



Police use of force statistics, England and Wales

April 2018 to March 2019

The statistics in this release are Experimental Statistics and do not represent all use of force in the 43 Home Office funded police forces in England and Wales.

Key results

In the year ending 31 March 2019, there were **428,000 recorded incidents** in which a police officer used force.



Restraint tactics (e.g. handcuffing) were the most common type of force used (401,000 times).

The most common reason an officer used force was to **protect themselves** (292,000 incidents).



The most common impact factor was the subject being **under the influence of alcohol** (166,000 incidents).

The most common outcome was the subject being **arrested** (309,000 incidents).



In the 428,000 incidents:

- 70% of subjects were perceived as **White** (299,000) by the officer
- 83% of subjects were perceived as **male** (356,000) by the officer
- 84% of subjects were perceived as between **18 and 64 years of age** (361,000) by the officer
- 86% of subjects had **no disability** (366,000), as perceived by the officer

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Use of force incidents: overview	4
3	Use of force by age, gender, ethnicity and disability of subject.....	6
4	Use of force tactics by reason, impact factors and outcomes	13
5	CED (conducted energy device) use.....	16
6	Incident location.....	19
7	Injuries and fatalities	21
8	Feedback and enquiries ..	23

Date published:
19 December 2019

Frequency of release:
Annual

Forthcoming releases:
[Home Office Statistics release calendar](#)

Home Office responsible statistician:
Amy Baxter

Press enquires:
pressoffice@homeoffice.gov.uk
020 7035 3535
Public enquires:
PublicOrderStatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk

1 Introduction

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 purpose of this collection is to provide the public with more 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 2018 and 31 March 2019. Data was collected from the 43 Home Office funded police forces in England and Wales.

These statistics are currently designated as '[Experimental Statistics](#)' so their accuracy should not be assumed. Experimental Statistics are published to involve users and stakeholders in their development and 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 is defined as a situation in which a police officer uses any of the following force tactics:

- **Restraint tactics:** Handcuffing (compliant or non-compliant), limb/body restraints, ground restraint.
- **Unarmed skills:** This includes distraction strikes with hands and feet; and pressure point and joint locks.
- **Use of other equipment:** Baton (including where it was drawn but not used), irritant spray (including where it was drawn but not used), spit and bite guard, shield (e.g. subject struck or pushed with a shield).
- **Less lethal weapons:** Conducted Energy Device (CED, e.g. TASER®), including where it was used without being discharged, Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP) (including where it was aimed but not fired).
- **Firearms:** This refers to the use of conventional firearms, including where the firearm was aimed but not fired.
- **Other:** Use of dogs (including where a dog was deployed but did not come into contact with (i.e. bite) the subject), other improvised tactics.

One 'use of force incident' refers to one officer's use of force involving one subject.

As well as the tactics used, 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. 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. 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.**

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 not equal to the number of unique incidents/events 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 have worked with, and continue to work with, police forces and the NPCC to improve the quality and completeness of these statistics.

2 Use of force incidents: overview

Police officers who deploy any force tactic(s) 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.

Data quality

The number of incidents does not tell us how many individual people experienced police use of force, but rather how many times force was recorded by police officers. 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).

2.1 Total number of incidents

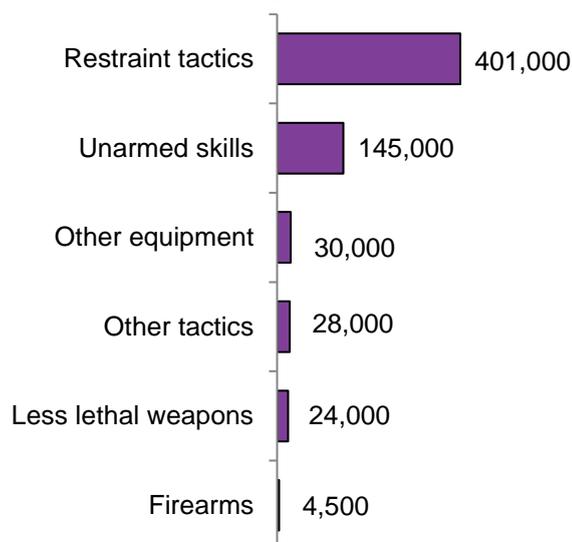
There were 428,000 recorded incidents where a police officer used force on an individual in England and Wales. However, due to the limitations previously stated, this figure is not an accurate representation of the total number of incidents involving police use of force in England and Wales in the year ending March 2019.

The number of incidents recorded by each police force ranged widely, from 880 to 130,000. These figures are representative 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.

2.2 Tactics used in incidents

There were 632,000 force tactics reported in 428,000 incidents. Around two-thirds (67%) of incidents included only one force tactic. It is common for use of force incidents to involve multiple officers, each only reporting their use of force. Each officer may only use one or two different tactics themselves during a situation, but this does not mean it was the only tactic that subject experienced.

Figure 1: Number of times tactics were used in use of force incidents, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 1](#).

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

Less lethal weapons relates to the use of Conducted Energy Device (CED, e.g. TASER®), including where it was used without being discharged and Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP), including where it was aimed but not fired.

Figures relating to firearms refer to the use of conventional firearms, including where the firearm was aimed but not fired.

For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped – see the [data tables](#) for groupings.

Restraint was the most common tactic type. This was mostly due to handcuffing which was recorded 302,000 times in 428,000 incidents. Unarmed skills were the second most common tactic type, reported 145,000 times. This includes distraction strikes with hands and feet; and pressure point and joint locks.

There were 4,500 incidents (1%) where firearms were reportedly used. This includes where the firearm was aimed and not fired.

