



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Statistical Digest of Rural England

Crime

This document is part of the larger compendium publication the [Statistical Digest of Rural England](#), a collection of rural statistics on a wide range of social and economic government policy areas.

The Statistical Digest of Rural England is an official statistics publication meaning these statistics have been produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

More information on the Official Statistics Code of Practice can be found on the [Code of Practice web pages](#).

These statistics allow comparisons between the different rural and urban area classifications. The Rural-Urban Classification is used to distinguish rural and urban areas. The Classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than 10,000 resident population.

More information on the Rural-Urban Classification can be found on the [Rural-Urban Classification web pages](#).

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Crime

- Average crime rates (police recorded crime) are lower in rural areas than urban areas.
- In 2021, the police recorded rate of violence against the person was 2,472 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Rural areas compared with 3,727 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Urban areas.
- The police recorded rate of sexual offences in Predominantly Rural areas was 248 per 100,000 population in 2021, compared with 325 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Urban areas.
- The police recorded rate of recorded crime was also lower in rural areas than urban areas for crimes such as robbery, residential burglary, and vehicle offences (theft of, theft from or vehicle interference). For example, there were 292 vehicle offences per 100,000 population in Predominantly Rural areas and 738 per 100,000 population in Predominantly Urban areas in 2021.
- There was more crime recorded in 2021 than in 2020, with a 2% increase in rural areas and an 8% increase in urban areas. These increases were driven by crimes against persons (violence, harassment, sexual offences, etc.) whereas crimes against property and morality (residential burglary, drug offences, vehicle offences, etc.) were lower in 2021; this reflects the restrictions imposed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

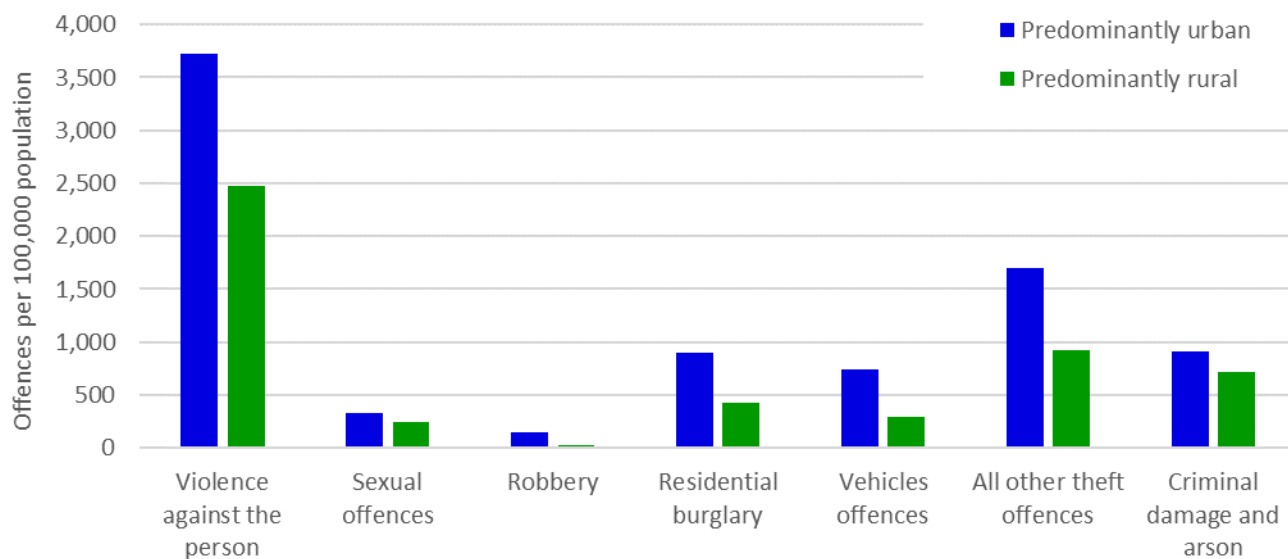
Notes: The way crimes are recorded by the police and the likelihood of victims reporting crimes may change over time. Figures on recorded crime may not be a reliable measure of year on year trends. The previous release of this publication covered the financial year up to spring 2021, whereas this edition evaluates the calendar year ending December 2021.

