



## Police use of force statistics, England and Wales: April 2017 to March 2018

The statistics in this release are '**experimental statistics**' and do not represent all police use of force in England and Wales. These statistics should be used and interpreted with caution.

In the year ending March 2018:

- There were **313,000 recorded incidents** in which a police officer used force on an individual.
- **Restraint tactics** (e.g. handcuffing) were the most common type of force used (286,000 times).
- The most common reason force was used by an officer was to **protect themselves** (214,000 incidents).
- The most common impact factor was the subject being **under the influence of alcohol** (127,000 incidents).
- The most common outcome was the subject being **arrested** (203,000 incidents).

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### Date published:

13 December 2018

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# 1 Summary statistics: Police use of force

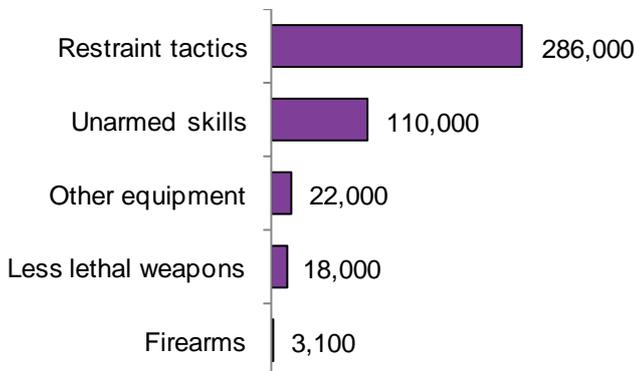
**Police use of force** refers to an officer using a force tactic (from handcuffing to using a firearm) on an individual.

A **'use of force incident'** refers to one officer's use of force on one person. Situations involving multiple officers or individuals will therefore count as multiple incidents.

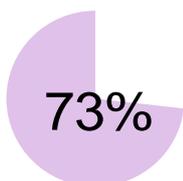
Reports from the 43 police forces in England and Wales show in 2017-18:

**313,000** police use of force incidents

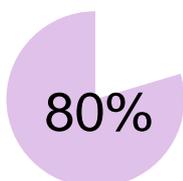
**469,000** tactics used



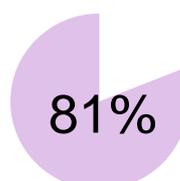
## Subjects, as perceived by the officer:



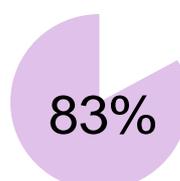
**White**



**Adult (18-64 yrs)**



**Male**



**No disabilities**

These are **'Experimental statistics'**: collected for the first time in 2017-18, and subject to **data quality issues and limitations**.

These statistics **do NOT represent all police use of force incidents in England and Wales for 2017-18**, as not all incidents were recorded.

These figures give us an **initial** view of police use of force, but it is expected the numbers may increase in future years as recording improves.

## Reasons for using force



**214,000** incidents

officers used force to protect themselves

## Impact factors



**127,000** incidents

subjects were thought to be drunk

## Outcomes



**203,000** incidents

included an arrest

## 2 Introduction

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From 1 April 2017, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) introduced the requirement for all police forces in the UK to record data on police use of force. The collection of this data is intended to hold police forces to account, and to provide the public with greater information on the different types of force used and the context in which this occurs.

The statistics on police use of force within this release cover incidents in England and Wales between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. Data was collected from the 43 Home Office funded police forces in England and Wales.

These statistics are currently designated as '[experimental statistics](#)' and should be used with caution. Experimental statistics are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to improve quality at an early stage. It is important that users understand the limitations of these statistics. More information is available below, and in the [User guide to 'Police use of force statistics, England and Wales'](#).

A use of force incident refers to a situation in which a police officer uses any force tactics (as defined in the [user guide](#)), ranging from applying handcuffs to using a firearm. As well as the tactics used in each use of force incident, officers must also record: the subject's details (age, gender, ethnicity and disability, as perceived by the reporting officer); the reason(s) for using force and other impact factors; outcome(s); location(s); and subject and staff injuries.

This release does not include incidents where force was used in designated public order events; see the [user guide](#) for more information.

### Limitations of these statistics

The statistics in this release **do not give an accurate representation of the total number of incidents involving police use of force** in England and Wales in the year ending March 2018, as this was the first year where recording use of force was implemented as a national requirement. Although all 43 Home Office police forces submitted a data return, there were various discrepancies and constraints in recording. **Many police forces were unable to record data for all variables, or submit this data to the Home Office in a standard format, and not all incidents in the reporting period were recorded.** It is expected that the number of incidents reported may increase in future years as recording practices improve across police forces.

Each section in the release features data quality text boxes which highlight relevant issues and limitations in the data. Further information can be found in the [user guide](#).

Police officers must record the details of any incident where they deployed force tactics through a 'use of force report'. Where an incident involved more than one subject or officer, **each officer who used force must complete one use of force report, per subject, detailing their own use of force.** As such, a singular event or individual may feature in multiple use of force reports.

In this release, **one 'use of force incident' refers to one officer's use of force involving one subject.** As such, the 'number of incidents' reported in this release is equal to the number of use of force reports that were completed by police officers, not the number of unique incidents or subjects involved in incidents. For example, if one subject is restrained by two officers, two use of force reports should be completed.

It is important to recognise that **a report could include multiple tactics, reasons for using force, impact factors, locations and outcomes**, although it should only relate to one officer and one subject. It is not possible to determine from such reports, for example, the location in which each tactic was used (where multiple tactics and locations are reported), or which tactic (or combination thereof) caused a subject's injuries. Although this limits the interpretations that can be made from the data, the information is collected in this way to ensure the reporting process isn't excessively bureaucratic or burdensome (e.g. through the completion of multiple or lengthy use of force reports) for police forces.

**Statisticians in the Home Office will work with police forces and the NPCC to improve the quality of these statistics as the collection continues.** In addition, having a second year of use of force data (i.e. for 2018-19) will give a greater insight into the scope and quality of the data. Improving the data quality should allow further investigation of future years' data, as well as the potential to publish force level data in future.

## 3 Use of force incidents: overview

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Police officers who deploy any force tactics must report the details of their own use of force. In this release, a 'use of force incident' refers to one officer's use of force involving one subject. A singular event or individual may feature in multiple 'use of force incidents'.

### Section 3: Data quality

**The number of incidents does not tell us how many individual people experienced police use of force.** In a situation where three police officers restrain an individual on the ground, and one of those officers then handcuffs the individual, there would be three separate use of force reports submitted (one by each officer). These would be counted in this release as three 'incidents'. All three reports would include the details of the incident (location, for example) and the subjects' details (as perceived by the reporting officer). The report would also include the tactics the reporting officer used (i.e. two reports would list ground restraint only, and one report would list both ground restraint and handcuffing).

Not all police forces' recording systems are able to record the repeated use of the same tactic within an incident. In this release **the tactics used in an incident are only counted once**, even if they were reported multiple times within the same incident.

### 3.1 Total number of incidents

There were 313,000 recorded incidents where a police officer used force on an individual in England and Wales. However, this figure is not an accurate representation of the total number of incidents involving police use of force in England and Wales in the year ending March 2018, as not all of the 43 Home Office police forces could provide use of force data across the full reporting year.

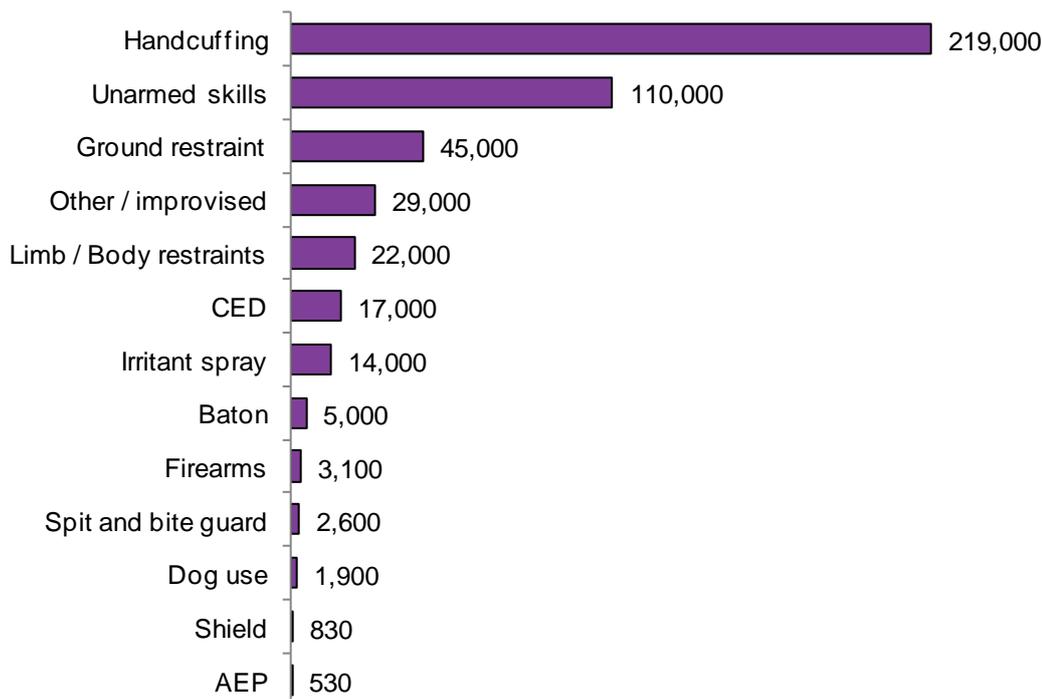
The number of incidents recorded by each police force ranged widely, from 410 to 61,000 incidents. These figures are not representative of the true number of use of force incidents occurring in those police force areas. Instead, these figures are indicative of the current level of recording of use of force incidents within police forces. The variation in recording levels across police forces therefore means that no comparisons are made between police forces in this release. **It is expected that the number of incidents reported may increase in future years as recording practices improve across police forces.**

### 3.2 Tactics used in incidents

Across the 313,000 incidents, there were 469,000 force tactics used. Over half (62%) of incidents included only one tactic. It is common for use of force incidents to involve multiple officers, explaining why the majority of incidents reported involve a small number of tactics used, as one officer may only use one or two different tactics themselves during a situation involving one individual and multiple officers.

