

14 July 2011

Statistical News Release: Crime in England and Wales 2010/11

The latest National Statistics on crime in England and Wales are released today. They are based on interviews from the British Crime Survey (BCS) and crimes recorded by the police in the financial year 2010/11. Each source has different strengths and weaknesses but together they provide a more comprehensive picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone (see Notes to editors).

Levels and trends in crime

The key points from the latest release are:

- Overall, there were an estimated 9.6 million crimes as measured by the BCS in 2010/11, not statistically significantly different from the 9.5 million crimes measured by the previous year's survey. Overall BCS crime remained at the lowest level since the survey started in 1981.
- There were 4.2 million crimes recorded by the police in 2010/11, a four per cent decrease compared with 2009/10 (4.3 million crimes) and at its lowest level since the major change to counting rules in April 2002.
- Both series show an easing of the falling levels of crime after the sustained reductions seen in findings from the BCS since the mid 1990s. The underlying trend in overall BCS crime has been fairly flat since 2004/05 with few statistically significant changes year on year and the reduction in police recorded crime is smaller than those reported in each of the previous three years.
- The 2010/11 BCS shows a 14 per cent increase in domestic burglary compared with the previous survey. However, this should be viewed in the context that the estimate from the 2009/10 BCS was the lowest since the survey began and the current estimate is in line with those for the previous five years. Over the longer term, burglary has fallen by 57 per cent between the 1995 and 2010/11 BCS. Police recorded domestic burglary, in comparison, fell by four per cent in 2010/11, continuing the general downward trend (down 41% since 2002/03).
- There are no statistically significant changes for other BCS acquisitive crimes between the 2010/11 and 2009/10 surveys. Recorded crime continues to show reductions for vehicle crime (down 9% between 2009/10 and 2010/11) and non-domestic burglary (down 3%); both crime types have shown year-on-year reductions since 2002/03.
- There was an increase for the recorded crime category of 'other theft' (up 4%) particularly driven by increases in 'other theft or unauthorised taking' – an offence classification which captures thefts of unattended property – which was up ten per cent. This offence classification includes personal and household crimes (such as thefts of unattended wallets or thefts of ladders from gardens), but also includes crimes against organisations, such as metal theft.
- The apparent six per cent rise in the level of violent crime between the 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS was not statistically significant. Police recorded violence against the person fell by six per cent between 2009/10 and 2010/11, with falls in both violence with injury (down 8%) and violence without injury (down 4%). The 2010/11 BCS estimates overall violence to be 11 per cent lower than the 2006/07 BCS. In comparison, police recorded violence against the person fell by 21 per cent between 2006/07 and 2010/11.

- Both sources are consistent in showing falls in vandalism (BCS vandalism down nine per cent, police recorded criminal damage down 13 per cent compared with the previous year).

Household and individual victimisation rates

In addition to providing estimates of the number of crimes experienced across England and Wales, the BCS is able to estimate the proportion of the population who had been victims of crime in the previous year. The 2010/11 survey showed:

- an estimated 6.1 per cent of households had experienced vandalism of a vehicle or other household property (down from 6.7% the previous year);
- about one in twenty vehicle-owning households (5.4%) had been victims of vehicle crime (includes theft of and from a vehicle belonging to the household and attempted thefts) which was down from 5.6 per cent in the 2009/10 BCS;
- 3.1 per cent adults had been a victim of a violent crime (includes wounding, assault with minor injury, assault without injury and robbery) – a similar level to the previous year;
- around one in forty households (2.6%) had been victims of burglary (including attempts) which was up from 2.2 per cent in the 2009/10 BCS; and
- 1.1 per cent of adults had been victims of theft from the person (e.g. pick pocketing) and 1.9 per cent of other theft of personal property (no statistically significant change in either category).

Violent and sexual crime

Provisional data show the police recorded 642 homicides in 2010/11 (including the 12 homicide victims of the Cumbria shootings in June 2010), compared with 618 the previous year (up 4%). The inherent variability in numbers of homicides means caution should be taken in interpreting year-to-year changes. The number of homicides recorded has been falling in recent years, with levels now statistically significantly below those seen in the early to mid 2000s. The police recorded 525 attempted murders in 2010/11, compared with 591 in 2009/10, a fall of 11 per cent.

Police recorded sexual offences increased by one per cent between 2009/10 and 2010/11, following a six per cent increase last year. These increases coincided with work the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) have been undertaking over the last two years to enhance the service and level of support provided to victims, which has included improving the recording of serious sexual offences.

The BCS provides estimates of the proportion of adults who have been a victim of sexual offences via an additional self-completion module (see Notes to editors). These figures show that 2.5 per cent of women aged 16-59 and 0.5 per cent of men in the same age group had experienced a sexual assault (including attempts) in the previous 12 months. A user consultation on the sexual offences questions asked within the BCS self-completion module is also launched today (see Notes to editors).

Provisional figures on police recorded firearm offences show a 13 per cent fall between 2009/10 and 2010/11. Firearm offences have shown a downward trend following rises between 2002/03 and 2005/06. Much of the fall over the last year was due to decreases in offences involving handguns (down 17%). However, provisional figures show 55 fatal injuries from firearm offences in 2010/11 (including the 12 homicide victims of the Cumbria shootings in June 2010), compared with 40 in the previous year. Serious injuries were down from 337 to 298 and slight injuries up from 1,537 to 1,593.

