



Police use of force statistics, England and Wales: April 2019 to March 2020

Experimental Statistics

Key results

In the year ending 31 March 2020, there were **492,000 recorded incidents** in which a police officer used force.



Restraint tactics (e.g. handcuffing) were the most common type of force used (385,000 incidents, 78%).

The most common reason an officer used force was to **protect themselves** (335,000 incidents, 68%).



The most common impact factor was the person being **under the influence of alcohol** (180,000 incidents, 37%).

The most common outcome was the person being **arrested** (376,000 incidents, 76%).



Most common **characteristics** in the 492,000 incidents:

- 69% of people were perceived as **White** (341,000) by the officer
- 83% of people were perceived as **male** (408,000) by the officer
- 54% of people were perceived as between **18 and 34 years of age** (266,000) by the officer
- 81% of people had **no physical or mental health condition** (397,000), 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 health condition of person	6
4	Use of force tactics by reason, impact factors and outcomes	15
5	CED (conducted energy device) use	19
6	Incident location	23
7	Injuries and fatalities	25
8	Feedback and enquiries	27

Date published:
17 December 2020

Frequency of release:
Annual

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

Home Office responsible statistician:
Daniel Shaw

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

Public enquires:
PublicOrderStatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk

1 Introduction

From 1 April 2017, the Home Office required 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 publication cover incidents in England and Wales between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. Data were collected from the 43 Home Office funded police forces in England and Wales.

This is the third year that these statistics have been published and as such they are currently designated as [Experimental Statistics](#). They are published because they are considered to have immediate value to users, help to improve the transparency and accountability of the police's use of force and can be used to help inform police practices. It also means stakeholders can be involved in the development phase of the statistics to improve their quality and coverage. More information is available in the [User guide to police use of force statistics, England and Wales](#).

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic. A range of restrictions relating to the outbreak began on 12 March 2020, and the first UK lockdown measures were announced on 23 March. Whilst the restrictions will have impacted on the types of incidents attended by police over this period, it is not thought that COVID-19 had a significant impact on police use of force figures included in this release due to the short period of time that the restrictions were in place during the year ending March 2020 data collection period.

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. person 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 drawn but not used.
- **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 person), other improvised tactics.

See the [user guide](#) for more details on tactics, including a tactics glossary.

One ‘use of force incident’ refers to one officer’s use of force involving one person.

As well as the tactics used, officers must also record:

- the persons details (age, gender, ethnicity and physical or mental health condition, as perceived by the reporting officer);
- the reason(s) for using force and other impact factors;
- outcome(s);
- location(s); and,
- person involved in incident 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 publication do not give a complete picture of the total number of incidents involving police use of force in England and Wales. Although all 43 Home Office police forces submitted data, it is likely that the number of incidents reported will increase in future years as recording practices continue to improve across police forces. Some police forces did not record data for every variable and a small number of forces submitted data to the Home Office in a non-standard format.

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 person or officer, each officer who used force must complete one use of force report, per person, 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 person. As such, **the ‘number of incidents’ reported in this release is not equal to the number of unique incidents/events or people involved in incidents.** For example, if one person 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 person. 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 someone’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 will 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 person. 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 restrained one individual on the ground, and one of those officers then handcuffed 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 person's details (as perceived by the reporting officer). The report would also include the tactics the reporting officers 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

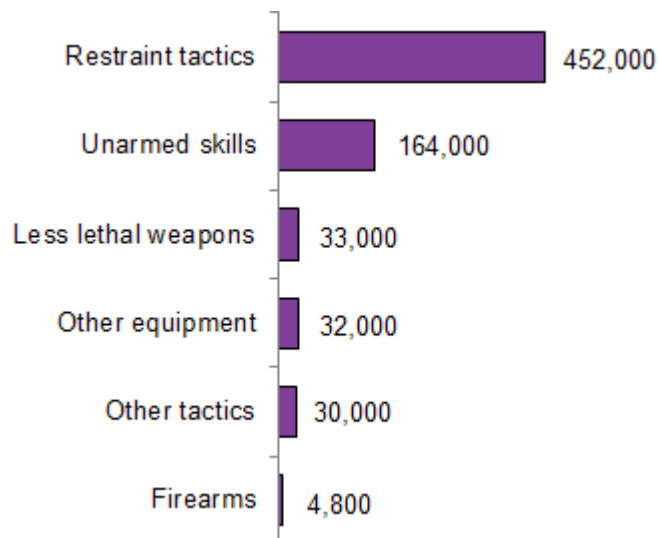
There were 492,000 recorded incidents where a police officer reported the use of force on an individual in England and Wales.

The number of incidents reported by each police force ranged widely, from 1,100 in Gloucestershire to 158,000 in the Metropolitan Police force area. These figures are influenced by the size of the police force area and its population, and a range of other socioeconomic factors, as well as the level of reporting of use of force incidents by each police force.

Tactics used in incidents

There were 715,000 use of force tactics reported in 492,000 incidents. Use of force incidents can involve multiple officers, each reporting their use of force. Each officer may only use one or two different tactics themselves during an incident, but this does not mean it was the only tactic that the person experienced.

Figure 1: Number of times tactics were used in use of force incidents, England and Wales, year ending March 2020



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [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 drawn but not used.

Other tactics include the use of dogs and other or improvised tactics such as vehicles or horses.

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. The majority involved handcuffing which was recorded in 70% of all use of force incidents (350,000 times in 492,000 incidents). Unarmed skills were the second most common tactic type, reported 164,000 times (in 33% of incidents). This includes distraction strikes with hands and feet; and pressure point and joint locks.

Firearms were used in 4,800 incidents (1%). This includes where the firearm was aimed and not fired. More information is published in [Police use of firearms, April 2019 to March 2020](#).

3 Use of force by age, gender, ethnicity and health condition of individuals

Key results

Of the 492,000 incidents in the year ending March 2020:

- In 266,000 (54%) incidents, individuals were perceived to be **18 to 34 years old**.
- In 408,000 (83%) incidents, individuals were perceived as **male**.
- In 341,000 (69%) incidents, individuals were perceived as being **White**.
- In 397,000 (81%) incidents, individuals were perceived as having **no physical or mental health condition**.

