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# Home Office Statistical Bulletin



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## Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to June 2010

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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 & 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 June 2010. Recorded crime figures in this bulletin relate to crimes recorded by the police in the year ending June 2010.

## MAIN POINTS

- Based on British Crime Survey (BCS) interviews in the year to June 2010, there was a decrease of four per cent in the number of incidents of BCS crime compared with the year ending June 2009. The number of crimes recorded by the police fell by eight per cent in the year ending June 2010 compared with a year earlier.
- BCS interviews showed that the risk of being a victim of crime (21.5%) has decreased compared with the year ending June 2009 (22.4%).
- In the year ending June 2010, there were no increases in any of the police recorded crime offence groups compared with the previous year, with the exception of sexual offences (which increased by 8%). The largest percentage falls were for criminal damage (down 17%) and offences against vehicles (down 16%).
- Levels of BCS violent crime showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year. In contrast, violence against the person offences recorded by the police fell by four per cent and robberies by seven per cent.
- Numbers of BCS household crimes showed a decrease of four per cent compared with the previous year, mainly due to falls of 12 per cent in vehicle-related theft and six per cent in vandalism. There was no statistically significant change in the overall levels of BCS personal crime over the same period.
- BCS burglaries showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year. In contrast, police recorded domestic burglaries fell by eight per cent and other burglaries by 11 per cent.
- There was a two 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 June 2009 (from 16% to 14%). All but one of the seven indicators relating to specific problems showed falls (perception of problems with noisy neighbours or loud parties showed no statistically significant change).
- The proportion of adults with a high level of worry about violent crime fell from 14 per cent to 13 per cent compared with the previous year.
- 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.

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. 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 the data on which this update reports differ only by one quarter (April-June 2010) from the data in 'Crime in England and Wales 2009/10'; there is an overlap of 9 months (July 2009 to March 2010).

Based on British Crime Survey interviews in the year to June 2010, there was a decrease of four per cent in the numbers of incidents of BCS crime compared with the year ending June 2009. Numbers of BCS household crimes showed a decrease of four per cent but the apparent decrease in personal crime was not statistically significant<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1 and Table 1).

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

BCS interviews showed that the risk of being a victim of crime (21.5%) decreased compared with the year to June 2009 (22.4%). This level of risk of being a victim of crime remains at a 30 year low.

BCS interviews for the year to June 2010 showed no statistically significant change in the levels of violent crime compared with the year to June 2009; the apparent one per cent decrease was not statistically significant, and neither were they in the two sub-categories of BCS violence (violence with, and without injury). However, the level of violence against the person<sup>2</sup> recorded by the police showed a four per cent fall compared with the previous year; violence with injury decreased by seven per cent and violence without injury fell by two per cent.

Police recorded robbery figures showed a seven per cent fall from 80,290 to 74,887 offences in the year ending June 2010 compared with the previous year. Data for robberies involving knives showed a fall of six per cent from 14,934 to 13,999 offences in the year ending June 2010 (excluding West Midlands Police<sup>3</sup>) compared with the previous 12 months. More details are presented in Annex A.

There was an eight per cent rise in recorded sexual offences compared with the previous year, from 51,139 to 55,217. 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 figures<sup>4</sup> for firearm offences recorded by the police show they account for 0.2 per cent of all recorded crime. There was a two per cent fall in firearm offences from 8,113 to 7,966 in the year to June 2010, compared with the previous year.

Levels of BCS burglaries showed no significant change based on interviews to June 2010 compared with the previous year (the apparent 1% increase was not statistically significant). In contrast, police recorded crime figures showed a fall of eight per cent in domestic burglaries compared with the previous year. Other burglaries recorded by the police also fell by 11 per cent over the same period.

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

<sup>2</sup> Police recorded violence against the person does not include sexual offences or robbery.

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

<sup>4</sup> 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.

There was a fall of 12 per cent in the level of vehicle-related theft according to BCS interviews to June 2010 compared with the previous year. There was also a 16 per cent fall in police recorded offences against vehicles<sup>5</sup> in the year ending June 2010 compared with the previous year.

Incidents of theft from the person decreased by 20 per cent according to BCS interviews to June 2010 compared with the year to June 2009. The latest estimate, of 536,000 thefts, is similar to the level in the 12 months to June 2007 (543,000) after two years at higher levels.