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 includes the officer issuing orders such as asking subjects to move or stop/change their actions. It may also explain their next tactic or the consequences such as with irritant sprays. In this statistical release we have not considered tactical communication on its own to be a use of force. The use of this technique was reported in 47% (203,000) of incidents. Detailed figures are available where tactical communication was reported alongside other tactics in tables 1 to 9 and tables 14 to 17.

See [data tables](#) 1 to 9 or 14 to 17 for more detail.

3 Use of force by age, gender, ethnicity and disability of subject

Key results

Of the 428,000 incidents in the year ending March 2019:

- In 233,000 (55%) incidents the subjects were perceived to be **18 to 34 years old**.
- In 356,000 (83%) incidents the subjects were perceived as **male**.
- In 299,000 (70%) incidents the subjects were perceived as being **White**.
- In 366,000 (86%) incidents the subjects were perceived as having **no disability**.

Data quality

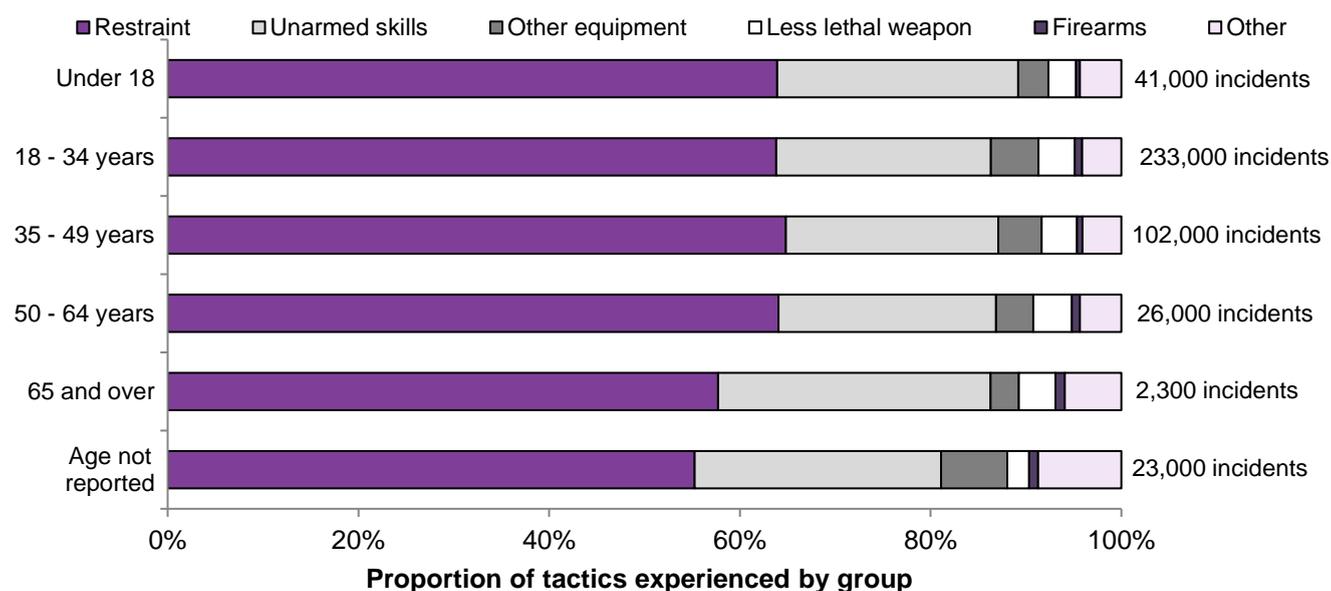
All subject details are recorded as perceived by the reporting officer. This data should therefore not be considered as reliable and accurate as self-reported (i.e. subject provided) data. In some cases, where the subject information is known (e.g. it has been provided by the subject), this information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

The number of incidents by subject's age, gender, ethnicity and disability does not relate to the number of subjects, as **more than one use of force report may be completed for the same subject**.

3.1 Age (as perceived by officer)

Over half (55%) of the recorded use of force incidents involved subjects perceived as being between 18 to 34 years old (233,000 incidents). There were 41,000 incidents involving subjects perceived to be under 18 (10%) and, of those, 640 were under 11.

Figure 2: Proportion of tactics involving subject group, by age (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 2](#).
Notes: 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 includes 22,000 of the 23,000 incidents involving CED use, as full 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. The use 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. It states that subject characteristics such as age should be taken into account in the officer's decision to use any type of force. The proportion of unarmed skills and other/improvised tactics used in incidents with these age groups may account for officers escorting subjects rather than handcuffing them.

Table 1: Proportion of each tactic experienced by subject group, by age (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2019

	Under 18	18-34	35-49	50-64	65 and over	Age not reported	Times tactic group used
% of incidents involving group	10%	55%	24%	6%	0.5%	5%	
Restraint	10%	56%	24%	6%	0.4%	5%	401,000
Unarmed skills	10%	54%	23%	6%	0.6%	6%	145,000
Other equipment	6%	58%	23%	5%	0.3%	8%	30,000
Less lethal weapon	8%	58%	24%	6%	0.5%	3%	23,000
Firearms	5%	61%	19%	7%	0.7%	7%	4,500
Other	9%	52%	22%	6%	0.7%	11%	28,000

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 2](#).
Notes: All percentages in this table are rounded according to the rounding conventions in the [user guide](#).

