. However, the BCS shows that the risk of vandalism has fallen statistically significantly (from 6.8% to 6.3%).

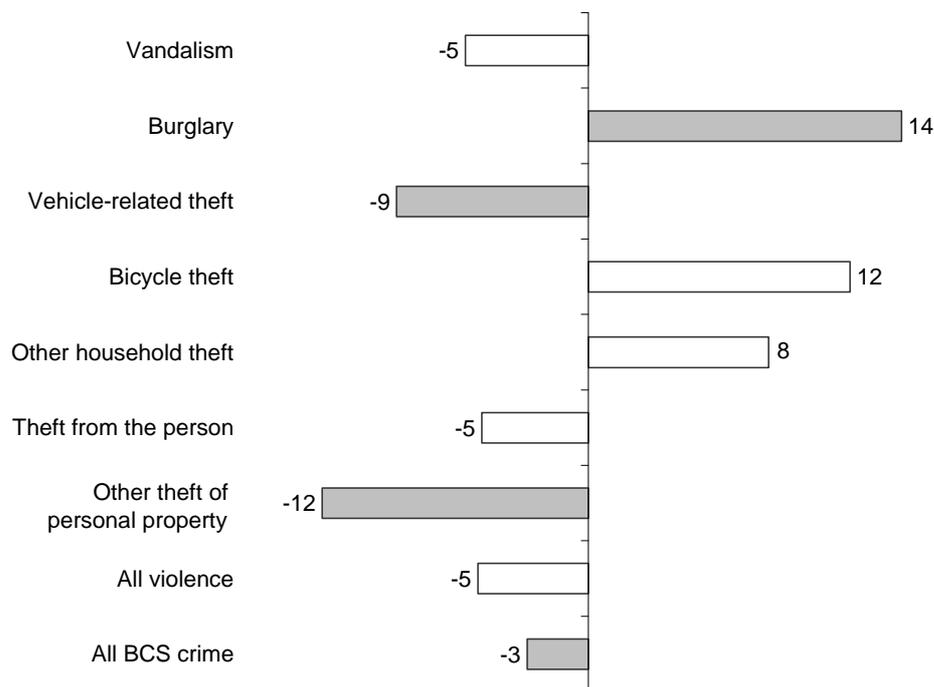
Drug offences recorded by the police fell by one per cent in the year ending December 2010 compared with the previous year. These recorded crime statistics are heavily influenced by policing priorities, and may reflect changes in the policing of drug crime more than real changes in its incidence. The 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 two per cent fall in the year ending December 2010, compared with a year earlier. 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). New questions on other aspects of fraud have been developed and will be added to the British Crime Survey from April 2011.⁶

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

⁶ First results from these questions will be available in 2012.

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

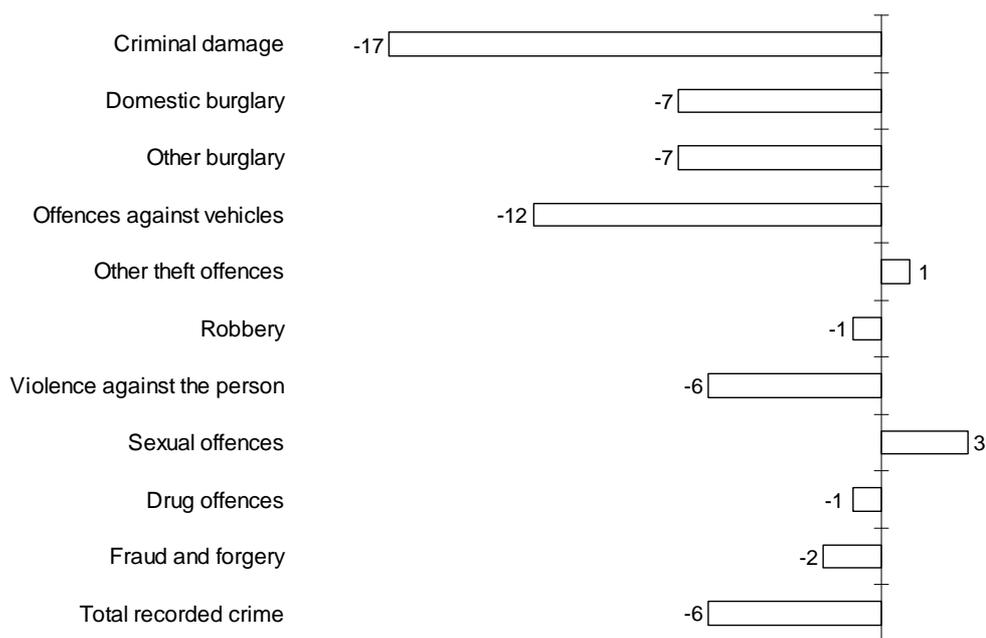


Table 1 Number of crimes and risk of being a victim based on BCS interviews in the year to December 2010 compared with the previous year