This analysis compares the rural and urban crime numbers as rates per head of population (or households for residential burglaries) for the latest year available, as well as the relative differences between crime rates in rural and urban areas between 2020 and 2021.

Previous years have analysed crime rate using “per 1,000 population” as the basis, whereas this edition uses “per 100,000 population” for ease of accessibility.

Further information can be found in the ONS publication ‘Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2021’: [Crime in England and Wales, year ending December 2021](#)

Police recorded crime rates per 100,000 population*, by offence type and Community Safety Partnership area, in England, 2021



Note: Crime rates are calculated per 100,000 population for all categories except residential burglary which is calculated per 100,000 households.

- **Violence against the person:** the police recorded rate of violence against a person was lowest in Mainly Rural areas, where there were 1,916 recorded acts of violent crime per 100,000 population, and highest in Urban with City and Town, at 3,822 recorded acts of violent crime per 100,000 population. This category includes 'homicide', 'violence with injury', 'violence without injury', 'death or serious injury caused by illegal driving' and 'stalking and harassment'.
- **Sexual offences:** the police recorded rate of sexual offences was lowest in Mainly Rural areas, where there were 203 recorded acts of sexual crime per 100,000 population, and highest in Urban with City and Town areas, at 349 recorded acts of sexual crime per 100,000 population.
- **Robbery offences:** the lowest police recorded rate of robbery offences was recorded in Mainly Rural areas at 16 offences per 100,000 population, compared with the highest rate of 194 per 100,000 population which was recorded in Urban with Major Conurbations.
- **Residential burglary offences:** the lowest police recorded rate of residential burglary offences was recorded in Mainly Rural areas at 252 offences per 100,000 households, compared with the highest rate of 1,049 offences per 100,000 households recorded in Urban with Major Conurbation areas.
- **Vehicle offences:** the police recorded rate was lowest in Mainly Rural areas, where there were 199 vehicle offences per 100,000 population compared with 919 offences per 100,000 population recorded in Urban with Major Conurbation areas.
- **All other theft offences:** this category comprises all theft offences other than Residential burglary and Vehicle offences; of these other thefts, the lowest crime rate was recorded in Mainly Rural areas at 649 offences per 100,000 population, and the highest crime rate was seen in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, with 1,830 offences per 100,000 population.
- **Criminal damage and arson:** the police recorded rate of criminal damage and arson was lowest in Mainly Rural areas, with 537 offences per 100,000 population, and highest in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas, with 1,097 offences per 100,000 population.

Police recorded crime rates per 100,000 population*, by offence type and Community Safety Partnership area, in England, 2021

	Violence against the person	Sexual offences	Robbery	Residential burglary	Vehicle offences	All other theft offences	Criminal damage and arson
Urban with Major Conurbation	3,681	311	194	1,049	919	1,830	850
Urban with Minor Conurbation	3,517	296	99	1,027	650	1,617	1,097
Urban with City and Town	3,822	349	85	669	505	1,522	967
Urban with Significant Rural	2,577	237	36	448	339	972	666
Largely Rural	2,833	277	31	562	352	1,098	822
Mainly Rural	1,916	203	16	252	199	649	537
Predominantly Urban	3,727	325	145	895	738	1,695	911
Predominantly Rural	2,472	248	25	429	292	921	710
England	3,314	297	106	739	593	1,439	837

Crime rates are calculated per 100,000 population for all categories except residential burglary which is calculated per 100,000 households.

Notes:

Unlike the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), recorded crime figures do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police or incidents that the police decide not to record. It was estimated in the year ending March 2016 that around 45 per cent of CSEW comparable crime was reported to the police, although this proportion varied considerably for individual offence types. See:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/methodologies/crimeinenglandandwalesqmi/pdf

(Section 4, page 5) for more information.