There was a three per cent fall in comparable police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in 2010/11 (see Notes to editors for details of offence coverage and details on the

comparability of data). This fall was largely due to a nine per cent fall in GBH and ABH offences involving a knife. In contrast, there was a four per cent increase in robbery offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (compared with the 1% increase in overall police recorded robberies). In total, the police recorded 32,714 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in 2010/11. The police provisionally recorded 214 knife and sharp instrument homicides in 2009/10, compared with 201 recorded in 2009/10.

The police recorded 76,179 robberies in 2010/11, a rise of one per cent on the previous year. This is the first rise in police recorded robberies since 2006/07.

Fraud offences

Fraud is not well measured by either recorded crime or the main BCS crime count. This crime bulletin presents supplementary information from the UK Cards Association, and findings from the BCS module on plastic card fraud. Both sources are consistent in showing falls in plastic card fraud for the most recent year available. UK Cards Association figures show a 32 per cent reduction in fraudulent transactions between 2009 and 2010; the BCS shows that the proportion of plastic card users who had been victim of card fraud in the last 12 months fell from 6.4 per cent in the 2009/10 BCS to 5.2 per cent in the 2010/11 survey.

Experimental statistics on the victimisation of children aged 10 to 15

Experimental statistics on the victimisation of children are presented based on two alternative approaches to measuring crime. These approaches are the 'Preferred measure', which takes into account factors identified in measuring the severity of an incident (such as relationship to the offender and level of injury or value of item stolen or damaged) while the 'Broad measure' also includes minor offences between children and family members that would not normally be treated as criminal matters.

Latest figures from the 2010/11 BCS show there were an estimated 878,000 crimes experienced by children aged 10 to 15 using the preferred measure. Of this number, two-thirds were violent crimes (576,000) whilst most of the remaining crimes were thefts of personal property (275,000).

Public perceptions

According to the 2010/11 BCS, 60 per cent of adults believed crime had risen nationally in the last two years, compared with 28 per cent of adults who thought crime had risen in their local area. Both of these measures are lower than last year (66% and 31% respectively).

The 2010/11 BCS shows that less people perceive that they are very or fairly likely to be a victim of crime in the forthcoming year compared with last year. The perceived likelihood of being a victim of burglary and violent crime was down from 15 per cent to 13 per cent and the perceived likelihood of being a victim of car crime was down from 21 per cent to 17 per cent.

The BCS also asks people about their perceptions of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local area. According to the 2010/11 BCS, 14 per cent of adults had a high level of perceived ASB, the lowest proportion since the measure was introduced in the survey in 2001/02.

Questions about awareness and use of online crime maps have been included from the 2009/10 BCS. According to the 2010/11 BCS, 15 per cent of respondents said that they were aware of crime maps and four per cent said that they had looked at or used them. This was an increase from 2009/10 (10% and 3% respectively). These changes were driven by a sharp increase in awareness and use in the final quarter of the year, coinciding with the launch of <http://police.uk> crime maps in January 2011. BCS results for January to March 2011 show the proportion that were aware of or had looked at or used online crime maps more than doubled from the previous quarter. The seven per cent who reported in this quarter having used online crime maps equates to 3.3 million individuals across England and Wales.

Notes to editors

1. For the crime types and population groups 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. However, the BCS does not aim to provide an absolute count of crime in England and Wales, but to produce estimates of crimes experienced by adults aged 16 and over resident in households. It does not cover all offences, with homicide, fraud and drug offences being notable exclusions.

2. Police recorded figures cover groups (e.g. residents of institutions and tourists) and sectors (e.g. commercial crime) excluded from the BCS sample and have a wider coverage of offences. However, police recorded crime does not cover those crimes that are not reported to or discovered by the police and is influenced by any changes in recording practice. Police recorded crime provides a robust measure of homicide (an offence not covered by the BCS) and is a good measure of well-reported crimes.

3. Due to their sensitive nature, questions of sexual victimisation are asked in a separate self-completion module in the BCS. Results from this module are not included in the main BCS count of crime.

4. The Overview chapter of this bulletin presents supplementary figures from a number of sources covering crime and disorder not within the scope of the main National Statistics. These include police recorded anti-social behaviour incidents (ASB). These statistics, which are not subject to the usual quality assurance processes associated with National Statistics, show that the police recorded 3.3 million calls for service related to ASB in 2010/11. This compares to 4.2 million police recorded crimes in the same year. Other statistics (originally published elsewhere) show the volume of crime which while dealt with by the authorities (including the police and local authorities and other relevant parties), are not included in the main crime figures.

5. The selected offences included in the police knife crime collection are: Attempted murder, threats to kill, ABH and GBH, robbery, rape, sexual assaults and provisional homicide figures. West Midlands Police changed their recording practice in April 2010. Their figures have therefore been excluded from the year on year comparisons presented.

6. 'Crime in England and Wales 2010/11' is available online via the UK National Statistics Publication Hub as well as the Home Office website.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1011/>

7. Also released today are a number of related publications:

A 'User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics' provides further information about the BCS and police recorded crime.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/user-guide-crime-statistics/>

'Crimes detected in England and Wales 2010/11' contains information of levels and trends in the police detection of crime.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1111/>

'Analysis of the 2010/11 British Crime Survey Intimate Personal Violence Split-sample Experiment' launches a user consultation on the future of sexual offences questions.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/research-statistics/crime/crime-statistics/bcs-methodology/>

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