Data quality

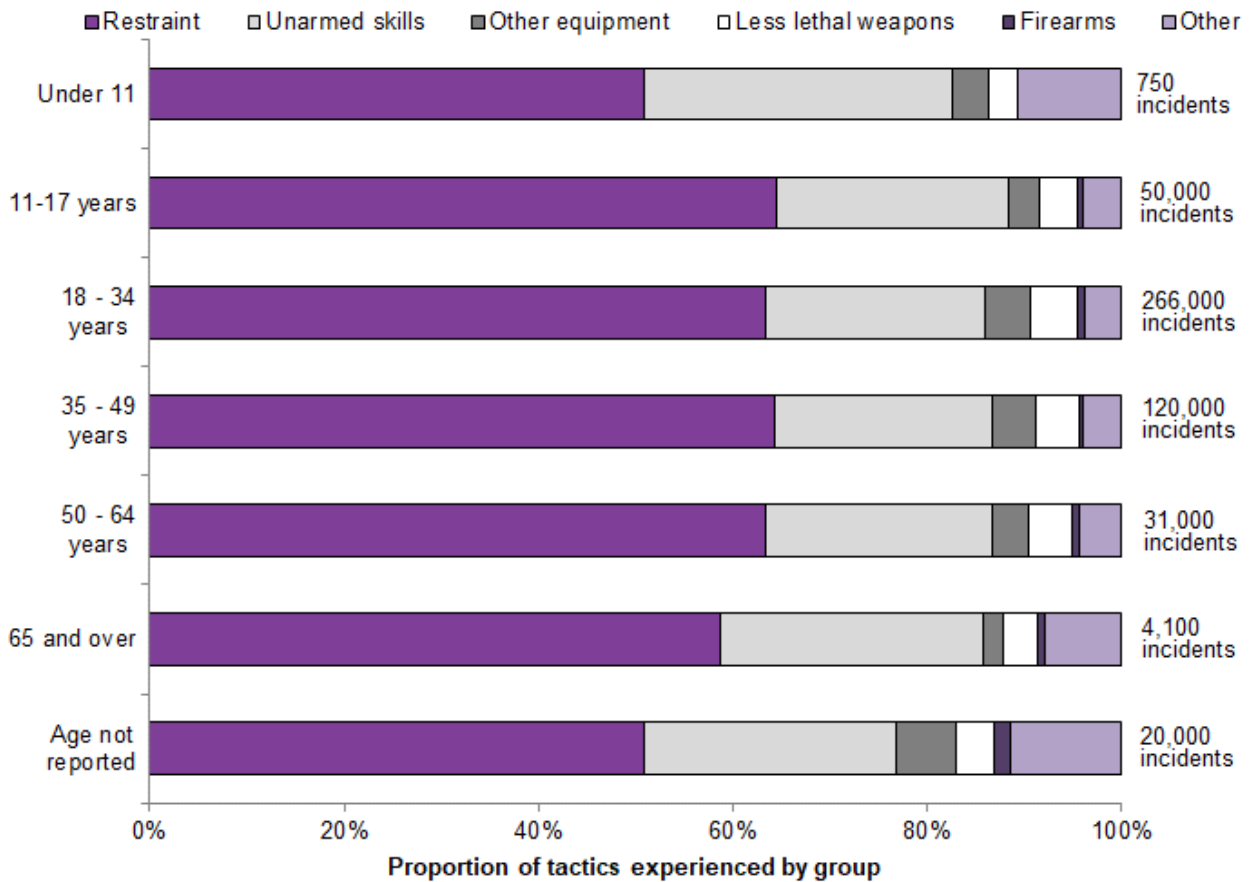
All person details are recorded as perceived by the reporting officer. These data should therefore not be considered as reliable or accurate as self-reported data. In some cases, where the person's information is known (e.g. it has been provided by the person), this information may have been provided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

The number of incidents by the individual's age, gender, ethnicity and health condition does not relate to the number of people who were subject to use of force as **more than one use of force report may be completed for the same person**.

3.1 Age (as perceived by officer)

Over half (54%) of the recorded use of force incidents involved people perceived as being between 18 to 34 years old (266,000 incidents). There were 50,000 incidents involving people who were perceived to be under 18 (10%) and, of those, 750 were under 11. The majority of incidents involving those under 11 involved restraint tactics or unarmed skills (83%). In addition, there were 23 incidents that involved CEDs (16 incidents where the CED was not discharged, none where the CED was discharged and 7 where the use level was not stated).

Figure 2: Proportion of tactics used by type of tactic and age (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [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.

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'). The greater proportion of unarmed skills and other/improvised tactics used in incidents involving these age groups may be accounted for by officers escorting people rather than handcuffing them, as per guidance issued to police forces on personal safety.

Table 1: Proportion of each tactic experienced by age group (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020

		Under 11	11 to 17	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65 and over	Age not reported	Total	Times tactic group used
	% of incidents involving group	0.2%	10%	54%	24%	6%	0.8%	4%	100%	
Proportion of tactic experienced by group	Restraint	0.1%	10%	55%	25%	6%	0.7%	3%	100%	452,000
	Unarmed skills	0.2%	10%	54%	24%	6%	0.9%	5%	100%	164,000
	Other equipment	0.1%	7%	58%	24%	5%	0.4%	6%	100%	32,000
	Less lethal weapons	0.1%	9%	58%	24%	6%	0.6%	3%	100%	33,000
	Firearms	0%	7%	60%	18%	5%	1.0%	9%	100%	4,800
	Other	0.4%	9%	49%	22%	6%	1.4%	11%	100%	30,000

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 2](#).

