

Statistics on the number of police officers assaulted in 2018/19, England and Wales

Key Figures

- In 2018/19 there were over 30,000 assaults on police officers in England and Wales (including British Transport Police). Of which:
 - 20,578 were crimes of “assault without injury on a constable” recorded across all forces (including the British Transport Police), an increase of 13% compared with 18,138 in the previous year.
 - 10,399 crimes of “assault with injury on a constable”¹ recorded across all forces (including British Transport Police), an increase of 27% compared with 8,157 in the previous year.

Police recorded crime data

The data source for assaults on police officers is the police recorded crime series which are published within the latest [“Crime in England and Wales”](#) release by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Previously, it was only possible to identify assaults on police officers that did not result in injury. There was no corresponding crime classification for “assault with injury on a constable”, with such assaults recorded under the relevant offence classification, such as “violence with injury”. A new crime classification for “assault with injury on a constable” was introduced on the 1st April 2017, and this is the second year for which such data are available.

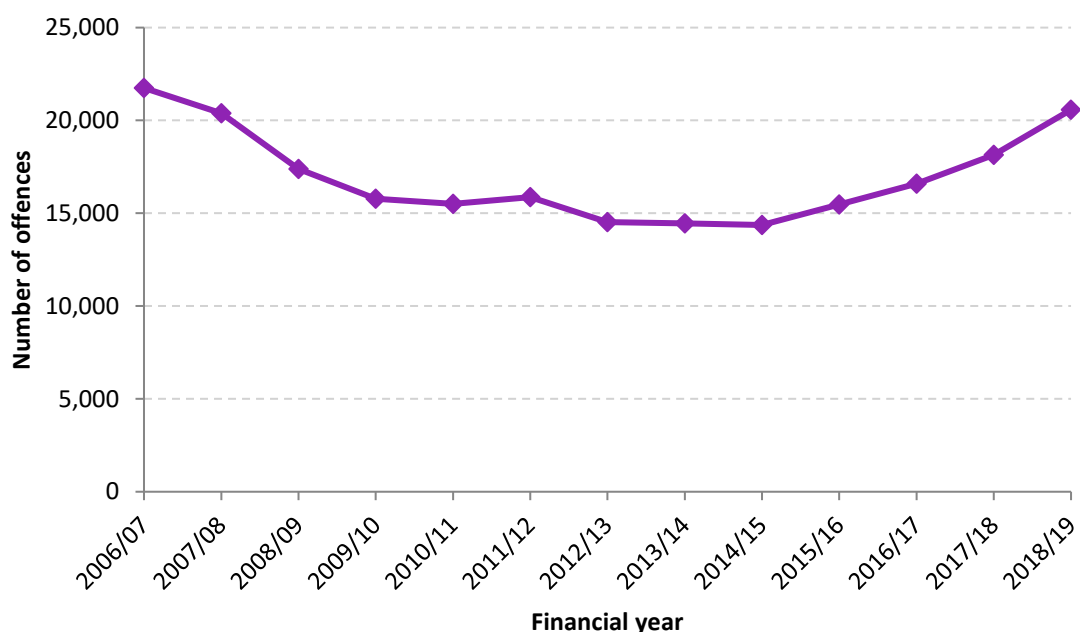
Previously, the Home Office used a combination of self-reported assaults data held within police forces’ Human Resource (HR) or health and safety systems and police recorded crime data of “assault without injury on a constable” to estimate the total number of assaults. Since the introduction of the new crime classification “assault with injury on a constable” data from forces’ health and safety systems are no longer required.

However, there are some differences between what is recorded on the health and safety systems, and what is recorded as a crime. Therefore, data in this note are not comparable with previous years. In particular, the new crime classification of “assault with injury on a constable” will exclude cases of more serious assaults. This is because, in line with the Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime, the assault will be recorded under a more serious crime classification, such as “attempted murder” from which it is not possible to separately identify police officers.