Police recorded crime showed a fall of three per cent in other theft offences in the year ending June 2010 compared with a year earlier. Within this category, there was a one per cent rise in the number of offences of theft from the person and a one per cent fall in offences of bicycle theft. For bicycle theft, the latest police recorded crime and BCS results show relatively little change (the apparent 5% increase from the BCS was not statistically significant).

BCS interviews for the year to June 2010 showed no significant change in other household theft from the previous year (the apparent increase of 7% was not statistically significant).

BCS estimates of other theft of personal property showed no significant change (the apparent 2% decrease was not statistically significant).

Both BCS and police recorded crime measures of vandalism/criminal damage showed decreases, with police recorded crime being more marked. Based on BCS interviews to June 2010, vandalism decreased by six per cent compared with the year to June 2009. Police recorded criminal damage fell by 17 per cent.

BCS interviews for the year to June 2010 showed decreases in the risk of being a victim of vandalism (down to 6.6%) and vehicle-related theft (down to 5.6%), as well as all personal crime (down to 5.7%), theft from the person (down to 1.1%) and violence with injury (down to 1.6%). However, there was an increase in the risk of being a victim of other household theft (up to 3.9%).

Drug offences recorded by the police fell by three per cent in the year ending June 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 four per cent fall in the year ending June 2010, compared with a year earlier. However, fraud offences are known to be substantially under-reported to the police. BCS estimates together with figures supplied by the financial industry are now used in the annual crime statistics publication as they provide a more comprehensive picture as to the scale and trend of fraudulent transactions (for more information see Flatley *et al.*, 2010).

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<sup>5</sup> Theft of and from a vehicle, aggravated vehicle taking and interfering with a vehicle.

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

	<b>England and Wales, BCS</b>			
	Interviews July 2008 to June 2009 <sup>1</sup>	Interviews July 2009 to June 2010	% change between years <sup>2</sup>	Statistically significant change <sup>3</sup>
<i>Number of incidents (000s) and percentage change<sup>4</sup></i>				
Vandalism	2,537	2,376	-6	**
Burglary	681	687	1	
Vehicle-related theft	1,387	1,222	-12	**
Bicycle theft	479	505	5	
Other household theft	1,108	1,183	7	
Household acquisitive crime	3,655	3,596	-2	
<b>ALL HOUSEHOLD CRIME</b>	<b>6,192</b>	<b>5,972</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>**</b>
<i>Unweighted base - household crime</i>	<i>45,185</i>	<i>45,109</i>		
Theft from the person	670	536	-20	**
Other theft of personal property	1,057	1,038	-2	
All violence	2,115	2,104	-1	
<i>with injury</i>	1,111	1,057	-5	
<i>without injury</i>	1,004	1,047	4	
Personal acquisitive crime	2,012	1,901	-5	
<b>ALL PERSONAL CRIME</b>	<b>3,842</b>	<b>3,678</b>	<b>-4</b>	
<i>Unweighted base - personal crime</i>	<i>45,148</i>	<i>45,060</i>		
<b>ALL BCS CRIME</b>	<b>10,034</b>	<b>9,650</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>**</b>
<i>Percentage risk of being a victim once or more and percentage point change<sup>5</sup></i>				
Vandalism	7.1	6.6	-0.6	**
Burglary	2.3	2.3	0.0	
Vehicle-related theft <sup>6</sup>	6.1	5.6	-0.5	**
Bicycle theft <sup>7</sup>	4.0	4.1	0.1	
Other household theft	3.6	3.9	0.3	**
Household acquisitive crime	11.4	11.3	-0.1	
<b>ALL HOUSEHOLD CRIME</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	
<i>Unweighted base - household crime</i>	<i>45,185</i>	<i>45,109</i>		
Theft from the person	1.4	1.1	-0.2	**
Other theft of personal property	2.1	2.0	-0.1	
All violence	3.2	3.0	-0.2	
<i>with injury</i>	1.8	1.6	-0.2	**
<i>without injury</i>	1.6	1.6	0.0	
Personal acquisitive crime	3.8	3.5	-0.3	
<b>ALL PERSONAL CRIME</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>**</b>
<i>Unweighted base - personal crime</i>	<i>45,148</i>	<i>45,060</i>		
<b>ALL BCS CRIME</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>**</b>

1. BCS estimates from interviews in 2008/09 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. 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 has been developed). 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 June 2010 compared with the previous year**