This table includes 22,000 of the 23,000 incidents involving CED use, as full incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

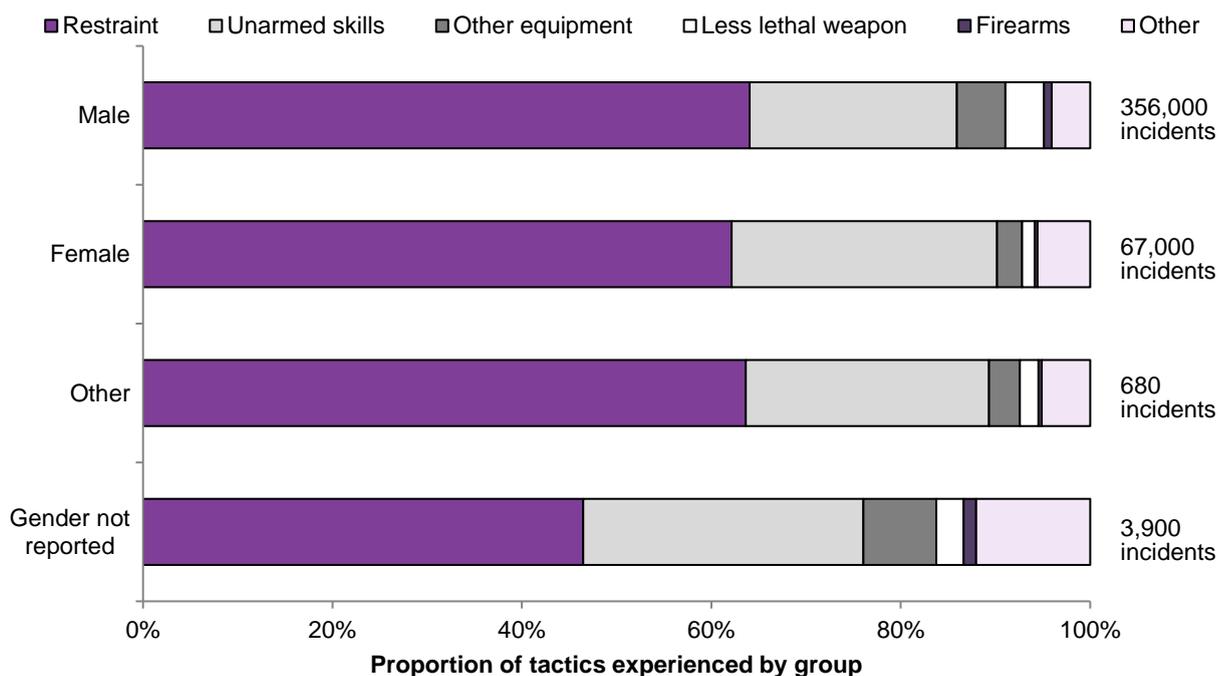
Table 1 shows that subjects perceived as under 18 years old accounted for 10% of incidents, but experienced proportionally fewer less-lethal weapons and firearms (8% and 5% respectively). Subjects perceived to be under 11 years old were involved in 640 incidents – 29 incidents reportedly involved CEDs and 5 incidents involved firearms. However, there are known errors in the under 11 data, this includes CED use on animals and cases incorrectly categorised.

Subjects perceived to be between 18 and 34 years old accounted for 55% of incidents, but experienced a higher proportion of police use of less lethal weapons and firearms (58% and 61% respectively). See [data table 2](#) for further information.

3.2 Gender (as perceived by officer)

Over 80% of the recorded use of force incidents involved subjects who were perceived as male (356,000 incidents).

Figure 3: Proportion of tactics involving subject group, by gender (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 3](#).

Notes: For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped – see the [data tables](#) for groupings. This chart includes 22,000 of the 23,000 incidents involving CED use, as full incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

As shown in Figure 3, incidents involving female subjects were more likely to include unarmed skills, and less likely to include the use of other equipment (e.g. batons), than any other reported gender. 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.

Table 2: Proportion of tactic experienced by subject group, by gender (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2019

	Male	Female	Other	Not reported	Times tactic group used
% of incidents involving group	83%	16%	0.2%	0.9%	
Proportion of tactic experienced by group					
Restraint	84%	16%	0.2%	0.6%	401,000
Unarmed skills	79%	20%	0.2%	1%	145,000
Other equipment	90%	9%	0.1%	1%	30,000
Less lethal weapon	93%	6%	0.1%	0.7%	23,000
Firearms	92%	7%	0.1%	2%	4,500
Other	77%	20%	0.2%	2%	28,000

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 3](#).

Notes: All percentages in this table are rounded according to the rounding conventions in the [user guide](#). This table includes 22,000 of the 23,000 incidents involving CED use, as full incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

