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## Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to June 2007

16/07

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## Main points

- British Crime Survey (BCS) interviews in the year to June 2007 show the risk of being a victim of crime has remained stable at 24 per cent compared with the previous year. This is around the lowest level since the survey began in 1981.
- The number of crimes recorded by the police fell by seven per cent for the period April to June 2007 compared with the same quarter a year earlier.
- There was no statistically significant change in BCS violent crime for interviews in the year ending June 2007 compared with the previous year. Recorded violence against the person for April to June 2007 fell by eight per cent compared with the same period in 2006.
- The BCS showed no statistically significant changes for burglary or vehicle-related theft. Recorded domestic burglary fell by three per cent for April to June 2007 and offences against vehicles fell by 12 per cent.
- BCS vandalism remained stable compared with the previous year; the apparent rise was not statistically significant. Recorded crime showed a ten per cent fall in criminal damage.
- BCS interviews to June 2007 showed a statistically significant decrease of ten per cent in all personal acquisitive crime.
- In the 12 months to June 2007 there were a provisional 9,712 firearm offences. This was a decrease of six per cent, or 639 offences, compared with the 12 months ending June 2006.
- The BCS showed no change in the overall levels of perceived anti-social behaviour. Levels of worry about crime also remained stable.
- Compared with the year ending June 2006, public confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) as measured by the BCS fell in five of the seven different aspects of the CJS, while confidence in the local police remained stable.

This update presents the most recent crime statistics from two different sources: the British Crime Survey (BCS) and police recorded crime. Both data sets represent the most up-to-date information, but they cover different time periods. The BCS results are from interviews conducted in the period July 2006 to June 2007; police recorded crime refers to the April to June 2007 quarter. Police recording practice is governed by Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime and by the National Crime Recording Standard. In its latest assessment of police data quality, the Audit Commission reported "better quality crime data than ever before" (see Notes section for more detail).

## Levels of crime

There was no change in all BCS crime, continuing the stable trend seen over the past two years. Based on interviews in the 12 months ending June 2007, the BCS estimates that 11.0 million crimes were committed against adults living in private households. The apparent changes in household (2% increase) and personal crime (4% decrease) were not statistically significant. The overall level of crime recorded by the police in April to June 2007 decreased by seven per cent compared with the same quarter in 2006 (Figure 2).

BCS interviews in the year to June 2007 show the risk of being a victim of crime has remained stable at 24 per cent compared with the previous year. This is around the lowest level since the survey began in 1981.

**Table 1: Number of crimes and risk of being a victim based on BCS interviews in the 12 months to June 2007 compared with the previous 12 months**

	Interviews in Jul 2005 to Jun 2006	Interviews in Jul 2006 to Jun 2007	% change <sup>(1)</sup>	BCS Statistically significant change <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Number of crimes (000s)</b>				
<b>All household crime</b>	<b>6,822</b>	<b>6,984</b>	<b>2</b>	
Vandalism	2,799	2,939	5	
Domestic burglary	725	740	2	
All vehicle-related thefts	1,708	1,675	-2	
All household acquisitive <sup>(3)</sup>	4,023	4,045	1	
<b>All personal crime</b>	<b>4,193</b>	<b>4,038</b>	<b>-4</b>	
Theft from the person	617	543	-12	
BCS violence <sup>(4)</sup>	2,368	2,387	1	
With injury	1,207	1,233	2	
With no injury	1,160	1,154	-1	
All personal acquisitive <sup>(5)</sup>	2,162	1,947	-10	**
<b>All BCS crime</b>	<b>11,016</b>	<b>11,022</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Percentage risk of being a victim once or more <sup>(6)</sup></b>				
<b>All household crime</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>18.6</b>		
Vandalism	7.7	7.8		
Domestic burglary	2.4	2.5		
All vehicle-related thefts <sup>(7)</sup>	7.5	7.3		
<b>All personal crime</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.5</b>		
Theft from the person	1.3	1.2		
BCS violence <sup>(4)</sup>	3.4	3.5		
With injury	1.8	1.9		
With no injury	1.7	1.8		
<b>All BCS crime</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>24.0</b>		

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

2. Statistical significance of changes is indicated by a single asterisk for significance at the 10% level, or a double asterisk at the 5% level (two tail tests). Statistical significance cannot be calculated for the change in all BCS crime. See Notes.