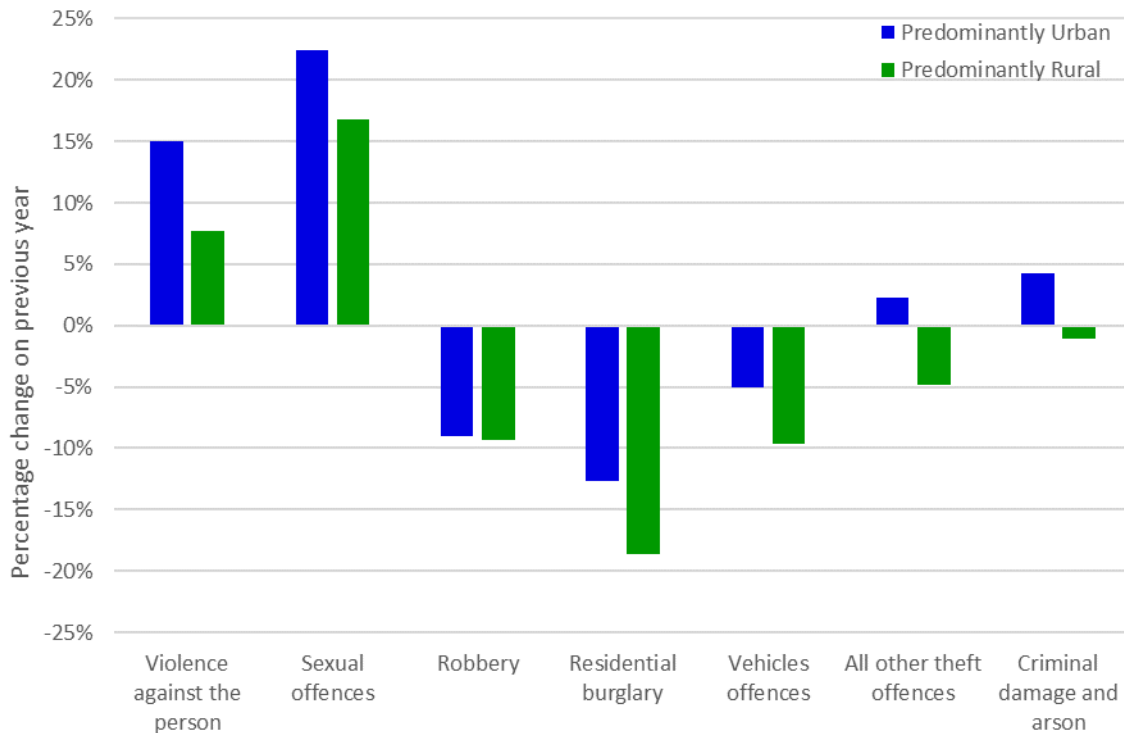
Crime rates are calculated using the mid-year population / household numbers for the year immediately prior to the crime reporting period.

The previous release of this publication (March 2021) contained an error involving the figures for Residential burglary, wherein London was weighted into the urban category incorrectly; this has since been rectified.

Source: ONS, *Recorded crime data at Community Safety Partnership*:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/recordedcrimedatabycommunitysafetypartnershiparea>

Percentage change in police recorded crime rates per 100,000 population / households by offence type and Local Authority classification, 2020 – 2021



Overall, there was more crime recorded in 2021 than in 2020, with a 2% increase in rural areas and an 8% increase in urban areas. In particular, crimes against persons (violence, harassment, sexual offences, etc.) were higher which reflects the restrictions imposed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance increased stress environments combined with fewer opportunities to leave. However, crimes against property and morality (residential burglary, drug offences, vehicle offences, etc.) were lower in 2021; this reflects the stay-at-home order used to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, where opportunity for such crimes was reduced.

In 2021, the main changes in crime rates by offence type were as follows:

- Violence against the person:** the percentage change in the police recorded rate of violence against a person was highest in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where a 19% increase was recorded on 2020 figures, and lowest in Largely Rural and Urban with Significant Rural areas, where a 7% increase was recorded on 2020 figures in both cases.
- Sexual offences:** the percentage change in the police recorded rate of sexual offences was lowest in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas, where a 13% increase was recorded on 2020 figures, and highest in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where a 27% increase was recorded on 2020 figures.
- Robbery offences:** the largest changes in the police recorded rate of robbery offences were in Mainly Rural areas, where a 13% decrease was recorded on 2020 figures, and in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas, where a 2% increase was recorded.
- Residential burglary offences:** the percentage change in the police recorded rate of residential burglary offences was largest in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where a 51% decrease was recorded on 2020 figures, and smallest in Urban with Minor Conurbation areas, where there was a 10% decrease on 2020 figures. A particularly large increase of 33% was also seen in Urban with City and Town areas compared with 2020 figures.