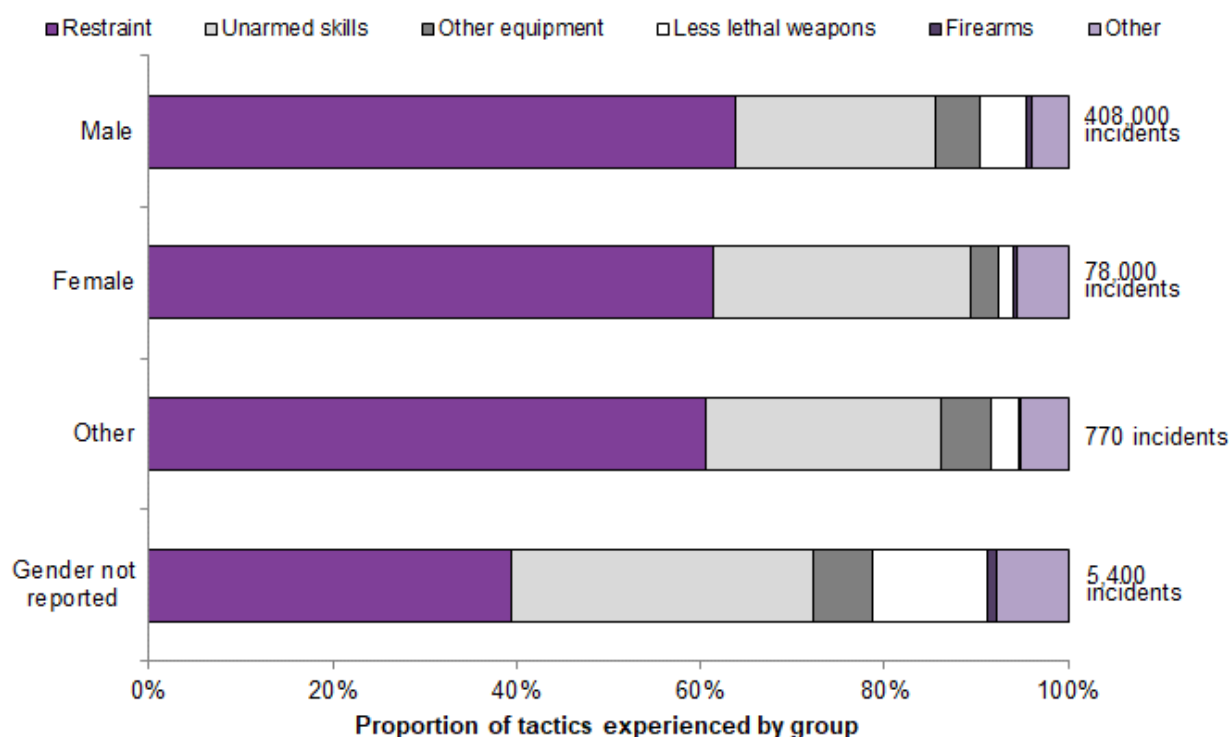
Table 1 shows that people perceived as 11 to 17 years old accounted for 10% of incidents, but experienced proportionally fewer less-lethal weapons and firearms (9% and 7% respectively).

People perceived as being aged between 18 and 34 years old accounted for 54% of incidents, and they experienced a higher proportion of police use of less lethal weapons and firearms (58% and 60% respectively). See [data table 2](#) for further information.

3.2 Gender (as perceived by officer)

Of the 492,000 recorded use of force incidents, 83% involved males (408,000 incidents) as perceived by the police officer.

Figure 3: Proportion of tactics used by type and gender (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 3](#).
Notes: For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped – see the [data tables](#) for groupings.

As shown in Figure 3, incidents involving females (as perceived by the officer) 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 people rather than handcuffing them, as per guidance issued to police forces on personal safety.

Table 2: Proportion of tactic experienced by type and gender (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020

	Male	Female	Other	Not reported	Total	Times tactic group used
% of incidents involving group	83%	16%	0.2%	1.1%	100%	
Proportion of tactic experienced by group						
Restraint	83%	16%	0.1%	0.6%	100%	452,000
Unarmed skills	78%	20%	0.2%	1.4%	100%	164,000
Other equipment	88%	11%	0.2%	1.4%	100%	32,000
Less lethal weapons	91%	6%	0.1%	2.6%	100%	33,000
Firearms	92%	7%	0.1%	1.4%	100%	4,800
Other	76%	22%	0.2%	1.8%	100%	30,000

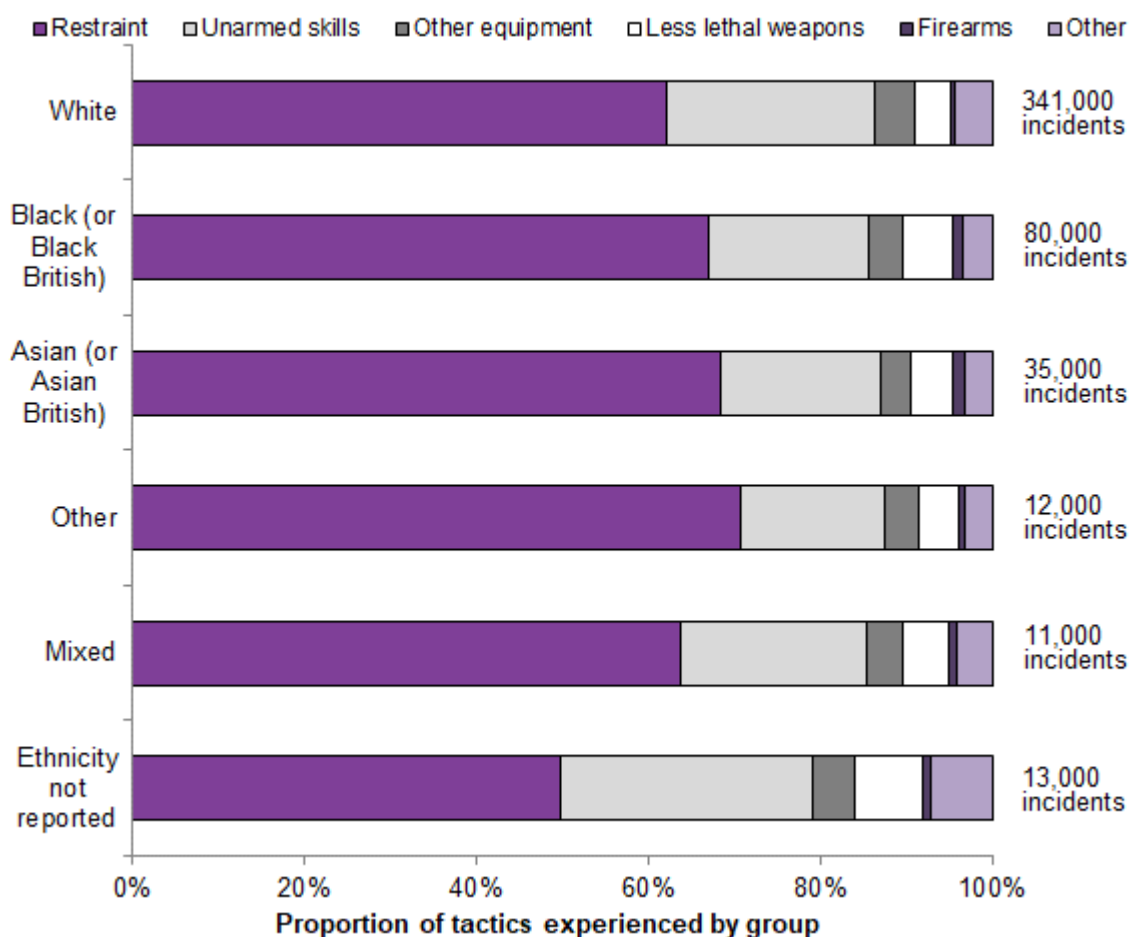
Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 3](#).
Notes: Where percentages have been rounded, they may not sum to the total.