3. All household acquisitive comprises: burglary, vehicle theft, bike theft and other household theft.

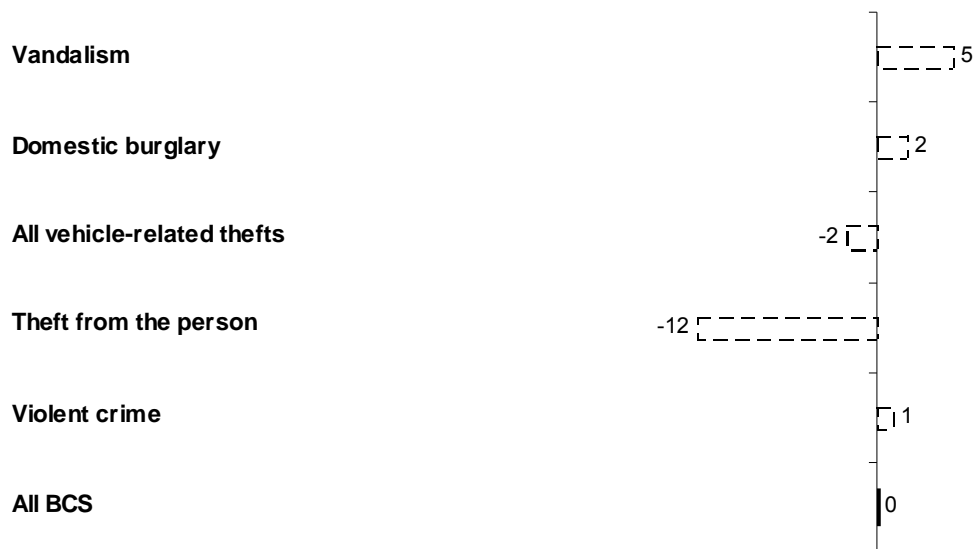
4. All BCS violence includes wounding, robbery, assault with minor injury and assault with no injury categories. Since year ending March 2007, BCS violence excludes snatch theft. To enable direct comparison, BCS violence for year to June 2006 also excludes snatch theft, therefore estimates will vary from those previously published.

5. All personal acquisitive comprises: robbery, theft from the person and other thefts of personal property.

6. A discrepancy may appear between trends in incidence rates (total numbers of offences) and prevalence rates (the proportion of the population victimised once or more) due to repeat victimisation.

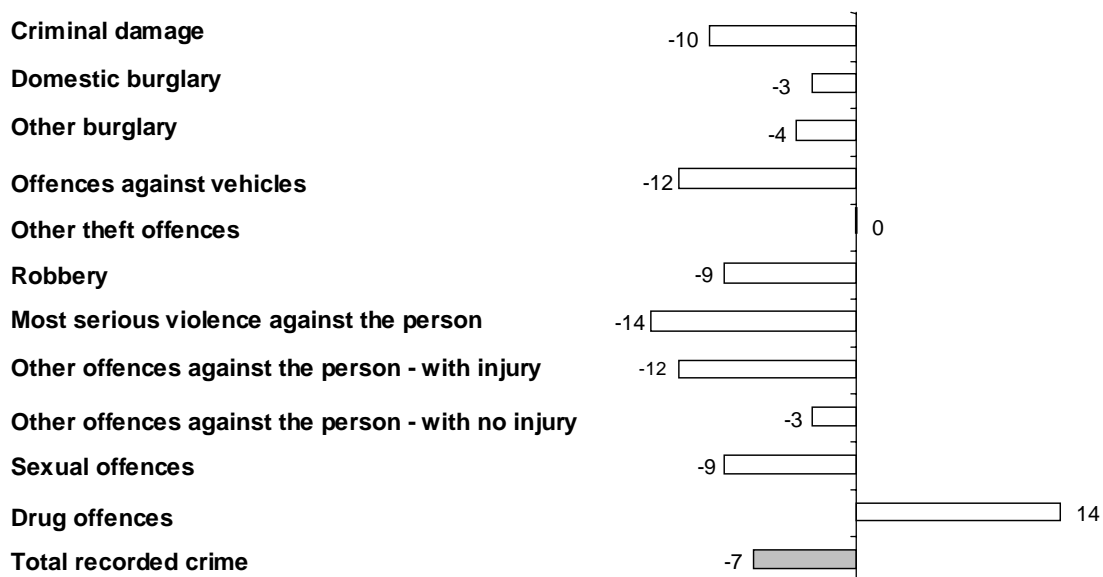
7. Risk for 'All vehicle-related thefts' is based only on households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle. It includes thefts of vehicles, thefts from vehicles and attempts of and from vehicles.