There were 7,000 incidents (2%) submitted by police forces to the Home Office in which no tactics were recorded. This is due to data being recorded in a different format to that requested during data collection. As many police forces have since implemented recording systems which comply with requirements, this issue should not affect future years' data.

**Figure 1: Number of times tactics were used in use of force incidents, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 1](#).

The number of tactics does not sum to the total number of incidents as multiple tactics can be used in an incident.

The tactic 'CED' refers to a conducted energy device (i.e. TASER®).

Handcuffing was the most commonly used tactic, recorded in seven out of every ten incidents (70%; 219,000 incidents). Unarmed skills and other restraint tactics (ground restraint, limb/body restraints) were the next most frequently reported tactics.

The 'other/improvised' tactic category is the fourth most frequently reported, and may include tactics such as the use of a police vehicle or horse. However, given that this is the first year in which the data has been recorded nationally, it is possible that some tactics have been incorrectly recorded within the 'other' category instead of being recorded under a specific tactic.

In addition to recording the type of force used in an incident, police officers also recorded the use of tactical communication in incidents where force was used. Tactical communication refers to an officer speaking to an individual, and includes the officer issuing orders such as asking them to move or stop/change their actions or speaking to the subject to explain their next tactic. For the purposes of this release, tactical communication is not considered to be a use of force in itself. The use of this technique was reported in 53% (165,000) of incidents. Detailed figures are available where tactical communication was reported alongside other tactics in tables 1-9.

See [data tables](#) 1 to 9 for more detail.

## 4 Use of force by age, gender, ethnicity and disability of subject

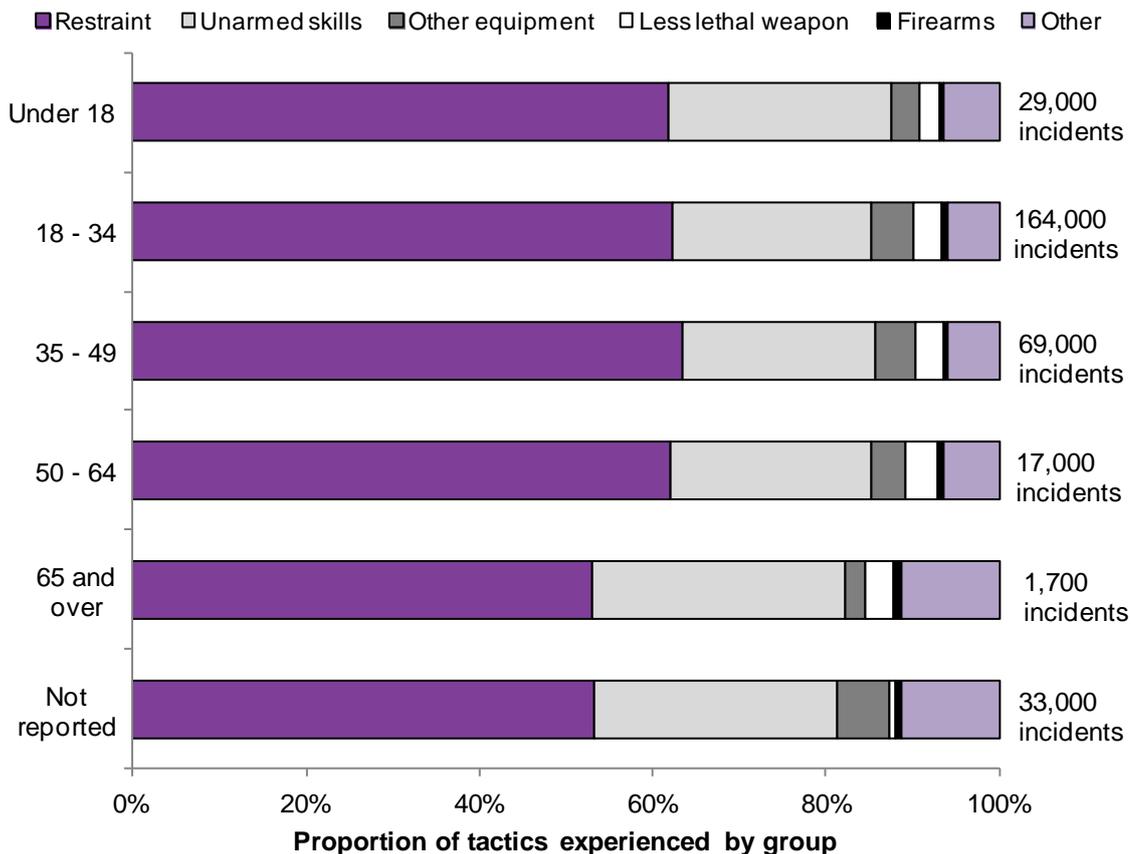
### Section 4: Data quality

All subject details are recorded **as perceived by the reporting officer**. This data should therefore not be considered as reliable and accurate as self-reported (i.e. subject provided) data. In some cases, where the subject information is known (e.g. it has been provided by the subject) this information may have been provided instead. However, it is not possible to determine which incidents feature subject information that is not officer perceived.

#### 4.1 Age (as perceived by officer)

Over half of the use of force incidents recorded involved subjects who were perceived as being between 18 to 34 years old (164,000 incidents, 52%); 9% of incidents involved subjects perceived as under 18 years old.

**Figure 2: Proportion of tactics used in incidents involving subject group, by age (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 2](#).

For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped; see the data tables for groupings. Table 2 provides a further breakdown of the under 18 age group.

This chart only includes 13,000 of the 17,000 incidents involving CED use, as wider incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

Figure 2 shows the tactics used in incidents involving each age group. The most commonly used group of tactics across all age groups was **restraint tactics** (77% of which was accounted for by handcuffing). The prevalence of these tactics was lower, proportionally, in the youngest and eldest

age groups ('under 11' and '65 and over'). This may be partly accounted for by guidance in the [National Personal Safety Manual](#), which states that subject characteristics such as age should be taken into account in the officer's decision to use handcuffs. The greater proportion of unarmed skills and 'other' tactics used in incidents with these age groups may account for officers escorting subjects rather than handcuffing them.

**Table 1: Proportion of tactic experienced by subject group, by age (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

	Under 11	11 to 17	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65 and over	Not reported	Total
<b>% of incidents involving group</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Proportion of tactic experienced by group</b>								
Restraint	0%	9%	54%	22%	5%	0%	9%	100%
Unarmed skills	0%	10%	52%	20%	5%	1%	13%	100%
Other equipment	0%	6%	55%	21%	4%	0%	14%	100%
Less lethal weapon	0%	7%	59%	24%	6%	1%	3%	100%
Firearms	0%	6%	60%	18%	6%	1%	9%	100%
Other	0%	9%	48%	19%	5%	1%	18%	100%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 2](#).

All percentages in this table are rounded to the nearest percent; figures showing as 0% include values lower than 0.5%.

This table only includes 13,000 of the 17,000 incidents involving CED use, as wider incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

Subjects perceived as under 18 years old accounted for 9% of subjects, but were involved in proportionately fewer incidents with less lethal weapons and firearms (7% and 6% respectively; 1,200 incidents in total). Of these, subjects perceived to be under 11 years old were involved in 19 incidents: 16 incidents involved CEDs (of which five included reports of the CED being fired), and three incidents involved firearms.