Those perceived as male accounted for 83% of incidents but experienced a higher proportion of police use of less lethal weapons, firearms and other equipment (91%, 92% and 88% respectively). See [data table 3](#) for further information.

3.3 Ethnicity (as perceived by officer)

Around 7 in 10 (69%; 341,000) reported use of force incidents involved people who were perceived as being from a White ethnic group; 16% (80,000) were perceived as being from a Black ethnic group and 7% (35,000) were perceived as being from an Asian ethnic group. The remainder were perceived as being from a Mixed ethnic group (2%; 11,000) or Other ethnic group (2%; 12,000). No ethnicity information was recorded in 13,000 (3%) of incidents.

Figure 4: Proportion of tactics used by type and ethnicity (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 4](#).

Notes: For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped; see the [data tables](#) for groupings. Asian or Asian British group now includes people perceived to be Chinese. Details on groupings are available on [GOV.UK](#).

Table 3: Proportion of tactics experienced by type and ethnicity (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020

	White	Black (or Black British)	Asian (or Asian British)	Mixed	Other	Not reported	Total
% of incidents involving group	69%	16%	7%	2.2%	2.5%	2.6%	100%
Proportion of tactic experienced by group							
Restraint	70%	16%	7%	2.2%	2.5%	2.0%	100%
Unarmed skills	75%	13%	5%	2.1%	1.7%	3.2%	100%
Other equipment	75%	13%	5%	2.1%	1.9%	2.7%	100%
Less lethal weapons	63%	20%	7%	2.6%	2.3%	4.3%	100%
Firearms	52%	26%	14%	3.0%	2.7%	3.3%	100%
Other	75%	13%	5%	2.2%	1.7%	4.2%	100%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 4](#).

Notes: Asian or Asian British group now includes people perceived to be Chinese. Details on groupings are available on [GOV.UK](#).

People perceived as being from a Black ethnic group (16% of incidents) were involved in proportionally more incidents involving the use of less lethal weapons and firearms (20% and 26% respectively), while people perceived as being from a White ethnic group (69% of incidents) were involved in proportionally less (63% and 52% respectively). People perceived as being from an Asian ethnic group (7% of incidents) were involved in proportionally more incidents involving the use of firearms (14%). See [data table 4](#) for further information.

3.4 Ethnicity (as perceived by officer) rates

The rate of use of force can be calculated for different ethnic groups by taking the number of times tactics were used on each ethnic group, and dividing by the number of people resident in England and Wales by ethnic group (as estimated by the [2011 census](#)). Whilst this calculation provides insight into the relative use of force for different ethnic groups, it has the following limitations and should be interpreted with caution for the following reasons:

- Data are not available on the ethnicity of all people that the police come into contact with. Therefore, the calculation does not consider any disproportionality in this group, which is affected by much wider socioeconomic factors, and assumes the distribution is the same as the population of England and Wales.
- The population data is based on the [2011 Census](#), and so is used on the understanding that since this time population distributions will have changed.
- Using aggregate numbers fails to take account of the variation in the size and geographical distribution of different ethnic groups.
- Police force areas vary in their ethnic composition; an average national figure presumes that all use of force tactics and ethnic groups are spread evenly across forces, whereas these can differ considerably between forces.

- Within a police force area there can be significant variation in terms of the distribution of different ethnic groups, which may be masked by force level averages.

Use of force tactics, ranging from handcuffing and ground restraint, to the use of batons, CEDs and firearms, involved people perceived as being from a Black ethnic group at a rate five times higher than people perceived as being from a White ethnic group in English and Welsh police force areas (excluding the Metropolitan Police). The rate was almost three times higher for people perceived as being from an Other ethnic group and lower for those perceived as being from an Asian ethnic group.

In the Metropolitan police force area, use of force tactics involved people perceived as being from a Black ethnic group at a rate four times higher than those perceived as being from a White ethnic group. The rate was over one and a half times higher for people perceived as being from an Other ethnic group and lower for those perceived as being from an Asian or Mixed ethnic group.

The Metropolitan Police is the largest police force in England and Wales and therefore had the largest number of use of force incidents (158,000; 32%). The Metropolitan Police also has a proportionately larger number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people resident within its police force area (40%) compared with the rest of England and Wales (10%) according to the [2011 census](#). The combination of the two means that data from the Metropolitan Police force area can skew national level figures. Rates were calculated for the Metropolitan Police separately from other forces in England and Wales.

Table 4: Rate of use of force by ethnicity (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020

		White	Black (or Black British)	Asian (or Asian British)	Mixed	Other
Rate of use of force (all tactics)	England and Wales	1.00	5.65	1.03	1.23	2.69
	England and Wales exc. Metropolitan Police	1.00	4.67	0.81	1.18	2.81
	Metropolitan Police	1.00	3.88	0.90	0.89	1.64

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020 and [2011 Census](#).