**Figure 1: Percentage change in BCS crime based on interviews in the 12 months to June 2007, compared with the previous 12 months**



Survey changes which are statistically significant at the 5% level (two tail tests) would be indicated by a fully shaded bar. Other apparent changes, denoted by dotted lines, are not statistically significant at the 5% level.

**Figure 2: Percentage change in numbers of recorded crimes, April to June 2007 compared with the same quarter a year earlier**



BCS interviews for the year to June 2007 showed levels of violent crime<sup>1</sup> to be stable compared with the year to June 2006; the apparent one per cent increase was not statistically significant. Within this category the apparent two per cent increase in violence with injury and one per cent decrease in violence with no injury were also not statistically significant.

The level of violence against the person<sup>2</sup> recorded by the police showed an eight per cent fall in April to June 2007. Within this category, most serious violence against the person fell by 14 per cent compared with the same period in 2006. The fall is largely due to a 15 per cent decrease in offences of more serious wounding or other act endangering life (data not shown).

Other violence against the person offences with injury recorded by the police in April to June 2007 fell by 12 per cent and those with no injury<sup>3</sup> fell by three per cent over this period. The decrease in offences with no injury follows successive rises in the previous three quarters.

Recorded robbery figures showed a nine per cent fall in April to June 2007 compared with the same quarter in 2006. There was a nine per cent fall in recorded sexual offences in April to June 2007 compared with the same quarter in 2006. The number of robberies and sexual offences identified by the BCS are too small to provide reliable estimates of trends.

BCS vandalism remained stable based on interviews to June 2007 compared with the previous year; the apparent five per cent increase was not statistically significant. Police recorded criminal damage showed a ten per cent fall in April to June 2007 compared with the same period a year earlier.

The BCS showed no statistically significant changes for burglary or vehicle-related theft. Police recorded crime figures showed continuing falls in recorded domestic burglaries, with a decrease of three per cent recorded in April to June 2007 compared with the same quarter in 2006. There was also a 12 per cent fall in offences against vehicles<sup>4</sup> in April to June 2007 compared with the same period in 2006.

BCS interviews to June 2007 showed a statistically significant reduction in all personal acquisitive crime<sup>5</sup>, a decrease of ten per cent, compared with a year earlier. The apparent 12 per cent decrease in theft from the person was not statistically significant.

Drug offences recorded by the police rose by 14 per cent in April to June 2007 compared with the same quarter in the previous year. The increases in this and previous quarters coincided with increases in the police use of powers to issue cannabis warnings.

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<sup>1</sup> BCS violence no longer includes snatch theft. See footnote 4 in Table 1 for more information.

<sup>2</sup> This definition does not cover sexual offences or robbery.

<sup>3</sup> Other violence against the person without injury includes common assault, harassment and possession of weapons.

<sup>4</sup> Theft of and from a vehicle, aggravated vehicle taking and interfering with a vehicle

<sup>5</sup> Personal acquisitive crime comprises theft from person, robbery and other thefts of personal property.

Fraud and forgery offences recorded by the police showed a 26 per cent fall in April to June 2007 compared with the same quarter of the previous year. Changes in the way cheque and plastic card frauds are recorded are thought to have contributed to most of the decline (see box below).

#### **Changes to the system of recording cheque and plastic card fraud**

The introduction of the Fraud Act 2006, which commenced on 15 January 2007, saw significant changes to offences in the fraud and forgery offence group. Cheque and plastic card fraud is now counted on the basis of the number of accounts defrauded, as opposed to the number of fraudulent transactions on each account.