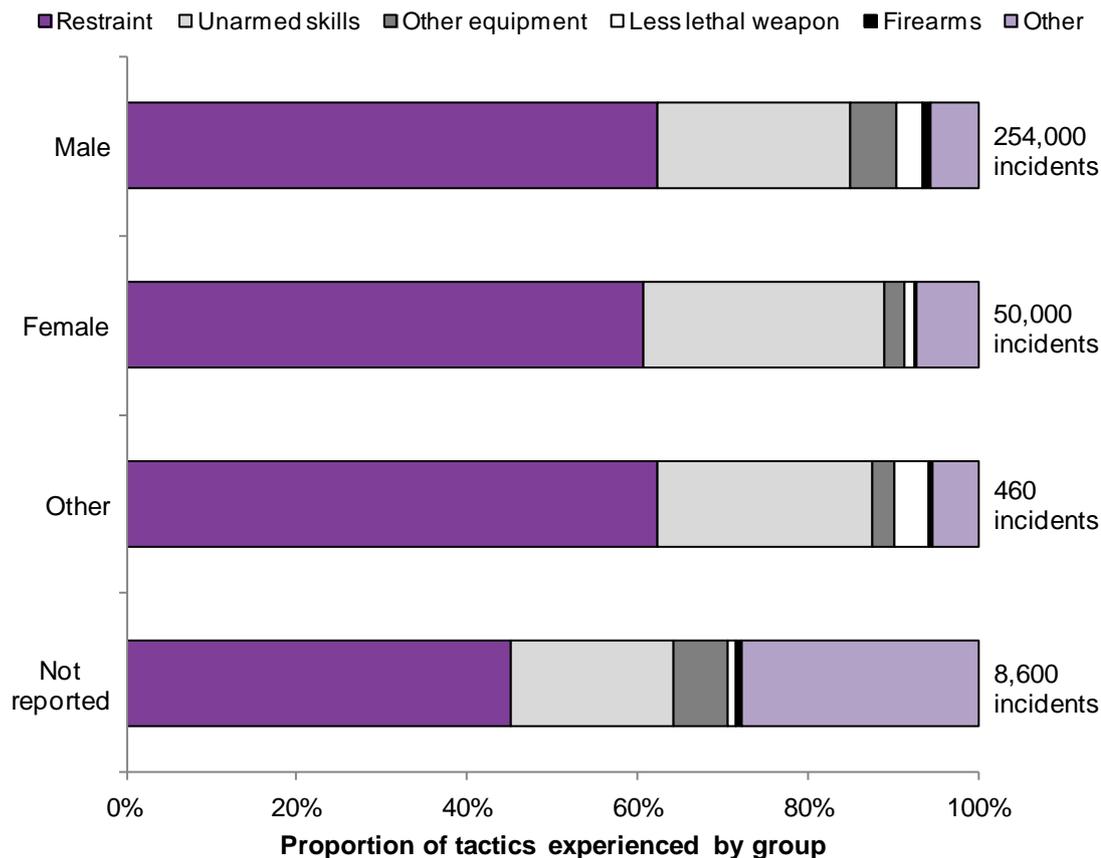
Subjects perceived to be between 18 and 34 years old accounted for 52% of subjects, but experienced a higher proportion of police use of firearms and less lethal weapons (60% and 59% respectively).

See [data table 2](#) for further information.

## 4.2 Gender (as perceived by officer)

Four out of every five of the use of force incidents recorded involved subjects who were perceived as male (81%; 254,000 incidents).

**Figure 3: Proportion of tactics used in incidents involving subject group, by gender (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 3](#). For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped; see the data tables for groupings. This chart only includes 13,000 of the 17,000 incidents involving CED use, as wider incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

As shown in Figure 3, female subjects were more likely to encounter unarmed skills, and less likely to encounter the use of other equipment (e.g. batons, irritant spray), than any other group. The greater proportion of unarmed skills and ‘other’ tactics used may be accounted for by officers escorting subjects rather than handcuffing them, as per guidance in the [National Personal Safety Manual](#) regarding subject characteristics.

In incidents where the subject’s details were not reported, the proportions of tactics used varied compared with other groups, including a higher proportion of ‘other’ tactics. The reason for this is not clear, but it is partially accounted for by recording issues in a small number of police forces; such issues are prevalent as this is the first year the data has been collected nationally.

**Table 2: Proportion of tactic experienced by subject group, by gender (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

	Male	Female	Other	Not reported	Total
<b>% of incidents involving group</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Proportion of tactic experienced by group</b>					
Restraint	82%	16%	0%	2%	100%
Unarmed skills	78%	19%	0%	2%	100%
Other equipment	88%	8%	0%	3%	100%
Less lethal weapon	92%	7%	0%	1%	100%
Firearms	91%	6%	0%	3%	100%
Other	71%	18%	0%	11%	100%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 3](#).

All percentages in this table are rounded to the nearest percent; figures showing as 0% include values lower than 0.5%.

This table only includes 13,000 of the 17,000 incidents involving CED use, as wider incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

Subjects perceived as male accounted for 81% of subjects, but experienced a higher proportion of police use of firearms, less lethal weapons and other equipment (91%, 92% and 88% respectively).

See [data table 3](#) for further information.

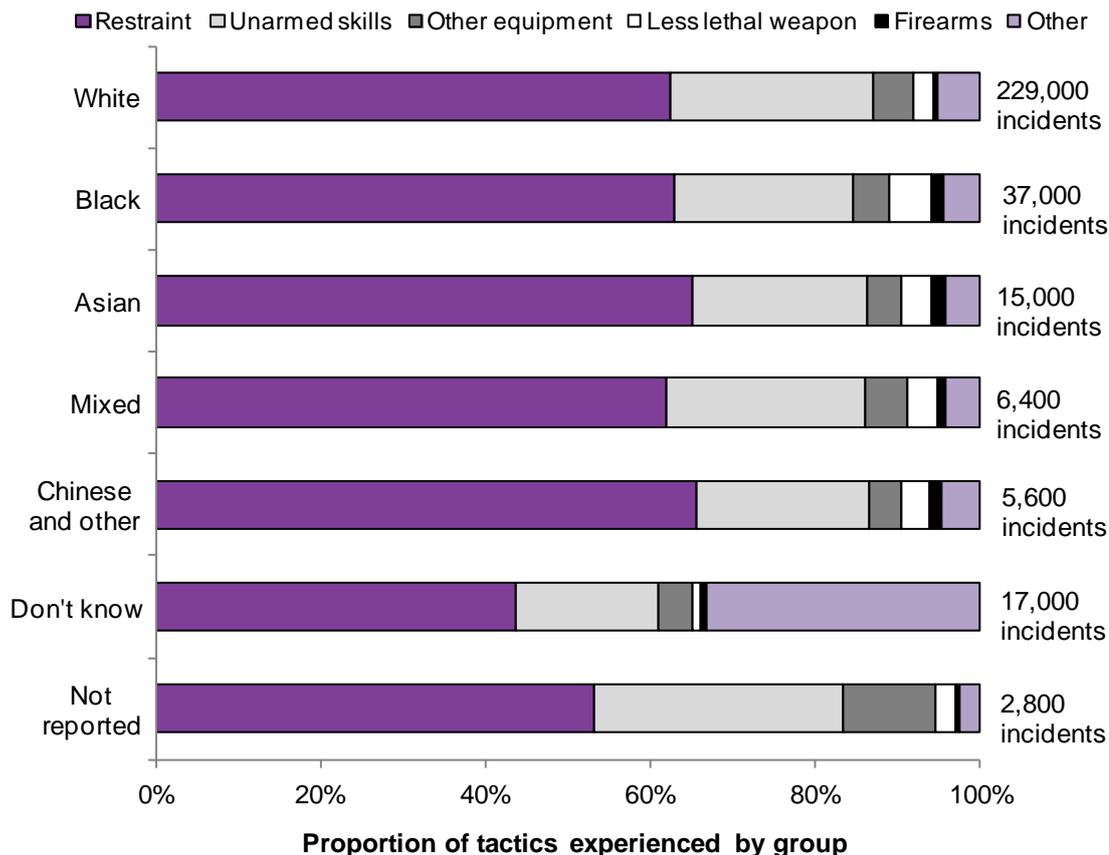
### 4.3 Ethnicity (as perceived by officer)

Almost three-quarters of the use of force incidents recorded involved subjects who were perceived as being White (229,000 incidents, 73%). No ethnicity information was recorded in 0.9% of incidents (2,800 incidents), although in 5% of incidents (17,000 incidents) the officer recorded that they 'did not know'<sup>1</sup> the subject's ethnicity.

In incidents where the officer 'did not know' the subject's ethnicity, the proportions of tactics used varied compared with other groups, including a higher proportion of 'other' tactics. The reason for this is not clear, but it is partially accounted for by recording issues in a small number of police forces; such issues are prevalent as this is the first year the data has been collected nationally.

<sup>1</sup> This may have been reported in situations where the officer did not feel confident in making a judgement about the subject's ethnicity, e.g. because of poor lighting conditions.

**Figure 4: Proportion of tactics used in incidents involving subject group, by ethnicity (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 4](#). For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped; see the data tables for groupings.

This chart only includes 13,000 of the 17,000 incidents involving CED use, as wider incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

**Table 3: Proportion of tactic experienced by subject group, by ethnicity (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Chinese and other	Don't Know	Not reported	Total
<b>% of incidents involving group</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Proportion of tactic experienced by group</b>								
Restraint	75%	12%	5%	2%	2%	4%	1%	100%
Unarmed skills	77%	11%	4%	2%	1%	4%	1%	100%
Other equipment	75%	11%	4%	2%	1%	5%	2%	100%
Less lethal weapon	67%	20%	6%	3%	2%	2%	1%	100%
Firearms	51%	26%	12%	3%	3%	5%	0%	100%
Other	58%	8%	3%	1%	1%	29%	0%	100%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 4](#). All percentages in this table are rounded to the nearest percent; figures showing as 0% include values lower than 0.5%.