Numbers and percentage changes	England and Wales, recorded crime <sup>1</sup>		
	12 months to June 2009	12 months to June 2010	% change between years
Violence against the person offences	899,797	862,965	-4
<i>Violence against the person - with injury</i> <sup>2</sup>	421,072	392,473	-7
<i>Violence against the person - without injury</i> <sup>3</sup>	478,725	470,492	-2
Sexual offences	51,139	55,217	8
<i>Most serious sexual crime</i>	40,613	44,513	10
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	10,526	10,704	2
Robbery offences	80,290	74,887	-7
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	9,334	8,071	-14
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	70,956	66,816	-6
Burglary offences	584,318	528,493	-10
<i>Burglary in a dwelling</i>	286,099	263,646	-8
<i>Burglary in a building other than a dwelling</i>	298,219	264,847	-11
Offences against vehicles <sup>4</sup>	573,439	479,218	-16
Other theft offences	1,070,663	1,041,973	-3
<i>of which:</i>			
<i>Theft from the person</i>	90,795	91,462	1
<i>Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle</i>	109,897	108,842	-1
Fraud and forgery offences	158,407	151,816	-4
Criminal damage offences	924,733	768,503	-17
<b>TOTAL PROPERTY CRIME</b>	<b>3,311,560</b>	<b>2,970,003</b>	<b>-10</b>
Drug offences	241,206	235,009	-3
Other miscellaneous offences	70,637	70,398	0
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME - ALL OFFENCES</b>	<b>4,654,629</b>	<b>4,268,479</b>	<b>-8</b>
<i>of which: Firearm offences</i> <sup>5</sup>	8,113	7,966	-2

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 June 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. Of the seven indicators that make up the composite measure, all but one showed a decrease since the previous year: problems with abandoned or burnt-out cars, people being drunk or rowdy in public places, people using or dealing drugs, teenagers hanging around, rubbish or litter lying around and vandalism or graffiti. The indicator for noisy neighbours or loud parties showed no statistically significant change (Table 3).

**Table 3 Anti-social behaviour indicators**

Percentages	England and Wales, BCS		
	Interviews in July 2008 to June 2009 <sup>1</sup>	Interviews in July 2009 to June 2010	Statistically significant change <sup>2</sup>
	<i>Percentage</i>		
<b>High level of perceived anti-social behaviour<sup>3</sup></b>	16	14	**
	<i>Percentage saying very/fairly big problem in their area</i>		
<b>Abandoned or burnt-out cars</b>	5	5	** <sup>4</sup>
<b>Noisy neighbours or loud parties</b>	11	11	
<b>People being drunk or rowdy in public places</b>	26	24	**
<b>People using or dealing drugs</b>	27	26	**
<b>Teenagers hanging around on the streets</b>	29	27	**
<b>Rubbish or litter lying around</b>	30	28	**
<b>Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property</b>	26	22	**
<i>Unweighted base<sup>5</sup></i>	42,737	42,594	

1. BCS estimates from interviews in 2008/09 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. This represents a statistically significant decrease which is not obviously apparent due to rounding (from 5.4% to 4.6%).

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

BCS interviews during the 12 months to June 2010 showed that the proportion of adults with a high level of worry about violent crime fell compared with the year to June 2009. The proportions with high levels of worry about burglary and car crime showed no significant change; the apparent one percentage point decreases were not statistically significant (Table 4).

**Table 4 Worry about crime**

Percentages	England and Wales, BCS		
	Interviews in July 2008 to June 2009 <sup>1</sup>	Interviews in July 2009 to June 2010	Statistically significant change <sup>2</sup>
	<i>Percentage with high level of worry about<sup>3</sup> :</i>		
<b>Burglary</b>	11	10	
<b>Car crime</b>	11	10	
<b>Violent crime</b>	14	13	**
<i>Unweighted base<sup>4,5</sup></i>	11,267	11,282	

1. BCS estimates from interviews in 2008/09 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 refer 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.

5. Since April 2008 this question has only been asked of a quarter of the sample.



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 June 2010 compared with the same period in the previous year (from 54% to 57%) (Table 5).

BCS interviews in the year to June 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 June 2009 (Table 5). There has been a related decrease in the proportion of people who disagree with this statement (from 21% in the year to June 2009 to 19% in the year to June 2010) while the proportion with no opinion remained at 29 per cent.