- **Vehicle offences:** the percentage change in the police recorded rate of vehicle offences was largest in Mainly Rural areas, where a 12% decrease was recorded on 2020 figures, and smallest in Urban with both Minor and Major Conurbation areas, where a 4% decrease was recorded on 2020 figures.
- **All other theft offences:** the largest percentage change was seen in Largely and Mainly Rural areas, where in both places a 5% decrease was recorded on 2020 levels. The smallest difference was in Urban with City and Town areas, where there was no change recorded between 2020 and 2021. The greatest increase was seen in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where a 4% increase was recorded on 2020 figures.
- **Criminal damage and arson:** The largest increase was seen in Urban with Major Conurbation areas, where an 8% increase was recorded on 2020 figures. The largest decrease was seen in both Mainly Rural and Urban with Significant Rural areas, where in both cases a 2% decrease was recorded between 2020 and 2021. The smallest difference was in Urban with City and Town areas, where no change was recorded from 2020 figures.

Percentage change in police recorded crime rates per 100,000 population / households by offence type and Local Authority classification, 2020 – 2021

	Violence against the person	Sexual offences	Robbery	Residential burglary	Vehicle offences	All other theft offences	Criminal damage and arson
Urban with Major Conurbation	19%	27%	-10%	-51%	-4%	4%	8%
Urban with Minor Conurbation	10%	13%	2%	-10%	-4%	1%	6%
Urban with City and Town	10%	19%	-8%	-33%	-9%	0%	0%
Urban with Significant Rural	7%	22%	-12%	-20%	-10%	-4%	-2%
Largely Rural	7%	17%	-8%	-16%	-9%	-5%	-1%
Mainly Rural	9%	17%	-13%	-26%	-12%	-5%	-2%
Predominantly Urban	15%	22%	-9%	-13%	-5%	2%	4%
Predominantly Rural	8%	17%	-9%	-19%	-10%	-5%	-1%
England	13%	21%	-9%	-14%	-6%	1%	3%

Notes:

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Source: ONS, *Recorded crime data at Community Safety Partnership*:

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Commercial Victimisation Survey

The Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS) has been commissioned by the Home Office annually since 2012 to record the nature and extent of crime committed against business premises across a number of industry types in England and Wales, including agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Proportion of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing premises that experienced crime in 2018, by number of employees.

	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing			All Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing premises
	1–9 employees	10–49 employees	50+ employees	
Burglary with entry	9	25	-	9
Attempted burglary	4	16	-	5
All burglary (inc. attempts)	11	30	-	11
Vandalism	8	21	-	9
Theft of vehicles	1	7	-	1
Theft from vehicles	1	14	-	2
All vehicle-related theft	3	15	-	3
All robbery (inc. attempts)	1	3	-	1
Assaults and threats	2	9	-	2
Thefts by customers	1	6	-	1
Thefts by employees	0	3	-	0
Thefts by others	1	1	-	1
Thefts by unknown persons	6	11	-	6
All theft	7	17	-	8
Fraud by employees	0	1	-	0
Fraud by others	0	3	-	1
Fraud by unknown persons	3	5	-	3
All fraud	4	9	-	4
ALL CVS CRIME	25	51	-	26

- 26 per cent of business premises in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector experienced crime in 2018, compared with 30 per cent in 2013.
- Medium-sized businesses in this sector experienced a higher crime rate compared with larger and smaller businesses.
- In 2018 premises were most likely to experience burglary (including attempts) with 11 per cent of premises having experienced burglary.
- Although vandalism accounted for a third of incidents, only 9 per cent of premises had experienced this crime type, suggesting a relatively high repeat victimisation rate.