This table only includes 13,000 of the 17,000 incidents involving CED use, as wider incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

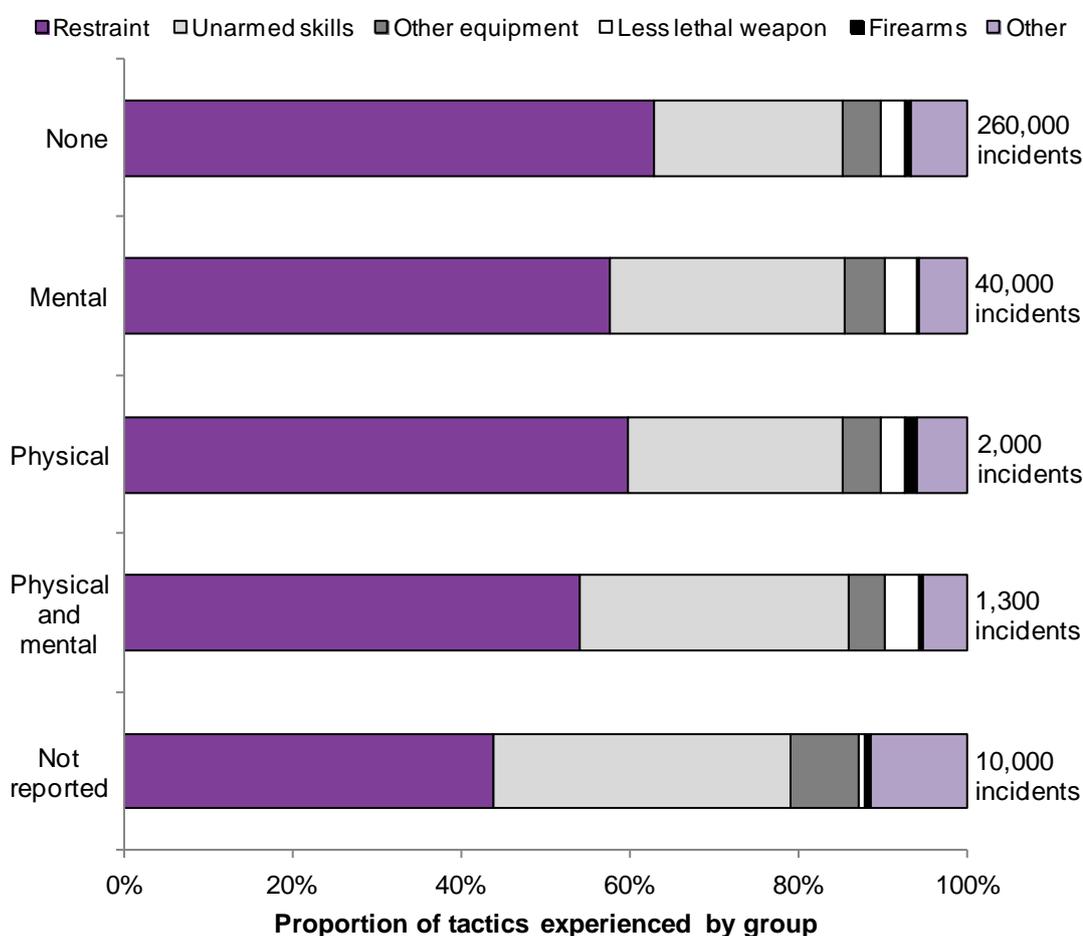
Subjects perceived as White accounted for 73% of subjects involved in use of force incidents, but were only involved in 51% of incidents which involved police use of firearms. In comparison, subjects perceived as Black or Asian accounted for 12% and 5% of subjects, but were involved in proportionally more incidents which involved police use of firearms (26% and 12% respectively). Similarly for less lethal weapons, subjects perceived as Black were involved in a higher proportion of incidents where police used less lethal weapons (20%), while subjects perceived as White were involved in proportionately less (67%).

See [data table 4](#) for further information.

#### 4.4 Disability (as perceived by officer)

The majority (83%) of the use of force incidents recorded involved subjects who were perceived as having no physical or mental disabilities (260,000 incidents).

**Figure 5: Proportion of tactics used in incidents involving subject group, by disability (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 5](#).

For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped; see the data tables for groupings.

This chart only includes 13,000 of the 17,000 incidents involving CED use, as wider incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

As shown in Figure 5, restraint tactics were used less in incidents where the subjects were perceived as having a disability, particularly in cases where the subject was perceived as having both mental and physical disabilities. This may be partly accounted for by guidance in the [National Personal Safety Manual](#), which states subject characteristics such as disabilities should be taken into account in the decision to use handcuffs. In situations where handcuffing or other restraints

would aggravate the subjects' condition, unarmed skills may have been employed by the officer instead.

**Table 4: Proportion of tactic experienced by subject group, by disability (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

	None	Mental	Physical	Mental and Physical	Not reported	Total
<b>% of incidents involving group</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Proportion of tactic experienced by group</b>						
Restraint	84%	13%	1%	0%	2%	100%
Unarmed skills	78%	17%	1%	1%	5%	100%
Other equipment	80%	14%	1%	0%	5%	100%
Less lethal weapon	80%	18%	1%	1%	1%	100%
Firearms	87%	8%	1%	0%	3%	100%
Other	82%	12%	1%	0%	5%	100%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 5](#).

All percentages in this table are rounded to the nearest percent; figures showing as 0% include values lower than 0.5%.

This table only includes 13,000 of the 17,000 incidents involving CED use, as wider incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

Subjects perceived as having a mental disability accounted for 13% of subjects, but experienced a higher proportion of police use of less lethal weapons (18%, predominantly CED), however they experienced proportionately less police use of firearms (8%). Where less lethal weapons were used in incidents with this group of subjects (2,400 incidents), there were 380 discharges.

Subjects perceived as having no disabilities (83%) experienced a lower proportion of police use of less lethal weapons (80%), but a higher proportion of police use of firearms (87%).

See [data table 5](#) for further information.

## 5 Use of force tactics by reason, impact factors and outcomes

This section presents further detail on incidents wherein officers recorded the use of: restraint tactics, unarmed skills, other equipment (batons, irritant sprays, spit and bite guards), less lethal weapons (CED and AEP), or firearms.

See [data tables](#) 6, 7, and 8 for further information, including the use of dogs, shields and 'other/improvised' tactics, and more detailed breakdowns.

### Section 5: Data quality

**Incidents can involve multiple tactics, reasons for using force, impact factors and outcomes, and as such should not be interpreted as being directly linked or causal.** For example, in an incident where restraint tactics were used and the outcome 'hospitalisation' was recorded, it does not follow that hospitalisation was caused by the use of restraint tactics, as other tactics may have been recorded in that incident which caused or contributed to the outcome. This also applies to reasons for using force and impact factors.

Officers may have recorded the outcomes 'hospitalisation' and 'fatality' even when these did not occur as a result of the reporting officers' use of force. **Outcomes recorded as 'fatality' have not been included in this section due to data quality issues.** Information on fatalities can be found in [section 7.3](#).

### 5.1 Overview

There were 313,000 incidents reported, which involved 469,000 tactics. The majority of incidents (62%) involved only one tactic; 2% of incidents had no tactics reported<sup>2</sup>.

#### Reasons

Across all reported incidents, the most commonly reported reasons for using force were for protection or to assist in making an arrest. Using force as a means of protection most commonly involved the officer protecting themselves or other officers, but also included officers protecting the public and the subject. The majority (80%) of incidents were reported with multiple reasons for using force.

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 6](#).

Figure shows the five most common reasons only.

Multiple reasons can apply in an incident.

**Figure 6: Total number of incidents, by reasons for using force, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

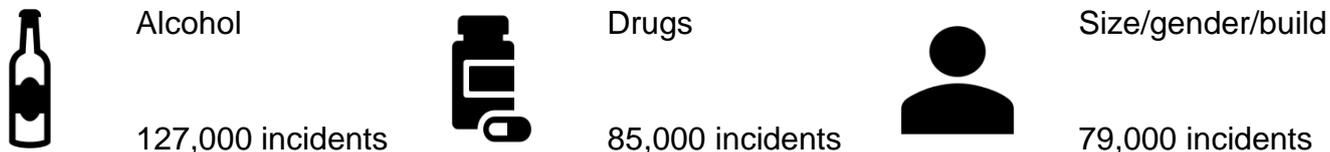


<sup>2</sup> See section 2.2 regarding the reason some incidents have no tactics.

## Impact factors

The most common impact factors recorded were: alcohol, drugs, and the size/gender/build of the subject. The majority (90%) of incidents included an impact factor, and almost half (49%) involved multiple impact factors.