From 1 April 2007, an account holder who suspects fraud on their account is required to report the matter to their financial institution, who will, in most circumstances, then determine whether to report the crime to the police. The new system was introduced to reduce considerable bureaucracy surrounding the reporting of fraud, where a report of crime made by a member of the public would also then normally require the police to contact the financial institution to determine whether a fraud had actually occurred.

These changes mean that fraud and forgery figures recorded by the police are not directly comparable with previous figures. However, fraud and forgery offences are known to be substantially under reported. Cheque and plastic card frauds recorded by the police showed 59 thousand offences in 2006/07 compared with much larger numbers of fraudulent transactions recorded by APACS (the UK Payments Association) across the UK as a whole (2.3 million in 2006). This is why the last annual bulletin on crime (Nicholas et al., 2007) drew particular attention to trends as measured by the APACS figures.

### **Public perceptions**

BCS interviews during the 12 months to June 2007 showed that the proportion of adults with a high level of worry about burglary, car crime and violent crime remained stable compared with the previous year (Table 2).

The overall proportion of people who perceived a high level of anti-social behaviour in their local area in the year ending June 2007 remained stable at 17 per cent compared with the previous 12 month period. For the individual indicators of anti-social behaviour the only statistically significant change was for perceived problems with abandoned or burnt out cars, which continued to show a decrease (Table 3).

In the year to June 2007, public confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) as measured by the BCS fell in five of the seven different aspects of the CJS, compared with the year ending June 2006 (Table 4).

BCS data for this period for victim and witness satisfaction with the police and CJS can be found at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb1607tab.pdf>

The proportion of people who thought that the police in their area did an excellent or good job remained stable in the 12 months to June 2007 compared with the previous year; the apparent increase from 51 per cent to 52 per cent was not statistically significant (data not shown).

**Table 2: Fear of crime**

<i>Percentage very worried</i>			<b>BCS</b>
	Interviews in Jul 2005 to Jun 2006	Interviews in Jul 2006 to Jun 2007	Statistically significant change <sup>(1)</sup>
High level of worry about <sup>(2)</sup> :			
Burglary	12	12	
Car crime	13	13	
Violent crime	17	16	

1. Statistical significance of changes is indicated by a single asterisk for significance at the 10% level, or a double asterisk at the 5% level (two tail tests). See Notes for an explanation of statistical significance.
2. See Nicholas *et al.* (2007) for more information on the definitions of the fear of crime indicators.

**Table 3: Anti-social behaviour indicators**

<i>Percentage saying very/fairly big problem in their area</i>			<b>BCS</b>
	Interviews in Jul 2005 to Jun 2006	Interviews in Jul 2006 to Jun 2007	Statistically significant change <sup>(1)</sup>
High level of perceived anti-social behaviour <sup>(2)</sup>			
Abandoned or burnt-out cars	10	8	**↓
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	10	11	*
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	25	25	*(3)
People using or dealing drugs	27	27	
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	33	32	
Rubbish or litter lying around	30	31	
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property	28	28	

1. Statistical significance of changes is indicated by a single asterisk for significance at the 10% level, or a double asterisk at the 5% level (two tail tests). See Notes for an explanation of statistical significance.
2. This measure is derived from responses to the seven individual anti-social behaviour strands reported in the table.
3. The rounded figures for People being drunk or rowdy in public places mask a change from 24.7% to 25.5%, which is statistically significant at the 10% level.

**Table 4: Public confidence in the criminal justice system**

<i>Percentage very/fairly confident</i>			<b>BCS</b>
	Interviews in Jul 2005 to Jun 2006	Interviews in Jul 2006 to Jun 2007	Statistically significant change <sup>(1)</sup>
Respects the rights of people accused of committing a crime and treats them fairly	80	79	*
Effective in bringing people who commit crimes to justice	44	42	**↓
Deals with cases promptly and efficiently	41	40	**↓
Effective at reducing crime	39	36	**↓
Meets the needs of victims of crime	36	34	**↓
Dealing with young people accused of crime	26	24	**↓
Treats people who come forward as witnesses well	69	68	

1. Statistical significance of changes is indicated by a single asterisk for significance at the 10% level, or a double asterisk at the 5% level (two tail tests). See Notes for an explanation of statistical significance.