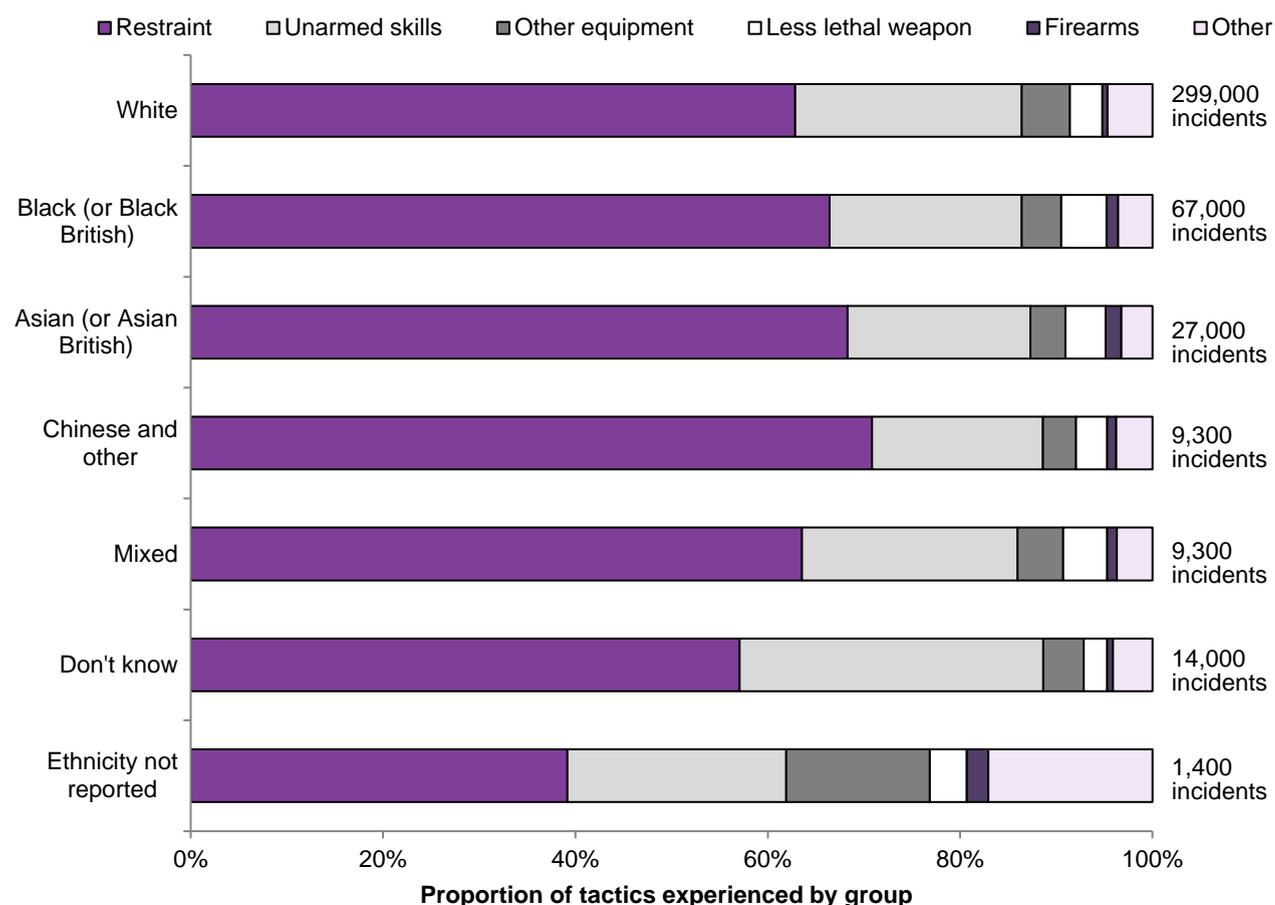
Subjects perceived as male accounted for 83% of incidents but experienced a higher proportion of police use of less lethal weapons, firearms and other equipment (93%, 92% and 90% respectively). See [data table 3](#) for further information.

3.3 Ethnicity (as perceived by officer)

Around 7 in 10 (70%; 299,000) recorded use of force incidents involved subjects who were perceived as being White. No ethnicity information was recorded in 1,400 (0.3%) of incidents, although in 14,000 incidents (3%) the officer recorded that they 'did not know' the subject's ethnicity.

In incidents where the officer reported that they did not know the subject's ethnicity, the proportion of restraint tactics was lower, and the proportion of unarmed skills is higher, compared with other groups. The reason for this is not clear, but it is partially accounted for by recording issues in a small number of police forces.

Figure 4: Proportion of tactics involving subject group, by ethnicity (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 4](#).
Notes: For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped; see the [data tables](#) for groupings. This chart includes 22,000 of the 23,000 incidents involving CED use, as full 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 2019

	White	Black (or Black British)	Asian (or Asian British)	Chinese and other	Mixed	Don't know	Not reported	Times tactic group used
% of incidents involving group	70%	16%	6%	2%	2%	3%	0.3%	
Proportion of tactic experienced by group								
Restraint	70%	16%	6%	2%	2%	4%	0.2%	401,000
Unarmed skills	73%	13%	5%	2%	2%	6%	0.3%	145,000
Other equipment	75%	13%	4%	1%	2%	4%	0.9%	30,000
Less lethal weapon	66%	20%	7%	2%	3%	3%	0.3%	23,000
Firearms	52%	25%	13%	3%	3%	3%	0.9%	4,500
Other	75%	12%	4%	2%	2%	4%	1%	28,000

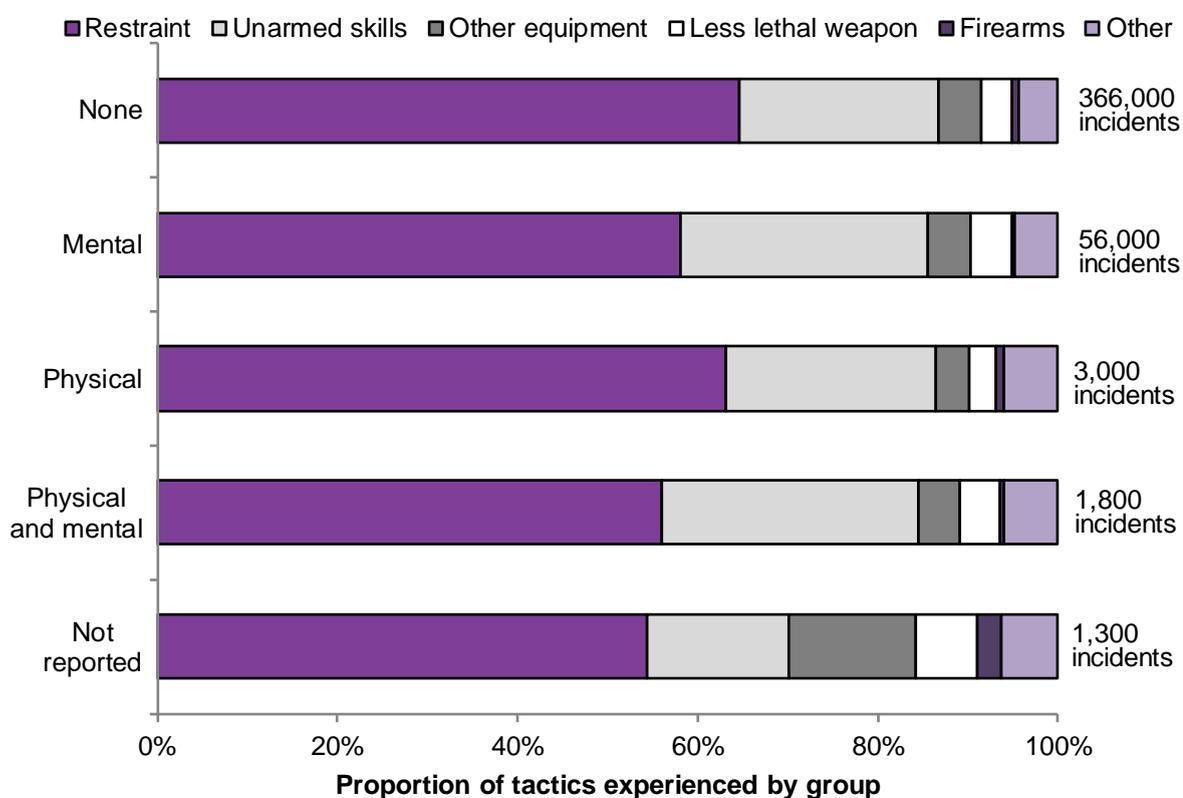
Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 4](#).
Notes: All percentages in this table are rounded according to the rounding conventions in the [user guide](#). This table includes 22,000 of the 23,000 incidents involving CED use, as full incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