Number of incidents (000s)

	All Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing premises (000s)	Crime type as a percentage of all incidents
All burglary (incl. attempts)	17	22
Vandalism	27	34
All vehicle-related theft	3	4
All robbery (incl. attempts)	2	2
Assaults and threats	5	7
All theft	12	16
All fraud	13	16
ALL CVS CRIME	79	100

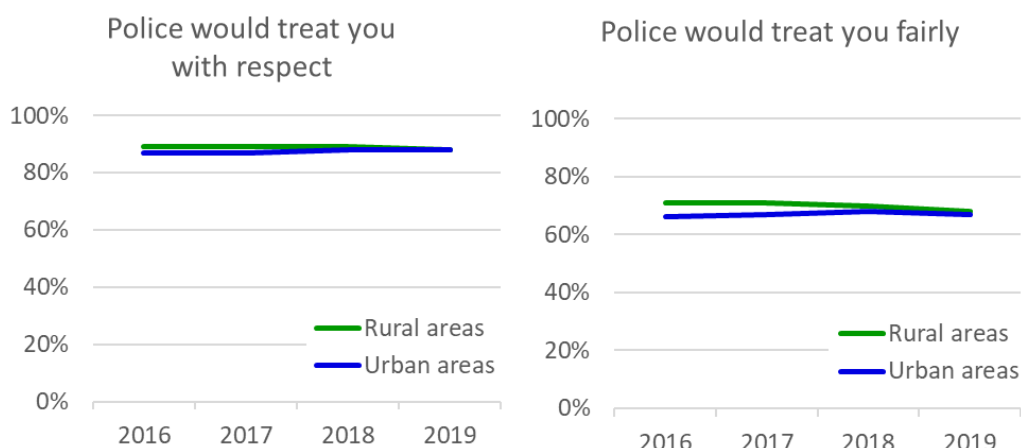
- The most common crime type was vandalism accounting for 34 per cent of all incidents, while burglary accounted for 22 per cent (including attempts), and fraud accounted for 16 per cent.