Based on interviews in the year to June 2010, 41 per cent of people were confident that the Criminal Justice System (CJS) as a whole is effective, an increase from 39 per cent in the year to June 2009. BCS interviews also showed that 60 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 in July 2008 to June 2009 <sup>1</sup>	Interviews in July 2009 to June 2010	Statistically significant change <sup>2</sup>
	<i>Percentage agreeing<sup>3</sup></i>		
<b>Police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in the local area</b>	50	52	**
<i>Unweighted base</i>	43,969	43,841	
<b>Police in the local area doing a good or excellent job</b>	54	57	**
<b>Police are dealing with the things that matter to people in the community</b>	54	56	**
<i>Unweighted base<sup>4</sup></i>	44,295	44,126	
	<i>Percentage confident<sup>5</sup></i>		
<b>The CJS as a whole is effective</b>	39	41	**
<b>The CJS as a whole is fair</b>	59	60	**
<i>Unweighted base<sup>6</sup></i>	43,726	43,542	

1. BCS estimates from interviews in 2008/09 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 July 2009 and June 2010 (BCS year ending June 2010) and incidents experienced by survey respondents in the 12 months prior to their interview. BCS results for the year ending June 2010 are compared with the results from the interviews in the year ending June 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 over.

The BCS fieldwork was carried out by TNS-BMRB Social Research. In the year ending June 2010, the BCS had a nationally representative sample of 44,638 adults with a response rate of 76 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>.

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 June 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 June 2010. National recorded crime data for individual quarters are also available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb1610prctab.xls>.

Figures at police force area level are also published alongside this quarterly bulletin at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb1610pftabs.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>. This is the first time that local authority figures have been released alongside a Quarterly Update publication.

Also published alongside this bulletin are a series of tables on the nature of crime – these provide more detail on BCS crimes already reported in 'Crime in England and Wales 2009/10'. [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/crimeew0910\\_tables\\_bvv.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/crimeew0910_tables_bvv.html)

### Additional methodological publications

Other reports published alongside these statistics are available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs-methodological.html> as follows:

- The results of an independent review of the methodology of the British Crime Survey. This has been carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (Hales *et al.*)

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

- The annual Technical Report on the 2009/10 British Crime Survey, written by the contractor, TNS-BMRB (Bolling *et al.*);
- A report on the methodological aspects of the extension of the BCS to 10 to 15 year olds available (Grant *et al.*); and
- A report on testing of possible changes to the questions asked in the British Crime Survey on inter-personal violence, including sexual offences (Campbell-Hall *et al.*).

## 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 June 2010 fell by seven per cent compared with the previous 12 months (from 32,347 to 29,981).<sup>7</sup> 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 15,382 to 13,904) and six per cent (from 14,934 to 13,999) respectively. These offence groups accounted for 92 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 199 knife or sharp instrument homicides in the 12 months to June 2010, a decrease of 13 compared with the previous twelve months, when 212 homicides were recorded. Over the same period, the number of knife or sharp instrument attempted murders decreased by 30, from 260 to 230.

The number of sexual assaults involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument has decreased by 47 offences, from 127 offences in the 12 months to June 2009 to 80 offences in the 12 months to June 2010. The numbers of rapes and threats to kill involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument have increased across this period, by 40 offences and 84 offences respectively.

The proportion of selected violent offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the 12 months to June 2010 is six per cent, the same as for the previous 12 month period. For all offence groups, the proportion of offences involving the use of a knife or sharp instrument is similar or lower when compared with the previous 12 months.

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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.

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<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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 June 2010, compared with the previous 12 months (excluding West Midlands unless indicated<sup>1</sup>)**

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 June 2009	12 months to June 2010		12 months to June 2009	12 months to June 2010
Attempted murder	260	230	-12	48	48
Threats to kill	1,447	1,531	6	16	16
Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm <sup>2</sup>	15,382	13,904	-10	4	4
Robbery	14,934	13,999	-6	21	21
Rape	197	237	20	2	2
Sexual assaults <sup>3</sup>	127	80	-37	1	0
<b>Total selected offences<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>32,347</b>	<b>29,981</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
Homicide <sup>5</sup>	212	199	-6	37	34
<b>Total selected offences including homicide<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>32,559</b>	<b>30,180</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>including West Midlands<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>36,200</i>	<i>33,274</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 2009 to June 2010. For July 2008 to March 2009, offences are those currently recorded by the police as at 24 November 2009 and are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available. Updated figures for all years will be included within a forthcoming Supplementary Bulletin, scheduled for early 2011.

## REFERENCES

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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](mailto:crimestats.rds@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) or write to Home Office Statistics, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Peel Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

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## Erratum

Amendment:

Page 11, paragraph two - the figure 39,981 has been amended to 29,981.

Amended 27th October 2010