**Figure 7: Total number of incidents, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

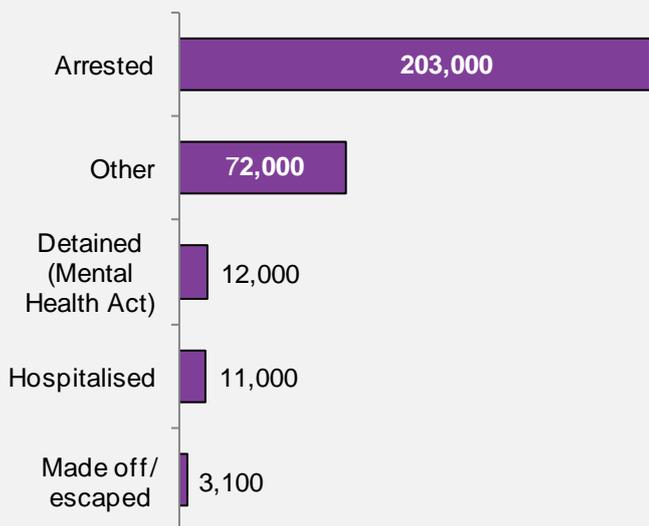


Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 7](#).

Figure shows the three most common impact factors only.

Multiple impact factors can apply in an incident, and there may also be incidents where no impact factor applies.

**Figure 8: Total number of incidents, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



## Outcomes

The most common outcome across all incidents was 'arrested', which was the most frequently reported outcome when looking across all individual tactics.

The outcome 'other' is the second most common outcome recorded, and is within the three most frequently reported outcomes for all tactics. 'Other' could include the subject being cautioned, charged, or de-arrested following further information, among others. See [user guide](#) for further details.

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 8](#).

Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

## 5.2 Restraint tactics

Restraint tactics covers the use of handcuffs, ground restraint, and/or limb/body restraints; these tactics were used 286,000 times. They were the most commonly used group of tactics across all incidents, and handcuffing accounted for 77% of all restraint. Of the 219,000 incidents involving handcuffing, 126,000 (57%) reported handcuffing as the only tactic used.

### Reasons

In incidents where restraint tactics were amongst the tactics used, the most common reasons included protection of the officer (reported 204,000 times), or other officers (reported 162,000 times), followed by assisting in making an arrest (reported 148,000 times). This is similar to the most common reasons for using force for most other tactics.

### Impact factors

In incidents where restraint tactics were used, the most common impact factors recorded were: alcohol, drugs, and the size/gender/build of the subject; this is similar to incidents involving unarmed skills and other equipment. Mental health was more likely to be reported as an impact factor in incidents where ground restraint or limb/body restraints were used, but less likely for incidents involving handcuffing.

**Figure 9: Number of times restraint tactics were used, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

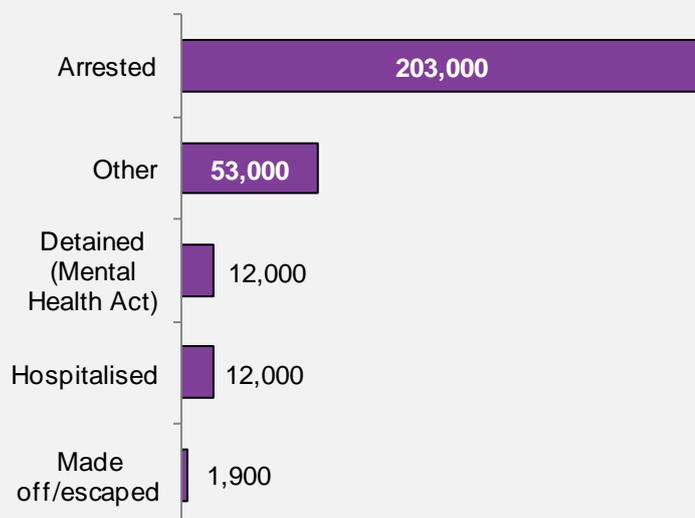


Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 7](#).

Figure shows the three most common impact factors only.

Multiple impact factors can apply in an incident, and there may also be incidents where no impact factor applies.

**Figure 10: Number of times restraint tactics were used, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



### Outcomes

In incidents where restraint tactics were used, the most common outcome was 'arrested', which is the same across all individual tactics.

The outcome 'other' could include the subject being cautioned, charged, or de-arrested following further information, among others. See [user guide](#) for further details.

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 8](#).

Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

### 5.3 Unarmed skills

Unarmed skills (i.e. physical contact, which can include: pushing; pulling; the use of pressure points; and knee, foot or hand strikes) were used in 35% of all incidents recorded (110,000 incidents). There were 36,000 incidents in which unarmed skills was the only tactic reported.

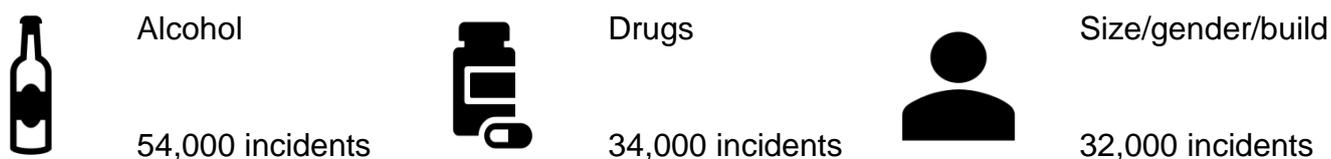
#### Reasons

In incidents where unarmed skills were amongst the tactics used, the most common reasons included protection of the officer (79,000 incidents) and other officers (70,000 incidents), similar to the most common reasons for using force for most other tactics. Protecting the subject was the third most commonly reported reason for using force in incidents involving unarmed skills (50,000 incidents). Unarmed skills could be used by the officer in these incidents to prevent the subject from harming themselves.

#### Impact factors

In incidents where unarmed skills were used, the most common impact factors recorded were: alcohol, drugs, and the size/gender/build of the subject. This is similar to incidents involving restraint tactics and other equipment such as irritant spray and batons.

**Figure 11: Number of times unarmed skills were used, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

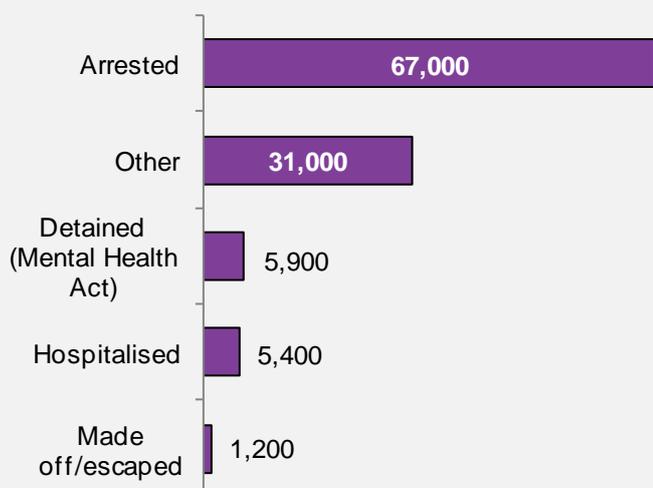


Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 7](#).

Figure shows the three most common impact factors only.

Multiple impact factors can apply in an incident, and there may also be incidents where no impact factor applies.

**Figure 12: Number of times unarmed skills were used, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



#### Outcomes

In incidents where unarmed skills were used, the most common outcome was 'arrested', which is the same across all individual tactics.

The outcome 'other' could include the subject being cautioned, charged, or de-arrested following further information, among others. See [user guide](#) for further details.

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 8](#).

Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

## 5.4 Batons and irritant spray

Batons and irritant spray were involved in 2% and 4% of all incidents recorded, respectively. **This includes incidents where the baton or canister containing the irritant was drawn but not used.** Of the 14,000 times that irritant sprays were reported, they were used (sprayed) 5,600 times. Of the 5,000 times that batons were reported, they were used 1,400 times.

### Reasons

In incidents where batons and/or irritant spray were involved, the most common reasons included protection of the officer (reported 15,000 times) and other officers (reported 12,000 times), similar to the most common reasons for using force for most other tactics.

### Impact factors

In incidents where batons and/or irritant spray were involved, the most common impact factors recorded were: alcohol, the size/gender/build of the subject, and drugs; this is similar to incidents involving restraint tactics and unarmed skills.

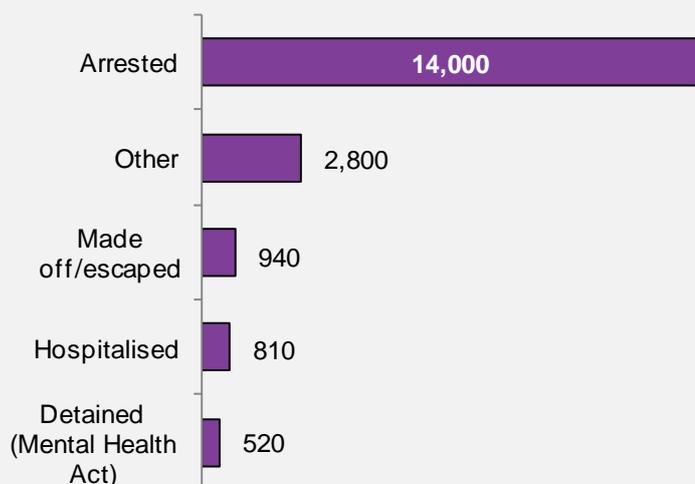
**Figure 13: Number of times batons and/or irritant sprays were used, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 7](#). Figure shows the three most common impact factors only.