## Firearm offences

Provisional statistics are available for recorded crimes involving firearms other than air weapons for the **12 months** ending June 2007. Firearms are taken to be involved in an offence if they are fired, used as a blunt instrument against a person, or used in a threat.

In the 12 months to June 2007 there were provisionally 9,712 firearm offences. This was a decrease of six per cent, or 639 offences, compared with the 12 months ending June 2006. Two thirds of firearm offences involve no physical injury.

**Table 5 Firearm offences (excluding air weapons): level of injury in England and Wales**

Nature of injury	Year ending June 06	Year ending June 07	% change
Fatal injuries <sup>(1)</sup>	53	56	+6
Serious injuries	435	388	-11
Slight injuries	2,862	2,654	-7
<b>Total Injuries</b>	<b>3,350</b>	<b>3,098</b>	<b>-8</b>
Threats	5,254	5,071	-3
No injuries	1,747	1,543	-12
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,351</b>	<b>9,712</b>	<b>-6</b>

1. Because of the small number of fatal injuries the percentage change should be treated with caution.

There was an eight per cent decrease in the total number of offences involving firearms resulting in injury in the 12 months to June 2007 (3,098 offences) compared with the previous 12 months (3,350 offences). Firearm offences resulting in fatal injury increased slightly, from 53 in the year to June 2006 to 56 in the year to June 2007. Serious and slight injuries both decreased, by 11 and seven per cent respectively in the year to June 2007 compared with the year to June 2006.

**Table 6 Firearms offences (excluding air weapons): type of weapon in England and Wales**

Weapon type	Year ending June 06	Year ending June 07	% change
Shotgun	613	608	-1
Handgun	4,430	4,177	-6
Rifle <sup>(1)</sup>	74	64	-14
Imitation firearm <sup>(2)</sup>	2,923	2,518	-14
Unidentified firearm	1,324	1,255	-5
Other firearm <sup>(3)</sup>	987	1,090	+10
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,351</b>	<b>9,712</b>	<b>-6</b>

1. Because of the small number of offences involving rifles, the percentage change should be treated with caution.

2. Imitation handguns, which are converted to fire bullets like handguns, are counted as handguns.

3. Other firearms include CS gas, disguised firearms, machine guns, pepper spray, stun guns and other specified weapons (majority are paintball guns).

There were 4,177 offences where handguns were used in the year to June 2007, a decrease of 253 offences (down 6%) compared with the year ending June 2006. Imitation weapons were used in 2,518 offences, a fall of 14 per cent or 405 offences.

**Table A Number of recorded crimes and percentage change compared with the same quarter in the previous year**

Offence group	Number of crimes recorded by the police (thousands) <sup>(1,2)</sup>					Percentage change compared with the same quarter in the previous year <sup>(3)</sup>			
	Apr-Jun 2006	Jul-Sep 2006	Oct-Dec 2006	Jan-Mar 2007	Apr-Jun 2007	Jul-Sep 2006	Oct-Dec 2006	Jan-Mar 2007	Apr-Jun 2007
Violence against the person	277.3	276.1	257.1	236.0	256.3	-1	-2	-2	-8
<i>Most serious violence against the person</i> <sup>(4)</sup>	5.2	5.3	4.6	4.0	4.4	-9	-11	-9	-14
<i>Other violence against the person - with injury</i> <sup>(5)</sup>	132.1	129.0	117.7	108.7	116.6	-7	-10	-5	-12
<i>Other violence against the person - with no injury</i> <sup>(6)</sup>	140.0	141.8	134.7	123.3	135.3	6	7	1	-3
Sexual offences	15.7	15.8	13.2	12.8	14.3	-5	-12	-7	-9
Robbery	25.4	24.2	26.6	25.2	23.1	1	8	-1	-9
Domestic burglary	69.4	73.1	76.3	73.5	67.1	-3	-3	-1	-3
Other burglary	84.9	79.3	81.6	83.9	81.1	-7	-4	0	-4
Offences against vehicles <sup>(7)</sup>	193.9	185.3	196.0	189.8	170.4	-5	-2	-6	-12
Other theft offences	302.2	305.3	293.9	279.6	302.6	-5	-3	-1	0
Fraud and forgery <sup>(8)</sup>	54.4	53.0	48.1	44.3	40.3	-13	-14	-17	-26
Criminal damage	301.2	281.3	309.7	292.9	271.3	1	1	-2	-10
<i>Total property crime</i>	1,006.0	977.3	1,005.7	964.0	932.8	-4	-2	-3	-7
Drug offences	48.3	46.2	48.5	51.3	55.0	10	4	7	14
Other miscellaneous offences	21.0	19.5	18.1	17.0	18.1	-2	-4	-5	-14
<b>Total recorded crime - all offences</b>	<b>1,393.8</b>	<b>1,359.1</b>	<b>1,369.2</b>	<b>1,306.3</b>	<b>1,299.5</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-7</b>