Subjects perceived as White accounted for 70% of subjects involved in use of force incidents, but were only involved in 52% of firearms use. In comparison, subjects perceived as Black or Asian accounted for 16% and 6% of subjects, but were involved in proportionally more firearms use (25% and 13% respectively). Similarly, subjects perceived as Black were involved in a higher proportion of less lethal weapons use (20%), while subjects perceived as White were involved in proportionally less (66%). See [data table 4](#) for further information.

3.4 Disability (as perceived by officer)

The majority (86%) of recorded use of force incidents involved subjects who were perceived as having no physical or mental disabilities (366,000 incidents).

Figure 5: Proportion of tactics involving subject group, by disability (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 5](#).

Notes: For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped; see the [data tables](#) for groupings. This chart includes 22,000 of the 23,000 incidents involving CED use, as full 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 subject’s 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 2019

	None	Mental	Physical	Mental and physical	Not reported	Times tactic group used	
% of incidents involving group	86%	13%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%		
Proportion of tactic experienced by group	Restraint	86%	13%	0.7%	0.4%	0.2%	401,000
	Unarmed skills	82%	17%	0.7%	0.5%	0.1%	145,000
	Other equipment	85%	14%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%	30,000
	Less lethal weapon	80%	18%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	23,000
	Firearms	92%	6%	0.8%	0.3%	0.8%	4,500
	Other	83%	15%	0.9%	0.6%	0.3%	28,000

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 5](#).

Notes: All percentages in this table are rounded according to the rounding conventions in the [user guide](#). This table includes 22,000 of the 23,000 incidents involving CED use, as full incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

Subjects perceived as having only a mental disability accounted for 13% of incidents, but experienced a higher proportion of police use of less lethal weapons (18%, predominantly CED); however, they experienced proportionally less police use of firearms (6%). Where less lethal weapons were used in incidents with this group of subjects (4,100 times), there were 660 discharges.

Subjects perceived as having no disabilities (86%) experienced a lower proportion of police use of less lethal weapons (80%), but a higher proportion of police use of firearms (92%).

See [data tables](#) 5 and 17 for further information.

4 Use of force tactics by reason, impact factors and outcomes

Key results

- The most commonly reported **reasons for using force** were for the reporting officers' own protection (292,000 incidents), protection of other officers (241,000 incidents) and to assist in making an arrest (213,000 incidents).
- The most commonly reported **impact factors** were alcohol (166,000 incidents), drugs (127,000 incidents) and the size/gender/build of the subject (125,000 incidents).
- The most common **outcome** was 'arrested' (309,000 incidents).

This section summarises tactic use for reasons, impacting factors, and the outcomes for further information. See [data tables](#) 6, 7, and 8 for further information.

4.1 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 or the subject. The majority (81%) of incidents were reported with multiple reasons for using force.

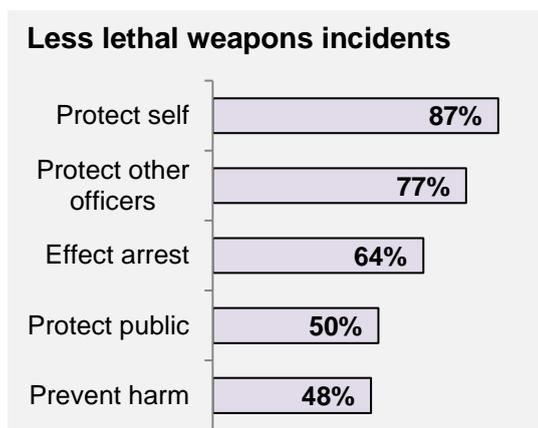
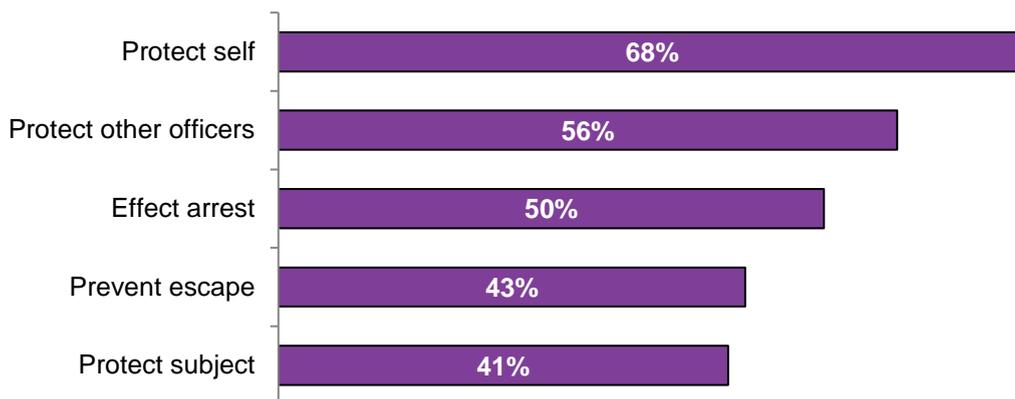
Data quality