Multiple impact factors can apply in an incident, and there may also be incidents where no impact factor applies.

**Figure 14: Number of times batons and/or irritant sprays were used, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



### Outcomes

In incidents where batons and/or irritant spray were involved, the most common outcome was 'arrested', which is the same across all individual tactics.

The outcome 'other' could include the subject being cautioned, charged, or de-arrested following further information, among others. See [user guide](#) for further details.

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 8](#).

Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

## 5.5 Spit and bite guards

Spit and bite guards may be used by an officer to provide protection from spitting and reduce the worst effects of biting. They were used in 0.8% of all incidents recorded (2,600 incidents). These incidents may also include other tactics; there were 210 incidents in which spit and bite guards were the only tactic reported.

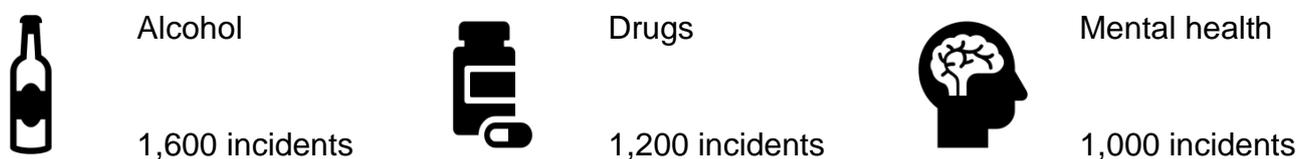
### Reasons

In incidents where spit and bite guards were used, the most common reasons included protection of other officers (2,100 incidents) and the reporting officer (2,100 incidents), similar to the most common reasons for using force for most other tactics.

### Impact factors

In incidents where spit and bite guards were used, the most common impact factors recorded were: alcohol, drugs, and mental health.

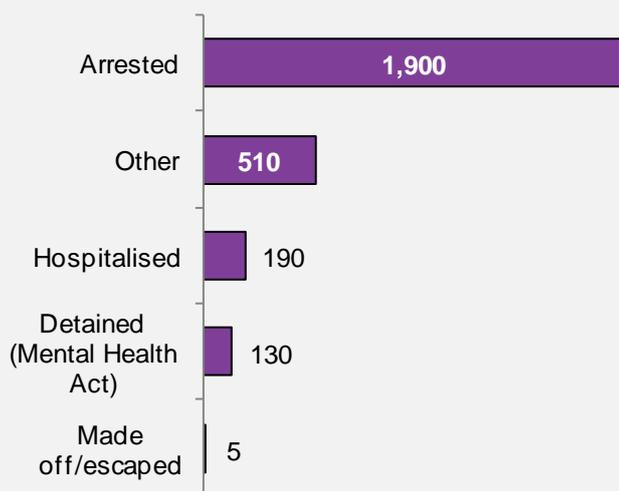
**Figure 15: Number of times spit and bite guards were used, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 7](#). Figure shows the three most common impact factors only.

Multiple impact factors can apply in an incident, and there may also be incidents where no impact factor applies.

**Figure 16: Number of times spit and bite guards were used, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



### Outcomes

In incidents where spit and bite guards were used, the most common outcome was 'arrested', which is the same across all individual tactics.

The outcome 'other' could include the subject being cautioned, charged, or de-arrested following further information, among others. See [user guide](#) for further details.

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 8](#).

Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

## 5.6 Less lethal weapons - CED (Conducted energy device)

Officers must record when a CED (i.e. a TASER<sup>®</sup>) is used in an incident, even when it is not fired. CED use is recorded against seven categories: drawn, aimed, arced, red-dot, drive-stun, fired, and angle drive-stun. Drawn, aimed, arced, and red-dot are non-discharge uses, as no electricity is discharged into the subject. Drive-stun, fired, and angle drive-stun are discharge uses. For definitions of these uses, see the [user guide](#).

In keeping with previous recording on CED use, these statistics present the 'highest' use of CED from each incident. For example, if a CED is drawn, aimed, red-dotted, and then fired, this use will appear under 'Fired' only.

The recording of police use of CEDs was a national requirement prior to 2017-18. However, due to the transition required to implement new recording systems, 17 police forces provided the Home Office with summary data on police use of CED for part or all of the reporting period, rather than incident-level data.

Despite the change in collection methods, **the total figure for CED use is considered to be an accurate reflection of CED use by the 43 police forces in England and Wales in 2017-18.** However, due to the transitions to new recording systems occurring at different times across police forces, only 13,000 of the 17,000 CED incidents included wider incident details such as the reasons for using force, impact factors and outcomes.

### Incidents involving CEDs

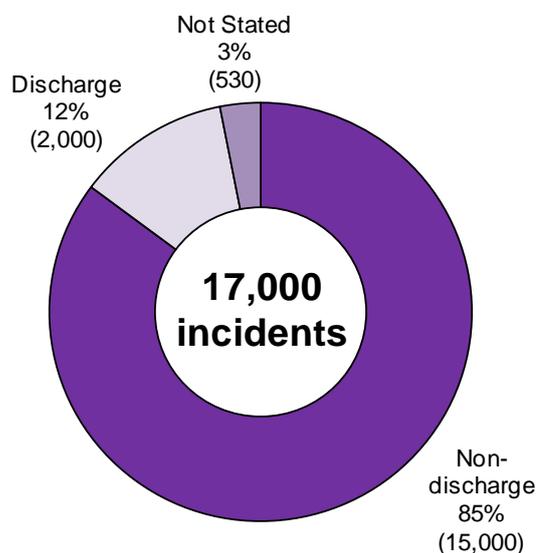
CEDs were used in 17,000 incidents, although **in 85% of these incidents the CED was not discharged.**

This proportion of non-discharge/discharge use is similar to previous years. However, the proportion of 'not stated' is higher than in previous years, due to the disruption caused by the transition required to implement new data recording systems.

### Reasons

In incidents where CEDs were used, the most common reasons included protection of the officer (12,000 incidents) and other officers (10,000 incidents), and to assist in making an arrest (7,900 incidents). This is similar to the most common reasons for using force for most other tactics.

**Figure 17: Number of times CEDs were used, by use type, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

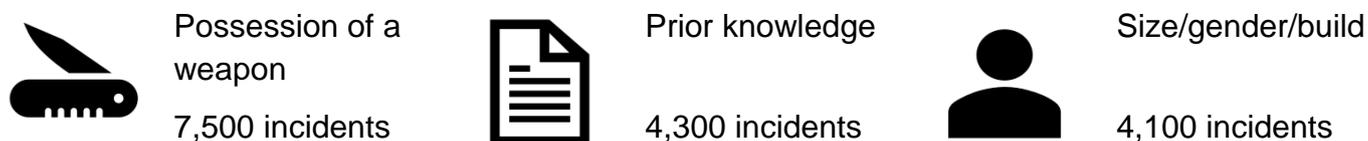


Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 1](#).

## Impact factors

In incidents where CEDs were used, the most common impact factor recorded was the subject being in possession of a weapon. Possession of a weapon was also the main impact factor in incidents involving AEPs and firearms.

**Figure 18: Number of times CEDs were used, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



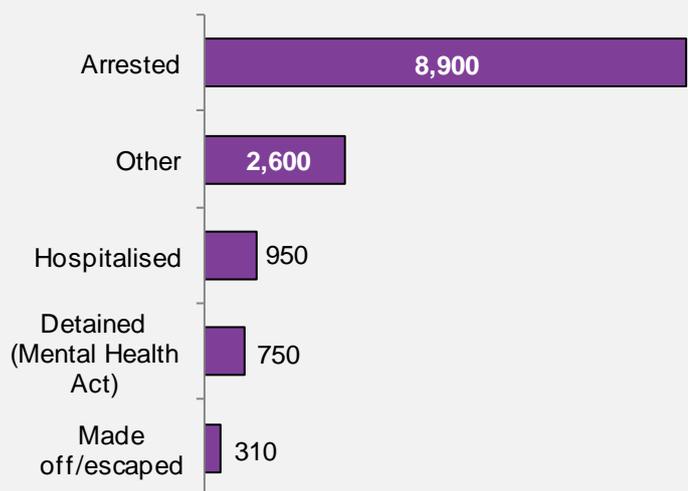
Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 7](#).

Figure shows the three most common impact factors only.

Multiple impact factors can apply in an incident, and there may also be incidents where no impact factor applies.

This chart only includes 13,000 of the 17,000 incidents involving CED use, as wider incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

**Figure 19: Number of times CEDs were used, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



## Outcomes

In incidents where CEDs were used, the most common outcome was 'arrested', which is the same across all individual tactics.

The outcome 'other' could include the subject being cautioned, charged, or de-arrested following further information, among others. See [user guide](#) for further details.

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 8](#).