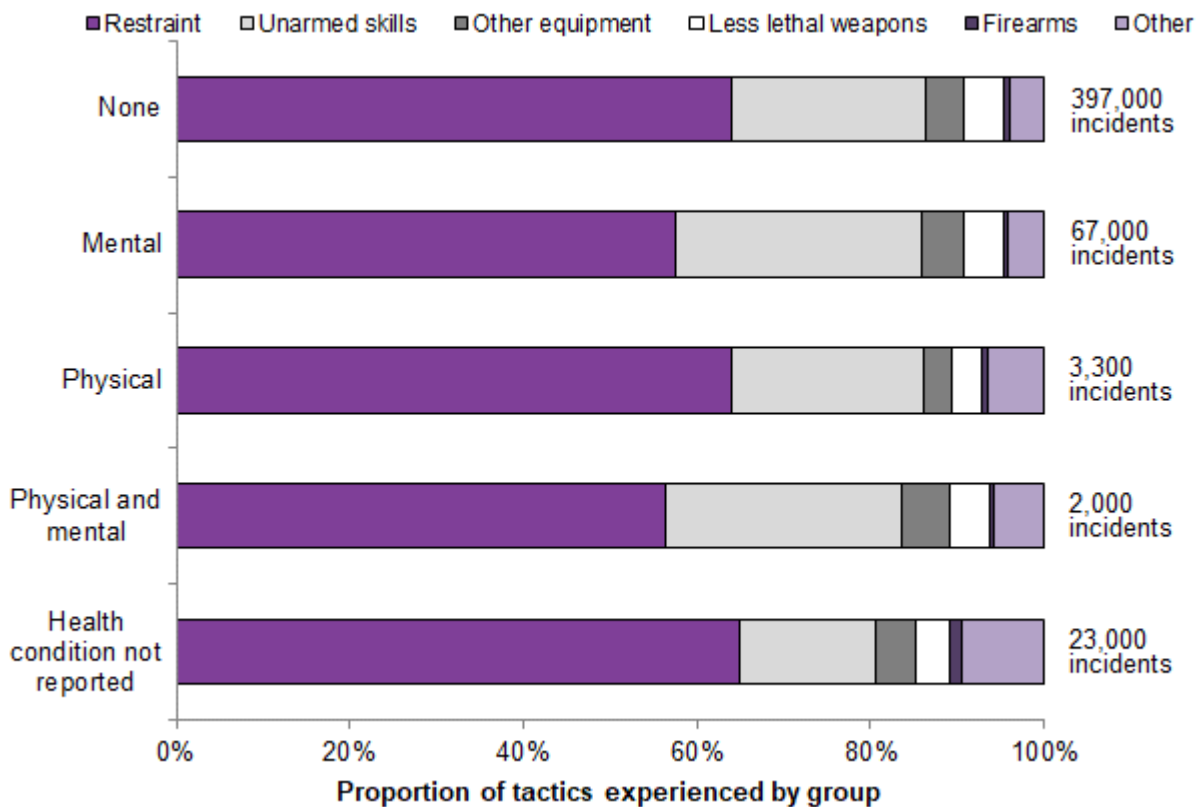
Notes: Rates for Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic groups are show in relation to the White ethnic group, e.g. use of force incidents involved those perceived as Black 4.67 times more often than those perceived as white in England and Wales (excluding the Metropolitan Police).

Asian or Asian British group includes people that identify as Chinese. Details on groupings are available from [GOV.UK](#).

3.5 Health Condition (as perceived by officer)

The majority (81%) of reported use of force incidents involved people who were perceived as having no physical or mental health conditions (397,000 incidents).

Figure 5: Proportion of tactics by type and physical or mental health condition (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 5](#).
Notes: For ease of viewing, some of the tactics have been grouped; see the [data tables](#) for groupings.

Figure 5 shows that restraint tactics were used less in incidents where the person was perceived as having a physical or mental health condition, particularly in cases where the person was perceived as having both types of conditions. This may be partly accounted for by guidance issued to police forces on personal safety, which states peoples’ characteristics such as mental and physical health conditions should be considered in the decision to use handcuffs. In situations where handcuffing or other restraints would aggravate the person’s condition, unarmed skills may have been employed by the officer instead.

Table 5: Proportion of tactic experienced by type and physical and mental health condition (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020

	None	Mental	Physical	Mental and Physical	Not reported	Total
% of incidents involving group	81%	14%	0.7%	0.4%	4.7%	100%
Proportion of tactic experienced by group						
Restraint	81%	14%	0.7%	0.4%	4.2%	100%
Unarmed skills	78%	18%	0.6%	0.5%	2.7%	100%
Other equipment	79%	16%	0.5%	0.5%	4.1%	100%
Less lethal weapons	80%	15%	0.5%	0.4%	3.6%	100%
Firearms	83%	8%	0.8%	0.2%	8.4%	100%
Other	75%	15%	1.0%	0.6%	9.0%	100%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 5](#).

People perceived as having a mental health condition accounted for 14% of incidents and those with physical health conditions accounted for less than 1% of incidents. 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 (335,000 incidents), protection of other officers (285,000 incidents) and to assist in making an arrest (252,000 incidents).
- The most commonly reported **impact factors** were alcohol (180,000 incidents), drugs (149,000 incidents) and the size/gender/build of the person involved (145,000 incidents).
- The most common **outcome** was 'arrested' (376,000 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

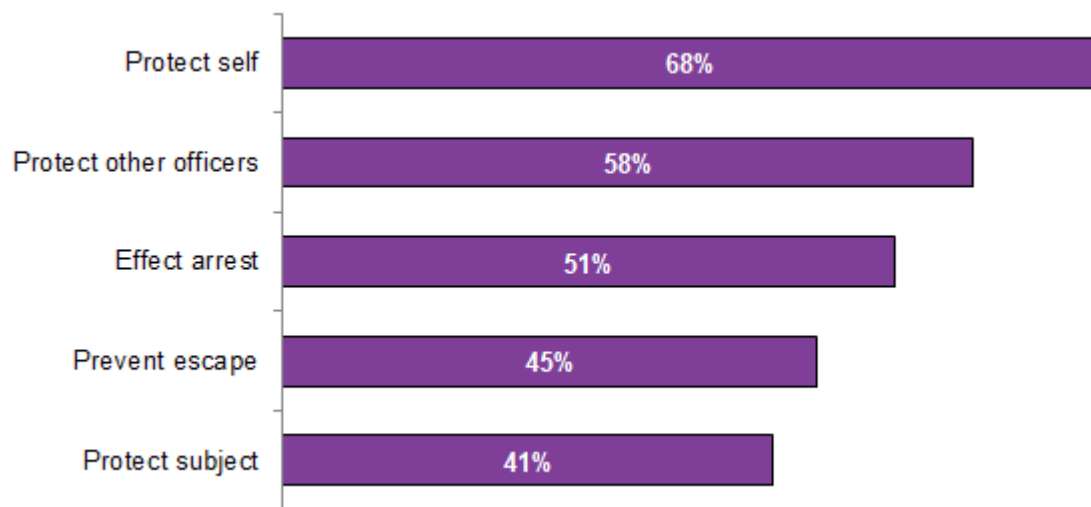
Across all reported incidents, the most commonly reported reasons for using force were for protection or to assist in making an arrest. Using force as a means of protection most commonly involved the officer protecting themselves or other officers, but also included officers protecting the public or the person involved. The majority (83%) of incidents were reported with multiple reasons for using force.