Incidents can involve multiple tactics, multiple reasons for using force, multiple impact factors and multiple outcomes, as such causality is not possible.

For example, in an incident where restraint tactics were used and the outcome 'hospitalisation' was recorded, it does not mean that hospitalisation was caused by the use of restraint tactics. 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 8.3.

Figure 6: Top 5 reasons for using force, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 6](#).

Notes: Figure shows the five most common reasons only. Multiple reasons can apply in an incident.

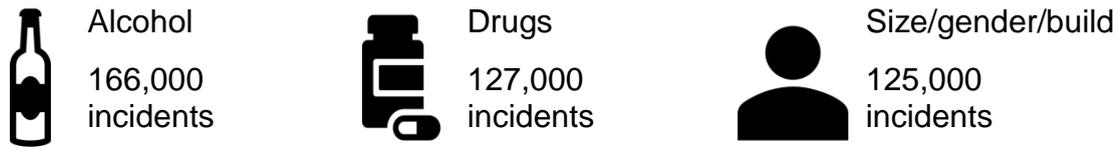
In incidents involving police use of firearms¹, including where a firearm was aimed but not fired, the most common reasons also included protecting the public and preventing an offence or harm. This is similar to incidents involving CEDs.

4.2 Impact factors

As well as the reason for using force, data on other factors that impacted on the incident are collected. These are called ‘impact factors’. The most common impact factors recorded were alcohol, drugs and the size/gender/build of the subject. The majority (92%) of incidents included an impact factor and half (52%) involved multiple impact factors.

¹ These statistics do not provide a breakdown of whether the firearm was aimed or fired. However, published statistics on [Police use of firearms, April 2018 to March 2019](#) show that there were 13 incidents involving persons in which firearms were discharged (fired). This may not equate to 13 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.

Figure 7: Number of incidents, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

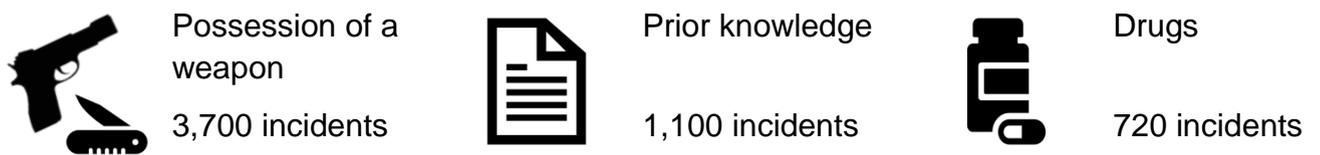


Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 7](#).
Notes: Figure shows the three most common impact factors only. Multiple impact factors can apply in an incident and there may also be incidents where no impact factor applies.

Mental health was more likely to be reported as an impact factor in incidents where ground restraint, limb/body restraints or spit/bite guards were used.

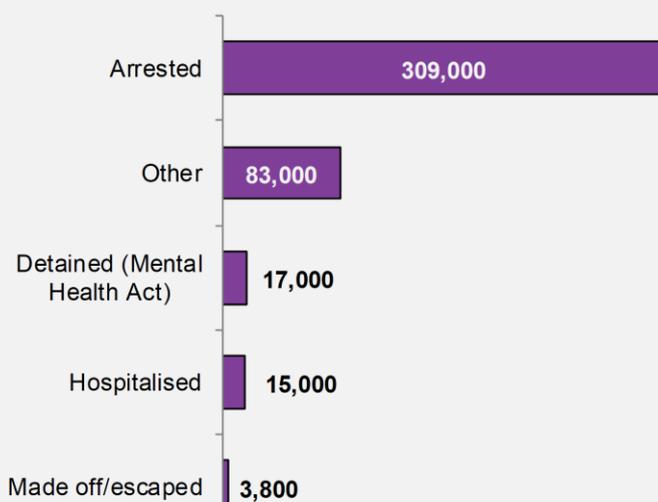
In incidents where firearms were involved, the most common impact factor recorded was the subject being in possession of a weapon. Possession of a weapon was also the main impact factor in incidents involving less lethal weapons (CEDs and AEPs).

Figure 8: Number of times firearms were used, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 7](#).
Notes: 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 9: Number of incidents, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 8](#). Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

4.3 Outcomes

The most common outcome across all incidents was ‘arrested’ (72%) which was the most frequently reported outcome when looking across all individual tactics.

‘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, cautioned, or de-arrested following further information, among others. See [user guide](#) for further details.

5 CED (conducted energy device) use

CED data quality

The method of recording police use of CEDs changed in 2017-18, making this collection year the second in the series. Due to this transitions occurring at different times across police forces, only 22,000 of the 23,000 CED incidents included wider incident details such as the reasons for using force, impact factors, and outcomes. 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 2018-19.**

Officers must record when a CED (i.e. a TASER®) 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 fired, this use will appear under 'Fired' only.