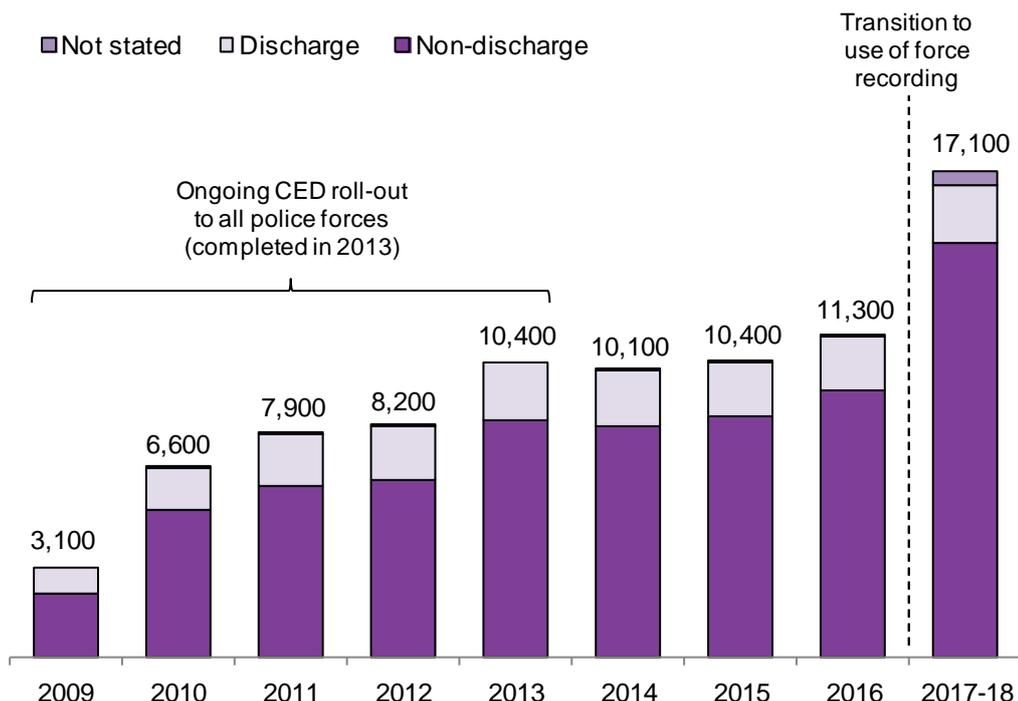
Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

## Police use of CED prior to 2017-18

The statistics on police use of CEDs that were previously collected and published by Home Office on a calendar year basis, up to 2016 (inclusive) are available on [GOV.UK](#). Figures on CED use for the three months between the 2016 reporting period and the new 2017-18 reporting period for police use of force (i.e. January to March 2017) are available in [data table 14](#) of this release. Revisions made to the CED use figures for 2016 are available in [data table 15](#).

The way in which police use of CEDs is counted and measured remains the same in 2017-18 compared with previous years; however, the way officers report their use has now changed. Therefore, **caution is advised when comparing figures on CED use with those for previous years**. The latest figures show that the number of times CEDs were used by police in 2017-18 has increased compared with the previous reporting year (calendar year 2016).

**Figure 20: Number of times CEDs were used, England and Wales, year ending December 2009 to year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 1](#); Police use of TASER® X26 conducted energy devices statistics, England and Wales, [collection](#).

CEDs were first trialled in UK police forces in 2003, after which the use of CEDs by all specially trained officers was authorised by the Home Secretary in 2008. The roll-out of CEDs to all 43 Home Office police forces finished in 2013. The rounding conventions used in this chart (i.e. to the nearest hundred) are different to the rest of the release to allow readers to distinguish between numbers that would otherwise round to the same value.

The increase in CED use compared to the previous reporting year is in line with the overall trend of increasing CED use, and may reflect:

- the increase in recent years of the number of CED-trained officers and CEDs available in police forces (which is based on forces' strategic assessments of threat and risk); or
- officers dealing with more incidents with the potential for conflict.

However, this latest rise may not be entirely explained by a real increase in police using CEDs, and may be partially accounted for by an **increase in the recording of CED use due to improved, simpler methods of recording** (i.e. officers recording more of their CED use, rather than more frequently using CEDs).

All types of CED use (discharge, non-discharge, and not stated) increased compared to the previous year. However, the majority (89%) of this increase in CED use was accounted for by a rise in non-discharge uses.

## 5.7 Less lethal weapons - AEP

AEP is a soft nosed impact projectile fired from a single shot launcher. AEPs were involved in 0.2% of all use of force incidents recorded (530 incidents); **this includes incidents where an AEP was aimed but not fired**. There were 36 incidents which involved an AEP being fired.

### Reasons

In incidents where AEPs were involved (i.e. aimed or fired), the most common reasons included protection of the officer (500 incidents) and other officers (450 incidents), and to assist in making an arrest (400 incidents), similar to the most common reasons for using force for most other tactics.

### Impact factors

In incidents where AEPs were involved, the most common impact factors recorded was the subject being in possession of a weapon. Possession of a weapon was also the main impact factor in incidents involving police use of CED and firearms.

**Figure 21: Number of times AEPs were used, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

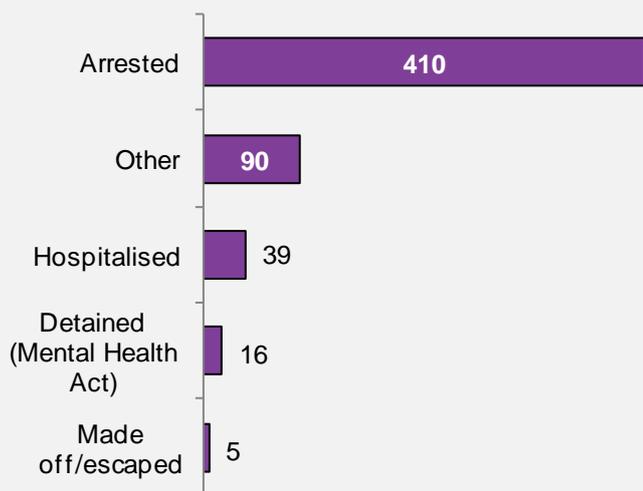


Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 7](#).

Figure shows the three most common impact factors only.

Multiple impact factors can apply in an incident, and there may also be incidents where no impact factor applies.

**Figure 22: Number of times AEPs were used, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



### Outcomes

In incidents where AEPs were involved, the most common outcome was 'arrested', which is the same across all individual tactics.

The outcome 'other' could include the subject being cautioned, charged, or de-arrested following further information, among others. See [user guide](#) for further details.

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 8](#).

Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

## 5.8 Firearms

Of the 313,000 incidents recorded, firearms were involved in 1% (3,100 incidents); **this includes incidents where a firearm was aimed but not fired.**

These statistics do not provide a breakdown of whether the firearm was aimed or fired. However, published statistics on '[Police use of firearms](#)' in 2017-18 show that there were 12 incidents involving persons in which firearms were discharged (fired). This may not equate to 12 use of force incidents in this release as the definition of 'incident' differs between the two releases. In the 'Police use of firearms' collection, one incident could involve two officers discharging firearms at one person, which would be counted as two incidents in this release.

### Reasons

In incidents where firearms were involved, the most common reasons included protection of the officer (2,800 incidents) and other officers (2,700 incidents), similar to the most common reasons for using force for most other tactics. Protecting the public and preventing an offence were also amongst the most frequently reported reasons; this is similar to incidents involving CEDs.

### Impact factors

In incidents where firearms were involved, the most common impact factor recorded was the subject being in possession of a weapon. Possession of a weapon was also the main impact factor in incidents involving less lethal weapons (CEDs and AEPs).

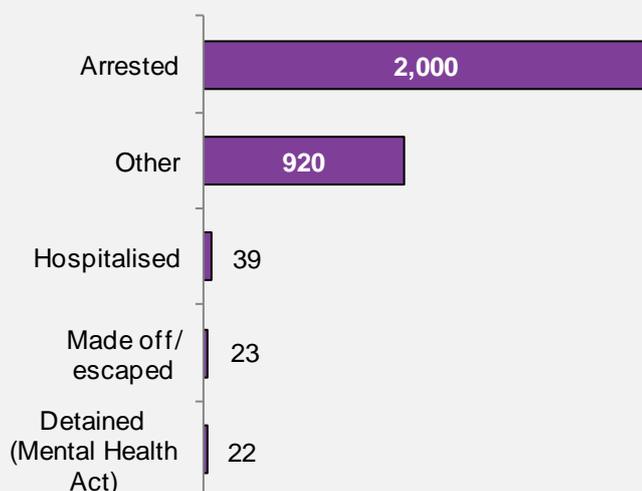
**Figure 23: Number of times firearms were used, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 7](#). Figure shows the three most common impact factors only.

Multiple impact factors can apply in an incident, and there may also be incidents where no impact factor applies.

**Figure 24: Number of times firearms were used, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



### Outcomes

In incidents where firearms were involved, the most common outcome was 'arrested', which is the same across all individual tactics.

The outcome 'other' could include the subject being cautioned, charged, or de-arrested following further information, among others. See [user guide](#) for further details.