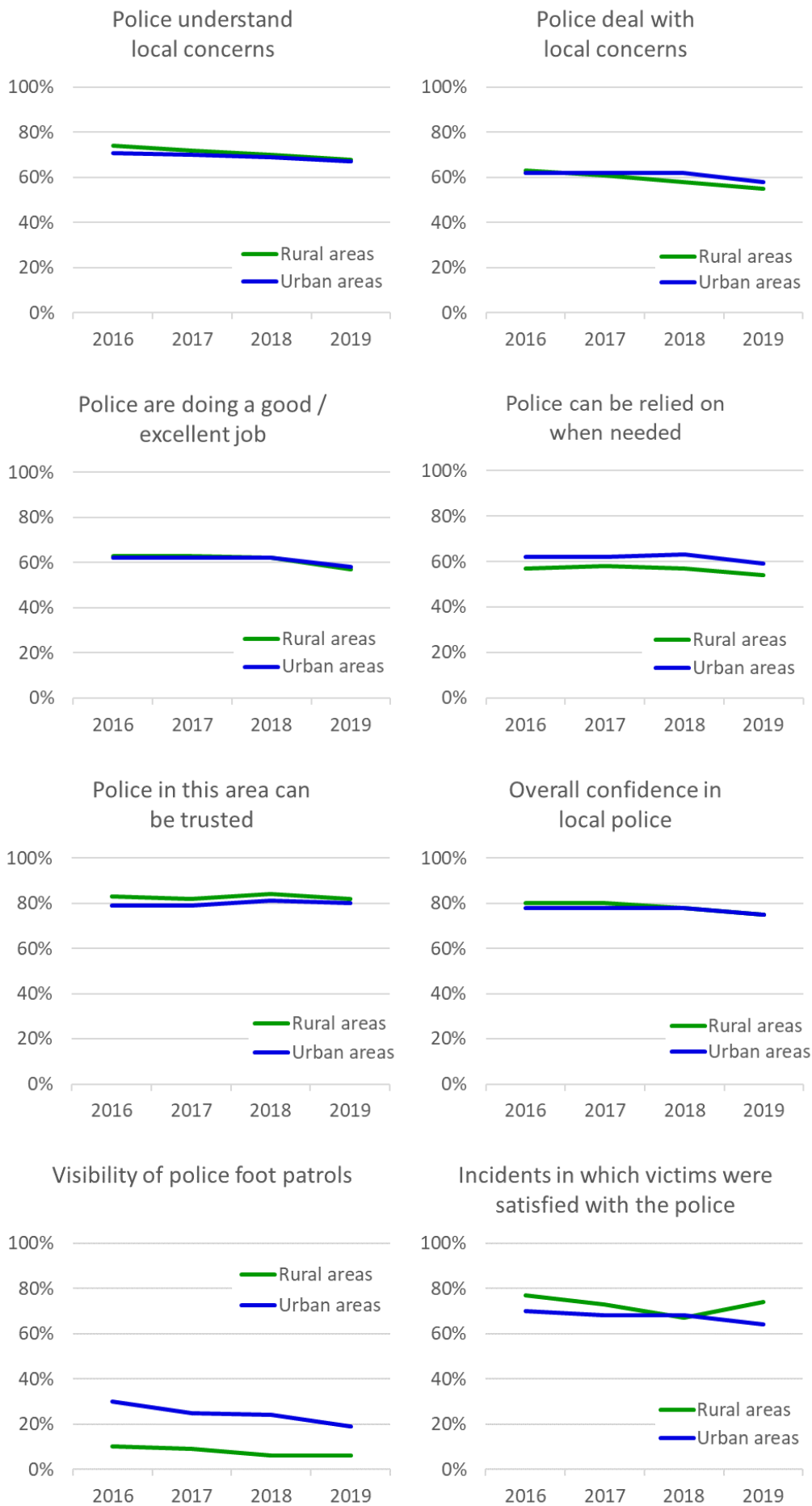
Crime Survey for England & Wales

The Crime Survey monitors the extent of crime in England and Wales. It is used to evaluate and develop crime reduction policies and provides vital information about the changing levels of crime over the last 30 years. Results for 2019 are presented below.

Perceptions of the local police

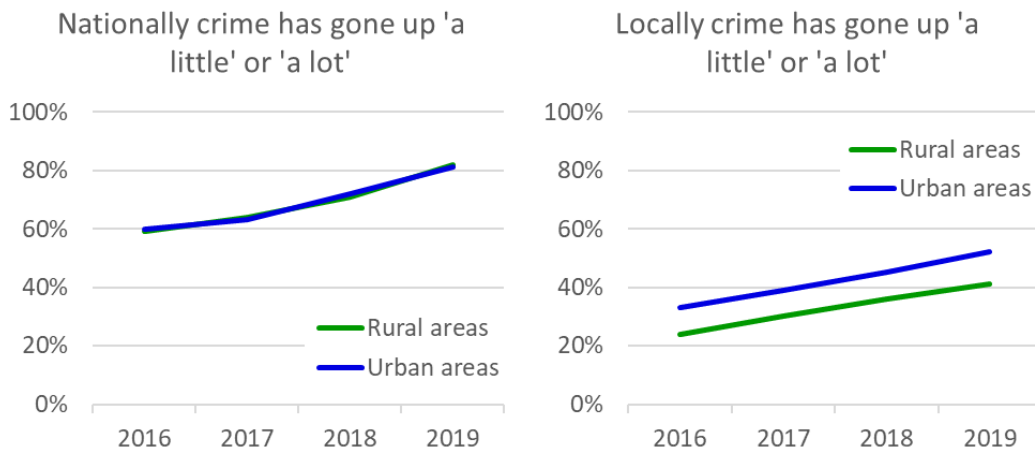
- There is little difference in people's perceptions of the local police between rural and urban areas overall.
- Both rural and urban areas have seen a decline in some measures of perception such as police dealing with local concerns.
- Fewer people in rural areas felt there was high visibility of police foot patrols, but a higher proportion of victims were satisfied with the police than in urban areas. However, declines in these measures have been in both rural and urban areas.





