

22 January 2009

Statistical News Release: Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to September 2008

Latest figures published in the Quarterly update today show that based on British Crime Survey interviews (BCS) in the year to September 2008 crime remains stable compared with September 2007; the number of crimes recorded by the police fell by three per cent in July to September 2008 compared with the same quarter in 2007.

BCS interviews also showed the risk of being a victim of crime (23%) is stable compared with the previous year. The risk of being a victim remains at a historically low level.

For the crime types it covers, the BCS provides a more reliable measure of trends in crime as it has a consistent methodology and is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police, recording practice or police activity.

Based on BCS interviews in the year to September 2008, the level of violent crime is stable compared with the year to September 2007. Police recorded violence against the person for July to September 2008 fell by six per cent compared with the same period in 2007. There were also falls in police recorded sexual offences (7%) and robbery (3%, although robberies involving knives or sharp instruments increased by 18%). In July to September 2008 compared with the same period a year earlier, there was a 29 per cent fall in firearms offences according to these provisional statistics.

Additionally, statistics from BCS interviews for the year ending September 2008 compared with the year ending September 2007 show:

- Domestic burglary remained stable.
- Vandalism remained stable.
- Vehicle-related thefts fell by ten per cent.
- Theft from the person, all personal acquisitive crime and all household acquisitive crime remained stable.

When compared with the same period in 2007, police recorded crime figures in July to September 2008 show:

- Domestic burglary rose by four per cent.
- Criminal damage fell by eight per cent.
- Offences against vehicles fell by six per cent.

An increase was seen in drug offences (9%, likely to still be related to increase in police powers to issue cannabis warnings since 2004) and fraud and forgery offences (16%, this follows an increase in the previous quarter after falls resulting from changes in the way cheques and plastic card fraud is recorded). Figures supplied by the financial industry are

now used in the annual crime statistics publications as they provide a much more comprehensive picture as to the scale of fraudulent transactions.

Further statistics from the BCS in the year to September 2008 regarding public perceptions show:

- The overall proportion of people with a high level of perceived anti-social behaviour remained stable (17%); but there was an increase in the proportion of adults perceiving people being drunk or rowdy in public places as a problem (25% to 26%).
- Levels of worry about violent crime decreased (from 16% to 14%) whilst worry about burglary and car crime remained stable.
- New questions on confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) showed that 37 per cent of people were confident that the CJS as a whole is effective and 57 per cent thought the CJS as a whole is fair.
- Forty-six per cent of people agreed that police and local councils were dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter in their area.

Notes to editors

Police recorded crime figures presented in quarterly updates are always provisional. Work is still being undertaken within forces to quality assure figures with respect to GBH with intent which means that trends and numbers for this category cannot be reliably presented. Following advice from the National Statistician after reviewing the quality issues surrounding the data, the breakdown of violence against the person has been restricted to the broader categories of 'violence against the person with injury' and 'violence against the person without injury'. Once figures are finalised, a full breakdown will be presented in the annual crime bulletin to be published in July 2009.

'Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to September 2008' is available online on the UK Statistics Authority website as well as the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics website.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb0109.pdf>

Another Home Office statistical bulletin, 'Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2007/08: Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence' is also being released on 22 January 2009. Both reports are available online on the UK Statistics Authority website as well as the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics website.