Data quality

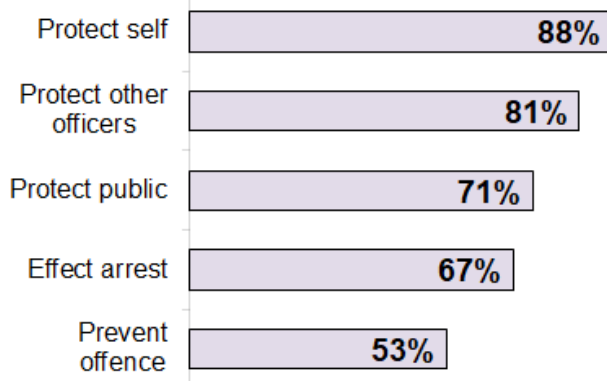
Incidents can involve multiple tactics, multiple reasons for using force, multiple impact factors and multiple outcomes, and, as such, it is not possible to assume causality. For example, in an incident where restraint tactics were used and the outcome 'hospitalisation' was recorded, it does not mean 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. More information on fatalities as a result of the person being injured during the use of force incident can be found in section 7.3.

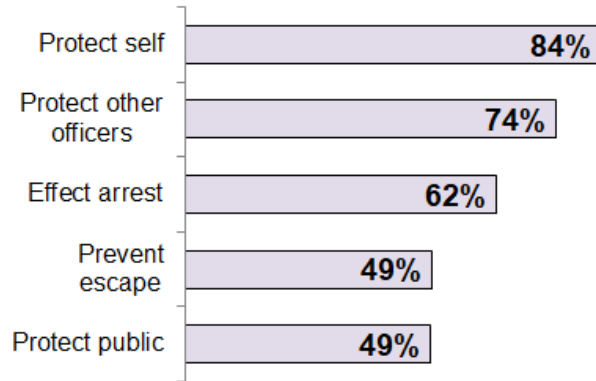
Figure 6: Top 5 reasons for using force, England and Wales, year ending March 2020



Firearms



Less Lethal Weapons



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 6](#).

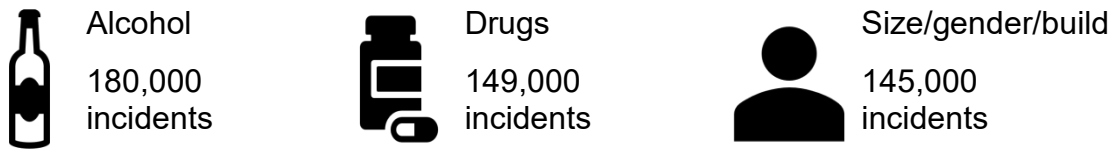
Notes: Figure shows the five most common reasons only. Multiple reasons can apply in an incident.

In incidents involving police use of firearms, including where a firearm was aimed but not fired, the most common reasons also included protecting the public and preventing an offence or harm. Data collected on police use of force do not include a breakdown of whether the firearm was aimed or fired. Home Office statistics on [Police use of firearms, April 2019 to March 2020](#) show that over this period there were 5 incidents in which firearms were discharged (fired) in England and Wales.

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 person involved. The majority (93%; 460,000) of incidents included an impact factor and half (53%; 259,000) involved multiple impact factors.

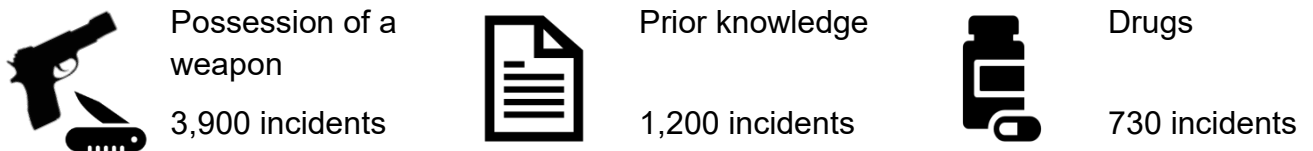
Figure 7: Number of incidents, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2020



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [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.

Where firearms tactics were used, the most common impact factor recorded was the person being in possession of a weapon (82%). Possession of a weapon was also the main impact factor when less lethal weapons tactics were used (CEDs and AEPs) (57%).

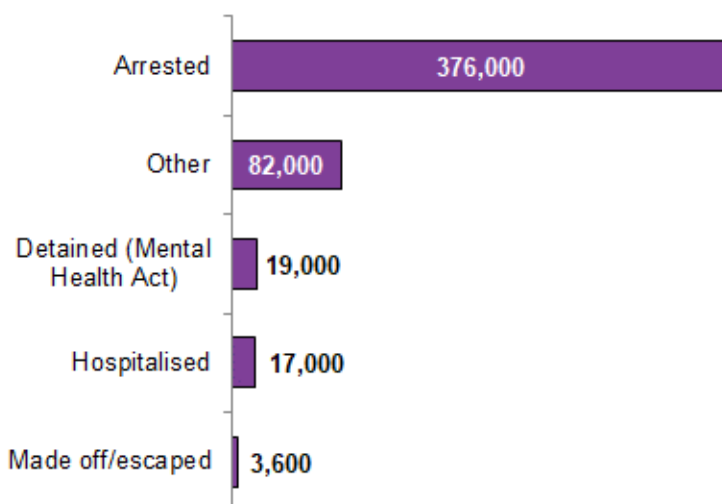
Figure 8: Number of times firearms were used, by impact factor, England and Wales, year ending March 2020



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [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.

4.3 Outcomes

Figure 9: Number of incidents, by outcome, England and Wales, year ending March 2020



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 8](#). Multiple outcomes can apply in an incident.

The most common outcome across all incidents was ‘arrested’ (76%) which was the most frequently reported outcome when looking across all individual tactics.

'Other' was the second most common outcome and could include the person being cautioned, or de-arrested following further information, for example. See the [user guide](#) for further details.

There were 16 deaths reported as the outcome to an incident involving police use of force. It is possible that not all fatalities reported were caused by an officer's use of force. Officers may record deaths of people that they have used force on where the death is caused by other factors (e.g. substance overdose). All deaths reported through the use of force data collection will be included in the [IOPC National Statistics report](#) which provides a more comprehensive overview of any deaths that occur during or following police contact.

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 third in the series. Due to the transitions occurring at different times across police forces, only 31,000 of the 32,000 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 2019-2020.**

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 person. 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.