England and Wales, BCS				
	Interviews from January 2009 to December 2009 ¹	Interviews from January 2010 to December 2010	% change between years	Statistically significant change ²
<i>Number of incidents (000s) and percentage change³</i>				
Vandalism	2,421	2,289	-5	
Burglary	644	734	14	**
Vehicle-related theft	1,293	1,183	-9	**
Bicycle theft	477	533	12	
Other household theft	1,136	1,227	8	
Household acquisitive crime	3,550	3,676	4	
ALL HOUSEHOLD CRIME	5,971	5,965	0	
<i>Unweighted base - household crime</i>	<i>45,750</i>	<i>45,838</i>		
Theft from the person	566	539	-5	
Other theft of personal property	1,074	947	-12	**
All violence	2,140	2,035	-5	
<i>with injury</i>	1,119	1,100	-2	
<i>without injury</i>	1,021	935	-8	
Personal acquisitive crime	1,997	1,712	-14	**
ALL PERSONAL CRIME	3,780	3,520	-7	
<i>Unweighted base - personal crime</i>	<i>45,710</i>	<i>45,862</i>		
ALL BCS CRIME	9,751	9,485	-3	**
<i>Percentage risk of being a victim once or more and percentage point change⁴</i>				
Vandalism	6.8	6.3	-0.5	**
Burglary	2.3	2.5	0.3	**
Vehicle-related theft ⁵	5.8	5.4	-0.4	**
Bicycle theft ⁶	3.9	4.3	0.4	
Other household theft	3.7	4.0	0.3	**
Household acquisitive crime	11.2	11.5	0.3	
ALL HOUSEHOLD CRIME	16.6	16.4	-0.2	
<i>Unweighted base - household crime</i>	<i>45,750</i>	<i>45,838</i>		
Theft from the person	1.2	1.1	-0.1	
Other theft of personal property	2.1	1.8	-0.3	**
All violence	3.1	2.9	-0.2	
<i>with injury</i>	1.7	1.6	-0.1	
<i>without injury</i>	1.6	1.4	-0.2	
Personal acquisitive crime	3.8	3.3	-0.5	**
ALL PERSONAL CRIME	6.0	5.5	-0.4	**
<i>Unweighted base - personal crime</i>	<i>45,710</i>	<i>45,862</i>		
ALL BCS CRIME	22.0	21.4	-0.6	

1. BCS estimates based on interviews from January 2009 to December 2009 have been revised based on revised Labour Force Survey (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. 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 for more information on statistical significance.

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

4. 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.

5. 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.

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

7. For more information about the crime types included in this table, see Section 5 of the User Guide.

Table 2 Recorded crimes in the year to December 2010 compared with the previous year

Numbers and percentage changes		England and Wales, recorded crime¹		
Offence group	12 months to December 2009	12 months to December 2010	% change between years	
Violence against the person offences	884,301	833,152	-6	
<i>Violence against the person - with injury²</i>	411,855	373,474	-9	
<i>Violence against the person - without injury³</i>	472,446	459,678	-3	
Sexual offences	53,091	54,602	3	
<i>Most serious sexual crime</i>	42,187	44,693	6	
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	10,904	9,909	-9	
Robbery offences	76,244	75,123	-1	
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	8,690	7,916	-9	
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	67,554	67,207	-1	
Burglary offences	557,689	519,356	-7	
<i>Burglary in a dwelling</i>	275,951	257,885	-7	
<i>Burglary in a building other than a dwelling</i>	281,738	261,471	-7	
Offences against vehicles	516,122	456,426	-12	
<i>Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle</i>	124,599	107,437	-14	
<i>Theft from a vehicle</i>	350,545	317,830	-9	
<i>Interfering with a motor vehicle</i>	40,978	31,159	-24	
Other theft offences ⁴	1,045,642	1,057,720	1	
<i>of which:</i>				
<i>Theft from the person</i>	91,559	90,822	-1	
<i>Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle</i>	112,170	106,693	-5	
Fraud and forgery offences	150,962	148,280	-2	
Criminal damage offences	857,984	714,730	-17	
TOTAL PROPERTY CRIME	3,128,399	2,896,512	-7	
Drug offences	235,148	231,695	-1	
Other miscellaneous offences	70,356	68,384	-3	
TOTAL RECORDED CRIME - ALL OFFENCES	4,447,539	4,159,468	-6	
<i>of which: Firearm offences⁵</i>	8,148	7,616	-7	

