



19 July 2018

Statistical News Release: Crime Outcomes in England and Wales, year ending March 2018

The latest statistics on the outcomes of crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018 are released today. These statistics are based on the position as at mid-June 2018 when the data were finalised for analysis. Not all offences recorded in that year have yet been assigned an outcome and a complete picture will become available in updated tables published on an ongoing quarterly basis.

Crime outcomes (all police recorded crime excluding fraud):

- Six per cent of crimes recorded in the year ending March 2018 had yet to be assigned an outcome; a similar proportion to last year. However, due to the increased volume of crimes being dealt with by the police it yielded a rise of around 46,000 cases at year end compared with last (310,217 compared with 264,213).
- As was the case last year, almost half of offences (48%) were closed with no suspect identified. This varied considerably by offence type with only 2 per cent of drugs offences given this outcome but with 75 per cent of theft offences closed in this way.
- A slightly higher proportion of offences than last year (29% compared with 26%) could not be progressed to a criminal justice outcome due to evidential difficulties. Most of this increase was due to cases where suspects had been identified but the victim did not want further action to be taken against them.
- The proportion of crimes which resulted in a charge/summons fell by two percentage points, from 11% to 9% (equivalent to an annual reduction of 41,215). This continues a downward trend seen since the introduction of the Outcomes framework in year ending March 2015 when 15% of crimes were resolved with a charge/summons.
- There was also a drop in the number and proportion of offences that were resolved through out of court resolutions. This was seen across the range of out of court disposals but the largest volume reductions were in the use of adult cautions (down by 0.6% or 17,043) and Community Resolutions (down by 0.4% or 7,940).
- In general, the median length of time to assign an outcome decreased compared with the previous year (6 days compared with 8 days). This continues a downward trend from a peak of 11 days in the year ending March 2016. The median length of time for investigations to be closed with no suspect identified fell from 2 days to 1 day.
- As in previous years, there was considerable variation by type of offence. Sexual offences took the longest time to assign an outcome (median of 73 days) and theft and criminal damage/arson the least (median of 2 days).
- Higher proportions of domestic abuse-related offences received a charge/summons than those that were not domestic abuse-related (15% and 8% respectively).
- Almost 7 out of 10 (69%) of domestic-abuse related offences had an evidential difficulties outcome. This is almost three times higher than the proportion of offences that were not domestic abuse-related (24%).

- The proportion of domestic abuse-related offences assigned a charge/summons decreased (from 18% to 15%) compared with the previous year. Conversely, the proportion of offences that resulted in the category “evidential difficulties - victim does not support action” increased (up from 41% to 48%).

Key Points (fraud offences):

- There were 638,882 fraud offences recorded in the year end March 2018 which were reviewed by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) for possible investigation and enforcement action.
- A total of 49,861 fraud offences were deemed to have sufficient grounds to disseminate the case to the police for investigation in the year end March 2018; a reduction from the 64,501 in the previous year.
- Of fraud offences disseminated to the police, there was an increase of 3 per cent in the number resulting in a charge/summons in the year to March 2018 compared with the previous year (from 6,402 to 6,572).

Background

From April 2014, the police have assigned an outcome to every crime that is recorded. This contrasts with the former detections regime, where only around 30 per cent of crimes were assigned an ‘outcome’. The Outcomes framework provides much greater transparency on the ways police resolve all crimes. The recording of fraud offences has been centralised via Action Fraud (the UK’s national fraud and cyber crime reporting centre) and for this reason crime outcomes in the main body of the bulletin exclude fraud. Outcomes for fraud offences are not presented in the same way as for other offences as it is not currently possible to link individual outcomes to individual crimes. Outcomes assigned during 2017/18 could be for offences disseminated prior to year. Investigations can take months or longer to complete. Ongoing work to improve the quality of this data means they are currently designated as “experimental statistics.”

When comparing crime outcomes data over time it is important to consider the broader context and changing crime caseloads. In 2014, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary published a critical national thematic report on crime recording which revealed significant under-recording of crimes that had been reported by victims to the police. This has been followed by a programme of rolling inspections of forces to examine the integrity of recorded crime data. This has led to improved compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard and increased caseloads as more crimes are (correctly) recorded than in previous years. In addition, the Office for National Statistics has commented that some of the increases in the lower volume but more serious categories of crime (such as homicide and knife crime) may reflect genuine rises. In addition, it is thought that more victims of sexual offences and domestic abuse have been willing to come forward to report crimes to the police than has happened in the past.

As a result, the volume of the crime caseload being dealt with by the police has grown. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that the crime mix has changed in recent years with rising numbers of complex crimes such as sexual abuse, child abuse and domestic abuse. The increasing volume of digital evidence (which may require more intensive work to investigate) across a wide spectrum of offences from harassment to sexual offences may also be an issue. At the same time, many forces have adopted local policies to prioritise the use of investigative resources. These factors are likely to have an impact on the distribution of outcomes over time and across forces.

Notes

1. ‘Crime Outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2018’ is available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018>

2. Also released today is 'Crime in England and Wales: Year ending March 2018' available on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

For all press enquiries, please contact the Home Office Press Office who will liaise with Home Office Crime and Policing Statistics:

Newsdesk - 020 7035 3535

Monday - Thursday: 07:00 - 21:00 Friday: 07:00 - 20:00 Emergency media calls, out-of-hours: 07659 174 240

Please note: the press office deals with enquiries from the media only. Members of the public should phone 020 7035 4848.