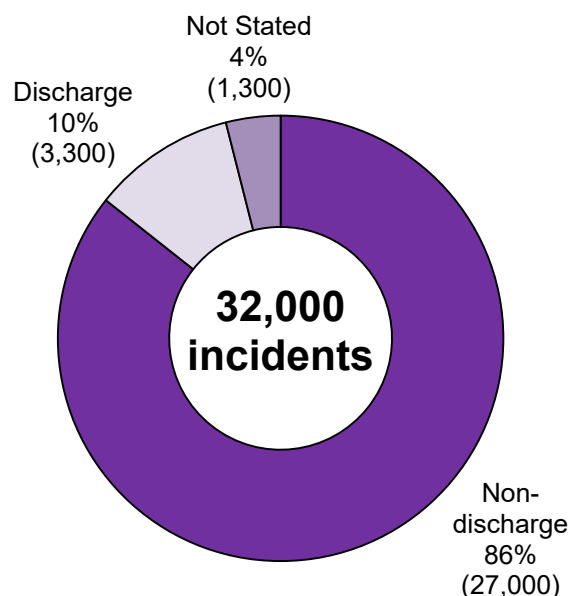
5.1 Incidents involving CEDs

CEDs were used in 32,000 incidents, although **the CED was not discharged in 86% (27,000) of these incidents.**

This proportion of non-discharge use is similar to the last collection year (2018/19). The total CED use has increased by 37% (8,600) from the previous financial year. The majority of the increase was in non-discharge uses, accounting for 88% (7,600) of the increase.

The type of use with the highest increase was red-dot which increased by 41% (+4,900).

Figure 10: Number of times CEDs were used, by use type, England and Wales, year ending March 2020

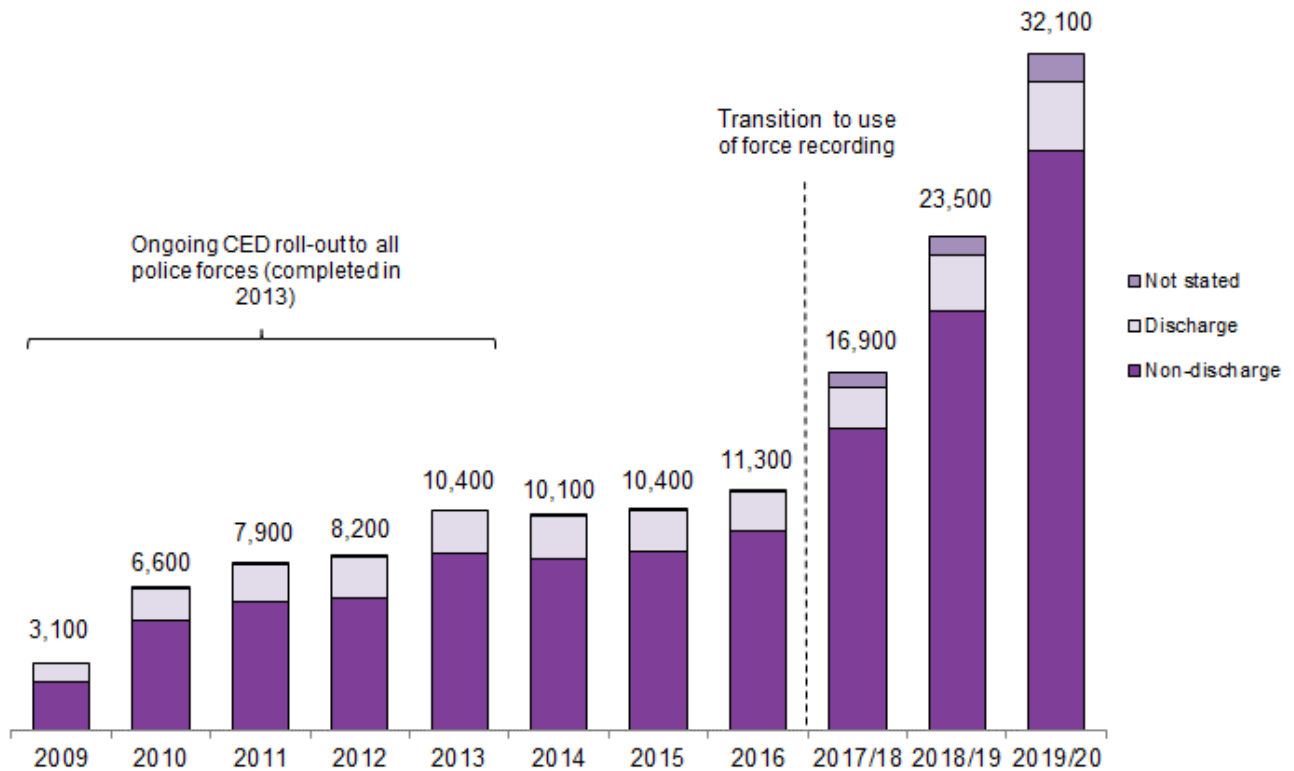


Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 13](#).

5.2 Police use of CED prior to year ending March 2020

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, 2019 and 2020 are not directly comparable with figures for previous years. The proportion of CED incidents where the type of use was not stated was higher in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 at 4% compared with earlier years.

Figure 11: Number of times CEDs were used, England and Wales, year ending December 2009 to year ending March 2020



Sources: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 13](#); [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).
- officers dealing with more incidents with the potential for conflict.
- an increase in the recording of CED due to improved and simpler methods of recording.

5.3 Police use of CED by perceived ethnicity

In total, 63% of CED incidents involved people perceived as being from a White ethnic group, 21% were perceived as being from a Black ethnic group and 7% were perceived as being from an Asian ethnic group.

Table 6 shows use of CED by the perceived ethnicity of the person involved. CEDs were discharged in 8% or 9% of CED incidents involving people perceived to be from a Black, Asian, Other or not reported ethnic group and in 11% of incidents involving people perceived as being from a White or Mixed ethnic group.

Table 6: CED use, by type of use and ethnicity (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020

	White	Black (or Black British)	Asian (or Asian British)	Mixed	Other	Not reported	Total
Times CED used	20,253	6,608	2,232	853	730	1,381	32,057
	63%	21%	7%	3%	2%	4%	100%
CED use type							
Non-discharge	16,273	5,808	1,997	722	605	1,186	26,591
	80%	88%	89%	85%	83%	86%	83%
Discharge	2,201	598	178	93	56	122	3,248
	11%	9%	8%	11%	8%	9%	10%
Not stated	1,779	202	57	38	69	73	2,218
	9%	3%	3%	4%	9%	5%	7%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 4](#).

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 person.

Drive-stun, fired, and angle drive-stun are discharge uses.

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

Not stated includes CED uses that were missing full incident details.

5.4 Police use of CED rates by perceived ethnicity

The rate of CED use can be calculated for different ethnic groups by taking the number of times it was used on each ethnic group, and dividing by the number of people within each ethnic group resident within the areas covered by English and Welsh police forces (as estimated by the [2011 census](#)). Whilst this calculation provides insight into the relative use of CED for different ethnic groups, it has the same limitations as outlined in section 3.4 of this release and figures should be interpreted with the same level of caution.