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. Other theft includes a range of offences, including shoplifting and abstraction of electricity. The two sub-headings given here are provided for comparison purposes as they correspond to BCS categories.

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 December 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, three showed a decrease since the previous year: abandoned or burnt-out cars, teenagers hanging around and vandalism or graffiti. The other indicators for problems with noisy neighbours or loud parties, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, people using or dealing drugs and rubbish or litter lying around showed no statistically significant change (Table 3).

Table 3 Anti-social behaviour indicators

Percentages	England and Wales, BCS		
	Interviews from January 2009 to December 2009 ¹	Interviews from January 2010 to December 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	24	24	
People using or dealing drugs	26	26	
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	27	26	**
Rubbish or litter lying around	29	28	
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property	24	22	**
<i>Unweighted base⁴</i>	43,261	43,333	

1. BCS estimates based on interviews from January 2009 to December 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.

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 December 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 (Table 4).

Table 4 Worry about crime

Percentages	England and Wales, BCS		
	Interviews from January 2009 to December 2009 ¹	Interviews from January 2010 to December 2010	Statistically significant change ²
	<i>Percentage with high level of worry about³:</i>		
Burglary	10	10	
Car crime	10	10	
Violent crime	13	13	
<i>Unweighted base⁴</i>	11,401	11,421	

1. BCS estimates based on interviews from January 2009 to December 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.

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 December 2010 compared with the same period in the previous year (from 56% to 58%) (Table 5).

BCS interviews in the year to December 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 51 per cent in the 12 months to December 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 December 2009 to 18% in the year to December 2010) while the proportion who neither agree nor disagree remained at 29 per cent (data not shown).

Based on interviews in the year to December 2010, 42 per cent of people were confident that the Criminal Justice System (CJS) as a whole is effective, an increase from 41 per cent in the year to December 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 January 2009 to December 2009 ¹	Interviews from January 2010 to December 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	51	52	**
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>44,477</i>	<i>44,540</i>	
Police in the local area doing a good or excellent job	56	58	**
Police are dealing with the things that matter to people in the community	55	57	**
<i>Unweighted base⁴</i>	<i>44,850</i>	<i>44,796</i>	
	<i>Percentage confident⁵</i>		
The CJS as a whole is effective	41	42	**
The CJS as a whole is fair	59	61	**
<i>Unweighted base⁶</i>	<i>44,204</i>	<i>44,201</i>	

1. BCS estimates based on interviews from January 2009 to December 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.

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 presented in the bulletin are based on interviews with adults aged 16 or over resident in households in England and Wales conducted between January 2010 and December 2010 (BCS year ending December 2010) and incidents experienced by survey respondents in the 12 months prior to their interview. The BCS now also covers crimes against children but these are not included in this bulletin (see below). BCS results for the year ending December 2010 are compared with the results from the interviews in the year ending December 2009.

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.⁷ 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. 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 December 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, organisations such as businesses, and crimes 'against the state' i.e. with no immediate victim (e.g. possession of drugs).

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.

Experimental statistics covering BCS estimates of personal crimes against children aged 10 to 15 were released in June 2010 for user consultation (Millard and Flatley, 2010). That 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://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html>

Additional data

This bulletin shows recorded crime data for the 12 months to December 2010. Also available are:

- National recorded crime data for individual quarters.
- Figures at police force area level. 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 at police force and local authority area level.

All of the above can be accessed at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb0611/>

⁷ Based on BCS interviews achieved during the year ending March 2010. The response rate for the year ending December 2010 cannot be calculated as finalised response figures are not yet available.