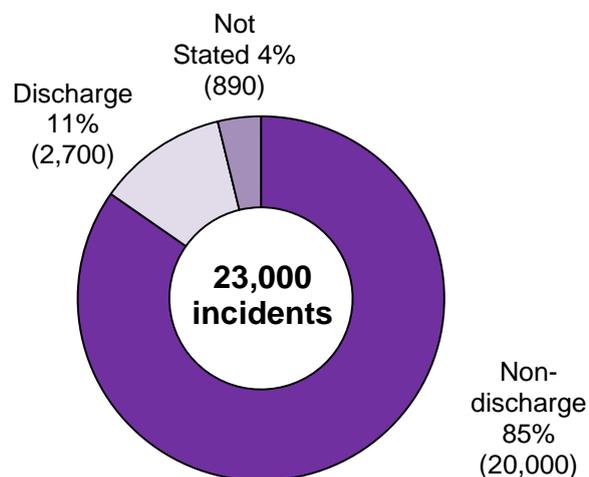
5.1 Incidents involving CEDs

CEDs were used in 23,000 incidents, although **the CED was not discharged in 85% of these incidents.**

This proportion of non-discharge use is similar to the last collection year (2017/18). The total CED use has increased by 39% from the previous financial year.

The type of use with the highest increase was red-dot which increased by 43% (+3,600).

Figure 10: Number of times CEDs were used, by use type, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

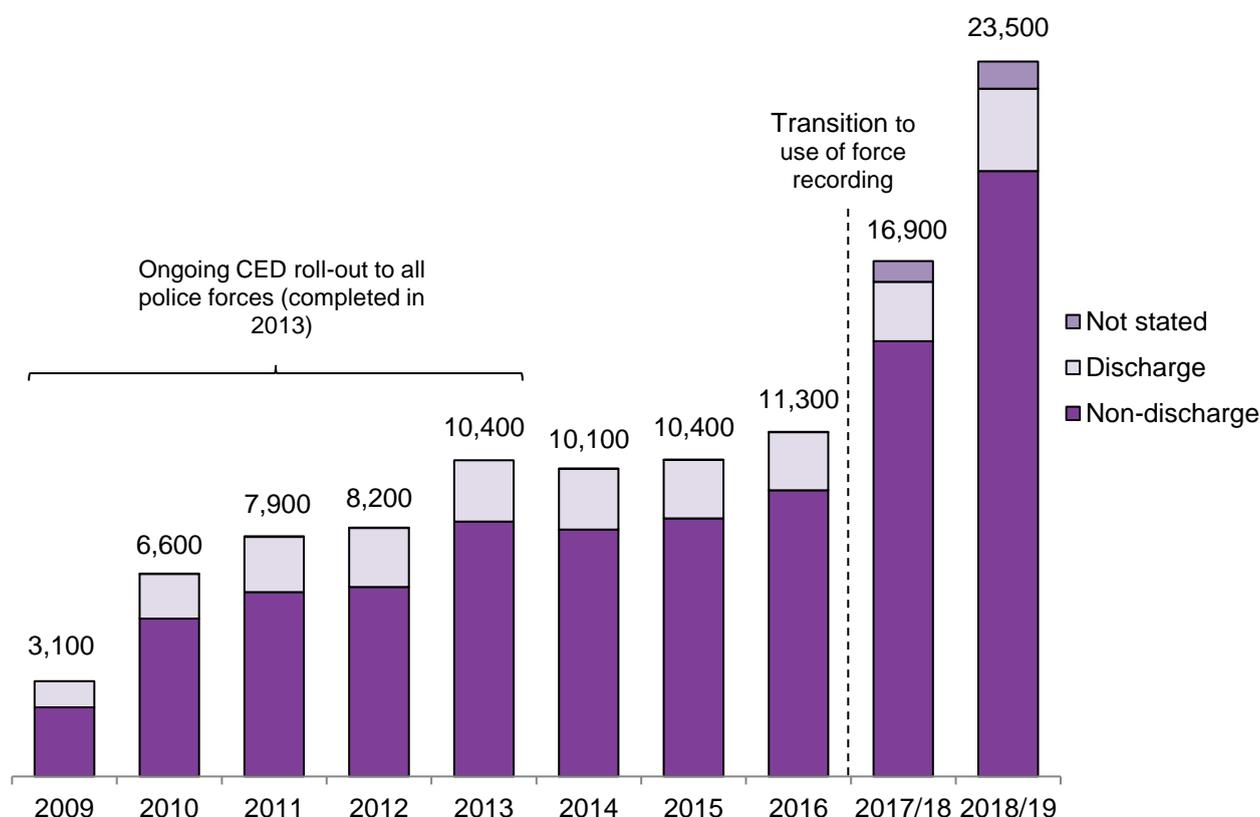


Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 1](#).

5.2 Police use of CED prior to year ending March 2018

The statistics on police use of CEDs that were previously collected and published by the Home Office on a calendar year basis up to 2016 (inclusive) are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). The way in which police use of CEDs is counted and measured remains the same compared with previous years; however, the way officers report their use has now changed. Therefore, figures for years ending March 2018 and 2019 are not directly comparable with figures for previous years. The proportion of CED incidents where the type of use was not stated is higher in 2017/18 and 2018/19 than in earlier years, likely due to the disruption caused by the transition required to implement new data recording systems.

Figure 11: Number of times CEDs were used, England and Wales, year ending December 2009 to year ending March 2019



Sources: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 1](#); Police use of TASER® X26 conducted energy devices statistics, England and Wales, [collection](#).

Notes: 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 then Home Secretary in 2008. The CED roll out 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 recent increase in CED use 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.