CED use, which incorporates both discharge and non-discharge incidents, involved someone perceived as being from a Black ethnic group at a rate seven times higher than someone perceived as being from a White ethnic group in English and Welsh police force areas (excluding the Metropolitan police), and at a rate five times higher in the Metropolitan police force area, when compared with [2011 census data](#).

The Metropolitan Police is the largest police force in England and Wales and therefore had the largest number of CED uses (10,000 uses; 31% of England and Wales total). It also has a proportionately larger number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people within its police force area (40%) compared with the rest of England and Wales (10%) according to the [2011 Census](#). The combination of the two means that data from the Metropolitan Police force area can skew national level figures. Table 7 shows the rate of CED uses for the Metropolitan Police separately from England and Wales.

Table 7: Rate of CED use, by ethnicity (as perceived by reporting officer), England and Wales, year ending March 2020

		White	Black (or Black British)	Asian (or Asian British)	Mixed	Other
Rate of CED use	England and Wales	1.00	8.43	1.26	1.66	3.08
	England and Wales exc. Metropolitan Police	1.00	7.31	1.13	1.75	3.91
	Metropolitan Police	1.00	5.24	0.91	0.98	1.14

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [Table 13](#) and [2011 Census](#).

Notes: Rates are shown relative to the White ethnic group. Rates for Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic groups are shown in comparison with the White ethnic group, e.g. CED use involved those perceived as Black 7.31 times more often than those perceived as White in England and Wales (excluding the Metropolitan Police).

Asian or Asian British group includes people that identify as Chinese. Details on groupings are available on [GOV.UK](#).

6 Incident location

Key results

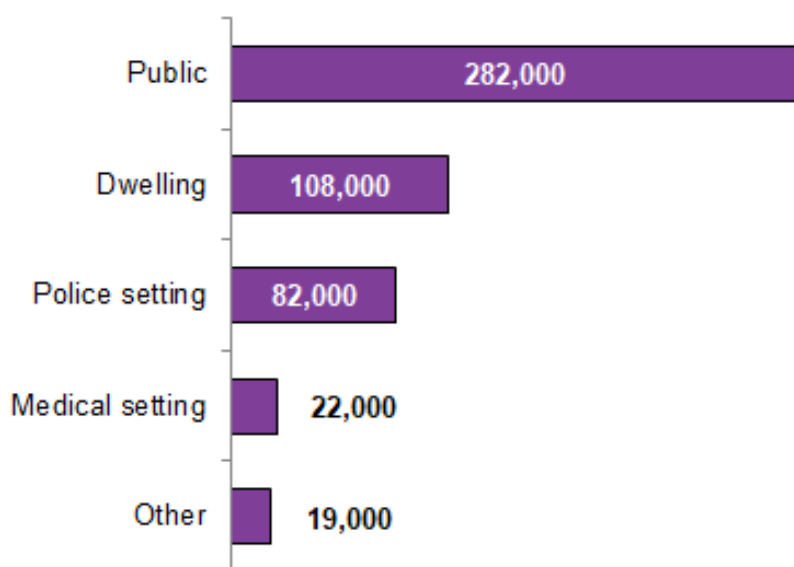
In the year ending March 2020:

- Over half (57%) of recorded incidents included a **public location** (282,000).
- The most common recorded incident location was a **street or highway**, which was recorded in 47% of incidents (230,000 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 person 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 2020



Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [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 public settings (mostly street/highway) and dwellings (which may be in response to an incident or to assist in making an arrest).

6.1 Police use of force in custody blocks

Custody block was listed as a location in 61,000 incidents. Table 8 compares total tactics used in all locations with those which included custody block as a location. It is important to

note that 20% of incidents involving a custody block included additional 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 person was placed in custody).

Table 8: Proportion of tactics used in all locations by type and those with custody block listed, England and Wales, year ending March 2020

	Total tactics reported	Tactics reported with custody block as a location
% of total tactics reported	100%	14%
Restraint	63%	54%
Unarmed skills	23%	35%
Other equipment	5%	4%
Less lethal weapons	5%	0.3%
Firearms	0.7%	0%
Other	4%	6%

Source: Home Office, Police use of force statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020, [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 a higher proportion of unarmed skills compared with all incidents in general. Restraint tactics, less lethal weapons and firearms were proportionately 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

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

Data quality

Some data on injuries and fatalities were inconsistent. For example, officers reported 'no injury' sustained due to their use of force, but then also included details of a 'minor' injury. This could be because **officers recorded injuries (to themselves or to the person involved) 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 may, after initial assessment at hospital, require formal admission to hospital.

- **Death**

Death of the person involved in the incident where there is a suspected causal link between police contact and the death.

7.1 Officer injuries

Of the 492,000 use of force incidents recorded, 23,000 (5%) involved the officer sustaining an injury during the use of force incident, either through an intentional or unintentional assault. Of the 23,000:

- 94% (22,000) reported minor injuries
- 2% (420) reported severe injuries
- 4% (970) had no injury level recorded

A full breakdown is provided in [data table 10](#). See the [user guide](#) for examples of injury levels.

7.2 Person injuries

Of the 492,000 incidents recorded, 6% (27,000) reported that the person involved was injured as a result of police use of force. Of the 27,000:

- 96% (26,000) reported minor injuries
- 2% (560) reported severe injuries

- 2% (470) had no injury level recorded

Of the 27,000 incidents where the person was reported as injured as a result of the use of force, 2,900 (10%) included hospitalisation as an outcome.

In total, there were 17,000 incidents with an outcome of 'hospitalisation'. Of these, there were 13,000 incidents where the officer reported that the person did not sustain an injury **as a result** of the officer's use of force. Of the remaining hospitalisations, officers reported 1,200 as unknown if the person was injured as a result of force used.

Officers should only report a hospitalisation outcome where this was caused by their use of force, so it is likely that these include hospitalisations for other reasons, for example the person 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.

In 8% (37,000) of incidents, the officer recorded that they did not know if the person sustained an injury due to their use of force or it was not reported. Data are provided in [data table 11](#).

7.3 Fatalities

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). This is done when 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 2020 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.

There were 2 reports of a death of an individual resulting from an injury relating to police use of force in the year ending March 2020. See [data table 11](#) for further information.

For information on the quality of data on injuries and fatalities, see the [user guide](#).

8 Feedback and enquiries

Statistical or public enquiries

If you would like to make an enquiry about this publication or have any general feedback, please contact the 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.

Statistical Bulletins are prepared by analysts in the Home Office under the Official 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 37/20

ISSN: 1759-7005



© Crown copyright 2020

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.