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 8](#).

Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

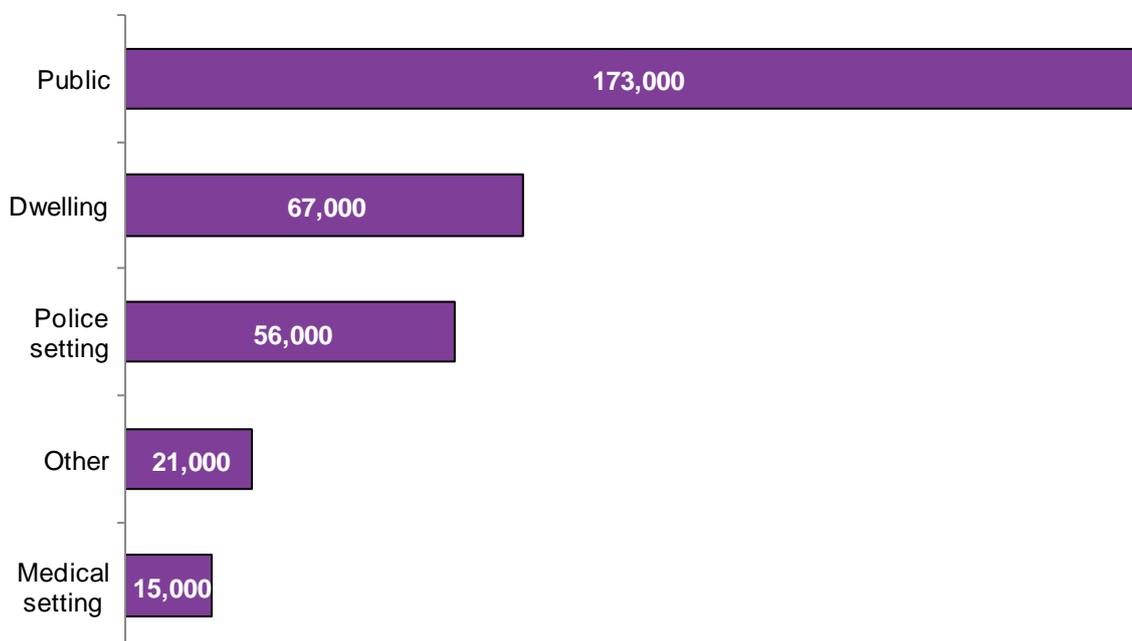
## 6 Incident location

### Section 6: Data quality

**A use of force incident may involve multiple locations** (e.g. an incident could begin in a dwelling, but finish on the street outside if the subject attempted to escape). However, police forces' recording systems may not allow for multiple locations to be recorded for one incident, so primary location may be given instead.

The majority of incidents recorded included a public location. The most common incident location recorded was a street or highway, which was recorded in 44% of incidents (137,000 incidents).

**Figure 25: Number of times location type was reported, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 9](#). For ease of viewing, tactics and locations have been grouped; see the data tables for groupings.

Restraint tactics were the most commonly used tactics across all location types, followed by unarmed skills. The use of less lethal weapons and firearms was recorded predominantly in dwellings (which may be in response to an incident or to assist in making an arrest) and public settings (mostly street/highway).

### Police use of force in custody blocks

Custody block was listed as a location in 41,000 incidents. The table below compares all incidents to those which include custody block as a location. However, it is important to note that 21% of incidents involving a custody block included other locations, and as such it does not necessarily follow that the tactics shown were always used within a custody block (i.e. they could have been used during the incident before the subject was placed in custody).

**Table 5: Proportion of incidents involving force, by tactic and location, England and Wales, year ending March 2018**

	All incidents	Incidents including custody block as a location
<b>% of incidents</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Restraint	91%	85%
Unarmed skills	35%	61%
Other equipment	7%	5%
Less lethal weapon	6%	0%
Firearms	1%	0%
Other	10%	12%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2017 to March 2018, [Table 9](#).

Incidents involving CED use may be under-represented in this table, as wider incident details such as location could only be provided for 13,000 of the 17,000 CED incidents.

All percentages in this table are rounded to the nearest percent; figures showing as 0% include values lower than 0.5%.

Compared against incidents overall, incidents in which custody block was listed as a location (but not necessarily the only location) featured more unarmed skills compared with all incidents in general, and the likelihood of spit guards being used rose from 0.8% to 2%. Restraint tactics, less lethal weapons, firearms and other equipment were less likely to be used in these incidents compared with all incidents in general.

See [data table 9](#) for further information.

## 7 Injuries and fatalities

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Officers should record details of their own injuries and those sustained by the subjects, where these injuries were as a result of the use of force.

### Section 7: Data quality

**Caution should be used when interpreting the data on injuries and fatalities**, due to inconsistencies in reporting. For example, officers may report 'no injury' sustained due to the use of force incident, but then also include details of a 'minor' injury. This could be because **officers recorded injuries (to themselves or to subjects) even when these did not occur as a result of the use of force incident**. The same may be true for the reporting of hospitalisations and fatalities.

Injury level is recorded in the following categories:

#### Minor

An injury which may require some simple first aid but does not meet the definition of severe.

#### Severe

A fracture, deep cut, deep laceration or an injury causing damage to an internal organ or the impairment of any bodily function. In addition, an injury which, after initial assessment at hospital, requires formal admission to hospital.

#### Death

(Subject only) Death of the subject where there is a suspected causal link between police contact and the death.

### 7.1 Officer injuries

Of the 313,000 incidents recorded, 6% (18,000) involved reports of the officer sustaining an injury as a result of the incident:

- 86% (16,000) reported minor injuries;
- 2% (270) reported severe injuries; and
- 13% (2,300) had no injury level recorded.

Excluded from the above are the incidents where the data was contradictory (e.g. no injury was reported, but an injury level of 'severe' was recorded). A full breakdown is provided in [data table 10](#).

### 7.2 Subject injuries

Of the 313,000 incidents recorded, 6% (20,000) involved reports of subjects injured as a result of police use of force:

- 91% (18,000) reported minor injuries;

- 2% (380) reported severe injuries; and
- 7% (1,300) had no injury level recorded.

Excluded from the above are the incidents where the data was contradictory (e.g. no injury was reported, but an injury level of 'severe' was recorded). A full breakdown is provided in [data table 11](#). In 4% (14,000) of incidents the officer recorded that they did not know if the subject sustained an injury due to their use of force.

Of the 20,000 incidents where subjects were reported as injured as a result of the use of force, 1,800 included hospitalisation as an outcome (170 of which involved a 'severe' injury). There were 8,600 incidents where hospitalisation was recorded as an outcome, but the officer reported that the subject did not sustain an injury as a result of the officer's use of force. It is possible therefore that not all hospitalisations were caused by an officers' use of force (i.e. a subject may have sustained an injury through another cause, or may have required medical attention for substances used prior to the incident).

### 7.3 Subject fatalities

There were 13 reports of the death of a subject, relating to 12 individuals, as one police force confirmed that two officers had reported the same fatality from an incident. However, these figures should not be used to represent the number of deaths caused by police use of force, as some officers may have reported fatalities which were not as a result of the use of force, due to differences in recording practices and initial unfamiliarity with new recording systems.

These figures should be used and interpreted with caution, due to data quality concerns. For more information on the issues with the recording of injuries and fatalities, see the [user guide](#).

Under the Police Reform Act 2002, forces in England and Wales have a statutory duty to refer to the Independent Office for Police Conduct's (IOPC) a death during or following police contact where there is an allegation or indication that police contact, directly or indirectly, contributed to the death. Therefore, any deaths that occurred as a result of police use of force in the year ending March 2018 will form a subset of the deaths in the IOPC National Statistics [report](#) which covers deaths during or following police contact in the same period. However, it is not currently possible to ascertain which deaths were as a result of police use of force.

See [data tables 8](#) and [11](#) for further information.

## 8 Feedback and enquiries

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The Police use of force statistics, England and Wales are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-use-of-force-statistics-england-and-wales-april-2017-to-march-2018>

### Statistical or public enquiries

If you would like to make an enquiry about this release or have any general feedback about this release, please contact the Fire, Licensing and Public Order Analysis Unit:

[FLPOAU@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:FLPOAU@homeoffice.gov.uk)

### Media enquiries via Home Office news desk

Office hours: 020 7035 3535; 7am-8pm Monday to Friday.

### Experimental statistics and data quality

These new statistics are considered to have immediate value to users and help with the understanding of the level and nature of the police's use of force. However, given the current quality limitations they are published as 'Experimental Statistics'. [Experimental Statistics](#) are statistics which are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.

The quality limitations of these statistics, and other issues which users should be aware of, include: missing values; erroneous data; and inconsistencies in recording, within and across police forces. See the accompanying [user guide](#) for more details of the current limitations and data quality issues of these new statistics.

Statistical Bulletins are prepared by staff in Home Office Analysis and Insight under the National Statistics Code of Practice and can be downloaded from GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/about/statistics>

Home Office Statistical Bulletin 30/18

ISBN: 978-1-78655-760-5

ISSN: 1759-7005



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