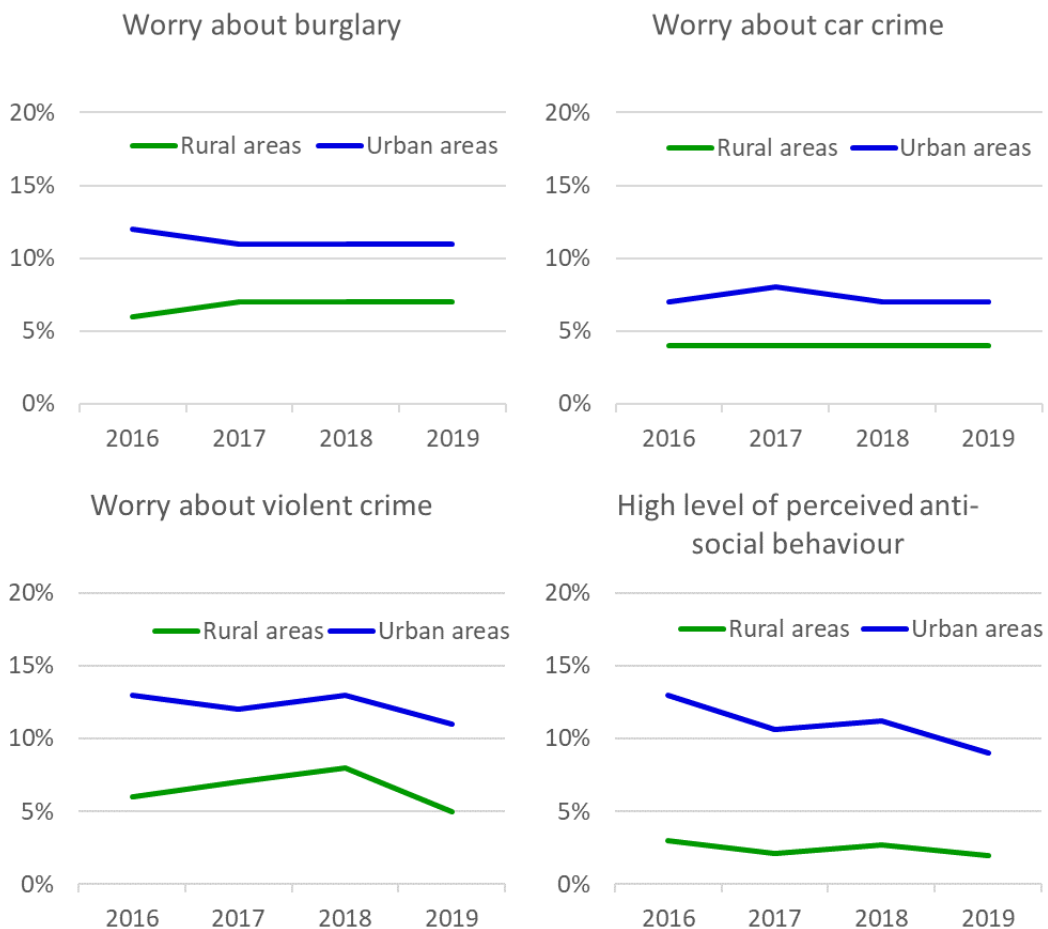
Perceptions of crime levels

- There has been an increased perception that nationally and locally crime has gone up. There is no difference between rural and urban areas in the perception about crime nationally. Perceptions about local crime going up are lower, and indeed in rural areas more so than in urban areas.



Perceptions of different crimes

- 88 per cent of rural people said they felt very or fairly safe when walking alone after dark compared with 76 per cent of people in urban areas.



Percentage of people who agree with the listed perceptions in both rural and urban areas, 2019

Perception	Rural areas 2019	Urban areas 2019
Were aware of the 101 non-emergency police number	79	74
Had used the 101 non-emergency police number	13	13
Awareness of Police and Crime Commissioners	66	54
Worry about fraud	17	20
Felt very/fairly safe when walking alone after dark	88	76

- The proportions of households worrying about crime and perceiving anti-social behaviour are lower in rural areas than in urban areas and have stayed the same or declined in recent years.
- There is little difference in people's awareness of the 101 non-emergency police number between rural and urban areas. However, only 13 per cent of people have used the number in both rural and urban areas overall.