Figure 1 shows the time series trend for the offence of “assault without injury on a constable”, which is comparable over time. Between 2006/07 and 2012/13 there has been a general downward trend in the number of offences of “assault without injury on a constable” recorded by the police. It then remained stable until 2015/16, when the number of offences increased by 8%, from 14,369 to 15,470 offences (a smaller increase than the 26% over the same period for all victims of “assault without injury”). In the year ending March 2019, 20,578 offences of “assault without injury on a constable” were recorded by the police, a 13% increase compared with the previous year (again a smaller increase than the 15% over the same period for all “assault without injury” cases).

¹ The crime code of “assault with injury on a constable” was introduced in April 2017. Previously there was no corresponding crime classification for “assault with injury on a constable”, with such assaults recorded under the relevant offence classification, such as “violence with injury”.

Figure 1: Number of offences recorded under “assault without injury on a constable”, England and Wales¹, 2006/07 to 2018/19²



Notes:

1. Includes the British Transport Police
2. These figures are published in table A.04 of the [‘Crime in England and Wales’](#) statistical release.

For 2018/19 the Home Office collected data from forces crime recording systems, on a mandatory basis for the second time, on both the “assault without injury on a constable” **and** the “assault with injury on a constable” crime classifications. For 2018/19, all 43 of the police forces in England and Wales provided these data, although some stated that the quality was variable and that the data may not be complete. It is known that these data are likely to be an underestimate of the total number of assaults in some forces as many officers view assaults as part of the job and do not bother to raise a crime record. A further limitation of the data is that it is not always possible for forces to identify whether the police officer was on or off duty at the time of the assault. For these reasons, the figures in Annex A are not directly comparable at police force area level. In 2018/19 there were 10,399 offences of “assault with injury on a constable” recorded by the police. Caution should be exercised when comparing this figure with the estimates reported for 2015/16 and 2016/17, which were less complete data from a smaller number of forces (15 and 20 forces respectively), and based on a relatively crude estimation method using forces’ health and safety systems.

Data on assaults are **NOT** National Statistics, due to their known limitations. The data are not thought to provide a complete picture of assaults against police officers and there are a number of comparability issues across forces as described above.

Annex A: Assaults on police officers, England and Wales, 2018/19

Force name	Police recorded crime - Assault with injury on a constable	Police recorded crime - Assault without injury on a constable	Total assaults on a constable (with and without injury)
Avon & Somerset	323	688	1,011
Bedfordshire	110	224	334
British Transport Police	193	581	774
Cambridgeshire	93	290	383
Cheshire	148	477	625
Cleveland	94	223	317
Cumbria	82	270	352
Derbyshire	169	168	337
Devon & Cornwall	204	327	531
Dorset	111	201	312
Durham	141	366	507
Dyfed-Powys	92	174	266
Essex	251	741	992
Gloucestershire	106	70	176
Greater Manchester	233	860	1,093
Gwent	61	158	219
Hampshire	424	752	1,176
Hertfordshire	205	564	769
Humberside	173	462	635
Kent	219	1,015	1,234
Lancashire	178	384	562
Leicestershire	67	257	324
Lincolnshire	104	257	361
London, City of	18	17	35
Merseyside	340	315	655
Metropolitan Police	2,319	2,654	4,973
Norfolk	143	439	582
North Wales	188	252	440
North Yorkshire	103	261	364
Northamptonshire	149	309	458
Northumbria	178	618	796
Nottinghamshire	264	188	452
South Wales	280	399	679
South Yorkshire	274	294	568
Staffordshire	131	321	452
Suffolk	96	366	462
Surrey	220	439	659
Sussex	288	745	1,033
Thames Valley	198	859	1,057
Warwickshire	86	121	207
West Mercia	184	330	514
West Midlands	524	608	1,132
West Yorkshire	480	1,417	1,897
Wiltshire	155	117	272
England and Wales	10,399	20,578	30,977