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

2. The figures given in the table are the latest available. They may therefore differ slightly from figures published in previous bulletins.

3. Comparisons are made with the same quarter in the preceding year in order to take into account seasonality. Comparisons with the previous quarter are not shown.

4. Most serious violence against the person 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 and other act endangering life and causing death by aggravated vehicle taking.

5. Other violence against the person - with injury comprises less serious wounding offences.

6. Other violence against the person - with no injury includes harassment, possession of weapons, other offences against children and assault without injury (formerly common assault where there is no injury).

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

8. The Fraud Act 2006, introduced in January 2007, altered the definition, coverage and some counting rules for fraud offences (see page 5).

## Notes

The latest British Crime Survey (BCS) figures are based on interviews with adults aged 16 or over living in private households in England and Wales conducted between July 2006 and June 2007 (BCS year ending June 2007) and incidents experienced by survey respondents in the 12 months prior to their interview. Averaging over the moving reference period generates estimates that are most closely comparable with police recorded crime figures for the 12 months up to the end of December 2006, about six months behind the latest recorded crime figures reported here. BCS results for the year ending June 2007 are compared with the results from the interviews in the year ending June 2006.

The BCS fieldwork was carried out by BMRB Social Research. In the year ending June 2007 the BCS had a nationally representative sample of 47,503 adults with a response rate of 75 per cent.<sup>6</sup> Further information about the BCS and access to recent publications can be found at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html>.

### **What do we mean by statistical significance?**

BCS estimates are based on a representative sample of the population of approximately 47,000 respondents aged 16 or over each year. Any sample survey may produce estimates that differ from the figures that would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed. The size of this difference depends on the sample size, the size and variability of the estimate and the design of the survey.

Because of this difference (known as sampling error), changes in estimates between sweeps of the survey may occur by chance. In other words, the difference may be simply due to which adults were randomly selected for interview. We are able to measure whether this is likely to be the case using standard statistical tests. Survey results that are statistically significant at the five per cent or ten per cent level, according to these tests, are identified by asterisks in the tables. Only results that are statistically significant at the five per cent level are commented on within this bulletin.

Recorded crime figures relate to crime recorded by the police in England and Wales in the quarterly period. Unlike the BCS, it does not include crimes that have not been reported to the police, and does not include those that the police decide not to record but does cover crimes against under 16s and businesses.

Police recording practice is governed by Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime and by the National Crime Recording Standard. The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced in all police forces in April 2002 to ensure better consistency of crime recording. The Audit Commission published its latest assessment of police data quality in September (Audit Commission, 2007) which commented that, "The police have continued to make significant improvements in crime recording performance and now have better quality crime data than ever before". They judged that 38 police authorities and forces (88% of the 43 Home Office funded forces) were assessed as good or excellent for crime data quality, which demonstrates a substantial improvement from 12 in 2003/04 (28%). The remaining five forces were judged "fair" and since 2005/06 no police authority or force has "poor" crime data quality.

BCS and recorded crime figures used in this bulletin should be treated as provisional and are subject to revision in future Quarterly Updates. This bulletin has been produced according to the guidance for National Statistics.

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<sup>6</sup> Based on BCS interviews achieved during the year ending March 2007. The response rate for the year ending June 2007 cannot be calculated as finalised response figures are not yet available.

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