Changes to future publications

The production of Crime Statistics for England and Wales is currently the subject of a review by the National Statistician, commissioned by the Home Secretary. This Review, which will lead to the publication of crime statistics moving out of the Home Office, is likely to make recommendations which will affect future publications. Further information on the Review is available at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-reviews/national-statistician-s-review-of-crime-statistics.html>

We anticipate that the Crime in England and Wales bulletin, which will be published on 14th July 2011, will be a more streamlined volume, with reduced commentary and a minor reduction in the number of data tables.

Future Quarterly Updates are also likely to be subject to change.

Changes to the 2011/12 BCS questionnaire

As part of the annual review of questions asked in the BCS, from April 2011 some survey questions will no longer be asked and others will be asked of a smaller number of respondents. This is a result of adding new questions to cover other areas of interest. This means that some measures currently included in quarterly and annual crime updates will no longer be available after July 2011. Questions no longer being asked from April 2011 include:

- agreement that the police in this area can be relied on to deal with minor crimes;
- agreement that the police and local council seek people's views about the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area;
- agreement that the police and local council keep people informed about how they are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area.

In addition, from April 2011 the number of respondents asked questions about their perceptions of problems in the local area will be reduced (from a full sample to a quarter sample) to allow for new questions on anti-social behaviour. This reduction in sample size may make it more difficult to detect significant changes over time in future and will also mean that estimates for these questions (and the composite measure of 'high levels of perceived anti-social behaviour') will no longer be available at police force area level.

New developments in recorded crime data collection

From 2011/12 Home Office Statistics will be putting into place a new data collection system that will collect disaggregate data on crime and police personnel. This will support the future collection of police recorded crime and also some new collections such as hate crime. The new 'Home Office Data Hub' is designed to align with Management Information Systems used in many police forces, allowing for the creation of automated extracts from one system to the other without the need for the completion of aggregate data collection forms. While there will be no immediate changes to our publications as a result of this new development, we hope it will deliver long-term cost reductions in our data collection processes and offer new and improved ways of analysing data in the future.

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 December 2010 fell by four per cent compared with the previous 12 months (from 30,560 to 29,259).⁸ This is largely due to falls in the number of GBH and ABH offences involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument, which fell by 11 per cent (from 14,660 to 12,998). Robbery offences involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument increased by three per cent (from 13,908 to 14,279) compared with a one per cent fall for all robbery offences. GBH and ABH and robbery offences 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 200 knife or sharp instrument homicides in the 12 months to December 2010, an increase of three compared with the previous 12 months. Over the same period, the number of knife or sharp instrument attempted murders decreased by 57 offences, from 263 to 206.

The number of sexual assaults involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument has decreased by 12 offences, from 97 offences in the 12 months to December 2009 to 85 offences in the 12 months to December 2010. The numbers of rapes and threats to kill involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument have increased across this period, by 24 offences (from 213 to 237 offences) and 35 offences (from 1,419 offences to 1,454 offences) respectively.

The proportion of selected violent offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the 12 months to December 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.⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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.

⁸ As reported in the April Quarterly Update, due to changes made to the collection in April 2008, it was not previously possible to present knife and sharp instrument data on the same rolling 12-month basis as other recorded crime statistics in this bulletin. The data are presented in this format for the first time in this update.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ This estimate was based on analysis of data from the April-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 December 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 December 2009	12 months to December 2010		12 months to December 2009	12 months to December 2010
Attempted murder	263	206	-22	46	46
Threats to kill	1,419	1,454	2	16	15
Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm ²	14,660	12,998	-11	4	4
Robbery	13,908	14,279	3	20	21
Rape	213	237	11	2	2
Sexual assaults ³	97	85	-12	0	0
Total selected offences⁴	30,560	29,259	-4	6	6
Homicide ⁵	197	200	2	33	34
Total selected offences including homicide⁴	30,757	29,459	-4	6	6
<i>including West Midlands¹</i>	<i>34,126</i>	<i>32,437</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 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 December 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.

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Further information

Copies of other Home Office publications are available from the Home Office Science internet pages:

<http://homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/research-statistics/>

For further information about Home Office crime statistics and crime statistics publications, including the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime, please email:

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