5.3 Police use of CED by ethnicity

As shown in Table 5, the use of CED varied by the perceived ethnicity of the subject. Subjects who were perceived to be Black, Asian, or Chinese and other ethnicities all experienced a non-discharge use of CED in 88% of CED incidents. This was the largest proportion for all ethnic groups. Where ethnicity was reported, those perceived to be of Mixed ethnicity encountered 13% discharge use, the largest proportion. Where ethnicity was not reported the number of CED incidents was low this may explain the disparity in non-discharge use of CED.

Table 5: CED use, by use type and ethnicity (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Subject's perceived ethnicity	Times CED used	CED use type					
		Non-discharge	Discharge	Not stated			
White	14,562	12,029	83%	1,800	12%	733	5%
Black (or Black British)	4,381	3,874	88%	443	10%	64	1%
Asian (or Asian British)	1,440	1,272	88%	131	9%	37	3%
Mixed	610	510	84%	80	13%	20	3%
Chinese and other	396	348	88%	39	10%	9	2%
Don't Know	614	515	84%	74	12%	25	4%
Missing	56	42	75%	12	21%	2	4%
Total incidents	22,059	18,590	84%	2,579	12%	890	4%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019.

Notes: All percentages in this table are rounded according to the rounding conventions in the [user guide](#). The figures have been left unrounded for clarity.

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.

Where percentages have been rounded they may not sum to the total.

This table includes 22,000 of the 23,000 incidents involving CED use, as full incident details could not be provided for all CED incidents.

White subjects experienced the highest level of CED use where the use type was not stated. In later years we expect the reporting of use type to improve.

6 Incident location

Key results

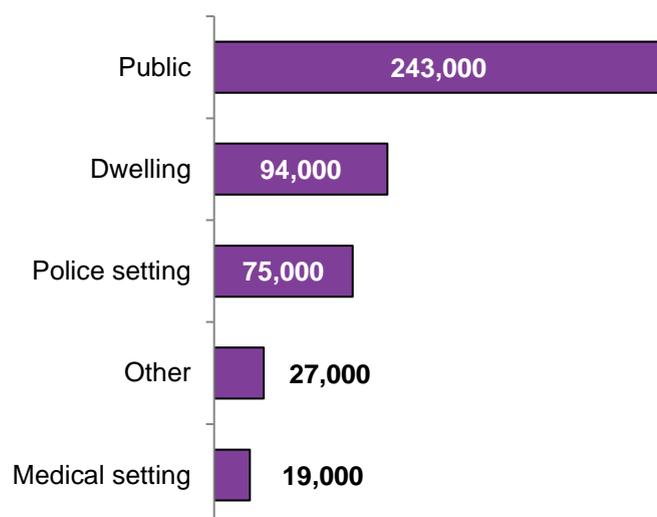
In the year ending March 2019:

- Over half (57%) of recorded incidents included a **public location** (243,000).
- The most common recorded incident location was a **street or highway**, which was recorded in 46% of incidents (197,000 incidents).

Section 7: 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 the primary location may be given instead.

Figure 12: Number of times location type was reported, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 9](#).

Note: 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).

6.1 Police use of force in custody blocks

Custody block was listed as a location in 55,000 incidents. The table below compares all incidents to those which include custody block as a location. However, it is important to note

that 20% of incidents involving a custody block included other locations. As such it does not necessarily follow that the tactics were always used within a custody block (i.e. they could have been used before the subject was placed in custody).

Table 6: Proportion of tactic experienced in all incidents and those with custody block listed, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

	All incidents	Incidents including custody block as a location
Total	100%	12%
Restraint	64%	53%
Unarmed skills	23%	36%
Other equipment	5%	4%
Less lethal weapon	4%	0.5%
Firearms	0.7%	0.004%
Other	4%	7%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2018 to March 2019, [Table 9](#).

Note: All percentages in this table are rounded according to the rounding conventions in the [user guide](#).

For ease of viewing, tactics and locations have been grouped; see the [data tables](#) for groupings.

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. 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

Data quality

The data on injuries and fatalities is not reported consistently. For example, officers may report 'no injury' sustained due to their use of force, 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.

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

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 may, after initial assessment at hospital, require 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 428,000 incidents recorded, 5% (22,000) involved reports of the officer sustaining an injury. Of the 22,000:

- 92% (20,000) reported minor injuries
- 2% (380) reported severe injuries
- 6% (1,400) 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 428,000 incidents recorded, 6% (25,000) involved reports of subjects injured as a result of police use of force. Of the 25,000:

- 94% (24,000) reported minor injuries
- 2% (610) reported severe injuries
- 3% (850) 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). In 4% (16,000) of incidents, the officer recorded that they did not know if the subject sustained an injury due to their use of force. A full breakdown is provided in [data table 11](#).

Of the 25,000 incidents where subjects were reported as injured as a result of the use of force, 2,500 included hospitalisation as an outcome (240 of which involved a 'severe' injury). There were 12,000 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 (e.g. a subject may have sustained an injury through another cause, or may have required medical attention for substances used before the incident, or for any other pre-existing medical condition).

7.3 Subject fatalities

There were 4 reports of the death of a subject. However, these figures should not be used to represent the number of deaths caused following police use of force, as some deaths may have occurred at date following the officer completing the form. For information on the data quality 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 a death during or following police contact to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) where there is an allegation or indication that police contact, directly or indirectly, contributed to the death. Therefore, any deaths that occurred during or following police use of force in the year ending March 2019 should 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 always possible to ascertain which deaths were a result of police use of force.

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

8 Feedback and enquiries

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:

PublicOrderStatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk

Media enquiries via Home Office news desk

Journalists with enquiries can call the Home Office news desk on 020 7035 3535. The desk operates from 7am to 8pm, Monday to Friday.

Home Office Statistical bulletin 33/19

ISBN: 978-1-78655-957-9

ISSN: 1759-7005



© Crown copyright 2019

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.